

# **Bernie and Beyond**

## **A Socialist Perspective on the Sanders Campaign**

By  
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### **Abstract**

The following is an outgrowth of research and organizing for our forum, “Bernie and Beyond: Socialist Perspectives on the Sanders Campaign,” held on Saturday, October 3, 2015 as part of our regular series, Suds, Snacks, and Socialism at the Starry Plough Pub in Berkeley. The forum was attended by about 50 people and included registered Democrats and Greens, as well as our own Peace and Freedom activists and registrants. The program featured both Sanders supporters and others critical of Sanders and of the Democratic party: Ellis Goldberg (Contra Costa for Bernie), Steve Early (Labor for Bernie), Marsha Feinland (Peace and Freedom Party), and Gerald Smith (Peace and Freedom Party).

This forum, and my paper, represents a good model for how socialists and independents might relate to the Sanders campaign, namely by considering all different perspectives as the campaign unfolds before making hard decisions and dogmatically defending these decisions to the end. In our forum, this was done by inviting speakers with different perspective and encouraging maximum audience participation.

I tried to follow this same approach in my paper, weighing the pros and cons, and the yes’es, no’s and maybe’s, to better understand the Sanders campaign. This may be confusing for some but I think the results of following this approach will be worth the effort.

Sanders might best be described as a “middle class” socialist, not a revolutionary socialist or a Marxist. His program may best be described as reformist, or “the left wing of the possible.” His foreign policy can most charitably be described as disappointing. In spite of all that, Sanders has transformed what otherwise would have been the most expensive, corrupt, and inane election in history into something real and exciting.

For those who don’t want to wade through my lengthy discussion (on the one hand, but on the other hand, but on still the other hand), you can go directly to my final sentence

*We might prefer that some other figure, such as Gloria La Riva of PSL or Jill Stein of the Green Party, were receiving the kind of mass support and media attention that Sanders has earned. But that is not a choice we get to make. In the real world, Sanders deserves socialist support in his campaign for the Democratic nomination and beyond. No one knows what a Sanders presidency would be like, but we all know what the usual suspects will give us.*

## **Introduction**

"Feel the Bern! Bernie! Bernie!" Tens of thousands gather to chant for a candidate described variously as "a sometimes cantankerous 73-year-old with unruly white hair and a populist message," and "an old leftist crank from Brooklyn." (Lee, Parvini and Linthicum 2015) (Newell 2015)

There is reason to be excited. Bernie Sanders is one of us, a product of the same civil rights and anti-war movements that gave rise to our own Peace and Freedom Party.

Not only has Sanders drawn bigger crowds than any other candidate, Democrat or Republican, he has raised more money than any candidate other than Hillary Clinton, including Jeb Bush and Donald Trump. According to reports filed with the Federal Election Commission on July 31, 2015, the figures are: \$47.2 mil for Clinton, \$15.2 mil for Sanders, \$11.4 mil for Bush, and a lousy \$1.9 mil for Trump. Of course, when PAC and Super PAC money is factored in, Bush leads the crowd with a staggering \$114 mil, while Sanders has refused all PAC and corporate money. (New York Times 2015)

The latest figures, based on partial analysis of the Sept 30, 2015 reports, show the Clinton/Sanders gap has narrowed, with \$28 mil for Clinton and \$26 mil for Sanders. Importantly, as the New York Times notes,

Mr. Sanders is rapidly rewriting the rules for big-money fund-raising in a presidential campaign. . . . Mr. Sanders appears to be relying overwhelmingly on donors making small contributions. "We are sending a message to the billionaire class," Mr. Sanders said on Twitter on Wednesday. "Your greed is going to end and we're going to end it for you." (Confessore 2015)

Sanders is clear that his goal is not simply to move the dialog to the left, or raise important issues, He wants to be President and expects to win:

We are going to win New Hampshire. We are going to win Iowa, and I think we are going to win the Democratic nomination, and I think we're going to win the presidency.

And I'll tell you why, George, the American people are sick and tired of seeing the disappearance of the great middle class of this country. (Easley 2015a)

So the Sanders campaign must be taken seriously. But is it enough to “Feel the Bern?” Do we need to build a movement that will last beyond 2016 and transform America and our Mother Earth? Is there any way to ensure the ferment and enthusiasm of the Sanders campaign is a move toward socialism, and not just a way of sucking dissent back into the system? And just what kind of socialist is Bernie Sanders, anyway?

I will address these questions from the perspective of scientific socialism, which stresses the central role of the international working class in the liberation of our species from the sufferings caused by capitalism. I will employ a dialectical approach to examine the Sanders campaign from a variety of perspectives, viewing both its positive and negative aspects.

As personal background, I left the Peace and Freedom Party in 1988, after Super Tuesday indicated that Jesse Jackson might actually win the Democratic Party nomination. While it was exciting to be part of the Jackson upsurge, the entire campaign fizzled after Jesse lost the nomination and told his supporters to vote for Dukakis. I didn’t. I moved on to other issues, and didn’t return to electoral politics for nearly 20 years.

More recently, I was close to some comrades who worked in the 2008 Obama campaign, and after the election, I attended a few meetings of the movement to “hold Obama accountable.” But that didn’t even last until the inauguration.

These experiences inform my desire to help ensure that the energy that develops around the Sanders campaign is not dissipated when he is no longer a candidate. This is better done, I believe, by a full discussion of the Sanders campaign and its strengths and weaknesses, rather than staking out a fixed position, pro or con, at this early stage and dogmatically defending it to the end. I hope my comments, therefore, raise more questions than they answer.

I have tried to fact-check my essay as much as reasonable, and include citations for skeptics to pursue these points further. I have also included some fairly long quotes since I believe that other people express their views better than I can. The result is not a quick read. But the issues are important, and worthy of careful and skeptical study.

## **What Kind of Socialist?**

When they wrote our *Manifesto*, Marx and Engels understood there were different kinds of people calling themselves socialists. As Engels noted in his “Preface” to the 1890 German edition,

Socialism in 1847 signified a bourgeois movement, communism a working-class movement. Socialism was, on the Continent at least, quite respectable, whereas

communism was the very opposite. And since we were very decidedly of the opinion as early as then that “the emancipation of the workers must be the task of the working class itself,” [from the General Rules of the International] we could have no hesitation as to which of the two names we should choose. Nor has it ever occurred to us to repudiate it.

Although they never repudiated this crucial distinction, both Marx and Engels came to use the term, “scientific socialism” to describe their approach, and even today, there is no better term (though I would consider Communism, Marxism, and Marxism-Leninism to be appropriate alternatives.)

