

Under Socialism the Worst Get on Top

A new poll by the [Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation](#) reveals “70% of Millennials say they would be at least somewhat likely to vote for a socialist candidate.”

Astonishingly, communism and Marxism are viewed favorably by about a third of Millennials.

To support their communist dreams, “around one-in-five Millennials think society would be better off if all private property were abolished.”

If all of this isn’t frightening, consider that “only 57% of Millennials believe the Declaration of Independence better ‘guarantees freedom and equality’ over the Communist Manifesto.”

Sixty-three percent of Americans believe “highest earners are not paying their fair share.” Meanwhile, 47 percent are ready for a “complete change of our economic system.”

Those supporting socialism and communism are our coworkers and neighbors. Many are ignorant of history. The poll reveals that millennials believe that Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping are responsible for more deaths than Hitler and Stalin.

The great educator [Lawrence Reed points out](#) these naïve utopians “will forever be disappointed by the socialist outcome.” When socialism fails, they blame “persons rather than the system.”

Reed provides a useful definition of a statist: “Someone who learns nothing from human nature, economics, or experience, and repeats the same mistakes over and over again without a

care for the rights and lives of people he crushes with his good intentions.”

[Bryan Hyde broadcasting at Loving Liberty Radio](#) shared the life experiences of a Romanian who “grew up” under communism and “fled to the UK.” “Living with communism” is like having the “worst person” you know be “empowered to control every aspect of [your] life.” Only the worst people “could and would do the things necessary to survive within the communist structure – and the higher up they are... the more ruthless and corrupt they have to be.”

Collectivism, the Romanian expatriate warns, is “not a bunch of toddlers cheerfully sharing toys at daycare – it is an open-air prison.”

The naïve might dismiss such testimony as anecdotal. In his 1944 book, [The Road to Serfdom](#), Nobel laureate Friedrich Hayek explained clearly “why the worst get on top” in a socialist government.

Since central planning can never work, Hayek writes, “the democratic statesman who sets out to plan economic life will soon be confronted with the alternative of either assuming dictatorial powers or abandoning his plans.”

Think of today’s socialist candidates railing against the wealthy. Hayek points out that “it seems to be almost a law of human nature that it is easier for people to agree on a negative program – on the hatred of an enemy, on the envy of those better off – than on any positive task.”

Blaming an enemy is the playbook of all those with totalitarian tendencies. Hayek writes:

The contrast between the ‘we’ and the ‘they,’ the common fight against those outside the group, seems to be an essential ingredient in any creed which will solidly knit together a group for common action. It is consequently always

employed by those who seek, not merely support of a policy, but the unreserved allegiance of huge masses.

Notice the rhetoric of today's socialists. Sanders has [railed against](#) "extremely greedy and selfish financiers." Elizabeth Warren too [rails against "corporate greed."](#)

Hayek warned that collectivists will claim that their "system is superior to one in which the 'selfish' interests of the individual are allowed to obstruct the full realisation of the ends the community pursues."

Out of professed good intentions, the horrors of collectivist regimes begin. Hayek writes, "Once you admit that the individual is merely a means to serve the ends of the higher entity called society or the nation, most of those features of totalitarian regimes which horrify us follow of necessity."

To those holding self-professed "noble" goals, the rights of individuals do not matter. Hayek explains,

There is always in the eyes of the collectivist a greater goal which these acts serve and which to him justifies them because the pursuit of the common end of society can know no limits in any rights or values of any individual.

Hayek's explanation of why the worst get on top supports testimony about the viciousness of those who carry out the orders of collectivist leaders:

To be a useful assistant in the running of a totalitarian state it is not enough that a man should be prepared to accept specious justification of vile deeds, he must himself be prepared actively to break every moral rule he has ever known if this seems necessary to achieve the end set for him.

Here is one final powerful warning from Hayek for those who

think there can be kinder, gentler socialism:

The probability of the people in power being individuals who would dislike the possession and exercise of power is on a level with the probability that an extremely tenderhearted person would get the job of whipping-master in a slave plantation.

Americans who support socialism and communism want us to believe that next time it will be different – central planning will succeed, and fundamental liberties will stay intact. “Naïve utopians,” think their brand of socialism will be kinder. Both history and economics say they are wrong.

—

[Image Credit: Flickr-Charles Edward Miller, [CC BY-SA 2.0](#)]