

# SOCIALISM

# Socialism

PROTESTER AT BERNIE SANDERS RALLY.



# SOCIALISM

**Hoffman** and **Graham** emphasize the diversity of socialist thought. They ask: Can socialism be defined? Is it an impossible dream? Do more “realistic” forms of socialism sacrifice their very socialism when they become more pragmatic? And do the diverse kinds of socialism have anything in common?



# **SOCIALISM**

**They also point out the difference between what they call “social democracy” or “democratic socialism” and “Marxism” or “scientific socialism.” What are the differences?**

**democratic**  
(adj.) by the people

**socialist**  
(n.) for the people

# **SOCIALISM**

## **Social Democracy / Democratic Socialism**

**Moderate classes  
Utilize the state  
Parliament (Congress)  
Ethically desirable  
Nation as a whole**

## **Marxism / Scientific Socialism**

**Eliminate classes  
Go beyond the state  
Worker's councils  
Historically inevitable  
Workers and their  
allies**

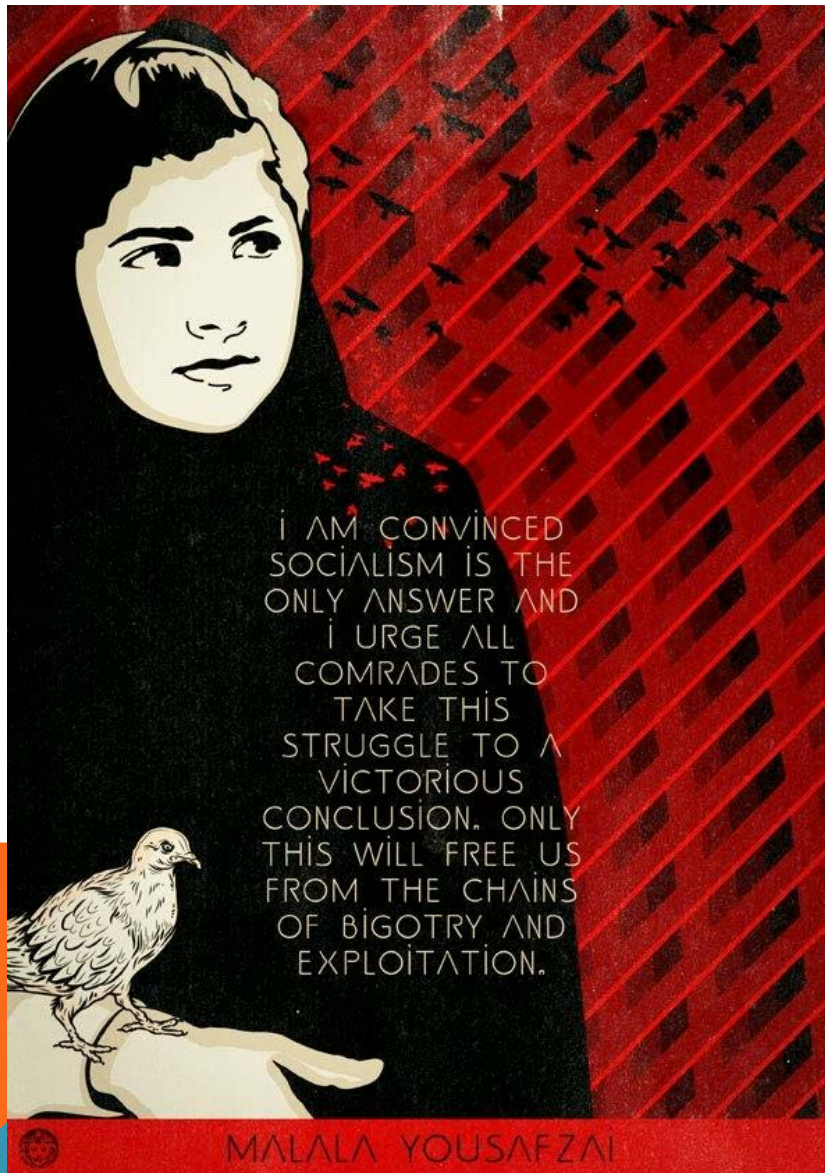
**The distinction between Marxism and  
social democracy is the major fault  
line among socialisms**

# SOCIALISM

In defining **socialism**, the authors note that all socialists share these common features...



# SOCIALISM



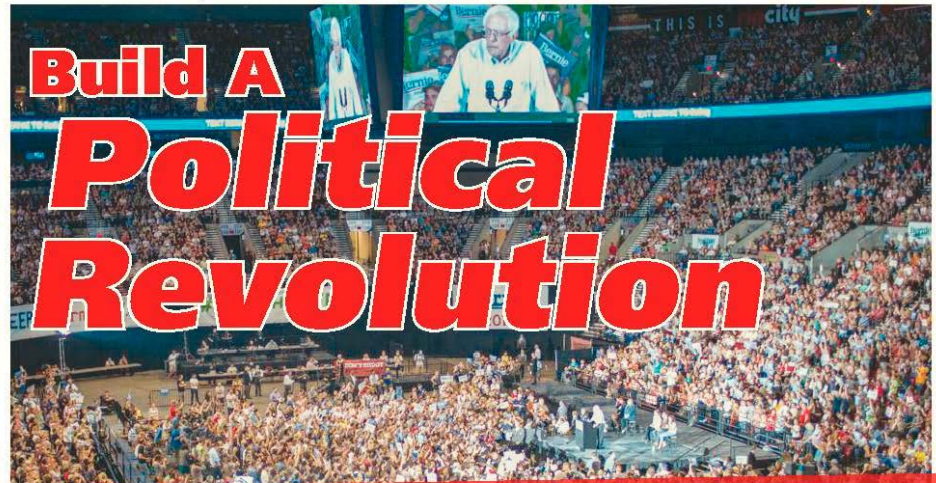
- a) *An optimistic view of human nature* – it is changeable and not a barrier to social regulation or ownership.

# SOCIALISM

b) *A stress on cooperation* – competition exists, but is not the guiding principle.

