Twitter Thread by Arash Kolahi



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How might the Left overcome self-defeating infighting & endless strategy disputes and instead start building the type of solidarity necessary to win a radically better world?

Left Solidarity in a Hostile World 1/30

There is little disagreement on both the importance & urgency of the systemic changes we desperately need.

We are facing grim challenges on multiple fronts:

Capitalism's systemic ecological destruction, injustices & alienation 2/30
https://t.co/Ju8w1McMnE

> Capitalism is inherently & by-definition:
> \u2022 Anti-democratic
> \u2022 Alienating
> \u2022 Inequitable & unfair
> \u2022 Environmentally destructive
> \u2022 A zero-sum game that rewards the worst & punishes the best of humanity
>
> An economic primer on capitalism #RIPCapitalism 1/12
>
> — Arash Kolahi (@ArashKolahi) May 14, 2020

Pervasive institutional racism systematically under-develops & under-nurtures communities of color. From systemic underfunding of schools to environmental racism, from economic injustice to the racist criminal "justice" system. 3/30
https://t.co/zLEQlr3qZG

> The primary systemic function of the US criminal \u201cjustice\u201d system is to control & criminalize black, brown & poor people while serving the interests of corporations & the wealthy. 1/14
>
> — Arash Kolahi (@ArashKolahi) August 25, 2020

Sexism, patriarchy, rape culture, toxic masculinity, homophobia, transphobia & gendered divisions of labor permeate every aspect of society. We are forced to contort our authentic selves into gendered boxes of what it means to be a ‘man’ or ‘woman.’ 4/30
https://t.co/mleVMcYEhi

> 1 in 6 women in the US has been a victim of rape. 1 in 4 girls is sexually assaulted by the age of 18. 1 in 3 women have experienced sexual violence at during their life.
>
> All these stats are even worse for our more vulnerable communities: POC, indigenous, disabled, etc. 17/30
>
> — Arash Kolahi (@ArashKolahi) July 28, 2020

Imperialist wars of aggression, international economic warfare, “free-trade” agreements that have little to do with trade & everything to do with subverting democratic oversight over environmental & labor laws and undermining civil & indigenous rights. 5/30

Here in the US, the belly of the beast of an empire in decline, the political sphere is dominated by a corporate duopoly: Democrats & Republicans both beholden to corporations & the 1%, leaving little room for actual democracy. 6/30

When the solutions we desperately need to overcome society’s systemic injustices conflict with the interests of corporations & the 1% the Duopoly set the parameters of what is on & off the table, in-effect working together to subvert democracy. 7/30
https://t.co/Y3rQEG18XJ

> The vast majority in the US support:
> \u2022 Medicare for all (70%)
> \u2022 \u2191 taxes on extreme wealth (74%)
> \u2022 \u2191 environmental protection (68%)
> \u2022 \u2191 social security (77%)
> \u2022 Ending police repression (67%)
>
> But we don\u2019t have any of these because we only have the illusion of a democracy.
>
> — Arash Kolahi (@ArashKolahi) July 16, 2020

Millions are food & housing insecure. Millions are on the brink of eviction & foreclosure. A 50-year one-sided class war against labor has left wages stagnant for the vast majority while the cost of living has steadily crept up every year. 8/30

The corporate media gives a tiny handful of CEOs & executives complete control over which ideas/perspectives/frameworks get the biggest megaphones and which ones get drowned out: not through ‘censorship’, but through biased access to the megaphones? 9/30
https://t.co/iQ42goMtK1

> What\u2019s missing from much of the Free Speech & Deplatforming conversations going around is that a tiny handful of CEOs & corporate executives \u2013 most of whom are members of the billionaire class \u2013 should NOT be the final arbiters of what is and is not considered \u2018free speech\u2019. 1/10

— Arash Kolahi (@ArashKolahi) January 11, 2021

Billionaire funded conspiracy theories speak to people's pain but rather than place blame where it belongs: capitalism, authoritarianism, racism, sexism etc they deflect blame towards anything but the truth: immigrants, POC, deep state, lizard people 10/30
https://t.co/HokIXLfBto

> Billionaires support conspiracy theories because they keep people confused and angry at any boogeyman other than the TRUE cause of their pain & alienation: the very system that allows for Billionaires while peoples\u2019 lives are falling apart. 5/14
>
> — Arash Kolahi (@ArashKolahi) January 14, 2021

Mental health is beyond crisis levels with every metric off-the-charts. Suicides & 'deaths of despair' are at historic levels. Capitalism's soul-crushing alienation & injustice, racism & sexism's systemic violence & oppression take their toll. 11/30
https://t.co/gpZH1SxiXz

> There is an exploding crisis in the US resulting in hundreds of thousands of deaths, millions of lives\u2019 potential cut short & immeasurable pain, suffering & oppression.
>
> And then the COVID\u201119 pandemic hit.
>
> Mental Health in a Society Gone Mad; Thread 1/30
>
> — Arash Kolahi (@ArashKolahi) July 28, 2020

According to APA's Stress in America, the primary drivers of our breakdown are systemic: economic anxiety, systemic oppression, rampant alienation from our political, economic & societal institutions, capitalism's atomization & commodification of meaningful connections, etc 12/30

