

**WHY I AM OPPOSED TO
SOCIALISM; ORIGINAL
PAPERS BY LEADING MEN
AND WOMEN**

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Why I am opposed to socialism; original papers by leading men and women by Edward Silvin

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UNIV. OF MICHIGAN,

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**Why I Am
Opposed to Socialism**



Original Papers by
Leading Men and Women



EDWARD SILVIN



SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA
U. S. A.

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By EDWARD SILVIN

Why I Am Opposed to Socialism

Eggert, Charles Augustus. (Author and College Professor.)

I am opposed to Socialism, first, because it is not an inductively obtained system, but an "ism" that postulates qualities in the individuality of a nation which no nation, or community even, has yet developed to a sufficiently high state to make this "ism" fit to be seriously tried.

Second: Much of what Socialism teaches will be put to the test by society anyhow, for society is based on interest, on financial considerations, and it has been found very long ago, that co-operation cheapens products, while steadying employment.

Third: As a working system Socialism is based on the limited intellectual powers of a large number of people who will not receive systematic instruction, or cannot. Any large school shows how large the proportion of children is who must eventually be, as adults, members of this number, and, by exercising their right to vote for their officers and leaders, will make a scientific and economical management exceedingly difficult, if not impossible. Tried on a limited scale it amounts only to co-operation—different from Socialism.

Fourth: The existing system is based on the rewards held out to individual effort, thus furnishing leaders who, by accumulating capital through self-denial, great moderation in the pursuit of pleasure, and strenuous work, will be eventually enabled to establish large combinations, factories, corporations of all sorts, which, as history and daily experience prove, pay even the unintelligent laborers higher wages and furnish them more security than they could possibly have obtained if left to themselves as Socialistic organizations. In order to obtain the best results, however, a protective tariff must keep out undue foreign competition.

Fifth: Differences of opinion on these points can be set-

noted satisfactorily only by a close and careful study of the history of business, and the leading Socialists, Marx, etc., have been shown to be palpably and grievously incapable of such study.

Sixth: Socialism would lead to governmental art, science and literature, that is to say to the counterfeit of real art, science, and literature. It would be the rule of the unintelligent and largely of the demagogues (for such would stand a better chance than the honest and thoughtful, for election to offices).

Seventh: Socialism could not be established (as an "ism") except by robbery. Good men would not lend themselves to such business.

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Mencken, Henry Louis. (Author of "The Philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche," editor of *The Players* Ibsen, part-author with Robert Rives LaMonte of "Men vs. the Man." Member of the editorial staff of the Baltimore Evening Sun.)

I am opposed to Socialism because, in general, it means a vain and costly attack upon the immutable natural law that the strong shall have advantage over the weak. I do not defend that law as perfect, nor do I even maintain that it is just. If I had the world to make over I should probably try to find something to take its place, something measurably less wasteful and cruel. But the world is as it is and the law is as it is. Say what you will against it, you must at least admit that it works, that it tends to destroy the botched and useless, that it places a premium upon enterprise and courage, that it makes for health and strength, that it is the most powerful of all agents of human progress. Would brotherhood, supposing it to be achieved, do as well? I doubt it. Brotherhood would help the soft man, the clinging man, the stupid man. But would it help the alert and resourceful man? Answer for yourself. Isn't it a fact that difficulties make daring, that effort makes efficiency? Do not functions develop by use? Does the cell act or react?

Meanwhile, I grant all schemes of brotherhood one indubitable merit. Socialism shares it with Christianity. It is this:

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that they are eternally impossible of carrying out, that men cannot actually live them. The Beatitudes, after 2,000 years, are still mere poetry. No human fiat will ever repeal the law of natural selection. No rebellion of slaves will ever break down that great barrier which separates slaves from masters.

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Brown, Mrs. M. McClellan. (Lecturer and Reformer.)

I am opposed to Socialism—

First: Because it is unnatural. Men are born free, but far from being equal in competency mentally, morally, or spiritually to use with advantage to self or others, the proceeds of earth, or the elements, or labor; even under the same civil, social, and educational opportunities (often in the same family) some are incompetent to make ends meet.

Second: Because it is impracticable, unjust, and detrimental to development and ennoblement of the human race, which is the manifest object of human creation.

Third: Because it destroys the ultimate power of individuality, which is the unit of State organization and social protection. The individual is the axis of reality in all the objective changes for human uplift.

Fourth: Because the Spirit of God is the humanizing power in the world, given to individual spirits as a complete fact, large or small, but personal in dynamic currents of bodily gifts as varied as the offices of the human organs.

Fifth: Because civilization is the fruit of developed individual consciousness in a concrete, unsharable experience of free personality which makes the vital push for progress in the world; even a social consciousness so-called, must turn on the axis of the individual.

Sixth: Because the only historic and scientific demonstration of Socialism is original barbarism. Set the pot in the midst of the group and let each use his paw.

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McConnell, Francis J. (Bishop of Methodist Episcopal Church, Denver, Colorado.)

I am opposed to Socialism because it goes farther than is

X necessary. The real reforms for which Socialism stands are very important, but I think these can be secured without accepting the extreme puttings of Socialistic doctrine. Within the past twenty-five years we have reached many of the results of the Socialistic programme and yet without adopting extreme Socialism. X

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Benington, Arthur. (Journalist.)

I am opposed to Socialism because I believe that the State was made for man, not man for the State.

X Because every one of the infinite number of projects of Socialism tends to discourage individual effort; hence, in a really Socialistic State there would be no incentive to achievement in art, literature, science, discovery, etc. The dull level of mediocrity would prevail; stagnation would take the place of progress.

Because the leading Socialists and all the Socialist newspapers I have ever seen attack religion.

Because Socialism would abolish the home and make the State responsible for the bringing up of children. The result of this would be to substitute a breeding farm for matrimony. Love—which cannot be abolished—would have no place in the scheme of things; it would struggle against institutions, either secretly in spite of them and contrary to them, or openly in rebellion. This is true not only of sex love, but of parental and filial love.

Because it is contrary to all the principles upon which the United States of America have won success in the world. It is an exotic importation from lands in which liberty is stifled, brought here by persons who do not understand American institutions, taken up as a fad by a few dreamers.

Because men always cease to be Socialists as soon as they have won success in life; suggesting that Socialism is merely a vague expression of the discontent of some, the disappointment of others. X

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Clark, John Bates. (Professor of political economy and author.)

I am opposed to Socialism because it would soon impover

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ish workers. The income to be divided would be smaller than is supposed by advocates of Socialism, and it would grow smaller per capita as the number of workers increased.

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Raymond, George Lansing. (Author and University Professor.)

I am opposed to Socialism because I think it founded on a misconception of the requirements of human nature; and this, mainly, for three reasons:

First: A great many people will not practice diligence and thrift, unless stimulated to do so by a possibility of obtaining, possessing and using something that they can call their own. This is something that Socialism theoretically, and so far as it has been applied, practically, would deny them.

Second: A great many will not work at all, when their only inducement is that others wish them to work, or need their help. Socialism, if established, would be obliged—merely to secure support for the community—to force such people to work against their own wills. This would inevitably involve the re-establishment of a system of human slavery.

Third: All a man's mental and moral development in this world—to say nothing of what may come after death—needs training. According to a law apparently divine, but certainly human, this training, whether in home, school, business or society, is imparted by means of discipline. The discipline is mainly derived from the circumstances of life in which one finds himself placed, and, in such cases, is always accompanied by dissatisfaction with one's allotted place, and by actual suffering. The Socialist aims to escape from this dissatisfaction and suffering by making a change in his circumstances—such a change, for instance, as would make a king a servant, or make all men kings or servants. But history and experience show that kings, whose friends die, courtiers flatter, and enemies trick, are no more free from the sufferings attendant upon discipline than are servants. The truth seems to be that to occupy a different position in life means merely to be placed in a different part of the same apparently divine and certainly social machine which—as some have faith to believe—is at work grinding out of the coarse grain of humanity what shall, some day, prove to be its fine flour. One who has the wisdom