

Update

# THE WORKER

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## Who Controls the Political Power?

The experience of the Workers Party is that amongst the people, there is widespread and growing disillusionment with the political system and political process.

This disillusionment stems not only from the fact that the government and the politicians ignore the needs and demands of the people; it also reflects the fundamental reality that the people are not in control of the direction of society. But if the people are not in control of their own social environment, of their society, they are **not in control** of their own lives.

In fact, the people are facing grave problems on all fronts. Take the economy as an example. While the economic conditions of the vast majority continue to deteriorate, the government remains unwilling or unable to do anything about the problems of unemployment, low wages and part-time jobs, or to get the economy out of a state of chronic stagnation. Rather, instead of helping the people in these times of hardship, federal, state and local governments have been drastically cutting back investments in education, income support for the unemployed and poverty-stricken, Medicare, Medicaid, etc. Government has arbitrarily decided that the solution to the problems is "deficit-reduction" and that the deficit will be reduced by cutting social programs. No one in government ever seriously mentions the possibility of reducing the deficit by eliminating its causes – the huge, parasitic military budget or the extortionist interest (\$450 billion/year) paid by the government to the big bankers. In other words, without a thought about the will or voice of the people, the government has unilaterally decided to implement the agenda of the economic elite. It is not the people who are deciding the economic priorities and policies of the government.

How does the government get away with this?

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## Join in Building the Alternative!

Even though the elections are still months away, the Democratic and Republican party politicians have already been campaigning for several months. Of course, for these politicians "campaigning" means raising money from the big corporations while studiously avoiding any discussion about the pressing issues on the minds of the masses of people.

So far, the only theme which has emerged from all the fund-raising and hot air is the need to end "irresponsible government spending" on social programs. This is nothing but the undisguised "free market" ideology of the capitalists according to which the workers have no rights as human beings and the government has no responsibility for the well-being of the people. According to this logic, the fundamental rights of the people are looked upon as "burdensome expenses," and the individual is left to fend for herself/himself within the so-called "free market" system. This is the ideology of removing any restraint on the big monopolies, of declaring that society is an arena in which the rich and powerful are "free" to prey on the masses of people.

In our opinion, it is no

coincidence that the candidates seem determined to frighten people to death and to attack them.

In our opinion, the entire election process is being used to depoliticize people and turn people away from participating in the affairs of the country. In the end, the elections are nothing but a means to get people, if not to accept, to resign themselves to the agenda of monopoly capital and to get people accustomed to the next face which big business chooses to put in office.

The permanent election campaign of the Democratic and Republican politicians is simply part of the continuous political struggle to deprive the people of political power and impose the agenda of the capitalist class on society as a whole. In short, the election circus – the empty rhetoric, the money-grubbing candidates, the pre-set agenda, etc., etc. – shows the complete bankruptcy of the current political process and political system.

The Workers Party calls to all the people:

"Don't let the rich monopolize the political affairs of our country." The anti-social agenda of

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## U.S. Imperialism, Hands Off Syria!

The Obama administration is continuing to "decree" that the government of Syria step down from political power and to call on the Syrian people and government to remember that the U.S. keeps "all options on the table" to achieve its aims there.

At the same time, "dissident organizations" receiving U.S. and Western financing and branded by the U.S. as "revolutionary" continue to carry out a systematic campaign of armed attacks on civilians, law enforcement personnel and vital infrastructure with the avowed aim of carrying out "regime change." These attacks are completely in line with U.S. imperialism's efforts to strangle the

Syrian economy and to "regime change" the Syrian government.

The Syrian people and government are defending the country's legitimate peace and security in the face of U.S.-backed sabotage and aggression. The people are coming out in protests and other mass actions in defense of the country's sovereignty and demanding an end to all foreign subversion and aggression against the government.

The Workers Party calls on democratic-minded people everywhere to remain vigilant and active against U.S. imperialism's interference and aggression against Syria.

