

THE RIPPLE EFFECTS OF SOCIALIST DUTY

"From Each According to Their Ability"

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the efficient use of the whole individual
for the absolute benefit of the collectivity.

—CHE GUEVARA

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Socialism's foundation on compulsory duty has contaminated much of socialist philosophy.

Here are two critical things to know about socialism: it's founded on compulsory duty, and this duty has shaped the entire philosophy.

For over 170 years, socialism's requirement of duty has been defined by the famous axiom "from each according to their ability."¹ French socialist Louis Blanc coined this phrase that remains the socialist standard today.² He explains (with his emphasis):

The more one *can*, the more one *must*. ... Hence the axiom: From each according to his ability. That is the DUTY.³

Socialism says all should be born owing their abilities—their time and talents—to society. This requirement of duty both reflects and enforces the socialist worldview that sees us as "cells"⁴ in the body of society, as "cogs"⁵ who exist to perform our "humble function in the great social machine."⁶

In contrast, the liberal philosophy that underpins democracies like the United States, Canada, France, and Japan rejects obligations to give our time and talents to others. Liberalism rejects such duties, be they to a king or queen, to fascists calling themselves "the community,"⁷ or to socialists calling themselves "society."

The founding principle of liberalism is that we each own our lives free and clear. It says others should not—without our express consent—have the power to control our time or talents or to interfere with our right to define our own lives.⁸

Socialism repudiates this fundamental liberal belief. Socialism starts by demanding that all "return to duty" and to "obedience."⁹ It imposes a type of duty that contradicts liberal principles. Socialists admit that duty of the type socialism demands is "strikingly absent" from liberalism and also from the constitutions of liberal democracies.¹⁰

Socialist duty is dangerous. It is not only illiberal but anti-liberal. It morphs our time into what socialism treats as *society's time*. It gives those running socialist society the very power that liberalism is designed to prevent: the power to control the lives of citizens. This duty is non-optional for socialism. A socialist society cannot be created or maintained without those running society having this power over our lives.¹¹

The last century's experiments with socialism were humanitarian disasters, despite the high hopes and promises of socialists at the time.¹² What went wrong? Duty.

Socialism's duty of "from each according to their ability" overrides individual rights, making it all too easy for authoritarians to seize control. The belief that we owe our abilities to society leads those running socialist societies to treat people as resources to be "used" and used "efficiently,"¹³ as the iconic socialist Che Guevara puts it.

"From each according to their ability" is socialism's philosophical Chernobyl. Socialist duty has broken containment, irradiated the whole of the philosophy, and warped its reasoning. It makes socialism a philosophy that

- denigrates human rights;
- considers slackers to be "thieves";
- is obsessed with identifying and eradicating "parasites";
- desires to eliminate what Karl Marx calls our "private labor" rights—our right to control our work individually;
- is strongly biased against small enterprises and craftwork; and
- treats the time in our lives as society's property to control—as *society's time*, not our own.

Let's explore these six ways the duty of "from each according to their ability" has contaminated socialist philosophy.



OUR "SO-CALLED" RIGHTS

To socialism, duty to society *always* beats individual rights.

That this is the case is simply a given. If socialism permitted our rights to override the duty of "from each according to their ability," it would no longer be a true duty.

Socialist philosophers don't mince words when it comes to socialism prioritizing duties over rights. They explain that socialism favors duty because it compels us to work on social goals, whereas rights are a problem because they permit us "to resist." In two of the innumerable examples of socialist philosophers praising duty and disparaging rights, celebrated socialists R. H. Tawney and J. Ramsey MacDonald, respectively, report:

Society should be organized primarily for the performance of *duties*, not for the maintenance of *rights*. ... Duties, unlike rights, are relative to some end or purpose, for the sake of which they are imposed. [Rights] are a principle of division; they enable men to resist. [Duties] are a principle of union; they lead men to cooperate.¹⁴

The State does not concern itself primarily with man as a possessor of rights, but with man as the doer of duties. A right is the opportunity of fulfilling a duty, and it should be recognized only in so far as it is necessary to the performance of duty.¹⁵

Another noted socialist, Bernard Shaw, writes:

We, as Socialists, have nothing to do with liberty. Our message ... is one of discipline, of service, of ruthless refusal to acknowledge any natural right.¹⁶

Shaw's "ruthless refusal to acknowledge any natural right" is not of his own invention. It's a common socialist sentiment, as demonstrated by the thinking of none other than Karl Marx, socialism's far-and-away most important philosopher.

Marx flat out rejects the concept of human rights. He calls rights "ideological nonsense"¹⁷ and "verbal rubbish."¹⁸ He refers to them as "so-called rights" and "supposed rights."¹⁹

Marx's thinking has defined socialism for the last 150 years and still does today. Michael Harrington, the founder of the Democratic Socialists of America, even says Marx should be considered a democratic socialist.²⁰ Not only does this show Marx remains the socialist messiah, but it also illustrates the dubious meaning of

“democratic” in the term “democratic socialism.” One can be a democratic socialist despite considering rights “rubbish” and “nonsense.”

The first critical byproduct of socialism’s foundation on duty? Socialism will forever place duty above rights.

