



TORCH AND ROSE

Social Democrats USA
Socialist Party of America

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LEARNING FROM OUR PAST AND REVIVED UNDER NEW LEADERSHIP TO BUILD FOR A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND THE WORLD

BY DAVID HACKER

Social Democrats, USA is the 110-year old organization, variously known as the Social Democratic Party of the United States of America from 1898-1901, the Socialist Party of America from 1901-1956, Socialist Party / Social Democratic Federation from 1956-1964, Socialist Party, U.S.A. from 1964-1972, and Socialist Party, U.S.A. / Democratic Socialist Federation of the U.S.A. in 1972. Social Democrats, USA is the direct successor of the Socialist Party, U.S.A., the party of Eugene V. Debs, Mary Harris "Mother" Jones, Jack London, Helen Keller, Morris Hillquit, Victor Berger, Meyer London, Norman Thomas, Darlington Hoopes, A. Phillip Randolph, Michael Harrington, Bayard Rustin & Frank Zeidler.

The Socialist Party U.S.A., at its national convention on December 30, 1972, by majority vote of the delegates, changed the name of the organization to Social Democrats, USA. The organization officially became the Social Democrats, USA with the adoption of a new

See "Learning From Our Past", pg. 3.

"We still have a dream. . ."

What Socialism is Not Seven Common Misconceptions about Socialism

BY ERIC EBEL, ADAPTED FROM ORIGINAL

Democratic Socialism and Social Democracy are merely two terms that mean the same thing. We in Social Democrats, USA, the historic and legitimate direct successor of the Socialist Party, U.S.A., the Party of Debs, Thomas, Harrington, and Zeidler, believe an economy should be run democratically, to meet the needs of the whole community - not to make profits for a few. A simple idea - which will work in the 21st century. Over the last century into the current one, many have developed common misconceptions about it, which we saw being used as an epithet against Barack Obama in the recent presidential election.

MISCONCEPTION # 1: Socialism is what they had in Russia.

Of course not. In 1917, Russia was in chaos. A small political party which called itself "socialist" seized power. Everything went wrong, and socialists have been arguing over why ever since. The working people didn't really run things over there, and everyone knows it.

Socialism means democracy. And that means elections, free speech and press, free political parties and labor unions - all the things the Soviet people didn't have, nor the Chinese or Cuban people today.

Just because the Soviet rulers (and the Chinese, Cuban, and North Korean) called their system "socialist" doesn't make it so. After all, they called it "democratic" too, such as the Democratic Republic of Korea.

We have denied that the former Soviet Union and other Communist countries are socialist in any form. Instead, we called it Communism and Stalinism. We stated that the system of Stalinism was either bureaucratic collectivism, Oriental despotism, or state capitalism.

See "Misconceptions", pg. 5.

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Leninism and the Left

BY GABRIEL K. MCCLOSKEY-ROSS

It is no secret that the Party for Liberation and Socialism controls International ANSWER. The Worker's World Party is in control of the International Action Center and the Troops Out Now Coalition. Meanwhile, the Revolutionary Communist Party dominates the World Can't Wait coalition. These groups are flat out Stalinist. They all see North Korea as a model of how to build socialism. They make common cause with Jihadists who want to destroy all of Western culture--most particularly our democratic elective process. The Jihadists see the United States and her people as the enemy.

It has been the traditional position of democratic socialists in the West to celebrate Western democracy's electoral institutions--while opposing the multinational corporations that pervert the process with their money. It is possible to oppose the war in Iraq without joining the "Death To America" crowd. There is a long pacifist tradition in and around the Socialist Party which opposes war, poverty, and oppression and does not make common cause with totalitarians and their apologists.

The problem comes with a group like United for Peace and Justice, which is not Stalinist. UFPJ has as affiliates many democratic left organizations. The leadership of UFPJ comes from the Communist Party tradition. UFPJ's leader and spokesperson, Leslie Cagan passed on graduate school to cut sugar cane for Fidel Castro's revolution. The Committees of Correspondence for Democratic Socialism, of which Cagan is a co-chair, split from the Communist Party, USA to follow a more Euro-Communist perspective. CCDS has contact with many of the reformed Communist parties of Eastern Europe. So the question becomes do we work with UFPJ and hence with CCDS and the CP/USA? My simple answer is NO!

For many of our local contacts any perceived association with any communist grouping (regardless of how reformed that group might be) is the kiss of death. Many of our new members found us based on the SD,USA and the SP before its anti-Communism. A member in Oregon discovered that his local peace group was sponsoring a speech by a pro-Castro speaker and he asked for a leaflet that pointed out that Cuba was not a "Socialist country" or on its way to Socialism. Cuba is a military dictatorship which brutally crushes all dissent. The fact that their economy is liberalizing means very little when it remains a command economy.

Being the small organization that

we currently are, we need to differentiate ourselves from both the Stalinist Left and reformed Communist Left quickly. Over a series of weeks we developed a strategy. We decided first to develop a flier that asked Americans to boycott the large corporate sponsors of the Olympic Games. e.g. McDonalds, Wal-Mart etc. This seemed like a wonderful teachable moment. We pointed out the ills of the state capitalism of China and the multinational capitalism which is distorting the values of the United States. Then we suggested that our Oregon comrade send his letter to the newspaper and forward it to all members, so that we could rework it for our locality and send it to many newspapers. We can make clear that there is an organization keeping the legacy of Norman Thomas' Socialist Party alive. We abhor all extremism and oppression whether the violence occurs in name of Monopoly Capitalism, Communism, Fascism, or Theocracy. We should be forming an anti-totalitarian peace movement based in churches, unions, and community groups. The attitude of the old SD leadership must be dispensed with as well. We see totalitarians as such no matter what their attitude toward the United States. This is the real "dictatorships without double standards" position.

Socialism and the Pro-life Perspective

BY JESSICA R. DREISTADT

Members of the the Social Democrats, USA, like many left-wing political groups in the United States, support a woman's choice to have an abortion. Their analysis of this issue is sometimes grounded in solid Marxist theory. However, some Socialists and other progressives disagree with this predominant position; we also base our beliefs on leftist ideology and a desire to promote and create a socialist society.

Unfortunately, the perspective of pro-life Socialists is sometimes met with ridicule and contempt. The purpose of this essay is to dismantle the dominance and dogma of some pro-choice Socialists and to encourage discussion and diversity within our movement.

This essay represents only the opinion of its author and is not meant to characterize the beliefs of all pro-life Socialists. The information presented here is offered in the spirit of a friendly reminder to all comrades that we should accept and love one another despite our differences of opinion.

As a Socialist woman, I stand in solidarity with all who are oppressed including people who are poor, people of color, people with disabilities, and the unborn.

Women and children are relegated to an inferior social status throughout the world. Capitalist societies, in particular, determine the worth of women and children based on their contribution or relation to economic production and growth. However, the worth of women and children cannot be measured by any man. Women and children are intrinsically valuable and deserve every opportunity and privilege available to men and women of means.

Abortion reinforces this imposed inequality. Pregnant women who do not have adequate social and economic support become alienated in our capitalist society. As Socialists, we must support all women in need by addressing the root causes of gender and economic inequality.

