

WHY SOCIALISM SAYS SLACKING IS THEFT

And What That Says about Socialism

————— “ —————
This person is a thief, a thief!

—FIDEL CASTRO

————— ” —————



WHY SOCIALISM SAYS SLACKING IS THEFT

And What That Says about Socialism

Socialism's foundation on the duty of "from each according to their ability" turns our time into society's time and thus makes slackers "thieves" and "parasites."

They are slackers, that is to say thieves.¹

These are the words of socialist great Henri de Saint-Simon, and they illustrate an inevitable outcome of socialist philosophy: to socialism, slacking is theft.

Henri de Saint-Simon is by no means the only noted socialist to attack slackers. Every quote in this paper comes from a socialist philosopher. These thinkers who condemn slackers as "thieves," "parasites," "exploiters," and the like include numerous socialist luminaries, such as Gracchus Babeuf, Vladimir Lenin, and Bernard Shaw:

No one can, without committing a crime, shirk labor.²

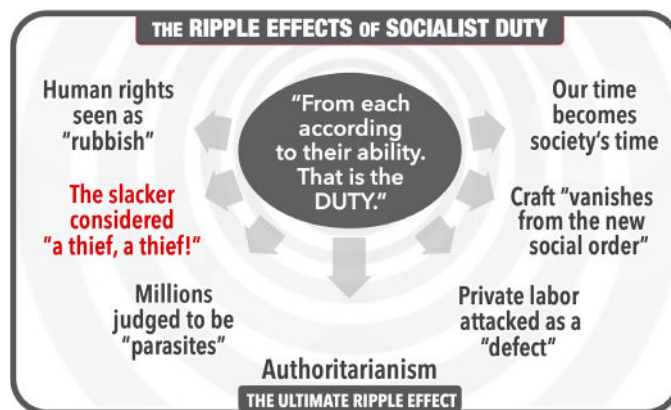
We have only one slogan, one watchword: Everyone who works has a right to enjoy the good things of life. Idlers, parasites ... must be deprived of these blessings.³

The idler will be treated not only as a rogue and a vagabond, but as an embezzler of national funds, the meanest sort of thief.⁴

Why is it that slacking is theft to socialism?

It's one of the byproducts of socialism's foundational requirement of duty to society—the duty expressed by the famed socialist axiom "from each according to their ability." As we'll see, to say "from each according to their ability" is equivalent to saying "slacking is theft."

The socialist duty to give our abilities—our time and talents—to society morphs the time in our lives into what socialists consider a societal



resource—into *society's time*. And slackers, who by definition work less than they can, are seen as stealing this time that socialism says society owns.

Socialism's foundation on duty and the belief that the time in our lives should be treated as society's time are the most important things there are to know about socialism. They also represent the most critical distinctions between socialist philosophy and the liberal philosophy that underpins our capitalist society.

Liberalism is based on the principle that we each own our lives and the time in them outright. We're not under a compulsory obligation to give our time to society. Thus, we're free to use it in virtually any way we wish, including by being slackers if that's our choice. Others may frown on that decision, but since our time is our own property in liberal society, slackers are not criminals.

This paper has two goals:

- First, to demonstrate that socialism's founding principle of "from each according to their ability" unequivocally means socialism considers slacking to be theft (which is, of course, why so many famed socialists tell us so).
- Second, to explore the implications of this fact, most notably how it demonstrates that socialism—democratic socialism included—is founded on the anti-liberal belief that the time in our lives should be treated as society's time.

The fact that socialism is based on compulsory duty and sees the time in our lives as society's time poses a grave threat, not just to supposed slackers, but to us all. It makes socialism a philosophy in love with passing judgment and with acting on these judgments. As the thinking of Lucien Deslinières warns us:

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.⁵

"THE SLACKER ... MUST BE PURSUED AS A THIEF AND PARASITE"

The principle that "slacking is theft" is connected to a centuries-old slogan that socialists still employ today: "Property is theft."

SOCIALISM SAYS THE SLACKER IS "A THIEF, A THIEF!"

Another Ripple Effect of Socialism's Foundation on Mandatory Duty to Society



In our liberal society, we're not born owing our ability (our time and talents) to others—it's ours to use as we wish, including as slackers.



Socialism rejects liberalism's lack of mandatory duty. It demands the duty of "from each according to their ability"—a phrase that means "the more you can, the more you must."



Socialist duty morphs our abilities into society's property—society's time and talents. It's the fact that socialism sees our time and talents as society's to control that leads socialists to attack slackers as "thieves" and "parasites."

What Socialism Says the Slacker Steals



A slacker only puts a portion of their ability to work.



Socialism considers our time and talents to be society's property. Thus, the unused portion of the slacker's ability is "stolen" from society.

TO SAY "FROM EACH ACCORDING TO THEIR ABILITY" IS TO SAY "THE SLACKER IS A THIEF, A THIEF!"

The expression “property is theft” originally comes from Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, a French philosopher who became an anarchist but who was a socialist when he coined this phrase. In *What Is Property?*, the same work in which “property is theft” first appeared, Proudhon writes:

The slacker, the idler, who, without performing any social task, enjoys like others—and often more than others—the products of society, must be pursued as a thief and parasite. We owe it to ourselves to give him nothing; but since he must nevertheless live, to put him under surveillance, and compel him to work.⁶

Proudhon says, “The slacker ... must be pursued as a thief”—in other words, slacking is theft. Property is theft to socialism, and slacking is too.

Modern-day socialist great Fidel Castro demonstrates that slacking remains a crime to socialism. Castro, the leader of socialist Cuba who passed away in 2016, was an immensely popular figure among socialists in the US and around the globe.

When he branded slackers as “thieves,” Castro was attacking socialist citizens who were treating the time in their lives as their own property rather than giving it to the socialist state. Take one example:

Who besides the workers can better develop a hard position against the parasites and against the one who consumes but does not produce because he does not feel like it and prefers instead to live off others? In other words, this person is a thief, a thief! Children, the aged, the ill ... they shall have everything. We will work for them. ... But not for the slacker! He is not going to become our exploiter! Our new exploiter!⁷

The Sinners of the Socialist Religion

Socialism’s “parasite” obsession is another byproduct of socialism’s foundation on mandatory duty. For example, socialist superstar Charles Fourier (who says that two-thirds of society and all Jews are “parasites”) writes that socialism “will return to duty and return to productive work those legions of parasites called merchants.”

Socialists say slackers are only the tip of parasite iceberg. Dozens of types of work in capitalist society are labeled by socialists as being “parasitic,” as an alleged waste of society’s time to be suppressed come socialism.

To learn more, see the RFP paper “The Socialist Obsession.”

Like Proudhon, Castro describes slackers as thieves and parasites. He even labels them “exploiters”—a socialist curse word commonly reserved for capitalists.

Castro’s thinking makes it easy to demonstrate socialist attacks on slackers aren’t one-offs or outliers. This socialist hero attacked the “slackers,” “idlers,” and “loafers” he believed lurked in Cuba’s socialist society again and again. (A dozen additional examples of Castro doing so appear in an appendix to this paper.)

