

Freedom, Emotion, and Fascism

A Psycho-Sociological Analysis of the
Modern American Progressive
Movement

Marc D. Schifanelli

Copyright © 2022, 2024 Marc D. Schifanelli

All rights reserved.

ISBN: 9798871518632

5

INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM

*“Yes! To this thought I hold with firm persistence;
The last thought of wisdom stamps it true:
He only earns his freedom and existence,
Who daily conquers them anew.”*

- Goethe's *Faust*

“A freedom which is interested in only denying freedom must be denied.”

- Simone de Beauvoir, *The Ethics of Ambiguity*

For the last two hundred and fifty years, Americans have enjoyed and reaped the benefits of a human condition known as *Freedom*. We speak of freedom almost daily: “I can do what I want,” we often hear, “it’s a free country.” Freedom of speech, religion, and assembly, along with a whole host of other “natural rights” are revered by mainstream Americans. They are often invoked by individuals and are protected by the Bill of Rights – a non-negotiable demand made by several of the state delegations to the Constitutional Conventions before they would ratify that founding document in 1789.⁴⁶

Most of us *feel* we are free. We often reflect on “freedom of choice,” and many of us can pick up stakes and move to another neighborhood or even another part of the country if we

prefer. We can look for another job with better hours or a better wage...or not. Maryland claims it is “The Free State.” Several conservative Congressional lawmakers formed a “Freedom Caucus,” while even those on the political Left, e.g., the Congressional Progressive Caucus, promote their platforms and agendas by claiming they want “freedom for everyone and not just the rich.” We all understand that freedom is the direct opposite of slavery, and that slavery was outlawed nationally by process of the same Constitution – for the first time in human history and less than a century after its 1789 ratification.

Despite this, there is a fair share of vagueness as to what freedom really is, where it came from in its uniquely American form, or how critical it is to the human condition. Philosophers ancient and modern have attended to these questions and, as philosophers are inclined, came to no clear consensus. What is clear is that, while many Americans who are typically right of the political center understand and fully value freedom, there are many around us who do not. People in a modern free society are, ironically, often too busy to contemplate exactly what being free means:

“Suddenly great old words have a hollow sound. Freedom? The average man knows in his heart what it means. His conscious concept, however, is tied up with and formulated in terms of these or those material conditions. They have been taken for granted and now they are threatened. He cannot recognize freedom, and so all meaning goes overboard and leaves a vacuum. What does ‘freedom of speech,’ ‘pursuit of happiness,’ or ‘democracy’ mean, unless I know how to earn a decent living by doing decent work? The scaffold of thinking that guides discourse begins to totter,

confidence deserts, indefinite fear invades the bewildered mind, impairs our faculty of orientation and thus of action."⁴⁷

“Freedom,” wrote one person recently on his social media page, “is when you don’t have to worry about losing your job and going hungry, losing your health insurance, or your shelter and you can invest your energy on the things that really matter – like family, creativity, being happy, etc.”⁴⁸ While emotions like worry, fear, and the search for “being happy” and “creative” are all considered part of his definition of freedom, what is obviously unclear for him is that someone else will be required to work and pay for those things he needs to find his happiness, creativity, and worry-free existence, i.e., his definition of “freedom.”

To understand how emotions can undermine Freedom and how Fascism and ultimately Communism can destroy it for everyone, it’s helpful to first have a deeper understanding of what freedom is in the fundamental sense and, just as importantly, how we as Americans have arrived at our current state of freedom – one that is envied by many individuals around the world who try, often employing desperate means, to come here for no other reason than to experience it and reap its benefits.

Only the human *individual* can emotionally experience freedom: to “feel free.” He or she can live in, of course, a “free country,” and a country may *claim* to be free, but it is only so in the sense that its people are not dominated by the forced will of another nation or that its citizens, its people, are generally not constrained by an oppressive government that prevents them from designing and pursuing their individual desires and goals. A nation, state, or collective does not experience the emotions

consistent with being human – no more than any other customary or legal body, like a corporation, does. The latter may exhibit a particular corporate culture, the former a national culture, and may even be said to have a particular group or collective psyche, but as legal or theoretical constructs they do not *feel* desire, hope, happiness, or the contentment and even regret that can accompany the freedom of being able to make and pursue one's own choices in life – emotions that only individuals can experience.

