

Socialism's history shows it delivers misery, murder and refugees

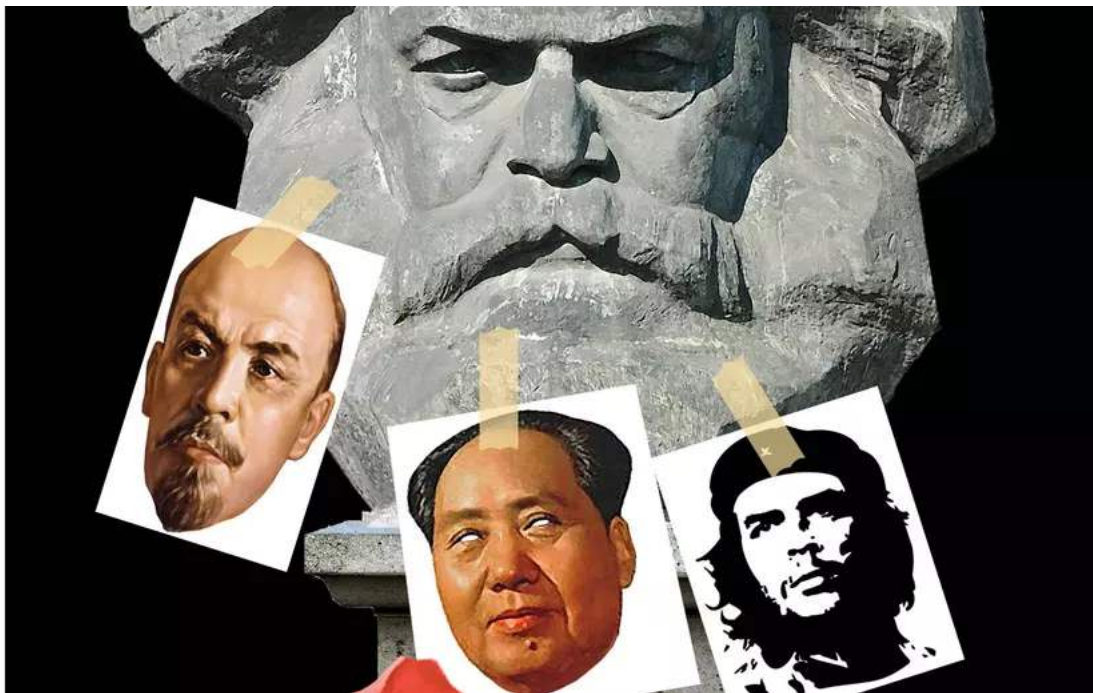


Illustration on the deadly history of socialism/communism by Alexander Hunter/The Washington Times Illustration on the deadly history of... more >

COMMENTARY

By Robert Knight
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OPINION:

Despite several horrifying current examples of nations in the grip of socialism, many of America's millennials are happily skipping down the socialist Yellow Brick Road toward an Oz that could never be.

It isn't just Bernie Sanders' young legions of admirers. A recent survey showed that a whopping 44 percent of young people favor socialism over capitalism, with seven percent opting for outright communism and seven percent more for fascism. It adds a majority wanting total government control over the economy — and their lives, if they stop to think about it.

The more than 100 million murdered in communist nations and by the Nazis during the 20th century? Ancient history? It's gone down a memory hole.

The poll was highlighted in the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation's "Annual Report on U.S. Attitudes Toward Socialism," which also found that old, dead commies are still quite popular. Thirty-one percent of the young people poll had a favorable view of Fidel Castro's favorite executioner, Che Guevara, 32 percent Karl Marx, 23 percent Vladimir Lenin and

Mao Zedong.

They are not big, however, on Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin, with a mere 6 percent seeing him in a favorable light. Perhaps because campus leftist professors for years have tried to distinguish “good” communists like those in Cuba from bad “St



But, as I said, you don't have to go back to the last century to observe the effects of socialism on once-vibrant nations.

Oil-rich Venezuela was once the wealthiest nation in South America. But Hugo Chavez's Marxist revolution, continued by thuggish Nicolas Maduro, has turned it into an economic basket case and totalitarian hellhole from which tens of thousands of Venezuelans are fleeing while they can.

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After Chavez became president in 1999, the number of Venezuelans in the U.S. jumped more than 94 percent from 91,507 in 2006. So many have settled in the South Florida community of Weston that some now call it Westonzuela.

Socialism's greatest outcomes are very predictable — misery, murder and refugees.

Another case in point is Cuba, the model for Venezuela's thugs. Fidel Castro's communist crackdown upon taking power caused a massive outflow of half a million people to Florida despite Castro's orders to kill anyone trying to leave the island. Catholic Church-led program dubbed Operation Pedro Pan, some 14,000 children were sent to Miami between 1960 and 1980, another 125,000 left in the Mariel boatlift. Castro blessed it because he used it to get rid of dissenters and to empty the island of criminals into America.

In 1979 when Nicaragua's Sandinista fighters deposed the right-wing government led by Anastasio Somoza, the country came under a socialist government. About 100,000 Nicaraguans fled. By the end of the 1980s, 50,000 more Nicaraguans had fled to Honduras and roughly 40,000 for Costa Rica.

During the 20th Century, Germans fled socialist regimes twice in massive numbers.

Between the National Socialist (Nazi) German Workers Party's rise to power in 1933 and Nazi Germany's surrender in 1945, more than 340,000 Jews emigrated from Germany and Austria. At least 85,000 resettled in the U.S. Millions of others were housed in Nazi extermination camps.

After the war, two million refugees fled East Germany to escape that socialist paradise before the Berlin Wall went up in 1961.

In South Vietnam, before North Vietnam's communist forces marched into Saigon on April 30, 1975, some 140,000 refugees fled to the defeated government and were resettled in the U.S. Over the next two decades, the U.S. opened its doors to millions of Vietnamese people. More than 250,000 Vietnamese of Chinese origin also fled to China when the communist government confiscated their businesses.

Finally, there is communist North Korea, the most miserable, repressive place on the planet.

With the entire nation run like a giant prison, more than two million people have died since the mid-1990s from starvation. Hundreds of thousands have been executed or died in concentration camps. Overwhelmed by North Korean refugees, China, under whose own communist government led by Mao an estimated 65 million died, has erected a massive barbed wire and concrete fence along the border.

Do the millennials who were polled know these historical facts? Probably not. But if they are curious enough to find out, how many profess a preference for socialism?

I'd like to think so. They are the future of this country.

• Robert Knight is a senior fellow for the American Civil Rights Union. Some of this material was drawn from a chapter by Robert Knight in the book "Ten Truths about Socialism," co-authored by Robert Knight.

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