



Written by [Trevor Loudon](#) on August 5, 2019

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## Democratic Socialists of America: Communism for the New Millennium

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Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) has mounted a massive disinformation campaign to fool the American voting public.

Thousands of members are flocking to the rapidly growing organization. Many DSA members have also joined the Democratic Party, holding key positions in almost every state. Millions of voters have supported DSA candidates running as Democrats. Hundreds of DSA-supported candidates have been elected to county commissions, city councils, education boards, and state legislatures across the country. Two members, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (N.Y.) and Rashida Tlaib (Mich.), have penetrated Congress. DSA-driven policies — Medicare for All (socialized healthcare), the Green New Deal, National Popular Vote, \$15 minimum wage, illegal alien amnesty — are rapidly becoming Democratic Party policy. All this is possible because DSA has managed to convince the U.S. mainstream media and most of the public that they are harmless European socialists who don't want communism. They want America to be more like Sweden or Norway, not like the Soviet Union, China, or Cuba.

According to the DSA website:

Socialists have been among the harshest critics of authoritarian Communist states. Just because their bureaucratic elites called them “socialist” did not make it so; they also called their regimes “democratic.” Democratic socialists always opposed the ruling party-states of those societies, just as we oppose the ruling classes of capitalist societies. We applaud the democratic revolutions that have transformed the former Communist bloc.

So why does DSA openly support the communist Maduro regime in Venezuela? Why does DSA also work closely with several European Communist Parties, including those of France, Spain, Italy, Bulgaria, and





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Germany?

Why did DSA National Political Committee member David Green write in 2007:

What distinguishes socialists from other progressives is the theory of surplus value. According to Marx, the secret of surplus value is that workers are a source of more value than they receive in wages.... Surplus value is the measure of capital's exploitation of labor.... Our goal as socialists is to abolish private ownership of the means of production.

The answer is simple. DSA might talk a good game about being democratic and giving the people a voice, but it is essentially a communist organization, one that is fully committed to socialist revolution, including undoing the Constitution and the rights it protects and doing away with the free-enterprise system. It is also a willing component of the world revolutionary movement.

## Rejuvenating Socialism

Three years ago, DSA was an obscure, graying Marxist sect of about 6,000 members — only about 20 percent of whom were consistently active. DSA had some strength in academia, organized labor, churches, and locally in the Democratic Party, but its influence was way down from its 1980s heyday.

Today, off the back of the 2016 Bernie Sanders presidential campaign and the subsequent anti-Trump protest movement, DSA boasts nearly 60,000 mainly young activists, a string of election victories, a massive social-media presence, and more than 200 locals in all 50 states.

While DSA is effectively an umbrella group for nearly every variant of Marxist and anarchist tendency in America, the influence of Italian Communist Party theoretician Antonio Gramsci is most prominent.

Gramsci believed that Marx and Lenin got it wrong. Revolution would not come from an uprising by oppressed workers. Instead Gramsci believed that the workers had been brainwashed by “capitalism” and the church to accept the status quo. Therefore society had to be reconditioned into a socialist consciousness. The churches, media, government, education, art, culture, unions, and political parties would all have to be captured by communists in order to shape the consciousness of the people in a socialist direction. And that's what DSA has tried to accomplish.

DSA national director Maria Svart confirmed the organization's ongoing commitment to Gramscian philosophy when she told a gathering of European communist and socialists parties in Brussels, Belgium, in April 2019: “We have a very ‘Gramscian strategy’ of ... bringing an ideological challenge to this whole system.”

## DSA and Religion

As the late conservative journalist Andrew Breitbart liked to say, “Politics is downstream from culture.” Good Gramscians such as DSA understand that culture is downstream from religion.

So right from the start, Harrington's Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee (DSOC) and then DSA maintained a religious and socialism commission dedicated to spreading socialist doctrines through Christianity, Judaism, and, more recently, America's Islamic communities.

Many DSA comrades held senior positions in mainstream Protestant churches and, to a lesser degree, the Catholic Church.

Among the more prominent Protestant DSA comrades were Stephen Charleston, assistant bishop of



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Connecticut and president and dean of the Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Massachusetts; Harvey Cox, Hollis professor of divinity at Harvard; Gary Dorrien, Reinhold Niebuhr professor of social ethics at Union Theological Seminary; Norm Faramelli, lecturer in philosophy, theology, and ethics at the Boston University School of Theology; and more.

James Cone, the father of Black Liberation Theology and colleague of Obama's Reverend Jeremiah Wright, was very close to DSA, as was Jim Wallis, of Sojourners and formerly President Obama's faith advisor. Wallis has played a major role in moving American Evangelical Christianity to the left in recent years.

Prominent Catholic DSA comrades included John Cort, Catholic Worker and Archdiocesan Labor Guild; Monsignor George Higgins, interfaith justice; and Sister Mary Emil Penet, founder of the Sister Formation Conference.

DSA comrades also include Unitarians, Muslims, and Jews.

