

The Ominous Parallels



Send him mail.

"Food for Thought" is an original bi-weekly column appearing every other Tuesday at Everything-Voluntary.com, by Norman Imberman. Norman is a retired podiatrist who loves playing piano, writing music, lawn bowling, bridge, reading, classical music, going to movies, plays, concerts and traveling. Archived columns can be found [here](#). FFT-only RSS feed available [here](#).

(Editor's note: Originally written in August 2009, and updated this month.)

Fascism: a system of government, marked by stringent socioeconomic control, and strong central government, usually headed by a dictator. (Webster's II New College Dictionary)

Under fascism, private ownership is in name only. There is forcible oppression of opposition and criticism and regimentation of industry and commerce. The more the private sector is controlled the more fascistic is that society. A total fascistic society does not begin as such. A society must go through a *transition* before it becomes totally repressive and does not necessarily have to be led by a single dictator. A fascist country can be led by any entity that enforces socioeconomic control, such as a king, a political party or a committee. Fascism develops by stages because if a king or dictator or political party were to mandate or pass laws of total oppression overnight, its evil would be so evident that rebellion would become rampant. Therefore, the authorities use the frog-in-the-slow-boiling-water effect to eventually get you.

In *The Ominous Parallels*, written in 1982, the author, Leonard Peikoff compared the creeping regulations in America to the creeping regulations that occurred in Nazi Germany in the 1930s leading to the oppressive fascism of the 1940s. He then predicted that the ever-increasing government controls in America would eventually result in a fascist-style government, similar to Nazi Germany. At the time he wrote this, few believed that it was possible for fascism to take hold here in America, the land of the free. Indeed, I too, was incredulous in 1982 when the book was published. Well, I believe it now!

We already have enormously strong and stringent regimentation of industry and commerce. In fact, to make matters worse, in recent months the government has taken over ownership of many businesses, partially or totally.

Peikoff wrote, "Contrary to the Marxists, the Nazis did not advocate public ownership of the means of production. They did demand that the government oversee and run the nation's economy. The issue of legal ownership, they explained, is secondary; what counts, is the issues of *control*. Private citizens, therefore, may continue to hold titles to property - so long as the state reserves to itself the unqualified right to regulate the use of their property." Peikoff continues, "But the Nazis defended their policies, and the country did not rebel; it accepted the Nazi argument. Selfish individuals may be unhappy, the Nazis said, but what we have established in Germany is the ideal system, *socialism*." "To be a socialist," says Goebbels, "is to submit the I to the thou; socialism is sacrificing the individual to the whole." In addition, Peikoff wrote, "The system which Hitler established - the social reality which so many Germans were eager to embrace or so willing to endure - the politics which began in a theory and ended in Auschwitz - was: the 'total state.'"

At this point I digress. When I was about 14 years old I was told a joke that was mildly funny but the joke is worth telling to make a point. A Jewish mother brought her son to a psychiatrist because whenever she served him kreplach he would have a nervous reaction by flailing his arms about and yelling, "keep it away, keep away the kreplach," like he was insanely afraid of kreplach. (For those who don't know, kreplach are square pieces of noodle with meat inside. The noodle is laid down flat on the table, the meat is placed in the center and each corner is folded over the meat so that the meat is enclosed inside of the noodle, similar to ravioli). The psychiatrist suggested that the son watch her make the kreplach such that he could see it made in stages and have nothing to fear. So the mother went home with her son and sat him in front of her while she made the kreplach. She cut out a square piece of noodle from a larger piece and placed it flat on the table. No reaction from the boy. She placed the meat in the center. No reaction from the boy. She folded over the first corner. No reaction from the boy. She folded over the second corner. No reaction from the boy. She folded over the third corner. No reaction from the boy. She folded over the fourth corner and the boy immediately went into a tantrum, flailing his arms about and yelling "keep it away, keep away the kreplach."

