

One Party in the Age of Two Lefts?

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One of the great challenges to redressing the split between Democratic Party avoiding and Democratic Party engaging socialists, is how to productively deal with a beguiling strategic predilection of the party avoiders. That predilection is to assail the Democrats as socialist spoilers; and while their arguments are not necessarily wrong, the ways they prove them divert many from facing the unity-encumbering dynamics of their left formation-building strategies.

Examining what strategists and activists in these two socialist lefts say about these electoral organizing processes offers a route to work through the solutions and loop-de-loops that captivate these polities and affect party building today. Sources examined include the magazines of *New Politics*, *Black Agenda Report*, and *Socialist Worker*.

In a recent symposium in *New Politics*, Kim Moody conveyed the gist of a socialist politics that avoids the Democratic Party. In his piece entitled, “The Two Souls of Democratic Socialism” he declared,

The belief that this party of capital can be used in one way or another as a means of building a mass socialist movement in the United States has always been an illusion. Far from a path to a sustainable radical left, this permeationist orientation in all its forms has been a barrier, in a society posing many barriers to be sure, to the emergence of mass independent socialist movement. With new movements from below arising once again, it is time to abandon this piece of a failed past—this other, compromised soul of American socialism.

In a response piece Michael Hirsch doesn’t dispute Moody’s point about the Democratic Party and capital. He does however identify a basis of a diversionary unity-affecting strategy. As per Hirsch,

Where Moody errs is in writing that the Democrats have been THE problem, that “this party/complex/milieu has absorbed the leaders and activists of social and political movements

from the Populist Party of the 1890s, to the industrial unions of the 1930s, to the civil rights, Latino, women's, and LGBT movements of the last century and today." Wrong! The Democrats have not been the problem, only a convenient watering hole for the parched and exhausted, a retirement village sans amenities for the dying. It's the movements and their internal contradictions that have been the problem.

Following the tenor of Hirsch's critique, Moody's position diminishes the horizon for unity building in a two-fold process:

First, he calls on socialists to abandon the Democratic Party. Moody's follow-up unity-abridging move is insinuated through an unstated consequence of abandonment: By not acknowledging that since this party engaging activity pertains to a large number of politically active people (hundreds of thousands in the 2016 elections... and who knows how many in 2020, now that Sanders is running) - and since it pertains to the marked time these activists will continue to spend in Party processes - Moody's position against Party participation, if taken up, would choke-off unity building between activists in and beyond these two lefts.

Three Socialist Spirits

Paul Le Blanc evokes a "friendly" reckoning with Moody's soul-splitting politics. Written for the International Socialist Organization's (ISO) *Socialist Worker* as part of a series of 25 articles on socialist strategy and the Democratic Party in light of the successful congressional campaign of Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Le Blanc opines that:

Historical, economic, sociological and other data indicate it is unlikely that the Democratic Party can become a socialist party. It makes little sense for the ISO to consider going into DSA [Democratic Socialists of America]: they represent two different strategic orientations. Nor do I think comrades leaving the ISO to go into DSA are likely to find revolutionary happiness.

Le Blanc's observations do not only suggest a soul-searching reckoning for the group that's experiencing abandonment, or in which some members may be contemplating it (soul-searching not just because of the 'possible' loss of members by ISO; it's also posed as dispiriting for the abandoning parties, which could be the entire ISO if they went "into DSA", lured as Le Blanc indicates, to a place of likely revolutionary unhappiness). Unlike Moody's no-compromise version, Le Blanc's observations beg the question: if ISO is experiencing even rumors of evacuation, might there be a third soul stirring somewhere short of that?

In this sense, because Le Blanc raises the specter of migrating to DSA, a soul-stirring spirit appears. Emerging out of his negative space — where "it makes *little sense*" (which implies that there is at least *some* sense "for the ISO to consider going into DSA") — is a fleeting sight: off the wings of ISO's 'dispiriting' flight, comes the spiriting sprite of contiguous migration between the two socialist souls; navigating the passageways of independent unity-organizing forms...

Beyond Immaculate Independence

Moody's immaculate independence strategy notwithstanding, the prospects for unifying these socialist lefts (rather than just collaborating, working in tandem, etc.) need not be considered only if one side comes over to the other. Hirsch opens the door to an alternative unity-broaching sense of independent left electoral and base-building politics:

I make no claims that a face toward the Democrats is a way forward for the left. I do argue that defining independent political action as anything independent of the two dominant parties

raises too many questions. ...Involvement with the Democrats has not “prevented these movements from developing independent organizations or ideologies which, in turn, has undermined their power,” as Moody writes.

