



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on September 17, 2025

Socialist Democrats Would Free Us From the “Jackboot of Competition”

There was an old joke in the former communist East Germany about their “national car,” the Trabant. It goes: “How do you double the value of a Trabant?”

Answer: “Fill up the tank.”

Oh, this doesn’t mean it was the worst car ever made. That honor *could* go [to the Yugo](#), which was produced in the former communist Yugoslavia. (There’s a video about it [here](#).) If you’re detecting a pattern now, you may ask a certain question (rhetorically, one would hope).

Is it a coincidence that both these clunkers were created in communist countries’ zero-competition environments?

Writer Mark C. Ross certainly wouldn’t say so. And, he warns, zero-competition-born incompetence and scarcity are precisely what today’s American socialists plan for us.

The Fantasy Never Dies

As Ross [wrote](#) yesterday in “Suffering under the jackboot of competition”:

Years ago, I was dragged up to Berkeley to witness a lecture presented by Cornell West and Michael Lerner. The advertised topic was “Why should Jews and black folks happily coexist?” The answer came early in the presentation: They are both the innocent victims of rapacious capitalism.

As they continued, West and Lerner screeched out their infatuation with socialism. One of their main targets was the tyranny of pricing. According to them, stores should not place prices on their goods. Customers should just toss what they feel they should pay into a basket by the exit door. Rush Limbaugh did a segment on this nonsense, in which he told about a trust fund heiress in New York State who used her unearned wealth to open just such a store. She lasted about two months before she went totally broke.

Zohran Mamdani is spewing the exact same ridiculousness as he continues to lead the pack in pursuit of New York City’s mayoralty. It seems that food is way too expensive, partly because of price-gouging by those greedy grocers. Food stamps and other forms of welfare just aren’t enough — so the government has to get into the retail grocery business. Kind of reminds me of what Khrushchev said in his memoir about how empty the shelves were in Russian stores when he became general secretary of the Communist Party.

Then there’s how empty some heads are. Is it rational complaining about grocery “price gouging” when



Kerrick/iStock/Getty Images Plus
East German Trabant



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that business' average net profit margin is one to three percent? (It was [1.6 percent in 2023](#). This means, of course, that a supermarket must sell \$100-worth of products to earn \$1.60.)

The exception is big-box stores and online commerce; their efficiency reduces costs.

The Beauty of Competition

Ross points out the obvious: Competition benefits consumers by offering choices and substitutes. Socialists, however, blithely ignore this reality. For example, consider what Senator Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) [said](#) while running for president in 2015:

You don't necessarily need a choice of 23 underarm spray deodorants or of 18 different pairs of sneakers when children are hungry in this country.

How eliminating choice in the deodorant and sneaker industries would feed children was not explained. Sanders' comment betrays complete ignorance of market forces (read: the laws of man's nature). That is, the only reason we have even one quality deodorant is that we have a "choice of 23." If there is only one product, as with East Germany's Trabant, disappointed consumers have no recourse. They must use that product. With competition, however, a bad deodorant will be avoided in favor of the better ones. This forces its maker to either "up his game" or go out of business. Thus does competition yield quality. (Aspiring athletes seek better competition for this reason — to improve themselves.)

Besides, who is Sanders to say what choices in products people "need"? What hubris.

There is an irony here, too. Both business owners and socialists share a commonality: They prefer monopolies. The businessmen would themselves like to have a monopoly; socialists want the government to have it.

A History of Failure

Another irony here relates to a paraphrase of philosopher Georg Hegel. "We learn from history that we do not learn from history," he observed. As psychologist/commentator Jordan Peterson has pointed out, it's not as if socialism hasn't been given a good test run. It has been tried in different parts of the world, across different times and different cultures — repeatedly — and has never worked.

In fact, it goes back to at least 1826. That was when Robert Owen, perhaps inspired by America's multitudinous religious communes, instituted [a socialist-like one](#) in New Harmony, Indiana.

It failed after two years, done in by socialism's fatal flaw: lack of incentive.

In contrast, many of the religious communes endured, some for more than a century. The difference?

Many religious communitarians believed they were doing God's will, that productive labor was a religious calling. And, to put it simply, whether you're driven by a conviction that you're participating in a divine plan or that you're earning eternal salvation, it amounts to the same thing: a pretty darn strong motivation.

In contrast, socialism involves an absence of not only the material incentive, but also the spiritual one. And no incentive means no productivity.

Speaking of which, the historical norm for man was grinding poverty; life was generally difficult, often brutal, and short. Yet we now enjoy luxuries of which our ancestors couldn't even dream. Examples are



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cars, TVs, computers, refrigerators, flush toilets, and supermarkets overflowing with food.

And where did all this wealth come from? It's the result of the profound incentive offered by economic freedom (not "capitalism." That word was originated by socialists). It catalyzes the common man's creative capacities by allowing him to enjoy fruits commensurate with his labors.

The Failure Between the Ears

This all makes so much sense that some may wonder: Why are we still arguing about a proven failure? Well, much of what humans do is explainable psychologically. And when people display ideological dysfunction, it's usually due to intracranial dysfunction. As to this, after relating a relevant personal anecdote in 2008's "[The Socialist and the Stone](#)," I wrote:

Winston Churchill once said, "Socialism is a philosophy of failure, the creed of ignorance, and the gospel of envy; its inherent virtue is the equal sharing of misery," and he was absolutely correct. Although leftists rail against greed, if you scratch the surface of such a person, you will find the most avaricious, covetous creature imaginable. They want to redistribute wealth not because they care about the poor and downtrodden, for if that were their concern they would give more to charity than traditionalists, when in reality they give far less. No, what motivates them is that they cannot abide the fact that others have more than they do. And they love — or, I should say, "want," as love is a godly motivation — a government-imposed level playing field because then everyone gets stoned [shafted] equally. And your failure doesn't seem like failure when everyone is forced to fail.

In the article I also cited [research showing](#) that right-wingers "really are nicer people." One finding: Liberals are actually far more money-oriented than conservatives.

Another finding: Leftists, being characteristically envious, were much more willing than rightists were "to give up some of their own money if it meant taking more money from someone else," author Peter Schweizer wrote in 2008, [reporting on the research](#).

It all could make one wonder if, well, socialism is really just the creed of the antisocial.



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