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Why Socialists in America Are Excited

Surveying the masses of self-quarantined needy, they don't see calamity, but phenomenal opportunity.

- Joel Hilliker
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Can you guess who is happy right now? The global health crisis wrought by covid- 19 has been dramatically eclipsed by a global *economic* crisis wrought by our *response* to covid- 19. Economic activity has cratered, businesses are failing, production has stopped. The United Nations predicts that even if the world rebounds financially over the rest of the year, extreme poverty will engulf as many as 132 million more people, and those facing acute hunger will double to 265 million.

To most people, this is a catastrophe. But some few are actually excited about it.

For years the folks pushing for a "Green New Deal" have advocated slashing use of fossil fuels. They want gasoline-burning cars off the roads and jet-fueled airliners out of the sky. Suddenly, their dream is reality: People aren't driving, and nobody is flying.

"This is what 'rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society' looks like," tweeted climate activist Eric Holthaus. "We're doing it. It's possible!" Spanish scientist Martín López Corredoira wrote, "Neither Greenpeace, nor Greta Thunberg, nor any other individual or collective organization have achieved so much in favor of the health of the planet in such a short time. A miracle happened. … It is certainly not very good for the economy in general, but it is fantastic for the environment."

Some of the wildest wishes of activists are being fulfilled by the coronavirus "miracle"—but not entirely. This global economic shutdown is projected to suppress carbon emissions by only 6 percent, and some analysts say an 8 percent drop each year for a decade is needed to beat climate change. So as difficult as these rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented changes have been, still greater sacrifices are needed, in their view.

The alignment of interests between environmentalists and lockdown advocates is compelling—and it is hardly coincidental.

Government Is Everywhere

The land of the free market is suffering a flash drought of jobs. In March and April alone, a staggering 36 million Americans filed for unemployment benefits. Millions of people who were taking care of themselves just fine, the government suddenly forced to stay home and stop working because it declared their work "nonessential." And this same government passed unprecedentedly expensive legislation whereby it (insufficiently) paid people directly by increasing taxpayers' debt. And it is mulling even more drastic measures.

Here again the lockdowns helped realize a long-cherished goal of the left: to make more people more dependent on government largesse, hence increasing governmental control and power.

For decades, there has been a movement in America to abolish free markets in favor of collectivism and a command economy. In recent years millions have rallied to this flag behind Sen. Bernie Sanders, particularly young people who have

been convinced that the solution to all problems is *more government.* They want free education, free health care, and guaranteed income whether they work or not.

These people saw the chaos created by lockdowns and insisted that it proves capitalism and free markets don't work, and that the government needs more control. In their view, the fact that people can't stay home from work and survive economically proves the need for guaranteed income. Also, the fact that people lost health care when they lost their jobs proves that health care must be universal.

On ABC's *This Week,* Senator Sanders called this the "silver lining" of the lockdown chaos—the recognition "that maybe we start rethinking some fundamental tenets about the way our government and society works." He gave the example of how COVID-19 proves America needs single-payer health care.

"[T]he COVID-19 pandemic has … expanded the spectrum of imaginable futures and political possibilities," wrote Eric Levitz in *New York Magazine.* "And *some* of those possibilities have been a sight for sore socialists' eyes" (April 1).

Surveying the masses of self-quarantined needy, they didn't see calamity, but *phenomenal opportunity.*

'Crisis and Opportunity'

America's largest officially socialist organization, the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), boasts only 66,000 members, but it is drawing more (especially young people) toward its ideals if not its membership rolls. Those ideals have deeply saturated the Democratic Party, which has *46 million* official members and millions more who identify and vote Democrat. Democrat legislators Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Rashida Tlaib are DSA members. They are Marxist, and though they call themselves "anti-fascist," they lustily endorse stripping power from individuals and shifting it to the government—a key feature of fascism.

The national DSA director, Maria Svart, started a May 7 missive ("Crisis and Opportunity") with this quote from Milton Friedman, whom she described as "an enemy": "Only a crisis—actual or perceived—produces real change." After accusing the "far right" of moving quickly "to take advantage of this crisis," she promised that socialists can move even faster. She praised Bernie Sanders and "the multiracial working-class movement behind him" for mainstreaming democratic socialist ideas. Now, socialists need to press their advantage "to build a new world on the ashes of the old." "If there is now a crisis of legitimacy of the old way of doing things, *there is an opportunity to create permanent shifts,"* she explained (emphasis added throughout).

Svart continued by listing what she considered positive developments: "We see this already where low-wage workers receive unemployment checks higher than old poverty wages, and where millions of people lost employer-based health care overnight and are now adrift in a pandemic and looking to Medicare for All." Note that: Socialists like Svart view direct payments from the government to workers it has banned from working as *good.* People getting a fatter check from the government for sitting on their cans than from working a job—*great!* People having to use government health care rather than private—*terrific!* If you're accustomed to freedom and accountability, then someone getting more cash for *not working* than they can by *working* is a serious problem. But not to "democratic socialists."

"Between seeing that workers really are essential for human survival yet the bosses still see us as expendable, it has become clear that we have nothing to lose but our chains," Svart continued, quoting directly from Karl Marx's *Communist Manifesto.* She said the people standing in the way of Medicare for All, universal rent control and "living wages" are "the owning class." Thus, "We must organize ourselves and fight."

They call themselves "socialist," but this is unabashed communism. And this type of thinking increasingly animates what the Democrats (and the mainstream media) are doing—most noticeably in their response to coronavirus.

Power Grab

Whether the issue is air travel, freedom to work, ventilator distribution—or pollution or homosexuality or anything else—all the Democrats' policies get back to the same thing: Take more power from the people and give it to the government. Take more money from people and redistribute it. That is the principle underlying health care for all, university education for all, government checks for all, the Green New Deal, and virtually every other major progressive initiative.

