



The Politically Incorrect Guide to Socialism

Kevin D. Williamson

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Stalin's gulag, impoverished North Korea, collapsing Cuba ... it's hard to name a dogma that has failed as spectacularly as socialism. And yet leaders around the world continue to subject millions of people to this dysfunctional, violence-prone ideology.

In *The Politically Incorrect Guide to Socialism*, Kevin Williamson reveals the fatal flaw of socialism — that efficient, complex economies simply can't be centrally planned. But even in America, that hasn't stopped politicians and bureaucrats from planning, to various extents, the most vital sectors of our economy: public education, energy, and the most arrogant central-planning effort of them all, Obama's healthcare plan.

In this provocative book, Williamson unfolds the grim history of socialism, showing how the ideology has spawned crushing poverty, devastating famines, and horrific wars. Lumbering from one crisis to the next, leaving a trail of economic devastation and environmental catastrophe, socialism has wreaked more havoc, caused more deaths, and impoverished more people than any other ideology in history — especially when you include the victims of fascism, which Williamson notes is simply a variant of socialism.

Williamson further demonstrates:

- * Why, contrary to popular belief, socialism in theory is no better than socialism in practice
- * Why socialism can't exist without capitalism
- * How the energy powerhouse of Venezuela, under socialism, has become an economic basket case subject to rationing and blackouts
- * How socialism, not British colonialism, plunged the bountiful economy of India into stagnation and dysfunction — and how capitalism is rescuing it
- * Why socialism is inextricably linked to communism

If you thought socialism went into the dustbin of history with the collapse of the Soviet Union, think again. Socialism is alive and kicking, and it's already spread further than you know.

The Politically Incorrect Guide to Socialism Details

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From Reader Review The Politically Incorrect Guide to Socialism for online ebook

Richard says

Socialism is even more evil that I thought! ;-)

John says

Great book. Great series. This guide will enlighten you as to all the ins and outs of Socialism: why it's inherently flawed and why it still lays claim to legions of enthusiastic proponents despite its truly abysmal track record.

Ray says

If you found yourself wanting more background as to why Obama was labeled as a socialist, or compared to Hitler, or a called a communist, this book may help address your questions. It's more than that, of course, but does give good background explaining failed socialist policies from around the world, and explains the concerns of many regarding the Obama Administration, Obamacare, and the reasons conservatives would be against those policies.

Kyle Labosky says

Imagine a fiscally conservative tea party economist reviewing socialism, and that is what this book is. On the whole it was very educational and informative. He ends up coming down relatively hard on American education, although not as hard as I would have liked. He has spent some time reading various Austrian economists like Mises and Hayek. The biggest weakness of this book is that he simply did not come down hard enough on various countries, including our own. This was to be expected from someone who does not subscribe to Austrian economics. The result is a rather shallow and cursory glance at the socialism of our country.

Still, it's highly recommended.

Elizabeth says

I think I hated this book. While I am no socialist or even a democrat, Williamson makes even the choice to drive a Prius instead of a Hummer a socialist choice because to do so is to reduce the amount of oil you consume personally. I don't think that a capitalist society is necessarily the one that consumes as much as they possibly can regardless of their wants or needs. A person is generally going to spend their money on something, that has been make clear. Spending it on oil is not necessarily the only place to spend it. I prefer

to buy food, straight from the farmer, not Wallstreet.

Having Wallstreet trade grain futures doesn't help the farmer or the hungry, it only helps Wallstreet and takes the free out of free trade because the hungry can no longer buy from the farmer. The farmer and the hungry is dependent on the good will of the mega rich. When is the price of grain high enough that the profits are enough? After half the country is starving and the other half is desperate? Wallstreet does not engage in supply and demand. They engage in profits by withholding the supply even if the supply starts to rot while they are holding it. While Wallstreet ownership of all grain may not be Socialism, it certainly is not capitalism. It is something far more corrupt and evil. Possibly food tyranny.

These are not his only points and some of what he says is very interesting but overall, while he seems very studied on socialism in the world, past and present, his opinions come across as very naive. As with his opinion on socialism, socialism in a perfect world may work perfectly, capitalism without greed and corruption may also work perfectly.

He seems to attribute any possitive environmental workings in capitalism to the good intentions of the corporation and talks about accountAbility. That accountability is not the doing of the corporations, that is the EPA. Another hated, big government organization. Does anyone realize that nothing in America would be edible or potable if the government hadn't stepped in and forced the capitalist corporations to look to something else besides their own profits? Maybe socialists are even worse when the government is heartless and thoughtless but last time I checked, all of Europe was not poluted beyond repair.

Joe Chernicoff says

Kevin D. Williamson's great book on a historically (fact history) and relevant topic for today's political world should be read by everyone. As I have written before, my four decades on this planet have allowed me to appreciate the facts within this text. Easy to read, and most interestingly written, "Politically Incorrect..." is another book, which read in tandem with the other books I am reading, and have read, helps cement a very styrong picture of realty in this geo-political world.

