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Socialism Without Anti-Imperialism: A Different Flavor of Tyranny

Well dearest motherfuckers, socialism is back and it only took about a century, or at least so it appears. Nearly half the country has polled as being down with Debs. In spite of the worst efforts of his party's trenchant neoliberal leadership, Bernie Sanders, who splays his socialist ID loud and proud, is now the undeniable frontrunner in the 2020 Democratic Primaries and even his moderate competition are aping his modus operandi. For the first time in ever, formerly far left positions like single-payer and free tuition have become so mainstream that they're downright boring. Even beyond America's official "left-wing" party, the socialist renaissance is in full bloom. At over 50,000 members, the once flimsy Democratic Socialists of America is now the largest American socialist organization since the height of the Labor Movement. More young people self-identify as proud socialists than ever before. So why the fuck am I so bummed?

Like America, my own relationship with socialism is a long and complicated one. A big part of the reason for our country's conflicted relationship with the S word has to do with the fact that it's loaded like a shotgun. This is why, while some 40 something percent of Americans are horny for socialism, another 50 something still find the word itself to be utterly terrifying. The reality is, if you really break it down, socialism is just some system of governance which affords some form of social ownership over the means of production. Democrats and Republicans alike have almost always supported some variant of socialist policy when it suits them. I myself follow a decidedly purist strain of this philosophy often referred to as libertarian socialism.

While in the past I've danced with the devil of full-tilt Bolshevism and I continue to stubbornly defend the legacy of Third World state socialists like Hugo Chavez and Fidel Castro, I've come to the hard fought conclusion that the only way for truly empowered social ownership of basic human rights like healthcare and education to exist is for it to be wholly decentralized, voluntary and operated from the bottom up. The idea of Bernie's Medicare for All just sounds like swapping masters to me, from corporate bag munchers to federal bag munchers. I'm already experiencing Medicare for Some as a legally disabled agoraphobic and let me tell you, there is exactly nothing empowering about it. I feel like shit being barely strung along by the very same folks who brought us Waco, Ludlow and My Lai, and that brings me to the biggest bug I have up my ass about millennial socialism.

While America's last great socialist era was defined by diehard peaceniks like Eugene Debs and Norman Thomas, socialism 2.0 seems to have little to no room for the leftist cornerstone that brought me to socialism in the first place, Anti-Imperialism. Oh sure, Bernie pays lip-service to broad notions of peace, love and understanding, but the most left-wing class in modern Democratic Primary history can't seem to be bothered to give a fuck about war for longer than two debate questions and a soundbite. Tulsi Gabbard, the only candidate who dared to make the issue a priority, has been run off the reservation like a feral goat.

When you dig deeper into this phenomena, things only get more sinister. Bernie Sanders has strongly endorsed every massacre ever thrown by a member of his surrogate party, including downright genocidal ones like Clinton's baby-killing sanctions regime in Iraq. In fact, the Democrats new found infatuation with seemingly radical leftist state programs like the Green New Deal has coincided ominously with a wave of open liberal imperialism defined by the Russophobic New Cold War of militarist creep-a-zoids like Adam Schiff. Turn on MSNBC and you'll hear an earful of pro-war cheerleading that is eerily reminiscent of Bush-era Fox News. So what the fucking is going on here?

We've seen this specific perversion of leftism before, dearest motherfuckers, and it ain't got dick to do with Debs. It's a sick cousin of Bernie's other roll models, FDR and LBJ. A form of pro-war socialism that essentially amounts to blood and butter payola. In times of extreme upheaval like the Great Depression and the radical end of the Civil Rights Era, members of America's elite parties and institutions have often conceded to light-weight genres of social democracy as a matter of staving off more revolutionary socialist

impulses. The New Deal and the Great Society weren't fantastic advancements in workers rights. They were top-down mechanisms designed to pay off the reasonably pissed proletariat to clear the fucking streets while our version of the left nuked Hiroshima and gassed Indochina. It's fucking hush money and it worked. The mighty Labor Movement which earned us weekends and the 24-hour work week was affectively assimilated into the federal beast by FDR, and LBJ managed to castrate the Black Power Movement with welfare checks just when militants were taking whole cities back from the pigs in post-MLK urban meltdowns. And here comes Uncle Bernie with a pocket full of hard candy.

Don't fucking fall for it, dearest motherfuckers. Like any political science, there are many schools of socialism and not all of them are benevolent. Any form of socialism which doesn't put anti-imperialism front and center can best be described as a variant of national socialism. One that fattens up the proletariat on the spoils of conquest. I don't know about you kiddies, but that is not what I signed up for.

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