

[The Bill Walton Show](#)

“Cultural Hegemony” and Why It Should Concern Americans Today – Part 1

David Nammo:

Yeah. That's Lance.

Bill Walton:

[inaudible 00:00:18]

David Nammo:

They don't know what these systems are.

Bill Walton:

No.

David Nammo:

It sounds great, they sound hip.

Bill Walton:

Yeah. They gotta be cool on the campus.

David Nammo:

Yeah.

Bill Walton:

Okay Ralph you ready?

Ralph Benko:

I'm ready.

Bill Walton:

Okay ... welcome back. I wanted to talk with you today about something and it came across last week that I thought was pretty disturbing and needed some exploration and digging into. It was a poll that said that millennials would rather live in a socialist or a communist and even a fascist nation than in capitalism, I think it was 53% would prefer those systems. This is a pretty stunning result here, and I wanna dig into this about how we got to this point in America, and with a road leading maybe from Marx through an obscure Italian Marxist theorist named Gramsci, to this notion of cultural hegemony which is how you change people's minds and change the way people think about what is common sense and how that might have been changing over the last fifty, sixty years. With me to talk about it is David Nammo who is the executive and director of the Christian Legal Society since 2012. David, welcome.

David Nammo:

Good to be here Bill.

Bill Walton:

And Ralph Benko who is the author of the Webster's dictionary, one of the most important books written about the internet, Webster's Dictionary: How to Use the Web to Transform the World. He's also founder of the Prosperity Caucus back in the, I believe it was in the 70's? And-

Ralph Benko:

85.

Bill Walton:

85, when it was founded-

Ralph Benko:

I'm not ancient Bill, so.

Bill Walton:

Well neither am I ... we'll talk. And the leading statistic there is that when he founded it the DOW was at 850, and now we think the DOW is closing in on 30,000 so good work, Ralph, and thanks for the prosperity. David, last year you wrote a interesting piece on an earlier version of the pole I just sited about socialism and how that's become a hip and popular thing for people to wanna be, wanna brief us on what you learned?

David Nammo:

Yeah so they did a survey last year and essentially ... and I'm of course simplifying it, it said that 40% of the people identified themselves as preferring socialism to capitalism.

Bill Walton:

Mm-hmm (affirmative)

David Nammo:

And after reading the pole and obviously poles are complicated, that, even at 40% is a tectonic shift in who we are and how we see ourselves. And so to me I think it was a result of really the big popularity of Bernie Sanders, he took ... he's always considered himself a socialist but all of the sudden he became a Democratic socialist to make himself I think a little bit more sexy to the electoral class as he was running for office. And you know "I wanna give college free to everybody." Which is a great, I would love to not have to pay for my kids college, right? And healthcare for all, and the finest healthcare systems, all these grand ideas that I don't know who is gonna pay for em. To me it was a shock. 40% of those surveyed prefer socialism over capitalism means that the universities are finally doing their job right? All this thinking.

Bill Walton:

Well what it says to me is they prefer free stuff. Whether they really understand what they're saying when they like socialism I don't know, I don't think people quite get the difference in the economic systems. Ralph, you wanna weigh in?

Ralph Benko:

Yeah, first of all I've known socialists and let me tell yeah Bernie Sanders is no Socialist. He's a hypocrite. He is a social Democrat who has- this is literally true. He believes that the government should be providing a robust safety net. That's what a social Democrat believes. A Democratic Socialist believes that the government should own the means of production. So both Bernie Sanders and Alexandria Cortez are either hypocrites or ignorant when they call themselves Socialists because neither one of them has come out and asked for actual socialism which is the government owning the means of production. They are social Democrats, so there is a lot of confusion going around here Bill, and one of the things you can do here is to help to clarify that and talk about what socialism really is, you've just finished re-reading the Communist Manifesto which is the source of socialism. It's a fundament of communism as the sort of 200 proof version of socialism, so you're well situated to help tell your listeners and viewers what socialism really is.