Women often choose to have abortions because they feel stuck in an undesirable situation. We must work to change the conditions that lead women to have abortions rather than encouraging the women themselves to change and adapt to their situations.

The pro-choice worldview reduces women and children to material objects whose value in the home and society is based, in large part, on male desire and convenience. When a woman chooses to end a life because of lack of male support, she and her child are victim to the patriarchy. Men who support a woman's right to choose are also taking advantage of their ability to use women's bodies and abuse their relationships.

A woman who has an abortion materializes and assumes ownership of her child to justify her right to end his or her life. Mainstream feminists, now free from male domination in many ways, put our children in an inferior social position - similar to the one women once held.

When a woman chooses to have an abortion, she is subjugating the needs of her child and society to her own individual desires while supporting the opportunistic, money-driven abortion industry. These are the hallmarks of a capitalist society.

Abortion negates women's ability to create life, reducing the societal value of our unique physical abilities because they are considered 'inferior' to the physical capabilities of men. Manipulating nature and its resources is detrimental to environmental harmony and disrespectful to the essence of womanhood. Abortion disrupts the natural flow and process of life and rejuvenation.

Many Socialists are pacifists and as such we condemn unnecessary violence. The taking of a life or the possibility of human life, especially when it involves pain, dismembering, and mutilation of a baby and emotional turmoil of a mother,

cannot be reconciled with a belief in nonviolence. Being pro-choice and pacifist are incompatible positions.

Abortion is sometimes defended because the fetus is of a different age, appearance, and physical capacity than a 'normal' human being outside the womb. When the value of human life, and its right to continue living, is based on these subjective qualities, the floodgates to discrimination and domination are opened.

Abortion is always a compromise. Women and children deserve, and must demand, real choices that unconditionally meet our needs. **ACCEPT NO COMPROMISES!**

The abortion controversy will only be resolved through the elimination of all forms of violence, sexism, discrimination, income inequality, abstinence-only programs, and corporate controlled healthcare (and everything else) along with support for safe homes and communities, equitable resource distribution, respect and opportunities for all, adequate childcare, comprehensive sex education programs, and easy access to birth control.

Check out the counterpoint to this article in the next issue of the Torch & Rose!

LEARNING FROM OUR PAST, cont. from page 1.

constitution. Nevertheless, the structure of the renamed organization remained the same. We have a National Chair, Co-Chairs, Executive Director, National Executive Committee, National Action Committee, State & Local Organizations, the Youth section, Young People's Socialist League of America, and our internal discussion bulletin, Hammer & Tongs. The International recognized the Social Democrats, USA as the same organization that held that seat under the name Socialist Party, representing the United States since the SP's founding in 1952. In addition, the SDUSA's constitution maintained that "The Socialist Party, by that name, shall continue in association with the Social Democrats, U.S.A." The constitution also stated that one of the duties and functions of the Socialist Party was "to solicit and receive money for distribution for socialist purposes, including electoral activity, in accordance with the decision of the Board."

This meant that the historic Socialist Party was still alive, despite the official name change to SDUSA. If need arose, the Board of the Socialist Party (members of the National Executive Committee of the Social Democrats, USA) could vote to re-establish the Socialist Party as a political party on a local, state, or national level under the name Socialist Party, U.S.A.. The Article of the SDUSA's constitution entitled, "The

Socialist Party," remained unchanged through the amendments of September 8, 1974; July 18, 1976; November 21-23, 1981; December 5, 1982; December 6, 1987; and March 24, 1990. The Young People's Socialist League changed its name to the Young Social Democrats in 1976. The SD's constitution included a separate Article under the title, "Young People's Socialist League," which said, "The Young People's Socialist League, by that name, shall continue in association with the Social Democrats, U.S.A."

Therefore, the Social Democrats, USA, as "Socialist Party", ran Eugene V. Debs and Norman Thomas for President of the United States; elected Victor Berger and Meyer London to the U.S. House of Representatives; Daniel Hoan and Frank Zeidler as mayor of Milwaukee, Wisconsin; and scores of mayors, state legislators, judges, and others in the period from 1912 to the mid 1920s.

The above is taken from the opening statement of our "SD Manifesto". The full text can be found on our website, socialdemocratsusa.org. It tells the complete story of the past 40 years of this organization, including the controversial record of the former leadership, ending in their sudden decision to close the national office, without informing the membership. It then relates how one remaining Local, struggling to maintain the organization, contacted members and sympathetic non-members across the country to join them in the effort. From their efforts, the SDUSA has been revived under new leadership, with a fresh political outlook. Our "Manifesto" details our new relationship with the other organizations that emerged from the historical Socialist Party, such as the Democratic Socialists of America and the so-called Socialist Party of the United States of America. It explains why we felt it necessary to preserve the SDUSA. Finally, the "Manifesto" discusses the continuing vitality of the concept of democratic socialism in the 21st century and the revived organization's statement of principles.

This is the first issue of the new official publication of the revived SDUSA, The Torch & Rose. It continues the legacy of the Socialist Call and New America. The official name of the revived organization is Social Democrats, USA--Socialist Party of America, reflecting our complex historical legacy and our revised political strategy. Nevertheless, we continue to adhere to those positions that remain vital to building a sane democratic Left in this country, while changing, sometimes even radically, the policies that made the old SDUSA appear to be apologists for neo-conservatism, alienating the organization from a

majority of the democratic Left. Here, in brief, are the policies of the revived organization:

What will be continued from the SD of the past 30 years:

1. Our support for a strong American Labor movement. We believe that working men and women organized in their trade unions are the most important force for progressive social change. We continue to affirm that working class socialism is the only kind of socialism that can or will ever exist.

2. Our opposition to Communist totalitarianism, Right wing authoritarianism, and religious extremism arising in many religious traditions, with the current most dangerous being in the Islamic world.

3. Our support for vigorous democracy here and abroad. Social Democracy can only exist in nations that have strong democratic institutions.

4. Our support for the Socialist International. We are focused on resuming our membership in that body, since the former leadership of the SDUSA allowed it to lapse.

5. We will continue to defend the existence of Israel as a Jewish State. We will oppose anti-semitism and anti-Zionism on both the political Right and Left.

6. We will, in general, work within the Democratic Party, along with the labor movement and other progressive constituencies.

7. We not take a position on abortion. In 1991, the AFL-CIO considered a pro-choice resolution. Prior to that, the SD separated itself from other groups on the Left by maintaining that the abortion issues was divisive and would alienate Catholic workers in the labor movement. The revived SDUSA has decided to resume this position that was taken by our organization before 1991. We want to provide a supportive environment for both sides to meet and work on developing social democratic economic programs which would result in alleviating the social and economic conditions of women that cause a large percentage of abortions.

8. We affirm the heritage of the SDUSA and the SP before it as charter members of the civil rights movement and the battle for racial equality. We will continue to reject the ideologies of oppression.

