

A Socialist Model for Survival?

One of the anti-socialist stories that has gone around the internet is that socialism has already been tried in the United States, by the settlers of the Plymouth colony. For the first two years production, specifically farming, and the results of that production, were supposedly shared equally. I say “supposedly” because while everyone was willing to share the results of their work equally, not everyone was willing to work equally to produce that harvest.

The truth of the matter is that human nature is not as altruistic as some would like to believe. People are much more willing to work, when they see that they will personally benefit from the fruit of their labors. If they are denied that, they are also denied the motivation to work industriously. Why work harder for others to benefit, especially when at least some of those others aren't working all that hard themselves?



10 Survival Skills That Our Great-Grandparents Knew

(That Most Of Us Have Forgotten)

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This is a large part of what destroyed the former Soviet Union. Being a communist nation, with a largely socialist economy, there was no motivation for people to put in the extra effort that is needed in pretty much any field of endeavor. The most productive farmland in Russia, was the tiny percentage which was privately owned. When the sun went down on those farms, farmers turned on the headlights of their tractors and kept working. On state run farms, people went home... often before the sun went down. One saying that has

survived that old regime is, "As long as they continue to pretend to pay us, we will continue to pretend to work."

I'm not going to go so far as to say that all poor people are lazy, as some have apparently said. There are many things that can bring one to poverty, such as health issues and the loss of a job, due to the employer going bankrupt. With the average family living on 110% of their income, it doesn't take long for a loss of income to bring one to poverty; and in today's job market, finding another job that pays comparable to what one was earning can easily take more than six months.

I will say though, that laziness is one of the faster ways to achieve poverty. Any truly successful person I have ever met has worked hard to get where they are. Oh, they might have had other advantages, such as high intelligence and/or an excellent education; but the deciding factor, in every case, was hard work.

What does this have to do with survival?

Many preppers today are part of a "survival team," with plans that they will all work together to survive, in a post-disaster world. Each of them would take responsibility for one area of their combined survival, making sure they were the expert at that area, so that they could do it for the team, when they need to.

On the surface, that sounds great. There are a lot of different skills that can be brought into survival, more than any one person can reasonably learn. So, focusing on learning one or two areas, while leaving other areas for other team members to learn sounds like a reasonable division of duties. Each team member can do their part, ensuring that there's enough of everything, for everyone.

I've talked with members of a number of these survival teams, feeling them out, to see just how their team is working together to ensure their survival. As I expected, things weren't quite as rosy as the picture that they wanted to paint.

The first, most obvious, problem I saw, over and over again, was an unequal breakdown of duties. Some survival tasks, like growing food, are all-encompassing, requiring a huge amount of effort. Then there are others, which require hardly any effort at all.

My favorite "survival skill" to pick on for this is communications. First, I'll have to say that I consider communications a secondary skill. While it is nice to have, it is not absolutely necessary. In the wake of a true disaster, there might not be a whole lot of people to communicate with and the government might not be intact enough to put out useful information. So, just what is a "communicator" going to do all day to help the team survive?

The worst part of this is that it seems like some of these people actually think that practicing their skill is a sufficient contribution to the team. It might be, if the team is big enough to actually afford a full-time communicator and there are enough people to communicate with, passing important information back and forth. But in a team of six to twelve people, having that much of your available manpower tied up, sitting on a radio, seems like it's putting an undue burden on the rest of the team. Socialism would say they are doing their part; but their part isn't really helping the whole enough to make up for the burden they are on the team.

As I mentioned earlier, some survival tasks take a huge amount of work, such as growing food. I would say that food production will take more of your survival team's time and effort, than any other single task. In other words, it's going to take the concerted effort of several people, perhaps the

concerted effort of everyone in the team.

Another task that can require a lot of time and effort is hauling water, if you have to bring your water in from some surface water source. While that won't require the efforts of everyone in the team, it could easily eat up a major part of the day for two team members. Is their effort, bringing water in for everyone's use, equal to being the team's medic, not doing any other work, but just standing by in case someone gets hurt?

Granted, a properly trained medic is a huge asset to any survival team. I am sure there are going to be many teams who will have to do without, simply because there aren't enough people with the proper training. But, will that medic be busy all the time? I certainly hope not; and if they aren't busy, does it make sense for them to just sit around, waiting for someone to get hurt?

There is no truly accurate way of determining just what a fair amount of work from each team member is. If you try to go by output, you'll find that some team members will produce more than others, in the same amount of time. If you try to go by hours worked, you'll find some team members who are quick to take time off, as soon as the work day is done, while others find tasks that can be done indoors, by lamp or candle light. On top of that, some skill sets are clearly worth more than others. I think most people would agree that the medic is worth more than the communicator.

Not all men are equal

This problem would be solved if we had perfect people; but that's a commodity that has been in grave shortage, ever since the beginning of time. The settlers of Plymouth were all Christians, claiming Christian values; yet they didn't all have the same work ethic. Some worked hard, while others took every excuse they could to get out of work.

Adding to the problem of getting everyone to do the necessary work, is the problem of getting everyone to prepare equally. Not everyone has the same family income, making it easier for some to stock up than others. But that's actually not what I'm referring to. What I'm referring to is the cost of coming up with the necessary supplies to take care of their area of responsibility for the team.

Let's take the medic as an example. Building a complete family first-aid survival kit would probably cost somewhere between \$300 and \$500. But that's just enough for one family. Multiplying that to the point where the medic is adequately prepared to deal with the medical emergencies of an entire survival team, for who knows how long, could easily run into a couple of thousand dollars. Who is going to pay for that? Is the medic expected to? Or, is the medic going to compile a list of what everyone else is going to buy and expect them to do so? Either way, it's a problem.

Another one I hear commonly in survival teams is that there is often one person in the group who is their hydroponics "expert." This person is supposedly going to be an important part of the team's food production, when they have to go into survival mode. Okay, but the question I always have for them, is just how big a hydroponics operation they currently have. The answer? About four feet square. That's not even enough to feed their family, let alone ten families.



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Don't get me wrong, hydroponics is a great way to grow food; highly efficient. But it requires quite a bit of equipment to get it going, most especially the tanks and growth media. I'm not sure just how big a garden someone would need, in order to

feed their family; but I'm guessing on the order of their entire back yard, not a four-foot-square test garden. But when I ask about their plans to enlarge their hydroponics operation so that they can feed their entire team, they never seem to have an answer.

How is that person living up to their responsibility to the team? Is the little they are doing adequate? Does that fulfill the socialist mantra of "From every one according to their ability and to every one according to their need?"

Balance is the way

While there is still merit to the idea of a survival team, it has to be based on something more solid than that mantra. Each team must come up with a way to balance both the work that they will do and the investment that they will make. This has to start now, long before they need to work together to survive. If the team can't figure out how to work together now, when things are normal, they won't have much of a chance of making it in a post-disaster world.