**SOCIALIST  
ALTERNATIVE**

Issue #20 - February 2016



Against the  
**Billionaire Class**

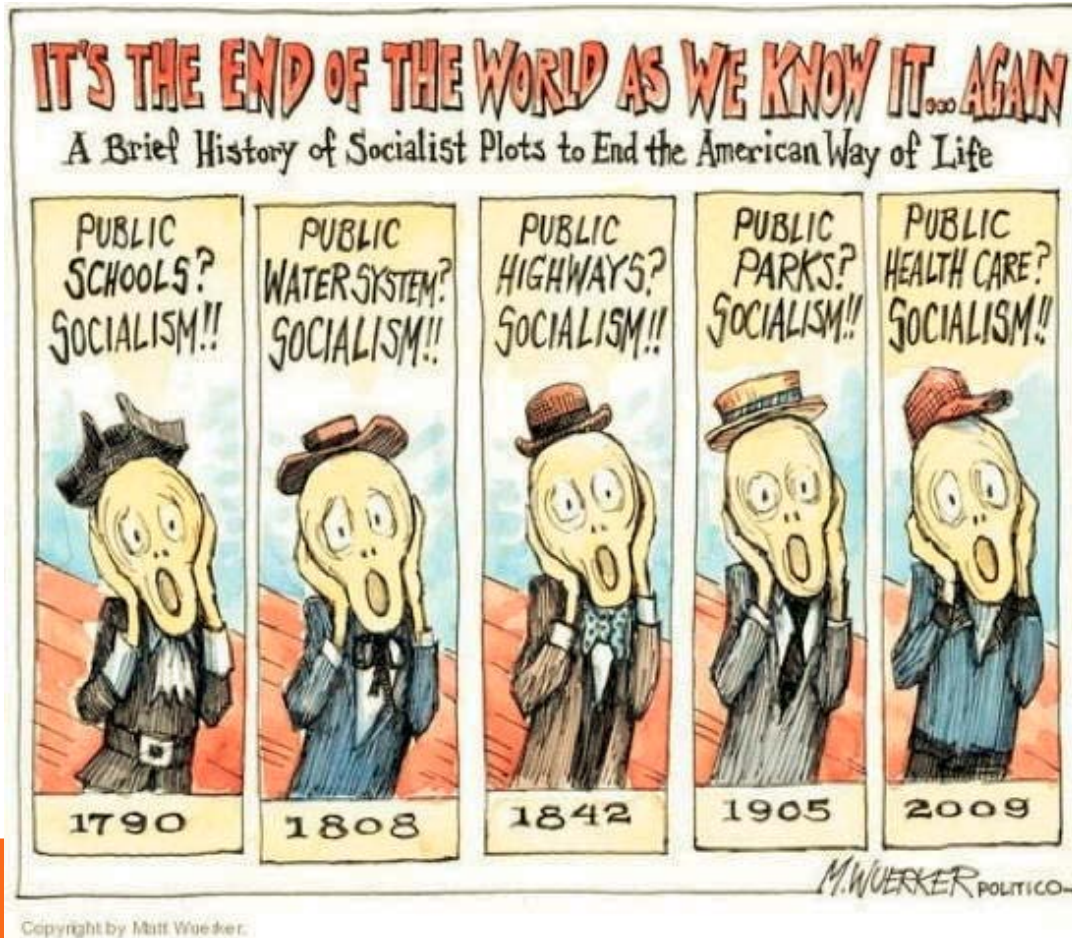


The Second  
Inauguration  
of Kshama  
Sawant  
page 3



Chicago:  
Political Crisis  
Deepens  
page 5

# SOCIALISM



c) *A positive view of freedom –*

**Freedom to, not just freedom from (a *material* basis of freedom)**

# SOCIALISM

d) *Support for equality* –

A basic value in any imaginable or feasible socialist society



# **SOCIALISM**

## **The problem of Utopia**



# SOCIALISM

All socialists are vulnerable to the charge of *utopianism* – trying to realize a society that is contrary to human experience and historical development



VETERANS

I never met a veteran who fought for Socialism or Marxism.

# SOCIALISM



**Socialists disagree as to whether utopianism is a good or bad thing.**

# SOCIALISM

**While some socialists see Utopia as a good thing, liberals and conservatives regard the notion of Utopia as negative – an irresponsible idealism that is contrary to reality, leading to regimes of a highly oppressive and totalitarian kind.**



There is no difference between communism and socialism, except in the means of achieving the same ultimate end: communism proposes to enslave men by force, socialism - by vote. It is merely the difference between murder and suicide.

— *Ayn Rand* —

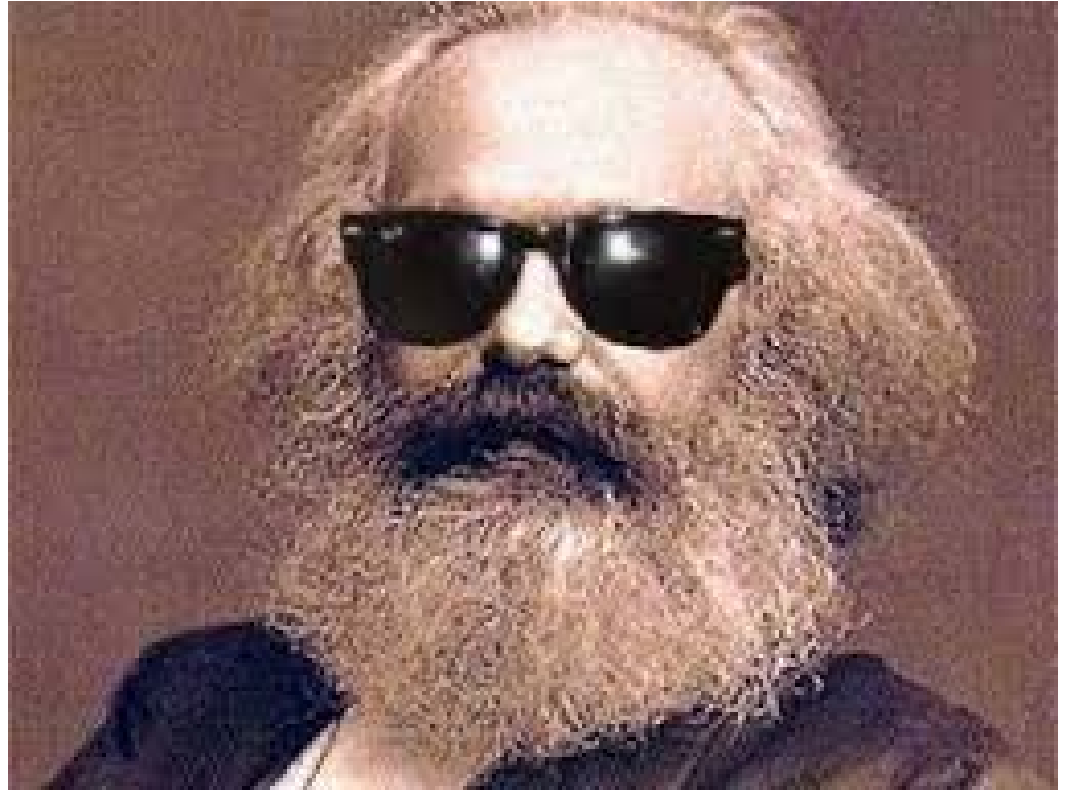
AZ QUOTES

**(Marx and Engels supported “scientific socialism” and rejected what they called “utopian socialism”)**

# **SOCIALISM**

## **Marx and Marxism**

**The belief that  
socialism  
should be  
scientific and  
not utopian  
(highly  
contentious)**



**Marx and Engels preferred the term  
“communism” (a working class  
movement from below) to “socialism” (a  
respectable movement initiated from  
above)**

# SOCIALISM

Why is  
Marxism seen  
as “scientific”?

