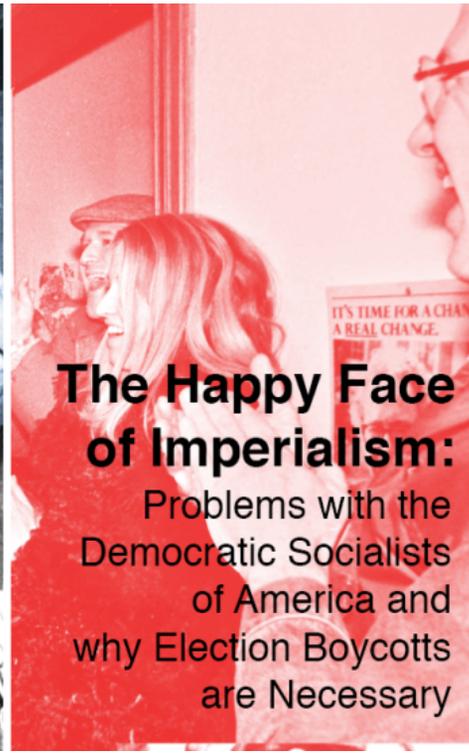


# The Happy Face of Imperialism: Problems with the Democratic Socialists of America and why Election Boycotts are Necessary

APRIL 20, 2020

STRUGGLESSESSIONS

---



## **The Happy Face of Imperialism: Problems with the Democratic Socialists of America and why Election Boycotts are Necessary**

By S. Mazur

The “Bernie bump,” a phenomenon referring to the swelling size of Democratic Socialist of America’s (DSA) chapters and organizations in the aftermath of the 2016 elections when Vermont senator and self-proclaimed “democratic socialist” Bernie Sanders ran, brought them into the spotlight of many progressive people who yearn for a new society. Brought to the forefront of a general crisis of imperialism germinating over several decades and brought to the forefront by imperialism’s production crisis decline in living standards, they appeared to some as an alternative to the old political center that has been falling apart. Today as Bernie has again capitulated and we enter a new production crisis, the main parties at the head of the endemically weak imperialist economy will continue to be further discredited, and the charm and allure of social democracy tries to continue on.

While their leadership both nationally (known as the National Political Committee, an 18-member board headquartered in New York City) and on a chapter-by-chapter basis will rail against the undemocratic nature of the American political system, which has a process so openly marked by obvious manipulation and contempt for the working class and oppressed, most DSA chapters have acted as loyal opposition to it. No matter where you go, they have become election machines for “progressive” Democratic candidates. The elections of Lee Carter in Virginia, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez in New York, and several “socialists” in local and state elections elsewhere have quickly gave them the reputation of representing a supposed “left” pole within the imperialist Democratic Party itself. These opportunists do draw in some of the masses but they do so on the basis of drawing them backward into a reactionary organization with close ties to imperialism.

Few DSA rank-and-file members know much about the history of the organization. Who was Michael Harrington, who founded the organization in 1982? How is he still influential? How does the caucus system within the DSA work, and what are the caucuses’ relationship to the organization’s overall direction? Where is the DSA heading? Let’s get into it, starting with brief remarks on U.S. elections, what role the DSA plays and why they represent a serious impediment to the growth of revolutionary power, exposing the cascade of justifications, strategic explanations and inventive self-labeling that presents itself as part of their (nonexistent, tit-for-tat, ever compromising) strategy for “socialism,” which we will see is a plan to ally with sections of the imperialists and to convince people to be content (for the indefinite future) in subordinating people in every way (organizationally and programmatically) to the policies and maneuvers of imperialist politicians.

### *The Objective Impediments of U.S. Bourgeois Democracy*

The U.S. bourgeois democratic system is uniquely marked, by its very structure, as being particularly undemocratic. In the era of settler colonialist expansion James Madison, as a capitalist politician, saw the need of designing a bourgeois republic which could stymy and weaken popular power beyond his

years, fearing the “levelling impulses” of those from the “majority faction” (the working classes). As he himself explained quite eloquently, this republic must “secure the public good and private rights against the danger of such a faction [the working classes], and at the same time preserve the spirit and form of popular government.” [1] In other words, Madison was speaking as most Democratic Party chieftains speak today, about the need to preserve the “form” and appearance of democracy while not tampering the rights and guarantees of the bourgeoisie.

In keeping those without property out of determining the course of society, Madison called for “auxiliary precautions” designed to fragment power, through the separation of executive, legislative, and judicial functions that act as checks and balances. As opposed to parliaments where a small but fervent ideology-based organization can get some votes and seats based on the proportion of the electorate which engaged in the elections, he promoted a winner-take-all system. There would be staggered elections, an executive veto, the possibility of overturning a veto, and a bicameral legislature, with an extremely elaborate and difficult process for amending this structure which requires the backing not just of national legislators but of state legislatures as well. In other words, while some bourgeois democratic states try to integrate a majoritarian principle (that those candidates with the most votes “win” and those policies which have the most votes are passed), the U.S. political structure was intentionally designed to lock such a principle into a system where a minority can veto them—which we of course know makes “marginal” political organizations winning seats an impossibility. [2]

This system was designed to entrench the parties which supposedly represent the people—making it impossible for a “socialist” third party. The winner-take-all, single-member-district plurality system makes it impossible for other minor parties to enter as well. Winner-takes-all should be understood quite literally, which is that a candidate or party that polls a plurality wins one hundred percent of the right to rule over the people, whereas the other parties, regardless of the vote, have lost any right to speak of legislating. In most congressional districts one party dominates over the other. The political

system in the United States exists in a patchwork of these one-party states, magnified by this winner-take-all system. In this “democratic” system one of every ten representatives is elected to Congress with no opposition at all in either the primary or the general election. Third parties are just as representing of the one singular ruling class and its dictatorship over the working class as the others.

Michael Harrington, among many others, has advocated for entering the Democratic Party to promote what they see as socialism rather than have their own party—this view will be explained more in later sections. Already seeing policy intervention and the lever-pulls of bureaucrats as the primary mover of history, it then follows that primary elections and the intricacies of the Democratic Party’s local, state, and federal political life become where activists lead people to focus on—and up until recently, most of those that have opted for this “political action” strategy in the form of pressure politics and lobbying have by and large avoided the label of socialist. The legal left today exists as an entrenched layer of nonprofit directors, staffers, academics, labor lieutenants and others who have served and acted as those that promote social peace in proletarian communities and workplaces. Seeing as there is no reformist party with a tradition in revisionist and reformist statecraft, that holds sway over unions, and that works with state sponsorship from larger conservative parties and forces, the legal “left” was divided in its loyalties today to Presidential candidate Bernie Sanders and Joe Biden, though the latter nominee is now inevitably being rallied behind.

While the institutional attachment of unions to Labor or revisionist Communist Parties is the case in the United Kingdom, Japan, Italy, and France, among many others, it is not the case here. The origin of retreat by Communist parties into social democratic degeneration is to be found, in part, in the reactionization imperialism increasingly imposes on the working class movement, creating the subjective conditions for the opportunists by buying out and collaborating with a thin section of the movement, that section who do not want to adopt an underground cell structure and increase the quality

and quantity of illegal methods in developing the movement, and that seed legality and class conciliation in their ranks. [3]

Many of these NGOs and unions in this age do not promote the “socialism” that Bernie Sanders promotes, which is an aggregation of public services and state capitalist management via nationalization, and instead opt for supporting the candidate who can win the “money primary” or that have the most institutional clout no matter what their orientation is to the issues that their “constituents” or dues paying members care about. When we look, we should see instead that the Democratic Party is *not* a “party” in the sense that it has dues paying members, with representatives or candidates who can be expelled if they break from the platform that those members make. In fact, when we look closely, the Democratic Party is instead a glorified patronage system that the legal “left” gambles inside of, with a disciplined whip enforced over those are able to win the Democratic ticket through a variety of both bureaucratic mechanisms and endorsement by financiers in the imperialist class all the way down the pyramid to unions and civil society organizations. While there is an illusion of open competitive primaries in which “left” candidates can enter and attempt to win, the primary system itself imposes strict limitations on social democrats that enter it.

Indeed, when we see what happens in the primaries, it becomes even clearer that social democrats cannot “realign” the Democratic Party. First comes the money primary, where before a primary contest there are candidates amassing an enormous war chest or throwing their own immense fortune in to discourage would-be challengers, allowing them to be treated seriously as a candidate and likely to be designated as a “front runner” by the media, the latter of which carefully crafts and tightly controls how things are framed during this process. We don’t find it necessary to go further into the details of how there is no longer a cap on contributions to candidates by capitalist-funded political action committees, how televised debates are hosted by corporations, about how the imperialist ruling class outspends workers making individual contributions by massive numbers, as these are all things even liberals have acknowledged. Because the Democratic Party is a patronage

system as opposed to a party where political professionals move to support the ruling class-approved candidate, around eighty percent of delegates are chosen in primaries and insider-controlled caucuses and the other twenty-percent are known as superdelegates, which are Democratic politicians and party officials who are appointed rather than elected. If a candidate gets a majority of pledged delegates through primaries and caucuses, then that candidate will win the first round of voting at the convention and no superdelegate will vote, potentially guaranteeing them the nomination, but if no single one candidate can get 50% plus one in round one (with the pledged delegates involved), then the second round involves the votes of superdelegates.

Let's talk about the voting itself in the primaries. The United States, of course, ranks among the lowest in the world in voter turnout for general elections, and is even lower for the primaries given their closed and loosely regulated nature. Many "socialists" may want to declare nonvoters to be apathetic and less informed, blaming them for their own oppression, as if, if they just showed up in a critical mass, the imperialist bourgeoisie would have to shrug and allow mass plebiscites on whether their armed domination of parts of the planet should continue or not. The Marxist view should be to patiently learn from and then teach the masses, pointing out, for example, how the bourgeoisie both in general elections and especially in the primary rig it in their favor, as it is their state and they wouldn't surrender it willingly. For example, during the 2020 California Democratic primary, there was one voting center at the University of California Los Angeles campus, where 40,000 students attend. Likewise, in Texas, primary voters saw themselves waiting up to 6 hours, with the presumptive Democratic Presidential candidate Joe Biden declaring victory before many voters even casted their ballot for the Democratic Party's nominee.

When we look at how these rules are structured, we can see sections of the Democratic Party imperialist ruling class who do not want class power to be constructed through social democracy. They moved quickly to use these rules precisely to crush even these "reformers" who just wanted to manage

imperialism differently. They have decided to throw so many Democratic Party candidates into the field because the Democratic National Committee (DNC) may want to guarantee that Bernie Sanders does not get that 51% of the delegates, allowing the superdelegates who are opposed to “democratic socialism” to vote. Even if Bernie won a plurality of 49% of all the delegates, the lack of a majority triggers the involvement of superdelegates. Bernie has lost the nomination not because of the current program of the Democratic Party, but because of the very structure of the rotten state and its elections which he has defended and benefits from, making his exclusion from the ticket a sure thing.

