Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) is the largest socialist organization in the United States. We believe that the economy and society should be run democratically to meet the needs of the many, not the few.

A better world is possible. ***Join us!***

How to Get Involved:

1. Become a DSA member at **dsausa.org/join**
2. Come to our actions and meetings
3. Submit your work at **quadcitiesdsa.org/worker-submission**

Disclaimer: The views in this publication are not necessarily representative of QCDSA's democratically-decided positions (except where noted), but represent the diversity of thought of our membership.

The Quad-City Worker



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A World to Win

by QCDSA Steering Committee

This July, our Chapter reached 150 members and continues to grow! This follows the extremely exciting news that nationally, The Democratic Socialists of America has reached a total of 120,000 members, surpassing the peak of Eugene Debs' Socialist Party of America in 1912!

With this exciting news in mind, I want to reflect on what our comrades from over 100 years ago were able to help achieve with a similar number of members:

- Socialist Party Leader Eugene Debs captured 913,644 votes in the 1920 presidential election from a federal prison cell.
- Over 1,000 Socialist candidates were elected to office between 1900 and 1924.
- Helped win the 40-hour workweek alongside trade unions & the IWW. The strikes and activism forced industries to adopt a 40-hour workweek, won safer workplaces and the weekend!
- Socialists put massive political pressure on FDR that led to the "New Deal," which won us Social Security & greater pension guarantees.
- Socialists, alongside the IWW and other trade unions, actively fought for equal suffrage, desegregation, immigrant rights, and anti-lynching campaigns decades before these issues were mainstream struggles.

Now this is just a summary and a snapshot; there were many wins and losses for us back then, just like now. But the reason I wanted to bring these specific wins up is because they are all directly under attack right now, 100 years after we fought and died for these wins!

The current administration is openly discussing banning or removing Socialists from office across the nation and even threatening deporting "communist" agitators.

They are eroding and attacking universal suffrage with the "Save America" act, which will also reimpose a poll tax along with tampering with free elections.

They are trying to ban or discredit unions, giving more power to the boss, which will inevitably lead to unsafe work environments, poor wages, the end of the 40-hour work week, and replacing jobs with AI.



Eclipse Hatred artwork by Roger Peet

The Quad-City Worker Launches Video Platform

QCDSA Communications and Political Education Committee

The Quad-City Worker is launching a brand new video platform, starting with a YouTube channel you can find at youtube.com/@qcworker.

This platform will be a new place for members to share a socialist perspective on the problems and opportunities that face the working class in our community.

We hope you will help us by submitting videos that describe relevant local news, explainers of our government's injustices, updates on the work the QCDSA is doing, and other things you hope will inform and mobilize.

YouTube Channel:

Submit your video or essay here:

The average person may want to know the why behind “radical” stances, but not the heart of why. The modern view of these political concepts echoed by commentators exists in black and white rather than in their shades of grey that a random debate-bro won’t really show. Knowing one or even two leaders and making the assumption that other related branches that fall within socialism must follow the same principles but ignoring the intricacies of different branches or the ideas that fuel them.

It makes sense that this is all happening right now. People on all sides are acclimating to new ideas, or as AOC put it, “woke 1”. As we awaken to this shift, post-movements like BLM, Me Too, and other social justice movements that finally brought politics to the forefront of everyone’s minds (and the headline of every newspaper and daytime talk show for the last 5 years). Every day, what was once considered socially or politically acceptable is changing, some saying it’s causing a culture war. I'd argue this change is nothing new. In fact, within this decade alone we've seen it many times.

We must acknowledge at the very least that within the vast lifetime of our political history, this back and forth has existed in perpetual flux, simultaneously both existing and non-existing. This creates a sort of paradox wherein the very nature of acknowledging political history itself becomes self-referential and recursive by its own narrative.

The transformative power of shift theory, when viewed through the lens of how popularized being fished into politics clearly demonstrates that when boiled down to its fundamentals, it depends on the observer's willingness to embrace these inherent contradictions into a to be or not to be.

