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2 October, 2020

Eng. 1121

Word Count: 3523

It is easy to know why I found the issue of “Democratic Socialism” interesting. It is extremely relevant today. In doing some advance research I am finding this subject is quite complex in its nature. My opinions that I had in the beginning are all parallel with the information I am finding. All the information and events do coincide with world and stateside events. When there is this what I call the “String of Continuity” I believe I am finding the truth. I feel compelled to research this subject and hope to shed light through my efforts of an intellectual pursuit of fact and truth. Rather than have the information fed by propagandists who have an agenda and fail to provide a complete picture. The complete picture is what is needed for a person to make an intelligent choice as opposed to just being swayed by a silver-tongued orator. One of my questions I developed from my main research objective is what is “Democratic Socialism”. Where I thought would be a simple start actually is a total subject in and of itself. Even though this would automatically ring the communism bell in most minds, it is in many ways very different. Using other countries as an example I am finding it best to compare events in Latin America to be a good indicator positive and negative, if the United States was to move in that direction.

I expect that Democratic Socialism may not be a good fit for the United States for reasons I will detail in my research. I believe this because what I have been reading from multiple sources. The student library has been very informative and I have been trying to stay with articles from magazines with a good reputation. I have not researched books as of yet because of the amount of content to sift thru to find what I am looking for. One discovery I made that I was unaware of is that there is also a “Social Democracy” and there is significant overlap in the design of the two. I would probably be disappointed if I discover Democratic Socialism to be the way of the future. Only because as evidenced today since it is a radical concept it requires a tearing down of institutions. Those institutions I know and respect, the history, the symbols of this country. I do not know if there is any another way one can develop without the other being eliminated.

Byas, Steve. “Venezuela the Poison of Socialism Claims Another Victim.” *Questia*, www.questia.com/magazine/1G1-595026050/venezuela-the-poison-of-socialism-claims-another-victim.

Steve Byas is currently a professor at the Oklahoma Conservative Assembly, before that he was a professor of history at Hillsdale Freewill Baptist College. In his article he explains briefly the development of Venezuela’s government. He describes the transition from a dictatorial, to a crony capitalism, which resulted in the first baby steps into socialism with the nationalization of the telephone company and several banks. He describes that the economy has be driven mostly by the oil industry of the country and has been for many years. The government wanted to nationalize the oil industry but eventually only became involved partially and began to control

the oil price at below the market rate. This would prevent the suppliers to bring their product to market causing a supply issue. The supply issue was blamed on the producers not the government and cause a lack of faith in the free market. This opened the door for politicians to intervene and correct the problem. What was skimmed from the booming oil industry was reinvested in a robust social welfare policy. Indeed, this looked promising but the governments involvement in the few but strong profitable industries would lead to a destructive chain of events. The free market was always to blame, not the governments intervention with artificially low prices. Eventually global situation would stagnate the booming sectors which can be expected. But when it did and the capital ceased to flow so readily the government could no longer sustain its welfare policies. In this instability and social addiction, the stage was set for the entrance of a dictator with a populist message. The nationalization of major industries and the systematic disassembly of democratic government commenced. The change in government also cause a realignment with global powers that was more familiar to their own. So, Venezuela aligned itself geopolitically with Cuba and North Korea. The nationalization of industry continued with more and more private sector commodities under national control. The government began to print more money to support the artificially low consumer prices. Leading to the devaluation of the country's currency. It is estimated at 10 times less its previous value. Wild inflation followed and the subsequent supply shortages across all areas of the economy was catastrophic. A good portion of his article at this point describes absolutely horrific conditions. The author now queries the readers as to what we have we learned from Soviet Union, Cuba, Argentina, Greece, Italy, North Korea, Vietnam? Apparently not much because a recent poll indicates 43% of Americans support socialism. In conclusion he asks are Americans falling for the same? Are they asking for the governments intervention with more social welfare nationalized programs and put a stop to inflation.

