

The Socialist Alternative

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With the decline and fall of the Soviet Union in the late 20th century, the wardens of corporate power proclaimed that there was no longer any alternative to living under the dictatorship of world capitalism administered by liberal democratic states and their proxy international organizations.

Fortunately for the working people of the nation and the world, the theory and practice of socialism offers a viable alternative to the tyranny of capitalist domination.

The socialist alternative, however, can only work if we are willing to confront the juggernaut of neoliberal globalization and its dire consequences for the environment and the people of the world.

Neoliberal Globalization: the Highest Stage of Capitalism

Since the end of World War II, global capitalism, spearheaded by US financial interests and backed by the most lethal military force that has ever been assembled, has consolidated its power over the world economy. In the past 30 years, especially, transnational corporations have tightened their control over national governments and international institutions. The imposition of free trade policies and the increasing privatization of social services have facilitated the accumulation of fabulous wealth for the owners of capital at the expense of working people and the environment worldwide. Neoliberal globalization, the highest stage of capitalism, now dominates every major sector of the world economy.

The social and environmental costs of neoliberal globalization are prohibitive. The global megatrends of rising inequality and absolute poverty, political instability, and global climate change--all compounded and accelerated by neoliberal globalization--are adversely affecting the lives and threatening the future of every inhabitant of the nation and the world.

In view of these megatrends and the current global economic crisis, the conclusion that neoliberal globalization does not serve the interests of the vast majority of the people on the planet and is both economically and environmentally unsustainable, is self-evident.

Clearly a revolution is in order--it is time to place the socialist alternative on the national and world agenda.

History offers harsh lessons. The political violence of the 20th century, which resulted in an estimated 200 million deaths and untold economic and environmental destruction, cautions us to work for socialism in the 21st century with every means at our disposal except violence.

Facing the awful power and willingness of capitalism to coerce and corrupt, we must find ways to make soft power prevail.

A point-by-point comparison of the diametrically opposed principles and practices of socialism versus those of capitalism is the best preparation for the contest at hand.

Socialism v. Capitalism

Matrix 1: Socialism v. Capitalism: Principles and Practices		
Issues	Socialism	Capitalism
	Civil Affairs	
Government	Promote the principles of liberty, unity, and social justice for all citizens	Preserve and increase the wealth and privileges of the owners of capital and their allies
The economy	Produce the goods and services necessary to support society at a sustainable level and provide an equitable distribution of wealth	Maximize the accumulation of capital without regard to the social, economic, or environmental consequences of production
Law enforcement and criminal justice	Guarantee public safety and ensure the equal administration of justice	Protect the owners of capital and other privileged social classes and suppress marginalized groups
Health services	Guarantee health care for all citizens	Sell like any other service or commodity
Education	Provide free public education through college	Sell like any other service or commodity

Welfare and social security	Guarantee a decent standard of living for all citizens	Privatize all social services including retirement and disability pensions in order to maximize capital accumulation
Immigration	Institute immigration policy that respects human rights and offers legal protections	Import cheap labor from poor countries (e.g. proposed guest worker programs)
Natural resources and environmental regulations	Socialize and conserve natural resources. Implement and enforce environmental regulations to protect the health of the environment and guarantee sustainable economic development	Privatize and consume all available natural resources for the accumulation of capital. Avoid environmental regulations as obstacles to profit maximization
Science and technology	Dedicate to the betterment of all citizens	Utilize in the service of the accumulation of capital
Foreign Affairs		
Trade	Establish fair trade practices with other nations	Maximize the accumulation of capital through inequitable trade agreements and practices under the banner of "free trade"
Diplomacy	Conduct foreign affairs in a spirit of internationalism that respects the sovereignty and right of self-determination of all people and nations	Expand the economic power of capitalism through gunboat diplomacy and military blackmail
Military	Provide for the defense of the nation	Secure corporate economic interests worldwide

Matrix 1 illustrates the interconnection between political principles and social practices and reveals how political principles determine social action in human affairs. The **vertical dimension** of matrix 1 indicates how social actions flow from the principles that have been adopted to govern a community. The **horizontal dimension** allows us to compare the consequences of the opposing principles of socialism and capitalism in action. The division of

issues between civil affairs and foreign affairs is strictly organizational and does not imply a clear-cut separation between the two categories of issues.

The issue of natural resources and environmental regulations offers a good example of the interconnection between principles and practices. Socialists realize that the unsustainable use of natural resources will inevitably lead to shortages. The resulting competition for scarce resources will undermine unity and social justice and therefore legal restraints on resource utilization are warranted. The fact that irreparable environmental damage will compound the problem is axiomatic. Capitalists, on the other hand, are focused on the bottom line and unconcerned about the social outcomes or the long range impact of their economic activities on the health of the planet.

The issue of the use of military force offers another clear contrast between the principles and practices of socialism versus capitalism. In general, socialists oppose the use of violence in settling conflict, but recognize the distinction between just and unjust wars. In line with the principle of liberty, wars of national liberation are considered just wars. The people of Vietnam were fighting a just war when they resisted the occupation of their country by the armies of China, France, Japan, France again, and, finally, the USA. Capitalist wars are based on the principle of *realpolitik* which maintains that a country is entitled to whatever it can take and hold. The US oil war in Iraq is a quintessential capitalist war. Such criminal aggression will occur as long as the principles of capitalism shape US foreign policy.

