

Volume 002
Issue No. 01



STRATEGY NEEDED
THE FIGHT FOR
FIFTEEN



HEALTHCARE
TALE FROM A BROKEN
SYSTEM



POLAND
CENTER LEFT'S LONG
DECLINE

THE RED VINE



Journal of the Red Party

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What Political Alternative to Sanders?

by Peter Moody

In a previous article in the *Red Vine* (<http://red-party.com/the-sanders-trajectory/>), I overviewed a probable trajectory of Bernie Sanders' presidential campaign, noting that, at least as the campaign and the candidate are concerned, any upsurge for the (broadly-defined) left will likely be limited. It should be the case that the Sanders campaign will provide some opportunities for communists to engage with people about what socialist and independent working class politics actually entails, but expecting such a shift in political consciousness to happen quickly and within the Sanders campaign is very unlikely. Nevertheless Sanders' supporters are at least partially right to say that his campaign is- at least in some ways- something which has not been seen to the US political landscape in quite some time, and there is a chance for the advancement of explicitly socialist politics at this stage, even if the Sanders campaign itself will ultimately be a dead-end.

One the one hand, this is a sentiment shared by a number of other groups on the left. A debate (or at least an exchange of views) between the International

Socialist Organization and Socialist Alternative - respectively one of the largest and one of the highest profile self-described revolutionary socialist groups in the US- suggests shades of agreement in terms of what happens after the Sanders campaign inevitably winds up. Both groups acknowledge that the Sanders campaign will no doubt excite a number of people who have been politicized in the previous few years, note that an "independent political alternative" is needed, and consider it necessary to engage with Sanders supporters to argue for such an alternative. The main difference is in terms of degrees; the ISO presents a more sceptical view of Sanders' campaign, and argues that socialists need to argue against the electoral trap of working within the Democratic Party and keep people "in the streets," where ultimate power presumably lies. Socialist Alternative, on the other hand, presents a much more positive view of the Sanders campaign, implicitly arguing in favor of Sanders as a political standard bearer by supporting the idea that Sanders continue his campaign after the Democratic primaries, though noting that "movements" should continue even if Sanders doesn't run as an independent.

Table of Contents:

General Content

- ▶ **What Political Alternative to Sanders?**
Pg. 02
- ▶ **Strategy & the Direction in the Fight for \$15**
Pg. 07
- ▶ **Party Update**
Pg. 08
- ▶ **Poland: The Fall of Social Democracy**
Pg. 09
- ▶ **A Sick System**
Pg. 10

Editorial

- ▶ **Theses on Electoral Tactics**
Pg. 04

Letters

- ▶ **The Channel Will Belong to the Public Domain**
Pg. 12

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On the other hand, very little is said about what any sort of political alternative should be aiming for. This is somewhat understandable given the fairly limited scope of the statements issued as part of the debate, but even when taken together with other articles each organization has written on the Sanders campaign and political strategy generally, the broader picture is still left vague, and rests primarily on what it seen as the next step. The question of what type of political party is ultimately needed and what that party would do if it managed to win political power is largely left unsaid, and in terms of an organized political alternative, this vagueness tends to lead to the largest already-existing alternative to the Democrats- the Green Party. As a result, whether they support this or not, they fall into supporting an organization that, while providing an opposition voice to the Democrats, does not provide an opposition voice to capitalism and the American state generally,

and as such fall vastly short of what a socialist or communist party would hopefully seek to achieve.

This weakness actually present itself in a similar way as the “left-wing of the possible” arguments arguments for social reform presented by more moderate sections of the left due to the Green Party's position as a “non-systemic opposition” party-one which opposes the main parties in power from the left, but doesn't fundamentally oppose the system that those parties uphold or the state that both parties operate in. As a result, even socialist campaigns tend to focus overwhelmingly on issues like wages, rent control, and other economic reforms-certainly positive for improving the condition of working class life, but there is no explicit direction from these reform proposals to a program which could at least pose the question of the working class taking over society. Even when such concepts are alluded to- such as

in vague calls for “revolution” which can easily fit for a gamut of candidates from Bernie Sanders to Jill Stein to Peta Lindsey- they serve as little more than cheering slogans as opposed to a clear proposal for working class political power.