Because it is a  
broad theory  
which  
encompasses...

## Scientific Socialism

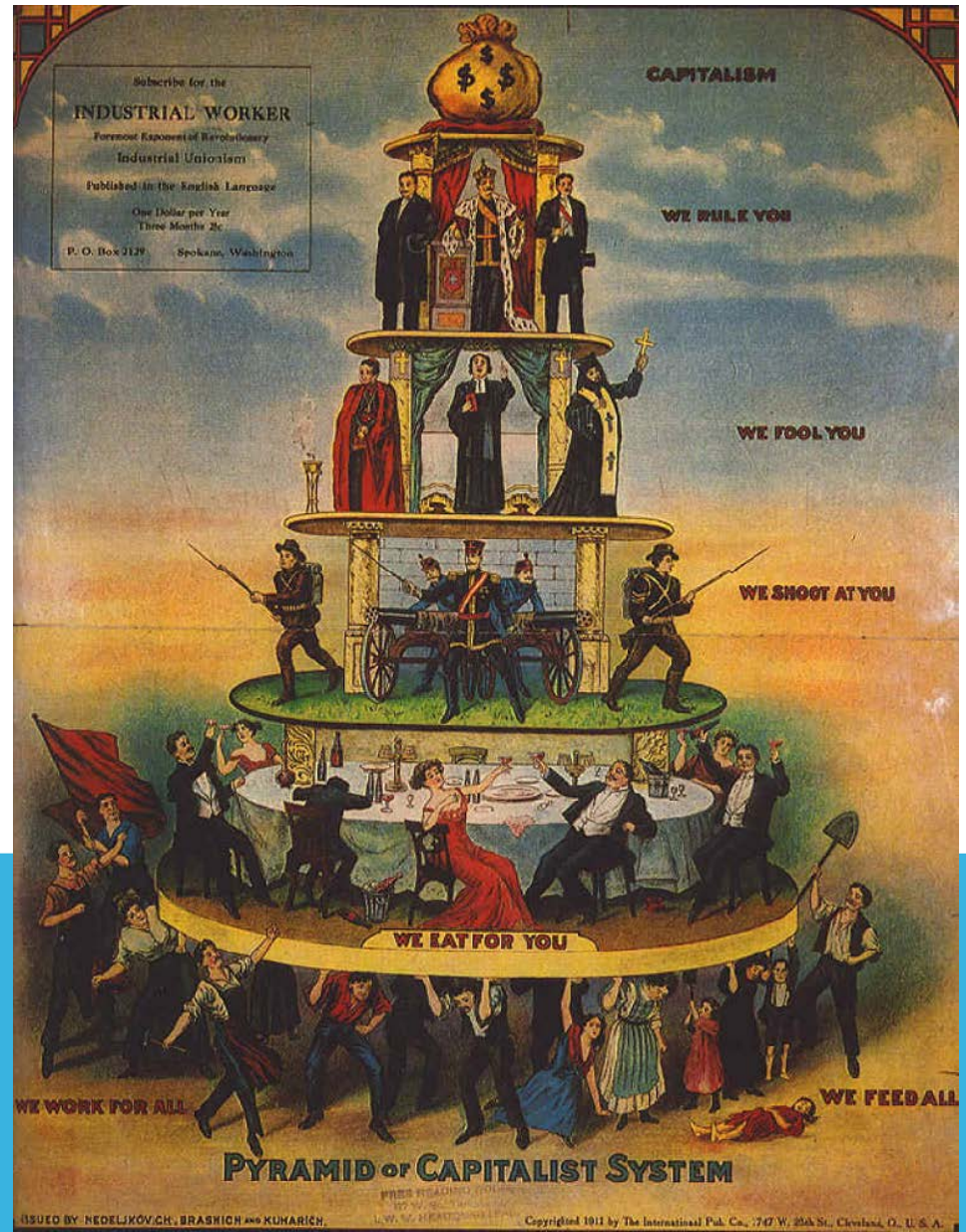
- Marx was not saying that capitalism would collapse because it was *immoral* or because it was *inefficient*.
- He was saying that capitalism would collapse because of the unalterable rules of social change that invariably destroy economic systems marked by class inequality.
- This is why another name for dialectical materialism is **scientific socialism**.

KARL MARX

# SOCIALISM

## A Theory of Class Conflict

Class-divided societies have incompatible social interests that lead to exploitation...



