

Genuine socialism vs. the Democratic Party politics of Bernie Sanders

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Niles Niemuth is the Socialist Equality Party's candidate for Congress in Michigan's 12th Congressional District, which includes Ann Arbor. This statement will be distributed to students and workers in Ann Arbor in advance of Sanders' visit to the city to campaign for Democratic gubernatorial candidate Gretchen Whitmer.

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Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders has brought his promotional tour for Democratic Party candidates to Ann Arbor, Michigan today to campaign for gubernatorial candidate Gretchen Whitmer.

The rally is part of a systematic campaign by Sanders for Democratic candidates in the midterm elections. Sanders is among the few political figures in the US who has any broader popular support, particularly among young people, due to his stated opposition to social inequality and his association with socialism. He is using this support for thoroughly reactionary purposes.

Workers and young people must not be fooled! Sanders is a fake socialist and a false prophet!

By promoting the Democratic Party, he is attempting to keep growing anger and opposition from taking an independent form and breaking free of the stranglehold of the right-wing political system in the United States.

This act has been played before. In the 2016 elections, Sanders won widespread support and 13 million votes for his presidential campaign in the Democratic Party—to the shock of many, including Sanders himself. He drew large crowds, including in Michigan, where he won a surprise upset over Hillary Clinton.

Sanders had no intention of directing this support into a campaign against the capitalist ruling elite and its pro-

war, anti-working class policies. Despite revelations that the Democratic National Committee had rigged the primary process against him, Sanders endorsed Hillary Clinton, the widely despised candidate of Wall Street and war. This handed Trump a monopoly on rhetorical opposition to the political establishment.

In return for his services, Sanders was elevated to a leading position in the Democratic Party caucus in the US Senate, despite his nominal “independent” status.

Since the election of Trump, the Democrats have sought to suppress and divert mass opposition along militarist channels. Trump's fascistic immigration policies has been dropped by the Democrats as an issue in the midterms, even as thousands of children are being detained in concentration camps on the US-Mexico border.

Instead, the Democrats have focused their criticism of Trump on his supposed softness toward Russia, engaging in an anti-Russia campaign that has been used to pressure Trump from the right on foreign policy and justify the censorship of political speech on the internet.

The Democrats have hailed as heroes arch-warmongers and conspirators against democratic rights like former CIA Director John Brennan and the late Republican Senator John McCain. Far from opposing this campaign, Sanders has given it his full support. “John McCain was an American hero, a man of decency and honor and a friend of mine,” he declared—of a man who never saw a war he didn't like.

Then there was the obsequious praise doled out by Sanders for Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos—the richest man in the world—when Bezos announced to great media fanfare that he was raising the minimum wage for Amazon workers to \$15 an hour. Amazon workers denounced the move as a cynical ploy that will lead to a pay cut for many workers since it was accompanied by

the elimination of bonuses and stock grants.

Sanders, however, praised Bezos, who makes his billions through the ruthless exploitation of hundreds of thousands of workers, for “doing exactly the right thing” and “leading the way.”

Above all, Sanders and the Democratic Party want to block the development of a real socialist alternative. They fear the growth of the class struggle and the many signs that workers are breaking free from the straitjacket of the trade unions.

For this purpose, they are upholding candidates like Democratic Socialists of America member Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez as evidence that the Democratic Party is “moving to the left,” even as the Democrats field in the midterm elections an unprecedented number of former CIA and military officers—like Michigan congressional candidate Elissa Slotkin—who will hold the balance of power if the Democrats win control of the House in November.

In the case of Whitmer, Sanders is shifting his support to a thoroughly establishment candidate after first backing the failed gubernatorial primary campaign of former Detroit health director and self-styled progressive Abdul El-Sayed.

The daughter of a former CEO of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, Whitmer has been a fixture of Michigan Democratic Party politics for nearly two decades. She served as the minority leader of the state Senate from 2011 to 2015. Most recently, Whitmer was the prosecutor for Ingham County, the area that includes the state capital, Lansing, before launching her bid for governor.

What is needed to fight inequality, war and dictatorship is not Sanders’ fake socialism, but the real thing!

Genuine socialism is based on the principle of social equality. The vast sums of wealth monopolized by the rich must be seized and directed toward the satisfaction of social needs.

Genuine socialism is international. Workers in every country have the same social interests and the same class enemies. A socialist movement must take up the defense of immigrant workers and fight for open borders. Workers everywhere should be able to live and work where they choose.

Genuine socialism means the fight against imperialist war, the product of capitalism, which threatens to

engulf the globe in a nuclear catastrophe.

Genuine socialism is based on the interests of the working class, the vast majority of the world’s population. It is to the working class, the vast majority of the population, that young people must turn to fight for a future.

And genuine socialism is revolutionary. It proposes not mild reforms, which the ruling class will not tolerate, but revolution—the overthrow of capitalist property relations through the establishment of democratic control over the giant banks and corporations. It fights for the political mobilization of the working class, in opposition to the Democratic and Republican Parties, to take power and establish a workers’ government to reorganize economic life, in the United States and internationally, on the basis of social need, not private profit.

The Socialist Equality Party is spearheading the fight to arm the developing objective movement of workers and youth with an uncompromising revolutionary program and perspective to put an end to war, poverty and social inequality. Vote for me on November 6 and make a class-conscious decision to join the Socialist Equality Party and take up the fight for socialism!



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