

Update THE WORKER**March 19, 2013****Newspaper of the Workers Party, U.S.A.****Vol. 27, Number 3**

What Aim for Society?

In his State of the Union address Obama put forward a program for subordinating everything in America to the interests of the U.S. and international monopolists. Obama's slogans and catch phrases were nothing but demands that every social institution, the government itself, the very life of the people must be organized from the standpoint of maximizing the competitiveness (that is, maximizing the profits) of the big capitalists.

The centerpiece of Obama's speech was his promise to "make America a magnet for new jobs and manufacturing" by giving the private sector more capital through a variety of initiatives including government-funded "manufacturing hubs." Obama also promised to increase government funding for corporate research and infrastructure.

In addition to lavishing billions in government funds on the private sector, Obama also promised "new tax credits to businesses that hire and invest." In other words, Obama plans even more tax cuts for the big capitalists.

In short, Obama plans to take billions of dollars accumulated by the government through taxes on the working people and use these monies not to give work or income-support to the workers but to give business more capital. Once more, our country's social capital is being turned over to a handful of private owners.

Obama's economic program is a double and triple fraud. In the first place, providing the capitalists with investment funds, research and development grants, tax breaks, etc. will not create jobs but rather result in more unemployment. This is because the capitalists invest in new technology and equipment with the precise motive of sweating more and

more work out of fewer and fewer workers. The capitalist goal is not to create jobs but to increase profits by increasing the exploitation of the workers.

Furthermore, Obama's economic program turns truth upsidedown. It is not the capitalists who create economic growth and jobs. It is the labor of the workers which produces all the wealth of the country.

The capitalist economic system is nothing but a system of organized

class privilege. By granting a handful of private businesses ownership over the country's means of production, capitalism enables these owners to exploit the labor of the workers and control the economic life of the country. Obama and the Democrats, just like the Republicans, wield the power of government to arbitrarily strengthen this system of privilege and turn even more of the country's economy over to the capitalists.

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Obama's Smear and Destabilization Campaign Against Venezuela

In a high-profile commentary made only hours after the death of Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, U.S. President Barack Obama broadcast the fact that he considers Chavez' death the beginning of "a new chapter" in the history of Venezuela.

Obama proceeded to malign Venezuela for breaking with U.S. canons about "democracy" "rule of law" and "respect for human rights." Obama even went so far as to depict this despicable slander of the already deceased President Chavez as a posture of "support for the Venezuelan people" and "interest in developing a constructive relationship with the Venezuelan government."

The self-same unbridled chauvinism expressed in this arrogant double-talk underpins the whole aggressive policy of the U.S. government towards Venezuela.

For years, U.S. imperialism has been actively organizing counter-revolutionary and illegal forces inside Venezuela who are plotting new attacks on the reform processes and the

democratically-elected government.

The U.S. seeks to overthrow the government of Venezuela because it has been strengthening the economic and political independence of the country and opposing U.S. domination of Latin America and the world.

The Workers Party expresses solidarity with the Venezuelan people's struggle to defend their Bolivarian process in the face of the U.S.-sponsored destabilization campaign. We demand an end to the official ideology of chauvinism and an end to U.S. interference in Venezuela.

Below we present some background material on Venezuela.

Amongst other things, through the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), the U.S. government has been organizing and financing opposition groups. In April 2002, these groups attempted a military coup, arresting Chavez and issuing a number of "decrees" nullifying many of the economic and political reforms being implemented by Chavez. The coup, although immediately recognized

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Accordingly, Obama also made it crystal clear in his State of the Union address that he plans to carry out more privatization of the social sectors of the economy, to spend hundreds of billions in tax dollars to guarantee interest payments for the Wall Street money-lenders, and to spend hundreds of billions in tax dollars for the continued militarization of the economy.

