

Statement on Social Democrats of America

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SDA, as a democratic socialist organization, is resolutely “social-democratic.” It accepts openly that “Politics is the art of the possible,” as leavened by DSA founder Michael Harrington’s concept of socialism as “the left wing of the feasible.” It thus resolutely works in the electoral process, and supports, advances wherever possible, reforms that enhance the lives of ordinary working people, women, people of color, minorities, LBGQT+ people, in ways that are democratic, inclusive, and benefit them materially and psychologically. SDA is hearty in this support—it does not half-heartedly support “reform” measures to demonstrate that “reformism” cannot solve the contradictions of capitalism, and that only “revolution” can solve them! In this it is firmly of the opposite stance of the “far left,” particularly those who turn to Bolshevik-legacy socialism for their ideal of a socialist society. The Bolshevik-legacy left had over a hundred years to prove itself both “necessary” and “fully feasible,” and failed on both counts. What resulted from Bolshevik-legacy socialism of any and all types—be they the rule of Lenin and Trotsky, or of Stalinism, Maoism, Castroism, or Marxism-Leninism of various stripes, as well as all forms of Leninism-Trotskyism, was not a democratic, liberating socialism as it was a form (whatever the state structure) of “bureaucratic collectivism” or “state capitalism.” Furthermore, Bolshevik-legacy socialism in the advanced capitalist world never redeemed itself as a mass workers’ movement, but only deteriorated into warring Marxist-Leninist and Leninist-Trotskyist sects with little, if any positive influence, even in places where mass Communist Parties existed, such as France, Italy, or post-World War I Germany.

Donald Sassoon’s *One Hundred Years of Socialism* (New York: New Press, 1996) gives an excellent history of the positive successes achieved in Western Europe under the reigns of “mere reformist social-democracy.” Such “mere reformism” established universal health care, advanced the welfare state, and broke decisively the link between poverty and being working-class. SDA recommends this book to all members.

Socialism, to be truly liberating, must mean more than simply the state ownership of the means of production, for, as the legacy of Bolshevik-inspired socialism shows, that begs the question: Who controls the state that “rules” in the name of the working class? The stock Bolshevik-legacy answer was that the “vanguard Communist Party” represented the working class; but it represented them in name only, setting itself up, instead, as a New Class that transmogrified the “dictatorship of the proletariat” into a “dictatorship *over* the proletariat.” Socialism is more than collective ownership vs. strictly private ownership; at its core, a truly liberating socialism is also democratic, transparent, and accountable—for when it isn’t, it’s mere “bureaucratic collectivism” or “state capitalism” that mirrors the same lack of transparency and accountability that prevails under capitalism. Thus, socialists are resolute democrats, extending democracy from the strictly political realm as achieved under liberalism into the social and economic realms as well.

For SDA, liberalism is not so much pernicious as it is incomplete, a “near left” that we of SDA can successfully work with and form coalitions with; as many liberals, instead of being studied “centrists,” or wedded to mere “diversity” and “equitableness” under neoliberal economics, are

honest grassroots progressives who do, in fact, agree with much of what DSA calls for, says, and advocates. We of SDA proudly march with such “mere” liberals!

Further, while SDA’s socialism goes beyond the capitalist welfare state, at this point in time, with the massive onslaught by the right against the capitalist welfare state having successfully prevailed since at least the Reagan-Thatcher years, a return to the “limited” achievements of the New Deal or under the Labour government of Britain in the immediate post-World War II years would be a magnificent political achievement that would give back to the working classes what neoliberalism, under the guise of “freedom,” has stolen from them!

SDA also upholds its principled ban on democratic-centralist organizations and individuals from membership; and extends that ban to caucuses within SDA. Marxism-Leninism and Leninism-Trotskyism, both of which rely on democratic centralism to impose “discipline” on their adherents, are actively contrary to SDA’s democratic socialist norms, principles, objectives, and practices. SDA respects individual autonomy and the ability of SDAers to think for themselves, without direction from self-appointed “vanguards” that demand robotic allegiance and “unity of action” from its adherents. The right to dissent or abstain is *always* an inalienable right within SDA.

Moreover, while SDA is a democratic socialist, i.e., social democratic, “big tent,” that does not mean it is a promiscuous gathering-place for all who call themselves “leftists.” Sadly, many present members of DSA are not committed to democratic socialism as such, but, instead, embrace such “far left” nostrums as authoritarianism, Marxism-Leninism, Leninism-Trotskyism, and uncompromising “revolutionism.” Such DSA comrades need to be educated within DSA on democratic socialist norms and practices; and informed that much about the “far left” SDA rejects in fundamental principle. Unfortunately, the sectarian hash that Marxist-Leninists and Leninist-Trotskyists have made particularly of the U.S. left over the last over one hundred years has made DSA attractive to them as a new “port of political entry.” It is also the same with anarchists. While certainly not wishing to engage in mass expulsions, the leadership, leading bodies, and active members of DSA should inform such “far left” comrades that perhaps they should find another political home elsewhere, or “settle” for being “mere” left social-democrats!

