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Why I am rejoining Solidarity and some thoughts on the future

- Features -

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A longtime friend, with whom I share a mutual respect, recently sent me an email regarding my decision to rejoin Solidarity.* What follows are the texts (slightly edited) of a two-part answer to him, and then my replies to a couple of emails he sent in response.

I will try to give a sense of where rejoining Solidarity fits into my thinking about what we seem to be facing and “what is to be done” at this point in time. This will take a couple of emails — this one dealing with more general matters, and another that I will send tomorrow dealing more directly with the questions you have asked.

It feels to me that time is running out — certainly for me and perhaps for humanity.

Being almost 78 years old, I do not expect to be politically functional (or even alive) for more than five years or so. Although I am definitely feeling, shall we say, “less energetic” than was the case in earlier phases of my life, the fact remains that for now I seem to have some juice left in me — so there is still an impulse to do what I can to help advance the struggle. But I find a heightened need to pick and choose. (More on that in a moment.)

Parallel to this, it seems to me that time is limited in regard to saving humanity from being overwhelmed by a cascade of social and environmental catastrophes — it feels like we may have a decade or two or three to pull that off, but not much more. At this point, particularly in the United States, it is not clear that we can pull that off, given the fact that Trumpism and similar toxic authoritarian trends are in the ascendancy and the organised left has largely disintegrated.

On the other hand, as social and environmental catastrophes unfold, it is likely that a deepening radicalisation will spread among more and more people. That signifies a revolutionary potential that might culminate in effective struggles for a better future. But without coherent organisations to strategise and organise in a way that is capable of helping to shape and mobilise that radicalisation, such revolutionary potential cannot be realised. The fact is that there are no such organisations. Changing that situation, to my way of thinking, must be the highest priority around which to make use of the time and energy remaining to me.

I find that one of the things I am able to do is to write books and articles, and to help generate and circulate books and articles by others, which help move thinking in that direction — and also to give talks and help generate discussions and discussion sessions at conferences and elsewhere that go in that direction. Another thing I am able to do is to be involved in modest but meaningful activist efforts — and given time and energy limitations already alluded to, over the past couple of years, I have focused on environmental justice efforts primarily through the Pittsburgh Green New Deal and the Global Ecosocialist Network.

But this is not enough. If the organisation we need is actually going to come into being, I think much of it will come together through the efforts of thoughtful and experienced activists who are currently in a small scattering of already-existing groups. This includes Solidarity. And that brings us more directly to the question you have raised in your email. In tomorrow's concluding email, I will take that up.

First of all, I owe you an apology. Not only because I am a day late in sending this off, but especially because it has ballooned into something much more than what you were asking for. It has become more a saga of a decades-long organisational quest than a direct answer to a simple question. You may decide to skip over much of what follows in order to get to the more direct answer, and for that I would certainly not blame you.

In any event, here is the promised concluding email on what we are facing and “what is to be done,” dealing specifically with your initial questions:

- Why I decided to rejoin Solidarity.
- What are my thoughts on the internal affairs of Solidarity.

When I was in the process of rejoining, I was asked to fill out a brief questionnaire which included the question: “Why are you interested in joining Solidarity?” Here is the brief response I gave:

Since the 2019 collapse of the ISO, Solidarity has continued to function as a socialist organisation, formally representing perspectives with which I am in basic agreement.

I believe the mass socialist organisation that I would like to see will probably draw from smaller organisational clusters of revolutionary socialists, of which Solidarity has proved to be one of the most durable.

Also, Solidarity is affiliated with the Fourth International, with which I strongly identify.

Everything I wrote in that brief response is true — but I was keenly aware of providing only a limited sketch of what I truly think. In approaching more complete answers to the questions you have raised, it might make sense to outline why I joined Solidarity in the first place and why I left it.

How I came to join Solidarity is a long story — sort of like a “shaggy dog” story — that has its roots in more than two decades of preliminaries.

Preliminaries

Long, long ago, after considerable experience as a new left activist in the 1960s and early '70s, and after considerable thought (and also a considerable amount of independent study), I made the decision to join the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), to which I devoted ten years of my life as a political activist.

