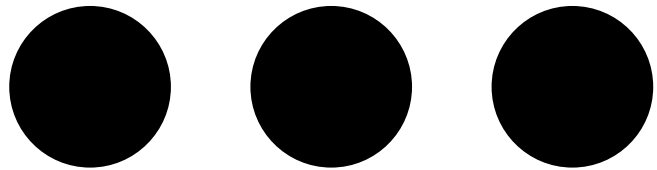




How Much Do Americans Sanction the Evil of Socialism?

Evil acts are given an aura of moral legitimacy by noble-sounding socialistic expressions, such as spreading the wealth, income redistribution, caring for the less fortunate, and the will of the majority. Let's have a thought experiment to consider just how much Americans sanction evil.

Imagine there are several elderly widows in your neighborhood. They have neither the strength to mow their lawns, clean their windows and perform other household tasks nor the financial means to hire someone to help them. Here's a question that I'm almost afraid to ask: Would you support a government mandate that forces you or one of your neighbors to mow these elderly widows' lawns, clean their windows and perform other household tasks? Moreover, if the person so ordered failed to obey the government mandate, would you approve of some sort of sanction, such as fines, property confiscation or imprisonment? I'm hoping, and I believe, that most of my fellow Americans would condemn such a mandate. They'd agree that it would be a form of slavery — namely, the forcible use of one person to serve the purposes of another.



Would there be the same condemnation if, instead of forcing you or your neighbor to actually perform weekly household tasks for the elderly widows, the government forced you or your neighbor to give one of the widows \$50 of your weekly earnings? That way, she could hire someone to mow her lawn or clean her windows. Would such a mandate differ from one under which you are forced to actually perform the household task? I'd answer that there is little difference between the two mandates except the mechanism for the servitude. In either case, one person is being forcibly used to serve the purposes of another.

I'm guessing that most Americans would want to help these elderly ladies in need but they'd find anything that openly smacks of servitude or slavery deeply offensive. They might have a clearer conscience if all the neighbors were forced (taxed) to put money into a government pot. A government agency would then send the widows \$50 to hire someone to mow their lawns and perform other household tasks. This collective mechanism makes the particular victim invisible, but it doesn't change the fact that a person is being forcibly used to serve the purposes of others. Putting the money into a government pot simply conceals an act that would otherwise be deemed morally depraved.



Written by [Walter E. Williams](#) on February 20, 2014

This is why socialism is evil. It employs evil means, confiscation and intimidation, to accomplish what are often seen as noble goals — namely, helping one's fellow man. Helping one's fellow man in need by reaching into one's own pockets to do so is laudable and praiseworthy. Helping one's fellow man through coercion and reaching into another's pockets is evil and worthy of condemnation. Tragically, most teachings, from the church on down, support government use of one person to serve the purposes of another; the advocates cringe from calling it such and prefer to call it charity or duty.

Some might argue that we are a democracy, in which the majority rules. But does a majority consensus make moral acts that would otherwise be deemed immoral? In other words, if the neighbors got a majority vote to force one of their number — under pain of punishment — to perform household tasks for the elderly widows, would that make it moral?

The bottom line is that we've betrayed much of the moral vision of our Founding Fathers. In 1794, when Congress appropriated \$15,000 for relief of French refugees who had fled from insurrection in San Domingo to Baltimore and Philadelphia, James Madison rose on the floor of the House of Representatives to object, saying, "I cannot undertake to lay my finger on that article of the Constitution which granted a right to Congress of expending, on objects of benevolence, the money of their constituents." Tragically, today's Americans — Democrat or Republican, liberal or conservative — would hold such a position in contempt and run a politician like Madison out of town on a rail.

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