

Get the Hell on a Path of Socialism

If we humans really were on the brink of saving ourselves in the '80s, but were swamped by a tide of elite, free-market fanaticism- one that was opposed by millions of people around the world- then there is something quite concrete we can do about it.

We can confront that economic order and try to replace it with something that is rooted in both human and planetary security, one that does not place the quest for growth and profit at all costs at its center.

And the good news- and, yes, there is some- is that today, unlike in 1989, a young and growing movement of green democratic socialists is advancing in the United States with precisely that vision. And that represents more than just an electoral alternative-

it's our one and only planetary lifeline.

There is nothing essential about humans living under capitalism; we humans are capable of organizing ourselves into all kinds of different social orders, including societies with much longer time horizons and far more respect for natural life-support systems. Indeed, humans have lived that way for the vast majority of our history and many Indigenous cultures keep earth-centered cosmologies alive to this day. Capitalism is a tiny blip in the collective story of our species.

But simply blaming capitalism isn't enough. It is absolutely true that the drive for endless growth and profits stands squarely opposed to the imperative for a rapid transition off fossil fuels. It is absolutely true that the global unleashing of the unbound form of capitalism known as neoliberalism in the '80s and '90s has been the single greatest contributor to a disastrous global emission spike in recent decades, as well as the single greatest obstacle to science-based climate action ever since governments began meeting to talk (and talk and



talk) about lowering emissions. And it remains the biggest obstacle today, even in countries that market themselves as climate leaders, like Canada and France.

But we have to be honest that autocratic industrial socialism has also been a disaster for the environment, as evidenced most dramatically by the fact that carbon emissions briefly plummeted when the economies of the former Soviet Union collapsed in the early 1990s.

Venezuela's **petro-populism** has continued this toxic tradition into the present day, with disastrous results.

Let's acknowledge this fact, while also pointing out that countries with a strong democratic socialist tradition — like **Denmark, Sweden, and Uruguay**- have some of the most visionary environmental policies in the world. From this we can conclude that socialism isn't necessarily ecological, but that a new form of **democratic eco-socialism**, with the humility to learn from Indigenous teachings about the duties to future generations and the interconnection of all of life, appears to be humanity's best shot at collective survival.

These are the stakes in the surge of movement-grounded political candidates who are advancing a democratic eco-socialist vision, connecting

the dots between the economic depredations caused by decades of neoliberal ascendancy and the ravaged state of our natural world. Partly inspired by Bernie Sanders's presidential run, candidates in a variety of races- like **Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez** in New York, Kaniela Ing in Hawaii, and many more- are running on platforms calling for a "**Green New Deal**" that meets everyone's basic material needs, offers real solutions to racial and gender inequities, while catalyzing a rapid transition to 100 percent renewable energy. Many, like New York gubernatorial candidate **Cynthia Nixon** and New York attorney general candidate **Zephyr Teachout**, have pledged not to take money from fossil fuel companies and are promising instead to prosecute them.

These candidates, whether or not they identify as democratic socialist, are rejecting the neoliberal centrism of the establishment Democratic Party, with its tepid "market-based solutions" to the ecological crisis, as well as Donald Trump's all-out war on nature. And they are also presenting a concrete alternative to the **undemocratic extractivist socialists** of both the past and present. Perhaps most importantly, this new generation of leaders isn't interested in **scapegoating "humanity"** for the greed and corruption of a tiny elite. It seeks instead to help humanity- particularly its most systematically unheard and uncounted members — to find their collective voice and power so they can stand up to that elite.

We aren't losing earth- but the earth is getting so hot so fast that it is on a trajectory to lose a great many of us. In the nick of time, a new political path to safety is presenting itself. This is no moment to bemoan our lost decades. It's the moment to get the hell on that path.

- **Naomi Klein**

Senior Correspondent at The Intercept, award-winning journalist and best-selling author, most recently of "No Is Not Enough." She has also written "This Changes Everything," "The Shock Doctrine," and "No Logo."



RE: MADURO ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT

Castro Assassination Plots Were Often Spectacular Failures

Fidel Castro's would-be assassins are alleged to have plotted to kill him in a variety of ways, including poisoning him, blowing him up during a speech and dosing his dive suit with fatal botulism which just coincidentally is called '**Madura stink foot**.' Shades of **President Maduro** of Venezuela who recently survived a reported drone attack during a speech.

Many of the Castro plots were spectacular failures. More Wile E. Coyote than Jason Bourne, despite the USA running a famous School of the Assassins in the South.

"More people have tried to murder the world's most famous socialist than any man alive," according to the 2006 British documentary "638 Ways to Kill Castro."

"If surviving assassination attempts were an Olympic event, I would win the gold medal," Castro liked to tell interviewers.

His reputation as a cheater of death took hold early. As a young revolutionary he was reported dead twice by Cuba's press -- "perishing" once when he led a failed uprising against a military barracks and again when he returned from exile by boat with a guerrilla force.

