

A "Third Force" Foreign Policy

Socialists are opposed to all forms of minority rule, whether capitalist, fascist or "Communist." While Socialists are firmly opposed to the knee-jerk anti-Communism of the McCarthy era, neither do they hesitate to speak out in defense of those elements in the "Communist" countries struggling to democratize those societies. The Socialist Party considers itself part of an international "third force" of movements equally opposed to capitalism and "Communism."

Becoming a Member

When someone joins the Socialist Party, they're also joining for reinforcing their commitment to other movements for social justice. Socialists don't simply function within their own party, in isolation from the outside world. On the contrary, most Socialists are deeply involved in other, larger movements and it is from those movements that many new Socialist Party members are recruited.

To join the Socialist Party, take or send your membership application to the nearest city or state affiliate for confirmation. If you do not already know a local member, our national office will help you get in touch. If there is no local or state organization, send your application directly to our headquarters.

Members are strongly encouraged to help build their local or state organizations, or to help start one. (The SP National Office can provide materials for this purpose.) Membership in the Socialist Party means learning as well as doing. The Socialist Party encourages its members to become well educated about various facets of the Socialist movement, and provide bibliographies and other materials to interested members and supporters.

Members participate directly in the decision-making processes of the party through their local or state organizations, through mail referenda, by attending state or national conventions as delegates or observers, by serving in commissions, or by writing articles for *Hammer & Tongs* the party's internal discussion magazine.

Some people come to the Socialist movement through their study of socialist writings on economics and politics. Some come to the socialist movement as a by-product of their religious commitment. Some become socialists because their work in the labor or women's movements had convinced them that such problems as persistent unemployment and sexual inequality cannot be solved within the framework of capitalism. Many come to the socialist movement simply because everyday life under capitalism has convinced them that there has to be a saner, more democratic way of running a society.

Socialists can be found in the consumers' movement, in the labor movement, in the feminist movement, in the disarmament and peace movements, and in the antinuclear and environmentalist movements. In each of these movements, Socialists work not only to promote the immediate aims of those movements, but also to push those reforms an extra mile, to point out to their coworkers in those larger movements that for their goals to be fully achieved requires fundamental change-Socialist change.



Socialist Party USA

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- I want to know more about the Socialist Party USA; please add me to your mailing list.
- Enclosed is \$10 for a year's subscription to *The Socialist*.
- I want to join the Socialist Party USA; please send me a membership application.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____

E-Mail: _____

Local Contact:

---labor donated---



Socialist Party USA

**Who We Are
Where We Stand**

Every four years, the Democratic and Republican parties meet in convention to adopt a national platform. With memberships ranging from Joseph Lieberman to Russ Feingold, and from Pat Robertson to John McCain, it's not surprising that their national platforms end up as vague attempts at being "all things to all people." Although their platforms often say little while maintaining an image of mutual hostility, those two parties are united on fundamentals.

They are united in upholding a system euphemistically called "free enterprise," in which a relative handful of people control the largest corporations in America and in the world, thereby wielding enormous economic and political power and subverting the functioning of political democracy.

Between the two of them, the Democratic and Republican parties today exercise a near monopoly of political power in the United States. If they wanted a redistribution of wealth and power in this society, there would be such a redistribution. If they wanted more democracy in our economic institutions, we would have more economic democracy. If they wanted an end to the arms race and to a foreign policy based on raw militarism, there would be an end to the arms race and to militarism. In short, if the Democrats and Republicans really wanted change, there would be change.

Where We Stand

In contrast to the Democratic and Republican parties, the Socialist Party has an underlying philosophy that is both coherent and radical. It is coherent in the sense that members of the Socialist Party differ on details, but are united on certain fundamental principles. It is radical in the sense that all members of the Socialist Party recognize the need for fundamental change in our society. Socialists believe that the problems facing America and the world, such as environmental despoliation, the systematic waste of public resources for private profit, persistent unemployment concentrated among women and racial minorities, and the maldistribution of wealth, power, and income, are not mere aberrations of the capitalist system — they are the capitalist system.