Patrick says

Great. Williamson shows how socialism (defined as central planning of non-public goods/services) is always disruptive at best, deadly at worst. The past century has made it clear that socialism is simply inconsistent with how the world works, which makes its advocates either arrogant or naive (or both). I also enjoyed Williamson's thoughts on what we really ought to be doing to reform healthcare. Highly recommended.

Christopher Stevenson says

Intellectually dishonest. Central planning isn't socialism. Central planning is model of organization, which nearly every single group or enterprise uses. It's cute to run around quoting libertarian or Austrian economists, but taking snippets out of context is pretty dishonest and lazy.

Jason says

I was looking for a balanced view of marxism, socialism, and communism. This wasn't it.

It was an anti-central planning rant using the same kind of broad strokes as Ann Coulter.

Jeff says

A bit uneven in its clarity, chapter by chapter, but a very enlightening book. Some of the best chapters involve the oil industry and the current US pursuit of "energy independence", of our supposed overspending on health care and overconsumption of energy, and the economics of the public education system. Not quite as top-notch as Jonah Goldberg's "Liberal Facism", but at the same time a more readable and a more topical description of socialist theory and practice, and the history and limitations of its practical implementation around the world (including Sweden, the supposed poster child of socialist utopias). Highly recommended.

Jeremy Walker says

Very good book for defining that which Americans refuse to define: Socialism.

Socialism, Communism, and the likes, are always seen as a problem in other countries, but not here in America. Other countries are criticized for their oppressions and evils, but in America we have FREEDOM!

We'll as it turns out "freedom" in America is not what people think, nor is it free at all.

Before you can fix a problem you have to identify it. This book does a good job of doing just that.

Jacob says

I would probably give this 2.5 stars if I could go half way. I liked it but not a whole lot. It suffers from what I suspect is too narrow a focus (much like the Politically Incorrect Guide to Global Warming, which was just fine as a chapter in the PIG Science book). Similarly, this could probably have been a chapter in the PIG Economics book. In its efforts to comment on the current state of the US, it has unfortunately dated itself with the sheer volume of references to the Obama administration and ObamaCare, so I suspect it won't hold up well.

On the other hand, some of the ideas are interesting. The author defines socialism as government control of an economy, or at least part of it. This is a fairly useful definition, although it tends to make capitalism stand out as the only non-socialist government. The author points out that nationalism and fascism are thus socialism by other names. I can wrap my mind around this, but not when by definition, monarchy and even

feudalism would also be included.

The book does have some interesting ideas, such as how the US National Highway system was a socialist enterprise. In addition, the last chapter is quite good about how the prices of things give us vital information, and if we obscure that information, e.g. by having health insurance pay for things instead of ourselves, costs get out of whack and are kept from capitalism's ruthless efficiency due to competition and choice. It would have been more fun to read if the other chapters had similarly inspiring arguments and wry humor.

Walter Kuriger says

I love truth. This book shows the continued falacies of socialism, and the refusal to accept the true impact that socialism has on cultures, people groups, and even the earth. Socialism is a plague that should be eradicated. An excellent book.

Adam says

People say socialism hasn't worked because real socialism hasn't been tried. I've put something similar forward – maybe communism hasn't worked because 1) it hasn't been done as prescribed and 2) maybe you need many other countries to be communist in order for it to work. To be clear, I don't think this argument works but it's something I considered. The author says non-ideal capitalism beats non-ideal socialism and I think that deals with point 1 above. I'd also add that capitalism works no matter if other countries are capitalist (although perhaps its efficacy would be different). I suppose as a thought experiment you could posit that ideal communism beats ideal capitalism but it would be a hard case to argue.

One great argument the author put forward is that one of the problems with socialism is it relies too heavily on arbitrary definitions such as the definition of a unit of labour. For example, if you tell people they will be paid x amount for y weight of iron nails they may just produce massive nails that no one can use. Another example: when school funding was awarded according to graduation rates, apparently, standards lowered (I don't know if this is really true but the logic is sound).

I like a bit of socialism. Free education for kids (which is in the communist manifesto); access to basic healthcare for all. The author seems to be in favour of a mixed economy (me too), but where capitalism generally predominates. I think he made a good case.

I'd recommend reading some books that disagree with this position (as I will) because I'm not sure he was always thoroughly honest in debunking socialism, nor admitting the problems with capitalism.

Boris says

Nice book. Sometimes it makes too much Milton Friedman style arguments for my taste. However, it is a detailed analysis about the false assumptions of socialism. Specially, it helped me to understand how flawed socialism is about pricing and their romanticism about how the world works. I had an intuition about its extreme romanticism after reading the communist manifesto. But now all my intuitions were confirmed: "Socialism is (a) a romantic denial of economic facts, (b) a moralization of economics, (c) an open invitation

to corruption, (d) a conscious denial about market prices, (e) an ideology followed by history's biggest murderers (Hitler, Stalin, Mussolini, Lennin, etc.) ".
