

Is the Average Person Dumber than a Lemming?

History lesson: From what I understand, lemmings are one of the few species of rodent that will migrate long distances to deal with overpopulation problems. Back in the day, people would see lots of lemmings one day, and almost none the next, and they came up with the bit of folklore that lemmings commit mass suicide. That bit of folklore would appear in the Disney documentary “White Wilderness,” where the filmmakers staged a lemming “migration.”

Is the average human dumber than a lemming?

Because significant numbers of people seem to have a strong affinity for bizarre nonsense like socialism. And what is socialism but a type of mass suicide? Mises said that the choice between capitalism and socialism is not like a choice between water or milk, but more like milk or cyanide. Before Mises, Frederic Bastiat lamented the ease with which people are tricked into a “war of all against all,” or “legal plunder.”

Humans, in fact, when they get into this mass suicidal move, actually like to prevent others from running away from it. The Berlin wall, the iron curtain—socialists love to drag people into their insane self-destructive crusades, and hold them there with violence once they’re in.

The whole Marxian framework for “exploitation of labor” is based on an obsolete value theory that Marx cribbed inexpertly from Adam Smith, while completely ignoring the fact that Smith and his contemporaries were well aware that their theory of value had major problems.

Gradually, it became clear that Marx’s predictions were worth even less than the value theory he used to make them.

In 1920, Mises explained beyond a shadow of a doubt why it’s socialism with the “internal contradictions,” much more so than capitalism. The communist rebuttal to Mises was basically a leftist-meme version of “nuh-uh,” spanning thousands of pages of faulty logic and special pleading.

The one group that actually tried to come up with something was the technological socialists. “Build me a computer large enough,” they claimed, “and I can plan the economy, even without prices.” However, seventy years of Moore’s law later, they still haven’t produced a computer that can *simulate* the economy, much less plan it. If they could, there would be a lot of very rich technological socialists.

But there aren’t.

Even if the technological socialists could plan the economy, they wouldn’t be able to predict the value of entrepreneurship. Similarly to how they misinterpreted and misused the labor theory of value, socialists took a thought-experiment model like the evenly-rotating-economy, and tried to turn it into some kind of “ideal” for mankind to strive towards.

It didn’t help that as the technological socialists were preaching the almighty Mother Brain, Hayek popped up and kicked over all their assumptions. It became more and more obvious that the economic theory behind all forms of socialism and communism was as empty as Marx’s résumé.

And now we’re stuck in a world where suicidal socialists have infiltrated practically every government in the world today. Their self-destructive ideas are the motivation behind many, if not most new laws at

this point. Private property lies undefended, and any who would defend it are portrayed as unfeeling monsters.

The barbarity of those attacking private property is ignored, even encouraged when they can get away with it.

Even many supposedly productive, capitalistic corporations face the same infiltration. They latch onto the government like lampreys, whispering anti-competitive nonsense into the ears of politicians, and sucking money out of government into special contracts.

Lemmings, at least, don't deliberately run to their deaths. They might try to cross a too-large body of water or something like that. But people seem to love the siren song of free stuff so much that they're willing to run off a well-known cliff for it.

They do the same thing when they take “perfect competition,” where the meaning of perfect is closer to “fits the model” than “works the best,” and claim that unrealistic thought experiment is also something to enact, rather than a simplified example used to isolate and understand certain economic problems.

If only we could take a cue from William Lloyd Garrison, the famous abolitionist. He argued that the free states should secede from the slave states, and absolve themselves of the responsibility of sharing a government.

Would that work with socialism today? Could we build a wall around New York City and make sure they feel the full consequences of their choices, with no outside charity to keep them afloat? Probably not. As hard as it is to keep people and goods from getting in, it's even harder to keep ideas from getting out.