

RED SPECK

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For changing times

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BEGINNING THE BATTLE FOR DEMOCRACY

If we had a genuine radical left, the battle for democracy would take up a lot of its bandwidth. It would recognize the tyrannies as our primary enemies. The well armed and aggressive ones are of particular concern. Russia, China, Iran and North Korea obviously come to mind here. We also have the regimes that should be the targets of the next instalment of the Arab Spring. Then together with China we have the "socialist" tyrannies in Cuba, Venezuela and Vietnam. And we mustn't forget the kleptocracies of Sub-Saharan Africa. In sum, we can say that there is an enormous amount of unfreedom to be overcome.

In the bourgeois democracies the left would be a prime mover in awakening a large mass democratic movement that not only defends political freedom and democracy at home but hounds and harasses their governments into pursuing policies that do a lot more to weaken rather than strengthen the tyrannies.

The fact that we do not see street rallies demanding unlimited military support for Ukraine is clear proof that there is neither a left nor a democratic movement at the moment. Defeating Russia would achieve a great deal. Both Ukraine and Belarus would be free and Europe no longer threatened. The fascist ultra-nationalist gangsters in Russia would be in a much weaker position. The monsters in Beijing would be more likely to think twice about invading Taiwan. We can see a similar failure with Gaza. People in the West are not out on the streets calling for international intervention to take over the Palestinian territories to ensure a transition to a freely elected government. Instead we get aimless chants of "Free Palestine".

The left would of course also constantly point out the problems that capitalism poses for democracy and open government. Firstly, there is the corrupting effect of vested interest in a society where everyone is seeking personal gain. Secondly, the government, no matter how democratic, is governing capitalism; it is the servant of the present system with all its obstacles to human progress. Thirdly and most importantly, fascism is a "solution" for capitalism embraced by many when conditions become too unstable and rebellious for their liking. There is the threat of these types seizing power.

For a future radical left it would be particularly important to attack the "socialist" tyrannies and look forward to their demise. This would allow it to clearly distinguish itself from much of the pseudo left and provide an opportunity to explain both the obstacles and objectives of the proletarian revolution.

Then there are the "anti-imperialists" to deal with. They call supporters of democracy "social imperialists". In turn they should be called social fascists or fifth columnists. These bods are just a small fringe, however their ideas cannot be ignored because they permeate the

common "discourse" and they threaten to infect any new generation of people spurred into political action. So, a harsh light needs to be shone into their dark little corner.

According to the social fascists, western imperialism is the main enemy and "multipolarity" would give countries more scope to break free from it. Such multipolarity in fact means closer ties to Russia or China and greater scope for corruption and dictatorship.

While defeating tyranny is of course highly desirable in itself, it is also critical for a future proletarian revolution. Firstly, growing up in a freer society makes workers more prepared for their task of transforming themselves and society once they have dispensed with the bourgeoisie. They are less obedient and deferential and have cast off more of the backwardness inherited from past ages. Secondly and more importantly, the far lower level of repression in a bourgeois democracy provides much more favorable conditions for a revolutionary movement to emerge.

The battle for democracy lies ahead of us. And the only way a radical left movement can emerge and grow is by joining it.

MARXISM IN A NUTSHELL

Here is a little something for "Marxians" (or is that Martians?) and "neo-Marxists." If you do not agree with the following please do not cause confusion by claiming to be Marxists or "in the Marxist tradition".

What was new in what I did was: (1) to demonstrate that the existence of classes is tied only to definite historical phases of development of production; (2) that the class struggle necessarily leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat; (3) that this dictatorship is only a transition to the dissolution of all classes and leads to the formation of a classless society.

Marx's letter to Joseph Weydemeyer
March 5, 1852

INTRODUCING RED SPECK

The aim of *Red Speck* and *David's Political Substack* is to put forward positions a radical left would have if it existed. These bear no resemblance to the mess dished up by the reactionary pseudo left which does indeed exist but only in a state of rather smelly decomposition.