To learn more about the ways belief in duty leads socialist thinkers to demean rights, see the RFP paper “Our ‘So-Called’ Rights.”

“THEY ARE SLACKERS, THAT IS TO SAY THIEVES”

To socialism, the slacker is a “thief” and shirking work is a “crime.”

Henri Saint-Simon, Gracchus Babeuf, and Fidel Castro provide three examples of the dozens of prominent socialists who attack slackers and slacking. They tell us, respectively:

They are slackers, that is to say thieves.²¹

No one can without committing a crime shirk labor.²²

This person is a thief, a thief! ... The slacker! He is not going to become our exploiter!²³

You may feel that choosing to be lazy is a waste of one’s life. But even if that’s the case, it’s something altogether different to say this choice should be considered a crime against society.

“From each according to their ability” morphs our time and talents into what socialism treats as society’s property.

Seeing slackers as thieves is, however, a given result of socialism’s foundation on “from each according to their ability.” This duty morphs our time and talents into what socialism treats as society’s property. Slackers, by definition, do not put their full abilities to work. They are thus seen as stealing the time and talents socialism claims we are born owing to society.

The fact that socialist duty transforms slacking into theft highlights the danger this duty poses to our liberal right to define our own lives. That one

noted socialist thinker after another condemns slackers should serve as a warning, not just to those who wish to be lazy but to us all.

The second critical byproduct of socialism's foundation on duty? Those who don't give their full abilities to society are counted as criminals.

To review dozens of examples of socialist thinkers attacking slackers and to learn more about the reasons they do, see the RFP paper "Why Socialism Says Slacking Is Theft."

SOCIALISM'S "PARASITE" OBSESSION

Beatrice and Sidney Webb were leaders of the famed British socialist organization The Fabian Society. They describe the duty of socialism as a

*duty not to be a parasite.*²⁴

The Webbs are but two of the hundreds of socialist thinkers who attack alleged "parasites." Socialists don't just berate "parasites" in casual conversation; this term appears again and again in socialist philosophical writings. It's an expression employed by nine generations of socialist thinkers, and it is still used today.

Who are "parasites" to socialism? They're the millions of us who perform work that socialist theory labels "socially useless" and thus "parasitic." Socialist Lucien Deslinières explains:

These useless ones are not just idlers as you might think. They are workers and sometimes even work a great deal, but their work produces nothing. ... Now these useless workers, socialism will suppress them; it will make them useful. Instead of being parasites they will become producers.²⁵

Socialism's foundation on duty makes it a philosophy in love with passing judgment and with branding people as "parasites." But the parasite concept plays a far more significant role in socialist thought than simple name-calling. Those whom socialists deem to be parasites are seen as a vast pool of wasted labor that can (courtesy of socialism's foundation on duty) be put to work on tasks of socialists' choosing.

Socialist theory is explicit that its many sales promises are to be fulfilled by forcing those judged to be parasites to work on approved tasks. As Fidel Castro elucidates, socialist goals are achieved by purging socialist society of supposed parasites:

We will have such an abundance of everything. ... We can have it with our work, with the effort of our working people, with a country of workers without parasites of any type.²⁶

Only one other philosophy has a comparable fixation with parasites: fascism.

Like socialism, fascism rejects liberalism's lack of compulsory duty and demands that we be made to return to duty.²⁷ Like socialists, fascists pass judgment on all: are you or are you not correctly performing your duty to the community? Like Fidel Castro, fascists promise "a country of workers without parasites of any type."

Fascists and socialists, despite being historical rivals, both see parasites everywhere they turn.

Fascists and socialists, despite being historical rivals, both see parasites everywhere they turn. These similarities aren't surprising because "the father of Fascism,"²⁸ Benito Mussolini, learned to love duty and loathe parasites when he was a socialist leader.²⁹

The third critical byproduct of socialism's foundation on duty? Socialism's multi-century fixation with parasites and its plan to suppress them.

To learn more about socialism's parasite obsession, including how it influenced fascism, see the RFP paper "The Socialist Obsession."

THE "DEFECT OF PRIVATE OWNERSHIP OF LABOR-POWER"

In our liberal society, our work is what Karl Marx calls "private labor."³⁰ It's *private* labor because the time we devote to work is under our individual control in the same way that our private property is under our individual control.

Our private labor rights mean we each have the ultimate say over which jobs we're willing to perform. They also mean we're free to pursue any job we wish and to do so without those running society being able to limit our choices to those they prefer.

Socialism objects to this liberal principle. For example, in his recent book, *The Socialist Imperative*, democratic socialist Michael Lebowitz attacks what he labels the

defect of private ownership of labor-power.³¹

Lebowitz also describes private control of work as an “infection” to be cured.³²

Socialism calls for the “abolition of ‘private labor.’”³³ The plan is for our private labor rights to be replaced by what Marx calls “directly social labor,”³⁴ which is our work under society’s control.

In a liberal society such as our current one—a society that rejects compulsory duty of the type socialism demands—there’s simply no way for socialists to implement their plan to give society direct control of our work. The imposition of socialist duty changes all that. It sets the stage for the suppression of our private labor rights.

A fourth critical byproduct of socialism’s foundation on duty? What we do for work is to be under society’s direct control.

