



Donald vs. Hillary: A Still Uncertain Election. Both Candidates Remain Unpopular with the Majority of Americans

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Is it possible that Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump will self-destruct well before the election? It certainly looked that way, given one major blunder after another in the days after his nomination at the July 18-21 Republican National Convention in Cleveland.

Here's another question: Or is it possible he can win? Both options are still on the table because despite voting polls both candidates continue to remain unpopular with the majority of Americans.

Meanwhile, in a mass fundraising letter to her supporters this week, Hillary Clinton declared:

« I know what we are capable of doing together. Together we can break down every barrier holding Americans back, and build ladders of opportunity for everyone. America was built by people who had each other's backs, who understood we all have to do our part and that at our best we all rise together. That's the Democratic vision I've worked toward my whole life. »

Who knew this woman, who seemed fairly conservative all her political life, was a secret socialist? As such, however, she should have mentioned slavery, the destruction of Native American society and the gross exploitation of the working class throughout those years of her quaint « all rise together » version of American history.

In recent weeks the billionaire businessman has generated extreme turmoil within his own party by mocking the Muslim parents of a U.S. Army captain killed in Iraq, refusing to support the re-election of key Republicans (such as House Speaker Paul D. Ryan), questioning why he shouldn't use nuclear weapons, and — to top it off — seeming to call for gun owners to protect the 2nd Amendment by, well, shooting Clinton. There's no telling what absurdity he will utter next.

But — don't bet on Hillary Clinton yet to win in November, even though she was ahead in polls in the days after her nomination at the July 25-28 Democratic Convention in Philadelphia. Real Clear Politics combined different six big time national polls in August up to the 12th. The result: Hillary leads by 6.8% — 47.8 to Trumps 41.0. The Aug. 2 CNN tally, not in the combined list, was Clinton, 45%, Trump 37%, Donald Johnson (Libertarian) 10 and the

Green party's Jill Stein, 5%. Gallop Aug. 3 reported the most recent poll of Americans about their views of the candidates, not how they would vote: 62% viewed Trump unfavorably and 52% thought so of Clinton.

Given the unpopularity issue, plus the contradictions in each party between the ruling establishments and rank-and-file and the possibility of staggering surprises or revelations to come in the nearly three months before the election (including the danger of a terrorist attack, and the probability of more computer hacking), nothing is certain at this stage.

Trump reversed himself Aug. 5 and finally endorsed the re-elections of House Speaker Paul D. Ryan and Senators John McCain (Arizona) and Kelly Ayotte (New Hampshire). In return, what used to be the GOP establishment is trying to accommodate to the most bizarre of presidential candidates and to what Stephanie Coontz describes as « the crudest alliance of racists, nativists, misogynists, and 'know-nothings' that America has seen in any national election since before World War II. » Rumors never cease that Republican leaders may find a way to kick him off the ticket before election day. At the same time there is great fear about retaliation from his supporters.

Trump's hard-core right wing constituency remains enthusiastic about their bombastic candidate, despite — or rather because of — his right wing nationalism, racism, anti-Muslim and anti-Latino prejudices, as well as his extraordinary egotism, dishonesty and blatant ignorance. Whether Trump wins or loses, he has galvanized and given strength and direction to millions of Americans who previously kept their bigoted views within the family or expressed them only to fellow haters. Now it's all out there since Trump entered the Republican primaries and may become more intense.

Despite some conservative billionaires and multimillionaires holding back their usual large donations to the Republican presidential race because of Trump's antics and disregard for certain traditional rightist issues, the New York Times reported Aug 4: « Trump all but erased his enormous fund-raising disadvantage against Hillary Clinton in the span of just two months, according to figures released by his campaign Aug. 3, converting the passion of his core followers into a flood of small donations on a scale rarely seen in national politics.

Vermont Sen. Bernard (Bernie) Sanders financed his entire \$200 million campaign on small donations and nearly gained the nomination. He showed for the first time in the modern era that a candidate for high office need not sell out to the plutocracy to obtain electoral power.

Sen. Sanders, who gathered 13,168, 222 primary votes to Clinton's 16,847,084, may have lost the nomination but he succeed in politicizing multimillions of Americans toward progressivism and the left. He has created a mass constituency for social change. Hopefully this force will be organized for action within the next year. Sanders further acquired more power within the Democratic party because of his huge following. It is assumed he will use that influence to promote support for his progressive legislative proposals.

What's Next?

After a year of sharp infighting within America's two ruling parties it is now clear that the traditional Republican establishment has lost its internal struggle for control, and the Democratic establishment won its fight against the liberal left upserge. But this could all change.

If Trump loses in November, the former GOP leadership will quickly return to power, making sure to embrace some of the programs of the fallen candidate in order to retain most of his voters. If he wins, the traditional GOP leadership will seek to exert dominant influence over a president who has no idea how to govern or what to do in office. Republican ultra-conservative Vice Presidential candidate Mike Pence and far right Speaker Ryan among others will see to that. Meanwhile, conservative Old Boys will be plotting to take over after Trump's term ends.

If Clinton loses it seems likely the Democrats will have to reorganize the party and it would be logical for the liberal/left to exert more leadership after years of being silenced during the center right Obama and Clinton eras. If Hillary wins, not much will change. However, a lot depends the pro-Bernie forces. It is not clear whether they will become an independent organization, the left liberal sector of the party or other configurations.

The problems afflicting the working class are finally being talked about in the U.S. today because they are among the reasons why both official parties are experiencing serious uprisings from their generally pliant rank and file voters. The fact is both parties were long aware that the working class and sectors of the middle class have been experiencing mounting hard times over recent decades— and they did nothing to alleviate this situation. Guess who made the following statement and when it was made:

“You go into some of these small towns in Pennsylvania, and like a lot of small towns in the Midwest, the jobs have been gone now for 25 years and nothing’s replaced them. And they fell through the Clinton Administration, and the Bush Administration, and each successive administration has said that somehow these communities are gonna regenerate and they have not. And it’s not surprising then they get bitter, they cling to guns or religion or antipathy to people who aren’t like them or anti-immigrant sentiment or anti-trade sentiment as a way to explain their frustrations.”

These prescient words were uttered at a California campaign fundraiser in 2008 by Sen. Barack Obama who, since then, has taken no significant action to mitigate this crisis. Indeed, it only seems to have convinced him to fight harder for passage of the Trans Pacific Partnership trade agreement, which will eliminate more jobs.

Clinton supported the TPP for years until it became evident last year that Bernie’s opposition to the pact was popular with many voters, and she turned against it. It is notable, however, that when the Sanders contingent sought to insert opposition to the TPP into the party platform, Clinton delegates defeated the measure. News reports indicate Obama will launch a major effort to pass the trade pact before he leaves office in January. He has two reasons for pushing further. The TPP will highly benefit U.S. and international corporations and, though rarely mentioned, it is a key part of the administration’s efforts to reduce China’s influence in East and South Asia. China has not been invited to join, of course,

The Economic System

Trump revealed his economic program Aug. 8. Although he tried to make it appear his plan benefitted all the American people, including the working class, it turned out to be a typical right wing neoliberal program vastly benefitting the ruling class. The New York Times commented editorially Aug. 9:

« Trump said that he wanted to usher in 'economic renewal,' but most of his proposals would hurt the economy, rack up huge deficits, accelerate climate change and leave the country isolated from the world. In a speech billed as a blueprint for stimulating growth and creating jobs, Mr. Trump offered a grab bag of ideas that borrow from discredited supply-side economics, the fossil fuel industry's wish list and 'America First' isolationism....

« Mr. Trump told the Detroit Economic Club that he would cut taxes to an extent not seen since Ronald Reagan was in the White House. He said he would slash the corporate tax rate to 15%, arguing that the current statutory 35% is one of the highest among developed countries. He did not mention that the average effective corporate tax rate was 18.1% in 2015, including state and local taxes.... »

In trying to understand why both official political parties put the needs of the 1% to 10% of the people first and those of the rest of the population second, keep in mind: Despite their differences, both parties adhere to neoliberal capitalism — the contemporary resurgence of 19th century ideas associated with laissez-faire economic liberalism. The Republicans are stauncher advocates, of course. Such a system usually transfers control of economic matters to the private sector. It insists that governments must limit subsidies, minimize social spending for the people, reduce [deficit spending](#), limit protectionism, back deregulation of private enterprise and privatize businesses run by the state. Its goal is to « free » the economy by eliminating state-imposed regulations and barriers. It's that system that is the problem.

