

21st Century Socialism

11 Talking Points

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Top: Scenes from CCDS 6th Convention. Left: Davidson at US Social Forum in Detroit, speaking on Socialism

1. Socialism's fundamental building blocks are already present in US society

- The means of production, for the most part, **are fully developed** and in fact are stagnating under the political domination of finance capital.
- The US labor force, again for the most part, is **highly skilled** at all levels of production, management, marketing, and finance.
- The kernels of socialist organization are also scattered across the landscape in cooperatives, **socially organized** human services, and centralized and widespread mass means of many-to-many communication and supply/demand data management.
- Many earlier attempts at socialism **did not have** these advantages



Top: Socialized production.
Middle, new green jobs.
Right: full automation

Photos: Robotics on assembly line, newly skilled 'Green Jobs' workers

2. Socialism is a democratic system where the organizations of the working class and its allies have attained and ***hold the main political power.***



- It is still a class society, but one in a protracted transition, over hundreds of years, to a future classless society where exploiting class privileges are abolished and classes and class distinctions generally wither away, both nationally and globally.
- So **socialism will have classes for some time, including some capitalists**, because it will be a mixed economy, with both public and private ownership, even as the balance shifts over time. Family farmers and small proprietors will both exist and flourish alongside cooperatives.
- Innovative 'high road' entrepreneurial **privately-held firms will compete with publicly-own firms**, and encouraged to create new wealth within an environmentally regulated and progressively taxed system.
- Past efforts to build socialism have suffered from aggravated conflict between and among popular classes and lack of emphasis on **building wide unity** among the people.



Green Entrepreneurs

3. Socialism at the base is a *transitional* system anchored in **the social mode** of production

- Brought into being by capitalist growth over centuries, the **socialist economic system is necessarily mixed**, and makes use of markets, especially in goods and services, which are regulated, especially regarding the environment.
- But capital markets and wage-labor markets can be sharply restricted and even abolished in due time. **Markets are a function of scarcity**, and all economies of any scale have them, even if disguised as 'black' or 'tiered' markets.
- In addition to regulated markets, socialism will also feature **planning, especially on the macro level** of infrastructure, investment of public asset funds, and other arenas where markets have failed. Planning will especially be required to face the challenges of harsh inequalities globally, as well as the challenge of moving from a carbon and uranium based energy system to one based on renewable green energy sources.
- The socialisms of the last century fell or stagnated at times due to failure to develop the **proper interplay** between plans and markets.



Photos: Hoover Dam bridge planned, public market in Seattle, bakery at farmers market

4. Socialism will be anchored in public and **worker ownership** of the main productive forces and natural resources.

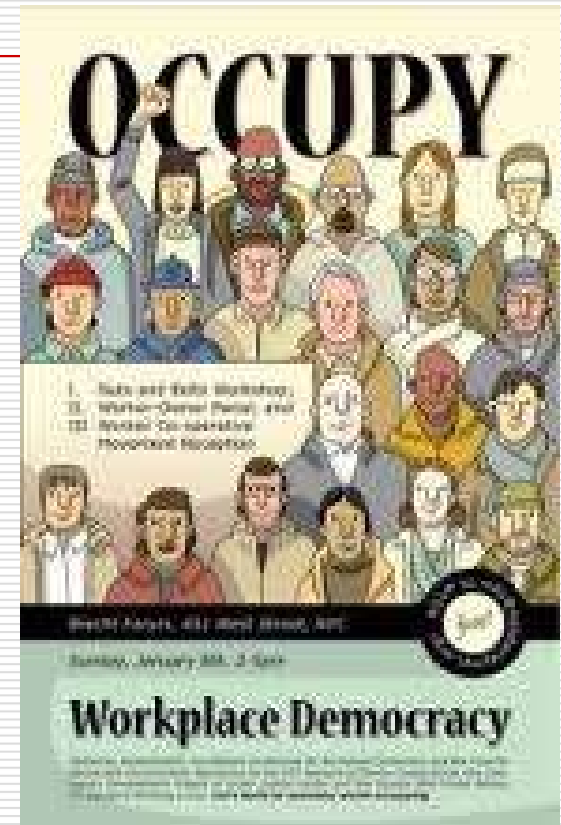
- This can be achieved by various means:
- a) buying out failing corporations at penny stock status, then leasing them to the unions and having the workers—one worker, one vote—run them.
- b) workers directly taking ownership and control over failed and abandoned factories
- c) eminent domain seizures of resources and factories, with compensation, otherwise required for the public good
- d) public funding for startups of worker-owned cooperative businesses.
- Socialism will also require **public ownership of most financial institutions, including bringing the Federal Reserve under the Treasury Department.** Lease payments from publicly-owned firms will go into a public investment fund, which will in turn lend to community and worker owned banks.