A careful study of the interconnection between principles and practices illustrated in matrix 1 explains the battle for the hearts and minds of people in the modern world--if a

population can be enticed or compelled to embrace a particular set of principles, they can be counted on to support social actions, including extreme measures like war, that follow those principles.

Combating Globalization

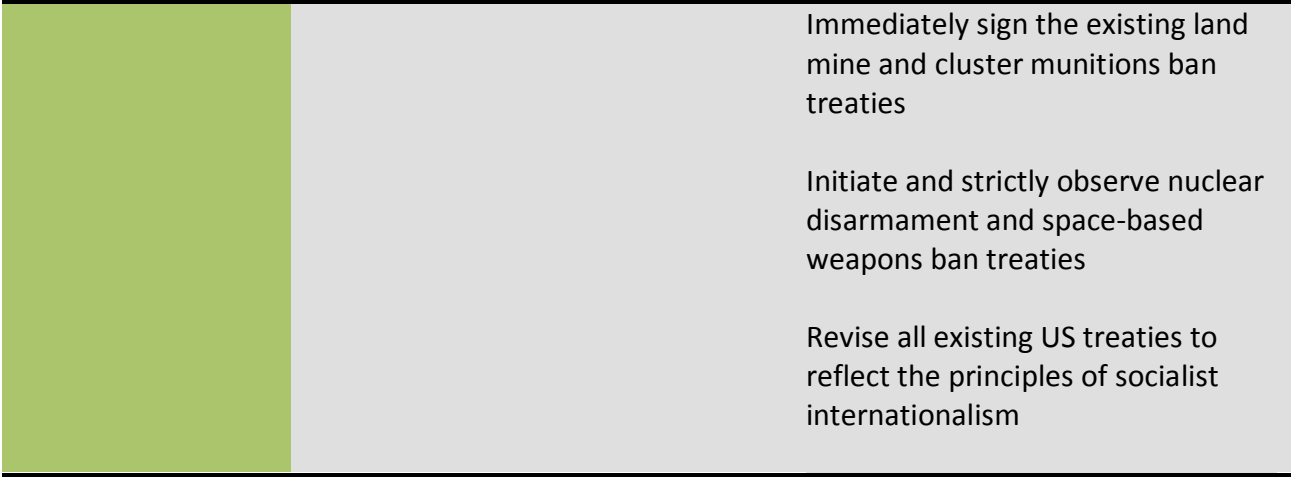
These are dangerous times. The global megatrends of the modern world indicate that we are rapidly approaching a point of no return on many fronts. The current worldwide economic crisis has the potential to elevate inequality to even greater heights and is pushing governments to sacrifice more of the environment and resort to military actions to bolster their shaky regimes.

The ideological battle lines of the modern world are becoming increasingly clear. The key to combating globalization lies in the contest between the reign of capitalism which is based on privilege and domination versus socialist democracy based on the principles of liberty, unity, and social justice. The question before us is what can be done to move the world towards democracy and socialism?

The socialist alternative offers a coherent strategy for action on both the national and international levels.

Matrix 2: Socialist Initiatives to Combat Neoliberal Globalization

Global Megatrend	National	International
Increasing globalization	End tax breaks, subsidies, and government underwriting for all offshore business operations	Renegotiate all US trade agreements (including NAFTA) as fair trade agreements
Rising inequality	Strictly regulate all US financial markets and prohibit offshore banking for US corporations End all privatization schemes and guarantee social services to all US citizens	Establish democratic control of international financial markets Replace the neo-liberal free trade paradigm with fair trade practices
Climate change	Establish constitutional human rights, including healthcare and education, for all US citizens Adopt constitutional labor rights for all US workers Adopt aggressive environmental protection and remediation policies	Require international human rights protection in all international treaties Require international labor rights protection in all trade agreements Participate in all international environmental protection initiatives and treaties
Increasing militarization	Adopt a sustainable US energy policy to combat climate change Stop the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan now and tax the corporations that profited in order to pay war reparations	Enlist the member nations of the "coalition of the willing" in the reconstruction of Iraq and Afghanistan
	Reduce the size of the US military and restrict operations to strictly defensive functions. Prohibit all covert military operations	Close all US military forward strike bases and remediate all environmental damage caused by offshore US military operations (e.g. Okinawa and South Korea)
	Concentrate military operations in US territorial waters and airspace	Restrict offshore US military operations to international waters and airspace



Immediately sign the existing land mine and cluster munitions ban treaties

Initiate and strictly observe nuclear disarmament and space-based weapons ban treaties

Revise all existing US treaties to reflect the principles of socialist internationalism

All politics are local. The socialist alternative offers the opportunity for a wide variety of actions on local and state issues, most of them directly related to neoliberal globalization and privatization. Local initiatives include: ending local and state tax breaks and subsidies for corporations, joining and supporting local unions and community organizations, renovating abandoned cities, revitalizing public education, expanding public health care facilities, rebuilding public infrastructure, utilizing closed military bases for civic purposes, implementing preventative crime programs, developing alternatives to incarceration, supporting local environmental initiatives, adopting living wage standards--opportunities on the local level are virtually unlimited.

The future of the USA and the world will be determined by the political system that triumphs in the immediate future--either capitalism attended by the megatrends of increasing

globalization, rising inequality, climate change, and rampant militarization will follow its disastrous course, or a sustainable future for the people of the nation and the world governed by the principles of socialism will be established.

The choice is ours.

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