

Art and COMMUNISM

Losing the Earth

COMMUNISM, it's a dreaded word in our society. It has been associated with all that is evil, demonic and downright despicable. If you are a communist, then you should be stuffed into a box along with some cement blocks and dumped in the ocean so far as most Americans are concerned.

I always wondered about this. On one hand Capitalism is a system based on the "greed is good" philosophy. By everyone trying to get more for themselves, everyone will benefit in the long run—so the theory goes. If it works so well I wonder why so many Americans can't afford a dentist and have missing teeth, but that's another question. I suppose you could say that it's their God given right to have the freedom to choose rotted teeth over good ones. On the other hand Communism is the system based on the sharing of wealth and resources. Society puts the money into a pot and passes it equally around. The theory being that if you are lucky to be born with a great brain and can be a doctor or a lawyer, or if you were unlucky and only have the smarts to become a garbage man, you deserve an equal share of society's wealth. If both people work equally hard, why not? After all, no one chose to be born smart or dumb, it is just the luck of the draw.

So if you think about it Jesus must have been a Communist. He believed in sharing, in giving to the poor. He only got mad once as far as we know, when he tossed the merchants out of the temple. So how did a political system based on sharing and taking care of the poor become associated with the devil and the one based on selfishness and greed come to be championed by the followers of Jesus? This is one of the greatest marketing successes of the 20th century. It would have been harder to sell if the Soviets had not such a strong arm approach to managing the influence of the church in their society. If they had not been this way would Madison Avenue have connived a way to sell Capitalism as a Christian value anyway?

So that brings us to the question, are artists communists? Artists certainly don't care about making money, if they did they never would have become artists in

the first place. True that some artists today rise to the status of rock stars and are showered with cash, but the majority of artists make next to nothing off their work. If the amount of time they spend on their art is factored in, the average pay an artist receives is probably much less than \$1 per hour. The work they do brings beauty to the world, some artists try to help the world by doing political art and acting as teachers. Does this make them communists? Probably not, but if I was forced to compare artists as a group to stock brokers or real estate developers, they I'd definitely conclude that yes indeed, artists are communists.

Some might say this magazine is communist because it has no commercial advertising. Does a lack of advertising make a magazine communist? I don't know, but personally I hate advertising. If I go into a store to buy some beer, I can pick out one that tastes good and does not cost too much. Why do I need signs plastered all over the place, pictures in magazines and ads on television to convince me to buy the lousy, watery drool sold as beer in America? Why do I need drug companies hawking me more expensive versions of generic drugs that work better or just as well? Why do advertisers pay no tax? Advertisers use the public space, why are they not taxed? They do not even pay sales tax when they buy ads. They pay nothing back to society for the privilege of forcing their products into our face.

If all artists are communists, does this make them evil or good? It don't think it even matters anymore because the word **COMMUNISM** has lost a lot of its negative connotations. The battle today is no longer about sharing vs. greed. It appears the sharers have lost and today's fight is between those who would destroy the planet vs. those who would preserve it. While preservationists plead with the public to change lightbulbs and struggle to enact feeble and virtually ineffectual regulations that won't take effect for twenty years, groups of arrogant, fanatical, deluded and self-serving destructionists drive around in gas guzzling SUVs while waging war and reaping havoc on the planet. It will be interesting to see what happens, but at this point it looks like the meek are losing the earth.