The SWP of the 1970s was a unique intergenerational entity, with layers of comrades (some still a living part of the organisation) with experience going back to the socialist movement headed by Eugene V Debs and seasoned by the militant Industrial Workers of the World, powerfully impacted (back in the day, in real time) by Vladimir Lenin and Leon Trotsky and other comrades who made the Russian Revolution of 1917. It included some who had been part of the early Communist movement of the 1920s, people who resisted and fought against the twin corruptions of Stalinist authoritarianism and reformist adaptation to capitalism, and new layers of comrades who had been active in the radical mass upsurges of the '30s and '40s. It included some who had found ways to survive and endure as revolutionaries in the face of the conservative backlash during the '50s, and more who had been part of the radical resurgence of the '60s.

There was much to be learned in this rich context — including some negative qualities that were sectarian and sterile — but, for me as well as others, there was much more that was incredibly positive and helped to shape us as serious political activists.

Some of the negative qualities in the makeup of the SWP came to the fore as the late '70s flowed into the '80s,

corrupting the newer and younger leadership, pushing aside the organisation's positive qualities and traditions. This trend culminated in a covert programmatic transformation of the organisation into a cultish and authoritarian sect involving waves of expulsions and resignations. (Elsewhere I have attempted to help document and analyse all of this.)

After my own expulsion, and a brief period of trying to find my way within the organisational cross-currents of those who had also been driven out, I ended up in the smallest and most modest of the organisations — the Fourth Internationalist Tendency (FIT). Unlike the other new groups, the FIT did not intend to become a replacement of the SWP. Instead, it focused on three goals.

One goal was to demonstrate that utilising an essentially non-sectarian variant of the old SWP orientation could contribute positively to developing an understanding of and engagement with US and global realities.

Another goal was to utilise that analytical approach to explaining how and why the positive political entity that the SWP represented could degenerate into its opposite.

A central goal was to labour, with assistance from the Fourth International, to create a situation through which those who had been expelled and driven out of the SWP would be taken back into that organisation. This would provide an organisational framework for serious, clarifying, democratic discussions and debates (which had been prevented by the corrupted new leadership), culminating in decisions to guide the efforts of a unified US section of the Fourth International.

As I have been writing this, it has occurred to me that my ongoing references to the importance of the Fourth International (FI) seem to suggest that perhaps I should compose a third email to explain how I see this global network that originated with Trotsky and his co-thinkers back in the 1930s. I will avoid composing that addendum — though I will offer a few more comments on the FI later in this email.

The FIT came into existence at the close of 1983, but it was not until seven years later that the SWP leadership — in an offhand manner — publicly stated that it no longer considered itself part of the FI. This news caused not a ripple of dissent in what was left of the SWP membership. At that point, at the conclusion of a democratic discussion, the FIT adopted as its third goal a commitment to unite with one of the organised fragments of expelled SWPers as a first step in uniting all fragments into a new, unified FI section. The two possibilities for more immediate steps of unification were Socialist Action and the FI Caucus of Solidarity. We committed ourselves to a serious exploration of these possibilities.

Joining Solidarity

Initially, some of us guessed that Socialist Action (SA) would be the group with which we would unify. But the discussion process soon revealed that SA's rigidity would allow unity only on the basis of the FIT being absorbed and digested into an organisation that would permit no dissent from its predetermined sectarian trajectory. Solidarity, on the other hand, made it clear that — assuming we would accept the fact that the FI Caucus was organically inseparable from Solidarity as a whole — we would be welcomed into the organisation, with full democratic rights to maintain our political orientation, including the right to continue producing, as an independent journal, our monthly Bulletin in Defense of Marxism. On this basis, a majority of the FIT voted to dissolve our organisation and — on an individual basis — join Solidarity. It was on this basis that I joined Solidarity.

Those who had been part of the FIT quickly went in different directions:

Some who had disagreed with the majority decision chose not to join Solidarity.

Among those who joined, one grouping of younger comrades who had been especially enthusiastic about joining

were soon outraged that their idealised and highly romanticised notion of what Solidarity was turned out to be a mirage. They formed an irreconcilable and provocative faction that the bulk of Solidarity members found intolerable, resulting in them being kicked out.

One highly articulate FIT leader made his own place and his own way in Solidarity, with no serious inclination to consult with others who had been in the FIT, contributing to the disintegration of what some had envisioned as an FIT current within Solidarity.

Several members found the organisation to be quite inhospitable to attitudes that had been acceptable in the FIT, and some could not find in the new group the sense of community and purpose that had been a norm for them in the FIT — and they drifted away.

Several older comrades were not able to be active in the new group, and death soon claimed most of those who decided to stay the course.

Very few adjusted to simply being members of Solidarity.