Edward Hoopers is a great example. His experience of grinding his way from The New York Edison Co. to a prominent illustrator for the commercial industry shows propaganda still works by giving some sense of national pride and nostalgia for a time that has never truly existed and one he has never lived.



Not to mention their white nationalist agenda, which, with the help of ICE, has murdered immigrants & Americans on the streets and in concentration camps they control.

As socialists, we recognize that we can and WILL win a better world; we started the project roughly 100 years ago and won massively! We know workers deserve more; that’s why we won't stop fighting for it! With our numbers growing both locally and nationally, let’s not just win what we have lost; let's fight to win a free and fair society set up for the workers and not the capitalist class!

Here in the Quad Cities area, we have seen massive success with our Trans Sanctuary campaign; we can win bodily anonymity and reproductive rights here! We have seen massive success with our Mutual Aid work, we help each other since we know the capitalist class won't. We can end homelessness and fair housing here! Through our work in Labor, we have fought to help unions locally and have helped workers start unions at their workplaces. We can win better working conditions and Unions for all here!

In solidarity,
Quad Cities DSA Steering Committee
https://quadcitiesdsa.org/join/

Why Democratic Socialism

by Mark B

How does one arrive at a position where the philosophy of democratic-socialism makes sense? Oppression is a likely answer. Living through the same old song and dance of neoliberal capitalism that slowly extracts every bit of self-esteem from your soul, dollar from your pocket, and enlists fear as a governance strategy may help one arrive at the door of democratic socialism.

If you have grown up in a conservative household and family, you may have watched your family struggle against the system they supported. How many parents have had to refinance the mortgage or file for bankruptcy to manage medical debt? Economic systems that define your value by debt and earnings potential do not promote freedom. They promote the exploitation of the worker. This is economic oppression at the most basic right of human dignity (medical care.)

When you grow up in a public school system that embraces capitalist ideals over social ideals one may become motivated to embrace democratic socialism. Standardized tests, No Children Left Behind, Every Student Succeeds Act, School Vouchers, and the belief that children are a commodity to be measured by a test score is capitalistic, rather than social and supportive. Children are not motivated by test outcomes. They have the freedom to resist these measures without accountability. Children are motivated by relationships with family, friends, and educators. Learning is motivated by curiosity, encouragement, and love. A child is not motivated by 1/1 technology initiatives or a simplified curriculum. Simply put, a child is not a test score. Children deserve a system that supports their needs. This definitely motivates one to embrace the principles of democratic socialism. Education is a social enterprise, not a capitalist one.

When one is working as a professional musician that has played fundraisers for both political parties, they hear and see the real person, not the publicly portrayed servant on television. When they see and hear (first hand) the bias and disrespect towards teachers, public officials of the opposing parties, LGBTQ peoples, and the open alliances with religious nationalism, it tends to make one nauseous. This definitely helps one embrace the principles of democratic socialism.

When one has seen the oppression of minorities, immigrants, and the poor through systematic procedures at the state and federal levels, it is easy to embrace the principles of democratic socialism. The federal citizenship test is designed to make an immigrant struggle or fail. Yet, many citizens would fail this test. Requiring online documentation for assistance when one cannot afford a computer or cell phone with multiple applications is a form of economic oppression. When you have seen racial, gender, or sexual discrimination throughout one's life how can you sit idly by without embracing democratic socialism?

If you are tired of being treated like a commodity. If you are tired of losing your dignity. If you are sick of the economic, racial, sex, or gender discrimination/oppression. Please think about joining or exploring democratic socialism. We serve the workers.

Become a DSA member at dsausa.org/join today!



The program must be the cornerstone of our organizing. Not only does this mean our candidates and elected officials should publicly fight for its principles, but our non-electoral work must tightly integrate its vision. For example, QCDSA is fighting for trans and abortion rights through its campaign Trans Sanctuary Davenport. In deep discussions with the broader working class, be it through canvassing or speaking at city council meetings, we should integrate DSA's programmatic goals into our rhetoric. The program talks about fighting for queer liberation, feminism, and universal healthcare - all things incredibly relevant to the campaign's demands - but we must tie our fight for bodily autonomy into broader class concerns about labor struggles, housing justice, and working-class democracy.