What will be different:

1. We believe that it is not enough merely to state that "we support the American Labor Movement," while the unions of the United States are in deep crisis. In the revived SDUSA/SPA, we will support an open and self-critical multi-racial labor movement. Moreover, we will be independent friends of

Labor and also have a open and self-critical attitude toward the union movement in this country. We will develop a relationship with union officials, especially those labor leaders bringing innovative ideas to the advancement of the working class movement. But it will be an independent relationship and not the servile one of the old SDUSA leadership.

2. Our conception of the SDUSA will be completely in accord with an organization that espouses social and political democracy from the bottom up. We believe that a group cannot advocate democracy until it first practices it. Therefore, the revived SDUSA will be a decentralized organization, with the emphasis on the growth of local and state affiliates. Each State and Local organization will decide where to place its political priorities.

3. We are unconditional advocates of Israel's right to exist, but we are sometimes critical of its governmental policies. We support Israeli democratic ideals and those who work for them. Whenever those ideals are compromised, we will vigorously protest, because we are pro-Israel. Our slogan is Israel is here to stay and also Israel must be saved. Sometimes, Israel must be saved from itself, if it is engaged in some governmental policy or action detrimental to establishing a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, etc. Moreover, our support for Israel's sovereignty does not mean that we are anti-Palestinian. We support a just resolution for the Palestinians that does not fatally compromise the legitimate security concerns of the Jewish State.

4. We believe that the suspicious attitude of the former leadership of the SD toward environmentalists is obsolete in this era of growing danger, esp. the effects of global warming. Both the environmental and labor movements have come to realize that they need one another and must work in harmony. Therefore we affirm that, in the 21st Century, we will also be a green movement dedicated to preserving the fragile environment of this planet. In other word, we are Ecosocialists.

5. We are open to supporting independent socialist / social democratic party campaigns by our state and local organizations, if they are for local public office and there is a better than even chance of winning. The SDUSA is willing to experiment with different democratic processes on the local level. Both sides of the old political strategy debate of the 1960s can reunite in harmony in the revived SDUSA, free to pursue separate tactics, while working toward the common goal of building a stronger democratic socialist / social

democratic movement in the United States.

6. We no longer consider DSA a rival organization. We view DSA as our sister organization, sharing the same goals and heritage, differing on strategy and public policy positions. We want to establish close and comradely relations with DSA, as we are kith and kin of one another. We wish to put the hostile relationship of the past to the dustbin of history and begin anew. We welcome dual membership between our two organizations.

7. We reject the lurch toward neo-conservatism and militarism of the old SDUSA. We lament the decent into democratic centralist, ultra-leftism of the SP of the USA. We are sad to see DSA abandon very successful efforts to get its members elected to public office. The new SDUSA-SPA is ready to work with members of the old SDUSA, DSA, the SP of the USA, the Labor Party, Americans for Democratic Action, the Working Families Party, and other social democratic groupings, as well as unaffiliated social democrats who remain committed to a pluralist, anti-totalitarian organization. We will work to see our members elected to local government in the tradition of Socialist Party which extends from Congressmen Victor Berger and Meyer London through State Representative Darlington Hoopes, Mayors Daniel Hoan and Frank Zeidler, and Congressman and now Mayor Ron Dellums, to Senator Bernie Sanders.

8. While concentrating on developing social democratic programs for the here and now, we have not given up our vision of the new socialist society that incremental change would eventually bring. We are still committed to the vibrant democratic socialist movement of the near future and our socialist vision of the far future beyond our lifetime and our children's lifetime.

This is the revived and revised SDUSA. We stand for Social Democracy and embrace our entire history. We fight for the extension of democracy into all aspects of society. We view the terms "social democracy" and "democratic socialism" as being interchangeable. We do not support a government-dominated social system. We support a democratic, non-sexist, un-racist, welfare state with a mixed economy in which the people and democratically-responsible representatives will have maximum feasible influence in setting economic priorities. Social Democrats, USA (SDUSA) is the successor to such past and present labor, civil rights, and humanitarian leaders as Eugene V. Debs, Norman Thomas, Victor Berger, Meyer London, Kate Richard O'Hare, Mother Jones, Helen Keller, A. Philip Randolph,

Upton Sinclair, Carl Sandburg, Reinhold Niebuhr, Darlington Hoopes, Samuel H. Friedman, Katharine Smith, Max Shachtman, Robert Tucker, David McReynolds, Erich Fromm, Murray Kempton, Frank Zeidler, Deborah Meier, Rochelle Horowitz, Michael Harrington, Tom Kahn, Joan Suall, Bayard Rustin, James T. Burnett, Ernie Erber, Sandra Feldman, Donnie Slaiman, Rita Freedman, and Penn Kemble. We fully embrace our history. We welcome a wide range of the Social Democratic / Democratic Socialists, from Third Way to Third Camp.

William O' Neill, in the conclusion of his book, *A Better World: The Great Schism: Stalinism and the American Intellectuals*, pages 383-384, published by Simon & Schuster in 1982, writes the following: "A left rooted in anti-Americanism and dedicated to the interest of foreign countries, which is what we had for most of the last half century or so, benefits no one, not even itself. An ethical left that regarded the well-being of the United States as a legitimate concern would be valuable as a counter to the right - always more powerful in this country than its opposite. - and as a way of making responsible dissent effective. Had there been a genuinely independent and democratic left of consequence in the 1960s, the worst national misadventures might have been avoided, or at least scaled down. That the Michael Harringtons and Irving Howes are so few is a problem that has defied the best efforts of socialists since World War I. But whatever the solution, experience makes clear that going the other way, as both the old and new lefts did, is not it. A Strong Left, if there is to be one, will have to be an American Left, democratic, loyal, and with no compulsion to admire or emulate foreign tyrannies. Anything less would be flawed and, the record indicates, futile."

This is the American Left we want to build. One that proudly flies the American Flag with the Red. We are patriotic and love our country to such an extent that we labor to make it truly a shining city on the hill. We are Social Democrats / Democratic Socialists because we are committed to the future of the United States and the American people. We may be not for everybody, especially those who want to continue the domination of the country by corporate elites and those who adhere to both the political Right and the authoritarian Left. On the other hand, we represent the hard working, middle income, low income, and unemployed majority of the United States of America. Maybe we are for you.

MISCONCEPTIONS,
cont. from page 1.

As in the recent presidential campaign, the political Right has always misused the term socialism, with the image of Stalinist or Communist societies. Back in 1949, Max Shachtman, one of the important political mentors of the SDUSA, made the perfect response to this charge against socialism:

"From the standpoint of the bourgeoisie, Stalinism represents a revolutionary left wing and Russia represents a "socialist state" in two respects. From the inception of the socialist movement, the bourgeoisie has taught (and many have undoubtedly believed) that socialism means the "servile state" - the bureaucratic monster-state that deprives all the people of property, of liberty, of prosperity, and subjugates all to its despotic whim. Stalinist Russia is the unexpectedly full materialization of this hoary calumny against socialism - or so the bourgeoisie teaches. Regardless of how much or little it believes this, it is obviously in its class interest to teach it. "There, in Russia today, is your socialism! That is what socialism looks like, not in the books of Marx, but in reality! That is the only thing socialism will ever look like in reality! Russia is a horror - shun it! Socialism is a horror - shun it!" (To which should be added that anyone who, with the best intentions and the best 'theory' in the world, continues to call Stalinist Russia a socialist or a workers' state of any kind, is giving both the Stalinist and bourgeois enemies of socialism a free weapon.)"

