

# A DEMOCRATIC SOCIOECONOMIC PLATFORM

in search of a

## DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL PARTY

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## PART I – DEMOCRATIC SYSTEMS

### Prelude

It seems a different country about this glorious globe experiences/undergoes a “crucially decisive” election practically every few months. Not that many (any?) countries about this polluted planet ever approach, in any meaningful sense, the ideal (whatever that is) of a democratic society.

Not infrequently, the election results are relatively closely decided, e.g., 51/49, up to a ‘divergence from balanced-difference’ of, say, 54/46, regardless of whether 10, 33, 49, 51, 70, or 98 percent of the eligible voters vote.

Then, of course, there is the matter of “Who is eligible to vote?” and the matters of “Who says so, and why?” There is the very wide variation in the confidence of the meaningfulness of participating in some or any particular political process in order to help realize peaceful, just, appropriate and desirable personal benefit, as well as equally farsighted overall societal benefit. And there is the matter of the quality of the questions, even if to be decided democratically, proffered by many contemporary politicians, political parties and political processes.

And all the above is regardless of considerations such as the magnitude, frequency and extent of the accidental as well as intentional alterings of any supposed democratic voting process outcome by strategically placed technological capability employing a wide variety of ingenious new inventions, as well as all the old tried-and-true traditional ploys of vote intimidation, shaving and fraud.

In those relatively fewer situations where a large majority of the eligible voters, which in turn make up a large portion of the “adult” population, vote for the same person or plan, it can be assumed, or at least strongly suspected, that the society is either doing something very, very good (relatively speaking) or experiencing something very, very bad (in an absolute and no-doubt painful way). More frequently, the latter situation prevails -- at least until the Transformation.

## Political Platforms

As the title concisely conveys, presented here is a Democratic Socioeconomic Platform looking for a (necessarily) Democratic Political Party.

This Democratic Socioeconomic Platform is respectfully submitted to all participants in, and/or those affected by, all the present local and global politicosocioeconomic systems and processes, as well as all political parties (presently “democratic” or otherwise), scattered about the carnage, outrage and desperation, frantically attempting to “organize” all these puzzling political processes and puzzled potential participants.

The purpose of this Democratic Socioeconomic Platform is to put forth a new, fundamentally just, democratic and systemically consistent political platform capable of democratically enhancing the General Welfare of All Citizens of a Democratic Society.

Expressed in other terms, the purpose is to indicate how Socioeconomic Democracy can and will resolve or significantly reduce a wide variety of already-acknowledged, serious, costly yet unnecessary societal problems -- and do so simultaneously, a natural gift/property of a successful systemic solution.

A further gift/property of Socioeconomic Democracy is that it will immensely increase facilitation of the realization of many of the other fundamental changes that are necessary and must and will be made by and for human survival, sustainability, grateful satisfaction and spiritual/humanistic development.

At least for example, “debt-creating” created money has got to go, for all the now-obvious and incontestable reasons, and Socioeconomic Democracy -- aided and abetted by the now-undeniable multidimensional global economic crises -- will get far more people to start seriously thinking about the who, what, where, when, why and how of Money, which is but a logical hop, skip and jump from successful democratic monetary reform.

This Democratic Socioeconomic Platform could be considered by, and is hereby most respectfully submitted to, the brave Bhutanese, who recently voted with 80% of the eligible voters voting almost unanimously (this, in a very high altitude and remote country, just below Heaven) to follow their 28-year-old king Jigme Khesar Namgyal Wangchuck’s “vision” of an all-encompassing political

philosophy that seeks to balance material progress with spiritual well-being for all, quantitatively and qualitatively characterized as “Gross National Happiness,” to be determined democratically.

This Democratic Socioeconomic Platform will undoubtedly be welcomed in Zimbabwe, where that charmed and painful President Robert Mugabe, who recently “won” or “lost” his latest in a long sequence of “re-elections,” and who is well known for his particular policies and implementation tactics regarding “land ownership reform and redistribution,” will likely direct his reportedly democratic ZANU (PF) Party to now embrace the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), mostly (but not completely) led by Morgan Tsvangirai, so that together they and all Zimbabweans can reduce Zimbabwe’s orbital-altitude inflation and violence and increase its gross national happiness, democratically.

Then, of course, there is the United States of America (Paine’s phrase), which is, alphabetically, among other criteria, currently much closer to Zimbabwe than Bhutan. With its seemingly years-long run-up to the much-anticipated and extremely educational global event, the US Presidential Election of 2008 is already and increasingly historic in a number of significant ways. All it needs now is a Democratic Socioeconomic Platform.

One of many important differences between this Democratic Socioeconomic Platform (DSeP), and the typical run-of-the-mill political party platform laundry list of independent and not-infrequently inconsistent political promises often offered yet seldom satisfied, is that this DSeP proposes and describes how to democratically realize/accomplish a peaceful and societally beneficial transformation of the world’s obviously malfunctioning, not to more than mention decidedly undemocratic and deadly, present patriarchal politicosocioeconomic systems.

More specifically, the presently harmful economic incentives, invariably, inevitably and inextricably created by contemporary economic systems, with their sorry-or-not socioeconomic consequences dramatically displayed daily, are, with this DSeP, democratically redesigned to create economic incentive that positively encourages the simultaneous reduction of society’s many painful, costly yet unnecessary socioeconomic problems, as well as contributes significantly to the Positive Empowerment and Healthy Development of All Citizens of a Democratic Society.

Socioeconomic Democracy, which is the essence of the proposed DSeP, can be viewed as engaging in (among other things) Transformational Politics, that is, an Evolutionary Politics that consciously, openly, honestly, forthrightly, publicly, thoughtfully and successfully works to realize significant synergetic inclusive societal improvement.

On the other hand, or rather likewise, Socioeconomic Democracy can be viewed as engaging in Transformational Economics, that is, an Evolutionary Economics that is dedicated to unabashedly maximizing the overall well being of all humanity. This implies and requires, at a minimum, a fully understood and appreciated concept and practice of Sustainable Development for All, which in turn implies and requires Bounded Inequality of Essentials for All. In a democratic society, such decisions are made democratically.

Similarly, SeD can also be viewed as engaging in Transformational Sociology or Evolutionary Sociology, as well as Transformational Psychology or Evolutionary Psychology. The latter perspective may ultimately prove to be the most descriptive and productive.

For this, public and democratic (as opposed to presently private and/or unrepresentative, secretive governmental) socioeconomic system design, with democratic approval and implementation, are clearly essential. Clearly also, these essentials should be readily available in a meaningfully democratic society.

This DSeP can be contrasted with many contemporary political party platforms, which, at best, primarily practice Transactional Politics, such as, for example, quibbling over, attempting to agree upon and finally deciding just how much and what percentage of the local, regional, national, international and global budgets should be devoted to getting the kids killed in the wars, compared to the amount and percentage devoted to getting the kids killed in the classrooms, compared to the amount and percentage devoted to getting the kids killed by denying them available but (unfortunately!) “unprofitable” medical and health care, and so on.

In a fundamental sense, Transformational Politics concerns democratically determining and implementing significant and necessary improved survivability, sustainability and quality-of-life measures and realities, while Transactional Politics is quibbling over Change.

A scientific metaphor might be a Kuhnian “scientific revolution” vs. Kuhn’s (certainly not completely contemptuous) “standard incremental science.” But to make the metaphor complete, it is acknowledged that even Kuhnian paradigm shifts are gradual and not instantaneous.

## Democratic Socioeconomic Platforms

Socioeconomic Democracy (SeD) is a theoretical and practical socioeconomic system wherein there exist both some form and amount of Universally Guaranteed Personal Income (UGI) and some form and amount of Maximum Allowable Personal Wealth (MAW), with both the lower bound on personal material poverty and the upper bound on personal material wealth set and adjusted democratically by all participants of a democratic society.

The definitive document describing Socioeconomic Democracy is the book *Socioeconomic Democracy: An Advanced Socioeconomic System* (Praeger, 2002) [1]. The website of the Center for the Study of Democratic Societies provides a wealth of further information regarding Socioeconomic Democracy [2]. The specifically defined idea of Socioeconomic Democracy was first presented in this writer’s initial, self-published book in 1972 [3]. The subject of Socioeconomic Democracy is now conveniently discussed on numerous websites and Internet newsletters and journals, locatable by the usual procedures. See, for example, [4 - 21]. A sampling of supportive or related material for the various ideas of Socioeconomic Democracy may be found in the much abbreviated further reading list [22-38].

