

Bernie Sanders Rapid Response Library

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Note: Items marked with an asterisk (*) are new in this issue.

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Introduction and Overview

I have put this library together to help other Berners fight the good fight in online forums and social media. Please feel free to cut and paste whatever you find useful.

I will continue to update this document as often as possible. To get the latest version at any time, please visit my blog at www.euroyankee.com or follow me on Twitter [@EuroYankeeBlog](https://twitter.com/EuroYankeeBlog).

General Comments on the Political Revolution

And yet, Reagan transformed the American political mentality. Conservatism became cool; greed was good; the word “liberal” became an epithet and an accusation by which to smear your opponent. The entire political spectrum shifted Rightwards, so much so that the Democrats

Reaganism Teaches us What Bernie’s Political Revolution is About

Ronald Reagan ran on a platform of right wing catnip: Abolish Medicare; Privatised Social Security; drastically shrink the Federal Government; cut taxes to the bone, overturn Roe v. Wade. Once elected, however, Reagan actually RAISED taxes 11 times. He grew the Federal workforce by 30%; he did not touch Medicare or Social Security, indeed he cut an historic deal with Tip O’Neill, Democrat House Leader, to extend the viability of Social Security. Reagan did practically nothing on Roe v. Wade.

And yet, Reagan transformed the American political mentality. Conservatism became cool; greed was good; the word “liberal” became an epithet and an accusation by which to smear your opponent. The entire political spectrum shifted Rightwards, so much so that the Democrats were forced to embrace the “New Democrat” thinking of the Democratic Leadership Council and its Chairman, Bill Clinton.

Bill Clinton had been Governor of Arkansas. You do not get to be Governor of Arkansas by being a liberal. And Bill was eager to show just how much he was NOT a liberal: he famously left the campaign trail to fly back to Arkansas to oversee the execution of a deeply mentally impaired inmate. He invented the “Sister Souljah Moment” to show how much of a racist Southerner he still was.

THIS was what Reagan achieved. He may not have managed to get done all those Right wing dream ticket items, but he forced the Democrats to become Republicans. It is amazing to see video of the Clintons back then: Hillary telling an audience in NH about black “Super Predators” and how they need to be “brought to heel.” The support for mass incarceration. Ending “Welfare as we know it” and turning welfare recipients into productive citizens rather than “deadbeats” as Hillary called them. The abolition of AFDC threw millions of children into poverty. The Clintons’ Crime Bill and 3-strikes laws led to the mass incarceration of millions of black youths. The

Democrats became the Party of Wall Street, with Bill Clinton making history in 1996 as the first Democratic Presidential candidate to raise more money from Corporate America than his GOP rival.

And yet – and yet – these pro-business, pro-Wall Street, anti-poor New Democrats were the people that ran as “liberals” and “progressives”. The American political scene had changed so much that the Democratic President, leader of the Democratic Party and heir to the mantle of FDR, LBJ, Harry Truman, could stand up and proudly proclaim that “the era of big government is over.” I’ll bet that was when Grover Norquist got his first chubbie.

So here we are, and a Reagan of the Left is running in the form of Bernie Sanders. Is he maddeningly vague? Yes, but that is only because he is aspirational and exhorting people to “think big” and go back to a time before Reagan, when Government could do good things, big things, when Government could make people’s lives better. When Government could be a force for fairness and a shield to protect the ordinary citizen from being ground under the giant boot-heel of huge multinational corporations.

Why Bernie’s “Political Revolution” is a Double-Edged Sword

Bernie Sanders is attracting huge crowds, and his followers - his main demographic - is comprised of young people and working class people who usually do not vote. One of Bernie's main themes is that "Republicans win when turnout is low." Bernie has identified this group of "self-disenfranchised" voters who have given up on the system. This is why issues that have strong majority support among citizens do not get addressed in Congress. Establishment politicians know that young people, students and the working poor just do not show up.

Only 35% of voters voted in 2014. Even in Presidential years, 50% of voters stay home. Among young people, 60% to 80% do not vote. Bernie has targeted this group. and his "Political Revolution" is nothing more or less than a campaign to bring these non-voting groups to the polls and get them involved on an ongoing basis in the political and electoral process. That's it.

Bernie is confident that if we increase voter participation, we will have a country and a government that better serves the people.

HOWEVER - the people that Bernie is attracting are loyal to Bernie, not the Democratic Party. Much was made of the fact that at the Jefferson-Jackson Dinner in Iowa last week the Bernie supporters left en masse after his speech and did not stick around to listen to Hillary Clinton. This fact reflects what I, as an avid supporter and follower of the Sanders campaign, know to be true: Bernie has a "yooj" following that is enthusiastic and fervent, almost evangelical in nature, but that enthusiasm is reserved only for Bernie.

Because these supporters do not usually vote, they will not show up in any polls of so-called "likely voters." That is why the Sanders campaign continues to exude confidence even in the face of daunting poll numbers.

This massive movement (and it is a movement) is however a double-edged sword. If Bernie becomes the nominee, this cohort of previously non-voting voters will most certainly propel him to victory. If however Hillary Clinton becomes the nominee, this same horde of potential voters will not come out to vote. They will, in all probability, avoid the polls like they avoided the Clinton speech in Iowa.

The Democratic Party Establishment needs to consider this. They have in 2016 a chance to massively expand their party's base, to get huge numbers of voters to come to their side, and to dramatically change the political landscape in America in a way that has not been seen since Reagan.

If however the Democratic Establishment see fit to use their power and influence to ensure a Clinton nomination, they will lose the chance to recruit these people and condemn the country to Right-Wing dominated government for another generation, and in so doing also risk losing the General Election in 2016.

Reagan Analogy – History Repeats!

Imagine, a politician who is true to his ideals, even when they are not popular; one who stays the course, keeps true to himself, and seizes the right moment when the US public is of the right mind to accept his radically different message.

This politician speaks plainly, has an answer to every question, and is magnificently convincing because he is sincere and well-practiced in his delivery, in his positions, in his unabashed embrace of a political philosophy that had been decried as “radical” and “fringe” and “out of the mainstream” for the past decades.

Suddenly, this politician gains traction with the Common Man, who appreciates his honesty, understands his outrage, and has had enough of the “mainstream” political philosophy that has simply stopped working for America. He leads what quickly becomes a political “Revolution” that dramatically changes the political landscape in America ...

Yes of course I am talking about Ronald Reagan.

But I think the same holds true for Bernie. He has spent decades in the wilderness. He has endured the long period in which “liberal” was a dirty epithet, and “socialism” even worse. But his time has arrived, and I would bet that we will see “Bernie Republicans” come out and support him.

And after all, why not? Bernie represents the economic interests of what we used to call “Reagan Democrats” - every one of his positions enjoys strong majority support among ALL Americans, regardless of party affiliation.

Bernie is running against a woman with a LOT of baggage, and one who is beholden to what Bernie calls the “billionaire class” ... just as Reagan was able to dismiss GHW Bush, Bob Dole, John Anderson and others as “too liberal” and corrupt during the 1980 GOP Primary, Bernie will also be able to sell himself, ultimately, as “the real deal” - with Hillary being just too conservative and corrupted by her billionaire friends on Wall Street and K Street.

Yes, my friends, the pendulum is finally swinging. We thought we were seeing a sea change with Obama - but he turned out to be just another opportunistic politician. Bernie is the clear-eyed, consistent, unabashed Liberal that America will love.

More info here: <http://www.euroyankee.com>

Reagan Comparison - Short

Imagine, a politician who is true to his ideals, even when they are not popular; one who stays the course, keeps true to himself, and seizes the right moment when the US public is of the right mind to accept his radically different message.

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Like Bernie, the “Reagan Revolution” also came out of the blue: remember – the great socialist programs of Medicare, Medicaid and The Great Society were all introduced in the late 60’s – if someone had told me a scant decade later that a far-right cowboy B-movie actor who was against Social Security and against Medicare and against Roe v. Wade and against unions and against civil rights would win in Michigan, Massachusetts, New York, and yes, even Vermont, I would have told them they were CRAZY.

So go ahead. Call us crazy.

Reagan Comparison - Reply

Bernie Sanders will be our next President, so get used to it. The "free market" capitalism / libertarianism you all claim to support is the greatest MYTH ever perpetrated on humanity - there is no such thing as a free market, there are only different people who make the rules. As a Democratic Socialist - which is very different from a Socialist (see <http://www.dsausa.org>), Bernie believes that people should have a larger role in deciding how the market functions, so that the economy is there to serve the people and not vice-versa. I remember 1980 when Reagan won by a landslide, a far right Conservative winning NY, NJ, MA and almost every other blue state except Minnesota - it was a blowout. And now the country is ready for a blowout in the other direction.

So hold onto your tinfoil hats, it's going to be a bumpy ride for y'all.

Reagan Comparison - Age

Bernie is about as old as Joe Biden is, and just a few years older than Hillary. However, I like to compare Sanders to Reagan, who also lead a transformative (as Obama says) "revolution" in American politics.

When Reagan was elected, he was 69, which was just 3 years away from the average life expectancy at the time. Bernie is 73, but he is a full 6 years away from the average life expectancy today.

In short, if 50 is the new 30, then 70 is the new 50.

Just as Reagan wanted to take the country back 50 years to the time pre-FDR and pre-New Deal, Bernie wants to take the country back 50 years to the time pre-Reagan and pre-Reaganomics. In order to do that, he needs to have perspective, he needs to know about the concepts and the movement of which he speaks. Bernie's age in this instance brings gravitas and authority, and his "50 years of consistency" means all the more because of the longevity of his convictions.

Electability

I would remind everyone that Bernie Sanders is a "socialist" that has been re-elected NINE (9) TIMES to Congress. As a socialist, he was re-elected Senator with 71% of the vote.

I'll say it again - as a socialist, he won with 71% of the vote.

Show me a Democratic politician who has that record, and running in a state with a higher GUN ownership rate than Nebraska, Ohio, Illinois, North Carolina and Missouri.

Oh, and just for good measure, this "socialist Jew" got those huge mandates in a state with just under 1% Jewish population.

Incorruptibility

Bernie Sanders has been in Congress 25 years. He has been re-elected 9 times, most recently with 71% of the vote. Before that he was Mayor of Vermont's biggest city. And after all that, his Net Worth is only \$330,000. And most of that was from a \$200,000 severance his wife got from her job running a college.

So if you want to say Bernie is stupid for being so poor after all those years in politics, or he's an idiot or inept because he stayed in politics so long without making a fortune or getting a sweet job as a lobbyist or consultant, then you are welcome to make that argument.

Such an argument would certainly be more believable than saying Bernie Sanders is corrupted by money and big donors.

Bernie Differs from Democrats / Morality as a Political Theme

You have made the same errors that so many make when talking about Bernie - that is to equate his political beliefs and his stance on issues with those of Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton and/or the Democratic Party. This is simply not true. If it were true that Bernie's positions and those of the Democratic Party were one and the same, then HE WOULD BE A DEMOCRAT.

Indeed, this erroneous mindset is witnessed by two facts that no one in the fourth estate seems to be able to put together. On one hand, Sanders is criticised because he has not managed to introduce legislation that gets voted on and passed. On the other hand, he has voted 95%-99% with the Democrats on legislation that DID come up for a vote. If I am allergic to seafood and really want filet mignon, and my choice for dinner is either salmon or chicken, I will vote for the chicken. Welcome to the frustrating world of Bernie Sanders's 25 years in Congress.

Bernie is a Democratic Socialist, which means he believes in many things that used to be the bedrock of the Democratic Party, but disappeared from the American political landscape following the Reagan Revolution. Indeed, Bernie's political platform is taken almost word for word from FDR's "Second Bill of Rights" aka the "Economic Bill of Rights." This legislation was a non-starter in the US at the time, but it did become adopted by the European countries when they rebuilt their political systems following WWII.

Bernie disagrees strongly with Clinton and the Democratic Party on many issues. TPP is the latest - Bernie never misses a chance to rail against the TPP as well as every other "Democratic" trade deal since NAFTA, which he characterises consistently as "disastrous" for American workers, and all of which he voted against. He thinks Obamacare is nothing but a sop to the insurance industry and is adamant about expanding Medicare to cover all. I will not go into every issue here, but suffice it to say that the Democratic Party has, since Bill Clinton and the DLC, become a party of the centre, with Obama acting as what would have been a centre-right politician anytime prior to 1990.