Bill Walton:

You mean I'm the one-eyed man on this call. Having recently read this, well, in the first place Marx was a wonderful writer, he was primarily a journalist and ... but he had some interesting characteristics. He never really had a job in his entire life, and for somebody that wrote about reordering the industrial world, he never stepped foot in a factory once ever in his life. And for "Workers of the world, unite!" He didn't wanna talk to you personally. And all the research for this book and his other one "Das Kapital", he did in the British Museum, or British Library, just looking up statistics and he basically became, if you look at it critically, his statistics are there to make his case. He doesn't really go after the objective facts of economics, he instead says "This is the outcome I want, let's find some facts to back it in."

Bill Walton:

In fact he found most of the bad stuff about capitalism from reports that were prepared by industry associations themselves, to clean up bad actors in their industry and they'd have people go around and look at a factory and they'd say, "Well this bad thing's going on." And they'd file this report. Well by the time he'd written about how terrible things were, the industry itself had already fixed the problem, and so the feature of what's called capitalism I call it free enterprise, free market enterprise, is continually adapting to fix problems, and you exploit workers for too long pretty soon you don't have any workers.

Bill Walton:

So it doesn't hold up in my view as a real economic tract, although there's scary stuff in here, and a lot of it's coming true. I mean he was talking about abolition to private property and he also had ten ... he said advanced country is following general applicable, absolute abolition of property and land but here's what he got already. He wanted a heavily progressive income tax, and I think that one's happened. And he also wanted abolition of all right of inheritance, although if you look at his own personal situation, he was supported through most of I guess the last 10 or 15 of his life by his writing partner Ingles who did have some money and the other money he lived on were from inheritances. So interesting book, have you guys taken a look at this recently? It's something I think everybody should read because-

Ralph Benko:

I think it should be assigned in the schools because if you compare the 2016 National Democratic Party platform to the Communist Manifesto you'll see that except for where the Communist Manifesto is obsolete due to technological changes, that the Democratic platform is a very vivid echo of the ten core principles of Communist Manifesto. And I'm not saying that to red bait the Democrats, I'm just saying that they should embrace their roots, and if they are moving forward since the progressions have more

influence over the Democratic party, and particularly over its platform, and since their policy formula appears to be almost indistinguishable from most of The Communist Manifesto, they should come right out of the closet and they should declare that and they should say, "Yes this is what we believe, and we're not going to mince words here."

David Nammo:

Why don't we declare- here's my problem Ralph, if they're moving that rapidly and that progressively, and I hate to use the word "progress", because it's not progress it's going backwards, but if they're doing that why are we not shining a light on it, saying, "Look they're, we're heading to Venezuela, they wanna go to Venezuela."?

Ralph Benko:

Yeah well I object to that David, because you are shining a light on it in your writings in The National Review, and I've been shining a light on it in my writings in The American Spectator, and prior to that at forbes.com and elsewhere, and Bill is committed in his human flourishing ministry if you will, secular ministry, but it's a crusade of shining a light on it too. So don't ... go point fingers at somebody else.

David Nammo:

Hey hey hey.

Bill Walton:

Well the crusade though, we need to make the case more effectively, and we need to make it with more people, because we know that market through the most productive and fair way to allocate resources and it's really the only one that's compatible with individual liberty. And we also know that you do need some light regulation, but most businesses industries regulate themselves and so therefore you don't wanna be all over it if you wanna see growth both in the economy for people as individuals.