In this material and elsewhere will be found anthropological, historical, philosophical, psychological, religious and human rights justifications for various locally appropriate forms of Socioeconomic Democracy.

Numerous practical political approximations to the ideal theoretical democratic socioeconomic system model have already been outlined or detailed. One simple, obvious and meritorious practical political approximation is characterized by different political parties advocating different amounts for the two crucial and extreme socioeconomic boundary parameters, with the “winning” political party or coalition then implementing their particular understanding of the General Will and suggested magnitudes for these boundaries.

Striking similarities and two intriguing minor differences between SeD and Zakat, one of the Five Pillars of Islam, have been indicated and internationally discussed. Considerable progress can be made simply by developing this relationship logically.

Relative costs and benefits studies for the four basic generic forms of SeD, as well as important considerations of the effect of variations in the particular magnitudes of the democratically set tolerable bounds on personal material poverty and personal material wealth have likewise been provided. System realizability, feasibility and implementation requirements have also been identified and shown to be quite satisfiable. Again, essentially all that is required is a thoughtful democratic society.

### Essential Aspects of Socioeconomic Democracy

We begin by examining each of SeD's democratically set bounds, i.e., UGI and MAW. Following that is an important yet simple differentiation between qualitative democracy and quantitative democracy. The latter, justified by elementary Social or Public Choice theory, is used to allow society to democratically decide the amounts of these two fundamental economic bounds, UGI and MAW. Some of the many possible theoretical variations of SeD are then outlined.

After this introduction of the important elements of SeD, Economic Incentive and Self-Interest are considered. Following a brief review of the strong, positive and societally beneficial economic incentive created by Socioeconomic Democracy, we then consider the possibilities of democratically resolving, or at least significantly reducing, simultaneously, humanity's many painful socioeconomic problems.

In Part II of this Democratic Socioeconomic Platform, a number of the myriad simultaneously occurring beneficial ramifications of a democratic socioeconomic system are described. That is to say, it will be shown just how a locally appropriate democratic socioeconomic system can and will solve serious societal problems by democratically establishing societally acceptable bounds on Inequality of Essentials.

## Economic Elements of Socioeconomic Democracy

UGI. With Socioeconomic Democracy, each Participant of the democratic society would understand that some form and amount of a democratically determined minimum amount of societally guaranteed personal income or support would always be available. Put another way, society would guarantee each citizen some minimum amount of purchasing power, one way or another.

To be sure, this basic idea dates back at least to antiquity, and has, in recent decades, been increasingly explored and richly developed by numerous individuals, organizations and governments at all levels. The Basic Income Earth Network (BIEN) and the United States Basic Income Guarantee (USBIG) Network are but two of many dedicated productive groups exploring, advocating and introducing the general concept around the world.

Depending upon available resources and the degree and direction of technological development, this democratically set, societally guaranteed minimum income for all could be sufficient to satisfy the typical individual's minimum subsistence and/or personal healthy growth needs. Alternatively, other societies might democratically decide to set the guaranteed amount at a partial subsistence level, for a variety of legitimate reasons.

There are, of course, as many different names and forms of UGI (ranging at least from Basic Income (BI) to Negative Income Tax (NIT) and including Guaranteed Livable Income (GLI)) as there are reasons to establish some form of UGI, or, for that matter, as there are ways proposed to fund different forms of UGI. Indeed, a democratically set UGI could logically be called and considered Guaranteed Sustainable Development for All. An increasingly popular public policy perspective referred to as “Socioeconomic Affirmative Action” is clearly related.

MAW. Further, with Socioeconomic Democracy, all participants of the democratic socioeconomic system would understand that all personal material wealth above the democratically determined and established maximum allowable amount would, by due process, be transferred out of their ownership and control in a manner specified by the democratically designed and implemented laws of the land, and transferred in accordance with other laws of the land to fund, say, various forms of Sustainable Development for All.

Do note that all the wealth above the democratically determined maximum allowable amount, now to be devoted (after SeD is established) to the sustainable development of all, could be either transferred in some sense directly to a democratic government to be deployed as democratically determined, or be dispersed and deployed as the present wealth owners desire and think best, satisfying, of course, a few reasonable laws, rules and regulations on the matter.

This latter procedure has many merits, of which one would be that the present wealth holders might in general be expected to more fully appreciate their “earned” opportunity to direct their democratically determined excess wealth toward focusing on specific legitimate societal problems that particularly interest and concern them.

Yet again, this “privilege” to personally deploy one’s “excess” wealth for the betterment of society, as personally preferred, could be extended to those who had personal wealth in excess of the initially established, democratically decided MAW limit (a “Grandfather” clause, as it were), while all excess personal wealth periodically trimmed off after the system is well established could be directed toward a democratic government’s General or Specific Welfare Fund.

Perhaps needless to say, the primary benefit of SeD to enhance societal well being and the General Welfare is the result of the economic incentive the democratically set MAW limit creates, and not the amount of wealth periodically trimmed off and donated toward the worthy cause of insuring sustainable development for all. (But everything helps.) This Economic Incentive is discussed below.

Democracy. There is a simple procedure by which each individual participant in a democratic society (or each member of a democratic legislative body) can directly vote her or his particular preference for an amount, magnitude, or quantity of something in question, with the democratically determined, societally or legislatively desired amount unequivocally resulting. As if to emphasize the significance of the discovery, Duncan Black and Economics Nobelist Kenneth Arrow independently and more or less simultaneously established the important yet simple mathematical result and procedure more than a half century ago.

Their now-classic Social Choice contributions have provided the theory which shows that the Median Value of the participants' (citizens' or legislators')

Personal Preference Distribution is the amount the democratic society or body, as a whole, is "for" -- assuming the minimal operational "one participant, one vote; majority rule" decision-making process. Roughly speaking, this means that the democratically determined amount is such that half the voters want that much or more while the other half want that much or less.

Note that the objective is not, definitely not, and should not be "equality in and of everything" (whatever that might mean), but rather acceptably bounded inequality of essentials, with the particular democratic society democratically determining the degree of inequality it will tolerate.

Note that Rush Limbaugh, the popular and much self-beloved, self-designated "Doctor of Democracy," will undoubtedly meet this concept of an advanced functioning democracy with high approval. This is especially the case considering Rush's not-infrequently-expressed concern regarding excessive CEO "Compensation" and the many problems this is exacerbating.

Variations of SeD. Note that any participant in the democratic political process, who might be opposed to any UGI, for any reason at all, could vote to place the lower bound on universal, societally guaranteed assistance at zero. If a majority of voters so voted, it would be the democratic desire of that particular society, at that particular time, to have no UGI.

Likewise, anyone who might be opposed to some finite limit on allowable personal material wealth, for any reason whatsoever, could and should vote, at election time, to place the upper bound of MAW at infinity. If, for any of a variety of reasons, a majority of the voting public were to prefer and vote to place MAW at infinity, then it would be the democratic desire of that society, at that time, to have no upper bound on personal material wealth.

Socioeconomic Democracy is thus seen to embrace, present and facilitate all four of the generic variations of democratic socioeconomic systems. That is, there can be democratic societies wherein there is a nonzero UGI and a finite MAW (the standard and most effective form of SeD); zero UGI and finite MAW (a system with many merits!); nonzero UGI and infinite MAW (legendary problems: how and how much to finance the UGI, and who says so?); and finally, zero UGI and infinite MAW (similar to the current situation, but at least then democratically approved, with such skewed and problem-producing wealth maldistribution apparently acceptable).

Beyond these four theoretical and fundamental variations of Socioeconomic Democracy are, of course, the wide ranges of possible magnitudes of the UGI and MAW levels, both democratically established. It is in the act of the societal setting of these two societally acceptable wealth and poverty boundary magnitudes that proper attention to the particular societal situation can and will be expressed.

Perhaps needless to observe, the same voting procedure (quantitative democracy) can be used to democratically resolve a wide variety of other serious societal questions concerning magnitudes of important societal parameters, arising in many different realms and levels of society. These might include, for example, a societally set upper bound on allowable personal income and/or an upper bound on the allowable ratio of maximum-to-minimum income, or wealth, in either a company, corporation, or country, etc. Thus, many societies, all fundamentally democratic, could nevertheless display their democratic differences.