# SOCIALISM



## A Theory of Revolutions

**This  
incompatibility  
can only be  
resolved  
through  
revolution...**

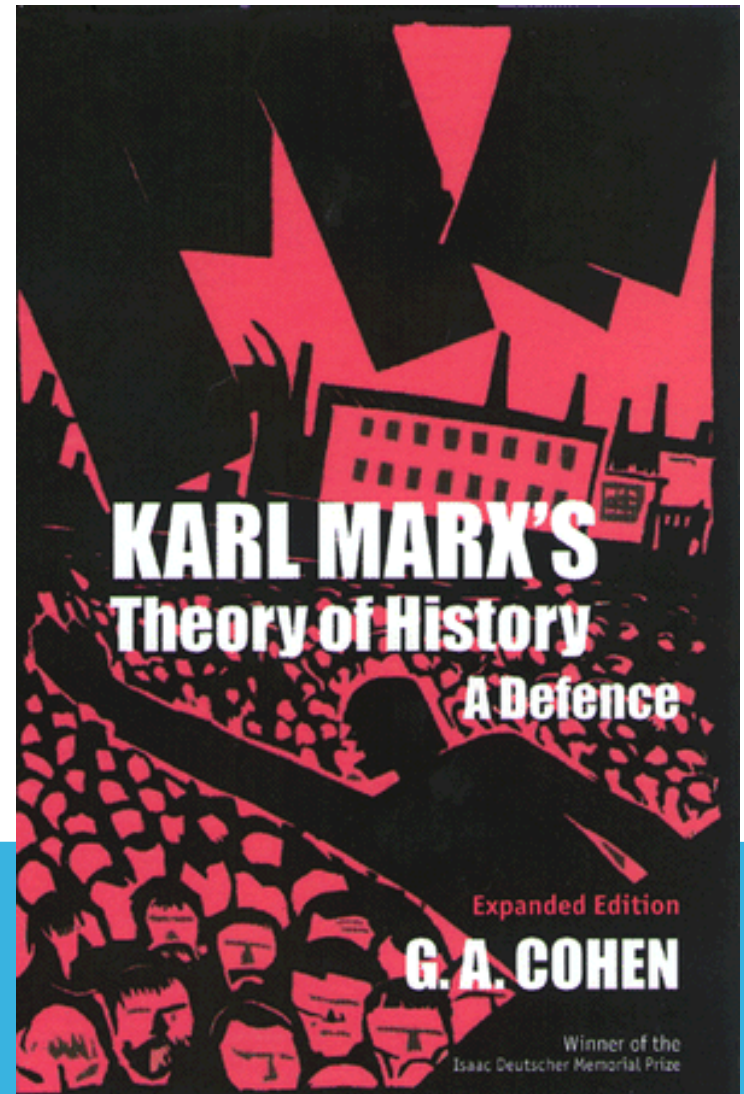
In contrast, Utopians seek peaceful and sometimes piecemeal change, appealing to all classes in society for support, and seeing the state as part of the solution rather than part of the problem

# SOCIALISM

## A Theory of History

Which contrasts the *forces of production* with the *relations of production*

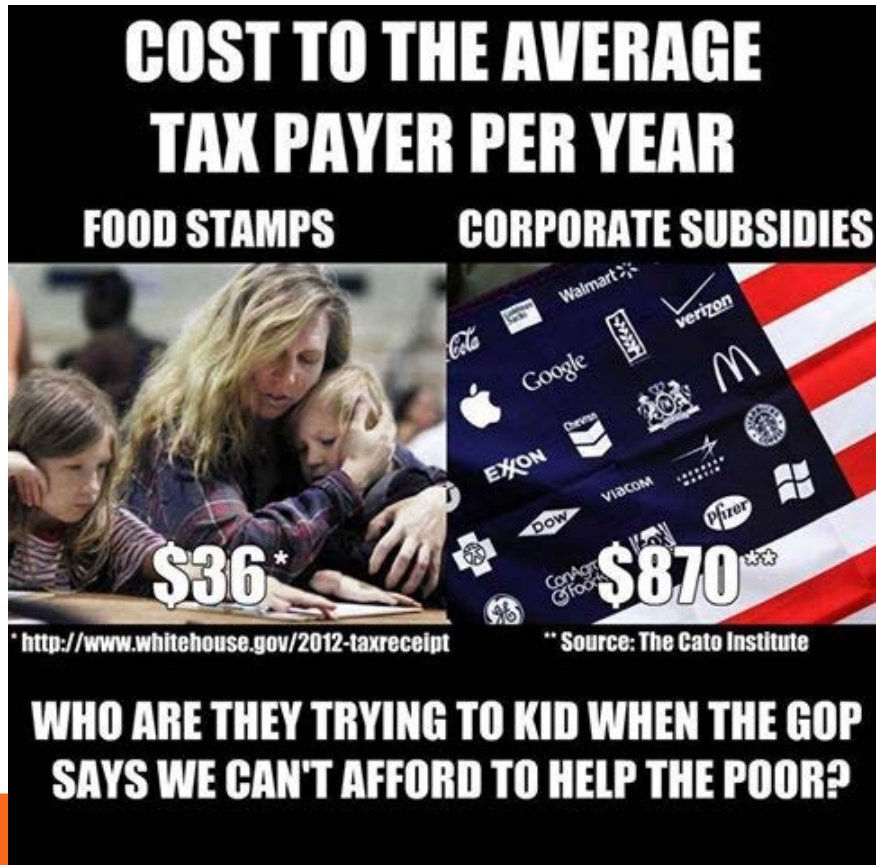
These two elements form a basis upon which arises a “superstructure” that incorporates political institutions, educational systems, culture and ideas



# SOCIALISM

## A Theory of Society

The self-destructive nature of capitalism which creates the working class (capitalism's "gravediggers"?)



Utopians see socialism as "desirable," not inevitable

# SOCIALISM

## The Authoritarian Consequences of “Scientific Socialism”

(...that is, according to **Hoffman** and **Graham**)



Intolerance of ambiguity is the mark of an  
authoritarian personality.

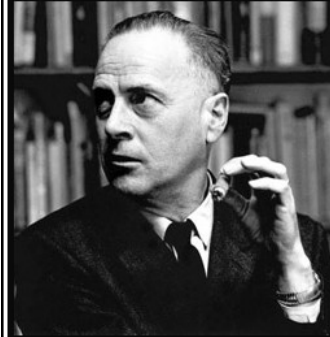
(Theodor Adorno)

# SOCIALISM

## a) The Argument of Inevitability (the major problem)

### Revolutions:

1. Bourgeois vs. proletarian
2. “Pre-mature”



There is absolutely no inevitability as long as there is a willingness to contemplate what is happening.

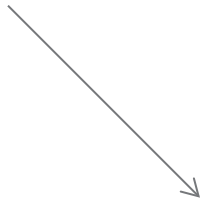
(Marshall McLuhan)

izquotes.com

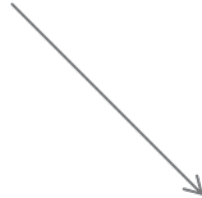
Can a country go from feudalism to communism?

# SOCIALISM

Hunter-Gatherer



Agricultural



Feudalism



Capitalism



????????????????????