To learn more about the “directly social labor” of socialism, see the RFP paper “A ‘Defect’ of Liberalism.”

CRAFT “IDIOCY”

Here’s an aspect of socialist theory about which many are unaware: socialism is *strongly* biased against small enterprises and craftwork, preferring large-scale production and maximally efficient work.

That’s why socialist great Vladimir Lenin says:

Unfortunately, small production is still very, very widespread in the world, and small production *engenders* capitalism and the bourgeoisie continuously, daily, hourly, spontaneously, and on a mass scale.³⁵

And Lenin is only one of the socialist thinkers who state that small-scale production creates capitalism non-stop, a result that’s obviously diametrically opposed to the goal of socialism.³⁶

The socialist bias against small enterprises is also vividly illustrated by Karl Marx’s outright rejection of craftwork. Marx calls craftwork “idiocy” and makes the snarky claim that performing it turns craft artisans into pinheads.³⁷ Socialist thinkers such as Sean Sayers admit that

Marx completely rejects the craft ideal.³⁸

There are four distinct reasons that craft workshops and other small enterprises clash with socialist theory and socialist goals. But each of these conflicts is itself rooted in the ultimate disagreement between liberalism and socialism: Who should control our time and talents—we individuals or society? Thus, even socialism's bias against craftwork results from its foundation on the duty to give our abilities to society.

The fifth critical byproduct of socialist duty? Socialism's objections to craftwork and other small enterprises, including small farms.

To learn more about the reasons socialism and small enterprises are like oil and water, see the RFP paper "Why Socialism Says Craftwork Is 'Idiocy.'"

OUR TIME AS SOCIETY'S TIME

The sixth ripple effect of socialism's foundation on "from each according to their ability"? It's that this duty morphs the time in our lives into what socialism treats as society's property, as *society's time*.

Actually, the link between socialist duty and the socialist view that our time is society's property is an instance of the proverbial chicken and egg problem. Which comes first? Does socialism's belief in compulsory duty cause socialists to treat our time as society's time? Or does the socialist belief that our time should be treated as society's property result in the duty of "from each according to their ability"?

These two key dimensions of socialist thought unquestionably reinforce each other. But ultimately, it's socialism's formal requirement of duty that compels us to submit to the commands of those running socialist society. The constitutions of socialist nations have even included socialism's "from each according to their ability" standard of duty as an explicit obligation of citizens.³⁹

We've already seen instances of how socialism treats our time as society's property, as society's time. For example, it's the society's time principle that leads socialists to see slackers as "thieves" (slackers, by being lazy, "steal" time that is society's property). But thinking of our time as society's property plays a far broader role in socialist philosophy than has been detailed to this point.

Let's consider an additional example of how the society's time principle is a hidden premise behind so much of socialism—one illustrated by quotes from Laurence Gronlund, Michael Lebowitz, and Karl Marx.

Gronlund writes:

Against the State, the organized Society, even Labor does not give us a particle of title to what our hands and brain produce.⁴⁰

Why doesn't our work give us even "a particle of title" (not even a tiny bit of ownership) in what we produce? This thinking is a natural extension of the socialist belief that our time and talents are society's property. Because socialism starts from the assumption that society owns our abilities, what we produce using them is considered society's property as well.

Gronlund's words certainly don't appear in the socialist sales pitch. But if anything, that makes his thinking more important to hear. He accurately summarizes the mainline socialist viewpoint, as demonstrated by comparing Gronlund's analysis to that of Karl Marx and Michael Lebowitz.

Again, Marx's beliefs have defined socialism for the past 150 years, and they still do today. Lebowitz quotes Marx while explaining that the goal of socialism is to create a society in which

the product of our activity is "a communal, general product from the outset."⁴¹

If what you produce is "a communal, general product from the outset," then what you produce is—from the outset—never yours.

Lebowitz and Marx tell us precisely what Gronlund has: that, as socialism sees it, our work does not give us even a smidge of ownership in what our hands and brains produce. Socialist duty turns our time into society's time. As a result, socialism considers what we produce to belong to society from the get-go.

What follows logically from the socialist belief that our time is society's time and that what we produce with society's time belongs to society from the outset? Given these premises, would it make sense for us to be permitted to work at any job we wish? Would it make sense for us to be permitted to produce whatever we feel like? Of course not. From the socialist perspective, letting us do whatever we want and make whatever we want would be absurd, likely resulting in a grave misuse of society's time.

No, socialist society determines how best to use its time. Socialist society decides what work is a valid use of society's time. It decides what we should be permitted to produce using society's time. These beliefs permeate socialist philosophy. As Fidel Castro says:

You cannot talk of socialism if you do not accept the premise of the rational, optimum use of human resources.⁴²

To socialism, our lives are a societal resource—a resource to be used as those running socialist society consider best. Socialist duty spurs and enforces this type of thinking.

The sixth ripple effect of socialism's foundation on duty? It causes socialists to see our time and talents as society's property to control. This logic is anti-liberal and incredibly dangerous. It inevitably leads to authoritarianism.

Additional examples of socialist theory and theorists treating our time as society's time appear in many RFP papers—for example, "Why Socialism Says Craftwork Is 'Idiocy.'"

