

# Collectivists Versus the Rest of Us

My preferred online dictionary defines a collectivist as “an adherent of the practice or principle of giving a group priority over each individual in it.” That’s too broad a definition, and too flabby. High school football teams, the Navy SEALs, and nuclear families are not examples of collectivist organizations.

A collectivist advocates powerful, centralized governments, wants us to practice [groupthink](#), and [misses the warnings](#) in Kipling’s lines from “[The Gods of the Copybook Headings](#),” “In the Carboniferous Epoch we were promised abundance for all/By robbing selected Peter to pay for collective Paul.”

Collectivists see individuals as part of a herd, sheep to be controlled and manipulated for the good of humankind, although they magically exclude themselves from sharing this pasture.

Some of my friends and family members are semi-collectivists, that is, they buy into mainstream media propaganda and look to the federal government to solve our nation’s problems. However, the way they live belies these beliefs. They work hard, pay their bills, believe in free enterprise, and profess to love liberty.

Personally, I doubt I know a single true collectivist. I only read about them in the news. They live in and around Washington D.C. and in some of our state capitols. They are the government types who claim to know what is best for the rest of us.

These collectivists want to rule by edicts and fiats. The rest of us want a limited government that operates in accordance with our Constitution.

Collectivists want to regulate every aspect of life. The rest of us want to be left alone.

Collectivists believe they are wiser than the rest of us and want the power to act as our nannies. The rest of us believe in personal responsibility and self-government in our personal affairs.

If we study these collectivists, we begin to see certain shared psychologies at work.

Collectivists in general are joyless. Watch them carefully, and you'll discover most of them lack both a sense of humor and any zest for living. These grim-faced commanders of destiny fit [H. L. Mencken's](#) definition of puritanism: "The haunting fear that someone, somewhere, may be happy." Fun isn't a word normally associated with these folks.

Collectivists don't worship a celestial power. Instead, they worship only power itself. They speak of doing good for "the people," but the good they do is mostly for themselves, which explains why so many politicians in D.C. are multi-millionaires. True good deeds—donating to a charity, tending to a sick neighbor—are worthy and noble enterprises, but when a collectivist mentions seeking the "good of the people," it's time to put your hand on your wallet and circle the wagons.

Collectivists show little love for our country or its history. They frequently speak of our flaws, our racism, our sexual bigotries, and our economic disparities. Rarely, however, do we hear them express any appreciation for the good America has done both at home and abroad. It's the oddest thing: collectivists want to have charge of a country for which they feel nothing but contempt.

Collectivists believe in their right to free speech, but wish to remove that right from the rest of us. They are a tribe of visionaries out to build a utopia on earth—you know, like the ones in North Korea, Cuba, and China—and the rest of us are

the ignorant unwashed who need reeducation until, to paraphrase a [line](#) from “Cool Hand Luke,” we get our minds right.

When I was a boy, “Father Knows Best” was a hit show on television. Today’s hit show on mainstream media is “The Feds Know Best.” Despite the federal government’s many failures, collectivists want the rest of us to trust in government as if it were a god. The rest of us know that depending on government to solve a problem is like asking a five-year-old to repair that burst pipe in the basement.

So how do the rest of us do battle with the collectivists?

Even at this late date, we still live in a republic. We still have the freedom to write our elected officials, to vote, and to voice our opinions in person at various meetings of our local governments. We can look for truth instead of propaganda, and we can teach our children to do the same.

Most importantly, we can remember our history and our liberties. In our hearts, minds, and souls, we can keep those ideas untarnished by the ideologies of the collectivists.

—

Image Credit: Flickr-Alisdare Hickson, CC BY-SA 2.0