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Autore	Bokros Lajos
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Sommario/riassunto	This book explores the idea of socialism from three angles and raises the questions if socialism is possible, inevitable, and desirable. Socialism as an economic and societal system was possible based on the two most important pillars of Marxian political economy: State ownership in the means of production and mandatory central planning (command economy). Nevertheless, these two characteristics are compatible only with dictatorship. On this basis, socialism is neither inevitable nor desirable, because it excludes competition, freedom, democracy, and the rule of law. The three questions are analyzed through the academic work of five towering figures: Joseph A. Schumpeter, Karl Polanyi, Friedrich A. Hayek, Karl Popper, and Hannah Arendt. The theoretical findings and inferences resulting from this analysis are compared with the reality of socialism as it existed rather than an imaginary uncontroversial blueprint of socialism. The book discusses the evolution of Soviet communism and its attempts with market reforms to solve its inherent contradictions. It concludes that totalitarian regimes tend to fail in reforms because market freedom is inconsistent with totalitarian control. The author makes a strong case against dictatorship, also in the context of the spreading of nationalist populism around the globe. This book is a must-read for everybody interested in a better understanding of the ideas of socialism,

totalitarianism, and populism.

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