



Written by [John F. McManus](#) on January 19, 2017

## Sanders the Socialist

While chatting recently with a friendly technician who was repairing my copy machine, I got a taste of a very big problem facing our country. The man knew everything about the bulky machine. But he displayed a woeful lack of awareness about our nation's fundamental principles. And he volunteered a political preference I fear is shared by millions.

The technician, a patriotic U.S. Air Force veteran, volunteered that he didn't vote in the 2016 presidential election. He had nothing good to say about either Hillary Clinton or Donald Trump. But he boasted that, if Bernie Sanders had won the Democratic Party's nomination, he would have gladly voted for him. He added that Bernie would probably have swamped Trump. He might be correct about that.

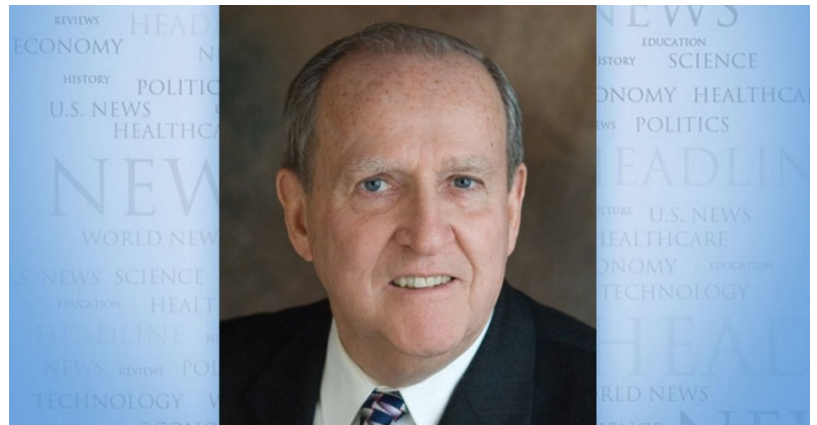
When I suggested that [Bernie Sanders would admit to being a socialist](#), he gave no response. Evidently being a socialist is OK with my technician acquaintance, not because he knows what being a socialist means and how un-American such a view really is, but because he doesn't know what it means. Had I an opportunity to explain what socialism truly connotes, I might have cited an excellent warning given in 1974 by economist Percy Greaves. In his book [Mises Made Easier](#), Professor Greaves wrote:

Following the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, the Bolshevik leader Lenin chose the name Communist Party for all those dedicated to the use of violence, revolution, and civil war to attain their final goal, and to distinguish his followers from the socialists, or social democrats, who sought the same final goal by democratic processes.

In other words, a convinced socialist is at least as dangerous as a Communist, maybe more so because his ultimate goal isn't well known. My technician acquaintance surely has no awareness that Marx's [Communist Manifesto](#) is the blueprint for both Communists and Socialists.

During the televised debates between the Vermont senator and Mrs. Clinton, I saw Sanders come across as genuinely honest and sincere. But he is a proud socialist, a man who has spent a lifetime favoring the same total government scheme, though not the same route to achieving it, as did the murdering tyrant Lenin. The man fixing my copy machine wouldn't have supported Lenin, or Stalin, or any of their successors who murdered millions and enslaved those they permitted to live. But he would willingly back Sanders. And therein lies the big problem facing America today.

Bernie Sanders doesn't advocate killing anybody; he just wants to establish government compulsion over everyone. But he never summarizes it that way. He will soak the rich, make health care and college education free, put government in charge of supplying everyone's needs, and more. It all sounds so very





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good to anyone who has no awareness of either America's fundamentals or the Marxian program. Yet, millions of young Americans flocked to his rallies and cheered him with great gusto. Lots of older Americans did likewise.

The socialism advocated by Sanders is a huge threat to freedom. The problem is that so few Americans understand the value of limited government or the worth of the Constitution, which is socialism's polar opposite. America grew from a veritable wasteland to becoming the envy of the world, not because of government action but because of the constitutional requirement for inaction. Millions of college-educated people today have never heard that view and, consequently, are ripe fruit for socialists to pluck. They see problems, most of which have been created by government, and expect government to solve them. The American way would be to get government out of the way and let enlightened self-interest do the solving.

Currently, there are 74 House members who hold membership in its socialist wing called the Progressive Caucus. Sanders is the only Senate member of this Caucus.

All of this presents a huge problem for America. The copy machine technician I encountered doesn't want the socialism goal advocated by Sanders; he just wants the nice-sounding program the Vermont maverick offers. But it's only nice-sounding, something even my acquaintance will discover if this nation doesn't get back to the fundamentals that made it so appealing in the first place.

[Click here to learn more about socialism's impact around the globe.](#)

*John F. McManus is president emeritus of [The John Birch Society](#). This column appeared originally at the [insideJBS](#) blog and is reprinted here with permission.*



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