SOCIALIST DUTY: BAKED IN

Today's socialism remains firmly founded on the duty that produces each of the ripple effects outlined above. Socialism still requires "from each according to their ability," just as it has for the past 170 years.

This is a standard explicitly endorsed by Michael Harrington, the founder of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA)⁴³ and by other present-day democratic socialists.⁴⁴ It's an axiom that's appeared on signage at the DSA annual convention.⁴⁵

That today's socialism remains based on the duty of "from each according to their ability" is one of the many factors demonstrating "democratic" socialism is a marketing slogan, not a new version of socialism.

The reality is that, for well over a century, socialists have believed that socialism *is* democracy.⁴⁶ To socialists, "democratic socialism" is a redundancy equivalent to "socialist socialism." For this entire period and still today, socialists have considered their philosophy to equal democracy despite its foundation on an anti-liberal and dangerous duty.

For over a century, socialists have considered their philosophy to equal democracy despite its foundation on an anti-liberal and dangerous duty.

Compulsory duty is baked into the socialist cake. Decorating the cake by piping "DEMOCRATIC" across the top doesn't change the ingredients inside.

To learn more about the factors that demonstrate "democratic socialism" is a misleading marketing slogan, not a new version of socialism, see the RFP paper "The 'Keto-Friendly' Political Philosophy."

BUT DOESN'T SOCIALISM PROMISE "PERFECT FREEDOM"?

Instead of explaining what socialism requires of us, today's socialists pitch its many promises. They even make claims that would lead one to believe that socialism has nothing to do with compulsion.

One common promise is that socialism would mean a society of "perfect freedom,"⁴⁷ a society in which government itself even "withers away."⁴⁸ For example, celebrated socialist Leon Trotsky writes:

Under socialism there will not exist the apparatus of compulsion itself, namely, the state.⁴⁹

But unless the assumptions behind all such promises of socialist freedom are *fully* explained, they are, in reality, sales tricks of the most fraudulent sort. There are three critical points that socialists often fail to explain when they claim socialism would mean a world of "perfect freedom."

First, socialist theory says these promises do not pertain to the initial socialist society that would follow capitalism. Instead, they would only be realized in what Marx called a "higher phase"⁵⁰ of socialism.

Second, socialist theory says the possibility of creating this higher phase of socialism hinges on the first phase boosting worldwide production to astronomical levels—levels so great that all needed goods would be available in quantities exceeding demand, permitting them to be free.⁵¹ The hypothesis is that the cornucopia of free everything would end all human conflict, thereby eliminating the requirement for government.⁵²

And the third premise behind promises of a higher phase of socialism that features perfect freedom? Socialist theory is explicit that the key to creating this fantasyland second phase is a first phase that takes *full* advantage of socialism's foundation on compulsory duty.

It turns out that socialist promises of a super-free tomorrow depend on their plans for compulsion today. The greater the compulsion today, the greater the odds of "perfect freedom" tomorrow. And if the whip of duty is not vigorously cracked in the first phase of socialist society? Then there isn't the slightest chance of achieving the second.

Leon Trotsky promises that “there will not exist the apparatus of compulsion itself, namely, the state.” When he continues his explanation, Trotsky provides the rest of the story:

Nonetheless the road to socialism lies through a period of the highest possible intensification of the principal of the state. ... Just as a lamp, before going out, shoots up a brilliant flame, so the State, before disappearing, assumes ... *the most ruthless form of state which embraces the life of the citizens authoritatively in every direction.*⁵³

How is the higher phase of socialism without government oppression created? By a first phase based on “the most ruthless form of state.”

Once we understand the details behind socialist promises of perfect freedom, we come to realize that these promises actually reinforce the central role compulsory duty plays in socialist thought.

To learn more about the hidden premises behind socialist promises of a world of “perfect freedom” and a world based on “to each according to their need,” see the RFP paper “The Secret Sauce of Socialism.”

“THE EFFICIENT USE OF THE WHOLE INDIVIDUAL”

Che Guevara provides a socialist definition for “individualism”:

Individualism ought to be the efficient use of the whole individual for the absolute benefit of the collectivity.⁵⁴

This is the individualism that results from a philosophy founded on the duty of “from each according to their ability”—a definition that stands the true meaning of individualism on its head. It’s another example of how socialism’s belief in the morality of duty has rippled out to contaminate all of socialist thought.

The “whole” of you is to be “used”—and used “efficiently” at that. Your time and talents are to be used not as you desire but for the “absolute benefit of the collectivity.”

Who will decide how best to use you? Who will decide if you’re being used efficiently? Who will decide when the whole of you has been consumed?

One thing is certain: it won’t be you.

Why have history's socialist experiments—experiments sold as representing democratic socialism⁵⁵—become human rights disasters despite socialists' promises and expectations? Because when each must give according to their ability, someone must have the power to determine how that ability is used.

Inevitably, socialist duty means absolute authority over individuals, and inevitably that authority falls into the hands of authoritarians. Belief in the morality of duty has convinced history's socialist leaders that they were doing Marx's work—if not God's work—as they created systems designed to ensure "individualism" via "the efficient use of the whole individual for the absolute benefit of the collectivity."

