

Update

# THE WORKER

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## Editorial:

### The Working Class Must Develop its Independent Political Program

Across the country, millions of workers are taking part in meetings, demonstrations and other actions to oppose cutbacks in social services and the wave of government attacks which are trying to hamstring or eliminate altogether public employee unions and suppress the collective rights of these and workers.

The Workers Party encourages everyone to take part in this growing protest movement.

At the same time, we emphasize the necessity to go beyond simply reacting to this or that attack. We must be pro-active rather than reactive. The working class and people must take the initiative into their own hands by putting forward their own aims and agenda for society.

Today, the working class is facing a number of serious challenges.

#### The Fight Against New Forms of Exploitation

For one thing, even as the Wall Street Bankers are reaping unprecedented profits and the Obama administration has again cut the taxes paid by the corporations and the very wealthy, the workers are facing increasing poverty, exploitation and economic insecurity.

All along the line, the capitalists keep imposing new and more intense forms of exploitation on the workers. Corporate downsizing has become a permanent feature of economic life, destroying the jobs of millions and forcing every worker to live with continuous job and economic insecurity. Tens of millions of workers have been pushed into the "contingent workforce" where they can only find part-time or tempo-

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## U.S. Launches Airstrikes on Lybia

On March 19, the Obama administration launched airstrikes on Lybia.

As part of the further military preparations by the U.S. and its "coalition" allies, warplanes and ships have been sent to the region. The U.S. currently has at least 11 naval vessels in the Mediterranean. As The Worker goes to press, the U.S. is preparing to launch another round of airstrikes on "strategic locations" throughout Lybia.

For the people of Lybia, the result of this savage bombing has already meant death and destruction. Already dozens of civilians have been killed and nearly 200 wounded during the bombing raids.

President Obama and other White House officials promise that the missile attacks will continue until they are satisfied with the outcome of Lybia's internal conflict.

This brazen act of gunboat diplomacy, this naked imperialist aggression, goes directly against world public opinion. The entire Arab world, including even the closest U.S. allies in the region, are denouncing the U.S. military attacks and refusing to join in the campaign to overthrow the Lybian government. Already the Arab League is condemning the offensive

and the African Union has called for an immediate halt to the bombings. Governments and people throughout many western countries, also, have condemned U.S. imperialism's latest military aggression in the region.

The bombing of Lybia is one link in a chain of U.S. aggression and intervention across the world. Already, U.S. imperialism is waging a continuous war in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as counter-insurgency, "low-intensity" wars in Pakistan, Colombia, the Philippines and elsewhere. U.S. imperialism is marching down the road to war against Iran. U.S. imperialism is increasing tensions in Asia and in particular threatening North Korea. The new war in North Africa shows that the contradictions of the world imperialist system are intensifying and that new and even greater dangers are facing humanity.

The war can only be stopped and the dangers averted by the people asserting themselves. The entire history of this century shows that war is a product of the capitalist-imperialist system but that peace is the sacred cause of the peoples. The struggle of the peoples can

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## Build the Mass Workers' Press

Building The Worker is the basic task which the Workers Party has taken up in the present period.

In every aspect of its our work we rely on the working class and broad masses of people. The monopoly controlled media has money, it has sophisticated technology and a distribution network already in place. But it is a media of lies, a media devoted to slander or silence about the struggles of the people, a media of apologetics for the entire anti-social offensive of the U.S. monopoly capitalist class. Because of this, the capitalist media is continually rejected by the people. The Worker, on the other hand, always

finds a sympathetic and enthusiastic response because it give expression to the real needs and aspirations of the working class and people and stands up for the independent political program and demands of the people on all the burning issues of the day.

Everything about our paper – its technical and writing staff, its financial support system, its distribution network and so forth – is a product of the tireless efforts of the working people themselves. Our writers did not go to fancy schools but are learning to write in the heat of struggle; the workers and activists who distribute The Worker do so only

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because it tells the truth about their conditions and struggles.

In our view, this day-to-day work of developing the content of *The Worker* and expanding its circulation is vital to creating the conditions for the rise of the mass independent working class and popular political movement.

Why do we say this?

When we analyze the real political situation in the U.S. today, we come up with one, irresistible, relentless conclusion. And that is that all the objective conditions demand fundamental social change, demand the transition from capitalism to socialism, but the subjective conditions are lagging behind.

