

The Great Bi-Partisan Deception

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Some cancer is too aggressive even for chemotherapy. The US political system is infected with such a disease; and we may be witnessing the first death spasms. In a country ravaged by war and economic crisis, with tens of millions of people suffering, politicians are capable of doing absolutely nothing to help ordinary people. The only two “achievements” of the Democrat’s super majority in the Senate — over the course of five months — were an ineffectual stimulus package and a “surge” of troops in Afghanistan.

Now the two party system is reshuffling to pursue a joint mission. Policies that the corporate elite have been planning for decades are in the process of being implemented. The recession is being used as the ultimate excuse to gut Medicare, Social Security, public education and other social services while expanding war, corporate tax breaks and corporate health care.

Typically, the Republicans leave the really dirty work to the Democrats, who enforce pro-corporate policies by exploiting their political capital with labor and community groups — while somehow managing to emerge “the lesser of two evils.” This is why Bill Clinton was left with the task of “reforming” welfare and implementing NAFTA. In regards to “reforming” Social Security, Bush looked into the abyss and got scared; better to let the Democrats play with that fire.

Obama, then, is being left to perform the dirtiest of missions. He refuses to do it alone. This is the motive behind his never-ending plea for “bi-partisan cooperation.” While the Democrats had a super majority in the Senate and huge House majority, Obama never stopped begging the Republicans to join him. And, yes, Obama understands that the Republicans hate him, insult him in public, and are betting high stakes on his failure. Still, he needs them to bear some of the political weight that comes with attacking popular social programs. The Republicans will likely meet Obama in the middle over many of these key issues; they don’t want to miss this historic opportunity to implement ideas they’ve been advancing for years through right-wing think tanks.

Thus, the Democrats worked with the Republicans in the Senate finance committee to create the still-pending corporate health care bill. The upcoming “bi-partisan health care summit” will likely be used to get further Republican support for this giant corporate giveaway. If the bill is then passed, the millions of people forced to buy shoddy health care will have both parties to denounce.

The Democrats also recently worked with the Republicans to create a corporate-oriented jobs bill, which focuses on tax breaks and credits for businesses. This bill — reduced to only 15 billion dollars by the Democrats — cannot guarantee that one new job will be created. Both parties, however, agreed that actually creating jobs should take a back seat to catering to the needs of corporations.

In regard to education, Obama's plan — disingenuously named Race to the Top — dismantles public education. The essence of this plan was taken from the longtime conservative ideas of replacing public schools with private charter schools and imposing teacher merit pay; both will decimate public education and teachers' unions, as was done in both New Orleans and Chicago. U.S. News declared that "Republicans and Democrats can Embrace Obama's Race to the Top for Education" (December 2, 2009). Indeed, Republicans have remained largely quiet about the plan, while secretly taking credit for an idea that goes far to the right of Bush's No Child Left Behind.

When it comes to Social Security and Medicare, Obama is going forward with his "bi-partisan deficit reduction committee." And the purpose of this committee? The corporate-friendly Wall Street Journal correctly called it the "Political Cover Commission."

"A gang of 10 Democrats and eight Republicans would be charged to come up with ways to reduce the deficit. The idea is for everyone to hold hands and agree to raise taxes and cut entitlement spending together [Medicare, Social Security, etc.], so neither party gets the blame." (January 21, 2010).

In this case, the Wall Street Journal's motivation for truth telling is to warn Republicans of the political fallout for such a move. The Journal would rather the Democrats take total blame for their corporate motivated policies. And this may be what ends up happening.

The Republicans may end up forcing the Democrats to go it alone in implementing crucial aspects of the above right-wing agenda. One way the Democrats have threatened to go solo is through the process of "budget reconciliation," which allows them to bypass a Republican filibuster. The Philadelphia Inquirer explains:

"Democrats in the House and Senate can pass health-care reform — and the rest of Obama's agenda — by insisting on majority rule instead of the 60-vote supermajority that it lost in the Senate with the surprise election of Republican Scott Brown in Massachusetts." (February 14, 2010).

Such a bold move would be commendable if it were to be used to help average people. Instead, it will be used to shift massive amounts of wealth away from the working class toward corporations. If the Democrats accomplish this sinister feat alone, the Republicans will be seen as the populist party of opposition, while the Democrats will enter political

oblivion.

To ensure the Democrat's fall, a final prop must be removed. Labor unions and community groups must refuse future support to this corporate-owned party. In the meantime, these groups must unite in opposition to the above bi-partisan agenda. A massive education campaign is needed to inform workers about the coming assault on their long-cherished social programs. Social Security, Medicare, and public education, etc., must be saved by ending wars and bank bailouts, and by raising taxes on the wealthy and corporations.

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