Similarly, only the human individual can truly experience and appreciate the loss of freedom – having it taken from him by physical incarceration, slavery, mental coercion, or simply through intimidation and fear.⁴⁹ Although individuals may experience those emotions concomitant with a loss of freedom, the collective has no more capacity than a corporation to feel the frustration, humiliation, and the fear inherent in subservience to the state when that freedom is contested or lost.

To *be* free, an individual needs to be able to pursue her own chosen aspirations in life and to fulfill her human potential, however manifested, with which she has been graced - to be the best that she can in her choices in life and with the least amount of interference by government or any other body. A government that engages in anything more than providing those common goods necessary to pursue one's own aspirations, e.g., policing sufficient to prevent citizens from physical assault or robbery of their earnings, maintaining a professional military that protects them from those foreign powers that would aspire to impose upon them any system antithetical to freedom, and to honestly maintain the public infrastructure that provides them the opportunity to engage in private pursuits – constricts their

aspirations. They are stymied and left unfulfilled in their endeavors and therefore not free. On the other hand, a government that protects one's freedom to aspire to one's fullest potential, a government that provides for those common goods necessary to pursue such aspirations, is a government whose power is checked and with the result that its citizens will experience the greatest freedom possible – for which they will willingly contribute through paying “their fair share” to support, for example, the common defense.

So where did modern freedom begin? True freedom - *the ability to chart and pursue one's course in life without interference* - was not something that appeared overnight on or around July 4th, 1776, to cause a Revolution. On the contrary, the freedom that Americans enjoy today began to take shape long ago in Europe as that continent was emerging from the Dark Ages - some seven hundred years before the American Revolution. The Dark Age (lately also called the “Gray Age” or “Dark Medieval Age”) was that period in European history that followed the final destruction of the Holy Roman Empire in 476 A.D. with the defeat of Rome's final Emperor at the hands of a German Barbarian. This *coup de grace* came after a long period of Roman moral and social decline finally ending ancient Europe's glorious age – the era that saw an organized civilization of Roman law, technological advances, unprecedented feats of architectural and civil engineering, and extensive trade throughout and beyond the Roman Empire with what was then the limits of the “known world.”⁵⁰

As the continent left these “glory days” further behind, illiteracy became the norm – Latin would be lost to most, except within the Church. The Roman tradition of *chronicling*

contemporary and recent history ended, leaving posterity in “the dark” as too much of what was to transpire in Europe for nearly the next six centuries. Peasants who lived during this time may have tread over stone bridges still standing or gazed upon the ruins of pillared buildings and aqueducts – still standing but dry – while having no clue as to the people who had built them, or the skills used in their creation. They had little idea of the past except what they could either immediately remember or what was passed down through storytelling. Man’s creation was professed through the Church and the Bible which itself was inaccessible for most because of their illiteracy, making them dependent on the clergy to interpret it.

Europe was at this time a comparative “backwater,” at least when compared to other contemporary civilizations around the world, including those in Asia and the Middle East. It engaged in little trade outside of its geographical boundaries. There was little in the way of technological invention and, in the instances that it did occur, little in the way of communicating and disseminating it outside of a small area. Invaders consistently raided and plundered: the invasions increasing in severity and frequency up through the Ninth Century. For defense, communities gathered under the protection of strong authoritarian characters – the forerunners of the Medieval period kings – who in exchange for subservience from the population, provided military leadership. Eventually, these men came to be characterized by strong autocratic rule with final and absolute authority during peacetime and supreme military command during times of conflict.

Archeologists and historians have only recently begun to learn much more about European society during the otherwise

obscure period between 467 and around 1000 A.D. (hence, now often referred to as the “Gray Ages”). Vestiges of the Holy Roman Empire did certainly survive, not least of all the Catholic Church and the application of Roman law in many areas throughout the Continent. Furthermore, not all the invaders came as or remained plunderers. Many came as ‘colonizers’ - bringing with them their own cultural ideas and inventions. As trade gradually increased and outside threats subsided somewhat, Europe boasted a rather vibrant society that moved it out of the Dark Age. What emerged around the 11th Century and the early Medieval Age was a society defined by a simple caste system: Nobility, the Clergy, and the Commoners, or “those who fought, those who prayed, and those who worked.” From a per capita perspective, this system reflected a pyramid, with the nobility occupying the narrow tip, the clergy in the middle tier, and everybody else in the bottom tier.