It's not that Americans are inherently more broken. It's that our societal institutions are breaking us, alienating us & oppressing us. Capitalism, racism, sexism & authoritarianism are literally killing us from the inside. 13/30

Traditional buffers & safety nets such as cultural, community & kinship bonds have been tattered away. Our societal institutions rob us of meaningful connection and then sell them back to us through unfulfilling commodified social media. 14/30

And with the Corporate Media taking off-the-table any meaningful systemic analysis of the root causes of our pain, most people lack a liberatory framework that rightfully looks at our society's institutions as the primary source of their oppression & alienation. 15/30

Furthermore, the Corporate Media & even much of the 'Self-help' Industry facilitate the lie that our pain, alienation, stress, anxiety & oppression are our own self-doing, further exacerbating the mental health crisis. 16/30

Every mental health metric paints a picture of people crying out for radical change. The diagnosis is systemic and thus, the solution must also be systemic.

True liberation & fulfillment means overthrowing our oppressive & alienating societal institutions. 17/30

Our problems are not about any one specific bad person doing bad acts. It's about a backward system that incentivizes & rewards bad acts, that rewards the worst in humanity & causes the worst among us to systematically rise to the top. 18/30
https://t.co/QYPCTS8NWv

> Capitalism also goes against our natural tendencies, inherently crushing the best of humanity.
>
> Capitalism systematically rewards heartlessness & callousness while punishing empathy & compassion: 13/30https://t.co/5n0xZfxnpc
>
> — Arash Kolahi (@ArashKolahi) July 28, 2020

Fighting for the next Band-Aid is important because it helps alleviate some of the bleeding & pain.

But we must do so along a trajectory towards a new society that inherently inflicts fewer wounds in the first place & thus requires fewer Band-Aids. 19/30
https://t.co/q3Ivu1Js9M

> Arguably the most INCREDIBLE aspect of humanity is that NOT ONLY can we understand our societal institutions, our place(s) within them and how they are affecting us but, incredibly:
>
> We can CHANGE our societal institutions for the better.
>
> Sociology for Revolutionaries 1/25
>
> — Arash Kolahi (@ArashKolahi) August 7, 2020

And to win a better society & a better world the Left needs to build solidarity and continuously grow.

Power only concedes X when something even greater than X is threatened. And we can't build powerful, threatening movements without solidarity. 20/30
https://t.co/1rdOcacj6B

> Positive social change happens when oppressors fear that if they don\u2019t stop oppressive behavior X, they will not only lose their ability to continue doing X but will now lose even more.
>
> That\u2019s the calculus. Raise the costs of their oppression until it's no longer worth it & win.
>
> — Arash Kolahi (@ArashKolahi) May 15, 2019

One of the biggest pitfalls to building Left solidarity is contentious strategy disputes: Electoral politics vs. grassroots movements, peaceful vigils vs. militant civil disobedience, etc. 21/30

Most of these disputes are rendered moot by one truism: Almost all strategy choices don't preclude other strategy choices & we can take different paths to get to the same place. 22/30

I have over 100 threads/tweets on the importance of movement building (and only a small handful on electoral politics) because my understanding of the history of social change tells me that movements are the primary driver of left social change. 23/30
https://t.co/D9YhwFAIG8

> Those who think consciousness raising & movement building are disconnected, or even a distraction from electoral politics have not paid attention to the history of social change.
>
> In this thread, we explore how societal change really happens.
>
> History\u2019s guidebook to winning. 1/20
>
> — Arash Kolahi (@ArashKolahi) February 19, 2020

But I have friends & people who I respect who focus primarily on electoral politics. Nothing they do precludes me from doing what I do. And more importantly, if we worked together, we'd probably both be better off. 24/30

If we look at the history of some of the most successful left movements, like the civil rights movement, we will see a large diversity of strategies & tactics used in parallel.

We need to look at our diversity of strategies as an asset – not a liability. 25/30

A second pitfall to building Left solidarity is the myopic perspective that one oppression is above all other oppressions.

Sure, we can't all do everything & we tend to work around oppressions close to our hearts. But we need a holistic perspective of other people's work. 26/30

Leftists must connect the dots of oppression & injustice, demonstrating how racism, sexism, capitalism, authoritarianism, etc. are ALL connected, reinforce one another & are used by those in power to maintain their power. 27/30

And we must build movements that connect ALL our oppressions to one another (because they ARE connected), thus binding our liberation to the liberation of others.

That's how we build solidarity. And that's how we win. 28/30

And finally, a third pitfall to building Left solidarity is the lack of shared vision. Of course, we should replace our undemocratic, alienating & oppressive institutions, but what would a good society look like? 29/30
https://t.co/gjnHl9ORhG

> If we dispose of false left/right dichotomies, clear away Orwellian doublespeak and intellectual dishonestly, what remains is a striking picture of the moral, ethical & logical superiority of leftist values. pic.twitter.com/Moa0ohbz3B

— Arash Kolahi (@ArashKolahi) August 2, 2019

To win a radically better world, we need powerful & diverse movements working together with solidarity & respect for diverse tactics. We need an intersectional framework & a comprehensive left vision.

Will we choose solidarity? Or will we choose self-defeat? It’s on us. 30/30