So, while an alternative does need to be constructed, it also needs to be counterposed to the other alternatives that currently exist. In particular, rather than fighting for a better government, socialists need to build a better opposition that, while putting forth concrete proposals of what it would do if and when it formed a government, stands in resolute contrast to all existing parties of reform. True, such an opposition movement needs to be as broad based as possible, involving all sorts of organizations and campaigns, but without a sense of direction and goals, adaptation towards the status quo will happen all the more quickly. It won't be an easy argument to win, but it will be necessary.

Notes

1. The statements of each organization can be accessed, with differing introductions via the ISO's Socialist Worker at <http://socialistworker.org/2015/05/20/what-should-the-left-say-about-sanders> or the website of Socialist Alternative's eponymous paper at <http://www.socialistalternative.org/2015/05/20/debate-what-should-left-say/>

Theses on Electoral Tactics

Editorial by the Red Party Central Committee

The Red Party's call for a socialist alliance, first expressed in the January edition of this paper, has come under scrutiny from some comrades over the last few months. Given this, along with some stirrings in the direction of left electoral cooperation in the United States - namely the recent Independent Electoral Action Conference held in Chicago - this is a particularly opportune time to elaborate on the Red Party's approach to communist electoral policy and how it relates to the vital need to re-found today's divided revolutionary left into a democratic and united Communist Party.

1. Elections under capitalism are an arena of struggle which revolutionaries would be ill-advised to ignore. For millions - despite a growing apolitical resignation over the current situation - they are the only time, barring conditions of mass struggle, at which the masses are engaging with political questions. A communist goes to where the masses are, to show them what we stand for. Even in the most reactionary institutions we will find proletarian militants deceived by such reaction. Our duty is to win the vast majority to the fight for radical democracy as the first step in establishing communism. Running candidates for office on a communist platform not only presents our ideas to a wider audience than is typically possible but can also expose the contradictions and limitations of bourgeois democracy. All this being said, we do not fetishize elections as applicable in all circumstances - above all this is a tactic to be utilized as part of the class struggle. But ruling out electoral intervention a priori in the name of "building the movement" (as though they are two mutually exclusive concepts) is an abstentionist viewpoint, a retreat into spontaneity fetishism.

2. We maintain that the goal of a socialist electoral campaign must be not to build the profile of a sect, but to advance the consciousness and self-

organization of the working class. There is no strict dichotomy between "running to win" (i.e., running for a seat where there is a realistic prospect of victory - namely, safe Democratic or Republican seats with no opposition from the other major party) and using the race for agitation and propaganda purposes. Where to run is a tactical question, and competitive districts must not be ruled out if communists are to present a rounded challenge to the capitalist system and its parties before our audience. In all cases, communists should vigorously promote a revolutionary-democratic perspective - including but by no means limited to proportional representation, unicameralism, right of recall for elected officials and representatives on an average worker's wage - as an antidote to this country's severe restrictions on democracy. Vote-chasing by diluting or concealing the communist program is a form of opportunism that ultimately hinders our cause by miseducating our class and preventing us from accurately estimating the level of support for our ideas in society. This is not to say that the Red Party supports running candidates on a platform of "socialism or bust." In any given election, a principled minimum program should be drawn up that reflects regional, national or international considerations.

3. There are clear limits on how effective the electoral campaign of a single far-left organization can be. Take, for example, the spectacle of multiple competing socialist candidates for President every general election, or uncoordinated socialist campaigns for state and federal offices that serve primarily to broaden the "market share" of this or that particular sect. While these candidacies deserve critical support and engagement, they are not sufficient to make socialism once again a mass force in society.

4. Given the weak and divided nature of the socialist left today, it's natural for the question of alliance and coalition to emerge. In the past two years there have been some positive developments in Chicago with the Chicago Socialist Campaign (CSC.) The CSC is a city-based coalition involving the International Socialist Organization, Socialist Alternative and Solidarity to contest municipal elections - Jorge Mujica in last year's aldermanic election. The campaign drew in a layer of unaffiliated radicals and, despite difficulties in coordinating and mobilizing its supporters (as well as equivocations on its stance toward Democratic Mayoral candidate Jesus "Chuy" Garcia), was able to win 12.5% of the vote - an eminently respectable result from which to advance in the future. A similar initiative has appeared in San Diego, which is running Sandra Galindo in the 2016 municipal election.

5. The Green Party wants to have its cake and eat it too. Left-wing Greens want "socialist" politics (or more precisely, old-school social democratic politics) without being open with them. The party as a whole presents a cynical "we are everything to everyone" point of view - not unlike the Democratic Party. Hiding inside of the Green Party is just that: hiding. That said, we welcome Green Party support of openly socialist and working class candidates like the endorsement offered to Kshama Sawant by the King County Greens. At the present time, electoral non-aggression agreements are a principled way to avoid conflict between forces left of the Democrats without hiding away openly socialist viewpoints.

6. While a communist political organization cannot control candidates and office holders it critically supports who are from other formations (for example, a Congressperson from a hypothetical future Labor Party), we can and must impose collective control over our own public representatives. We do not support an approach where the proletarian party or pre-party formation's label is available on an individualistic basis, nor do we dismiss out of hand the possibility of the

organization's office-holders gradually detaching themselves from the communist program - adapting to bourgeois ideology and the bourgeois state. A number of measures from our movement's history are useful in preventing this. First, communist deputies should be paid no more than the average worker's wage for their constituencies, with the rest of their salaries going to the movement. This is already common practice on the left and so will not be further elaborated here. Second, we advocate a two-tiered party control over the candidate or representative: at the local (committee) level and subject to supervision by the party's central body.

7. While we call for critical support of socialist candidates independent of the Democratic Party even in spite of programmatic limitations, we maintain that a serious campaign must be waged against economism if the revolutionary left is to present a genuine anti-capitalist challenge and a credible vision of the alternative society we seek. "Economism" is the raising of bread-and-butter demands and policies to the detriment of democratic demands; essentially, 'pure' economic agitation as a substitute for high politics.

For representative examples, see Kshama Sawant's 2013 and 2015 election platforms with their single-minded focus on the minimum wage and rent control, respectively. Or take a look at the Party for Socialism and Liberation's election materials, in which political democracy is not so much as an afterthought. Of course, certain demands can and should be given priority in given campaigns, but economism as a tendency starts from a false premise - the idea that trade-unionist level struggles will spontaneously tend to grow over into political struggle and socialist consciousness. This places an illusory level of hope in elemental struggle while downplaying the struggle for revolutionary-democratic politics both as a means to advance the working class's position under capitalism and as the only tenable foundation for workers' rule in the future. This vitally includes agitation against the sacred cow of American patriotism, the undemocratic U.S. Constitution.



8. A Marxist program is both essential for orienting revolutionary electoral interventions and the foundation on which a new Communist Party will be built. Even a weak or partial program would still be a great advance if it meant further unifying our movement, but our definition of program revolves around the concepts of proletarian internationalism, class-political independence and extreme democracy. Program embodies the general strategic orientation we need to progress from present conditions to socialism, and in doing so doing embodies the possibility of merging spontaneous struggles over various issues into a generalized resistance against capital and the state. This program combines the general concepts and goals of communism (the maximum program) with a section outlining immediate demands and what measures would be needed to place state power in the hands of the proletariat (the minimum program.)

That is the basis on which a communist party would take governmental power - full implementation of the minimum program. The logical conclusion here is that a revolutionary socialist party shouldn't "form a government" (in parliamentary terms) only to go on to administer capitalism, whether a 'friendlier' version or otherwise. In American terms this means socialist candidates shouldn't accept executive positions - governors, mayors et cetera.

9. Under capitalism, the socialist alliance should be one that sees itself and its candidates / office-holders as a radical oppositionist force. This alliance should itself be a democratic one, with an eye toward existing as a living and participatory membership organization even outside of election cycles. A unifying force both in the immediate term and as part of the longer-term transformation of the socialist left from a patchwork of bureaucratic-centralist sects into a Communist Party worthy of the name: one that acts as the political center around which a regenerated workers' movement and its organizations, from unions to cooperatives, can cohere.

The 2016 general election is an opportunity for the socialist left to unite on this basis, with a joint slate of Congressional candidates. Since all 435 seats in the House of Representatives are up for election, a socialist alliance could affect a nationally-coordinated impact while also raising the political bankruptcy of the vapid popularity contest that is the presidential election. That being said, a national alliance that campaigns for local and gubernatorial races offers advantages of its own in so far as material hurdles are lower and the various left organizations are better integrated into their local areas.

Strategy & Direction in the Fight for \$15

by Gabriel Pierre

The fight for \$15 scored a limited but noteworthy advance last week in New York, where Democratic Governor Andrew Cuomo's Wage Board (an executive commission comprised of representatives from both capitalists and labor unions) coming out in favor of a three year phase-in to \$15/hour (up from \$8.75) for the state's fast food workers. Because of the sectoral nature of the raise (applying only to employees of fast food chains with more than 30 locations), Cuomo is expected to approve the recommendation as an executive act.

This news comes on the heels of last week's decision by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors to raise the wage in the County's jurisdiction (unincorporated towns) to \$10.50 next year with incremental shifts to \$15 in 2020, at which point it will be indexed to the Consumer Price Index to adjust for inflation. This plan is basically a mirror of what the City of Los Angeles approved earlier this year, and is one of several local-level initiatives raised since the movement came to prominence in Seattle and, to an extent, SeaTac. Massachusetts can be included in this list, with an agreement between state-

employed SEIU home health care workers and Republican Governor Charlie Baker raising their pay rate to \$15/hour by 2018.

A pattern is emerging out of this patchwork that should be concerning to living-wage campaigners, namely that of phase-in periods, caveats for "small business" (rather generously defined in many cases) and exclusions for certain categories of workers. To begin with, \$15 itself is already decidedly not a living wage in large metropolitan areas¹, with a hypothetical worker in L.A. still not able to eke out a decent standard of living even assuming no dependents, a forty-hour workweek and no paid days off. While some of the new minimum wage regulations are attached to cost of living adjustments, these don't come into effect until after inflation has already eaten into the new wage's value by the end of the phase-in period. Add to this the uncertainty of partial jurisdictions and confusion over who exactly is covered (what counts as 'fast food'?). While communists support any increase in the living standards of our class, no matter how partial it may be, clearly we have here a recipe for greater state bureaucracy, demoralization in the movement and continued

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poverty (not to mention wage theft) for low-wage workers.

This type of situation is amenable to the labor bureaucracy, the upper caste of the labor movement whose conditions of existence have more in common with the petty-bourgeoisie than with low-wage workers or rank-and-file trade unionists. The current labor leadership - with some honorable exceptions - has a clientelist outlook, using worker

mobilizations as a pressure tactic and bargaining chip to gain limited concessions from Democratic politicians.

We need a serious strategic change of direction, one based on the long-term struggle to transform our labor movement. The low-wage workers themselves, with all the tenacity and energy they've shown so far, can take the lead here hand-in-hand with SEIU and UFCW militants. 15 Now!

chapters could play a crucial role here. A 15 Now! that stands for a renewed labor movement, democratic and fighting for demands like the \$15 minimum wage and a living wage jobs program (and its corollary, reducing the workweek with no loss in pay) would act as a galvanizing left-wing force in the low wage workers' movement.

Notes

1. http://la.curbed.com/archives/2015/05/every_single_part_of_losangeles_is_unaffordable_on_15_an_hour.php

Party Update

by Mari Pierre-Antoine

Readership for the last issue stands at around 295, but this month's fundraising appeal is a little different. We are asking readers not to donate to us (though we will not turn you away if you do!) but rather to the Communist Party of Great Britain's annual Summer Offensive drive. Many of you are

likely already aware of the CPGB's work in fostering polemic and clarification on the left, and more 'keen-eyed' readers may have noticed some similarities between our calls for a single, united Marxist party in our respective countries. You can show your support for the CPGB and their paper, the *Weekly Worker*, by going to www.weeklyworker.co.uk/worker/subscribe/.