At a certain point, I decided that I would be part of this “very few.” I worked to help build a Solidarity chapter in Pittsburgh and eventually (although sometimes identifying with an oppositional current) served for two years as part of Solidarity's political committee.

Leaving Solidarity

This brings me — at long last — to why I left Solidarity. After considerable experience, I came to the conclusion that, in large measure, my earlier critique of Solidarity (when I was part of the FIT) had been at least partly correct.

Solidarity initially came into being as a “regroupment” effort initiated by three separate entities with somewhat different histories — the International Socialists, Workers Power, and a sizable group of former SWPers who constituted the first split-off from Socialist Action, adopting the name Socialist Unity. Part of the glue that seemed to hold this three-group entity together was to avoid political disagreements, especially those rooted in each group's history, that might result in disunity.

This tended to nurture an internal culture of theoretical agnosticism and to choke off the possibility of having serious political discussions that might, in fact, have given the organisation as a whole a sense of direction. People were encouraged to do their own thing and not feel compelled to work together on a common orientation. Meetings tended to move away from discussions of “what we should do” and devolved into one or another activist giving an informational report on what they were doing, which resulted in meetings having a “show-and-tell” quality. For some this posed a question of why one should keep attending meetings that simply added up to talk-talk-talk.

I became fond of quoting one of the organisation's founders, who noted, after a few years, that “Solidarity is an organization of revolutionaries — it is not yet a revolutionary organization.” Inspired by my vision of the best that the SWP had been, I was hopeful that there might be some commonly agreed-upon project that could give the organisation a sense of collective purpose and collective functioning, forming a bridge to Solidarity actually becoming a revolutionary organisation.

There were attempts to get things going in that direction. At one point, a couple of experienced labour comrades urged that the organisation adopt a general orientation of trade union organising among workers. At another point, we seemed to be on the verge of a campaign designed to transform Solidarity into an activist anti-racist organisation. At yet a different point, there was an attempt to get all of the Solidarity chapters to unify around conducting a series of classes reading and discussing a broad range of Marxist texts. For various reasons, none of these efforts gained

sufficient support or traction to get off the ground.

I noticed that the organisation's membership was aging, with attrition due less to death than to apparent weariness. Periodically a new group of young comrades would join (this happened with the last major incarnation of the Pittsburgh chapter) — but most of the promising influxes of youth would give way to one or another exodus fostered by confusion, boredom, disillusionment or the lure of new reformist or anarchist fashions. There was no durable growth. I began to see (and refer to) Solidarity as “the slow boat to nowhere.”

There were four reasons for my staying in Solidarity.

I was in basic agreement with what Solidarity formally stood for, even if — as an organisation — it did not seem to be doing much about this.

I respected the fact that it contained revolutionaries and activists who did good work, albeit more or less independently of what Solidarity was (or more accurately, was not) doing.

I felt that a person self-identifying as a revolutionary socialist should be part of an organisation which stands for revolutionary socialism — and that a FI supporter should belong to an organisation having some relationship, even a loose one, with the FI.

Solidarity was blessedly free of any sectarian pretence of being an adequate revolutionary organisation, let alone of being the incarnation (or even the embryo) of the revolutionary organisation we need.

For several years I offered very frank critiques of Solidarity in the organisation's internal discussion bulletins. At a certain point I was very clear in my mind and in things that I said that the primary reason I remained in Solidarity was because I did not see anything better — and if that changed, I would leave Solidarity.

At a certain point, I concluded that something better had come into being: the International Socialist Organization. The ISO was now the largest revolutionary socialist organisation in the United States — with substantial resources and a largely youthful membership — and it was moving away from the insular sectarianism with which it had been afflicted. As a group it was clearly committed to Bolshevik-Leninist traditions that were important to me (and which Solidarity, as an organisation, stood aside from). It was also proving to be interested in developing a relationship with the FI.

I was in basic agreement with its political program, and I found that my clearly and publicly stated disagreements would be tolerated. I found through experience that I could work fairly well with this group. Despite limitations I could perceive, which were largely due to youthful inexperience, I concluded that I could do more as part of the ISO than was possible as part of Solidarity.

I have no regrets about shifting my membership from Solidarity to the ISO when I did, nor do I regret most of my ten-year experience in the ISO. On the other hand, limitations that I perceived seemed clearer to me as time went on — and these problems eventually generated a severe internal crisis which culminated in its precipitous collapse. Elsewhere I have attempted to more fully describe and analyse this.