Last, while SDA is an activist organization, it looks beyond activism as such, and recognizes the need for thoughtful expression of socialist theory, principles, strategy and tactics through open and serious debate and discussion within not only SDA, but throughout the public intellectual sphere as well. SDA calls for the return of the esteemed “public intellectual” of the left, as evinced through such people as C. Wright Mills, Irving Howe (another DSA founder), and Michael Harrington—all of them learned, erudite persons who were concerned with not talking only to their fellow adherents and academics (for both Mills and Howe were university professors), but reaching beyond the ivory towers and intellectual walls to the broader public. In other words, intellectual accessibility and thoughtfulness are also hallmarks of socialist practice, as is a healthy skepticism that sees nothing as just “written in stone” but, rather, understands that “all that is solid melts in air,” as the *Communist Manifesto* put it memorably.



Social Democrats of America
Year 2021

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Branch:

This form must be filled in by each member, existing and new, and turned to the branch treasurer

Member Information	Full address
Last Name:
First Name:
Email Address: _____ @ _____ . _____	
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I, the undersigned, _____ declare to join/renew my membership to the Social Democrats of America and I pay, this day, my annual contribution for the year 2021 of an amount of \$ _____

Date and Signature

Membership fee payment

To validate, the membership fee must be paid. The Branch Treasurer must send this completed form to the party with the corresponding fee.

Membership payment by Check	
I enclose a check in the amount of \$ _____ payable to Social Democrats of America payable to the _____ chapter.	
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I authorize the Social Democrats of America to debit my card number in the amount of \$ _____	
Number: _____ Expiration Date ____ / ____	
SWIFT Transfer	
Alaska USA does not have a SWIFT code. The sender must instruct their foreign institution to send the funds through their United States correspondent with ABA Routing Number 325272021, Alaska USA Federal Credit Union, Anchorage, AK to Social Democrats of America Incorporated, Account # <To Be Determined>	
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Cash Payment	
Certificate of Payment	To be completed by the Branch Treasurer
Amount paid to the branch treasurer today \$ _____	Amount of the contribution in \$ _____
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The declaration of principles

The Social Democrats of America Party has its roots in the tradition of humanism and in the philosophy of the Enlightenment. It embraces the values of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity proclaimed by the American and French Revolutions. It was born from the encounter between a rich and diverse critical thought and the action of the workers' movement which, for two centuries, carried a challenge to the social organization shaped by capitalism and defended the project of a society of solidarity in which all members enjoy the same freedoms and rights.

It claims the memory of 1848, with the abolition of slavery, of the Commune, the heritage of the Republic, of its democratic work, and of its fight for secularism, the great social conquests of the Popular Front, of the Liberation, of May 68, May 81 and the left-wing governments that have followed since.

He participated in the great political and intellectual battles for freedom and justice, from the Dreyfus Affair to the abolition of the death penalty. He made the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights his own.

These ambitions are more relevant than ever. For socialists, the human being is a being endowed with reason, free, a social being who grows from his relationship with others, open to all potentialities. That is why the conditions in which he lives are essential. Building a new and better world, respecting the dignity of the human person and safeguarding the planet is the primary task of socialists, the one that motivates a renewed commitment to progress in the world.

Social Democracy or Socialism wants to be an explanation of the world, a pedagogy of action, a promise for the future. Socialism wants to be an explanation of the world, a pedagogy of action, a promise for the future for humanity. its nature is "to go to the ideal and to understand the real", to invent the future and to work in the present, to assume the tensions and the contradictions which result from it and make the human life.