There is an analogy here. How far must the regimentation, the oppressions, the controls, the regulations progress before they are *recognized* as fascism (kreplach)? Could one say that it is only 25% kreplach when the first corner is folded and 50% when the second corner is folded and 75% when the 3rd is folded and 100% when the final corner is folded? Is the oppression not fascism until it is total? Isn't it 25% fascism and then 50% and then 75% some where along the way until it finally approaches 100% fascism? As demonstrated in Peikoff's *Parallels*, fascism must be recognized *before* becoming total in order to prevent a Nazi-type catastrophe. A little bit of fascism is never good for a society and, most importantly, there is no law of nature dictating that total fascism can't happen here. Fascism is creeping up on us at an increasing pace.

Ludwig Von Mises and F. A. Hayek, two of the greatest economists of the twentieth century, and Fredric Bastiat, one of the wisest economist of the nineteenth century, in their various writings, proved that there can be no mixture of freedom and fascism, just as the mixture of pure water and poison is still poison. Once a little fascism is condoned, it becomes part of the system and will eventually lead to full fascism, *unless* there is a complete turn around in the philosophy and ideology of the masses.

As I listen to the news on the radio and TV, I witness fear and anger in so many people. However, they are not aware of what it is that they fear and of the actual cause of their anger.

Previously, I wrote that fascism entails “forcible oppression of opposition and criticism of government policies.” In August of 2009 I heard on the news that we now have a government office within the Federal Communications Commission headed by Mark Lloyd, a “diversity officer,” whose job is to ensure that there is “fair diversity” over the airwaves. Lloyd chose Venezuela (a repressive society) as his model, which will have the effect of limiting freedom of speech and forcibly oppressing opposition and criticism of government policies. Oppression of the freedom of speech has already started with the concept of “political correctness.” Lloyd will have the power to fine those who do not cooperate with his idea of “fairness.” Now in June of 2013 we are faced with a government that has been exposed for the communo-fascist system it really favors. Even the New York Times is criticizing the Obama administration for its allowing and promoting the listening in on our conversations via telephone, emails and other communication devices that most of us use on a daily basis. The Benghazi murder cover up and the IRS attacking those with political views that are antithetical to the views of the present administration are other examples of the threat that is upon us. Another example, of limiting freedom of speech is where politicians accuse as “unpatriotic” those people who dare to criticize government-proposed policies, past and present. I am one of those who dare to speak out. Will there be a knock on my door some day by those with the power, but not the right, to drag me away to some unknown prison camp for dissenters?

The dictator who takes over in America does not have to be a loud spoken, German speaking, mustached man or an overweight, round-faced man, wearing a military uniform, who speaks Italian. He can be a soft-spoken, clean-shaven man, in a business suit with a charming smile, who goes to church every Sunday, and with his minions insists on the enforcement of his fascist mission. It is the presence of the socioeconomic controls, government regulations and government suppressions through legal and illegal coercion that defines fascism.

For fascism to get a stronghold on a nation, one more condition might develop, but is not essential. When a serious crisis occurs, citizens cry out for someone to do something about it at any cost. Of course, that “someone” is the government. In Germany of the 1930s the

crisis was runaway inflation. However, any crisis will do. For America the crisis could be another terrorist attack using nuclear, chemical or biological weapons; a depression; a stock market crash; a food shortage; a torrent of bankruptcies and bank failures; a bursting of the housing bubble, etc. In most cases, the crisis is government-generated, while the government's solution is to continue to do the very same thing that caused the crisis in the first place. In some cases, as depicted in the movie "Z," the government surreptitiously causes a crisis in order to motivate the citizens to succumb to more government control. This gives those on top of the power pyramid even greater power. That's why the State loves war in spite of statements to the contrary.

Some of you may say, "There is a vast difference between America and those countries where fascism ruled. Those countries did not have a system of checks and balances with free elections to prevent such a take over, as we have in America. With those two mechanisms in place, it can't happen here."

