



Socialism Rising, With Bernie Sanders Leading the Charge

“Libertarians and conservatives talk a lot about freedom,” writes *Jacobin* magazine, “but the most important kind of freedom is freedom from domination — and if you take that seriously, you should oppose capitalism.” This article, running Friday and titled “Socialism Is All About Expanding Freedom,” might hardly warrant mention, except that MSN.com saw fit to [publicize](#) it on its homepage.

The “freedom” bit is all about a rebranding. One might think that 200 years of abject failure, punctuated with 100 million dead bodies in socialism’s wake, would be enough to bury the misbegotten ideology. Not at all. In fact, Senator Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) is helping lead its latest reincarnation, with a new book titled *It’s OK to Be Angry About Capitalism*.

According to historian and sociologist Rainer Zitelmann, Sanders’ new effort reads like Marx and Engels, except that they actually had some positive words about “capitalism” — the senator has not a one.

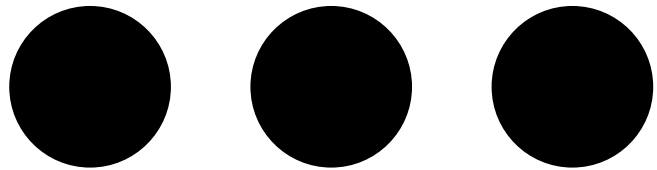
Sanders “calls for a political revolution in which working people come together,” which, of course, is just a rephrasing of Marx’s “Workers of the world, unite!” He also, Zitelmann informs, demonizes the rich, stoking envy by infusing his book with numerous tales of the wealthy’s opulent lifestyles. Yet he doesn’t mention that they generally made their money by, as late economist Dr. Walter Williams would put it, “serving their fellow man” through the market system.

Zitelmann adds his own perspective, [writing](#) that

what Sanders does not say is that the top 20 percent of households in the U.S. pay 83 percent of all federal taxes.... Readers won’t find [this information] in Sanders’s new book, as he is far more concerned with constantly asserting that the rich do not pay enough taxes.

“The corporate elite are not nice guys[.]... They are ruthless, and day after day they sacrifice human life and well-being in order to protect their privilege.” According to Sanders, America is a terrible land: “The majority of Americans live lives of quiet desperation.” Over and over again, he repeats the thesis that over the past 50 years, the standard of living of average Americans has not improved — an oft-parroted assertion that is simply not true.

Of course, Sanders pulled the “lives of quiet desperation” line from poet Henry David Thoreau. Now, if



AP Images
Bernie Sanders



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on March 12, 2023

he simply meant that given man's fallen nature, his lot is to quietly suffer the consequences of his own and others' sin — including unfulfilled and often ignoble yearnings — that's true. But Sanders doesn't even recognize that a yearning to have more just because others do is ignoble, that it smacks of a mindset that always sees the cup half empty.

In reality, even left-wing ThinkProgress [admitted in 2013](#) that the worldwide standard of living was the highest it had ever been in history (insane Covid policy no doubt affected this), a triumph attributable to healthy market forces' spread.

The Socialist Vision for America

Sanders also seeks the elimination of billionaires (apparently though, not millionaires such as himself). Yet does he fancy making us North Korea? "Apparently, because even in Sweden, which Sanders has often praised as a model, the share of billionaires in the total population is 60 percent higher than in the United States!" writes Zitelmann.

Sanders doesn't think much of our system. He impugns the Supreme Court as a bunch of "right-wing judicial activists" and says that it and the Senate should be "rethought." He generally doesn't hold our Constitution in high esteem, either, viewing it as a relic of a bygone era that's insufficient for addressing modern needs and imperatives. Perhaps he hasn't heard of the "Amendment Process" — or, maybe, it just bothers him that altering the Constitution through it requires the vast majority of the people's consent.

Sanders' preferred constitution would, as is common in socialist countries, "guarantee" employment; how this is possible without also guaranteeing worker productivity is not explained. He advocates rent control as well, and these two proposals certainly would guarantee this: decaying economies and buildings.

In addition, the senator praises Germany's supposedly enlightened industrial policies, even though the nation's greentopian dreams have yielded an energy-deficit nightmare; Sanders lauds Britain's National Health Service, despite it being so lacking that approximately "8 million Brits have private medical insurance, and around 53 percent say they would like to invest in some sort of private scheme," Zitelmann tells us.

The kicker is that while lamentably statist, none of the European nations Sanders cites are "socialist." Zitelmann concludes that Sanders' book proves, yet again, that he is a radical "class warrior who wants to turn the United States into a socialist country."

The deeper issue, however, is our modern obsession with "equality," which not only animates socialists but also influences conservatives' thinking. As for the former, *Jacobin Magazine* writes, "Equality matters both in itself and because genuine freedom is impossible amid massive inequality." How this is so is not explained, perhaps because it makes no sense.

Consider an example I often use: There are two tennis centers training children. After a certain period of time at the first, all the kids are advanced beginners. After the same period at the second, some are advanced beginners; two other large groups constitute, respectively, low intermediates and intermediates; there's a small group of advanced players; and a handful are approaching tournament caliber. At which center is there more equality?

Okay, now, at which are the children doing far better on average?

The lesson: Equality tells you nothing about quality. It's completely irrelevant.



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So how, then, can we explain the irrational socialist belief, echoing Marx, that equality matters “in itself” and that peaceful coexistence is impossible without it?

Projection.

Socialists are generally envious individuals who project (a common human error) their covetous, materialism-oriented mindset onto everyone else. “People can never live in harmony if they see others have more than they do!”

Many of us, though, don’t care that Bill Gates and Warren Buffett have more than we (we just want them to stop using their wealth to undermine civilization).

Of course, this socialist-envy issue is a problem of souls and sin, not systems; minds, not money; hearts, not haves and have-nots. In other words, if these socialists really want to change the world, they should start with the world they already govern: their own hearts and minds.



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