# SOCIALISM

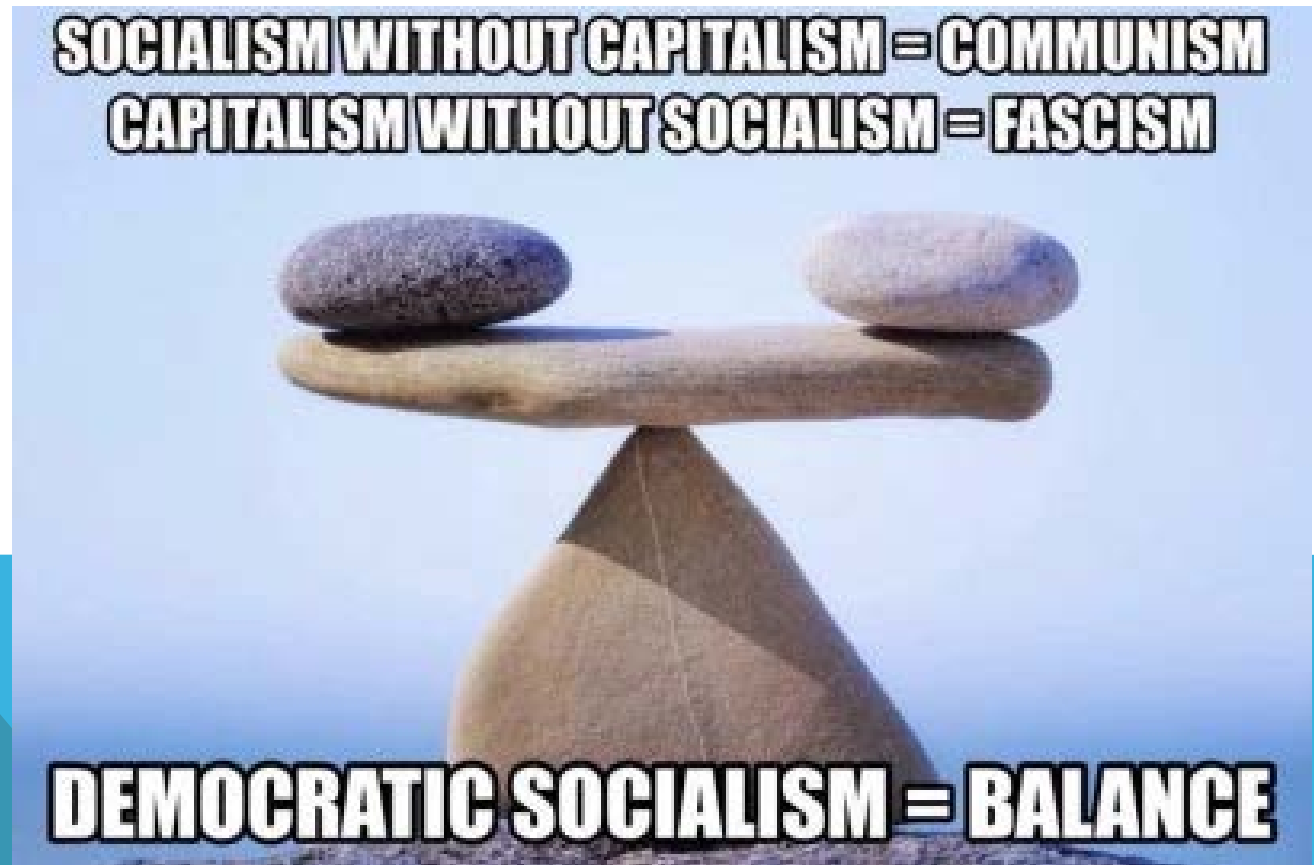
## b) Class War and the Problem of Morality

A “scientific” attitude ought to be tolerant and empirical, but in Marxism, the notion of a vanguard leading a revolutionary process that is both inevitable and historically necessary, leads to an authoritarian version of socialism whose state and political institutions are illiberal, and refuse to “wither away.”



# **SOCIALISM**

## **The Dilemma of Democratic Socialism**



# SOCIALISM

**Social democracy** sees itself as everything that Marxism is not: democratic, reformist, realistic, open-minded, and concerned with making a *moral* case for socialism.

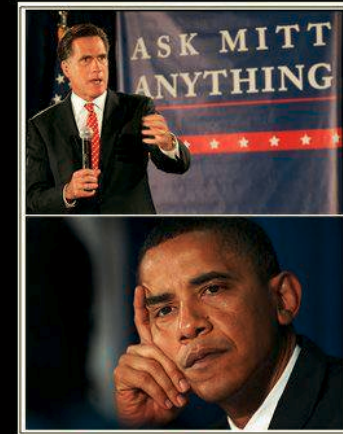
## CAPITALIST DEMOCRACY

### Toothpaste



1407 Choices

### Presidents



Two Choices

You can buy your own toothpaste but Wall Street has already bought your presidents for you.

How is this different from liberalism or even more flexible forms of conservatism?

# **SOCIALISM**

*Degenerate* forms of rule:

**Benevolent autocracy** → **tyranny**

**Aristocracy** → **oligarchy**

**Democracy** → **mob rule**

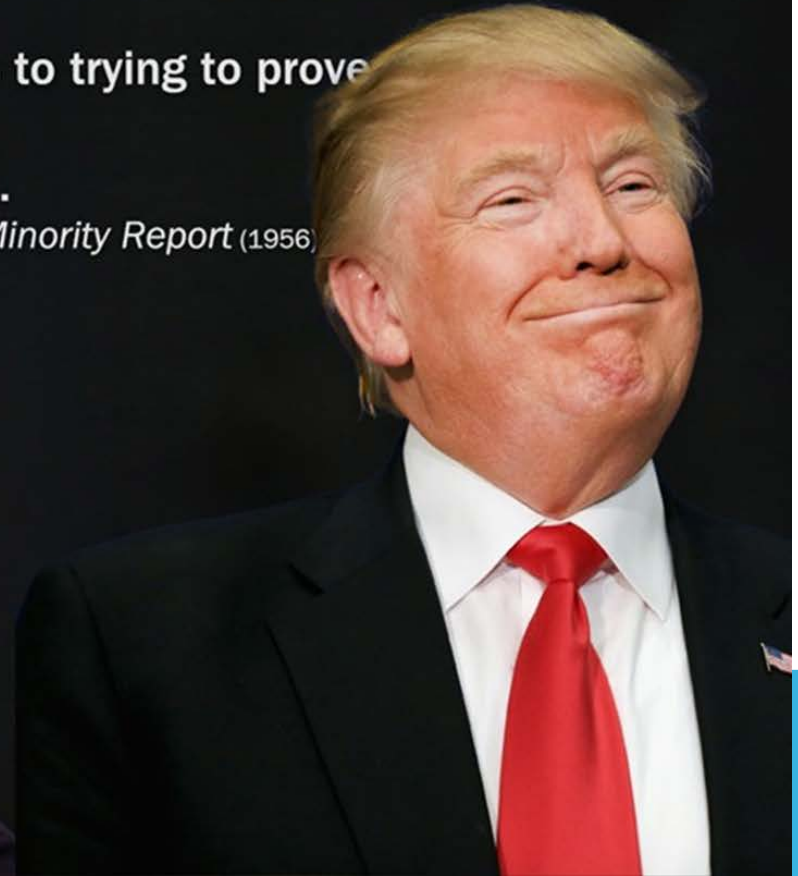
**Social Democracy** → **“electoralism”** (a  
concern to win elections without  
worrying about principles at all)

# SOCIALISM

## UNDER DEMOCRACY

one party always devotes its chief energies to trying to prove  
that the other party is unfit to rule —  
and both commonly succeed, and are right.