'The Take' covers Argentine factory takeovers; UE signs at Chicago's occupied Republic Windows

5. Socialism will require *democracy in the workplace* of public firms and encourage it in all places of work

- ❑ Workers have **the right to independent unions** to protect their social and daily interests, in addition to their rights as worker-owners in the governance of their firms.
- ❑ In addition to direct democracy at the plant level, the organizations of the working class also **participate in the wider public planning process** and thus democratically shape the direction of ongoing development on the macro level as well.
- ❑ Under socialism the government will also serve as **the employer-of-last-resort**. Minimum living-wage jobs will be provided for all who want to work. Socialism is committed to genuine full employment. Every citizen will have a genuine right to work.

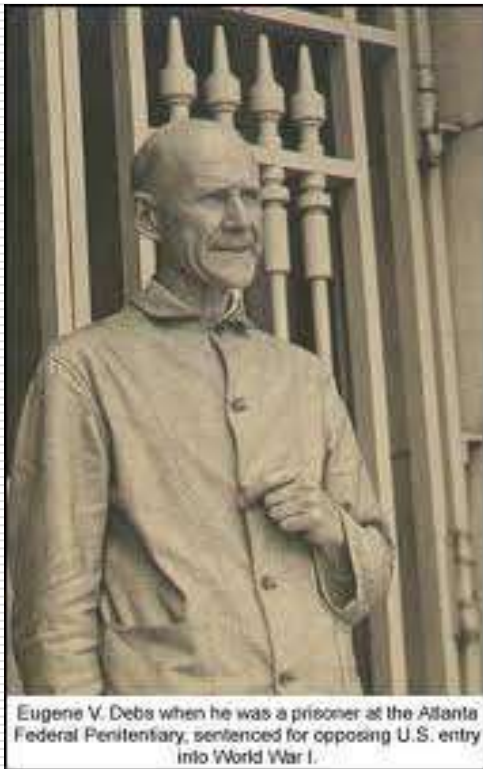


Poster for workshops on worker ownership

6. Socialism will largely be gained by the working class and it allies *winning the battle for democracy* in politics and civil society at large

- ❑ Take down the structures of class, gender and racial privilege.
 - ❑ Women have equal rights with men, and minority nationalities have equal rights with the majority. **Equal rights and self-determination** among all nations across the globe; no nation can itself be fully free when it oppresses another.
 - ❑ Encourage **public citizenship** and mass participation at every level, with open information systems, public education and transparency.
 - ❑ A true **multiparty system**, with fusion voting, proportional representation and instant runoff. No single party could likely adequately represent all popular interests; working class and progressive organizations will need to form common fronts.
 - ❑ All trends are guaranteed **the right to speak, organize, petition and stand for election**. With public financing of elections, socialism can move away from "one dollar, one vote" and toward a system more reflective of "one person, one vote."
 - ❑ Some socialisms of the past used only limited formal democracy **or simply used administrative means** to implement goals, with the **failure** of both the goals and the overall projects.
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7. Socialism will be a **state power**, featuring a democratic political order with a government representing the working class and its allies



- ❑ The current ruling order, corrupted with the thousand threads tying it to old ruling class, will have to be broken up and replaced with new tools of power serving the majority.
- ❑ The **US Constitution** and Bill of Rights can still be the initial basic organizing principle.
- ❑ The democratic rights gained over the years will be protected and enhanced.
- ❑ State power behind the law will be required to compel the honest use of resources and to **protect people from criminal elements**, individual and organized.
- ❑ Forces who try to overturn and reverse the new socialist government **illegally and in violation of the Constitution** will not be able to do so; they will be broken up and brought to justice.
- ❑ Government power has **limits**; under **socialism sovereignty resides in the people themselves**, and the powers of any government are necessarily restricted and subordinate to the universal and natural rights of all humankind.
- ❑ Attempts to ignore or reject these principles have severely harmed socialist governments and movements in the past.