#### Economic Incentives Created by Socioeconomic Democracy

Consider first the economic incentive created by a democratically set Maximum Allowable Personal Wealth limit. We have observed earlier that, with SeD, all wealth above the democratically set upper bound on personal material wealth could either be given to the government as taxes (to either enhance the General Revenue Fund or be mandated for specific projects and purposes) or be disposed of as the present wealth “owners” so choose (again, satisfying reasonable, democratically established societal restrictions and opportunities).

In either case, all rational, self-interested and insatiable (as the current dominant-though-fading neoclassical economic assumptions/theory goes), extremely wealthy, law-abiding participants in the democratic society with its democratic socioeconomic system, who still desire increased personal material wealth, would be economically motivated, that is, have economic incentive, to actively and seriously work to increase the welfare and well-being of the less well-off members of society. Only in this manner can these (still-wealthiest) participants persuade a majority of the citizens/participants of the democratic society to see the wisdom in and democratically vote to raise somewhat the legal upper limit on allowable personal wealth -- everything considered.

There is, in fact, strong economic incentive for those who are at or near the democratically set upper bound on allowable personal material wealth to be successful in improving the General Welfare. For if the current level of MAW is not producing sufficient improvement in the General Welfare, as democratically determined, there is the possibility and probability that the democratic society will democratically decide to reduce the MAW limit even more, in order to enlist even more still-wealthy participants (with their unique and valuable knowledge, know-how, contacts and “can-do”-ness) and their extra wealth in the proper and noble task of seriously improving the welfare and well being of all society, humanity and posterity.

The ultimate effect of such economic incentive, as experienced by those at or near the democratically set upper bound on MAW, will be to transform their very real, primitive and originally quite justified (individual survivability) concept of “self-interest” to instead, and in effect, interpret and include larger and larger segments of society and humanity as “self,” insofar as calculations of “self-interest” are concerned.

This is because such a perspective will be appealing to that still-functioning, primitive, individual-ego-informed self-interest. Put another way, global and higher consciousness will be increasingly appreciated, encouraged and demonstrated by the emerging realization of the very real benefit to personal self-interest resulting from considerations of inclusive “self-interest.”

Note also that a not-insignificant amount of this effect would be manifest, even if some particular democratic society democratically decided and voted to initially establish the upper limit on allowable personal material wealth (MAW) at, say, twice the amount of wealth presently possessed by the currently Richest of the Rich. Verification of this observation is an amusing exercise.

Another informative and amusing exercise is to consider the effects and ramifications of many different levels of MAW, democratically set in, say, contemporary United States of America -- though the general idea is, of course, applicable everywhere. For example, consider what different situations would obtain in the USA (as well as globally, for that matter) if the MAW limit in the USA were democratically set at, say, \$1t, \$100b, \$50b, \$10b, \$1b, \$500m, and even \$100m (also known as a “Texas Unit”).

A further question might be: Just what does the Gentle Reader think/feel the MAW limit should be in the USA? Another, as instructive, question is: Just what

does the Gentle Reader think/feel the MAW limit ultimately would be, if democratically established in the USA today, or, say, in 2012?

The economic incentives created by various forms of UGI have long been theoretically examined, practically tested and adequately documented. The results are easily available, though anyone not familiar with the subject could conveniently begin with BIEN or USBIG.

Of course, except for Tom Paine, no proposal for some form of UGI has ever yet been seriously linked directly to either democracy or some form of upper bound on allowable personal material wealth. Hence, in spite of its promise and potential, the present state of this very sick planet.

Insights parallel to those regarding a democratically set MAW limit, above, can be obtained by considering implications and ramifications of various possible democratically set UGI amounts and approximations, in the USA and elsewhere.

The incentives, economic and otherwise, created by establishing these two crucial economic bounds, i.e., UGI and MAW, democratically, will, among many other desirable developments, significantly encourage and enhance the informed political participation of all citizens in their finally meaningfully democratic society -- here assumed a positive and progressive political development. This, again, is basically because of very real and undeniable self-interest in all of us. After all, the only way to democratically establish the UGI and MAW limits is to participate in the political process that would change the de facto settings of zero and infinity, respectively.

### Democratic Resolution of Socioeconomic Problems

Socioeconomic Democracy would thus create economic incentive and provide necessary funds to encourage and effect significant reduction in an almost surprisingly diverse array of unnecessary yet painful and lethal individual, societal and global problems.

As is described at length in the referenced material, these problems include (but are by no means limited to) those familiar ones involving: automation, computerization and robotization; budget deficits and national debts; bureaucracy; maltreatment of children; crime and punishment; development, sustainable or otherwise; ecology, environment, resources and pollution;

education; the elderly; the feminine majority; inflation; international conflict; intranational conflict; involuntary employment; involuntary unemployment; labor strife and strikes; sick medical and health care; military metamorphosis; natural disasters; pay justice; planned obsolescence; political participation; poverty; racism; sexism; untamed technology; and the General Welfare.

It should be kept in mind that these highly desirable outcomes of reduced societal problems are not simply “Goals for a Better World.” Rather, they are the direct and predictable ramifications of adopting various forms of locally appropriate Socioeconomic Democracy.

As indicated earlier, the individual, extremely wealthy people (all those democratic participants in the democratic society who are at or near the democratically set MAW limit), with their different skills and knowledge sets, if serious about their self-interest maximization, can all be expected to utilize and apply their gifts/talents toward reducing or resolving the problems of others. And wanting to do so efficiently and effectively, these individual, still extremely wealthy participants of their particular democratic society can further be expected to devote their gifts/talents to reducing those classes of problems that particularly interest them -- for any of a variety of reasons.

This is one of a number of reasons why so many different societal problems will all be seriously addressed and significantly reduced, and why they will all be addressed simultaneously and successfully. Whatever societal problems are not addressed adequately by the “private sector,” as democratically determined, can and should be successfully addressed by the democratic government, which will now have available sufficient funds and motivation to do so, appreciatively provided by the democratically set MAW limit.

This might appear, at first glance, revolutionary. But remember; only in this way can these still wealthiest members of society persuade a majority of society to democratically raise the upper limit on MAW, which the law-abiding wealthiest of society presumably still desire (at least according to the assumptions of momentarily dominating, though fast-fading, contemporary economic systems theory and practice). Even in this “worst-case scenario,” the societally desirable and beneficial behavior is obtained -- democratically, peacefully and with all that other good stuff.

Far more common, it is predicted, will be the increasing number of those who now see the undeniable light of day at, dare it be said, the end of humanity's terrifyingly dark tunnel of transformation.

As a matter of fact, one can easily picture the following lovely littoral scene. Beautiful waves and magnificent rhythmic sets are rolling in, spotted three sets out, at an angle to the golden shell and sand shoreline to create and display such exquisite shoulders with such sensuous shapes.

Further out, above the waves just starting to hint of their growing strength and beauty as they rush eagerly toward shore to place their individual and unique kiss, lines of formation-flying Pelicans surf the updraft preceding the incoming and rising walls of water.

Inside the outer developing swells, where those exquisite and enticing shoulders beckon, happy human surfers also play with and make love with the waves.

Staring from the shore, enthralled, at such a sacred sight will be, among others, more than a few now-democratically-limited-material-wealth-types who, knowing that everyone else in their much-beloved democratic society is likewise democratically limited (wealth-wise) and extended (happy-human-heart-wise), and further knowing that the same thing is safely and surely happening all about her/his/their/our glorious Gaia, will heave a sonorous sigh of relief, yelp of joy, and grab their surfboards to join the growing groups of advocates in the local lineups for locally appropriate forms of Socioeconomic Democracy (actually, just another example of "Appropriate Technology"), now that the perfectly shaped democratic socioeconomic sunrise surf's up and so inviting!

After all, the surf -- and the wind, for that matter -- is "free," though a "lunch," surfboard or sailboat may not be. The continuing question, of course, is just how much should a (delicious, nutritious and environmentally friendly) lunch and the other necessities of life cost, and should these and the other necessities of life be obtainable by all humans or simply by some small subset of society -- especially since there is a sufficiency of essentials for all.

(end of Part I)

## PART II – SOCIOECONOMIC RAMIFICATIONS

### Foreplay

In Part I of this Democratic Socioeconomic Platform, following an appropriate Prelude, we first briefly reviewed some of the purposes, functions and characteristics of political platforms in general. Then, we considered some of the possibilities of democratic socioeconomic platforms in particular.