On the one hand, Hirsch’s disclaimer and Moody’s take on the Democrats indicate that the hegemonic claws of the capitalist-collaborating Democratic elite, pierce the veins of the Party, with – the parasites’ abandon (sated as they are, by corporate lucre, and carrot and stick ideologies that are – oppressed identity and neoliberal capitalist inclusive; authoritarian politics inviting and infesting; and austerity-infesting for all but big business toppers).

On the other hand, Hirsch insinuates two steps for redressing the polarization of these lefts. The first involves sidelining the view that Democratic Party engaging socialists are taking part of the left to their graves. Simultaneously, a priority focus would be to examine contradictions within and between proximal left organizations.

This leads to a second step: leftists would do well to expand acceptable common meanings of independent base-building and state power-winning politics.

For Democratic Party-avoiding socialists, this could include seeing their counterparts as no more or less independent. For Democratic Party engagers, this could include joining with the Party-avoiders in a base-building, and electoral and party engaging formation/organization, that would be independent of, but not exclude Democratic Party engagement.

Immediate, Near, and Long Term Revolutionary Visions

Penning another response to Moody in *New Politics*, Sam Lewis, Luke Elliott-Negri, and Amelia Dornbush outline a third step for a more united, independent, state power winning left:

If the left generally and DSA specifically are interested in really vying for power, we need a majority—a *majority* in each battle we fight, but also a *majority of the whole society*. We are dead set on this goal—winning majorities to socialist politics—and have no interest in letting baggage, however big, get in the way. If we can build a socialist majority without the Democratic ballot line, great. With the Democratic ballot line, great too. Hell, we’ll use the Republican ballot line if we can get ahold of it.

As to suggesting an independent unity form, the writers group together the left and DSA. Because this combine takes advantage of all parties, it’s no stretch to consider it as independent of those parties.

While they don’t provide details about an organizational unity form, they offer a programmatic step in this direction. Implicit in their strategy is developing a revolutionary and state power-winning left consensus that – the perils in society are too pressing and broad in scope not to move capaciously to triumph against those dangers in the immediate and near term (e.g., using any party to win majority votes now – in “each battle we fight”): realizing a socialism of a left kind, as this logic suggests, will be doubtful in the long run if the majority of society is not producing this consensus; it will be doubtful moreover, if effective immediate and near term strategies, and capacious levels of left unity, are not secured.

Cracks in the Wall

The issue of participating in the Democratic Party is at the forefront of the ISO series. A few writers support engaging Party processes; most do not.

On the one hand, what comes through in a number of articles is the impressive extent of collaboration between ISO and DSA - outside the Party.

On the other hand, examining internal organizational conundrums can yield negotiable insights as to why comparatively speaking, ISO's *electoral*-engaging unity-making seems halting and fraught.

This is to observe that the main precipitants of such unity work appear to be external to the organization: it's very much about the Democratic Party and its anti-socialist character.

This brings up a strategy and organization examining question: how are the articles instilled with writing about that party?

There are more than 600 direct references to the Democratic Party in these 25 short pieces. Internal compulsion-broaching, unity-affecting orientations are not just suggested by those numbers. It's also the pervasiveness of the hostile-to-socialism portrayals, and the accompanying trove of historical justifications that suggest the following questions:

- How can these matters *avoid* becoming a preponderantly insinuated - ISO-members bona fides establishing contest (...where the inspiring, group-cohering au courant in organizational comportment would be - who can best concur about, or establish what makes the Democratic Party most able to stunt revolutionary socialism in its midst)?
- How can the organization's members *avoid internalizing* such ISO-cohering processes - also as unity-making palliatives - that together contribute to their production of little more than a wisp of *electoral* unity-making with Democratic Party engaging socialists?

Unity in the Fog of Monsters?

Many of the writers seem so determined to prove the anti-socialist character of the Party that the position, that all Democrat-engaging socialists should abandon such electoral activity, ...or they *will only get a portion* of ISO's unity making energy - nebulizes the membership.

