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Does it matter which party wins?

By Sam Webb

It is obvious that there is a growing feeling of frustration and even anger among supporters of the Democratic Party with its performance over the past two years.

AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka, speaking for the labor movement, strongly expressed this unhappiness in some recent speeches.

I am disappointed too with some aspects of the Obama administration's domestic and foreign policy.

But I don't forget that this administration governs in a very hostile political environment in which the right is laboring overtime to wreck its initiatives at every step of the way.

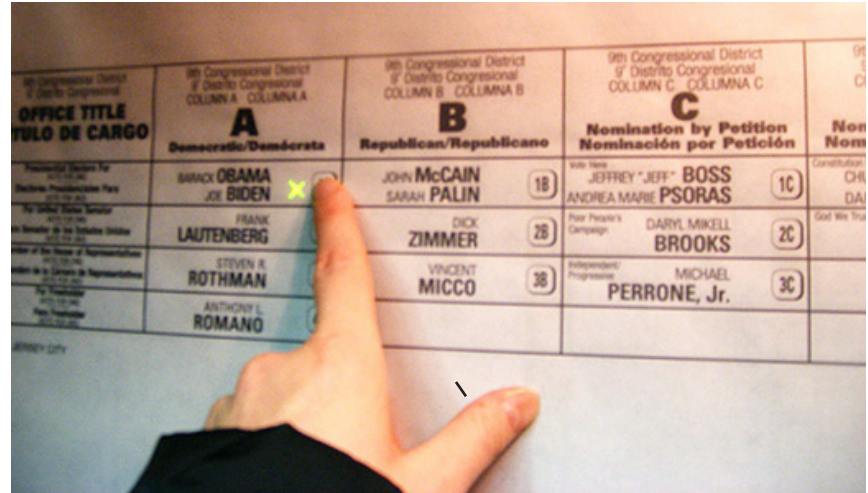
In addition, there are the structural pressures of governing in a capitalist economy and state.

Then there are conservative pressures coming from some congressional Democrats and members of the administration.

Everything can't be explained away by the objective context, however. The president and his administration can be faulted for a number of policy decisions.

But the main question from a strategic point of view is this: Does it make any difference, from the standpoint of the class and democratic struggles, which party gains political ascendancy?

Some - though not the labor movement nor other mass organizations of the American people



- say no, it doesn't.

Some even go a step further and say a Democratic victory creates popular illusions, which in turn weaken the people's struggles. And the only way out of this vise is to form a third party now.

Communists don't agree with either one of these views. In our view, the differences between the two parties of capitalism are of consequence to class and democratic struggles.

Neither party is anti-capitalist, but they aren't identical either. Differences exist at the levels of policy and social composition. And despite the many frustrations of the past two years, the elec-

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tion of Barack Obama was historic and gave space to struggle for a people's agenda.

If, on the other hand, the Republicans had

We don't have any illusions about the Democratic Party, but we don't have any illusions about the Republican Party either.

been victorious in 2008 the character of class and democratic struggles would have unfolded very differently. Our movement would have been on the defensive from Day One, the Democrats would be running for cover, and the Republicans would have an unfettered hand in their efforts to liquidate the welfare state, roll back the rights revolution of the 1930s and 1960s, and crush the people's movement - labor in the first place.

As for the wisdom of a third party, we have always advocated the formation of an independent people's party. It is essential for any deep-going social change. But its realization depends on more than our desire, more than our political-ideological attitude. Millions who have to be at the core of this party still operate under the umbrella of the Democratic Party.

Moreover, to separate ourselves at this moment from these forces would be contrary to our strategic policy of building maximum unity against right-wing extremism now and in next year's elections.

That doesn't mean we give up advocacy of an independent people's party; we also understand that its formation is dictated by concrete politi-

cal realities and strategic necessities. Nor does it mean that we hit the mute button when the Obama administration takes positions that we don't agree with. Just as we show no hesitation in supporting, and fighting for, the administration's progressive initiatives, we should have no compunction about taking issue with the administration when it takes positions that we don't agree on.

We are keenly aware of the fact that the agenda of the far right is to bring this administration and country to its knees, with a heavy dose of racism, lies and economic sabotage, setting the stage for a full blown return to power of the most reactionary, racist, anti-labor, anti-women, homophobic and militarist grouping in U.S. politics.

We want no part of that. We don't have any illusions about the Democratic Party, but we don't have any illusions about the Republican Party either.

Furthermore, we are also aware of the undeniable fact that no other party besides the Democratic Party stands a chance of beating the GOP next year.



Sam Webb is chair of the Communist Party USA.

N.Y. marriage law giant step for civil rights

By PW Editorial Board

New York took a jump into the 21st century as Democratic Gov. Andrew Cuomo signed a bill June 24 legalizing same-sex marriage.

This was not a gay issue, not a Republican-Democratic issue and not a simple "social issue": It was a question of fundamental civil rights.

