

"Writing the truth  
as I see it;  
trying not to  
offend  
those who will  
disagree."

# The truth as I see it™

Idaho Common Sense™



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## The fraud of socialism

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Leicester University in England recently ranked Denmark as the happiest country. What is their secret? By their own admission they are a socialist, welfare state providing everything for everyone from birth to death. And they freely, almost proudly admit they pay for it with the highest income taxes in the world.

Were we wrong to fight the Revolutionary War with the British Empire to free us from the bonds of a government that decided what was best for us? Were we wrong to die for freedom and opportunity, rejecting government servitude? Were we wrong to want the freedom and risk of independence rather than the safety and security of a paternal government?

Let's look at Denmark more closely. In America we have the burden of deciding if we will attend church and if so, what church we will attend. Not so in Denmark. Their Internet site <http://www.denmark.dk/en/> states, "the Evangelical Lutheran Church, as the established Church of Denmark, shall be supported by the State." Denmark kindly removed the difficulty of decision making. No need to think; the government is there to decide for you. Is that freedom?

Denmark provides "free" public health. With the highest income taxes in the world, it must be a superb, all inclusive system. Not so. The patient has significant co-payments. Moreover, as in other socialist countries, about a third of the people purchase supplemental insurance to help cover what the "free" government healthcare does not. Is that equality?

Further, access to healthcare is tightly regulated, with waiting times of more than a year for "elective" surgeries. About five percent of the people solve this problem by purchasing insurance that allows them to "jump waiting lists," buying the spot on the top of the list. Is that equality?

Denmark also provides free higher education. Again, there are downsides. "Central planners" decide how many people are needed in any given occupation. Students are then placed in the degree program the central planners decide is best for the country. Interestingly, 15% of Danes have bachelor degrees, similar to fellow socialist countries Sweden and Norway; but that is half of the 26% with bachelor degrees in the United States. Does this suggest that choice, opportunity, and dreams are more important than a guaranteed education? Is that freedom?

The realities of this welfare state. In the 1970s 300,000 Danes were on welfare. Now, over 2 million people, 40% of the adult population, are on "government transfer income" (welfare) with an unchanged population of five and a half million people. Another 1 million are below the age of 18 and not working or paying taxes. That leaves only two and a half million people to work and pay taxes. Of these, nearly 1 million work for the government, leaving only one and a half million people in a country of 5 and a half million who are not on welfare or working for the government. Is that equality?

How long can they increase the number of people on welfare and decrease the number of people paying the bills before the bucket is empty? By their own admission they never realized they would provide benefits to so many people for so long. What did they think would happen?

And how do they pay for this? Their real tax rate, including excise and sales taxes, is over 70%, with 40% of workers paying a marginal rate of 63.33% on any income over \$33,000 a year. Their sales tax is 25% and there is a 180% "special tax" on car purchases. The government uses punitive taxes to not only pay for the welfare programs

but also to control the people's spending habits. Is that equality and freedom?

Are socialist countries operating like America's old fashioned "company towns;" the only difference being the company is now the government? Have they traded freedom and opportunity for a guaranteed, indentured servitude existence? Is their only real freedom being freed from the burden of making a choice? Is that freedom?

How happy are the Danes? Danish newspaper columnist, Sebastian Dorset said, "If you didn't tell me about the survey I wouldn't believe you...because everybody complains all the time." A college student was surprised when he studied abroad and saw so many students laughing and joking. According to Per Henrik Hansen of the Mises Institute, "Young people have virtually no chance to improve their lot in life, to take risks, to make it big through innovation and entrepreneurship." Danes have low expectations and are rarely disappointed. Is that happiness?

We too can have all that the Danes have. All we have to do is trade opportunity for mediocrity. All we have to do is trade freedom for indentured servitude. All we have to do is trade dreams for "good enough." All we have to do is trade our self determination for an acceptance of our lot in life. All we have to do is trade those who died for freedom for a handout.

With all its blemishes, all its inequities, all its unfairness; our democracy is the most wondrous and magnificent dream of mankind. Is it worth fixing?

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