

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. [...]

CONTENTS	
Preface by Frances Goldin	xi
Introduction by Debby Smith and Michael Steven Smith	xiii
Section 1: What's wrong with capitalism?	
1. Capitalism: The real enemy by Paul Street	3
Section 2: Imagine socialism	
2. The future will be ecosocialist, because without ecosocialism, there will be no future by Joel Kovel	25
3. A democratically run economy can replace the oligarchy by Ron Reosti	33
4. The shape of a post-capitalist future by Rick Wolff	43
5. Law in a socialist USA by Michael Steven Smith	53
6. Alternatives to the present system of capitalist injustice by Mumia Abu-Jamal and Angela Davis	59
7. Socialism is the highest expression of human rights by Ajamu Baraka	71
8. Personal, emotional, and sexual life without capitalism by Harriet Fraad and Tess Fraad-Wolff	77
9. A woman's working day in a socialist USA by Renate Bridenthal	85

10. Dignity, respect, equality, love By Blanche Wiesen Cock	89
11. How queer life might be different in a socialist USA by Leslie Cagan and Melanie Kaye/Kantrowitz	99
12. Drugs in a society where people care about each other by Steven Wishnia	105
13. Immigration: immigrant workers point the way to a better world by Juan Gonzalez	113
14. Welfare in a new society: an end to international impoverishment and degradation by Frances Fox Piven	125
15. Food for all: creating a socially sustainable food system by Arun Gupta	135
16. The right to housing by Tom Angotti	147
17. Socialized medicine means everyone gets care, regardless of whether they have money by Dave Lindorff	155
18. Teach freedom by William Ayers	161
19. Imagining art after capitalism by Mat Callahan	171
20. Prometheus completely unbound: what science and technology could accomplish in a socialist America by Clifford D. Conner	179
21. First-class news: the media in a socialist USA by Fred Jerome	189

Section 3: Getting there: how to make a socialist America	
22. Where does Occupy Wall Street go from here? A proposal by Michael Moore	199
23. What I would do as attorney general by Michael Ratner	205
24. We be reading Marx where we from: socialism and the black freedom struggle by Kazembe Balagun	209
25. The working-class majority by Michael Zweig	219
26. How to achieve economic democracy in the United States by Clifford D. Conner	223
27. The capitalist way: from Chinese sweatshop to Detroit's decay by Dianne Feely	231
28. The third American revolution: how socialism can come to the United States by Paul Le Blanc	249
29. Imagine the angles of bread by Martin Espada	263
30. Thanksgiving 2077: a short story by Terry Bisson	267
31. You are the light of the world: speech via mic check at Occupy Wall Street by Joel Kovel	277
Contributors' biographies	283
Index	295