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No Support to Democrats or Republicans!

Working People Need a New Strategy

Wayne Price

October 12, 2010

The economy is dismal and this is called the “recovery.” Millions are jobless or underemployed or are losing or have lost their homes or are deeply in debt. Meanwhile the U.S. is waging at least two wars, killing our soldiers and local people. The world rolls on toward ecological catastrophe, global warming, and energy shortages. Oppression and discrimination continues against African-Americans, Latinos, Muslims and Arabs, and LGBT people.

In desperation, many people turn to the Republicans and the Tea Party. These claim to be against bailouts of the rich, but their call for tax cuts for the rich is the biggest form of a bailout. They claim to be against big government, but they advocate a big military and police, with increased government control of immigrants, government control over women’s reproduction, and government repression of Gay people. They denounce centralized, bureaucratic, big government, but support centralized, bureaucratic, big corporations!

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<http://anarkismo.net/article/17793>

This is the kind of political statement which I think should be made by class struggle anarchists to U.S. working people and oppressed people. Not necessarily these exact words but this sort of statement.

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Other people support the Democratic Party. This is the program of liberals, union officials, leaders of the African-American and Latino communities, leaders of the organized women's movement, of the peace movement, of most GLBT organizations, etc. This has not worked out well. A Democratic president was elected, with big majorities of both the House and Senate. They bailed out the very rich. They failed to pass a serious jobs program. They passed a health care program barely better than nothing. They dropped a union-recognition-reform law. They gave up on the environment and energy. They did nothing for immigrants. But they did expand the war in Afghanistan and Pakistan, while continuing the war in Iraq. Yes, it is historic that a Black man was elected president, but this has not really done anything for the average African-American working family.

Their excuse for their failures has been the obstruction of the Republicans. But they gave the Republicans the power to obstruct (for example, by supporting the Senate filibuster rule) and some Democrats have consistently voted with the Republicans.

Why have they done this? Because the Democrats are the second party of big business and cannot go too far in challenging business' objectives. They fear to rouse up their base, working people and oppressed people, because this might create "class warfare" against the corporate rich.

The electoral arena belongs to the rich and powerful, the capitalist class. To get any party's nomination requires big bucks. To run in an election requires more money, the more money the more important the position is. Once elected, any politician must deal with a capitalist economy and therefore must have pro-business policies. Even a new, third, party (such as the Greens, a "Labor Party," or another Nader campaign) would run into the same problems.

Working people, poor people, oppressed people have a different set of strengths than are useful for running in elections.

We have our numbers. People who work for a living without being bosses are the big majority of the population. And we have a potential power in that we do the work of society. We can shut it down, if we chose. A major strike in any city pretty much shuts down the whole city. And we can start it up again, with a new and better organization. No one else can do this.

The great gains of the people were won in this way. The civil rights movement ended Jim Crow segregation through mass civil disobedience, not elections. And won Great Society benefits through urban rebellions ('riots), not elections. Unions won the right to organize through big sit-down strikes in the 30s, not elections. The movement against the Vietnamese war made its impact through mass demonstrations and college strikes, as well as by a virtual mutiny in the armed forces, not by elections.

The unions, the African-American community, immigrant communities, organized women, the peace movement, etc., etc., should stop wasting our time, energy, and money by supporting Democrats. We need a new strategy, based on our real power. We need to build toward militant strikes, city-wide general strikes, boycotts, demonstrations, civil disobedience, and general hell-raising. Then we can win real gains.

But the capitalist system is in trouble. It cannot afford to give even the kind of limited gains it gave in the 50s and 60s or even in the 90s. Eventually, the whole of society will have to be reorganized. Power must be taken away from the rich and their agents. We, ordinary working people, and those like us, will have to take it over and democratically run it. We should replace the centralized, bureaucratic government (the state) with a federation of workplace councils and neighborhood assemblies. We should replace the capitalist corporations with a federation of self-managed workers' and consumers' associations (cooperatives). We call this "anarchism" and "libertarian socialism." It is this, or further disaster for everyone.