

THE SOCIALIST PARTY USA strives to establish a radical democracy that places people's lives under their own control — a non-racist, classless, feminist, socialist society in which people cooperate at work, at home, and in the community.

Socialism is not mere government ownership, a welfare state, or a repressive bureaucracy. Socialism is a new social and economic order in which workers and consumers control production and community residents control their neighborhoods, homes, and schools.

The production of society is used for the benefit of all humanity, not for the private profit of a few. Socialism produces a constantly renewed future by not plundering the resources of the earth.

Under both capitalist and authoritarian statist systems, people have little control over fundamental areas of their lives. The capitalist system forces workers to sell their abilities and skills to the few who own the workplaces, profit from these workers' labor, and use the government to maintain their privileged position, while further impelling the drain of society's productive wealth and goods into military purposes, the despoliation of the environment and natural resources, and perpetual war in which workers are compelled to fight other workers.

Under authoritarian statist regimes, decisions are made by ruling party officials, the bureaucracy and the military. The inevitable product of each system is a highly stratified society with gross inequality of resources, privileges, and substantive participation in political life.

People across the world need to cast off the systems which oppress them, and build a new world fit for all humanity. Democratic revolutions are needed to dissolve the power now exercised by the few who control great wealth and the government.

By revolution we mean a radical and fundamental change in the structure and quality of economic, political, and personal relations. The building of socialism requires widespread understanding and participation, and will not be achieved by an elite working "on behalf of" the people. The working class is in a key and central position to fight back against the ruling capitalist class and its power. The working class is the major force worldwide that can lead the way to a socialist future — to a real radical democracy from below.

Radical democracy is the cornerstone not only of our socialism, but also of our strategy. Here are the main features of each:

Socialist Society

Freedom and Equality

Democratic socialism is a political and economic system with freedom and equality for all, so that people may develop to their fullest potential in harmony with others. The Socialist Party is committed to full freedom of speech, assembly, press, and religion, and to a multi-party system.

We are dedicated to the abolition of male supremacy and class society, and to the elimination of all forms of oppression, including those based on race, national origin, age, sexual preferences, and disabling conditions.

Production for Use, Not for Profit

In a socialist system the people own and control the means of production and distribution through democratically controlled public agencies, cooperatives, or other collective groups

The primary goal of economic activity is to provide the necessities of life, including food, shelter, health care, education, child care, cultural opportunities, and social services.

These social services include care for the chronically ill, persons with mental disabilities, the infirm and the aging. Planning takes place at the community, regional, and national levels, and is determined democratically with the input of workers, consumers, and the public to be served.

Full Employment

Under welfare capitalism a reserve pool of people is kept undereducated, under-skilled, and unemployed, largely along racial and gender lines, to exert pressure on those who are employed and on organized labor.

The employed pay for this knife that capitalism holds to their throats by being taxed to fund welfare programs to maintain the unemployed and their children.

In this way the working class is divided against itself; those with jobs and those without are separated by resentment and fear. In socialism, full employment is realized for everyone who wants to work.

Worker and Community Control

Democracy in daily life is the core of our socialism. Public ownership becomes a fraud if decisions are made by distant bureaucrats or authoritarian managers. In a

socialist society, power resides in worker-managed and cooperative enterprises. Community-based cooperatives help provide the flexibility and innovation required in a dynamic socialist economy.

Workers have the right to form unions freely, and to strike and engage in other forms of job actions.

Worker and community control make it possible to combine life at work, home, and in the community into a meaningful whole for adults and children. Girls and boys are encouraged to grow up able to choose freely the shape of their lives and work without gender and racial stereotyping. Children are provided with the care, goods and services, and support that they need, and are protected from abuse.

Ecological Harmony

A socialist society carefully plans its way of life and technology to be a harmonious part of our natural environment. This planning takes place on regional, national, and international levels and covers the production of energy, the use of scarce resources, land use planning, the prevention of pollution and the preservation of wildlife.

The cleanup of the contaminated environment and the creation of a nuclear-free world are among the first tasks of a socialist society.