All this leads to the concept of programmatic unity: as DSA members we come from different backgrounds, experiences, and ideologies, but we can all be united by the program. Our tactics and theory may differ, but if we agree to fight for the program's principles and if we empower members to democratically modify the program, we create a durable socialist party. We have a solid answer to the question "what does DSA want?"; rather than waiting for someone to ask us that question, we must confidently proclaim our goals and vision every chance we get, through our words and deeds.



The popification of politics: The reality that all trends, even political ones are cyclical

by Taylea M

When I say the 'popification' of politics, I'm referring to the actions taken by many, generally the otherwise politically uninvolved, to seek out information echoed by commentators or streamers full of buzzwords, talking points, ideas all in some effort to understand the political; but not engaging with theory in any context or the realities behind them.

Regardless of where you fall on the political spectrum, this phenomenon is not reserved to 'the other side.' It's common to meet someone when talking politics, claiming to be post-[insert opposing party]. The underlying factor that tends to thread these stories together is the inability for these commentators to differentiate or substantiate their politics in action. Anyone can read theory and parrot ideas they have heard online without instigating real-world change. Chucking $5 to the local group they agree with when reasonably they would be able to do more.

Steinbeck writes, "I call whatever happens in the Place 'taking stock.' Some others might call it prayer, and maybe it would be the same thing. I don't believe it's thought. If I wanted to make a picture of it for myself, it would be a wet sheet turning and flapping in a lovely wind and drying and sweetening the white. What happens is right for me, whether or not it is good."

The poetic and meditative prose is spiritual and thought-provoking. Like all of Steinbeck's works, I am left with goosebumps after the read and automatically want to restart from page 1. So thank you, John, for allowing us readers to "take stock" of our relationship with society and capital with this brilliant novel.

Happy reading!



For Programmatic Unity

by Andrew D

Last month DSA released its new program, *Workers Deserve More*. Already the Democratic Party consultant class and the right-wing media are losing their minds over its contents. The backlash only serves to trumpet our program and its goals to the working class: indeed, it is good when our enemies attack us, because that means we are effective.

Our party program illustrates our goals and vision for a better world. Everyone should read it at program.dsausa.org, but in brief, the program describes the long-term horizon of our socialist vision along with policies we want to carry out in the short term, the latter of which are broken down into three categories: Thriving Working Class Communities, Working-Class Foreign Policy, and Working-Class Democracy. These short-term goals are the "minimum" of our program, that when achieved leads to the "maximum" demand: a democratic socialist republic.

A program is just words on a paper, though, if they are not represented in the work of the party, its members, and its candidates. So how should we use the program? We should educate every member on the program, using this as the foundation for our theory of change, and teach them to talk to non-members about DSA. More than simply reciting its policies, members should be ready to engage in dialogue with fellow workers: for example, asking people "If you had another day off of work each week, what would you do?" to educate about the program's demand for a 32-hour workweek. We should use the program as our means of linking local conditions to structural concerns: when a mass layoff occurs, we should tie that into the demand for public ownership of the largest corporations.

The Price of Fitting In: What "Belonging" Actually Costs

by Darin D

Over the last several years, while researching disability and higher education, I kept running into the same pattern: belonging was never unconditional. Disabled people were welcomed only as long as they remained easy to accommodate. Belonging, in most systems we move through, isn't something that is given but something you have to keep earning, over and over, by proving you're not too much trouble.

Institutions are built around assumptions about who the "normal" person is: someone who can walk quickly between buildings, sit through long meetings, and complete standard forms. No one decides to exclude people who don't fit that mold, but the exclusion is baked into the design and invisible until you're the one who doesn't match up.

And once you don't match the mold, the burden flips to you. You document your need, then document it again next year, because approval is never permanent. You explain yourself to a new person every time the old one leaves. You learn which offices or departments help and which stall you, which words make a request sound "reasonable" and which get you labeled difficult. None of it is written down. You learn it the way you learn a pothole exists after your car has already been damaged by it.

