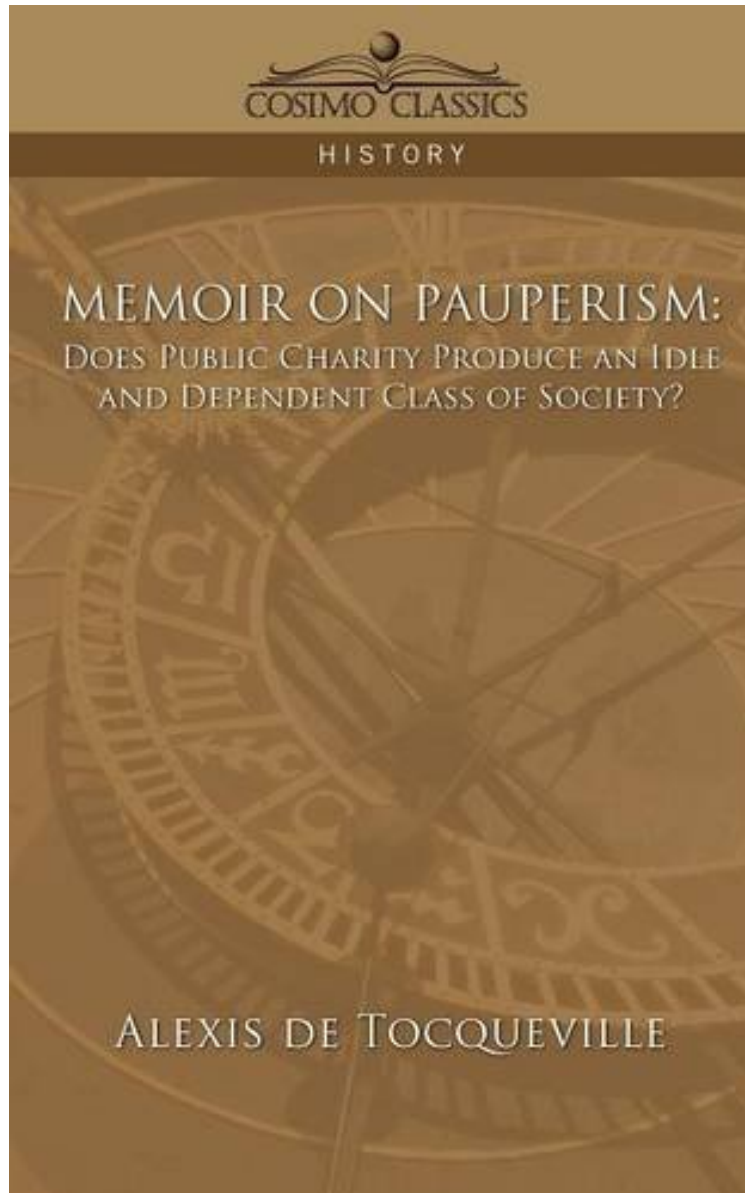


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Memoir on Pauperism: Does Public Charity Produce an Idle and Dependent Class of Society?