Clearly, Sanders is none of these. Although he is said to have read and understood Marx during his early years, his campaign website shows no indication of a Marxist understanding of capitalism, class, or imperialism. He does not look to the international working class for a revolutionary transformation of global society. Instead, his is reformist program, but that does not mean that it can be easily dismissed. Sanders has taken a left/progressive stand on nearly every issue that has come before Congress in the last twenty years.

## **A Middle Class Revolution?**

To his credit, Sanders has been consistent in his political thrust.

Here he is in 1974, as the 32-year-old candidate for U.S. Senate of a fledgling leftist party in Vermont called Liberty Union: "A handful of banks and billionaires control the economic and political life of America. ... America is becoming less and less of a democracy and more and more of an oligarchy."

And now, in an Associated Press interview: "This is a rigged economy, which works for the rich and the powerful, and is not working for ordinary Americans. ... You know this country just does not belong to a handful of billionaires."  
(Gram 2015)

This program is something that has defined Sanders entire political career, not simply slogans designed to push his current political ambitions. All this is an appeal to what Sanders calls the “middle class,” in contradiction to the “billionaire class” which runs this country. The goals raised by the Sanders campaign are all, moreover, worthwhile goals for the entire working class, not just its upper layers.

Further, none of the other Duopoly candidates covered by the mainstream press have better positions on any of the issues. Sanders does indeed stand at the left-wing of the possible.

We need, however, to compare the Sanders campaign with the motley crew of Duopoly candidates, but also with those of the presidential candidates of alternative parties: Jill Stein, the likely nominee of the Green Party, and Gloria La Riva of the Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL),

the only declared candidate for the Peace and Freedom nomination. Both have stronger programs, but nowhere near the support and energy of the Sanders campaign.

Stein has a stronger reformist program than that of Sanders, going beyond Sanders in the area of making a job a right, cutting the military budget, and shutting down foreign military bases.

La Riva's program is the program of a Leninist party, openly socialist and revolutionary, consistent with the scientific socialism of Marx, Engels, and Lenin.

Although talk of a "billionaire class" vs a "middle class" may sound radical and evoke some sense of class struggle, both terms are simply incorrect from a socialist perspective, as pointed out by our departed comrade, Bob Evans. There are, of course, middle income people and billionaires, but, as Marx taught us, the fundamental opposition in capitalism is between the capitalist class and the working class (on this, see Hall and Grey 2015).

Having gained this understanding, we might consider it a step backwards to abandon it for more popular but less precise phrases. But then, the Sanders campaign is not purely educational. It seeks power in our current reality, which is not revolutionary.

Sanders's campaign, whatever its flaws, is thrusting front and center to a *mass audience* a whole series of *principled, critical* demands and issues (many of which overlap with those raised in splendid isolation by Jill Stein and the Green Party), the realization of which would markedly advance the material well-being and future prospects of ordinary Americans: \$15 an hour minimum wage; union card check to expand organizing rights; improved Medicare for all; expansion (not retrenchment) of Social Security; revamped progressive taxation to reduce income inequality; a Wall Street transaction tax; a rapid transition to renewables to combat climate change; opposition to the ecocidal, neo-fascist TPP, NAFTA, and WTO; an end to the militarization of local police forces; cracking down on hate groups; free tuition at all public universities and colleges to alleviate student debt peonage; paid family leave; and so on. If realized in the aggregate, these demands would challenge the neoliberal logic of the prevailing order. (Kaufman 2015)

## **Beyond Black Lives Matter**

Like all sixties radicals, Sanders has always been supportive of racial justice. As Ben Spielberg recently wrote,

In the 1960s, while a young Hillary Clinton was supporting Republican presidential candidate Barry Goldwater . . . Sanders was leading protests against police brutality and segregated schools and housing, marching in the March on Washington and working as an officer for the Congress of Racial Equality. His voting record while in Congress, first as a Representative (1990-2005) and then

as a Senator (2006-Present), has earned him consistently excellent marks from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). (Spielberg 2015)

It may seem curious, then, that Black Lives Matter (BLM) activists singled out the Sanders campaign for disruption when his actual record on racial issues was arguably better than any other mainstream candidate. But as Bruce Dixon of Black Agenda Report describes the disruption:

Last month folks whom Alicia Garza described as “part of our team” disrupted two minor white male candidates at NetRootsNation, the annual networking event for paid and wannabe paid Democratic party activists, embarrassing them with demands over structural racism and “say her name”. If they were positioning themselves for careers inside the far-flung Democratic party apparatus, it was a smart move, because Hillary wasn't there. Hence they got noticed in that crowd of Democrat operatives without antagonizing the people with the real money and connections. (Dixon 2015b)

The disruption was highlighted in the press, and some have criticized the way in which Sanders handled the situation, with Donald Trump calling Sanders “weak.” Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, however, sees Sanders’ handling of the disruption as the big difference between Trump and the “mature, thoughtful and intelligent” Sanders:

Bernie Sanders faced his own challenge at a political event last month, when two African American women pushed in front of him to use the microphone to demand four and a half minutes of silence to honor the death of Michael Brown. Sanders left the stage and mingled with the crowd. Later, Trump criticized Sanders as being “weak” for allowing them to speak, but truly he showed grace under pressure by acknowledging their frustration and anger. Instead of bullying their voices into silence or ridiculing them as losers, pigs or bimbos, Sanders left. After all, it was not his event; he was a guest. Besides, his voice was not silenced, but came back booming even louder: The next day, Sanders posted a sweeping policy of reform to fight racial inequality. (The timing coincided with Michael Brown’s death and had nothing to do with the two women.) (Abdul-Jabbar 2015)

Even before this disruption, Sanders had as good a position on race as any of the Duopoly candidates. But as socialists we must note that, although the candidates may discuss racial issues, they do not deal with the underlying causes.

It is one thing to say the names of black men, women, gays, and transgendered people killed by police, but quite another to say the name of the system that is killing them: capitalism. Neither the BLM activists nor the Sanders campaign talk about the link between capitalism, class, and race.

It was, of course, none other than the founder of scientific socialism, Karl Marx, who stressed the role of racism in maintaining the capitalist system, both in England and the United States:

Every industrial and commercial centre in England now possesses a working class divided into two *hostile* camps, English proletarians and Irish proletarians. The ordinary English worker hates the Irish worker as a competitor who lowers his standard of life. In relation to the Irish worker he regards himself as a member of the *ruling* nation and consequently he becomes a tool of the English aristocrats and capitalists against Ireland, thus strengthening their domination *over himself*. He cherishes religious, social, and national prejudices against the Irish worker. His attitude towards him is much the same as that of the “poor whites” to the Negroes in the former slave states of the U.S.A.. The Irishman pays him back with interest in his own money. He sees in the English worker both the accomplice and the stupid tool of the *English rulers in Ireland*.

