

SOCIALISM OR EMPIRE: A DANGER

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Socialism or Empire: A Danger by Ed. F. Browne

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ED. F. BROWNE

**SOCIALISM OR
EMPIRE: A DANGER**

SOCIALISM OR EMPIRE

—A—

DANGER

BY

COL. ED. F. BROWNE

THE MOST SERIOUS QUESTION PRESENTED TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE
SINCE THE ABOLISHMENT OF SLAVERY IS NOT RE-
CEIVING DUE CONSIDERATION.

THE CONTROL OR REGULATION OF THE EARNING CAPACITY OF CAPITAL
INVESTED IN PRIVATE VENTURES IS A REVOLUTION
IN OUR FORM OF GOVERNMENT.

THE PRESENT SOCIALISTIC TENDENCY TO BUILD UP THE EXECUTIVE
POWER CAN ONLY END IN ONE OF TWO THINGS, I. E., A SO-
CIALISTIC TYRANNY THROUGH LEGISLATION,
OR AN IMPERIATOR.

(1906)

PREFACE.

There is an undercurrent of political thought today in the United States, which drifts toward socialism, and this unconscious drift, leads up to a grant of power to our Executive Department quite necessary under a socialistic government, but which creates a danger to our institutions. Successive grants of power to an executive, have always ended in Empire with Republics of the past, and usually the additional power has been given, at the instance of the "common people". While the theory of socialism is a beautiful one, human nature must be changed to make it a success. There are two well defined classes of socialists. The educated theorist who claims to have eliminated greed from his nature, and who prates of the equality of man; and the uneducated socialist who thinks it wrong for any man to have more than himself. The Theorist is a fraud, and should be watched by the police. as mild forms of lunacy soon drift to violence. His only danger is in injury to himself and the advice he gives others.

It is but a step from the theory that it is only right to work entirely for the public good, to the position that the public should receive the benefit of all personal endeavor.

The theoretical socialist talks of the beauties of socialism from the stand point of the "giver", while his ignorant followers interpret this to mean that the public should have the power to "take".

The unfortunate thing about this agitation is the fact that the later class is gaining the most headway.

This under current of thought is so sweeping, that I have been surprised in conversation with Senators, Congressmen and Managing Editors of several of our great dailies, when I have suggested that this agitation was a tendency toward socialism, to hear the expression, "that possibly it was coming."

If public men and great newspapers fear to attack this argument for fear of loss of popularity, a political question

more vital to our future prosperity than any which has been presented since the abolition of slavery, may not receive proper consideration.

There is no doubt but that this socialistic tendency is gaining strength and that the disposition on the part of the public to *take* power not consistent with true political economy is growing.

Weak men and designing politicians are accepting part of the theories of socialism either because they know no better, or they desire to take advantage of the political agitation for personal ends. The United States has become the leader of nations in a business way by following ideas the antithesis of socialism. Our constitution was framed with the creditable object of allowing absolute freedom in business conduct, and our great prosperity has come about through bright minds being able to reap benefits here not attainable elsewhere, and it was intended that every one who had a business should attend to it and let other people alone.

The Socialistic trend of thought now creates a demand that the form of "negative" laws which have controlled our action in the past, shall be supplanted with an initiative control on the part of the government over great business ventures, owned and operated by private citizens.

The demand that the "public" should control, regulate, and investigate everything and every body, who is making money, with a view of seizing any profit over and above a rate of interest that they (the public) think fair, is only the worst form of socialism.

This element desires the passage of laws with a view of eliminating all the speculative benefits to capital, which have rushed the business of the country ahead of all others.

This speculative inducement has brought to our shores the brightest minds of Europe, and our country has received the benefit of the endeavor of such men as Erickson, Carnegie, and thousands of other foreigners, who while making money themselves assisted many others and have been important factors in our rapid advance. The dominant idea of the founders of our nation, was to restrain the government from interfering or competing with private endeavor, because the colonies rebelled against that form of paternalism.

The clamor in some quarters that the public should own

utilities, and that the government should regulate and control insurance, railroads, trusts, and other great private business ventures is nothing more or less than socialism, which would undoubtedly end in Despotism or Empire.

It cannot be that the American People wish to change our form of government and these recommendations mean a change so radical, that we would place back in the hands of an executive of our own selection a power we took away from the executive by the war of the Revolution.

We are asked to place in the hands of our executive department, the power claimed by kings and Emperors, and to give to our executive officers the same form of control over business affairs from which we released ourselves by that long and bloody struggle.

Any interference with the management of private business on the part of government is a form of despotism and there is but little difference between a socialistic tyranny and an Empire. In fact business interests would be safer under an Empire than under a dictator governed by the whims of irresponsible agitators.

The idea of the government "doing things" has grown very rapidly and the evident willingness on the part of our lower branch of congress to turn over to the executive every power requested, is quite in line with the history of Republics which have merged into Empire.

The lower branch of congress (The peoples representatives) has already built up the power of the executive department to such an extent that the congress itself is fast losing its independence and were it not for the Senate our political institutions would be in danger. But this semi-socialistic agitation proposes to give more and more power to the Executive and all of the reforms now apparently so popular, are pointing to a change in the form of government laid down by our Fathers.

In Monarchies or Empires the people have not the constitutional protection from inquisition, control and regulation, which we possess, and this has been our greatest freedom.

My object in writing this book is to show the danger of departing from the written constitution in these matters, and to show that in no instance where government interferes with business conditions are the "people" benefited.

This agitation in favor of the government, state or municipality taking control of business ventures or regulating them except through "negative" laws is Unamerican and wrong. It is but the froth escaping from the seething pot of socialism, which if not cooled by reason will boil over and put out the fires of prosperity.

SUMMARY OF CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

THE OBJECTS DESIRED BY THE FOUNDERS OF THE UNION.

Separation from England result of unequal and unjust taxation, business restriction and regulation, and undue investigation of the private business affairs of citizens. Instructions of the delegates sent to the Continental Congress, all indicate business unrest. War declared July 6th, 1775, over these business conditions. The business freedom demanded by the colonies not granted in a monarchy or empire. Refusal of Parliament to consider requests ended in political freedom being declared July 4th, 1776, one year after the war commenced. An effort made to establish a government giving private incentive freedom from government control.

CHAPTER II.

CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS.

Framers of Constitution fully alive to the dangers of paternal or monarchical government control. Tried to frame an Instrument taking away from the Executive any discretionary powers. Explicit instructions to live up to the written language of the document. Limitations of authority on the part of congress and the Executive more strongly put than permissions granted. Successive amendments continue to guard the business interests from encroachment of the legislative and executive branches of the government. The business freedom is what has made this nation great. Do the people want to turn back to the government the power taken to themselves by the War of the Revolution.

CHAPTER III.

INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS IN VARIOUS COUNTRIES.

The United States today the only nation with constitutional guarantees for the individual. The only nation having a court created by constitutional provisions. Courts are a co-ordinate branch of government in this and in no other country. Can interpose in behalf of the people against legislative or executive action. Courts are creation of statute in other countries. Liberties of people in Europe usually lie with the legislative branch, no constitutional guaranties. What would be legal and proper in Europe would be a violation of our constitutional rights. No protection in Europe against actions of the government. The citizens of France have

no rights whatever as against the government. While the government can interfere in any way it chooses with business in Europe we are protected from such interference in this country.

CHAPTER IV.

DANGER IN ATTEMPT TO "GET AROUND THE CONSTITUTION."

Business control by government merely result of socialistic agitation and executive ambition. Such a control necessarily builds up and gives power to an executive not intended. Careless legislators have already allowed executive encroachments creating a danger. The greatest danger to a republic is executive "initiative" power, and hysterical action on the part of the people. A control of great business ventures makes our executive department too dominant a factor. The changes at present suggested, a revolution in our form of government. Caesar and Napoleon first suggested immaterial infractions of the constitution, then tore the constitution to pieces. Empire, the logical result of increased executive power. Roman agitators built up the executive power to assist Pompeius but Caesar reaped the benefit. Should we give executive power to our President that we would fear in another's hands—Franklin's prophecy.

CHAPTER V.

PANAMA CANAL.

Extraordinary carelessness of Congress in managing this affair. Practically turning the whole thing over to the Executive department. American Contractors should do this work. Excessive cost of excavation, and probable further loss. Useless expenditures greater than that for practical purposes. Executive department not fitted for business operation. Every principle of American government violated in Panama. The Panama dollar arrangement. Congress should not shirk its duty in this transaction.

CHAPTER VI.

PANAMA R. R. AND STEAMSHIPS.

An apparent attempt to prove theories of socialism or Empire in government. Purchase of railroads an expensive mistake. A poor investment handled in an extravagant manner. Excessive charges do not create profit. Purchase of steamer line which has cost more for repairs than original investment. Government making contracts with foreign lines of steamers with a view of running an American line out of business. Costly experiment in transportation in which the people will stand the loss. Government Panama line of steamers and Phillipine transports would save money in ten years time if at the bottom of the sea. Other nations subsidize lines of steamers while ours try to drive them out of business. Repugnant to our ideas of government to allow this to continue.

CHAPTER VII.

RATE REGULATION.

This is the first definite attempt to place in the hands of the executive department, the power taken from government by the war of the Revolu-