The concept of Socioeconomic Democracy was introduced. Recall that Socioeconomic Democracy (SeD) is a theoretical, practical, and realizable socioeconomic system wherein there exist both some form and amount of Universally Guaranteed Personal Income (UGI) and some form and amount of Maximum Allowable Personal Wealth (MAW), with both the lower bound on personal material poverty and the upper bound on personal material wealth set and adjusted democratically by all participants of a democratic society.

The definitive document describing Socioeconomic Democracy is the book *Socioeconomic Democracy: An Advanced Socioeconomic System* (Praeger, 2002) [1]. The website of the Center for the Study of Democratic Societies provides a wealth of further information regarding Socioeconomic Democracy [2]. The specifically defined idea of Socioeconomic Democracy was first presented in this writer's initial, self-published book in 1972 [3]. The subject of Socioeconomic Democracy is now conveniently discussed on numerous websites and Internet newsletters and journals, locatable by the usual procedures. See, for example, [4 - 21]. A sampling of supportive or related material for the various ideas of Socioeconomic Democracy may be found in the much abbreviated further reading list [22-38].

Part I of this Democratic Socioeconomic Platform (DSeP) carefully defined and described the economic and democratic aspects and resultant theoretically possible variations of Socioeconomic Democracy. In the referenced material and

elsewhere will be found anthropological, historical, philosophical, psychological and human rights justifications for various locally appropriate forms of Socioeconomic Democracy.

Numerous Practical Political Approximations to the ideal theoretical democratic socioeconomic system model have been outlined or detailed. One simple, obvious and meritorious political approximation to the theoretical model is characterized by different political parties advocating different amounts for the two tolerable socioeconomic boundary parameters, with the "winning" political party, or coalition, then implementing their particular understanding of the General Will of that particular democratic society.

It has been noted that there are striking similarities and two intriguing minor differences between SeD and Zakat, one of the Five Pillars of Islam, that have been indicated and internationally discussed. Simply developing this relationship logically can cause considerable progress.

Relative costs and benefits studies for the four basic generic forms of SeD, as well as important considerations of the effect of variations in the particular magnitudes of the democratically set tolerable bounds on personal material poverty and personal material wealth have likewise been provided.

System realizability, feasibility and implementation requirements have also been identified and shown to be quite satisfiable. Again, essentially all that is required is a thoughtful democratic society.

The Economic Incentive created by such a Democratically Set Personal Material Wealth (MAW) and Poverty (UGI) Boundary Controller Subsystem was next described. It was seen that this economic incentive provides considerable motivation to address and reduce or resolve the full spectrum of society's and humanity's psycho-politico-socioeconomic problems.

Briefly reviewing the important effect of a democratically set MAW limit, we observed that, by definition, all wealth above the democratically established upper bound on personal material wealth could either be given to the government as taxes (to either enhance the General Revenue Fund or be mandated for specific projects and purposes) or be disposed of as the present wealth "owners" so choose (satisfying reasonable, democratically established societal restrictions and opportunities).

In either case, all rational, self-interested and insatiable (as the current dominant-though-fortunately-fading neoclassical economic assumptions/theory goes), extremely wealthy, law-abiding participants in the democratic society with its democratic socioeconomic system, who still desire increased personal material wealth, would be economically motivated, that is, have economic incentive, to actively and seriously work to increase the true welfare and well-being of the less well-off members of society. Only in this manner can these (still-wealthiest) participants persuade a majority of the citizens/participants of the democratic society to see the wisdom in and democratically vote to raise somewhat the legal upper limit on allowable personal wealth -- everything considered.

There is, in fact, strong economic incentive for those who are at or near the democratically set upper bound on allowable personal material wealth to be successful in improving the General Welfare. For if the current level of MAW is not producing sufficient improvement in the General Welfare, as democratically determined, there is the possibility and probability that the democratic society will democratically decide to reduce the MAW limit even more, in order to enlist even more still-wealthy participants and their extra wealth in the proper and noble task of seriously improving the welfare and well-being of all society, humanity and posterity.

This information and insight was then used to seriously consider the possibility, desirability and implementation requirements of a Democratic Design of Society's Socioeconomic Systems, in order to efficiently, effectively and peacefully reduce or resolve present needless but nevertheless shuttering, stuttering and shattering socioeconomic situations.

In Part II of this DSeP, we shall take a necessarily brief look at some of the many specific Desirable Ramifications of this Democratic Socioeconomic Platform. The below-described properties, implications and ramifications of Socioeconomic Democracy are admittedly and unquestionably only partial sketches of portions of the desirable impact of a democratic socioeconomic system on just a few of society's many serious but unnecessary problems.

Confident that anything, taken to extreme, turns into its opposite, and that all things are related, and therefore multiply related, let us now take a tour of the simultaneous transformative possibilities of a Democratic Socioeconomic Platform.

A Few Individual yet Intimately Intertwined Socioeconomic Problems  
Successfully Resolved or Significantly Reduced with Socioeconomic Democracy

Automation, Computerization and Robotization. “What is to be done,” now that automation, computerization and robotization are increasingly able to produce almost everything the whole of humanity could possibly need, and a good bit of what humanity could reasonably want, while requiring (partially for higher accuracy, productivity and environmentally friendly vacation time) next to nobody to push the buttons?

A thoughtful, democratic society (the kind hypothesized in this DSeP) could easily adopt Socioeconomic Democracy and thereby guarantee universal direct personal benefit from Humanity's Heritage of Advancing Technological Capability.

And if this is considered by some as yet another justification “for” some form of UGI, well, so be it.

It is emphasized that this proposal in no way necessarily conflicts with, but rather can synergistically correlate with, encourage and help facilitate the necessary resurgence of local, satisfying and sustainable community living, globally. At the same time, this DSeP can assuage the

The Common Technological Heritage of Humanity has been reinvested time and time again, accruing compound interest over years, decades, generations, centuries and millennia. “Wealth,” as Bucky Fuller famously observed, “is knowledge utilized.” There is sufficient accrued technological wealth to provide a satisfying material and spiritual existence for every member of humanity, and the fact that this is not (yet) realized is the direct and predictable result of the economic incentives created by contemporary sputtering politico-socioeconomic systems.

The obvious and blatant violation of this intended inheritance and birthright of all humanity to benefit from properly directed science and technology is unconscionable, predictable and soon to be eliminated, democratically.

Budget Deficits and National Debts. Suffice to say now that Socioeconomic Democracy would derive necessary funds from, and provide societally synergetic economic incentive for, the materially wealthiest members of society

to rapidly reduce and eventually eliminate harmful governmental budget deficits and more harmful governmental debts. National surpluses, not only for rainy but even sunny and exploratory days, would and should be possible.

The typical intergenerational injustice of accumulating and bequeathing staggering debt to future generations could finally be terminated. And all of those who presently obtain their personal income by the care, feeding and milking of huge governmental debt would still have at least their subsistence needs met with a UGI -- democratically set, it would be hoped, at a sufficiently high level to help guarantee not only basic survival but some sense of satisfaction in life.

Bureaucracy. Save perhaps for a bureaucrat, bureaucracy is generally considered a significant societal problem -- often most prominent in "developed" and "overdeveloped" socioeconomic systems. For the bureaucrat, it is not infrequently a dull-to-absurd, but seemingly necessary, means to a guaranteed personal income. SeD would be most effective in reducing societally expensive, unproductive, intrusive, inefficient and generally undesirable bureaucracy.

For example, with SeD, practically all present social welfare bureaucracies, which administer myriad uncoordinated and frequently competing, wrongly incentivized General Welfare programs, including Food Stamps, AFDC (Aid For Dependent Children and Corporations), Unemployment Compensation, robbed and worthless Retirement Plans, Promises and Old-Age Pensions, even Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid and all those other near bankrupt mega systems of the federal government which now or will soon require complete restructuring, would no longer be necessary and could be carefully and systematically eliminated while simultaneously better satisfying all legitimate human needs during the transition and transformation.

These bureaucracies will either be independently restructured without acknowledgement of, and coordination with, the necessary restructuring or elimination of all the other subsystems in society's presently sputtering General Welfare System or, as a result of SeD, the problems the bureaucracies have been erected ostensibly to solve will be solved universally, democratically and far more efficiently. One way or another, the bureaucracies and the programs are going to change fundamentally and soon.