Within this neoliberal context the plutocracy prefers that the U.S. remains a two-party electoral system — one party far right, the other center right, functioning as the « lesser evil, » which, in this case, Hillary is to the Donald. This insures there will be continual « democratic » struggle between two parties, but all well within the assigned economic system. (There are those, such as economist Paul Krugman, who view the Democratic Party as center left. The last time the party was center left was in the 1960s when it was responsible for some amazing reforms and social programs. Today's party is much closer to the now obsolete Moderate Republicans, hence center right. For example, Obama's only significant, though flawed, social program, the Affordable Care Act, was a copy of the then Moderate Republican Gov. Mitt Romney's 2006 health plan for Massachusetts.)

The two-party proviso is why it is so difficult to construct a viable national left third party in America. The last serious national effort to do so was the left wing Progressive party in 1948 when Roosevelt's former Vice President Henry A. Wallace ran against Democrat Harry Truman and Republican Thomas Dewey. The Progressives opposed Truman's beginning stages of the Cold War against the USSR and demanded the end of nuclear weapons. They blasted Jim Crow racism supported by the Democratic southern Congressional delegation, and backed women's rights, worker rights and civil rights. The new party was supported by communists, socialists and the left. It was rebaited viciously through the campaign, but it managed to obtain 2.4% of the popular vote. The subsequent crackdown on the political left lasted for decades.

There are a number of left political third parties in America, nearly all of them quite small and ignored by the media. Of these, several represent various socialist tendencies and several others operate within a capitalist perspective.

As a result of the Bernie Sanders campaign and his popularization of democratic socialism,

the Green Party — which in the 2012 election championed « responsible stakeholder capitalism » — this year decided it sought a decentralized « alternative economic system » to capitalism. The nature of that system wasn't thoroughly defined but it was based on « workplace and community democracy. » The Greens declared:

« We believe the old models of capitalism (private ownership of production) and state socialism (state ownership of production) are not ecologically sound, socially just, or democratic and that both contain built-in structures that advance injustices. Instead we will build an economy based on large-scale green public works, municipalization, and workplace and community democracy. Some call this decentralized system ecological socialism, communalism, or the cooperative commonwealth but whatever the terminology, we believe it will help end labor exploitation, environmental exploitation, and racial, gender, and wealth inequality and bring about economic and social justice due to the positive effects of democratic decision making. »

This sounds as though it was quickly put together with a lot of loose ends.

The Green party is expected to benefit considerably in November because an undetermined number of Bernie's supporters will not vote for Clinton, and the Green party views itself as the alternative. Green presidential candidate Dr. Jill Stein, who obtained less than 1% in the 2012 election, may get 5% this year because she has been heavily courting Bernie fans since he backed Clinton after leading the fight against her.

The Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL) is also fielding a woman candidate for president in a number of states. She is revolutionary socialist activist and union leader Gloria LaRiva, who won the important nomination of California's large Peace and Freedom party Aug. 13. Her running mate in this state is Dennis Banks, a lifelong activist for social justice and co-founder of the American Indian Movement. They call for socialist reforms in the state.

A Woman Candidate

It is long past time for a woman to be elected to the White House. This is a major matter of gender equity that must be addressed and supported. It cannot, of course, be addressed adequately unless the politics of the candidate selected for this historic role actually will fight to fulfill the social, economic and political needs and demands of the majority American working families who have been neglected for decades by both parties.

