

Democratic Socialism is the Future!



One day we must ask the question, "Why are there forty million poor people in America?" ... When you ask that question, you begin to question the capitalistic economy.
Martin Luther King, Jr.

I believe Socialism is the grandest theory ever presented, and I am sure it will someday rule the world. Then men will be content to work for the general welfare and share their riches with their neighbors.
Andrew Carnegie

What is Democratic Socialism?

Socialism in its essence is a state of society in which all people are equal and work cooperatively for the common good. In recent times people who hold this principle have described it as *democratic socialism*, to distinguish the principle from authoritarian and undemocratic states that have wrongly described themselves as *socialist* in character.

Origins of Democratic Socialism:

The word *socialism*, as it first appeared, was used in publications devoted to cooperatives in Great Britain. Socialism was used to describe a society in which people work together to increase the benefit of all.

Another underlying assumption was that people are, by natural rights, equals. Socialists have always been recognized for upholding the principle of the equality of peoples as a highest value.

Socialism describes a society in which people work together to increase the benefit of all.

Because Socialists value the principle of equality, persons truly *socialist* in spirit value *democracy* as a vital political principle. In a *democracy*, each person has the right to be heard and to be given due consideration. The government is chosen by a vote of the people. This is the basis for the label *democratic socialist*.

This label is used to distinguish *democratic socialists* from people who improperly call themselves *so-cialist* and do not support the values of both equality and democracy.

Principles of Democratic Socialism:

Democratic socialism implies certain other values in human conduct.

1. No person should exploit any other person. This principle of opposition to exploitation is especially important in labor relations.
2. Natural resources should not be exploited or wasted.
3. Changes in society and its governments should be made by free and open elections. Thus, *democratic socialism* ought to be achieved through the ballot box.
4. Widespread and full public education is essential to guarantee the equality of people. People must have information and be allowed to communicate their ideas.
5. *Public Enterprise* in some economic activities is necessary to help people attain economic and social equality. The government should undertake to do for them what people cannot do well for them.

Public enterprise leads to the common definition of *socialism* found in dictionaries: "the public or collective ownership of the means of production and distribution and the democratic management thereof."

Democratic socialists support the principles of democratic collective ownership of the basic means of production and the principle of democratic management. Therefore, *democratic socialists* support not only public ownership, but also cooperative ownership of economic functions.

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Because Socialists value the principle of equality, a person truly *socialist* in spirit values *democracy*, as a vital political principle.

Democratic socialists support the democratic public control of those activities which are vital to the humane operation of an economy, but do not support the idea of state ownership of every human enterprise.

Socialism Misused:

Certain societies have sometimes disguised themselves by using the term *socialism*. "National socialism" advocates a one-party dictatorial society. Political parties advocating and implementing a one-party society with very limited democratic practices have frequently adopted the term, "Communism". However, a truly communal society would be very *democratic*, as were some early societies in the Americas.

Differences between Socialism and Capitalism:

Capitalism describes a state of society, which accepts and encourages private ownership of the means of production. Capitalism exalts the selfish individual. In capitalism regulation of self-interest is discouraged as a hindrance to the operation of a "free market."

The United States is considered by many political and economic leaders to be a capitalist society with a free market. However, the U. S. political and

economic system is in reality a system of private markets protected by the government against competition.

Further, to keep the faltering American capitalism functioning, the various governments step in to provide public funds and support for functions performed by a private enterprise. The United States underwrites the risks for banks and other financial institutions. Local and state governments provide assistance for real estate developers through construction and maintenance of roads and public infrastructure. Local governments provide tax incentives for local developers.

In contrast *democratic socialists* favor government programs to help provide all citizens with their basic needs. Socialists have implemented improved parklands, unemployment compensation, social security, more equitable taxation, public radio and television, and improved educational opportunities.

Democratic socialists have always favored **PEACE** and opposed war as a means of settling differences between nations and groups. Thus, they look to duly constituted courts to settle differences.

Democratic Socialists, knowing the world societies are interdependent, seek to establish a world of "cooperative commonwealths"-- a world of nations that will cooperate with each other for the common good.

Democratic socialism is the radical idea that people should live and work cooperatively in a democratic society.

A socialist society will provide for each individual's basic needs for food, clothing, shelter, transportation, and health.

The spirit of cooperation acknowledges that we must live in a peaceful, environmentally sustainable world.



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