



Liberalism/Progressivism does not equal Socialism/Communism

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steve2470 ★ (1000+ posts)

Sat Oct-23-04 11:35 PM
Original message

Liberalism/Progressivism does not equal Socialism/Communism



Can someone help me to refute the well-worn RW meme that lib./prog. equals socialism/communism ? That seems to be the underlying message behind the "he's a LIBERAL" negative mantra. Thanks for your help.



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Waverley_Hills_Hiker (1000+ posts)  Sat Oct-23-04 11:45 PM
Response to [Original message](#)

1. ""statism"

If your right wing interlocutor is of the libertarian persuasion he would say all these political tendancys or ideologies are forms of statism, where the government inteferes in society and/or economy.

And, within their libertarian ideology, they would be correct.


If its a more garden-variety rightwinger who just bought the propaganda without thinking much about it...well...tell him that:

liberalism grew out of progressivism and earlier 19th century movements and philosophies. (the Grangers and Populists, and also the earlier proposals for internal improvements and land grant colleges).. and both of these where responses to problems and disfunctions in the market economy...

Regulation and other forms of intervention corrected abuses and extremes, and made up for market failure....in short they where movements of reform and improvement within the free enterprise system, using the mechanisms of democraxy and representation to affect reform and chage, not revolution.

Communism and socialism want to socialize the market, via the state taking over the economy (communism) or via some sort of workers taking over buisnesses (sort of socialism). These movements didnt want to reform the market economy or free-enterprise system, but wanted to replace it.

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Sean Reynolds (1000+ posts)  Sat Oct-23-04 11:45 PM
Response to [Original message](#)

2. It should. If people researched communism they'd 'get' it.

Edited on Sat Oct-23-04 11:49 PM by Sean Reynolds

Communism in ideological form is not bad. IMO true liberals would embrace socialism.

That said, Kerry is NOT a communist nor really a liberal.

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IrateCitizen (1000+ posts)  Mon Oct-25-04 03:55 PM
Response to [Reply #2](#)

17. I've researched communism. I "get" it. It ain't the answer.



Communism in ideological form is not bad.

Neither is Libertarian Capitalism. It's too bad that things don't transfer from the ideological world to the real world very well.


IMO true liberals would embrace socialism.

Why would they? And, I would hazard a guess that your definition of socialism differs significantly from my definition as a progressive democratic socialist. So, you'd better be a little more explicit as to what you describe by "socialism". If you are equating socialism with communism, then you can count me out.

That said, Kerry is NOT a communist nor really a liberal.

No, Kerry IS a liberal, or at least was at one time in his political life -- but he is decidedly NOT a communist. Then again, the fact that Kerry is a liberal would help explain why he would reject any discussion of socialism or communism.

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Cleita ☆ (1000+ posts) 

Mon Oct-25-04 04:13 PM
Response to [Reply #2](#)

20. Communism in its pure form is actually tribalism.



Edited on Mon Oct-25-04 04:23 PM by Cleita

It means that living in communes that share the work and the products of the work are communistic in nature and really take us back to our stone age tribalism. In this way everyone shares in the necessities of life even though they may be too young, too old or too sick or disabled to contribute to the tribe full time or even at all. They will still be fed and cared for within the community.

Food that is hunted and gathered is shared equally among all regardless if some came home empty-handed. I don't know how you can apply these basic principles of tribalism into our technological and complex civilization, but it could be a good thing to try to integrate at lot of the dynamics behind this cultural heritage, like not leaving those members of society behind who can't compete as easily as others.

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Maat ☆ (1000+ posts) 


Sat Oct-23-04 11:46 PM
Response to [Original message](#)

3. to me, ' progressive/progressivism' simply means that...



you are smart enough to recognize that we need a decent social infrastructure/safety net.

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NMDemDist2 ☆ (1000+ posts) 

Sat Oct-23-04 11:47 PM
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4. hmm I could be wrong but I thought it was like this...



Liberals believe that the state should not take freedoms from the people. The state was there only to serve the people and allow them the greatest of amount liberties and the least amount of state interference

Progressives want to see the state(s) move the entire populace toward a most just and egalitarian






world with corporations held to account

Socialists believe the people work for the state who then metes out the product of the people's labor to all regardless of contribution.

Conservatives just don't want any change whatsoever.

🙄 but hey, I could be wrong

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IrateCitizen (1000+ posts)     

Mon Oct-25-04 04:01 PM

Response to [Reply #4](#)

18. Correction regarding socialism...








Socialists believe the people work for the state who then metes out the product of the people's labor to all regardless of contribution.

What you're describing here is centralized communism, not socialism. Socialism is actually a system in which the WORKERS control and own the means of production. For instance, rather than a manufacturing facility being owned by a far-away corporate board, it would be owned and run by the workers. Management could be elected from amongst the workers by popular vote. Proceeds from production and the sale of goods are distributed amongst the workers, as opposed to the holders of capital.

