

Communism vs. Compassion

It's amazing—and horrifying—what can happen when people have mushy-headed, vague beliefs in their heads, lacking what I refer to as “clarity of thought.” Most people have general feelings, and nebulous ideas and ideals, but they're not even clear about the specifics, and the real-world applications, of their *own* belief systems.

Perhaps the most heinous example in history has been communism. Many millions of well-intentioned yet muddle-headed people (along with a much smaller number of opportunistic megalomaniacs) have put forth a “philosophy” that has ended up getting tens of millions of people murdered. How could that possibly happen?

After all, doesn't this *sound* nice, and caring, and loving?: “*From each according to his ability, to each according to his need.*” (For anyone who doesn't already know this, that is how *The Communist Manifesto*, by Marx and Engels, sums up the essence of communism.) Isn't that a noble, caring sentiment? Shouldn't we each contribute to the world whatever we can, and shouldn't all people have the things they need in life? So how does such a compassionate, glorious, enlightened idea end up creating abject horrors?

As is often the case, “the devil is in the details.” For example, what do people literally and specifically mean when they say things like, “*Everyone should have the necessities of life,*” or “*Those who can afford to help others, should*”? In a general sense, I agree with both of those statements. Other than a sociopath, who wouldn't? Who would *object* to the idea of all people having what they need? And who would argue *against* prosperous and successful people helping out the less fortunate? Certainly not me.

At the same time, for decades I have pointed out that communism is an insane, horribly destructive and profoundly evil idea that is completely immoral and anti-human. But why? How can I agree with the general sentiments expressed, and yet vociferously condemn the philosophy? In this case, the distinction comes down to something that might not occur to most people, but is actually quite simple:

WHOSE choice is it?

When someone says that the wealthy “should” help the less fortunate, I totally agree, as *long as the giver is the one who gets to make that choice*. Communism, in contrast, dictates that the one in “need” is *entitled* to whatever he “needs,” that his “need” makes it rightfully his, and that he therefore has the moral right to *take*, by any means necessary (which usually happens via “government” violence) whatever he “needs.” In other words, communism says that it is *not up to* the wealthier person to decide whether to give, or how much to give.

Because of this, communism is absolutely incompatible with genuine compassion. Charity and generosity are expressed by someone voluntarily giving up *what is rightfully his* to someone else. In contrast, violently robbing another in the name of “compassion” is immoral, hypocritical and dishonest. When I say, “the rich should help the less fortunate,” I mean, “It would be nice if they chose to do that.” When a communist says it, they mean “the rich should be *forced* to give to the less fortunate.”

Notice how often leftist politicians are intentionally dishonest in their propaganda. They might say, for example, when talking about “tax policy,” “*We are just asking the rich to pay their fair share.*” But taxation has absolutely nothing to do with “asking.” Taxation is always a *demand* backed by threats of *violence*. It is theft. It is extortion.

I think that a person owns—i.e., has an exclusive right to decide what is done with—anything and everything he acquires through his own efforts or any other voluntary means. I also think it can be good when such people *freely choose* to give away some of what is theirs to others. But it absolutely must be *their choice* when and whether to do that. If a billionaire chooses not to give a penny to anyone else, that is his choice. I can think (and say) that he is a selfish twit, but I have absolutely no right to initiate violence against him based on what he chooses to do with his *own* property. Nor does anyone else have such a right, on their own or by way of “government,” or in the name of some collective.

A communist, on the other hand, believes that true ownership *comes from “need,”* and that the successful person merely hanging onto the fruits of his own labor is guilty of *theft*, if he doesn’t “need” all of it. To them, “need” determines ownership, which in turn justifies whatever *violence* is necessary to get people what they “need.” (And, of course, people will always disagree about who “needs” what, and so in communism a centralized “need-determiner” will inevitably appear and forcibly impose its decisions on everyone else.) And *that* is why communism, put into practice, leads to widespread poverty and starvation, and mass violence.

In short, communism is the “philosophy” of cockroaches and sewer rats. Described honestly, it amounts to this:

“What I need, I am entitled to. What I am entitled to is rightfully mine. What is rightfully mine, I have the moral right to acquire by any means necessary, including violence. Therefore, I have the right to use violence to take from others whatever I need.”

When expressed clearly and specifically like this, the true nature of communism, and the reasons for the inevitable violent outcome of that heinous idea, become obvious. And it is the opposite of genuine compassion. Indeed, *ownership of private property*—which

communism opposes—is essential to being generous and giving. Why? Because you can't give what isn't yours. It is only virtuous when it was *up to you*; when you *had a choice*. Neither asking a ruling class to rob your neighbor to “give to the poor,” nor getting robbed yourself to “give to the poor,” is charitable. It is only kind generosity when you *freely* choose to give away what is *rightfully yours*.

Read [this article](#), which I wrote many years ago, for a more thorough explanation of why communism's soul is horrendously destructive and purely anti-human, although often disguised as loving compassion. Also, feel free to skip down to where the article says “Communism's Soul.”