In like manner, it can be (and has many times been) shown that forces, both economic and otherwise, would be generated by SeD to reduce the undesirable and harmful bureaucracy in other areas such as education and the military. Hence governmental, i.e., societal, regulation would at once be significantly reduced and made far more effective, so far as societal well-being is concerned.

Children. Whether speaking of the continuing conditions of children in the USA, which significantly “leads” the rest of the industrial nations in the high rate of child poverty, or in the rest of the world, where many children in many countries labor and languish, malnourished and mobilized for war, the right to (not to more than mention desirability of) a healthy childhood is as violated by the long reach of contemporary economic systems as by past economic systems.

Whether children are forced into slavery, corporate profit-motivated labor, prostitution, or crime for survival on the street is the shame of us all. It should be clear Socioeconomic Democracy would go a long way toward eliminating the violations of the rights of children -- nationally and globally, and for a variety of reasons.

Having solved the national debt problem with SeD ipso facto reduces undeserving debt and a filthy-to-toxic environment saddled upon future generations of children because of the excesses, cowardice, stupidity or simply relative unconsciousness of past and present generations of adults and economists.

Crime and Punishment. While there certainly are Many Faces of Crime, it should be immediately clear that SeD is capable of democratically differentiating between Crimes caused by Need and Crimes caused by Greed. Certainly, SeD can and does eliminate need (at least as democratically determined) and therefore any and all crime caused by it. At long last, society could really get tough on the remaining crime mostly caused by greed, without being concerned at all about any possible twinges, pangs, outrages of conscience or expressions of concern for those committing “crime” out of need.

It can even be anticipated that overwhelming majorities of law-abiding, sensitive citizens might coalesce to form a consensus supporting a solution to the far more important and harmful crime problem (crime caused by greed) by throwing all people apprehended and found guilty of crimes caused not by need but by greed into a jail equipped with only such amenities as can be afforded by the prisoner's forfeited UGI during his (or her) residency in jail. This, as opposed

to present-day Country Club Confinement currently reserved for many wealthy and successful corporate criminals and government officials convicted of crimes of greed.

The sheer terror (that good ol' "economic incentive") often associated with being fired, laid off, terminated, downsized or outsourced in a global market where there are far more people than worthwhile jobs would, of course, no longer be experienced with SeD (since at least the individual's subsistence needs would be guaranteed). Hence, far fewer people would become so desperate, distorted and "demented" after being fired (for any of a variety of reasons, again) as to massacre former employers, fellow employees, innocent bystanders, shoppers in malls, citizens in Post Offices, school children in schoolyards and college children in colleges, ad infinitum.

Perhaps needless to say, the contemporary "growth" and presently profitable Incarceration Industry (profitably supplying an obvious need), most notable in the USA, and devoted in the USA to attempting to warehouse (certainly not rehabilitate) the highest number and proportion of incarcerated individuals on this glorious globe, could and would be reduced, with surprising billions saved. Indeed, the present cost of one prisoner in jail (food, clothing, shelter, medical care, education, supervision, gym equipment, etc.) is far more than society "freely" provides its hard-working, law-abiding, honest and well-intentioned citizens. The fact that that doesn't "figure" figures, considering contemporary socioeconomic systems and the malignant economic incentives they can create.

It is true that the USA Incarceration Industry might be expected to take a "hit" from such a policy, but again, there is the democratically set UGI to provide at least sustenance for all the no-longer-needed Human Warehouse Guards and Human Warehouse Entrepreneurs until they get back on their feet and find another job to contribute to their healthy personal growth and that of the now-democratic society.

Development. At the outset, it is observed that the whole world is in development. The dimensions of development include at least its physical, environmental, scientific, technological, economic, social, psychological, political, ethical, sustainable, spiritual and cosmic aspects. Different societies -- as different individuals -- have developed to different degrees down these different dimensions.

Both the democratically set maximum allowable personal wealth limit and the democratically set universal guaranteed income contribute, in significant ways, to healthy development along essentially all these dimensions, as the interested reader is invited to verify for her or himself if so inclined. If not, see the referenced material on, for example, Socioeconomic Democracy and Sustainable Development.

While much good work has been done by the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), it is becoming clearer that satisfaction of many of the eight basic goals will not even be approached by 2015, the year of accounting and reckoning, at least without fundamental and universal change, and in a positive direction. And then, of course, the MDG attempt is only aiming at reducing by one half the number of humans now living in poverty. Much more requires doing and can be done.

These two limits (UGI and MAW) would also provide a societal "future shock absorber" which is at once simple and societally controlled. For the "underdeveloped" nations of the world, many of whom continue to seek alternatives to the strict "capitalist" and "socialist" development models, SeD would allow all the peoples of these nations to democratically control the rate and direction of societal development -- heretofore almost always an ugly and inhuman process. In the "developed" countries, where fundamental technological change is bound to take place one way or another, further healthy development would be realized by the economic incentive created with the two democratically set boundaries on personal poverty and wealth.

Both growth and development (both carefully defined) c/would result under Socioeconomic Democracy, but always with the quality, sustainability and universality of both those characteristics of healthy life in both the individual and the body politic now receiving major emphasis and economic nourishment/encouragement. The task and the transformation would appear trivial.

Ecology, Environment and Pollution. Neither the well-being (welfare) of society in general nor the well-being of individuals of society are well served by presently profitable polluting practices promoted by the economic incentives created by contemporary socioeconomic systems. Socioeconomic Democracy would do much to reduce further pollution and in fact would provide strong economic incentive and opportunity to help restore the presently degraded environment -- throughout this polluted planet. Serious, meaningful concern

(and love) could then be shown not only for our immediate children but also for that seventh generation.

From a universal, democratically established and set, societally guaranteed income, at least four benefits are immediate. First, this guaranteed income could financially allow people to refuse to work in industries that significantly pollute the environment. This reduces pollution. Second, the guaranteed income could sustain people while they demanded nonpollution-producing jobs and even jobs to reduce present pollution. This reduces pollution even more. Third, the democratically set guaranteed income for all would allow more people to refuse to buy the significantly polluting products of industry. Pollution is thereby reduced even further. Fourth, this democratically set universal guaranteed income would allow more people to demand nonpolluting products from industry and even products and processes which ecologically complement other existing products and processes. All this contributes to the well-being and welfare of everyone and everything -- including the environment, solid, liquid and gaseous.

Consider next the basic effect on pollution of a democratically set and adjusted maximum allowable personal wealth limit. Any self-interested, rational participant at or near the upper bound on allowable personal wealth would no longer be economically motivated to attempt to generate personal profit, by means currently legal or otherwise, at the expense of significant environmental pollution or damage, i.e., at the expense of other members of society. This Elimination of Externalities and the Economists who Ignore them will profoundly improve the clean-up process.

This is because society could pay for the added costs of properly cleaning up the pollution with funds obtained by democratically reducing the allowable wealth limit even more. Further, such societal control would be most effective because it would be operating at the source of the pollution, rather than attempting to repurify the total volume of the polluted medium -- a societally expensive suggestion frequently offered by those proposing to manufacture and market technological fixes.

The Gospel of Consumerism, catchingly (and now, desperately) scored by presently motivated corporations, aided and abetted by slick-and-thin advertising, would be transformed into a Gospel of Conservation, equally enticingly promoted by equally transformed and redirected corporations

operating in a democratic society and democratic socioeconomic system dedicated to the General Welfare of All.

It remains to be seen if the color green will prove to be anything other than another campaign slogan, political or corporate, pitching for a sell to a segment of the demographics.

Of course, the appropriate primary purpose of any current serious Green Political Party, which necessarily implies now being a “minority” party, is not to win elections so much, though that can be encouraging, as to interject intelligence and synergetic new ideas into the stumbling and bewildered contemporary public political discourse.

Q: How does society properly dispose of a Toxic Throwaway Economy and Toxic Economic Theory?

A: Thoughtfully, carefully and democratically.

Education. It should be clear that SeD would effectively resolve the problems of financing, providing and rewarding dedicated quality teachers for, and successfully imparting to students the importance and joy of, a meaningful education for all.

It is assumed that at least one of the more important goals of education is increased clear thinking capability on the part of students and ultimately the adult participants of the democratic society. To realize Socioeconomic Democracy, people will have to start thinking -- it will be an education in itself.

With SeD, there is strong economic incentive for the still wealthy, pegged at the democratically set upper bound on allowable personal wealth, to see that this goal of quality education is indeed accomplished. And (some form of) a universal guaranteed income at least helps to guarantee everyone the opportunity for further education of personal choice, when and as desired.