MISCONCEPTION #2: Socialism means the government will own and run everything.

For years, socialists believed that establishing a socialist economy would be simple. The working people would take over the government, and the government would take over the factories and run them in the public interest.

We've learned that it's not so simple. Too much centralized power undermines democracy and doesn't work. A true democracy puts control of the important decisions into the hands of the people involved on an everyday basis.

Today, most American socialists want to decentralize economic decision-making. The Federal government will be given responsibility only for the things it handles best, such as guaranteeing democratic rights and setting the general direction of the economy, as most people already expect.

MISCONCEPTION #3: Socialism can't work because power will simply fall into a few hands.

Power is already in a few hands. The basic economic decisions, affecting

millions of people, are made by a handful of corporate executives who answer only to themselves and a few wealth stockholders. This is what should now be obvious in the example of the current economic crisis we are facing.

If what socialists wanted to do was to turn everything over to the government, it would make matters no better. We again cite the current example of the FEDs taking control of the banks. We want to open up the system.

We can't eliminate large corporations, but we can bring them under democratic control. That doesn't mean the government has to take over the corporations. Instead, it could rewrite regulations and the tax code, use its purchasing power, or set up public financing programs, all to encourage corporate behavior in the public interest and to outlaw antisocial activities.

Government does all these things already, but the basic goal is to keep profits as high as possible. Working people and taxpayers have to demand that their government require corporations help people instead of hurting them - that they create jobs, keep the environment clean, rebuild the cities, make useful high-quality products, and give farmers a fair living.

Finally, most democratic socialists want the corporations themselves to be run more democratically. Companies should be communities - and organize themselves as such. Someday we hope to see companies controlled by their own employees, choosing their own management, and deciding for themselves about company goals and organization. In some cases, enterprises run by consumers or local communities might be more appropriate.

That will put power in a lot more hands than it is in now!

MISCONCEPTION #4: Socialism won't work because it won't provide incentives for effort or creativity.

When it comes to getting people to put out their best efforts, there is no reason a socialist society can't do whatever brings the best results. If it turns out that people do their best work for material rewards, material rewards are what we would support. If it turns out that people work for the sake of their own self-respect - provided they can be sure of making a decent living - moral incentives would be best. Probably there would be some of both.

Not all socialists would agree on how work should be rewarded. But most agree that there isn't nearly enough equality of opportunity in today's society and that impairs our efficiency. Socialism will not end debates about economic policy, nor should it. We'll need an even stronger democracy to settle questions

like this.

MISCONCEPTION #5: Socialism can't work because individual freedom can't survive without private enterprise.

This is the gut issue for many people.

Socialists believe modern industry has changed the meaning of freedom for most people. Back when things were on a smaller scale and there were fewer of us, freedom may have seemed a simple matter. It meant being left alone to do what you wanted to do, so long as you didn't hurt anyone. Maybe such a world once existed and maybe it didn't. The point is, it doesn't exist today.

Today, most people are part of big organizations, organizations they don't control. Corporations, cities, and nations have grown so large that whoever is running them can decide things for thousands or millions of people without ever consulting them. Again, the example of our current economic crisis.

So freedom today means more than the right to be left alone. It means the right to be treated fairly by "the system", the right to earn a decent living, and a right to a say in the decisions that affect your life.

Doubtless this will interfere with the "freedom" of bosses and bureaucrats. But for most people, democratic control of the economy, which is what socialism is about, will bring more freedom, not less.

MISCONCEPTION #6: Socialism can't work because modern technology requires inequality.

Socialists hope someday to build a world in which there will be no rich or poor, no rulers and no ruled - only people, living and working together as equals.

Obviously, this isn't going to happen tomorrow. Some people think it won't happen at all, because they believe modern industrial society is so complicated that only the experts can understand how to run it.

Nobody really knows how much equality is possible given modern technology. Technology means trying to find the best way to solve a problem. Today our society's overriding goal is to make a profit for someone. Technology is harnessed to find the best way to use and control people as raw material to keep the profits rolling in. There is no money to be made finding new ways to give people more freedom and dignity.

Yet here and there, groups are experimenting with more democratic ways of doing things - its called "self-management", "workers control", or "employee involvement". Some of these projects thrive, others don't. The ones that succeed prove self-management can

be efficient and can better our daily lives. The ones that don't teach us what mistakes to avoid the next time.

MISCONCEPTION #7: Socialism can't work because it is based on trying to create perfect people in a perfect society.

Socialism really has nothing to do with perfection. We do believe that a modern industrial society is run better by making decisions openly and deliberately, to serve the needs of the community, rather than by leaving them to chance - or to whoever has the most money.

At the same time, we believe that people who live in a cooperative, democratic society will tend to behave differently than those in a competitive capitalist society. They will get into the habit of working together, of taking responsibility for the good of the community, and of realizing that their own welfare depends on the welfare of everyone else.

If so many people misunderstand socialism, why continue to use the word?

First, we call ourselves socialists because that is what we are. We really believe that people would be better off if key economic decisions were made democratically rather than by a few wealthy executives.

Second, no matter what we call ourselves, the powers that be will try to turn it into a dirty word. Liberals and progressives in this country have been afraid of being called socialists for generations. It just didn't begin with the recent presidential campaign. It was used as an epithet in the halcyon days of Debs and Thomas. Teddy Roosevelt's Bull Moose presidential campaign in 1912, was called by the New York Times, socialist. It was widely used in the McCarthy era of the 1950s, and during Michael Harrington's lifetime. No one can scare us away from something we support by calling it socialist.

Finally, we call ourselves socialists to remind everyone we have a goal. Even if we know it will take a long time to accomplish through the workings of the democratic system, even if we keep our minds open to the suggestions of others, we are sustained by the belief that someday people will be able to live together in peace, equality, and cooperation.

The Multistate Solution for the Arab-Israeli Conflict

BY DR. DONALD F. BUSKY

I used to believe in the two state solution between Israel and the Palestinian. Israel would withdraw from the occupied territories captured in the Six-Day War in 1967 in exchange for

a peace deal with the Palestinians and they would get a state of their own on the West Bank of the Jordan River with East Jerusalem as their capital, and it would also include the Gaza strip. Israel would also withdraw from the Golan Heights in exchange for a similar peace treaty with the Syrians.

However, with a civil war raging between Fatah and Hamas there is no one left for Israel to negotiate such a peace treaty. With Fatah, Israel could make a peace treaty, but they only control the presidency at the moment, and that perhaps not for long. They are locked in a violent fight with the terrorist group Hamas. Hamas is an ultraconservative, Islamic fundamentalist religious movement that takes funding from Iran, the state that is the largest funder of terrorism today. Iran's president is an ultraconservative, Islamic

fundamentalist, religious fanatic who denies the Holocaust ever took place and has sworn to wipe Israel off the face of the world. Hamas and the Revolutionary Guards in Iran both oppress women. To say they are anti-feminist is a tremendous understatement. In Palestine husbands get away with "honor killings" of wives. Hamas controls the Palestinian parliament. They will not agree to recognize Israel or make peace with it. Hamas is currently killing Fatah members who challenge their rule, and as they will boycott the parliamentary election just called by secular Palestinian President Abbas, who is a member of Fatah. Fatah would likely lose in such an election the polls show if Hamas participates. Abbas is in too weak of a position politically to negotiate a peace treaty with Israel at present, or is likely to in the future.