Communism adheres to the maxim, "From each according to their ability, to each according to their needs." Socialism, OTOH, could be summed by, "From each according to their ability, to each according to their WORK."

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clydefrand ☆ (1000+ posts)     

Sat Oct-23-04 11:57 PM

Response to [Original message](#)

5. Ask them if they believe in Jesus Christ



If they say they do, then point out how "progressive" and "liberal" Jesus was for his day. He believed in the value of WOMEN (healed a woman who had been menstruating for years...she was in dire need of a D&C and some iron supplements)! Feeding those that hunger and thirst(go to the Sudan and do likewise), providing for the sick(health care. Was Jesus a capitalist? He threw those money lenders out of the temple...must have been lobbyists trying to curry favor with God. Now Jesus was really big time faith based. He dared to speak in public to a woman of ill repute. (Repugs do that, but in houses of ill repute.) 😊

These may be simplistic, but if they believe their mantra about compassionate conservatism and faith-based alliances, etc., they should hear this.


Ask them to explain what socialism means to them and to give examples of Kerry's stance on whatever it is they might come up with. I think if you start asking questions, they often don't have a clue when they say the word liberal as if it were a dirty word. Remind them that liberal meanings liberty...freedom...

And ask what does conservative mean to them. If it means being fiscally responsible, well, Bush certainly isn't. Look at our debt. Does it mean stopping special projects for the states that ask for them; ie, pork? Ask them to name them and if there are any in your state that some representative

or senator was instrumental in getting. Ask them who has the majority in Congress. Who has passed the bills that have caused the tremendous debt?

I believe in making them explain their views and why they think their choice is better than our choice.

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leftyandproud (1000+ posts) 


Sun Oct-24-04 08:44 AM
Response to [Original message](#)

6. There is NOTHING wrong with communism

Don't fall into their trap. I call myself a liberal but believe in many socialist/communist policies.

Like I said, NOTHING wrong with it. Be proud of your beliefs.

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eauclairliberal (1000+ posts) 


Sun Oct-24-04 08:58 AM
Response to [Original message](#)

7. RE: "Liberalism/Progressivism does not equal Socialism/Communism"

Think about the core beliefs of socialism.

Bush is America's modern day Trotsky. The only difference is that the proceeds of a "war time economy" are shifted to the proletariat.

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Darranar (1000+ posts) 

Sun Oct-24-04 10:17 AM
Response to [Reply #7](#)

11. Um, not quite...

socialism advocates control of the economy by the workers, and therefore allocation of wealth to those who actually do the work, while Bush's policies lead to a massive government subsidy for the rich. That's certainly not traditional capitalism, but it's hardly socialism.

Socialism is possible without a significant government. Anarcho-syndicalism, for instance, is an ideology based entirely on this principle. Corporate welfare, however, is naturally dependent on a large and powerful government.

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H2O Man ☆ (1000+ posts) 

Sun Oct-24-04 09:19 AM
Response to [Original message](#)

8. It's important for people to understand



the definitions of the words, and therefore the implications. Liberalism and progressivism refer to a political/social philosophy. Socialism and communism are economic philosophies. Then it is important to look at how these different theories have played out in practice.





Since we live in the United States, we might want to look here first. Just to start, let's consider liberalism: it's led, in real life, to the civil rights movement. The majority of Americans recognize that the civil rights movement was a good thing. It's led to the equal rights for women movement. Again, most believe this is good. It's led to programs to help the poor. Interestingly, of these three, it is the idea of helping the poor that the right wing republicans are most comfortable in attacking, despite its overlap with people of color and women.

Socialism is simply a government-run program. The highways, the public schools, medicaid and medicare, and the national parks programs fit into this definition. Curiously, the republicans are intent on serious cut-backs in funding of the public highways at the same time they are increasing funding to airlines. (Highways are used as a "commons" for the public, while airlines are a private industry. Hmmm?) As I posted a few days back, at a meeting in Sidney, NY Hilary Clinton said that if Bush stays in office, he will try to eliminate public education for large segments of our society. He wants to take Social Security funds to invest in the "free market": guess that mean Enron and Halliburton. And he is trying to open all the national parks to "private industry."

I think that liberals need to be progressive in terms of social services. I worked in human services for decades. The programs have problems. Poverty should not become entrenched; public assistance should not be a multi-generational way of life. But one of the most obvious answers is public works programs, similar to the CCC Camps and the WPA programs.

A person can be liberal/progressive, and believe in capitalism, socialism, or a mixed economy. Likewise, a person can be conservative, and still believe that government-run programs offer the best solution to specific problems in society.

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steve2470 ★ (1000+ posts)    

Sun Oct-24-04 09:22 AM





Response to [Reply #8](#)

9. great response - I consider myself a "humane capitalist"



basically, the capitalist system works the best IMO but raw capitalism is very brutal and inhumane. Therefore, the need for the government to protect ordinary, non-rich people.

