



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on July 25, 2025

## We Hear Gen Z Is “Shifting Right,” Yet 62% Like Socialism and 34% Like Communism

“Communist governments killed 100 million people during the 20th century,” I told a young man about seven or eight years ago. I’ll never forget the look of surprise that registered on his face. Though he was approximately 18 and had attended a wealthy suburb’s “good” government schools, he’d never heard that before. It’s a good example of why, as the saying goes, you should “never let your schooling interfere with your education.”

But that such interference is the norm today perhaps explains the results of a new poll. It found that among older Zoomers (18-29), 62 percent have a favorable view of socialism. The kicker (and it’s a kick in the head):

Thirty-four percent have a positive view of *communism*.

A second kicker: At the same time we hear that, as *The Hill* [reported](#) recently, young voters “are shifting right.” How can these seeming incongruities be reconciled? Is it that the polls are wrong (again), or is it something else?

(Spoiler: It’s something else.)

### Contradictions

Mentioning the poll, conducted by the CATO Institute and YouGov, was Gen Z commentator Rikki Schlott. Writing Tuesday at the *New York Post*, she opened her piece [stating](#) that

Zohran Mamdani owes his primary victory to young New Yorkers’ fiscal anxiety — paired with their economic illiteracy.

The majority of my generation is warm to socialism....

Schlott then mentions the 34 percent of her age mates who cotton to communism. “Compare that with just 2% of senior citizens,” she continues, “who are old enough to remember some of the ideology’s atrocities.”

Yet there’s that contradiction again. Approximately 47 percent of Zoomers voted for Trump. Yet the percentage of Americans 65 and older who did was just two points higher, 49 percent. In fact, there was a four-point shift *toward* Harris among seniors. While young people moved “right,” the elderly were “the only generation to move left,” informs *The Hill*.

Put differently, almost half of the socialism-leaning young people went for the unabashed “capitalist,” Donald Trump. Likewise, almost half of the communism-fearing seniors supported Kamala Harris,



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whose party [is embracing socialism](#). Explanation? I'll get to that momentarily.

## Ignorance and Iniquity

So why are young people glomming on to socialism? Schlott has her diagnosis, writing:

Less than 1 in 5 Zoomers [were proficient in history](#) when they were in the 8th grade, according to NAEP [National Assessment of Educational Progress, or the Nation's Report Card] reports. If they had even a basic understanding of history, surely they'd know of the 100 million plus lives communism claimed in the 20th century through unimaginable hardships in [Soviet gulags](#), Chinese repression and [famine](#) and genocidal regimes such as the [Khmer Rouge](#) in Cambodia.

Add to that the fact that 60 to 75% of American college students [never take an economics class](#) in college, according to the Journal of Economic Education. Meanwhile, just 28 states [require high school students](#) to take any course in economics to graduate.

Yet there's an issue here. While education is important, we again run into the problem of that vs. *schooling*. Even if Zoomers were "proficient in history," we'd have to ask: *What* history? If Gen Z here means Generation Zinn (i.e., anti-American "historian" Howard Zinn, who has heavily influenced schooling), they could be proficient — but only in propaganda.

## The Flesh

Just as significantly, focusing exclusively on schooling overlooks the moral component. And something ancient Chinese sage Confucius wrote is relevant here. "It is not that I do not know what to do," he stated. "It is that I do not do what I know."

While knowledge is necessary, it's virtually powerless against the siren of the animal organism, against the flesh. If someone's emotional foundation is malformed, his affinities will be misdirected.

For example, think now of those people, mostly gone, who were too proud to take handouts. They wanted to stand on their own two feet. Today, in contrast, a spirit of entitlement prevails. And let's be clear:

It is a moral defect to believe you're owed something.

The point is that our Founders said virtue was a prerequisite for liberty for good reason. For demagogues prey on the moral failings [of characteristically vice-ridden people](#). If, for instance, too many Americans are defined by envy, covetousness, and greed, socialists can capture their support by promising to give them what those they're jealous of have. I elaborated upon this in 2021's "[There's Only ONE Thing That Can Stave Off Socialism: Morality](#)."

Oh, and how are vice-ridden people forged? Look no further than our corruptive popular culture.

## Yeah, I Like Socialism — It's Social!

Now we come to the matter of young socialists...who are also rightists? When evaluating this, first realize that most young people who support socialism don't actually know what it is. The CATO/YouGov pollsters *did not define it for them, either*. The respondents could imagine the ideology was whatever their fantasies dictated. So when they say they support it, they're not thinking of failed socialist states,



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such as Venezuela. They don't know that communists generally call themselves socialists. And when they do support communism, they usually don't know about its trail of dead bodies and killed economies.

They just know that socialism seems social and communism sounds communal. "It's about helping people, right?" Yeah, branding matters.

And when many of these same young people vote for Trump? They're not thinking "He's an ardent foe of socialism and an unreconstructed 'capitalist.'" They're thinking he's got swagger, is real and a real man, and that it's good to "make America great again." (Note, too, that they saw Trump on Joe Rogan's and other podcasts.) As for Kamala Harris, she seems phony to them.

As for the seniors who swung to Harris, most weren't thinking about the Democrats' embrace of socialism. (Remember here that the 65+ set still imbibes legacy media.) They were perhaps thinking that Trump is boorish and about abortion. Note here that among senior men, 57 percent voted for Trump. It was the 65+ women who swung toward Democrats, modestly, relative to 2016 and 2020.

## Knowing Your Right From Left

Yet there's a far deeper issue. Consider that the aforementioned *Hill* piece talks about how in "the U.S., Canada, Germany, Poland, and Portugal — the youngest voters have swung dramatically in favor of right-wing parties." Now, it would help if legacy media didn't describe every devoted statist who ardently opposes illegal migration as "far right." But this gets at the point:

Unlike with sex, there is no firm binary in politics. The Left-Right conception of things is deceptive.

The political usage of the terms "Left" and "Right" originated with the French Revolution (1789). That is, those sitting on France's National Assembly's right side were monarchists. Those sitting on the left were republicans (as in, those aiming to establish a republic). And that we'd laugh today at conceiving of leftists as republicans and rightists as monarchists is instructive.

The terms "Left" and "Right" largely correlate with, respectively, "liberal" and "conservative." And the only definition of "liberal" consistent over time relates to "wanting to change the status quo." The only consistent definition of "conservative" relates to "wanting to preserve the status quo." Thus, as the status quo changes based on time and place, so do the positions associated with "Left" and "Right."

And what media almost never mention is that the political status quo in Canada and Western Europe is devout statism/immigrationism. This is how, too, a statist who happens to oppose migration gets labeled "right-wing."

## Rebels With a Cause

Remember as well that young people are prone to rebelling against the establishment. And Trump — and Mamdani — and the foreign political parties in question (e.g., the AfD) are anti-establishment. Also realize that, young or old, many voters cast ballots on emotional bases.

And that people can flit from a better rebel to a bad one tells the tale. The only change that will be enduringly positive is movement toward virtue. Only a virtuous people will know when establishment norms should be defended or upended, and what revolutionary reforms are pay dirt or fool's gold.



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