“THE MORE ONE CAN, THE MORE ONE MUST”

That socialism sees slackers as “thieves” and “parasites” is one of the ripple effects of socialism’s foundation on duty to society.

The requirement of duty to society has been an aspect of socialism since the philosophy’s first days. For example, over 250 years ago, in one of the seminal works of socialist philosophy, *The Code of Nature*, Étienne-Gabriel Morelly wrote:

Every citizen will contribute his part to the public good according to his strength, his talent and his age; this is how his duties will be regulated.⁸

And over one hundred seventy years ago, Louis Blanc coined the axiom “from each according to their ability” that remains the socialist standard of duty today.⁹ Blanc explains its meaning (with his italics and all-caps for emphasis):

The more one *can*, the more one *must*. ... Thus the axiom: From each according to their ability. That is the DUTY.¹⁰

The more you *can* do, the more you *must* do. This is “the DUTY” socialism demands.

Socialism is *not* based on “from each according to what they individually choose.”¹¹ This is the liberal standard, not the socialist one.

Nor is the socialist benchmark “from each according to *some* of their ability.” Socialism says we *must* give society all we *can*. And socialism doesn’t request “from each according to their ability” as a favor. It’s a mandatory obligation we would each owe the socialist state.

This socialist morality and the resulting duty represent a complete reversal of the liberal philosophy that underpins our capitalist society. Liberal philosophy is based on the principle that we own our lives free and clear and that no one has a right to claim our time or talents without our express permission. It rejects as incredibly

dangerous the idea of compulsory duty to others, be they king, queen, dictator, or socialists calling themselves “society.” Socialists themselves note that duty of the type socialism demands is “strikingly absent” both in overall liberal philosophy¹² and in the US Constitution, a document based on liberal philosophy.¹³

But socialism, in turn, repudiates the liberal position and is based on the demand that we “return to duty.”¹⁴ In another foundational work of socialism, *The Doctrine of Saint-Simon*, Prosper Enfantin and his co-authors use all caps for emphasis when they call for us to

return with love to OBEDIENCE.¹⁵

As you would guess, the “with love” aspect is optional. Socialist true believers would no doubt “return with love to OBEDIENCE.” The rest of us would *be* returned to submission, whether we liked it or not.

Democratic Socialism? Déjà Vu All Over Again

Today’s democratic socialism is based on the same standard of duty—“from each according to their ability”—that has been socialist dogma for 170 years and that leads inexorably to the socialist belief that slacking is theft.

Why is today’s democratic socialism based on the same standard of duty as plain old socialism? Because it is plain old socialism. The reality is that socialists have sold socialism as democratic for well over a century.

“Democratic socialism” is a marketing slogan, not a new version of socialism.

To learn more, see the RFP paper “The ‘Keto-Friendly’ Political Philosophy.”

Once we understand that socialism is based on the belief we should be born owing our time and talents to society, it’s simply a given that slackers violate both socialist morality and the resulting compulsory duty.

What makes someone a “slacker”? A slacker is someone who chooses to use less than their full abilities—someone who is consciously doing less than they *can*. And this, without question, means slackers are failing to do what socialism says they *must*.

Any version of socialism that doesn’t consider slackers as failing socialist morality and socialist duty would be a version of socialism that has abandoned its founding principle of “from each according to their ability.” It would, in fact, not be socialism. As we’ll see, “from each according to their ability” remains the bedrock principle of socialism today, democratic socialism included.

SLACKERS "STEAL" WHAT SOCIALISM CONSIDERS SOCIETY'S TIME

It's easy to see that slackers violate socialism's duty of "from each according to their ability." But why do so many socialists use the specific term "thief" and describe slacking as a "crime"?

What makes someone a thief? Thieves steal things. They take property they don't own. What socialism sees the slacker as "stealing" is society's time. Yes, this time makes up the slacker's life, but the very fact that socialism labels slackers "thieves" demonstrates that socialism is based on the premise that the time in our lives is society's property, not our own.

How can slackers stop being thieves to socialism? Only by giving society their full abilities as socialist duty demands. There's no other method. Slackers can't avoid the socialist judgment of "thief!" by consuming less.

Bernard Shaw makes this very point:

Weary Willie may say he hates work and is quite willing to take less and be poor and dirty and ragged or even naked for the sake of getting off with less work. But that as we have seen cannot be allowed.¹⁶

Weary Willy wants to take less to get out of socialism's compulsory duty. But this "cannot be allowed." The only way for Willy to stop being a thief to socialism? He *must* work more because he *can*.

The belief that the time in your life should be treated as society's property is a baked-in feature of socialist thought. It's a hidden premise behind many of the arguments that socialists make.

One example comes from Charles Peguy, who makes a stock socialist claim when he says that capitalism wastes labor and that socialist society would end this supposed waste:

This regime [socialism] will spare human labor, the waste of which is immoral. This savings will be achieved by several methods, including the following three: Competition will be suppressed. ... Idleness will be suppressed. ... Production will be centralized as much as possible.¹⁷

There are innumerable similar instances of socialists attacking capitalism's alleged waste of labor.¹⁸ Each of them results from the hidden premise that our time is society's property to control. If the time in our lives is our individual property, not society's, what socialists attack as "waste" is really us using our lives as we choose.

Consider the second of the alleged labor-saving tactics Peguy lists: "Idleness will be suppressed." To socialist thinking, suppressing idleness "will spare human labor."

But Peguy can't be speaking about labor time that an idler owns, can he? Slackers choose to spend the time in their lives being idle. You may disapprove, but if we each own the time in our lives, the idler's choice is their choice, and that's that.

Suppressing idleness only results in "sparing human labor" if our labor is counted as society's property. If society owns the time in our lives, then the idler, by being idle, steals society's time—precisely what socialism says.

"A MAN HAD BETTER HANG HIMSELF THAN GET THE REPUTATION OF A SHIRK"

Socialism's foundation on duty makes it a philosophy infatuated with passing judgment. Who is performing their duty to society? Who is not?

Richard Lahautière explains socialism's moral code:

Each individual in his sphere, works not for himself, but to accomplish the tasks of humanity.¹⁹

A society in which your work is not for yourself but rather is "to accomplish the tasks of humanity" is a society that will be focused on passing judgment on whether you're working hard enough to accomplish humanity's tasks. Socialism creates a world in which everyone sticks their nose into your business because it's no longer your business; it's theirs.

In *The Fight for Socialism*, Max Shachtman explains how, come socialism, any suspected slacker is to be a "social outcast":

Let any strange creature try to be so capitalistically "old-fashioned" as to draw on the public store without contributing his labor! The scorn of all around him would quickly make him a social outcast such as policemen and prisons could never make him under

capitalism.²⁰ He would not be long in coming to his senses and performing his social duty.

