

The Dangers of Socialism: Is It Inevitably Coming to America?

As an Alabama high school student, I was chosen to travel to the Soviet Union for the 'People to People' international student exchange program, as part of the first delegation from my home state. It shocked me to see the oppression and hopelessness of the people and their lack of choices and freedoms that most Americans take completely for granted.

That experience, at such a young age, shaped my worldview and deepened my love and appreciation for the United States. After three long weeks in a communist country, when our plane touched down at John F. Kennedy Airport, the first thing a few of my travel companions and I did was get down on our hands and knees and kiss the ground! I had never been so grateful to be an American.

So why should you as a Christian care about this, and how does socialism deviate from Christian values?

For a start, socialism destroys religious freedom. It destroys creativity, innovation and ingenuity. Today, most Americans do not know the history of the death and destruction communism caused in the twentieth century. Most American college students can answer correctly when asked how many Jews died in the Holocaust. They know it is six million people because they have learned this in our schools, through popular movies, stories like *The Diary of Anne Frank* and because of ongoing campaigns from organizations like the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation, the Holocaust Museum and others, who remind Americans about this history.

But if you ask the average American how many victims communism has claimed, very few would respond with the correct answer.

Some sources report that it is over 100 million.

Many young people today seem to be confusing socialism with social justice, even though the two are completely dissimilar. Socialism in most countries does nothing to help the poor—it often actually creates more poverty!

The people who fought for our country to establish the freedoms we enjoy today suffered enormous hardship. Many of them died fighting to protect our religious freedom especially. If you are a Christian, the choice that faces you is not whether you are willing to fight for what you believe. Instead, it is this: Do you want to fight right now while it may be uncomfortable and unpleasant, but you will be fighting to preserve what freedoms we already have? Or do you want to wait and fight later to regain what we had before we lost our freedom?

Long hours volunteering on a campaign, giving up a little extra money each campaign season, taking time out of your busy schedule to attend town hall meetings and dealing with the unpleasant nature of politics pales in comparison to what people who fought in the Revolutionary War and other battles for freedom endured. Never before in our nation's history have we been so close to adopting a way of life that will eventually lead to everything we hold dear being completely stripped away. Socialism is a political and economic system with roots in the ideas of Karl Marx. In socialism, the government owns all means of generating wealth, but individuals can own property. It is often thought of as the period between the overthrow of the capitalist system and the implementation of communism.

Communism is the full implementation of government control and exists when there is no class, no money and no private ownership whatsoever. The government runs everything, and all property is communally owned. All one needs to do is look at how their local US Postal Service office or their DMV

operates, and then imagine that style of service applied to every single aspect of life. It is beyond imagination how anyone could think that this would improve things in our country. If the United States were a communist country, the iPhone would most likely never have been invented because all of the government regulations and lack of incentives would most likely have stifled someone like Steve Jobs and the rest of his team's creativity.

Under free-market capitalism, there is free competition and no government regulation or interference. Entrepreneurship, hard work and innovation are incentivized, and people are free to own property.

The recent rise in socialism coming from the fringe Left should be deeply troubling to all because at its core, socialism is about replacing God with government and freedom with tyranny. America is the greatest land of opportunity the world has ever known because Americans are free to practice their own beliefs, speak their own minds, protect their own lives, pursue their own dreams and enjoy the fruits of their own labor. Socialism directly opposes the American dream.

Advocates for socialism see Christianity as a threat and therefore believe it must be silenced, canceled and eliminated. Socialism has been tried all over the world and has never worked, but somehow people keep getting deceived into adopting this approach. The truth is, in socialist countries, most people of faith suffer tremendously. One of the greatest ways they suffer is by having God stripped out of everything.

Right now, in America, socialism is on our doorstep. As one major donor at a fundraising event recently said to me, "My husband and I can either get involved in politics now and give away some of our money to help get the right kinds of candidates elected, or we can wait, hold on to our money and then risk our kids having nothing to inherit. If our country

gives in to full-scale socialism or communism, the government could easily come in and just take it all!" This may sound extreme, but for anyone who remembers what happened in Cuba when Castro took power and converted them to full-scale communism, or if you have studied places like Venezuela, there are horror stories of things just like that occurring.

We as Christians and people who love God, love our country and love the very things that make life precious must rise up. We must choose God over government and faith over fear. If not now, when? If not us, then who?

*The preceding is excerpted from chapter 13 of **Terri Hasdorff's** book, Running Into the Fire (Charisma House, Sept. 2022). For more information on Running Into the Fire, or to order the book, visit .*

Terri Hasdorff is a former congressional candidate and an executive-level leader with over twenty years' experience in government and politics. She began her career in 1991 in what is now called the White House Office of Public Engagement, where she had the honor of working with faith leaders from across the country. She later served on Capitol Hill for six years, then ran for a seat in the US House to represent Alabama's second congressional district. She has a bachelor's degree from Samford University, is a graduate of the senior executives program at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government and is currently in the executive MBA program at Oxford University.