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Debate Transcript: Capitalism vs. Socialism

Yen - Socialism Argument: Socialism is an economic system where everyone owns the factor of production, which are labor, entrepreneurship, capital goods, and resources. In my side of the argument, socialism is a better system than capitalism in terms of advancing society and the economy of a country, where it promotes stability, equality, democracy, and other factors.

From a socialist's point of view, capitalism is unequal, unstable, and undemocratic. An article by Oxfam stated that the combined wealth of the richest 1% in the world will surpass the rest of the population, showing the large disparity in income. Also, every few decades a capitalist country experiences an economic downturn, not due to external factors such as war, but because of the system itself. It is a cycle where the economy turns bad, the top 1% loses business, and in turn millions of workers lose their jobs, income, and method of survival, consequently creating a big crash in the economy. Lastly, capitalism is undemocratic because their "democracy" does not apply to large, private enterprises. The companies can gain monopoly over a field of business and the owners decide on the pay of the workers, which may turn into modern "slavery" where employees are unpaid or underpaid.

The above are all highlights of capitalism's faults. Instead, socialism strives to prevent these faults from happening. It gives everyone fair and equal economic and financial rights, and offers incentives and opportunities for the people to contribute to the system. Socialism eliminates competition for survival and poverty. This means that no one is discriminated against and the system can provide equal access to health care, education, and other needed support, due to the lack of inequality. Socialism also promotes democracy, where there is equal decision making and grants workers greater control of the means of production and their workplace. It also eliminate exploitation by the owners of the workplace, or eliminating modern "slavery", which underpaid and unpaid workers, and allow them equal pay based on the market conditions. Lastly, socialism ends recession/depression by rationally and democratically planning the economy on the basis of meeting human needs.

Jose - Argument: Capitalism is the best economic system there can be in the world. By "best" I mean that it's not perfect, but it works. Socialism makes a lot of great promises, but always underdelivers and fails to achieve important goals. One sad part about this is that as I have experienced, nearly all of academia and academic departments in the United States are filled with a really leftist point of view and impose a progressive anti-capitalism ideology on all students, and while this has helped develop my critical thinking substantially by being constantly "challenged" by left-leaning college textbooks, I think academia should strive for a beautiful balance between the two. Let's now state factual claims that dismantle the socialism swindle. First, as both a Panamanian and Latin-American, I can share what is happening in Venezuela. As opposition mentioned in her opening argument, socialism is where the state owns all means of production. Hugo Chavez attempted to do this in Venezuela with catastrophic results. According to the Borgen Project, a project started by important

American leaders, 90% of Venezuela lives in poverty. Let's also take a look at Cuba, a well-known socialist government where the state even attempts to hide poverty rates by setting shady statistic-counting methods. According to the Bertelsmann Foundation, to count as "poor" in the government's purview, a person has to meet four criteria: " (1) monthly salaried income below approximately \$4 per month; (2) did not receive remittances from abroad, did not work in a hard-currency sector in Cuba such as tourism; (3) did not grow food (thus by definition no one in a rural area was poor); and (4) job compensation did not include a free or subsidized cafeteria. When you take a look at problems like these, it is easy to visualize why socialism is a lie. In addition, famous socialists claim that their economic system can make people "happier" without the constraints of greedy corporate owners and the unregulated desires of people left to their own devices. Socialists believe that capitalist societies are "impersonal" and with almost no "sense of solidarity" which according to Durkheim increases suicide rates, but while many of them cite Emile Durkheim to prove this, reality is again what dismantles socialism. Let's take a look at what happened in communist Germany in 1977. In 1977, the communist German government attempted to hide their own government's GDR(German Democratic Republic) statistics in which they stopped counting suicides when East Germany (socialist Germany) had the second-highest suicide rate in Europe, second only to Hungary, and suppressed reports of it according to The People's State: East German Society from Hitler to Honecker by Mary Fulbrook. This proves societies which strive for less "anomie" and "less" division of labor actually possess even higher suicide rates, according to the movie Das Leben Der Anderen. Lastly, capitalism has lifted millions out poverty, ameliorated people's standard of living, and even given a lot of scientific and academic progress to nations like the United States, while countries like Cuba still struggle academically.

Yen - Response: From the opposition's argument, I have understood that capitalism is the best economic system, albeit not perfect, because unlike socialism, it does not under deliver their promises, hide actual poverty statistics, or have results as catastrophic as what happened to Venezuela. Although, I would have to mention that capitalism, similar to the previous statements about socialism, also have under delivered their promises, especially in the sense of democracy and equality. The opposition failed to mention that in a capitalist country, it is possible for the rich to purchase political favors, and even change statistics to their favor. For example, in the case of a major crude oil company that affects the environment but buys out and publishes reports that state the otherwise, same in the case for political decisions and statistics.

Jose - Response: It would be totally acceptable to state that capitalism, equality and democracy sometimes don't go hand in hand. But capitalism still proves to have achieved conspicuous progress when it comes to equality of opportunity, education, and freedom of choice. To illustrate with an important example, I will talk about Higher Education in both Cuba and the United States, and mostly all prosperous capitalist nations like England and Angela Merkel's Germany. How come nearly all universities in the top 100 world university

rankings are mostly Anglo-Saxon, effectively beating out any other developed countries' universities (even China, a socialist country). The Top 100 universities in the QS World University Rankings 2020 depicts that out of 100 world universities 64 are of Anglo-Saxon origin, or from countries where English or German is spoken. This is because unlike, utopia-like socialist dreams of "equality" and where everything is so free and amazing, the best quality of college education can only come from colleges whose tuition is not free of charge. No country with a free tuition economic model possesses universities in the Times Higher Education top 30 best World Universities.

In Germany, where this model has been attempted (to no success) has not produced good results. Quartz magazine states that "the shift to dependence on government funding, combined with the increase in enrollment, has also meant a 10% decline in spending per student in the last few years, the OECD reports". In addition to the issue that despite free-college intentions to increase the enrollment from disadvantaged groups, University of Munich economist and director of the Ifo Center for the Economics of Education, Ludger Woessmann, states: "In Germany, making tuition free hasn't led to any noticeable change in the demographics of who goes to college". So this is important when considering what happens when Marxist-leaning policies are applied to reality.

Yen - Rebuttal: The opposition argument claimed that capitalism has lifted millions out of poverty, made living conditions better, has made contributions both scientific and academic to develop their countries yet countries like Cuba are still unable to do the same. Also in the response it was mentioned that the best quality of college education can only come from colleges that need tuition to be paid. But, it is illogical since it is because of capitalism that there are poverty stricken people, and even academic-wise, the education can only serve people with higher income. Free education in capitalist countries is not top quality education, but it does not mean that top quality, free education does not exist. Although not in rankings, there are public education whose quality is comparable to private universities. Also, referring to Cuba, Cuba is not a perfect form of a socialist country as it did not bring the promised freedom and equality, thus not a convincing example.

Jose - Rebuttal: The opposition claimed for example, that capitalism also fails to make people "happy" and that the rich can purchase political favors, and while corruption is not at all tolerated in prosperous capitalist places like Singapore, Taiwan or the United States the problem of socialism is deeper than this. Socialists again, prove to be skilled deceivers. Corruption and lack of equality and opportunity and therefore, happiness can be even more ugly in socialist countries. According to the Bertelsmann Foundation, "the quality of schooling has also deteriorated at the academic high school level, evident in high failure rates in university admissions exams. Private sector alternatives have emerged in education, principally tutoring as well as private instruction in languages and music", and that "petty corruption has begun to affect access to health care, including admissions to hospitals and for expensive procedures" and even continues to add that: "Favoritism for children of national

leaders seems to have risen. The government's sharp cutback on university enrollment appears to have come at the expense of those from lower-income families, nonwhites and, to some extent, women. They had concentrated disproportionately in university programs in the humanities and the social sciences, which have been cut back the most" for a shocking revelation about the reality of socialism and gives a score of "6" to Equality of Opportunity in Cuba.

Yen - Final Argument: My last argument to make is that socialism although it has faults in the system, it is still a more beneficial system than capitalism. For example, the opposition mentions that socialism under delivers their promises and strives for utopia-like equality. Time and time again when socialism fails to deliver fully their promises is when a faulty government does not offer enough incentives for the population to be rid of their greed, and also the government does not gather enough cooperation from the public, and as a result they rebel against the government. In a good form of socialism, the government is able to provide to the population based on needs, and the cooperation of the public is crucial for socialism to succeed. As for utopia-like equality, socialism does not strive to achieve that. Socialism wants to eliminate the disparity between income in the population and the difference in living conditions, not to control the population to a fixed set of patterns. Also, in the case of education, in a socialist country all breakthrough research is available to the public, either to use or to improve. This will result in top quality education no matter the location or price-point. That is why socialism is still the preferable system if people are looking for chances to improve their lifestyle and also be part in innovating their society, instead of leaving everything to the top tier people.

Jose - Final Argument: My final argument simply consists in the fact that history has taught humanity, and might continue to do so, that socialism is a dangerous system. This is not to say, for example that capitalism is 100% perfect, but it conspicuously achieves higher results and goals more efficiently and quickly by not relying on utopias of collective state-owned means of production, science, progress, because it does take into account the individuality of each person, their psychology, IQ, abilities, proclivities, and by doing this it avoids socialist educational-catastrophes like the "high failure rates in university exams" that the Bertelsmann Foundation reports. Could you imagine a nation-wide high failure rates of SATs university exams of say 80% to 90% in the United States? Basically no one would graduate college or succeed in life, which is why (and a lot more too) many Cubans have engaged in a massive Cuban diaspora, seeking to flee their country. If socialism can make people so happy by "eliminating" poverty as Marx, Engels and Durkheim attempt to depict, why are their citizens such as Cubans, and East-Germans before the fall of the Berlin Wall always trying to escape their socialist dreamy countries? For this and much more I hope people will always choose wisely in their lives and be smart to know the truth.