Similarly, in his novel *Equality*, noted American socialist Edward Bellamy describes the reaction to slacking in the setting of a future socialist society:

The one who evades or scamps his work robs every one of his fellows. A man had better hang himself nowadays, than get the reputation of a shirk.²¹

We've seen Bernard Shaw report that socialist society would treat the idler as "the meanest sort of thief." In this extended quote, he explains the outcome of this fact:

The idler [in socialist society] will be treated not only as a rogue and a vagabond, but as an embezzler of national funds, the meanest sort of thief. The police will not have much trouble in detecting such offenders. They will be denounced by everybody, because there will be a very marked jealousy of slackers who take their share without "doing their bit."²²

Shaw writes that, come socialism, slackers would be "denounced by everybody." Socialist society would be characterized by "marked jealousy" and keeping tabs on what others do. This is the unsurprising byproduct of owing our time and talents to others. And it's a positive to socialist Shaw.

The ugly world of denunciation and informing that Shaw describes isn't just theory—it's exactly what's been experienced in socialist nations.²³ Socialism's foundation on duty and the belief that our work is not for ourselves but for society turned countless citizens of socialist societies into snitches busy reporting those they felt were "wasting" or "stealing" what socialism considers society's time.

And socialist citizens didn't limit themselves to informing on actual slackers. Many falsely reported personal enemies as some type of "enemy of the people."²⁴

"HE WHO DOES NOT WORK SHALL NOT EAT"

Seeing one socialist thinker after another attacking slackers should concern all who value our liberal right to define our own lives. We've already reviewed quotes from many socialist greats passing judgment on slackers in one fashion or another, but these only scratch the surface.

Here are fourteen additional examples of noted socialists doing so—respectively Leon Trotsky, Georges Renard, Sidney and Beatrice Webb, Richard Lahautière, Constantin Pecqueur, Robert Owen, Che Guevara, Philippe Buonarroti, William Morris, Étienne Cabet, Max Shachtman, Charles Fourier, Mao Zedong, and Werner Sombart:

Not one serious Socialist will begin to deny to the Labor State the right to lay its hand upon the worker who refuses to execute his labor duty.²⁵

In cooperation for life, the slacker becomes synonymous with the thief.²⁶

Any person who neglects or refuses to pay this debt [to socialist society] by contributing, according to his ability, to satisfying the needs of the present or future generations is held to be a thief, and will be dealt with as such. ... If his idleness or slackness continues, or if his example proves contagious ... he may have to be isolated for appropriate remedial treatment.²⁷

As long as there is an idler vegetating in this world, society will be in peril.²⁸

From idleness to laziness and from one to the other to all vices and all disorders, there is only one step. A man who does not give his production to the association is more than useless, he harms.²⁹

In the Millennium state [that is, socialist society], *Idleness and Uselessness* will be unknown in the conduct of a single individual.³⁰

[Socialism must take] drastic measures to eliminate the parasites ... who are irredeemably against work.³¹

[Under socialism] ... the disgrace with which public opinion would brand the lazy man, and the severity of the law, ... would punish voluntary idleness with such pains as are now inflicted on thieves.³²

The first step to be taken then is to abolish a class of men privileged to shirk their duties as men, thus forcing others to do the work which they refuse to do. All must work according to their ability, and so produce what they consume.³³

And the lazy? ... The lazy! They are unknown here [in the socialist society Étienne Cabet describes in his novel *Voyage en Icarie*]. How

could there be any when the work is so pleasant, and when idleness and laziness are as vile to us as theft is elsewhere?³⁴

One of the reasons for a worker's state is to sternly enforce the principle, "He who does not work shall not eat."³⁵

There will be no idlers, all will produce more than they consume.³⁶

HOW TO MOBILIZE LOAFERS TO TAKE PART IN PRODUCTION
... Our methods of mobilization are ... The government gives them definite production tasks. ... They are inspected at regular intervals. ... Urging the masses to struggle against them, and to force them to join production. ... Organizing the loafers in collective labour. ... The masses were very pleased that the government made the loafers take part in production.³⁷

"He who does not work shall not eat." On this all Socialists are agreed. ... But if work is a necessity, no one shall be exempt from it. For if there are exceptions, it would mean that those who do work will have to contribute more than their share to the common stock. Besides, on what principle are the exceptions to be justified?³⁸

In the quote directly above, Werner Sombart employs a common socialist slogan—one that's an offshoot of the socialist loathing for slacking: "He who does not work shall not eat." Sombart continues, "On this all Socialists are agreed."

The writings of Karl Marx supports Sombart's claim. As you're likely aware, Marx is the most important socialist philosopher of all time. (Something that may come as news to you is that the founder of today's Democratic Socialists of America says Marx should be considered a democratic socialist—even though Marx's thinking is so closely associated with yesterday's authoritarian socialism.³⁹)

Marx believed that even school children should be taught the "don't work, don't eat" rule. He wanted kids to learn this anti-slacking lesson directly—by being made to perform factory labor as part of their socialist schooling. Yes, Marx (who today's democratic socialists sell as a "champion of human freedom"⁴⁰) opposed ending child factory labor.⁴¹ One of the alleged benefits Marx listed for his child labor plan? It would teach children that one must "work in order to be able to eat."⁴²

THE KEY TO A LAZY FUTURE? SUPPRESSING LAZINESS TODAY

Good news: socialists promise a perfected future in which socialism will no longer consider slacking to be theft and all can be lazy if they wish.

Bad news: this society isn't going to exist in your lifetime—even if you live to 200.

Worse news: socialist theory says that creating this socialist future that would permit slacking requires the suppression of slacking in the socialist present.

Yes, the exception to the socialist rule that slacking is theft is the ultimate example of an exception that proves the rule.

Socialists say their goal is to create a world based on the axiom “to each according to their need.”⁴³ They define this as a world in which the earth's entire human population of 7,500,000,000 and rising would be able to take every needed good and service for free forever.⁴⁴ Socialists also call this world one of “opulent abundance,”⁴⁵ of “superabundance,”⁴⁶ and the like.

Socialist theory says that to create this magic realm, socialism would not only dramatically boost production quantities, but it would do likewise with production efficiency. Once a permanent state of abundance (free everything for all forever) is achieved, socialist society would continue to boost productivity via further automation, leaving less and less work for humans to perform.

As modern-day socialist great G. A. Cohen describes it, ultimately everything people do in this socialist future outlined by Marx would “only resemble activity which once was labor.”⁴⁷ In other words, there would be no work, only hobbies. As all actual work had been eliminated, socialist duty would become meaningless, and all could be as lazy as they wished.

This future fantasyland of hyper-automated superabundance is the exception—the only exception—to the socialist rule that slacking is theft.

But there isn't the slightest chance this worldwide society of free everything for all with virtually no work could exist within the next several centuries, if ever. It's a utopian fantasy, especially since every socialist experiment has shown socialism kills productivity rather than dramatically boosting it as socialist theory predicts.

Moreover, socialist theory is explicit that the way socialism is to achieve this perfected future society in which all could be lazy is via the suppression of laziness when a socialist society commences. By suppressing slacking in the socialist here and now,

a socialist society would increase the total work accomplished, inching socialism closer to its goal of superabundance and laziness for all. Further, suppressing slacking in the here and now would reduce the quantity of work socialist society demands of every citizen.