This antagonism is artificially kept alive and intensified by the press, the pulpit, the comic papers, in short, by all the means at the disposal of the ruling classes. This *antagonism* is the secret of the *impotence of the English working class*, despite its organisation. It is the secret by which the capitalist class maintains its power. And the latter is quite aware of this. (Marx 1870)

In *Capital*, Marx is quite clear on the need for unity of black and white workers in the emancipation of the working class:

In the United States of North America, every independent movement of the workers was paralysed so long as slavery disfigured a part of the Republic. Labour cannot emancipate itself in the white skin where in the black it is branded. But out of the death of slavery a new life at once arose. The first fruit of the Civil War was the eight hours' agitation, that ran with the seven-leagued boots of the locomotive from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from New England to California. (Marx 1867)

From the perspective of scientific socialism, anti-black racism lies at the very bedrock of American capitalism, and this racism is best understood as way of keeping the working class divided and preventing the rise of a unified movement against the oppression of black, brown, and white people within and beyond our borders. The struggle against racism, therefore, is a crucial element of the struggle against capitalism and the abolition of racism requires a unified movement of the entire working class, black, white, and brown. Marx goes so far as to say:

After studying the Irish question for many years I have come to the conclusion that the decisive blow against the English ruling classes (and it will be decisive for the workers' movement all over the world) cannot be delivered *in England* but *only in Ireland*. (Marx 1870)

One must ask whether BLM, which owes more to black nationalism, identity politics, and postmodernism than to Marxism, is really clarifying the issue. After all, more whites than blacks are murdered by police, unjustly imprisoned, and suffering from extremes of poverty and homelessness. In Richmond, California, we have an openly gay police chief joining demonstrators and holding up a sign saying “Black Lives Matter,” while, at the same time, covering up the police murder of an unarmed white man,

Pedie Perez. (OGC 2015) Does BLM have a solution to the underlying problem of police violence, or do they have another agenda?

Bruce Dixon of the Black agenda remarks,

Why doesn't the #BlackLivesMatter movement, supposedly focused upon the unique needs of people of color, have any critique of the black political class, almost all Democrats, who have been key stakeholders in the building of the prison state, in gentrification and school privatization from New Orleans to Detroit and beyond, and who helped peddle the subprime mortgages to black families which exploded and cut black family wealth by nine-tenths? Have they even noticed that a black president has closed and privatized more public schools than any other in US history? For all the big words they use, do they ever mention the word "capitalism"?

Are some #BlackLivesMatter leaders angling for spots in what Adolph Reed calls the race management elite? Could this be why #BlackLivesMatter has no critique of the black misleadership class, or of capitalism? (Dixon 2015b)

It is essential to provide a socialist analysis of the black liberation struggle. A significant move in this direction was made at a recent presentation at our State Central Committee meeting in Oakland by the Oscar Grant Committee, which insists on linking the slogan "Black Lives Matter" with "All Lives Matter" and developing a working class approach to black liberation. (OGC 2015) The Sanders campaign does little to clarify matters in this regard.

## **End the Wars and Save the Planet**

Just as racism lies at the very foundation of American capitalism, so too does imperialism. The U.S. does not exist on a separate planet. It is part of our Mother Earth, and U.S. imperialism is but the latest phase of an imperialism that has exploited the peoples of Mother Earth for five centuries.

In 1972, Sanders clearly expressed his views on the "barbaric war in Vietnam," as follows:

I have spoken out consistently against the barbaric war in Vietnam and against our entire foreign policy of support to military dictatorships throughout the world. Not only is our foreign policy morally bankrupt — but it is bankrupting us financially. We spend more on the military every day than we spend on the entire budget for the state of Vermont for a year. Let us stop the war now and build low cost housing, provide free and excellent medical and dental care for all, and clean up the environment. (Summers 2015)

However, although Foreign Policy is now listed among the Issues on the Sanders 2016 campaign website, his positions cannot be described as socialist or internationalist.



As noted by Norman Solomon, when questioned about his foreign policy, Sanders responds with only “quite minor” differences with the Obama administration.

While unavailable on his campaign website and barely mentioned on the stump, the broad outlines of Sanders’ opinions about foreign policy and war can be gleaned from interviews and Q&A portions of town hall appearances. For the most part, on those subjects, his outlook appears to be in line with the views of many Democrats on Capitol Hill.

After a question about “the military establishment” and “perpetual war” from a man who identified himself as a veteran for peace at a recent town hall gathering in Iowa City, Sanders’ reply was tepid Democratic boilerplate. He blamed Republican hawks for getting the U.S. into Iraq. He called for progress against waste and cost overruns at the Pentagon. And he said that in the war against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), the U.S. government should act jointly with regional allies such as Saudi Arabia and Turkey. (“Those countries are going to have to get their hands dirty, it cannot just be the United States alone.”)

When pressed for details on military intervention, Sanders has indicated that his differences with the Barack Obama administration are quite minor. Like many Democrats, he supports U.S. air strikes in the Middle East, while asserting that only countries in the region should deploy ground forces there. Sanders shares the widespread view among members of Congress who don’t want boots on the ground but do want U.S. air power to keep dropping bombs and firing missiles. On foreign policy, Sanders cannot rely simply on his 2002 congressional vote against the invasion of Iraq to set himself apart.

Sanders has also urged confronting Russian leader Vladimir Putin over Ukraine. (“You totally isolate him politically, you totally isolate him economically,” Sanders said on Fox News last year.) Closer to home, the Vermont senator has championed the \$1.4 trillion half-century program for Lockheed Martin’s F-35 beleaguered fighter jets. The Air Force is planning to base F-35s at the commercial airport in Burlington, his state’s largest city. (Solomon 2015)

Not only is the U.S. the “biggest purveyor of violence in the world today,” as Dr. King told us in 1967, it is also the biggest polluter in the world today, even when it is not involved in a shooting war. (Ruyle 2014) Further, it is the biggest enemy of the international working class. In overthrowing leftist governments around the world, for example, Iran 1953, Guatemala 1954, Indonesia 1963, Chile 1973, it has preserved the system of corporate capitalism which is destroying our Mother Earth.

For those of us that learned the lessons of Vietnam, U.S. foreign policy is not so much about keeping Americans safe as keeping the world safe for U.S. corporations.