Still, politics does matter. Had New York not gone from Republican to Democratic leadership recently, the right couldn't have been won.

There was compromise in the bill, and some say it may set a standard going forward. To neutralize opposition from the Catholic Church and some other religious groups, the bill's sponsors added a provision allowing churches and similar entities to decline to perform same-sex marriages. This gave wavering politicians cover to vote for the bill.

No matter what the compromises made, it's clear that the bill would not have passed without the active, popular pressure put on legislators. Thousands of people from around the state called their lawmakers to demand that they do the right

thing. Unlike in California, where voters came out against gay marriage, the movement in New York was organized enough to win.

But no one could honestly say that LGBT rights are won. There have been big steps forward in recent years. The military's "Don't ask; don't tell" policy was ended. Still, LGBT people can't get married in most of America and the federal government won't recognize the state marriages.

There's a long way to go in this fight, and a lot of work to do. Most importantly, the Republicans have to be defeated in 2012 - can anyone imagine what would happen to LGBT rights in a nation led by tea party extremists? And we need to build unity for fundamental civil rights: Every working person in America will benefit by guaranteeing civil rights and freedoms to all.

In New York, much of the labor movement understood that the fight for LGBT rights is their own. That's why SEIU took a stand and helped to organize for them, as did the labor-backed Working Families Party and other groups.

This is the way forward.

There was compromise in the bill, and some say it may set a standard going forward.

Why progressives should not support Ron Paul

By Ryan C. Ebersole

Ron Paul has become a living legend for many due to his outspoken libertarian views. He has attracted a multi-generational following that occasionally borders on cult-like status.

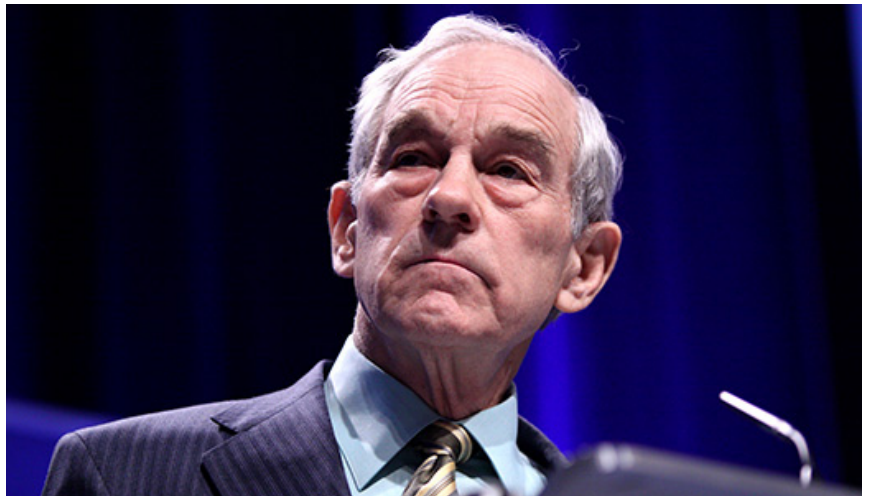
Some of Paul's views have drawn the support of progressives. For example, he has steadfastly been against our massive deployments in the Middle East, and opposes the encroachments on our civil liberties found in the Patriot Act. However, he holds several core policy positions, ranging from opposition to social programs to ignoring climate change, that should send progressives running.

Paul holds to the right-wing view that America is a Christian, rather than secular, nation. He steadfastly opposes the concept of the separation of church and state, enshrined in the First Amendment's "establishment clause." Instead, he claims "the notion of a rigid separation between church and state has no basis." He argued "the Founding Fathers envisioned a robustly Christian" nation.

Paul's supporters have tried to promote the notion that his positions are pro-LGBT in his own, libertarian way. However, his libertarian dogma, which his supporters claim treats everyone in a "live and let live" fashion, does not advance LGBT rights in any way. While he opposed the draconian federal amendment banning marriage equality, he stated that he would have voted for the Defense of Marriage Act and he is not against individual states practicing discrimination against their gay and lesbian residents.

Paul opposed banning prohibitions on sodomy, claiming that the Constitution provides no protections for those wishing to engage in "sodomy."

Moreover, Paul opposed the Employment Non Discrimination Act (ENDA) which would have prohibited employment discrimination based on



sexual orientation. Additionally, he opposed expanding hate crimes protections to include sexual orientation and gender identity.

It's not just gays and lesbians that Paul seems unwilling to protect against discrimination. Paul says he would have voted against the Civil Rights Act of 1964, saying it "reduced civil liberty" and violates private property rights. He voted against renewing the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

Paul supported a 10 percent flat income tax, the big beneficiaries of which would be the richest people in our country, who would have their taxes drastically reduced.