What does this mean? It means that the economic, political, and social project of capitalism has long ago exhausted itself and today, rather than being able to provide a perspective, a future for our country, monopoly capitalism is imposing an extremely reactionary, anti-social agenda on the people.

What is the economic program of capitalism today? It is the program of "increasing international competitiveness." For the workers, this means new and more intense forms of exploitation – the slashing of wages and benefits, the elimination of full-time jobs and the widespread use of part-time and/or temporary workers, the gutting of the few labor laws which provide certain minimum protections and standards for the workers, such as workers compensation, unemployment insurance, etc.

The capitalist economic program is a program of withdrawing social investments on every front, from health care to education to Social Security. It is a program of turning public resources and the social sectors of the economy over to the private capitalist exploiters. It is a program of attacking the poor and most vulnerable. It is a program which declares that the people have no rights, and that the only aim of society and government is to insure the power and privilege of private property in the means of production.

And what is the politics of monopoly capitalism? Behind the public facade of diversion and spectacle, the real politics of monopoly capital is the politics of arbitrary rule . . .

Today, capitalist politics, because it represents outdated and backward social relations, has nowhere to go except to become more openly against the people. That is why the mass disgust with the Democrats and Republicans is growing and can only continue to grow.

But still we cannot really see the reactionary character of present-day capitalism until we look into what it is suppressing.

The Workers Party has long pointed out that today, all the conditions exist for bringing an end to the historical era in which human existence remains dominated by the struggle for economic survival. We have shown that all the conditions exist for humankind to take a huge leap from the realm of necessity to the realm of freedom. Yet capitalism is preventing this revolution from taking place. In purely economic terms, the capitalist relations of private ownership of the means of production are holding back and suppressing the socialized productive forces, based on the cooperative labor of tens of millions of working people. But more than this, capitalism is suppressing the very social character of human existence.

And it is this which is demanding recognition. At its very foundation, today's society is based on collective efforts and collective life. Go to New York or Los Angeles and the people there do the same work, face the same problems and have the same aspirations for social change as we do. No matter how much propaganda the capitalists do, insisting that society is only a collection of individuals, no matter how much propaganda is done to claim that there is no such thing as human solidarity and collective aims, we can see that irresistibly the teachers and other public employees, the auto workers, etc., come out together in the struggle for their rights. And moreover, we can see that the whole working class and people support them because they face the same problems. Countless examples – from the women's movement, from the struggles of the oppressed nationalities, from the youth, can be given to show that nothing can prevent people from organizing themselves and coming out as collectives. What is more, the entire experi-

ence of the Workers Party is that the deepest thing in the hearts of the people is the aspiration to live in a society which recognizes, in practice, the equality and rights of all human beings, and in which the people themselves are the sovereign creators and builders of society.

The future of our country lies with the political project that arises from collective life of the people. So when we say that the subjective conditions are lagging behind, we are saying that the one and only task is to assist in developing the consciousness, organization and independent program of these collectives and of the people as a whole. In other words, the demand of social development is that the workers and people take the destiny of our country in their own hands. The need is to create a new political unity amongst the American people, a political unity based on a program of taking our country into the modern era on the high road of progress, on the road of the emancipation of the people.

In the contemporary world, only a revolutionary politics – a politics which arises from the real interest of the working class and broad masses of people, a politics which unites and empowers people to fight for the profound economic and social transformations demanded by the very development of society – only such a politics can inspire and mobilize the people.

The mass workers' press has come into being and is developing precisely as part of the movement of the workers and people to create these subjective conditions, to organize themselves and come out as an independent force. Its task is to be a collective voice for the people, to unite the workers on the basis of their own class aims and agenda, and to mobilize the broadest sections around a pro-social agenda which opens the path for progress.

It is extremely important to grasp that the starting point of the workers' press is political; our press is not, as some people may think, simply an instrument for illumination or ideological discussion. Our press is a means for the political mobilization of the people, openly contending with the capitalists

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rary jobs which do not even provide a minimal livelihood. Wages and benefits, including health care and pensions, continue to be cut.

