

# A reply to a Socialist Party USA member

Tom Carter  
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*Yesterday, the World Socialist Web Site published an account of the inaugural meeting of a political formation calling itself the Coalition for Peace, Revolution, and Social Justice (CPRSJ) in Los Angeles. Zach Medeiros, a member of Socialist Party USA, responded in the comments section to the article (under the name Ghost of Gene Debs, 2016). Below is a reply to his comment.*

Mr. Medeiros:

While I disagreed with almost everything that was said at the meeting, I attempted to present an accurate account of what occurred. Your response does not dispute the substance of the presentations, the positions that were taken, or the language that was used in the discussion.

In particular, the depiction of Washington's intrigues in Syria as a "revolution" is a political fraud. Your report on Syria, which endorsed this depiction, failed to answer several basic questions. What is this "revolution?" Who are its leaders? What are their political histories? Where can a written programmatic record of their political lives be found? Every serious revolutionary movement has a documented history of factional struggle. Where is such a history to be found in relation to what you and numerous other petty-bourgeois tendencies are hailing as a "revolution?" Above all, what social interests are involved and how are they reflected in the different parties, leaders, and institutions?

Like the *New York Times*, you are falsely attempting to give the anti-regime forces in Syria—which, in fact, largely consist of sectarian militias backed by the US and its allies—some sort of progressive and "left" coloration. In your remarks, you implied that anyone who refused to line up behind this CIA-backed regime change operation was an enemy of the Syrian people. You jokingly label yourself a "running dog of American imperialism." The irony is misplaced. You

should take a hard look at how closely your position lines up with the State Department agenda.

The general thrust of all the presentations at the meeting was, in fact, to denounce Russia, China, and Iran. You claim that you called for "direct humanitarian aid" instead of "direct humanitarian intervention," but the difference of one word does not alter very much. Who will be providing this direct humanitarian assistance? And to whom? The uncritical use of the word "humanitarian" in this context says rather a lot. The world has unfortunately had plenty of experience already with the lethal consequences of "humanitarian" assistance from America.

Iran and Syria are countries that have been historically targeted by imperialism. The fight against their bourgeois regimes is a task of the international working class, not sectarian religious forces armed by US and European imperialism. The struggle of the working class in the United States in solidarity with its class brothers and sisters around the world is, in the first instance, a struggle against *American* imperialism.

As for Russia, you do not dispute that the presentations characterized that country as "imperialist." This terminology is simply the modern iteration of the old state capitalist/bureaucratic collectivist line that was, prior to the dissolution of the USSR, promoted by the Shachtmanites and tendencies like that of Raya Dunayevskaya (to which Kevin Anderson adhered). The history of Shachtmanism illustrates the reactionary political implications of state capitalist theory.

The definition of Russia as imperialist serves to legitimize US-backed "regime change" operations targeting states aligned with Russia, and even within Russia itself, under the guise of supporting "national liberation." (See: "Behind the designation of Russia and China as 'imperialist': A case study in theoretical charlatanry"). And in the case of Syria, it serves as a

justification for the efforts to topple Assad, instigated by the US and its allies, which have resulted in the horrendous destruction and loss of life that you described in your presentation.

You claim that the phrase “working class” was used in the presentations. Amid all the verbal confusion of the meeting, I did not recall the phrase being used. In any event, the one genuinely revolutionary force in American society clearly did not occupy the central place in any perspective being advanced by this coalition. In the CPRSJ “Principles of Unity,” for example, “class oppression” and “imperialism” are lumped together as part of a long list that includes “racism, sexism, heterosexism, nativism, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, and environmental destruction.”

I have now had a chance to review Ms. Afary’s remarks, which have been posted online. When she referred to the working class, it was to claim that since 2008 the working class has been “won over” by appeals to “racism, sexism and homophobia.” This coincided with references to “white supremacy” and claims that racial divisions represent the fundamental or essential characteristics of American society.

You complain that the WSWWS casts your motives into question. But Marxism concerns itself not with personal motives but rather with the class content of a political line. Whatever the personal motives of each individual involved may be, there are objective social interests behind political positions. As things presently stand, it is hoped that yesterday’s article and this exchange will provide WSWWS readers with enough information to distinguish for themselves between our very different political orientations.

Sincerely,  
Tom Carter

*Yesterday’s article, together with Mr. Madeiros’ response (under the username “Ghost of Gene Debs, 2016”) can be found here.*



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