For many of us, Sanders views on foreign policy are unacceptable, and more serious than his running in the Democratic primaries and caucuses. On the other hand, his foreign policy is no worse than any other Demo-publican

candidate. On still the other hand, it is far worse than either of the likely candidates of alternative parties, Jill Stein (Green Party) and Gloria La Riva (Peace and Freedom).

## **On the Democratic Party**

In November 2014, the State Central Committee of our Peace and Freedom Party adopted the following statement:

The Peace and Freedom Party deeply appreciates that many issues important to working people are raised by Bernie Sanders in the U.S. Senate and in the media.

The Peace and Freedom Party welcomes the possibility of Bernie Sanders campaigning for President as an independent.

If Bernie Sanders runs for President independent of the Republicans and Democrats, we invite him to submit his name as a candidate for the Presidential nomination of the Peace and Freedom Party in the 2016 presidential primary. (Peace and Freedom Party 2014)

This statement reflected a widespread hope among independent leftists, including America's socialist in Seattle, Kshama Sawant, that Sanders would run as an Independent. (I was not present when this statement was passed, and probably would have abstained anyway.)

Sanders' response was disappointing to many. At a conference call to 3000 members of Democracy for America on January 14, 2015, Sanders discussed his options:

"I am giving very serious consideration to it, but before you make a decision of that magnitude, ... you have to make sure that you can do it well," Sanders said. "So what we are doing is reaching out to folks all over this country trying to determine whether or not we can put the grassroots organization together that we need."

"If I run, we'll be taking on the billionaire class," he said. "That's Wall Street, the drug companies, the military industrial complex."

"No matter what I do, I will not be a spoiler," Sanders said. "I will not play that role in helping to elect some right-wing Republican as President of the United States."

Sanders continued to explain that he would not follow the usual Democratic Party strategy of beating the Republicans in the big money game, but would base his campaign on grassroots activism:

"It is not only absolutely imperative that we mobilize huge numbers of people for an election, but that those people stay mobilized *after* the election," Sanders said. "Because if there is a mistake that President Obama has made, I think he has not been strong in maintaining the ties with the grassroots that helped elect him president." (Jones 2015)

By the end of March, Sanders had decided to run in the Democratic primary and caucus system. As he told George Stephanopoulos on ABC News' "This Week:"

"As I was contemplating what I'd do, one decision I had to make was, there were a lot of people telling me to run as an Independent," Sanders said. "They said the Republican Party is an extreme right-wing party, and the Democratic Party is too conservative, too cozied-up to big money ... and that I should run outside of the two party system."

Sanders said. "But I reached the decision ... that the only way at this particular moment in history that we could run an effective campaign was within the Democratic primary and caucus system."

"I would not want to be responsible for electing some right-wing Republican president," (Easley 2015b)

Although many on the left are unhappy with this decision, it is unlikely Sanders would receive the kind of supporter and media attention he enjoys as candidate for the Democratic nomination. It needs to be stressed, however, that although he is running for the Democratic nomination, he is running as an independent, not "as a Democrat."

Many refuse to understand this distinction. If Sanders were running as a Democrat, he would be seeking the support to top Democratic Party leaders, as well as establishing a Super PAC to collect campaign contributions from Wall Street and the giant corporations. He is not. Instead, he is running a real grassroots campaign, and that's how he intends to govern, as he told New York Magazine:

"This is how it is going to be," Bernie says, as if he were still in his \$200 car, back in the Liberty Union days. "Suppose you want to raise the minimum wage to a fair level and know that change is not going to come from inside Washington. Not in this climate. So, as president, I'd invite millions of low-income workers to come to the capitol. Like a bonus march. I'd do the same thing about making college affordable. Put out the call, invite a million students. Make sure they're all registered to vote. Then when these congressmen come by the White House and they're beholden to the Koch brothers, the super-PACs, or the oil companies, I will say, 'Do what you want, but first do one thing for me: *Look out the window.*' "

"Look out the window," Bernie repeats, liking the sound of it, the call to arms, just the sort of phrase that might get the attention of a downtrodden, detached electorate and prompt them to raise a fist in the air.

"Look out the window. Because all those people are out there. They're demanding their fair share and they're not leaving until they get it." (Jones 2015)

Whether Sanders will be successful with this approach is a good question, but it's clear that Sanders is not your grandfather's Democrat. But for some, simply being associated with the Democratic Party is like having contagious disease, something to be avoided at all costs. It is interesting that

those who would have welcomed Sanders running outside the Democratic Party are now denouncing him for positions he held before he made that decision. One comrade went so far as to tell me that the fact that Sanders might win the Democratic nomination and even the presidency is a reason to oppose his candidacy.

Although a majority of Peace and Freedom Party activists may be critical of the Sanders campaign, this is not necessarily true of folks registered in our party. Some party officials worry that many of our registrants will leave to vote for Sanders. The situation is also unclear in the Green Party, where it is estimated that 80% or more of the Party's members do not vote for the Green Party presidential candidate. There was even a minor scandal within the Green Party when party officials attempted to censor a "Greens for Sanders" group. (Shorr 2015)

However, we do need to recognize that one of the major fault lines of the left has to do with our relationship to the Democratic Party, and we need to deal directly with this long-standing and seemingly unresolvable divide. The debate has gone on for decades with little hope of resolution. (Williams 1977) (Brenner 1988)

Many on the left, including almost everyone active in the Peace and Freedom Party (as well as the Green Party, I suspect) agree those who say that working inside the Democratic Party is a political dead end, that the Democratic Party is the graveyard of independent movement. On the other hand, those that do choose to work within the Democratic Party argue that working outside the Democratic Party is also a dead end, as well as politically irrelevant. There is much to be said for both positions.

What is interesting, and encouraging, about the Sanders campaign is that he may have found a way past these two dead ends, namely an independent campaign for the Democratic nomination through the Democratic primaries and caucuses, but doing so outside the traditional sources of Democratic power.

For most of us in the Peace and Freedom Party, LBJ's refusal to seat the Freedom Democratic Party of Mississippi in the 1964 Democratic Convention, together with his subsequent betrayal of the peace movement, pretty much confirmed our refusal to support Democrats and led to the formation of the Peace and Freedom Party in 1967. Further confirmation came with Clinton and then Obama.. However, if we review the subject historically, back to FDR and the New Deal, we see that there have been periods that need to be analyzed differently.

It is, of course, possible that a mass movement could capture the nomination of the Democratic Party. One thinks of the McGovern campaign of 1972 and before that, the EPIC campaign of Upton Sinclair for Governor

of California in 1936. Both worthwhile efforts, and both were expressions of mass movements. Neither were supported by the Democratic Party establishment, but it is not clear to what extent they actually furthered these movements.

