

## CONTRARIAN THOUGHTS FROM A DISABLED LIBERTARIAN:

### NOT ALL DISABLED PEOPLE WANT SOCIALISM

Ziggy Encaoua



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## CONTRARIAN THOUGHTS FROM A DISABLED LIBERTARIAN: NOT ALL DISABLED PEOPLE WANT SOCIALISM

**Ziggy Encaoua**

### Against the Grain

I am a disabled person. I've written many times about being disabled but never exclusively about why being disabled has made me an advocate for smaller government. Some think that if you're disabled then you must be an advocate for socialistic government. I believe differently. My views have evolved from a combination of my own experiences as a disabled person and the treatment of disabled people in society. Quite simply, I've come to believe that socialistic government is actually damaging the cause and prospects of disabled people.

I believe that socialistic government helps to foster an attitude in society that there will always be a social worker or an institution to care for the disabled, and so why should any individual care so long as it's someone else's job. This has led to an even worse notion that being a social worker or social carer isn't just a job of caring for the welfare of somebody who's disabled, but that it's the job of a social worker to be a friend. It's the sad truth that some people think that it's the job of a social worker to be a friend to somebody who's disabled, and it's because of the state. This should come as no surprise. It is most often expressed by liberals and leftists because liberals and leftists don't think that *they* should care but that the *state* should care.

I saw an example of this in the transgendered community when no transsexual would be friends with or otherwise help a disabled person with gender dysphoria be-

cause they thought that it was a job for a social worker, even though no social worker would have the expertise to help a disabled person with gender dysphoria.

### Social Work: Just Another Job

There's something of a misconception about social workers. It's the belief that social workers really care about people. Not so. The truth is that they're paid to care about people and they clock off at the end of the shift just like any other worker. Social work is just like any other job such as being bank clerk. You don't expect to be served at the bank five minutes after the banks close. So, no social worker or social carer is going to feel that they should be expected to care about their clients when they clock off nor in my opinion should they be expected to have a duty of care once they clock off. Plus, social workers have professional boundaries which are set to protect both social worker and client. This prevents them from having anything other than a professional relationship with their client, otherwise they'll be reprimanded. Friendships are fluid, so it's odd why any liberal or leftist expects a social worker to develop friendships since friendships can't flourish within the boundaries of a professional relationship.

I recognise that social workers are probably better off than other workers in setting boundaries to their professional relationships. But as well as professional relationships social workers often obsess about their remits. If a client asks for help outside

what a social worker judges to be their remit then that client is out of luck even though it's not harming anybody. For instance, there have been examples of social carers refusing to book prostitutes for their clients even though paying for sex is the choice of their client. It's not like anybody is expecting a social worker or social carer to provide the "service" themselves! Perhaps the social carer should realise that maybe because the client is so disabled then the only way they're going to get sexual relief is by paying for sex.

Another incident I know of is a disabled person who asked their social worker if they could help them become a professional dominatrix. This person wasn't too disabled but did need help doing various things an able bodied person would take for granted. However, with a little help they could have earned a living from being a dominatrix. This person happened to be on welfare, but rather than helping them accomplish something they found enjoyable and which would earn them a decent living the social worker suggested that they needed therapy. This is because social workers "know best" what help the client needs and never mind what the client's wishes happen to be.

### **Turkeys Do Not Vote for Christmas**

But the bigger problem with social workers is they need people to be messed up because the more messed up people that there are then the more social workers can justify their jobs.

I found this out when I used to be involved in a charity for people who had mental health problems. The purpose of the charity originally was to rehabilitate people to help to get them into education and em-

ployment—the usual "become a useful member of society" stuff. But the problem was that the more people got into education or employment then the fewer the numbers of people the charity got funding for. This was because the charity relied upon government funding and the government didn't measure funding by how many people the charity helped to rehabilitate but by the number of people who were on their books. The more people the charity had, the more funding there was. And the social workers who worked there looked out for their job prospects. So instead of helping people get ahead and become useful members of society they decided generally to spoon feed them and wipe their backsides.

Sadly, the majority of people who this charity dealt with lapped it up and those who said it was patronising were hounded. Not all the paid workers went along with the party line. There was one worker in particular who, rather than patronise any person with talent, would say to them "stop worrying about your weaknesses and start thinking about your strengths". This worker, however, was "encouraged" to move on. Later on there was a volunteer worker who was prevented from getting too involved in helping individuals. I have a lot of respect for individuals who, out of the goodness of their heart, give up their time and volunteer to help those less fortunate. However when this individual did more than what was usually required the social workers in charge of this charity put a stop to it because it made the paid workers look bad.

I wonder if I'm the only one who reckons there's something very wrong in charities that deal with the disabled and mentally ill being paid on the number of how many people there are on their books rather than

on the basis on how many people they manage to rehabilitate? I'm not the only one who knows this goes on but not enough of the taxpaying public knows this. I'm sure that if they did they'd be asking far more questions about the relationship between state funding and disability charities. This is why I don't believe that the state should be funding charities and that instead charities need to rely solely on private funding. If this was the case then charities would aim to carry out far more constructive programmes because people aren't going to fund social workers to keep people ill or messed up just to justify their job.

The government has recently announced reforms to disability welfare. Now it's not going to be about what disabled people can't do, rather its going to be what they can do. But ironically it's not disabled people whom are alarmed by this new policy but social workers who the government will get to implement these reforms.

However, even with the government taking this new approach many disabled people are still unemployable through no fault of their own. It's previous governmental policy which has conditioned them since it used to be the policy to send disabled and mentally ill people to residential education and care institutes.

I was a product of this policy. I was put in an institution when I was seven and left when I was 18. I spent the next three years in and out of hospital suffering from depression because I couldn't cope out in the real world. I didn't have a clue because I'd been cut off from society and this leads to problems about interacting with the wider world. What people learn from a normal upbringing is missing in anybody put in an institution at an early age. I was lucky and I

managed eventually to overcome this institutional conditioning and forge a life for myself. However, there are those who are less fortunate and they can find themselves isolated and in the care of social workers.

### Only *Individuals* Can Really Care

Some say I've romanticised a view that if government didn't tend to the disabled then people would be more charitable. Well, it's not a romanticised view. It's a logical one that if there wasn't the idea that it's the government's job to look after disabled people then I believe that people as *individuals* would be more willing to help.

But disabled people need to help themselves far more and not expect the state to aid them. This is not a popular opinion with the disabled and mentally ill. In fact, some have labelled me a fascist! I'm no fascist, I just believe in self-empowerment and I believe that everybody has a talent for something. I also believe that there are people willing to care about the disabled other than some government-employed social worker. But I also believe that nobody is going to care about anybody, disabled or not, who wallows in self pity.

It's the belief that somewhere there is a government employed social worker "to look after things" that prevents *individuals* from *genuinely* caring. Yes, as usual, it's the government which is the problem!