

Imagine: living in a socialist USA

"We go forward to preserve the air and land and water and sky and all the beasts that crawl and fly. We go forward to safeguard the right to speak and write, to join, to learn, to rest, safe at home, to be secure, fed, healthy, sheltered, loved and loving, to be at peace with our identity."

Lynne Stewart



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Editors: Frances Goldin, Debby Smith, Michael Steven Smith

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Debby Smith and Michael Steven Smith; New York, 2012

“This book was Frances Goldin’s idea. She said to us, “I’m eighty-eight years old. I want to do two things before I die: get Mumia Abu-Jamal out of prison and edit a book about what America might be like if it were socialist.”

It is one thing to criticize what *is* – that’s easy. But to imagine what *might be* is not. Even Karl Marx didn’t attempt it. But things have changed since the mid-nineteenth century – for better and for worse.

We certainly know where things are heading. Rosa Luxemburg proposed two stark choices just after the imperialist slaughter that was World War I: socialism or barbarism. Given the catastrophe of climate change, the ongoing economic upheaval, and the risk of nuclear annihilation, it’ll be barbarism – if we’re lucky.

[...] The book is divided into three parts. The first is an indictment of American capitalism. The second part is intended to inspire hope: to imagine what life in America would be like if capitalism were overthrown. It covers multiple aspects of the new world: art, health care, housing, food, emotional life, sexuality, racism, criminal justice, poverty, immigration, religion, drugs, education, science and technology, women, ecology, and the democratic organization of public owned economy. The third part discusses how to get from where we are to where we want to be.

[...] There is plenty of wisdom in this book: in its authors’ understanding of capitalism and its depredations; in their proposals for how to replace it, and with what – in their vision of what might be. Read it and make the most of it.”



Frances Goldin

“[...] The ignorance about what socialism really is and how it could be realized here in our own country is appalling. The mainstream media and the powers that be have made the word “socialism” frightening, foreign, unpatriotic, and menacing. It threatens their ill-gotten gains, so the idea of workers sharing in the wealth that their sweat and toil has generated to be labeled “un-American.” “Sharing the wealth” scares the “1 percent” and provokes them to quash, arrest, and jail those – like the members of the Occupy movement – who dare to challenge their power.

But a better world is possible, and if we are to win any measure of justice in our country, we must all take responsibility for working to it. As the drums beat for more wars, there is an alternative: give the power back to the working people – or risk turning into a barbaric, fascist state. [...]

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