

Self-presentation

# **“We explore possible ways for the working class to consolidate its struggle as an agent of societal change”**

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## **About Us**

Left 21 was founded by a group of like-minded individuals based in Hong Kong with the aim of promoting and creating discussion on left-wing thought.

The HKSAR government serves the interests of the elite with its state-business alliance and undemocratic political system. The root of this financial politics can be traced back to capitalism, which has allowed for the dominance of corporations. Through functional constituencies and a so-called free market economy, corporate interests are able to control the legislature as well as monopolize economic power.

The unrestricted expansion of capitalism in Hong Kong, mainland China as well as the world has created numerous problems. In face of such a dire situation, there are still options open to the people who seek them. We need a broadened perspective in order to understand the ways in which the powers that be have oppressed the people, and to explore possible ways for the working class to consolidate its struggle as an agent of societal change.

We believe that through participation and initiation that comes from the masses below, it is possible to create a truly democratic, free, equal, and just society that respects individuals regardless of their gender, ethnicity and sexual orientation. To realize these goals, we must unite and consolidate left-wing forces from different strata of the society.

We will hold study groups and discussion seminars as well as publish articles electronically to create a platform where leftists can exchange ideas and learn from each other.

In recent years, social conflicts in Hong Kong have become increasingly polarized, with more and

more groups and individuals voicing out their discontent. Amidst all this, the root cause of the problem is exposed.

The root cause of Hong Kong's social conflicts can be understood not only from a local perspective, but also within the framework of global economic development. Since the Sino-British negotiations on the future of Hong Kong, the PRC has used investment and business opportunities in the mainland as a tradeoff for Hong Kong's democratization. This strategy has successfully tempted local capitalists to work against the interests of the people - through an undemocratic political system - by exercising their exclusive privilege to exploit the resources of the society. As a result, in these three decades Hong Kong has seen a surge in the power of property developers and financiers to the extent where their interests underlie every government decision. The dark consequences of reckless profit maximization are felt in every aspect of the average person's daily life. According to the United Nations, Hong Kong is consistently ranked amongst places with the highest economic inequality in the world.

This is not a situation unique to Hong Kong. After the post-war boom, the global economy began to decline in the 70s. To maintain their control over the world's resources, capitalist states in Europe and the US adopted neo-liberal economic policies. To name a few, the de-regulation of the financial market, the expansion of the assets market, the forced opening of trade in the developing world, the de-regulation of labour protection, suppression of trade unions and labour movements, and so on, are all examples of policies which have consolidated the power of the capitalist class while speeding up the widening rich-poor gap.

The European and American experiences have shown us that it is far from sufficient to use representative democracy as a checking mechanism to prevent the dire consequences that stem from capitalist market economy. Therefore, while we are committed to the struggle for universal suffrage and the abolishment of functional constituencies, we must also establish a type of participatory democracy in which the people's role in shaping political and socio-economic policies are not only limited to regular elections.

This is Left 21's analysis of Hong Kong's deeply entrenched social problems. 'Left 21' is a left-wing platform founded by a group of progressive individuals whose aim is to unite and consolidate leftist forces in Hong Kong. We hope to promote left-wing thought through discussion, learning, publishing, political participation as well as participation in labour movements and social activism. We believe that an ideal society must promote the interests and well-being of the working class, protect the environment and maintain sustainable development, eradicate inequality of the sexes and ethnicities, and respect individuals' sexual orientation. This ideal society can only be created through bottom-up participation and initiation, and requires the unity of different groups in the society.

If you agree with the analysis and proposals offered above, you are welcome to become a member of Left 21. To know more about us, please feel free to contact:

E-mail [info@left21.hk](mailto:info@left21.hk)

Website <http://left21.hk/>

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## **Our Declaration**

In early 2010, during the anti-high speed railway movement in Hong Kong, we noticed that there was increasing youth participation in political and social activism, and that youths in Hong Kong were becoming more radical against the backdrop of the global financial crisis. As such, a group of leftists came up with the idea of exploring the crisis through a left-wing lens, thereby providing a theoretical basis as well as a new direction for social activism in Hong Kong.

On January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2010, we held our first meeting, where we decided to further unite and consolidate left-wing forces by establishing a platform that would primarily use class analysis as its fundamental approach to the political economy. On this basis, 'Left 21' was founded on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of February.

After four months of planning, more than forty 'Left 21' members and supporters adopted the following as our aims and our work:

### **Our goals:**

Short-term: To promote left-wing thought, get involved in different social movements, act as an advocate for labour-related economic and political movements

Mid-term: To support the establishment of a democratic political party representing the working class in Hong Kong

Long-term: To unite global anti-capitalist left-wing forces and fight for a truly democratic socialism

### **Our current work:**

Organization: To recruit new members via directly engaging with labour activists, and using dynamic strategies to mobilize youth participation

Education: To establish an anti-capitalist discourse that reaches the general public and fosters labour-based economic and political struggles

Aid: To promote progressive thought and provide support for labour-related struggles, especially workers' struggles in mainland China

Alliance: To build alliances with labour movements, environmental movements, feminist movements, student movements and leftist movements in Greater China, as well as engage with international democratic left-wing groups

Internal consolidation: To adhere to the principles of mass participation and democratic decision-making, and by building consensus through study and discussion, to serve as the backbone of the left-wing movement with responsibility, ideals, as well as organizational and analytical abilities.

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\* <http://left21.hk/>