



Brainwashing in Socialism Starts at K-12

A conversation with Andy Kessler

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Uncompressed Thinking

Andy, your WSJ article, **“Our Champagne Socialists,”** was the trigger for this essay. Your subtitle says that “Old, failed ideas” still appeal to “young, naive people,” and that is exactly the right concern. But I am afraid our focus on college and university campuses is misplaced on the axis of time — a long overshoot. Your concern about champagne socialists is right, but by the time they arrive on campus, the ideological work is mostly done. College is not where the socialistic narrative begins. College is where it is released, amplified, dramatized, and sometimes acted out physically for the cameras.

The brainwashing is largely completed by the time students finish high school, perhaps much earlier. In K-12, young people are captured at their most influenceable and impressionable age. They are not yet equipped with adult skepticism. They are not yet protected by enough lived experience. And they are surrounded, year after year, by an educational culture that often presents capitalism as exploitation, inequality as moral crime, government as compassion, and socialism as justice.

Then they reach college. They are relieved of family-based adult supervision, unburdened by daily parental correction, and placed into institutions where their K-12 narrative is not challenged but refined. Whatever intellectual intensity they had is now dressed up with advanced language, more sophisticated dogma, and the freedom to perform it. They exercise free speech to repeat

what they were taught. And when speech is not enough, they sometimes express the same dogmas physically — as we have seen ad nauseam on the screens.

You write that “socialism feeds on campus brainwashing.” I agree with the diagnosis, but I would move the origin point backward. Campus is not the source. Campus is the amplifier. By college age, the student already carries the ideological software. The university mostly installs the updates.

This is why the socialistic teachers’ “trade” unions are terrified by the movement away from socially bankrupt public education toward private education, homeschooling, charter schools, and now AI-assisted learning. Their monopoly depends on early capture. Break that monopoly, and the fuel supply begins to dry up.

There is also a larger problem. The educational system itself has reached a dead end. Its style is obsolete. Brick-and-mortar secondary schools and colleges will not disappear entirely, but many of them may eventually morph into research labs, laboratories of practice, social centers, athletic facilities, town parks, stadiums — whatever communities decide to do with the freed real estate. The physicality of education will remain, but its implementation will be drastically different.

One vision I have is that education will begin grouping people, after a certain age, not simply by age, but by character, temperament, capability, and yes, IQ — the word everyone tries to avoid bringing into serious discussion. Children do not develop on one conveyor belt. Some need structure. Some need acceleration. Some need craft. Some need abstraction. Some need discipline before freedom. Some need freedom before discipline becomes meaningful. A sane system would maximize the progress of each individual, not force everyone through the same ideological and bureaucratic pipe.

So, going back to your core concern about the poison of socialistic and communistic trends in our political space: they will not be defeated mainly by arguing with college protesters. Your advice to young socialists — “Touch grass” — is perfect, but even that may come too late if the mind has already been trained to see reality through ideology. By then, the cement is already dry.

They will dissolve only when starved of the fuel poured into their sails by K-12 education.

Undoing K-12 is hard — close to impossible from inside the current structure. But replacing it is becoming imaginable. So hail to the new education brought to us by AI, by parents, by independent teachers, by entrepreneurs, and by people still willing to believe that education should liberate the mind, not pre-load it with political software.