

We Can't Tail After the Democrats

By Bernie Sanders

Introduction by the Peace and Freedom Party Communications Committee

We find much of what presidential candidate Bernie Sanders is currently saying about wealth inequality and by implication about the failures of a capitalist economy in the U.S. to be consistent with our platform.

But we think that Bernie Sanders should be running outside the two-party system. Instead, he is running as a Democrat and will likely support the winner of the Democratic primary (he did with Obama), which almost with a doubt will be the "corporate liberal" Hillary Clinton.

While raising important issues for the electorate to consider, the Sanders candidacy also has the function of giving an undeserved left-liberal legitimacy to the Democratic Party. His campaign, which does not directly criticize the record of the Democratic Party or of Ms. Clinton, serves to draw back into the fold otherwise disaffected voters who had been disappointed when the progressive hopes generated by candidate Obama turned out to be largely hopes without substance.

*The Peace and Freedom Party considers that one of the first steps toward progressive change in the U.S. is to have an organized left party that is independent of the two corporate parties, the Democrats and the Republicans. Ironically, this argument is masterfully made by Bernie Sanders himself in the following article that is reproduced from *The Guardian* of September 27, 1989 (we have added the subtitles). Written 26 years ago, Sanders' prescient analysis applies to his current campaign.*

Bernie Sanders says the following ...

Democratic and Republican Parties Are Indistinguishable

We need a new, progressive political party in the U.S. because on almost every important issue the Democratic and Republican Parties, both controlled by Big Money, are indistinguishable. The "Reagan Revolution" of the 1980s was not created solely by Ronald Reagan and the Republicans. It was brought about with the active and strong support of the Democratic Party which controlled the U.S. House of Representatives for eight out of Reagan's eight years and the U.S. Senate for two out of Reagan's eight years.

During the Reagan era both parties supported huge tax breaks for the rich - and major cutbacks for working people and the poor. Both parties supported a huge increase in military spending - and cutbacks in education, housing and environmental protection. Both parties supported the illegal and immoral wars against Nicaragua - and efforts to weaken the trade union movement.

We need a new, progressive political movement in this country because the Democrats and Republicans are not only incapable of solving any of the major problems facing this country, they are not even prepared to discuss them. On the most important issues facing this country the Democrats and Republicans have nothing to say.

Mass Media Is Heavily Censored

The mass media in this country is heavily censored by the corporate ownership and the companies that advertise. "News" is increasingly presented as entertainment with exciting video of plane crashes, terrorists in action and other 30-second "news briefs."

Analysis of why things are the way they are-- the unfair distribution of wealth and power, starvation and poverty, war, ecological destruction, racism, sexism, etc. - is not considered "news." Serious writers and cultural workers who wish to address the problems

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that most affect the U.S. public are completely out of the "public" broadcasting system. The simple truth is that ideas that are in conflict with the ruling-class ideology are almost never allowed on the mass media.

Has the Democratic Party ever once raised the issue of corporate control over the media, and the need to provide for a national media that will address the reality of U.S. life and allow for a diversity of opinion?

For over 150 years, under Democratic and Republican administrations, the U.S. government and U.S. corporations have overthrown, or attempted to overthrow, every government that has come to power in Latin or Central America or the Caribbean that has defended the interests of its workers and peasants.

Compromised and Corrupt Democratic Party Dominated by Big Money

The U.S. people, as almost never before, are rejecting the "2-party" system and are crying out for a political alternative. Half the people no longer vote for President, and fewer vote in state and local elections. Poor people are almost completely boycotting the current election system.

We need a new political movement in this country because our citizens desperately need to see and hear a radical alternative to the tired old status-quo politics of the Democrats and Republicans. Everyone instinctively knows that the current system is failing, but the progressive movement is not getting out an alternative vision of society or an alternative program of immediate demands.

It is my strong opinion that the boldness and clarity that we need to articulate can never be done through the compromised and corrupt Democratic Party - dominated by Big Money.

We Can Create a Third Party

We need a new political movement in this country, one that must put an end to the ineffective single-issue syndrome that currently exists – where unions, environmentalists, women, people of color, farmers, tax reformers, and senior citizen groups fight their separate battles against a hostile establishment.

We must begin to have the courage to fight for power - not handouts. We are the majority of people and must act accordingly. Clearly, there will be differences within the progressive movement that will have to be worked out. We can do it.

I am not naive, and I understand the enormous difficulties that confront us when we take on the Democratic and Republican parties and the economic oligarchy that controls this country. I believe, however, that if we stop thinking about all the reasons as to why it can't be done, and go out in the streets and do it, we can succeed.

We can create a third party. We can raise the important issues which the Democrats and Republicans ignore. We can make politics relevant to working people and the poor. We can win.

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