This is why Socialists are not impressed by political appeals based on the personal qualities or "charisma" of any individual politician. Socialists believe that it is the system — and the institutions which make up that system — that must be changed. Socialists differ fundamentally from liberals in this regard. Socialists critically support liberal reform measures (such as increases in the minimum wage) not as ends in themselves, but as guideposts pointing to the need for a fundamental transformation of our society.

Membership in the Socialist Party implies a clear agreement with and commitment to the fundamental points of the party's statement of principles, Socialism as Radical Democracy. There are many different points of view within the Socialist Party, but all of them are in agreement with these basic points of democratic socialism.

Production for Use Instead of Profit

Socialists seek a society in which the production and distribution of goods and services is based on public need instead of private profit. We believe that the use of profitability as the overriding criterion for the production and distribution of goods and services usually leads to decisions which harm the public welfare. This is especially true where irreplaceable natural resources are concerned.

In the 1930s America witnessed the spectacle of farmers plowing under crops because prices were not high enough, while children in nearby cities were starving. Today, we have thousands of construction workers out of jobs while there is an enormous need for new housing. Socialists believe that once we begin moving to introduce democracy into our economic institutions, it will be possible to establish the public good — instead of private profit — as the cornerstone of a new national and international economic order.

Extension of Democracy from Politics to the Economy

Socialists believe that in order for political democracy to work well in a post-industrial society, it must be complemented by economic democracy. Socialists feel that unless at least "the commanding heights of the economy" are socially owned and democratically controlled, those corporations will use their enormous political and economic clout to circumvent and block political democracy. Accordingly, Socialists support such institutions as consumer cooperatives, workers' collectives and worker/consumer participation in the management of governmentally-owned industry, as steps toward a society in which political democracy is reinforced and strengthened by economic democracy. Socialists are also strong supporters of democratic planning in the economy and government.

Defense of Civil Liberties

Socialists regard civil liberties and political democracy as among the highest achievements of our society, however imperfectly they can be applied under capitalism. Socialists helped found the American Civil Liberties Union, and were among the very few who protested the interment of Japanese-Americans during World War II. For Socialists, the defense of civil liberties and minority rights is not a tactical question, but a matter of fundamental principle.

Workers' Internationalism

Socialists believe that all those who earn their in comes through work — whether by hand or brain — have a common interest in transforming our economic system from capitalism to socialism, and that working people around the world have more in common with each other than with their national rulers

Opposition to Militarism and War

Socialists have historically worked long and hard for disarmament and the prevention of war, while contending that it is only by abolishing the root economic causes of war that war will finally be ended. The Socialist Party's candidate for President in 1920, Eugene Debs, campaigned from a prison cell — he had been sentenced to the Atlanta Federal Penitentiary for opposing the war "to make the world safe for democracy."

Believing that wars have almost always been "a rich man's war and a poor man's fight," Socialists have opposed time and again U.S. military intervention around the world, stressing instead the common interests of America's working people with those of the workers in the country the U.S. military establishment is trying to repress.

Socialist-Feminism

Socialists realize that economic, class oppression is just one type of oppression found in contemporary capitalist societies.

Other types of oppression include sexism and racism, and the Socialist Party is committed to fighting all of them. The Socialist Party recognizes that the oppression of women pre-dates capitalism and so will not automatically be ended by the transition to democratic socialism. Consequently, we are committed to promoting feminist consciousness both in society at large and within our own ranks. As socialist-feminists, we differ from both those on the left who fail to recognize feminism as an essential aspect of human liberation, and from those parts of the feminist movement that believe that women's liberation can be achieved without a fundamental change in the economic system.

The Struggle Against Racism

Bigotry and discrimination help the ruling class divide, exploit, and abuse people here and in the Third World. We work to eliminate prejudice and discrimination in all its forms. We recognize the right of self-defense in the face of attacks, and also support non-violent direct action in combating oppression. We support independent organization by people of color to fight oppression. Racism will not be eliminated merely by eliminating capitalism.