Nothing about socialist duty has changed in almost two centuries. Nor can it. Socialism is founded on belief in the morality of duty. Moreover, socialism has been designed so that it requires this power over our lives to function.

Today's socialism, like yesterday's, is based on the duty of "from each according to their ability." And today's socialists, like yesterday's, sell their philosophy as democratic despite its foundation on this duty that makes every socialist experiment an authoritarian accident waiting to happen.

Compulsory duty of the type socialism demands leads inexorably to authoritarianism. Authoritarianism is the ultimate ripple effect of socialism's foundation on duty.



To learn more about the ripple effects of socialist duty, visit redflagspress.org/ripple

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1. Louis Blanc is typically credited with developing the expression “from each according to his ability, to each according to his need” in the 1840s (though another French socialist, Étienne Cabet, also started using it at roughly the same time). Blanc wrote in 1848: “Chacun produise selon son aptitude et ses forces, que chacun consomme selon ses besoins.” Louis Blanc, *Nouveau discours de M. Louis Blanc sur l’organisation du travail devant l’assemblée générale des délégués des travailleurs* (Paris: Commission du Gouvernement Pour Travailleurs, 1848), 10.

2. The axiom “from each according to their ability” without question remains the socialist standard, appearing time and again today, as three examples illustrate. First, the Democratic Socialists of America’s 2017 annual convention used signage with sayings of Karl Marx, including “from each according to their ability, to each according to their needs” (David Weigel, “The Socialist Movement Is Turning Younger and Turning into a Left-Wing Force,” *Chicago Tribune*, August 6, 2017, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/nation-world/ct-socialist-movement-bernie-sanders-20170806-story.html>). Second, the Socialist Students Society of Cardiff University proclaims in its organizational overview: “As socialists we believe that a different kind of society is possible in which the principle of ‘from each according to their ability, to each according to their need’ (Karl Marx) is realized” (“Socialist Students Society,” Cardiff University Students Union, accessed February 15, 2021, <https://www.cardiffstudents.com/activities/society/socialiststudents/>). Third, Binay Sakar, in a 2019 article, cites “from each according to their ability, to each according to their needs” as the goal of democratic socialism (Binay Sakar, “Road-Map to Socialism—Democracy Is the Road to Socialism,” *Countercurrents.org*, July 6, 2019, <https://countercurrents.org/2019/07/road-map-to-socialism-democracy-is-the-road-to-socialism/>).

3. “Plus un homme *peut*, plus il *doit*. ... D’où l’axiome: De chacun, selon ses facultés. Là est le DEVOIR.” Louis Blanc, *La Histoire de la Révolution de 1848* (Paris: C. Marpon, 1880), 1:148.

4. J. Ramsay MacDonald, *Socialism and Society*, 6th ed. (London, Independent Labor Party, 1908), 32.

5. “Man once again regains the old sense of happiness in work, the happiness of fulfilling a duty, of feeling himself important within the social mechanism. He becomes happy to feel himself a cog in the wheel, a cog which has its own characteristics and is necessary although not indispensable, to the production process, a conscious cog.” Ernesto “Che” Guevara, “On Creating a New Attitude,” in *Venceremos! The Speeches and Writings of Che Guevara*, ed. John Gerassi (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1968), 337.

6. Sidney Webb, “The Basis of Socialism—Historic,” in *Fabian Essays in Socialism*, ed. Bernard Shaw and H. G. Wilshire (New York: Humboldt Publishing Co., 1891), 38.

7. Adolph Hitler spoke of “the community” as frequently as socialist thinkers speak of “society.” In his notorious *Mein Kampf*, Hitler refers to “the community” dozens of times. One example could appear in a piece of socialist writing without a single change: “The evaluation of the man must be based on the manner in which he fulfills the task entrusted him by the community.” Adolph Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, trans. Ralph Manheim (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1943), 434.

8. Liberal democracies are founded on principles that reject compulsory duty. Socialists admit as much themselves. For example, socialist thinker Joseph Carens notes that duty of the type socialism demands is

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“strikingly absent” in most liberal philosophy (Joseph Carens, “Rights and Duties in an Egalitarian Society,” *Political Theory* 14, no. 1 [February 1986]: 33). Similarly, socialist greats Sidney and Beatrice Webb use the very same words, “strikingly absent,” when attacking the US Constitution for lacking the types of mandatory duty to the state that the constitution of the USSR demanded of socialist citizens (Sidney Webb and Beatrice Webb, *Soviet Communism: A New Civilisation*, 3rd ed. [London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1944], 437).

Liberal societies are certainly not always perfect in their adherence to liberalism, and liberal democracies have not always rejected dangerous forms of compulsory duty. One obvious example is the military draft, such as that used during the Vietnam War. But when our society deviates from its liberal principles, the answer is to seek more consistent application of these principles, not to throw the principles overboard. In contrast, socialism is based on the outright rejection of liberalism and its replacement with a philosophy *founded* on the compulsory duty of “from each according to their ability.”

