

How Liberals Strengthen the Right Wing

By [Shamus Cooke](#)

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The Democrats look around, blindly, after losing their long-held Senate seat in Massachusetts, and with it their Senate super-majority. They wrongly blame the voters, or their “populist” opponent, but rarely themselves. The Democrats’ claim to be “shocked,” but this scenario is now too familiar in the U.S. two-party system — that corporate-owned game of political musical chairs.

Just when it seemed that the Democrats could finally “do something” — since they had a year of super-majority status in the Senate — a wrench was somehow thrown in the machinery.

After reaching 60 Senate votes (counting the Independents), a new grouping magically emerged in the party — the Blue Dog Democrats: not quite Democrat, not quite Republican. And now, because the Democrats have, again, proved they are the “other” party of big business, they’ve lost their super-powerful congressional status, with many more losses soon to come. Obama has already begun his political retreat, as if he had made any forward progress.

This always seems to happen to the Democrats, because they always fail to do something that motivates people to vote for them. Sure, they can make fine speeches and promises, and even bullying threats against the big banks, but nothing ever positive results, unless they feel threatened by angry, mobilized workers.

The progressive groups who refuse to detach themselves from this corporate party always fall back on the Republican bogeyman to scare people to once again “plug their nose and vote Democrat.” Sometimes they preach about the impossibility of forming a third party — one that represents the working class. Often the Democrat hangers-on point to Franklin Delano Roosevelt and encourage the present Democrats to act like their political ancestor.

Not only has the Democratic Party changed drastically since the Great Depression, but FDR too was guilty of similar crimes as the current, bought-off Democrats. Although he, to be sure, was far bolder — and his treasury far richer — than his modern day equivalents, FDR quickly abandoned his jobs programs to funnel money for another familiar and more profitable purpose — war.

As a result, the once popular FDR received a healthy dose of voter backlash. At the height of his popularity, the Democrats dominated Congress, with an amazing 76 Senators and 334 House members. During the course of Roosevelt’s administrations, these numbers plunged to 57 Senators and 242 in the House — a fact rarely mentioned by today’s ravenously pro-FDR liberals. If the Depression-era Republicans were not hopelessly clueless, the Democrats would have fared far worse.

Presently, there remain liberals who embarrassingly cling to Obama's coat tails — even as he follows in Bush's war-criminal footsteps. They make excuse after excuse for the President's bloody behavior abroad and his domestic carelessness for all things non-corporate.

These liberals offer no real solution, so of course the Republicans will continue to gain steam from the Democrats' behavior; but they aren't the only ones benefiting from the failed liberalism of the Left. The Far Right is growing rapidly from the bankruptcy of both parties.

While the Democrats — and some Republicans — preach the need for “bi-partisanship,” “moderation,” and “centrism” — all code words for maintaining the status quo — the far right demands “revolution,” the dismantling of the Federal Reserve, and other radical sounding solutions. Of course, these long-term goals are shelved for more realizable short-term goals: racism (anti-immigration), patriotism (for legal citizens only), and many false denunciations of Obama's “socialism” (the President is as dedicated as Bush to corporate rule).

The far right denounces the status quo, and they display energy, enthusiasm, and will power to reach their goal, while liberals merely talk. The more that progressives talk, while doing nothing powerful to promote change, the stronger the rightwing grows, while their so-called solutions involving race and religion become evermore seductive. Weakness invites aggression.

The far right screams loudly about the economic crisis and its enormous long-term implications, while most liberals seem content to sit on their hands and hope that Obama “comes to his senses.”

Contrary to this belief, Obama is quite conscious in his decision making. He is consciously using the mass unemployment to push down wages, which both parties have agreed are too high. He rationally chose to escalate the Afghanistan war, while drastically increasing drone-attack “targeted assassinations” (a war crime) in Pakistan. He “logically” chose to bail out the banks, while doing next to nothing about jobs.

America's labor unions have a special role to play if this trend is to be reversed. Nowhere else does there exist an institution distinctly representing working people with the resources and organizational power that unions have. This power, if it is put into motion, can inspire millions of people not only to join unions, but to become actively engaged in politics where they can actually have an impact on events that affect them. If labor mobilizes its ranks, reaches out to the vast majority of the unorganized, and becomes aggressive in promoting its demands, the far right will see its membership and effectiveness shrivel.

There are thousands of people in the “tea party” movement who would join such a labor-led movement, but not if the unions continue to attach themselves to the pro-business Democrats, and definitely not if labor continues to ask “favors” or make foul “bargains” with the Democrats where working people end up with less than they have now.

To out-muscle the far right, the unions must adopt a few of its tactics. Richard Trumka, President of the AFL-CIO, has acknowledged this fact recently. In response to the

Democrat's loss in Massachusetts, Trumka stated that, "It's not time to leave it to any political party to take care of us once we put them in office. It's time to organize and mobilize as never before..."

Although Trumka has not distanced the AFL-CIO far enough from the Democrats, his words hint that the AFL-CIO will start to engage in "street politics," a much needed change in union strategy, where the full weight of organized labor— in combination with the majority of working people— can be used to fight in defense of their own interests. The rank and file can and must ensure that Trumka's words are put into action.

It is up to labor to publicly challenge Obama's pro-corporate policies through giant demonstrations, which include demands for jobs programs, extension of unemployment benefits, ending the wars, expansion of Medicare, and fully funding Social Security and public education. These basic demands, if fought for aggressively, have the potential to unite much of America in a movement capable of changing the course of U.S. politics — away from corporate dominance and towards meeting the needs of the working class.

Shamus Cooke is a social service worker, trade unionist, and writer for Workers Action (www.workerscompass.org). He can be reached at shamuscook@yahoo.com

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