

Update

THE WORKER

December 2, 2013

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

Vol. 27, Number 15

**U.S. Pressure
Against Iran**

Despite being falsely advertised by political opportunism as an opponent of "war-hawks", President Obama is continuing to beat the drum for war against Iran. Obama brands Iran as an "outlaw" or "rogue" state even while continuing to defend and intensify U.S. imperialism's economic embargo against Iran. So too, the U.S. continues to prepare a "military deterrent" and to set up a web of alliances throughout the region so as to secure undivided hegemony.

Obama's talk of "peace" is nothing but a thin cover for war preparations. Most recently the U.S. initiated talks "to require Iran to prove the peaceful nature of its nuclear program and to ensure that it cannot acquire a nuclear weapon." U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry admitted during a speech on November 24th, that a temporary new agreement reached with Iran is being welcomed by Obama because it "says that Iran's peaceful nuclear program is subject to a negotiation and to mutual agreement." In other words, he is telling us directly that the U.S. government wants the power to decide which countries can and which countries cannot acquire non-weapons nuclear technology!

Just as with Iraq, the U.S. is trying to create a hysteria about Iran and alleged "weapons of mass destruction," in order to bring about "regime change." Everyone knows that the real motives behind the U.S. policy of pressure, dictate and interference against Iran and other Middle Eastern states are the questions of oil and the domination of the strategic Middle East region. To achieve its aims, U.S. imperialism has targeted Iran and every other government in the region that either defends the national rights and sovereignty of its own people, or seeks to ally itself with one of U.S. imperialism's rivals.

The working class and progressive public opinion in the U.S. must not be caught unawares as the tensions and rivalries in the Middle East continue to grow. U.S. imperialism wants war in the Middle East because its insatiable appetite for the oil wealth of the region is continually coming up against more and more obstacles, including the liberation movements of the Middle Eastern peoples, the stands and interests of various governments in the region,

*CONTINUED***Deepening Health Care
Crisis**

Nationally, our country's health care system is undergoing rapid corporatization.

The restructuring of health care along the lines of managed care puts the drive for corporate profits ahead of the health and well-being of the people. Under managed care, health care providers are paid a fixed premium for each person enrolled. And since the aim of these corporate providers is to maximize profit, the managed care system has a built-in incentive for the provider to minimize the care available. Hospital stays are arbitrarily shortened, referrals to specialists are put off and needed procedures denied.

The government is accelerating this corporatization of health care by increasingly contracting out Medicaid and Medicare recipients to managed care networks. Federal regulations which allow states to opt for mandatory Medicaid managed care without federal waivers, have led many states to privatize Medicaid services and more are expected to follow. So too, Medicare is being privatized with a large percentage of beneficiaries already enrolled in managed care plans. In this way, billions of dollars of public monies, formerly earmarked for the health of the population, are being turned over to the private sector and converted into profits. Privatizing Medicare and Medicaid undermines the entitlement status of these programs, taking

the delivery of health care for the poor and elderly out of the public domain. Under managed care, millions of recipients find themselves shunted aside and denied needed services.

With the profit motive in command, hospitals are understaffed because the owners seek to maximize profits by cutting back on employees which in turn endangers the quality of care. There are many disastrous consequences. For example, many emergency medical facilities are already so overcrowded that some patients go untreated while others suffer severe complications as a result of long waits. So too, some hospitals have developed a two-tier delivery system. Private, for-pay patients receive quality care while the under-insured find that vital procedures, access to specialists, follow-up care, etc. are delayed or denied altogether.

The privatization and corporatization of health care across the country confronts the people with a serious challenge. In our country, which has created a modern health care infrastructure, growing numbers of people find themselves paying more and more for health coverage but receiving less care. The "Affordable Health Care Act" will accelerate the process of corporatization

*CONTINUED***Imperialism Means War**

Below we reprint excerpts from V.I. Lenin's book: "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism." We encourage our readers not only to review these short passages but to read and re-read this classic work in light of contemporary conditions.

Imperialism As A Special Stage of Capitalism

In Chapter VII, entitled "Imperialism as a Special Stage of Capitalism," Lenin writes:

"We must now try to sum up, put together, what has been said above on the subject of imperialism. Imperialism emerged as the development and direct continuation of the fundamental characteristics of capitalism in general. But capitalism only became capitalist imperialism at a definite and very high stage of its development, when certain of its fundamental characteristics began to change into their opposites, when the features of the epoch of transition from capitalism to a higher social and economic system had taken shape and revealed themselves all along

the line. Economically, the main thing in this process is the displacement of capitalist free competition by capitalist monopoly. Free competition is the fundamental characteristic of capitalism, and of commodity production generally; monopoly is the exact opposite of free competition, but we have seen the latter being transformed into monopoly before our eye, creating large-scale industry and forcing out small industry, replacing large-scale by still larger-scale industry, and carrying concentration of production and capital to the point where out of it has grown and is growing monopoly: cartels, syndicates and trusts, and merging with them, the capital of a dozen or so banks, which manipulate thousands of millions. At the same time the monopolies, which have grown out of free competition, do not eliminate the latter, but exist over it and alongside of it, and thereby give rise to a number of very acute, intense antagonisms, frictions and

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Imperialism

conflicts. Monopoly is the transition from capitalism to a higher system.”

“If it were necessary to give the briefest possible definition of imperialism we should have to say that imperialism is the monopoly stage of capitalism. Such a definition would include what is most important, for, on the one hand, finance capital is the bank capital of a few very big monopolist banks, merged with the capital of the monopolist combines of industrialists; and, on the other, the division of the world is the transition from a colonial policy which has extended without hindrance to territories unseized by any capitalist power, to a colonial policy of monopolistic possession of the territory of the world which has been completely divided up.”

“But very brief definitions, although convenient, for they sum up the main points, are nevertheless inadequate, since very important features of the phenomenon that has to be defined have to be especially deduced. And so, without forgetting the conditional and relative value of all definitions in general, which can never embrace all the concatenations of a phenomenon in its complete development, we must give a definition of imperialism that will include the following five of its basic features: 1) the concentration of production and capital has developed to such a high stage that it has created monopolies which play a decisive role in economic life; 2) the merging of bank capital with industrial capital, and the creation, on the basis of this “finance capital,” of a financial oligarchy; 3) the export of capital as distinguished from the export of commodities acquires exceptional importance; 4) the formation of international monopolist capitalist combines which share the world among themselves, and 5) territorial division of the whole world among the biggest capitalist powers is “completed.”

“Imperialism is capitalism in that stage of development in which the dominance of monopolies and finance capital has established itself; in which the export of capital has acquired pronounced importance; in which the division of the world among the international trusts has begun; in which the division of all territories of the globe among the biggest capitalist powers has been completed.”

In “Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism,” Lenin criticizes the theo-

ries of Karl Kautsky, theories which to this day play an important role in covering over the basis and inherently aggressive character of the capitalist-imperialist system. Lenin writes:

“The fundamental ideas expressed in our definition of imperialism were very resolutely attacked by Kautsky in 1915, and even in November 1914, when he said that imperialism must not be regarded as a “phase” or stage of economy, but as a policy, a definite policy “preferred” by finance capital. . . .”

“The essence of the matter is that Kautsky detaches the politics of imperialism from its economics, speaks of annexations as being a policy “preferred” by finance capital, and opposes to it another bourgeois policy which, he alleges, is possible on this very same basis of finance capital. It follows, then, that monopolies in economics are compatible with non-monopolistic, non-violent, non-annexationist methods in politics. It follows, then, that the territorial division of the world, which was completed precisely during the epoch of finance capital, and which constitutes the basis of the present peculiar forms of rivalry between the biggest capitalist states, is compatible with a non-imperialist policy. The result is a slurring-over and a blunting of the most profound contradictions of the latest stage of capitalism, instead of an exposure of their depth; the result is bourgeois reformism instead of Marxism.” . . .

In Chapter IX, entitled “The Critique of Imperialism,” Lenin criticizes the theory of “ultra-imperialism.” Lenin writes:

“The notorious theory of “ultraimperialism,” invented by Kautsky, is just as reactionary. Kautsky [says]: ‘. . . Cannot the present imperialist policy be supplanted by a new, ultraimperialist policy, which will introduce the joint exploitation of the world by internationally united finance capital in place of the mutual rivalries of national finance capitals? Such a new phase of capitalism is at any rate conceivable.’” . . .

Lenin continues: “It is sufficient to state this question clearly to make it impossible for any reply to be given other than in the negative, for any other basis under capitalism for the division of spheres of influence, of interests, of colonies, etc., than a calculation of the *strength* of the participants in the divi-

from page 1

sion, their general economic, financial, military strength, etc., is *inconceivable*. And the strength of these participants in the division does not change to an equal degree, for the *even* development of different undertakings, trusts, branches of industry, or countries is impossible under capitalism. Half a century ago Germany was a miserable, insignificant country, as far as her capitalist strength was concerned, compared with the strength of England at that time; Japan was the same compared with Russia. Is it “conceivable” that in ten or twenty years’ time the relative strength of the imperialist powers will have remained *unchanged*? Absolutely inconceivable.”

Iran

from page 1

and the conflicting ambitions of other imperialist powers.

It is the system of capitalist imperialism which breeds war and militarism. In the Middle East, driven by the insatiable appetite of the big U.S. oil monopolies, U.S. imperialism has militarized the entire region, violating the sovereignty of the Arab peoples, creating a permanent state of tension and the seeds of new wars. In fact, all over the globe, U.S. imperialism is preparing and carrying out military intervention and aggression. It adheres to the Hitlerite logic that “Might Makes Right.”

But the war program of imperialism can be defeated when the people insert themselves into the equation and bring their program for peace to center stage. We must remain vigilant and fight every step of the way to stay the hands of the imperialist warmakers.

At the same time, the workers and people must unfold their own independent movement which demands a genuinely democratic foreign policy. Such a democratic foreign policy includes the immediate withdrawal of all U.S. troops stationed abroad and the end of all aggressive military alliances. Such a democratic foreign policy demands an end to interference and intervention in the sovereign affairs of other countries and recognizes the right of every nation and country to determine its affairs for itself.

The struggle for a democratic foreign policy is a struggle against the monopoly capitalist class and the imperialist system. The cause of peace can only be won and secured by the peoples.

Health Care

from page 1

as it guarantees a market for health care providers who will continue to have a built-in incentive to minimize the care available in order to maximize profits. Furthermore, more Medicaid and Medicare recipients will be contracted out to managed care networks. And obviously, with the profit motive in command, health care costs will continue to rise.

We say that a fundamental change is needed. We must no longer allow our country's health care infrastructure to be used to maximize profit.

Health care is a right belonging to every human being. We must put our country's vast health care sector in service of the people so that this right is guaranteed, free of charge, for everyone.

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Newspaper of the
Workers Party

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