

# On liberalism and the Democratic Party

29 July 1998

To WSWS

It was interesting to review your letters and comments. I disagree that both parties are beholden to the rich and powerful. As a lifelong liberal democrat, it is apparent that the Democrats had to fight fire with fire to survive. The GOP has and always will block any and all new legislation to better the health and welfare of the middle and poor class. In addition they try to destroy the programs that are in place for workers.

I would like to know of any social program promoted and passed by the GOP that wasn't trickle down from the upper tier to in any way benefit the working class. Campaign Finance reform to make it so money cannot buy elections is a must and who is blocking it? Health care is another area that needs fixing not blocking. The tobacco legislation was blocked by the GOP as a result of their being owned by same.

I think the parliamentary system is better in some ways as the party with the majority is responsible for the program and must bear the blame when things go wrong. Things can change in a hurry once the party in power gets a no confidence vote. I think that changes being submitted by the Democrats are far and away better for the workers than the GOP tax cutting proposals which primarily are for the rich.

Your input is exactly what is needed but I disagree that the two parties are the same. I think with a complete return to one party or the other and not a splinter party is needed. As the GOP has made liberal a dirty word, I would like to see more Wellstones battling for progress which is what I relate liberal to. Your program is progressive but it does not mean that the Democrats cannot again become progressive if restored to power. The GOP is against progress and for repression of the lower class.

The socialist view is a breath of fresh air and I agree with you that workers have to unite worldwide for the benefit of all and this can only be accomplished through strong unions.

PT

Minneapolis

19 July

I am 78 years old and had my own opinion of the Administrations cited. The release of the American Hostages on the day of Reagan's inauguration seemed to be more than a coincidence. Every time Reagan had bad polling, he would have a military action.

As a lifelong liberal Democrat, I have been called everything from Communist to Socialist. My favorite question to GOP friends is to name one piece of legislation that the GOP sponsored for the primary benefit of labor, (working people) and not trickle down from the top.

I can remember when Charlie Wilson said: What is good for General Motors is good for the country...

The GOP has made socialism a bad name by calling or relating it to Communism. They also relate liberalism to Socialism which in a way is true as far as protecting lower income people (the have-nots) from the Greedy Haves or rich.

Give me some data on your organization or publication. Thanks.

PT

19 July

Dear PT,

Enjoyed your two letters. It's good to see that after nearly eight decades you're still fighting.

In response to your question: the *World Socialist Web Site* represents the views of the International Committee of the Fourth International, whose American supporters are organized in the Socialist Equality Party.

The Fourth International was founded in 1938 by Leon Trotsky and his supporters in opposition to the betrayal and perversion of socialism by Stalinism. Trotsky, as you may know, stood for the defense of the genuine ideals of socialism and the October Revolution of 1917. Against the corrupt, privileged and

nationalistic bureaucracy led by Stalin, Trotsky fought for the revolutionary unity of the international working class and believed that socialism depended upon a truly democratic mass movement.

As you probably realize by now, we're not liberal Democrats. Indeed, we see no basic difference between the Democrats and the Republicans. From the way you describe yourself, it seems that you'd find it difficult to point to real (and not merely verbal) differences in the essential economic and social policies espoused by the two parties of big business.

We disagree that serious social change will be achieved by restoring the Democrats to power. That argument was advanced on behalf of Clinton's election in 1992, and the last six years should convince anyone that the choice between the Democrats and Republicans is merely between different degrees of political and social reaction.

None of the great problems that confront American workers can be resolved within the framework of the capitalist system. If you reflect on the experience of your own lifetime, you will be able to trace the steady erosion of liberalism since its hey-day in the 1930s.

For far too long, workers have been distracted from the all-important task of building their own independent political organization with the false hope that their interests could be served through the existing two-party system. Among the greatest failings of the trade unions was the perpetuation of this false and destructive perspective.

The time has come to admit its failure and seek a new road. That is why we urge workers to follow the *World Socialist Web Site* and build the Socialist Equality Party.

Fraternally yours,  
David North  
(for the WSWS Editorial Board)

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