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mr blur ★ (1000+ posts)    

Sun Oct-24-04 09:45 AM

Response to [Original message](#)

10. What's wrong with Socialism?



I've always considered myself a Socialist; the shame of our Labour Party here in the UK is that it's left its Socialist ideas/ideals far behind and is now nothing more than a watered-down version of the Tory Party - though many in the US, I'm guessing, would still see it as dangerously left-wing and pinko

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fwiff (181 posts)    

Sun Oct-24-04 10:22 AM





Response to [Original message](#)

12. one of my favorites....



I'm an ETHICAL capitalist. 😊

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steve2470 ★ (1000+ posts)    

Mon Oct-25-04 03:09 PM





Response to [Original message](#)

13. kick



kick

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Killarney (1000+ posts)    

Mon Oct-25-04 03:15 PM
Response to [Original message](#)

14. definitions here



Liberalism has NOTHING in common with socialism or communism. Two very different theories. Repukes just like to equate them to scare people to vote against Democrats.

liberal:

Favoring proposals for reform, open to new ideas for progress, and tolerant of the ideas and behavior of others; broad-minded.

liberalism:

A political theory founded on the natural goodness of humans and the autonomy of the individual and favoring civil and political liberties, government by law with the consent of the governed, and protection from arbitrary authority.







socialism:

Any of various theories or systems of social organization in which the means of producing and distributing goods is owned collectively or by a centralized government that often plans and controls the economy.

communism:

A theoretical economic system characterized by the collective ownership of property and by the organization of labor for the common advantage of all members.

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apnu  (1000+ posts)     

Mon Oct-25-04 04:03 PM
Response to [Reply #14](#)







19. kickety kick!



Great definations!



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Anarcho-Socialist  (1000+ posts)     

Mon Oct-25-04 03:30 PM
Response to [Original message](#)

15. RWers are lazy and don't read, let alone read a political science book



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Cerridwen  (1000+ posts)     

Mon Oct-25-04 03:49 PM
Response to [Original message](#)

16. Liberalism is about the individual; communism is about the group



Edited on Mon Oct-25-04 03:50 PM by nemdaille

They have always appeared to me to be polar opposites; despite what the U.S. War Department did to the definitions in the 40's (I think it was).

from www.dictionary.com - see below definitions.

Liberalism






2. A political theory founded on the natural goodness of humans and the **autonomy of the individual** and favoring civil and political liberties, government by law with the consent of the governed, and protection from arbitrary authority.

Communism

1. A system of government in which the state plans and controls the economy and a single, often authoritarian party holds power, claiming to make progress toward a higher social order in which all goods are equally **shared by the people**.

Edited to add: oops, previous poster beat me to it.

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Tierra_y_Libertad ☆ (1000+ posts)     

Mon Oct-25-04 05:24 PM
Response to [Original message](#)

21. It sure as hell doesn't equal capitalism.



Communism, socialism, anarchism, capitalism are all societal construct built in different ways around economic constructs. All can be democratic, the least of which would be capitalism.

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camero (1000+ posts)    





Mon Oct-25-04 05:30 PM
Response to [Original message](#)

22. Pubes are fascists



I ask whether the person speaking is a fascist.

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George_S (1000+ posts)    

Mon Oct-25-04 05:34 PM
Response to [Original message](#)

23. From The Oxford Companion to Philosophy

liberalism. One of the major political ideologies of the modern world, liberalism is distinguished by the importance it attaches to the civil and political rights of individuals. Liberals demand a substantial realm of personal freedom -- including freedom of conscience, speech, association, occupation, and, more recently, sexuality -- which the state should not intrude upon, except to protect others from

harm.





....

Liberalism first emerged as an important movement in Europe in the sixteenth century. Today, particularly after the decline of communism, it is the dominant ideology in many parts of the world. There are two familiar ways of explaining the rise of liberalism. On one view, liberalism grew of the recognition that toleration was the only alternative of the Wars of Religion. After innumerable wars, both Protestants and Catholics accepted that the state could not assume or impose a shared devotion to a single faith, and that the only stable basis for a political regime was to separate Church and State. Liberalism has simply extended this principle from the sphere of religion to other areas of social life where citizens have conflicting beliefs about the meaning and purpose of life. A liberal state does not seek to resolve these conflicts, but rather provides a 'neutral' framework within which citizens can pursue their diverse conceptions of the good life. Liberalism, on this view, is the only humane response to the inevitable pluralism and diversity of modern societies.

....

Dire warnings about liberalism's inability to contain the centrifugal tendencies of individual freedom can be found in every generation for the last three centuries, yet it appears that liberal societies have managed to endure while various forms of monarchy,, theocracy, authoritarianism, and communism have come and gone.


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DU AdBot (1000+ posts)    

Sun Sep 20th 2009, 03:24 PM
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