

What Bernie Fans Should Know About the Ideology of Socialism

Bernie Sanders has done it again.

In an age when old, rich, white men are heavily maligned by the Left, it's rather remarkable that Sanders has risen to such prominence in not one, but two presidential contests. Given the attacks of other candidates, his lead in delegate counts, and his [favorability ratings](#), it looks like Sanders could easily end up as the Democratic nominee.

Perhaps that shouldn't be surprising given socialism's own approval ratings. Last year, Gallup found that nearly 40 percent of Americans had a [positive view of the ideology](#). But do we really know what socialism is? Would we sign up for it if we did?

Not long ago, I read an intriguing book called [Marx & Satan](#), which explained the personal life and beliefs of Karl Marx, one of socialism's main ideologues. Reading some of his direct quotes provides a revealing glimpse into the underlying thoughts of socialism.

For starters, Marx seems very prone to inciting violence in society. In the [Communist Manifesto](#) Marx writes, "The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions." Separately, he [also noted](#) "that there is only one means in order to shorten, simplify, concentrate the murderous death pangs ... of the new society, only one means – revolutionary terrorism."

But Marx didn't stop at violence. He also seems to have a

positive view of torture, [saying](#), “Torture alone has given rise to the most ingenious mechanical inventions and employed many honorable craftsmen in the production of the instruments.”

Marx, although Jewish by heritage, practiced Christianity in his youth. He later turned on both his physical and religious backgrounds, as the following excerpt from an 1856 *New York Tribune* article shows:

We know that behind every tyrant stands a Jew, as a Jesuit stands behind every Pope. As the army of the Jesuits kills every free thought, so the desire of the oppressed would have chances of success, the usefulness of wars incited by capitalists would cease, if it were not for the Jews who steal the treasures of mankind. ... The fact that the Jews have become so strong as to endanger the life of the world causes us to disclose their organization, their purpose, that its stench might awaken the workers of the world to fight and eliminate such a canker.

Violent revolution and torture, racism and religious hatred. Ask most Americans who favor socialism and it's unlikely they would want to be associated with such attitudes. Yet these were clearly prominent in the life of one of the chief proponents of the socialist ideology. Is it possible they are still in the warp and woof of socialist ideology and practice today?

This is an important question because, like it or not, American politics and the leaders we elect to office – Democrats and Republicans alike – are all about the ideas which will prevail in society. As Russell Kirk writes in [The Roots of American Order](#):

American politics is not a matter of national party conventions or of presidential elections merely: rather, those conventions and elections and all the other

contrivances of American practical politics are means for implementing a body of beliefs about the human condition.

Keep this in mind as we go to the polls this year. What are your values and beliefs? Have you done due diligence to see if they align with those of the candidate for whom you are voting? Perhaps most important, will those values further the health and prosperity of America?

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