In researching the effects and history of a country's relatively recent acceptance of socialism. I cannot help but to see a pattern. Admittedly there is a disparity in wealth. A large disparity but socialism the answer remains to be seen. The pattern that there is a middle ground did not seem to work in Latin America at all, it was disastrous. What is truly frightening as explained in this article was the slow "Soft" socialism. Renamed, repackaged, with new faces, but still the same product. The author is extremely opinionated on this matter and his choice of words calling socialism poison is a testament to that fact. He lays out his argument with clarity that shows a series of events that seem to have a domino type effect. With the situation spiraling further and further down the path of destruction. Should we really look at ourselves and ask realistically, are we living that bad? Because we see others with excessive wealth should we be asking for more and will we pay for that down the road? Apparently yes. Just as I feared the author in his article also describes the tearing down of institutions, the reversing of human rights, and the elimination of religion. To me that seems a very expensive price to pay. And it seems not necessarily to support an oligarch but for a desperate government trying to control the situation that they engineered, by trying to attain these unrealistic utopias.

"Socialists everywhere claim to seek the attainment of a government that wisely directs the economy for the enrichment and overall good of all the people, but what socialism in practice always leads to is the impoverishment of the mass of the population, and the enrichment of the political class and its cronies." Para 14.

Cain, William E. "The End of Capitalism: Eugene V. Debs and the Argument for Socialism in America." *Society*, vol. 56, no. 5, 2019, p. 466+. *Gale Academic OneFile*, https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A607986387/AONE?u=cuny_nytc&sid=AONE&xid=a5362582. Accessed 25 Oct. 2020.

The author William B. Cain is a professor of English in Wellesley College. In his article which is semibiographical account of Eugene V. Debs and his argument for socialism. Debs ran for the presidency of the United States 5 times. His best showing was in 1912 with 6% of the vote. He is not a contemporary man so why should he matter? This is what Mr. Cain explains in his article. Socialism has existed in the United States for years and current events have ignited a new argument for a revolution. He explains how the fundamental thought that private ownership of life sustaining necessities should be abolished and given to the people. They should work to care for their own physical needs and material wants. Times have been changing and 40% of Americans believe they should live in a socialist country. 49.6% of millennials do also feel the same way (*The National Interest*, July 16, 2019). There is an increasing belief that capitalism is not taking care of their needs. Societal events and political restructuring are an indicator of the trend. The rising student debt, LBGTQ rights, 2008 market crash, occupy wall street, BLM movement, and climate change to name a few. Some are both nation and international concerns. The emergence of figures such as Bernie Sanders and Alexandria Ocasio Cortez, and others who either believe in or are active members of the Democratic Socialists of America. Currently there are 3 members in the U.S. Senate and 3 members in the U.S. House of Representatives. At the State level there are 17.

By far one of the greatest influencers in the belief that capitalism isn't working is income inequality. The argument of wealth distribution is strong with a clear undisputed set of figures to support that there is a significant disparity. This disparity is growing with Nick Hanauer (an American entrepreneur, philanthropist and venture capitalist) observing that "Since 1990, America's superrich have grown about 21 trillion dollars richer, while those in the bottom half of the wealth distribution have grown 900 billion dollars poorer." Indeed, both sides admit that this exists and need to be addressed. But in the last administration into the present the middle class has not or was incapable of benefitting from the legislation enacted to assist them. Mr. Cain provides recent figures and explanations of those facts. The increased knowledge of the amounts of money that our legislators have been amassing while working middle class are paltry or non-existing increases has increased their resentment of an unfair inequitable establishment. Fueling the desire for a radical change with resentment and anger. The author concludes by explaining don't ever think a revolution cannot happen. There is a possibility that capitalism can be brought down. Allowing one more of Eugene V. Deb's prophesies to come true.