How I came to rejoin Solidarity

Why I am rejoining Solidarity and some thoughts on the future

Finally, finally, finally at long last I am coming to a direct answer to your questions. But first (of course!) there is something more I want to interject.

Amid the rise and fall and disappearance of organisations in which I placed great hopes, I have attempted to remain true to my revolutionary commitments in four ways. One element of “remaining true” involves the continuation of a substantial amount of writing, editing, speaking, educational work, and so on. A second has involved a commitment to keeping alive a revolutionary internationalist engagement — connecting with activists in more than a dozen countries that I have visited, plus engaging with global networks, including the International Institute for Research and Education and the FI. A third has involved sustaining, to the best of my abilities, an involvement in at least some activist efforts. And a fourth has been reflected in my being a member of certain socialist organisations — and my rejoining Solidarity especially fits into this fourth element of trying to be true. So I will say something more about this fourth element, with a focus on how it has been realised over the past five years.

Not long after the collapse of the ISO, I decided to join two socialist organisations — the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) and the Tempest Collective.

It was easy to join DSA nationally — which I did early on by filling out a brief form and signing up for a modest automatic dues payment. This was simply a means for making contact with, and receiving information about, what had suddenly, in the wake of the initial Bernie Sanders Presidential campaign, become the largest socialist group in the US (with a paper membership hitting the 100,000 mark, and an active membership estimated at only 10% of that — which was still an impressive 10,000 people). To be a member required one to agree with a very general commitment to democratic, progressive, and socialist principles — which was no problem at all.

I almost joined the local branch (consisting of 700 paper members, “only” about 10% active), but I veered away after close friends reported that it had been taken over by an intolerant clique engaging in “cancel culture” and expulsions (including of the group’s initial leaders) aimed at those guilty of “incorrect” behaviour.

After a couple of years, this ugliness seemed to have melted away, and I joined the local DSA chapter. In addition to attending some of the monthly meetings (generally drawing between 40 and 80 people — mostly between 18 and 30-something years of age), I attempted to become engaged with two different working groups — the ecosocialist working group and the political education working group.

It turned out that the first — under the banner of “mutual aid” — was basically engaged in providing free food to poor people, and I was unable to find my footing within it. Through the second I was able to help organise two good educational programs (using short videos and capable speakers) that were embedded in chapter meetings: one on the Green New Deal and another on Rosa Luxemburg. The first working group seems to have melted away. The capable coordinator of the second resigned after concluding that DSA was so diffuse and non-activist that his time would be better spent in a different organisation, consequently joining the Party of Socialism and Liberation.

While disagreeing with this comrade’s solution, his critique struck me as more or less accurate — but it still makes sense to me to maintain my membership at this time, with no high expectations.

My expectations were much higher with Tempest. The initial core of the group was composed of people who had been part of the ISO, and most were between the ages of 20 and 50. Others who were not from the ISO also joined. The hundred or so members were predominantly much younger than me, very bright, with a much higher level of political experience and theoretical knowledge than was common in DSA. Yet there were also limitations which resulted in my becoming keenly disappointed.

There were at least two problems, it seemed to me, that were responsible for these limitations. One was the fact that comrades had been badly burned by the negative aspects of the ISO experience, with the collapse of confident and optimistic assumptions, which fed into a deeply agnostic and uncertain approach to actually doing things (reminiscent of some of Solidarity's limitations).

Another problem was the fact that the internal culture of the ISO in its "good old days" had very serious limitations. Many branches were animated by routines involving paper sales, literature tables, forums, abstract political discussions, and not much else — such as participating with non-members in serious social struggles. There were comrades who did engage in serious mass work and organising, but this was not connected with any democratic collectivist process within the ISO as a whole. There was a disconnect, it seemed to me, between discussion and struggle, contributing to a shallowness in political understanding and organisational norms.

It seemed clear to me, through some frustrating experiences, that my efforts in the group were unlikely to be fruitful. Worse, it seemed to me that the group as a whole had no clear sense of activist direction and, from what I could see, seemed unlikely to find its way to such a direction. Still, I am in basic agreement with what the group stands for, and I know it contains very good people. So it makes sense to me to continue paying dues and to remain a member.

Also, as Bertolt Brecht once said: "Because things are as they are, they will not stay as they are." We have entered a period destined to be saturated by very terrible shocks. This includes the proliferation of environmental catastrophes, complemented by a jarring triumph and predictable outcomes of Trumpism.