## **DSA and the Unions**

After many communists were expelled from the AFL-CIO in the 1940s and '50s, most of American organized labor came under moderate — or sometimes criminal — control and stayed that way up until the early 1990s. During this time unions would often endorse Republicans and refused to tie themselves exclusively to the Democratic Party.

Circa 1994, AFSCME president Gerald McEntee approached the AFL-CIO with his idea for Project '95, a coalition effort aimed at retaking the House for the Democratic Party. However, moderate AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland refused to cooperate. In response, McEntee and SEIU leader John Sweeney began plotting Kirkland's removal. They soon built a coalition that included not just the core of the old communist-led CIO (the Auto Workers, Steelworkers, Mine Workers), but the Machinists, leftist Ron Carey's Teamsters, the Carpenters, and the Laborers.

When the dust had settled, John Sweeney, who formally joined DSA just before the election, emerged as America's top labor leader.

The new leadership quickly removed the AFL-CIO's constitutional clause banning communists from holding office in AFL-CIO unions — with predictable results.

According to DSA's *Democratic Left* Spring/Summer 2000 edition,

And there's good news: More DSA members and alumni of DSA's Youth Section are moving up through the administrative and organizing reaches of AFL-CIO international unions, and global labor solidarity groups, than ever in recent memory.

Today DSA has huge influence in the 1.8-million strong SEIU, the government workers union AFSCME, various education unions, and in the AFL-CIO itself. National Nurses United, one of the main players in the push for socialized healthcare, is a wholly owned DSA subsidiary.

And in today's America, the unions and the Democrats are locked at the hip.

In an essay in *Democratic Left* Spring/Summer 2000, then DSA vice-chair Harold Meyerson wrote:

The strategic importance of unions in American politics has increased almost exponentially since John Sweeney took the helm at the AFL-CIO in 1995. It's the unions that have brought the Democrats back to



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the brink of retaking Congressional power.

DSA controls America's unions, and the unions largely control the Democratic Party.

## **DSA and the Democratic Party**

Under DSA founder Michael Harrington's able leadership, DSA began a concerted campaign to move the Democratic Party to the left. Hundreds of DSA comrades joined the Democratic Party and held regular meetings at Democratic conferences through DSA fronts such as the "New Directions Movement" and "Democratic Agenda."

In the early days, DSA had dozens of prominent Democrats on its membership roster, including New York City mayor David Dinkins; St. Paul, Minnesota, mayor Jim Scheibel; Ithaca, New York, mayor Ben Nichols; Irvine, California, mayor Larry Agran (who briefly ran for president); and several state representatives, including Michael Paymar (Minnesota), Babette Josephs (Pennsylvania), and Harlan Baker (Maine).

Congressional DSA comrades have included Neil Abercrombie (later governor of Hawaii), Major Owens (New York), one-time second-ranking Congressional Democrat David Bonior (Michigan), Mary Jo Kilroy (Ohio), and senior member of the Armed Services Committee Ron Dellums (California). Current Congressmen who have been in DSA include Jan Schakowsky and Danny Davis (Illinois), and Jerry Nadler (New York), who as chairman of the Judiciary Committee oversees the Justice Department and the FBI — and may lead the impeachment of President Trump. The goal now is to build DSA-controlled groups working semi-autonomously under the Democratic Party banner.

Key elements of this takeover are the Congressional Progressive Caucus, which was founded by Bernie Sanders with DSA help in 1991; Progressive Democrats of America (founded by DSA member Tim Carpenter in 2004); the DSA-infiltrated Working Families Party; and the mass organizations Our Revolution and Indivisible. Our Revolution, which boasts 300,000 members, is completely controlled by DSA. Many chapters in fact double as DSA branches.

According to senior DSA members Carl Davidson and Bill Fletcher, Jr., writing in *Organizing Upgrade*:

At the moment, there are two major caucuses: the social democratic Congressional Progressive Caucus (CPC) and the neo-Keynesian New Democrat Coalition (NDC)/Third Way Caucus.... DSA, Working Families Party (WFP) and Progressive Democrats of America (PDA) make up the left wing of the CPC....

The Congressional Progressive Caucus gets even greater reach at the grassroots through Our Revolution and Indivisible. Our Revolution grew out of the 2016 Bernie Sanders campaign and has hundreds of local chapters. Indivisible was formed in the protests around Trump's inauguration, first around a manual on how to organize. It now boasts a reported 3,800 local groups.

The implications? Socialists shouldn't work 'within the Democratic party,' but with one of its clusters, the Congressional Progressive Caucus, especially its DSA/WFP/PDA left wing and its mass allies. The Progressive Caucus is by far the largest of the Democratic Caucuses, with numbers above 100 members.... The goal would be to develop and expand the CPC, win over as many of the New Democrats as possible.



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## DSA and Presidential Politics

DSA is about power, so it always sought to influence those fellow leftists who one day may be serving in the White House.