"The COVID-19 crisis is a chance to do capitalism differently," Mariana Mazzucato, professor of economics at University College London, wrote in the *Guardian.* This crisis exposed the "lack of a safety net and protection for working people in societies with rising inequality …. But we now have an opportunity to USE THIS CRISIS as a way to understand how to do capitalism differently. This requires a rethink of what governments are for: rather than simply fixing market failures when they arise, they should move towards *actively shaping and creating markets* that deliver sustainable and inclusive growth" (March 18).

Progressives mistrust the private sector's ability to "actively shape and create markets." They endlessly criticize the "1 percent" for wielding wealth and power in a way that excludes the rest of society. The reality is that the private sector and free markets have created an explosion of wealth that has smashed global poverty, particularly in the most recent decades.

Reducing government control and allowing people to decide for themselves how and when to buy and sell has brought unparalleled prosperity to millions of people. Even the "poor" enjoy living standards far higher than the great majority living in more-controlled economies.

Yet socialists believe *government officials* can somehow "actively shape and create markets" with no negative side effects. They have unfailing faith that the 1 percent within the *bureaucratic ruling class* are incorruptible.

Mazzucato wrote about how the government can "ensure prices are fair, patents are not abused, medicine supply is safeguarded, and profits are reinvested back into innovation, rather than siphoned out to shareholders." In other words, individuals investing their money is somehow immoral—but government officials taking those individuals' money and investing it is moral because government is inherently unselfish.

Remember, the money that governments spend comes *from the people.* The power the government wields comes at the expense of average people. Socialism takes decision-making away from private individuals and concentrates it in the ruling class. And the reality is, the ruling class is just as susceptible as anyone else to self-interest, greed, corruption and other failings of human nature.

The ideas are always couched in altruistic language—"opportunity," "safety net," "social protection," "sustainable and inclusive growth"—but they promote a fundamental idea that has impoverished, enslaved and even killed hundreds of millions of people throughout history, particularly over the last century.

"As companies, from airlines to retail, come asking for bailouts and other types of assistance, it is important to resist simply handing out money," Mazzucato wrote. "Conditions can be attached to make sure that bailouts are structured in ways that *transform the sectors they're saving* so that they become part of a new economy—one that is focused on the green new deal strategy of lowering carbon emissions while also investing in workers, and making sure they can adapt to new technologies. *It must be done now, while government has the upper hand.*… Let's not let this crisis go to waste"

In other words, amid the haste to do something—while even *conservative* lawmakers are being pressured into signing obscene spending bills—let's push through every progressive measure we possibly can.

They are not letting the crisis go to waste.

More to Come

In May, Democrats unveiled a new $3 trillion relief package. The $2 trillion bill Congress passed in March was the largest relief bill in human history—and just weeks later they were ready to enact another that would surpass that by half again. Euphemistically called the Heroes Act, it would give $1 trillion to state and local governments, about $200 billion to workers who face heightened health risks, $175 billion to people for rent, mortgage and utilities, $75 billion for covid-19 testing and contact tracing, and up to $6,000 more in cash payments to each household in the country. It also extends payments and benefits to people who lose employer-sponsored health coverage. Though it passed the House of Representatives, is not expected to pass the Senate.

Socialists want the government to provide "economic security" for everyone—even people who can't work or don't want to work. They too can consider coronavirus a "miracle": Suddenly, the number of people who can't work has skyrocketed into the millions! This is the perfect opportunity to put tens of millions on government payrolls, under more government control, and into a transition to a socialist state.

No wonder they have been so forcible and uncompromising in promoting the strictest of quarantines. *Stay home. Don't take the risk of going to work. Let the government take care of you.* Socialists want to make it so people aren't *allowed* to take care of themselves—they *must* rely on the government to provide for them.

Once you give up accountability for your own life (and the freedom that comes with it), you fall into a pattern of dependency that is very difficult to break.

A Solution That Works

The most widespread of the catastrophic effects hitting the world today are not coming from a virus, but from governmental response. The millions of people now unable to provide for their families, the millions slipping into extreme poverty, the millions facing acute hunger, are not suffering from a viral pandemic, but from political policy that is myopic at best, ideologically vainglorious and disastrous at worst.

This is a spectacular example of a fundamental flaw with human beings. So often, the results of our "solutions" are worse than the problems. Far too often, we misperceive a malady, we incorrectly diagnose, and we then apply remedies with ruinous side effects. Today we are seeing this on an epic scale.

Why do these "solutions" fail? Why do they create more problems than they solve?

There is a specific, fundamental reason: It is because they ignore God. They ignore God's law.

God has an economic system that benefits everyone. It is built around private property ownership, responsible stewardship and stable families. It minimizes taxation, bureaucratic bloat and governmental imposition in order to maximize freedom. He has a system for helping the poor. It is based on *individual responsibility* and *private charity.*

God created the family to encourage industry and to ensure that everyone's needs are taken care of. Many of His laws protect and promote family, but for those few who fall outside that structure, God even has a limited system of centrally run welfare to ensure they are not neglected. You can read about it in our article "A New World Economy."

Whenever and however we deviate from God's system and implement charitable initiatives apart from God's design, our efforts are doomed to fail. We rob people of personal dignity, we cause economic distortions, and we empower and expand government in ways that encourage corruption.

God's solutions work. Human solutions create more problems than they solve, and the further they are from God's law, the more spectacularly they fail (Proverbs 14:12; 16:25). In all history, socialism has repeatedly proved itself to be among the chief of these erroneous "solutions."

Learn the lesson! Stop insisting—on the human level, on the national level or on the personal level—that we don't need God. In our health, in our ideologies, in our politics, in our economics, "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. … It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones. Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine" (Proverbs 3:5-10).