Lucien Deslinières tells us:

The first goal to aim for to increase production is therefore to eliminate to the fullest extent possible the parasites who do not work and those who, working without producing, could be suppressed by a better organization of society. ... The great defect of the present [capitalist] society, an irremediable defect, for it belongs to its very essence, is to contain an enormous proportion of idlers and workers who do not produce.⁴⁸

Georges Renard provides an example of the common socialist theme that says socialism will reduce work by suppressing slackers and other “parasites.” He says that work in socialist society

will be reduced to the minimum by the sole fact that everyone will take part in the work and that the parasites and the useless will have returned to the ranks of the laboring army.⁴⁹

Socialist superstar William Morris also promises that suppressing slacking would permit socialist society to give everyone their approved share of laziness:

We are going to get rid of all non-workers, and busy-idle people; so that the working time of each member of our factory will be very short.⁵⁰

Under conditions where all produced and no work was wasted, not only would everyone work with the certain hope

Duty Beats Rights

Socialism’s foundation on mandatory duty has shaped the whole philosophy. The fact that socialism sees slacking as theft is one of many ripple effects of duty.

Another ripple effect is that, in socialist society, duty to society beats individual rights, just like rock always beat scissors. As democratic socialist R. H. Tawney writes, the socialist view is that “society should be organized primarily for the performance of duties, not for the maintenance of rights.”

And Karl Marx? He dismissed the idea of rights completely, referring to them as “rubbish” and “ideological nonsense.”

To learn more about how socialism’s foundation on duty puts our rights at risk, see the RFP paper “Our ‘So-Called’ Rights.”

of gaining a due share of wealth by his work, but also he could not miss his due share of rest.⁵¹

How would socialist society make sure everyone gets what society determines to be their “due share of rest”? By making sure “all produce” and by acting on the plan “to get rid of all non-workers.”

The claim that socialism would suppress its way to a superabundant and super lazy future is the theme of nineteenth-century socialist Paul Lafargue’s work *The Right to Be Lazy: The Refutation of the Right to Work of 1848*.⁵² Socialists making dishonest attempts to suggest socialism is okay with slacking sometimes point to the words “The Right to Be Lazy” in this title.

Lafargue didn’t believe anyone has a right to be lazy or any other right in the sense we use the term.⁵³ His title is a parody of another socialist concept, “the right to work.” The socialist society Lafargue envisioned would suppress the hordes of “parasites”⁵⁴ and “social lice”⁵⁵ Lafargue said infest capitalist society. These “useless mouths”⁵⁶ would be made to work on approved tasks and perform the “necessary social labor”⁵⁷ Lafargue said socialism would require of each citizen. Eradicating all parasites would eventually yield a world in which all could be equally lazy—as lazy as those running socialist society decided was permissible.

A GRAVE MARKED “SLUGGARD”

On a sign marking a roadside grave in the People’s Republic of China was one word: “Sluggard.” Beneath it were the remains of individuals beaten to death when they failed to work hard enough or fast enough to please socialist officials.⁵⁸

Socialist plans to treat slackers as thieves aren’t just talk. It’s exactly how slackers have been dealt with in socialist nations. A particularly horrific example is found in China during the so-called Great Leap Forward

“The Great Leap Forward” was the name the socialist government in China gave to its national effort to dramatically boost agricultural and industrial production using socialist methods. Famously, the Great Leap Forward actually led to widespread starvation. *Tens of millions* died from hunger when socialist planning and production techniques resulted not in increased food production but in a massive famine. (A detailed study of the horrors of the Great Leap Forward is found in Frank Dikötter’s excellent *Mao’s Great Famine*.)

Many have heard of the people who starved during this period in China's history, but few are aware of the staggering repression and millions of deaths by *direct government violence* that characterized this period as well—oppression and violence directed in large part at those deemed slackers.

The allegedly lazy were subjected to constant public shaming. Those seen as not pulling their weight were forced to participate in so-called “struggle sessions.” They were paraded through town wearing dunce caps⁵⁹ or white ribbons or carrying white flags⁶⁰ (in contrast to workers and work groups deemed above-average producers, who were given red flags to display).⁶¹ They became outcasts, leading many of them to commit suicide.⁶²

But punishments went far beyond public humiliation. True to socialist promises, alleged slackers were treated in the same brutal fashion as actual thieves. Villager Zhu Daye recounts one example:

If anyone failed to turn up for work, they were deprived of food. On our way to work every day, the cadres stood by with a bamboo cane in their hands. If anyone was slow in walking, they would use the bamboo to beat that person.⁶³

Local party leader Ou Desheng tells the story from the government's perspective:

If you want to be a party leader, you must know how to beat people.⁶⁴

Ultimately, millions were murdered by their socialist government. They died from beatings, from being denied their food rations,⁶⁵ from being made to literally eat excrement,⁶⁶ and in countless other sickening ways. In one region alone, an internal investigation determined that in a single year, 67,000 people had been beaten to death by government officials.⁶⁷

That's enough people to fill a football stadium, all beaten to death in a single district in one year.

This figure includes those accused of literal theft and other offenses in addition to those who were merely considered lazy. What is important to recognize is that socialist officials saw no difference between underperforming workers and actual thieves, and they treated alleged slackers accordingly.

WHY DON'T TODAY'S SOCIALISTS ATTACK SLACKERS?

Those selling socialism today don't attack slackers as thieves, do they? Why is that?

You likely know why. It's because doing so would be sales suicide—not only highlighting socialism's disdain for slacking but also reminding us that socialism is premised on the anti-liberal belief that we should be born owing our time and talents to society.

What do today's socialists often do instead of explaining that socialist theory is anti-slacking? They sell the fantasy described above: the perfected socialist future in which socialism's slacking-is-theft rule would finally have expired and all could be lazy.

And unfortunately, they often do so in an exceedingly unethical manner. Many "forget" to mention that this utopia requires worldwide superabundance that makes socialist duty meaningless. They similarly fail to explain that socialist theory says the way to achieve this future of being lazy is via the suppression of lazy "parasites" and "useless mouths" today.

Now, some would no doubt like to claim that the reason today's socialists don't berate slackers is because socialism has changed and is no longer anti-slacking. There's just one problem with this argument: it's easily shown to be a crock.

Today's democratic socialism still lives by the standard that means "slacking is theft" even if today's socialists don't say so out loud.

The speed limit is 55. You're doing 125. Aren't you violating the law? The only way to make driving 125 mph legal is by rewriting the rules of the road.

It's the same with the laws of socialism. Short of having achieved the utopian fantasyland outlined above, the only way socialism will accept slacking is if it does away with the duty of "from each according to their ability." It's this most fundamental principle of socialism that turns slacking into theft in the first place.

But today's socialists are as dogmatic as ever about this socialist law. Take, for example, Michael Steven Smith writing in the recently published *Living in a Socialist USA*. What's the rule going to be when socialism arrives?

The rule will become "from each according to their ability, to each according to their need."⁶⁸

And what does Michael Harrington, the founder of the present-day Democratic Socialists of America, tell us is still "the goal of socialism, clearly"?

