

Driven to Despair: The Return of American Socialism

by [war news](#), terror attacks, heightened security, homeward bound casualties, etc.) is applicable, though slightly counter-intuitive. Entertainment companies have certainly taken a lead role in the public mind, and “crude dispersion of facts untampered by context” is an important element of “[farewell address](#), warned future generations against both “innovations” and partisanship as two of the greatest challenges to the continuance of the government. The American left is now driven by love of “innovations” and a loss of faith in American traditions and institutions. What they would see as an innovation, an improvement, is rather a great hammer poised against the edifice of the democracy.

Towards the preservation of your Government and the permanency of your present happy state, it is requisite, not only that you steadily discountenance irregular oppositions to its acknowledged authority, but also that you resist with care the spirit of innovation upon its principles, however specious the pretexts . . .

I have already intimated to you the danger of parties in the State, with particular reference to founding them on geographical discriminations. Let me now take a more comprehensive view, and warn you, in the most solemn manner, against the baneful effects of the spirit of party, generally.

This spirit, unfortunately, is inseparable from our

nature, having its root in the strongest passions of the human mind. It exists under different shapes, in all governments, more or less stifled, controlled or repressed; but in those of the popular form, it is seen in its greatest rankness, and is truly their worst enemy.

The alternate dominion of one faction over another, sharpened by the spirit of revenge, natural to party dissension, which, in different ages and countries, has perpetrated the most horrid enormities, is itself a frightful despotism; but this leads at length to a more formal and permanent despotism. The disorders and miseries which result, gradually incline the minds of men to seek security and repose in the absolute power of an Individual . . .

'T is substantially true, that virtue or morality is a necessary spring of popular government . . .

Promote, then, as an object of primary importance, institutions for the general diffusion of knowledge. In proportion as the structure of a government gives force to public opinion, it is essentially that public opinion should be enlightened . . .

—Washington's *Farewell Address*

Whittaker Chambers, like Howard Fast and many others in this country, became strong communists and worked hard for the utopian workers' paradise that communism promised—until they didn't. They realized that the utopian solution they had embraced was a great fraud, and evil.

The errors of the past are flooding upon us, the friends of the constitution and of the country are stunned by the shift. The strident loss of faith by a large cohort of the country brings us all to a new crisis. The unity of the country is chipped away and in the residue the seeds of hatred, intolerance, and despair are planted.

Few men are so dull that they do not know that the crisis exists and that it threatens their lives at every point. It is popular to call it a social crisis. It is in fact a total crisis—religious, moral, intellectual, social, political, economic. It is popular to call it a crisis of the Western world. It is in fact a crisis of the whole world. Communism, which claims to be a solution to the crisis, is itself a symptom and an irritant of the crisis.
—Whittaker Chambers, *Witness*[\[12\]](#)

This great internal dissension and conflict is not simply a political party matter but rather a conflict of philosophies; pragmatism vs. utopianism; national unity vs identity politics, sovereignty vs. globalism, individual freedom vs socialism, ignorance vs wisdom, hope vs a surrender to despair, ignorance, and illusion.

The United States is no utopia and was never meant nor designed to be such. Thomas Paine, in his pamphlet of the American Revolution, *Common Sense* (1776) wrote:

Society in every state is a blessing, but government even in its best state is but a necessary evil; in its worst

state an intolerable one . . . Wherefore, security being the true design and end of government, it unanswerably follows that whatever form thereof appears most likely to ensure it to us, with the least expense and greatest benefit, is preferable to all others.

—Thomas Paine, *Common Sense*

The philosophical crisis in the United States is based upon a simple dichotomy: the idea that government is a necessary evil to be improved over time versus the belief that government is a necessary and benevolent good, and the only structure powerful enough to solve the problems of humanity and of society. One position is American and valid, the other is alien and a fraud.

One position is built on the essential value of the individual, and the fears of power and its abuse that prompt the people to keep the government in check.

The other position seeks to empower the state because power is not to be feared, but used to solve great problems for the benefit of humanity. To meet the requirements of this fundamentally anti-individual philosophy people must be converted from citizens to apparatchiks and slaves in service to the government and its ruling class. Supporters of this approach believe that only in this way can the great problems of the world be solved. That the cost of socialism is freedom is lost upon the utopians of the socialist-communist left.

[1] Robert Conquest, *Reflections on a Ravaged Century*, (Norton, 2000); p.35.

[2] John Adams, [Letter](#) to Massachusetts Militia, October 11, 1798.

[3] W. Cleon Skousen, *The Naked Communist*, (Izzard Ink, 1958, 2017); p.82.

[4] V.I. Lenin, *The State and Revolution*, 1917. "But the scientific distinction between socialism and communism is clear. What is usually called socialism was termed by Marx the 'first', or lower, phase of communist society."

[5] *Hitler – Memoirs of a Confidant*, Edited by Henry Ashby Turner, Jr.; Translated by Ruth Hein (Verlag Ullstein GmbH, Frankfurt/Main-Berlin-Vienna, 1978; Yale University Press, 1985); first quote p.16, second quote p.319.

[6] Howard Fast, *The Naked God*, (New York, 1957); p.30.

[7] Richard Pipes, *Three "Whys" of the Russian Revolution*, (New York, 1995); p.7.

[8] Whittaker Chambers, *Witness*, (Gateway, 1952, 1980, 50th anniversary edition); first quote p.191, second quote p.193.

[9] Robert D. Kaplan, *The Coming Anarchy: Shattering the Dreams of the Post Cold War*, (New York, 2000); pp.174-5.

[10] Whittaker Chambers, *Witness*, (Gateway, 1952, 1980, 50th anniversary edition); p.xvi, and p.473.

[11] Theodore Roosevelt, last public message: letter to the American Defense Society, January 2, 1919; in *The World War: Utterances Concerning its Issue and Conduct by Members of the American Academy of Arts and Letters*, (New York, 1919); p.44.

[12] Whittaker Chambers, *Witness*, (Gateway, 1952, 1980, 50th

anniversary edition); p.7.

Daniel Mallock is a historian of the Founding generation and of the Civil War and is the author of The New York Times Bestseller,