One stunning example of such neglect was casually articulated to a reporter for Democracy Now who was randomly asking questions of Bernie supporters picketing outside the convention. « My name is Jacinta Mack. I'm 35 years old. I'm from Queens, New York. And I've been in Philadelphia since Sunday. I'm here as a Bernie supporter and protesting. » Asked « can you describe this sign that you're carrying? » She replied:

« It is a big poster board that is carved out with Bernie's name on one side and 'Never Hillary' on the other side. When I was younger, my family was on welfare, and Bill Clinton was in office. And they passed welfare reform. We weren't qualified for food stamps any longer. The monthly money that we got was cut. And then the subsidized housing was also cut. And my mother was required to go out and apply for a certain number of jobs, but she was a single mother of six children and wasn't able to meet their requirements. We

struggled tremendously. And my mother actually became a sex worker. »

Hillary Clinton strongly supported President Bill Clinton's « ending welfare as we know it. » The legislation was backed by nearly all Republican politicians. Hillary continued to defend the measure until recently when Sanders sharply criticized this conservative maneuver.

Aside from the grudging acceptance of several progressive platform proposals from Sanders as payback for his endorsement, all indications are that a Clinton presidency will fail to satisfy the legitimate demands of masses of working class, middle class and poor women and men— particularly now when such unmet needs have accumulated for decades. A certain criticism of Wall St. has also entered the Democratic candidate's vocabulary, but it is largely just rhetoric.

In recent decades, progressive election campaign promises are usually the first to be abandoned by the Democrats when its candidate enters the Oval office. Clinton has been and remains a servant of Wall Street, the big banks, the principal corporations and the richest 1% of the population who function as a plutocracy without the corporate mass media ever uttering the name.

In an Aug. 4 column in TomDispatch.com, titled The Decay of American Politics, Andrew J. Bacevich wrote of Clinton:

« Even by Washington standards, Secretary Clinton exudes a striking sense of entitlement combined with a nearly complete absence of accountability. She shrugs off her misguided vote in support of invading Iraq back in 2003, while serving as senator from New York. She neither explains nor apologizes for pressing to depose Libya's Muammar Gaddafi in 2011, her most notable 'accomplishment' as secretary of state. 'We came, we saw, he died,' she bragged back then, somewhat prematurely given that Libya has since fallen into anarchy and become a haven for ISIS. [Last week President Obama resumed bombing Libya to dislodge the Islamic State, which occupied the coastal city of Sirte as a consequence of Clinton's enthusiasm for regime change in Libya. U.S. Special Forces contingents are also fighting in Libya. The main fighting to liberate Sirte is by troops of one of the three factions claiming to rule the country. And it appears they may succeed in driving IS out of this coastal city.]

« The essential point here is that, in the realm of national security, Hillary Clinton is utterly conventional. She subscribes to a worldview (and view of America's role in the world) that originated during the Cold War, reached its zenith in the 1990s when the United States proclaimed itself the planet's 'sole superpower,' and persists today remarkably unaffected by actual events. On the campaign trail, Clinton attests to her bona fides by routinely reaffirming her belief in American exceptionalism, paying fervent tribute to the world's 'greatest military,' swearing that she'll be 'listening to our generals and admirals,' and vowing to get tough on America's adversaries. These are, of course, the mandatory rituals of the contemporary Washington stump speech, amplified if anything by the perceived need for the first female candidate for president to emphasize her pugnacity. »

Foreign Policy

Nearly 15 years of the Bush-Obama wars have caused death and destruction throughout the Middle East, beginning with the invasion of Afghanistan, then the illegal war of choice

against Iraq, spreading further over the years. After this election a third presidential name will be added to the list. The wars are hardly mentioned much less debated by the candidates. Nothing will change after the election, given the caliber of the two candidates and the historic nature of the two war parties.

Clinton and the Democratic establishment have seen to it that there will be no substantive changes in Washington's current foreign/military affairs, which are based on the policy adopted after the implosion of the Soviet Union over a quarter century ago. In essence: Enforce unilateral U.S. global hegemony.

The 2016 platform says succinctly:

« American leadership is essential to keeping us safe and our economy growing in the years ahead. It would be a dangerous mistake for America to abandon our responsibilities. We cannot, as Donald Trump suggests, cede the mantle of leadership for global peace and security to others who will not have our best interests in mind. »

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The Middle East situation won't change. Bush-Obama wars will continue and probably get bigger under a Clinton administration, certainly increasing action to oust the Assad government in Damascus. David Cole captured the flavor Of Obama's militarism in the Aug. 18 N.Y. Review of Books:

« The news that the United States had killed 150 unnamed individuals in a country halfway around the world with which it is not at war [Somalia, last March] generated barely a ripple of attention, much less any protest, here at home. Remote killing outside of war zones, it seems, has become business as usual.