The goal of socialism, clearly, is to ... act on the basis of “to each according to his/her need, from each according to his/her ability.”⁶⁹

These are but two of the dozens of available examples of present-day socialists reminding us that today’s socialism remains based on the duty of “from each according to their ability,” a duty that means “the more one *can*, the more one *must*.”

Today’s democratic socialism still lives by this standard—a standard that, by definition, means “slacking is theft” even if today’s socialists don’t say so out loud.⁷⁰

Now, it’s not uncommon for people to invent imaginary versions of philosophies and religions—versions that suit their personal preferences at the cost of intellectual honesty. But we shouldn’t let those who have fooled themselves fool us too.

To argue that socialism doesn’t mean slacking is theft is no different than arguing driving 125 isn’t violating a 55 mph speed limit.

The question to ask any socialist who says, “My socialism doesn’t consider slacking to be theft,” is how that’s possible given socialism’s founding principle of duty to society that automatically results in the corollary expressed by socialist great Gracchus Babeuf:

No one can, without committing a crime, shirk labor.⁷¹

One way today’s socialists attempt to evade addressing socialism’s disdain for slackers is by arguing that it’s only evil capitalism that makes people slackers in the first place. Come socialism, the argument goes, those who are slackers today would gladly give society every ounce of their abilities and whistle while they work.

This isn’t a new argument. It’s one that socialists have long made. Over a century ago, William Morris and Ernest Bax, writing jointly, said:

The revolutionised ethics of a Socialist epoch, which would make all feel their first duty to be the energetic performance of social functions: shirking work would be felt to be as much of a disgrace then to an ordinary man as cowardice in the face of an enemy is now to an officer in the army.⁷²

Come the perfected ethics of a Socialist epoch, repentant slackers would not only perform all basic tasks but would also love nothing more than to participate in the extra “mandatory volunteer” work that socialist nations are famous for.⁷³ Or so we’re asked to believe.

The argument that capitalism causes slacking is bogus. It's a head fake. It doesn't alter the fact that socialism says those who treat the time in their lives as their own property are criminals. It just argues that, come the magic world of socialism, slackers would be a non-issue because all would gladly "return with love to OBEDIENCE."

A "FUNDAMENTAL LAW OF SOCIALIST SOCIETY"

What does socialist great August Bebel list as the first "Fundamental Law of Socialist Society"? He writes that it's the

Duty to Work of All Able-Bodied Persons.⁷⁴

Bebel then explains the implications of socialist society's first law. It means

lazy persons, shirkers of work, are met in bourgeois [capitalist] society **only**.⁷⁵

Slackers are **only** (Bebel's emphasis) found in capitalist society, not socialist.

How can Bebel be so sure?

Because he knows socialism flips the script on the liberal principle that the time in our lives is our individual property. Because he knows the compulsory duty of socialism turns our time into society's time, society's property to control.

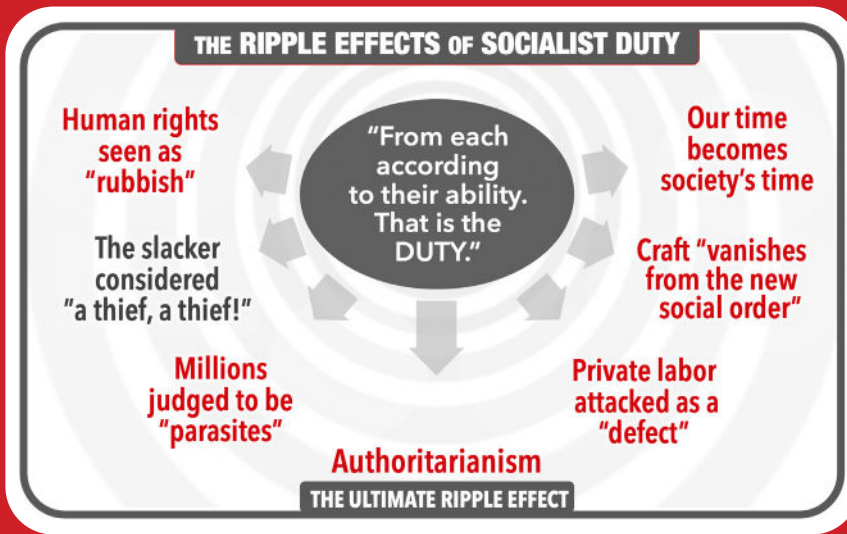
To believe in socialism—democratic included—is to believe in its duty of "from each according to their ability." To believe in "from each according to their ability" is to believe slacking is theft. Thus, to believe in socialism is to believe slacking is theft.

Anyone who claims otherwise isn't arguing with me. They're arguing with an obvious conclusion of socialist philosophy. They're arguing with Gracchus Babeuf, August Bebel, Edward Bellamy, Philippe Buonarroti, Étienne Cabet, Fidel Castro, Lucien Deslinières, Charles Fourier, Che Guevara, Richard Lahautière, Vladimir Lenin, Karl Marx, William Morris, Robert Owen, Constantin Pecqueur, Charles Peguy, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, Georges Renard, Henri de Saint-Simon, Bernard Shaw, Max Shachtman, Leon Trotsky, Beatrice and Sidney Webb, Mao Zedong, and countless other socialist thinkers.

Socialism considering slackers to be "thieves" is one of the many ripple effects of socialist duty. It's a demonstration of how socialist duty turns the time in our lives into what socialists see as society's property to control.

Socialism's foundation on duty is exceedingly dangerous—not just for supposed slackers, but for us all. Who will decide if you're properly performing socialism's duty to society or if you're a "parasite" in need of punishment?

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



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

APPENDIX: LEARNING FROM FIDEL

One noted socialist thinker after another attacks slackers as “thieves” and “parasites” for failing socialism’s duty of “from each according to their ability.” Many do so time and again. To illustrate, we turn to that celebrated socialist Fidel Castro, the longtime leader of socialist Cuba.

We’ve already seen Castro condemning the slacker as “a thief, a thief!” Here are a dozen additional examples of his berating and calling for the elimination of the lazy “parasites” and “thieves” he believed lurked in Cuba’s socialist society.