For a better model, we need to go back to FDR and the New Deal, when a hereditary member of the ruling class, Franklin D. Roosevelt, viewed the threat of mass action from below and, thinking of the great October Revolution, responded with the words, "Reform if you would preserve." There was a period during the 1930s, when it made sense to work within the Democratic Party for significance social change. This was the period of the great sit-down strikes, the rise of the CIO, the WPA, Social Security, the Wagner Act. But that was then, this is now. We have a Democratic Party that is far to the right of where the Republicans were under Nixon.

Of course, some would analyze this period differently, and I have neither the space or expertise for a more complete analysis ( but see Ness 2015).

Beyond this, American history has seen major tectonic shifts. We can look past the New Deal to the rise of the Republican Party in the 1850s, when neither of the two established parties was dealing with the burning issue of the times, slavery.

The biggest change in the property system that supports the American ruling class, the abolition of slavery, was associated with the rise of an independent Third Party, the Republican Party, which held its first national convention in 1856 and elected Abraham Lincoln in 1860.

Abraham Lincoln was by no means the front runner for the Republican nomination in 1860. The Republican convention was held in Chicago in May 1860, and it was not until the third ballot that Lincoln emerged with the nomination. The party platform promised not to interfere with slavery in the slave states, simply not to allow it in the territories. Lincoln won the Presidency with less than 40% of the popular vote by carrying all the Northern and Western States. The South, of course, was solidly opposed to the Republicans and seceded in order to protect the slave system, in what Marx called a "slave-owners' rebellion."

Socialists cannot stand aloof from the mass struggles of the day. Marx and his followers provide an excellent example of this. As American politics were moving toward the 1860 elections, Marx's friend Joseph Weydemeyer and others in the newly formed Communist Clubs in New York, Chicago, Cincinnati, St. Louis, and Baltimore attended the Republican National Convention in 1860. They did so in order to work for, first of all, a strong anti-slavery plank in the Republican platform and secondly, the nomination of Lincoln rather than the favorite of conservatives, William H. Seward of

New York, who was considered the front runner. As Philip Foner remarks in *Socialism and Black Americans*:

It is now generally conceded that the German-American influence was reflected not only in the Republican platform, but also in the defeat of candidates who were being groomed for the presidential nomination by the Party's conservative forces and in the final nomination of Abraham Lincoln as the Republican standard bearer.... Weydemeyer and Douai continued to work together after the Republican convention to help elect Lincoln (Foner 1977, p. 27)

After the election of Lincoln and the outbreak of the Civil War, the Communist Clubs disappeared, as their members joined and fought with the Union Army. After the war, they re-formed and joined the International Workingmen's Association. Electoral action was but one aspect of their political work.

I have been unable to locate anything on Marx's own views of the Republican election of 1860 written at the time. In 1862, however, he wrote the following:

At the time Lincoln was elected (1860) there was no civil war, nor was the question of Negro emancipation on the order of the day. The Republican Party, then quite independent of the Abolitionist Party, aimed its 1860 electoral campaign solely at protesting against the extension of slavery into the Territories, but, at the same time, it proclaimed non-interference with the institution in the states where it already existed legally. If Lincoln had had *Emancipation of the Slaves* as his motto at that time, there can be no doubt that he would have been defeated. Any such slogan was vigorously rejected. (Marx 1862)

All of this should remind us of what Marx noted in his Preface to *Capital*, "the present society is no solid crystal, but an organism capable of change, and is constantly changing." We need to apply this perspective to the Democratic Party and our entire electoral system. Major changes in American society have been linked to electoral action, with causal arrows going in both directions.

Coming back to the present, it is clear that the Democratic Party is one of the institutions through which the ruling class rules, but it is also the institution where we find most of the people we need to win to socialism, the labor movement and people of color. Unfortunately, we have had as little success in doing so from outside the Democratic Party as from the inside.

It is important to stress that although Sanders is running a campaign "within the Democratic primary and caucus system," his campaign should still be seen as independent. He is not accepting donations from corporations or PACs, and is basically running outside the Democratic power structure. As Larry Shoup notes, the "level of support given to non-plutocratic candidates like Trump and Sanders indicates that this time something different is going on, a kind of revolt of the masses." (Shoup 2015) It is not

clear exactly what is going on, but it is clear that this is not a time for socialists to sit on the sideline

## **Beyond Bernie: Strategies for Socialists**

Clearly, the next few months will be much more interesting because of Bernie Sanders, and different left/progressive/socialist tendencies are already staking out their positions.

There are some, of course, who will vote Democrat no matter what. This position cannot be dismissed as simply as many in Peace and Freedom may think. One influential representative of this view is the Communist Party, USA. In an article published in *Political Affairs* (Jan 22, 2015), CPUSA National Chairman John Bachtell wrote that:

In fact, a labor-led third party and mass participation in the electoral arena are prerequisites for winning advanced economic and social democracy, and even winning a green, democratic, demilitarized socialism. The challenge is: How to move from present political realities to the actual establishment of a radical third party....

it's not enough to make sweeping generalizations about the Democratic and Republican parties. It's true both parties are dominated by Wall Street interests, but it's also necessary to see how each party differs, particularly their social bases and how this affects their policies....

the Democratic Party is also home to labor, African Americans, Latinos, other communities of color, women, most union members, young people, and a wide range of social and democratic movements. These constituencies exert influence on party leadership and hold positions at all levels.

Because Democrats embrace a multi-class constituency, the class struggle rages within, between what are loosely the Wall Street and the progressive or pro-labor wings. (Bachtell 2015)

For the CPUSA and many others, the essential step at present is the defeat of the reactionary, right-wing, racist, and pro-imperialist forces that lead the Republican Party. Many prominent and respected left intellectuals, including Howard Zinn and Noam Chomsky have similarly advocated voting Democrat as a way of defeating the Republicans. (Socialist Action 2008) (Filipowicz 2012)

It is worth stressing that for the CPUSA, voting the lesser evil is a temporary strategy, a way of dealing with the right shift in American politics. The long term goal is “radical third party based in labor, working-class neighborhoods, communities of color, and democratic movements.”

We see this as one of the stages in the long struggle for advanced democracy and socialism. Without decisively defeating the most reactionary sections of monopoly capital, disintegrating Republican Party support at every level, it's hard to see winning more radical and advanced programs and policies and waging a fight against the monopoly class as a whole.

These are realities that can't be escaped. . . .

