

of many pages in the great religious books of all world religions. The reasons are easily seen by thoughtful people of all faiths, and even by those who claim no faith. In the early days of the American frontier there was a saying worth pondering long: "Don't eat the seed grain." Socialism regularly eats the seed grain.

The Steps to Progress

The free market proceeds in a very orderly, step-by-step, manner. Step one is vision. The poor, but free, man sees himself improved by his own labor. His is not the vision of a robber whose soul covets the rewards of another man's toil. And it is not the vision of a fool who can be enticed into a get-rich-quick scheme: he doesn't plan to give his meager surplus, when he has saved it, to someone who presents an image of cleverness and strength superior to his own. He will rely on his own arm, and the help that lies at the end of it. So his vision is clear and specific. He knows always just what he needs in order to do more efficiently just what he does well already.

Step two is to go through the sacrifice and self-denial of living on less than he earns for however long he must to save enough to purchase some tool or capital good that he needs to increase his productivity. He has vision for muscle and hope for fat to keep him going. He even may have to beg to get to the point

where he can save. The socialist world has forgotten that it is better to beg than to steal, that it is better to give what is your own than what you took from another, and that it is better to look for those in need than to wait until they unite and break down your door. Socialists visualize a utopia where hungry mouths are filled with legal plunder. And they forget the blood and tears that follow the plunderers, the tax men.

Step three is the purchase of the capital item. It may be nothing more than a cultivator to take the place of a hoe to use in a garden that will now produce more—maybe enough for a wayside fruit and vegetable stand. Or it may be enough to purchase a fast-food franchise so the family can have a business instead of a lifetime of the bondage of wage-earning and unemployment lines. To a nineteenth-century Jewish or Italian immigrant it may have been a push-cart for a vending business which, from that humble beginning, could have grown, in one lifetime, to a million dollar enterprise if the same virtues that started the business were perpetuated when it succeeded.

Self-Control

The common element of all virtues is self-denial. If you would not murder, deny yourself the luxury of anger. If you would practice moral rectitude, deny your mind evil thoughts and your eyes enticing im-

ages. If you wish to possess the soul of one who can be trusted with other men's money and goods, kill your covetousness by being quick to give the poor what they need when they ask if you are able. Don't send them away with a promise of future generosity if you have the means to do it right now. This will make it possible to be wealthy and yet not feel guilty in your wealth like the rich prophets of socialism do. Socialism takes this pleasure and virtue of giving away from you. Remember, a bitter fountain cannot bring forth good water. Charity must be voluntary to be virtuous. Those who practice voluntary charity are improved by it. The reason it works is that self-denial becomes a habit, a way of life; and it is the fuel which runs all those who achieve great and good goals—those whose labor is the foundation of all the good production of this world.

Step four, of course, is that careful and industrious use of the capital item purchased from savings. And step five is the same process all over again—vision and self-denial practiced on a high enough level to insure replacement of the capital item when it is worn out. And more: there must be a greater savings than before because there is greater income. And one who can start this kind of program for the purpose of greater consumption—improvement of the living standard—must not make

consumption an end in itself or he will lose the virtue that saved him from starvation in the first place.

The Socialist Program

The first step in the socialist program of improvement also begins with vision. But it is not the vision of an individual trying to improve his lot with his own labor and his own capital, saved, begged or borrowed. It is the vision of conspirators who have looked at the misery of mankind and have appointed themselves as the saviors of the unfortunate. Calling them conspirators is neither overly dramatic nor an exaggeration. They fit any reasonable standard for the use of the word. It is an interesting fact that it is almost impossible to get good people to conspire to do anything. They mostly want to be about their own business and rarely presume to know enough to plan the lives of others.

Yes, "big business" has been caught in conspiracies quite regularly during the past several decades. But, other than those cases that are misrepresentations and of the sort that fit the damned-if-you-do and damned-if-you-don't dilemmas served up by government agencies, it can be shown that government planners either handed them the opportunity or forced them into it. Almost nothing that is going on in American business today is pure free enterprise. Indeed, no business activity is