Photo: Eugene Debs got nearly 1 million votes for president, running from prison, where he was serving a sentence for speaking against World War One

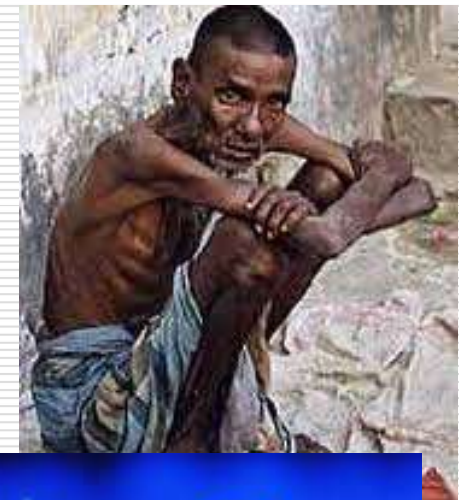
8. Socialism will be a society in harmony with the natural environment

- All economies are subsets of the eco-system and ignore it at their peril. In socialist economics, **there are no such things as 'externalities'** to be pushed off downstream or to future generations.
- The nature of pending planetary disasters necessitates a **high level of planning**. We need to redesign communities, promote healthier foods, and rebuild sustainable agriculture—all on a global scale **with high design**, but on a human scale with mass participation of communities in diverse localities.
- Socialism will treasure the diversity of nature's bounty and end the practice of genetic modification to control the human food supply. **We need growth, but intelligent growth in quality** and wider knowledge with a lighter environmental footprint.
- A socialism that simply reproduces the **wasteful expansion** of an earlier capitalism creates more problems than it solves.



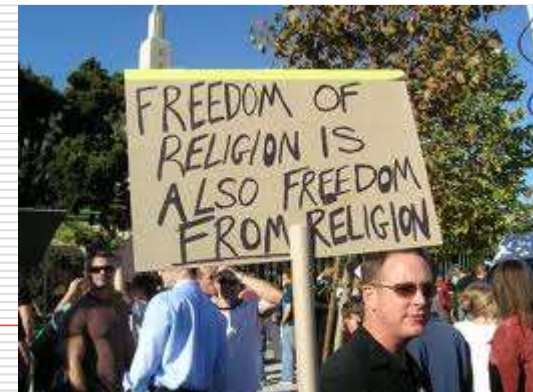
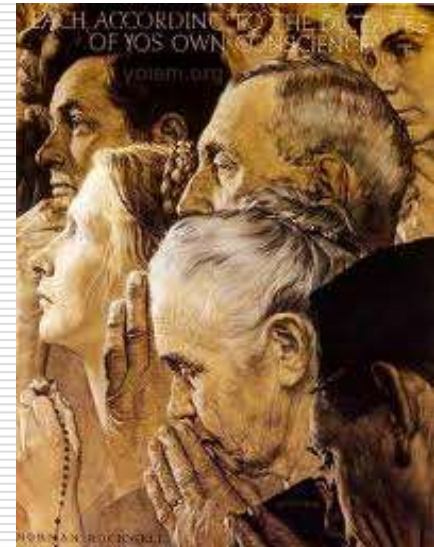
9. Socialism values equality, and will be a society of far greater equality of opportunity

- ❑ In addition to equal legal rights, all citizens and residents will have **equitable access to a 'universal toolbox'** of free public education for all who want to learn, for as far as they want and are able to go.
- ❑ Socialism will provide universal public pre-school care; a minimum income, **as a social wage, for all who create value**
- ❑ Parents raising children, students learning skills, elders educating and passing traditions to younger generations--all these **create value** that society can in turn reward.
- ❑ **Universal health care** with retirement benefits at the level of a living wage is critical to start.
- ❑ Since everyone has access to employment, the **existing welfare system can be largely abolished**; individuals will be free to choose the career path and level of income targets they desire, or not.
- ❑ There are no handouts for those able to work, but there are also no irrational barriers to achievement.



10. Socialism is a society where religion can be freely practiced

- ❑ People are also free to not practice any religion
- ❑ No religion is given any special advantages over any other.
- ❑ Religious freedom remains a fundamental tenant of socialism, but naturally **neither its practitioners nor anyone else can deny anyone the benefits and protection of civil and criminal law,** especially to women and children.



11. Socialism will require an institution of armed forces

- Their mission will be to defend the people and secure their interests against any enemies and help in times of natural disasters.
- It **will not be their task** to expand markets abroad and defend the property abroad of the exploiting classes.
- Soldiers will be allowed to organize and petition for the redress of grievances.
- Armed forces also include local police, under community control, as well as a greatly reduced prison system, based on the principle **of restorative justice**, and mainly for the protection of society from individuals inflicted with violent pathologies and criminal practices.
- **Non-violent conflict resolution** and community-based rehabilitation will be encouraged, but the need for some coercive means will remain for some time.



Photo: Women's militia in Cuba: Graphic: Community conflict