The essential participation of parents in the education of their children (always recognized as important, but because of the stresses and conflicts caused by inefficient contemporary socioeconomic systems, often insufficiently provided) could far more easily be provided with SeD in place.

Elderly. The rapidly approaching bankruptcy of the many mega systems societies have designed to express at least partial gratitude to previous

generations for bearing and nurturing them does seem a shame. But as Occidentals all surely have learned by now, a crisis is an opportunity. In this case, with SeD, it is the opportunity to eliminate the financial, intellectual and moral crises in the quality of life for all the elderly, by democratically creating a more advanced, efficient and effective socioeconomic system to universally accomplish the most appropriate task.

Feminine Majority. Socioeconomic Democracy clearly satisfies numerous legitimate demands articulated by or for the feminine majority of humanity. For example, SeD would guarantee all people the opportunity to participate meaningfully in the socioeconomic sphere. All poverty, including the major portion experienced by women (and their children), would be eliminated democratically.

No longer would there be such a thing as "unpaid labor." Indeed, guaranteed income for all would cover all women who frequently labor totally unpaid to bear and rear the prevailing patriarchal socioeconomic system its next generation of laborers and warriors. Thus finally would matriarchic nurturing be acknowledged as crucial to human existence, survival and sustainable development, not in more glowing words but with something a little more substantial.

If it is the democratic preference of a particular society, SeD certainly could cover all human embryos (female and male), regardless of, or depending upon, the circumstances of conception. In any case and far more importantly, with all women guaranteed some measure of economic independence, SeD certainly would dramatically reduce the number of unwanted, unnecessary or harmful pregnancies and births. Hence, the desire of those who claim a "right to choose" would converge with the desire of those who currently claim a "right to life" but evidently merely mean at present a "right to birth," regardless of the lifetime of consequences.

Democratically set guaranteed income for all would be the universal safeguard against any significant economic hardship experienced by anybody (most often by women and children) as a result of changing family relationships. No longer would a woman -- or a man -- be forced to prostitute herself -- or himself -- in order to obtain what a majority of the members of society consider a satisfactory subsistence. Highly priced prostitution, in the oldest as well as all more recently established patriarchal professions, including economics, would also tend to be reduced, as the interested reader is urged to thoughtfully and thoroughly verify for herself.

The democratically set, universally guaranteed income would be available to all older women who require it and the democratically set maximum bound on personal wealth would provide economic incentive for the still rich, famous and powerful to cause meaningful, acceptable and satisfying work to be made available for all older women who desire it.

Inflation. Now, some form of democratically set, societally guaranteed income for all would make that portion of present society which is most adversely affected by inflation essentially immune thereto. For if inflation exists, for any reason, the democratically set UGI could simply be increased by subsequent voting to match the higher cost of living. This procedure could ultimately be automated, thus eliminating need of frequent voting during periods of high inflationary rates, by employing a "cost-of-living index" to appropriately adjust a periodically reset UGI level by ballot. Note that such a societal safeguard against inflation basically provides guaranteed minimum purchasing power during periods of high (as well as low) inflationary rates. Implications for a true and actually beneficial "free and fair market" are enormous.

Among many other things, SeD would eliminate (or significantly reduce) all "wage push" inflation because there would then be reasonable and democratic control over the extremes in the distribution of wealth and income. "Wage earners," "workers" and all those other glorified-then-ignored individuals would for the first time have their just economic reward and there would be no need for labor to "push" for their just economic reward. No longer would workers be held hostage by economic incentive operating off contemporary income and wealth distributions and no longer would they be forced to accept wages many orders of magnitude lower than others who clearly do no more good for humanity. As noted later, this also eliminates societally disruptive but presently necessary labor strikes.

A democratically set maximum allowable personal wealth limit would do much to ease inflationary pressures. Among many other important effects, it would provide economic incentive for the still-wealthy near the democratically set upper bound on MAW to find out just what really is inflation (which leads to what is money?), what causes inflation and to put a stop to it, because until they do, the democratically set UGI can be raised to keep up with inflation and the democratically set MAW limit can be reduced to help pay for it.

International Conflict. The enhancement of societal well-being made possible with Socioeconomic Democracy ipso facto provides an effective and positive deterrent to international warfare, here assumed undesirable and to be eliminated. The simultaneous resolution of a large number of these other serious societal problems, as described here, eliminates at once many causes of -- and perhaps more importantly, many excuses for -- war.

Beyond this, other significant beneficial effects can be anticipated. For example, those participants in the democratic socioeconomic system who are personally at or near the societally set upper bound on allowable personal wealth would no longer have personal economic incentive to promote war or military intimidation, whether involving their own country or other nations. They could no longer gain personal wealth by such action and could well lose it, especially if their society democratically decided to further reduce the allowable personal wealth limit to help finance involvement in any necessary hostilities.

Democratically set, governmentally guaranteed personal income for everyone also provides many direct deterrents to warfare. Among other strong effects, it would eliminate any economically "handicapped" class, which, of course, has historically provided warring nations with a convenient pool of combatants. Such guaranteed income also solves the very real and almost always neglected problem of necessary income for all those who presently derive their personal income and wealth from warfare, its threat, preparation, propagation or promotion, either directly or indirectly.

All this reduction in "war" makes available, among other things, needed funds for Sustainable Development for All. Far more importantly, perhaps, it provides a fundamentally different and far healthier Mindset for Humanity.

Yet if some war is absolutely "necessary," both democratically set MAW and UGI bounds, and the economic incentives they create, would go a long way to insure that all military personnel are provided adequate care (financial, medical, psychological, educational, therapeutic and otherwise) to meet their requirements for attempting to salvage a deservedly respected, dignified and healthy life, both during and after their military service -- as opposed to not-uncommon current conditions. The veteran suicide rate, estimated to be about 18 per day in the USA, but certainly a universal phenomenon, is to be expected considering contemporary socioeconomic systems and the economic incentives they create. That same suicide rate could be essentially eliminated, with Socioeconomic Democracy.

Intranational Conflict. Whether intranational conflict has components of cultural differences, color, gender, age, religion, class, caste and/or whatever else people manage to quibble about, a common thread is almost always economic. But with Socioeconomic Democracy, that common cause of intranational conflict is simply and democratically eliminated – or at least significantly reduced. Forthrightly, the proposed just and democratic society will have publicly acknowledged and declared its commitment to the all-inclusive General Welfare. Here again, we assume that intranational conflict is undesirable and to be eliminated -- in spite of all the presently highly paying jobs, guaranteed income, wealth concentration and increasing GDP that intranational conflict and its concomitant problems create.

As a single specific example of the harm caused by present intranational conflict (and international conflict, for that matter), consider the lowly landmine. Economically produced by the millions (in contemporary socioeconomic systems with contemporary economic incentives), these and similar creations of scientifically trained and, no doubt, highly paid minds could, of course, also be discussed under the Problem of Pollution, which is what they are for everyone else after the boys are done playing war and have gone home or been buried. To be sure, they are a rather deadly form of pollution; but then, in the long run, what pollution isn't?

Or landmines could be discussed under Medical Care for instantly, if crudely, amputated limbs and lives. Or they could be discussed under Involuntary Unemployment, which is what is produced if the victims somehow survive the explosion and then have to try to figure out a way to compete for survival in a personal-profit-motivated global marketplace. Landmines could be discussed under Drug Abuse, which is certainly one unfortunate but predictable and understandable ultimate result of seeing one's surviving loved ones or oneself limping about on crutches or trying to get around in wheelchairs because of the stupid wars, the stupid war promoters and the stupid landmines.

Perhaps all these and the myriad other ultimate ramifications of profitably produced, distributed and abandoned landmines, depleted Uranium artillery shells, general spraying of CBR weaponry and other abandoned obscenities will sow the seeds for the next conflict, which can then kick start a sluggish and uncompetitive economy, bringing again momentary prosperity for some with the economic boom accompanying the next intra- and/or international conflict.

Involuntary Employment. Whether rooted in the requirement to "work or be shot" or "work or starve to death," involuntary employment, if not identical with, certainly shades into slavery. A most important characteristic of any societally satisfying economic system -- and one totally ignored by practically all contemporary economic systems and systems theorists -- is therefore the ability to eliminate or substantially reduce involuntary employment. It bears reemphasis; it is here assumed that involuntary employment (or, for that matter, involuntary anything) is undesirable and to be minimized or eliminated throughout society.

Socioeconomic Democracy does well in this regard. A democratically set, universally available guaranteed income, placed somewhere around subsistence level, would allow most of those presently involuntarily employed to terminate personally unsatisfying and/or societally detrimental employment. Note that the amount of income guaranteed everyone and set democratically would determine just how much involuntary employment could be eliminated, with effectiveness increasing as the societally set UGI level is increased.

On the other side of the wealth spectrum, those near the democratically determined upper limit on allowable personal wealth would be economically encouraged to help make all truly necessary and desirable societal work personally satisfying for, and voluntarily sought by, those who are willing to perform such work. The percentage of the population enlisted in this societally desirable endeavor increases as the level of the democratically set allowable personal wealth limit decreases.

Involuntary Unemployment. Socioeconomic Democracy would also be an effective safeguard against the problem of involuntary unemployment. Quickly reviewing, if a person is involuntarily unemployed, for any reason and for any duration, that person's basic needs, democratically determined, would still be satisfied. This necessary minimum income would be available regardless of whether the unemployment was frictional, cyclical, structural or simply theory-impaired. Indeed, this income, guaranteed against the shortcomings of economic theory and theorists, not to forget the onslaught of work-eliminating technology, would eventually allow "unemployment" to become a good thing -- something no current scarcity-assuming (actually, scarcity-producing, scarcity-maintaining and scarcity-glorifying) economic system can do. Until that time, those at or near the democratically set maximum allowable personal wealth limit would have considerable monetary motivation to see that acceptable,

satisfying, reasonably remunerated and societally beneficial work is made available for all who desire such structured activity.

Labor Strife and Strikes. Societal inconvenience and disruption caused by labor strikes are, of course, experienced only in those politicosocioeconomic systems wherein this particular form of request, protest, and demand for redress are tolerated, permitted and employed. A valid solution to the very real societal problems caused by labor strikes must clearly contain, among other things, the legitimate goals of the strikers. Equally important, a truly valid solution would accomplish these goals at no illegitimate expense or inconvenience to any other members of society. A general and efficient solution would simultaneously realize the same degree of legitimate socioeconomic redress for all members of society.

Socioeconomic Democracy renders labor strikes more or less obsolete and would unquestionably significantly reduce their occurrence. This is so because practically every legitimate goal of labor, yet articulated or not and succinctly summarizable as a just demand for democratic participation in society's socioeconomic system, is realized with SeD. The causes of a large number of labor strikes would therefore be eliminated. Further, all other participants in the democratic socioeconomic system could only benefit from the elimination of societally disruptive yet presently necessary though frequently ineffective labor strikes.

Medical and Health Care. We have elsewhere observed that some universal guaranteed medical and (for efficiency's sake) health care is a very real form of (partial) UGI -- as is universal schooling. When the amount of UGI is democratically set, the amount could be adequate to provide and guarantee, individual and societal, physical and psychological health.

We here merely observe that SeD (especially the democratically set MAW limit) would encourage and cause a desirable and fundamental metamorphosis in the economic motivations and incentive within the medical professions and much more importantly within the medical business professions (economically motivated, as they are, just as most every other business), which currently frequently attempt (and are legally bound) to package and provide medical, dental, pharmaceutical and psychotherapeutic care primarily for personal profit, rather than overall societal health.

Military Metamorphosis. The metamorphosis of the military has been taking place for many years now but has of late accelerated. Accompanied by lively discussion, to be sure, there is the metamorphosis of the relationship of women to the military (including inter alia both the expanding roles of women serving in the military and the various "uses" made of women in both friendly and occupied territories by the still-mostly male military). There is the metamorphosis of the purpose of military capability from solely controlled or wanton destruction and dominance to increasingly peacekeeping activities (a service as dangerous and courageously performed as old-fashioned frontline, face-to-face trench combat) and on to the increasing use of specialized military forces for rapid rescue, disaster relief and general humanitarian missions (again requiring courage and commitment).

This military metamorphosis is taking place at the same time as the complementing metamorphosis in the meaning and understanding of national security. Certainly governmental departments concerned with the interior, the environment, the economy, medicine and public health, education, etc., are all significant parts of a metamorphosing department of defense, intelligently concerned with true national and international security. Then there is the by-no-means resolved, but certainly evolving issue of "gays", "straights" and "whatevers" having the opportunity or obligation to serve their country in its military.

Socioeconomic Democracy would encourage and help facilitate the healthy metamorphosis of the military. As the reader is seeing, SeD would simultaneously reduce or eliminate many of the causes of and excuses for war. The proud tradition of the military and the warrior would certainly not cease with the diminution of war. All of the above-mentioned changes and other new ways to serve would be developed and expanded. A National Service Corps, obligatory or voluntary, associated with some approximation of SeD, could eventually grow within and become a proud part or branch of the military service. Throughout the global metamorphosis of the military, the military personnel of all countries can, should and will continue to serve their countries with courage, strength, intelligence, compassion and good humor.

Natural Disasters. As the experience of the unfortunately feeble and financially constrained, whether or not valiant, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) efforts in the USA to socialize some of the costs and benefits of widespread natural disasters emphasizes, almost all such efforts have in the past been partially helpful but too often too little and too late. These formal

governmentally organized responses to natural disasters have been both too little and too late primarily because society has not yet made an unquenchable commitment to the general welfare of all its citizens.

In the hypothesized just and democratic socioeconomic system, as defined here, all (or at least a majority) of the participants will have made such a commitment. A balanced budget, reduced societal debt (both public and private) and reduced expenditures on society's other shrinking problems will make available far more funds and capabilities to maximize beneficial response to, and minimize harmful effects caused by, the predictably continuing sequence of multibillion dollar "unexpected" natural disasters. The metamorphosis of the military provides enormous potential for further rapid, effective and massive response capability during and after, as well as anticipatory preparation prior to, natural disasters.

Do consider the possibilities. From asteroids and comets slamming into the planet (Jupiter, thank you, and praise be to God!), to hurricanes, tornadoes, cyclones, earthquakes, tsunamis, tidal waves, volcanic eruptions, blizzards, floods, mud slides, droughts, fires, periodic El Niños y La Niñas, melting polar ice, rising tides flooding all coastal communities and cities, shifting oceanic currents and all the other impressive natural processes, they will all continue to occur even if humanity does not, by its actions, affect by one iota Gaia's health and well-being.

On the other hand, and being realistic, rational and responsible, it could be acknowledged that some detrimental effects of human action have already taken place, more are to come, and it is by no means clear just how harmful things really are or will get and just how big a "natural" disaster humanity will really manage to create and personify.

Adding to the natural and man-made disasters, the Wrath of Goddess and God, who are perhaps understandably upset with how humanity has been carrying on lately, it would appear prudent for humanity to quickly create a planetary surplus and society to create a national surplus in anticipation of, and preparation for, all the "natural" disasters to come.

Pay Justice. As surely as an Iowan Whirlwind merits respect, so Pay Justice merits respect, about the globe. And just as an unexpected, suddenly appearing, beautiful, powerful and determined Iowan Whirlwind demands immediate action, so Pay Justice demands immediate action, about the globe.

No need for further fancy definitions, detailed discussions, governmental gibberish, rewarding research, subtle slavery, obligatory oratory or academic alibis. Pay Justice Now!

It is no doubt quite clear, this far along, just why and how Socioeconomic Democracy would help realize a significant increase in Pay Justice, about the globe. From Pay Equity to Appropriate Pay, it is quite simple: Pay Justice!

Planned Obsolescence. The determination of the multidimensional beneficial impact of Socioeconomic Democracy on the personally profitable and societally detrimental practice of planned obsolescence is confidently left to the reader, gentle or otherwise. And while one is at it, one should definitely simultaneously consider the related problem of promoting addictive consumerism, blatantly and vulgarly encouraged everywhere possible, with its resource-raping, pollution-producing and thought-stultifying ramifications. Perhaps I exaggerate, just slightly.

Political Participation. It should be clear that the almost ubiquitous problem of voting, whether that problem be manifest as an oppressive requirement to vote, a present lack of the opportunity to vote, or merely a growing majority not bothering to vote, would be substantially eliminated if the questions to be decided at election time were the democratic determination of the bounds on universal guaranteed minimum income and maximum allowable personal wealth. The political apathy expressed by many tens of millions of Americans (and certainly others throughout the world) who do not vote has, of course, little to do with the alleged inconvenience of registering and voting and far more to do with the disenchantment with the seemingly near meaningless-to-bankrupt political process providing next to nothing worthwhile for which to vote.