It takes two to negotiate a peace treaty. Israel is willing to negotiate, but there is no one with enough power on the Palestinian side to negotiate. Israel and the Palestinians were extremely close to making a peace deal in 2000, in which the Palestinians would have gotten the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, but then the second intifada began and the deal collapsed. Israel is attempting to build an "apartheid wall" to keep the terrorist out. It will likely fail in the end, and is a civil rights disaster.

The time of the two state solution worked out over many years and negotiations died in 2000. It will not be revived despite the Bush administrations' or other government's attempts to make it a reality. It is time to move on to a new solution for peace in the Middle East; to a multistate solution to the Arab-Israeli Conflict.

The elements of the multistate solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict begin with Israel returning in the Golan Heights to

Syria in exchange for a peace treaty. Syria will have to cut off funding and recognition to the terrorist groups Hezbollah and Hamas. This part of the peace treaty will have to be made in such a way that it is verifiable. This is critical. Both groups are Islamic fundamentalist. Last summer's war between Hezbollah and Israel in Lebanon was provoked by Hezbollah. Israel in the eyes of many lost the war. Certainly the civilians of Lebanon lost the war. Both sides used cluster bombs against each other. They are still killing people. The U.S. provided Israel with its cluster bombs. Hezbollah got its weaponry from Syria and Iran. Hezbollah was militarily weakened but in the eyes of many politically strengthened by the war. They are now trying to overthrow the democratic government of Lebanon.

The next war that Hezbollah and/or Hamas fights with Israel may well be fought with weapons of mass destruction: nuclear, chemical or biological, provided to them by Syria or Iran or someone else. Israel is likely to respond with its own weapons of mass destruction. They won't admit it, but it is generally suspected that they do have nuclear weapons.

Making peace with Syria will greatly lessen the possibility of war fought with weapon of mass destruction in the Middle East, which could pull the U.S. and other nations in the conflict and touch of World War III.

Syria and Israel must agree to a free trade deal. Syria and Israel must agree to free travel of the respective citizens between their two nations. Israelis must not be forced to leave the Golan Heights. If they wish to remain there they must agree to become Syrian citizens. Syria must accord them the same rights of all Syrian citizens. Any loss of lands Syrian citizens incurred by the takeover of the Golan Heights because of the Six-Day War should be settled by the International Court of Justice in the Hague. Compensation should, of course, be paid. I doubt if many Israelis will want to remain in the Golan Heights and be Syrian citizens, but they should be allowed to be and be protected from harm if they do. Syrians wishing to immigrate to Israel should be allowed to, and their rights should be protected and they should be treated equally.

Settling the Israel-Syrian problem sets the model for the rest of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Israel must return all of the West Bank and East Jerusalem to its owner before the Six-Day War, Jordan. Jordan must guarantee the security of all Palestinian and any Israelis who chose to remain. Jordan is a friendly nation with Israel today. They must be held responsible for ending terrorist attacks on Israel. If Jordan wants to make the

West Bank with East Jerusalem its capital of a state in the federal system of Jordan to accord some local control, that should be their business. Israeli settlers now in the West Bank and East Jerusalem must be allowed to remain, but they will have to become Jordanian citizens and accorded all the equal rights and protections of all Jordanian. Many of these settlers in the occupied territories will probably elect to move back to Israel proper, but that will be their decision. Compensation should be paid to Palestinian who lost land on the West Bank to these settlers and in Israel prior to the 1948 War of Independence. That should be handled by a neutral arbitrator: The International Court of Justice in the Hague.

The Gaza Strip, currently the source of some of the most bitter fighting between Fatah and Hamas should be returned to its original owner, Egypt. They must bring law and order to this land so full of oppressed people. The Israeli military must keep out. Egyptian military forces and police force must stop the rocket attacks by Islamic extremist on Israel that provoke Israeli military incursions from time to time.

There is one other ingredient necessary. Israel, Syria, Jordan and Egypt all need democracy, social welfare, full employment, economic democracy, feminist policies, environmental policies and a tremendous reduction in their mutual military spending. That ingredient is democratic socialism. Together with the multistate solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict we can avert a war fought with weapons of mass destruction that will inevitably come unless change is made.

In Memoriam: Dr. Donald Busky, Ph.D was the founder of the Socialist Party of the Greater Party of Philadelphia and its chairperson from 1978 to 2002, and State Chairperson of the Pennsylvania Socialist Party from 1988 to 2000. Don was a founding member of the Social Democratic Party of Pennsylvania and a contributing editor to New America, the blog of the Social Democrats, USA. He was an advisor to the Philadelphia chapter of the new Students for a Democratic Society. Busky was the author of Democratic Socialism: A Global Survey (Praeger, 2000) and Communism in History and Theory, 3 vols. (Praeger, 2002). His four volume work "The History and Theory of Anarchism" has been accepted for publication by the University Press of America, Inc. At the time of his death he was writing a multi volume work entitled "Capitalism". Dr Busky was an adjunct professor of Political Science at Camden County College. We lost Don on November 29, 2008. His wit and perceptiveness will

be greatly missed. This article is from the Spring 2007 edition of the "Red Penn", a journal Don founded and which he returned to editing in 2008. In Don's memory "The Red Penn" will publish at least one more hard copy issue. Please contact Gabriel McCloskey-Ross at redgabeross@yahoo.com or 814 410 2542 for more information.

This Old Heart of Mine

BY STEPHEN WEINER

Notes on Iraq 3/31/07

This article originally published in The Suspicious Humanist, A Journal of the Arts & Opinion, 1971 Siskiyou Blvd. #1 Ashland, OR 97520.

I'm sorry that I have to write this essay the way I'm going to write it, and say the things I'm going to say: the essence, the political bottom line, is that I find myself unable to agree with most of my friends and probably most of my readers. In supporting an immediate or even pre-announced "telegraphed" as the Republicans say American withdrawal from Iraq - I find myself reluctantly agreeing with President Bush and the Republicans that such an outcome would leave Iraq in probably worse shape and in the hands of murderous Islamofascist terrorists determined to convert to their variety of Islam - or kill - every person on earth - that's an ultimately hideous program and the world hasn't seen anything like it since the Nazis or perhaps the Khmer Rouge - there are also unreformed Saddamist Baathists and Sunni and Shia sectarian extremists determined to kill each other, Kurds, Christians and, I suppose "westerners" (translate: white people) in great numbers - I've been a Democrat in every election since I voted for George McGovern against the Vietnam War in 1972 and have voted Democratic in every partisan election since then except once, in California in 1974 for the Left-wing Peace and Freedom party and once years later also in California for a very liberal Republican state legislator, a physician with a good record on health issues - that's it - in addition, as regular readers know, I was born into a very Left-liberal at one time Communist party family - in Vietnam I planned to avoid the draft with a psychiatric "defense" - completely true and unfake - fortunately I got a lucky undraftable number in Nixon' lottery, but if I hadn't - well, I was already making plans to go into exile in Canada, and I might well be a Canadian today - so I fell very band and somewhat /almost guilty for supporting a continuation of this war which will[sic] the deaths and maimings of many more American soldiers as well as multitudes of innocent Iraqi - but I feel the truth is the truth, and Bush (whom I voted against twice) is, despite all his