That unity-regulating message is ubiquitous, yet largely unarticulated. Reasons for this can be said to be related to the following conundrum: If the Democratic Party is toxic to socialism, why wouldn't ISO want Party-engagers just to exit the party and/or come to their side?

ISO is immersed in strategic quandaries (e.g., how to negotiate a no-Democratic participation unity position, when a majority of organized state-power seeking socialists engage that Party). And they are caught between challenging ideological positions (of Moody's soul-compromising sort).

It would seem that it's not just globally off-putting, that electoral unity-making isn't falling their way (where moreover, electoral action - is revolutionary work for both lefts). Given such adversity, what comes out edgewise is a surfeit of high-stakes attacks on an external enemy. As Moody's graveyard parlance tells, this is no enemy of equals; there be monstrous anti-socialist overlords there, eternally prevailing over revolutionaries. If ISO ventured in? The fangs would appear, biting into every single electoral Party process where they turned up - even with DSA in hand.

In this fogged-up unity-making atmosphere, the question of endorsing Julia Salazar could bring out the hounds; providing moral-political support would not. Going to the Party office to make get out the vote calls: verboten; knocking on doors during her campaign to raise revolutionary issues related to her platform: palatable (there's a closer-to-home expression of this schismatic politics, vis-à-vis the word support, as it references socialist Democratic Party participation, up or down: positions in favor appear 53 times; against, 43; yet the unity-making stutter-step prevails: the positions in favor are never framed as more than considerations: no line-crossing experiments, no one-offs to report

on, and short of a democratic centralist move of affirmation, no resolutions to vote on).

How else could such Jekyll and Hyde gymnastics be described, if unity-making cannot take place within the activities where the socialists are said to be in, in-party flagrante, while it can take place in electoral activities that are microscopically determined to be clean of the Party; is it that ironic that when it comes to the electoral, state-power securing, and candidacy-winning realm, this ends up meaning – almost nowhere?

Consequently, members could be understood as imbibing the bona-fides establishing palliative (and the unite-with-DSA, only outside the party palliative) in ways that buoy them up, while diverting them from prioritizing immediate, capacious cross-socialist, electoral unity-building:

Wouldn't such prioritized strategies concern – how to comprehensively engage electoral and social movement base-building unity action and possibilities, in ways that *organizationally* unite with Democratic Party engaging socialists, while not requiring that they themselves participate in those Party processes?

This begs the question:

- What analyses can effectively convey to the ISO and all Democratic Party avoiders, how the *Socialist Workers* writers' arguments against Democratic Party participation are not necessarily wrong, but divert them from facing the unity-limiting dynamics of their unity building strategies?

Psycho-Dynamic Beguilements of Revolutionary Unity-Building

ISO's halting two-socialist-lefts electoral unity-making processes can be understood as *implicitly* and *explicitly* produced.

The implicit stickiness of a sense of being in a discrete revolutionary polity can be said to build up its tackiness in the 600+ times the terms "we", "us", and "our" appear in these pieces.

That molasses (a.k.a., organization-cohering) coating on a revolutionary "us" gets thickened moreover, in relation to a socialist "them". The difference-implicating "them" is conveyed for instance, through a moral gestalt, to the effect that 'we are not them: we don't toxify socialism by participating in that capitalist Party' (or, per Le Blanc: because they are that "different" ...going into DSA could dispirit the migrating souls).

The Democrats are referred to pejoratively – as a capitalist party – more than 40 times. DSA is referenced more than 90 times as participating in that Party. An obverse side of these moral linkages are the many correct-path insinuations as to how the ISO should remain independent of that party (the word independent is used more than 200 times in ways that implicate or assert that the Democrats will never become a working-class/socialist party).

Such moral insinuations can build an organization-cohering sense of revolutionary confidence as to what unity ISO will collectively commit to.

Yet it's no stretch to consider such unity-making positions, as encumbering unity, based on a nebulized consensus against contaminating revolutionary correctness within. In this context, *independence* can express correct-path certainty, and foreshadow anxiety and retrenchment (as a proverbial, 'whatever it takes') vis-à-vis avoiding comprehensive electoral unification with a revolutionarily "compromised" socialist-left.

Organization-Building and Anxiety-Evoking Revolutionary Rem(a)inders

In this respect, Todd Chretien pulls out the organizational stops when he expresses conditional opposition to a Party-infiltrating strategy called the Dirty Break (i.e., fomenting a left Party-engaging breakaway from within the Democrats).