## Political Power

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The problem is, that despite all the propaganda about “U.S. democracy,” the current political system **denies** the people the right to govern and to control the direction of society. While we are told that the system is based on “political equality” and “rule by the people,” reality reveals a **system of privilege**, designed to keep all the political power in the hands of the economic elite and to **completely exclude** the masses of people from the political power.

To begin with, the people are **denied the means** to translate into practice the rights which are proclaimed. Everyone knows that big money is “more politically equal” than any other section of society and that those who control the mass media are “more free” than everyone else to express their ideas and influence public opinion.

Of course the standard argument of the defenders of the political status quo is that the system of elections gives the people the ultimate say so.

But on examination, we see that this system also enshrines and legitimizes political privilege. For one thing, once elected the government officials are free to rule – to do

whatever they want – without any accountability or control by the masses of people. This is why politicians are best known for their record of broken promises. In fact, most of the real business of government is carried out on a continuous basis by a huge bureaucracy operating either under the authority of the executive branch or on an autonomous bases. The people have no role in selecting or supervising this power. Government agencies which enforce environmental and safety standards, which define and implement labor law, etc. are completely outside the control of the masses of people. So too, the Supreme Court, which has taken on itself the authority to determine the ultimate law of the land, stands completely above the will and control of the people.

For another thing, the people have no role in selecting the candidates. This crucial right is given to the Democratic and Republican parties, which have a legal near-monopoly over access to the ballot. But if the candidates for office are handpicked by the big parties and the big business interests which fund these parties, the people, in fact, have no choice at all.

In other words, under the present set-up people are reduced to voting cattle. The political role assigned to the masses of people is nothing more than voting every two or four years for candidates selected by the economic elite. The business of governing is reserved, in the main, to a large administrative bureaucracy and the people have no direct say in any government decisions or policies.

To resolve the political problem and take control of the direction of society, the masses of people must take the question of democracy into their own hands. The people must demand and create the **means** whereby the slogans of political equality and rule by the people are **guaranteed in practice** and not left as empty phrases to legitimize the rule of the economic elite. The people must demand and create the mechanisms which insure their control over elected officials and which give the people a direct role in governing and deciding affairs. The two big parties must be deprived of the right to nominate the candidates and this right of selection must be given to the people themselves.

Such changes in the political process can only be brought about by those who have a stake in creating a genuinely democratic system – by the working class and broad masses of people who need solutions to the problems facing society and who are not benefiting from the status quo of economic and political privilege.

We can work in the direction of creating such changes by not allowing the political discussion and political agenda to be monopolized by the big parties and the mass media. We can work to develop widescale discussion in which the people put forward their agenda, their aims for society. In other words, we must work to resolve the political situation in favor of democracy by developing the independent political movement of the working class and people.

## The Alternative

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the capitalists – the slashing of social investments, the war program and the arbitrary power of the government – is leading our country to disaster.

The workers and people must take matters into their own hands by creating a new politics which brings their own agenda to center-stage. Such a new politics must aim at fundamental changes in the political process and political system so that the people themselves are empowered to determine the direction and future of our country.

We say: use the elections as an occasion to denounce the capitalist politicians and to develop our independent political movement based on our own aims and agenda for society. We say it is high time to get at the root of the problem and put forward our own vision for a society and government run by and for the working class and people themselves.

Instead of letting the Democratic and Republican politicians push us to the sidelines, we say: let's use the election period to further unite and organize ourselves to carry on the political struggle for our vision and agenda.

To assist this campaign, "The Worker" will devote a regular section of the paper to the discussion and struggle to carry out such a democratic renewal of our country. This section will include political articles exposing the anti-social agenda of the capitalist parties as well as articles elaborating a genuinely pro-social agenda. We will include theoretical articles analyzing the political system and political process. We will report on activities of people and political groups trying to create new, independent political space. We encourage all our readers to join in this work and contribute their views and experience.

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