

Socialism in the Age of Trump?

Presented by: *Al Lindemann*

Three Tuesdays
November 7, 14, & 21, 2017
9:30 am - 12:00 pm

Grace Gathering
400 Puento Drive, Santa Barbara

Is there a socialist future for the United States?

It's an old question, and most informed observers have answered it with a confident No. But that No has weakened recently, when a self-described democratic socialist, in an electoral season of many surprises and upsets, drew large and enthusiastic audiences.

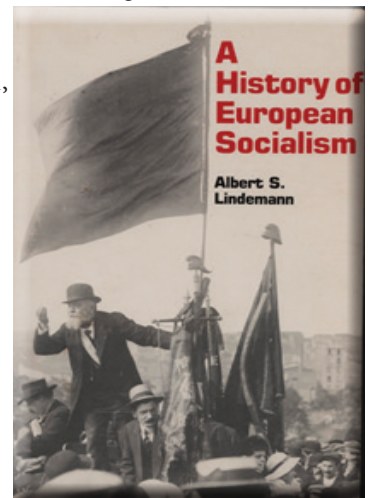
But what do Sanders's admirers understand by socialism? His proposals seem closer to New Deal liberalism than to socialism, though over the years both terms have been twisted into shapes very different from their original meaning. Many Republican leaders have described the New Deal as socialistic; recently columnist Michael Reagan denounced Obamacare as a form of "socialist medicine." However, "that's socialism!" is no longer considered by many to be such a crippling or outrageous charge.

Nonetheless, there has been little serious discussion of socialism recently in America's popular media. We have never been an ideologically inclined nation, and most Americans, especially the young, know little about socialism.

The problem is more than ignorance, since the tenets of socialism are elusive, perhaps contradictory in tendency. Similarly, the history of socialism is dizzying in its ambiguities; the lessons that history allegedly offers are often tendentious and simplistic.

Even within the most thoroughly discredited form of socialism, that is Stalinist Communism, the contradictions and paradoxes are numerous. Quite aside from the horrors committed in the name of Communism, what do we now understand by the term? Present-day China, North Korea, Vietnam, or Cuba offer striking differences. More democratic forms of socialism have also assumed many shapes in Europe and the rest of the world.

So the question "Socialism in the U.S. After Trump?" must first address "which socialism"? May we speak of some very basic socialist ideals? Is there a modernized form of those ideals that might fit for the United States? Does the history of socialism offer insights into what that form might be? In a related way, can we identify broad developments (technological, economic, social, cultural) that favor socialism — or, on the contrary, do those developments suggest that it has no real application or significant relevance for the future of our country?



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Enrollment Form: *Socialism* – Nov 7, 14, & 21, 2017

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Deadline for registration: October 31st

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Biography: *Al Lindemann* received his PhD from Harvard University. He began teaching at UCSB in 1966, after teaching for a year at Stanford, and is now professor emeritus of history. He was named “Distinguished Teacher of the Year, 1993–4” by the UCSB Academic Senate, among many other honors. He has written two books on socialism: *The Red Years: European Socialism vs. Bolshevism* (Univ. of California Press), and *A History of European Socialism* (Yale Univ. Press). He has written many articles and book reviews dealing with the topics of socialism and communism, and for several decades he taught a two-quarter upper-division course on the history of socialism at UCSB. He is also a popular VISTAS presenter.



Continued from page 1: A related question is “Will the Trump presidency actually enhance the prospects of a socialist direction for our country?” Assuming that “after Trump” does not mean “after the nuclear holocaust,” can we reasonably speculate that the forces of the left will be unified by their common detestation of what they consider to be an accidental president?.

VISTAS Calendar

Seminar/Event	Inclusive Dates	Time	Venue
Annual Picnic	Sunday, September 10	12:30 pm	Tuckers Grove
Documentary Film Club	3rd Thurs Monthly	2:00 pm	Maravilla Theater
Nonfiction Book Club	2nd Thurs Monthly	1:30 pm	Vista del Monte-Sierra Madre
The British Raj	Mon, Sept 18, 25, Oct 2 & 9	9:30 am	Grace Gathering
Art Presentations	Thurs, Sept 21, 28, & Oct 5	9:30 am	Valle Verde - Social Room
The Changing Arctic	Tues, Oct 17 & 24	9:30 am	Goleta Library
Mental Illness	Wed, Oct 18 & 25	9:30 am	Valle Verde - Social Room
Freedom Train	Tues, Oct 31 & Wed, Nov 1	1:00 pm	Grace Gathering
Socialism in the US	Tues, Nov 7, 14, 21	9:30 am	Grace Gathering
Wine in Culture	Mon, Nov 13, 20, 27	9:30 am	Valle Verde - Social Room
Climate Change Denial	Wed, Nov 29 & Dec 6	9:30 am	Museum of Natural History
Hamilton	Mon, Dec 4, 11, 18	9:30 am	TBA - Limited to 10