Some have argued for a Basic or Citizen's Income on the grounds that the UGI would be, among many other things, appropriate payment to participate meaningfully, wholeheartedly and thoughtfully in society and its politicosocioeconomic system. The UGI can be viewed, employing neoclassical free-market theory, as a necessary and just salary providing economic incentive for everyone to participate in the finally relevant ritual of voting. Buckminster Fuller referred to something similar as a highly desirable "Lifetime Fellowship."

One alleged geographical obstacle to, or problem with, increased political voting (what with electronic feedback of election results instantaneously radiating westward across, say, the United States) is the projection and/or reporting of

election results prior to all voting polls closing. A not uncommon complaint comes from California, though the Great State of Hawaii sees the sun for many hours after California and the rest of the country are wrapped in darkness. And then there is Russia!

In any case, when voting to democratically determine the two bounds of SeD at a federal level, each vote, whether the first cast, the last cast or any of those cast in between, would be of equal weight and impact on the final outcome -- and would, as observed above, in all likelihood be eagerly cast. Then, while at the polling booth or filling out the mail-in ballot, the participant might even bother to cast a vote for some promising politician or political initiative worthy of consideration.

Another aspect of the improvement in the political process resulting from adoption of SeD is the increased public focus on the meaning, purpose and realization of democracy. The whole concept of “representative democracy” clearly needs a steam bath, under high pressure. At a minimum, Proportional Representation (PR) will replace, or rather evolve from, presently poorly performing “Representative Democracy” under “Majority Rule.”

Poverty. The myriad manifestations of the ubiquitous problem of poverty assault our senses daily. It is of moral and visual interest to eliminate poverty. But if we are serious about the desire to eliminate poverty, it behooves us to pay appropriate attention to the meaning of the word. From almost unbelievably obliging dictionaries, we are given the following apropos phrases illustrating meanings of the word poverty:

- (1) State or condition of having little or no money, goods or means of support, as in broke.
- (2) Lack of something specified, as in poverty of intellect.
- (3) Deficiency of desirable ingredients or qualities, as in poverty of charity.
- (4) Scantiness or insufficiency, as in poverty of the "Safety Net."

Beyond these more or less common definitions and interpretations of the word poverty, there is the poverty of practically everything else. There is the Poverty of Affluence and the Poverty of Progress. There is the Poverty of Liberalism (18th, 19th and 20th century versions; 21st century version DOA/RIP), the Poverty of Socialism (ditto), the Poverty of the Welfare State and the Poverty of Mixed(-up) Economies. There is the Poverty of Education and the Poverty of the Academic Community. There is the Poverty of the University

Economics Departments, that can't or don't want to figure out a better economic system to eliminate the poverty they and everybody else daily experience, ignore or guarantee their personal income by "working on." Certainly Hope, Confidence and Justified Faith appear impoverished. Perhaps most important of all, there is the Poverty of Ideas to solve, once and for all, the Unnecessary Planetary Problem of Poverty.

The terrifying Tsunami of Poverty, engulfing the globe, can and will be ended with Socioeconomic Democracy.

Racism. Consider next the impact of Socioeconomic Democracy on that variegated problem of "racism." First, it should be observed that according to recent scientific discovery and understanding, not to mention common sense, there is but one race -- the human race. Further, we all share, scientifically speaking, a common GreatMother, who lived hundreds of thousands of years ago in Africa -- and who, no doubt, thought about, cared and wished well for all her GreatChildren to come. So whatever the squabble among humans, it is and indeed definitely displays the characteristics of a "family fight."

As an aside, it is noted that with our common GreatMother from Africa, that makes most all "Americans" African-Americans, with any differences of note simply being on which ship, deck and in-or-out of chains their ancestors come over in. Native Americans are an exception, and could mostly be referred to as African-Asian-Americans, quite respectfully.

Thus, with only one human race, there can really be no real problem of racism -- that isn't utterly stupid.

Admittedly, however, this simple scientific fact has evidently not as yet penetrated general consciousness or persuaded a large number of people from behaving in ways that display and dramatize their continuing confusion concerning the matter. But both those who play the part of "Racist Pigs" (whatever the "Race" and what's wrong with Pigs? They are intelligent!) and those whose roles so far have been to suffer the constant pangs of, and rebel against, real "Racism" are thereby distracted, perhaps as intended, from the resolution of their easily resolved and far more important common problem of economic exploitation, economic injustice and/or simple economic oversight by simple economists. Resolve the important problems, the economic distribution and incentive problems, and "racism" as we now know it will almost vanish.

Any residual "racism" (after Socioeconomic Democracy has universally solved the really important economic distribution and incentive problems -- and, for that matter, the production, productivity and productiveness problems) will certainly not be something to fear, dread or even get bent out of shape over. Rather, any vestiges of "racism" would then be something to ridicule, or at least laugh at, or, more thoughtfully yet, pity, or, more thoughtfully yet, ignore, while paying attention to the far more interesting, delightful and fascinating aspects of life on this beautiful Planet Earth -- home of this beautiful Human Race.

Sexism. The "problem" of "sexism," we respectfully submit (and portions of the tradition-shattering 2008 USA Presidential election run-up dramatically displayed), is very much like the "problem" of "racism" -- at least in certain crucial aspects and structure. It will become apparent that a significant portion of practically anything that could at all reasonably be referred to as harmful and undesirable "sexism" would be eliminated when the current decidedly undemocratic and patriarchal socioeconomic system has been replaced with SeD. It is reserved for the reader to think of literally dozens of reasons why this will be so and dozens of examples of what might be expected with a locally appropriate democratic socioeconomic system.

Untamed Technology. As will be seen, SeD reduces the societal problems caused by presently motivated and incentivized technology, as well as provides incentive for the redirection of technological development towards greater satisfaction of human needs. That is to say, Socioeconomic Democracy would help realize the desirable but unrealized promise of technology, as well as reduce and help eliminate the undesirable but unfortunately realized harmful potentials of technology.

Being guaranteed an income -- minimal though it may initially be -- people could, and some portion of them would, refuse to work on technological projects not clearly dedicated to the well being of all society and the environment. The relationship here to involuntary employment should be clear. Further, this guaranteed income could, and at least a portion of it would, be devoted to the development of societally profitable appropriate technology -- as opposed to personally profitable but societally detrimental technological development economically encouraged by many present socioeconomic system arrangements and incentives. As with other societal problems, the beneficial effects of a democratically set universal guaranteed income, in taming technology for the unequivocal advantage of all humanity, depend upon the magnitude of that

income. If that magnitude were democratically set at a subsistence level, the impact would be quite significant and beneficial.

Just as important, those at or near the democratically set maximum allowable personal wealth limit would be economically encouraged to give appropriate thought to the trade-off between short-term personal gain and possible long-term societal loss resulting from an exploited potential of technology. For if, overall, society is harmed by particular technological developments (as is frequently the case, presently), society could increase its democratically set guaranteed income to offset the added expense of rectifying the harm.

Conservation would then logically imply societal reduction of the maximum allowable personal wealth limit to finance any actual increase in societally determined and provided minimum income guarantees. On the other hand, technological developments that significantly benefit society in general would at the same time tend to personally benefit the still-wealthy participants in the hypothesized democratic socioeconomic system, since these developments hold the promise of eventually raising the MAW limit.

Welfare Reform. If the reader (gentle or not, but certainly diligent) has gotten this far, it should be “perfectly clear” by now that a fully blossomed Socioeconomic Democracy would indeed “end welfare as we know it.” In its place would be an advanced socioeconomic system that would allow society to much more easily, realistically, productively, satisfyingly, efficiently, effectively, ecologically and democratically attempt to guarantee the General Welfare of a Democratic Society, Humanity and Posterity.

Conclusion. The interested reader is urged to develop and extend for herself the ramifications and implications of Socioeconomic Democracy in those areas of particular personal interest. Contemporary socioeconomic systems are truly prolific so far as producing problems; work remains to be done. Then, of course, there is the whole new realm of desirable future democratic possibilities, which beckon and beg to be thought about, explored and satisfyingly lived.

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[21] An earlier draft of this DSeP was first published on the Pelicanweb (July & August, 2008), in its two parts.

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