Sanders' campaign for Clinton: A "political revolution" in defense of the status quo

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With five weeks remaining before Election Day, Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders is intensifying his campaign in support of Democratic Party presidential candidate Hillary Clinton.

Sanders spoke at University of Minnesota campuses in Duluth and Minneapolis on Tuesday. He will appear in Wisconsin and Iowa today, hold rallies and meetings in Michigan on Thursday, and stump for Clinton in New Hampshire on Friday. With the exception of Iowa, these are all states where Sanders defeated Clinton in Democratic Party primary contests earlier this year. He lost the Iowa caucuses by the narrowest of margins.

In his campaign events and television appearances over the past several weeks, Sanders has sought to convince those who backed his primary campaign, particularly young workers and students, to vote for Clinton in the November election. His speeches, delivered before audiences far smaller than those he drew when he was opposing Clinton for the Democratic nomination, are dishonest attempts to present Clinton's empty promises about jobs, free tuition and student debt relief as the beginning of a progressive transformation of American society.

In remarks in Minnesota yesterday, Sanders said there was only one candidate committed to raise the minimum wage, ensure equal pay for women, reduce the cost of higher education, address global warming and "protect working families"—Hillary Clinton. Her Republican opponent Donald Trump, by contrast, was out to lower taxes on the wealthy, while denying global warming and promoting bigotry.

Sanders exhorted his audience "not only to come out and vote, not only to get your friends to come out and vote, but to do everything that you can to make certain that Hillary Clinton is the next president of the United States."

Sanders' particular assignment in behalf of the Democratic Party and Clinton, and the broad ranks of bankers, CEOs, CIA spooks and military brass who are backing the Democratic candidate, is to cajole and intimidate the millions of people, particularly young voters, who oppose the fascistic Trump but despise and distrust Clinton, into thinking they have no choice but to cast a ballot for the Democratic "lesser evil."

Sanders declared on ABC News over the weekend that "if you're voting for somebody else in the sense of not supporting Clinton because she doesn't live up to all of your specifications or all of your ideas," that would be, "in a sense, a vote for Trump." He added, "The evidence is overwhelming that the next president of the United States is going to be Hillary Clinton or Donald Trump."

Sanders' effort to drum up support for Clinton is based on sophistries and lies.

First, while warning about the consequences of a Trump presidency, Sanders is concealing the consequences of a Clinton presidency. The most politically significant fact about his speech in Minnesota was the absence of any reference to the single most important issue facing the people of the United States and the world: the drive to war.

Sanders did not warn his audience that Clinton supports a massive military escalation in Syria. Nor did he mention the fact that the Democratic candidate has focused her denunciations of Trump on the charge that he is not prepared to decisively counter "Russian aggression." He made no attempt to square his claim that a vote for Clinton is part of a "political revolution" with the fact that Clinton has received the support of dozens of top Republicans and generals, including leading neoconservative architects of the 2003 invasion of Iraq such as Paul Wolfowitz and Robert Kagan.

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Second, Sanders' effort to dress up Clinton as a candidate of "working families" directly contradicts what he himself said during the Democratic primary campaign. In a debate in April, for example, Sanders called on Clinton to release the transcripts of her speeches to Wall Street banks and other financial institutions and attacked her as a candidate of the "billionaire class." "Do we really feel confident," he asked, "about a candidate saying that she's going to bring change in America when she is dependent on big money interests?"

In relation to Clinton's talk of increasing the minimum wage, Sanders said sarcastically, "I am sure a lot of people are very surprised to learn that you supported raising the minimum wage to 15 bucks an hour."

All such criticism has been dropped. Asked over the weekend whether Bill and Hillary Clinton should return the $1 million in speaking fees they have received from Deutsche Bank, recently fined $14 billion for fraudulent mortgage-lending activities, Sanders said that was "for them to decide," before going on to insist that the "political revolution" required a vote for Clinton.

Sanders came out strongly in defense of Clinton following the release last week of a recording of a speech she delivered to donors castigating as "indefensible" Sanders' stated support for "free college" and "free health care."

Finally, the argument that it is necessary to back Clinton in order to oppose Trump—the "lesser evil" argument employed in election after election going back more than 100 years—is advanced as if the phenomenon of Trump can be understood apart from the character of the US political system as a whole. Trump did not arise out of nowhere. He is the product of decades of war and social reaction carried out by both big business parties. Clinton, no less than Trump, personifies a diseased and corrupt political system.

Moreover, the channeling of social opposition behind Clinton, the favored candidate of Wall Street and the military, allows Trump to posture as the opponent of the status quo.

Everything Sanders now says confirms the analysis that the Socialist Equality Party made from the beginning of his campaign. We explained that while the broad support for a candidate calling himself socialist was an expression of social anger and anti-capitalist sentiment, Sanders himself was a defensive response, from within the political establishment, to this political radicalization, put forward for the purpose of containing and smothering it, and preventing it from developing into an independent movement of the working class. We noted that the Sanders campaign mirrored previous "left" and "insurgent" campaigns—Jesse Jackson, Howard Dean, Dennis Kucinich--that have served as covers for the ever more right-wing policies of the Democratic Party.

Our evaluation was based on a scientific, Marxist analysis that begins not from what political tendencies say about themselves, but from their history and program and the class interests they represent. Those political organizations that orbit around the Democratic Party, which presented the Sanders campaign as a legitimate and progressive expression of the desires and interests of the millions of people who voted for him, share full political responsibility for the outcome of his campaign.

In these elections, we call on workers and young people to reject the political intimidation being mounted by Sanders and the Democratic Party. Support the Socialist Equality Party's election campaign and its candidates--Jerry White for president and Niles Niemuth for vice president. Cast a write-in vote for White and Niemuth on Election Day. Attend one of the election meetings being held throughout the country, culminating in the November 5 conference in Detroit, "Socialism vs. Capitalism and War." Donate to the campaign and become involved.

The SEP campaign is aimed at preparing the working class for what is to come, regardless of who is elected in November. The capitalist system is leading mankind into the abyss of war, dictatorship and reaction. This can be prevented only through the independent and international mobilization of the working class in the fight for socialism.

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