

Proposal on Electoral Activity

This is an update to an earlier proposal on electoral work (P07), it has been expanded to include the formation of an ad hoc electoral strategy committee and explanations have been added under each proposal for ease of understanding.

- James Turner

1. Red Party opposes, and will not endorse, runs for executive and law enforcement positions in the bourgeois state.

This is because executive offices, (governor, president, mayor) must manage the day to day functioning of the capitalist system. Their role is to administer the existing order to maximize the accumulation of capital, and as Marxists we know that capital accumulation is the theft of surplus value created by the working class. As revolutionaries who aim to abolish exploitation we cannot also manage that exploitation. Socialists who have tried to govern capitalist society in the interests of the working class have universally failed. Either they have been overthrown by bourgeois forces when they tried to attack capital, as happened in Chile. Or they have been forced by “market forces” to attack the working class in the interests of capital as occurred in France with the Mitterand government.

In terms of law enforcement positions, it should be obvious that a “socialist sheriff” is a contradiction in terms. Especially in America, police are merely the armed wing of capital tasked with defending private property and bourgeois “law and order” against attacks by the working class. Even more than that, American police are clearly a racist institution that regularly get away with the murder of black and brown people. As socialists we call for the dismantling of existing law enforcement and judicial institutions and their replacement with democratic bodies tasked with the protection of human life.

2. In order to be effective, socialist electoral activity must build up the political independence of the working class from capital’s political representatives, expose the broadest possible sections of society to the socialist program, and build up the fighting capacity of the workers movement outside of the halls of bourgeois government. Therefore, any electoral work The Red Party might engage in should meet the following criteria:

Independence from all bourgeois political forces, including The Democratic Party and the petite bourgeois third parties.

Stand on an openly socialist program, including the abolition of the capitalist state, the dictatorship of the proletariat and the expropriation of the expropriators.

Be run in a serious manner that focuses on engaging with the broadest section of the workers on the political questions of the day and works with the movements of the working class in a collaborative manner. Winning the election should be seen as secondary to building up the broad workers movement.

3. The Red Party will form a committee on electoral strategy, to be composed of self selected volunteers and accountable to the Central Committee and general membership. Beginning from the principles proposed on parts one and two of this proposal, this committee will be tasked with developing a proposal on electoral strategy to be proposed at the next convention. This draft strategy document will be non binding, but should form the basis for a formal party wide approach to elections.

4. Until the adoption of a party wide electoral strategy local groups will have a free hand in endorsing candidates, and engaging in electoral initiatives. However, they should provide the broader party and Central Committee with explanations of why they are choosing to engage in specific campaigns along with reports on the effectiveness of these tactics. The electoral strategy committee should be kept in the loop, so that their proposal a can be informed by the actual work of our party in this arena.