alleged stupidity, essentially correct in seeing that the whole reasonable (I don't like to use the quasi-racist term "civilized") world has been attacked by Islamofascism - when I first decided I wanted to grow up to be a political writer when I was in junior high school and read a collection of essays by George Orwell, I decided that I wanted to grow up to be and write like the very honest and unfashionable (anti-communist in pro-communist Left-wing intellectual circles in Britain) Orwell - this essay is based on the pledge I made back then that I wouldn't be worth anything as a writer if I didn't always try to tell the truth as I saw it - finally, Islamic extremism is in my opinion a variation of the understandable but now-unjustifiable desire on the part of many non-white people to exact revenge for hundreds of years of European imperialism, colonialism and racism - it's understandable, but it goes beyond legitimate liberation and has taken on the quality of what I call "revengism" - and when it' melded to a very hateful version of an old and popular religion, it's time to take a stand.

Note: "This Old Heart of Mine" is a song originally a hit of the Isley Brothers on Motown in 1966, if I'm not mistaken, and covered by Rod Stewart in the 1980s. I love it, and for a long time I've used it as a title for writings which express my deepest feelings and thought.

Catholics and the Left

BY GABRIEL K. MCCLOSKEY-ROSS

I realize that many non-Catholics wonder why our Church puts such emphasis on the "right to life". In fact, many "Catholics" also wonder. Of course, most of these "Catholics" likely accept three of seven sacraments and five of the ten commandments. I have seen polls that show that only 40% of Catholics accept the "real presence of Jesus in the Eucharistic". That means 60% of Catholics deny the central teaching of their Church and hence are, by definition, non-Catholics. It would be as if a significant number of American Jews acknowledged Jesus as the messiah. Would faithful Jews then be compelled to acknowledge "Jews for Jesus" as a denomination of Judaism?

In a secular, democratic society, people may believe whatever they choose. The Roman Catholic Church is neither secular nor democratic. It functions on faith. It is a "matter of faith and morals" fundamental to being a Catholic to believe life begins at conception. Many, like Vice-President-Elect, Joesph Biden, argue that this is "a matter of private morality". When prominent Catholics argue in the public arena that obedience to Church doctrine

is a matter of private conscience, it confuses the faithful and makes them assume that whatever they chose to believe is just fine. This ethic is creating more and more "cafeteria Catholics" who feel they may pick and chose among the doctrines that they will accept.

I have for a great while found it odd that many on the American left believe that almost any institution except a Church can and should hold members to agreement on matters of doctrine. There was no outcry from most liberals when Pennsylvania governor, Robert Casey, was prevented from addressing the Democratic convention because he differed from the Party platform on abortion. If, on the other hand, a "Catholic" office holder were denied the sacraments for actively attempting to thwart the Church's mission to end abortion, liberals see that as intolerance.

Again, I have thought for a great many years that a true social democratic movement would be very different from the "liberal wing" of the Democratic Party. Left Democrats tend to hold radical positions on social issues like abortion, but Social Democrats would likely be swayed by the majority of Americans who reject these positions. Only 40% of Americans accept abortion on demand and that percentage has been steadily declining over the last three decades. The family is the basis of any collectivist thinking.

On political issues, Left Democrats tend to hold doctrinaire positions. Social democrats would likely seek a more consensus building position. A quick look at the positions of the members of Party of European Socialism on the economic meltdown will demonstrate this point. Rather than keeping the bank bust for a campaign weapon, the social democratic parties of Europe have worked toward immediate aid packages and a long term strategy to protect against another such mishap. Frequently, they are working with conservative ruling parties on such measures. It would doubtless be easier to just blame those in power and create the kind of grid lock that scuttled the first attempt at a loan to the American auto industry.

On matters of economics, Left Democrats are extremely conservative. They can find all the money necessary to bailout Wall Street and none to help working families. Obviously, Social Democrats worry about working families first.

It is essential to have actual, believing Catholics as part of a social democratic movement. Most Catholics accept the "seamless garment of life" theory put forward by the late Cardinal Joseph Bernadine. We understand that war, poverty, and ecological

degradation are all sins against the one who made man in His own image and likeness. Our problem comes when we are almost alone, institutionally, in defending the unborn and are then held up to ridicule for our efforts. This creates an "us and them" mentality that should have ended centuries ago.

For instance, I would think that believers in personal conscience would quickly move to defend the right of health care providers to recuse themselves from procedures that violate their personal beliefs. The lack of such a vigorous defense of health care providers right to choose makes what should be a strong natural constituency for single payer health care very wary of it. Catholics are afraid single payer would mandate abortion and contraception services at all hospitals.

As Father Andrew Greeley has pointed out, up until the 1970's radical Catholics organized unions, opened soup kitchens, and protested militarism. All the while they remain obedient to their Church. Today radical Catholics start institutes to publish magazines that essentially call for the dissolution of the universal Church.

With economic hard times clearly beginning and perhaps the start of a new depression, it will require people like those who formed the Radical Catholic Alliance of the 1930's to be an active part in a social democratic

coalition. It would never occur to me to demand unanimity with my position on abortion (I believe abortion is always a disaster for all concerned and with the exceptions of a direct threat to the life or health of the mother, it is always wrong) with a broad social democratic coalition. I find it equally untenable to be told that I must put my faith in my back pocket

in order to participate in such a coalition. There is a real possibility of meeting both pro-life and pro-choice goals by reducing the desire for abortion by ending poverty. Politically, social democrats can build the consensus mentioned earlier, yet on matters of faith we must agree to disagree. To do less is to advocate theocracy, which is absolutely counter to the ethos of social democracy and

Christianity. I am a democratic socialist because I am a Roman Catholic, not in spite of it.

~A third generation radical Catholic

yours, mine, and ours

BY RICHARD D'LOSS

I could have placed this piece on the "Writings" page, but it is an essential part of my economic philosophy and so I have put it up front. Accompanying this piece is a paragraph from the Talmudic tractate Pirke Avos which describes 4 different characters and their relationships with their "stuff". It gets right to the heart of the Torah ethic regarding personal possessions, greed, charity, and micro-economics. It attaches a moral evaluation of each of the 4 basic perspectives on property ownership, and there is no equivocation. Average, ignorant, pious, wicked. So much in such a little package! Let's take a deeper look.

