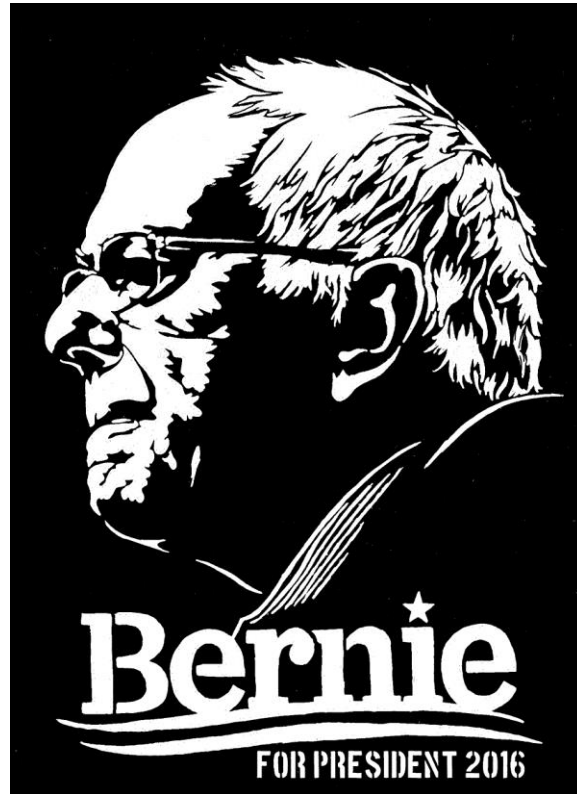


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Common Sense (2016)

a pamphlet by
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Introduction

Despite being rather up in years (age 71), I find it vital to set down certain thoughts on current affairs and share these with everyone. My wife, Angela, joins me in these thoughts and comments and has kindly agreed to edit my efforts.

The concept of a "Second American Revolution" has recently interested me especially ever since many politicians running in the 2016 presidential election (like Bernie Sanders, for example) have identified the current nature of our democracy as in fact no more than an "oligarchy", meaning the rule of small elite (a group of billionaires) governing in their own interests. Sanders calls this group "the billionaire class" and the "one or two percent."

Like Thomas Paine, the author of the original pamphlet "Common sense", I also feel that the issue of inherited wealth is an important problem. In contemporary jargon, the issue of

the "inheritance tax" is crucial because if this tremendous wealth is under-taxed, the general public must foot the bill for all social benefits. If it is true like Bernie Sanders states that the one or two percent own 40% of the total American wealth, then a high tax on the inheritance of this wealth could go a long way to righting the economic inequality in American society. But it would be naive in the extreme to think the social imbalance, which is so extreme, can be corrected by a mere change in tax policy.

Sanders calls for a "political Revolution" perhaps fearing that if he called it a "social revolution" he would sound too much like making a real call for socialism. But even the TV personality Lawrence O'Donnell has called what is needed today "an expansion of socialism" recognizing that social security, Medicare, Pell grants, etc. are all forms of good ol' American socialism.

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But how can we get from a political revolution to a social one without recreating purely European models. "Scandinavian socialism" , "Italian Gramscian socialism", "English Labor Party Socialism", and "French socialism" all come to mind. In short, very successful models for providing social benefits, but

can any of these models be simply grafted onto the American situation? I doubt it.

An American socialism has to be pragmatic and based upon a modern revolutionary pragmatism as we see in Bernie Sanders' ideology of social pragmatism. In other words, a socialism based upon a list of practical social ills and a logical, common sense solution to each issue. The collective set of solutions equals socialism.

Each Chapter of this pamphlet will address one of those issues. To take action on each and every one of these issues is tantamount to a social and political revolution. Now is the time, our time. If not now, when? If not Bernie, who?

My wife, Angela, who is mentioned above, is calling for the founding of a "Social Benefits Party" recognizing the difficulty of a real socialist program within the Democratic Party. The SBP so named, avoids the stigma in America of the bugaboo word "socialism" yet advocates for the same platform.