The Nobility were the lords and landowners. They were knights and leaders who by tacit or explicit agreement offered their abilities to rally warriors, make political alliances, and lead men into battle in defense of the community or their lord. These also included the kings, a station that had been solidified during the relative anarchy and insecurity of the Dark Ages. By the time of the Medieval period, many ruled by “Divine Authority.” That is, they were considered, and considered themselves, to have been ordained by God to rule over their subjects for the greater good of the kingdom. It was customary that, in exchange for the general security and welfare provided by the king, the nobles and landowners with lesser station would swear allegiance to him and rally for the defense, or offense, when called. They were all committed to the service of the king, and each in his turn could

call on those able-bodied men who lived on his land to serve as foot soldiers in military campaigns. It was a necessary and willing relationship that protected both kings, nobility, the Church, and ultimately, the collective.

And the kings and their nobles had one major commodity in common: land. They were landowners of vast acreages, much of it cultivated croplands and often with huge manors or castles situated on them. In fact, by the year 1066, most European land was cultivated and owned by the nobility, with another healthy portion owned by the Catholic Church. There were, in fact, few areas not cultivated, and fewer parts were still forested. The nobles, of course, were not performing the labor needed to care for the land and make it produce. They relied upon the commoners and serfs, “those who worked.” Few, if any, peasants at that time owned the land they lived on. Rather, they ‘leased’ it or lived on it by leave of the landowner or nobleman. In exchange, they plowed, sowed, and harvested his crops. They tended to his livestock and horses, mended walls and fences, served as woodcutters and cooks, and so forth. In short, they provided the labor that the landowner needed to maintain or increase his own wealth and status. The nobleman would also allow them to keep a portion of their harvests as sustenance for themselves and their family. Other customs included gifting something to the nobleman on his birthday, and a system of inheritance tax when the head of household died – to compensate the Nobleman for the loss of a valuable hand. Notably, there was no “wage,” as we understand that word today, exchanged for the Serf’s labor, but only an agreement (often hereditary and spanning generations) of subservience and allegiance to the nobleman and with the right to live on his land and benefit from

his protection in return.

Children born on a noble's land were raised to learn the skills necessary to care for the noble's estate or his family. Young boys started early at learning husbandry, repair work, planting, hunting, and harvesting. If he could acquire a weapon as a young adult, then in the event of war he could join his noble on campaign as a soldier. If lucky, he might return home with something of value looted from some conquered adversary's lands and possessions. Young women learned domestic skills and cooked for the family as well as the nobleman and his family. They made clothes and, of course, caring for the younger children. There was little opportunity except in the case of marriage, for geographical relocation.

Many children born on a noble's land never left it and would later be buried on it. While he had served his own lord, his children often served his lord's sons in a continuous succession that could span generations. As with geographical mobility, there was virtually no "upward mobility" either. Largely without exception, a person lived and died as a member of the class into which he was born. The exception was for those who were accepted into the clergy – often enough commoners who swore a life of devotion at a young age to God and the Church – but also members of the nobility who forewent their inheritance for a similarly devoted life. St. Thomas Aquinas, for example, was born to a wealthy family and sent to one of the universities that were popping up throughout Europe in the new era of enlightenment. In 1243 he joined the Dominicans and lived out most of his remaining life in a Monastery.

By providing the promise of the Kingdom of Heaven upon one's death, the Church offered comfort to commoners and

nobles alike. To the commoner and his terrestrial toils, sickness and disease, sorrow for the loss of loved ones, and other misfortune when it struck, his faith gave him strength, a reason to be and, when unsure, a way to look for guidance. If his life was something less than virtuous at times, the sinner was sure he could be absolved for all but the most serious of sins through confession and perhaps a fair penance. For the noble, however, if his sins were those within the more serious cardinal category, all but assuring his burning in Hell upon his death, relief was still available: through confession and absolution. Typically, this was done by a bishop or cardinal who had the power – authorization by the church - to expunge those grave sins. Of course, this cost in the way of a hefty donation to the Church, often in gold or silver but land was accepted as well. This had two effects. First and most obvious, many a noble avoided his destiny in Hell where his similarly situated serf did not. Second, the Church soon became the second-largest landholder in the Medieval world.