This will have — and already is having — a powerful impact on the lives and consciousness of millions of people, and a mass radicalisation is in the process of unfolding, with people pushed out of what has been "normal." (This also impacts on members of such groups as Solidarity, DSA and Tempest.) Where they end up cannot be predicted, but the outcome will not automatically be a future shaped by revolutionary-democratic, humanist, and socialist values and commitments.

I believe that hoped-for future can only come into being if an organisation that does not yet exist can somehow come into being: a revolutionary socialist organisation with sufficient political clarity, rock-hard commitment combined with tactical flexibility, organisational coherence, and a mass base.

If such an organisation does come into being, it will in large measure be the result of different forces — in part drawn from small groups of good people with the right kinds of ideas and commitments — cohering into something approximating what is needed.

Despite its obvious imperfections, it seems to me that DSA is one such group. The Tempest Collective is another. That is one reason that I choose to belong to them. And based on my experience and brooding reflections, it seems obvious to me that Solidarity is yet another — and that it makes sense for me to belong to it. And so I have rejoined it.

Internal stirrings in Solidarity

The first question is finally answered, and now on to the second. This can be done more succinctly, because I have just become a member of Solidarity once again, so there is much less I am able to say about the state of the internal affairs of Solidarity.

Why I am rejoining Solidarity and some thoughts on the future

I have been warmly welcomed into the organisation. As one comrade put it: “Welcome home.” I have had substantial telephone discussions with a couple of people. But where I live (Pittsburgh) there is no longer (and not yet) a branch of the organisation.

On the other hand, I have attended a couple of online meetings that have been organised to discuss some of the internal documents prepared for the upcoming World Congress of the FI. One of these discussions was an open meeting of Solidarity’s National Committee, which also discussed a motion that Solidarity become the US section of the FI. In a straw poll taken at the meeting, this motion passed almost unanimously (with a couple of abstentions). Soon a mail poll of the entire membership will decide the matter.

In the two Zoom discussions there were several things I noticed. Solidarity seems the same in some ways, but also different. Some of the same old faces are there, but some are gone, and there were some new faces as well. It is as if the organisation has been stirred, and it is not quite the same as when I left it. There were differences on important questions — yet these were discussed with a clarity and comradeliness that positively impressed me. At the same time, I found common reference points that made me feel very much at home.

Regardless of the outcome of the upcoming vote regarding the nature of Solidarity’s relationship with the FI, the fact that it is taking place — along with the discussions I witnessed and participated in — indicates a dramatic development. I think it is a good development.

Whether or not one considers all the changes to have been for the better, it is undeniable that the FI has also changed.

When it was initially founded in 1938, the FI perceived itself as “the world party of socialist revolution” — in contrast to the Second International that had been corrupted by policies and practices of a reformist bureaucracy, and in contrast to the Third International that had been corrupted by policies and practices of the Stalinist bureaucracy. Both of these were brilliantly and incisively analysed and critiqued by Trotsky and his co-thinkers. It was anticipated that the tiny forces in the FI would soon be reinforced by massive breakaways of revolutionary-minded elements from the Socialist and Communist movements, plus other radicalised forces from the ranks of the working class and the oppressed.

This anticipated growth did not happen, although for many years Fourth Internationalists were unwilling or unable to let go of this vision. Eventually, some dissident members sarcastically proclaimed that the FI had shifted from being the world party of socialist revolution to the world party of socialist resolutions.

In the 21st century, rejecting the notion that it represents “the sole vanguard,” the FI describes itself in this way: “Its forces are limited, but they are present on every continent and have actively contributed to the resistance to Nazism, May ’68 in France, solidarity with anti-colonial struggles (Algeria, Vietnam), the growth of the anti-globalization movement and the development of ecosocialism.” Today it reaches out to those who share the “belief that an ecosocialist society, liberated from class, gender, race or colonial domination is needed, and can be achieved only through a revolution.”

To the extent that Solidarity — not a cluster of its members, but the organisation as a whole — connects with the FI, it seems to me to be going in a revolutionary internationalist direction that will make the organisation stronger, while also (through the contribution of its own experience and insights) making the FI stronger.

I am glad to have received your most recent email.