In reply I remind you that Adolph Hitler was freely elected into office. In addition, if we did have a system of checks and balances that actually worked in practice, America would never have already gotten this far into fascism. We are being checked and balanced into becoming a third world country, with a currency that the world no longer respects, with the threat of terrorist attacks forever with us, with Tea Parties springing up everywhere, where anger is rampant, where we have a failing education system, and a failing socioeconomic system and a plethora of failing banks and failing businesses, with a huge unemployment rate and huge mortgage foreclosure rates. You can no longer blame the "other" political party or the greedy businessmen, or the unions or the rich or the illegal immigrants or capitalism or pick your favorite scapegoat, for our problems. Such blame won't hold water any longer. It is time that one's ideology is examined.

The problem is enormous when the common people who support the present course of government control, from the left or the right, do not recognize that they are supporting fascism. The man on the street thinks, "after all, fascism is bad and I am a good person, therefore I can't be fostering fascism. Only the other guys in Nazi Germany were fascists. I am nothing like them." Then, there are the uncommon people - those fascists in Congress and the White House who also think of themselves as humanitarians who are trying to do the right thing for their country, just like the other dictators or politicians of the past tried to do for their homelands. However, the results will always be the same—eventual destruction.

I believe that the common man on the street in Germany during the Nazi regime thought that he was supporting a good cause when he supported Hitler and his thugs. Like us, the German people and the Nazis loved their children, went to church, played bridge, went to the opera and concerts, played tennis and engaged themselves in the same everyday activities as we do.

“The road to hell is paved with good intentions.” Fascism can come from the right or the left. Doing what feels good and doing what is right and works are not necessarily the same thing. To determine what works, one must analyze cause and effect. The reasoning of the “feel good” proponents goes something like this: “wouldn’t it be nice if the poor were more prosperous?” (We all would like to see that the poor were more prosperous.)

Solution—“let’s give them some of my money and your money and everybody else’s money.” Problem solved. Fascist doctrine does not bother to look at the morality of such acts, the unintended and long-term negative consequences of such a policy, the side effects of the policy and never bothers to seek out the cause of the very prosperity that they wish to establish. The problem is magnified by the fact that when the unintended consequences do become a reality, fascist ideology is never blamed. Other people, groups and greed are blamed.

I am at a loss to identify what is going on in our country as anything other than “fascism,” so allow me my passion to strive for a fascist-free America by pointing out in this essay, the underlying principle that constitutes fascism. Some of the pro-fascists may say, “We only want partial fascism. What harm can that do?” Leonard Peikoff already answered that in *The Ominous Parallels*. I reply, “A little fascism can go a long way - a long way to catastrophe.” It’s like a communicable disease that must be stopped or it will spread until it devours the entire country.

If you desire a system of government, marked by stringent (or non-stringent) socioeconomic control, a strong central government, whether it is headed by a president, a congress, a parliament, a political party, or any entity with the power to enforce control, you are a supporter of fascism, *by definition*. When you support the idea that the government should own, run, regiment, control, or regulate things such as healthcare, the banking industry, the insurance industry, commerce, the schools, prices, contracts, wages, rents *ad infinitum*, and in addition, provide largess to those who don’t earn it, you are supporting fascism. The devastation that will follow from such policies is not some mystical Nostradamus-like prediction. It follows as sure as night follows day. Full fascism will eventually envelop the lives of our children and grandchildren and may even occur within our own lifetime if the tide is not turned.

As Thomas DiLorenzo wrote in his book *Organized Crime*, “It would be very difficult indeed to argue against the proposition that the U.S. economy today is even more heavily controlled, regulated and regimented by the state than Nazi Germany was at the time Hayek was writing *The Road to Serfdom*. Americans have traveled many miles down the road to serfdom by deluding themselves that the god of democracy will somehow save them from statist slavery. As Hayek warned, ‘there is no justification for the belief that, so long as power is conferred by democratic procedure, it cannot be arbitrary...’”

You *can* stem the tide. Refrain from voting for more and more government control of my

life, your life and the lives of your neighbors and fellow American citizens! Peikoff is correct. The parallels are ominous. Start espousing the opposite of fascism – total freedom!