This is not to praise Sanders, who has endorsed Biden and chided some of his supporters as so irresponsible to be frustrated with this system. The Democrats are not entirely opposed to Sanders, being that while they sabotaged his campaign from the start they simultaneously benefited from the rehabilitating imagery of including social democrats like him. When they, whether it's Hillary yesterday or today with Biden, inevitably get endorsements publicly, they benefit from securing the withering ties to the working people who were drawn into supporting the campaign.

Elections themselves have always represented shams. In one of the closest contests in U.S. history between two imperialists, Vice President Al Gore and Texas Governor George W. Bush, the outcome depended on the vote in Florida. Thirty-six thousand (!) newly registered voters were turned away because their names were never added to the voter rolls by Florida's secretary of state. Others were turned away on the suspicion that they were “convicted felons,” in many cases incorrectly. In several Democratic precincts, people showed up to polls after getting out of work to find that they were closed early. [4]

This likewise happened in 2004, 2008, 2012, and 2016 as well. Up into today there have been reports of overseas ballots not being normally and reliably distributed, of absentee ballots mailed out to voters mailed out just before election day only to be too late to be returned on time, of purging from rolls of voters for felony arrests without convictions, of sufficient numbers of polling

stations and voting machines not being given out, and more. Touch-screen electronic voting machines are likewise coded, tested, and certified in complete secrecy, making verified counts impossible as they leave no reliable paper trail. Any programmer can write code that displays one result on the screen, records something else, and prints yet something else—there is no way to ensure that this won't happen. [5]

Never mind the Electoral College, the institution founded in the Constitution that was to generally be consisted of electors who were propertied and educated bourgeois. These electors would reward their vote on a winner-take-all basis to the candidate who wins a plurality of a state's popular vote, creating an artificial and exaggerated majority out of slim pluralities. For example, if a candidate has 47 percent of the vote in a state (with the other 53 percent divided among other candidates), they win 100 percent of the Electoral College vote. Donald Trump for example won only 46% of the popular vote (with most of the masses in the U.S. *not voting*) and yet won 57.3% of the Electoral College.

In cases where a major election does not appear close (Johnson to Goldwater, Reagan to Carter) it becomes clearest to those elements that do vote that the ruling establishment has picked a winner, not “the people.” This is not the result of some sinister hidden committee, or some monolithic fraternity of imperialists – but a complex, fractious, evolving process of decision-making involving levels of power, centers of power, and different instruments of class oppression (military, the media, funding by monopoly capitalists, etc.). But the fact remains that ultimately the decision is made by the ruling class. That's why Biden and Trump have been selected, and the selection is ultimately not by individual voters who believe they are personally (somehow) “making a difference” but by a system (and its political kingmakers) who reach a consensus. The monsters who rule the U.S. (and those who profit from its armed domination of its colonies and semi-colonies) have crushed countries, murdered countless oppressed people, exploited billions of proletarians, bought and paid for politicians and bureaucrats like race horses – the notion that these criminal empire-makers will stop every four years, and hand over their disagreements for the people to decide is naïve in the extreme.

When we look at the landscape of other “left” parties engaging in electoral politics, such as the Party for Socialism and Liberation and Workers World Party, they have explored waging election campaigns that are supposed to have a strong agitational and explicitly socialist edge. We see the problem with this in that in order to do so one has to find communities where there is a base for that socialist “electorate” (New York, East Bay, Portland, Vermont, etc.), which is typically hard, because those of the class who make up the “lowest and deepest” don’t vote in those areas and even more so elsewhere and have largely been on auto-pilot in this respect when it comes to participating in the government’s undemocratic and corrupt election process, but ever in rebellion to the conditions imposed on them. It also requires difficult choices, because, frankly, most of the people organized to be active in electoral politics *want* to win and are willing to accept candidates making sharp and deep cutting compromises that harm oppressed and working people, which in turn makes them impatient with campaigns that choose to self-marginalize. As we have seen, even with these revisionists they also ultimately mean reinventing what “socialism” even means, making their agitational campaigns drift more into “Jobs not War” areas and around other reforms tied to accommodating the ruling class. In many ways it’s not surprising when these revisionist parties tail after the same NGOs and unions that are endorsing Democratic Party candidates, because their day-to-day focus is by and large about working within the rubric of acceptable politics to the ideologically backward sections that make up the material basis of opportunism in this country.

The failure of the “Left” as it has been crushed by the same electoral process they worship so much, frustrated as their votes for Bernie do not even match the number of non-votes, shows a need for a way forward. Their unrestrained parliamentary cretinism only guarantees them the most humiliating defeat again and again.

The “socialism” of Michael Harrington is not that which belongs to Marxist socialist economy, which can only be brought by the proletariat declaring war on the bourgeoisie to expropriate it under its leadership in the Communist Party. Rather than seeing welfare benefits, state ownership of some industry,

etc., as modern features of modern capitalism, reflecting its growing socialization and the wealth of some imperialist countries, Michael Harrington saw them as forms that prove socialist forms could increasingly be legislated on and adopted over time. Largely not caring about revolution and the road of ongoing and deepening socialist transformation, where the proletariat's interests are in command of the direction of society, he gesticulated at the great movements of the time from the sidelines and demanded they subordinate themselves to that section of the political establishment that was moving towards his trajectory of what "socialism" is. Harrington followed in the tradition of many conservative Socialists who came before him, who collaborated closely with imperialism, opposed revolution, and worked as committed reactionaries against the specter of Communism.

### *The Prehistory Of Democratic Socialism*

Though we do not have the time to cover the chronology of American social democracy, it is worth discussing it and, in particular, the heyday of the Socialist Party of Eugene Debs and its internal divisions that ultimately led to the rise of the Communist Party of the United States of America.

The Socialist Party, like most European Social Democratic parties, was a parliamentary Party of the old type. Initiated around the time of Engel's death, they were all united by the eventual 1912 platform that was focused on nationalization of factories and mines, improvement of working conditions and hours, the raising of wages, universal education and health care, and also supported a host of reactionary positions and remained geared towards legalism and electoral politics. [6] In spite of the rigged rules described above, the Socialist Party gained grassroots strength and even won elections, having representatives in twelve hundred offices in 340 cities, including seventy-nine mayors, thirty-two legislators, and a member of Congress. From its birth, contradictions from within the inside would be present.

Victor Berger, of the Social Democratic Union, merged with Eugene Debs of the Socialist Labor Party, the latter of whom was one of the cofounders of the

syndicalist Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), to form the Party. Berger became a supporter of Eduard Bernstein, the German revisionist who, in the aftermath of Engels' death, argued for a "humane" German colonial policy and that promoted the idea that capitalism could peacefully transition to socialism. [7] Berger, inspired by the Progressive era and Bernstein, called for the SP to focus on improving urban governance and municipal ownership in order to attract middle class reformers, demanded the removal from the 1904 platform all references to the Communist Manifesto as it "encouraged class hatred," and bragged that in his home city of Milwaukee the social democrats could oppose "almost every strike" to promote class conciliation and gain more supporters. [8]

The IWW was the syndicalist/anarcho-syndicalist union. Many in the IWW would organize in violent strikes that would square off against the state and non-state reactionaries like the Ku Klux Klan and American Legion. The strikes would serve to train many militants in class struggle, with the participation of notable later-Communists like Elizabeth Gurly Flynn, Louis C. Fraina, and John Reed. The IWW on one hand steeled these militants in difficult battles and preached a hatred of bourgeois politics, but on the other was steeped in economism and rejection of politics altogether. Later on many in the IWW would come to support the Bolshevik revolution and would leave, en masse, for the new CPUSA after its rightwing section rejected membership in the Communist International, leaving it to fester and fall apart. [9]

These divisions increased with the rising strike waves of the period, which the IWW and the Socialist Party played a significant role in supporting. In 1902 the Anthracite Miners Strike was initiated, pushing demands for higher wages, shorter hours, and recognition of their union, the United Mine Workers. The Pennsylvania SP branch immediately started canvassing to make miners Socialist voters and raised thousands for strike relief, which succeeded in bolstering the Party's ranks and supporters in mining country, but when many industrial committees started calling for an industry-wide general strike, Leon Greenbaum of the National Executive Committee (who worked for business unionist Sam Gompers' AFL) argued that this would be a breach of contract and

must be opposed. Debs and others defended the right of the union local to call for a general strike, but before the general strike could be initiated the union settled for the contract and the morale to initiate the general strike in other mines was weakened as the SP failed to take initiative and instead was paralyzed in this in-fighting. Soon thereafter SP membership fell as both Democratic and Republican parties adopted some of the reforms the SP was calling for, and with Gompers breaking the AFL's neutrality clause to endorse the Democratic Party, bringing many workers in the trade union movement under the ideological influence of those attached to the Democratic machinery.

Debs' syndicalism did little to demarcate him from the most conservative trade unionists at this time; what he later became distinguished for was his position of standing for proletarian violence against imperialism and resisting conscription to war. This later earned him recognition from Lenin as a leader of the U.S. proletariat. There were dual aspects to Debs, from his opposition to imperialist world war, his experience as a militant worker organizer, and status as a political prisoner, to his centrism and refusal to break from the parliamentary party. Needless to say, this opening of how the party of "Socialism" should try to relate to the spontaneous movement would come up again. [10]

As syndicalism gained popularity among many workers and many SP leaders like Debs advocated for dual unionism, or the setting up of socialist unions tied to the Socialist Party, Berger had argued that Debs and others were attempting to destroy the labor movement by not engaging with the AFL unions. Morris Hillquit who once sided with Debs and now reverted to backing Berger had called for the SP to "recruit adherents from the better classes of society." Socialist locals were counseled to concentrate all activity on elections and education around how to electioneer, disclaiming any interest in "physical revolution," declaring it and those who remained in the SP who had such views to be "impossibilists." The SP stopped even engaging within AFL trade union elections and influencing the movement altogether in spite of the fact that this approach was posed by Berger and Hillquit to challenge the dual unionist

view, and when the Second International issued a condemnation of craft unionism, the SP's right leadership said that "conditions are entirely different here." [11]

The SP likewise began to endorse a list of reactionary positions, with Hillquit endorsing immigration restrictions, voting in 1904 to bar immigration for the "backwards races." Berger denounced the invasion of "yellow men" and argued socialism can only happen in a white man's country, and later remarked that communism could only work with backwards people who needed dictatorship to catch up to the standards of the imperialist countries. The SP also refused to adopt any resolution on the question of the oppression of Black people in the United States of America, with several members such as Hubert Henry Harrison facing discipline and restrictions on what kind of political work they could do, especially as it relates to the national question. Unfortunately as would be the case until the Communist International's guidance on the forming of America's Communist Party, the question of the oppression of women and nationalities wouldn't be brought up as a focus of political work among existing American "left" parties, including in the left wing of the Socialist Party at the time. While Debs is portrayed as an opponent of such chauvinism, he vacillated and embraced anti-German U.S. chauvinism in the buildup to world war and supported SP leadership refusing to adopt any resolution around the oppression of Black people. [12]

What would prove to be decisive to splitting the SP was the conflict over "direct action" (illegal tactics and clandestine work), internationalism and the desire to be an open and respectable social democratic party, especially as it related to political organizing among the trade union movement, which was ultimately intensified to a breaking point by the growing imperialist rivalries coming into play. IWW founder and Socialist Party member "Big Bill" Haywood, as these divisions developed, had started to challenge Hillquit from a position of syndicalism and illegal tactics. In February 1913, Haywood was recalled from the Socialist Party's National Executive Committee for allegedly opposing political action and advocating violence, in violation of Article 2, Section 6 of the Party constitution. This and the increased armament for world

war would serve to activate an internal line struggle between the left and the respectable socialists who advocated electoralism and municipal socialism. This played out dramatically in locals across the country. [13]

As World War 1 started, the SP suffered huge losses in the 1914 elections. The left of the SP organized the theft of draft records for the entire county of Indianapolis, in Minnesota bankers who supported the war had boycotts declared against them, and in California a group of alleged IWW and SP members sabotaged a troop train and fought with the soldiers on board. But Hillquit, running the SP from its Rightist headquarters in New York City, defended “Socialist” representative Meyer London after he reneged from his previous anti-war position and voted for war appropriations. New York City’s “Socialist” alderman adopted a pro-war stance as well and voted for Liberty Bonds, along with several unions associated with the SP there dropping opposition statements. Victor Berger likewise discouraged statements against the war, and when imperialist President Woodrow Wilson demanded for mayors of every major city to carry out draft registration, Socialist Mayor Daniel Hoan of Milwaukee was free and available to do so. Berger likewise worked closely with Wisconsin industrialists to promote the war, using his “Socialist” cover to argue that the war had nothing to do with capitalism, though he split with Hoan. [14]

On the left, there were a number of U.S. socialists like Louis B. Boudin, who opposed sending U.S. workers to fight in an imperialist war but fell short of Lenin’s revolutionary defeatism, or the position of transforming imperialist war into a civil war between the proletariat and bourgeoisie. While Boudin and others propagated against the war and, in many cases, organized people to be antagonistically against it, they could not make sense of how to use these conditions to serve a proletarian revolution. Others like soon-to-be Communists like Louis C. Fraina began attacking America’s Kerensky supporters and Kerensky himself for being pro-war, while orthodox Marxists like Boudin found himself retreating to the right as he could not imagine socialism being birthed in an under-developed place like the Russian Empire. Harrison George, the first to defend the Bolsheviks outright and an imprisoned

leader of the IWW, likewise became a Communist and would be drawn to the Bolshevik revolution, becoming decades later an outspoken leader in the first wave of anti-revisionism. [15]

In this period the left and right Socialists were slowly being split into two Parties. The repression by the right of the left and the Great October Socialist Revolution in the soon-to-be Soviet Union fueled the left's rise and further activated the internal contradictions that had already existed over the years. The April 1917 Emergency Committee meeting which led to the ratifying of an anti-war resolution led to many on the right departing but Hillquit remained in charge. [16] When a meeting was called in winter of 1918 over New York City's Socialist alderman's support for the war in spite of the April 1917 Resolution, it served as a further catalyst. Not a single speaker from the left was permitted to speak to bring attention to their class collaboration with imperialism, leading a large group to leave to set up a committee and a separate party. After it appeared the left would win the National Executive Committee's election, Berger invalidated the elections, and ordered that any branch associated with the left be expelled, which in turn led to the expulsion of whole state branches. [17]

The Great October Socialist Revolution was a historically shattering and world changing event that forced and propelled two-line struggle, compelling many leftwing socialists within Social Democratic parties overnight to demarcate themselves as Communists. October meant a new age of proletarian revolution and the final end to the age of bourgeois revolution. The path became clear to every revolutionary worth their salt: they had to establish the Party of the proletariat, and it had to be the vanguard party of professional revolutionaries.

By 1919 the SP, despite increasing their vote count for the imprisoned Debs dramatically, suffered the combined attacks of state, local, and federal authorities. Their headquarters in numerous cities were sacked, their funds confiscated, and many party leaders on the left and right arrested on trumped up charges. Immigrant members were summarily deported, newspapers were

denied mailing privileges, and Socialist candidates were denied their seats in various state legislatures and Congress. The SP as an organization was never prepared for a direct confrontation with the state as it was designed to be an open parliamentary party, and we know today that to have this kind of resilience, the vanguard party of professional revolutionaries is needed, which in the modern age is the militarized Marxist–Leninist–Maoist Party. It wasn't repression alone that finished the SP as a viable political force – the right wanted to be a bourgeois political party even if it meant becoming an imperialist party and took the time to dismantle and discredit the left wing, and the left wing saw that the electoral road was now dead and departed out to form the Workers/Communist Party of America (led by the Language Federations), and the Communist Labor Party, which would merge to become the Communist Party of the United States of America.

Much could be written about what would become the CPUSA, which led the first election boycott in 1920 before the Right adopted legal, open methods of work as a means of warding off the Palmer raids, and how some of the political prejudices of the IWW and left in the Socialist Party, such as its economism and aversion to politics, would be carried over, but we must take the time to focus on the genealogy of social democracy in the US. Social democracy did not die, and in fact, it lived on and attempted to grow. The decade and a half after the CP's constitution would be one of great struggles that every revolutionary in the U.S. must study. [18]

After 1921, the SP became a solid social democratic Party without the mass base and support the CPUSA would enjoy for leading mass revolutionary struggles. It emerged as even more irrelevant as the Democratic New Deal coalition (which similarly Earl Browder liquidated the CPUSA into, along with all Communist–led labor organizations and those organizations focused around Black oppression) carried out an economic program of corporatism. Before this however in the Third Period, the CP had (in spite of some incorrect directions at that time) correctly exposed the fascist aspects of Roosevelt's economic program, agitated within the unemployment councils around public works being around armament, and organized against the Socialist Party as

“social fascist” for pushing for this program. This program involved the federal government setting wages and prices, nationalizing key industries, and re-orienting the U.S. economy towards armaments as inter-imperialist competition around control of the Pacific heated up with Japan. Ironically during this time, SP leader Norman Thomas ran for President several times and recruited Michael Harrington in the 1950s. Thomas spoke on behalf of imperialist JP Morgan and called for people to vote for Hoover, a show of the level of degeneration the SP had achieved up to that point. Likewise he endorsed the Japanese Socialist Party as it supported the genocidal conquest of Manchuria. [19]

Thomas, who would recruit Michael Harrington, was close friends with CIA architect Allen Dulles, and would go on to head the CIA front Congress for Cultural Freedom [20]. Max Shactman and Thomas also enthusiastically supported the invasion of Cuba in 1961 as well. Thomas would also later on visit the Dominican Republic after the U.S. invasion and occupation in 1965 with “socialist” union leader Albert Shanker, union boss of the United Federation of Teachers in New York and later on of the national UFT, for the purpose of setting up a US friendly bureaucrat capital-ran state [21]. Thomas would do the same while being a member of the Vietnam Lobby, flying to Vietnam with the CIA and other members of the state, helping U.S. puppet Diem to establish south Vietnam as a colony of the United States, saying in a letter to Diem before his departure that he “held it a privilege to serve you and your country in your struggle for independence [sic] against the old colonial imperialism.” [22] A March 1967 special on CBS highlighted how the Socialist Party, and its youth wing that Michael Harrington was part of, had been flushed with CIA cash as part of helping to set up front groups for imperialism in the semi-colonies. [23]

Much of Harrington’s calls for excluding Communists (“Stalinist authoritarians”), and those affiliated with the movement in even tertiary ways had to do with open collaboration and support of pro-imperialist union officialdom, and of working closely within the Democratic Party. As we have seen with Hillquit and Bergen up to Thomas, this was tied to an extreme

reactionary “socialism” of a chauvinistic type which had always existed within the preexisting Socialist Party. While the Socialists’ collaboration with imperialism should hardly be a surprise given the trajectory of the Second International parties, there were also CPUSA revisionists who likewise would do the same, with Bukharinite Jay Lovestone joining the AFL–CIO’s International Affairs Department, which was a CIA front that channeled imperialist dollars to phony workers’ organizations that collaborated with semi–feudal, semi–colonial governments, and Earl Browder of course liquidating the Communist Party and endorsing Roosevelt and Truman’s governments [24]. While Earl Browder and William Z Foster were traitors to the Communist Party from the start (but were able to hide it more cleverly) the Socialist Party would reveal themselves for what they were from the start—social fascists.

### *“Against Apologists for the Vietcong!”: The Story of Michael Harrington*

DSA ideologue and founder Michael Harrington was a social fascist that wanted to “re-align” the Democratic Party by using the Democratic primaries and local and state committees to get a Social Democratic majority. Harrington’s politics and vision, as we shall see, has far outlived him and has largely served as the basis for the DSA’s organizing today.

Michael Harrington grew up in an Irish Catholic petty bourgeois family in the suburbs of St. Louis. His Catholicism played a part in his politicization, in that it was in large part influenced by liberal Catholics that supported Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s New Deal, a corporatist policy of fixing wages and prices along with investments in rearmament for world war. Attending school at Holy Cross and later transferring to the University of Chicago, he had aims of following in his family’s footsteps of becoming a lawyer, but instead opted to complete a degree in literature. Being from his class, Harrington was more motivated by

feelings of guilt and humanitarianism around poverty and oppression than by the feeling that oppression and exploitation can only be defeated by the proletariat through armed revolution. He became a social worker in St. Louis where he “came to a revelation” that he must “obliterate” poverty.

His first involvement was with the pacifist Catholic Workers, where he worked in their soup kitchen and edited their journal, *The Catholic Worker*, on labor issues and poverty. From the start Harrington was interested in linking the literary world he was involved in and the anticommunist left, where he admirably followed leader of the Socialist Party (SP) of the time, Norman Thomas. The SP was increasingly distinguished by its virulent hatred of Communism, siding with U.S. imperialism as Truman’s Democratic Coalition participated in the destruction and division of Korea, threats of nuclear war on China, and escalating involvement in fighting against national liberation movements of that time. Thomas was a founding member of the American Friends of Vietnam, along with capitalist Sen. John F. Kennedy and Catholic Cardinal Spellman of New York. Prior to the more intensive involvement of the U.S. as the French imperialists faced defeat, this group became known as the “Vietnam lobby” and spent a good part of the 50’s pressing for support to the comprador dictatorship of Diem. All of this was preparation for invasion.

Michael Harrington soon met a member of the Young Peoples Socialist League, the youth wing of the Socialist Party, and formally left the Catholic Workers to join them. But as the Korean War proceeded to a standstill, he found himself in opposition to Norman Thomas’ SP but only on grounds that the War was no longer in the “interest of [U.S.] national security.” Harrington went along with Trotskyite Max Schachtman in breaking away from the SP temporarily on this basis. Unsurprisingly Harrington saw Schachtman’s anti-Communist dislike of a “new totalitarian class” and “bureaucratic absolutism” as their common ground. Seeing that the SP was still on the margins of political life despite catering to imperialism, Harrington began to develop his ideas on driving the Democratic Party to the “left.” [25] [26]

While the Socialists wanted to run open candidates, Harrington saw the obvious limitations of this. Unlike Europe where social democratic and “labor” parties could enter ruling coalitions (and did so based on embracing fully imperialist politics) and receive seats based on proportional voting, the U.S. was not parliamentary and has winner-take-all elections. Harrington laid out that reformist politics had to take the form of dabbling with the Democratic Party. With this opposing forming left iterations of Labor or the Social Democratic Party embodied by the Socialist Party, he also saw the need to promote “respectability” (focusing mainly on elections and not on combative street actions and disruptions, so that multi-class electoral constituencies can be won over) and forging close alliances with establishment liberals to get there. But before this came the pause brought by the “Secret Speech” of revisionist head-of-state Khrushchev, cementing the already occurring rightward shift of many Parties towards electoralism, reformism, and economism. As many conservative intellectuals left the Communist Party of the United States of America (CPUSA) over the attacks on Stalin, it was hoped by Harrington and Schachtman alike that the Socialists could pick many of those demoralized by Khrushchev’s testimony (which was, as Mao laid out, more about providing covering fire to capitalist roaders who were going about dismantling collective farms and making labor power something that managers can buy and sell, as outlined in Ghosts Along the Capitalist Road). Harrington re-entered Thomas’ SP with hopes that they’d achieve some success. [27]

The work towards developing what would become the Democratic Socialists of America was paused as the SP hovered around, continuing to pick up petty bourgeois anti-Communists. In this same time militant Black Power collectives and the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) were emerging, eclectic and non-Marxist (or partially Marxist at best) in their stance. Michael Harrington was hopeful about the prospects of these mass movements and was present when the SDS was developing the Port Huron statement—a declaration from an increasingly militant student movement against war and racism. Harrington was quite influential in the drafting of the statement as can be seen in the stressing of the necessity of the student movement linking up

with the Civil Rights movement and trade unions, supporting liberals and changing the Democratic Party, and, of course, rejecting Communism. [28]

Harrington would publish “The Other America” during this time, a book about the poverty he witnessed as a social worker. This would gain him a seat in the imperialist Lyndon B. Johnson’s government, advising the implementation of “Great Society” programs. Soon these domestic concessions were increasingly on the chopping block as the result of LBJ strengthening U.S. imperialist occupation and aerial bombings of Indochina, in hope of weakening the nationalist League for the Independence of Vietnam’s resolve. Harrington’s conflict with SDS anti-imperialists soon came to a head, stressing to them that activist forces should be tied to liberals in power and looking to have an open line to the White House, rather than insulting them by marching and working with increasingly radicalized left forces (whom he termed “apologists for the Viet Cong,” the pejorative name given to the Vietnamese forces fighting for national liberation). Harrington’s anti-Communism was particularly rabid in addressing the rebelling students, a fact that he admitted two decades later, as evidenced by the fact that his “Socialists” were all but absent in the movements of that time.

Harrington of course opposed the Vietnam War, but again opposed it on “national security” grounds, arguing from a social chauvinist position that it was not a good war for Americans. Wouldn’t that make sense for a man whose mentor helped the CIA establish the South Vietnam semi-colonial state? He saw that it was important to continue collaborating with the Democratic Party and the labor aristocracy as they were vital allies to the counter-revolutionary NAACP (which represented the Black petty bourgeoisie and had a history of working to sabotage the CP when it organized Black proletarians and sharecroppers) just as several Black revolutionary currents most popularly embodied by the Black Panther Party entered the historical stage.

This was also the case with the anti-war movement. Continuing Democratic Party votes for appropriations, troop buildups, and subversion of national liberation movements was not seen as a sign of the Democrats being in the

camp of imperialism, a systemic and historical lineage of a Party that has always been imperialist, but a tragic mistake made by well-meaning legislators and capitalists who had to be persuaded that it wasn't in their interest to conduct such wars. Harrington would continue to refuse to make the Democratic Party the target of criticism, and only after the Tet Offensive significantly weakened the morale of U.S. imperialism to continue would he demand that the Socialist Party adopt a strict position against the war in spite of the repercussions this would have in upsetting liberal allies, his opportunism and trafficking on full display.

Harrington would finally depart the Socialist Party to lay the foundations to the precursor to the DSA, the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee (DSOC) in 1973 after Schactman and he had fundamental disagreements on how to proceed. The latter held that it was a mistake to upset the reliably "anti-Stalinist" Democratic Party, and as a result of this factional fight, Harrington took those who were opposed to the Vietnam War with him. The DSOC would merge with the New Americans Movement to become the DSA and, in spite of Harrington's feelings of the Democrats supporting the Vietnam War, he once again used the organization he was part of to focus on the supposed "progressive" elements among the imperialist bourgeoisie to unite with. Jesse Jackson's National Rainbow Coalition in 1984 mounted a challenge to the Democratic Party's chosen nominee, Walter Mondale, from a reformist view, but rather than back him, Harrington maintained that "no candidate has yet put forth a clear, anti-corporate alternative to Reaganomics, a truly progressive agenda for equality, social justice and a democratic foreign policy." [29]

Of course Jackson knew he was never going to win the racist, imperialist Democratic Party's nomination, and that the riptides of the very logic of the Democratic primary process would dismantle the "Rainbow tent" as soon as the big lights turned off, so this campaign was very much about roping people into the electoral farce from the beginning, yet Jackson represented much of what the DSA wanted more-so than Mondale. As Jackson abdicated and dismantled the relatively independent electoral network he set up to

subordinate it to the Democrats, the deeply revisionist “Communist Party of the United States of America” declared that his candidacy was a “left error” and the DSA threw all its member and resources into supporting Mondale. Revisionists and reformists have no need to be consistent in what they initially tell people their principles are, because their principle is always chiefly class collaboration, no matter the cost.

### *Class Collaborationist Strategy*

Like a decoy duck, Harrington wanted to draw people’s attentions back to reformism through the Democratic Party in spite of his protestations of the New Left. As the New Left shattered and the New Communist Movement was birthed, and several Marxist-Leninist and Marxist-Leninist-Mao-Zedong-Thought collectives sent cadre to organize in minefields and factories, the DSOC and one of its allied organizations, the New American Movement (NAM), had already held a degree of influence and support among progressives in the labor bureaucracy and often came into contradiction with the communists (many who were not so at all, an analysis of the NCM and the micro parties it was part of is definitely due). Harrington saw the labor aristocracy and petty bourgeoisie as the way to support his theory of “realignment” and when Jimmy Carter was elected imperialist head of state, he saw the “Democratic Agenda” (a New Deal style program) in 1976 as a way to bring people back into Democratic Party politics, and equally saw the “purists” and “sectarians” from the NCM (labels that often weren’t completely untrue, but from the point of view of Harrington represented nothing short of an anti-Communism that resented what were perceived as revolutionary organizations by him) as a threat. When Carter instead went on the offensive, enacting austerity policies to squeeze more profits from an insurgent working class that was on its largest strike wave since post-World War 2, Harrington had only meaningless tough words for the “progressive” President, words that ultimately represented no paradigmatic shift in Harrington’s mind, as he continued to support realignment as Republican Ronald Reagan won the Presidency.

*What is the theory of realignment and why is it relevant today?*

Harrington saw the Democratic Party as the place “where a beginning can be made” for socialists and that the petty bourgeoisie would be the principal and leading force for this new beginning, and made this argument based on seeing the decline in the bargaining power of unions in the working class movement (as opposed to analyzing class collaboration and the low subjective level of many workers in resisting the restructuring of industry). [30] As he argued: “There is no single, ‘natural’ majority in the United States which can be mobilized behind a series of defined policies and programs. Rather, there are several potential majorities at any given time, and which one will actually emerge depends on a whole range of factors.” [31] Not unlike the middle-class reformers who populated the Socialist Party he had left, Harrington continued to argue that the working class would be in a hopeless situation if they were not led by this “new class” of scientists, technicians, teachers, and professionals. Harrington took a step further in a way that would make Eduard Bernstein’s corpse glow a radiated yellow, arguing that the formation of this new class showed that the U.S. imperialist economy was proceeding towards socialism, stating that this class of “bureaucrats, both public and private, [have] become more important than entrepreneurs or stockholders,” throwing Rosa Luxemburg’s maxim of socialism and barbarism upside down into a formula of whether this new class would rally to “bureaucratic collectivism” or to a “democratic collectivism, i.e. socialism” if no effort was made to recruit and win them over. [32]

Harrington, like most members of his class, was disgusted by the idea that the proletariat could govern society, arguing that this principal force for his reformist drive would be the force governing the democratic collectivist (i.e. welfare capitalist) society: “With so much economic, political and, social power concentrating in computerized industry, the question arises, who will do the programming? Who will control the machines that establish human destiny in this century? And there is clearly the possibility that a technological elite, perhaps even a benevolent elite, could take on this function.” [33]

Maoists have always upheld that the masses are motive force for revolution, that the principal force is the peasantry in the third world and proletariat in the

first (around the united front led by a Communist Party), and that the proletariat is the leading force, whose Party, which is to say the Communist Party, uses its political leadership to establish the proletariat's control and initiative within the revolutionary movement.

The petty bourgeoisie, the “new class” Harrington speaks of, is not condemned to reaction but also is not drawn automatically to be revolutionary; its status as controlling its own labor and having its own income independent of social production makes it a vacillating class that can be mobilized by either a proletarian or bourgeois political line. There will undoubtedly be petty bourgeoisie drawn into a CP and the larger mass movement. Molotov argued that Parties that are not proletarian in composition must actively recruit from the working class and work towards proletarianizing intellectuals who join. [35] This is all, of course, in opposition to the social democratic party and specifically Harrington's conception, who focused on creating electoral coalitions based on what he saw as intersecting self-interests between various multi-classes “progressive” constituencies which, by default, made the composition of his organizations high in petty bourgeois intermediaries and careerists.