It is very clear that the people described in Torah have personal possessions. There is no description of a communal life where everything is common property. Shepherds owned flocks. Abraham purchased the cave where he buried his wife Sarah. Some people had little wealth, some had a lot, but there is no value judgment placed on that condition. Wealthy people are no more likely to be wicked than poor people. And conversely, there is no

description of people being more righteous because of their poverty. Therefore, we can see why the first character type might be considered "average". We note that "average" is neither wicked nor pious. Certainly, if you own a car and you need it to get to work, and your work provides a livelihood for your family, you have an interest in protecting that possession and to be angry if it were stolen. This does not make you insensitive to the man who has no car. It is a common sense application of "what's mine is mine, and what's yours is yours". So why the additional remark that some consider this a

Pirke Avos 5:13

There are four characters among men:

1. he who says, "What is mine is mine, and what is yours is yours" is the average type, though some say this is a Sodom-type;
2. he who says "What is mine is yours, and what is yours is mine" is ignorant;
3. he who says, "What is mine is yours, and what is yours is yours" is pious;
4. he who says, "What is yours is mine, and what is mine is mine" is wicked.

Sodom-type? The people of Sodom were exceedingly wicked: there were not even 10 righteous men in the entire city. So how can the first type be considered "average" to some and "exceedingly wicked" to others?! To understand this, we must consider the ultimate ramification of the first character type. Suppose your neighbor is starving and you have an abundance of food in your

household? If you are the first character, you say, "I'm sorry, but what's yours is yours, and mine is mine". The first character cannot be charitable because charity is completely contrary to the rule. Strict adherence to this rule prohibits a man from following Torah teachings such as leaving the corners of your field uncut so that the poor may glean some food. Thus we see from the first character that the Torah permits us to have personal possessions, but not to carry this concept to a callous extreme.

The second character seems to be talking nonsense and is labeled ignorant. However, "ignorant" means lacking knowledge, not being mentally deficient. Very brilliant men and women have attempted to live by this second rule. It basically says that we have no personal possessions. Everything of mine is yours and everything of yours is mine. So, it's not describing nonsense; it's describing communists and kibbutzniks. This character is not "average" or even common. And this philosophy is not spawned from our subliminal greed. So where did it come from? After I read Reb. Irving Bunim's commentary, I immediately recalled the words of Karl Marx in his Manifesto, where he said that the bourgeoisie created its own destroyer; it created the "have nots" living in squalor who would rise up to destroy the "haves". Unfortunately, while the bad actors of type 1 created the reactionaries of type 2, it doesn't make the type 2 philosophy correct. It is a noble endeavor to battle the Sodom-types, but the communists were (and are still) ignorant of basic human nature. The natural inclination of men is to protect themselves, mainly by seeking shelter, food, and security. During every age, this meant acquiring living space, food, and the wealth that typically brings security. The key therefore is not to fight this basic nature and disdain all personal possessions, but to seek moderation. The Torah teaches a similar lesson regarding alcohol—it's not prohibited, but its excessive consumption is. Personal possessions have a legitimate purpose; let's not throw out the baby with the bath water.

The third character requires no explanation. We know that the pious of every generation go beyond being "average". They willingly give what they have to others. They don't rely on the gifts of others; they never turn away the needy. They keep only what they need for basic subsistence and give the remainder to charity. This pious character is also described in the Christian scripture of Acts chapter 2. "The spirit of the Lord came into the men and they sold their possessions and distributed the proceeds to the needy

amongst them". Likewise, the fourth character needs little explanation. He is voracious in his jealousy and lust. He wants everything he has and everything you have. He is the ultimate violator of the 10th commandment "thou shalt not covet". Too much is never enough. He wants it all. His gluttony presents a danger not only to himself, but his entire community.

This perek outlines a basic philosophy of wealth which can be understood by average men. It tells us what is average behavior and it tells us what is pious behavior. It does not demean "average" but warns us of its danger. Thus, an average man can establish for himself a personal economic philosophy that is "do-able", one that seeks to elevate him above average with an eye towards piety. This is critically important, for what good is a philosophy if it can only be followed by the most pious of men?

I believe that at the end of the 19th century we Americans had enough of the Sodom types, the famous industrialists and bankers who amassed great fortunes and concentrated power in the hands of few. We saw the rise of the Socialists, who rightly pointed out that capitalists acquire their wealth through the blood and sweat of workers who get no benefit from their own labor. And Republicans pointed out that the capitalists monopolize business, locking out opportunities for industrious individuals. Interestingly, the Democrats had no philosophy supporting the common working man. In a bold, yet calculated maneuver, the Democrats took the Socialist platform and incorporated it into their own, simultaneously creating the New Deal and decimating the Socialist Party. And America would never be the same. With the creation of the graduated income tax, disability insurance, unemployment insurance, social security, and food stamps, we took a giant step towards the piety described in this perek. The result? Within 25 years we became the most prosperous nation on earth. We built a standard of living unrivaled in the world.

So here we stand today, at the end of 2008, our economy in its worst shape since the Great Depression. How did it happen? Just as the Book of Exodus tells us that "there arose a Pharaoh who knew not Joseph", we can say that the 1960's and 1970's grew up a generation who knew not the Great Depression. They had no personal memory of a time when people stood in bread lines and lived in tin shacks in Hoovervilles, or of a time when wounded military veterans received no care nor assistance, or of a

time when company police could shoot striking workers, or of a time when women couldn't vote, or of a time when the mentally infirm roamed the streets looking for a place to sleep. And so, perhaps naturally, we began a backslide. A slow steady march back to Sodom in search of "what's mine is mine". In the 90's, we had the Clinton presidency, which could be described as a great big, 8-year long orgy. People made lots of money, tax revenue rolled in, and we eliminated General Assistance (commonly known as Welfare). This made a fat bank account in Washington. But the excess didn't stop. Another 8-year party followed it, where, in spite of massive amounts of wealth being accumulated by some, we decided to cut taxes for our nation's wealthiest citizens—while we are fighting two wars overseas. Too much money was not enough. So here we are; our economy flat on its ass. It's deja vu all over again. My major concern is that this economic situation will continue to spiral downward, cause great calamities in our country, and even leading to violence. We have seen it before. In the late 19th century our government clearly aligned with the capitalists and against working people. The workers took matters into their own hands. In 1892, workers here in Pittsburgh took over the Homestead works of Carnegie Steel and a shootout with the Pinkertons ensued. Later, anarchist Alex Berkman shot capitalist Henry Clay Frick, chairman of Carnegie Steel, because of his role in the strike. Can it happen again? Recently, while millions of Americans filed for unemployment, our government leaders gave AIG \$65 billion of our tax money and the AIG executives promptly made for themselves a great party and gave each other huge bonuses. AIG is run by the Fricks of our day, and they are the "Sodom-types". These robber-barons rule over us, holding us hostage. And they do so with the support of Congress. It's 1892 all over again.

WHAT DO WE BELIEVE CAN CHANGE?

The presidency of the United States of America cannot fix all of the world's problems, yet it is the most powerful elected office in the world. Senator Barack Obama accepted the nomination of the Democratic Party exactly 45 years after the 1963 "March for Jobs and Justice"—the "March on Washington", best remembered today for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr's "I have a Dream" speech. It is perhaps most brilliant political oratory in our nation's history. The force of Dr. King's speech and the hundreds of thousands who responded to it influenced President John Kennedy and his successor,

Lyndon Johnson, to enact legislation ending racial discrimination. President Johnson echoed the cry of civil rights marchers in a nationally televised speech. "We shall overcome", intoned the president. And we did! The 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act outlawed most public forms of discrimination. Johnson skillfully used the power of the executive office to right a major domestic wrong in his advocacy of both bills. The leaders of America's black, civil rights, and trade union communities, however, knew the work was just beginning in the effort to build a nation free of poverty and repression.

