

SOCIALIZING U.S. SOCIETY

Political Economy & Social Movements - Winter 2007

Combined seminar workshop - 2/23/07

Workshop Overview

I. Panel, up to 10 min each	30 min
II. Post-panel Discussion	15 min
III. Workshop in 4 discussion groups	45 min
IV. Group Presentations, up to 10 min each	45 min
V. Debrief and Wrap-up	15 min

Workshop Details

I. PANEL

Pete:	Strategy Towards a Participatory Socialist Society
Zoltán:	Drawing from Community Experience
Tony:	Post-victory: The End of Class Struggle?

II. POST PANEL DISCUSSION

Responses, questions, comments, dialogue, ideas, alternate views, challenges, refutations, etc.

III. GROUPS DISCUSSING THE SOCIALIZATION OF SOCIETY

In the United States in the not too distant future the fight for social and economic justice has been largely successful. Across the country, people are seeking to define, sustain and continue to build a just economy and society. Your group is attempting to continue this movement to socialize society so that every member of society can contribute and thrive.

There are three key parts of this conversation we've identified (of course there are many others). These three elements are really simultaneous conversations what develop together, but we've pulled out these three threads so that different but complementary aspects of this idea could be covered. Keep in mind that each of the following conversations impacts the others. They aren't necessarily stages, but mutual.

One, develop your ideas of a good society. Include in your thinking not only economics, but also issues involving culture, environment, decision making and social relations including race and gender, family, community, international trade relations, the role of the state.

How is labor and production organized? Income? Innovation in society?

How do you ensure everyone has a house? food?

How do you ensure everyone has quality medical care, education, transportation?

How would this be organized and implemented?

How are the ongoing challenges of racism, patriarchy, oppression based on sexuality or gender expression, etc. to be fully confronted without taking away cultural aspects that various groups might want to retain?

How are problems recognized, understood, and overcome?

Drawing on this morning's discussions you might discuss the relative attractions of the systems discussed in Hahnel: Centrally planned communism, Market socialism, Social democracy, Libertarian socialism (Anarchism), Participatory socialism, etc. Using Hahnel and the Pop Ed workshop, you can discuss in your group which is closer to your own vision and experiences, and the group would define what type of economic system to pursue. But please don't get bogged down in ideological debates. This isn't so much about consciousness and ideology as about needs and interests.

You should fill in details of the type of society you have in mind and summarize it in 10 points.

Two, describe how the success mentioned above has happened.

What type of transition has occurred? How did the society move to the new system. What transition problems are being experienced? What made it happen gradual non-reformist reforms and/or sudden shifts?

What is there around us today that will have been built on to create the new more cooperative society? What kind of timeline is realistic? What obstacles were overcome?

At what geographic scales (local, regional, national, etc.) did this occur through the transition?

Finally and perhaps most importantly, how do you practically see winning over ordinary Americans to this economic system throughout the transition and as you build the new society? What is in it for them?

Be sure to pick a time keeper and 1 or 2 representatives.

IV. PRESENTATIONS

Each group 1-4 will present for up to 10 minutes. The groups will present their plan and their program. You should refer to and interact with Hahnel in your presentation. We'll have to be strict about time.

V. DEBRIEF

This is a chance to discuss together the overall workshop.

What did you learn from each other? What seems reasonable? What questions remain?

What are some strategies for getting to this place and ensuring this happens in a just and equitable way?

How does the thinking we've done today help you understand your actions today?