After all that, belonging isn't unconditional. It's granted to whoever can perform low-maintenance. One person I interviewed stated she was treated as a "desirable disabled person" because she lived alone, worked, drove herself around, and didn't require much from anyone. The institution did not reject disability, but it did prefer the version of disability that cost it the least.

What looks like disability policy is really a broader way of organizing society. Institutions reward people who require the fewest resources and shift the cost of navigating bureaucracy onto everyone else. Disabled people simply encounter that logic more often and more intensely. The same logic that makes a disabled student justify their existence makes a worker prove they're still "worth" employing, makes anyone on public assistance document poverty in triplicate, and has multiple legal barriers to collect unemployment insurance. The performance, the hours spent on paperwork and appeals, is uncompensated labor. The institution depends on it, because if disabled people stopped, the gaps in the system would become impossible to hide.

Organizing exists to solve this kind of problem that individual accommodation never will. Win someone a single accommodation, and the underlying design stays untouched, so the next person fights the same fight from zero. Conditional belonging asks us to stop treating each case as isolated and start targeting the pattern itself: buildings, offices, benefits systems built for the actual range of human need from the start, not for an ingrained default with disabled people bolted on after.

Socialists have a word for the alternative: solidarity. It rejects conditional belonging altogether. It doesn't ask what you've done to earn your place or whether accommodating you is efficient. It starts from the understanding that your place was never contingent to begin with.



Flock, or: killing the cop in your head

by Meagan R

I used to love going where I wasn't supposed to be.
The street at 1 AM
Where the asphalt was warm on my back and the moon looked so much brighter than from the safety of the yard
An unfinished attic
With books that have been out of print for decades and will never be sold again. They were moldy and beautiful
A forgotten closet
Might as well be Narnia. I would sit and get lost in my fantasies. A lifetime passes, but only on the inside.
A tiny island with a collapsed bridge
We climbed over the fence and beat our way through the overgrown trails
Now I'm attached to a car that I'm scared to park anywhere without permission
I leave parks at dusk
I walk and someone shouts
And my body tenses
I look over my shoulder, apologies already spilling from lips
When did this eye open, fixing itself to my every move?
Certainly long before there was one fixed on every corner
I must kill the first
If we're to kill the other



Steinbeck's "The Winter of Our Discontent"

by Clayton C

I don't have a good answer for why I've waited this long to read this novel, "The Winter of Our Discontent," by John Steinbeck. I'm glad I waited because it's always nice to receive priceless new gifts that you will enjoy for the rest of your life. Honestly, the novels of John Steinbeck have become like basic and essential organs of my body, if any of them were removed from my life, I don't think I would be able to function.

In this story Steinbeck pressures readers to consider what the true meaning of success is while measuring if the ends truly justify the means. He presents the challenge of considering the internal cost of moral destruction as a result of humanity's thirst for wealth and prestige.

He writes, "I don't know for sure how other people are inside—all different and all alike at the same time. I can only guess. But I do know how I will squirm and wriggle to avoid a hurtful truth and, when finally there is no choice, will put it off, hoping it will go away. Do other people say primly, "I'll think about that tomorrow when I am rested," and then draw on a hoped-for future or an edited past like a child playing with violence against the inevitability of bedtime?"

Although the protagonist, Ethan, is hyperaware of the blatant corruption that consumes his community, he wrestles with the temptations of becoming another gear in the machine in order to gain respect from and provide for his family. He recognizes and is disgusted by the world he is trapped in and also holds bitterness because of the loss of his family's generational wealth and the embarrassment it creates for his children.

Steinbeck writes, "There is no doubt that business is a kind of war. Why not, then, make it all-out war in pursuit of peace? Mr. Baker and his friends did not shoot my father, but they advised him and when his structure collapsed they inherited. And isn't that a kind of murder? Have any of the great fortunes we admire been put together without ruthlessness? I can't think of any. And if I should put the rules aside for a time, I knew I would wear scars but would they be worse than the scars of failure I was wearing? To be alive at all is to have scars."

Ethan becomes outraged not only at his community but also at his children when he recognizes their open willingness to let go of ethical judgment in exchange for material gain. He becomes even more outraged when he also recognizes his own skin in the game.