— H.L. Mencken, *Minority Report* (1956)



# SOCIALISM

## Socialism and the USA

Factors to  
examine when  
asking why  
socialism has  
never taken  
root here.



Lazy?

Want all the  
stuff without  
all the work?

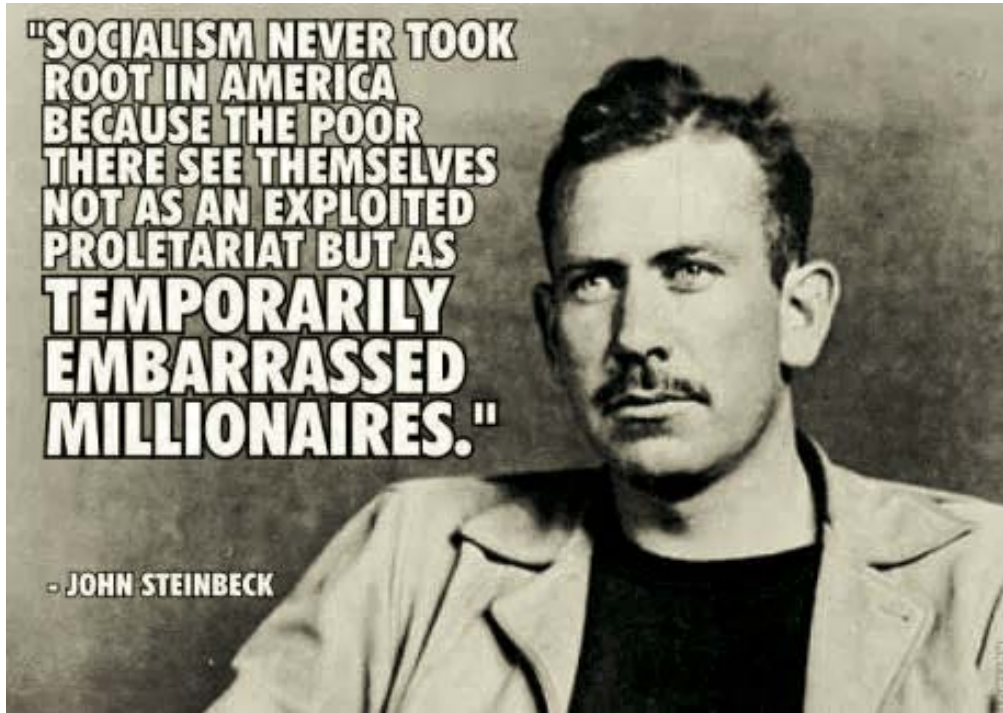
SOCIALISM

May be  
right for you!

Facebook.com/ImageBlitz



# SOCIALISM



Early American republic did not have the same *class structure* as England and the continent.

# **SOCIALISM**

**A social ethos that prioritized individualism over collectivism**



# SOCIALISM

Capitalism is a social system based on the recognition of individual rights, including property rights, in which all property is privately owned.

Ayn Rand

**Emancipatory movements (especially trade unions), that championed the rights of individual men over an oppressed class.**

# SOCIALISM


**Roosevelt's *New Deal***, although seen by its enemies as “socialist” in character, embraced a social or new liberalism that never really challenged the capitalist nature of the economy.



# **SOCIALISM**

## **Can Marxism be Rescued?**

**This is an interesting question. The authors do not say by whom it should be rescued, and for what ultimate purpose (should radicals who want to begin the revolution, rescue it from liberals who want to tame it?).**



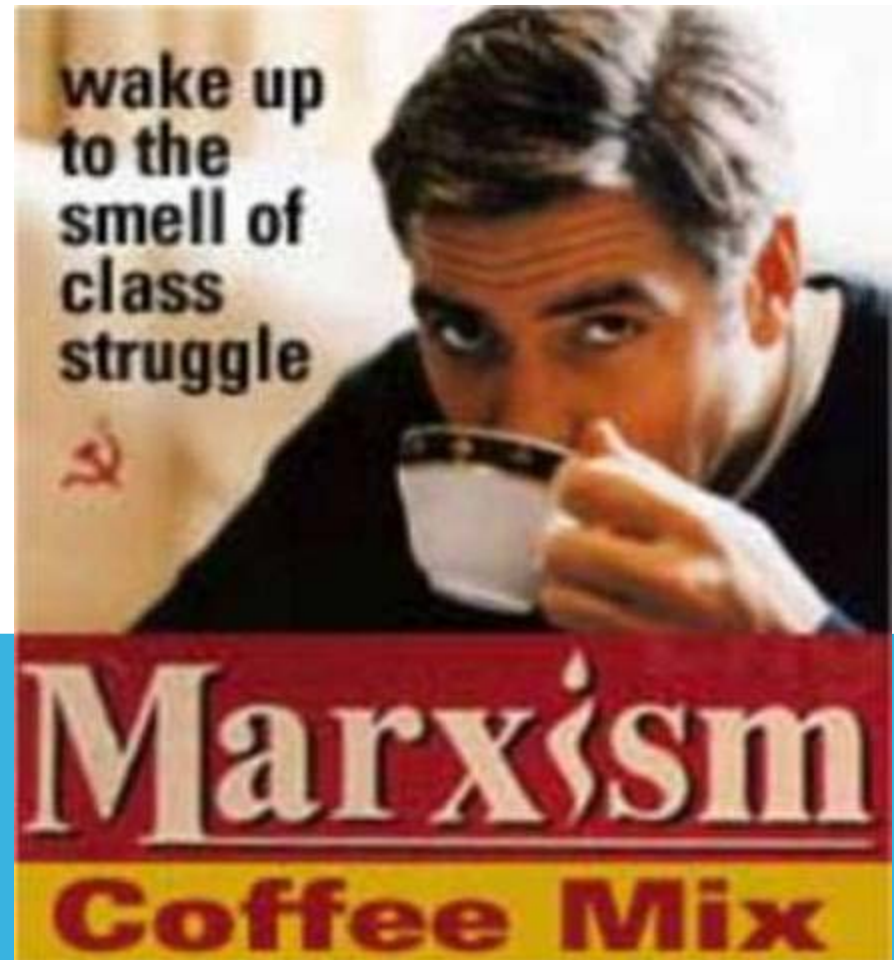
# SOCIALISM

The authors suggest that the problem with Marxism is that it embraces elements that make it impossible for the state to “wither away” – meaning that it must lead to authoritarianism.