I don't think any argument needs to be made on whether there is a need for a change. It is undeniable the wealth inequality is enormous. Corporations have been eating well more of the lion's share of profits. As I had mentioned in Mr. Cains article, the middle class cannot even truly benefit from the economy. The current administration loosening of restrictions and resurgence of domestic product and energy sectors, will only financially help those who are invested in and own stocks, or profit share. Job creation is a plus however, union or not, wage increases have been almost nonexistent. The wage increase is less than that of 2009, with a recession sandwiched in between from then to now. "The economy created 145,000 jobs in the

final month of 2019 to cap off the ninth straight year in which new hires topped the 2 million mark, but workers still aren't reaping a windfall from the strong labor market through rapidly rising pay".^[1] It seems inevitable at some point there will be the proverbial "straw that breaks the camel's back". A gloomy answer comes from Walter Scheidel, in *The Great Leveler: Violence and the History of Inequality from the Stone Age to the Twenty-First Century* (2017). He says that there are four ways through which inequality is reversed: war, revolution, state collapse, and deadly pandemics-he terms them "the four horsemen." Redistribution on a grand scale: this, he contends, comes about in the aftermath of "catastrophe." There is a "fundamental reset": much is changed, must be changed, after so much has been destroyed.

It seems at this juncture we are seeing a combination of about three of the four horsemen mentioned. I cannot help but feel as I explore these writing that there is a grand design being enacted. And forces are at play, albeit with good intentions to create this fundamental reset. How is it conceivable that we can have states with people hungry, and homeless strewn about in our major cities. Populations of people scavenging on the periphery of society while having some with more money than they can possibly know what to do with. Neoliberal policies enacted domestically and internationally can be stifling. It does seem to offer freedom to those with wealth but not for the poor. Is taking away control of essential services from private to public the answer, or will it just create oligarchs as in Mexico a democratic republic and the United Kingdom which is a social democracy. We run into this very precarious situation when we decide who controls essential services. It is exactly that control; one system capitalism, would like to control to maximize profit by price gouging. The other system socialism would like to control the people, by the people, who would actually be capable of starving or dehydrating them. Was not that option explored already? Turning off the water at a house party in lockdown over covid. Notice the difference in the two words by and for the people. We would like to think that a counsel of our peers would always be in our best interests. But we have seen community boards staffed with political hacks. Who approve projects that are clearly not in the best benefit of its constituents. I personally feel that if able to operate with impunity they can be an extremely destructive and a self-interested menace. Both parties seek the redistribution of wealth and are aware of the problems. And both parties seem to not know how to do it. Especially when a moment of ethical lucidity is clouded by the legalized bribery renamed "lobbying". Which is alive and well and exploiting a very common human vulnerability, whose presence is not likely to be eliminated on either side of the spectrum.

"We are heading toward a crisis: it could lead to Socialism, as Debs believed it would, or to authoritarian rule. In fact, we are in a crisis already". Pg 466

"The Path to Democratic Socialism Lessons from Latin America", Patrick Iber, April 1, 2016, Dissent Magazine (00123846), <https://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/path-democratic-socialism-lessons-latin-america>.

The author Patrick Iber is an assistant professor of history at the University of Texas at El Paso. He wrote this article for the magazine the Dissent. The Dissent magazine is an independent magazine of political and cultural criticism. In this article he uses the relative recent events concerning socialism in Latin America, as a predictor of a socialism transformation in America. He describes what is has taken to achieve that transformation and the similarities. The events

compared to here with what is occurring is startling. The ideas of socialism and communism have their differences but still originate from core principals. Of most important being a clear class distinction. This distinction is the development of a radical group of people seeking a dramatic change, a revolution. Mr. Iber interprets the “radicals” the socialists, as being more of a populist movement. Easily compared to what we are seeing today as what can be considered “far” left. Those who do not agree with the social policies they put forward are not with the “people”. And this opens the door to what would be clear censorship. This type of censorship has been evident in his comparison to events in Latin America. He makes reference to a “pink tide”. Not full communism but a mixture of ideas from the same. A desire for more public control of the means of production or in the case of United States, capital. Capital, because the United States has moved from being centered upon extraction and refinement of resources as its economic base. The country instead has become more of a money manager as in most developed countries. To be more specific, the country is wealthy. He considers the socialization of allowing local councils to be in control of capital as becoming problematic having a reverse effect on liberties. The schism that is occurring as he describes, is attempting to define who are the “people”. The social polarization cannot be any clearer. He believes the political and governmental revolution of a far left will not be able to reach its desired destination with all of its values intact. It will also not be able to proceed with a form of transformation that will change modify or eliminate many of the “old” beliefs and institutions that have developed within this country since its inception.

