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For a Pro-Social Agenda

During the last several years the monopoly capitalist class has been stepping up its anti-social offensive in our country. The Obama administration as well as state and local governments have been attempting to privatize vital public services and infrastructure and to make cuts to our country's social programs. The government is preparing to put the entire country at the disposal of the billionaire capitalists while insisting that it has no responsibility to guarantee the rights of the people.

The working people are feeling the increasing toll of this anti-social offensive:

Hunger and malnutrition have been imposed on millions. Cutbacks in funding for food stamp and other welfare programs mean that millions are denied government assistance.

In 2010 the number of people liv-

ing below the poverty line reached 46.9 million – the highest level seen in the 50 years the government has been publishing information on poverty rates.

An ever growing army of unemployed workers have been deprived of even the barest essentials. At the end of 2011 only 48 percent of the country's 14 million workers officially unemployed received assistance.

The problems of evictions and homelessness affect millions.

Tens of millions of people are denied health care while "reforms" of Medicaid and Medicare have affected millions more because of the introduction of out of pocket expenses.

And the list goes on and on: retired workers denied pensions, children denied special education classes, insufficient medical aid and pensions for veterans, millions of youths denied a

modern education, employment or any prospects for the future...

So too, people everywhere are coming out in opposition to this anti-social offensive. A widespread movement against privatization of the public schools, hospitals and other public services and infrastructure is developing. Senior citizens, unionized workers and people from all walks of life are organizing to defend programs such as Medicaid, Medicare and Social Security. In fact, people are demanding that the government make more social investments in order to guarantee the rights of the people.

What is needed to push this movement forward?

For one thing we need to unite all the currents of opposition to the anti-social agenda into one mighty torrent.

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The Program of Economic Rights is the Alternative to the Economic Policy of the Democrats and Republicans

In every aspect, Obama's economic program represents the consensus program of the monopoly capitalist class – of the big business interests. It is a program based on shifting an ever-greater burden of exploitation and impoverishment onto the backs of the working people.

Obama's economic program demands that the working people "sacrifice" in order to increase the "global economic competitiveness" of U.S. business. This boils down to nothing more nor less than a program for increasing the rate of profits by imposing more wage and benefit cuts on the workers. Obama wants to "increase

productivity" by forcing workers to accept work rule changes and job combinations which result in mass lay-offs, on the one hand, and intense overwork for the remaining workforce on the other.

Obama's budgetary policies are based on precisely the same "trickle-down" and "supply-side" economics which he claims to criticize. When Obama talks of stimulating "economic growth" he is talking about the economic program of turning more of the social capital – more of the monies extracted from the workers through taxes – over to big business. Thus, Obama is continuing to rack up huge budget

deficits even while he uses the "demon of the deficit" as an excuse for undermining social programs. He is working to shift the burden of the economic crisis further onto the backs of the working people who are being forced to pay even more in taxes while getting less in return.

Again, on the question of "health care reform," Obama's program is based on protecting the interests of the managed care corporations, while simultaneously relieving other monopoly corporations of a large part of the cost of providing health insurance for their employees by shifting a greater burden

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Handing Over the Country to Big Business

One of the latest trends in the privatization movement of the U.S. monopoly capitalist class is the creation of so-called “public-private partnerships” which use various forms of privatization in order to place public resources at the disposal of the private sector. Most recently, former President Bill Clinton and Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel announced the first-of-its-kind “public-private partnership” which aims to turn Chicago’s entire infrastructure development function over to private enterprise. The plan calls for the city government to set up a private “Infrastructure Trust” and turn over to big business the management of the funds as well as authority over infrastructure development strategy.

The openly declared goal of Clinton and Emanuel’s “Infrastructure Trust” is to allow big business “to invest and see a return.”

The “public-private partnership” is but one of many ways by which the government has been taking areas of the economy that make up the national patrimony of the American people and turning over to the private sector. All across the country, state governments are contracting out such things as social welfare programs, the running of prisons, park service, school food service and maintenance, garbage collection, etc., etc. State and local governments have been privatizing highways, mass transit systems, hospitals, parks, etc. In addition, government-run programs such as Medicaid and Medicare are being dismantled and the public revenues earmarked for these services are being turned over, in the form of vouchers, to private HMO’s or other for-profit health care providers. The privatization movement is even taking aim at the schools and step-by-step unfolding a program to turn public education over to “educational

entrepreneurs.”

Privatization of government functions, which has become a major part of the programs of both the Democratic and Republican parties, serves two parallel purposes. First, it effectively separates the government from the responsibility of providing needed services to the population. Secondly, the capitalists are not only given the opportunity to reap huge profits by selling vital public services but they are also given the capital needed to provide such services.