Perhaps the SBP can lead the next wave of social revolution. This will only be possible if it becomes a truly mass party capable of organizing a government from and of the people and capable of overturning the false default legitimacy of bourgeois rule. Then things get interesting.



CHAPTER 1

**On the Origin and
Design of Government in
General, With Concise
Remarks on Rule by the
Billionaire Class**

"The billionaire class now owns the economy and they are working day and night to make certain they own the United states government" -- Bernie Sanders.

According to Forbes Magazine: "Despite plunging oil prices and a weakened euro, the ranks of the world's wealthiest defied global economic turmoil and expanded yet again. For our 29th annual guide to the globe's richest, we found a record 1,826 billionaires with an aggregate net worth of \$7.05 trillion, up from \$6.4 trillion a year ago." (Forbes, 3-02-15).

As pointed out by the Occupy Wall street Movement, the current levels of income inequality between the 1% and the 99%

are similar to the levels of inequality between the English crown and the peasantry at the time Thomas Paine wrote the original Common Sense.

46.5 million people now live on food stamps. Louisiana, West Virginia, Tennessee, Oregon, New Mexico, the District of Columbia, and Mississippi lead the country in the numbers of food stamp recipients. Hundreds of thousands of those who work are receiving low wages, too low for anything but subsistence. It is estimated that half the population is poor.

These dreadful facts should be enough for the masses to call for an end to billionaire rule. Although this situation is often accepted without challenge, as a useless fact of life, this doesn't have to be the case. Our common sense should be enough for us to call for an end to oligarchy in the name of democracy.

The general inequality between the billionaire class and all other economic levels (the middle and lower classes) is taken for granted as a given and is rarely questioned. This doesn't have to be so. I raise the question, is this just? Should this situation be allowed to continue, to perpetrate itself?

No, this is an artificial situation engineered by the billionaire class and something called "social hegemony" wherein

the masses acquiesce and go along with the official program. They do this because they are incapable, for the moment, of thinking otherwise. Their very thoughts, their levels of consciousness, have been controlled and conditioned by billionaire propaganda since infancy.

What you can earn from wages is very limited. One cannot get wealthy on wages and, compared to CEOs and owners of large enterprises, it is impossible for your earnings to catch up with those of the billionaire class. The rich get richer, the poor get poorer. And the traditional middle class, that has seen its earning power go flat for decades, it is quickly disappearing into the poorer classes.

Meanwhile the descendants of the rich continue to inherit the wealth of their families and, like the royalty and nobility of the age of King George III, make up a powerful class of property and landowners whose huge estates contrast sharply with the meager holdings of the workers.

Although the kinds of tax and inheritance law reforms spelled out by Bernie Sanders will certainly help reduce income inequality, even Sanders has said that without a political revolution sweeping in scope, not much can be done to alter the basic structure of the system that oppresses the middle and

lower classes.

Governments are originated as a social contract with the masses to ensure human rights, prosperity, freedom, and the pursuit of happiness. When this contract is torn apart by a small group of billionaires who seek to own, control, and have the entire national pie to themselves, then the government has become a puppet and is ineffectual and must be pulled down in a political revolution.

Now is the time to organize for such a revolution through the Bernie Sanders campaign for the presidency. But as the candidate himself has said, this will not be enough. We must start to think, organize, plan, and work with alliances and coalitions to build the new coalition of youth, gay, seniors, Afro-Americans, Latinos, and progressives everywhere.



ISSUES FOR BERNIE

CIVIL RIGHTS

IMMIGRATION

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

RACIAL JUSTICE

EARTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT

ECONOMIC INEQUALITY

THE ECONOMY AND JOBS

EDUCATION

FAMILY

FOREIGN POLICY AND NATIONAL SECURITY

GOVERNMENT REGULATION

HEALTHCARE

MILITARY AND VETERANS

PERSONAL FREEDOMS

POLITICAL AND ELECTORAL REFORM

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

SOCIAL SAFETY NET

WORKING PEOPLE

Coming Soon...To be continued

CHAPTER 2+