First, he opposes engaging the break at present, to wit: "I just don't believe we need to adopt what would either be a short-term tactic or — far more likely, in my view — a long-term trap to do so."

A second related point of opposition could be anxiety-inducing and not just inspiring to members or potential recruits, specifically:

As revolutionary socialists, I want to flag an assumption we all share that may not be apparent to SW readers who are not members of the ISO: We are committed to a democratic-centralist method of organization that guarantees "freedom of discussion" and insists on "unity in action." ...Comrades may argue for changes in the ISO's program or principles — or for specific strategies or tactics — but we don't act on these views as individuals.

Building upon other articles where the writers point out that any participation in the Party goes against ISO's "Where We Stand" statement, Chretien implicitly directs the organizational arm of revolutionary discipline at those writers who favor considering Party engagement. In the same statement he sets up a potentially members-booting, us-them delineating challenge: members (us), unlike non-members (them), will violate the revolutionary basis of their membership if they act against centralist-decided positions (presumably by actually engaging Democratic Party processes).

When Foundational-Organizational Challenges Overflow

Arguing in favor of exploring the break, Eric Blanc, uses Chretien's views, while couching his own position in "we" and "our" statements:

In regards to the potential of a "dirty break" strategy ...Todd[']s ...acknowledgment that revolutionaries can, under certain conditions, effectively use the Democratic Party ballot line constitutes a very significant advance for our collective discussion. From the moment we acknowledge that using the ballot line isn't a question of principle, but rather of one of tactics and strategy, we can have a productive discussion about if and when it would make sense to adopt this approach.

In asserting that Blanc misleadingly uses Chretien's analysis, Alan Maass builds upon Chretien's disciplinary citations:

First, on principles, strategies and tactics: Eric misleadingly turns Todd Chretien's (highly qualified) speculation about the possibility of "a socialist-inspired rupture from within the Democratic Party" led by "a future DSA (or DSA-like organization)" into a supposed "acknowledgment" that there are no issues of principle at stake for "revolutionaries" in using the Democratic Party ballot line:

For revolutionary socialists in the International Socialist Organization, though, it is a principle to not support Democratic Party candidates — or at least a conclusion that is directly related to the principle of working class independence, and that is not subject to revision to make a proposed strategy viable.

The ISO has had different strategies regarding U.S. politics and elections over our 40-year history, but they flow from a position summarized in our brief "Where We Stand" statement throughout: "We do not support candidates of capitalist parties like the Democrats or the

Republicans.”

...Having a sentence in the Where We Stand isn't a substitute for convincing people of it or anything else, ...But it *is* a position that is foundational to the ISO's revolutionary socialist politics — so this isn't just a matter of changing strategy based on different circumstances.

Because he poses these matters as foundational, Maass raises the specter that the toxicity of the Party could affect the ISO at its core, e.g., if members break with its principles.

Yet he waffles on whether supporting Democratic Party candidates is a principle.

On the one hand, there's his principle-establishing statement that never supporting Democratic candidates “is a principle”, which *if it is such* (like “the principle of working-class independence”), “is not subject to revision.”

On the other hand, he casts doubt on his no-revision position of not supporting Democrats, by moving from saying “it is a principle”, to saying, “or at least [it is] a conclusion that is directly related to the principle.” And in the same group of thoughts he says: it is a part of a “brief” (stand-taking) statement, possibly one of ISO's “different strategies” – and, as such, it “isn't a substitute for convincing people of it.”

So, at each succeeding iteration, he fails to reconcile the unraveling of his position, as to the way he also expresses it as a chameleon concept (that overflows the senses moreover, as to exactly how – “issues of principle [are] at stake”). The no-support-of-Democrats position thus seems to be: a principle; a conclusion related to a principle; not a principle, but a stand-taking position; and as such, no substitute for convincing people of it. And, in that most tentative position, it may not be a principle, ...but it is foundational.

By the time he gets to this last point, he strips his argument of persuasiveness. This speaks of a rawer, logically-shaky internal discipline-asserting politics: it may not be a principle, but it must be treated like one because it “is foundational”.

If it's foundational, then that matter is as Blanc implies, worthy of priority time and debate. Furthermore, how persuasive is it to exhort something that it may or may not be, i.e., a principle, to dismiss – not just the dirty break or supporting Democratic candidates. How wise is it to employ this shaky-logic to indirectly deter from getting and keeping on the table (because it's against ‘our principles’) an immanent challenge: *how* to engage capacious, independent, unity-building organization-making strategies, that accept working in all political parties with the Democratic Party engaging left?