I. Our fundamental purpose

art. 1

To be a socialist is not to be satisfied with the world as it is, it is to want to change society. The socialist idea is both a revolt against injustice and a fight for a better life. The goal of socialist action is the complete emancipation of the human person.



art. 2

Equality is at the heart of our ideal. This will only make sense through and for freedom. Equality and freedom are inseparable. To the injustices and the violence of the world, the socialist idea opposes a commitment for a free, just, united and fraternal humanity. It carries a universal message, as soon as it is a question of defending the fundamental rights of each and everyone. For socialists, these objectives can only be achieved through the spontaneous functioning of the economy and society. The permanent redistribution of resources and wealth is necessary to give reality to the equality of rights, to offer to each one the chances to lead his life, to reduce the differences in conditions and to fight against poverty.

art. 3

Sustainable development must allow us to meet the needs of the present, without compromising the future of new generations. The aims of Socialism fully reflect the desire to preserve our planet, which is currently threatened by the risks of climate change and the loss of biodiversity, to protect and renew natural resources and to promote the quality of the environment. This need calls for responses that do not privilege immediate profitability, but reconcile the general interest and individual interests. Aware of the close interaction between human activities and ecosystems, socialists consider the planet as one of their fundamental goals, along with the promotion of progress and the equitable satisfaction of needs.

art. 4

Progress, synonymous with the improvement of human living conditions, is a fundamental value for socialists. They believe that the exercise of reason must be accessible to all, acceptable to all, applicable to all. They promote knowledge, research and culture.

They want to put scientific and technological advances at the service of people and the planet. These pose essential questions for the future of humanity. Socialists defend the precautionary principle which allows collective choices to be made through democratic arbitration and subordinates the acceptability of risks, inseparable from the development of science, the usefulness of innovations and the legitimacy of their uses.

Economic and social progress can no longer be assessed solely on the basis of the growth of market production, but must be assessed using indicators that reflect the actual quality of people's living and working conditions.



art. 5

Democracy is both an end and a means. It embodies a universal value and struggle. It conditions the very nature of socialist action. It cannot be reduced to a method. To be socialist is to think that women and men are people who decide to act together can influence the evolution of their lives, their society and the world. Our socialism is a conception and practice of citizenship in all fields and in all its forms. Political democracy and social democracy, representative democracy and participatory democracy form a whole to allow for collective deliberation and decision.

II. Our objectives for the 21th century

art. 6

The socialists carry a historical criticism of capitalism, creator of inequalities, factor of crises, and degradation of ecological balances, which remains relevant in the age of globalization dominated by financial capitalism. The socialists are partisans of a social and ecological market economy, a market economy regulated by the public power, as well as by the social partners which has for finality the satisfaction of the essential social needs. The system desired by socialists is a mixed economy, combining a dynamic private sector, an efficient public sector, quality public services accessible to all, a third sector of social and solidarity economy.

Socialists affirm that certain goods and services should not be subject to the operation of the market when they concern essential rights. They make the creation and redistribution of wealth a major issue of political action.

art. 7

Socialists defend a new development model, on a global scale, which combines growth, innovation, the ecological imperative, job creation and social protection.

Socialists are concerned not only with the quantity of wealth produced and its distribution, but also with the way it is produced and the content of production.

Socialists are working to ensure that economic growth and wealth generation are achieved by reducing the drain on non-renewable resources and by strengthening social cohesion.

art. 8

Human work is an issue and a fundamental right; it is an individual and collective means of integration, recognition and emancipation. Socialists refuse and fight against a dual society where some earn their income from employment and others are locked into assistance or



exclusion. They defend the principle of a society that gives everyone the means to live in dignity and fight against life's handicaps. The quality of employment is a fundamental objective which implies fair remuneration, guaranteed and respected rights, access to lifelong learning that promotes professional and social advancement, a right to health at work. Work must go hand in hand with a way of life that gives free time, access to culture and sport, offering everyone the possibility to build their own life and participate in public life, and gives full scope to the non-profit sector.

art. 9

An equally important task is to update what is the proper contribution of Socialism in the last century, the social state, which allows collective responses to satisfy individual needs in their diversity. This state privileges first of all productive investment to the detriment of rent and speculation. It must be a state that invests and emancipates by promoting education, research, innovation and culture. It provides protection against social risks. It is based on an assumed redistribution and the implementation of a progressive tax system. It must guarantee the security of people and property for all, without which there can be no real freedom. Regulation is one of the major roles of the state in reconciling the market economy, democracy and social cohesion and territorial.

art. 10

Fighting for peace, collective security, co-development corresponds to the internationalist vocation of socialists. This is our horizon for the century that is beginning. The struggle for a peaceful international community is inseparable from the defense of human rights and the struggle for social justice. It also requires the recognition of the interests of states and peoples, and working to identify common interests in order to build a balanced, just and secure world. It also demands a double effort to strengthen, reform and democratize international institutions. Finally, it requires solidarity in the management of global public goods such as climate, water and bio-diversity. This is why we need the strengthening of the United Nations, and the weight of the United States and its determination.

art. 11

The socialists' will is to contribute to make the United States an open country, respected in the world, working for peace, human rights and sustainable development. The United States is, by virtue of its history, both singular and universalist, it must be faithful to this double heritage. It must fight discrimination and protect the fundamental rights of immigrants.