Our future society must be a society entirely of workers. Of parasites, let there not be even one per million in that future society. For if we have one parasite out of a million people in that future society, the revolution’s work cannot be considered finished.⁷⁶

The more lazy, the greater the parasite.⁷⁷

What we must create is a climate of condemnation for the scoundrels, the loafers, the idlers, and parasites.⁷⁸

Everybody already is learning to see the loafer as the worst enemy, the parasite as the worst enemy.⁷⁹

We have understood better than ever that there are two classes of citizens ... the citizens who worked, produced, and created and the citizens who lived without working or producing. These latter were parasites. ... He who lives as a parasite does not belong to the people.⁸⁰

For the peasant and the honest man, work is not a punishment, but for a parasite the worst thing in the world is work.⁸¹

The exploitation of the hero of labor by the loafer, the parasite, by one who does absolutely nothing, must also disappear.⁸²

We do not mold parasites for our society but workers for society; servants of society and not its exploiters. ... The revolution is not obliged to tolerate vagrants, it has no obligation to tolerate parasites.⁸³

The lazy people, the parasites, the drones! ... Our society must become more a society of the workers and for the workers, and less a society of the parasites and for the parasites. Who is against this? Just the parasites. Who is against justice? The parasites and those who live in idleness.⁸⁴

Our people already see the loafer, the parasite, as an enemy ... they see the absentee as an enemy who does not want to produce.⁸⁵

We have to produce food even for the lazy. That is what hurts, to have to feed the lazy and the parasites.⁸⁶

When somebody steals a day's wages [by shirking work], he is stealing it from the people, from the persons who work. ... We must combat this parasitism from now until we put an end to it. ... The day every citizen sees a loafer as somebody living off other people's work, life will become impossible for the parasite.⁸⁷

NOTES

1. “Il y a des fainéants, c’est-à-dire des voleurs.” Henri de Saint Simon, *Œuvres de Saint-Simon et d’Enfantin* (Paris: E. Dentu, 1868), 18:130. “Le fainéant” is, in today’s English, “the slacker.”
2. “La Nature a imposé a 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.
3. Vladimir Lenin, “On Equality [August 30, 1918],” in *Voices of Revolt: Speeches of Lenin* (New York: International Publishers, 1928), 62.
4. Bernard Shaw, *The Intelligent Woman’s Guide to Socialism and Capitalism* (New York: Brenanto’s Publishers, 1928), 400.
5. Lucien Deslinières, *Entretiens Socialistes* (Paris: Chez le Auteur, 1901), 36–37.
6. “Le fainéant, le débauché, qui, sans accomplir aucune tâche sociale, jouit comme un autre, et souvent plus qu’un autre, des produits de la société, doit être poursuivi comme voleur et parasite : nous nous devons à nous-mêmes de ne lui donner rien, mais, puisque néanmoins il faut qu’il vive, de le mettre en surveillance et de le contraindre au travail.” Pierre Proudhon, *Qu’est-ce que la propriété? ou Recherches sur le principe du droit et du gouvernement* (Paris: Chez J F Brocard, 1840), 194. “Le fainéant” is, in today’s English, “the slacker.” The second word Proudhon uses (“le débauché”) I have translated as “idler.” “Le débauché” is related to the English “debaucher,” but in Proudhon’s French, it means someone who avoids work, making “idler” a more apt translation and certainly a clearer one than “rake,” which is the translation provided by an earlier English version of Proudhon’s work.
7. “Decíamos que los obreros tienen una posición dura contra la vagancia, el ausentismo y el parasitismo, como los maestros la tenían en el otro problema. Y los obreros sienten las consecuencias que trae: la carga de trabajo peor se la dan al mejor, en fin, múltiples ejemplos de ese tipo. Además, es un gravamen, es un consumidor que no produce. Y nadie más que los obreros pueden desarrollar ese sentido de lucha y tener una actitud dura frente al parásito [parasite], y frente al consumidor que no produce porque no le da la gana, porque quiere vivir de los demás. 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, “Castro Addresses Plenum of Basic Industry Workers, Havana Domestic Radio and Television Services in Spanish 8 Dec 1970,” Departamento de Versiones Taquigraficas del Gobierno Revolucionario, accessed December 4, 2020, <http://www.cuba.cu/gobierno/discursos/1970/esp/f071270e.html>.
8. “Plus un homme peut, plus il doit. ... D’où l’axiome : De chacun, selon ses facultés. Là est le DEVOIR.” Louis Blanc, *La Historie de la Révolution de 1848* (Paris: C. Marpon, 1880), 1:148.
9. “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.

NOTES

10. “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.

11. This wording is inspired by libertarian thinker Robert Nozick’s phrase “from each as they choose.” Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (New York: Basic Books, 1974), 160, Kindle.

12. Joseph H. Carens, “Rights and Duties in an Egalitarian Society,” *Political Theory* 14, no. 1 (February 1986): 31.

13. Sidney Webb and Beatrice Webb, *Soviet Communism: A New Civilisation*, 3rd ed. (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1944), 437.

14. In his *Crimes of Commerce*, socialist superstar Charles Fourier explains that socialism “will return to duty and return to productive work those legions of parasites called merchants” (“elle fera rentrer dans le devoir et retourner au travail productif ces légions de parasites appelés marchands”). Socialism rejects the lack of mandatory duty in liberal society and the fact it means we are free to do essentially any work we chose, including work that others look down on. Socialism starts, as Fourier reports, by making all “return to duty,” thereby giving society the ability to define what work counts as the “productive work” we are to be permitted to perform. Charles Fourier, *Manuscrits de Charles Fourier: Crime du commerce* (Paris: Phalange, 1845), 19.

15. “Nous reviendrons avec amour a l’OBEISSANCE.” Prosper Enfantin, et. al., *Doctrine de Saint-Simon, Exposition Premier Année*, 3rd ed. (Paris: Au Bureau de l’Organisateur, 1831), 330.

16. Shaw, *Intelligent Woman’s Guide*, 78.

17. “Ce régime épargnera le travail humain, dont le gaspillage est immoral. Cette épargne sera réalisée par plusieurs causes, dont les trois suivantes : La concurrence sera supprimée. ... L’oisiveté sera supprimée. ... La production sera centralisée autant qu’il est possible.” Pierre Deloivre [Charles Peguy], “De La Cite Socialiste,” *Le Revue Socialiste* 25, no. 1 (1897): 187–88.

18. All of these attacks stem from the hidden premise that the time in our lives should be treated as society’s time.

19. “Chaque individu dans sa sphère, travaille non pour lui, mais pour accomplir la tâche de l’humanité.” Richard Lahautière, *De la loi sociale* (Paris: Chez Prevot, 1841), 64.

20. Max Shachtman, *The Fight for Socialism: The Principles and Programs of the Workers Party* (New York: New International Publishing Co., 1946), 128–29.

21. Edward Bellamy, *Equality*, 3rd ed. (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1898), 389.

22. Shaw, *Intelligent Woman’s Guide*, 400.

23. Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Practice of Denunciation in Stalinist Russia* (Washington, DC: The National Council for Soviet and East European Research, 1994), 1:iii.

24. Fitzpatrick, *Practice of Denunciation*, 2: “Many denunciations were informed by personal malice: the desire to settle scores, cause trouble for a neighbor, and so on.”

25. Leon Trotsky, *Dictatorship vs. Democracy, A Reply to Karl Kautsky* (New York: Workers Party of America, 1922), 142.

26. “Dans une coopération pour la vie, fainéant devient synonyme de voleur. Quiconque, pouvant travailler, s’obstine dans l’oisiveté, est le parasite de ses compagnons.” Georges Renard, *Le Régime Socialiste*, 6th ed. (Paris: Felix Alcan, 1907), 27.

27. Sidney Webb and Beatrice Webb, *Soviet Communism: A New Civilisation*, 3rd ed. (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1942), 911.

NOTES

28. “Quel sont les devoirs? Il ses résument en un mot; ‘le Travail,’ Tous les membres de société doivent concourir, par le travail individuel, au bien-être général — Tant qu’il végétera dans le monde un oisif, la société sera en péril.” Richard Lahautière, *Le petite catéchisme de la réforme sociale* (Paris: 1839), 5.