Organizing would be within the Democratic Party, and would happen on the basis of this NGO “constituency” model: the working class with its “leaders” in the labor movement, along with other constituent groups (Black, mothers on welfare, veterans against war, etc.) with their self-appointed representatives, could build a new majority within the Democrats by winning key posts within the bureaucracy and by running progressive candidates on the Democratic Party ticket. In 1973, he succinctly described the realignment strategy as “the left wing of realism” because it was only there that the “mass forces for social change are assembled; it is there that the possibility exists for creating a new first party in America.” He apparently was asleep over the last decade! [36]

Harrington likewise saw the imperialist state that the Democratic Party sponsors and controls to be autonomous from the economic base, inspired by Greek revisionist Nicos Poulantzas who championed parliamentary politics.

Poulantzas, like Harrington, wanted to abandon “dogmatic banalities” of “every State [being] a class state; all political domination [as] a species of class dictatorship.” [37] Discarding an understanding of demarcating between the State of the oppressors and exploiters through making war with an organized proletariat, proceeding in leaps and bounds towards its final victory using both legal and illegal means, he in turn discarded Lenin. Obviously, Harrington wouldn’t want to read an “authoritarian,” but this understanding of the State is written into the DSA’s DNA despite their relatively decentralized nature, meaning that all their work proceeds from trusting in the military, the police, and all of its agents. Today in the DSA there has been a debate about whether to adopt a national exclusion of police and most, for the sake of “democracy,” do not wish to have the national organization impose such tyranny on the DSA locals—yet when Maoists expose this policy to an audience, they are slandered by DSA members and supporters as “cops” and paid informants!

Harrington, despite appraising a high role to this “new class,” saw working with union bureaucrats and National Labor Relations Board-backed trade unions that enthusiastically collaborated with management and imperialism as indispensable to recapture the Democratic Party. Harrington argued that while American unions do not have their own labor or socialist party like his counterparts in the “Socialist” International (formerly the traitorous Second International), they had actually created one in all but name ever since the AFL’s racist Samuel Gompers threw the amalgamated craft union’s organizational weight behind the Democratic Party in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century: “there is a social democracy in the United States, but most scholars have not noticed it. It is our invisible mass movement.” Michael Harrington, for example, aligned himself with the AFL-CIO’s anti-Communist President George Meany, who helped pass the Taft-Harley Act and required union organizers to sign “loyalty oaths” to the state after the Browderite coalition with U.S. imperialism broke down in the aftermath of the Second World War. [38]

Harrington, a man who was always fine with the company of imperialist politicians and trade union bureaucrats, also integrated his anticommunist

politics into the DSA's structure, with a national bylaws stating specific exclusions for Communists:

“Members can be expelled if they are found to be in substantial disagreement with the principles or policies of the organization or if they consistently engage in undemocratic, disruptive behavior or if they are under the discipline of any self-defined democratic-centralist organization. Members facing expulsion must receive written notice of charges against them and must be given the opportunity to be heard before the NPC or a subcommittee thereof, appointed for the purpose of considering expulsion.” [39]

In looking at Harrington, we don't see “socialism” – by his very admission, Realignment “will not be a revolution or even a sudden dramatic lurch to the socialist left. It will be the emergence of a revived liberalism – taking that term to mean the reform of the system within the system – which will of necessity, be much more socialistic even though it will not, in all probability, be socialist.” [40] In other words all activist and political organizations must make themselves the junior partners of liberal imperialists, as they are natural allies in a long game that may be left-liberal, that may be social democratic, but that is guaranteed no matter what to be focused within the imperialist Democratic Party.

Even as the Democratic Socialists of America has voted to disaffiliate from the “Socialist International” (the former Second International), much has not changed from when Harrington exited his earthly bones for the same dirt that other pro-imperialist leftists are laid in. [41]

### *Bernie Sanders and his Politics of Imperialism*

In looking at the history of Michael Harrington we would be making a mistake to ignore Bernie Sanders and his political past. Years before becoming mayor of Burlington and supporting Vermont-based third party Liberty Union, Sanders, like Harrington, would be a member of the Young People's Socialist League. The YPSL during this time worked closely with the Trotskyite Socialist Worker

Party's (founded by James Cannon, who attempted to split the CPUSA) National Peace Action Committee (the NPAC) against the war in Vietnam. The SWP's NPAC, based on the insistence of trade unions and certain bourgeois politicians that didn't want to work in a coalition with Communists, agreed that anti-imperialist forces would not appear on the same platform of Senator Vance Hartke or the various trade union officials that wanted to speak out against the war. [42]

This bargain that Harrington and Sanders supported involved a certain degree of enforcing at NPAC rallies. SWP marshals were, for example, often very hostile to NLF flags and the list of speakers was always restricted to what was acceptable to the "notable" activists of that time. Its demands for "Out Now" was then a hypocritical lie, as no members of the coalition or those attending their events were granted equal right to speak or act on that basis.

After moving to Vermont, Sanders continued to have friends in the Socialist Party and in the Socialist Workers Party, but he focused his efforts on organizing with the Liberty Union. An eclectic social democratic party, it would use its ballot line to grant the Socialist Party and even the Marcyite Workers World Party access during election years. Sanders, like all these third parties, was always interested in playing in the bourgeois sandbox, so after becoming Mayor of Burlington he sided with Democratic-allied union officials, especially for public workers like the local police but in particular with General Electric's labor chieftains. Sanders had the police arrest Central America solidarity protestors who were blockading a local weapon factory's gates for supplying the reactionary Contras in Nicaragua, arguing that it was wrong to split the U.S. working class from the antiwar movement and that it's better to persuade imperialists within their legislative halls to abandon their aggressive maneuvers in the semi-colonies of the world than fight it out in the streets. [43]

While the Jacobin piece "Bernie's First Political Revolt" paints his ruling as an example of great leftist-technocrat tinkering of the state, the reality was that the Burlington Community Land Trust (now known as the Champlain Housing

Trust) handed over and waived property taxes on several rental properties in working class neighborhoods there for only a capped number of years, allowing them to be handed over to gentrifying developers and landlords soon thereafter. Bernie also pushed through the gentrifying development of the Riverfront in Burlington after making a sweetheart deal with a railroad company, and today it is where the bourgeoisie from New York City and elsewhere put their yachts. He gave huge wage raises to Burlington's police department and befriended the top developer and owner of real estate, Antonio Pomerleu. [44]

Bernie would endorse the SWP ticket in 1980 and 1984, and would ultimately become a representative in the U.S. Congress and then a Senator. While much is discussed about how he was against the barbarous war in Iraq, his authorization for military action in Afghanistan is not discussed, nor is his support for bombing Sarajevo. While Sanders has talked a good game against reactionary Prime Minister Netanyahu in Israel, he has funded efforts to defeat Palestine's national liberation movement precisely for Netanyahu's armed forces. [45]

While some reactionaries in the capitalist press today lambast Sanders as "radical" and even a "Communist" he represented all that the "realistic" Social Democrats of the DSA could want in a candidate. Their ability to "pragmatically" follow the worst oppressors of the world ("Anybody but Reagan" during the Mondale campaign), their pragmatist option of judging and comparing political tactics to their gold standard of electoral style political interventions, had showed that they found their grey haired savior. Sanders, who perfected his amateur reformist politics of first jumping from third party to third party, and who now saw the light of salvation in wheeling and dealing within the Democratic Party, was to be their Presidential candidate.

And now he has lost, and endorsed establishment Democrat Joe Biden, a dog that won't hunt.

*The State Capitalist Theory of Democratic Socialism*

Though this will be expounded more in the next section, we see that American social democrats not only use *Jacobin* to develop their own historical justifications for the practices of the Second International and its sections along with the first capitalist roader, Bukharin, but that they also do attempt to elaborate their own theories. These range from open apologies for capitalism through open revision of Marxism to embracing the “orthodox” Marxism of the Kautskyist revisionist school. This appears, on one hand, as embracing anti-materialist understanding in philosophy (partaking in idealism, the philosophy of class society) and also a rejection of the laws of capitalist production, placing distribution as the prime point.

Marxism (Marxism–Leninism–Maoism in our era) is in contradiction to the class collaboration of the Second International, which promotes participation in bourgeois parliaments, coalition policies, and “critical” support for imperialism. The honest investigation of capitalist production necessarily leads to Marxism, and makes it impossible for those who grasp it that classes can be in harmony with one another, embarrassing those with a class collaboration policy to distort it or reject it altogether. Social fascist theory, in part, denies the problems of production relations and instead approaches economics from the view of circulation, of market relations, making this the center of their investigation. As Kautsky states in his preface to the People’s Edition of Volume 2 of *Marx’s Capital*, page 19:

“In the circulation process there appear phenomena which are of the greatest significance to the welfare and ill of the workers, and which do not lose importance because here, to an extent, workers and capitalists have the same interests.”

One of the writers who inspired much social fascist theory, Austrian Julius Braunthal, argues that one can come to see “economic democracy” and “organized capital” as possible only when one starts from the concept of the sphere of distribution, i.e. ignores production relations and presumes the harmony of proletarian and bourgeois interests are constant with only some disequilibrium to keep this relationship healthy. This of course corresponds to

and justifies the practice of “socialist” trade union staffers and other bureaucrats preventing and suppressing violence by workers, and in calling upon the state to intercede and guide workers’ struggles. When the problem is merely how things are circulated and exchanged, why worry about anything else? As the Austrian *Arbeiter Zeitung* explained in laying out the development of such an arrangement:

“The era of finance capital is followed by the era of state capitalism; the domination of the banks over industry is followed by the domination of the state over the banks which dominate industry. The world will come out of this crisis different from how it went into it. State capitalism which arises out of collapse of finance capital is not yet socialism, but when the state dominates the banks and through them industry, then state capitalism turns into socialism as soon as the masses who work in the factories conquer state power which dominates the factories.”