# **SOCIALISM**

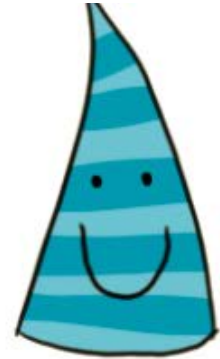
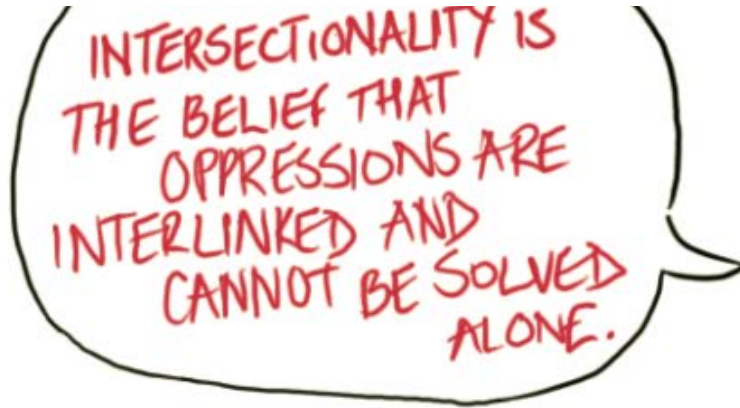
**Engels suggested revolutions are authoritarian events, and they create a new state that clearly distinguishes between revolution and counter-revolution, and this leads to the kind of insecurity and division that generates despotism rather than democracy. Was he right?**



# SOCIALISM

## Class and Agency

Are there factors other than class (gender, race, national identity, sexual orientation) that are crucial to understand?



OPPRESSIONS ARE NOT ISOLATED.  
**INTERSECTIONALITY NOW!**

**Intersectionality?**

# SOCIALISM



## Socialism and Inevitability

Is socialism only “conditionally” inevitable as the authors suggest?

In other words, couldn't the US go right, towards fascism, under certain circumstances?

# SOCIALISM

## Determinism and Free Will

**Classical liberalism argues for a notion of freedom independent of circumstances and relationships, and since they [socialists] are critical of liberalism they might be tempted to take the view that since circumstances determine the way people are, they do not have freedom or willpower.**



**SOCIALISM**

# **Socialism:**

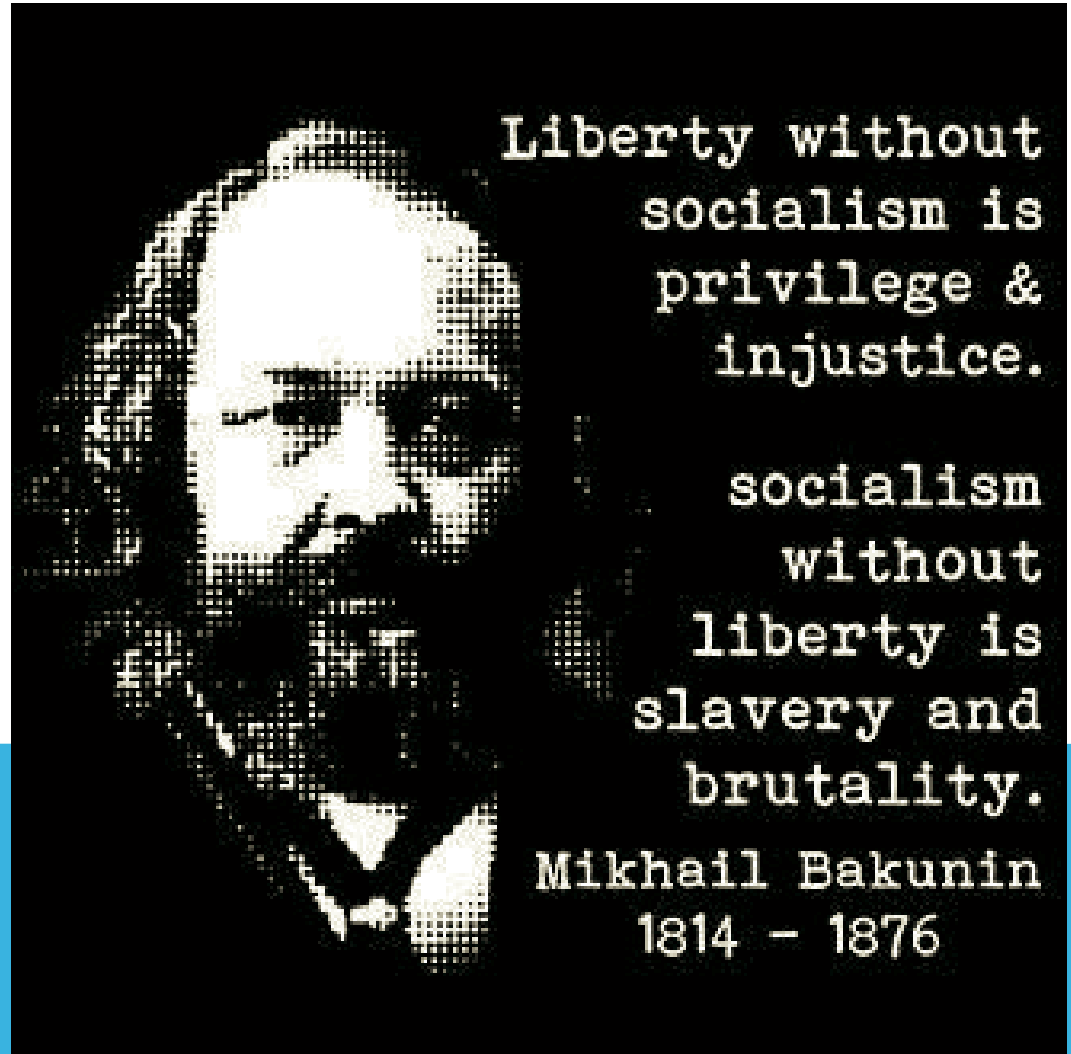
**A Summary from**

**Hoffman and Graham**



# SOCIALISM

**Socialism** is a broad church, but underlying its numerous forms is a concern with cooperation and equality....

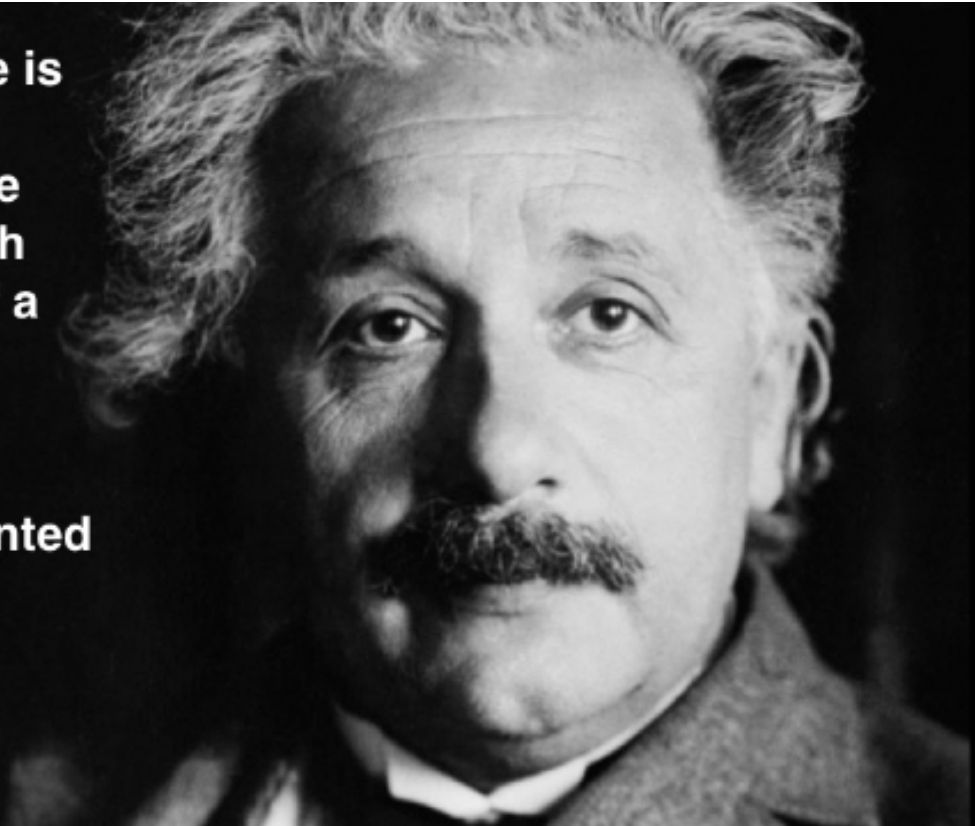


# **SOCIALISM**

**...and a belief that human nature can change and that freedom requires an adequate provision of resources.**

**I am convinced there is only one way to eliminate these grave evils, namely through the establishment of a socialist economy, accompanied by an educational system which would be oriented toward social goals.**

**- Albert Einstein**



# SOCIALISM

**Socialism** is prone to the problem of *utopianism* because it seeks to establish a society that differs from the world of the present.



**LIBERTARIAN  
SOCIALISM:  
AN OXYMORON?**

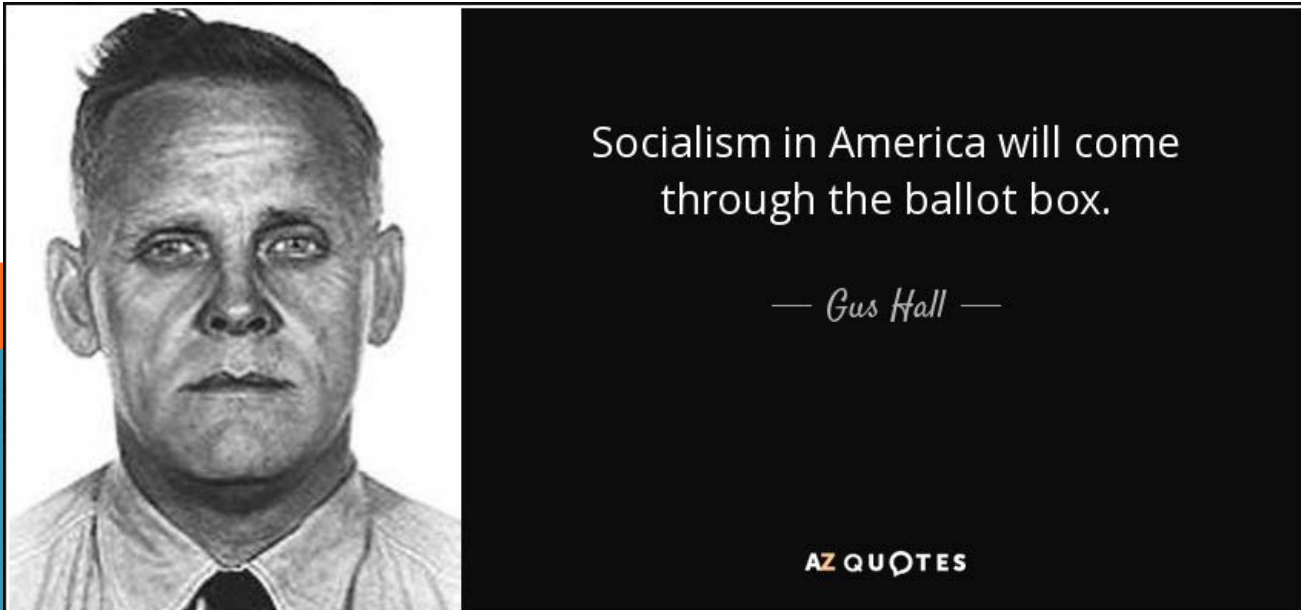
# SOCIALISM

**Marxism** is a variant of socialism that leads to authoritarianism insofar as it emphasizes an unconditional inevitability, has a particular notion of revolution, and is disdainful of moral judgement.



# SOCIALISM

**Marxism** can only be rescued from the problem of authoritarianism if it rejects the notion of revolution as a single political event, and adopts a broader view of class and a conditional notion of inevitability.



# **SOCIALISM**

**A DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST IS NOT A  
MARXIST SOCIALIST OR A COMMUNIST.  
A DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST IS STILL A  
CAPITALIST, JUST ONE WHO SEEKS TO  
RESTRAIN THE SELF-DESTRUCTIVE  
EXCESSES OF CAPITALISM  
AND CHANNEL GOVERNMENT'S USE OF  
OUR TAX MONEY INTO CREATING  
OPPORTUNITIES FOR EVERYONE.  
DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISTS BELIEVE THAT  
BOTH THE ECONOMY AND SOCIETY  
SHOULD BE RUN DEMOCRATICALLY  
TO MEET HUMAN NEEDS, NOT SIMPLY  
TO MAKE PROFITS FOR A GREEDY FEW.**