In reading this article I could not help but feel that this opinion is accurate. The structure of socialism is not a cure all that can fit for every type of location. The selling points are strong and very appealing. It is definitely not a one size fits all scenario. As I noted in other readings the societal and economic breakdown here are not the same as other European countries who have been relatively successful with this form of government. I think the author is correct in drawing upon the Latin American experience, for a more accurate comparison. I also find his populist construction as dead on. Indeed, it is displayed over and over again that a disagreement is not tolerated. The opposing view is immediately silenced by name calling and labeling. There is actually talk of eliminating the electoral college. This is surely a populist view and as many that might argue that this would seem fair it disenfranchises more rural areas and silences their voice, and will only lead to a theoretically a one-party system (Perhaps that is the ultimate objective). As the cities whose populations are quite large will have sway in all affairs. It appears those who wish to share more are so eager to take away in one form or another. I cannot help but feel there is enough to go around but is that sustainable. You cannot possibly receive so much for free without having to pay that bill at some point. I can only hope further exploration and analysis will answer those questions.

“Significant change to our political economy will require significant change to our structure of government. It is hard to see how to get there without some kind of “populist” moment, fraught with danger to other values we believe to be essential.” Pg 120

Better minds than me have spent much more time and have much more experience than I have on these matters. I scoured thru a tremendous amount of information and history to attempt to objectively look at the options. There is a need for a redistribution of wealth as both a moral and economic duty. But I cannot agree with what socialism offers, as the formula does not work. The

intent is good but it is against the natural order of things. In its simplest terms, there is a ying to a yang. free energy, limitless power, is not possible now, there is always some sort of repercussion. Can socialism work, yes it can, but it is always is hybrid of ideologies. I do not believe a pure form of a social democracy can exist. A useful insight and one I agree with, was a Quora blog post. It specified that those socialist countries that are successful seem to have particular constants that allow it to exist. 1. The country is small 2. The country is socially homogeneous 3. The country has collective attitudes[2]. The United States is not one of these things. Could it be the change is desired by neoliberals as some sort of guilt over their wealth and these thoughts are over compensation to the populists and social democrats? Indeed, it would not be coined if it was not true that if you give an inch, they will take a yard. The dinner bell ringing and all will get a free meal. The ideas can be sold and are plausible and could instigate grass root uprisings, and these uprisings would open the door to radicals and anarchists, that have no solution other than to tear down what is existing. Causing destruction just for the sake of destruction exploiting the moment of lawlessness. And the inability for forces to re-establish normalcy because of the inability to discern friend from foe. And it's all caught up in the frenzy of the moment as 3 of the mentioned proverbial horsemen are actually riding in with various intensities right now. It would not be prudent to make hasty decisions in this turmoil. Violent overthrow is not the answer, and should not be as we do not exist in a subjugated society, whose government deserves such hostility. We are not in such a high desperation to survive to resort to such animalistic behavior. I challenge anyone to bring me to a location in America that has starving, bloated abdomen, completely dehydrated dying, men women and children. Addressing the issue of wealth disparity needs to be balanced, performed with clear minds, bipartisan and without an agenda.

[1] Bartash, Jeffrey. "U.S. Creates 145,000 Jobs in December as Hiring Slows and Wage Growth Softens." *MarketWatch*, MarketWatch, 10 Jan. 2020, www.marketwatch.com/story/us-creates-145000-new-jobs-in-december-2020-01-10.

[2] McKay, Dallas, Could the rising interest in Democrat Socialism be good for America?, July 23, 2018, <https://www.quora.com/Could-the-rising-interest-in-Democrat-Socialism-be-good-for-America>