Alexis De Tocqueville
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Alexis De Tocqueville : Memoir on Pauperism: Does Public Charity Produce an Idle and Dependent Class of Society? before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Memoir on Pauperism: Does Public Charity Produce an Idle and Dependent Class of Society?:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Welfare is a bad idea whose time came four centuries ago. But the beast can't be killed. By Graham H. Seibert Public welfare had a two century history when Tocqueville wrote about it in the 1830s. It dates from Shakespeare's time. When King Henry VIII split with the Catholic Church, it was no longer able to provide charity to England's paupers. Queen Elizabeth instituted Poor Laws that required each parish to tax its citizenry to support the indigent. The pernicious effects were well evident by Tocqueville's time. In his opening paragraph he notes that even though Portugal and Spain were much poorer than England, pauperism was not that much in evidence. However, in England, one person in six lived on welfare. It varied a great deal from region to region, with more paupers in the richer districts. They could afford the tax. Tocqueville notes the strong contrast between private and public charity. Private charity is not an entitlement. It is given at the discretion of the donor. There is no guarantee it will continue. Therefore, the recipients must show gratitude, and the donors are careful with their money. Public charity, on the other hand, is an entitlement. Tocqueville visited an English court to observe what went on in the administration of charity. It was an endless stream. An old man, who probably had means to support himself, put forth a claim which could not be discounted, and therefore receive charity. A woman whose husband had gone to sea claimed charity, although her father-in-law could have easily provided for her. He had no legal obligation, and the parish would do it, so he did not. Several unmarried women, pregnant or with children, said they had no other means of support. Though they could name the fathers in some cases, there was no way to compel them to pay. Six stout young louts, well known for their drinking and gambling, demanded welfare inasmuch as the parish did not have any work projects for them. The magistrate noted that they were able-bodied and could probably find work, but he was not in a position to test the proposition. That's how it was in 1830. Is it any different today? As Charles Murray *Coming Apart: The State of White America, 1960-2010*, it saps the morality of the recipient. As Richard Lynn and Helmuth Nyborg report, it results in the deterioration of the entire population as the unfit reproduce and the more capable members of society are taxed to the point that they do not, or find other things to do. Tocqueville concludes that there is no good way to administer such a system and that ought to be abandoned. Nobody had the courage to do so. They still don't. We have expanded welfare to include public healthcare and it is experiencing exactly the same problems. It is the problem with socialism in every aspect. It sounds good on paper, feels like the right thing to do, and winds up being a disaster in practice. 9 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Find where exactly the waters we're drinking from now got muddled up. By Buenoslibros.es How Socialism crept into Western Europe The great French man takes a look at the paradox offered by modern societies (in this case England, early 19th Century): The countries appearing to be more impoverished (are the ones with) the fewest indigents", and "among the peoples most admired for their opulence, one part of the population is obliged to rely on the gifts of the other in order to live." The key? Welfare, public charity. Today it may not seem a paradox anymore, so ingrained in our righteous leftist minds it is. But Tocqueville saw it as it surreptitiously came forth, along with the Industrial Revolution. His analysis is clear-minded, cool, not coldly detached from the anguish of the miseries of the poor, but -on the contrary- interested enough to inquire into the roots of this modern paradox, which has since provided the daily fuel for the Left's demagoguery, and is the real opium of the self-blinded masses. Tocqueville is not the Manichean the Left would like to think. His solution to the vicious cycle of welfare-poverty-more-welfare is not to cut through and banish it all. It is to get away with what went wrong in an originally fine idea: To cut loose from there, and return to the healthy idea of improving society, not contributing to its impoverishment. A real diamond this book is, for its value and for its tiny size. You'll find where exactly the waters we're drinking from now got muddled up. 12 of 14 people found the following review helpful. READ THIS!! By Debbie on Most people who are familiar with Democracy in America are aware of just how well de Toqueville's analysis of the early 19th century United States has held up to the test of time. On Pauperism is brief (miniscule in comparison) but THE BEST analysis of why the welfare state doesn't work; why private charity can work (no guarantees); and a not-cheerful, but frighteningly accurate, discussion of the apparently "wider" spread poverty of affluent nations than poor nations. A brilliant, valuable, percipacious work which should be much more widely read. Thanks to Cosimo Pres for re-publishing it.

[L]egal charity has not only taken freedom of movement from the English poor but also from those who are threatened by poverty. -from "Memoir on Pauperism" Inspired by a trip to England at a time when that nation was in the throes of political, social, and economic strife and poverty was rampant, political philosopher Alexis de Tocqueville developed his theories on civil society as it relates to its poorest members and set them down in this 1835 essay. With keen insight, he explains: . why the richest nations have the most paupers . why private charity is more likely to alleviate poverty than government aid . how good intentions backfire to produce a chronically dependent underclass. The political and economic situations Tocqueville examines are immediately recognizable as one that haunts the world's richest nations today, and his lessons are still to be learned. This is an important book for our unsteady times. Also available from Cosimo Classics: Tocqueville's Selected Letters on Politics and Society. French writer ALEXIS DE TOCQUEVILLE (1805-1859) was born in Paris and practiced law before embarking on travels in America to study the young nation's political experiment. The result, the two-volume *Democracy in America* (1835, 1840), is considered a classic discourse on 19th-century America.

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