For the commoner, life was predetermined for him at birth. His destiny consisted of growing old and dying. Many never fulfilled that destiny, as life could be interrupted easily, early, and permanently. But despite all the hardship, life in early Medieval Europe was quite stable and secure. That is, everyone knew his place, what was expected of him or her, and what role they were to play at any given time. For the commoner, most of all, but also in some ways the nobility and the clergy, the Medieval caste system provided sociological and psychological stability. One was pretty sure to have a roof over his head each night and food on his table. Except perhaps in the most extreme of circumstances, the commoner and his family lived securely under the watch of his lord's knights and soldiers. Short of an

invasion or disease, all was relatively safe.

There were few of the modern worries of society of today, those “modern problems” such as “looking for a job,” wondering where and when the next paycheck would arrive, or how to put food on the table and diapers on the children. People in those times may not yet have been free to “chart and pursue their own course in life,” or to pursue fame and fortune, but for the most part they were content to live as they had always lived and generations before them had lived. If one could today ask a commoner of that time what it meant at that time “to be free,” he would likely give the inquirer a queer enough look, and perhaps his answer would suggest something like not having been taken hostage by an enemy or simply not being stuck in a dungeon somewhere. He knew his work, he had security in exchange for allegiance, and his Church promised him salvation, making his toil here on earth the more bearable.

The landowning nobility, on the other hand, were in a somewhat different position. They too had been born into their own class and with little to say about it. However, the noble not only had more control over his day-to-day affairs but also over his life-long aspirations. What allowed him this greater degree of ‘freedom’ was his wealth, and how much wealth, largely limited only by the volume of land he owned, was the only restriction on what he could do in practical terms of power.

Challenging Authority and the Rise of Capitalism

And power, as it has throughout the history of mankind, can corrupt. A corrupted king, such as England’s King John in the 1200s, could have the desire to cause his vassals to suffer much

abuse. Apparently, however, only to a point. If his vassals united against him, then he had problems. And as it happened in 1215, and in a move that is widely regarded as the first step toward the spirit of the freedom that we enjoy today, King John's vassals - his barons - did after years of abuse revolt. John had ruled over them for sixteen years by regularly employing violence, blackmail, extortion, and other abuses until his barons had finally had enough. They drafted a document, the Magna Carta Libertatum, which laid out restrictions on the scope of his power and that of future English kings and delivered it with an ultimatum: sign it or risk civil war and, naturally, his head.

John signed it, and in June of 1215, the Magna Carta circumscribed the power of English kings and provide certain "rights" for the lesser nobility. Of course, the nobles who confronted King John were not particularly concerned with the rights of their commoners, only of themselves as nobles and landholders. But as time passed and the Magna Carta endured - often invoked in English courts of Common Law - commoners began to see within its principles that they increasingly invoked for their own protection as well. It would later serve as the basis for the right to petition the courts by writ, for example, a writ of habeas corpus - a demand requiring an accused to be timely brought before a court and charged, and not held indefinitely without trial. It also became the source of more legal protections and principles that would not only find their way into England's courts - but also in the country's future colonies and directly into the United States Constitution and Bill of Rights (including the Fourteenth Amendment, passed after the American Civil War, whose provisions can be traced directly back to the Magna Carta).

Still, for the commoner in the immediate aftermath of the

events of 1215, not much was different in the way of freedom. This began to change in the middle of the Fourteenth Century. The agent of that change was the Bubonic Plague, also known as the Black Plague or, as it was known in Europe during its time, simply the Black Death. By the 1300s, Europe was no longer a 'backwater' with little international trade. Cities and seaports of significant size had developed, many boasting growing artisan classes and facilitating robust trade with cities in North Africa and the Middle East. Along with the sea trade in goods, of course, came the animal kingdom's natural stowaway: the black rat. He brought with it a flea that brought with it the Black Plague bacteria.

The Plague had been running its course in China, India, Persia, and Egypt before finally making its way along trade routes to Europe in 1347. In the course of a few short years, the Plague hit all parts of Europe, and although it would come back time and again to cause new outbreaks in Europe during the next one hundred years, this first outbreak devastated Europe's population. In some cases, the populations of entire towns were wiped out. Histories document young children that were found alone – living quite ferally – after their entire family and community had succumbed to the plague. People diagnosed with the plague in the morning were often dead by evening – if they were lucky. Others, depending on the method of infection, wasted away more slowly and in great pain before succumbing. Within just a decade, the Plague took with it upwards of fifty percent of Europe's continental population.