This is a remarkable development, all the more noteworthy in that it has emerged under Barack Obama, who came to office as an antiwar president, so much so that he may be the only person to win the Nobel Peace Prize based on wishful thinking. Our Peace Prize president has now been at war longer than any other American president, and has overseen the use of military force in seven countries—Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Pakistan, Libya, Yemen, and Somalia. In the latter four countries, virtually all the force has come in the form of unmanned drones executing suspected terrorists said to be linked to al-Qaeda or its “associated forces.”

The Democratic platform also notes: « A strong and secure Israel is vital to the United States because we share overarching strategic interests and the common values of democracy, equality, tolerance, and pluralism. That is why we will always support Israel's right to defend itself, including by retaining its qualitative military edge, and oppose any effort to delegitimize Israel, including at the United Nations or through the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions. » As though the issue were Israel's right to defend itself and not the imprisonment and bombings of Gaza, the continual Israeli land-grab in West Bank and the rights of Palestinians in general.

The Russians Are Coming

The Democratic campaign platform on NATO is dishonest when it argues:

« We reject Donald Trump's threats to abandon our European and NATO allies, all while he praises Putin. » Trump — ever the money-minded businessman — suggested that he might not come to the aid of a NATO country that had not paid its dues. This was an outlandish statement, but hardly abandoning Europe. And he seemed to be facetious when he said that Russian intelligence should try to hack Clinton's « missing emails. »

Trump also said he wanted to talk to the Russians in hopes of developing a less fraught relationship. This is a good idea that the Democratic candidate implies is treason. Would that she'd try it if she enters the White House, but Clinton views Russia and China as enemies with which the U.S. eventually may go to war — and that's that.

It is interesting that Great Britain, America's closest ally, has evidently decided to depart from the U.S. concerning Russia. Boris Johnson, the UK's new foreign secretary, said Aug. 11 that Britain must « normalize » its relationship with Russia after years of hostility. He spoke on the phone with the Russian foreign minister, Serge Lavrov, and reportedly « discussed a possible normalization of bilateral ties. » The Telegraph (UK) also reported that Prime Minister Theresa May spoke earlier by telephone with Russian President Vladimir Putin and « questioned the current state of Russian-British relations. » The pair will meet at the G20 summit of world leaders in China next month.

Candidate Clinton and her clique virtually made Trump into a Russian spy reporting regularly to President Putin, the most recent of many world leaders Washington has unjustly demonized since the end of World War II. It has not been proven that Putin or Russia, for that matter, hacked the thousands of E-mails from the Democratic Party computers that were publicized by WikiLeaks.

So far some news outlets including the New York Times are reporting the incident was a « Russian cyberattack, » carried out by two Russian intelligence groups, but U.S. government officials are only quoted as having « high confidence » that the Russians were involved. « High confidence » means no proof.

The United States never stopped interfering and spying on Russia following the collapse of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics Dec. 26, 1991 and the immediate transition to capitalism under the government of hard drinking President Boris Yeltsin, who ruled with considerable American support and guidance to the end of 1999. The U.S. knew virtually everything going on in the Russian Federation during that period — from spy satellites to commuter transmissions, telephone conversations, agents on the ground, paid informants

within the government and Americans connected to the White House who actually worked with Yeltsin and his regime in developing state policy. The U.S. intention was to swiftly transform Russia into a capitalist country dependent upon and serving the interests of U.S imperialism.