Paul opposes regulations on industries, even the financial industry. According to him, regulations are burdens rather than consumer protections, and the much hailed "free market" will regulate itself. Paul opposes any federal regulations against corporate monopolies. He also opposes the federal minimum wage, Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid, many federal departments, FEMA the notion of climate change, and Planned Parenthood.

His record should be enough for any progressive to be turned off.

He holds several core policy positions, ranging from opposition to social programs to ignoring climate change, that should send progressives running.

Tex. legislature leaves trail of wreckage

By Jim Lane

That long loud shrieking shudder you heard on June 29 was the entire population of Texas breathing their sigh of relief; the legislature had finally ended its reign of terror and gone home.

The legislators tried to cripple the right to organize; they assaulted democracy, they tried to "out-Arizona" Arizona on the rights of Latinos, they tried to humiliate and torture women who bear unwanted pregnancies, and they threw themselves into the task of gutting children's education.

A signal victory for anti-worker legislators came in their two-pronged attack against democracy. Their redistricting efforts face legal challenges before the full effect is felt, but their voter ID attempt to restrict voting with extra requirements was finally passed in 2011 after failing two years before.

The worst of the many anti-worker bills was Representative Tan Parker's "paycheck deception," which would have effectively defunded any advocacy and political activity by organized workers. It was beaten back by heroic efforts led by the Texas AFL-CIO. Labor's Legislative Director Rene Lara wrote, "The list of bad bills we killed is long."

The assault against abortion rights even spilled over into birth control cuts!

The Senate finished their list and left Austin, without even waiting to see what the House would do, and the House finally threw in the towel. Governor Perry missed participating in this particular fiasco because he was in California trying to build support for his presidential bid. The disaster that is Texas legislation is now pointed at the rest of the United States.

But the AFL-CIO Legislative Director ended his summary with the most fitting question possible, "Are you with us in 2012?"

Chile: trabajadores se anotan gran triunfo

Por La Federación Sindical Mundial

El gobierno derechista de Sebastián Pinera debió retroceder en su intención de rebajar las indemnizaciones, después que pretendió modificar por decreto el Artículo 172 de Código del trabajo.

El Lunes 6 de Junio la Dirección del Trabajo órgano administrativo dependiente del Ministerio del trabajo, emitió el Ordinario 2314/038, por el cual pretendía modificar la Base de cálculo de las indemnizaciones por años de servicio y de aviso previo, eliminando los bonos, ante este decreto del gobierno derechista, dirigentes de Confederaciones, Federaciones y Sindicatos del sector privado, agrupados en la Coordinadora Nacional de organizaciones amigas y afiliadas a la Federación Sindical Mundial-FSM, mas la Confederación de gente de Mar, como tambien otro grupo de organizaciones Sindicales en coordinación con la Escuela Sindical tomaron contacto con algunos diputados y otras organizaciones Sindicales para salir al paso de esta maniobra, los dirigentes solicitaron formalmente a la Dirección del Trabajo la anulación del decreto de la discordia, también se dirigieron al presidente de la Corte suprema para solicitar la revisión de dicho decreto en la Sala de lo Laboral, esta sala a través de algunas sentencias han negado la valides del artículo 172 para el cálculo de las indemnizaciones, apagándose en las facultades que la Constitución les entrega, según los dirigentes. Al mismo tiempo que convocaban a dirigentes sindicales del sector público y privado a coordinarse para enfrentar esta arremetida gubernamental contra sus derechos.

Mientras tanto en Aysén la Min-

istra de Trabajo y Previsión Social, Evelyn Matthei, se reunió con el Director Nacional de Trabajo con el fin de reconsiderar el dictamen, alegando que la ley "está muy mal hecha", por contradicciones en los artículos que no permiten resolver adecuadamente.

En este sentido el Director de Trabajo en la Región de Aysén, Eugenio Canales, señaló que este jueves 16 se decidió dejar sin efecto la circular de dicho decreto ; a fin de que sean los parlamentarios los que mejoren la ley. "Por consiguiente y conforme a los señalado por la Ministra, se entendió que este problema debe abordarse íntegramente por vía de un proyecto de ley, más que por un dictamen y sobre esa base y las consideraciones expuestas por la ministra se solicitó a la dirección del trabajo, la reconsideración de este dictamen 2314 y por ello la dirección del trabajo ha estimado pertinente dejarla sin efecto, manteniéndolo por ende la doctrina anterior contenidos en el inciso segundo del artículo 41 del código de trabajo"

Los más de 100 dirigentes reunidos en la Anef han insistido en presentar una segunda solicitud para asegurar que los anuncios de la Ministra no queden solo en palabras, al mismo tiempo se convocaron para los proxima días a una reunion para analizar lo que acontece con la propuesta del Gobierno de entregar tan solo un 4,7% para el Salario Mínimo, medida que es rechazada por todo el Movimiento Sindical, los participantes acordaron seguir coordinando esfuerzos para impulsar la defensa de los derechos de los trabajadores.

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