



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on January 17, 2016

For Hillary, Sanders Is Ghost of Elections Past

“So what does it say about our country that a candidate who is a self-avowed socialist ... could be the Democratic nominee?” asked moderator Maria Bartiromo at Thursday’s GOP presidential debate. She was, of course, referring to Vermont senator Bernie Sanders, who now leads Hillary Clinton in New Hampshire primary polling. And his rise says nothing good about our country — or about Clinton.



As for Clinton, she just might be having flashbacks. In 2008, she was the presumptive Democrat nominee, poised to make history as our first female president. Instead, Barack Obama, four years after [he said](#) he was too inexperienced to run in four years, became the man the media was looking for and made some history of his own. Now Clinton’s dreams may be dashed again, this time by a candidate who’s as different from Obama superficially as he’s similar substantively. Sanders is old, more wizened than wise, in an age of youth; and he’s a white male, hailing from the whitest state in the nation, in an age of quota Democrat candidates. Yet ideologically they’re kissin’ cousins: Sanders is an out socialist, Obama a closeted one, having been [a member of the socialist New Party](#) in the 1990s. And a 2007 [analysis](#) of the most left-wing Senate voting records placed Obama at number one — ahead of even Sanders.

But the order of the day is anti-establishment fervor, and just as Donald Trump is that spirit’s choice on the GOP side, Sanders is capturing the imaginations of disenchanting Democrat millions. And, let’s face it, nothing smacks of the establishment old guard like the name Clinton (except the name Bush).

This factor is not the only explanation for Clinton’s fall from inevitability. Another is that she’s a poor campaigner, so loath to endure scrutiny that, as even liberal *Time* magazine [observed](#), she has a habit of calling on young children at town halls because the “strategy ensures that she’ll get a softball question.” There is her e-mail scandal and a possible criminal referral from the FBI. Then there’s the ill will she has purchased throughout the years by way of nastiness off-camera, and the fact that an internecine Democrat Party struggle exists. As *American Thinker’s* Thomas Lifson [writes](#):

There is the small matter of all the knives in the hands of members of her own party that have been sheathed all these decades since she and Bill first entered the White House as tenants. She has made a lot of enemies over the years, snubbing some, ignoring others, and behaving with the arrogance and self-centeredness that has been a visible part of her character ever since she entered public life. There is a struggle underway for the future of the Democratic Party between the Obama faction and the Clinton faction. When she appeared inevitable, an uneasy truce prevailed. But if she may be tied up with a criminal defense case, that would solve a lot of problems for the Obama-ites.

Then there’s the fact that husband Bill, whom Hillary termed her “not-so-secret weapon,” may actually be a secret liability in certain quarters. As Lifson also opined, “The old certitudes about the Clintons have crumbled. Bill no longer is a vibrant, likable, vigorous exponent of hope; he is instead a hollow shell, a creepy degenerate who reminds us of our own mortality after heart bypass operations and



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drastic weight loss.”

Nothing illustrated this crumbling better than when, after Hillary accused Trump of “sexism,” the bodacious businessman dared the Clintons to play the war-on-women card. Bill, an adulterer against whom accusations of sexual assault and even rape have been leveled, subsequently seemed so subdued (cowed?) on the campaign trail that the *Wall Street Journal* penned the [headline](#), “The Big Dog — Bill Clinton — Gets Fixed.” And now [reports hold](#) that, à la Hillary, he’s avoiding interviews while on the stump.

Next there’s Hillary’s woman problem. According to a [recent poll](#) and quite counterintuitively, the “woman’s candidate” is losing the youngest female voters to the oldest male candidate: Sanders leads among women aged 18 to 34 by *19 points*.

This again reflects the crumbling of the Clinton mystique. A 34-year-old never had a chance to vote for Bill, and 20-somethings are generally too young to wax nostalgic about the Clinton years. To them, Hillary is perhaps more likely to be seen as passé than a resurrector of past glories. And Bill is just not that debonair, devilish lady-killer anymore. A dirty young man can, unfortunately, be an alluring “bad boy” to many women; a dirty old man is, well, just pathetic. To young women today, Bill isn’t some master of the universe in whose arms they might fantasize about being ensconced. In fact, Hillary’s association with him may hurt her with young women, making her seem like a bizarre old lady too weak and needy to get away from a “creepy degenerate.”

But there’s an even simpler factor: The young are the most liberal age demographic and socialist Sanders is the most avowedly liberal candidate running. Note that he [wins](#) 57 percent support among those (women and men) 18 to 25, but only 36 percent among the 26 to 34 cohort. In this respect he’s reminiscent of George McGovern, the 1972 Democrat nominee who inspired naïve, starry-eyed idealists but lost in a landslide to Richard Nixon.

In addition, Sanders exhibits a refreshing apparent honesty; after all, he has never shrunk from boldly announcing his socialism. (This isn’t to say he’s *intellectually* honest, meaning, honest with oneself; it’s hard to imagine such honesty breeding a wholesale embrace of leftism.) Clinton, in contrast, bears the stench of an opportunistic kleptocrat.

But isn’t wearing the socialist label fatal honesty? Not surprisingly, the different age-demographics’ support of Sanders may be roughly congruent to their support for socialism. According to a 2011 Pew Research Center [poll](#), while 60 percent of Americans have a negative view of the term “socialism” and 31 percent a positive view, those 18 to 29 reckon the word *more positively than negatively* (49 percent vs. 43 percent) and overall have a negative view of “capitalism.” Moreover, “liberal Democrats” in general viewed socialism more positively than negatively, 59 to 33 percent; while “conservative Republicans” had a more negative than positive view, 90 to 6 percent.

There are a few reasons for socialism’s gain in currency. It’s said that the “Universe tends toward disorder,” and, without the steady application of principle (rare in a relativistic age), people tend toward disordered thinking. And such thinking is certainly encouraged via conditioning by academia, the media, and entertainment.

Of course, one might wonder if the acceptance of the socialist label is even necessary. As the apocryphal saying (wrongly attributed to socialist Norman Thomas, apparently) warns, “The American people will never knowingly adopt socialism. But, under the name of ‘liberalism,’ they will adopt every fragment of the socialist program until one day America will be a socialist nation without knowing how



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it happened.”

And with Americans having elected ex-New Party candidate Barack Obama and N.Y.C. mayor “Bolshevik” Bill de Blasio, some would say that day is fast approaching.

Photo of Bernie Sanders and Hillary Clinton: AP Images



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