We envision a prolonged process toward political independence, with many turns, advances and defeats, utilizing many forms, resulting in a radical third party based in labor, working-class neighborhoods, communities of color, and democratic movements. Such a coalition third party must extend its reach beyond urban areas, to suburbs, exurbs, rural areas, and in "red" states and congressional districts. (Bachtell 2015)

From this perspective, calls for independent electoral action, whether in the Green Party, the Peace and Freedom Party, or an often-called-for Labor Party are premature, given current political realities.

Perhaps at the other end of the political spectrum in this regard, there are those who will not vote for a Democrat no matter what. Two influential statements are those of Black Agenda editor Bruce A. Dixon and Howie Hawkins the Green Party candidate for Governor in New York in 2014.

Dixon views the Sanders campaign as detrimental to the working class since its effect is to act as a sheepdog and herd liberals and progressives into the Democratic fold:

Sheepdogs are herders, and the sheepdog candidate is charged with herding activists and voters back into the Democratic fold who might otherwise drift leftward and outside of the Democratic party, either staying home or trying to build something outside the two party box.

1984 and 88 the sheepdog candidate was Jesse Jackson. In 92 it was California governor Jerry Brown. In 2000 and 2004 the designated sheepdog was Al Sharpton, and in 2008 it was Dennis Kucinich. This year it's Vermont senator Bernie Sanders. The function of the sheepdog candidate is to give left activists and voters a reason, however illusory, to believe there's a place of influence for them inside the Democratic party, if and only if the eventual Democratic nominee can win in November.

Despite casting millions of voters for the likes of Jesse Jackson, Al Sharpton and other sheepdogs, those leftish Democrat voters are always disregarded when Democrats actually win. Bill Clinton gave us NAFTA, a vicious "welfare reform," no peace dividend or push for DC statehood, lowered unemployment but mostly in part time and low-wage jobs, and mass incarceration of black and brown people. President Obama doubled down on bailouts of banksters and GM, and immunized them from prosecution but failed to address the most catastrophic fall in black household wealth in history. We got health care for some instead of Medicare for All, the Patriot Act renewed instead of repealed, a race to privatize public education, drone wars and still more mass incarceration of black and brown people. And if President Obama gets his way, we may soon have a global job-destroying wage-lowering NAFTA on steroids, with the TTP and TTIP.

The sheepdog's job is to divert the energy and enthusiasm of activists a year, a year and a half out from a November election away from building an alternative to the Democratic party, and into his doomed effort. When the sheepdog inevitably folds in the late spring or early summer before a November election,



there's no time remaining to win ballot access for alternative parties or candidates, no time to raise money or organize any effective challenge to the two capitalist parties.

At that point, with all the alternatives foreclosed, the narrative shifts to the familiar “lesser of two evils.” Every sheepdog candidate surrenders the shreds of his credibility to the Democratic nominee in time for the November election. This is how the Bernie Sanders show ends, as the left-leaning warm-up act for Hillary Clinton. (Dixon 2015a)

Howie Hawkins, in his’ article, “Bernie Sanders is no Eugene Debs,” published in *Socialist Worker*, a publication of ISO, also sees the Sanders campaign as a largely negative phenomenon and have a Plan B ready for when the Sanders campaign folds:

From an independent socialist point of view, all the money and time going into Sanders' handoff to Clinton is time and money that could be going into getting Jill Stein's Green Party candidacy on every ballot in the country--the only independent left campaign in 2016 with any prospect for doing so.

Some even argue that the Sanders campaign *is* a movement. We've heard that claim before with the candidacies of Jesse Jackson, Al Sharpton, Dennis Kucinich and Barack Obama. Bruce Dixon of Black Agenda Report aptly described these candidates as "sheepdogs...charged with herding activists and voters back into the Democratic fold who might otherwise drift leftward and outside of the Democratic party."

No self-activating movements or organizations came out of these campaigns, and there is no reason to expect the Sanders campaign will be any different. The Sanders campaign is enlisting people in an election campaign, not an ongoing political organization. The Sanders campaign may be a bridge for some to positions as Democratic operatives, as it was for some in previous sheepdog campaigns. But it is not building a political organization that is independent and opposed to the capitalist parties. (Hawkins 2015)

Hawkins concludes by noting that

The independent left should be talking to progressives who have decided to support Sanders. We should talk about why independent politics is the best way to build progressive power, about the Democratic Party as the historic graveyard of progressive movements, and about the need in 2016 for a progressive alternative when Sanders folds and endorses Clinton. I don't expect many will be persuaded to quit the Sanders campaign before the primaries. But I do expect that many of them will want a Plan B, a progressive alternative to Clinton, after the primaries. . .

Progressives in the Democratic Party are going to need a Plan B after Bernie Sanders throws his support to Clinton in about 10 months, after the March primaries seal the nomination for her. We should be building Plan B now. (Hawkins 2015)

In between these extremes, others recognize both the positive and negative aspects of the Sanders campaign, for example Socialist Alternative (SA) and the Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL). Although these

organizations are quite different, both see the Sanders campaign as providing opportunities for organizing and building an independent movement.

In the view of Socialist Alternative, the group that elected America's socialist in Seattle, Kshama Sawant, constructive engagement with the Sanders campaign and its supporters is essential for building an independent movement:

Socialist Alternative has greeted the radical, anti-corporate, working class platform of Sanders. At the same time we have explained that the Democratic Party is a dead end for all those seeking to fight Wall Street and the billionaire class. Sanders will not win the Democratic primaries and an independent working class challenge will be needed against Hillary Clinton and the Republican candidate in the 2016 election. To carry out his call for a political revolution against politicians serving the billionaires Sanders cannot endorse Hillary Clinton or any other pro-corporate candidate. Instead we have strongly urged that he runs as an independent against Clinton and the Republicans in the November 2016 election.

While Sanders has made clear that he intends to endorse whoever the Democratic Party nominee will be (likely Hillary Clinton), this is very much an open debate among Sanders supporters. Socialists and those on the independent left should get involved in this debate to win people over to our approach of working-class independence. Socialist Alternative is boldly intervening at events and putting forward positive proposals to build movements that can challenge the "billionaire class" that Sanders talks about. We want to work alongside people campaigning for Sanders while discussing with them the best methods to win victories for working people and youth.

Right now, the organized socialist left is unfortunately quite small in relation to our tasks. The same can be said of independent left electoral politics in general with a few exceptions like Kshama Sawant in Seattle and the Richmond, California Progressive Alliance. At the same time, polls show again and again that millions of people are open to anti-corporate and even anti-capitalist ideas. Activists must constantly find ways to bring our ideas to a broader audience and organize people for struggles like the fight for a \$15 an hour minimum wage, the struggle against racist police violence and the movements against cuts to public education. In this process, we need to find ways to raise the banner of independent left politics and the need to fundamentally transform society through mass movements of working people.

