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### December 21, 2014: Questioning Capitalism

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Title: Questioning Capitalism

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12/21/2014—I signed an online petition yesterday for Bernie Sanders to run for President. I don't believe the petition specified how he might run, whether in the Democratic primaries or as an independent, and I don't want him to do anything that would help elect a Republican President, but I do want him to run. Sanders has no realistic chance currently to win the Democratic nomination. That candidate is likely to be Hilary Clinton, which is OK with me. I want Sanders to run to raise the issue of capitalism. Sanders is a socialist. These days, no one knows what a socialist is. The European socialist parties are essentially social welfare parties, which means they favor broad safety nets and public spending. That would be a big improvement over anything America offers in its politics, but it is still not the reason I support Sanders. I want to make capitalism a question. Since the collapse of Communism in the late 1980's, and really long before, since Communism had long been discredited as tyranny, there has not been any alternative to the global capitalist system. The reason cannot be that this system has operated well. It has not. It has been beset by regular crises. Its long term growth has not been rapid. Its benefits have been increasingly concentrated in the wealthy. Its innovations have tended to be trivial. Its skewed price system has contributed to global warming. And right now, it is sputtering. Making capitalism a question would also lead to political debates in America that would get beyond government and taxes. Why do white working class voters favor the Republican Party? They benefit disproportionately from Obamacare and yet they oppose it. Is this what the Marxists used to call false consciousness? Or is it a sense that liberals despise working people? Socialism takes no position in theory on issues of race, or gay rights, or guns, or abortion, or religion or immigration or other issues America calls social. I guess socialism must say something about the environment since that is so much a consequence of economic organization. I hope that a Sanders candidacy would be similarly restrained on all those other issues. A Sanders candidacy would ask the question, is capitalism a good economic system? Can we imagine a better one?