9. When socialist great Charles Fourier attacks the “parasites” he believes inhabit capitalist society, he says the new society will return them to duty: “It [socialism] will return to duty and return to productive work those legions of parasites, called merchants, which create a domain of piracy within each empire” (“Elle fera rentrer dans le devoir et retourner au travail productif ces légions de parasites appelés marchands, qui se créent un domaine de piraterie au sein de chaque empire”). Charles Fourier, *Crime du commerce* (Paris: Aux Bureaux de la Phalange, 1845), 19.

Liberal society’s lack of mandatory duty is what Fourier and socialism generally see as permitting the existence of “parasites”; socialist duty is the path to their suppression. Similarly, in *The Doctrine of Saint-Simon*, one of the foundational works of socialism, Prosper Enfantin and his Saint-Simonian coauthors call for us to “return with love to OBEDIENCE” (their emphasis). Socialist true believers will no doubt “return with love” to obedience. The rest of us will be made to return to duty whether we like it or not.

The Saint-Simonians see a return to duty as the means to achieve social goals: “We will return with joy to this high virtue, so misunderstood, we can even say so despised today, to this virtue so easy and so sweet, between beings who have a common goal which they all desire to achieve ... we will return with love to OBEDIENCE” (“Nous reviendrons avec joie à cette haute vertu, si méconnue, nous pouvons même dire si méprisée aujourd’hui, à cette vertu si facile et si douce, entre des êtres qui ont un but commun qu’ils désirent tous atteindre ... nous reviendrons avec amour à L’OBEISSANCE”). Prosper Enfantin, et. al., *Doctrine de Saint-Simon, Exposition Premier Année*, 3rd ed. (Paris: Au Bureau de l’Organisateur, 1831), 330.

10. Socialist thinker Joseph Carens notes that duty of the type socialism demands is “strikingly absent” in most liberal philosophy (Joseph Carens, “Rights and Duties in an Egalitarian Society,” *Political Theory* 14, no. 1 [February 1986]: 33). Socialist greats Sidney and Beatrice Webb use the very same words as Carens, “strikingly absent” (see n. 8), when attacking the French and US constitutions for lacking the type of mandatory duty to the state that the constitution of the USSR demanded of socialist citizens.

11. There are multiple reasons socialism cannot be created or operate without the power that the duty of “from each according to their ability” gives to those running socialist society. For example, if we retained our liberal right to use our lives in essentially any way we wish, there would be no chance of fulfilling what socialist great Fidel Castro says is an absolute prerequisite for creating socialism: using our lives in the fashion that’s optimal for society. Castro says: “Socialism cannot exist unless every citizen is given optimum employment, unless every citizen is used in an optimum, rational way.” Fidel Castro, “Castro Speaks to Education Conference [Havana Radio, December 24, 1991],” Castro Speech Database, <http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/castro/db/1991/19911224.html>.

12. Earlier experiments with socialism were sold as being democratic socialism in the same way they are today—that is, as democratic socialism. Today the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (the USSR) is seen as the very definition of authoritarian socialism. Yet when the USSR was founded, and for decades thereafter, it was said to be democratic socialism in action. This claim was made not only by socialists in the USSR but by socialists worldwide. For example, famed American democratic socialist Eugene Debs said that the USSR

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represented the world's first democracy. To learn more, see the RFP paper "The 'Keto-Friendly' Political Philosophy."

13. "Individualism ought to be the efficient use of the whole individual for the absolute benefit of the collectivity." Ernesto "Che" Guevara, "On Revolutionary Medicine," trans. Beth Kurti, *Obra Revolucionaria* 24 (1960): <https://www.marxists.org/archive/guevara/1960/08/19.htm>.

14. R. H. Tawney, *The Acquisitive Society* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1921), 96.

15. J. Ramsay MacDonald, *Socialism and Government* (London: Independent Labour Party, 1909), 1:12.

16. Bernard Shaw, letter to Dr. Friedrich Adler, October 14, 1927, quoted in Margaret Cole, *The Story of Fabian Socialism* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1964), 197. Shaw wrote these words praising Mussolini five years after Mussolini had established his fascist reign over Italy, but before Italy joined Nazi Germany to lead the world into World War 2.

17. Karl Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, in *Marx/Engels Collected Works* (London: Wishart, 1950), 2:23.

18. Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, 23.

19. Karl Marx, "On the Jewish Question," in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert Tucker (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1978), 40, 41.

20. Harrington has called Marx a democratic socialist multiple times. For example, he dedicates one book to "Champion of human freedom and democratic socialist, Karl Marx" (Michael Harrington, *The Twilight of Capitalism* [New York: Simon and Schuster, 1976], v). For more on Marx and Engels being called democratic socialists, see the RFP paper "Karl Marx: 'Democratic Socialist.'"

21. "Il y a des fainéants, c'est-à-dire des voleurs." Henri de Saint Simon, "L'industrie," in *Œuvres de Saint-Simon et d'Enfantin* (Paris: E. Dentu, 1868), 18:130.

22. "La Nature a imposé à chacun l'obligation de travailler. Nul n'a pu sans crime soustraire au travail." Gracchus Babeuf, *Analyse de la doctrine de Babeuf, tribun du peuple: proscrit par le Directoire exécutif pour avoir dit la vérité* (Paris: 1796), 1.

