

International and national socialism are no more disastrous than is . . .

Coercion

AT THE

LOCAL LEVEL

ROBERT LEFEVRE

WE ARE, it seems, so alarmed and dismayed by the *amounts* of money taken from us by our federal government that we are prone to resist the advance into socialism not on the basis of principle, but on the basis of the numbers of dollars we are losing.

We do not like to object to the income tax on principle. We prefer to object because the income tax is taking so much money.

We do not like to object to the collectivist philosophy of labor unions. We prefer to object to unions because they have become such an enormous reservoir of financial potency and because some of their leaders have been found corrupt.

We do not object to the draft. We raise our voices because so many men are involved. Further, we object because our young men are impressed into service for a

period of eight long years. Why do we quibble over the years or the numbers of men involved? To take one man by force and to hold him where he does not want to be, even for five minutes, is immoral.

We do not object to having the government run schools. We object because the government is increasing the amounts of money it takes from us to run the schools. And now we object because the larger (federal) unit of government is taking a more active part in our educational picture. But is it all right when the local governments do the same things?

It seems it is size that impresses us, not fundamentals. If the evil that confronts us appears to be small in size, though deadly in its contradiction to the great truths of life, we are prone to ignore it. What can a little thing like that do to harm us, we ask. But when the evil has expanded, not in violation of principle but in size relating to the numbers of

1959

COERCION AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

33

persons affected or the amounts of dollars involved, then we become alarmed.

We condoned the post office for years not because the government ought to be running it but because the government managed for about seventy-five years to keep the deficit rather small. Now that the deficit has grown to gigantic size we are upset. But the direction of our cry of outrage is usually not to strike at the fundamental violation of principle which is inherent. It is rather to reduce the size of the deficit. And if the size of the deficit is reduced, then, with the canker still working, we subside with the illusion that we have wrought a cure.

Blind Devotion to Size

It is this impressionistic devotion to mass, to Gargantua, which has Americans enthralled. That is why so many of us can see and clearly recognize socialism in our federal government. It is there, openly apparent, readily discernible because the federal government is huge. We require no magnifying glass to read the dark inscription of socialist rule and ruin being written on our federal wall. We can read it without our glasses.

This is the reason — it must be the reason — so few of our fellow Americans fail to recognize social-

ism in our state and local governments. By comparison with the federal oligopoly, even such a giant state government as California or New York stands dwarfed. And when we get down to such puny administrative governmental units as counties, school districts, and cities, we shrug and go on our way without a second thought.

What could any government as small as one of these do toward advancing socialism? Also, such governmental units are right under our noses. The men and women in them are local people. We know them. They are our neighbors. If one or another of them gets out of line, we can always replace them. Socialists? Not for a minute. These are the backbone of America.

They are so much the backbone of America, in fact, that with virtually one voice our local politicians have beseeched Washington to pour more money into their coffers for their own pet projects. Of course, all of this money, whether it is taken locally to be spent locally or taken nationally to be spent locally or taken locally to be spent nationally, is still our money. What we seem to object to is the seizing of our money nationally to be spent internationally. But what is this but an expansion of the original violation of principle

Mr. LeFevre is President of The Freedom School and is also responsible for the editorial page of the *Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph*