

THE "KETO-FRIENDLY" POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

The Critical Problem with Socialist Marketing

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Our democracy is so pure that we can compare it to the first that existed in the world, such as the Greek democracy.

—FIDEL CASTRO

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The Critical Problem with Socialist Marketing

There are seven aspects of democratic socialism that demonstrate it's a marketing slogan, not a new version of socialism.

Proponents of the keto diet claim that the secret to weight loss is to severely limit carbohydrates and replace them with fats. They say we can lose pounds while eating lots of meat and cheese. Keto has become so popular that many products are now sold with "Keto Friendly" emblazoned on their packaging.

Some keto-friendly products are truly new ones—products for which the recipe has been changed to reduce the carbohydrates. But many of the items now sold as keto-friendly have (but for a new label) not been altered in the slightest way. They're products that have *always* had few or no carbohydrates and thus were keto-friendly long before this diet became a fad.

Take bacon, for example. Bacon is loaded with saturated fat and salt, but it's always been extremely low in carbs. Imagine there's a Bacon Marketing Board that decides to promote bacon as keto-friendly. Bacon itself will not have changed in the least. The new advertising campaign would merely highlight a pre-existing attribute of bacon in an effort to boost sales.

This is the story of democratic socialism.

Democratic socialism isn't some new socialism based on an altered recipe. It's not socialism reformulated to be democratic. No, socialists have long considered socialism to be inherently democratic and to represent the only true kind of democracy. They've claimed this for well over a century.

When socialists started adding "democratic" to their product's label, they were simply taking advantage of the belief that their philosophy is intrinsically democratic, just like bacon is intrinsically low in carbs. "Keto-friendly" bacon isn't a new and improved bacon, and "democratic" socialism isn't a new and improved socialism. Both are branding exercises, pure and simple.

There is, however, a critical distinction between these sales tactics. Labeling bacon as keto-friendly is surely marketing spin, but at least it's honest spin. Bacon is low in carbs and so meets the requirements of the keto diet.

But marketing socialism as democratic isn't just hype; it's *dishonest* and *misleading* hype. Unlike "keto-friendly" bacon, "democratic" socialism has never been and never will be what the label claims. Moreover, given the authoritarian history of socialism, the "democratic" sticker tricks the consumer into believing they're buying some revamped version of socialism when that's simply not the case.

How can we demonstrate that "democratic socialism" is a misleading marketing slogan and not a new version of socialism? Here are seven ways.

DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM A MARKETING SLOGAN, NOT A NEW VERSION OF SOCIALISM

Factors proving today's socialism is not a new type of socialism:

1. For well over a century, socialists have claimed that socialism is democracy—that socialism equals democracy.
2. For the same period, essentially all socialists have considered themselves democratic socialists.
3. Socialists say democratic socialist societies have already existed.
4. Today's socialists consider Karl Marx, whose thinking has been the basis of all authoritarian socialist societies, a democratic socialist.
5. Today's democratic socialism has the same defining goal as yesterday's socialism.
6. You can be a democratic socialist despite calling rights "rubbish" and "nonsense" and holding any number of other anti-liberal views.
7. Today's democratic socialism is based on the same requirement of compulsory duty that's been the socialist standard for over 170 years.

FOR MORE THAN A CENTURY, SOCIALISTS HAVE CLAIMED THAT SOCIALISM IS DEMOCRACY

The first key to recognizing that democratic socialism is not some new version? It's understanding that socialists have *long* seen socialism as, by definition, democratic. They've long considered "socialize" to be the equivalent of "democratize."¹ And they've also long believed that anything that isn't socialism can't really be democracy.

For over 120 years, socialists have considered "democratic socialism" redundant. When someone says "democratic socialism," socialists hear "socialist socialism."

Over a century ago, celebrated democratic socialist² Eugene Debs (Bernie Sanders's favorite American socialist³) consistently claimed that socialism is inherently democratic and the only true kind of democracy. Here are three of the countless examples of Debs making this claim:

Change the system, socialize the means of life, establish economic freedom, and we shall have *true democracy* and self-government!⁴

The only genuine Democratic party in the field is the Socialist party.⁵

Social democracy is the only democracy.⁶

Victor Berger, another American social democrat who wrote over a century ago, echoes Eugene Debs:

Social-Democracy will be the *first real democracy* that has ever existed.⁷

Socialism, or Social-Democracy, has never been tried.⁸

August Bebel is one of history's most famous socialist thinkers and a self-described "social democrat."⁹ Writing in 1885, before even Debs and Berger, Bebel promised that socialism means

a thoroughgoing democratic society.¹⁰

He also uses "social democracy" as a synonym of "socialism":

These are the Socialists, that is, the Social Democracy.¹¹

And in the preface of the noted *Fabian Essays in Socialism*, published in 1889, Bernard Shaw speaks not only for himself but also for his seven socialist co-authors:

The writers [of *Fabian Essays*] are all Social Democrats, with a common conviction of the necessity of vesting the organization of industry and the material of production in a State identified with the whole people by *complete Democracy*.¹²

What will socialism be? "True democracy." "Real democracy." "Complete Democracy."

Also more than a century ago, Vladimir Lenin provided his view of the government he led in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), the world's first socialist state:

Proletarian democracy is a million times more democratic than any bourgeois democracy; the Soviet power is a million times more democratic than the most democratic bourgeois republic.¹³

As these five examples demonstrate, socialists have long considered socialism and democracy to be synonymous. And that's what socialists have claimed ever since.

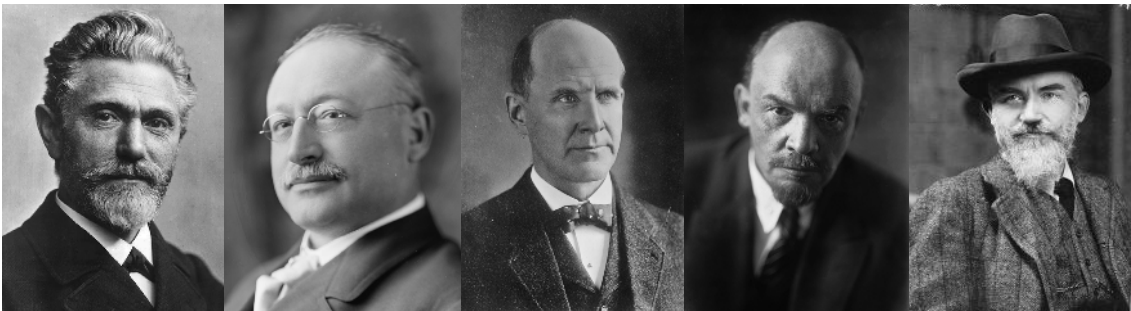
Cuban leader Fidel Castro makes the identical arguments decades after Debs, Berger, Bebel, Shaw, and Lenin. First, that there is no democracy outside of socialism:

I believe democracy can only exist in socialism.¹⁴

Second, that socialism means real democracy, pure democracy:

Those who want to find out what the real word democracy means should come to Cuba. Our democracy is so pure that we can compare it to the first that existed in the world, such as the Greek democracy.¹⁵

OVER A CENTURY AGO, THESE FIVE NOTED SOCIALISTS SAID THAT SOCIALISM IS DEMOCRACY



*August
Bebel*

*Victor
Berger*

*Eugene
Debs*

*Vladimir
Lenin*

*Bernard
Shaw*

Democracy in Cuba was so pure that there were no elections—zero elections—in Cuba for seventeen years following the speech in which Castro’s words above appeared.¹⁶ Democracy in Cuba is so pure that, when elections were permitted starting in 1976, only one government-approved candidate was allowed to “compete” for each office.¹⁷ But these facts don’t keep socialists from claiming Cuban socialism as the real democratic McCoy.¹⁸

For well over a century, socialists have believed that socialism *is* democracy. When today’s socialists pitch “democratic” socialism, they’re simply putting the sales spotlight on what socialists have long considered a given attribute of their product. Today’s democratic socialism is not a new version; it’s keto-friendly bacon.

To learn more about the socialist history of equating socialism and democracy, see the RFP paper “Democratic Socialism? Déjà Vu All Over Again.”

FOR MORE THAN A CENTURY, ALL SOCIALISTS HAVE COUNTED THEMSELVES DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISTS

Socialists have believed that socialism *is* democracy for over 130 years. As such, it’s no surprise that essentially all socialists have thought of themselves as democratic socialists for the same period. Saying you are a non-democratic socialist would be like calling yourself a non-socialist socialist.

Moreover, there’s no test one needs to pass to be called a democratic socialist. If you say you’re one, you are. And as we’ll see below, socialists who hold many exceedingly anti-liberal and authoritarian views—even calling human rights “rubbish”—are regularly held out as believers in democracy.

The specific labels “democratic socialism” and “democratic socialist” are the marketing taglines socialists have employed for roughly the last fifty years.¹⁹ Before that, it was more common for socialists to sell socialism as “social democracy” and call themselves “social democrats.” Eugene Debs, Victor Berger, August Bebel, and Bernard Shaw all called their socialism “social democracy.” It was the “democratic socialism” of their day.

Today, Eugene Debs is praised as a “democratic socialist,”²⁰ showing this term is synonymous with what Debs meant when he called himself a “social democrat” and led two parties using that name: Social Democracy of America and the Social Democratic Party of America.²¹ The word “socialism” doesn’t appear in the term “social democracy,” but Debs makes the link clear:

The Social Democracy is a socialist party and is pledged to the principles of socialism.²²

The opening sentence of an article that socialist Frederic Heath wrote in 1900 about Debs's Social Democracy Party hits the nail on the head:

Social Democracy is but another term for democratic socialism.²³

Social democracy = democratic socialism = socialism.

"Social Democracy of America" or "Democratic Socialists of America"? It's no different than labeling bacon "keto-friendly" or "friendly for keto."

All socialists consider themselves to be true socialists. And since they equate socialism with democracy, they also see themselves as true democratic socialists. But there have certainly been instances when the members of one socialist sect have claimed that those of another are not followers of the true faith. In these cases, it has been common for those being labeled heretics to be attacked for not believing in democracy. But the argument isn't that these heretics are non-democratic socialists; rather, it's that they're not socialists at all.²⁴

If today's democratic socialism is a new and distinct version of socialism, why don't we find other socialists, past or present, claiming they are non-democratic socialists and reporting that their socialism has no plans to be democratic? It's because "socialism" and "democratic socialism" is a distinction without a difference.

Much as socialists do not differentiate between "socialist" and "democratic socialist," the vast majority of knowledgeable socialists do not distinguish between "socialist" and "communist." To learn why, see the RFP paper "Socialism? Communism? What's the Difference?"

SOCIALISTS SAY DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST SOCIETIES HAVE ALREADY EXISTED

The cherry on top of socialists' century-long equation of socialism and democracy is that they've also claimed earlier socialist societies were democratic ones. As we've seen, Fidel Castro claimed socialist Cuba is a democracy "so pure that we can compare it to the first that existed in the world, such as the Greek democracy."²⁵

But there's an even more remarkable example of an earlier socialist nation being sold as democratic socialism in action: the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the USSR.

Yes, the government that today is considered the very definition of authoritarian socialism was long said to be a perfected democracy. Vladimir Lenin claimed that in the USSR, "Soviet power is a million times more democratic than the most democratic bourgeois republic."²⁶

But it wasn't just those within Soviet Russia who portrayed it as the ultimate in democracy. Following the Russian Revolution in 1917, the claim that the USSR was the embodiment of democratic socialism was made by socialists worldwide. It's a claim that continued to be made for decades, long after it became clear that Soviet citizens were perishing at the hands of their government.

Beatrice and Sidney Webb were influential British socialists and leaders of the socialist Fabian Society.²⁷ The Webbs toured the USSR in 1932 and wrote a book about their exceedingly rosy findings.²⁸ In a new introduction for an edition published in 1942, Beatrice Webb reports her view that

the USSR is the most inclusive and equalised democracy in the world.²⁹

Webb describes the USSR as the world's foremost democracy a quarter-century into the history of this first socialist experiment, and at a time when *millions* of Soviet citizens had already been murdered by their government.³⁰ And Webb's claim was by no means unusual. Eugene Debs and socialists around the world similarly declared that the USSR represented democratic socialism—the only kind of socialism.³¹

If a new socialist experiment started tomorrow, today's socialist faithful would once again proclaim that democratic socialism had truly arrived. They'd shout the good news from the rooftops, just as earlier socialists did after the birth of the USSR. But new claims that we're witnessing the democratic socialist rapture would have as much connection with reality as all previous ones: *none*.

There has been no meaningful change to the recipe for socialism, so there is no reason to expect different results. Today's democratic socialism remains founded on the same dangerous form of compulsory duty that permitted authoritarians to end up in control of each earlier experiment with supposedly democratic socialism.

"Democratic socialism" is nothing more than sales shenanigans. This reality becomes vividly clear once we realize that the nations we now think of as defining authoritarian socialism were themselves sold as democratic socialism in action.

To learn more about how socialists praised the USSR and other socialist nations as democratic, see the RFP paper "Democratic Socialism? Déjà Vu All Over Again."

KARL MARX IS CONSIDERED A DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST

Karl Marx is the most important socialist philosopher of all time—by many orders of magnitude. Marx’s thinking has defined socialism for the past 150 years, and it still does today.

You’ve likely heard of Karl Marx. But did you know he’s said to be a democratic socialist?

Marx is labeled a democratic socialist by no less an authority than Michael Harrington, the founder of today’s Democratic Socialists of America. Harrington calls Marx a democratic socialist in at least three of the books he authored. He declares Marx both a “democratic socialist” and a “social democrat,” demonstrating again that socialists see these terms as synonymous.³²

Not only does Harrington say Marx is a democratic socialist, but the organization Harrington founded, the DSA, identifies as a Marxist one. (The DSA is by no means the only socialist organization claiming to represent democratic socialism or to be Marxist in orientation—essentially all of them do.)

As noted in a *Chicago Tribune* article about the DSA’s 2017 annual convention, the DSA is now “the largest Marxist organization since World War II” (an announcement that prompted convention attendees to break into song).³³ The convention even featured quotes from Marx on the signage used to make important announcements.³⁴

This is the same Karl Marx, of course, whose thinking was the basis of earlier socialist experiments that went wildly wrong, such as in the USSR and the People’s Republic of China (PRC). It’s impossible to overestimate the role Marx and his ideas played in both of these authoritarian nations.³⁵ Consider three examples from the PRC.

First, Mao Zedong, China’s original socialist leader, emphasized Marx’s central role in the PRC. In the famous *Quotations from Chairman Mao* (also known as *The Little Red Book* because of its small size and red color), Mao references Marx or Marxism over *seventy* times—for example, teaching that

the basic principles of Marxism must never be violated, or otherwise mistakes will be made.³⁶

Second, Marx’s doctrine remains a focus of education in China today. As reported in the *South China Morning Post*:

In universities, an “introduction to the basic principles of Marxism” is a mandatory course all students must pass to graduate.³⁷

Third, Marx is still celebrated in China. The Chinese government went all out to commemorate Marx’s two-hundredth birthday in 2018. They made a present of a three-ton bronze statue of Marx to his hometown in Germany.³⁸ And they held multiple events memorializing the birth of the socialist messiah.

A tweet by *People’s Daily*, the media conglomerate controlled by the Chinese Communist Party, shows an event China’s socialist government held to commemorate #KarlMarx200.³⁹

The tweet quotes China’s current president, Xi Jinping, who says:

Marxism has always been the guiding ideology of our Party and our country.

In his speech celebrating Marx at this ceremony, President Xi also explained that China’s government is working hard to perfect socialist *democracy*:

China will advance socialist democracy under the organic unity of Party leadership, the running of the country by the people, and law-based governance.⁴⁰

Marxism is the guiding ideology of both the supposed socialist democracy in the People’s Republic of China and the Democratic Socialists of America. And Marx is revered by both as well.

Today’s democratic socialists want us to believe their product is something new. In reality, however, they’re selling the same 150-year-old Marxist philosophy that’s been the basis of every prior socialist experiment. If today’s democratic socialism was a new product, democratic socialist leaders like Michael Harrington wouldn’t be claiming Marx as one of their own.

To learn more about Marx’s status as a democratic socialist and its implications, see the RFP paper “Karl Marx: ‘Democratic Socialist!’”



TODAY'S DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM PURSUES THE SAME GOAL AS YESTERDAY'S SOCIALISM

The defining goal of today's democratic socialism is to create a society that operates based on socialism's most famous axiom: "From each according to their ability, to each according to their need." So says Democratic Socialists of America founder Michael Harrington, among numerous others.⁴¹ (The *Chicago Tribune* report on the 2017 DSA annual convention describes how quotes from Marx appeared on meeting signage. It's no surprise that "from each according to their ability, to each according to their need" was among them.⁴²)

But creating a society based on this saying isn't some new socialist ambition. On the contrary, it's the very same objective Marx established for socialism 150 years ago.⁴³

For the bulk of the twentieth century, socialists used the term "communism" as the name for a society based on "from each according to their ability, to each according to their need."

As knowledgeable socialists are aware, this goal is tied up with other long-term socialist aims. For example, to seek a world based on "from each according to their ability, to each according to their need" is to seek a world in which every business, large and small, has been eliminated.⁴⁴

For the bulk of the twentieth century, socialists used the term "communism"⁴⁵ as their name for a society based on the "from each according to their ability, to each according to their need" standard. This was the technical meaning of "communism" in socialist literature. Stating things as socialists did last century, the aim of today's socialism is to achieve communism.

Why is the goal of today's democratic socialism identical to the goal socialism has pursued for the past 150 years? Because today's democratic socialism is fundamentally identical to the socialism of the past 150 years.

Socialists say creating a society based on the axiom "from each according to their ability, to each according to their needs" requires "abundance" and "constant over-production." To learn more about these requirements, see the RFP paper "The Secret Sauce of Socialism."

DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISTS HOLD THE SAME ANTI-LIBERAL VIEWS AS PLAIN OLD SOCIALISTS

Our current society is a liberal one; that is to say, it's based on liberal political philosophy, a philosophy that counts the protection of our individual rights as the central role of government. Liberalism starts from the premise that our time and talents are our personal property, ours to use as we wish to define our own lives.

Socialism explicitly rejects liberalism, objecting in particular to the fact that liberalism does not impose a mandatory duty to give our time and talents to society, as socialism demands. Any number of socialist thinkers have openly attacked liberal philosophy. For example, Mao Zedong's paper "Combat Liberalism"⁴⁶ makes his views crystal clear. Once we realize socialism seeks to "combat liberalism," it's no shock to discover socialists hold numerous views incompatible with liberal thinking.

But it may come as a surprise to learn democratic socialists hold these same anti-liberal beliefs—another demonstration that "democratic socialism" is a marketing slogan, not some new version of socialism.

There's no more important democratic socialist than Karl Marx. Yet Marx called human rights "rubbish" and "nonsense."⁴⁷ It's hard to get more anti-liberal than that. Similarly, R. H. Tawney is considered a democratic socialist⁴⁸ despite arguing our rights should be limited because they enable individuals "to resist."⁴⁹

Democratic socialists call specifically for the suppression of what Marx called "private labor"—our liberal right to pursue essentially any type of work we desire without society being permitted to limit our choices. Marx said that, come socialism, our private labor rights would be replaced by what he termed "directly social labor"—that is, our work under society's direct control.

Today's democratic socialists still seek to replace private labor with Marx's directly social labor. For example, in *The Socialist Imperative*, Michael Lebowitz⁵⁰ labels our private control of our work an "infection" that socialism must cure.⁵¹

The termination of our private labor rights is linked with the socialist plan to suppress "socially useless" work. Any number of today's democratic socialists call for the elimination of all supposedly useless work. For example, Fred Magdoff asserts that "socially useless, even harmful, products and programs" today consume "as great as *half of the labor force*" and that a democratic socialist society would make these workers perform tasks that have the blessings of socialists instead.⁵²

Socialist plans for eliminating allegedly useless work are based on the suppression of our liberal private labor rights—that is, our right to do whatever type of work we feel like, even if others think it’s a waste of time.

Democratic socialists also call for eliminating private property rights—specifically our right to own a business. Marx explains that the plan is to

centralize all instruments of production in the hands of the state. ... Of course, in the beginning, this cannot be effected except by means of despotic inroads on the rights of property.⁵³

“The Social Democratic Party ... does not propose to modify the competitive system, but abolish it.”

Eugene Debs is idolized today as the archetypical democratic socialist. We’re told Debs is “a symbol of democratic socialism”⁵⁴ and “the first major Democratic Socialist in American history.”⁵⁵ Yet Debs echoes Marx’s call for “despotic inroads on the rights of property” and for doing away with *all* private businesses. Here are two of the countless times Debs made this demand over the decades:

The Social Democratic Party is not a reform party, but a revolutionary party. It does not propose to modify the competitive system, but abolish it. ... It stands unequivocally for the collective ownership and control of *all* the means of wealth production and distribution—in a word, socialism.⁵⁶

What is socialism? To answer in a single sentence, it means the collective ownership by all the people of *all* the means of wealth production and distribution.⁵⁷

Today’s democratic socialists also call for the end of private business. For example, Michael Steven Smith, in the recent *Imagine: Living in a Socialist USA*, speaks of socialism as a

democratically organized society that has done away with capitalist private property.⁵⁸

Another example of democratic socialists planning on eradicating private enterprise comes from none other than DSA founder Michael Harrington. In his article “What Socialists Would Do in America—If They Could,” Harrington explains that, because it’s not possible “to socialize an economy overnight,”⁵⁹ there’s a need for a “transitional”

phase of socialism before perfected socialism can arrive. One consequence of the reality that socialization takes time is that

we must anticipate a corporate sector in the socialist transition.⁶⁰

This corporate sector during the transition isn't something Harrington is excited about. It's just an unavoidable pothole on the road to completed socialism. And any uncertainty about the ultimate outcome socialism plans for these businesses is dispelled by the analogy Harrington then uses, saying that it's as if the businesses in the socialist transition are

on death row.⁶¹

The founder of the DSA sees socialism as ultimately meaning just what democratic socialists Marx, Debs, and Smith say it does: a society that does away with private property and private enterprise. (One advantage of the socialist plan for a transitional phase—a concept that started with Marx—is that it permits socialists to talk out of both sides of their mouths, promising there will be businesses in socialist society while all the time planning their demise.)

Many socialists attempt to minimize the concern over the elimination of our private property rights by suggesting socialism wouldn't necessarily mean the end of every business. But all such promises are worthless. Once socialist society gives itself the right to seize one set of businesses in the name of society, our liberal private property rights are defunct. After that, it's only the whims of our rulers that would determine what businesses are to be permitted this week and suppressed the next.

The bottom line is you're welcome to be a democratic socialist despite calling human rights "rubbish," despite seeking to limit rights because they permit us "to resist," and despite calling for the suppression of both our private labor and private property rights. And this is only a partial list of the anti-liberal things one can call for and be a democratic socialist today.

Why do democratic socialists hold the same anti-liberal beliefs that socialists have long held? For one reason only: because democratic socialism is actually plain old socialism, just like keto-friendly bacon is actually plain old bacon.

To learn more about how socialism clashes with liberalism, see the RFP papers "Our 'So-Called' Rights" and "A 'Defect' of Liberalism."

TODAY'S DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM IS BASED ON COMPULSORY DUTY, AS YESTERDAY'S WAS

A final critical sign that democratic socialism is really plain old socialism: despite the word “democratic” in the label, today’s socialism remains founded on the same compulsory duty that’s characterized socialism from its earliest days.

In fact, today’s democratic socialism is based on the very same standard of duty that socialism has demanded for 170 years, the standard reflected by the socialist axiom “from each according to their ability.”⁶² Louis Blanc, who coined this phrase, used all caps to make his point when he defined it as “the DUTY.”⁶³

“From each according to their ability” means that whatever we can contribute to society, we must contribute.⁶⁴ This duty transforms our time into what socialism treats as society’s property, as *society’s time*.⁶⁵ It’s a dangerous type of duty that liberal philosophy outright rejects and that is fundamentally different from the obligations of liberal societies, such as paying taxes.⁶⁶

Despite the lessons of the past, today’s democratic socialism still demands “from each according to their ability.”

Socialism’s requirement of “from each according to their ability” has played a significant role in one socialist experiment after another ending up an authoritarian nightmare. It’s this duty that gives those running socialist society the ability to override our rights and to take control of our lives.

The duty to give our abilities to society also lies behind many other troubling aspects of socialism. For example, it’s responsible for socialism’s obsession with identifying and eliminating “parasites”—those of us whom socialists judge as failing to properly contribute to society.⁶⁷ Why have hundreds of socialist thinkers⁶⁸ attacked alleged parasites in their writings? It’s a byproduct of socialism’s foundation on this anti-liberal form of duty.

Despite the lessons of the past, today’s democratic socialism still demands “from each according to their ability,” just as yesterday’s socialism did. It’s a requirement endorsed by DSA founder Harrington and any number of present-day democratic socialists.⁶⁹ It’s a saying that’s appeared on signage at DSA conventions.⁷⁰

Why doesn’t socialism abandon its requirement of duty? Because it wouldn’t be socialism if it did, any more than liberalism would be liberalism if it added a requirement of duty analogous to the one socialism has. Socialism is not only based

on the belief that compulsory duty to society is morally correct, but it's been designed so that duty is required to create and operate a socialist society.⁷¹ Socialism without the power of compulsory duty is like a car without an engine.

Sure, some socialist true believers would perform their duty without compulsion. But the rest of us? It's socialist duty that gives those running a socialist society the power to make us salute.

For over a century and right up until today, socialists have believed that socialism is democracy, even though it requires an onerous form of compulsory duty. Their fervor for their faith blinds them to the reality that the duty of "from each according to their ability" makes every socialist experiment an authoritarian accident waiting to happen.

The duty demanded by today's democratic socialism is the same as it ever was. Why? Because today's socialism is also the same as it ever was.

To learn how socialism's foundation on duty has contaminated so much of socialist philosophy, see the RFP paper "The Ripple Effects of Socialist Duty." To learn specifically about socialism's nine-generation obsession with "social parasites," see the RFP paper "The Socialist Obsession."

DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM: A "HARMFUL LIE"

Lambasting sales and marketing in capitalist society as unethical has been a favorite socialist theme for centuries.⁷² It remains a staple in socialist writing today, as exemplified by Terry Bisson's "Thanksgiving 2077: A Short Story:"

In Bisson's tale, Jesse, Grandpa, and family are celebrating the November holiday in the socialist future. Young Jesse was born after the arrival of socialism and has never heard a word of marketing nonsense (socialism having apparently delivered on its promise to eliminate all businesses, all buying and selling, and thus all sales and marketing as well⁷³).

Someone at the Thanksgiving table mentions advertising in the bad old days of capitalism. Jesse is thrown off by this unfamiliar term, but Grandpa fills Jesse in:

"What's advertising?" asked Jesse. "Harmful lies," said Grandpa.⁷⁴

There's only one problem with socialist crabbing about the "harmful lies" of marketing in capitalist society: socialists are themselves salespeople par excellence and employ every sales trick in the book.

Promoting socialism as democratic is a prime example of the reality that socialism is sales and that socialists are themselves purveyors of harmful lies. "Democratic" socialism isn't simply marketing hype; it's *dishonest* and *misleading* hype. Democracy is by no means intrinsic to socialism, and today's democratic socialism isn't some new recipe designed to fix the flaws that produced the disasters of the socialist past.

Rather than living up to the advertising claim of being democratic, socialism has resulted in one authoritarian nightmare after another. Selling socialism as "democratic" doesn't make it so any more than saying a car is "safe" protects you in an accident. It's not the advertising claims but the product design that determines the outcome. And socialism has proven time and again that its design makes it unsafe at any speed.

Knowledgeable socialists know that nothing meaningful about their product has changed. They know that today's socialism remains and must remain based on a dangerous form of compulsory duty. And as such, they know there's absolutely no way to ensure that future socialist experiments sold as democratic will turn out differently than the broken promises of the past.

Given socialism's authoritarian history, most non-socialists hearing of "democratic socialism" are left with the impression that this must be some new and improved version—a version redesigned to be democratic. But as the seven factors discussed above demonstrate, that's simply not the case.

The truly harmful lies of marketing? They're lies like "democratic socialism"—lies that most people don't realize they're being told.

NOTES

1. Over a century ago, famed American socialist Eugene Debs equated “socialize” and “democratize”: “But these tools and materials and forces must be released from private ownership and control, *socialized*, *democratized*, and set in operation for the common good of all instead of the private profit of the few.” Eugene Debs, “Industrial and Social Democracy,” in *Labor and Freedom: The Voice and Pen of Eugene V. Debs* (St. Louis: Phil Wagner, 1916), 74. Emphasis added.
2. Though Debs called himself a “social democrat” and founded socialist parties named the Social Democratic Party of America and Social Democracy of America, he is today labeled a “democratic socialist.” Paul and Mari Jo Buhle call Debs “a symbol of democratic socialism” (Paul Buhle and Mari Jo Buhle, “The Face of American Socialism before Bernie Sanders? Eugene Debs,” *The Guardian*, March 23, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/mar/23/american-socialism-bernie-sanders-eugene-debs>); Michael Kazin writes about how Debs went to jail and “emerged from his cell a democratic socialist” (Michael Kazin, “How Eugene Debs Became a Socialist,” *Dissent*, Spring 2019, <https://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/how-eugene-debs-became-a-socialist>); and the opening words of a National Public Radio piece report that “Eugene Debs was the first major Democratic Socialist in American history” (Will Huntsberry, “Eugene V. Debs Museum Explores History of American Socialism,” *NPR*, May 2, 2016, <https://www.npr.org/2016/05/02/476498750/eugene-v-debs-museum-explores-history-of-american-socialism>).
3. Senator Sanders states: “Eugene Victor Debs remains a hero of mine. A plaque commemorating him hangs on the wall in my Washington office” (Bernie Sanders, *Outsider in the White House* [Brooklyn: Verso Books, 2015], 27, Kindle). Senator Sanders’s lone experience with private enterprise was creating an audio documentary about Debs—one that Sanders wrote and produced himself and in which he delivers parts of some of Debs’s speeches (Sanders, *Outsider in the White House*, 26; Jill Lapore, “Eugene V. Debs and the Endurance of Socialism,” *The New Yorker*, February 11, 2019, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2019/02/18/eugene-v-debs-and-the-endurance-of-socialism>).
4. Eugene Debs, “As Good a City Government as We Deserve: A Letter to the Terre Haute Post (February 24, 1914),” Marxists.org, accessed February 27, 2021, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/debs/works/1914/140224-debs-asgoodacitygovernment.pdf>. Emphasis added.
5. Eugene Debs, “The Socialist Party and the Working Class (Opening Speech Delivered as Candidate of the Socialist Party for President of the United States, at Indianapolis, Ind., September 1, 1904),” in *Debs: His Life, Writings and Speeches* (St. Louis: Phil Wagner, 1908), 368.
6. Eugene Debs “The Essence of Social Democracy (September 3, 1900),” Marxists.org, accessed February 27, 2021, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/debs/works/1900/000903-debs-essenceofsocialdemocracy.pdf>.
7. Victor Berger, “Getting on the Band Wagon,” in *Berger’s BroadSides* (Milwaukee: Social-Democratic Publishing Co., 1912), 171. Emphasis added.
8. Victor Berger, “Socialism or Communism,” in *BroadSides*, 37.
9. August Bebel, *Woman under Socialism*, trans. Daniel De Leon (New York: Schocken Books, 1971), 5.
10. Bebel, *Woman under Socialism*, 326.

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11. Bebel, *Woman under Socialism*, 5.
 12. Bernard Shaw, preface to *Fabian Essays in Socialism*, ed. Bernard Shaw (New York: Humboldt Publishing Co., 1891), xx. Emphasis added.
 13. Vladimir Lenin, quoted in E. H. Carr, *The Soviet Impact on the Western World* (London: McMillan, 1947), 4.
 14. Fidel Castro, “Part III of Interview With Fidel Castro [June 4, 1992],” Castro Speech Database, accessed February 27, 2021, <http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/castro/db/1992/19920604.html>.
 15. Fidel Castro, “Castro Agrees to Return to the Premiership [July 27, 1957],” Castro Speech Database, accessed January 9, 2021, <http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/castro/db/1959/19590727.html>.
 16. Juan Carlos Medel, “Cuban Democracy in the Speeches of Fidel Castro, 1959–1976,” *International Journal of Cuban Studies* 11, no. 2 (Winter 2019): 340–48.
 17. Medel, “Cuban Democracy in the Speeches of Fidel Castro,” 351.
 18. In 2019, Juan Carlos Medel wrote, “The socialist democracy of the Cuban revolutionary discourse became a legitimate alternative to the liberal democracy of the United States.” Medel also claims that in the first seventeen years of the Castro regime, when not a single election was held, Cuba was even more democratic than it is now. Medel, “Cuban Democracy in the Speeches of Fidel Castro,” 355.
 19. The Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee was founded in 1973, and in 1982 it merged with the New American Movement to found the Democratic Socialists of America (see “History of Democratic Socialists of America 1971–2017,” accessed February 17, 2021, <https://www.dsausa.org/about-us/history/>). Effectively all socialist organizations argue that they are democratic socialists, not just the DSA.
 20. See n. 2.
 21. The short-lived party Social Democracy of America was founded by Debs and others in June of 1897 and within a year became the Social Democratic Party of America. The Social Democratic Party would later become the Socialist Party of America. See *Debs: His Life, Writings and Speeches*, 20, 114.
 22. Eugene Debs, “Against Fusion (May 14, 1898),” Marxists.org, accessed February 27, 2021, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/debs/works/1898/980514-debs-againstfusion.pdf>.
 23. Frederick Heath, “The Social Democracy (January 1900),” Marxists.org, accessed February 27, 2021, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/debs/works/1900/000100-heath-socialdemocracy.pdf>. Heath was editor of the *Social Democratic Herald*. See *Debs: His Life, Writings and Speeches*, 102.
 24. For example, American socialist James Cannon was the leader of the “Trotskyite” Socialist Workers Party. In one speech, Cannon attacks other socialist sects (Stalinists and “Social Democrats”), saying they are imposters selling fraudulent socialism and thus not real democracy. Cannon says what’s required for real democracy is “a clean break with all Stalinist and social democratic perversions and distortions of the real meaning of socialism and democracy and their relation to each other.” He continues by praising his own movement as true socialism and thus the epitome of democracy: “The authentic socialist movement, as it was conceived by its founders and as it has developed over the past century, has been the most democratic movement in all history.” James Cannon, “Socialism and Democracy,” Marxists.org, accessed March 1, 2021, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/cannon/works/1957/socialism.htm>.
- Conversely, in the USSR and among supporters of Soviet socialism worldwide, Trotskyites like Cannon were labeled “fascists” and accused of treason. For example, American socialist Alex Bittelman’s wrote a book titled *Trotsky the Traitor* (New York: Workers Library Publishers, 1937). It opens: “Lenin called Trotsky Judas—and cautioned the people repeatedly to beware of him. Today Trotsky and his agents stand exposed before the whole world. ... It is incredible, some people say, that Trotsky and his agents should have gone so far. Conspiring with Hitler and Japan to dismember the Soviet Union, to destroy its socialist system” (1). Bittelman

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writes: “Trotskyism, like its ally, fascism, is a menace to the world. It is a menace to its peace, its progress, its democracy” (30). Bittelman defends the link between socialism and democracy. The book includes a chapter titled “Soviet Democracy Vindicated” (23).

25. Castro, “Castro Agrees to Return to the Premiership.”

26. Vladimir Lenin, quoted in Carr, *Soviet Impact on the Western World*, 4.

27. Margaret Cole, *The Story of Fabian Socialism* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1964), 145, 145n.

28. Sidney Webb and Beatrice Webb, *Soviet Communism: A New Civilisation*, 3rd ed. (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1944). Beatrice Webb said that she “fell in love” with Soviet socialism—as is certainly demonstrated by her effusive praise for the system despite her knowledge of the many lives it was taking (Cole, *The Story of Fabian Socialism*, 220).

29. Beatrice Webb, introduction to Webb and Webb, *Soviet Communism*, xxi.

30. Webb’s praise for the USSR as “the most inclusive and equalised democracy” was published in 1942, twenty-five years after the Russian Revolution of 1917 and well after the Great Terror (a political purge) and the Holodomor (a human-caused famine in Ukraine that many countries have recognized as a genocide) had taken millions of lives in the 1930s. Webb may have been unaware of the full scope of the deaths, but she was not oblivious to the fact that Soviet citizens were losing their lives to this supposed democracy. To learn more about the Great Terror and the Holodomor, see the RFP paper “Democratic Socialism? Déjà Vu All Over Again.” For the definitive account of the Great Terror, see Robert Conquest, *The Great Terror: A Reassessment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); and for an excellent overview of causes and results of the Holodomor, see Anne Applebaum, *Red Famine: Stalin’s War on the Ukraine* (New York: Doubleday, 2017).

31. Debs said of the USSR: “They have laid the foundation of the first real democracy that ever drew the breath of life in this world.” Eugene Debs, “The Canton, Ohio, Speech [June 16, 1918],” in *Eugene V. Debs Speaks*, ed. Jean Y. Tussey (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1970), 271.

32. Harrington refers to Marx as a “social democrat” (Michael Harrington, *Socialism* [New York: Saturday Review Press, 1970], 57); and Harrington dedicates one of his books to “democratic socialist, Karl Marx” (Michael Harrington, *The Twilight of Capitalism* [New York: Simon and Schuster, 1976], v). For additional details, see the RFP paper “Karl Marx: ‘Democratic Socialist.’”

33. David Weigel, “The socialist movement is getting younger and turning into a left-wing force,” *Chicago Tribune*, August 6, 2017, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/nation-world/ct-socialist-movement-bernie-sanders-20170806-story.html>.

What song did the DSA convention attendees sing? One honoring far-left British socialist leader Jeremy Corbyn, who at the time was the head of the British Labour Party. In 2020, Corbyn was expelled due to Labour Party anti-Semitism. Benjamin Mueller, “Labour Party Suspends Jeremy Corbyn Over Anti-Semitism Response,” *New York Times*, October 29, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/29/world/europe/jeremy-corbyn-labour-anti-semitism.html>.

34. Weigel, “Socialist movement is getting younger.”

35. Marx and his thinking dominated every aspect of Soviet society, most obviously in the operations of the socialist government and the policies it introduced. One massive societal change carried out on Marx’s precepts was the USSR’s move to “collectivize” all farming. Marx called not only for the end of private ownership of all businesses but also for the end of all privately owned farms. He strongly favored the perceived efficiency of large-scale production in both industry and agriculture. In their most successful work, *The Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels call for socialism to be based on “industrial armies, especially for agriculture” (Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert Tucker [New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1978], 352).

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Early decrees ended all private ownership of land and laid out the goal for a “socialist system of agriculture” based exclusively on large collective farms. The decrees included statements like “the landowners’ right of property in land is herewith abolished without compensation”; “the right of private property in land is to be abolished for all time”; “all forms of individual land farming ... [are to be] transitory and passing”; and “encourage a collective system of farming ... at the expense of individual farming, with a view toward the transition to the socialist system of agriculture” (see W. Ladejinsky, “Collectivization of Agriculture in the Soviet Union,” *Political Science Quarterly* 49, no. 1 [March 1934]: 7–8). After the forceful taking of land rights from small farmers, the Soviet state began the process of forced collectivization under Lenin, and it was expedited under Joseph Stalin (Ladejinsky, “Collectivization of Agriculture in the Soviet Union,” 27–34). The human cost of the collectivization was staggering, and the policy is closely tied to the death by starvation of millions in Ukraine (see Applebaum, *Red Famine*).

Despite being aware of the catastrophic results of forced collectivization in the USSR, the leaders of the People’s Republic of China similarly attempted to follow Marx’s thinking by collectivizing farming as part of the so-called Great Leap Forward. The results of these socialist policies were again disastrous, also costing millions of lives. See Frank Dikötter, *Mao’s Great Famine* (New York: Walker Publishing Company, 2010).

Marxism also dominated the culture of the USSR in education. All Soviet children were taught “the true science of Marxism” as part of their schooling. See Joseph S. Roucek, “Special Features of USSR’s Secondary Education,” *The High School Journal*, no. 1 (October 1960): 21.

36. Mao Tse-tung, “Speech at the Chinese Communist Party’s National Conference on Propaganda Work (March 12, 1957),” in *Quotations from Chairman Mao* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1966), 20. (Note: Because of a change in how Chinese names are represented in the Latin alphabet, Mao’s full name today commonly appears as “Mao Zedong,” though “Mao Tse-tung” will still be found in many printed works.)

37. Nectar Gan, “A new class struggle: Chinese party members get back to Communist Manifesto basics,” *South China Morning Post*, April 29, 2018, <https://www.scmp.com/print/news/china/policies-politics/article/2143841/new-class-struggle-chinese-party-members-get-back>.

38. Nectar Gan, “A new class struggle.”

39. *People’s Daily*, China (@PDChina), “China’s national rejuvenation cannot be achieved without theoretical thinking; Marxism has always been the guiding ideology of our Party and country: Xi #KarlMarx200,” Twitter, May 3, 2018, <https://twitter.com/PDChina/status/992236636632006656?s=20>.

40. “China marks 200 years of Karl Marx’s birth as Xi leads in new era,” *Xinhua*, May 4, 2018, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-05/04/c_137156583.htm.

41. For example, Harrington writes: “The goal of socialism, clearly, is to overcome greed and act on the basis of ‘to each according to his/her need, from each according to his/her ability’” (Michael Harrington, “What Socialists Would Do in America—If They Could,” *Dissent*, Fall 1978, 445).

42. Weigel, “The socialist movement is getting younger.”

43. Louis Blanc is generally credited with coining the expression “from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs” in the 1840s, though another French socialist, Étienne Cabet, also began using this saying at roughly the same time. But while Blanc (and Cabet) developed the specific wording for the socialist standard of duty still used today, it was Karl Marx’s adoption of this saying as his own that made it the most famous saying of socialism and its defining goal. One of the best-known (at least in socialist circles) passages Marx ever wrote is in his *Critique of the Gotha Program*, where he states that a “higher phase” of socialist society would eventually “inscribe on its banners ‘from each according to his ability, to each according to his need’” (Karl Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Program*, 388).

44. Socialism’s most famous saying, “from each according to their ability, to each according to their need,” is a dog whistle. That is to say, it communicates many things to socialist insiders that non-socialists don’t hear.

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When knowledgeable socialist hear this phrase, it suggests a world that has achieved the long-term socialist goal of eliminating all businesses. How so? Knowledgeable socialist understand that socialist theory says a world of “to each according to their need” is a world in which every needed good and service is available for free. And a world in which all goods were free is, by definition, a world without businesses, since businesses sell goods to earn a profit. If all goods and services are somehow made free, there is nothing to sell and no way to make a profit. To say one wishes a world based on “to each according to their need” is to say one hopes for a world without a single business, large or small.

To learn more about what’s needed to achieve a society based on the axiom “from each according to their ability, to each according to their need, see the RFP paper “The Secret Sauce of Socialism.”

45. Socialist great Vladimir Lenin began the practice of using “communism” to refer to what Karl Marx had called the “higher phase” of socialist society that would come about *if* an initial phase of socialist society could so massively boost production as to create the world of super-abundance required to deliver on the socialist promise of “to each according to their need.” For the bulk of the twentieth century, until the collapse of the USSR, the common socialist practice was to refer to a world based on “from each according to their ability, to each according to their need” as “communism.” This practice ceased and the word “communism” all but disappeared from socialist parlance following the collapse of the USSR. To learn more, see the RFP paper “Socialism? Communism? What’s the Difference?”

46. Mao Tse-tung, “Combat Liberalism,” in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1965), 2:31–34. See Marxists.org, https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-2/mswv2_03.htm.

47. Karl Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Program*, 388.

48. Today’s socialists say R. H. Tawney should be considered a democratic socialist. See, for example, the description of Ross Terrill’s biography *R. H. Tawney and His Times* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973): “Economic historian, democratic socialist, educator, and British labor party activist, R. H. Tawney touched many worlds.”

49. R. H. Tawney, *The Acquisitive Society* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1921), 96.

50. As is the socialist norm, Lebowitz sees “socialism” and “democracy” as synonyms. See Lebowitz, *Socialist Imperative*, 154–55. See also Michael Lebowitz, *The Socialist Alternative: Real Human Development* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2010), 132, in which Lebowitz outlines the “battle of democracy,” which could just as well be called “the battle of socialism.”

51. Michael Lebowitz, *The Socialist Imperative: From Gotha to Now* (New York: Monthly Review, 2015), 67.

52. Fred Magdoff, “An Ecologically Sound and Socially Just Economy,” *Monthly Review*, September 1, 2014, <https://monthlyreview.org/2014/09/01/an-ecologically-sound-and-socially-just-economy/>. Emphasis added. How is it that people would be kept from wasting what socialists treat as society’s time? The only possible way is to abolish the private labor rights we have in our liberal society—our right to use the time in our lives as we wish. Socialism would limit our choices to what is approved by those running society.

53. Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, 41.

54. Buhle and Buhle, “The Face of American Socialism before Bernie Sanders?”

55. Huntsberry, “Eugene V. Debs Museum Explores History of American Socialism.”

56. Eugene Debs, “The Social Democratic Party: Revolutionary Not Reform (March 6, 1900),” Marxists.org, accessed March 1, 2021, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/debs/works/1900/000306-debs-lettertonyjourn.pdf>. Emphasis added.

Here are two additional examples of democratic socialist Eugene Debs calling for the elimination of our private property rights and for the collective ownership of all industry, large and small:

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“Private ownership and competition have had their day. The Socialist party stands for social ownership and co-operation. The one is Capitalism; the other Socialism.” Eugene V. Debs, “Capitalism and Socialism,” in *Labor and Freedom*, 173; see Marxists.org, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/debs/works/1912/1912-capsoc.htm>.

“Between private ownership and collective ownership there can be no compromise.” Eugene V. Debs “Mission of the Socialist Party” May 26, 1902; see Marxists.org, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/debs/works/1902/0526-debs-missionofthespa.pdf>.

57. Eugene Debs, “The Social Democratic Party,” *Independent* (New York), August 23, 1900, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/debs/works/1900/000823-debs-thesocialdemocraticparty.pdf>. Emphasis added.

58. Michael Steven Smith, “Law in a Socialist USA,” in *Imagine: Living in a Socialist USA*, ed. Frances Goldin, Debby Smith, and Michael Steven Smith (New York: Harper Perennial, 2014), 58.