This death rate dramatically affected the economic relationship of the commoner with the noble. As the Plague took its toll, the workers – on whose labor the nobles depended to

make their lands profitable – began to be buried in it instead of working on it. In many instances, whole communities disappeared as the Black Death took all inhabitants with it, leaving no one to take care of the noble's lands. In other cases, it was the nobles themselves – often enough along with their extended families - who passed into eternity. The net result was vast tracts of lands and outbuildings deserted, unclaimed, and as the plagued years wore on, overgrown. For the first time in history, there was a labor shortage, and it was this shortage that signaled the ushering in of the vestiges of a new phenomenon – Capitalism.

Labor – or its scarcity – became in the mid-1300s western Capitalism's most resonant commodity crisis. Commoners used it to barter with desperate nobles who needed it. Better working conditions and in some cases, remuneration besides just the usual “room and board” were the result. For the first time, commoners began working for and expecting a wage. If one landowner couldn't or wouldn't pay a wage, or a high enough wage, then a commoner might find a better wage from the next landowner down the pike. Likewise, commoners and their families could simply pick up stakes and occupy lands that were now deserted due to the Black Death having done its work not only on the noble landowner but all his legal heirs. After clearing it, caring for it, and then making it produce for decades, commoners quieted these lands as their own. In that way, once serfs, they now began creating their own wealth, self-reliance, and new social status.

Meanwhile, trade with distant lands resumed and as the economy again took off, a burgeoning merchant class began to develop – “new money” dynasties began to arise with demand for imported goods from distant lands, and distant demand for

exported European goods increased. The discovery of the Americas in 1492 created demand for Caribbean products such as sugar and coffee (and setting off what would come to be called “the Colombian Exchange”). Whereas Columbus had been required to rely upon Queen Isabella to finance his initial voyages in search of a shorter trade route to India, as exploration of the Americas continued, groups of investors began to pool their own money and share the risks of financing ventures across the Atlantic for profit – to “make money” as it were for profit’s sake – and not so much for gloria patria. Mercantilism – the economic theory of the day – was being upended by Capitalism and its growing “middle” and “upper middle” classes. It was the making of money for the benefit of the investor, the artisan, and the laborer according to his strengths, and the western world would soon see it level the power of ‘divine authority’ with a rapid pace.

Individualism – Economic Freedom’s Natural Companion.

Just a few years later, in 1505, a young man named Martin Luther gave up on a very short career studying law to join the Order of the Hermits of St. Augustine. Luther was to pursue his Christian faith passionately, openly challenging Rome on several of the strongest tenets of the Catholic Church – the single Western religion as Europe stood in the early 1500s. Luther was so outspoken in his arguments with Rome that warrants for his arrest – and the burning of his anti-Catholic writings – were routinely ordered by Papal decree. Ultimately, Luther’s writings and polemics would serve as the catalyst for the Reformation – the religious protest and upheaval that caused the Church to split

between Catholic and Protestant. Luther's focus would both conflict with and follow Christ's notion of personal responsibility, i.e., that the Kingdom of Heaven awaited those who did God's work here on earth. That is, Luther believed that Christ's sacrifice was atonement for original sin and that one's entrance to Heaven could be attained through faith alone, and not necessarily "earned" as Catholicism professed.

For Luther, Christians were predestined to enter Heaven – and this ultimately militated against the individual's dependence on the Church. The individual was a free agent who did not need the Church to determine – most controversially through the purchase of a letter of indulgence ridding one of their sins – whether he should be allowed salvation and entrance to God's Kingdom upon his death. Luther's Reformist views were adopted by Calvin – a second-generation Reformist. Calvin further professed a belief that God's extension of salvation to "sinful" humanity was an enigma, emphasizing that Hell was still an option. Consequently, Reformists began to have some doubt about how exactly God wanted them to act while on earth. The solution for Protestants was to maintain a strict spiritual focus in one's daily life on work: an unceasing commitment to one's "calling" or vocation in life.⁵¹ What developed was a strict "Protestant work ethic" that was heretofore unseen, or at least unknown, in history, one which has been described as a vigorous desire to willingly labor that no Pharaoh or king could ever hope to see. Furthermore, frugality and asceticism in enjoying or spending the fruits of one's labor was also essential to maintain Godliness. According to sociologist Max Weber, this combination of work ethic and conservation of earnings resulted in a rapid accumulation of capital.⁵²

