

Update

THE WORKER

June 12, 2012

Newspaper of the Workers Party, U.S.A.

Vol. 26, Number 4

Taking Action

As the work to develop widescale discussion amongst the people over their aims and agenda for society intensifies, more and more people are asking: "What should we do? How can we participate in changing the political and social system so as to empower the people and guarantee their rights?"

The answer is quite straightforward: join in the work. In other words, if you agree that there is a need for the working class and people to clarify and fight for their own aims and agenda, then initiate this discussion with your co-workers, friends, neighbors, etc.

This is a decisive political task. As the monopoly capitalist class and its two big political parties continue their offensive against the rights of the people, there is a profound and growing polarization. But the working class and people still remain on the political sidelines. Turning the discontent of the people into a conscious and organized force and getting off the sidelines means giving direction and program to the people's movement; it means that the people must come into the political life of the country with a program that addresses the problems confronting society and opens the path for progress. Discussing the

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There Is An Alternative!

Every day the TV, radio and newspapers are filled with stories about the Presidential candidates. Everyday, the candidates spend huge sums of money advertising themselves. Yet even still the monopoly-controlled media admits that large numbers of people have turned off and tuned out the elections.

Of course, according to the media, this is because people are "apathetic" and "apolitical."

But the fact that people have contempt for the capitalist politicians and the phony elections does not mean that people are "tuned out" to genuine politics. On the contrary. The very acts of boycotting and denouncing the

capitalist elections are political statements.

And while people are rejecting capitalist politics, they remain more concerned than ever about the problems facing them and about finding solutions to these problems.

Such solutions – solutions to the problems of poverty, economic insecurity and exploitation, to the problems of militarism and war, to racism and national oppression, to the denial of rights and the exclusion of people from the political process – can only be brought about through the development of the independent politics of the working class.

For those people who are
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Hands Off Iran!

The U.S. government is using military blackmail against Iran with the open aim of starting a war to overthrow the government. On May 15, the U.S. ambassador to Israel reminded the world that the Obama administration is fully prepared to launch a war on Iran. According to Ambassador Shapiro, the U.S. military "option" is "fully available. And not just available, but it's ready. The necessary planning has been done to ensure that it's ready." In May the U.S. House and Senate, in

nearly unanimous votes, passed bills authorizing new sanctions on Iran and once again declaring Iran a target for possible U.S. intervention.

According to the "big stick diplomacy" used by the Obama administration to justify its military blackmail, Iran must take measures to prove to the world that it has the sovereign right to develop its nuclear energy program. This must not be allowed to pass. It is the U.S. government which must stop

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For Your Information

The Role of Parties in the U.S. Political System

One of the most serious obstacles in the way of the further development and realization of democracy in the U.S. – of a government genuinely of the people, by the people and for the people – is the system of privilege which is manifest in the political monopoly exercised by the Democratic and Republican parties.

This political monopoly is reinforced by the current system of elections and, in fact, sanctioned by law. On a national basis, the Democratic and Republican parties are not only guaranteed a place on election ballots, but they are the only political entities which are. In other words, current law denies the people the right to nominate and select candidates and reserves it as a privilege for the two big political parties. Furthermore these two parties receive large financial subsidies from the government. Even the primaries – through which the big parties select their candidates – are organized by the state itself, further entrenching the legal monopoly of the Democrats and Republicans. The Democrats and Republicans also enjoy de facto control over the election boards which organize and monitor the elections. In short, these two political parties – which represent only special and private interests, not the society as a whole – function, in law and in fact, as part of the governmental apparatus.

Such a system of privilege, by denying the electorate the right to nominate and select candidates, effectively undermines the right to vote itself. One must insist on the fact that a "choice" between two candidates handpicked by the Democrats and Republicans does not constitute a choice at all. In

many cities and states there is, in reality, only a one-party system (e.g. the Democratic Party machine has held undivided sway over large areas of the South for more than 100 years). The so-called "mandate of the people" which the system of representative democracy claims for the elected officials really boils down to the "mandate of the Party" which, through the privilege of nomination, exercises absolute control over who gets elected to government.

In addition to disenfranchising the people, by denying them the right to select candidates and run for office, current electoral law places many obstacles in the way of third parties and independent candidates, thus further undermining the right of the people to politically organize themselves. In order to qualify for ballot status, a third party or independent candidate must satisfy a maze of electoral requirements (requirements which are not imposed on the two big parties), many of which are openly prejudicial to new parties. Third parties are denied financial assistance as well as state support for their selection procedures. Congress has also passed laws suspending the equal time and fairness requirements for FCC broadcasts so as to exclude third party and independent candidates from election forums, debates, etc.

In addition, the system of elections itself – including the huge number of offices to be filled and the system of straight line or ticket voting, the large constituency for Congressional seats, and the single-ballot, winner-take-all method of election, all work against the rise of new parties and independent candidates and fortify

the monopoly of the two big parties.

In sum, today the Republican and Democratic parties have grown into two gargantuan political machines, exercising a virtual monopoly over the political life of the country. The Party system, by concentrating the power to select candidates as well as the organization of pre-election debate and discussion, in the hands of an elite, professional stratum effectively excludes the masses of people from political power. The Parties function as gate-keepers of the political power – gate-keepers with the power to determine who would be allowed into government and to exclude the masses of people from governance. The real "mandate" which a candidate and eventual office-holder receives is the mandate of the Party which nominated him/her and the big monied interests which stand behind the two parties.

In effect, the feudal system, which guaranteed political privileges for the land-owning class, has been replaced by a new system of political privilege that keeps the power in the hands of the two big political parties and the big business interests that back them up. Instead of the political equality of all citizens and a government of the people, we have a system of party privilege and party government.

The Worker

Newspaper of
The Workers Party

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Iran

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threatening Iran and trying to justify possible military intervention. The threat to peace in Iran and the region comes from U.S. imperialism which has declared itself the "world policeman" and which openly proclaims the "right" to carry out pre-emptive war against not only Iran, but also any government or people which it declares to be a threat to its "interests."

Since launching the war on Afghanistan in 2001 the U.S. has brazenly relied on the logic of might makes right in order to impose military blackmail on the world and to wage war. The U.S. has repeatedly launched military attacks and invaded countries, overthrowing governments and committing barbarous atrocities against the peoples. It has repeatedly made threats and pressured countries such as Iran, Syria, North Korea and others to go along with its dictates or face "regime change."

Iran itself has been the target of U.S. aggression for more than thirty years. Since the overthrow of the Shah of Iran in 1979, U.S. imperialism has tried with might and main to undermine and destroy the government of that country. After attempting to invade Iran in 1980, the U.S. adopted a policy of supporting Iraq in a war which took the lives of several million Iranians and Iraqis. In addition, the CIA has carried on a continuous campaign of disinformation and destabilization, both inside and outside the country.

The hostile policy of the

U.S. government towards Iran comes from the fact that the U.S. views the Iranian government and people as obstacles to U.S. domination of the Middle East. At this time the U.S. government has set an agenda of seeking allies in its campaign against Iran and doing whatever it takes to label Iran as a "international outlaw" in order to justify war and intervention there.

It is precisely because of the questions of oil and the domination of the strategic Middle East region that the U.S. is waging an all out campaign to destabilize and overthrow the Iranian government. Repeated military threats have been issued and economic sanctions imposed. The Obama administration has tried to squeeze Iran by means of sanctions which target the oil sector and prevent third party countries from trading with Iran. On March 30, Obama signed a "Presidential Determination" authorizing the U.S. government to sanction foreign central banks and other foreign government-owned financial institutions if the U.S. administration disapproves the institution's level of petroleum-related transactions with Iran. In an attempt to cause financial chaos,

the Obama administration has frozen all the U.S. deposited assets of every Iranian bank including the Central Bank of Iran. In 2009, the Obama administration ordered the expansion of clandestine military operations "to counter threats in Iran." Since the passage of the "Iran Freedom Support Act" in 2006, the U.S. Congress has allocated tens of millions of dollars to destabilization groups and initiatives aimed at "changing Iran's form of government." First Bush and now the Obama administration have carried out a massive military buildup. Just this April, the Pentagon deployed an additional 20 jet fighters to the region.

In order to defeat the U.S. governments war plans against Iran the American people must demand an end to all U.S. threats and pressure against Iran. We must speak out against the chauvinism of the Obama administration which declares, in the manner of an imperialist overlord, that it has the right to decide which countries have the right to sovereignty and which do not. We must fight against U.S. imperialism's military blackmail and economic strangulation of Iran and demand: U.S. Imperialism, Hands Off Iran!

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Taking Action

aims and agenda of the working class and people is the decisive step in organizing such a new, independent political movement.

The second thing is that in order to sustain and consolidate this independent political movement, we must equip ourselves with consciousness and organization.

Clarifying the aims and agenda of the working class and people means looking into the contemporary level of development of our society as well as into the historical projects taken up by the American people. It means looking into what is blocking the realization of the aspirations and aims of the people and what social and political conditions must be created in order to achieve these aims. It means looking into how various political and social forces are operating at the present time, either to advance or retard the interests of the people.

In order to take up these questions, the Workers Party has published a Draft Program for the Working Class. The Draft Program sets the short-term objectives of guarantying all the economic and other inviolable rights of the people, of carrying out the democratic renewal of the political system and political process, and of implementing a democratic foreign policy. The Draft Program sets the long-term objective of creating a socialist society. Studying the Draft Program in all its depth and breadth is a vital task in equipping ourselves with the consciousness necessary to sustain and develop our

independent political movement.

All this work must be carried out in an organized way. In other words, there is a need for everyone who is taking up this work to get together and work together. Through organization we deepen and broaden our analysis and release our initiative. Through organization we are able to develop our independent politics in a systematic and thorough-going way, influencing events and people in a more and more profound manner. Through organization we can more accurately gauge the stage of development of the independent political movement and advance the work in a step-by-step manner.

In addition to holding regular consultations amongst themselves, activists in the work have already taken the initiative to organize groups to discuss and distribute *The Worker*. These groups are a decisive means for equipping ourselves with consciousness and organization and key levers for creating the new, independent political space.

To sum up. What can be done to help change the political and social system so as to empower the people and guarantee their rights? — 1) Join in the work of initiating widescale discussion amongst the people over their aims and agenda for society and of popularizing the Draft Program for the Working Class. 2) Join and help build groups that discuss the Draft Program and read, distribute and write for *The Worker*.

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Building the Alternative

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fed up with capitalist politics but remain hesitant about the possibilities for change, there are, of course, many facts and arguments which show the great strength and on-going struggles of the people. But, in the final analysis, the best facts and arguments can be seen in life itself. We say: "Try it Out!" We say that the way to see the revolutionary aspirations and drive of the people is to go amongst them with genuinely independent politics. Only such a politics can interest and mobilize the people.

The Workers Party unites and mobilizes people on the basis of the program of economic rights, democratic renewal, a democratic foreign policy and socialism. Our experience is that by popularizing this independent program as widely as possible and by persisting, on a daily basis, in developing this politics amongst the people, we break the stranglehold of capitalist politics and help people come into active political life on the basis of their own aims and agenda.

Join in building the alternative!

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