59. Michael Harrington, “What Socialists Would Do in America—If They Could,” *Dissent*, Fall 1978, 448.

60. Harrington, “What Socialists Would Do in America,” 448.

61. Harrington, “What Socialists Would Do in America,” 448.

62. French Socialist Louis Blanc is typically credited with developing the expression “from each according to his ability, to each according to his need” in the 1840s (though another French socialist, Étienne Cabet, also started using it at roughly the same time). Here’s one example of Blanc’s using this expression in 1848: “Chacun produise selon son aptitude et ses forces, que chacun consomme selon ses besoins.” Louis Blanc, *Nouveau discours de M. Louis Blanc sur l’organisation du travail devant l’assemblée générale des délégués des travailleurs* (Paris: Commission du Gouvernement Pour Travailleurs, 1848), 10.

63. “From each, according to his abilities. That is the DUTY” (“De chacun, selon ses facultés. Là est le DEVOIR”). Louis Blanc, *La Histoire de la Révolution de 1848* (Paris: C. Marpon, 1880), 1:148.

64. Louis Blanc explains: “The more a man *can*, the more he *must*.” (“Plus un homme *peut*, plus il *doit*.”). Blanc, *Histoire de la Révolution de 1848*, 148.

65. Numerous RFP papers explore the fact that socialist duty turns the time in our lives into what socialism treats as society’s property—as society’s time. See “The Ripple Effects of Socialist Duty,” “Why Socialism Says Slacking Is Theft,” “‘Parasites’: The Sinners of the Socialist Religion,” and “Why Socialism Says Craftwork Is ‘Idiocy.’”

66. The liberal philosophy that underpins our current society rejects compulsory duty of the type socialism demands. Why? Because “from each according to their ability” gives others the power to control our time and talents without our consent. Our duty to pay taxes in liberal society only comes into play *after* we’ve chosen what to do with our lives. Taxes apply to the economic results of our choices; they don’t put those running society in a position to make those choices for us.

In contrast, socialism’s duty of “from each according to their ability” is enforced *before* we decide what to do with our lives. Socialist duty morphs our abilities into society’s property to control—it turns our time into society’s time. For example, socialist duty puts those running socialist society in a position to define what kind of work is a good use of that time and to forbid work that isn’t “socially useful.”

67. Socialism’s obsession with “parasites” is joined at the hip with its commitment to duty. Sidney and Beatrice Webb described socialist duty as a “duty not to be a parasite” (Webb and Webb, *Soviet Communism*, 437).

68. For examples of 101 socialist thinkers attacking “parasites,” “parasitism,” and all things “parasitic,” see the RFP resource “101 Damns.”

69. DSA founder Michael Harrington writes: “The goal of socialism, clearly, is to overcome greed and act on the basis of ‘to each according to his/her need, from each according to his/her ability.’” Harrington, “What Socialists Would Do in America—If They Could,” 445.

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Similarly, Ron Baiman directly links democratic socialism with socialism's central mantra when he discusses "the only way that the current capitalist ... as opposed to democratic socialist ('from each according to ability, to each according to their need'), economics can be justified" (Ron P. Baiman, *The Morality of Radical Economics* [New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2016], 276). Robert Sewell writes: "Society will be based on the principle 'from each according to their ability, to each according to their need.' In other words, a classless society based upon solidarity and the harmonious satisfaction of everyone's needs" (Robert Sewell, "Why you should be a socialist," *Socialist Appeal*, September 4, 2015, <https://www.socialist.net/why-you-should-be-a-socialist.htm>).

70. Weigel, "Socialist movement is getting younger."

71. Socialist theory is explicit that creating and maintaining socialism requires that society have the ability to override our right to use our lives as we choose. For example, socialist theory says that capitalist society permits the waste of great quantities of labor time by people working allegedly superfluous jobs. The way that socialism is to achieve its many goals is by making any number of supposedly "socially useless" jobs illegal and forcing those who work them to perform approved work instead.

It's only because socialism's duty of "from each according to their ability" turns our time into what is effectively society's time that those running socialist society end up with the power to pass judgment on what types of work are legitimate. If a "socialist" government maintained the rights of a liberal society (e.g., the freedom to work essentially any job we choose), there would be no way for socialism to recover the supposedly "wasted" labor that is the key to achieving socialist objectives.

On p. 12 of this paper, we saw present-day socialist thinker Fred Magdoff suggest that roughly half of all work performed in our society is "useless" work from the socialist perspective—work that would be suppressed in a "democratic" socialist society. Similarly, in his 2013 article "To Each According to Their Need," Paul D'Amato writes that in socialist society, goods "are produced because they're socially necessary"—that is to say, that socialist society would pass judgment on all goods regarding whether society needs them or not, suppressing the production of those judged unneeded (Paul D'Amato, "To Each According to Their Need," *Socialist Worker*, August 23, 2013, <https://socialistworker.org/2013/08/23/to-each-according-to-their-need>).

The ability to suppress allegedly useless jobs and products, as Magdoff, D'Amato, and countless other present-day socialist thinkers call for, hinges on our being under the thumb of the socialist duty that turns our time and talents into society's property to control. Maybe you come up with an idea that others see as useless but that you love and want to pursue; in our liberal society, you're free to use your life to pursue your supposedly silly idea, even if others consider it useless. Why? Because in liberal society, the time in your life is yours to use as you wish, not under society's control and to be used only on approved purposes. How many of the products we use and consider essential today began as some individual's "useless" and "stupid" idea?

72. From socialism's first days, socialist thinkers have attacked selling as intrinsically unethical and have labeled those who work in sales, marketing, and advertising as "parasites." J. Morrison Davidson writes that "in the Cooperative Commonwealth this incessant fraud of buying and selling will be at an end" (J. Morrison Davidson, *The Old Order and the New: From Individualism to Collectivism* [London: William Reeves, 1902], 134). Socialist superstar Charles Fourier attacks merchants, as well as "speculators" and Jews: "When a science [free market economics] adopts in principle to admit only the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, it is quite surprising that its doctors [free market economists] are passionate about the merchants, the speculators and Jews from whom, far from finding the truth and nothing but the truth, we are so sure to meet the lie and nothing but the lie" ("Lorsqu'une science adopte en principe de n'admettre que la vérité, toute la vérité, rien que la vérité, il est assez surprenant ses docteurs se passionnent pour les marchands, les agioteurs et les Juifs, chez qui, loin de trouver la vérité et rien que la vérité, on était si assuré de rencontrer mensonge et rien que le mensonge") (Charles Fourier, *Oeuvres complètes de Charles Fourier* [Paris: Éditions Anthropos, 1966], 5:196–97).

73. It was Marx's position that a socialist society was impossible until all buying, selling and wage labor (pay for work) was abolished. There would thus be no need for sales and advertising. Anitra Nelson and Frans

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Timmerman write: “A moneyless, marketless, wageless, classless and stateless planetary society is necessary and possible.” Anitra Nelson and Frans Timmerman, “Use Value and Non-Market Socialism,” in *Life Without Money: Building Fair and Sustainable Economies*, ed. Anitra Nelson and Frans Timmerman (London: Pluto Press, 2011), 2.

74. Terry Bisson, “Thanksgiving 2077: A Short Story,” in Goldin, Smith, and Smith, *Imagine*, 271.