Thus, grave challenges face us. The U.S. monopoly capitalist class is continuing to impose a thoroughly reactionary, anti-social agenda on the country – imposing new and more intense forms of exploitation on the workers, slashing social investments in education, in health care, in income-support programs, in social security and so on, privatizing the public infrastructure, and stripping away any guarantees for the economic and human rights of the people. This anti-social agenda is the bi-partisan program of the Democrats and Republicans, the political parties of big business.

In fighting against these attacks it is necessary to resist each and every backwards step. And such resistance, which is already reflected in protests against social service cutbacks, in strike struggles and so on, can only continue to develop. At the same time, the working class and people must take up the challenge to repudiate the aim and program of the big capitalists and bring their own aims and agenda to the fore so as to open the path for the progress of our society. The aim of the working class can be nothing less than to emancipate itself from capitalist wage-slavery and create a new, socialist society. This aim is consistent with the interests of the overwhelming majority of the people and must necessarily lead to the affirmation of the rights of all individuals and collectives. That is, in setting its aim and agenda for society, the working class must carry forward the finest traditions and historical project of the American people.

One of the first things that comes up in terms of the aims of the

people is to provide themselves with economic security. Over several hundred years, the peoples who came to this country, as well as the Native Americans, have created a country with a vast economic potential – with modern technology, tools, means of communication and so forth.

Yet even though we have created all the means necessary to guarantee the well-being of the people, the basic economic needs of the people remain unmet. The program of "increasing international competitiveness" has led to chronic high levels of unemployment and to the substitution of part-time and temporary jobs for full-time positions. Access to health care is beyond the economic means of some 100 million Americans. The public school system is being dismantled and the majority of people cannot afford the price of higher education. Millions of retired workers live in extreme economic hardship. In short, the overwhelming majority of people live in a state of economic insecurity and the people's standard of living continues to fall.

As a first step in providing for their economic security, the working class and broad majority of the American people must fight for the implementation of the program of Economic Rights. This program recognizes that it is the responsibility of society and the government to guarantee the well-being of every member of society – to guarantee everyone a job or a livelihood commensurate with society's high level of development, to guarantee material security in old age or loss of the capacity to work, to guarantee the right to universal and free medical care, the right to the best possible education (including child care and university education) and to guarantee other vital social services. Implementing the program of economic rights means changing the direction of the economy so that the vast productive forces already created by our people are put at the disposal of the people themselves. It means that the aim of

economic life must be to satisfy the all-around economic and cultural needs of the people.

Democratic Renewal

Our country emerged as part of the historical struggle against medievalism, and, more than 200 years ago, took up the banners of equality and democracy. Despite the obstacles created by the reactionary classes – despite the imposition of slavery, the armed conquest of the Southwest and other territories, despite Jim Crow and the whole system of discrimination and inequality imposed on the peoples – the American people, gathering together the democratic and progressive traditions of the peoples from many lands, always fought for the realization in practice of equal rights for everyone.

Today, when the drive to "increase the international competitiveness" of U.S. capitalism is accompanied by an intensification of discrimination of all kinds and when the monopoly capitalist class is trying to erase the victories of the historical struggles for equal rights, the people must carry forward their great democratic heritage to the point of creating a society which guarantees, in practice, equal rights for everyone and which guarantees, in practice, the means for the realization of these rights.

The leading edge of the struggle for equality is the struggle to carry out the democratic renewal of the political system and the political process. Today, the American people, who emerged as a nation in the struggle

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U.S. Continues Provocations Against North Korea

As The Worker goes to press, the U.S. and South Korean military forces are in the midst of large-scale war "games," code-named Key Resolve and Foal Eagle, on the Korean peninsula. Ten thousand U.S. and 200,000 South Korean troops, accompanied by hundreds of U.S. fighter aircraft and naval warships, are taking part in the 2 month exercises scheduled to end on April 30.

In recent years, U.S. aircraft and warships have repeatedly violated

the territorial airspace and waters of North Korea, and the exercises are always accompanied by provocative military threats against North Korea from various U.S. State Department and Pentagon officials.