Nationalized industry, then, is hailed as the transition to socialism, debt forgiveness is as well, a public works program (a “Green New Deal”) is a step in that direction, and so on. The imperialist state, then, has a revolutionary role to the social fascists; if it is appropriately captured by “progressives” it can carry out this transitional role, and the proletariat’s struggles can be suppressed underneath it. In social fascist theory, therefore, economic laws are placed by political arbitrariness. With Marx we know that exchange categories are nothing but the expression of production. With these social fascists, on the other hand, we find an overemphasis on surplus value arising in the circulation process, and crisis arising there too. Norman Thomas makes his own American contribution, laying out a similar elaboration:

“The operation of our complex machinery for the common good rather than for private profit throws into strong relief the role of the consumer...It is very significant, as the Webbs brought out before the war, that almost all progress in socialization has actually been in the interests of consumers” [46]

Indeed, we (“consumers,” no longer workers of any kind but glorified buyers of things) just need to be bought off with material items from a well managed imperialist machine; this is the socialism of Sanders all the way back to the days of the Second International. Once the center of attack is placed on sphere of exchange from production, it ceases to be a place of contradiction between wage laborer’s resistance to the extraction of surplus value by the capitalists, and becomes a process of merely regulation of the exchange process by the imperialist state, i.e. of having *state capitalism*. It follows with this theory that, at least according to Kautsky, in the sphere of circulation “workers and capitalists have the same interests,” so we can only presume that political activity should be conducted on the equality of the two parties interests.

Thomas and Harrington, as students of the Second International, were also avowed ideological opponents of Marxism, declaring that it promoted “economic determinism.” Thomas felt that Marxism was just a “very effective organizing ‘myth’ to hold the workers together and to substitute the ‘myth’ of nationalism which has less economic justification” adding that the philosophy needed was an intentionally vague “social ideal, a great organizing loyalty, which must have emotional as well as intellectual content and will escape degeneration into doctrinaire creedalism.” [47] Harrington and Thomas’ intentional indeterminacy is obviously against the idea that there is *no such thing* as a fixed form or indivisible element, that contradiction is a law that rules everything. This Kantian agnostic idealism can be seen in the very structure of the DSA and its “political education,” who make a philosophical argument in their ranks that the “practical” pragmatism of what they can win *within the current system* (whether it be getting a Congressperson to pledge to vote a certain way) is what matters and that permanent disunity on how to proceed is a good thing. Their creed is “It’s working in that we’ve gained “x” by our metrics, so why upset our monolithic unity (which obviously exists as a liberal disunity) by promoting an ideology that can’t feed us with a plate of lentils right away?”

*The Democratic Socialists of America Today*

The DSA as it enlarged in size was challenged by many among the masses and even DSA rank and file when their 2017 Convention elected Danny Fetonte of Austin DSA to the National Political Committee (NPC). The Austin DSA Local defended Fetonte, who was a union organizer for the Combined Law Enforcement Association of Texas (CLEAT), the state's most influential lobby for police agencies. CLEAT was controversial for sponsoring a Texas bill that permitted motorists to drive through crowds of protestors blockading roadways, and considering activist Heather Heyer's death at the hand of fascist James Alex Fields Jr. who drove his car into her and others, this was seen as particularly despicable, even among many DSA members who threatened to withhold membership dues. Also during this time the DSA criminally mismanaged funds for Heather Heyer's family and other survivors of the attack, requiring those who were injured to show a police report in order to have access to the donations. The great divisions between the NPC and several locals were quite apparent.

Fetonte ended up resigning after the NPC failed to vote in a majority to remove him, with skepticism over National leadership becoming a fixture of political life within the DSA (as many members say, "no one listens to national"). Needless to say debates over internal organizing goals and national regulations and policies, including over whether to allow police officers and their organizers like Fetonte to be members, have continued to be brought up. [48] When there was an attempt to pass a "no police officers" rule in the bylaws the steering committee and NPC pushed against it, arguing that this would interfere with locals' membership rules. Even to today, many leading Austin DSA members like Andrew Costigan have started Change.org petitions demonstrating their anger that Fetonte voluntarily resigned. [49]

Brenden Davison, one of the chairs of the Kansas City, Missouri DSA and a prominent defender of sexual abusers in the Lawrence, DSA, argued that such an exclusion with membership was "discriminatory" and that it would exclude American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) organizers who are DSA members that work alongside the same individuals that represent a number of federal law enforcement officers. Likewise former

SDS and NCM veteran and defender of the arch-revisionist Deng Xiaoping, Carl Davidson emphasized the utility in keeping membership open to those adjacent to the police. Carl currently leads the Committees of Correspondence for Democracy and Socialism and the Steel Valley DSA in Aliquippa, PA. Davidson argued that on “the cusp of violence or worker’s insurrection, we are going to want allies in the military and even among police.” While the statement is not objectively false, the need for encouraging defection is misrepresented by promoting working in collaboration with the reactionary state instead of infiltration to serve insurrection.

After the failure of the national DSA to pass police officer exclusion the North Bay DSA, representing Marin, Sonoma, Napa, Solano, and Lake Counties in California, moved to pass their own exclusion for all police and correctional officers. The National Steering Committee intervened to stop the exclusion once again, and voted 4 to 1 to disallow the North Bay to have such a bylaw expelling or excluding members of their chapter based on professions in the state. They did this by citing national Article III of the national Constitution and Article I of the Bylaws that govern membership and expulsion (which are used against Communists, as cited above). The Steering Committee, in their response outlining their position, laid out that while Communists can be expelled (for “undemocratic behaviors”), the Constitution does not allow for exclusion or expulsion of members for being police by themselves, making it totally clear that the DSA is by its own Bylaws anti-communist and pro-reaction. [50]f

As brought up already, the debate and discussion around how to handle domestic and sexual abuse – one of the historic means of oppressing proletarian women under the guise of intimate privacy – is also one of the great weaknesses of the DSA. NPC members Hannah Allison-Natale and Sam Allison-Natale covered up the rape and repeat unwanted sexual advances of Lawrence, Kansas DSA members Brian Thomas, Dan Jensen, and Leo Niehorster-Cook, proving that there was little promise of safety for women activists in DSA organizing spaces. [51] This, again, amounts to a problem of political line, in that DSA as a legal “prison abolitionist” organization – that is

to say, promoting a kinder and gentler bourgeois state when it comes to incarceration, by pleading for the state to have vocational programs, education, and more social workers – looks at the problem of men using violence against women as a thing to be met with “accountability processes.” Given that they are a legal electoral party and do not have the capability nor the desire to empower women members in particular to use revolutionary violence (or even the threat of it!) to dispense with or isolate rapists and abusers, they instead sinisterly downplay the level of those men’s transgressions.

The DSA, following in the tradition of all Social Democratic parties of the Second International, does not have an organizational line that favors any degree of centralism (which permits unity of policy, politics, tactics) when it comes to expelling petty bourgeois individualists and careerists or hated police agents and sexual abusers. It is a “big tent” so all are welcomed, including oppressors! This contrasts with the organization of professional revolutionaries, who through militarization go out and effectively unleash the liberating potential of the masses from the below, and carefully select and vet organizers and activists only based on their success in practice of serving the people. By combining legal and illegal methods, by settling the oppressor’s violence against the workers and the masses by imposing the violence of the oppressed, and by continually purging the poisoned blood of corrupt or demoralized cadre with fresh blood through continuous struggle, will we see the road forward. The exhaustive historical reiterations of social democracy produce their same disappointments, on the other hand.

Today there are many caucuses, including self-proclaimed “Marxist” ones, which attempt to influence organizing projects and to implement internal organizing goals within the DSA. Most of this happens on a local or regional convention level. There is Bread and Roses, which had a huge emphasis on electing Sanders (seeing him as a “class struggle” candidate) and on a “rank and file” strategy within established trade unions. Like Harrington, they see the necessity of working with the Democratic Party, proposing the “Ackerman plan” (written by Seth Ackerman, a member of the caucus) to build a labor

party within an imperialist party. They hold much of the influence over the bourgeois rag Jacobin.

There are other caucuses similar to Bread and Roses, such as Collective Power Network and Socialist Majority, who are all influenced by Karl Kautsky and Vivek Chibber's drive for the "mass party." The thought is that by not having an ideologically consolidated and unified organization, it can still unite broad sectors of society through both electoral and non-electoral means to the point of becoming a large enough "working class" party that it can start contesting the Democratic Party in elections. This would represent a "clean break," or the splintering of capitalist politicians who are more progressive and left-liberal from the Democrats to this new working class party.

Of course these politics are nothing new and, in fact, have been part of the Trotskyite tradition for a long time. Even among the dead International Socialist Organization (ISO) along with Trotskyite refoundationalists like Solidarity and Socialist Alternative, the call has always been for an "independent working class party." Much of this of course originates with a view that sees social democratic parties (like the SPs or even the CPs of Europe) as somehow "different" and less imperialist (or even part of some common "worker's movement"), which is why there is no shame when the DSA tells people their democratic socialism comes from west Europe rather than the Soviet Union. The Trotskyites in France who had this same position, for example, tailed Mitterand's "Socialists" and the then-influential pro-Soviet-revisionist PCF, proclaiming this coalition as having some kind of different character from the conservative parties (of the Gaulists, nationalists, so on). The reality that many knew, including many among the French working class, was that Mitterand, both in and out of power, was as imperialist as De Gaulle, and the PCF was utterly and deeply enmeshed in French imperialist politics, as an auxiliary support to Soviet social-imperialism.

The only difference between Bread and Roses caucus and many Trotskyites is that they are drawn to different kinds of class collaborationism, one in anti-Democrat Third Party electoralism, where they focus enthusiastically on

electoral politics but like to join or critically support more reformist groups like the Green Party (in the U.S.) or the Labour Party (in Britain), and the other in the DSA whose more virulent organizers and leaders hopes to build a “[mass] party within a party” without the Democratic Party leadership taking notice of it. They all invent different strategies and train their members in all sorts of legalist and electoral tactics, but they are both united, in their day-to-day functioning, as vehicles of reform-minded middle class politics that (if they actually got close to power) would emerge cleansed as an imperialist party.

The Socialist Majority caucus merged from the dead North Star caucus, and it has the most direct link to Michael Harrington. This is a caucus that essentially just promotes a policy list and that prioritizes elections and the Democratic Party as the arena where such a policy list would be met.

Finally there is the Liberation Socialist caucus and the Communist caucus. Both are more critical of electoral strategies but see them as crucial, part of a “two pronged” attack (supposedly) that ultimately serve to complement each other. The main thrust that they support is around “dual power” projects, which we have criticized at length for having the view that the masses can be bought off or their support secured only first through material incentives. This logic is like that of imperialist NGOs. While it appears that they may be more “left” than the other factions, they ride on the coattails of others in the DSA who legitimize elections and act as loyal “opposition” to the imperialist state and its armed forces and agents, pushing people into voting even as the State serves to move toward the reelection of its reactionary candidates. In effect, feed off the masses illusions and a small meal, but not guide them in any way towards confronting their enemies and seeing the inevitability and necessity of revolution. The Communist Caucus’ affiliation with the Marxist Center, and other MC groups like Philly Socialists, show a network of organizations that similarly endorse the revisionist thesis of a sort of gradual, mechanical transfer of power to the masses that could be accomplished only by a left-capitalist “mass party” alongside some vague bodies representing “people’s power” crowding out armed imperialists and all their tanks and drones and armed civilian reactionaries like a suffocating but non-lethal car airbag. In many ways

reactionary forces understand more clearly than many so-called “Marxists” that “political power grows out the barrel of a gun.”