Now we are engaged, not in a new struggle, but in the next phase of that same struggle. Public discrimination on the basis of color and gender is illegal, but private racism and sexism remain virulent. Barack Obama and Senator Hilary Clinton are proud beneficiaries of the appropriate use of executive authority. However, the last eight years has seen a woeful usurpation of authority by the White House. The George W. Bush administration used the first foreign attack in more than a half century against Americans upon their own soil to govern by executive fiat. The administration lied about the dangers of one regime and ignored actual perpetrators. Bush led a war, not against the terrorists of 9-11, but against the American working class. Using tax breaks for corporations and the rich, they redistributed wealth from the average wage earner to the economic elites. Never has the gap between the wealthy and the rest of us been so wide. Those who supported George Bush and John McCain counted on American workers being divided. These financial elites literally banked on Americans remaining preoccupied by differences of race, color, creed, gender, national origin, and life style. By concentrating on what makes us different, we allow our government to fail us. We must make our government again "uphold, support, and defend the Constitution of the United States from all enemies, foreign and domestic". The economic fat cats are wrong. American workers are united like as not since the great depression.

We are the Social Democrats, USA, the only legitimate heir to the Socialist Party, USA. Our heritage includes Eugene Debs, Mary Harris "Mother" Jones, Helen Keller, Norman Thomas, A. Philip Randolph, and Bayard Rustin. Randolph and Rustin planned and brought together the 1963 March for Jobs and Justice. Dr. King might have had a very small audience if not for them. Randolph, a life long member of the social democratic movement, organized the first predominantly black union, the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters.

Rustin, a long time peace and human rights activist, counseled Dr. King, and his colleagues as they developed their plans for nonviolent resistance to "Jim Crow". Randolph and Rustin united the struggle of workers with the struggles of minorities, hence the "March for JOBS and JUSTICE". The Labor Movement supported the March in both finances and numbers. Many other members of the Socialist Party helped make the march a watershed moment, including the individual Dr. King called "the bravest man I ever knew", socialist elder statesman, Norman Thomas. Young People's Socialist League members Rochelle Horowitz and Tom Kahn wrote speeches for John Lewis and others. The SD,USA enthusiastically embraces the candidacies of Barack Obama and Joe Biden. They are part of our own broad, pro-labor, anti-totalitarian, liberal tradition, as were Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt, Walter Reuther, Harry Truman, George Meany, Lane Kirkland, Hubert Humphrey, and Michael Harrington.

President Obama will take the oath of office the day after the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday and 138 years after Abraham Lincoln became president. The next stage of the civil rights struggle is to ensure for all Americans, regardless of color, sex, or economic circumstances, an equal opportunity to economic advancement and safe guarding from misfortune, illness, joblessness, or homelessness. It is time now to put into practice fully the promises of the "New Deal" and the "Great Society". The struggle remains one for "Jobs and Justice". The Social Democrats, USA will be a proud part of this struggle. Will you?

"The combination of black and white workers will be a powerful lesson to the capitalists of the solidarity of labor. It will show that labor, black and white, is conscious of its interests and power. This will prove that unions are not based upon race lines, but upon class lines. This will serve to convert a class of workers, which has been used by the capitalist class to defeat organized labor, into an ardent, class conscious, intelligent, militant group." (taken from an editorial the socialist newspaper, The Messenger, 1912) The late A. Philip Randolph, honorary chair, Social Democrats, USA.

"Social democracy is a practical ideal. It will not come about by decree, certainly not by force, but because a majority of Americans – blacks and whites, trade unionists, intellectuals, and youth – learns from practical experience that

social democracy is the best and only way to achieve economic justice and political freedom." The late Bayard Rustin, National Chairman Social Democrats, USA.

"There must be a better distribution of wealth, and maybe America must move toward a democratic socialism." The late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

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~Good and Welfare~

Mindful of hardship and illness,
we keep these folk in our thoughts
and prayers, willing, aye, ready to
lend an hand such as we are able:

Patricia Friend
Stephen Weiner
Michael C. Marino

and most especially

~our president~
Robert W. Tucker

~and~

to all the victims of poverty, war,
disaster, famine, and disease
anywhere in the world.

Disclaimer: All material contained herein is the opinions of the individual authors and does not necessarily reflect the principles of the organization.

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Social Democracy comprises humanity's boldest experiment -- an attempt to organize society of collective justice and individual freedom where everyone gets food, shelter, health care, education, and the ability to actualize his or herself. In other words, achieve a truly civil society.

To this end:

WE SUPPORT THE AMERICAN LABOR MOVEMENT.

Working men and women, organized in their trade unions, can be the most important force for progressive social change. We support an open democratic and self-critical labor movement.

WE SUPPORT VIGOROUS DEMOCRACY HERE IN THE US AND ABROAD:

Social democracy can only exist in a climate of strong democratic institutions. We support strong voting rights, public campaign finance and equal access to media for all candidates. We look to strengthen the longest most successful democratic experiment in world history, the USA.

WE SUPPORT THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL

as the society of like minded parties and activists. We stand with the Labour Party of Britain, the Social Democratic Party of Germany, the French Socialist Party and labor parties across the world. We look to SI members in government for guidance in effective and just government. SD,USA has adopted the SI Declaration of Principles and Ethical Charter and uses the Party of European Socialists the SI working group in the European Parliament as its pragmatic basis.

WE, IN GENERAL, WORK WITHIN THE TWO PARTY SYSTEM.

WE EMBRACE THE LIBERATORY POTENTIAL OF RELIGION

- The world's sacred texts provide some of the strongest support for the dignity of labor, the need for social fairness and the ability of humanity to achieve its highest aspirations. SD,USA embraces religious faith not as an "interest group" within a larger movement, but as fundamental to the creation of a better world.

WE OPPOSE TOTALITARIANISM IN ITS SECULAR AND RELIGIOUS FORMS

SD,USA proudly opposed Communist totalitarianism and opposes religious extremism arising in many religious traditions, especially in the Islamic world.

WE DEFEND ISRAEL.

We are unconditional advocates of Israel's right to exist, and that our support does not depend on it being "nice" in order to deserve our defense. But we are not uncritical. We support Israeli democratic ideals and those who work for them. We support a just resolution for the Palestinians that grants their legitimate national aspirations without fatally compromising the legitimate security concerns of the Jewish State.

WE STAND FOR SOCIAL DEMOCRACY AND EMBRACE THE HISTORY OF SOCIAL DEMOCRATS, USA.

We fight for the extension of democracy into all aspects of our society. This means not a government-dominated, but a democratic, non-sexist, un-racist, welfare state with a mixed economy in which the people and democratically-responsible representatives will have the maximum feasible influence in setting economic priorities.

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