



## **Mussolini Supporters Would Vote for Sanders**

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The Political Right in the United States is very quick to label Bernie Sanders an Ideologue; which he may or may not be. But, at the same time the Right as it exists today consists of no fewer ideologues than the Left.

The Right today consists of two factions melded into what the Right calls Conservatism, which, if my memory serves me correctly, is nothing like the Conservatism I supported when Barry Goldwater was the person espousing the philosophy.

The Political Right today is a blend of staunch Free Marketeers (As in 'Mouseketeers') and Religious Conservatives. A far cry from Goldwater, who once said that all straight thinking Americans should kick Jerry Falwell in the ass. Supposedly, that was the cleaned up version of the story.

The Right's stance on medical care is especially emblematic of their socio / political / economic "philosophy."

For the record, the problem with medical care in the United States is not the care itself, but its delivery, because of its cost and its scarcity in many sections of the country.

Even those in the American middle class who have their own private medical insurance, far too often have a problem with its cost. It's just too darn expensive.

The Republicans talk a good story about free market medical Insurance, but in essence they have offered no concrete solution to the problem of affordable ubiquitous medical for all American citizens.

Currently, a large segment of the country already has "free" medical coverage, underwritten by the Federal government and the states, mostly through Medicare or Medicaid, Social Security Tri Care or the VA.

The bottom line is that any straight thinking American knows there is a problem with medical care in this country - in spite of the fact that there are workable cost effective beneficial solutions in the ether that the Republicans (as well as the Democrats) refuse to consider.

And, it is not only the delivery of medical care that is a problem for many Americans. There is the problem of extremely high college tuition and its attendant student debt. There is the problem of usurious credit card interest rates and its attendant debt. There are unfair tax advantages that certain investments like stock trading receive, the benefits of which most working stiffs can't take advantage, and there are other government granted inequities and predatory practices for which government could provide a solution, or at least be of help in resolving.

Outrage over unfair conditions is not new in America. It has been with us from the very beginning of the country. All we have to do is recall Shay's rebellion wherein former Revolutionary soldiers were losing their farms because they couldn't convert their crops to cash to pay the taxes on their farms, and subsequently were being dispossessed in large numbers.

Rather than do what it could to help, something that Rhode Island did after a change of political party controlling the legislature, the Government in Massachusetts sided with those who stood to profit from the farmers' lack of hard currency to pay their tax debts. Solutions could have been enacted, but Massachusetts' government officials stood by their political supports who were profiting from the farmers' losses.

In a sense, the recent 2008 Financial Crisis and its subsequent "Too big to fail bank bailout," which left the little guy holding the bag and losing his property, was in some ways similar to the earlier crisis in 1787. Many of those who had profited in creating the financial crisis were rewarded in its solution. An underlying sense of injustice, while rarely discussed on the airways, remains a simmering element in American's dissatisfaction with our state and Federal governments and the financial and commercial institutions government seems to inordinately protect.

This is where Bernie comes in. Bernie has a solution for all of our problems.

For example, he has a solution for our medical care problem – albeit in this writer's opinion, a terrible one. But, putting my opinion aside, Bernie has a solution.

The Right, on the other hand, has no real solutions for the obvious injustices that plague many Americans. And, when it comes to a solution for the health care problem, the Right only has a slogan, "free market health insurance" – and it appears they have tattooed that slogan inside their rib cage where their hearts should be, or maybe inside their skull where their brains should be – or possibly in both places.

Now - how does this involve Mussolini?

You see in 1965 I was 21, and I lived in Rome, Italy. And, across the street from my apartment near Piazza Bologna, there was a tailor shop run by a personable middle aged guy named Luigi. In my very broken Italian, mostly terrible translations from my somewhat conversant Spanish, Luigi and I would speak about many matters. I had been a Political Science major during my abbreviated stint at CCNY, infamously known in earlier days as the Little Red School House.

Luigi and I had several extended political conversations during this post war period, which would eventually come to be known as *La Epoca de la Dolce Vita*. And, it was. I hung out on Via Veneto with all the Ex-Pats and early Euro Trash. It was truly the time of Fellini's Rome.

One day Luigi beckoned me with the Italian upside down come here "hand gesture" into the back room workshop. I said "cos e'?" He pointed to a spot above the door. Visible only from inside the room was a picture of Benito Mussolini. I was shocked. I was Jew from the Bronx who had, save for one distant cousin living in Israel, no relatives left in Europe after World War Two. To me Mussolini was the same as Hitler. And, in many ways, death camps aside, he was. He was, in fact, the creator of Fascism.

Luigi saw the look on my face and quickly, tried to calm me. And, as he blurted out "*La politica*," he simultaneously scraped his chin with his hand, which translates from gestured Italian to spoken English as "yuch." But, he continued "*Ma, i treni erano in tempo*." 'The trains were on time.'

Now, as a young man I was familiar with people saying that under Facism "The trains were on time," which most Americans thought was comical. But, that an entire population would vote and support a dictator simply because he promised to make the trains run on time, seemed incredulous. And, whether or not they actually ran on time under Mussolini is questionable.

Mussolini promised to bring some semblance of order to the chaos. And, for many Italians that was enough. And, for Luigi, living through a new incarnation of corruption and Libertinism, the belief that "*I treni erano in tempo*" was enough to overlook the brutal dictatorship that had led to war and the destruction of his country.

So, when the Right scoffs at Sanders saying that 'while Castro may not have been perfect, but everyone learned to read and write, and they had good medical care,' the Right is missing the point in their quick to criticize sarcasm. The arrogant Right can't see that Sanders is offering a belief in a solution, exactly what Mussolini had offered.

If you don't believe me, believe Luigi, an Italian who lived through the Second World War, and thought very little of Mussolini's politics, and, in fact despised them. But, in 1965, in a revitalized

Italy, Luigi still had the infamous photo of Mussolini hanging where only he could see it. For Luigi, a belief in Mussolini's promised solutions was enough.

For Sander's supporters, many of whom have no real idea who Marx, Engels, Stalin, Mao or Chavez are – Sanders' promised solutions are enough. Quite possibly, in twenty years some former youth, now a middle aged man, will have a picture of Bernie hanging in his closet and occasionally will push aside his clothing to show it to a friend, and will recall with great remembrance the hope he instilled in him. He might say, "Bernie had solutions." Translated into Italian - "*I treni erano in tempo.*"