Poland: The Fall of Social Democracy

by Maciej Krzymieniecki

Whenever you ask a Polish person about the left in contemporary Poland, they'll most certainly tell you about SLD. The Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej (Union of Democratic Left) formed first as an electoral alliance in 1991 consisting of the SDRP (Social Democracy of the Republic of Poland), PPS (Polish Socialist Party), trade unions, feminists, unemployed and many other groups within the working class being pressured into an unprivileged position after the free market transformation.

Despite carrying the baggage of ex-Communist politicians in its cadre, in 1993 the SLD managed to win some extraordinary results in the Polish legislative and presidential elections since 1991. In 1993, just two years after its creation, it formed a coalition government with the agrarian PSL party, beating the Christian-Liberal Democratic Union. The government lasted until 1997, but the SLD-UP electoral alliance won again in 2001 with a 41% landslide victory. In the 2005 election, the SLD lost 30% of its voters, winning just over 10% in total. As of today, the party polls between three and four percent. Its youth wing has already been disbanded in many major cities and SLD has lost

control over some councils while dozens of SLD politicians on local as well as national level are leaving the party and continuing as independents.

How did this happen?

The economic and political legacy of the SLD can be compared to the one of New Labour in the United Kingdom. After several attempts of trying to form a government, the SLD has continued to betray the working class through continuing Balcerowicz's plan¹ of mass privatisation and deregulation, disastrous policies causing soaring unemployment, allowing the clergy to take massive amounts of power, the wealth gap getting bigger than ever, biggest immigration wave since 1945, and right wing foreign policies such as joining the EU and sending the country into war in Iraq. One of its major political policies included the introduction of an optional poll tax in 2004 allowing the rich to win a massive tax break of only 19%.

As opposition, the party has learnt nothing. One of its senior members, MEP Janusz Zemke, has criticised Syriza for wanting to raise the minimum wage while General Secretary Krzysztof Gawkowski refused to congratulate Alexis Tsipras as he saw him as being "too far on the left." However, the party didn't

have any problems letting the CIA set up private Guantanamo-like prisons on Polish territory during the Iraq war. For the presidential elections, SLD has nominated Magdalena Ogórek, a pro-business candidate who is less left wing than Ed Miliband as she passionately promised to increase the army spending, lower the corporation tax and other policies which even the far-right politician Korwin has publicly endorsed. Ogórek won 2.4% of the vote in presidential elections, yet the party's ex-Communist leader Leszek Miller refused to step down as leader or admit fault in the party's prospective policies. The massive loss of popularity and dishonouring the name of the left on the Polish political arena has led to a growth in far right. The candidate of the warmongering conservative PiS party, Andrzej Duda, has won the presidential elections while Christian Right musician Pawel Kukiz - whose only point in his programme was to introduce an FPTP (first past the post / "winner-takes-all") electoral system - has won 20% of the vote. It is quite likely that in the parliamentary elections later this year there will be no left-wing representation in the Polish parliament, even if its just in the name, as the SLD isn't predicted to pass the minimum threshold of 5%.

A number of new left wing parties are being formed to fill the vacuum of left wing reformism. Razem (a right-wing party), the Greens and Social Justice Movement Party want to form a new coalition based on social democratic principles, just like the SLD did in 1991. Except this time, the people don't seem too fond of re-branded left-wing populists taking power again, especially since the fringe parties are considering running with the SLD as one force of the left. Where will the voters turn? More and more young people raised in religious and patriotic indoctrination started in 1989 and upheld by the right wing IPN institute are voting for Kukiz, the National Movement and KORWiN, respectively being right-populist, fascist and Tea-

Party like conservative on the political spectrum.

There is virtually no relevant left wing movement in Poland at the moment, and it's quite depressing to watch from abroad as a Pole living in the UK. The experience of the SLD will definitely make people think twice before they let "left wing" populists take power again. The SLD went from 41% to 3% in just over 10 years. It would be far from truth to describe Poland as an inherently right wing nation. Back in 19th century, Engels described Poland as the "most revolutionary Slavic nation" following the successes of the PPS and SDKPiL². Historically, Poland supplied the revolutionary movement not only with leading the legendary strikes from 1905 onwards but

also with the likes of Rosa Luxembourg, Felix Dzierzhinsky and Ludwik Hass. After the experiences of a right wing Bonapartist dictatorship in the interwar period, the experiences of Stalinism, post-Stalinism and the betrayal of SLD, the Polish working class is currently filled with scepticism as well as growing frustration which could cause a political earthquake in Eastern Europe. It is the most challenging task of the Polish left to stop letting the rage be hijacked by reactionary right wing politicians.

Notes

1. Poland's program of "shock therapy" in the post-1989/91 Soviet bloc.
2. Polish Socialist Party and Social-Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania.

A Sick System

by Miah Simone

Twelve - million Americans get misdiagnosed in a hospital each year. In 2011 a study reported that 440,000 people die of treatable diseases in the hospital each year. Such sad news comes to light in this story where a disease that effects two out of ten people under the age of thirty each year. The American healthcare system is crying out for help and this true encounter is only the tip of the iceberg.

I was lucky to have my fully conscious partner (who is a Certified Nursing Assistant) at my side for this whole ordeal. Otherwise I could not be able to say even half of my story.

I started running a little fever. Nothing unusual, I grew up in a home daycare populated by the children of those who could not afford a day off. The unusual was that I had mononucleosis. I started to get progressively weaker and the fever grew until we could no longer ignore it. My partner

drove me to the emergency room. The doctor on staff said I had the flu. We went home.

That night my fever hit 102.9 and I became severely dehydrated, delusional and despondent. We called an ambulance and I was rushed to a different hospital (thank god). Shortly after arriving they deduced that I had the Epstein-Barr Virus, popularly known as the kissing disease. It took nine liters of fluid to rehydrate me and they kept me for a day to

make sure I was alright. They sent me home.

I slept that day away and then received a call. They thought I had a bacterial infection. See they messed up and ordered two sets of blood tests. In the process of the second one they collapsed one of only two easily accessible veins in my arms and scraped some of my skin into the blood sample. After arriving I was asked every five minutes if I was an intravenous (IV) drug user. I was homeless at the time and homeless people do have a higher chance but being insulted was the least of the slights against me.

I was in the hospital for several days. I had saline being pumped into me pretty regularly as I had difficulty swallowing anything besides very tiny sips of water and frozen yogurt (I have yet figure that one out). They kept telling me that they were going to do a swallow test: a test where they make you swallow thickened milk of magnesia, strap you to a table laying down and take CAT scans. Something of an impossibility given my current state (a fact pointed out by my partner.) The staff kept lying to me about when it was to happen. Between that and the hunger my patience could only hold for a couple of days. My partner and I decided we would check out.

Out of the woods I was not. I spent the next six weeks



mostly asleep, without much consciousness or memory of that time. As mentioned before my partner is a CNA. They took care of me, waking up every thirty minutes to take my temperature, helped me maintain basic hygiene and cooked whenever I had enough strength to attempt eating until I was better. Though I still have fatigue episodes.

We discovered a few months later that everyone in my house, except one person, came down with the exact same sickness that landed us all in the exact same hospital. It is from the partner of the original victim that we learned it was a mutated strain of the virus that nearly killed me. The poor soul who first came down with had it for at least six months, gave it to us by using our toothbrushes, treated it with vodka and cold showers because they were trans, without insurance and afraid of the medical system. Not without