Privatization is a program which is throwing our country backwards 100 years and more. Privatization means handing the birthrights of the people over to the monopoly capitalist class. The public infrastructure, including such things as the public schools or the stock of public housing, is part of our country’s social capital – created and paid for over many decades by the workers and taxpayers. Privatization means turning this public infrastructure into private capital; it is the robbery and plunder of the country on a grand scale.

Privatization also means denying that the government and society have any responsibility for the public good. Through privatization, the government is eliminating the entitlement status of various social programs. Instead of providing public services to everyone on the basis of right, privatized social programs will be distributed as commodities on the basis of money. The rich will get the best health care, education, retirement benefits and so forth, while those without money will simply be pushed aside and denied their basic human rights. Privatization is part of the program of leaving every aspect of the life of the people in the hands of the so-called “free market” – that is leaving people completely at the mercy of monopoly capital.

The demand for public services arose in the struggle against medievalism as people fought to make the state – the public authority – bear certain responsibility to guarantee the public welfare and provide for social needs. For example, very early in the history of our country, the people forced the government to recognize the right to education and the state took on responsibility for the system of public education.

Over the years, as the people’s struggles forced at least partial recognition of other rights, the state took responsibility for such things as public hospitals and public health, the Social Security system, public housing, and so forth. In addition, historically the capitalist state worked to build the infrastructure needed for capitalist development, including highways, railroads, etc.

Of course, in operating such public services, the capitalist government invariably ran things in a way to guarantee profits for the capitalist class while minimizing the rights of the people. For example, for decades the government has been letting the stock of public housing, the public school system and public health facilities deteriorate and crumble.

But today, as the crisis of monopoly capitalism deepens, the capitalists are seeking to withdraw any and all guarantees for the rights and well-being of the people and to have the maximum amount of the social capital put directly at their disposal. This is the source of the privatization movement.

Thus, the people are presented with a fundamental question. Repeated struggles are being waged and must be waged to prevent the privatization of public services and to demand that government provide guarantees for the rights of the people.

Furthermore, to defeat the pro-
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Economic Rights

the workers' standard of living and undermining the rights of the people on all fronts as a program which represents the interests of the people.

But, as our work over the last several months shows, the people are not fooled by Obama's empty talk. On the contrary. People are extremely concerned over the deteriorating economic situation and are demanding genuine solutions. In overwhelming numbers, the workers are denouncing Obama for his record of broken promises and his complete failure to do anything to resolve the grave economic problems. Certainly there are some people who have illusions and want to "give Obama more of a chance." But the realities of life itself as well as the work of our Party are helping people cast off such illusions.

The politics of our Party starts not from the interests of big business but from the needs and demands of the people; the politics of our Party exposes Obama's empty rhetoric by looking at his deeds. Our principled politics help to accelerate the class polarization, help the masses cast off illusions, and break the political stranglehold of the Democrats and Republicans. Our Party's politics aim at helping the people take the path of independent struggle – the only path through which they can find solutions to their growing economic problems.

Furthermore, our Party's politics are not content with simply criticizing Obama. Our program provides clarity and class consciousness for the spontaneously developing opposition, and provides a real programmatic alternative.

Our Party's alternative is expressed in our program of Economic Rights.

We say that the starting point, the first priority, of economic life must be to guarantee the well-being of the people. We say that, given the tremendous wealth and productive capacity of

our country, everyone must be guaranteed the right to a job, the right to free medical care, to education, to a secure retirement, and so forth.

The program of Economic Rights responds to the urgent needs of the people and points to the necessity for struggle against the privilege and power of the monopoly capitalists which prevents the people from realizing their rights and which are holding back the all-around economic development of our society. The program of Economic Rights irresistibly brings into sharp relief the contradiction between the social character of our society and the capitalist property relations based on private ownership of the means of production. The program of Economic Rights represents the independent program of the working class and enables the workers to keep the initiative in their own hands and to fight for their own agenda and aims.

Our Party's criticism of Obama's economics and our work of popularizing the program of Economic Rights has profound ideological and political significance. This work not only helps to push forward all the immediate economic struggles of the workers and people, but, at the same time, it is strengthening the political and theoretical foundations of the workers' movement.

All our members and friends should pay close attention to studying and mastering the Party's analysis of such problems as "international competitiveness" and "productivity," the deficit and health care crisis, etc., etc., and learn how to elaborate the program of Economic Rights amongst the people. In the course of opposing Obama's big business program, we want to establish and strengthen the leading role of the politics and theory of the Workers Party. This is the way to develop the spontaneous political opposition into a conscious, independent movement.

