

Harris, in Video, Starts Showing Marxist Streak

By [IRA STOLL](#), Special to the Sun | November 2, 2020

Vice presidential candidates, like doctors in the Hippocratic Oath, are supposed to “do no harm.” Joe Biden’s running mate, Kamala Harris, risks violating that traditional rule with an animated [video](#) narrated in her voice that she posted Sunday on social media. “There’s a big difference between equality and equity,” she says in the video.

Equality, she suggests, is problematic. “Equality suggests, oh, everyone should get the same amount. The problem with that, not everybody’s starting out from the same place. So if we’re all getting the same amount, but you started out back there and I started out over here, we could get the same amount, but you’re still going to be that far back behind me,” she says.

A better alternative, she suggests, is equity. “It’s about giving people the resources and the support they need, so that everyone can be on equal footing and then compete on equal footing. Equitable treatment means we all end up at the same place.”

The video was met with vehement reactions. “Sounds just like Karl Marx. A century of history has shown where that path leads. We all embrace equal opportunity, but government-enforced equality of outcomes is Marxism,” [replied](#) a Republican member of Congress from Wyoming, Liz Cheney. Ms. Cheney, a daughter of Vice President Cheney, is a member of the House Republican leadership.

The writer Andrew Sullivan, no Trump fan, commented, “Why would a vice presidential candidate seemingly endorse full-on Marxism days before a general election? Does she believe government should enforce equality of outcome for everyone? Seriously?”

Mr. Sullivan went on, “‘Equitable treatment means we all end up in the same place.’ That’s equality of *outcomes* enforced by the government. They used to call that communism.”

The opinion editor of the Daily Telegraph, James Morrow, [quipped](#): “‘Equitable treatment means we all end up at the same place,’ says Kamala Harris, not understanding that that same place always winds up being a gulag or a bread line.”

The animated video could be a calculated move by the Biden campaign to try to whip up enthusiasm from Bernie Sanders-supporting or Elizabeth Warren-supporting far-left voters who are at risk of staying home and costing the Biden-Harris ticket the election. It could, simultaneously, be an ill-conceived blunder that risks distracting swing voters from other issues, such as the Covid-19 pandemic and Mr. Trump’s character and divisiveness, that Mr. Biden has emphasized.

For voters, the Harris video provides a reminder that the election is a contest about not only the particulars of Covid-response policies or international relations but philosophies. The Harris

cartoon view of the world doesn't allow for people ending up in different places because some people work harder or have more natural ability or better or worse luck or make different choices. It suggests that all different outcomes are the result of inequalities of resources, which should be eradicated, so that we can all end up in the same place.

We do have plenty further to go in America to improve equality of opportunity. Clumsily depicting a vision in which "we all end up in the same place," as the Harris-narrated video does, is counterproductive. It will only slow progress.

We are already all in the same place, at least in the sense of being in the same country. The cartoon suggests the government should somehow make sure we all end up at the same level of achievement, wealth, or post-tax, post-transfer income.

What makes this more than just a story about a clumsy social media effort is that the cartoon video matches the rhetoric and substance of the Biden campaign — all the [Park Avenue-bashing](#), the [Biden plan to double the capital gains tax](#), the closing stretch [television ad](#) about "my economic plan that will finally reward work not wealth in this country."

The message is coming not just from Senator Harris but from the Democratic candidate at the top of the ticket. [Campaigning Sunday night in Philadelphia](#), Mr. Biden said, "Wall Street did not build this country, you did, the working people of America built this country.... Under my plan, and this is the God's truth, if you make less than 400,000 bucks a year, you're not going to pay a penny more in taxes, not one penny, I promise you. But the wealthiest, and the biggest corporations...they're going to start to pay their fair share."

"Fair" is Biden-speak for what Harris calls "equity." The people defining what's "fair" in deciding who gets to keep what won't be the people who earned the money or who have it now, but rather Mr. Biden, Ms. Harris, and their fellow politicians. Ms. Harris's cartoon calls it "giving people the resources and the support they need." What it comes down to, though, is less about giving than about taking.