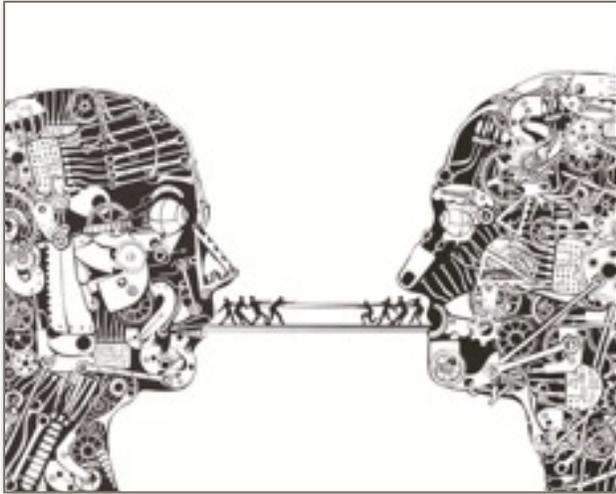
reason: we lived in the South where trans people are occasionally hunted down and killed for sport.

At numerous points this story could have ended happily or, at least, without nearly as much as drama.

My story is not unique: it happens every day all across the United States and, likely, the world. Our medical system is deeply flawed. Private property and the profit motive have turned its purpose into dollar signs. A rational society would make health available to all freely. The good news is that we can have a rational society but only if we learn to think, learn to organize and overturn capitalism. From each according to ability, to each according to need is a principle that can make a better world for all.

Letters

The Channel Will Belong to the Public Domain



by Ben Seattle

Since you began with an introduction I thought I would as well. My name is Miah, and I have been a communist for four years this upcoming August.

Congratulations. Four years. I know this takes courage.

My first encounter with the organized left was with the International Socialist Organization.

Yes, sad thing, that.

I ended up dedicating about two years to that organization before I started to wise up to how undemocratic it was.

Two years? What tipped you off?

I have since moved away from Trotskyism and found my organizational home in the Red Party.

I see. I appreciate, Miah, your ability to express yourself with such clarity, using so few words.

We're very glad that you enjoyed the first eleven courses and very sad that the dessert was not to your taste.

I'll bet you are fucking heartbroken.

We wish to see a united party-movement

I'll bet you do.

and one of the clearest paths we can see to this is common action.

Common action to serve the interest of *which* class? Bourgeoisie? Or Proletariat? I am not attempting to be a nerdy nitpicker. For me, it is a matter of the heart.

The only arena for common action that most of the left

So what is meant by the fascinating term "most of the left?" Could it be... social-democracy? You can bank on it. You are speaking in favor of giving social-democracy veto power over the future. You are speaking in favor of giving social-democracy the ability to place its veto over any project aimed at uniting all who wish to struggle to break the rule of capital. Before I go along with that, I prefer to die.

The only arena for common action that most of the left adheres to, does not have a presence in, and would not be splintered by sectarian theory-mongering (the splitting on the basis of theory rather than program) is elections.

I must make clear, before I begin, that I oppose sectarian theory-mongering. I have never had much truck with mongers of any sort. However, my experience (as a theoretician who has always considered theory a matter of absolute life and death) is that many people, many political trends (including #socdem political trends) have a strong hatred of theory that can make things clear. Kind of the way bible-thumpers and snake-oil salesmen are afraid of the truth.

Which one are you? My guess is you are not a bible-thumper. You tried that. It didn't work.

Your idea to start a revolutionary news service is commendable and we would likely support such a thing if asked.

The news service, by its nature, would be democratic.

If it is genuinely democratic, you don't need anyone's permission (much less mine) to help out. It will be the nature of the project that no one person or center will be able to keep you out, so long as your activity, on balance, serves to build the project—and you have the ability to, so to speak, “make your case” in the public arena in the event of a public challenge.

You can help (and I am asking you to help) by asking me some hard questions. Go ahead. Hit me with your best shot.

We would like to clarify a few things

I love good questions:

involving this idea of yours though.

You give me too much credit to call it my idea.

News services, the great ones at least, have had organizational backing of some form

Very good question.

News services, the great ones at least, have had organizational backing of some form so we must ask independent in what sense? From the two parties, from the sects, from what?

From any and all persons, organizations or institutions which live subject to the veto of their bourgeois masters (or their swarm of social democratic flunkies).

Is that sufficiently clear?