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The capitalists try to confine and liquidate the opposition by separating people into competing interest groups. But such questions as the right to income security in retirement, to health care and education, are not "special interests" but issues of concern to all – issues which go to the very heart of what kind of society we live in and whether or not the inalienable rights of the people are recognized. Battles are raging on many fronts but they are all part of the common struggle for the rights of the people.

Secondly, in the course of our struggles, we must work to give independent political expression to the program of the people themselves. Today, the disorganization and weakness of our movement comes from the leaders of various working class and popular organizations who are still trying to keep us bound hand and foot under the political domination of the Democratic Party. The bankruptcy of this politics of liberalism and social-democracy is seen in its continued support for Obama. Obama's so-called "change" based on a "new vision" has proven itself to be nothing less than a way of buying time in the face of the growing movement of the people even while stepping-up attacks on social programs previously won by the working people through decades of struggle.

The only way to defeat the anti-social agenda of big capital is for the working class and people to come onto the political scene with their own aims and program. We must not only resist the attacks on our rights but put forward a vision and program which realizes the great potential latent in our country and opens the way for renewed progress. Such a program begins with recognizing all the inalienable economic and human rights of the people and demanding that society be organized from the aim of guaranteeing these rights.

Stepped-up U.S. Intervention in Colombia

These days, the military ties between the U.S. and Colombian governments are closer than ever.

One of the latest moves of the Obama administration has been to set up Colombian military forces under U.S. brigade commanders.

U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff Martin Dempsey recently announced a new U.S.-Colombia joint military force called “Joint Task Force Vulcano” which would be officially charged with carrying out military attacks against the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). The force involves 10,000 Colombian troops and an unspecified number of U.S. forces. Dempsey also said that the joint task force would involve national police. During his announcement Dempsey pointed out that the U.S. is already involved in counter-

insurgency operations through the Pentagon’s Southern Command (Southcom) and civilian agencies within the U.S. government but that what’s new is the U.S. supply of “organizational structures, command and control architectures, and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities like no other in the world.”

In other words, the Obama administration is preparing to dramatically escalate the war in Colombia. Already U.S. military advisers are assisting the Colombian army in a counter-insurgency war. Thousands of Colombian troops have been trained by the U.S., and some \$7 billion in U.S. military assistance has been sent to the country over the last two decades. This “dirty war” and the fascist methods of the Colombian

government (which “boasts” the worst human rights record of government in the world) have claimed the lives of hundreds of thousands of Colombians, displaced another 1.5 million from their homes and been condemned by peoples, governments and human rights groups throughout the world.

The counterinsurgency war which the U.S. is waging in Colombia aims not only at maintaining U.S. economic and political domination of Colombia but also at militarizing the entire region. As the peoples in Venezuela, Ecuador, Brazil, Bolivia and throughout Latin America increasingly come out against U.S. imperialist exploitation and domination, the U.S. is preparing to wage more counter-revolutionary wars.

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gram of privatization and retrogression, the people must bring their own positive, forward-looking program to center-stage. Such a program demands the democratic renewal of our country so that the government itself is actually in the hands of the people. This includes a program of providing ironclad guarantees for all the people’s inalienable economic rights – including the right to food, shelter and clothing, to a secure job or livelihood at a standard commensurate with our country’s high level of development, the right to free, comprehensive health care, to education from infant-care through the university, etc. To guarantee these rights, government must make the needed investments in the public infrastructure. This public infrastructure must be developed in a planned way to meet the needs of the people, not put at the disposal of the capitalist exploiters.

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of co-premiums, co-payments and taxes onto the workers.

On all fronts – on the question of Free Trade Agreements, on governmental “reform,” welfare assistance, labor legislation, the minimum wage, etc., etc., – Obama’s economic program starts from the interests of big business and is based on forcing the working people to sacrifice in order to increase the profits and wealth of the capitalists.

The Workers Party’s analysis of Obama’s program enables us to place ourselves in the forefront of the spontaneously growing opposition to Obama’s record of broken promises.

This is extremely important work which must be vigorously continued.

The capitalists brought Obama to office because they are well aware of the profound economic polarization, as well as growing political crisis – the widespread disillusionment with the capitalist government and political parties. By disguising his program with

populist rhetoric, Obama is trying to divert the growing resistance of the people while stepping up the economic offensive of the capitalist class. All of the forces representing big business interests, including the forces of political opportunism and the “labor lieutenants” of the capitalists who make up the hierarchy of the AFL-CIO, are trying to sell Obama’s program to the people and perpetrate the greatest fraud on the workers. They are presenting Obama’s big business program of cutting wages, reducing

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