Bill Walton:

The liberals in America, I think they believe in the markets but they don't trust em, and so that's why we ended up with this heavy regulation and all that, but we're ... you know you speak about progress versus looking back, one of the striking things about Marx if you look at his writings is that he demonized the [inaudible 00:10:57] as creating this new industrial society, while at the same time gave them credit for the biggest leap in material prosperity ever at that time from 1750 to 1850, I think that's when he wrote the book. The economy for the first time ever in human history grew, and people are getting paid for, people are being lifted out of not just poverty but starvation with the system that the English, primarily industrialists were promoting, and then his solution though, he gives credit to all that and then he says how terrible it is because it's objectified workers and made them wage slaves. His objective is sort of the good old days of the Medieval monks and the church and the feudal society where people were very safe in their place in society but they were absolutely living in terrible conditions.

Bill Walton:

So he looks backwards towards-

Ralph Benko:

Well now let's be fair. We're Conservatives so let's be fair, it's the Progressives that like to take liberties, so I'm gonna hold you to account here Bill. He recognized that capitalism had destroyed the feudal order and created a bourgeoisie order, which he also believed to be, he believed to be an advance, but he believed that ... he was very articulate about this, that the tide of history would now move where the proletariat or the working-class, the blue collars if you will, or what Hillary would have called "The Deplorables", would then seize control from the bourgeoisie, and so moving from the oligarchy of feudalism to the sort of soft oligarchy of capitalism, he believed in the egalitarianism of communism, and he advocated the use of brutal means and he was not kidding, and Communists certainly took him up on that between Stalin and now and [inaudible 00:13:11] in order to break the power of the bourgeoisie, which was his word for the middle class, and to move things forward to the Socialist workers paradise, which was their supposed objective but would just ... receded further and further the more brutal they were, the more they attacked the middle-class.

Ralph Benko:

That's, to me, the dirty secret of these Socialists, that when they talk about free universal medical care for all, something by the way that's state sponsored, something by the way that [inaudible 00:13:45] was in favor of, they pretend like they can tax the rich people to pay for it, but the truth is and even The Washington Post has acknowledged this because they have integrity, that they will have to soak the plan for Bernie care, medicare for all, single payer, they would have to soak the middle class and essentially impoverish the entire middle class to pay for the lavish medical benefits that Bernie is promising them. There aren't enough rich people around and even if you confiscated the entire fortune of the Coke's and of the Soros's, and all of the super rich people in the country, it would cover the cost of maintaining the medicare for all for about a month out of the year. The rest of it's gonna come out of our pockets.

Bill Walton:

Well, yeah.

David Nammo:

And that's what millennials don't understand. They hear free- they don't understand that the joke is on them because it's not free, they are going to have to pay for it.

Bill Walton:

Well and the millennials that believe in socialism, I did a show a couple a weeks ago where I pointed out our social security, medicare and the other entitlement systems were about a little over 200 trillion in debt if you take the value of what we owe, we've promised in the future versus the amount that people are expected to pay in and you know I'm a math type and that math's not very attractive, so. They're piling into a system [inaudible 00:15:26] can never pay for the stuff they're taking for free.

Bill Walton:

But let's back up to the Marx piece of this because he proclaimed all this great stuff. It only really worked in Russia, in 1917, and it worked there because Lenin was the most ruthless man in the planet, maybe ever. And he went into Russia and by force, overthrew the Czar, and what he really did was he replaced one Czar's system, one dictator's system with another dictator's system. There was no bourgeoisie to speak of in Russia, so the whole notion of having the bourgeoisie overcome by the proletariat, well there really wasn't a proletariat, there really wasn't bourgeoisie, it was just an outright grab of power that Lenin did and he implemented this whole system by force. And of course the

Communists at the time thought, "Well this is great, Russia's first and Germany's next, and France and Italy and on and on and on." Well it never happened, it didn't take.

Bill Walton:

And the thing that's interesting, I know Don and I mentioned his name, this Italian Marxist theorist, Gramsci, which you guys have both cited and written about extensively, took Marx and he said "Well look you can't use the blunt instrument of force, you gotta understand that if you want our ideas to prevail, we need to have control of the cultural institutions and the way people think." David, Ralph, you wanna take that one and run with it?