Such military actions by the U.S. reveal not only the extremely dangerous and provocative steps on the part of the Pentagon, but also the hypocrisy of U.S. imperialism. While U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry and Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel

proclaim North Korea as a "military threat," it is the U.S. itself which is stoking the flames of war.

Once again, the military maneuvers being carried out by the U.S. on the Korean peninsula demonstrate that it is U.S. imperialism, and not North Korea, which is pushing the region to the brink of war. Clearly, the removal of all U.S. military forces from the Korean peninsula is necessary to end the threat of war and help bring about the peaceful reunification of the peninsula.

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against the absolute power of the feudal kings, again face an entrenched political power which has usurped the sovereignty of the people. Today, the Republican and Democratic parties, creatures created by the economic elite, wield the same arbitrary power as the Kings and Lords of the feudal period, deciding, without regard for the will of the people, such vital questions as war and peace and the direction of the national economy, and dispersing the funds of the public treasury in order to line the pockets of the economic elite. Facing this political situation, the American people must take up the struggle to renew the political system and political process so that the sovereign power – the decision-making power – returns to the people themselves and the people are able to directly participate in governing their affairs.

In the course of building our country and carrying forward our aspirations for equality and emancipation, the American people always sympathized with and supported the peoples of all countries fighting for progress and emancipation. Yet again, this aspiration of the American people has been blocked by the reactionary capitalist class, which has repeatedly launched wars of aggression against other nations. Today still, this great problem confronts us. What place should the

American people occupy in the world and what kind of world do we aspire to? The Obamas and Boehners dream of a world in which U.S. imperialism is the sole superpower, projecting its military might to the four corners of the globe, interfering in the internal affairs of other countries, dictating their economic and political system, plundering the wealth and exploiting the peoples of other countries. The great anti-imperialist, democratic tradition of the American people demands an end to this imperialist foreign policy. It calls for a foreign policy which aims at living in peace and cooperation with all the peoples, recognizing the sovereignty and independence of every nation and people. Such a democratic foreign policy includes the withdrawal of all U.S. troops stationed abroad, the withdrawal of the U.S. from all aggressive military pacts and alliances, an end to the militarization of our society, an end to the official ideology of chauvinism, an end to the policy of dictate, interference and aggression against other nations and peoples.

Part and parcel of the reactionary offensive of the McCaines and Obamas – of the big capitalists and their political representatives – is the attempt to deprive the people of their own perspective and own program, the attempt to bar the door to progress.

Of course, we must respond

and take actions against each and every attack on our rights, but this response must develop in the context of the people's own aims and agenda, in the context of solving the problems posed by history and the present situation.

By enunciating their own aims and agenda, the people bring out everything that is healthy and alive in the society and arouse themselves to go forward to achieve their aspirations for equality and emancipation. By uniting ourselves under the banner of our common aims, we unify the manifold activities of the people, giving our movement consciousness and organization.

The program of recognizing the economic and other inviolable rights of the people, the program of carrying out the democratic renewal of our country so as to empower the people themselves, the program of implementing a democratic foreign policy, carries forward the great banners of the American people and opens the road to progress and socialism.

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Venezuela

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by the U.S. government, was defeated by the Venezuelan people who came out in their millions to rally around the elected government.

Since 2002, the U.S. government has continued to fund and encourage the same oppositional forces. Relying on tactics similar to those employed in Haiti and elsewhere, the U.S. government and media (as well as the monopoly-owned media in Venezuela) continually try to create hysteria about Chavez' alleged "dictatorial powers," while promoting the opposition as the "democratic alternative." However, the facts show that the opposition, in addition to having virtually no popular support, relies on the methods of agent provocateurs and terrorists.