Overall, how can ISO members stop using suspect – external-pointing, stops-pulling-out – stratagems, to suck much of the unity-making air out of the room (on a foundation that hasn't been fully excavated)?

Mind the Gap

A quote from series writer Fainan Lakha's article, “Getting Concrete About AOC [Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez] And The Democrats,” raises strategic issues that hint at a route out of this unity-delimiting dilemma:

It is my view that there is something deeply persuasive about a discussion of the “dirty break” from the Democratic Party. This is quite simply because it is a genuine attempt to map out a direction for the U.S. left — one that fits in with the general tendencies we've experienced in the last few years.

If we aren't persuaded by this account, I think it behooves us to ask more seriously: What do we think is the most plausible trajectory for the founding of an independent socialist party in the U.S., and how do we propose to get there?

Moody takes up the type of challenge that Lakha asks ISO to engage. He focuses on rising social movements. He offers little however, as to how these movements can cohere or are cohering to build a singular independent base, let alone how this base might develop socialistically. He says little moreover, about how they are combining organizationally to win enduring state power on the left (paradoxically, in the name of defeating Republicans, some in the movements Moody references, support all Democratic candidacies, capitalist corporate-aligned ones included).

As telling of the limited unity-building effects of Moody's strategy, which also pertains to ISO's Democrats-avoiding strategies, is what is revealed by a colleague of his; as per Moody, "As we used to say in the political (socialism-from-below) tendency that La Botz and I share, the Democratic Party has been the graveyard of social movements."

Dan La Botz's *New Politics* piece can be read, contra Moody, as an unintended affirmation of the deflating alternatives for socialist politics when left-pushing Democratic Party work is relegated to failure. In his article on why DSA shouldn't endorse Cynthia Nixon for the governorship of New York, La Botz says,

What we should avoid is becoming simply another progressive group on the left edge of the Democratic Party dreaming that we could somehow have great influence on it or even reform it. I think that is absolutely impossible to reform or capture the Democratic Party given the control of the party's organization and finances by the capitalist class and given its historic and deep ties to the banks, corporations, military leadership, and major media. I believe that we need our own working class party, though *how to get there from here is not clear.* (italics added)

La Botz's concluding phrase implicates with more candor than Moody, a strategic void, if not a pessimism for politics that do not significantly expand what constitutes joining the two socialist lefts (e.g., electorally). And while La Botz's last phrase evokes a *party-building void* that, per his logic, doesn't necessarily result from refraining from uniting with Democratic Party engaging socialists (which La Botz does not refrain from) - the fact that it follows his statement consigning all left, Democratic Party reform to failure, renders the connection too irresistible to ignore.

Circling back to the visions offered by Lewis, Elliott-Negri, and Dornbush, and the challenges made by Hirsch and Lakha: if Moody and like-minded Democratic Party-avoiding activists' visions are *not* about winning majoritarian state power now or soon (e.g., of the "whole society"), then as per Lakha, they should offer persuasive alternatives (this challenge seems pressing for writers in the *Socialist Worker* series who acknowledge that a major working-class party is not feasible at present). The same holds true if their vision *focused on* winning majoritarian state power.

No such strategies seem forthcoming.

Where's the Party? It's in Formation(s)

Like Lewis, Elliott-Negri, and Dornbush, Joe Allen identifies a type of organizational formation, that indicates how the strategic gap that La Botz refers to is being filled. Writing about DSA in *New Politics*, he says,

...the reborn DSA—or the next political formation that arises that will share similarities to it—provides the opportunity to create a large socialist organization, even an embryonic party

in the United States. That appears to me to be a once in a lifetime opportunity. To even begin to address the enormity of crisis before revolutionaries we have to be prepared to take serious risks to break out of the political margins.

Allen's strategic framework engages current activism, with a longer-term goal (inclusive, e.g., of party building and realizing socialism); he views formation-building as work that can be embryonic of party-building - but doesn't just have to build one party, right away. Lewis, Elliott-Negri, and Dornbush also reference the formation form, to wit, "DSA or any left formation should make rejection of corporate funding fundamental to their campaigns."