29. “De l’oisiveté à la paresse et de l’une et l’autre à tous les vices et à tous les désordres, il n’y a qu’un pas. Un homme qui ne donne pas son contingent de production à l’association est plus qu’inutile, il nuit.” Constantin Pecqueur, *Économie sociale des intérêts du commerce, de l’industrie, de l’agriculture et de la civilisation* (Paris: Dessart, 1839), 371.

30. Robert Owen, *A Development of the Plans and Principles of Self-Supporting Home Colonies* (London: Home Colonization Society, 1841), 7.

31. “Las medidas drásticas de eliminar al parasito, ya sea al que esconde en su actitud una enemistad profunda la sociedad socialista o al que esta irremediamente reñido con el trabajo.” Ernesto “Che” Guevara, “Contra El Burocratismo [February 1963],” in *Obra Revolucionaria* (Mexico City: Ediciones ERA, 1971), 548.

32. Philippe Buonarroti, *Buonarroti’s History of Babeuf’s Conspiracy for Equality*, trans. James Bronterre (London: H. Hetherington, 1836), 221.

33. William Morris, “Useful Work versus Useless Toil,” in *Signs of Change* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1896), 153.

34. “Et les paresseux?— Les paresseux nous n’en connaissons pas Comment voulez-vous qu’il y en ait, quand le travail est si agréable, et quand l’oisiveté et la paresse sont aussi infâmes parmi nous que le vol est ailleurs?” Étienne Cabet, *Voyage en Icarie*, 5th ed. (Paris: Au Bureau Populaire, 1848), 102.

35. Shachtman, *Fight for Socialism*, 128.

36. Charles Fourier, *Theory of Social Organization* (New York: C. P. Somerby, 1876), 114.

37. Mao Zedong, “Economic and Financial Problems in the Anti-Japanese War 2: On the Development of Agriculture,” *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung* (Secunderabad, Kranti Publications, 1990), 6:211–14.

38. Werner Sombart, *Socialism and the Social Movement*, trans. M. Epstein (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1909), 25.

39. Michael Harrington, *The Twilight of Capitalism* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1976), v. Harrington is the founder of the Democratic Socialists of America.

40. Harrington, *The Twilight of Capitalism*, v.

41. Marx wrote repeatedly about his desire for child factory labor as an aspect of the socialist education system. For example, in his famous work *Capital*, Marx writes that “the germ of the education of the future is present in the factory system; this education will, in the case of every child over a given age, combine productive labour with instruction and gymnastics, not only as one of the methods of adding to the efficiency of production, but as the only method of producing fully developed human beings.” Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, trans. Ben Fowkes (London: Penguin Classics, 1992), 1:614.

42. Karl Marx, *On the First International*, trans. Saul K. Padover (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1973), 26.

43. Even though it was Louis Blanc who coined the famous socialist axiom “from each according to their ability, to each according to their need,” it’s the fact that Karl Marx adopted it as his own that made this the defining goal of socialism. Marx said socialist society would eventually “inscribe on its banners: ‘From each according to his ability, to each according to his need’” (Karl Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, in *Marx/Engels: Collected Works* [London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1950], 2:23). The first half of this axiom—“from each according to his ability”—is the mandatory duty portion. It’s easily achieved: all the socialist state need do is put us under its thumb. This is what morphs our time into what socialism treats as society’s time and what thereby leads socialism to consider slacking to be “theft.” It’s the second half of the axiom, “to each according to their

NOTES

needs,” that’s hard to achieve. Karl Marx called for “constant over-production” as the means to achieve this goal—something that is both impossible and unsustainable.

44. Socialist theory says that a world based on “to each according to their need” is a world in which all needed goods and service are free for the taking worldwide forever. Socialists also use the word “abundance” (often souped up to “superabundance,” etc.) as likewise meaning a world in which everything is free for all worldwide. And they say that creating this world requires “constant over-production.”

45. Eugene Debs, “Revolutionary Unionism: Speech at Chicago, November 25, 1905,” in *Debs: His Life, Writings and Speeches* (Chicago: George G. Renneker Co., 1908), 441.

46. “C’est pourquoi la supériorité du socialisme est éclatante; il arrivera dans un espace de temps très restreint à créer la surabondance de tous les produits nécessaires à l’homme ; on devra alors limiter la production, ce qui permettra d’affecter le surplus de la main-d’œuvre à des travaux d’embellissement et de réduire la durée du travail.” Lucien Deslinières, *Comment se réalisera le Socialisme* (Paris: Librairie du Parti Socialiste, 1919), 20.

47. G. A. Cohen, “Marx’s Dialectic of Labor,” *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 3, no. 3 (Spring 1974): 257.

48. “La société la plus parfaite est évidemment celle dont la population active est la plus nombreuse par rapport à la population totale, et dont les producteurs réels sont les plus nombreux par rapport à la population active. Dans aucun cas ces deux derniers éléments ne peuvent être égaux, car il est impossible de se passer complètement d’intermédiaires. Le premier but à viser pour accroître la production est donc de faire disparaître dans la plus large mesure les parasites qui ne travaillent pas et ceux qui. Travaillant sans produire, pourraient être supprimés par une meilleure organisation de la société.” Lucien Deslinières, *L’Application du Système Collectiviste* (Paris: Librairie de la Revue Socialiste, 1899), 37.

49. “Ce qui est nouveau, c’est qu’il deviendra une obligation universelle; c’est aussi qu’il sera réduit au minimum par le seul fait que tout le monde prendra part à la besogne et que les parasites et les inutiles seront rentrés dans les rangs de l’armée laborieuse.” Georges Renard, *Le régime socialiste—principes de son organisation politique et économique*, 6th ed. (Paris: Librairies Felix Alcan, 1907), 48.

50. William Morris, “Work In a Factory as It Might Be II,” in *Political Writings: Contributions to Justice and Commonweal 1883–1890*, ed. Nicolas Salmon (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1994), 40.

51. Morris, “Useful Work,” 154.

52. Paul Lafargue, *Le droit à la paresse: réfutation du droit au travail, de 1848* (Paris: Henry Oroil, 1883).

53. The reality is that Lafargue held the same negative view of rights and justice as his father-in-law, Karl Marx (Lafargue married Marx’s daughter Laura). As Marx did, Lafargue saw rights in liberal society as a byproduct of the right to own property—a right socialism was to do away with. Socialist society was going to be literally beyond the need of rights, which obviously makes it clear Lafargue didn’t endorse a right to be lazy in any sense we would understand it. Here’s a sample of Mr. Lafargue’s thinking on the subject: “The ideas of Justice which encumber the minds of the civilized, and which are based on mine and thine, will vanish like a bad dream when common property shall have taken the place of private property” (“Les idées de Justice qui encombrant les têtes des civilisés et qui sont basées sur le mien et le tien, s’évanouiront comme un mauvais rêve, dès que la propriété commune aura remplacé la propriété privée”). Paul Lafargue, *Idéalisme et matérialisme dans la conception de l’histoire: conférence de Jean Jaurès et réponse de Paul Lafargue* (Paris: Parti Ouvrier, 1895), 25.

54. Paul Lafargue, *La propriété, origine et évolution*, vol. 2 (Paris: Librairie Ch. Delagrave, 1895). Lafargue attacks parasites a dozen times in this one work.

55. Paul Lafargue, quoted in Léon Gani, “Jules Guesde, Paul Lafargue et les problèmes de population,” *Population* (French ed.) 34, no. 6 (November–December 1979): 1032. “Natural history has shown that all

NOTES

parasites also have their parasites. Social history corroborates the fact. As the bourgeois are the social lice living on the working class, the servants of the bourgeoisie (statesmen, soldiers, magistrates, prostitutes, journalists, etc.) who share with them the loot stolen from the producers, are parasites on these social lice.” (“L’histoire démontre que tous les parasites ont leurs parasites. L’histoire sociale corrobore le fait. Si les bourgeois sont les poux sociaux vi classe ouvrière, les domestiques de la bourgeoisie [hommes d’Etat, soldats, magistrats, laquais, prostitutes, figuristes, etc.] qui partagent avec elle, les butins dérobais aux producteurs, sont les parasites de ces poux sociaux.”)

56. Paul Lafargue, “Le Lendemain de la Révolution,” *Le Socialiste* 3 (January 1888). “The capitalist proprietor is a useless mouth who consumes terribly. All consumed by the rich as well as by the domestics and others who serve the rich, and satisfy their tastes and needs, is pure waste. ... This useless capital must be suppressed to reduce the costs of social production. The social revolution is charged to accomplish this work of economy. It will not destroy the property, as the anarchists inconsiderately ask, it will get rid of these parasites.” (“Le propriétaire capitaliste est une bouche inutile. ils consomment terriblement. Tout ce que mandent un riche et les domestiques et autres gens qui le servent et satisfont ces goûts et ses besoins, est consommé en pure perte. ... Le capitaliste étant inutile doit être supprimé pour diminuer les frais de la production sociale. La révolution sociale est chargée d’accomplir cette œuvre d’économie : elle ne détruira pas la propriété, comme le demandent inconsidérément les anarchistes, elle la débarrassera de ses parasites.”)

57. Paul Lafargue, “Socialism and the Intellectuals,” in *The Right to Be Lazy and Other Studies*, trans. Charles H. Kerr (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 1907), 103.

58. Frank Dikötter, *Mao’s Great Famine: The History of China’s Most Devastating Catastrophe, 1958–1962* (London: Bloomsbury, 2010), 296.

59. Dikötter, *Mao’s Great Famine*, 296.

60. Ralph A. Thaxton Jr., *Catastrophe and Contention in Rural China: Mao’s Great Leap Forward Famine and the Origins of Righteous Resistance in Da Fo Village* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), ch. 4. Kindle Edition. Thaxton quotes the villager Pang Qinli, speaking about another villager who would soon die: “He was accused of being a lazybones and was forced to wear a white ribbon.”

61. Thaxton, *Catastrophe and Contention*, ch. 4. Also see ch. 6 for discussion of how those who boasted good results were the “red achievers.” Frank Dikötter also discusses white flags of shame and red flags of socialist glory in *Mao’s Great Famine* (e.g., 36–37).

62. Thaxton, *Catastrophe and Contention*, ch. 6.

63. Xun Zhou, *Forgotten Voices of Mao’s Great Famine, 1958–1962: An Oral History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 40.

64. Dikötter, *Mao’s Great Famine*, 294.

65. Dikötter, *Mao’s Great Famine*, 292–305. Chapter 34, “Violence,” details the countless terrible ways in which individuals were maimed and murdered by government officials (292–305).

66. Dikötter, *Mao’s Great Famine*, 295.

67. Dikötter, *Mao’s Great Famine*, 117, 294.

68. Michael Stevens Smith and Frances Goldin, *Imagine: Living in a Socialist USA* (Toronto: Harper Perennial, 2014), 58, Kindle.

69. Michael Harrington, “What Socialists Would Do in America—If They Could,” *Dissent*, Fall 1978, 445.

70. For example, Harrington writes: “The goal of socialism, clearly, is to overcome greed and act on the basis of ‘to each according to his/her need, from each according to his/her ability’” (Michael Harrington, “What Socialists Would Do in America—If They Could,” *Dissent*, Fall 1978, 445).

NOTES

71. “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.

72. William Morris and E. Belfort Bax, *The Manifesto of the Socialist League* (London: Socialist League Office, 1885).

73. Forced, unpaid “voluntary labor” has been a standard feature in socialist regimes, including the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), the People’s Republic of China, the German Democratic Republic, socialist Cuba, and so on.

In the USSR, this work was nicknamed “subbotnik” and “voskresnik” from the Russian words for Saturday and Sunday, the days on which most “voluntary” labor took place. Frank Kaplan describes the intent of these days. Rather than Saturday and Sunday being a holiday from labor, these days were meant to be “a day on which rest is put aside for the joy of labor.” The sham nature of the “voluntary” aspect of this work is found in its organization from the top down; for example, the workforce of, say, an entire plant was “volunteered” by its managers. Individual workers did not make a choice; they were told what to do. The only way in which this work resembled voluntary work is that it was unpaid. See Frank Kaplan, “The Origin and Function of the Subbotniks and Voskresniks,” *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 13, no. 1 (April 1965): 30–39.

In an article written to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of Che Guevara’s starting Cuba’s program of unpaid “volunteer” labor, Yusimi Rodriguez provides insights into how little “volunteer” labor in Cuba has to do with personal choice. See Yusimi Rodriguez, “Doing Voluntary Work ... Voluntarily,” December 4, 2009, *Havana Times*, <https://havanatimes.org/opinion/doing-voluntary-work%E2%80%A6voluntarily/>.

74. August Bebel, *Woman and Socialism*, trans. Meta L. Stern (New York: Socialist Literature Co., 1910), 370.

75. Bebel, *Woman and Socialism*, 370.

76. Fidel Castro, “CDR Anniversary Rally (Havana Domestic Television, September 29, 1967),” Latin America Network Information Center—Castro Speech Database, <http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/castro/db/1967/19670929.html>.

77. Fidel Castro, “Castro Speaks on Education and Parasites (Havana Domestic Radio, March 16, 1968),” Latin America Network Information Center—Castro Speech Database, <http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/castro/db/1968/19680316.html>.

78. Fidel Castro, “Castro Gives Speech on 30th CDR Anniversary (Havana Domestic Radio and Television Services, September 9, 1990),” Latin America Network Information Center—Castro Speech Database, <http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/castro/db/1990/19900929.html>.

79. Fidel Castro, “To Officials, Technicians, and Producers of INRA (Havana Prensa Latina, July 21, 1963),” Latin America Network Information Center—Castro Speech Database, <http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/castro/db/1963/19630721.html>.

80. Fidel Castro, “May Day Celebration (Havana Intl Service, May 2, 1961),” Latin America Network Information Center—Castro Speech Database, <http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/castro/db/1961/19610502.html>.

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