The following are a good indication of the point of view:

- Support for the Maoist position that the proletarian revolution requires a protracted period of struggle to transform society and the individual, and to ensure that the state does not change from a revolutionary to a reactionary force. The demise of regimes that have turned into their opposites is not to be lamented. There was nothing worth rescuing from the Soviet empire when it collapsed 35 years ago. The same can be said for present-day China, Cuba and Vietnam that badly need bourgeois democratic revolutions;

- An opposition to "anti-imperialism" which started out as something progressive but turned into something totally reactionary, in particular, because of its support for highly dubious regimes in the "South" and its failure now to distinguish between aggressor and non-aggressor powers;

- Much like the 1930s, the major powers are divided into non-aggressor bourgeois democracies on the one hand and fascist aggressors on the other. A genuine left in the former would be working with others to put the maximum pressure on their leaders to pursue a ramped up policy of collective security and provide unstinting support for Ukraine. The battle for democracy and victory against tyranny are important pre-conditions for proletarian revolution;

- Opposition to the green movement and support for economic growth. The success of the proletarian revolution requires advanced industrial development on a global scale. Coexisting with and harnessing nature depends on increasingly more advanced technologies; and

- Opposition to identity politics. This converts concern about discrimination and oppression into something absurd and toxic, and prevents the open discussion of views that we need in order to acquire clear understanding of the issues. Presenting conservatives with these caricatures gives the far right a field day.

David's Political Substack
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TOTAL SUPPORT FOR UKRAINE

Putin invaded Ukraine because he saw that country slipping into the western democratic camp. In his view it belonged at best as a vassal state in a new Russian empire. Also having a bourgeois democracy on its doorstep was a real threat to Russian fascism given the strong links between the two countries. Most Ukrainians speak Russian as a first or second language and many had relatives in Russia. Of course, if Ukraine had indeed become a member of NATO, the effect would have been devastating for Putin on both counts.

Ukraine should receive the fullest possible support from the other western bourgeois democracies. Indeed, they should become openly and directly involved so that no one can say that it is a "proxy" war.

There can be no peace deal with the Ruscists. They simply have to be expelled from Ukraine and their regime severely weakened.

As Ukraine rebuilds and develops it will of course become an increasing part of the overall European economy with ever more to-and-fro movement of goods, services and capital. Its economic and other links with Russia will return to normal once that country joins the bourgeois democratic camp.

FREE PALESTINE NOW NOT LATER

Simply denouncing Israel and demanding an end to military support to that country, and chanting "Free Palestine" is an inadequate response to Israel's policy of genocide and dispossession.

It should be made part of the general understanding that on this question the UN is displaying its quite normal inability to do its job. If it were functioning properly it would mandate an external third party force to replace the present Israeli one in the occupied territories and provide the security necessary during the transition to an elected Palestinian government.

Given the inability of the UN to act, the pressure should be put on the western European powers to fill the breach. The UK and France should definitely be involved. The Italians are another possible participant. They could land in Gaza by sea and enter the West Bank through Jordan.

They would have the job of preventing hostilities between Palestinian factions and between Palestinians and Israeli settlers, and ensuring the supply of humanitarian aid. They might also have a post-independence role in deterring Israeli interference.

The establishment of an independent Palestine is certainly in the interest of the European powers. They have nothing to gain from the present mess. It would also help them learn how to act independently of Uncle Sam. Indeed, they would likely have to withstand push back from that quarter. After all, it is Israel's underwriter.

Of course, the pseudo left could not support something like this because it would be an "imperialist" intervention,

even though it would be undoing awful past policies. We also have people who think that the liberation of the Palestinians has to wait for a working class revolution in the Arab world. Given that this is nowhere on the horizon it is effectively the same policy as Netanyahu's.

There would need to be sufficient economic and diplomatic pressure on Israel for it to conclude that it has no choice but to cooperate. Cooperation would have to include the establishment of a land bridge between Gaza and the West Bank, much like the one that connected West Berlin to West Germany before 1989.