Let me know. There is a lot more I could say.

Now we appreciate the idea of a democratic publication

Maybe you do. Per the above, it is unclear if you understand what it means to be independent, or what it means to be democratic. It is not easy to understand these things. It requires real work. My impression is that you would rather live under the thumb of social democracy.

and strive towards it with our policy of open publishing of all letters sent to us.

Well, that is good. There are many organizations, such as the CVO and the IG, which do not allow readers to post comments on their blogs. For those kinds of organizations, the truth is a terrible smell closing in on them from all directions. It cannot be escaped. It invades even their dreams. No escape.

The nightmare has no pity.

We must ask: is this your idea of democratic in this context or is there something more we do not see?

There is something more.

The channel will be democratic in the way that Occupy's General Assemblies were democratic at the height of the movement in the most militant cities (fall, 2011).

On all the others points for your news service we would not disagree. Though we do add that it should be open about being socialist (not sure if that is what you meant by number 4).

NOTE TO READERS: Miah is making reference to point number four of my proposal: “(4) The news service will be centered around the need overthrow the rule of capital.”

Everything about the news service will be in the public domain. The disagreements, the contradictions, everything. It will all belong to the public domain. All information, all politics, and all power, are coming to the public domain. Nothing can stop this.

Now my question for you (and for anyone around your group) is simple: If you are on the earth for the purpose of struggling to help the proletariat create its own organization (one which is independent and democratic) then will you make this clear to me in unmistakable terms?

All power to the public domain,
Ben Seattle

WHAT WE STAND FOR

The Red Party is a U.S. political organization that fights for working class unity in a single socialist party-movement. A united organization, based on a Marxist program, would turn politics as we know it upside down, injecting the labor and social movements with a renewed sense of confidence and strength.

* A united workers' party-movement would combine political action with economic and social action, including running socialist candidates for office, protests, strikes, co-operatives and mutual aid societies.

* Our organization has the word party in its name, but we recognize that in the world-historic sense there is no revolutionary party in the U.S. today. Instead we have a fractured array of competing sects organized on a bureaucratic basis. Their work is hampered by hyper-activism with little to no long-term strategy, lack of internal democracy and lack of deep roots in the working class. The Red Party organizes day-to-day resistance against injustices spawned by capitalism within the context of strengthening working class organization and building support for socialism.

* Marxists operate through democratic centralism. Through ongoing debate we

seek to achieve unity in action and a common world outlook. As long as they support agreed actions, members have the right to speak openly and form factions to advance their views.

* Marxists oppose all imperialist wars and interventions, from Iraq to Syria, but recognize that ending war permanently means ending capitalism.

* Marxists are internationalists. We strive for the closest unity of the working class and oppressed peoples everywhere. We oppose nationalism in all its forms. We advocate a new revolutionary workers' International. Without an International (a world party), the struggle against Capital is weakened. Capital organizes across borders; so too must we.

* Marxists support industrial unions (organizing workers by industry) rather than the more narrow trade union structure. We support the highest possible level of pan-American union coordination for workers' rights. Bureaucratic leadership and class collaboration, particularly support for the Democratic Party, in the unions must be replaced with democratic revitalization and class independence.

* Marxists are champions of the oppressed. Women's oppression, racism, national oppression and LGBT/QI

oppression are just as much working class questions as are higher pay, union rights and struggles for quality health, housing and education. Marxists demand self-determination for American Indian nations, Hawaii, Puerto Rico and all other territories.

* World capitalism, based on exploitation and a reckless quest for profit, is increasingly putting the future of humanity at risk through war and climate change. World capitalism must give way to world socialism - a society based on freedom, solidarity and a radical extension of democracy.

* Marxists oppose Stalinism, a system of bureaucratic dictatorship that rules in the name of socialism the same way the capitalist class claims to rule in the name of liberty.

* Socialism itself is the first stage of the global transition to communism - a society where war, exploitation, money, classes and states exist only as museum pieces. Communism is the negation of class society and provides the maximum individual and collective freedom.

If you agree with these principles, join the Red Party!

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