In 1962, two decades before he founded DSA, Michael Harrington published his opus on American poverty, *The Other America*. Harrington's book argued that upwards of 50 million Americans lived in a "system designed to be impervious to hope." Harrington's book is widely credited with inspiring President Johnson's "Great Society," the massive and disastrous expansion of the federal welfare system that is still blighting the nation today with its intergenerational welfare and related endemic crime.

DSOC/DSA leader Michael Harrington also enjoyed a close personal relationship with Massachusetts Senator Ted Kennedy, and endorsed his 1980 presidential campaign.

In 1979, Harrington invited Kennedy to address one of DSOC's Democratic Agenda conferences.

Although Senator Kennedy declined to appear, he did send a message of support to the DSA stating, "I share your conviction that progressive economic and social programs must gain a high priority in the direction of our party and our nation.... I welcome the opportunity to work with you."

President Clinton's speechwriter David Kusnet was a DSA comrade. The Clintons were also very close to influential Los Angeles philanthropist Stanley Sheinbaum, a well-known DSA donor and member. DSA also claims that several of its members served on Hillary Clinton's Health Care Task Force — her failed attempt to socialize American healthcare. Notorious DSA comrades Richard Cloward and Frances Fox Piven were standing directly behind President Clinton in the oval office when he signed the 1993 Voter Registration Act. This legislation, promoted by Cloward and Piven, was designed to encourage higher turnout among low-income Democratic-leaning voters — a strategy still being followed today.

Barack Obama could hardly turn around without tripping over a DSA comrade. Writing in the Chicago magazine *In These Times*, in March 2008, editor and DSAer Joel Bleifuss asserted:

In particular, Obama can be linked to the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), the Democratic Party-oriented organization that is a member of the Socialist International.

A former communist turned DSA activist, physician Quentin Young was the father of the American "single payer" or socialized healthcare movement.

As Young told Amy Goodman:

Barack Obama, in those early days — influenced, I hope, by me and others — categorically said single payer was the best way, and he would inaugurate it if he could get the support.

During Obama's first presidential campaign, several DSA comrades climbed on board, including Harry Boyte, co-chair of the campaign's Civic Engagement Group; Eliseo Medina, Latino Advisory Council; Cornel West, National Black Advisory Council; and Jose LaLuz, who served as president of Latinos for Obama.

Once Obama was elected, Eliseo Medina, a leader of the illegal-alien-amnesty movement, served as an immigration advisor to the president. Obama appointed one-time DSA comrade Ron Bloom as his "Car Czar," and Rosa Brooks, the daughter of prominent DSA leader Barbara Ehrenreich, was appointed





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senior advisor to the under secretary of defense for policy, Michele Flournoy.

Several of the current crop of 2020 Democratic presidential hopefuls have DSA connections.

Bernie Sanders owes his career to DSA. Sanders addressed his first DSA group in Los Angeles in 1986, and has addressed multiple socialist affairs since.

From the Spring 2000 edition of DSA's *Democratic Left* editorial:

DSA honored independent socialist Congressperson Bernie Sanders of Vermont at our last convention banquet, and we have always raised significant funds nationally for his electoral campaigns.

DSA boasts that its efforts put Sanders into the U.S. Senate in 2006, and there is no doubt it formed the backbone of his presidential campaign in 2016, as it will again in 2020. Even Sanders' biographer Stephen Soifer was a DSA comrade.

Senator Elizabeth Warren worked closely with DSA supporter Heather Booth to create her signature Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. In 2013, Warren was given an award by the DSA-controlled Midwest Academy, a Chicago-based Alinsky-style training school for communist agitators. I mean "community organizers."

Senator Amy Klobuchar comes out of Minnesota's Wellstone movement. Klobuchar's mentor Senator Paul Wellstone was actively involved with DSA for at least 15 years. He was reportedly about to announce a presidential run when he died in a plane crash in 2002.

Representative Tulsi Gabbard's first congressional race was launched by one-time DSA member and Hawaii's first lady Nancie Caraway. She has worked extensively with DSA comrades over the last few years.

Former Representative Beto O'Rourke employed many DSA comrades in his unsuccessful 2018 race for U.S. senator from Texas.

South Bend, Indiana, mayor Pete Buttigieg's father, Joseph Buttigieg, was a DSA affiliate and leading Gramsci scholar. As a teenager, young Pete was on the DSA mailing list and won a prestigious national essay competition on the topic of his socialist hero Bernie Sanders. Mayor Pete worked closely with some DSA members in South Bend.

DSA always tries to cover its bases.

## **Public (Grassroots) Enemy No. 1**

DSA is usually portrayed in the media as a dynamic bunch of idealistic young socialists, fully committed to justice, fairness, and democracy. In reality, DSA is a Marxist revolutionary organization fully committed to destroying America's constitutional freedoms and free-enterprise system.

The communistic DSA has influence at every level of the Democratic Party (federal and local), organized labor, academia, and religion.

DSA is a "clear and present danger" to the national security of this nation. Unless this organization is thoroughly investigated, exposed, and countered, expect it to continue to wreak havoc on the Constitution for some years to come. DSA aims to finish what the Communist Party started. We cannot allow that to happen.



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