And it would primarily be Protestants, adherents to both Luther's and Calvin's Reformist theology, who would initially settle in the northern American continent. They would bring with them the spirit of work, individualism, spiritual freedom, and the spirit of self-reliance with which the still developing phenomenon of Capitalism would symbiotically thrive in America.⁵³ Thus, by the mid-1600s, North America boasted several strong colonies that had been founded and settled by those religious dissidents. Although there was a growing spirit of individualism and independence among the colonists, England was content to leave them alone: to ultimately let them administer their colonies and determine their legislatures, religious institutions, and militias how they saw fit. And the colonists eventually thrived – producing indigenous crops like tobacco and corn as markets and demand developed for them in England and Europe, as well as natural resources and refined products like timber that England needed for shipbuilding. With successive generations being born with identities more “American” than British, the rift between the old and new worlds grew. Life in America was in all respects a challenge, one not for the faint of heart, and on its shores grew a unique character that was extremely self-reliant, steeped in faith, and ruggedly individualistic. Not least of all, he was self-interested and increasingly wary of government regulation and misappropriation.

Once England and the Crown realized how productive these new “Americans” were – competing with England's economy in both size and activity – it began to demand its ‘fair share’ in taxes, eventually sanctioning monopolies in trade and passing several acts, like the Stamp Act, that would ensure tribute

to the Crown. And so, amid cries for “liberty” and “freedom,” the lid blew off in July 1776, leaving in its wake the first government uniquely “of the people for the people,” and with the people’s individual, natural rights explicitly protected from infringement by virtue of their Constitution. Such was the power of this new spirit of freedom that immediately after the ratification of the Constitution in 1789, many of the new states – and for the first time in human history - outlawed slavery as contrary to their own similarly crafted state constitutions. Pennsylvania’s legislature did not even wait for a Constitutional convention. Its colonial legislature outlawed slavery through a process beginning in 1778 = just two years into the Revolutionary War. Within eighty years slavery would be outlawed federally by virtue of the federal Constitution and after a war that almost permanently destroyed the union.

Hence, it was principles of Capitalism that had brought feudal society in Europe to an end by providing a means of upward mobility for the legacy commoners to earn wages – individuals who could earn and dispose of their wealth, large or meager, how they saw fit. Some paid to send their children to be educated in the new universities that were cropping up in early Medieval centers in Italy, Germany, the Netherlands, and England. Others invested in export-import and ancillary activities in a growing world economy. Others risked parts of the accumulated wealth in speculation and venture-style risk-taking. These opportunities were soon on par with land ownership as a means to achieving wealth and, with wealth, the freedom to transcend one’s station in birth and in life. It was Capitalism that allowed a laborer the freedom to seek a better wage elsewhere. The value of work and the notion of collecting wealth – i.e.,

money – commensurate with its value, allowed men to control more and more aspects of their own lives without reliance upon a monopolistic, landowning nobility. Europe was unwittingly creating a unique avenue to a level of freedom not achieved before in human history. This was Capitalism and it was leading men increasingly, albeit sometimes painfully slow, to individual economic freedom.

Capitalism made man free, even if just a little by giving him an edge over what would otherwise be a predetermined destiny in the old Feudal system. It was the natural companion of Individualism: both nourished each other as men acquired a little or a lot of wealth and could therefore write their own paragraph or their own chapter in life.

“Economic freedom,” wrote Fromm, “Was the basis of this development, the middle class was its champion. The individual was no longer bound by a fixed social system based on tradition and with a comparatively small margin for personal advancement beyond the rational limits. He was allowed and expected to succeed in personal economic gains as far as his diligence, intelligence, courage, thrift or luck would lead him... in the feudal system the limits of his life expansion had been laid out before he was born; but under the capitalistic system the individual, particularly the member of the middle class, had a chance – in spite of many limitations – to succeed on the basis of his own merits and actions.”⁵⁴

Europeans – and after 1776, Americans in particular - were more in control of their lot in life than ever before in the history of mankind. Capitalism’s benefit was to the individual, giving him (and ultimately, her) the maximum amount of freedom in making economic decisions with the money that they earned and therefore more freedom to chart their course in life.

Economic freedom is inextricably intertwined with, and a necessary condition of, individual freedom.