

Focus on Religious Freedom

*"Socialism (is) the most bitter enemy of Christian principles."
Pope Benedict XV (1914-1922)*

Warnings from Nine Popes about Socialism and Its Threat to Religious Freedom – continued

The Catholic Church has condemned Socialism in all its forms - so-called Christian Socialism as well as atheistic Socialism - without exception. But why? What is the error of socialism?⁽¹⁾

Pope John Paul II (1978-2005) said, "The fundamental error of socialism is ... (it) considers the individual person simply as an element, a molecule within the social organism, so that the good of the individual is completely subordinated to the functioning of the socio-economic mechanism."⁽²⁾ However, Christianity holds the belief that each individual must be free to assume responsibility for his own choices. Jesus came to save each person individually and not a collective called "people."

In 1891, **Pope Leo XIII (1878-1903)** wrote, "It is clear that the main tenet of socialism, community of goods, must be utterly rejected, since (it is) directly contrary to the natural rights of mankind and would introduce confusion and disorder into the commonweal." Socialism advances the error that private property is not a human right but can be taken away from individuals by the state and given to others.⁽³⁾

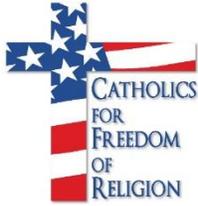
Pope Pius XI (1922-1939) explained, "Just as it is gravely wrong to take from individuals what they can accomplish by their own initiative and industry and give it to the community, so also it is injustice and a grave evil to assign to a higher association (big organization or government) what a lesser and subordinate association (local organizations or government) can do."⁽⁴⁾

"No Catholic could subscribe even to moderate socialism (since) Socialism is founded on a doctrine of human society which ... takes no account of any objective other than that of material well-being. It proposes a form of social organization which aims solely at production; it places too severe a restraint on human liberty," wrote **Pope John XXIII (1958-1963)** in his 1961 encyclical *Mater et Magistra*.⁽⁵⁾

(fatima.org, 5/19/20(1)(3)(4); Pope John Paul II-quotable quotes (2); tpfstudentaction.org, 4/8/10(5) tfp.org, 2/24/10; aei.org, 9/27/15)

"The state which would provide everything, absorbing everything into itself, would ultimately become a mere bureaucracy incapable of guaranteeing the very thing which the suffering person- every person – needs: namely, loving, personal concern."

- Pope Benedict XVI (2005-2013)



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