Why I am rejoining Solidarity and some thoughts on the future

One thing that strikes me is that I may have presented my thoughts on the FI in an unbalanced and misleading way. It was not decisive in my rejoining Solidarity — I was quite unaware of current developments regarding Solidarity's relationship with the FI before I decided to rejoin. Only after rejoining did I discover that such developments were unfolding, that an FI World Congress was coming up, and that a couple of about-to-take-place online discussions in Solidarity were to be focused on that. Attending both discussions (over the past week-and-a-half) pulled my narrative in that direction more than would otherwise have been the case.

This is not to be dismissive of the FI — but more decisive for me is a general internationalism which has become a more intense part of my experiences, perceptions and commitments over the past couple of decades. Connecting with activists and groups in more than twenty countries — most of whom were not affiliated with the FI — has been of profound importance for me. My thinking and feelings about the FI (in its current incarnation) fit into that but do not define it.

While Solidarity's growing connection with the FI strikes me quite positively, it was — to repeat — not a factor in my rejoining. Instead, that decision flowed from the belief that the effective revolutionary socialist group we need is likely to be initiated (as I have noted) by

... small groups of good people with the right kinds of ideas and commitments ... cohering into something approximating what is needed.

Despite its obvious imperfections, it seems to me that DSA is one such group. The Tempest Collective is another. That is one reason that I choose to belong to them. And based on my experience and brooding reflections, it seems obvious to me that Solidarity is yet another — and that it makes sense for me to belong to it. And so I have rejoined it.

Of course, DSA as a whole will not go in this direction — but I agree with you that elements within it might, particularly if Solidarity and Tempest unite for the purpose of bringing such an organisation into being.

Your conclusions about the current crisis of capitalism make sense to me, and I very much agree with your quite negative assessment of the Democratic Party (although I believe some left-wing Democrats elected to local offices could be won to something better).

I would like to respond to something you say with which I am in sympathy but also only partial agreement. You write: "My two major concerns are: getting a base in the working class via union work (including issues of race, gender, climate, internationalism, etc.) and being clear on the Democratic Party and the need to actually begin experiments in independent political action."

I want to see a strong left-wing base in the working class, and I am in favour of the kind of class-conscious, democratic, radical union work you describe. But most people who are part of the working class are not in unions, most members of Tempest and Solidarity are not in unions, and for that matter, I am not in a union. It would not be a simple thing for a majority of us (including most workers) to be in a union. For that matter, successful engagement in independent political action will be dependent on popular mobilisations and struggles, through social movements largely functioning outside of a trade union framework.

At the same time, I think you are right that if a small group tries to do too many things, "prioritising" all of the important social movements, its efforts will be too diffuse. There needs to be greater focus, and I think your two major concerns are necessary but not sufficient.

Why I am rejoining Solidarity and some thoughts on the future

I think there is another concern that should be added, which connects with the two you have identified while allowing for the engagement of activists outside of the unions, with potential for uniting social movements prepared to push in the direction of independent political action. For me, this additional focus has to do with what has been identified, variously, as the Green New Deal, Climate Justice, Climate Jobs, etc. Over the past few years, I have devoted a considerable amount of energy to that.

In any event, I very much agree with you that it would be a very good thing for Tempest, Solidarity, and others to join together to build a broader revolutionary current. I also agree with your comment: “Perhaps building a broader revolutionary current could be such a project centred on independent political action, union democracy, growth, and militancy; anti-imperialism; anti-racism/gender rights; ecosocialism; and an understanding of the deep nature of the crisis of capitalism (even if there is disagreement on the specifics).”

I was pleased to receive your most recent email, which dramatically narrows any seeming disagreements between us. I am very glad that my clarification regarding revolutionary internationalism has been understood. I am also heartened by your two assertions that “any revolutionary current we can aid won’t be mostly workers, but it is a matter of direction,” and that “it will be the social movements that are key to independent political action, but I think local union groups can be drawn in ...”

I would only add that most of those involved in social movements and in such groups as Tempest, Solidarity, and DSA may not be unionised workers, but they happen to be part of the working class (due to the fact that they are dependent for a living income derived from the sale of their labour-power, that is to say, their ability to work for an employer). In any event, I think we are pretty much on the same page.

I think we are also in agreement regarding the logic of helping to create greater socialist unity around the general political and activist orientation we have been discussing — which might fruitfully involve an organisational unity of those involved in the Tempest Collective, Solidarity, and at least some of the currents in DSA. Bringing this about will, of course, not be a simple matter, but it will certainly be worth staying in touch with each other to share information and ideas.

And beyond that, there may be some things we can do together — and with others — to help advance such a unification process.

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