23. "Y que hemos dicho que ese es un ladrón, ¡un ladrón! ["a thief, a thief!"] Los niños, los ancianos, los enfermos, esos lo tendrán todo. Se trabaja para ellos, para los que no pueden producir, para los que lo necesitan. Para el vago ["slacker"] no. Porque no se van a convertir en nuestros explotadores ["exploiters"], nuestros nuevos explotadores." Fidel Castro, "Discurso Pronunciado por Fidel Castro Ruz, Presidente de la República de Cuba, en la Clausura de la Plenaria Nacional de la Industria Basica [December 7, 1970]," Departamento de Versiones Taquigraficas del Gobierno Revolucionario, accessed December 4, 2020, <http://www.cuba.cu/gobierno/discursos/1970/esp/f071270e.html>.

24. Webb and Webb, *Soviet Communism*, 437.

25. "Ces inutiles ne sont pas seulement les oisifs comme vous pourriez le croire. Ce sont surtout des gens qui travaillent, même parfois qui travaillent beaucoup, mais dont le travail produit rien et qui doivent par conséquent vivre sur le travail d'autrui. Or, ces inutiles, le socialisme les supprimera ; il en fera des au lieu d'être des parasites ils deviendront des producteurs." Lucien Deslinières, *Entretiens Socialistes* (Paris: Choisy Le Roi, 1901), 35–36.

26. Fidel Castro, "Castro Speaks at Uvero Battle Commemoration [May 28 1965]," Castro Speech Database, accessed October 20, 2020, <http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/castro/db/1965/19650528.html>.

27. For a comparison of socialist and fascist thinking about duty and rights, see the RFP paper "Our 'So-Called' Rights."

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28. Mario Palmieri, *The Philosophy of Fascism* (Chicago: Dante Alighieri Society, 1936). Benito Mussolini is referred to as “the father of Fascism” multiple times in this work authored by Palmieri, a support of fascism. Additionally, the preface was authored by another fascist, Dr. Guido Corni, who writes: “Mr. Palmieri’s work is not only honored by the seal of the Dante organization, but also by the approval of the father of Fascism, the Duce himself, his Excellency Benito Mussolini.”

29. Prior to becoming the world’s first fascist dictator, Mussolini was a leader of the Italian Socialist Party and editor in chief of the party’s daily newspaper. Mussolini even started his own socialist theoretical journal, *Utopia*.

30. See socialist thinker Ernest Mandel’s discussion of Marx’s concept of private labor in his introduction to Karl Marx, *Capital*, trans. Ben Fowkes and David Fernbach, 3 vols. (London: Penguin Classics, 1978–1981), 1:32, 38, 39, 42, 43, 54, 57, 74.

31. Michael Lebowitz, *The Socialist Imperative: From Gotha to Now* (New York: Monthly Review, 2015), 67. For details, see the RFP paper “A ‘Defect’ of Liberalism.”

32. Lebowitz, *Socialist Imperative*, 67.

33. Kohei Saito, *Karl Marx’s Ecosocialism: Capitalism, Nature, and the Unfinished Critique of Political Economy* (New York: Monthly Review, 2017), conclusion, Kindle.

34. Marx explains: “Private labour cannot be treated as its opposite, directly social labour” (*Capital*, 1:188n). Elsewhere, he writes that in socialist society “the labour of the individual is posited from the outset as [directly] social labor” (*Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy*, trans. Martin Nicolaus [Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1973], 172). Even though Marx does not specify “directly” in this latter instance, he’s writing about the same concept he elsewhere describes as “directly social labor,” as present-day socialists note (Peter Hudis, *Marx’s Concept of the Alternative to Capitalism* [Boston: Brill, 2012], 111).

35. Vladimir Lenin, “*Left-Wing*” *Communism, an Infantile Disorder* (New York: International Publishers, 1940), 10.

36. As detailed in the RFP paper “Why Socialism Says Craftwork Is ‘Idiocy,’” another example of the socialist belief that “small production engenders capitalism” is found in the thinking of Karl Kautsky, who often argued vehemently with Lenin about socialist philosophy.

37. Marx says those who work as craftspeople “arrive at the knowledge and the consciousness of the pin”—that is, become pinheads. Karl Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1956), 144.

38. Sean Sayers, “The Concept of Labor: Marx and His Critics,” *Science and Society* 71, no. 4 (October 2007): 449.

39. For example, the new constitution for the USSR introduced in 1977 included the requirement of “from each according to their ability” for all citizens. 1977 U.S.S.R. Const. ch. 1 art. 14, Bucknell University, accessed December 17, 2020, <https://www.departments.bucknell.edu/russian/const/77cons01.html#chap01>.

40. Laurence Gronlund, *The Cooperative Commonwealth: An Exposition of Modern Socialism* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1884), 83–84.

41. Lebowitz, *Socialist Imperative*, 39.

42. Fidel Castro, “Castro Speaks at Education Workers Conference [December 24, 1991],” Castro Speech Database, accessed March 17, 2021, <http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/castro/db/1991/19911224.html>.