Ralph Benko:

Well David you wrote a very interesting piece to how the American Bar Association attempted to hijack the power of the appointment and confirmation of supreme court justices and maybe other justices, using Gramscian theory or at least according to, in direct accord to Gramscian theory so why don't you-

Bill Walton:

Well somebody oughtta describe Gramscian theory, David you wanna take a crack?

David Nammo:

Gramsci really, really laid out a hegemony, hegemony, however you wanna pronounce it, alright so-

Bill Walton:

Nobody knows how to pronounce it.

David Nammo:

Yeah. If you're going to take over, right, if you're going to make a change, a cultural change, you have to, if one idea, ideology is going to [inaudible 00:17:54] you, it's going to dominate, it must stamp out the other things in that culture. And so Gramsci really talked about how you change vocabulary, something we talked about at the beginning of the show, and how you take over culture institutions, and that's what my point was in the American Bar piece, The American Bar Association you would think if you're not a lawyer, and I don't think either one of you are lawyers so you guys are, your souls are intact-

Ralph Benko:

I am a lawyer.

Bill Walton:

Ralph suffers.

David Nammo:

That explains a lot, Ralph. I just wanna [inaudible 00:18:28] Is the male order university still open? I just ...

Ralph Benko:

It was called Boston University of Law School and last time I drove by it seemed to still be there.

David Nammo:

Which one?

Ralph Benko:

Boston University of Law School.

David Nammo:

Oh Boston, absolutely, wonderful.

Ralph Benko:

Under John Silber.

David Nammo:

But The American Bar Association should be ... it's one small example right? You should represent all lawyers of all ilk, and back in the 90's, really around the Clinton years, and I went and found an old article about this, they started to shift politically. And they picked up on issues, of course things that I care about at the Christian Legal Society, they decided to take a position on abortion, and they decided to take a position on certain political issues, and they even started taking a position right in the middle of Bill Clinton's impeachment proceedings. They had him speak at The American Bar Association, and people came out, not Conservatives, but Liberals came out and said "Look, The American Bar Association is going to stand for the rule of law, why are you having this guy come and speak?" So they shifted their ideology, or people in The American Bar Association shifted their ideology, so their examples of oh, they'd give a 100 percent rating for a judge, and then the judge would all of a sudden be appointed by a president they didn't like, and their rating would drop 30 or 40%.

David Nammo:

And that's what I mentioned in my article is, well what did they do differently? They're just as qualified [inaudible 00:20:01] qualified cause they'd been sitting on the bench, and so that was Gramsci's thing, we take over the affiliations, we take over the institutions, we change the language, we shame people that don't use the right words, so we have to use certain pronouns now, we have to address people in certain ways. And so we, through cultural forces, not necessarily political forces, you force people to think and act and be in a certain way, and eventually the culture moves out of fear and a certain way of thinking. Ralph, you can speak even deeper about this.

Bill Walton:

Well you said something interesting, says "When one ideology or worldview dominates, it suppresses or stamps out, often cruelly, any other way of explaining reality." So it's not just politics, it's what people think of as common sense, how you explain day-to-day life. Ralph?

Ralph Benko:

Bill, it says, I'm getting here that says, "Less than a minute left in this zoom session" So if we disappear immediately I'm just gonna stand by and wait for you to-

Bill Walton:

Well that's only for your camera.

Ralph Benko:

Oh, well-

David Nammo:

No it's re-sent itself a couple times Ralph.

Bill Walton:

No I'm joking, I've had that same thing. I had to reset it for a moment there you saw me, the deer in the headlight, I had this big thing on my screen saying "Your time is up."

Ralph Benko:

Well-

Bill Walton:

I think we're okay, we'll fix it, we'll boom back in if we get interrupted.

Ralph Benko:

The dust bit of history. Look, Gramsci made a point, and Gramsci by the way spent most of his life in jail, jailed by the Fascists ... and his work filtered out through his prison notebooks and through his letters, his main ...