THE BIGGEST DIFFERENCE between Bernie and the Democrats, however, is Bernie's unabashed penchant for framing his arguments in quasi-religious moral terms. He is not afraid to talk about greed, and to accuse the Koch Brothers and corporate giants of greed. The Democrats still seem to be languishing under the 80's meme that "greed is good" and that one should not "criticise success". Bernie will have none of that. He believes - and he exhorts his supporters to believe - that there is something morally reprehensible about being wealthy and wanting to acquire even more wealth "while children go to bed hungry."

Bernie is a big fan of Pope Francis and even channels the Pontiff on both the Senate floor and in his rallies. He believes, like Francis, that Climate Change is not a social, economic or even scientific issue - it is a moral one.

Liberals have traditionally been loathe to couch their positions in religious doctrine, and Democrats especially shy away from using words like "greed", "evil", "abhorrent", "abysmal" and so on to describe their political foes or an opposing viewpoint. Not Bernie. In fact, I have not heard a politician so fond of using the word "grotesque" since Newt Gingrich in the 90's. When Bernie's supporters say that he "tells the truth" and "gives it to you straight" they might as well be saying that he is not afraid to call

a sin a sin, and a sinner a sinner.

Bernie and the Democrats not only differ in terms of policy they are literally worlds apart in how they frame the debate itself. Bernie is appealing to the Christian nature of Americans, telling them that it's OK, they can come back to what they always knew in their hearts: that Jesus would condemn Gordon Gekko and raise high the modest worker. Bernie is reminding them of what they learned in Sunday school, and he is giving them a way to exercise those beliefs in a context that will redound to the overall good not just of society, but of themselves.

That is a powerful message indeed, and not one that Hillary or any other establishment Democrat can offer.

Bernie not a Democrat?

Bernie has caucused with the Democrats in the House and Senate for 25 years, where he has voted for and supported Democratic leadership and sponsored, co-sponsored Democratic legislation; the Democratic leadership rewarded him with Committee assignments and chairs. When it comes to governing, Bernie Sanders has done MUCH, MUCH more to advance Democratic causes and policies than has Hillary Clinton with her lackluster 8 years in the Senate..

***The 2016 Election - Autopsy**

The Democratic Party Was Wiped Out Under Obama

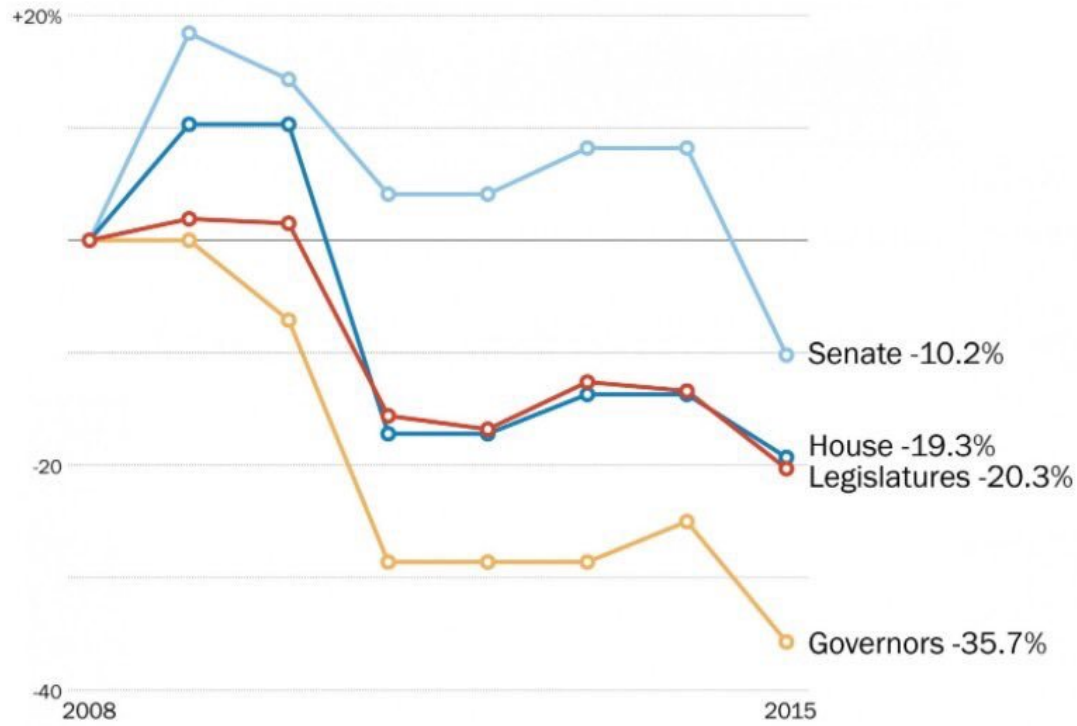
The facts speak for themselves. Under Barack Obama, the Democrats lost 900 State legislative seats across the country. The GOP now controls 69% of all State legislative chambers and 2/3 of all the Governorships.

The 2016 disaster, in which the Dems lost total control of the Federal government, was just the culmination of a trend that started years ago.



Change in number of Democrats since 2008

Data from House.gov, Dr. Carl Klarner, Ballotpedia, Statista.



The Party membership has also plummeted under Obama:

In politics, as of today, do you consider yourself a Republican, a Democrat or an independent?

	Republicans	Independents	Democrats	
	%	%	%	
2017 Jan 4-8	28	44	25	30% decline for Dems; aka the "Obama Bump"
2016 Jun 1-5	27	41	30	
2012 Dec 19-22	25	35	38	
2009 Jan 9-11	30	33	36	

<http://www.gallup.com/poll/15370/party-affiliation.aspx>

Bernie Lost Big in the Primary?

Bernie did not "lose big" he came from WAYYYYY behind - 60 points behind, in fact, and ended up winning 23 primaries and 46% of the delegates. But that almost

makes it seem like it was a fair fight. As we now know, the DNC, the Media and the Clinton campaign colluded to tip the scales in every possible way against Bernie, so it was not a fair fight.

Hillary Clinton is the most famous politician in the world. She is part of the most powerful political family on the planet; she has the entire Democratic Party in her pocket. HRC supporters LOVED crowing about all the endorsements she had from the Party Elite and the Establishment, how many Superdelegates and Unions endorsed her, and so on. She had every possible advantage that could be had going into this election.

And then you had Bernie; a 74-year old self-proclaimed "Socialist" from a tiny little state in the NE corner of the country, whom NO ONE had ever heard of. Bernie started out at 3% in the polls, with 6% name recognition. When Super Tuesday happened there were still 30% of Democrats who did not know who Bernie Sanders was.

Hillary had a MASSIVE lead over Bernie - 60 to 80 points, depending on which poll you looked at. And you know what? She pissed it all away. By April they were virtually tied in the national polls.

Yes, with all her advantages - seemingly unlimited PAC money, a ground operation built up over years if not decades, personal relationships in every district, Hillary STILL could not put Bernie away. She could not win a majority of pledged delegates, and now she will need to rely on the votes of Superdelegates at the convention in order to win the nomination.

How sad is all that? Very sad. It shows just how toxic a candidate she is. How weak a candidate she is. She lost 22 states to a grumpy old Socialist in a rumpled suit with NO name recognition, NO organisation, NO ground game, NO PAC money and NO previous experience running for President.

So now you look around for someone to blame, and you blame the guy who played fair all along, the ONLY candidate who has maintained a net POSITIVE favorability rating throughout the campaign, and you point fingers and scream like the pod people in "Invasion of the Body Snatchers." Shame on you.

Don't Blame the Berners

Many DNC and Clinton defenders seem to completely misunderstand the problems that many voters had with Hillary. It was not her voice, her tone, her demeanour, or the fact that she was a woman. It was the fact that she was a corrupt career politician who was a warmonger and a Wall Street lackey who didn't give a goddam about poor people or people of colour, no matter what she might have been saying to get elected. In short, most of us still believed what Barack Obama observed correctly about Hillary in 2008: "she will say anything and do nothing." The email leaks showed the entire Primary to be tainted by the nefarious machinations of a corrupt cabal of Clintonites and the DNC, but in addition it opened up a window into the absurdly

brazen level of "pay to pay" corruption of the Clinton Foundation and how Bill and Hillary were using the Foundation to peddle influence. These are serious flaws bordering on the criminal. Certainly, they rose to the level of disqualification on grounds of moral turpitude of the most despicable sort a government servant can commit.

YET – many in the DNC misleadingly lump these serious failings in with the spurious ad hominem attacks of the Right. This is intellectually dishonest. There is a big difference between (a) criticising Hillary for the way she dresses and (b) condemning her for taking millions of dollars from Wall Street in return for making "secret" promises in closed door speeches, the transcripts of which she refused to release. There is a big difference between (a) disliking Hillary because of her shrill voice, and (b) condemning Hillary for taking millions in donations for the Saudis, the Kuwaitis, the Qataris and others in return for rubber stamping their US arms purchases.

Secondly, the charge that Hillary's loss was in any way due to the votes cast for Stein and Johnson has been debunked. Firstly, Johnson took more GOP votes than Democratic ones. Secondly, Stein did not get enough votes to have made a difference. This has been widely debunked.

Thirdly, and MOST IMPORTANTLY, millennials and progressives did not vote for Hillary because once she had the nomination, Hillary went out of her way to give them the finger. She could have chosen a progressive like Bernie or Elizabeth Warren or Sherrod Brown or any one of a dozen suitable progressive Democrats (Keith Ellison would even have been good). Instead she chose Tim Kaine, a pro-TPP, pro-fracking, pro-life conservative who was to her RIGHT on all the issues. This was because the Clinton campaign made a deliberate STRATEGIC DECISION to reject and repel millennials and progressives in favour of courting the votes of "moderate Republicans." The Clinton campaign publicised this strategy and were quite open about going after Republicans who were fiscally and economically conservative but were turned off by Trump's racism, bigotry and sexism. This was their PLAN. Hell, Chuck Schumer even said so:

"For every blue-collar Democrat we lose in western Pennsylvania, we will pick up two moderate Republicans in the suburbs in Philadelphia, and you can repeat that in Ohio and Illinois and Wisconsin."

The Clinton campaign was constantly issuing press releases about the many high-level Republicans who planned to vote for Hillary. She was brazenly fraternising with and fawning over all manner of GOP stalwarts, from Wall Street criminals like Hank Paulson to war criminals like John Negroponte. She repeatedly expressed gushing praise for Henry Kissinger. And she managed to get half of the Bush cabinet that took us into Iraq to come out and publicly support her.

That was their plan. And they stuck to it. They didn't WANT the votes of progressives and millennials. They were convinced that they could win enough REPUBLICAN VOTES to clinch the election.

TO SUM IT UP: The "Bernie Wing" of the Party didn't vote for Hillary because they were not supposed to vote for her - even according to the Clinton campaign's own playbook. No one should be surprised that she lost. She misjudged the relative size of the two groups: it turned out that the Berners, the millennials and progressives she deliberately repelled, outnumbered the suburban Republicans she sought to attract. Simple. And simply disastrous.

Blame Bernie for Hillary Losing?

HA HA! Sure - in a year that EVERY PUNDIT and political observer has named "the year of the outsider" and the "anti-establishment year" let's choose a candidate who embodies the Establishment. Yes, her husband was President, so let's entice the American people - who are in an anti-Establishment mood - with the chance to have good old Bill "Slick Willy" Clinton shuffling around the White House again, doing God knows what.

Let's choose a candidate who by her own admission is "terrible at politics." Let's find one that has been in the public eye for a long time, but who lost her last Presidential primary to an unknown 1st term junior Senator who is black and has a funny Muslim name. Yes, we want the candidate that started out way ahead of that guy but then lost in the end.

And by all means, let's pick a candidate who has the LOWEST favorability rating of any Democratic candidate EVER. And just for good measure, let's make sure that same candidate is under an active FBI criminal investigation, the results of which will probably be made public at the WORST possible time during the campaign.

Sure, a majority (54%) of the US electorate do not like her, and even larger majority (68%) consider her not to be trustworthy. She is the epitome of an Establishment politician and a lousy campaigner. But according to the DNC, she is a sure thing to win.

You want to blame Bernie? Why not blame the candidate who, with multiple Super PACs and unlimited resources, with the entire DNC and Party establishment behind her, with 97% name recognition, with a 30 year track record, nonetheless SOMEHOW managed to piss away a 60-point lead against a completely unknown Senator from Vermont, and a 74-year old "avowed Socialist" to boot. Yes, Hillary was ahead by 60 points in fall of 2015 but by April 2016 she was virtually tied with Bernie. Yes, by all means, with a stellar performance like that, she lost because that grumpy old Socialist in the rumpled suit was too mean to her.

GIVE ME A BREAK.

Time for a Third Party?

The Democrats, after all, only account for 29% of the electorate. The GOP accounts for even less (25%). The largest cohort of voters are the Independents, with 42% of the vote - i.e., 45% LARGER than either the Democratic Party or the Republican Party. The Democrats are incapable of representing anywhere near a majority of the American electorate, and neither are the Republicans.

Indeed, polls indicate that fully 50% of the people that supported either Trump or Hillary are doing so because they are actually voting AGAINST the other candidate. That means that in 2016, 42% of Americans felt that they have nothing to vote FOR.

Funny how that number of 42% keeps coming up, eh?

Moreover, in the latest polls, 60%+ of the American voters want to see a Third Party alternative.

I say, it's high time we gave them that choice!!

US Progressives are NOT Stymied or Paralyzed

US progressives are not inert or stymied or paralyzed. Progressives and millennials came out and voted by the millions for Bernie Sanders. But centrist Dems just cannot understand people who insist on voting based on real "bread and butter issues" and "kitchen table issues". And when was the last time you heard a Democrat run a campaign based on either of those? Or even use those terms in a speech?

No - this is simply more wishful thinking from the dying breed of DINOs who are essentially Republicans that approve of abortion and civil rights.

These "centrist" Democrats need to leave the Democratic Party and go become the moderate Republicans they truly are. I mean, it sounds funny and ironic to say "moderate Republicans" these days, doesn't it? That's because all the moderate Republicans became Democrats back in the 90's, when the Clintons and the DLC took over the Democratic Party and pushed it hard to the right. Back then it was called "triangulation" and the unsuspecting Republicans lost elections because "Slick Willy" and his fellow corporate Democrats co-opted all their talking points and political positions.

We progressives will oppose Trump. We shall fight him in the streets, we shall fight him on the Internet; we shall fight him with growing confidence and strength in the court of public opinion; we shall fight him in the Congress, and we shall never surrender. And if that sounds like a speech from Churchill it should. Because we are in a similar struggle right now.

*Silver Linings: The Opportunity the Trump Presidency Brings

Americans Wake Up to the Endemic Problems of Our Government

If there is a theme to this piece, it can be summed up with a nod to the great [Ambrose Bierce](#): For if "war is God's way of teaching Americans geography," surely *Trump is God's way of teaching Americans civics*. And it is a lesson that was sorely in need of teaching.

Grover Norquist, possibly the biggest bag of dicks that the Right ever produced, has been making the rounds of the Sunday yak shows - even appearing on Real Time, where that benighted liberal elitist Bill Maher welcomes him as a "friend of the show." First, how we ever got to the point where knobsacks like Norquist and God help us Hugh Hewitt are embraced by the MSM is a telling point in itself - but to the point: Grover Norquist is proudly telling anyone who will listen that the 2016 election is not an anomaly. It is NOT as if the Democrats just hit a tragic turn in which they suddenly lost 70% of the State legislatures and 2/3 of the Governors' mansions (as well as the Congress and the White House).

The Republicans, as Grover rightly points out, have been steadily taking over the country "for the past 4 elections."

How Obama Put the Progressive Left to Sleep

Now, these elections obviously happened under Barack Obama's watch. That was because he was one of the FEW Democrat to do well under the tender mercies of the corporatised DNC and the Democratic political machine that the corporate liberal elites like the Clintons and the Obama had built up over the past 30 years. They had perfected the strategy of Identity Politics. As long as they managed to get a good-looking, smooth-talking, non-threatening BLACK MAN at the top of the ticket and put him in the Oval Office, the corporate uni-party could chug along undisturbed by the rabble, while the liberal elite patted themselves on the back and congratulated themselves on "how far we have come" and "how liberal values have won out" - and meanwhile the entire so-called "Left" in America went to sleep. The progressive movement, defanged and declawed, was anaesthetised by the forced consensus that concentrated not on working class economic issues, but on the politics of race, gender and sexual orientation. Think about it: when was the last time a Democrat (other than Bernie Sanders) even used the words "kitchen table issues"? Or "bread-and-butter issues"? These used to be the mainstay of Democratic stump speeches. Now they have been replaced by "strength through diversity" and "there is a special place in Hell for women who don't support other women."

The main problem was that Obama was beyond reproach; for the Democrats and the Left, Obama's actions, to quote Peter Lorre, "could not be rescinded, not even questioned." We all had to support everything he did, because this well-spoken, highly educated, elegant black man was facing a "racist" Republican Party that blocked everything he tried to do. This was, of course 100% BULLSHIT.

How, exactly, was Obama blocked? He had a good chunk of time in which he had a filibuster-proof majority, and yet all he could do was deliver Romneycare. He never even TRIED to deliver the public option that he had campaigned on. He could have closed Guantanamo at any time: contrary to popular opinion, it was fully within his purview to do so But he chose not to. He could have prosecuted the bankers on Wall Street. Congress passed over 10 criminal referrals to the DOJ; but Holder and Obama chose not to pursue it. Obama could have broken up the big banks - he could have "gone after Wall Street" like he promised in his campaign - he did not need Congress to do that. He chose not to. He could have helped Unions by passing Card Check while he had control of the Congress. Nope. He had promised to "put on a pair of comfortable shoes" and march with Labor to fight for Union rights. Never happened. When the Unions in Wisconsin, Ohio, Indiana were literally fighting for their lives, where was Obama? Those "comfortable shoes" stayed in the closet for 8 long years.

But was there outrage from the Left? No.

Obama doubled down on Bush's drone "program", increasing drone strikes by 500%. He inherited wars in 2 countries and expanded that to 7. He invoked the Espionage Act of 1917 more than all the other Presidents combined, and for the express purpose of prosecuting and persecuting journalists and whistleblowers. He had promised transparency, but delivered secrecy. What Snowden exposed about the machinations of the NSA the CIA and other parts of the Obama Administration were crimes against the Constitution and certainly an affront to civil liberties. But no one blamed Barry - certainly he was not aware. Not him!

Was there marching in the streets as Obama used illegal cluster bombs in Yemen to kill innocent women in children in the poorest country in the world? Were there demonstrations against our intervention in Libya? Did anyone even QUESTION what we were doing when we bombed so much in Syria that the US [literally ran out of bombs](#) and had to ask for another \$60 Billion worth to continue to pound the poor people of Aleppo?

When was the last time anyone ever even USED the words "exit strategy" in connection with Iraq and Afghanistan? Under Obama, the US public has become, like that proverbial frog in the slowly boiling pot of water, inured to the idea of permanent and perpetual WAR.

We were too busy attacking Donald Trump for questioning Obama's birth certificate, and swooning over how elegant the First Lady was, and just what a gosh-darned beautiful, proud black First Family we had. We were all too busy being "post-racial"

to think about such things as economic injustice, rising addiction, exploding poverty, and the fact that we were creating more and more terrorists everyday by bombing in Iraq, Libya, Yemen, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Somalia, Mali, and God knows how many other places.

Trump "Excesses" Expose the Ugly Truth About Obama

Jeremy Scahill, appearing on [Democracy Now on Feb 3, 2017](#):

“The Obama administration mercilessly pounded Yemen with bombs since December of 2009, when they launched a cluster bomb attack that killed three dozen women and children in the village of al-Majalah, then repeatedly drone struck Yemen, and then, more recently, provided the Saudis with cluster bombs and other munitions, aircraft, to engage in their total destruction, scorched-earth campaign inside of Yemen, and also refueling the planes that the Saudis have been using to pummel Yemen. While Samantha Power, Obama’s ambassador to the United Nations, was condemning the excesses of the Saudis in Yemen, the United States was, of course, continuing to support the Saudi campaign there.”

[Pardiss Kebriaei](#), Senior Staff Attorney at the Center for Constitutional Rights, also appearing on Democracy Now on Feb 3, 2017:

*“...these are authorities that were claimed by the Obama administration, that were continued from the Bush administration and claimed by the Obama administration, a program of killing through drones, through raids, that has been going on for years. And accountability is important not just when you have ... a president like Trump, but, you know, when you have a constitutional law professor like President Obama, as well. And **accountability did not really happen**, did not happen meaningfully under the former administration, you know, politically, publicly or through the courts. I mean, we’re seeing now, for example ...with the Muslim ban, how essential the role of the courts is in checking sweeping, ostensibly unlawful, executive power. **There were attempts at judicial accountability in the past under the Obama administration with the drone program, and the courts failed to exercise judicial scrutiny at that point.**”*

Obama Betrayed the Middle Class

And just as he was leaving the White House Obama did one final Fuck You to the middle class: He [bailed out Blackstone Group](#), a private equity landlord company that was also a really swell friend to the Clintons and Obama. That little parting “gift” will ensure that these guys can keep buying up rental properties, jacking up home prices and making mortgages and rents unaffordable for middle class Americans. Thanks, Obama!

There are many more examples of Obama's perfidy, but for the sake of this argument, let me just say that with Hillary Clinton we would have had the same sort of corrupt corporatism, but on steroids. We would have had the same Identity Politics, with "liberals" all over America congratulating themselves in an orgy of self-satisfaction over having "shattered that last great glass ceiling."

And just as any whisper of criticism towards Obama would be crushed by accusations of racism, the mildest of criticism of Madame President would have been castigated as sexism or even misogyny. Hell, IT ALREADY IS.

Back to my point: the Obama Presidency saw the complete obliteration of the Democratic Party on a national scale. The Party has become a regional (bicoastal) party reliant on discrete special interest groups and the perpetuation of Identity Politics that tells people to vote based on who they are rather than what they need. We elected a black man in Obama. JOB DONE - nothing more to do, we have achieved our goal. If we had elected Hillary, it would have been the same. She had already positioned herself that way. They even built a giant "glass ceiling" above the stage that was supposed to break dramatically during her victory speech on Election Night. That glass ceiling metaphor was going to serve her well for another eight years as she ramped up Obama's militarism and funnelled the riches of the US to her friends on Wall Street, all the time giving rousing speeches exhorting women and girls to "be all you can be" and "dream big," and "you can do anything - look at me!"

The Clinton Foundation would have taken the Clinton brand of pay to play politics to a global level. The Clintons would have become a world-straddling force that transcended geography, politics, borders and ideology. It would have been one giant orgy of international corruption. And anyone who would have dared to question what she was doing? Well - SEXISM.

So - why is Trump so good for America?

Let's take the example of Betsy DeVos. She was opposed by every Democrat in Congress. She was on the lips of every American with even the slightest idea of the news. She was roundly condemned as unfit and above all a huge threat to public education in America. AND YET - on a policy level she was not much different from Arne Duncan. Who was Arne Duncan? You may well ask, because he was Secretary of Education under Obama. Like DeVos, he had absolutely ZERO experience teaching, or working in a classroom of any sorts. Like DeVos, he was a [vigorous proponent of the corporatisation and privatisation](#) of public education in the US. No one questioned Arne Duncan. There were no protests, no outraged parents worried about the future of public education in America. But when Trump picks someone who espouses what is basically the same core ideas of privatisation, vouchers, charter schools, etc., then HELL NO!!!

As a second example, I give you Steve Mnuchin, the Goldman Sachs executive that Trump has picked to serve as Treasury Secretary. People are outraged that Trump could be so blatantly corporatist as to have a deep-seated denizen of Wall street (his father also worked at Goldman) be in charge of our nation's Treasury Department. Imagine! Well, we don't have to imagine. A month before Obama even won the 2008 election, he received a memo from Michael Froman at Citigroup. The memo contained a list of [31 cabinet-level positions and who would fill them](#). And Obama obliged: 29 of Froman's 31 picks made it into the offices that Wall Street wanted, including Timothy Geithner, of course. Obama then named Froman himself to be the US Trade Representative, tasked with negotiating the TPP.

Where were the protests? The howls of outrage as Obama succumbed to the siren song of Wall Street, [against which he had railed so often](#) during his 2008 campaign? I mean, the wounds were still fresh, people had lost everything, "putting Wall Street over Main Street" was Obama's biggest and most iconic criticism of the Bush Administration. And even before he was elected he had already rolled over, sold out.

One more example I feel compelled to mention only because it is too deliriously and deliciously ironic to resist: Rex Tillerson as Secretary of State.

This one always makes me laugh. Tillerson, now the ex-CEO of ExxonMobil literally personifies Big Oil. He has been dubbed "Rexxon Mobilson" by the outraged chattering classes. And yet, who are we fooling? When Hillary Clinton was Obama's Secretary of State, she (in a speech to none other than Deutsche Bank) cited as one of her major accomplishments the fact that she had "[promoted fracking all over the world](#)". Of course, the major beneficiaries of her campaign to promote fracking on a global scale were Chevron and Halliburton - which may explain why Exxon's Tillerson decided he needed to get personally involved at State. I have no respect for liberals who are now jumping all over the Tillerson nomination.

For years we on the Left have been saying that in matters of foreign policy, "America is just a big oil company with its own army" - or words to that effect. The great [Smedley D. Butler](#), America's most decorated soldier, who wrote *War is a Racket*, said that in his 33 years in the Marines it was his job to "see to it that Standard Oil went on its way unmolested." And now, like Captain Renault in Casablanca, we are shocked, SHOCKED to find that America's foreign policy may be driven by private oil interests. Give me a break. Still - it is good that we are finally fessing up - we can no longer pretend that our foreign policy is anything but what Tillerson is sure to do. Under Trump we will be forced for the first time in decades to examine what we are doing in the world and why. Another silver lining.

Trump recently OK'd a raid in Yemen that resulted in the deaths of dozens of civilians, including an 8-year old girl. Rachel Maddow has been all over this, with exhaustive coverage of the horrors, the atrocities committed "in our name". And yet, Obama had her half-brother killed in an outdoor restaurant in Yemen in 2011. From the Left? Crickets. The fact that the boy was actually an American citizen was still

not enough to get any substantial coverage. And certainly not a word on Maddow. The Obama Administration didn't even try to justify the killing. When pressed at a news conference, an Obama spokesperson said the boy [should've "had a more responsible father."](#)

The short answer as to why Trump is good for America is that he has shown the true and horrible face of the government in a way that could never happen under a Democrat Administration. He has sparked the "Political Revolution" that Bernie Sanders spoke of during the Democratic Primary. He has caused the progressive Left to mobilise and to take on the energetic activism of the Tea Party. And let's remember: The Tea Party has been a success because the GOP politicians are deathly afraid of them. House Representatives mostly live in "safe" districts. The one thing – the ONLY thing – they fear is a contested Primary that could take them out of the race. Leftists are now moving towards that same level of threat for corporate Democrats. And that is a good thing.

***Social Justice vs. Economic Justice**

The False Dichotomy of Identity Politics

Bernie [has given interviews](#) in which he rails against what he calls the "Liberal Elites" —the establishment faction of the Democratic Party—who are focused on *identity politics* of gender equality, racial equality, LGBTQ rights and fighting for social justice but who are less interested in fighting for economic justice (i.e., taking on Wall Street and the banks, going after the billionaire class, and so on).

Indeed, it seems for the Left, the unrecognised obstacle to achieving economic justice is the fight for social justice. To put it simply: many left-leaning Americans cannot fight for free college tuition, healthcare or economic reform before eradicating racism, achieving gender equality and safeguarding LGBT rights, etc. Unfortunately, this kind of thinking will hurt all of us in the long-run as I explain below.

Choices Personified in 2016

This fundamental "choice" between economic versus social justice seems to be a large part of the massive disagreement between Bernie supporters and Hillary supporters. To put it bluntly: many who were "with Her" were more interested in electing the first female POTUS than achieving a universal/single payer healthcare system.

Other examples of this dichotomy: Even though middle class blacks [lost 70% of their wealth](#) thanks to the 2008 crash caused by the crooked bankers on Wall Street the shooting of unarmed black men by racist cops is a more pressing and immediate public emergency; movements to increase wages for working class people are

eclipsed by the desperate need to stop the midnight raids and mass deportations of undocumented workers and their families.

Bernie's Challenge

Early in Bernie's campaign, he received a wake-up call on the social justice front when [Black Lives Matter challenged him](#) at a rally in Seattle. This confrontation fed into a narrative pushed by the Clinton campaign: namely, that Bernie [was an old white guy from Vermont](#) who was simply and woefully out of touch with the issues of race, gender and sexual orientation. With this, the "[Bernie is a racist misogynist](#)" meme was born and the dismissal of his supporters as "[sexist Bernie Bros.](#)" In each case, the Bernie Sanders movement was condemned for putting economic justice ahead of social justice.

Another key criticism was that a "Democratic Socialist" program like Bernie's is based around some version of it is "easier" for countries in Europe and Scandinavia to have single payer healthcare, paid family leave, free college, etc. because [they are culturally and ethnically "homogenous"](#). In contrast, these things are difficult, [if not impossible](#), in the U.S. because we are such a culturally and ethnically "diverse" society.

Previously, I rejected these arguments out of hand. After all, "diversity" is something that was supposed to make America better and stronger than other countries. Immigration and multiculturalism are positive forces in American life. I believe in American exceptionalism in this regard.

All this adds up to a clear realization that diversity does not make it more difficult to adopt all the wonderful socialist programs enjoyed in other developed countries, but the crises and injustices arising from diversity are viewed as more urgent and pressing for America's Left than its political, social and financial resources.

The Two-Party System: Yin and Yang of Identity Politics

Bernie sought to remove the diversity obstacle during his presidential campaign. In every stump speech, he avowed that "[we cannot allow them to divide us up](#)," and that "when we stand together, there is nothing we cannot do." In other speeches, he was more specific: "we need to build a movement around those things that we all have in common." Bernie obviously believes that the fight for economic justice is a battle that we can all wage – it is literally the 99% versus the 1%. And in terms of the 99%, we all stand together when it comes to this struggle.

Bernie is now actively campaigning to reconcile these two "wings" of the American Left, to unite Liberals and Progressives in a political revolution that rejects the false dichotomy of identity politics as practiced by the elites of the Democratic establishment. This dichotomy is [reinforced and complemented by the opposing](#)

[forces of the Right](#) and the Republican Party because when it comes to bamboozling the American people, it takes two to tango. The GOP is only too willing to make every political and electoral debate about cultural issues – that way no one will realise that they stand for massive economic injustice. The white, blue collar working class of Middle America would never vote for the economic policies of the GOP, but when the GOP and the Democrats join forces to engage solely on the battlefield of cultural and social issues, wedge issues abound, and voters can be all too easily persuaded to vote against their own economic interests. But if you listen closely, in Bernie’s mantra of “we cannot allow them to divide us up,” the “them” refers as much to the corporate Democrats as it does to the GOP.

One example of this yin-yang collaboration between the Liberal Elites and the GOP was when Barack Obama [made the Bush Tax Cuts permanent](#). Bernie Sanders [famously filibustered the Bush Tax Cuts extension](#), yet the Left in general was remarkably silent, complacent in their belief that the nation’s “first African-American President” could not help but be a massive Liberal.

The silence of the Left however was answered with a drumbeat all throughout the following year, headlined by Bill O’Reilly on FOX News, declaring Obama to be [“the most liberal President in US history.”](#) These attacks from the Right did more to galvanise Obama’s support on the Left than anything that the President actually did to earn that title.

MLK Gave us the Solution

Bernie [often invokes Martin Luther King](#), and in so doing he is quick to point out that MLK’s last great movement was a [“Poor People’s Campaign”](#) – because King realised that without economic justice there can be no social justice. It was on the eve of the planned Poor People’s March on Washington that King was assassinated, and so the Reverend’s call for economic justice is often neglected in the history books, and it certainly seems to have been struck from the lexicon of today’s Democratic Party.

Bernie seeks, in effect, to revive MLK’s dream of economic justice as a means to achieve social justice. And Bernie supporters are in that fight with him, despite the efforts of both the Democratic elites and the Republican Party to make us choose between the two. It is a false choice, and we must reject it.

We need to end the “Culture Wars” that the Democrats and Republicans have forced upon us; we need to change the rules of engagement. Bernie’s goal is to convince everyone on the Left that we can, in essence, walk AND chew gum...that social justice is NOT separate from economic justice. We need to see that the two are naturally and inextricably entwined, *and always were*.

With that, I urge all my brothers and sisters on the Left to come together and to oppose ALL injustice everywhere. How useful are “equal opportunity” laws if there

is no opportunity? What does it serve to have “fairness in lending” laws when you cannot afford a mortgage? How does it help to have “equal pay for equal work” when there is no work? Indeed: how can you break a glass ceiling if you have no strong economic ladder to stand on?

Issue: Immigration

Consistent Position /Long

Bernie’s position on immigration is completely consistent with his overall philosophy and especially his opposition to international “trade” agreements such as GATT/WTO, NAFTA, CAFTA, PNTR, and now TPP. These deals are backed by the Koch Bros. and other Big Businesses because they facilitate the free flow of CAPITAL and GOODS between nations without regulations, and place corporations’ profits above the sovereign will of the people in the participating countries. What has been missing so far however, is an agreement on the free flow of LABOR.

Of course the big multinationals would like to see “open borders” where all people can go – and work – everywhere. Unfortunately, there are still these pesky things called “nation states” that try to serve the best interests of their citizens, and this means workplace regulations. The Koch Bros. and other multinationals would like to see both sides of the equation covered, so that Capital and Labor BOTH would flow freely without being subject to regulations or controls by individual nations. Wages would then plummet everywhere in a dismal race to the bottom, leaving even more profit for the corporations.

Bernie is completely correct in saying that if such an “open borders” policy is ever adopted then nation states like the USA will for all intents and purposes cease to exist, and we will all live in a dystopian world ruled by mega-corporations like in Rollerball. Is that what you want?

More info here: <http://www.euroyankee.com>

Open Borders – Short (COOL)

Bernie assumes that an "open borders" policy would further diminish the strength of the nation state as we know it and further increase the power of multinational corporations. We already have trade deals that allow corporations to sue nations if they pass regulations that eat into profits (real or projected) - America has already lost the right to COOL (Country of Origin Labelling) which used to tell an American consumer where the hamburger you are buying actually came from. Not any more - the meat could come from Nebraska or Canada or Mexico - you will never know. Phillip Morris is suing Uruguay because that country implemented an anti-smoking public health campaign.

Bernie sees an open borders policy as part of that continuum - taking power away from nations and their elected governments and giving it to multinational corporations. He is consistent, and he is right!

More info here: <http://www.euroyankee.com>

Reagan on Open Borders

Look, “Open Borders” is not just a Koch Brothers idea, it was Ronald Reagan’s position, and Bernie is nothing if not the anti-Reagan. In 1980, Reagan said we should “open the border both ways” with Mexico:

<http://reason.com/blog/2014/11/21/friday-av-club-what-gop-immigration-poli#.pvk98o:K0AD>

More info here: <http://www.euroyankee.com>

What Open Borders Really Means

People talk about “open borders” without, I think, fully realizing what it would mean. I think many people think it would only affect unskilled workers, but obviously it would have to apply to everyone. So you would have plumbers, machinists, skilled and semi-skilled workers coming to America in hopes of making 5x what they make in their home country.

Likewise, I expect that any “open borders” policy would include provisions allowing professionals like engineers, software developers, managers – even doctors and lawyers – to move to America and work.

This is why Big Business and the Koch Brothers LOVE an “Open Borders” policy – it would, in effect remove the need for outsourcing. Rather than move the jobs to Vietnam or India, the Indians and the Vietnamese could just move to America! It would radically drive down the cost of labor – indeed, wages AND salaries would plummet – and it would dramatically increase profit!

Imagine – those techies in Silicon Valley would no longer be making those huge 6-figure incomes. They will be making the same as their colleagues in Bangalore and Karachi. Larry Ellison, Jeff Bezos and other tech billionaires will be popping champagne! – Oh, and so will those Koch Brothers Bernie mentions.

More info here: <http://www.euroyankee.com>

Other Positions and Issues

Climate Change

I grew up in the 70’s when America was leading the world in green technology and environmentalism. The ozone layer was disappearing, and we solved the problem by leading the world in eliminating CFC’s.

Jimmy Carter had a program under which homeowners would get a tax deduction for installing solar heating panels on their roof. While in college I actually had a summer job selling these systems. They were very popular! And our President led by example as well: Carter installed solar heating panels on the roof of the White House.

Under Carter, America started to move to smaller, more fuel-efficient cars, and lead-free gasoline was introduced to work together with catalytic converters to lower the pollution caused by automobile exhaust.

Then Ronald Reagan was elected. Almost on the first day, he ripped out the solar panels on the White House and set about getting America back into the fossil fuel camp. SUV's were introduced, and the size of American cars swung to the other end of the size spectrum.

When I graduated college, I got my first job as European Sales Representative for Allied Signal, an American company that made catalytic converters for automobiles running on unleaded gas. The US was 15 years ahead of Europe in clean-car technology, and we sold our catalysts to Mercedes, BMW, Porsche, Renault, Peugeot and FIAT. I must say it was a wonderful feeling to be respected as an American by my colleagues and customers: respected for the technology that only America could have pioneered.

Sadly, those days are gone. America is now "Number 1" among advanced countries only in areas like gun violence, obesity, military spending and of course the denial of Climate Change.

Bernie Sanders has a plan to take America back to our rightful place as a pioneer and an innovator in clean technology. Under Bernie's leadership, the US will lead the world once again in stewarding the planet. America can and will become the "indispensible nation" not just in terms of military security but also in climate security. The world needs radical change in terms of our relationship with the planet and our environment; the world is counting on America not just to develop the technologies we need, but also to once more provide a shining example of what can be achieved when American ingenuity is combined with sensible public policy.
#FeelTheBern – Bernie2016!

Popularity of Bernie's Positions with Percentages (Citations)

Bernie's ideas are not radical or "fringe" positions - they are SUPPORTED BY STRONG MAJORITIES OF AMERICANS:

65% support expanding Social Security:

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/11/19/social-security-benefits-poll_n_4305258.html?utm_hp_ref=politics

67% support "Medicare for All" Single payer health care:

<http://thehill.com/policy/healthcare/229959-majority-still-support-single-payer-option-poll-finds>

63% Support Free Tuition at public colleges:

<http://thehill.com/blogs/blog-briefing-room/230064-poll-majority-support-obamas-free-tuition-planb>

64% support increasing corporate taxes:

<http://www.people-press.org/2015/03/19/federal-tax-system-seen-in-need-of-overhaul/>

61% support increasing taxes on the wealthy:

<http://www.people-press.org/2015/03/19/federal-tax-system-seen-in-need-of-overhaul/>

63% support a \$15 minimum wage:

<http://www.nelp.org/content/uploads/2015/03/Minimum-Wage-Poll-Memo-Jan-2015.pdf>

Moreover:

215 economists support Bernie's proposal of a \$15 Minimum Wage as well – they even submitted a petition to Congress:

<http://www.budget.senate.gov/democratic/public/index.cfm/2015/7/top-economists-are-backing-sen-bernie-sanders-on-establishing-a-15-an-hour-minimum-wage>

170 economists support Bernie's proposal to reform Wall Street:

<http://www.politicususa.com/2016/01/14/170-economists-bernie-sanders-plan-reform-wall-st-rein-greed.html>

Popularity of Bernie's Position with Percentages (No Citations)

Bernie's ideas are not radical or "fringe" positions - they are SUPPORTED BY STRONG MAJORITIES OF AMERICANS:

67% support "Medicare for All" Single payer health care

63% Support Free Tuition at public colleges

64% support increasing corporate taxes

61% support increasing taxes on the wealthy

63% support the \$15 minimum wage (as do 215 prominent economists)



BERNIE SANDERS

AND THE PEOPLE

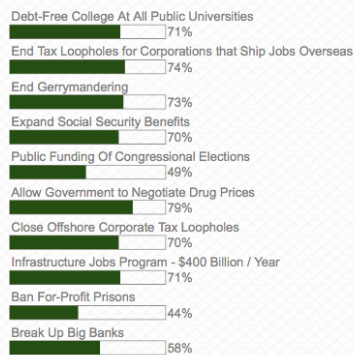
Polling suggests the majority of 2016 voters agree with Bernie Sanders' platform.



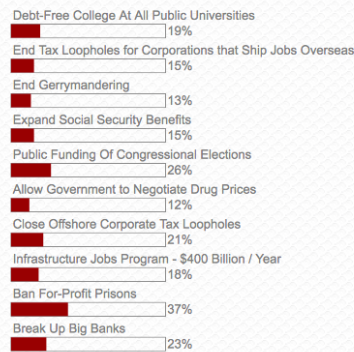
WHAT DO VOTERS THINK OF HIS IDEAS?

Progressive Change Insitute polling of likely 2016 voters.

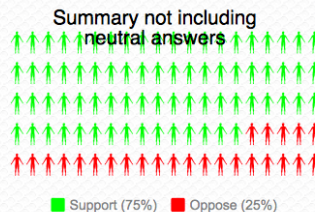
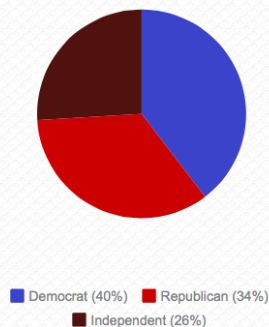
SUPPORT



OPPOSE



POLITICAL AFFILIATION OF THOSE POLLED



Bi-Partisan Stats

"583 (38.9%) of those interviewed identified themselves as Democrats, 382 (25.5%) as Independents, and 507 (33.8%) as Republicans."

Figure 1: Infographic showing popularity of Bernie's Positions

Minimum Wage - FDR

When FDR set up the Minimum Wage as part of the New Deal in 1933, he said:

"It seems to me to be equally plain that no business which depends for existence on paying less than living wages to its workers has any right to continue in this country. By "business" I mean the whole of commerce as well as the whole of industry; by workers I mean all workers, the white collar class as well as the men in overalls; and

by living wages I mean more than a bare subsistence level-I mean the wages of decent living.”

So you see, the Minimum Wage was and has always been meant to mean a Living Wage. We just need to go back to that idea.

Minimum Wage - Effect of \$15 Minimum Wage on Prices

A \$15 minimum wage will add only 17 cents to the price of a Big Mac.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonkblog/wp/2015/07/30/what-doubling-the-minimum-wage-would-do-to-the-price-of-a-big-mac/>

Currently, taxpayers are paying \$153 billion a year to subsidize low-wage workers:

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2015/04/15/we-are-spending-153-billion-a-year-to-subsidize-mcdonalds-and-walmarts-low-wage-workers/>

Minimum Wage – CEO Hypocrisy

The CEO of Dunkin’ Donuts, Nigel Travis, notably slammed the movement toward a \$15 minimum wage, calling it “outrageous.” But while low-wage workers have not seen a substantial raise in decades (along with declining purchasing power since the 1960s), Travis himself has been raking it in. This year, he earned about \$10.2 million—or about \$5,800 per hour—which is twice what he made in 2014, making his own hypocrisy the only thing that is “outrageous.”

<https://www.bostonglobe.com/business/2015/03/30/dunkin-ceo-pay-doubled/hXp2WjwxBBWIKkPWtdsD4J/story.html>

Travis is not the exception by a long shot, either; the average CEO makes about 300 times what their staff earns, and CEO pay has increased about 54 percent since the start of the economic recovery in 2009, according to the Economic Policy Institute. Even worse, the federal minimum wage stands at \$7.25—which is exactly where it was in 2009.

Yet for the top 1 percent of earners, incomes have quadrupled since 1980.

<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/richest-americans-see-huge-growth-in-income/>

Myopia

Ever since the 1980's - and especially under Clinton and the so-called "Democratic Leadership Council" - the two parties have pursued the same economic agenda.

Clinton co-opted all the economic policies of the Republicans so that he - and other establishment Democrats - could get the support of wealthy donors.

There was then a tacit agreement that the Democrats and the Republicans would "fight it out" over social issues like Abortion, Gay Marriage, Gun Control, School Prayer, Evolution, Race, Immigration, and so on. No one talked about economics. Bernie has been criticized for being "too focused on economics" - but that is only because no one has talked about economics in terms of the middle class since 1980. People are just not used to it. We have been told for 30 years that "economics" means tax-cuts for the rich, and to the extent that you were either for or against those tax cuts, you were judged to be a Democrat or a Republican, a "liberal" or a

"conservative" - we became completely MYOPIC as country, unable to see what is really going on.

Now Bernie comes along and says, "wait, instead of arguing over just how much or how little to CUT Social security, let's talk about expanding it. Instead of fighting over how to make college more "affordable" - let's just make it tuition-free - like it used to be up until the 70's."

So - minds are being blown, because we have collectively lost our memory of when things used to be different. People reject Bernie's ideas as "radical" and yet everyone knows that what he is saying is true. We have just become so docile, so accustomed to moving on that small little playing field that the donor class and the political elite have set up for us, that we cannot imagine doing anything to really affect the status quo - for 30 years we have tinkered around the edges, made small adjustments here and there ... now we need to actually reverse the decline that we have been experiencing and return to what we were before money became the be-all and end-all, before "trickle-down economics" became a matter of accepted faith. Before the political Establishment conspired with the wealthy to rob the middle class.
FEEL THE BERN!!!

Meme on Wealth

There is a popular meme on the Right that goes something like this:

"Socialism is horrible, because eventually you run out of other people's money. Do you realize that if you confiscated all the wealth, every single penny of the top 10% that it would only run our government for six months or so."

Let's do the numbers:

Total Net Worth of all US households: \$84.9 Trillion

<http://www.wsj.com/articles/americans-net-worth-hits-high-of-84-9-trillion-1434038401>

Net Worth of the top 10% of US households (75%): \$63.9 trillion

<http://www.mybudget360.com/wealth-inequality-america-top-10-percent-of-us-households-control-75-percent-of-wealth/>

Net Worth of the top 1% of US households (35%): \$34.9 trillion

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wealth_inequality_in_the_United_States

Net Worth of the top 0.1% of US households (25%): \$21.2 trillion

<http://www.theguardian.com/business/2014/nov/13/us-wealth-inequality-top-01-worth-as-much-as-the-bottom-90>

Total Federal Budget for 2015: 3.9 trillion (Wiki)

This means that the net worth of the top 10% could run the Federal Government for 16 YEARS.

Are you surprised? I would imagine that most people do not realize just how much frigging money the top 10% really do have.

But this is even more interesting: the total DEBT of the US is now at \$19 trillion – that means the Net Worth of the very top 1/10th of 1% (0.1%) could more than wipe out our entire DEBT! Isn't that fantastic? Bring me my pitchfork!! :-)

Income Inequality

Bernie's right in pointing out that the US has a "grotesque" and "absurd" level of income inequality. According to Global Finance magazine, which lists all countries by their GINI coefficient, which represents the income distribution of a nation's residents. Out of 34 OECD countries, the US is the 31st WORST in terms of income inequality. In case you are wondering, the three countries we beat are Turkey, Mexico and Chile.

Tuition Free Public Colleges

The public colleges and universities that Bernie wants to make "tuition free" were established using Federal Land Grants back in the 1800's (under the Morrill Act). As part of their charter, they were to offer tuition free educations to in-state taxpayers – just like anyone who lives in a city or town gets to attend that town's High Schools "tuition free." This is not a radical concept!!

Anyway, these public universities thrived, people were educated and these institutions stayed tuition free for over 100 years. That's right -- until the mid 1960's you could have gone to UCAL Berkeley or UCLA for FREE. What happened in the 1960's? Well, Ronald Reagan and other conservative State Governors wanted to cut taxes and maintain balanced budgets -- so ... they introduced tuition to the previously free public colleges. Nice, huh?

So DO NOT frame this proposal as some sort of radical "leftist" idea - Bernie Sanders simply wants to turn those public colleges and universities back into the truly "public" schools that they were originally established to be, and the way they functioned for a century before radical "rightists" decided to start making people PAY for what was supposed to be a public service.

For a list of all the public universities that used to be "tuition free" before Reagan and other conservatives took over, click here:

<http://www.nap.edu/read/4980/chapter/2>

Student Loan Interest Rates – Right Wing Talking Point

Ignorant right-wingers make the argument that "Bernie doesn't understand economics" because he asks why student loan rates are higher than car or house loans. Conservatives say it is simply because there is no collateral.

But it is CONGRESS that sets those loan rates!!

Bernie is saying that it is in the interest of the public good and the national future of our country to have an educated population. If Congress is setting the interest rates, if the government is running the student loan programme, then the Congress should not be acting like Wells Fargo or Citibank. They should be acting for the good of the country and of the American people. And that means having lower interest rates on the student loans that the government makes.

Post Office Banks – why it is a good idea

This is an excellent idea because there are many parts of the country where there are no banks. Indeed, of the 30,000+ Post Offices in the country, 59% are located in Zip Codes where there are no traditional banking services available.

The people who live in these “bank deserts” have to rely on check cashing services and payday lenders, which charge exorbitant fees. Each year, the average “underserved” household spends \$2,412 – nearly 10 percent of gross income – in fees and interest for what is euphemistically called “alternative financial services”. These people are getting doubly screwed because they are paying exorbitant fees but do not have the opportunity to create a credit history, have access to affordable, safe and sustainable financial services, or build assets over time.

Postal Banking is widespread throughout the world, and 1,5 billion people rely worldwide on Postal Banking. It is like universal health care, paid family and medical leave, and free college tuition – just one more thing that every other industrialized country in the world has, except the US. It is a valid a trusted concept, and one that is already proven to work in the US. From 1917 to 1967 the US had Postal Banking. The United States Postal Savings System (USPSS) eventually closed because it was not allowed to charge or offer high interest rates, and as banks opened more branches everywhere, they could not compete. NOW, however, banks have been closing branches, and so we have “bank deserts” where almost 40% of Zip Codes in the US do not have a single bank in them – yet they do have a working post office, staffed with trained professionals who are already doing certain limited financial transactions such as Money Orders.

More info here:

<http://www.campaignforpostalbanking.org/know-the-facts/>

Senator Warren Champions Postal Banking

“Nearly 60 percent of Post Office branches are in banking deserts. They are in zipcodes where there are either one or no bank branches. This means that the Postal Service already has the strong brick-and-mortar presence in low-income and rural communities that traditional banks are leaving behind.

“. . .it’s not often in life when you see such a perfect match: there is a big need — 68 million Americans, who don’t have access to traditional banking — and a Post Office that has plenty of additional capacity. The two can be put together, bring down costs [and] bring more families into the financial mainstream. . .”

***Post Office Banks – why the USPS “loses” money**

The government (the PRC) sets the postal rates. It tells the USPS, for example that UPS and FedEx only have to pay \$0.02 for every package the USPS helps deliver. This is GREAT for UPS and FedEx, because it keeps their costs down, and they make more PROFIT.

This is NOT good for the USPS, because they are not covering their costs. So they are "losing" money in order for FedEx and UPS to "make" more money. Don't you see? It is just another indirect subsidy to big business.

In the 2014 Election alone, FedEx contributed over \$2 MILLION to political campaigns, and spent another \$13 MILLION on lobbying. UPS paid over \$3 MILLION in campaign contributions and spent another \$7 MILLION in lobbying.

Why do you think they give so much to the politicians? Among many other things, it is so the politicians will keep the USPS rates DOWN and run the USPS at a loss which is, in the end FedEx's and UPS's gain.

It is just like the government allowing Wal-Mart and McDonald's to pay their workers so little that they qualify for Food Stamps and Medicaid. By making the taxpayers pay part of the employees' "compensation", this is an indirect subsidy and a transfer of wealth from taxpayers to those corporations in the form of government-subsidized operating costs. Talk about socialism!

Democratic Socialism

Definition from DSUSA.org

Bernie is not a "Socialist" - he is a "Democratic Socialist" - and yes, that is a thing, and yes, it is different from standard "Socialism". In other words, think more Sweden and Denmark than Cuba and Venezuela.

There is even a national organization for Democratic Socialists in the US:

FROM: http://www.dsusa.org/what_is_democratic_socialism

"Democratic socialists believe that both the economy and society should be run democratically—to meet public needs, not to make profits for a few ... Democratic socialists do not want to create an all-powerful government bureaucracy. But we do not want big corporate bureaucracies to control our society either. Rather, we believe that social and economic decisions should be made by those whom they most affect"

More info here: <http://www.euroyankee.com>

Democrats vs. Democratic Socialists (DWS)

Democrats - at least the ones that supported ACA (Obamacare) over single payer, believe that things like health care should still be a for-profit industry, and the health care companies should still have profits and spend their customers' premiums on

marketing and making political contributions and lobbying - but maybe just not as much as they might have otherwise. Why do you think health care stocks skyrocketed after Obamacare was passed? A Democratic Socialist, however, believes that health care is a right and should be provided by the State and paid for with our tax dollars, just like the military.

That is what DWS was afraid of saying.

More info here: <http://www.euroyankee.com>

US Invented EU Dem Socialism

The US actually invented European style Democratic Socialism!! It was all based on FDR's "Second Bill of Rights" - a.k.a., the "Economic Bill of Rights" (look it up!). FDR could not get it passed through the Republican Congress (sound familiar?) but it was worked into the Marshall Plan and the US-assisted rebuilding of the European countries after WWII. Europe never had a socialist tradition - they were used to monarchies, class structures and dictatorships - all the things our Founding Fathers wanted to get away from. So America gifted them a new way to start over clean and build a society that honored labor, protected the middle class, and granted rights to the individual that Americans still don't have. Bernie aims to rectify that.

More info here: <http://www.euroyankee.com>

Socialist Jew

They tell me Bernie can't win because he is a Socialist Jew. I tell them America celebrates a Socialist Jew every December 25!

Reagan Was a Socialist

People think that "Socialism" means the re-distribution of wealth. Well, in that case, the biggest Socialist President we have had was Ronald Reagan. In 1986, when Reagan slashed the top tax rate again, his redistributionist obsession led to a perversity in the law. The wealthiest faced a 28 percent tax rate, while those with lower incomes faced a 33 percent rate; in addition, the bottom rate climbed from 11 percent to 15 percent. For the first time in history, the top rate fell and the bottom rate rose simultaneously. Even unemployment compensation was not spared. The jobless had to pay income tax on their benefits. A year later, the man who would not spare unemployment compensation from taxation called for a cut in the capital gains tax. Thus, Reagan was a staunch socialist, totally committed to his cause of wealth redistribution towards the affluent. This started a trend of redistribution UPWARDS that goes on today. Bernie Sanders wants to correct that situation.

And as far as socialized, government-run healthcare is concerned, again, Reagan was its biggest proponent! When Reagan signed the Emergency Medical Treatment and Active Labor Act into law (which forces ER's to treat everyone) he didn't just socialize medicine, he did it by putting the burden on the people and businesses who were actually doing the right thing and buying health insurance policies and he did it while laying an unfunded mandate on the states.

And yet people think he was for small government.

More info here: <http://www.euroyankee.com>

Dem Socialist Countries have highest GDP Per Capita

According to the IMF, 9 of the top 10 countries with the highest GDP per capita (used to measure a country's wealth) are Socialist Democracies: Luxembourg, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Switzerland, Denmark, San Marino, Singapore, Australia. And the 10th country, the one that is at the BOTTOM of the list? The USA.

Democratic Socialism is Better for Business

What most people don't know, and what will probably come as a surprise to you, is that it is much easier to start and grow a small business in "Socialist" Europe than in the US. This is due to several reasons:

1. Lower regulatory burdens - yep, it's true, according to the OECD
2. Lower taxes - again, it's true according to OECD
3. Better access to working capital (World Economic Forum)
4. Lower employee costs for healthcare (which are 0 in the EU because they have Single payer nationalised health care)

Small business's share of the U.S. economy is slowly shrinking and is less significant than in many European economies. This is because of crony Capitalism and "laissez-faire" attitude that believes in the so-called "Free Market" - when there is no such thing. Europe's political and economic system is from the 20th century, and America's is from the 18th. Viewed in those terms, it is not hard to believe that the European-style "Democratic Socialism" that Bernie is pushing is the way to go for entrepreneurs and believers in free enterprise.

But don't take my word on it - this is all from BusinessWeek:

http://www.businessweek.com/smallbiz/content/dec2010/sb20101210_839038.htm

More info here: <http://www.euroyankee.com>

Quick Response – Anti-Socialist Hypocrisy

OK –you are anti-socialism – we get it. So will you promise everyone here and now that you won't cash your Social Security checks? I mean, you wouldn't be part of that socialist scheme, would you? Making the people who are working pay for your retirement? Horrible! And Medicare? Promise us all right now that you will NOT go on Medicare, because that, my friend, is the largest program of socialized medicine in the world!

I also assume that you do not send your kids to public school, because why should their education be paid for with other people's taxes?

Will you affirm all these points, or are you just another reactionary hypocrite?

Quick Response – Your definition of socialism is outdated

The problem with most of you who criticise Sanders because he is a "socialist" is that you are referencing a definition of Socialism that goes back to a time when "negroes" were only 3/5 of a person, and "democracy" meant you had to be a white, male property owner in order to vote. Doesn't sound much like the "democracy" that people like to cheer about today, does it? Well, socialism has evolved since the 1800's as well.

The "democratic socialism" that Bernie Sanders is promoting only means that the PEOPLE have a bigger say in how the government is run and above all, how our tax dollars get spent. It is about rewriting the rules and, in its most simplistic sense, it is about reversing the right wing extremist rules that got written in the 1980's, when all the wealth started flowing from the middle and working classes to the top 1%.

***Quick Response – If socialism always fails, how do you explain China?**

If it is true that "socialism" that always makes a country unsuccessful, how do you explain China? They are a Socialist/Communist government and yet many would say that they are beating America at its own "capitalist" game. They have 9% economic growth and are expanding into markets all over the world. They are "buying" America's debt. Donald Trump says, "China is killing us." How can China be killing us if they have a socialist government?

The "democratic socialism" that Bernie Sanders is promoting only means that the PEOPLE have a bigger say in how the government is run and above all, how our tax dollars get spent. It is about rewriting the rules and, in its most simplistic sense, it is about reversing the right wing extremist rules that got written in the 1980's, when all the wealth started flowing from the middle and working classes to the top 1%.

Possible GOP Attacks on Bernie as a Socialist – NOT CREDIBLE

Yes, I would dearly LOVE to see the GOP attack Bernie's "socialist" positions. I would HOPE to see them attack the expansion of Social Security, which 65% of Americans support. I would ENCOURAGE them to condemn single payer "Medicare for all", which 67% of Americans support; I would BEG them to dismiss tuition free state colleges, which 63% of Americans support; I would EXPECT them to oppose raising corporate taxes, which 64% of Americans support, just as I would EXPECT them to oppose raising taxes on the wealthy, which 61% of American support. And last, but not least, I would WELCOME them to attack the \$15 minimum wage, which 63% of Americans support.

Yes, by all means, the GOP attack machine would go into overdrive against Bernie, and if you somehow think that the GOP will not go into overdrive attacking Hillary you must have been in a coma the past 30 years.

The difference is that with Bernie the attacks would backfire because Bernie - and

Bernie alone - can get those new voters, independents and disaffected Republicans out to vote for him. Hillary cannot.

***Social Security is not Socialist ?**

The first SS beneficiary to receive monthly check was Ida May Fuller, who worked for three years under the Social Security program. The accumulated taxes on her salary during those three years was a total of \$24.75. Her initial monthly check was \$22.54. During her lifetime she collected a total of \$22,888.92 in Social Security benefits. Who paid in the money she collected?

***Americans are used to Socialism – thanks to FOX**

Oh, the delicious irony. Oh, the poetic justice! The American people have been told for 8 years that Obama is a “socialist” ... FOX, the Tea Party, the Koch Brothers and their minions – they have spent the last 8 years comparing Obama to Mao, Stalin, Hitler, etc. – and screaming “socialist”, “communist” and “Marxist” all the while. And after 8 years under the brutal heel of Obama’s Socialist Oppression, the stock market is at a record high, corporate profits are obscenely high, and the unemployment rate is only 5%. Now, not all Americans may be happy with Obama or the Obama economy, but they do know that things are better than they were when he took office, and so maybe Socialism is not the disaster people say. Americans are now inured to the term “socialist” and the Right Wing have collectively cried “wolf” too many times to use it as an effective weapon against Bernie.

Economics

Economists Say Sanders Plan comes up short

These guys make a big mistake, and that is that they refuse to apply known economic modeling to the positive growth aspects that the Sanders plan would engender. The Sanders plan is based on generating 5.3% economic growth, and these establishment economic types think that is unreasonable. IOW, they are perfectly willing to accept that Government spending results in growth (i.e., “stimulus”) but they somehow posit - without a single shred of proof - that the amount of spending to be done under the Sanders proposal will not result in economic GROWTH in the same “outrageous” levels.

Bernie is proposing an economic package that is huge in its scope. but ALSO huge in its impact. The plan relies on the idea that economic growth that will result will be commensurate with the size of the stimulus delivered. These economists are looking at the size of the stimulus package, and the “cost” of the stimulus, without acknowledging the economic growth that will result.

“under conventional assumptions, the projected impact of Senator Sanders’ proposals stems from their scale and ambition. When you dare to do big things, big results

should be expected. The Sanders program is big, and when you run it through a standard model, you get a big result.

That, by the way, is the lesson of the Reagan era – like it or not. It is a lesson that, among today's political leaders, only Senator Sanders has learned."

- James K. Galbraith

<https://ourfuture.org/20160223/the-sanders-economic-plan-controversy>

Fascism

Definition of Fascism (from Wikipedia):

"Fascism operated from a Social Darwinist view of human relations. The aim was to promote superior individuals and weed out the weak. In terms of economic practice, this meant promoting the interests of successful businessmen while destroying trade unions and other organizations of the working class. Fascist governments encouraged the pursuit of private profit and offered many benefits to large businesses, but they demanded in return that all economic activity should serve the national interest. Historian Gaetano Salvemini argued in 1936 that fascism makes taxpayers responsible to private enterprise, because 'the State pays for the blunders of private enterprise... Profit is private and individual. Loss is public and social.'"

More info here: <http://www.euroyankee.com>

Jane Sanders

<http://www.bloomberg.com/politics/articles/2015-05-12/getting-to-know-jane-sanders-wife-of-bernie>

Fraud Case

In reality, it appears that in listing the donor pledges needed to secure a \$10 million loan, Jane Sanders may have overstated the amount of money pledged by some \$35,000. This by a Vermont investigative publication:

<http://vtdigger.org/2015/09/13/jane-sanders-overstated-donation-amounts-in-loan-application-for-burlington-college/>

Racial Injustice

Racial Position/Platform

Hmmmm. Regarding African-Americans: Bernie has become very active here, and published a sweeping platform to address racism. I have searched and searched for Hillary Clinton's own "Plan to combat racial inequality" but I cannot find anything anywhere. It must not exist. How can THAT be, when the Black Lives Matter people are steering so far clear of her, and giving her a free pass when she says things like "all lives matter"? She actually said that in Charleston, and what did we hear from Black Lives Matter? Crickets.

Granted, writing such a "racial justice" plan would be problematic for Hillary, because it would have to start with rolling back and dismantling all of the horrible things she and her husband did to the Black Community in the 1990's – abolishing AFDC, decimating the social safety net, and promoting mass incarceration of minorities through the "Clinton Crime Bill."

<http://www.truth-out.org/opinion/item/31065-will-hillary-clinton-abolish-the-prison-state-her-husband-created-don-t-count-on-it>

If "Black Lives" REALLY mattered to these people they would be camped out in front of Hillary's office in Brooklyn (not the one in Harlem – she is never there because her big rich donor friends don't like to come uptown).

Response to articles or assertions that "Bernie has a Race Problem"

This is such a blatant and obvious hatchet job by yet another Clintonista. Have you not been following? Bernie has a 97% rating from the NAACP. Hillary only has 96%.

According to a profile article in Essence, Bernie met with Symone Sanders just days after being shouted down at the Netroots Nation in mid-July. During their initial meeting, the two had an hour-long conversation about how the Senator could stay in touch with the #BlackLivesMatter movement. She told him that there was a strong link between racial inequality and economic equality, which he has since integrated into his campaign. Bernie offered Symone the job as his Press Secretary at the end of their meeting. I would imagine her first job was helping to draft his platform on racial equality, which he has now published.

A few days later, on 25 July, Bernie addressed the Southern Christian Leadership Council, one of the premier African-American civil rights organizations, of which MLK was head. I urge you to read Bernie's address to the SCLC here:

<https://berniesanders.com/remarks-senator-sanders-southern-christian-leadership-conference/> .

So Bernie was doing his homework, he was eating his vegetables. He was doing what he needed to do. HE GOT IT.

He did not deserve to be ambushed by some self-described "agitators" in Seattle, who have since been denounced by BLM itself as well as other black groups (most recently Larry Wilmore). In short, you are wrong, and you should stick to writing about whatever you know about rather than shilling so pathetically and transparently

for Hillary Clinton.

Hillary is no friend to black folks, and you should know that. Her husband set blacks back a generation. <https://thoughtmerchant.wordpress.com/2007/10/05/how-bill-clinton-hurt-poor-blacks-and-how-hillary-might-to/>

Hillary on Crime

If anyone should be “held accountable for her actions” (as the BlackLivesMatter protesters shout) then it is Hillary Clinton, not Bernie Sanders. Hillary was an ardent and vocal supporter of her husband’s welfare “reform” and “tough on crime” bills that devastated black families and led to the mass incarceration of black youths.

To wit:

"We need more police, we need more and tougher prison sentences for repeat offenders. The ‘three-strikes-and-you’re-out’ for violent offenders has to be part of the plan. We need more prisons to keep violent offenders for as long as it takes to keep them off the streets.”

- Hillary Clinton, speaking on the 1994 Crime Bill.

“We already imprison more people per capita than any other country, and all of the executions in the world, will not make that situation right. We can either educate or electrocute. We can create meaningful jobs, rebuilding our society, or we can build more jails. Mr. Speaker, let us create a society of hope and compassion, not one of hate and vengeance.”

- Bernie Sanders, speaking on the same 1994 Crime Bill.

50 Year Record

Bernie has been campaigning for civil rights for 50 years - he protested segregation, got arrested for protesting police brutality, he marched with MLK.

Bernie has a 97% rating from the NAACP. Hillary only has 96%.

I can understand that maybe he hasn't communicated on this topic as much as he needed to - but on the other hand, given his 50 years of activism on behalf of African Americans, and his rock solid voting record and history of supporting black causes, he might be forgiven for having thought that he did not have to "prove himself" today. And indeed, this "what have you done for me lately?" attitude that I am picking up from the black community is not becoming.

The fact is, Hillary is no friend of the Black Community, and neither was her husband - not by a long shot! So stop picking on Bernie, get your head on straight and realise who really has your back - cos it ain't Hillary!

<https://thoughtmerchant.wordpress.com/2007/10/05/how-bill-clinton-hurt-poor-blacks-and-how-hillary-might-to/>

Apology for Slavery

“Obviously nobody in this generation is involved in slavery, but as a nation, slavery is one of the abominations that our country has experienced. There’s no excuse. It was horrific, It killed millions of people, It destroyed just the lives of so many people,” So as a nation ... we have got to apologize for slavery ... As a nation, we

have got to apologize for slavery and of course the president is the leader of the nation.”

- *Bernie Sanders on the Joe Madison Show, July 8, 2015*

“And I will also say, that as a nation — the truth is a nation that in many ways was created, and I’m sorry to have to say this from way back, on racist principles, that’s a fact.”

- *Bernie Sanders speaking at Liberty University, September 14, 2015*

Hillary believes “All Lives Matter”

It was Hillary Clinton who was tone deaf this summer, when she travelled to Ferguson Mo. In June and gave a speech in an historic black church there, saying "All Lives Matter."

<http://www.nytimes.com/politics/first-draft/2015/06/24/hillary-clintons-all-lives-matter-remark-stirs-backlash/>

Racial Justice Platform

<https://berniesanders.com/issues/racial-justice/>

Polls Show Bernie Gaining Among Blacks as Hillary “Plunges”

Hillary’s popularity among the African American Community is plummeting, according to a poll by USA Today and Suffolk University on 01 October.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2015/10/01/hillary-clintons-support-from-black-voters-plunges-in-a-new-poll/>

USSR

Russian Flag in Office

The City of Burlington has a sister city in Russia called Yaroslavl – this is still a big thing:

<http://burlingtonyaroslavl.com>

Sanders had their flag in his office, and the Mayor of Yaroslavl probably had a US flag in his - remember, this was all done under Gorbachev's Glasnost and Perestroika in the late 80's just before the Wall fell. And yes, Bernie went to Russia in 1988 to meet his mayoral counterpart in Yaroslavl, and yes, he took his wife along and turned the trip into a honeymoon. Now, you might criticise Bernie for mixing official business with his personal life, but that's about all you can do.

Russian Honeymoon

In 1988, when Sanders was mayor of Burlington, the city formed a “twin” city relationship with a Russian city called Yaroslavl - Remember, this was one year before the Berlin Wall fell, at the height of Gorby's Perestroika and the thawing of East-West relations. The program was a total success and is still going on today - see <http://burlingtonyaroslavl.com>.

That year Sanders traveled on an official trip to meet his counterpart, the mayor of Yaroslavl. The trip, which was made with 10 other people, including prominent businesspeople and city officials, was scheduled for the day after his wedding, so he invited his wife to come along. Now, you can say he was a maybe he should not have taken his wife on a trip for official city business, but you cannot make any more out of it than that.

Nicaragua

Support for Sandinistas

Bernie famously said “Just because Ronald Reagan dislikes these people, doesn’t mean that people in their own nations feel the same way.”

This was certainly true about Nicaragua. The FSLN (Sandinistas) were not our enemy, and let's not forget they were battling the Contras, whom Reagan funded by selling arms to Iran.

The Contras were murdering nuns. Those were the kinds of guys Reagan was supporting. A Sandinista militiaman interviewed by The Guardian stated that Contra rebels committed these atrocities against Sandinista prisoners after a battle at a Sandinista rural outpost:

"Rosa had her breasts cut off. Then they cut into her chest and took out her heart. The men had their arms broken, their testicles cut off. They were killed by slitting their throats and pulling the tongue out through the slit."

You know when the side you are backing is guilty of mass murder of clergy and cutting off women's breasts and men's testicles, maybe - just maybe - you are on the wrong side!!

In any case, Nicaragua filed a suit against the USA in the International Criminal Court and the USA was found guilty. Likewise the Contras were found by Human Rights Watch to be guilty of a plethora of crimes from raping women to torturing and killing civilians.

And, in the end, Bernie was right: While the Contras have long since been relegated to the “dustbin of history,” the FSLN is a major political force in Nicaragua, and Daniel Ortega is a popular leader who won re-election in 2006 and again in 2011. That is because they are and were always on the side of the Nicaraguan people, while the US and the Contras were on the side of United Fruit.

Cuba

Response to Posts about people “fleeing” Cuba for America

So you recognise the proof that 50 years of a US-led trade embargo hurt the Cuban people and made their lives difficult? Good for you!!

But if the number of people fleeing to enter the US is the way we judge a country's government, then we should be embargoing MEXICO!

The Cubans have nothing

People are “forced” to drive old cars because there was a US-led embargo against Cuba and Cuban goods for 50 years! Anything the Cubans do not have is because of the US and its embargo. Duh.

Quality of Life is Good in Cuba

Life expectancy in Cuba is 79, the same as it is in the US

Literacy rates in Cuba is almost 100% (99.8%); in the US it is 99%

Homicide rate in Cuba is 4.2/100K inhabitants; in the US it is 4.7.

By contrast, the homicide rate in Mexico is 22/100K, and life expectancy is only 77 years. So as a poor Caribbean country, Cuba is doing pretty damn good and a hell of a lot better than its neighbors.

Iran

History / Coup

Look, the Iranians have a good reason to hate and distrust America. They elected a moderate "socialist" secular government in 1953. The government wanted to nationalize the oil industry in Iran, so the CIA had the legitimate, elected leader and his government ousted in a coup, and brought back the Shah, who established a dictatorship with the most vicious secret police the world has ever seen, the SAVAK. Iranians suffered under this regime, and it was open knowledge that this odious regime was forced on them by the US. In yet another instance of "unintended consequences" arising from US intervention in the Middle East, the extreme cruelty and violence of the American puppet, the Shah, led to the rise of the Mullahs.

Just like the US-backed Maliki government in Iraq led to the rise of ISIS.

That is why Bernie is wise to support diplomacy and avoid another disastrous military adventure that will inevitably backfire.

Denmark

Forbes says Denmark is the “No. 1 Best Country for Business”

Bernie is often criticised for saying that the US should learn from Denmark. In the first Democratic debate, Hillary famously said "we are not Denmark."

Well, Forbes recently did a study to rank countries in terms of how business friendly they were, and that study Denmark ranked No. 1 for “Best Country for Business.”

“Denmark is one of the most entrepreneurial countries in the world. The government streamlines the startup process with only four procedures needed to start a new business and at minimal costs. The regulatory climate is also one of the most efficient.”

“One of the keys to Denmark’s pro-business climate is the flexible labor market known as “Flexisecurity,” where companies can easily hire and fire workers with out-of-work adults eligible for significant unemployment benefits. Unemployed workers are also eligible for training programs. It creates one of the most productive workforces in Europe.”

No, Hillary, we are not Denmark. As a matter of fact, the US ranked 18th in this same Forbes study. Bernie is right, we could stand to learn a thing or two from the Danes.

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/kurtbadenhausen/2014/12/17/u-s-slides-again-as-denmark-tops-forbes-best-countries-for-business/>

Market Cap Comparison

Many Americans – especially those on the Right – love to talk about “American exceptionalism.” They describe the US as “the greatest country on Earth” and the “world’s only Superpower” – and even Bernie himself acknowledges that the US is “the richest country in history.” The argument Bernie is making is NOT that the US should become one big Denmark. The point is that the greatest, and richest country in the history of the world should be able to do what a teeny tiny country of 5 million Danes have been able to achieve.

The Danish Stock Exchange has a market cap of \$230 Billion, or \$41,000 per person. The NYSE and NASDAQ have a market cap of \$20 TRILLION, or \$63,000 per person.

The US is indeed the richest nation on earth. It’s time we started acting like it.

Quick Responses for Online Commenting

Inflation / Tuition

Inflation: my Harvard tuition in 1977 cost \$8000, adjusted for inflation it should be \$28,000. But instead it's \$60,000.

In 1968, it cost \$300 a year to go to the University of California. Adjusted for inflation, it should now cost \$2014 a year. Instead it costs \$15,000.

Liberty University

I think Bernie Sanders will find a very receptive audience at Liberty University. It is a Christian school, so these kids are already used to absorbing the teachings of a socialist Jew :-). GO BERNIE!

Pope Francis Video

Bernie Sanders discusses Pope Francis and his views. Amazing, truly amazing!!
https://youtu.be/9_LJpN893Vg

The VOX Interview

<https://youtu.be/S5vOKKMipSA>

Bible Supports Socialism

Mark 12:17:

Regarding Taxes: "Give back to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's."

Matthew 25:40:

On welfare: "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."

Mark 10:25, Matthew 19:24, Luke 18:25:

Wealth and income inequality: "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God."

Matthew 21:12:

On Banking and Finance: "And Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who sold and bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers"

Jesus was most definitely a socialist. A socialist Jew, like Bernie.

Ann Coulter Spills the Beans: GOP want HRC to run

From Breitbart.com:

Ann Coulter declared, "'I wish Fox News would go a little easier on Hillary Clinton. She's the one we want to run against" on "Lou Dobbs Tonight" on the Fox Business Network. Coulter argued, "I wish Fox News would go a little easier on Hillary

Clinton. She's the one we want to run against. Could you guys just back off? Because I feel like I'm living through this, I feel like this is déjà vu again. We used to say, 'Oh, the next president isn't going to be a guy named Barack Hussein Obama.' Our next president could be **Sen. Bernie Sanders** if you people keep this up."

<http://www.breitbart.com/video/2015/08/12/coulter-go-a-little-easier-on-hillary-because-shes-the-one-we-want-to-run-against/>

Bernie's Legislative accomplishments

According to the Congressional Record, Bernie has Sponsored or Co-Sponsored over 6,000 bills; he Introduced 5,286 of those bills; 704 made it out of Committee; 206 became law - <https://www.congress.gov/member/bernard-sanders/S000033>

Moreover he was the "Amendment King" in that he passed more Amendments than any other member of Congress.

<http://www.alternet.org/election-2016/bernie-gets-it-done-sanders-record-pushing-through-major-reforms-will-surprise-you>

Bernie's Plan will NOT cost \$18 Trillion

The economist that calculated the \$18 Trillion figure actually concluded that Americans would SAVE \$5 Trillion over the 10 year period. The WSJ hit piece is debunked here:

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/plum-line/wp/2015/09/15/no-bernie-sanders-is-not-going-to-bankrupt-america-to-the-tune-of-18-trillion/>

Private Prisons

Private Prison Lobbyists Are Raising Cash for Hillary Clinton

<http://interc.pt/1Jhpxww>

Here's why:

"We need more police, we need more and tougher prison sentences for repeat offenders. The 'three-strikes-and-you're-out' for violent offenders has to be part of the plan. We need more prisons to keep violent offenders for as long as it takes to keep them off the streets."

- Hillary Clinton, speaking on the 1994 Crime Bill.

By contrast;

"We already imprison more people per capita than any other country, and all of the executions in the world, will not make that situation right. We can either educate or electrocute. We can create meaningful jobs, rebuilding our society, or we can build more jails. Mr. Speaker, let us create a society of hope and compassion, not one of hate and vengeance."

- Bernie Sanders, speaking on the same 1994 Crime Bill.

Rape

Give me a break. This was a satirical essay written in 1972, and it was meant to expose the deleterious effects of gender stereotypes on both men and women. Bernie has commented: "It was intended to attack gender stereotypes of the '70s, but it looks as stupid today as it was then."

<http://www.npr.org/sections/itsallpolitics/2015/05/29/410606045/the-bernie-sanders-rape-fantasy-essay-explained>

Bernie is NOT a Warmonger: He is Historically Anti-Defense Spending

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vabeos-F8Kk&feature=share>

70% of Americans support for Bernie's Positions

<http://reverbpres.com/politics/datalog/americans-agree-bernie-sanders/>

Only 2% of Sanders Supporters are "Anti-Hillary"

<http://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/news/politics/iowa-poll/2015/08/29/iowa-poll-democrats-august/71387664/?hootPostID=f566866239310c78a602dd7712a622da>

*The Social Election

<http://thesocialelection.tumblr.com>

Did Bernie Suggest Psychological Factors Cause Cancer?

Yes, according to a NY Times article. However, this is not a crackpot theory – see this study by the Journal Oncology:

<http://www.cancernetwork.com/oncology-journal/role-psychological-factors-cancer-incidence-and-prognosis>

Electability

Experience and Campaign Performance

I would remind everyone that Bernie Sanders is a "socialist" that has been re-elected NINE (9) TIMES to Congress. As a socialist, he was re-elected Senator with 71% of the vote.

I'll say it again - as a socialist, he won with 71% of the vote.

Show me a Democratic politician who has that record, and running in a state with a higher GUN ownership rate than Nebraska, Ohio, Illinois, North Carolina and Missouri.

Bernie's Accomplishments

If you want to judge the worth of a politician, ask the people who know him. Sure Bernie is well liked on both sides of the aisle, and admired because of his consistency and openness. But the real measure of the man is this:

Bernie Sanders is a "socialist" that has served as a big city Mayor for 8 years; he has been elected and re-elected NINE (9) TIMES to Congress. As a socialist, he was re-elected Senator with 71% of the vote statewide, including 25% of the Republican vote.

I'll say it again - as a socialist and a Jew from Brooklyn, he won with 71% of the vote, and that from a rural state with a lot of Republicans, a lot of farmers, no socialists and less than 1% Jews.

Show me a Democratic politician who has that record, and running in a state with a higher firearm ownership rate than Nebraska, Ohio, Illinois, North Carolina and Missouri. You cannot.

That, my friend is quite an accomplishment.

US Never Elect a Socialist?

People say that America would never elect a Socialist. And I tell them, they already did: they elected FDR three times! That's right, the "New Deal" was the largest bundle of socialist programs the world had ever seen, establishing, to name just a few, Social Security, the FDIC, the FHA and the SEC.

The socialist trend continued with Lyndon Johnson in the late 60's. He established Medicaid and Medicare, which is still the largest "socialist" medical scheme on earth, in terms of people who get free health insurance from the Government. And what does Bernie want to do? He wants "Medicare for all" - and you think that is such a hard pill to swallow?

Universal Daycare and Family Leave were both passed by Congress on a bipartisan basis in 1971, but vetoed by Richard Nixon.

An the \$15 minimum wage that Bernie is pushing would increase the price of a Big Mac by 17 cents - is that such a disaster?

Free tuition at public colleges and universities was THE NORM in the US until the mid 60's, when Reagan lead a movement to stop it.

Indeed, Ronald Reagan didn't just become President in 1980 - he also led a successful national movement - what was called the "Reagan Revolution" - one which not only won the White House but gave the GOP control in the Senate for the first time in 26 years. I am old enough to remember it, having voted in that election as a liberal - and I remember how shocked everyone was that he won, because he was thought to be too "radical". Remember, Medicare and Medicaid had only been passed 12 years earlier, and the socialist streak in the American consciousness was still thought to be strong. Reagan had to fight for the nomination against the "establishment" GOP, and the RNC limited the primary debates to only 6 because they were so afraid he would get the nomination. Such a move has not been done since, except for this year when the DNC did the same thing to shut out Bernie Sanders.

But Reagan did win. And he won BIG. If anyone had told me in 1979 that a far-right cowboy B-movie actor who was against social security and against Medicare and against unions and against civil rights would win in almost every blue state, including Michigan, Massachusetts, New York, and yes, even Vermont, I would have told them they were CRAZY.
So go ahead. Call us crazy.

GOP Attacks on Bernie as a Socialist – NOT CREDIBLE

Yes, I would dearly LOVE to see the GOP attack Bernie's "socialist" positions. I would HOPE to see them attack the expansion of Social Security, which 65% of Americans support. I would ENCOURAGE them to condemn single payer "Medicare for all", which 67% of Americans support; I would BEG them to dismiss tuition free state colleges, which 63% of Americans support; I would EXPECT them to oppose raising corporate taxes, which 64% of Americans support, just as I would EXPECT them to oppose raising taxes on the wealthy, which 61% of American support. And last, but not least, I would WELCOME them to attack the \$15 minimum wage, which 63% of Americans support.

Yes, by all means, the GOP attack machine would go into overdrive against Bernie, and in every case the move would backfire, because Bernie - and Bernie alone - can get those 60%+ majorities to come out to the polls. Hillary cannot.

Socialism is on the RISE – especially among young people

Some good articles:

The Nation (11 Dec 2016): [Socialism in America is Closer Than You Think](https://www.thenation.com/article/socialism-in-america-is-closer-than-you-think/)
<https://www.thenation.com/article/socialism-in-america-is-closer-than-you-think/>

WaPo, 26 April 2016: [A majority of millennials now reject capitalism, poll shows](#)

Fun Bits

EL QUEMAZÓN – Mexican Ballad for Bernie Sanders

<https://youtu.be/ZcaCL4OfLM?list=RDLrmup2t3bdo>

Es un hombre con muchas visiones (He's a man with many ideas)
para mejorar a este país, (On how to improve this country)

corriendo para ser presidente, (running to be the next president)
pero los ricos no lo quieren aquí. (but the rich do not want him here.)
Bernie Sanders se llama el compa, (Bernie Sanders is the 'compa's' name)
su quemazón ahora van a sentir. (And now you will feel his Bern.)

Nueva York estado que lo vio nacer, (The state of New York is where he was born)
En las calles de Brooklyn se crío, (In the streets of Brooklyn he was raised)
Desde niño empezó a notar, (Since he was a child he started to see)
Que los ricos se hacían más ricos, (That the rich just kept getting richer)
Y los pobres todo el día chambeando, (And the poor who were working all day)
Y muchos ni tenían para el frijol. (Barely had enough to eat.)

Hijo de padres inmigrantes, (He's the son of immigrant parents,)
que vinieron a mejorar sus vidas, (who came to make a better life for themselves,)
Trabajando para salir adelante, (working hard to get ahead,)
como todos lo hacemos hoy en día. (like we all do every day.)
Venimos con el mismo sueño, (We all come with the same dream,)
sacar adelante a nuestras familias. (make a better life for our families.)

¡Y echale compa Bernie! (Let's go Bernie!)
Hasta llegar a la Casa Blanca. (All the way to the White House.)

Los ricos ni la tele lo quieren, (Neither the rich, nor TV like him,)
Tienen miedo que vaya a ganar, (They're scared he might win,)
Porque quiere que el colegio sea gratis, (Because he wants college to be free,)
Pa' que nuestros hijos puedan triunfar, (So our kids can succeed.)
Quiere cuidado de salud para todos, (He wants health insurance for all,)
Sea ciudadano o seas ilegal. (whether or not you're a citizen.)

En Chicago caio tras las rejas, (In Chicago, he fell behind prison bars,)
Por protestar contra la segregación, (For fighting against segregation,)
No le importa el color de tu piel, (He doesn't care about the color of your skin,)
Pa' el todos somos hijos de Dios. (He thinks we're all children of God.)
Muchos le apodan 'Robin Hood,' (Many call him Robin Hood,)
otros le dicen 'El Quemazón.' (Others call him The Bern.)

Peleando por los derechos humanos, (Fighting for human rights,)
Pero ni la ley lo aplaco, (Not even the law could stop him,)
El sigue luchando hasta ser (He'll keep fighting until he is)
Presidente de esta nación. (the president of this country.)
Bernie Sanders se llama el compa (Bernie Sanders is the compa's name,)
Este es su corrido 'El Quemazón.' (This is his song, The Bern.)