American plans began to crumble when Vladimir Putin was elected president in 2000 (he was acting president from 1999-2000). He won a second term in 2004, became prime minister in 2008 and was reelected president in 2012 to the present. Even his enemies acknowledge Putin's popularity rating is about 80%. Putin continued the transition to capitalism, and ultimately became an open critic of the communist era, but absolutely denied the U.S. the ability to establish hegemony over the federation. The demonization began soon after it was clear he would not only keep Russia independent but began to criticize aspects of America's aggressive foreign policy. In recent years U.S. government officials began referring to him as a « thug, » among other accusations. Speaking at the Democratic Convention July 24, Vice President Joe Biden actually referred to the popular Russian leader as a « dictator » despite his overwhelming victory in the 2012 election. The next day a spokesperson for Obama refused to dispute Biden's remark.

As far as the spying allegation is concerned, suffice to say both sides do it. Regarding Putin and Trump it is wise to remember Putin is extremely intelligent and experienced and Trump is not. Why wouldn't the Russian leader be interested in a presidential candidate who didn't hold an angry grudge against him and his country and seems to abjure the possibility of a war? We all know that both Obama and Clinton are enmeshed in the old Cold War. Clinton may be considered the lesser evil but in this case she's more dangerous.

Criticism of Bernie

Sanders has received criticism from a vocal sector of his constituency and some left elements for supporting Hillary Clinton after his primary defeat instead of immediately forming a third party or accepting an invitation to become the candidate of the Green Party. Various post-convention opinion polls show between 70% and 90% of Bernie's supporters intend to vote for Clinton.

Although we have long supported the construction of a viable national left third party and have only backed socialist or left third-party presidential candidates over the years, we disagree with a few of the extreme criticisms aimed at Sanders, particularly that of journalist Chris Hedges, who backs the Green Party candidate, and in a speech outside the convention after hundreds of Sanders' delegates walked out. It was reprinted on the Internet. We think his unfortunate rant speaks far more about the critic than the subject. Below is a short quote from this speech:

« The parade of useful idiots, the bankrupt liberal class that long ago sold its soul to corporate power, is now led by Sen. Bernie Sanders.... He [Bernie] took his 30 pieces of silver and joined with a bankrupt liberal establishment on behalf of a candidate who is a tool of Wall Street, a proponent of endless war and an enemy of the working class. Sanders, like all of the self-identified liberals who are whoring themselves out for the Democrats, will use fear as the primary reason to remain enslaved by the neoliberal assault. And, in return, the corporate state will allow him and the other useful idiots among the 1% to have their careers and construct pathetic monuments to themselves. »

Bernie did a successful job within the limits of his mandate. However he could have handled the end game better after Clinton won the primary. He was pledged to support the winner but appeared overenthusiastic in his backing and praise for Hillary — whom he had been excoriating, correctly, for many months. At the convention, in his speech and when he called for the vote to be unanimous in Hillary's favor, he went over the top, much to the chagrin of a number of his 1,900 delegates. Also he should have been in much closer touch with his nationwide followers in the disappointing final few weeks, urging them to look ahead by putting forward a number of concrete proposals. Some delegates at the convention complained that they received little guidance. The July 30 edition of *The Economist* noted:

« In the end Bernie Sanders came through. The Senator from Vermont had threatened to take his fight for a « political revolution » to the floor of the Democratic National Convention.... But when his aggrieved supporters had the temerity to take that threat seriously by booing the convention's early stages, Mr. Sanders tried to calm them and just about succeeded. »

The Washington Post reported:

« Bernie Sanders closed out the first day of the Democratic party's convention with a forceful plea for his supporters to get behind the party's nominee Hillary Clinton. The Vermont senator spoke to a packed arena that had for hours swung wildly from unified highs to divided lows....' Based on her ideas and her leadership, Hillary Clinton must become the next president of the United States.' Sanders said. 'The choice is not even close.' Even as he spoke, the reaction was mixed and emotions ran high. His most ardent supporters called out "We want Bernie!" Others stood silently, tears streaming down their faces. Meanwhile, Clinton's supporters rose to their feet, chanting "Hillary! Hillary! Hillary!"

Why Did Bernie Run For The Nomination

Sen. Sanders was 74 near the end of long career and he wanted to finally get his progressive message out to the masses of people when he decided last year to become a Democrat and run for the presidential nomination. He knew the times and attitudes were changing after decades of stagnant wages, lower benefits, lousy jobs for the working class, huge student debts, and grave economic inequality — all of which were exacerbated by the 2008 Great Recession and sluggish recovery.