To think or presume such projects represent the “left” within the DSA, then, is a mistake. While there are leftists in the DSA, just as Social Democrats always have a left, they are not organized into a faction of any sort. As Dimitrov laid out, the distinction between the two different camps is based on those on the left who are not sectarian anti-communists and are willing to integrate into the struggles of the masses, and those diehard elements that are against any united front with communists and work hard to sabotage and disintegrate it, as it would in the long-term undermine their policy of class collaboration. The right also discredits all discussion of boycott as “voter suppression” and upholds electoral and legal work as pivotal, dismissing all criticism of electioneering as “sectarianism,” as if the answer to the question of using elections as a tactic is obvious and can be abstractly applied trans-historically, acting as all bourgeois democrats do in elevating the meaningless slogans of “being heard” and getting out to vote to universal principle.

### **What is the Role, Then, of the DSA?**

When we look at the prehistory of American “socialism” after the forces that would become the CPUSA left in 1919, up to the founding of the Democratic Socialists of America and Michael Harrington, to its present-day adherents, we see a structure built on deceptive pacifist, legalist and reformist illusions and worse, one in the service of US imperialism.

What does the DSA represent? In short it represents what social democracy represents worldwide today, a force that has been responsible for the preservation of the legal and institutional system of exploitation, allowing its legality and institutionalism to suppress any protest that dares go beyond the limits they impose through elections and electoral work. For many people drawn into mass movements and into fighting immediate class enemies, lacking a revolutionary orientation and leadership, they have been held “between the sword and the wall”: between the violence of state repression,

and the wall of an institutionalism basically opposed to their interests by the NGO left and fake “socialists.” This is done by paying respect and submitting to the existing laws and institutions, by launching, within such a framework, purely economist and conciliating actions to support their demands, by reducing any aspiration for power to mere electoral attempts, and finally, once defeated in election or forced with the realities of having to make concessions to imperialism as part of entering an imperialist state, acquiescing to collaboration with the most reactionary government officials and bureaucrats to form a legalist opposition.

They brag about their success compared to “marginal” groups by showing their influence on ruling class circles, because to them this is what the game is all about: the maintenance of the bourgeois state and their attempts to take it from the inside. Their aim is to create a state bourgeoisie through broadening the public sector, either at the expense of the imperialist monopoly capitalists or through association with them, having joint management of exploitation of the people. In order for them to get any of the reforms they want at all they know they must mobilize the masses, but they must always seek to sabotage the mass movements of our time if they go far beyond the agreements of this alliance.

The necessity of preserving the regime of exploitation and the bourgeois state is the main axis of their politics, with all other actions serving as an auxiliary to this purpose. It is important to keep this all in mind that in essence, according to Lenin’s definition, the revisionists are servants of the big bourgeoisie and their role is always to safeguard the bourgeois order, even when they become occasional disloyal and ungrateful servants.

The repulsion at Maoists, and other “sectarians” who work to expose them shows that they will view any independent struggle that is unrelated to their conciliating line in response to the arch-reactionary imperialist offensive launched by the State in its more violent forms as even more dangerous than the temporary victory of the old exploiters and the more dangerous prospect of the establishment of fascism.

The DSA will continue, until US revolutionaries raise the subjective elements to match the objective reality of a revolutionary situation we are in today, to keep a latch on and silence those who advocate a right of revolutionary violence or that question the monopoly of violence for the authorities in a time of rising fascism, that make public advocacy of revolution and socialism (not the Bernie Sanders social-democratic kind), that support international forces that are in armed conflict with US imperialism and with their leashed dogs, and all those who don't have "acceptable" positions in contrast to the demands of their conciliation. They will hold back those who must be organized to attack reactionaries, whether that is for sexual abusers, bosses that exploit and create unsafe working conditions, or other oppressors of the people. On the other side of this debate will be those who are unafraid of making public politics, demands, and tactics outside of the framework that is acceptable (tolerable, and ultimately *compatible*) to leading sectors of the liberal bourgeoisie.

It is in the revolutionary election boycott from this side that we find the clarity and sharp contrast of a new day from the old, rotten official political arena.

### *The Revolutionary Election Boycott*

In this age where elections are the property of the revisionists and reformists, the elections of the Old State must be boycotted, and where it is possible obstructed, undermined, and prevented. This involves a massive campaign of agitation and propaganda, including the painting of slogans, putting up posters, leafleting, manifesting all sorts of other bolder actions. While in the People's Wars of Peru, India, and Nepal, Maoist revolutionaries (the latter which was betrayed, as Prachanda's revisionist group sold the Nepalese Revolution to imperialism through their electioneering) have been able to capture polling stations and burn ballots in succeeding in bringing the boycott to the height of actively *preventing* elections in guerrilla controlled areas. Such activities are not limited and telescoped to countries where People's Wars have been initiated. It is more than possible to initiate and broaden the effectiveness of the boycott tactic even in imperialist countries. [Elections As An Instrument of Counter-Revolutionary War](#) details this all further. In Brazil

revolutionaries there counted 42 million not voting for any of the bourgeois candidates, even though voting is mandatory there. [52]

The boycott takes up different forms depending on the movement's strength as well as the masses' level of consciousness and preparedness, that is according to the concrete conditions. In some places it may be at the level of agitation-propaganda, where there is not yet an ability to impede or stop the process of the election but where people can be mobilized to question the parasitic politicians and corrupt parties they are members of to obstruct their campaign from taking place. And where the Party and its instruments are strong enough, the drama around elections and the futility of electoral democracy can come under more direct attack. Lenin explained that the boycott, as a special means of struggle, involves an intense uptick in agitational work to make it an *active*, that is, real phenomena:

“...we must exert every effort to make the boycott of real use in extending and intensifying agitation, so that it shall not be reduced to mere passive abstention from voting. If we are not mistaken this idea is already fairly widespread among the comrades working in Russia, who express it in the words: an *active* boycott. As distinct from passive abstention, an active boycott should imply increasing agitation tenfold, organizing meetings everywhere, taking advantage of election meetings, even if we have to force our way into them, holding demonstrations, political strikes, and so on and so forth.”

What does the election boycott pose as the proletarian opposite to bourgeois elections? Lenin again:

“As we have already said, ‘an active boycott’ means agitation, recruiting, organizing revolutionary forces on a larger scale, with redoubled energy, and bringing redoubled pressure to bear. Such work, however, is unthinkable without a clear, precise, and immediate slogan. Only an armed uprising can be that slogan.” [53]

In other words, it repudiates constitutional illusions of power by declaring to the armed proletariat, facing the emerging deep economic and financial crisis, the intensification of exploitation, and the aggravation of unemployment, that it is its organized revolutionary power and all the attending legal and illegal activities leading to it, as what will lead it to its victory.

Lenin further outlined, to the St. Petersburg Party committee as a precursor to the 1906 boycott of Duma elections, that the *class nature* of the elections inevitably establish favors for the big bourgeoisie and landlord. Lenin went on to blast opportunists in the Resolution around boycott tactics, declaring that it would promote the legitimacy of bourgeois elections: “participation of the Social-Democrats in the State Duma elections at any stage is likely to encourage among the people the incorrect idea that there is a possibility of reasonably fair elections for the parties that uphold the interests of the broad masses.” That it would divert attention from the armed and underground struggle: “participation in the elections is likely to divert the attention of the proletariat from the revolutionary movements of the workers, peasants, soldiers, etc., that are taking place apart from the Duma to the tiny matter of a pseudo-legal, sham constitutional election campaign and to lower still more the temporarily depressed mood of the working class by creating the impression that the revolutionary period of the struggle is over, the question of an uprising, has been shelved, and the Party is taking the constitutional path.” That it would demoralize the most advanced sections of the masses and Party militants and promote an appraisal of a situation that suggests a constitutional road is possible among them: “elections to the State Duma imply a situation in which the Party must keep within legal and peaceful bounds; for this reason our participation in the elections would have a harmful effect on the pressing revolutionary task—that of more vigorous actions against the government during the Duma elections and at the time of its convocation.” [54]

Opportunists like to similarly drag Lenin through the mud of their politics by citing “*Left-Wing*” *Communism: An Infantile Disorder*. Indeed, it was possible then for the Bolsheviks to use the Duma for agitational purposes, to explain a

Communist program, to expose all the reactionary parties, etc. It's perhaps willfully ignored by these opportunists that the Bolsheviks were *illegal* – that they had many of their activists were imprisoned or killed while this participation was happening, had just fought several violent pitched battles in 1905 and the years after with the state, and that they were seen as working to overthrow the Russian Empire. The fact that they were using the Duma as part of a larger canvass (of national politics and public opinion) to defeat and destroy their opponents is ignored by opportunists. This got to a point where antagonisms were so sharp that Black Hundred representatives would stand up and demand that the worker delegates be arrested and hauled off to Siberia.

As Lenin himself explained in "*Left Wing*" *Communism*:

“The Bolsheviks’ boycott of ‘parliament’ in 1905 enriched the revolutionary proletariat with highly valuable political experience and showed that, when legal and illegal parliamentary and non-parliamentary forms of struggle are combined, it is sometimes useful and even essential to reject parliamentary forms. It would, however, **be highly erroneous to apply this experience blindly, imitatively and uncritically to other conditions and other situations.**” [authors emphasis]

So, one must embrace Lenin and recognize that participation in elections fits particular historical conditions, and recognize that today elections have a thoroughly counterrevolutionary character. The rise of Khrushchov’s revisionism cemented the parliamentary path and participation in elections as the strategy of modern revisionists. Already adopted decades earlier by those anti-Marxists like Earl Browder (among others) who, as General Secretary of the CPUSA, was to take the 1935 Congress where Georgi Dimitrov forwarded the Popular Front and it was misapplied, calling instead for the liquidation of the CP along with demanding the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) support the Democratic Party campaign of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. As a predecessor of Khrushchev, Browder would lament that “Nikita Khrushchov has now adopted the ‘heresy’ for which I was expelled from the CP in 1945 for. It is the same line, almost word for word, that I defended fifteen years ago. Thus,

my crime has been converted, at least for the time being, into the new orthodoxy.” [55]

We see then that every action as part of the boycott serves to demarcate between the revolutionary road and the right opportunist road. Opportunists tend to tearfully frame boycott actions as “voter suppression,” revealing how much legitimacy they invest in these bourgeois elections. Targeting any official and the election process is a cardinal sin to these opportunists, an insult to their “democracy” they work so hard to defend. The Communist Party of Peru, in “Elections, No! People’s War, Yes!” laid out how incredulous such “leftists” were when selective annihilations would be carried out to cripple the functioning of the State apparatus:

“Some, the reactionaries and their cronies the opportunists, say ‘how is it possible to vilely murder mayors elected by the people?’ First, it must be explained that the election is only a reactionary instrument of the bourgeois democratic system. We will never allow ourselves to be deceived by the political stupidity of those who only speak of dictatorship if there are no elections. United Left (IU) and their ilk may say such things; but a communist can never think that way since the State, first and foremost, is a class dictatorship, and the mayors, the governors, or the bureaucratic authorities, of the CORDES or similar organizations, are part of that State system, of that violent reactionary structure. Hitting or beheading State authorities or bureaucrats of whatever level hampers the running of the State and even more generates a Power vacuum. One of the traditional problems of the Peruvian State, as Mariategui already noted, is that *it has never been able to extend its power to the remotest corners of the country*; it is a fact that reaction is sited in central locations, in the cities, and has been extending its power to intermediate size cities, and once in a while it reaches small cities; while the annexes or towns in the countryside, villages or shantytowns are beyond the State and do not endure steady control; it is a problem linked to the semi-feudal bases sustaining it. So, then, the annihilations undermine the State order and that is good. It helps to erode it, because the political vacuum created is left in our hands, to *fill it and exert power.*”

The same fear of insulting bourgeois mores and bourgeois state worship is the source of such an error in thinking.