43. For example, Michael Harrington, the founder of the Democratic Socialists of America, writes: “The goal of socialism, clearly, is to overcome greed and act on the basis of ‘to each according to his/her need, from

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each according to his/her ability.” Michael Harrington, “What Socialists Would Do in America—If They Could,” *Dissent*, Fall 1978, 445.

44. Other examples of present-day democratic socialists stating that socialism is to be based on the “from each according to their ability, to each according to their needs” standard include David S. Pena, “You Might Be a Marxist If ... You Believe in From Each According to Their Abilities, to Each According to Their Needs,” *Political Affairs*, April 4, 2011, captured by the Internet Archive, May 1, 2021, <https://web.archive.org/web/20210310131119/http://www.politicalaffairs.net/you-might-be-a-marxist-if-you-believe-in-from-each-according-to-their-abilities-to-each-according-to-their-needs/>; Michael Steven Smith, “Law in a Socialist USA,” in *Imagine: Living in a Socialist USA*, ed. Michael Stevens Smith and Frances Goldin (Toronto: Harper Perennial, 2014), 58, Kindle; Robert Sewell, “Why You Should Be a Socialist,” *Socialist Appeal*, September 4, 2015, <https://www.socialist.net/why-you-should-be-a-socialist.htm>.

45. David Weigel, “The socialist movement is getting younger, thanks to one 75-year-old,” *Washington Post*, August 7, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/powerpost/the-socialist-movement-is-getting-younger-thanks-to-one-75-year-old/2017/08/06/464f0656-7924-11e7-8839-ec48ec4cae25_story.html.

46. For well over 120 years, socialists have considered socialism to equal democracy—that is, they’ve believed that socialism *is* democracy. Here are two examples of this reality from celebrated American socialist Eugene V. Debs, who, in the early 1900s, equated socialism with democracy. This was the norm for socialists at that time, and it has been ever since and despite the fact socialism is based on compulsory duty.

“The only genuine Democratic party in the field is the Socialist party.” Eugene Debs, “The Socialist Party and the Working Class: Opening Speech Delivered as Candidate of the Socialist Party for President of the United States, at Indianapolis, Ind., September 1, 1904,” in *Debs: His Life, Writings and Speeches* (St. Louis: Phil Wagner, 1908), 368.

“Social democracy is the only democracy.” When Debs was writing in the early 1900s, “social democracy” was the slogan used for democratic socialism. Today Debs is called a democratic socialist, but he always referred to himself as a “social democrat” and led two socialist parties that used “social democratic” in their names. Eugene Debs, “The Essence of Social Democracy [September 3, 1900],” Marxists.org, accessed February 27, 2021, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/debs/works/1900/000903-debs-essenceofsocialdemocracy.pdf>.

47. “Every member of society will thereby be enabled to develop and exercise all his powers and abilities in perfect freedom.” Friedrich Engels, “The Principles of Communism,” in *Marx/Engels Collected Works* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1973), 1:87.

48. Friedrich Engels coined this expression that has become a common socialist theme. It appeared in his work *Anti-Dühring*: “The government of persons is replaced by the administration of things and the direction of the process of production. The state is not ‘abolished,’ it *withers away*.” Friedrich Engels, *Anti-Dühring: Herr Eugen Dühring’s Revolution in Science*, trans. Emile Burns, Marxist Library 18 (New York: International Publishers, 1947), 315. Emphasis added.

49. Leon Trotsky, *Dictatorship vs. Democracy: A Reply to Karl Kautsky* (New York: Workers Party of America, 1922), 169.

50. Karl Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Program*, 23.

51. Socialist theory is explicit that a world of “to each according to their need” is a world in which all good and services are available for free worldwide. Tatab Mentah reports that this standard would mean “individuals will have free access to what is produced according to self-defined needs” (Tatab Mentah, *Socialism: The Only Practical Alternative to Contemporary Capitalism* [Mankon: Langaa Research and Publishing, 2012], 36). Socialist thinkers are similarly clear that such a world is one in which goods and services are constantly overproduced—that is, constantly produced in quantities that exceed demand. Paul Mattick writes: “In socialism overproduction would be indispensable to assure the satisfaction of social needs and would therefore be

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considered normal” (Paul Mattick, *Economic Crisis and Crisis Theory* [London: Merlin Press, 1981], 108). For more on overproduction, see the RFP paper “The Secret Sauce of Socialism.”

52. Eminent modern-day socialist philosopher G. A. Cohen provides an example of socialists admitting that Marx and Engels’s predictions of a world of perfect freedom and equality are founded on the assumption of what Cohen calls “limitless conflicts-dissolving abundance.” The cornucopia of goods socialism would supposedly produce is to be so massive as to end all human conflicts. This is what leads socialists to claims their philosophy would eliminate the need not only for government but also even for law. G. A. Cohen, *Self-Ownership, Freedom, and Equality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1995), 10–11, 122–127.

53. Trotsky, *Dictatorship vs. Democracy*, 169–70.

54. Guevara, “On Revolutionary Medicine.”

55. The earlier socialist nations we think of as defining authoritarian socialism were themselves said to be democratic socialism in action. For example, socialists around the world proclaimed that the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) was not only a democracy but also the world’s first democracy. For more, see the RFP paper “The ‘Keto-Friendly’ Political Philosophy.”