

RAY O' LIGHT NEWSLETTER

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A Revolutionary Approach to the Sanders Presidential Campaign

by RAY LIGHT

“Engels is most definite in calling universal suffrage an instrument of bourgeois rule. Universal suffrage, he says, ... is the ‘gauge of the maturity of the working class. It cannot and never will be anything more in the present-day state.’” (Cited by Lenin in The State and Revolution)

The 2016 U.S. Presidential Race thus far reflects the bitter experience of the working class, the urban and rural poor, and the middle class with the capitalist austerity for the 99% and the almost unprecedented boom years for Wall Street and finance capital. This assault on our conditions of life has been provided by the bipartisan “Republicrats”

under Republican President George W. Bush and Democratic President Barack Obama since the economic crisis hit in 2007 and 2008.

Under the banner of “universal suffrage,” the TV debates, polls, rallies, and constant media coverage have revealed that there is remarkably little support for the “Republicrat” “2016 heavy favorites” (mainstream Democratic and Republican candidates, Hillary Clinton and especially Jeb Bush). Instead, the strong showing of right wing, fascistic Tea Party candidates such as Trump, Carson, Fiorina, Cruz, Rubio et al. on the Republican side and the social-democrat Sanders on the Democratic side reflects *some level of popular mass rejection*

(contd. on p. 2)

May The Force Awaken

by CINDY SHEEHAN



“Listen, I can’t get involved. I’ve got work to do. It’s not that I like the Empire; I hate it. But there’s nothing I can do about it right now... It’s all such a long way from here.”

—Luke Skywalker in Star Wars

Prelude

Psychologist, Robert Jay Lifton, who is a pioneer in the study of what drives otherwise “normal” human beings to commit war crimes calls war: “an atrocity-producing situation.” Atrocities have been committed in every war since the beginning of time, and the sad thing is the barbarity hasn’t decreased. Recently a US soldier tried to justify to me committing atrocities because the “British did it to the Native Americans” in the French-Indian War. This soldier was essentially agreeing with Lifton.

(contd. on p. 6)

Do you know who said it??

“Black Americans, in the main, live life in a hell — daily. For them, freedom is a word, but prison is inevitability. For them, civil rights are a mirage, and daily humiliations are a certainty.

“For all the powers of the state are arrayed against them.”

Hint: The painful eloquence, efficacy and economy of these words reflect a person who has both lived what he is writing about and is no stranger to the craft of writing.

—Still stumped? See page 7 for the mystery answer.

Also included in this issue:

U.S.-led Military Intervention in Afghanistan and the Opioid-Heroin Epidemic in the USA pages 5-6

(Sanders Campaign continued)

of “Republicrat Rule” and the Wall Street imperialist ruling class they represent.



Many of the ruined privileged petty bourgeoisie especially the white supremacist, great nation chauvinist, and Christian fundamentalist among them) are backing Trump, Carson, Fiorina, Cruz or Rubio and have helped these candidates attract large numbers of (especially white) impoverished workers and the poor. This campaign is accelerating the already formidable fascist direction in which the USA has been going for some time now — especially during the George W. Bush and Barack Obama years. *It is a disturbing and dangerous development.*



On the other hand, large numbers of lower middle class and working class folks who have also experienced increasing economic hardship are supporting Bernie Sanders. This has been shown by the huge numbers of people that have attended a Sanders Rally and/or donated to his campaign, dwarfing the numbers for other presidential candidates. The Sanders campaign is mobilizing this mass support in spite of the pro-imperialist, pro-Wall Street national AFL-CIO and NAACP misleadership with their early endorsement of arch imperialist and Wall Street puppet Hillary Clinton. As 2016 begins, only three national unions have endorsed Sanders — National Nurses United, American Postal Workers Union (APWU) and the Communications Workers of America (CWA). Yet these three unions, with their Sanders endorsement and progressive leadership, do not represent any significant break with the treacherous AFL-CIO leadership, such as had occurred in the 1930's in the split between the stagnant, top-down AFL bureaucracy and the then new and rising, emerging democratic mass-oriented CIO, with its large Communist Party influence. Moreover, Sanders' commitment ahead of time to support Clinton or

Biden or whatever imperialist war criminal the Democratic Party ultimately picks as its candidate sharply diminishes the extent to which the Sanders Campaign represents any real alternative to the “Republicrats” and to the Tea Party.