With the active support of the government, the capitalists are attacking such social insurance programs as workers' comp, unemployment insurance, medicaid, etc. The aim is to eliminate any guarantee of even a minimal economic existence in order to create a growing pool of desperate workers, increase the competition for the limited number of jobs and thus drive down the wage levels of the whole working class. In addition, the capitalists and government are working to gut or eliminate the few labor laws which offer some small guarantees of workers' rights – such as laws restricting overtime work, laws protecting workers from occupational disease and dangers, and laws which recognize the right to unionize and strike.

The workers must squarely face up to the way things are going. The capitalists want to eliminate any and every restraint on their system of profit-making, to eliminate unions, to eliminate any legal standards which limit the degree of exploitation of labor, to eliminate social insurance programs which guarantee a minimal existence and set a minimal standard. The capitalists aim at destroying every gain achieved by the workers through decades of collective struggle. The capitalists aim to wipe out any collective rights for the workers and to attack every expression of class solidarity. The capitalists want to reduce the workers to the status of individual slaves, with no rights recognized by the society except the "right" to be mercilessly exploited by the "free market" system.

### **An All-Sided Anti-Social Agenda**

And this is not all. The capitalists are not only stepping up the direct exploitation of the workers at the point of production, but also carrying out a thoroughly reactionary, anti-social agenda in all spheres of life.

The capitalists and their government have declared war against the very concept of social responsibility. They are slashing needed investments in social programs all along the line and thus depriving millions of the poor and most vulnerable of any means of subsistence. Medicare and Medicaid, along with other

public health programs, are being slashed. Even as the public schools crumble from lack of investments, government – at all levels – keeps slashing school funding. Our country's stock of public housing as well as funding for housing assistance are being gutted, while millions and tens of millions of Americans, including the disabled and elderly, are forced to live in substandard housing or even made homeless. Even Social Security is under attack.

As part of this anti-social agenda, the government is privatizing vital public services and turning our country's public infrastructure over to the private sector. Everything from garbage collection, to welfare programs, to Medicare and the public schools is being put up for grabs. This privatization of our country's public infrastructure is robbery on a grand scale. It is also part of the program of denying any social or governmental responsibility for the well-being and rights of the people. Again, the "free market logic" of the anti-social agenda denies that the people have any rights whatsoever. The only "rights" recognized are the "rights" of the biggest capitalists to monopolize everything and anything and to increase the exploitation of the people to the maximum. The most elementary rights of the people are denied so that all the funds in the public treasury as well as all the resources of the country can be put at the disposal of the biggest monopolies and bankers.

And of course, these profound and intensifying economic contradictions are reflected in all aspects of social life. Just look, for example, at the all-sided decay and corruption of the political system. The legally-sanctioned two-party monopoly of Republicans and Democrats is completely alienated from the people. These politicians are all bought-and-paid-for by the monopoly corporations and, in turn, pay back their sponsors by helping them loot the public treasury. Everywhere people feel and know that the current political setup, rather than empowering people and guarantying their role in governance, only entrenches the power and privilege of the economic elite. There is a profound political polarization developing all across the country.

How must the working class respond to these economic and political challenges? The working class must respond by organizing itself as a class and

coming to the forefront of the struggle of all the people who want to defeat the anti-social agenda and open the path for the progress of our country. The working class must rally the whole people around a pro-social agenda which defends the rights of all and offers real solutions to the pressing economic, social and political problems.

The workers must cast off any illusions in the present economic and political system. The anti-social offensive of the big monopolies is the inevitable product of capitalism in crisis and decline. The monopoly capitalists can offer our country nothing but more exploitation and poverty. As their political system rots, they more and more openly resort to ruling by dictate and arbitrarily trample the rights of the people underfoot. Something new is needed and that something new must begin with the working class – the class which has no stake in the present system, the class which can only emancipate itself by coming forward as the ardent defender and fighter for the rights of all humanity.

Coming out as a class and placing itself in the forefront of the struggle against the anti-social agenda means that the workers must come into the political arena with their own aims and agenda and rally the whole people around a positive program. The workers must create new political space in which people can get together, politicize themselves, prepare the necessary tactics and organization and come out to contend with the capitalists over the fundamental direction of our country.

To assist the development of this independent politics, the Workers Party has put forward the program of economic rights, democratic renewal, and a democratic foreign policy.

The program of economic rights asserts that human beings are entitled, by right, to food, clothing and shelter; to secure jobs or livelihoods, to health care, education and so forth. These inalienable rights must be recognized in the fundamental law of the land and government must make all the needed social investments to guarantee these rights in practice. The program of democratic renewal aims at breaking the stranglehold

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over the vital issues of the day, and showing people how to take an active role in the struggle for their interests.

Such a politics must be concrete. It is not enough to declare loyalty to socialism and to merely try to convert people to such a doctrine. A concrete politics is a politics which addresses the concerns of the masses and the demands of social development.

The Campaign for Economic Rights (CER) is such a politics, not only because the capitalists have thrown down the gauntlet and are slashing vital social investments, privatizing the social sectors of the economy and insisting that the workers have no rights except to be exploited by the capitalists, but also because social development has reached the point where human beings need no longer be enslaved by economic necessity – by a continuous battle to secure the minimums of existence.

The politics of democratic renewal is such a concrete politics not only because monopoly capital has completely excluded the people from participation in political life and there is mass disgust and alienation from the political process, but also because the whole course of history in the last few hundred years is the people coming into the political arena and asserting their role as decision-makers and creators of the society they live in.

The program for a democratic foreign policy is such a politics not only because U.S. imperialism, on the basis of the fascist logic that "Might Makes Right," has declared itself the sole superpower and seeks to dictate the affairs of all the nations and people, but also because the profound democratic, anti-imperialist aspirations of the American people lead us to join the peoples everywhere in creating a world of peace and friendship.

Through the mass workers' press, our Party is continuously developing this concrete politics and contending with the capitalists over the fundamental issues facing our country. Whether the issue is Obama's terrorist bombing of Lybia, or monopoly capital's plan to privatize So-

cial Security and further cut Medicare and Medicaid, or the growing strike movement, The Worker is not only mobilizing the opposition but politicizing people in the true sense – pointing to the commonality of their interests – and putting forward a program of solutions.

The decisive issue in building the mass workers' press is that its politics is based on fundamentals, on the general class interests of the workers. Our press is not devoted to fads or diversions, nor does it content itself with simply reporting on spontaneous resistance. Again and again, we must bring to the forefront

the problems which must be solved, and inspire the workers and people to organize themselves for solutions by coming into the political arena on the basis of their own aims and agenda. Fighting unswervingly and with limitless energy for this independent politics is the key to uniting the people and opening the path for the progress of our country. Diversions and fads come and go but reality – the need for fundamental social change, the need for the workers to rise to the occasion and lead the whole people forward on the basis of a genuinely pro-social agenda – remains.

## All Out to Build the Workers' Press!

### Lybia

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stay the hands and defeat the aggression of the imperialist warmakers.

In the course of coming out to demand an immediate end to the war in Lybia, people must organize themselves as an independent force, in opposition to and struggle against the capitalist warmakers

and the imperialist system. The peoples must organize themselves to bring into being that world so ardently desired – a world of peace, a world of friendship amongst the peoples based on recognizing the sovereign equality of every nation.

### Stop the Bombing!

### Stop the War Against Lybia!

### Peace is the Sacred Cause of the Peoples!

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that the two big parties and big money exercise over political affairs.

The workers and people must be empowered to play a direct role in governance and given the power to directly nominate and select the candidates for office. Everyone must have an equal right to elect and be elected and public officials must be subject to recall at all times. The program for a democratic foreign policy goes directly against imperialist war and militarism and demands an end to U.S. interference and intervention in the affairs of other peoples.

The goal of our Party is to create a new, socialist society which eliminates the exploitation of human beings and guarantees all the inalienable economic and political rights of the people, and in which the political power belongs to the workers and people themselves.

The task of the times is to bring this program to the center of the political life of the country. This takes many forms.

It includes building the mass workers' press as a means for stimulating the widest possible discussion and for rallying people around the independent politics. It includes developing the various campaigns such as the Campaign for Economic Rights. It includes organizing discussion and study circles, as well as public meetings and rallies. It includes initiating and joining in mass actions which further mobilize people into the struggle to claim their rights and play their independent political role.

The bottom line is that the workers face not only serious challenges but also great possibilities for advance. There is a profound polarization and large numbers of people are straining for the way forward. All the conditions cry out for the working class to come into the political arena as an independent force with a program that can open the path for the progress of our country.

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