CHINA IS A THREAT

The Chinese regime is a fascist tyranny badly in need of a bourgeois democratic revolution. It is xenophobic, revanchist, militaristic and an avowed enemy of democracy, with a large and growing capacity to project military power into the region and beyond. Even apart from the threat to Taiwan, the bourgeoisie democracies must not allow this malignant force to go unmatched.

The regime's increasing military and economic muscle can be used to undermine democracy, impose tyranny wherever it suits it economically or politically, and limit the ability of countries to make decisions free of concerns for Chinese bullying.

Looking further down the track, it would threaten the prospects of proletarian revolution in Europe, North America and other developed countries which are ripe for such a convulsion. It could support the counter-revolution all the way up to an invasion. Or the threat could deter revolutionaries from taking such a course in the first place.

The claim that China is socialist is a sick joke. If it were true, we would have to vigorously oppose socialism.

They describe their present system as a primary stage of socialism with a socialist market economy. According to this nonsense the reliance on markets, capitalists and small private business will end when the economy and society are sufficiently developed and they will return to social ownership, and to transforming the relations of production and superstructure.

For this to happen the system, indeed the whole of society, would have to completely change tack. The bourgeoisie and very large petty bourgeoisie would not object. Workers would cease to be alienated, semi-functional, low spirited, cringing wage slaves and make good progress in transforming themselves and their relations in production and society generally. At the same time, everyone with positions of authority in the CCP and government would do everything they could to assist and would abandon their power and luxury lifestyle. Everyone would revert to Marxism and abandon reactionary Xi Jinping Thought. In other words the present regime would not need to be overthrown. If you believe in fairies this may seem plausible.

Then we have the absurd position of orthodox trotskyites who claim that China still has an "economic base" worth defending. They are referring here to the fact that

the state still owns the "commanding heights" of the economy and all the land is either state or "collectively" owned. To remove the remaining deformities there needs to be a "political revolution" that replaces the "bureaucracy" with genuine working class rule.

We already know that state ownership is not socialist if only from the fact that it used to be quite extensive in many advanced capitalist countries prior to the wave of privatization of the 1990s. Power generation, telephones, rail and ports, for example, were often in government hands. Also, state ownership of all land has proven quite compatible with capitalism in many places. Hong Kong and the Australian Capital Territory are good examples.

The big political take-home message of the orthodox trots position on China is that the regime has to be protected from its own people. We don't want "reactionary" umbrella revolutions or Tiananmen Square incidents upsetting things. The only force worthy of overthrowing the present regime is some pristine proletarian revolutionary movement. You can't support people who just want a bit of bourgeois democracy instead of tyranny with Chinese characteristics.

So a revolutionary movement is supposed to emerge in China that is separate from and opposed to the main, and far larger, source of opposition to the regime. That is nuttiness of the highest order. Genuine revolutionaries would be working with and supporting anyone who is resisting or being suppressed by the tyrannical regime, and would recognize that democratic space is critical for the development of a revolutionary movement worthy of the name.

ECOSOCIALISM IS SILLY

"Ecosocialists" believe that we need to degrow the economy to some much lower steady state if we are to reduce greenhouse emissions and save the biosphere, and that this cannot be achieved under capitalism with its drive to accumulate.

If this is true we are stuffed because capitalism is not going to be overthrown and replaced in any relevant timeframe. So, instead of joining this death cult, we should be out there demanding our lords and masters supercharge "technofix". There has been a lot of great innovation in the energy/environment domain in the last decade or so which is amazing given the low level of funding for research and development. So, just imagine what could be achieved if they pulled out the digit.

The other thing ecosocialists get wrong is in failing to recognize that growth, with its elimination of economic backwardness, is a prerequisite for successful revolution. Reaching a high level of development creates the prospect of sharing material prosperity, humanizing work and having ample free time. We have a long history showing how we are not prepared to share the opposite - poverty and toil. These two blights have been the very basis of class society. So, we need to achieve a level of material conditions where the benefits of living in a convivial classless society considerably outweigh the benefits of being a "winner" under capitalism.