

Why are some words so frightening?

Here we are in the midst of another insufferably long election season. Again, we are focused on national as well as local elections. Thus far, we have heard the candidates called “idiots,” “freaks,” “clowns,” “messes,” “cheaters,” and, worst of all in the eyes of some, “democratic socialists!”

What is so frightening about being a democratic (supporting democracy and its principles) socialist (believing that the most harmonious state of affairs would be for all to get a fair shot at financial success)? I simply do not know. A democratic socialist believes and supports the idea that both the economy and society should be run democratically in a manner that the



DANIEL BRUCH
Thoughts from Dan

needs of the public are addressed, rather than to make profits for a few. Democratic socialists think that ordinary American citizens should be able to participate in the many decisions that affect their lives.

This is nothing new. Democracy and socialism go hand in hand. All over the world, wherever the idea of democracy has taken root, the vision of socialism has taken root as well. Everywhere, that is, but in the United States during the past few decades. Instead, we have allowed a non-democratic

form of socialism to emerge. Instead of “we the people” deciding what aspects of social caring and economic investments we want to share, large corporate bureaucracies, a few huge banks, and even fewer extremely rich families now make most of the basic economic and social decisions that affect almost all of the rest of us. Democratic socialists believe that social and economic decisions should be made by those whom they most affect.

It is good to note that democratic socialists have long rejected the belief that the whole economy and social structure should be centrally planned by the government. Rather, it recognizes that there are some social and economic matters that are best

addressed by “we the people” than by the few rich and powerful with strong self-interests. In short, democratic planning by means of the democratic processes can shape major social and economic investments like education, mass transit, fire and police protection, housing, health care, and energy, to name a few. Because democratic socialism has been practiced in our country in the past, we now have public education, public roads, Social Security, Medicare, fire and police protection, the right to vote, free elections, and almost innumerable other processes and practices that serve the good of “we the people.” What is so frightening about that?

Daniel Bruch is a Hudson business owner