After six decades of U.S. imperialist hegemony in the world capitalist camp, a period that witnessed the dismantling of the international communist movement and the demise of the socialist camp, the U.S. sector of the international working class remains largely isolated from the rest of the class. It is still politically overwhelmed by its immediate and direct bourgeois enemy, U.S. imperialism. This still powerful global force, the U.S. Empire, as the main bastion of international capitalism, continues to draw its strength from its international connections, from the oppression of the world's peoples.

This unequal conflict between U.S. labor and U.S. capital is reflected, among other things, in the lack of a revolutionary working class vanguard party in the USA today. Furthermore, there seems to be no short term prospect for the re-establishment of proletarian international solidarity among the rest of the international working class and especially with the U.S. workers such as existed in the days of the Soviet-led Communist International.

Nevertheless, the U.S. Empire is itself in rapid decline, a factor that provides renewed opportunities for the advance of the proletarian revolutionary cause in the USA.

In the Presidential Campaign thus far, the Sanders For President Campaign is helping to educate the working class and oppressed nationalities and the poor that they are entitled to a better life, after

(Sanders Campaign continued)

decades in which most of the workers and the 99% have bought Wall Street's idea that the problems in the USA are due to the workers receiving *more* than they deserve! (The Democratic Party and its AFL-CIO Labor Lieutenants, NAACP misleaders, etc. claim that "the middle class" needs and deserves more but not the increasing masses of poor people and the working class.)



At the same time, the Sanders Campaign makes concrete positive *mass demands on the U.S. imperialist ruling class*. Single payer universal health care, \$15/hr minimum wage, defense of the public good, i.e. free public college tuition, public schools and public post office, etc. Most or all of this Campaign's demands had already been identified by the *Revolutionary Organization of Labor (ROL-USA)* as worthwhile goals of the class struggle around which we are trying to mobilize the working class and the masses. Both within and in conjunction with the Sanders Campaign we can now continue and deepen the political struggle around these demands.

Trump and the other Republican tea party candidates are moving U.S. society rapidly and decisively toward fascism (Trump's anti-Latino immigrant bashing, Fiorina's spearhead of an anti-women campaign, the Carson-led anti-Muslim immigrant hysteria). On a positive note, however, the Sanders Campaign is moving a segment of the U.S. populace toward opposition to Wall Street rule.

Can the weak and isolated revolutionary working class forces in the USA today afford to stand outside the fray and refuse to *critically* support the Sanders campaign's half-hearted and fatally compromised defense of the petty bourgeoisie, the workers and the poor? Half-hearted and fatally compromised because Sanders himself remains

wedded and committed to the Democratic Party wing of the "Republicrat" party of Wall Street and U.S. imperialism and to defense of the U.S. Empire.

Remember the guidance of our *boldest* leader, comrade Lenin, — we need to make political compromises and alliances. But these maneuvers can only advance the proletarian revolutionary cause if we implement a principled policy using both "*unity with and struggle against*" our temporary allies. For example, Lenin observed: "The Bolsheviks ... since 1905 have systematically insisted on an alliance between the working class and the peasantry against the liberal bourgeoisie and tsardom, never, however, refusing to support the bourgeoisie against tsardom (for instance during second ballots) and never ceasing their relentless ideological and political struggle against the bourgeois-revolutionary peasant party, the 'Socialist-Revolutionaries,' exposing them as petty-bourgeois democrats who falsely masqueraded as Socialists."