The opposition openly agitates for the armed overthrow of the constitutional government and several leaders have repeatedly called for U.S. military intervention. Their tactics include murder and torture of government officials, as well as attempts to incite civil strife through violent street actions. The aim is to cause a disturbance big enough to "justify" U.S. intervention to "restore peace."

There is also the danger that the U.S. may use Colombian paramilitary death squads and/or the Colombian army to create armed conflict with Venezuela which again could be used as an excuse for U.S. intervention. In recent years, Colombian paramilitaries have been caught making incursions and preparing armed attacks inside Venezuelan territory.

Recent History

From 1958 to 1998 two parties representing the Venezuelan upper classes [Accion Democratica (Social Democrats) and Copei (Christian Democrats)] monopolized political power through an agreement, known as "puntofijismo," under which the two competed and shared the state administration while excluding all working class parties.

In the 1980's, the Venezuelan economy faced tremendous difficulties as a result of the fall in oil prices and the flight of foreign capital. In

response, two successive administrations – headed by Presidents Carlos Perez and Rafael Caldera – adopted a typical neo-liberal economic program which included "Structural Adjustment Loans" from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), privatization of state-owned enterprises, cutbacks in social expenditures, deregulation, etc. The measures – dictated by U.S. and foreign banks – destroyed the livelihoods of the Venezuelan people, forcing more than two-thirds of the population into poverty.

In 1998, Hugo Chavez was elected President on a platform that called for the democratization of the country through the convening of a National Constituent Assembly and the drafting of a new constitution. In August 1999, the Constituent Assembly was elected with an overwhelming majority of members supporting the pro-Chavez Fifth Republic Movement (MVR). The new constitution was overwhelmingly approved in a national referendum in December 1999 and subsequently the Chavez-led coalition won a substantial majority of representatives in the new government.

Chavez and the MVR began a process of economic and political reforms known as the "Bolivarian Revolution."

Several measures have been taken to strengthen the economic independence of the country. The new Constitution itself banned the privatization of the oil industry and other state sectors. In 2001, a new law was passed mandating that the Venezuelan government maintain at least 51% ownership in all new oil exploration and production enterprises.

Chavez also brought Venezuelan oil production in line with OPEC quotas, thereby reducing oil exports to the U.S. (Venezuela is one of the 4 top suppliers to the U.S., accounting for 13% of the oil imported to the U.S. in 2002 or more than 1.4 million barrels/day).

Chavez has also taken measures to impose certain limited monetary controls to prevent

manipulation of Venezuela's currency by the big international bankers.

One of the major social reforms of the Chavez government is in the educational sector. Chavez doubled the government's annual expenditures on public education and by May 7, 2004 already built 3,200 new "Bolivarian Schools". These schools help the most downtrodden because they are day-long schools, thus enabling parents to work. The Bolivarian schools also provide free breakfast, lunch and a late afternoon snack for all children. The schools are also closely integrated with the community and serve as community centers. In addition, "Plan Simoncito" has greatly expanded infant and child care for ages 0 to 6. By 2004 more than 300,000 infants and children, nearly 45% of Venezuela's children, were receiving free day-care.

In addition, Bolivarian University is extending access to higher education to tens of thousands of students from impoverished backgrounds. With the help of Cuban experts, Venezuelan has also undertaken an extensive adult literacy program.

Some of the other ongoing reform initiatives include:

- rural and urban land reform which has already given title to land and housing to hundreds of thousands of peasants and urban poor.

- a community health care program which is establishing clinics in poor neighborhoods.

- a nationwide network for distributing food at below market rates.

The U.S. government also opposes the independent foreign policy of the Venezuelan government which has repeatedly spoken out against U.S. aggression and interference in Latin America and throughout the world, against the FTAA, etc. The Venezuelan government also opposes the blockade of Cuba and concluded a barter-exchange agreement with Cuba, providing that country with 100,000 barrels of oil/day in exchange for Cuban assistance in developing the health and education sectors of Venezuela.