A parallel independent left formation-building standpoint is indicated by Glen Ford in a *Black Agenda Report* piece. In describing how Sanders 10-point Agenda could polarize the Democratic elite from a large (left/progressive) part of the base within and beyond the Party, Ford offers two formation-evoking party-building scenarios:

If the Party sabotages him in the primaries, as in 2016, then progressives will get another chance to do the right thing, and say goodbye to the Democrats. Or, if Sanders wins, hopefully the corporatists will follow the money and run away to the GOP, or form their own Third Way party, and leave the Democratic carcass to the poor folks. Any split will do the trick, as long as the result is a non-corporate mass party.

Ford and Allen, and Lewis, Elliott-Negri, and Dornbush pose formation-building politics on a scale that will not likely be accomplished without capacious unity between and beyond the two imbricated socialist lefts; this is partly because even as the Democratic Party-engaging left can expand to hundreds of thousands, the Democratic Party-avoiding left has risen to tens of thousands of activists (e.g., during the 2016 elections, through the Green Party, the Peace and Freedom Party, Socialist Alternative, and ISO). Continuing electoral-polarization doesn't bode well for unity-making, especially in relation to winning the "majority of the whole society".

Descriptive, Strategic, and Partisan Dynamics of a Political Formation

A strategic takeoff point is to think of a left formation as describing political forces that cohere within - and between - movements and parties. Accompanying this point is the partisan strategic challenge, that building an effective left party today cannot be accomplished without a *mediating independent organizational form or forms*.

Compared to the party form, the formation's organizing purview can be more decentralized (not unlike the notion of a social formation). And its left unity-insinuating purview can be drawn-in to focus on multiple proximal left/socialist electoral-engaging organizations and activism (opening up the examination for instance, to where such groups are collaborating, conflicting, and so on). It can also take into its sights the sense that it includes a leading force (e.g., DSA) or forces within the larger milieu.

Seen in this way, it might strike one that only the right produced a majoritarian winning formation, which is to say, the Tea Party, and in relation to that formation-guiding force, Trump's election campaign cohered between movement and party; they did this in ways that enabled these guiding forces to build independent, interconnecting political forms, to triumph in the Republican Party, and to win the executive power of the nation. Yet the 2016 election and the current period evince capacious left activism that coalesces between movements and parties. And despite the divisions, many in the two lefts believe that majoritarian state power must be won in 50 states. They also believe this must be done by waging a (social and/or socialist - democratic) political revolution.

While the phrase united front seems similar to the formation, the latter implies more on-the-ground diffusion and scope (e.g., as to who and what are its strategic elements). Then there's the fragmented, trust-adverse dynamics between social movements and the unity-building left. Given such sensitive conditions regarding uniting, the more decentralized formation notion might better bridge those divides.

The formation strategic-framework offers the Democratic Party avoiding left a guiding organizational form moreover, that could capaciously unite the two lefts, while not requiring the avoiders to participate in the Party. As with Allen's conception, it can also develop relevant organizational mobilizations towards building a party, that as Ford indicates, do not necessarily exclude the Democratic Party.

Conclusion

It may be that DSA is the leading group that will unite these lefts or develop the next great party. However, when it comes to a formation inclusive of the left and social movements, such an effort might not appeal to enough of the movement polities. This might be because non-socialist movements and organizations (e.g., anti-oppression/identity-freedom, environmental, labor, anti-authoritarian, migrant justice, and pro-democracy) might be put off by prioritizing socialism, rather than an equalized plurality of their respective main political positions (which doesn't mean, e.g., that an anti-oligarch priority-identity-position wouldn't be supported).

As with ISO strategies that dribble towards but don't appreciably take on left formation-building processes, there are similar resistances in major Democratic Party-avoiding organizations such as Socialist Alternative and the Greens. The above analysis finds ISO breaking towards the Democratic Party-engaging left nevertheless (e.g., if not as a whole, then as Blanc insinuates, in pieces). A formation-building strategy shows how they can unite with Democratic Party-engaging leftists, in ways that they will all be stronger and independent in social movement base-building and state-power winning politics - for the immediate, near, and long term.

The prospect of a left formation rising, and helping build a unified party, might be met with the retort: it will never happen because these lefts have incorrigible differences, and the social and justice movements have not capaciously, electorally joined them. Does that mean it shouldn't be pursued, even as it is already happening?