III. Our Socialist Party

art. 12

The Social Democrats of America Party is a republican democratic party. It is organized in the service of citizen commitment. It embraces the values of the Republic, Liberty, Equality, Fraternity and Secularism. It advocates the separation of powers, guaranteeing a regime of political responsibility. He defends pluralism and independence of information in the media. For him, the Nation is not a juxtaposition of communities, but a contract between free citizens. It respects the rights of all those who live on its soil, and ensures that everyone fulfills their duties towards it. The Social Democrats of America Party aims to encourage everyone to adhere to the values of the Republic.

art. 13

The Social Democrats of America Party is a secular party. It defends the separation of church and state and the secular character of the public school. It watches over the freedom of conscience. Secularism is more than a principle of tolerance, it is a fight against all fundamentalisms, and all sectarianisms. It intends to promote and organize a common space, respecting religions, as long as they are exercised within the framework of the law and are not an obstacle to individual and collective freedoms. Secularism is a condition of our living together in the Republic.

art. 14

The Social Democrats of America Party is a reformist party. It intends to exercise the responsibilities of government, at all levels, in order to change society. It carries a project of radical social transformation. It knows that this transformation cannot be decreed, that it results from a strong collective will assumed in time, taking into account the ideal, the realities and the history. Social Democrats of America Party wants to contribute to change life with society and by society, by law and contract. It never considers the power relations of a moment as fixed or unsurpassable. It intends to fight against all social determinisms, source of injustices and inequality.

art. 15

The Social Democrats of America Party is feminist. It acts in favor of the emancipation of women. It works for equality between women and men, parity and the mixing of society. It guarantees women access to the fundamental rights that ensure control over their bodies. It defends the wage and professional equality between men and women.



art. 16

The Social Democrats of America Party is a humanist party. It fights against all forms of discrimination whatever the origins and causes. It condemns the commodification of the human body and of the living. It fights all attacks on human integrity and dignity because of sexual orientation.

art. 17

The Social Democrats of America Party is a decentralizing party. It places respect for the diversity of the territories at the heart of its values. It wants to combine the presence of a regulatory State, guarantor of republican equality and balance - including financial balance - between the territories, with a living and innovative local democracy.

art. 18

The Social Democrats of America Party is committed to the main principles of justice. It ensures the protection of both public and individual liberties.

Justice is a value and an institution. It guarantees the reality of everyone's rights. It must be accessible, independent and equal for all. Its mission is to

The purpose of the program is not only to punish, but also to contribute to prevention and to assist in rehabilitation and reintegration into society.

art. 19

The Social Democrats of America Party places culture and education at the center of its values. Culture allows both to gather and to liberate. Faced with the danger of standardization and commodification, culture, with the irreplaceable contribution of artists and creators, contributes to building a world based on diversity, dialogue and openness. Digital technologies can contribute to this, as long as the democratic framework and pluralistic rules are specified. Education and training are a major condition for the emancipation of each individual and the democratization of our society. They decide the future of our country. The Socialist Party must ensure that everyone has the same access to education and training.

art. 20

*** Removed as it pertains to Europe **



art. 21

The Social Democrats of America Party is an internationalist party. It condemns all oppression and exploitation and modern forms of slavery. It works for the respect of children's rights. It fully recognizes the right to asylum. It fights xenophobia, racism and anti-Semitism.

The Social Democrats of America Party campaigns for a just and respected international order, for cooperation between peoples, for a true development policy. It defends the role of the UN and international institutions. It wants the Socialist International to become a genuine progressive movement on a global scale.

art. 22

The Social Democrats of America Party is a popular party rooted in the world of work. It is the product of the political and social struggles conducted since the 19th century for more justice and of social equality. Open to society, it intends to express the general interest of the French people.

art. 23

The Social Democrats of America Party is a democratic party. It respects each of its members. It organizes a transparent and open political debate. It ensures the diversification of partisan and elective responsibilities at all levels. It makes parity between men and women a principle. It takes into account in a permanent dialogue the forces and movements of civil society, in particular trade unions, associations and non-governmental organizations, while respecting their independence.

The Social Democrats of America Party is a party that defends a political ethic in its militant commitment. It is based on a voluntary membership that demands that decisions, texts and rules, deliberated and adopted in common, be respected.

art. 24

The Social Democrats of America Party wants to bring together all the cultures of the left. It is not resigned to the divisions inherited from the past. It has always organized a free debate within its ranks and calls on all men and women who share its values to join this struggle.