Few had as much reason to want Castro dead as the American mafia. Before the revolution, US mobsters paid off Cuban officials to let them operate hotels, casinos and brothels on the island, just 90 miles from Florida but well out of US jurisdiction. Castro brought the party to a crashing halt, seizing the mobsters' casinos and hotels and sending them scurrying back to the States.

And that led to an unusual partnership.

A CIA agent met with mobster Sam Giancana in Miami in 1960. Giancana agreed to help the American government kill Castro and even said the mob would waive their usual fee, according to declassified CIA reports."Sam suggested they not resort to firearms, but if he could be furnished with some type of potent pill, that could be placed in Castro's food or drink," according to a "Secret - Eyes Only" CIA cable that was released in 2007 as part of a Freedom of Information Act request.

Cyanide pills were delivered via the mob's contacts to the former Hilton Hotel in Havana, now nationalized and renamed the Hotel Habana Libre, the CIA documents show. It served chocolate milkshakes that Castro adored. But on the night that Castro turned up, it all went wrong for the mob assassin, according to Fabián Escalante, a retired Cuban intelligence officer who looked after Castro for decades.

"They ordered a chocolate milkshake, and in the rush and nervousness brought on by the moment for which he had prepared himself for over a year, he broke the capsule of poison while trying to pick it up, as it had stuck to the shelf of the freezer in which it was hidden," Escalante wrote in his book "Executive Action: 634 Ways to Kill Fidel Castro."

The CIA tried pills again, recruiting an erstwhile lover of Castro's to deliver the poison.

Marita Lorenz had met and fallen in love with Castro shortly after the revolution, she wrote in her 1993 memoir, "Marita: One Woman's Extraordinary Tale of Love and Espionage from Castro to Kennedy." They had a whirlwind romance, but then, Lorenz wrote, the CIA recruited her when she visited the United States. She was sent back to

Cuba with poison pills, Lorenz remembered. But when she got to Havana, she found that the pills had dissolved in the jar of face cream where she had hidden them and, worse yet, Castro was aware of the plot. "Are you here to kill me?" Lorenz recalled Castro asking her, and then handing her his pistol as they met in a hotel suite for a tryst. Instead of shooting Castro, according to Lorenz, she fell into the Cuban leader's arms.

Following the disastrous 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion, more than 1,000 CIA-trained Cuban exiles were taken prisoner by Castro's forces. The US government sent attorney James B. Donovan to negotiate the exiles' release directly with Castro. He spent months talking with Castro, even bringing his son along. The relationship developed and Castro took the Americans along for one of his favorite activities, spear fishing in Cuba's crystalline waters. Those outings inspired a new CIA assassination plot: the toxic dive suit. According to a CIA document that was partially declassified in 2015, it was proposed that Donovan become the "unwitting purveyor" of a dive suit contaminated with disfiguring "**Madura foot fungus**" and deadly "**tuberculosis bacteria**."

But, according to the CIA document, Donovan turned down the dive suit he was to present to Castro because he had already given one to the Cuban leader as a gift. However the Kennedy's, Bobby and Jack were unrelenting in their determination to have Castro killed.

Over the decades Castro became one of the longest-ruling heads of state in the world, but the plots against him never abated. According to Escalante, Castro was targeted with sniper rifles, explosive-laden baseballs, poisoned cigars and pistols disguised as news cameras. All failed.

Even in his fifth decade of power, Castro was still calling out plots against him. In 2000 at the 10th Ibero-American Summit of Latin American and European leaders in Panama, Castro publicly denounced what he said was another attempt about to be made against him.

"They are already in Panama and they have introduced weapons and explosives," Castro said, holding up a photo of one of his most persistent foes: Luis Posada Carriles.

Posada was a Cuban exile and former soldier in the CIA sabotage campaign against the Cuban government. He had been accused by Cuban officials in the 1976 downing of a Cubana airliner and the 1997 bombings of hotels in Havana. Posada, his face riddled with scars from what he said was a failed attempt by Cuban agents to kill him, has at various times both denied and admitted playing a role in the airplane and hotel bombings. The plan, Castro said, was to blow him up while he gave a speech to a Panamanian university. Panamanian police arrested Posada and three other Cuban exiles who were indeed in the country. The men were convicted of endangering public safety but then controversially pardoned.

Despite the constant threat of assassination, it was not a bomb or cyanide capsule that removed Castro from power but a botched medical operation.

In 2006, having given up his beloved cigars and switched to a mostly vegetarian diet for health reasons, Castro was afflicted by an intestinal ailment. A series of bungled operations nearly cost him his life, and two years later he was forced to cede power to his younger brother Raul Castro.

Increasingly infirm, Castro still traveled with heavy security in the last months of his life, though he was rarely spotted in public. But on his birthday in August, Castro's presence was again felt. Around Cuba, the government posted signs reading,

"Long live Fidel."

- Thanks to Patrick Oppman