At this moment the biggest audience for socialists to build support for independent working class politics is the hundreds of thousands of workers and youth gravitating around the Bernie Sanders campaign. Unfortunately, the approach Hawkins advocates for will not allow socialists to seize this opportunity. (Koulouris 2015)

In a similar vein, PSL, which is at present running the only candidate for our socialist Peace and Freedom nomination, Gloria La Riva, writes:

It is clear that what is driving the response to the Sanders campaign is the desire on the part of a huge number of people for profound political change. The election of Kshama Sawant to the Seattle City Council, the Gallup poll and

others like it, and now the Bernie Sanders campaign are clearly part of a broader trend of an explicit, if amorphous, emergence of socialism as a major oppositional trend to the oppressions and exploitation of daily life.

It has its corollary in the streets in the new labor movement bubbling up in low-wage workplaces, the Black Lives Matter Movement, those fighting for justice and dignity for immigrant communities, and to save the planet.

As revolutionary Marxists, we in the Party for Socialism and Liberation regard this as fertile ground for a movement that can truly uproot the capitalist system.

Over the next 15 months leading up the 2016 election, the La Riva/Puryear PSL Campaign will seek to reach out to the millions—including Sanders' supporters—through our activism in the struggle, while tirelessly explaining that only the revolutionary reorganization of society can truly achieve what the people and the planet most desperately need—socialism! (Liberation Staff 2015)

There are thus a variety of overlapping socialist views on the Sanders campaign and how to relate to it. Unfortunately, we have yet to discover the magic formula which will lead to truly independent and powerful working class politics, much less to a socialist revolution comparable to October 1917.

The only option I can see is to continue to discuss and debate the issues with open minds. It is important that this discussion take place within a wider setting, and must include not only Peace and Freedom activists, but also members of the Green Party as well as folks who are registered Democrats.

Some of us in the Peace and Freedom are trying to follow this course, with a discussion on “Sanders and Beyond” at our monthly “Suds, Snacks, and Socialism at the Starry Plough” forum in Oakland (October 3, 2015) and will continue this discussion through the Primary season and beyond.

But whatever one may think of Sanders' positions on various issues, his positions are his own, not those of corporate donors. Sanders' critics rarely mention that he is not accepting corporate funding. Sanders has been clear on this, saying “I don't want money from the billionaires,” and “I don't have a super PAC, and I don't want a super PAC.” One of Sanders biggest supporters, multi-millionaire Ben Cohen, of Ben and Jerry's, has given only \$1,000 (plus few hundred dollars' worth of ice cream for the Sanders' campaign launch event in Burlington).

“The people who are going to provide the money are going to be drawn to his policy and proposals,” Cohen said in an interview. “It's like selling ice cream. You don't have to ask for money. Instead of asking, ‘Do you want this ice cream?’ you say, ‘Do you want this president?’” (Topaz and Parti 2015)

The bitter reality, of course, is that no matter what our Peace and Freedom Party does, it will have little or no impact on the 2016 elections. But this does not mean we should give up our own identities and submerge ourselves in some larger movement.

## **You don't have to be a Democrat**

You don't have to be a Democrat to "Feel the Bern," and you don't have to register Democrat to support the Sanders campaign.

Not everyone understands this. People may think that they have to register Democrat to support the Sanders campaign, but that is, quite simply, not true. The real situation is complicated, and different in different states. Let us review some of the complications.

The earliest real results will begin in February, when New Hampshire and South Carolina will have their primaries and Iowa and Nevada will hold caucuses. Then Super Tuesday, March 1, when eleven states, including delegate-heavy Texas, Virginia, and Colorado have their primaries. It could be over by then, but the Sanders campaign could well continue into our California primary, June 7. The Obama campaign did not win the nomination until June 2008 (California held its presidential primary on Super Tuesday, February 5, 2008, rather than the usual first Tuesday in June).

In all likelihood, the nominee will be clear well before the Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia on July 25–July 28, 2016. The Green Party's Presidential Convention will be in Houston, August 4-7, 2016. The date for our Peace and Freedom State Convention is as yet undecided, but at least one day of the convention must be during the month of August.

With this timetable in mind, voters here in California do not need to make decisions about who to actually vote for until mid-May (the last day to register to vote in the June 7 Primary is May 23). To vote for Sanders one must be registered as a Democrat, unless the California Democratic Party decides to hold a "Modified-closed presidential primary" and allow voters who did not state a party preference to vote in the Democratic primary, as they did in 2012. This decision need not be made until 135 days before the June 7 primary (mid-January).

Further, there is a good chance that the Democratic nominee will be determined before the California primaries, so registration in the Democratic Party may be irrelevant as far as the Sanders campaign is concerned.

But there are many ways Californians can support the Sanders campaign before June, including: 1. donating to the Sanders campaign, 2. working on the Sanders campaign in other states, either in person or by phone, or 3. getting one's union or other group to endorse the Sanders campaign. Labor for Bernie is one example, Veterans for Bernie Sanders another.

So, for folks that live in California and are considering re-registering Democrat to vote for Sanders, there is no need to do this before mid-May.

There are very good reasons to remain in the Peace and Freedom Party. Only those registered in Peace and Freedom will have any voice whatsoever in deciding our presidential nominee. That decision will be made in August 2016 by the State Central Committee, newly elected in the June 2016 primary. By then, we will know the presidential nominees of both the Democratic and Green Parties and can act accordingly (whatever that means). The only way to participate in that decision is to actually run for State Central Committee in the June primary. (To do this, you will have to be registered Peace and Freedom and gather about twenty signatures of PFP registrants, but there is no filing fee. Check with PFP party officials or your Country Registrar of Voters for the exact requirements.) If elected—and Central Committee elections are usually not all that competitive—you can then participate and vote at the Peace and Freedom State Convention in August (the exact date is not yet decided). Since the June primary presidential election is simply advisory, the State Convention may select anyone it chooses, even Sanders though he would likely decline, or if Sanders win the Democratic Party nomination, choose not to run anyone. I'm not necessarily advocating any particular course of action at this time, but it is important to understand the options.