Following the Bolshevik example, we can endorse the Sanders petty bourgeois democratic domestic platform, while ceaselessly opposing and exposing his criminal support for the U.S. Empire with its continuous imperialist war and oppression of the peoples of the world. In order to have successful (pro-revolutionary) united front work with the Sanders Campaign, however, it is crucial that we remain constantly mindful that Sanders is no better than "the extreme left wing of the imperialist bourgeoisie" and that we have a constant duty to educate the workers and oppressed within the USA and around the world of that fact.

In a section of *Ray O'Light Newsletter #59* (March-April 2010) entitled, "Obama and the Federal Government Preside Over the U.S. Empire in Decline" we opened with the following sentence: "Barack Obama is well suited for the difficult task of presiding over an orderly march of the U.S. population to impoverishment in the desperate effort of the U.S. monopoly capitalist and imperialist ruling class to save itself and its hegemonic position in the world capitalist system."

After elaborating how, in the face of the Obama bailout of Wall Street, the Obama-Biden Democratic Administration had seduced much of the U.S. "left," the Afro-American people, Latino immigrant workers, and the organized section of the U.S. working class under AFL-CIO leadership, we

(contd. on p. 4)

(Sanders Campaign continued)

concluded that: *“This march to impoverishment, however, is still only in its beginning stages. And the challenge to the U.S. monopoly capitalist and imperialist ruling class and President Obama to lead the masses of working people and oppressed nationalities in the USA to poverty without us opting for revolt, without us turning to socialist revolution for the way out of our difficulties, will only get more difficult.”*

Since we made the above observation, the more than five years of bitter experience of the 99% of the U.S. population on our backward march to austerity, under the leadership of the Obama Regime and U.S. imperialism, is the concrete material basis for the strength of the Sanders Campaign that has surprised everyone – including

Sanders. In this light it is clear that a section among “the 99%,” among the U.S. workers, the oppressed nationalities and petty bourgeoisie, are beginning to turn “to socialist revolution as the way out of our difficulties.” This helps explain why Sanders raises the need for a “political revolution,” despite having already committed himself to support the nominee of the Democratic wing of the imperialist ruling party, the “Republicrats.”

The Sanders Campaign represents a step, though a small one, by thousands of U.S. workers and of the 99%, including some youth, toward open “revolt,” toward “socialist revolution.” *ROL-USA and the handful of other proletarian revolutionaries in the USA have a responsibility to help the class and the masses to continue on this revolutionary path to workers power and socialism.*

“U.S. Democracy”

The U.S. Empire’s Indispensable Myth

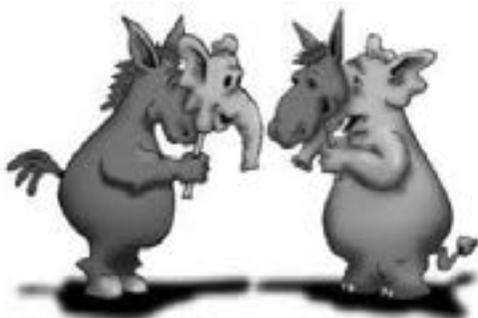
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Revolutionary Organization of Labor, USA

Connecting the Dots:

U.S.-led Military Intervention in Afghanistan, Opium-Poppy Production, and the Opioid-Heroin Epidemic in the USA

by ROSE BROWN

In 2007, the total estimated world production of heroin reached 75.2 tons of which 82% was consumed in the USA! By 2010, an estimated 122.5 tons was manufactured. Opium-poppy production and distribution in Afghanistan today provides more than 90% of the global supply of opium from which heroin is produced.

According to the *Christian Science Monitor*, “The opium capital of the world, Afghanistan ... produces about \$4 billion worth, or 53 percent of gross domestic product, making drug production easily Afghanistan’s most lucrative industry, according to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). (“Afghanistan’s soaring drug trade hits home,” 3/13/2008)

By 2001, the Taliban government of Afghanistan had virtually eliminated opium-poppy production there. In fact, in August of 2001, the U.S. government gave the Taliban government a grant of 43 million dollars which was announced by Secretary of State Colin Powell in recognition of the Taliban’s efforts in wiping out the main source of the world supply of heroin. (See “Bush’s Global Terrorist War and the September 11th Events,” *Ray O’ Light Newsletter* #29, November, 2001)

However, within weeks, beginning on October 7, 2001, U.S. imperialism, behind the smokescreen of 9-11, launched its criminal U.S.-led invasion and occupation of Afghanistan. As U.S. (and NATO) troops spread across the country and the Taliban was removed from power, poppy cultivation and opium production was resumed once again. TeleSur reported this year that “The production of opium increased 40-fold in the 13 years of the U.S. intervention in Afghanistan ...” ([http://](http://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/US-to-Blame-for-Spike-in-Opium-Production-in-Afghanistan-20150416-0028.html)

www.telesurtv.net/english/news/US-to-Blame-for-Spike-in-Opium-Production-in-Afghanistan-20150416-0028.html)

In a *Counterpunch* article in November 2012, Mike Whitney pointed out: “The Pentagon reversed [the elimination of poppy production in Afghanistan] by installing the same bloodthirsty warlords who had been in power before the Taliban. Naturally, this collection of psychopaths – who the western media lauded as the ‘Northern Alliance’ – picked up where they left off and resumed their drug operations boosting their own wealth and power by many orders of magnitude while meeting the near-insatiable demand for heroin in capitals across Europe and America.”

When Obama assumed the U.S. presidency in 2009, his administration not only continued the Bush-led imperialist war against Afghanistan but augmented it with a “surge” of additional troops. Part of the BIG LIE rationale of the Obama Administration was that in addition to fighting “terrorism” in Afghanistan, the U.S. government was leading the fight against “drug trafficking.” Reportedly, the U.S. government spent \$7.6 billion in an effort to reduce the production of poppy. The result? “Poppy production was at an all-time high of 209,000 hectares last year, it grows in numerous parts of the country where it once did not and U.S. officials blame Afghanistan’s government for failing to stop it. ... About half of all poppy production in Afghanistan occurred in Helmand, where thousands of additional U.S. Marines deployed as part of President Obama’s surge of troops ordered in late 2009.” (*The Washington Post*, 10/21/14)

The truth is that this opium-poppy production in Afghanistan is in the interests of U.S. imperialism. For one thing, according to the March 2015 report of the U.S. Department of State Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, an estimated 2 million of the 33 million Afghan people are opiate users and Afghanistan has the largest population of juvenile opium addicts in the world. It is much easier for U.S. imperialism to control a drugged population and thus the resources of its country than an alert and organized population defending its rights and national sovereignty.

In the *Counterpunch* article cited above, Whitney noted that the production and trafficking of narcotics in Afghanistan helps the U.S. achieve its goal there “to pacify the public, to maintain the loyalty of the warlords, and to open the country to resource extraction

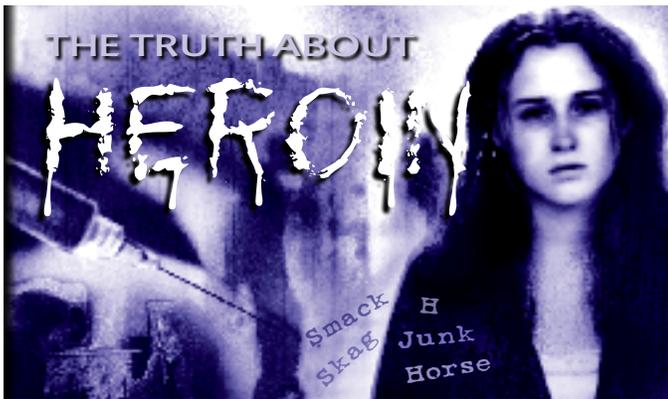


U.S. Troops Patrol Opium-Poppy Field in Afghanistan

(Opioid-Heroin Epidemic continued from p. 5)

and military bases. As long as the warlords get their payola, the U.S. is able to maintain some control over the hinterland beyond Kabul, which is a big part of the game plan.”

Opium-poppy production in U.S. imperialist-controlled Afghanistan has also wreaked havoc here in the USA. According to a *Los Angeles Times Report* (9/11/13) more than 12 million people abuse opioid drugs in the USA and 16,652 deaths in 2010 were related to opioid overdoses. At a time of prolonged economic crisis and growing impoverishment of the U.S. masses, the large inexpensive supply of heroin flowing from Afghanistan has significantly contributed to these deaths and drug abuse.



The U.S. opioid-heroin epidemic has been aggravated by the big pharmaceutical industry’s pushing of highly addictive prescription opioids, especially oxycontin (synthetic heroin) in the last decade. This has resulted in tremendous profits for Big Pharma and mass opioid addiction among the 99%. Many U.S. patients who are prescribed oxycontin by a doctor become addicted. Because heroin is more readily available and less expensive than oxycontin in many areas, former patients turn to heroin as a substitute for oxycontin and end up dying of accidental heroin overdoses.

Connect the Dots – If the U.S. population had *not* supported the U.S. imperialist-led invasion of Afghanistan, millions of people in both Afghanistan and the USA today would not be addicted to heroin. By supporting the U.S. troop invasion of Afghanistan, the working people and oppressed nationalities of the U.S. were supporting our own worst enemy, the U.S. imperialist government which has been attacking our standard of living, our social benefits and our civil liberties here at home while laying the basis for the heroin-opioid epidemic in the USA today.

Let’s fight for a better life for ourselves and the majority of the world’s people!

Oppose U.S. imperialist war!

(May The Force Awaken continued from p 1.)

Since war is an atrocity in the first place, war crimes will be committed, period. In many of my speeches soon after Casey was killed, I used to call war “a failure of imagination.” Now I know that’s crap — war is imagined by and for the war machine and gladly perpetrated by its toady elected officials and promoted by its toady media. War is not “failure” in this Empire — war is inevitable.

World Wars and Emperors

The UN recently admitted that the world is technically in a World War because of the number of countries involved in the Middle East fighting US/Israel-created ISIS (and all of its permutations and uneasy alliances). I am constantly and consistently upset with the Empire’s genocidal foreign policy, but I can’t decide what upsets me more — the genocidal foreign policy or the fact that most of my fellow USAins are sheep who blindly follow (or not follow) the Emperor in the Oval Office depending on whether that person has a (D) or an (R) behind his name. Expressing “him” is not sexist in this case, because it’s always been a “him” so far; however, the US may be getting an Empress soon, but she is as much of an Imperialist warmonger as the next guy and will be no better in terms of peace and social justice.

Imperial Stormtroopers

The inevitability of war would not be possible without toady media or toady politicians or without the Cult of (Storm)Troop Worship. And what about this Cult of Troop Worship? Even the antiwar movement is so careful to not criticize anything The Troops™ do. We are constantly admonished to “hate the war, but love the warrior.” I am sorry, but I don’t even like that word, “warrior.” It implies that our children join the military to commit war crimes, but we all know that most of our children join for education benefits, or health insurance because of all the insidious crimes against the masses, the fact that we have so little options vis a vis education or jobs is perhaps the worst. “Warrior” also implies that we live in a War State — which we do — but the antiwar movement does not have to use the nomenclature of The Empire. Most of us teach our children the difference between right and wrong, but when our young people become The Troops™ they receive a thorough brainwashing and get sent off to murder members of their own class and species who are

(contd. on p. 7)

(May The Force Awaken continued from p 6.)

not their enemies. Our children become hired goons for imperial greed — more like victims of a system that neglects everyone’s essential needs, than heroes.

The Force Tosses and Turns

This past year, with the support of many organizations, (including ROL,USA), Cindy Sheehan’s Soapbox organized one of the only anti-war events in Washington, DC called “Spring Rising: An antiwar intervention.” The turnout and energy were less than spectacular, but I in no way believe that was the fault of the organizers or our very principled demands and activities — the lukewarm energy was mostly due to the fact that most people who would come out in support of antiwar events identify with the Democratic Party and if a Democrat is spiraling the world into war, then it’s probably best for them to just stay asleep until a Republican is doing the same thing.

The Wrong Force?

For those of you living in a cave, there is a new installment of the *Star Wars* saga in theaters now called, *The Force Awakens*. I have not seen it, but I know that an Evil Empire cruelly dominates some galactic space-scape and in the series, Luke Skywalker has transformed from the attitude of the Joe USA-ian to be a badass Jedi Knight because his family was slaughtered. Isn’t it ironic that many of our fellow workers go to these movies to cheer on rebellious behavior, but oppose any effort to end the Empire of the US? Also, how many people identify with the radicalization of Luke Skywalker, but not with the radicalization of Arabs who are literally being driven to oppose the US Storm troopers in their own countries?

The Force Votes

In my opinion, it would be best to ... hit the masses that attend these campaign events [during presidential election season] with a little dose of our “Ray-o-light” Sabers and be relentless in hammering the Empire with our fundamental opposition to Imperialism every chance we get.

May the force (power of the masses) of truth, justice, and rebellion awaken in reality this year and may we continue to be courageously in the thick of it.

Still stumped?! See answer below to front page mystery quotation.

Mumia Abu-Jamal, the famed Black radio journalist, known as the “Voice of the Voiceless,” has been imprisoned for the past 34 years under the false allegation that he killed a Philadelphia cop. For anyone serious about defending and enforcing that “Black Lives Matter,” Mumia, in many ways was among “the first on the scene” *and* the most insistent *and* uncompromising.



The mystery quote is from a brief 2014 essay entitled, “The Historic Role of Journalism Among Black People.” It appears in a 2015 book of his selected prison writings entitled, “Writing on the Wall.” Arguably there is no person in the USA today who has more integrity than Mumia. In an article entitled “Mumia Abu-Jamal and the U.S. Presidential Election” published back in November of 1999, I wrote: “When people of the caliber of Mumia Abu-Jamal can become President of the USA, it will be a much better world.”

Today, still imprisoned, Mumia is fighting for his health and life in order to be able to keep on keeping on serving us. We can send letters of support and donations on behalf of Mumia to P.O. Box 411074, San Francisco, CA 94141 or email support to prisonradio@gmail.com

—the Editor

NOTE FROM CINDY SHEEHAN:

Ray O' Light Newsletter Now On Line!

Dear Comrades,

The Soapbox People's Network (www.cindysheehanssoapbox.com) has been diligently publishing everything that the ROL Newsletter sends us. We are receiving over 100,000 hits per month and the information is certainly getting out there.

The ROL page is at:

<http://www.cindysheehanssoapbox.com/ray-olight.html>

I can always be reached at my email:

CindySheehansSoapbox@gmail.com

In struggle,
Cindy Sheehan

* * * * *

*"The great appear great to us
Only because we are on our knees:
Let us rise."*

— Camille Desmoulins

Revolutionary Organization of Labor (ROL), USA is a revolutionary working class organization that fights for working class power and the elimination of all human exploitation. **Ray O' Light Newsletter** is the regular publication of ROL, USA. We believe, with comrade Lenin, that the working class "... needs the truth and there is nothing so harmful to its cause as plausible, respectable petty bourgeois lies." In the spirit of Karl Marx who taught that "our theory is not a dogma but a guide to action," we welcome your comments.

Comradely the Newsletter Staff,

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