Today as the international Maoist movement grows, the election boycott tactic has been applied everywhere. In the United States of America, since 2016, organized Maoists have applied the boycott widely as well. In every action attached to the tactic of the boycott, it serves to show the masses to reject the old State, to show that they don't believe in the fairytale and will not let itself be tricked. In other words, it serves to demarcate between the State and the revolutionaries; the latter want the reconstituted Communist Party which can fight for a New State.

### Works Cited

[1] The Writings of James Madison: 1787. The Journal of the Constitutional Convention. By James Madison.

[2] An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States. By Charles Beard.

[3] Opportunism, and the Collapse of the Second International. By V.I. Lenin. This is an important text for understanding the material basis of opportunism and revisionism.

[4] "Floridas flawed "voter-cleansing" program." by Gregory Palast. December 4, 2000.

[5] Diebold Memo Discloses 2000 E-Voting Fraud, by Alastair Thompson. Retrieved at <https://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/HL0310/S00211.htm>

[6] Socialist Party 1912 Platform, Retrieved at <http://sageamericanhistory.net/progressive/docs/SocialistPlat1912.htm>

[7] In the Interest of Peace and Progress: Eduard Bernstein's Socialist Foreign Policy by R.A. Fletcher. Review of International Studies. Retrieved at <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20096972?seq=1>

[8] The Rise and Fall of the Socialist Party of America by Paul Heideman. The Jacobin. Retrieved at <https://jacobinmag.com/2017/02/rise-and-fall-socialist-party-of-america>. To make things clear, we do not endorse Heideman's conclusions or share the Jacobin's vision for a social democratic party.

[9] To the IWW: A Message from the Communist International. Retrieved from <https://www.marxists.org/history/international/comintern/sections/australia/iww/open-letter.htm>

[10] The Rise and Fall of the Socialist Party of America by Paul Heideman.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid.

[13] A People's History of the United States, "The Socialist Challenge." Howard Zinn. Retrieved at <https://www.historyisaweapon.com/defcon1/socchal13.html>. Zinn, as a left populist, paints a mostly flattened view of mass movements in the U.S.A., denying the reader a view of their contradictions.

[14] The Rise and Fall of the Socialist Party of America by Paul Heideman.

[15] One Hundred Years of the Communist Movement, by Incendiary News Editorial Board. Retrieved at <https://incendiarynews.com/2019/05/01/100-years-of-the-us-communist-movement/>

[16] Ibid.

[17] *The Rise and Fall of the Socialist Party of America* by Paul Heideman.

[18] *One Hundred Years of the Communist Movement*, by Incendiary News Editorial Board.

[19] *Civic Gifts: Voluntarism and the Making of the American Nation-State*. By Elisabeth S. Clemens. Page 161. Thomas encouraged cooperation with JP Morgan through appeals to bourgeois charity but also promoted it as a form of counterinsurgency to the CP-led Unemployment Councils.

[20] Kaplan Fund, Cited as C.I.A. 'Conduit,' Lists Unexplained \$395,000 Grant, *New York Times*, 3 September 1964.

[21] "Dominican Republic Project: Norman Thomas Comments on Conjectured C.I.A. Link," *New York Times*, 10 September 1964.

[22] Joseph G. Morgan, *The Vietnam Lobby: The American Friends of Vietnam, 1955-1975*, (University of North Carolina Press, 1997), pp. 18-28.

[23] The media storm on CIA revelations is vividly described in Wilford, *Mighty Wurlitzer*, pp. 225-248, and Saunders, *Cultural Cold War*, pp. 381-406.

[24] Ted Morgan, *A Covert Life: Jay Lovestone: Communist, Anti-Communist, and Spymaster*. New York: Random House, 1999; pp. 4-6.

[25] Michael Harrington: An "Other American'" By Maurice Isserman.

[26] Herbert Mitgang, "Michael Harrington, Socialist and Author, Is Dead," *The New York Times*, August 2, 1989, p. B10.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Harrington's Dilemma. By reformist SDS leader Tom Hayden. Retrieved at <https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/harringtons-dilemma/>

[29] The left, the Jesse Jackson campaign, and the 1984 elections. By Anne Adams. Retrieved at <https://www.marxists.org/history/erol/ncm-7/lrs-elections.htm>.

[30] Quoted in Robert Gorman, *Michael Harrington: Speaking American* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 142.

[31] Michael Harrington, *Decade of Decision: The Crisis of the American System* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1980), 291

[32] Michael Harrington, "The New Class and the Left," in B. Bruce-Biggs, ed., *The New Class?* (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1979), 24

[33] Michael Harrington, *The Accidental Century* (New York: Penguin Books, 1965), 40.

[34] Report to the Second Plenary Session of the Seventh Central Committee of the Communist Party of China. Mao Zedong. March 5, 1949. Retrieved at [https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-4/mswv4\\_58.htm](https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-4/mswv4_58.htm)

[35] "The Communist Party of the Soviet Union." By V. Molotov. Retrieved at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tUCRUAsrB8Y>.

[36] Michael Harrington, "Out Beyond Liberalism," *New York Times*, March 3, 1973, Retrieved at <https://www.nytimes.com/1973/03/03/archives/out-beyond-liberalism.html>

[37] Michael Harrington, *The Twilight of Capitalism* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1976), 321.

[38] Michael Harrington, "The Left Wing of Realism."

[39] Democratic Socialists of America. National Expulsion and Appeals Procedure. Retrieved at <https://www.dsausa.org/resources/national-expulsion-and-appeals-procedure/>

[40] Michael Harrington, *Decade of Decision: The Crisis of the American System* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1980)

[41] DSA Votes for BDS, Reparations, and Out of the Socialist International. By Juan Cruz Ferre. Retrieved at <https://www.leftvoice.org/DSA-Votes-for-BDS-Reparations-and-Out-of-the-Socialist-International>

[42] Committee on National Security House of Representatives. July 13–15, 1971. Pg. 3921. Retrieved at <https://books.google.com/books?id=PWpFAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA3920&lpg=PA3920&dq=%22NPAC%22+Vietnam+war+Senator+Vance+Hartke&source=bl&ots=iuQsu9G55o&sig=ACfU3U0vfZafFNM4bSLL4vO4VJVwB1orFQ&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjrpOrugvDoAhWjkHIEHQ-KAD8Q6AEwAXoECAkQKQ#v=onepage&q=%22NPAC%22%20Vietnam%20war%20Senator%20Vance%20Hartke&f=false>. The State notes the anger many felt towards NPAC, with attempts at disrupting some of the speakers.

[43] As Mayor, Bernie Sanders was More Pragmatist, Than Socialist. By Katherine Q. Seelye. Nov. 15, 2015.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Bernie Sanders' voting record on war is mixed. By Louis Jacobson. Retrieved from <https://www.politifact.com/factchecks/2020/mar/02/facebook-posts/no-bernie-sanders-didnt-vote-favor-every-war-durin/>

[46] America's Way Out. By Norman Thomas. 1931.

[47] Ibid.

[48] How the DSA Screwed Up with Danny Fetonte. By Emmet Penney.  
Retrieved from <https://www.pastemagazine.com/politics/dsa/how-the-dsa-screwed-up-with-danny-fetonte/>

[49] Change.Org “Danny Fetonte: Rejoin DSA”. Retrieved at <https://www.change.org/p/anyone-danny-fetonte-rejoin-dsa>

[50] “Proposed Police Exclusion Amendment to DSA Constitution,” DSA Discussion Board. One has to be a DSA member to be able to access this forum and this post. Here is a screenshot of a North Bay DSA member discussing the interaction: <https://ibb.co/FVhYCqk>

[51] “DSA Abusers” Retrieved at <https://dsabusers.home.blog/>.

[52] “More than 42 million boycott the electoral farce!” Nova Democracia.  
Retrieved at <https://anovademocracia.com.br/english/508-217-2nd-fortnight-of-october-and-1st-fortnight-of-november-2018/10050-more-than-42-million-boycott-the-electoral-farce>

[53] The Boycott of the Bulygin Duma, and Insurrection. By V.I. Lenin.

[54] Resolution of the St. Petersburg Organization of the R.S.D.L.P. on the Tactics of Boycott. By V.I. Lenin.

[55] Chile, An Attempt of Historic Compromise: The Real Story of the Allende Years. By Jorge Palacios.

---

#### PREVIOUS POST

*The Negation of Proletarian Politics: Notes on Maoist Communist Group’s “Four Points of Orientation”*

---

**NEXT POST**  
*A Quick Reply to MCG*

---

## Leave a Reply

Enter your comment here...

Search ...

## ARCHIVES

---

December 2021

---

November 2021

---

October 2021

---

September 2021

---

August 2021

---

July 2021

---

---

June 2021

---

May 2021

---

April 2021

---

March 2021

---

February 2021

---

January 2021

---

November 2020

---

October 2020

---

July 2020

---

June 2020

---

May 2020

---

April 2020

---

March 2020

---

February 2020

---

January 2020

---

December 2019

---

November 2019

---

October 2019

---

August 2019

---

July 2019

---

---

June 2019

---

May 2019

---

April 2019

---

February 2019

---

January 2019

---

December 2018

---

November 2018

---

October 2018

---

September 2018

---

August 2018

---

July 2018

---

June 2018

---

**BLOG AT WORDPRESS.COM.**