He thought the only way his leftist program and critique would get any significant press and TV coverage from the corporate mass media was if he entered the Democratic primary. It is true that U.S. mass media always suppress news about left wing, socialist or communist third parties.

Bernie switched from being a lifelong political independent espousing social democracy to a Democrat when he announced his candidacy in late May 2015. There were six candidates; he said that if he lost he would support the winner. Neither he nor anyone else anticipated how popular his candidacy would become. At the time, Clinton was considered a sure winner. By the time Clinton gained enough votes to secure the nomination in June, more than a hundred million adults not only heard his message but many of them — often for the first time — were won over to the radical views of a self-declared democratic socialist. The U.S. socialist left has benefitted from Bernie's openness and for his incredible ability to

attract millions of young people to a quite mild social democratic banner.

It is important to understand Bernie's goals, as we wrote in March (An Incredible Election Year in America — click on [3-13-16 Activist Newsletter](#)): « The Democratic party liberal and left sector has been sharply constricted by the traditional leadership and the Clinton and Obama two-term administrations, despite the fact that liberalism in Democratic ranks has increased 17% since 2001, according to a Gallup poll last June. That means 47% of Democrats are socially liberal and economically moderate liberal.... Sanders seeks to motivate and lead the party left to demand and exercise considerably more political clout. The party hierarchy views this as an act of apostasy. Most funders equate it to a kick in the teeth. »

The political « revolution » Sanders called for was intended to transform the center right Democratic Party to once again stand as a center-left party such as existed during its two periods of social reform benefitting millions of working class, middle class and poor Americans — during the Great Depression, led by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, and the 1960s, led by President Lyndon B. Johnson. Many of his objectives, such as free college education, and generous family leave, have existed for decades in the social democratic countries.

Sanders did not propose scrapping capitalism but he did seek to modify neoliberalism by introducing some of the popular reforms that exist mainly in the Scandinavian countries and less so in Germany, France and occasionally elsewhere. He hopes that eventually the U.S. will become a democratic socialist society, but his job was to create an uprising within the Democratic party that might be a step in that direction.

Bernie had no intention to head the Green ticket or break his promise to support the winner of the primary in order to form an independent third party just a few months before the election. It takes at least a year or two of hard work by many people in 50 states, and a considerable amount of money, for a new third party to run a serious national campaign for presidential office.

Bernie Today

Sanders is now raising funds to support a number of progressive candidates for Congress who backed his campaign, the latest being Zephyr Teachout (New York); Rick Nolan (Minnesota); and Pramila Jayapal (Washington). Teachout is in our 19th congressional district in the Mid-Hudson Valley, and we and our local readers support her.

Bernie's latest communication to millions of his supporters arrived a few days ago:

« Election days come and go, but the struggle for economic, social, racial and environmental justice continues. Together, we built something special and unprecedented through our presidential campaign. Now, we are going to take the next steps for our political revolution. We are building a new organization called Our Revolution. Our goal will be the same as in our campaign: we must work to transform American society by making our political and economic systems work for all of us, not just the 1%. »

Sanders has created a large constituency for further political advances against the erosion of what remains of true democracy and equality in the existing neocapitalist system. It is to be hoped that the genuine left in America will seriously seek to attract and organize

members of this new force for intensive radical political activism and not simply for electoral politics.

As we end we recall two incidents at the convention leftists and progressives should never forget. First, the Democratic Party's instructions to Clinton delegates to drown out Bernie delegates with a particular response if they began chanting unauthorized slogans. On Aug. 28, during a speech by retired Marine Corps General John Allen, a relatively small number of delegates began chanting « No More War » and were quickly made inaudible by the insistent (and « authorized »), ultra-nationalist chant « USA, USA, USA.... » Allen joined in at the microphone. The Republicans also had an unforgettable moment during a speech by New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie. As he was making the case that Clinton was a criminal, thousands began hatefully chanting, « Lock her up, Lock her up, Lock her up.... »

We thought these passing incidents spoke volumes about both parties.

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