

After endorsement, Sanders attempts to convince angry supporters to back Clinton

Isaac Finn
14 July 2016

Following Bernie Sanders' official endorsement of Hillary Clinton for US president, the Vermont senator is desperately scrambling to rally his skeptical supporters behind the Democrats' right-wing and militarist candidate.

After the joint rally in New Hampshire where he endorsed Clinton Tuesday, Sanders met via conference call with his delegates to this month's Democratic Party National Convention in Philadelphia.

During his call Sanders patronized his supporters telling them how much their "political revolution" had achieved. He boasted that discussion about social inequality and the corporate control of the political system had now become "mainstream" and he claimed that the Democratic Party had adopted the "most progressive party platform, by far, in its history."

This is a fraud. The party platform is non-binding and will have absolutely no effect on the policies of the next president. The rhetorical changes made by the Clinton-controlled platform committee include the call for a \$15 an hour minimum wage that "should" be implemented "over time." Sanders has used these and other meaningless changes as a pretext to claim that it is safe to back a candidate everyone knows is a shill for Wall Street and the Pentagon because the Democrats have supposedly moved to the left.

On the most important questions, like the full support to the Israeli regime or the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement, which is backed by a consensus of the ruling class and the Obama administration to further isolate China, the platform committee rejected Sanders' proposals. Sanders did not challenge nor is he opposed to other bedrock planks in the party's platform, including, "Democrats believe America must continue to have the strongest military in the world," and calls for further military buildup in the Middle East

and against Russia and China.

In his conference call, Sanders sought to maintain the focus of his supporters on the upcoming Democratic Party convention, telling delegates there would definitely be a roll call vote for the presidential nomination, and, as far as he knew, he would be given time to address the convention. He said delegates should prepare to fight in the Rules Committee and even on the floor of the convention to challenge the nomination rules for the future, presenting this as a monumental fight to transform the oldest capitalist party in the world into a party of "working people."

"In the coming weeks," he said, "I will be announcing the creating of successor organizations to our presidential campaign to advance the struggle we have been a part of these past 15 months. It would be horrific and an outrage if we allowed the movement that we built to simply wither on the roadside. We have to build on what we have done."

He made it clear, however, that such organizations would be entirely dedicated to boosting the electoral chances of the Democrats. Sanders encouraged his supporters to run as Democrats, to support Democrats, and to elect "progressive" Democrats in every level of government, complaining that the Republican Party had long made inroads in traditional Democratic-controlled state and local governments.

Asked what he could do to "ease" his supporters into backing Clinton he said in Europe it was common for different political parties to form coalition governments. "Many of the Clinton people are very decent people. They disagree with us on this or that issue, but many of them are decent people. And, our goal right now is to come together to do everything we can to defeat Donald Trump."

Jeff Weaver, Sanders' campaign manager, echoed

these remarks, telling *Politico*, “I think the senator’s intention is to stump quite heavily for the secretary all across the country, obviously and specifically in the battleground states.”

Having spent large parts of his campaign denouncing Clinton for her millions of dollars in speaking fees from Goldman Sachs and other big banks, Sanders is now engaged in the political alchemy of convincing the 13 million people who voted for him that the deeply hated Clinton would champion their interests.

The Vermont Senator and self-described “democratic socialist”—much to the surprise of many political figures, including himself—gained mass popular support, particularly among young people who took his denunciations of the “billionaire class” seriously. From the beginning, however, the *World Socialist Web Site* warned that the Sanders campaign was an attempt to direct mass opposition towards inequality and endless wars back into the safe channels of the Democratic Party.

Sanders has been given a “left” cover for this monumental political fraud by such pseudo-left groups as the International Socialist Organization and Socialist Alternative.

In an article published yesterday, Seattle City council member and Socialist Alternative leader Kshama Sawant said, “Bernie Sanders’ endorsement of Hillary Clinton has hugely disappointed millions of his supporters. Many of those inspired by his call for a political revolution had held out hope, even until now, that he would refuse to endorse Wall Street’s favored candidate. But those hopes have come crashing down.”

Saying her party had “urged Bernie if he was defeated within the (un)Democratic primary” to continue running as an independent or Green, and launched a petition that has been signed now by nearly 125,000 people, she called on Sanders supporters to “continue the political revolution” by backing Green Party Presidential candidate Jill Stein and “joining our efforts to build a new party for the 99%.”

The Green Party is not an anti-capitalist, let alone a socialist or working-class party. Its affiliates in Germany, Australia and other countries, far from opposing capitalism have been the most forthright proponents of militarism and austerity. They have also played a key role in propping up social democratic and even right-wing bourgeois governments.

While Sanders, like Jesse Jackson, Howard Dean and Dennis Kucinich before him, claimed that the Democratic Party could be reformed from within, the Greens have opted, since their formation in 1984, to try to pressure the Democrats from without.

Such a perspective would lead workers and youth to no less a political dead end that they have gotten with Sanders. Just last week, Stein offered to step aside and hand Sanders the Green Party nomination.

In any case, all of these pseudo-left forces are trying to continue the political fiction that “grassroots” pressure can force the Democrats to the left. This was made explicit in the July 12 *Washington Post* op-ed piece by Katrina vanden Heuvel, editor of the *Nation*.

After repeating the nonsense about the Democrats’ most progressive platform ever, she says, “For citizen movements in motion, the platform can provide an important measure to challenge Democratic Party candidates and state and local officials. The Fight for \$15 can use the platform to push Democratic mayors and state legislators to raise minimum-wage laws. Any Democrat in executive positions should be pushed to pass ‘model employer’ regulations giving preference to employers who respect their employees’ right to organize. Students can use the platform as they mobilize to make college affordable. Black Lives Matter can push Democrats at the local and state level to fulfill the promises of the national party. The environmental movement, however, is clearly put on notice: Even in a Sanders-influenced Democratic Party, catastrophic climate change still does not get the prominence and priority it merits.”

In opposition to all of this, workers and young people need to draw the political lessons from the Sanders campaign and make a decisive political break with the Democratic Party and capitalist politics as a whole. That is the purpose of the Socialist Equality Party election campaign and our candidates Jerry White for president and Niles Niemuth for vice president.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact