

# Comments and discussion: the election and the coming period

## Discussion of perspectives on a post-election movement

November 12

Ron,

I think the perspectives document is strong, and I am in agreement with it. Thank you for the good work.

I have three comments that I hope will lead to broader discussion:

1. We frequently use the formulation (as you do in the document): "(the) rule of the working class and all oppressed people." I wonder whether we would be better off using the formulation, "the rule of all working and oppressed people." My motivation is twofold: 1) to be less 'Marxist' (in reference to a magically endowed 'class'); and, 2) To be less 'archaic'-- 'working class' has strong connotations of the industrial working class of a partially bygone era. We believe, I think, that an overwhelming majority of people in this country (and the world), are 'working people,' not owners/rulers/elites, and we envision a society that would be managed/organized/governed by this overwhelming majority. I think the current formulation may distort our true meaning.

*Editor's note: The formulation referred to above has been changed in the above draft of the 'Perspectives' document to "working people and other oppressed members of our society"*

2. Related, the formulation you use above includes the word 'rule.' I think this is also a throwback to wording of the past, and has a similar connotation issue. We are not seeking 'rule' (by anyone), just as we are not seeking 'dictatorship' of any class. We are seeking to create a society that is organized, managed, administered, governed by and in the interests of the

overwhelming majority of people, rather than by and in the interests of a wealthy (capitalist) elite. I think we would do well to find a way to use managed or organized or administered (or even governed) as an alternative to any reference to 'rule.'

*Editor's note: The formulation referred to above has been changed in the published draft to "the direct, cooperative, and democratic management of society by working and oppressed people"*

3. While I support advancing the notion of armed self-defense guards, there are several issues I would like to raise for discussion:

a) Tactically, the civil rights movement often used passive resistance (non-violent, civil disobedience) to tremendous effect. The line between and role of oppressor and oppressed were clearly and dramatically revealed.



b) I think advocating armed self-defense in relation to the *police* runs the risk of significant adventurism at this stage of the struggle. One gun fired by protestors at police at Standing Rock would, in all likelihood, not only lead to a significant loss of life and injuries for protestors, it would probably invite a level of repression that would end the struggle.

c) The issue of armed self-defense with respect to right wing thugs (Klan, Nazi-types, etc.) is more complex. While the civil rights movement used non-violent civil disobedience to strong effect, it is also true that throughout the South (and elsewhere) Black people (and a few white people) were beaten and/or lynched for fighting back (or even for being 'uppity'.) Clearly, it was appropriate to take a stance that the cops and ruling officials were not going to defend these people (quite the contrary, they were organizing the terrorist acts, and putting on their white robes at night), and to advocate *organized, armed* defense guards. The need for such defense was obvious, at some level.

That said, issues still arise. As I mentioned yesterday, regarding the CWP, I think announcing publicly that they were going to confront the Klan in Greensboro, armed, was probably a *tactical* mistake. As another example, I participated in many of the over 300 nights of street marches for open housing organized by Father Groppi in Milwaukee. Each night the marches went through a



largely white working-class (Polish) neighborhood; angry residents stood on their stoops, cursing the marchers, spitting, and otherwise acting menacing. It was a tense situation, and there was no question that many in the neighborhood were looking for the opportunity to attack the marchers (who often numbered several hundred to a thousand). Groppi and his people organized some form

of 'Deacons for Defense' (may or many not have been their name). This was a disciplined force of approximately 50 Black men who leap-frogged along on both sides of the march, adopting an aggressive, but arms-folded stance, that 'stared down' the hostile whites. It didn't have to work, but it did.

We are entering a period that will likely see a dramatic rise in repressive forces and actions. In this context, advancing the notion of community-based, armed self-defense guards is important and appropriate. At the same time, it is tricky, to say the least. I think we owe it to ourselves to carefully discuss these issues now, so that we are as prepared as possible to make sound assessments of the practical challenges a militant, mass movement will face.

Rod

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November 22

Rod,

I agree with all your points and suggested changes.

I am also open to changing the defense guards formulation to accommodate your concerns. Obviously, there are times and places where a purely non-violent approach is best, but there will certainly be times when armed guards are necessary. If the church in Charleston that Dylann Rust entered and started shooting had had even one armed individual on the interior side of the front doors, I suspect the massacre would not have happened, or at least would not have been as bad. Just a historical note: while Martin Luther King, Jr. advocated (unarmed) civil disobedience as a public tactic, he was almost always accompanied by armed bodyguards and was usually armed himself when he was out of the public eye. In fact, throughout the South, many Black people had weapons in their homes to ward off attacks by racist thugs, the Klan, etc.

Ron

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November 22

Ron,

I think we are in agreement. Thanks for your additional examples.

Formulations that cover the complexity of the issue are difficult to come up with, but here is a first attempt:

Replace: "As part of this, we urge the movement to organize armed defense guards to protect people...from attacks by right-wing thugs and the police."

With: As part of this, we urge the movement to recognize that community-based, armed self-defense groups are both a right and a need to protect people in the face of attacks by right-wing thugs and the police. We are not advocating tactics of violence--these are most often adventurist, substitutionalist and counterproductive. But we are asserting that individuals and communities of ethnic and religious minorities, immigrants, women, and LGBT people – and institutions - labor unions; community, civic, and political organizations; and churches have the right to defend themselves, by any means necessary. In light of the rapid rise of the 'white nationalist' extreme right (with tacit encouragement from the Trump administration) this issue has immediate relevance.

Rod

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November 22

Thanks Rod.

I actually agree with the "working and oppressed people" change.

As to the discussion on armed self-defense, I'm not sure. (I immediately went out and got multiple cans of pepper spray!) Certainly needs more discussion particularly in heavy Latino population centers in **non-sanctuary** cities.



The young folks I know (some from more privileged backgrounds) have no clue how dangerous the situation could become for them. (One even talked about shaving head with anti-Nazi slogan!) On the other hand younger African American women I work with are

extremely fearful for their kids and would do just about anything to protect them.

So, yes to more discussion.

Roni

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November 22  
Hi Roni,

Thanks for your thoughts. Your examples reveal some of the complexities of what I think is a tricky issue. I think we are in agreement that it is important to assert both the right to and the need for organized, community-based, armed self-defense guards. That said, we need to be clear that we are not telling the movement, "the way to fight Trump is to pick up the gun.' After those two statements, everything tends to get specific and has context. (An old friend of mine used to say, frequently, 'the truth is always concrete.')

My goal is to make sure we recognize the complexity, and I think the discussion that is unfolding will help to accomplish that.

Rod  
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November 22  
Hi All,

I overall agree with Ron's document. On the question of armed defense guards, though: I think that the way to approach this is to add a paragraph explicitly warning of the real possibility that Trump and company will unleash severe depression, including escalated raids, use of armed force, and possibly trying to provoke via false flag / Reichstag fire type incidents. We should stress the need to prepare by building a mass movement to resist, and to not limit or call out our tactics at this point. I believe that many forms of defense will be needed, but it is a mistake to all for immediately organizing armed defense guards. At the same time, I think that we should stress that we defend the right to resist -- as many of us supported the Panthers, the Deacons for Defense, Robert Williams, and others -- and we should say this.

Jack

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P.S.

I just saw Rod's suggested wording. It's better, but I think more is needed warning of the danger of victimization and repression. And less on specific tactics -- just stress that we defend the right to resist, and cite precedents of the Panthers et al resisting police and racist violence.

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November 23

All,

*As promised yesterday, I've written up a paragraph on defense against attacks by reactionary thugs and by the state. I've run this by Ron and Rod, and I am not proposing my paragraph as an amendment to Ron's document, because Rod and I will be expanding the sense of it into a separate document (not counterposed to Ron's -- in fact, Ron agrees with these points but thinks that they belong in a separate document.) Here's that paragraph:*

“Trump is putting in place a set of appointees who will likely try to gut immigrant rights, abortion rights, voting rights, black lives, brown lives, health care, LGBT lives, working class jobs and protection, existing environmental protection, and what’s left of civil rights. Violent thug attacks have shot up since Trump’s election, and we can expect more and more organized attacks by the Klan, Nazis, and other racists and reactionaries. We ought not to look to the state for



protection. Under Trump, violence by the state — harassment, beatings and murders by cops; raids and detention by ICE; surveillance and detention the FBI and Homeland Security — will almost surely increase substantially. We need to be aware, and we need to prepare to resist and defend. And we need to be aware that those who resist will likely immediately become targets themselves. The first and best defense is to build a militant mass movement that responds to the attacks, with the understanding: An injury to one is an injury to all! Violent attacks need to be met by immediate mobilizations, rallies, strikes, and other tactics. Community and workplace defense groups should be organized, and these groups will have to prepare to repel violent, possibly armed thugs.”

Jack

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*Editor's note: The original formulation in the draft 'Perspectives' document has been changed from 'armed defense guards' to 'defense guards (armed if necessary).'*

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November 15  
All,

I like the perspective with suggested amendments. As a point of information, U&S put out a proposal to M1 and BR/RN to discuss the possibility of joint work.

Peace,

Bill

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## **Thoughts on the election**

Shemon  
November 11

*(Here some thoughts. There are still some major flaws. I do not pay attention to the right wing forces from below and tensions they might or might not have with the state. I think i am still to flippant or wide eyed about trumps danger. At least i am not satisfied with the formulations. Thoughts or critiques are welcome. -- Shemon)*

### Theses: What Time is It?

1. Trump is not a fascist. He has not marshaled extra parliamentary forces against the bourgeois order in order to destroy it. He is a right wing populist with a contradictory class basis of his support. His personality is a reflection of that support. This means that his politics are going to be a mix of what is considered left and right. The establishment will have a difficult time pinning him down to Republican or Democratic Party standards of definition.



Revolutionary forces may face a similar definitional problem. Simply accusing him of being a racist or right wing will not explain his appeal to people who like him for ideas traditionally associated with the liberal-left, for example his “sewer socialism” of massive support for public infrastructure.

His potential cabinet of Chris Christie, Rudy Giuliani, and Newt Gingrich range from right wing authoritarians to the typical Republican found in the House or Senate. Again these are not fascists and it isn’t necessary for them to be in order to do tremendous damage to the country and the world. There are plenty of laws these figures can use to ravage the proletariat.

2. What he will do in his Presidency is not fully certain. He will face the challenges of governing that all right and left wing governments have faced since the economic crisis. If anything is certain, it is that all governments in this period have immense difficulty in governing in this economic/ political

climate. Trump will face the same challenges. It is easy to talk of pulling out of NAFTA or NATO, but doing so will prove extremely difficult. It is not clear that Trump has the programmatic will or principles to do this.

Destroying NATO and NAFTA have been goals of the revolutionary forces for a long time. Might Trump accomplish this from the right? Revolutionary forces should not become defenders of this, and at the same time, we can pose alternatives to how the proletariat and international class struggle can fulfill these tasks.

3. During his campaign, Trump raised profoundly dangerous dynamics. The deportation of millions of immigrants was perhaps the most immediate and far-reaching of these.

Fundamental questions on the moral order of what would you do when the Nazis took the Jews and others in Germany may emerge not only for revolutionary forces, but for the proletariat in the United States. While it is not literally the genocide of immigrants, the deportation of such large numbers will be a first order political and ethical question. Physical deportations will have to be met by physical force and small groups of revolutionaries will not be enough to stop these actions if they have the power of government. Rather, halting actions like this would require the armed power of the proletariat. If it fails in this basic defense, it will be a defeat of epic proportions 4. Trump has emboldened the far right forces in the United States. As of now they are not marching in people of color neighborhoods. They are not killing immigrants and Muslims. They are not attacking Black neighborhoods. It is not clear what Trump would do if this began to happen on an extra parliamentary level. We should discuss this with people, but should not argue that this will automatically happen.



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It is not clear if the flurry of media articles showing attacks on people of color and LGBTQ people are a spike or if the media is now paying attention to it more. As if these things were not happening under Obama's utopian America.

5. Trump has shown that a far right politics can win with not only a white body politics, but with a sizable Latino, Asian and smaller Black vote. A more serious candidate under more stressful times will certainly be able to pick up more people of color including Black voters. Economic nationalism, anti immigrant, law and order (anti-Black), anti-LGBTQ politics, and anti-Islam are powerful political ideologies. When will identity and essentialist politics die? It does not matter what your race or gender is. What you do in class struggle is what counts. HRC lost because Black and Latino voters stayed home. It is possible that part of the white Bernie base also stayed home. Why did they stay home? It was not a matter of not being relatable. The false hope of Obama's America laid waste to HRC's aspirations. The Democratic Party is deeply implicated in the crisis of this country and the election of Trump.



Rumors are already afoot for the promise of Michelle Obama running against Trump in 2020. The nation will be saved by Michelle. This should not be underestimated. Liberalism should be a zombie ideology at this point. But as we have seen across the world it will not go down on its own. It will have to be dragged into its' coffin. Revolutionaries should be the most ruthless attackers of liberalism while not being sectarian towards the masses of people who entertain liberal ideas.

People are seeing what they want in Trump. Trump supporters are dismissing his racism and patriarchy as exaggerations by the liberal media. Trump haters see him as the reincarnation of Hitler. This is not a new phenomenon in politics by any means, but worth noting the complexities of the situation.

6. The desperation and shock amongst the revolutionary forces shows some important dynamics: its elitism and cluelessness are on the same order as the liberal media, which floundered on election night. Rachel Maddow is an excellent caricature of revolutionary forces today.



If this crisis continues to develop the old revolutionary forces will continue to be obsolete. New social forces and new organizations will emerge on the corpse of who we are. These social forces will largely be unrecognizable to the revolutionary forces. We should welcome such a development, as the continuing order of the bourgeoisie is the most powerful condemnation of our incompetence and irrelevancy.

Trump voters are profoundly more complex than anything that liberal media has portrayed. The revolutionary forces have had few meaningful conversations with Trump supporters and largely parrot the line of the liberal establishment.

The revolutionary forces should not fear monger and cry wolf. We all know what happened to the boy who cried wolf. We need to lay out the possibilities of a Trump presidency, which are not fully predictable. But the range of possibilities is immense. From mass deportations to a collapse of the international order to a continuation of "Obama-ism".

The basis for overthrowing the bourgeois order has existed for a long time. The question is whether it is feasible. Whether a Trump presidency opens up that possibility is not clear.



The mass confusion and depression that has set across the nation must be understood politically. It shows how powerless people feel: they have possibly overinflated what Trump is, they have no organizations that can stop the possible attacks on society, and they have no strategy. These three points can be said of the revolutionary forces as well.



The revolutionary forces have been in crisis for decades. The fundamental crisis of the revolutionary forces can only be answered by the proletariat. In the meantime, theoretically grasping the most accurate nature of the crisis that the revolutionary forces faces is an important task.

The revolutionary forces will face the same stagnation if the proletariat is not willing to fight. The lack of class struggle is rooted in the destruction of the classical workplace that workers based their power. Out of this problem, dozens of second order problems arise. However the struggle of circulation and squares movement has opened a new avenue of struggle. It is not perfect and has plenty of contradictions. So did the workplace struggles that the classical revolutionary forces romanticizes. The question is to be answered is why does the struggle emerge the way it does and how does the revolutionary forces operate in that environment.



Revolutionary forces should be clear on who our enemies are: social democracy, Keynesianism, liberalism, conservatism in all its forms. Our only friends are the proletariat.

7. The challenge for revolutionaries is not to have their politics turned into purely anti-Trump politics. Many people entering the movement will want to return to the pre-Trump world. At the same time revolutionary forces should not abstain from anti-Trump struggles as they might have the chance of radicalizing.

People also seem to be falling into either apocalyptic visions of Trump's presidency or that he is going moderate himself like all politicians do. The latter is based on the notion that politicians are liars or that the institutions will smooth their rougher edges. The apocalyptic visions can end up in the story of boy who cried wolf. The moderation theory at its extreme can give people a false sense of security for a Trump presidency. It can also lull people into complacency when another more serious right wing candidate comes along in the future.

8. Race and Class. Undoubtedly race played a crucial if not fundamental role. When does it not? The question is how so and how to formulate it amongst ourselves and to the proletariat.

The growth of the Latino population is driving Trump's voters. This has happened in small towns and cities and suburbs. What



is at the root of this? Competition for jobs is too economic an argument. Scapegoating, racial ideology are key factors.

Part of Trump's support certainly is about destroying Black Lives Matter. Black Lives Matter as a mass movement has certainly been cornered into the defenders of unarmed 'innocent' straight Black men. This has been a huge movement mistake. Organizations and individuals might have more sophisticated politics, but the mass movement component has spoken by who it shows up for.



The fear of Islam is certainly felt by Trump's base. The racism of Muslims has isolated them from the most important struggles in the United States: Black Lives Matter. However the assumptions many immigrant Muslims have had about the United States are being thrown out. The problem is the large Muslim middle class that has a powerful influence amongst the Muslims proletariat.

As of now the white workers who voted for Trump should not be automatically seen as a lost cause. It is too early to declare that. There will be a time when they are forever lost to the other side. This is not the time. Revolutionary forces must engage with white workers. Revolutionary forces are closer to liberal elitists in their knowledge, approach, and treatment of the white working class. We have lost our way and mimic the liberals.

Why is HRC considered more anti-racist than Trump considering her politics? Secondly why is liberal racism seen as something acceptable. There is never outrage over HRC and her supporters. Would there have been anti-HRC protests if she

won? Just like complexities are seen in HRC's supporters on such issues, shouldn't the same sophistication be applied to Trump supporters?

9. What this will be for non-cis straight men in our society? Trump's base is profoundly hostile to freedoms gained by LGBTQ community.

Will Trump go after the right of Queer people to marry? What about bathrooms? Roe v. Wade? His own stance on these issues is not clear. This is part of his opportunism. Perhaps he will be pushed by the Republican Party; perhaps he will ignore them and leave those issues alone. These struggles are a part of class



struggle. It cannot be defended based on legislation or congress if Trump goes for an outright attack on any of them.

What does Trump's Presidency say to young white men and men generally about how far a man can go while openly discussing sexual assault among other things? How do revolutionary forces defend LGBTQ people and women without being subsumed into the Democratic Party? This is a challenge revolutionary forces face as well with Black Lives Matter.

10. The limits of symbolic struggle seem to have become apparent. The Oakland riot spectacle is the most extreme example of this. Questions of real disruption and destruction,

take over of workplaces, and violence seem to be hovering in the air. The common person is most likely to say that coming to protests is a waste of time because they do not accomplish anything. There is a deep truth to this insight. American protests are at an impasse. It is not clear if they can be resolved by the bold actions of the revolutionary forces. Would such bold actions be a spark to something bigger or a failed ultra leftists adventure?

11. Fundamental questions of politics might be on the plate again. Revolutionary forces must pose them and act on them as clearly as possible.

The revolutionary forces are so removed from questions of power and violence that is phenomenon is part of the reason that we cannot pose any fundamental resolutions to the crisis. The victory of liberalism and civil society has also infected the proletariat where safety, family, the American Dream etc have all become priorities over fundamental political questions of life and death. All one has to do is look at the past to see how violence as a form of justice in daily life was a part of proletarian life to see the victory of the liberal order and how revolutionary forces as well have been broken by this. Trump's victory might bring back such forms of politics on a larger order.

Black, LGBTQ, Latin, Muslims, women, and whites are scared and shocked. While we need not be cold, we need to throw some cold water on everyone's faces. Coddling fear and shock are not the tasks of the day. We need to point out what others all over the world are doing to fight the old order. Get your shit together people of this cursed land. What will we do?

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## **Discussion of Chris Hedges article on the current conjuncture**

*On November 12, Mary initiated the circulation of an article on the presidential election by Chris Hedges (truthdig). Below is a link to the article, followed by discussion.*

[http://m.truthdig.com/report/item/its\\_worse\\_than\\_you\\_think\\_20161111](http://m.truthdig.com/report/item/its_worse_than_you_think_20161111)

November 13

All,

First, I think it is way too early to make definitive predictions about what will happen in the country in the next few years, let alone to promote a scenario as definite and as frightening as Hedges'.

That said, I think it is correct to be very concerned about what will happen in the country and around the world in the coming period. For one thing, it is almost certain that under a Trump administration there will be regression, and perhaps serious regression, on issues of concern to us: the environment, women's rights (particularly abortion), Black and Latino rights, labor rights, civil liberties, health and safety regulations, public education, etc. For another, we will also see, as we already are, a substantial upsurge in racist violence -- and racism, sexism, xenophobia, in general -- as the far right and other reactionary forces feel empowered by the victory of a candidate who ran such a bigoted campaign.

Yet, there is another side to the situation. And this is, that if the current demonstrations against Trump are any indication (and I think they are), I believe it's likely, even highly likely, that we will see a substantial increase in mass struggles around the issues I listed above and others in the coming period. (A mass mobilization in support of women's rights is already planned for Washington around the time of the inauguration.) After all, a majority of voters voted for Clinton and against Trump (as the final votes come in, Clinton's margin over Trump has risen to roughly one million votes and may well go higher), while I suspect that, of the people who didn't vote, most were opposed to Trump but not enthusiastic enough about Clinton to come out and vote for her. Many of these people are likely to feel, and with good reason, that the election outcome was unfair and undemocratic, and I doubt their anger will dissipate. Moreover, there is good reason to believe that both the Clinton voters and the anti-Trump non-voters are and will continue to be extremely concerned about political and social issues and that their concern will increase under a Trump administration. When you add to this the



fact that the Democrats, particularly the left-wing Democrats around Sanders and Warren, will be anxious to organize and mobilize such people, if only to build support for Democratic candidates for the 2018 elections and for their fight inside the Democratic Party, I think there may exist a potent mix for a revival of an increasingly unified, and an increasingly radical, mass movement.

Finally, I think there's a chance that, if such a movement does develop and if Trump fails to deliver on his promises (as I expect), some of those who voted for him may respond to and join in such a movement. After all, according to some polls, 55% of the people who voted for Trump did so primarily because they opposed Clinton and the unsatisfactory status quo she represents. In sum, while I am very concerned about the direction of the country under a Trump administration, I think there is reason to be optimistic about the possibility of mass and, hopefully, increasingly radical, struggle in the coming period. In hindsight, I think it is reasonable to say that the Obama administrations served to dampen radical opposition movements, since so many liberal-to-left-leaning people, particularly Black people, did not wish to embarrass the country's first Black president. With Trump in office, this hesitancy will be gone.

As far as the Hedges article is concerned, I think it is fairly typical of the simplistic analyses and fear mongering that characterizes much of the liberal and left movements. After all, these were the forces who tried to mobilize people to vote for Al Gore and John Kerry, in 2000 and 2004 respectively, on the grounds that George W. Bush was going to impose fascism on the country. (They were also the people who told us that we all had to support Bernie Sanders' campaign, and we've seen what that added up to.) While I believe there are grains of truth in

what Hedges says, everything is so overdrawn as to seem, at least to me, to be a grotesque caricature of the current situation. Of course, I could be wrong and Hedges may be right, but it's not how I see things at the moment.

Hedges' piece also peddles some left-liberal myths that verge on the absurd. The United States today is no more and no less of a (bourgeois) democracy than it's ever been. The idea that, at some point in the not-too-distant Past, the American people actually controlled the U.S. government until some kind of corporate coup took place is positively ridiculous. When? Where? How? This is the same delusion promoted by Bernie Sanders. Directly and/or indirectly, the US government has always been controlled by a (historically evolving) elite. There are different and competing elements of this elite, based in varying economic sectors and social functions, and through the major political parties, they mobilize various sectors of the population behind their competing programs, but elite control, as such, has rarely been threatened. One of the times it was in the 1930s, and it was Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Democratic Party (the



very party the liberal left wants us to support) who saved it. And it's worth noting that the Truthdig webpage also featured an article by Berkeley economics professor Robert Reich? He served in the Clinton administration (if my memory serves me correctly) and was a big supporter of, if not an adviser to, the Sanders campaign. His most recent book is titled, appropriately, Saving Capitalism.

In sum, I think Hedges has sketched an apocalyptic scenario that, in addition to being inaccurate, does little to educate the people who will make up what I hope will be a developing mass movement. Rather than a serious analysis, his essay is closer to a combination of Chicken Little ("the sky is falling, the sky is falling") and The Boy Who Cried Wolf.

Ron

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November 13

All,

Chris Hedges can turn out some decent stuff. But I think that there's a problem in the way he looks at the world — at the minimum a big inconsistency.

Hedges talks about "the liberal class." A few years back he wrote a book titled "The Death of the Liberal Class," in which he mourned the demise of that good old-fashioned liberalism that fought for the common folk. First of all, liberals aren't a class. Secondly, in the good old days (i.e., FDR) they were for saving capitalism via more state regulation (especially in finance), state deficit spending, and moderately increasing the social safety net. Jimmy Carter, Bill Clinton et al eased up on regulation and pushed neo-liberalism (financialization; structural adjustment; increased privatization). Hedges mourns for FDR. That's mourning for the big state.

Now, to his credit, he opposes both Democrats and Republicans. So in my opinion it's inconsistent. (Another example of his inconsistency: Five years ago he praised the violent tactics during the street fighting in Athens, praising the conflagrations etc. But a few months later he led the denunciations of the black bloc in Occupy that used very similar tactics (just to be clear: I was not and am not an admirer of the black bloc.)

Jack

P.S. I should add: Trump has a lot in common with Silvio Berlusconi — authoritarian, self-indulgent, solipsistic, openly treating women as sex toys and openly demeaning them. Despite all this, Berlusconi did not impose austerity as harshly



as did his successors from Italy's Democratic Party (which formed from a regroupment of much of Italy's old Communist Party and Christian Democratic Party.) Will Trump be more like Berlusconi than, say, Mussolini? I don't have a crystal ball. Some trends seem to be emerging, based on his transition team and choices for chief of staff (Reince Priebus) and chief adviser (Steve Bannon). It looks pretty clear that he plans to appoint judges who will gut abortion rights, worker rights, minority rights, etc.; that he will cater to coal and oil corporations and big developers ("rebuilding the infrastructure" with large scale rather than decentralized projects), to Big Pharma, and to law and order. It seems like a pretty good bet that he will accelerate the concentration of power in the "emergency state", which already is in a semi-permanent state of emergency with regard to the black community. This tendency has been going on for decades under Democrats as well as Republicans. Will Trump mean a qualitative acceleration — that is, will it lead to a de facto elimination of the norms of parliamentary democracy? I don't know. No one does, and that probably includes Trump himself.

In any event, here's a link to an article by Jonathan Chait published in "New York" magazine more than a week before Election Day. It makes similar points to those made by Chris Hedges, but with a less hysterical tone:

<http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2016/10/the-gops-age-of-authoritarianism-has-only-just-begun.html>

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November 14

Jack,

Thanks for your thoughts, which I agree with.

Right now, I'm really excited about what's happening in response to the Trump win. I'm most encouraged by the recent demonstrations by high school students in LA, DC, Oakland (?) and elsewhere. And did you see that precisely when people (young people and very young people) are hitting the streets, Obama is telling everybody they should give Trump a chance, because he's really a pragmatist, etc.? (I know he didn't really mean all that nasty shit he said because I, as a politician, understand what one has to do to get



elected.) How cynical and obvious, and after all the rhetoric about transcending race, being the post-racial president! Between Trump and Obama (in the context of an election in which the candidate who won the popular vote lost the election because of the Electoral College), they're discrediting the office of president and the whole



institutional set-up in no way it has been since Lyndon Johnson. Then throw in the stuff about Steve Bannon, and we've got one hot scene here. And I don't think this is going away.

Ron

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November 15, 2016

Ron,

I agree.

There have been several high school walkouts in Oakland. Also in Berkeley. The high school where I taught, Castlemont, has been part of it. Castlemont is in East Oakland, a very low-income area. The school is about 95% black and Latino (the rest are almost all Pacific Islanders.)

Digression: More than a month ago, the Castlemont football team played a Canadian school. The team stood for the

Canadian anthem, but not for the star spangled banner. Got a lot of attention. Turns out that the team is coached by a former student of mine who credits me for his graduating high school. And he's a close friend of Colin Kapaernick.



Back to the main thread: I think that Obama is worried about the demonstrations and fears that the genie is out of the bottle. He's boosting Trump to try to stuff it back in the bottle. Show of unity for maintaining class rule. And I saw a headline online saying that Bernie Sanders is calling for an end to the demonstrations. Interesting, if true.

Jack

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November 15

Jack,

I haven't seen that about Sanders although I believe it's true. However, the genie is out of the bottle, and I don't think they're going to be able to get it back in. If we are right, the Democrats' strategy, particularly that of the Sanders/Warren wing, will be to try to ride (and even organize) the wave, put themselves in front of it, and channel it into electoral action behind liberal Democratic candidates. This would put us in a position of supporting and (where possible) participating in the movements, while exposing the aims of the liberal Democrats. This may be more difficult than it sounds, because I suspect the emergence of a united Sanders/Warren wing of the Democratic Party, along with their left-wing stooges, may be attractive, as it has been, to many people in left-wing milieus (including our

own). The liberal Democrats' strategy is to revive the New Deal Coalition, the time when the Democratic Party supposedly "really



did" represent working people. Our goal is to build a movement that is outside of and hostile to the Democratic Party, including the Sanders/Warren wing. Although I am hostile to Marxism as an ideology, I think we should try to form a block of all left organizations, including Marxists, who share our (middle-term) strategic conception.

Ron

---

November 15

Ron and Jack,

I think you are right, Ron, that a movement more significant than those we have seen in quite some time is likely developing. Even though I believe there will be some surprising moves to the 'center' by Trump in some areas, there will remain enough far right elements to his presidency (Bannon is a good start) to further fuel a militant, non-electoral movement.

What I heard Sanders say (on *Democracy Now*, I think) was that there was no contradiction between accepting the legitimacy of Trump as President and protesting against Trump's policies. It had the character of courting the developing movement, while warning it not to be too extreme. This, of course, reflects the Sanders/Warren approach you refer

to--help to mobilize a movement, but work hard to channel it into support in two and four years for liberal Democrats. It would be nice to think that the discrediting of Clinton/Clinton/neo-liberalism/DP that occurred in this election would enable people to skip past the step of supporting 'better' (more liberal) Democrats, but I agree with you that, unfortunately, this will have strong attraction. Interestingly, I think some elements among Trump voters, once betrayed as they will be, are more likely than many Hillary supporters to more readily open to a non-DP, non-electoral approach. This is in line with my view that a significant number of Sanders' primary voters (not his 'movement people,' but the vote describes as 'white working class') switched to Trump--that is, they wanted anything but the DP establishment. I don't have the data for this, but continue to think it is true.

I agree that we would want to participate in the broader movement, and block with all progressive forces that reject the DP and favor independent, direct action.

Rod

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November 21  
All,

I wanted to send this video along in the spirit of Ron's observation that "shit is really about to hit the fan." Here, a black man films himself driving around looking for the white people that through rocks at his daughter as she walked home from school. He is livid and threatens a serious ass kicking if he finds them. As he says, he is not going home to pray about it. <https://www.instagram.com/p/BM-B2-jFL3D/>

Last week, a friend of mine from Durham contacted me for any advice I might have about organizing against the Klan. I shared what little I knew. She attended a meeting this weekend to organize an anti-Klan effort. But the key to me is that this is a white mom with a Ph.D. who barely batted an eyelash when I mentioned armed self-defense and explicitly rejected a counter-demo somewhere else that wouldn't directly confront the Klan.



I agree with the general sentiment folks are expressing that things are escalating very quickly right now. Incidents like these - and all kinds of other stuff appearing on social media - are suggesting a level of outrage and willingness to get involved that certainly surpasses anything I've witnessed in my lifetime.

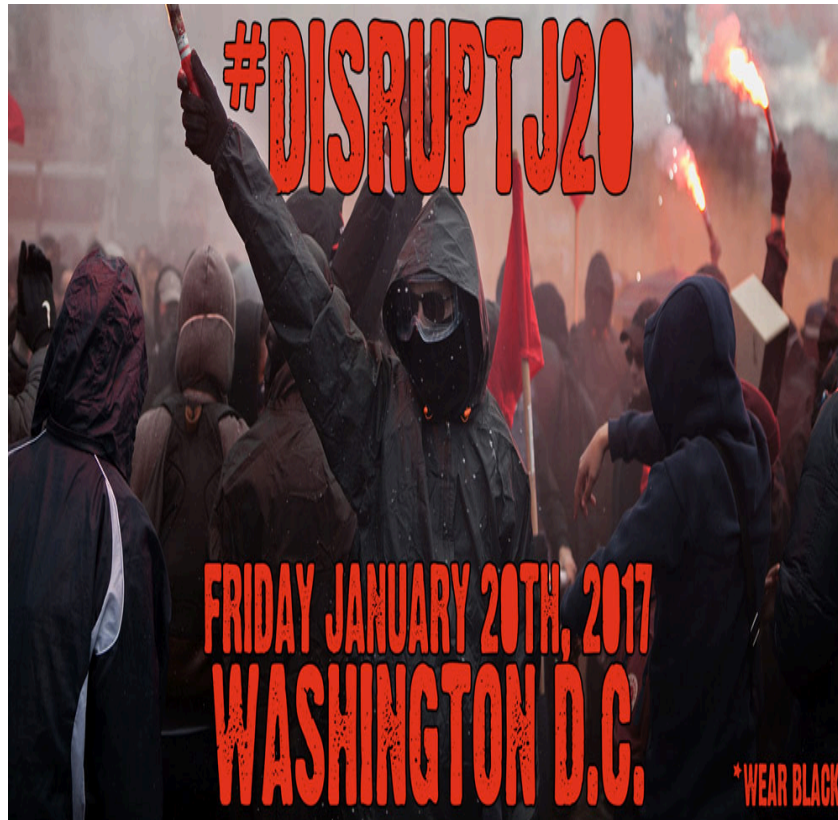
Mike S.

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## **Discussion: *DISRUPT J20 ACTION***

*On November 17, Jack sent a link to call for the disruption of the inauguration on of Donald Trump on January 20. This led to an e-mail exchange. The document and the exchange are printed below.*





On Friday, January 20, 2017, Donald Trump will be inaugurated as President of the United States. We call on all people of good conscience to join in disrupting the ceremonies. If Trump is to be inaugurated at all, let it happen behind closed doors, showing the true face of the security state Trump will preside over. It must be made clear to the whole world that the vast majority of people in the United States do not support his presidency or consent to his rule.

Trump stands for tyranny, greed, and misogyny. He is the champion of neo-Nazis and white Nationalists, of the police who kill the Black, Brown and poor on a daily basis, of racist border agents and sadistic prison guards, of the FBI and NSA who tap your phone and read your email. He is the harbinger of even more climate catastrophe, deportation, discrimination, and endless war. He continues to deny the existence of climate change, in spite of all the evidence, putting the future of the whole human race at stake. The KKK, Vladimir Putin, Golden Dawn, and the Islamic State all cheered his victory. If we let his inauguration go unchallenged, we are opening the door to the future they envision.

Trump's success confirms the bankruptcy of representative democracy. Rather than using the democratic process as an alibi for inaction, we must show that no election could legitimize his agenda. Neither the Democrats nor any other political party or politician will save us—they just offer a weaker version of the same thing. If there is going to be positive change in this society, we have to make it ourselves, together, through direct action.

From day one, the Trump presidency will be a disaster. #DisruptJ20 will be the start of the resistance. We must take to the streets and protest, blockade, disrupt, intervene, sit in, walk out, rise up, and make more noise and good trouble than the establishment can bear. The parade must be stopped. We must delegitimize Trump and all he represents. It's time to defend ourselves, our loved ones, and the world that sustains us as if our lives depend on it—because they do.

### **In Washington, DC**

DC will not be hospitable to the Trump administration. Every corporation must openly declare whether they side with him or with the people who will suffer at his hands. Thousands will converge and demonstrate resistance to the Trump regime. Save the date. A website will appear shortly with more details.  
#DisruptJ20

### **Around the US**

If you can't make it to Washington, DC on January 20, take to the streets wherever you are. We call on our comrades to organize demonstrations and other actions for the night of January 20. There is also a call for a general strike to take place. Organize a walkout at your school now. Workers: call out sick and take the day off. No work, no school, no shopping, no housework. #DisruptJ20

### **Around the World**

If you are living outside the US, you can take action at US embassies, borders, or other symbols of neocolonial power. Our allegiance is not to "making America great again," but to all of humanity and the planet.

Spread the word. Join the fight. #DisruptJ20  
*Signed,*

Agency  
CrimethInc. Workers' Collective  
It's Going Down  
subMedia  
New York Anarchist Action  
The Base  
NYC Anarchist Black Cross  
Pittsburgh Autonomous Student Network  
Pittsburgh Student Solidarity Coalition  
NightShade Pittsburgh  
Pitt Against Debt  
Pitt Students for a Democratic Society  
Steel City (A) Team  
UNControllables  
Antifa Seven Hills  
WNC Antifa  
Asheville Anti-Racism  
Black Rose Book Distro St. Louis  
Resonance: An anarchist audio distro

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November 17

Jack,

Thanks for sharing these concrete and relevant experiences. They underline the difficulties here. It breaks down this way, for me:

1) We oppose an electoral/pro-DP strategy. There is no 'grey area' here for us, though how to 'patiently explain,' takes thought.

2) We favor rallies, teach-ins, marches and similar forms of protest. These create awareness, educate, and can expand and build the movement. They are also a challenge to the powers-that-be, though with limits.

3) It is the limits of these forms of protest that begin to raise thorny issues.

--At one end of the spectrum, I think that we are clear that we oppose individual acts of violence because: 1) they substitute for the conscious, collective actions of the movement itself, and, 2) such violence has unintended consequences, most importantly that it invites repression



against the movement as a whole, which is not equipped to defend itself.

--At the other end of the spectrum, we acknowledge the limits of chanting 'make love, not war' outside the Pentagon (i.e., rote rallies and marches can in the end be little more than a 'vent' for frustration.)

If we had our wishes, a movement would have significant roots in organized workplaces (or contribute to organizing workplaces), thereby offering the muscle of walkouts/strikes. (High school students/some college students seem to be in the vanguard of this currently in the growing Trump movement.) Absent this, which seems likely at least on the front end, it seems to be that our task is to give careful thought to where tactics of large-scale, civil disobedience are appropriate, and what these might be. A significant part of the strength of the civil rights movement lay in tactics used by CORE, SNCC and SCLC such as lunch counter sit-ins, Freedom Rides, and other sit-ins and marches that provoked violence from the other side against peaceful (but often militant) protesters. (The



North Dakota Pipeline struggle has been successful, to a considerable degree, along these lines.) We need to draw on our past experience and knowledge, while seeking to be fresh and creative.



In taking this approach, we will need to fight against the liberal DP politicians, the labor bureaucrats, and those orienting to them, who will denounce such tactics as 'too radical.' (As we know, even MKL Jr. was widely denounced by liberals for 'going to fast.')

At the same time, we will have to fight just as clearly against adventurism, which unfortunately has its strongest roots within the broader anarchist milieu itself.

Some initial thoughts, anyway. Hopefully there will be a movement that will make them vaguely relevant!

Rod

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November 17,  
Rod,

I think the problem isn't just "*individual* acts of violence." The black bloc actions are group actions. For sure, some of them are just acting out of frustration and anger, and some are just trying to gum up the works. But I think that their leading members see this as a way to inspire others to follow suit. In my opinion, they're wrong because rather than providing a basis for building mass actions (or at least building towards mass actions) and organization, they antagonize and alienate working and poor community members and communities. We saw this in Oakland during Occupy, when many in the black

community were angered by the mindless trashing by the black bloc (and others who followed them) during their "Moving Day" march (late January 2012). It was used by black pastors and others to redbait and smear all of Occupy Oakland, and inside of Occupy it was used by black and Latino cultural nationalists and non-prophiteers to lambaste *all* whites in Occupy. I won't provide the details, but can.



Aside from that, I agree overall with what you wrote. But, as you note, these are guidelines and somewhat vague. My overall attitude -- which I expressed openly many times -- was to push for united front type actions in which local groups were urged to try to build on as militant and "left" basis as each felt they could without isolating and alienating. Also, I think that it's very important to try to have overall framing slogans. "Bread, Land and Peace." "Freedom Now." "No Cuts, No Fees, Education Must be Free." That provides the framework, the umbrella, beneath which the different local groups can employ different tactics and still work in coalition.

Jack

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November 17

Jack and Rod,

I agree with virtually all that you've written. I agree especially with Jack's attitude toward the Insurrectionists (or are they Insurrectionalists? I've never figured this out) and their tactics. Those of us who consider ourselves to be anarchists and have been active, to varying degrees, in the anarchist movement have consistently opposed and criticized them and have tried to counter-pose a perspective of organizing in the working class and in other milieus with the notion of building a

self-empowered mass anarchist movement in workplaces, communities, and elsewhere.

The people and groups within the broader anarchist movement that share (generally) this perspective have called themselves "class struggle anarchists." For a variety of reasons (workerism, anti-intellectualism, tendencies to capitulate to the union bureaucrats, hostility to self-determination of nations, leaving aside incredible ignorance and arrogance), we are no longer in direct relations with this milieu, but it is possible/likely that we will find ourselves in some level of engagement, even agreement, with them down the road. Generally speaking, the Insurrectionists are the modern version of the terrorist wing of the historic anarchist movement, those who engaged in "propaganda of the deed." The class struggle anarchists tend to trace their roots to anarcho-syndicalism (the Spanish FAI/CNT), on the one hand, and the Platformist Tendency, on the other. The Platformist Tendency traces its roots to the Organizational Platform authored by Ukrainian anarchist/guerrilla leader, Nestor Makhno, and his comrades, Peter Arshinov and Ida Mett, when they were in exile (and Makhno was drinking himself to death) in Paris after the defeat of Makhno's movement by the Bolsheviks. They decided that the chief reason for their defeat was that the Bolsheviks were better organized than they were and proposed building anarchist organizations on a basis very close to that of the Bolsheviks. Over the decades, they have tended to capitulate to, and even liquidate, into Leninist (Trotskyist, Stalinist, Maoist, and Guevarist) organizations.



The only point I'd make about Trump at this point is that it is one thing to be politically savvy when relating to the US political scene and altogether another thing to run an administration and follow a coherent imperialist foreign policy. He may be brilliant at the former but a bungler at the latter.

Ron

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November 17  
Jack and Ron,

Thank you, Jack, for correcting my use of the word 'individual' with regard to acts of violence, and also for your amplification on the 'black bloc' actions. I agree entirely with your assessment of the destructive role of these actions. I also agree with your point about the importance of 'framing slogans' as the basis for united front action (such as: *Down with Trump! Jobs, Freedom and Justice Now!*). The brief guidelines I wrote up were, as you suggest, initial and vague--an attempt to get people thinking, questioning and discussing issues that I hope very much will become relevant soon. Thanks, Ron, for filling in some of the history of the anarchist milieu, as it exists both currently and historically.

On Trump, I think you are right to differentiate between being 'savvy about the US political scene' vs. having the intelligence and skills to run an administration and follow a coherent foreign policy. And, you may be right that he might be the first, but be a total bungler on the latter.

I think what is going on now with the cabinet picks will be telling. IF the talk of Romney, Nikki Haley, and some other moderate Republicans or even Democrats turns out to be real or even partially real, that is, if Trump selects some sort of a 'team of rivals,' I would conclude that he is more than just 'a bit savvy.' On the other hand, if this is simply carefully orchestrated reality-TV, plus misdirection, I think it will prove cheap, short-lived...and dumb.



To look at this another way: if Trump launches his presidency on the extreme right, he will guarantee an ineffective, losing presidency--the base for an extreme right administration does not exist in the country, or even among the political elites; the conflict that will ensue will be enormous and paralyzing. On the other hand, if he recognizes that he mobilized an electoral base that spans Sanders to Cruz, and builds an administration and pursue policies that reflect this, he will create the potential to be a (dangerous) powerhouse. It would be nice if Trump would form an administration of Bannon's, Giuliani's, Flynn's, and Palin's (and throw in Sheriff Joe Arpaio)--it would create deep polarization, and make the work of opposing him much easier. I think it is a mistake to expect this. Going out further on a limb, I think he may well prove smart enough to be a right/left, authoritarian populist. (I think Juan Peron is the best example of whom Trump might turn out to be. And he has a couple of 'Evitas' to call on.)

That said, I think that foreign policy and climate change are his Achilles heels. I agree that his thinking on both of these is entirely muddled and dumb, and it is hard to see how he charts a road forward. On foreign policy: with intelligent advisors (depends on cabinet, etc.), he perhaps could succeed in doing two things that are consistent with his views:

engaging in constant, militant, over-the-top rhetoric about ISIS/terrorism, while following Rand Paul/libertarian policies regarding intervention. This could cobble together support. On global warming...well, it may have to turn out to be a Chinese hoax for him to find a way forward--but even here, the man shows a remarkable ability to not be bothered in the least by ignoring what he said yesterday, and saying the opposite today.

Nothing here is meant to suggest that he can deliver in the long run; I am only suggesting the possibility that he may show greater finesse, effectiveness, and success in the short run than virtually anyone but his enthusiastic supporters credit him with being capable of displaying.

Rod

---

November 17

All,

I'm reluctant to make predictions about the future. But I do think that if Trump pursues a closer relationship with Putin, as may well occur, he'll be confronted with very difficult problems. If allying with Putin leads to closer ties with Assad, how will he (and his advisers) deal with the Saudis? And whether or not he allies with



Putin and Assad, how will he deal with Turkey / Erdogan?

I am not sure that there is a "smart" solution to the U.S.'s foreign policy dilemma. Obama, remember, in his 2008 campaign proclaimed that he would pursue a "smarter" foreign policy by moving the war. In the event, the war spread to both fronts. The U.S. remains by far the strongest



force militarily, but it can't win decisively militarily and its ability to guarantee stability to the bondholders continues to erode. I don't see this reversing.

Domestically, Trump may be able to stimulate a short-term boom via deficit spending (tax cutting, large scale infrastructure investment, subsidizing coal), or at least provide jobs for a year or two to unemployed miners and oil workers. I don't think that this can work indefinitely, but it may hold his base among white workers for some period of time -- and the expected gross tax cuts for corporations and the wealthy may make many of the affluent happy. For a while. If he doesn't go bananas and trigger destructive trade wars.

Jack  
November 18  
Jack and Rod,

I generally agree with what you say. I agree that a substantial increase in defense spending, tax cuts for the rich, and a large infrastructure program (complete with earmarks) may produce a short-term economic upturn, even a boom, but only at the expense of great problems down the road: inflation, rising interest rates, huge budget deficits, and a possible credit squeeze that may hit the government's ability to borrow/fund the deficit.



On foreign policy, there are few good options. While the US remains the world's dominant power, its relative position



continues to decline; it can't do what it used to. If Trump makes a rapprochement with Putin, the Russians, the Iranians, and Assad become dominant in the Middle East. In Iraq, this is likely to strengthen the hand of the Shiites, and then, where do Saudi Arabia and the other Sunni nations turn? To China? Even if ISIS is completely defeated, this (broad) outcome is not a victory for the US, but a substantial defeat.

Re the domestic scene: When Reagan took over, he had a mandate and the popular mood was positive. Trump barely squeaked in (by the way, according to Mike, in Michigan, they are still counting the votes, and Clinton is in the lead, so she, not Trump, appears to have won the state), and the mood of the country is not optimistic but, at best, a desperate hope on the part of the Trump supporters and a mounting anger on the part of everybody else. Economic improvement may lessen this dynamic, but I doubt it will overcome it, given the other issues motivating liberal and left-wing people: police targeting of Blacks and Latinos, women's issues (equal pay, abortion), immigration, LGBT issues, and especially, the environment. By 1980, the movement had completely petered out; today, it seems to me that it is on the upswing, with people feeling as if they were robbed rather than defeated. Meanwhile, the Democratic Party has, at least partially, discredited itself. To me, this suggests that we may have the basis for a majoritarian mass movement, not a minoritarian one like the 60s.

Re the coal industry: I tend to think (and I hope) that the following article is correct. NY Times, 11/15/16, The Coal Industry Isn't Coming Back, by Michael Webber.

Re the bungler issue. I continue to believe, and to hope, that Trump will not prove himself a deft



leader. It's one thing to manipulate a bunch of desperate people against a very flawed, weak candidate with no charisma and a lot of baggage; it's another thing to deal with (a very complicated) reality. If Trump is even thinking about appointing Sarah Palin to a cabinet position....

Ron

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November 18  
Jack and Rod,

See also: Politico.com, 11/18/16, Environmentalists get a dose of good news, by Michael Grunwald

Ron

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November 18  
Ron,

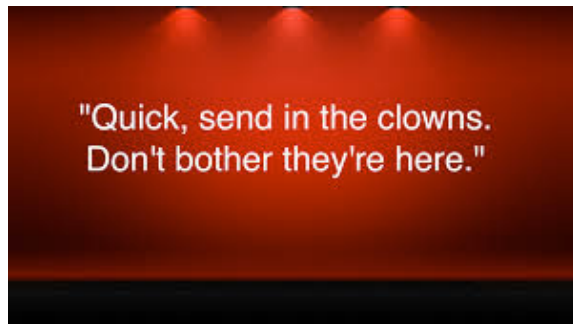
I agree on the economic outlook you describe. Wasn't this what took place with Reagan?

I think you are right that foreign policy defeats are likely, for the reasons you describe. The US would be/has been being squeezed no matter who is/was president; Trump's incoherent blend of 'world tough guy' and 'America First isolationism' may well lead to major debacles.

Domestic scene: I think your analysis is excellent. The situation does seem ripe for a significant mass movement, perhaps even 'majoritarian,' as you suggest. It seems to me that even a section of the Republican Party may be forced into rebellion if the 'alt right' influence turns out to be as strong as some early steps suggest. Even if Romney becomes window dressing, I wonder how long he would survive (i.e., he would resign) in a Trump/Bannon/Flynn administration.

Trump bungling: I, too, want him to be the biggest bungler imaginable, but have been guarding against a tendency (my own as well as others') to underestimate him. However, unless there is an immediate, sharp change of course on appointments and related--and there isn't too much wiggle room left here--I will have to conclude that he is not just

ignorant and vile, but dumb as well. And if Sarah Palin is in the cabinet, it really is, *send in the clowns...*



Rod

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November 18

All,

I agree with what Ron wrote, with one caveat. I realize that coal is no longer cost competitive. But coal company stocks have shot up since Trump was elected, coal executives are included in his transition team, and I think that Trump would like to deliver mining jobs and profits. So I think that he will push for coal to be subsidized.

Jack

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## **‘Communization’: A starting point?**

November 23

All,

Below is a summary of the communization current per *endnotes*. I believe it is the starting point of any possible defense against Trump, and beyond towards an anarchist society. All struggles in my opinion have to defeat the endnotes argument.

[https://endnotes.org.uk/other\\_texts/en/endnotes-la-theses](https://endnotes.org.uk/other_texts/en/endnotes-la-theses)

Does this change Ron's document in any way?

Solidarity

Shemon

---

November 24  
Hi Shemon,

You present a set of theses written a year ago by a group that developed out of libertarian (ultra-left) Marxism.

My response is directed to you because I doubt that most of the rest of the Utopian group (perhaps excepting Mike S. and W.E.B.) would find this topic of interest. This is because it assumes the continuing relevance of aspects of Marxism.



In fact I agree with what I think would be part of their reaction, namely a revulsion toward the alienated, abstract, academic, Marxoid language in which the theses are expressed. Even readers who are fairly sophisticated in knowing Marxist theory would have difficulty figuring out what the writers are saying. I sure do.

A while ago I asked you to suggest something to read about "communization" theory; you recommended **End Notes # 4**. Loren Goldner made the same recommendation. From reading most of it, I concluded that they treated Marx's "Historical Tendency of Capital Accumulation" (Chap. XXXII; **Capital** Vol. 1) as a concrete prediction, which has failed to come true. That is, they treat it as an absolute law. But Marx regarded his "laws" as tendencies, patterns of movement which tended to happen, but which were altered and modified in practice by countervailing tendencies. So it does not refute the "historical tendency of capital accumulation" because capitalism tends to centralize big semi-monopolies *and* to break up into smaller enterprises, to unify the working class *and* to divide it up, to create a worldwide

integrated economy *and* to de-industrialize certain sectors, etc. All these abstractions require concrete analyses of specific periods and countries and industries to see exactly what is happening--rather than relying solely on the abstract tendencies. The **End Notes** folks seem to want to replace one set of Marxist abstractions (as they see them) with a new set of abstractions.

Of their theses, I agree with (1) and (2). From (3) onward, it gets confusing. They focus on the non-revolutionary reaction of the working class/labor movement to the capitalist downturn beginning in the 1970s. This is stated with no mention of the defeats the workers' movement faced during the 20s and 30s, the rise of fascism, the rise of Stalinism, World War II, the post-war apparent prosperity, which was propped up by the social democrats, the union officials, and the Stalinists--all of which left the working class utterly unprepared for the end of the period of prosperity.

On the other hand, I may agree with the eighth thesis, "class consciousness, today, can only be **consciousness of capital.**" That is, *if what it means* is that differing sections of the working class and oppressed people should each become aware of the ways in which capital oppressed and exploited them, then this could lead to a unified struggle of a movement of movements. How to make this concrete however (and how to include the still important capital/labor conflict) is certainly not clarified in these theses, nor in the **End Notes #4**book.

Solidarity,  
Wayne

P.S. Apparently, "communization" is a theory which comes out of Marxism but denies the "need" for intermediate stages between the revolution and full communism. This should lead to rapprochement with anarchism, which at least denies the need for a "transitional state" and is less rigid about intermediate stages of socialism.