But even folks that really want to vote for Sanders enough to register Democrat (or no party preference) can re-register out of the Democratic Party and into the Peace and Freedom Party (or other party of their choice, or with no party preference) after June 7, 2016 and still be able to vote for Sanders in November assuming he gets the Democratic Party nomination (which doesn't sound as crazy as it did two months ago), or whoever else they want. This way, one can support Bernie Sanders without supporting the Democratic Party.

Finally, if Sanders does not win the Democratic nomination and we are left with a "lesser evil" situation in November, folks don't have to be registered Democrat to vote for Tweedledum instead of Tweedledumber.

But however one votes, there is a good reason for socialists to register in the Peace and Freedom Party. Whatever our faults, Peace and Freedom is still the only working class, socialist party in California, so there is no more effective way of publically declaring your opposition to capitalism than by registering in the socialist Peace and Freedom Party. Given the hegemony of bourgeois ideology, this may seem futile. But as Marx and Engels wrote concerning the importance of electoral activity even in the worst of times:

Even where there is no prospect of achieving their election the workers must put up their own candidates to preserve their independence, to gauge their own strength and to bring their revolutionary position and party standpoint to public attention. They must not be led astray by the empty phrases of the democrats, who will maintain that the workers' candidates will split the democratic party

and offer the forces of reaction the chance of victory. All such talk means, in the final analysis, that the proletariat is to be swindled. The progress which the proletarian party will make by operating independently in this way is infinitely more important than the disadvantages resulting from the presence of a few reactionaries in the representative body. (Marx and Engels 1850)

I'm not sure what the details of the electoral system were in England when Marx and Engels wrote this, but I doubt that they included the option open to Californians, namely voting for the lesser evil but remaining registered in a working class, socialist party, a clear public statement of opposition to capitalism, racism, and imperialism. Registering Peace and Freedom is, in a real sense, "voting" for socialism. While our ballot status is secure through at least the gubernatorial election of 2018, it is important that we maintain respectable registration figures.

And, while we are quoting Marx, we should also remember the words of Lenin and apply scientific socialism concretely to the actual situation:

It is far more difficult—and far more useful—to be a revolutionary when the conditions for direct, open, really mass and really revolutionary struggle do not yet exist, to defend the interests of the revolution (by propaganda, agitation and organization) in non-revolutionary bodies and even in downright reactionary bodies, in non-revolutionary circumstances, among the masses who are incapable of immediately appreciating the need for revolutionary methods of action. The main task of contemporary Communism in Western Europe and America is to learn to seek, to find, to correctly determine the specific path or the particular turn of events that will bring the masses right up against the real, last, decisive, and great revolutionary struggle (Lenin 1920, pp. 77-78)

How we apply these insights of scientific socialism depends on how we evaluate the concrete reality of the present, and that will surely change and the Sanders campaign develops.

Based on the above discussion, it is important that Peace and Freedom have an educational campaign for our registrants so they understand the rules of the electoral system in California and make informed decisions. Our registrants need to know that, however they decide to vote on June 7, it is important that they re-register Peace and Freedom on June 8, 2016. It will still be possible for them to vote however they want in the November General Electiqwwon,

As we participate in a flawed and undemocratic electoral system, the Peace and Freedom Party platform openly states that our goals cannot be achieved by electoral means alone, and that we participate in mass organization and direct action in neighborhoods, workplaces, unions, schools, and the armed forces everywhere. This remains crucial, no matter what happens in November.

We might prefer that some other figure, such as Gloria La Riva of PSL or Jill Stein of the Green Party, were receiving the kind of mass support and

media attention that Sanders has earned. But that is not a choice we get to make. In the real world, Sanders deserves socialist support in his campaign for the Democratic nomination and beyond. No one knows what a Sanders presidency would be like, but we all know what the usual suspects will give us.

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## **What is to be Read on the Sanders Campaign?**

The literature on the Sanders campaign is large, and will certainly continue to grow in the coming months. The following sources have been most useful in preparing this essay.

**Mother Jones** has a good background article on Bernie Sanders: "How Bernie Sanders Learned to Be a Real Politician. A portrait of the candidate as a young radical." By Tim Murphy. Mother Jones. (May 26, 2015). Retrieved 2015-09-03, from <http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2015/05/young-bernie-sanders-liberty-union-vermont>. (Murphy 2015)

**Green Party** candidate for Governor of New York provides an influential critique: "Bernie Sanders is no Eugene Debs." By Howie Hawkins. Socialist Worker. (May 26, 2015). Retrieved 2015-09-03, from <http://socialistworker.org/2015/05/26/bernie-sanders-is-no-eugene-debs>. . (Hawkins 2015)

**Socialist Alternative** argues that constructive engagement with the Sanders campaign and its supporters is essential for building an independent movement. "How To Win Sanders' Supporters To Independent Politics: A Response To Howie Hawkins." By Bryan Koulouris. Socialist Alternative (July 7, 2015). Retrieved 2015-09-03, from <http://www.socialistalternative.org/2015/07/07/response-howie-hawkins/>. (Koulouris 2015)

**Political Affairs** gives a view from the National Chairman of the Communist Party, USA on third party politics: "A radical third party? I agree!" By John Bachtell. Political Affairs. (January 22 2015). Retrieved 2015-09-02, from <http://peoplesworld.org/a-radical-third-party-i-agree/>. (Bachtell 2015)

**Democratic Party** peace activist and former Congressional Candidate Norman Solomon discusses Sanders foreign policy: "Bernie Sanders should stop ducking foreign policy." By Norman Solomon. Aljazeera America. (August 5, 2015). Retrieved 2015-09-02, from <http://america.aljazeera.com/opinions/2015/8/bernie-sanders-should-stop-ducking-foreign-policy.html>. . (Solomon 2015)

The **World Socialist Web Site**, published by the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI), has a useful critique from a Trotskyist perspective: "Is Bernie Sanders a socialist?" By Tom Hall and Barry Grey. WSWS. (16 July 2015). Retrieved 2015-09-03, from <https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2015/07/16/sand-j16.html>. . (Hall and Grey 2015)

**In these Times** has responded to the left critics of the Sanders campaign in their essay, "Why Radical Leftists Need To Stop Worrying and Back Bernie Sanders," by William Kaufman at: <http://inthesetimes.com/article/18425/why-the-radical-left-really-really-needs-to-quit-whining-about-bernie-sande>

**The Peace and Freedom Party**, our working class, socialist party here in California, is posting (or re-posting) a series of articles reflecting the views of members.

**The International Socialist Review** has a useful article on "Marx and Elections," by Paul D'Amato, at [http://www.isreview.org/issues/13/marxists\\_elections.shtml](http://www.isreview.org/issues/13/marxists_elections.shtml) (D'Amato 2000)

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