Socialist Strategy

Socialist Feminism and Women's Liberation

Socialist feminism confronts the common root of sexism, racism and classism: the determination of a life of oppression or privilege based on accidents of birth or circumstances. Socialist feminism is an inclusive way of creating social change. We value synthesis and cooperation rather than conflict and competition.

We work against the exploitation and oppression of women who live with lower wages, inferior working conditions, and subordination in the home, in society and in politics. Socialists struggle for the full freedom of women and men to control their own bodies and reproductive systems and to determine their own sexual orientation. We stand for the right of women to choose to have a safe and legal abortion, at no cost, regardless of age, race, or circumstance.

Women's independent organizations and caucuses are essential to full liberation, both before and after the transformation to socialism. Women will define their own liberation.

Liberation of Oppressed People

Bigotry and discrimination help the ruling class divide, exploit, and abuse workers here and in the Third World. The Socialist Party works to eliminate prejudice and discrimination in all its forms. We recognize the right of self-defense in the face of attacks; we also support non-violent direct action in combating oppression.

People of color, lesbians and gays, and other oppressed groups need independent organization to fight oppression. Racism will not be eliminated merely by eliminating capitalism. We fully support strong and expanded affirmative action programs to help combat the entrenched inertia of a racist and sexist system which profits from discrimination and social division.

International Solidarity and Peace

People around the world have more in common with each other than with their rulers. We condemn war, preparation for war, and the militaristic culture because they play havoc with people's lives and divert resources from constructive social projects.

Militarism also concentrates even greater power in the hands of the few, the powerful and the violent. We align with no nation, but only with working people throughout the world.

Internal Democracy

Socialism and democracy are one and indivisible. The Socialist Party is democratic, with its structure and practices visible and accessible to all members. We reject dogma and promote internal debate. The Socialist Party is a "multi-tendency" organization.

We orient ourselves around our principles and develop a common program, but our members have various underlying philosophies and views of the world.

Solidarity within the party comes from the ability of those with divergent views on some issues to engage in a collective struggle towards social revolution. We strive to develop feminist practice within the party.

Cultural Freedom

Art is an integral part of daily life. It should not be treated as just a commodity. Socialists work to create opportunities for participation in art and cultural activities. We work for the restoration and preservation of the history and culture of working people, women, and oppressed minorities

The Personal as Political

Living under domination and struggling against it exact a personal toll. Socialists regard the distortion of personal life and interpersonal relations under

capitalism as a political matter.

Socialism must ultimately improve life; this enrichment of culture through diversity cannot be accomplished by demanding that personal lives be sacrificed for the movement. We cherish the right of personal privacy and the enrichment of culture through diversity.

Electoral Action

Socialists participate in the electoral process to present socialist alternatives. The Socialist Party does not divorce electoral politics from other strategies for basic change.

While a minority, we fight for progressive changes compatible with a socialist future. When a majority we will rapidly introduce those changes, which constitute socialism, with priority to the elimination of the power of big business through public ownership and workers' control.

By participating in local government, socialists can support movements of working people and make improvements that illustrate the potential of public ownership. We advocate electoral action independent of the capitalist-controlled two-party system.

Democratic Revolution from Below

No oppressed group has ever been liberated except by its own organized efforts to overthrow its oppressors. A society based on radical democracy, with power exercised through people's organizations, requires a socialist transformation from below. People's organizations cannot be created by legislation, nor can they spring into being only on the eve of a revolution.

They can grow only in the course of popular struggles, especially those of women, labor, and minority groups. The Socialist Party works to build these organizations democratically.

The process of struggle profoundly shapes the ends achieved. Our tactics in the struggle for radical democratic change reflect our ultimate goal of a society founded on principles of egalitarian, non-exploitative and non-violent relations among all people and between all peoples.

To be free we must create new patterns for our lives and live in new ways in the midst of a society that does not understand and is often hostile to new, better modes of life.

Our aim is the creation of a new social order, a society in which the commanding value is the infinite preciousness of every woman, man, and child.

If you agree with these principles, then we would encourage you to join the Socialist Party USA

SOCIALISM *as radical* **DEMOCRACY**

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES OF
THE SOCIALIST PARTY USA



A Socialist Party USA Statement