

Update

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Rights and Government for Whom?

These days, even as the government is carrying out a broad-scale offensive against the American people, the politicians – Republicans and Democrats alike – never stop repeating such catch phrases as “getting government off the people’s backs” and boasting of their commitment to “individual liberty” and the “sovereignty of the individual.” Exposing the basis of these slogans is a necessary part not only of the immediate fight against the capitalist offensive but also in order to get at the root of things and open the perspective for the progress and renewal of our country.

The ideology of “individual liberty” and the “sovereignty of the individual,” as espoused today by the Republican and Democratic party politicians is based on the political theory first enunciated by representatives of the capitalist class in the 17th century. According to this theory the state arises to protect civil society based on private property in the means of production. Such a state must guarantee the so-called “natural rights of man” (the most “natural” and fundamental “right” being to acquire and accumulate property) by treating all individuals as “equal before the law” and safeguarding various “civil liberties,” i.e. the rights of individuals to participate freely in civil society. In other words, the concept of “individual liberty” actually translates into the right of the individual owners of property to accumulate more property and the idea of the “sovereignty of the

individual” means the sovereignty of the individual owners of private property in the means of production, e.g. the capitalist class. The function of government – the state – is to insure that nothing interferes with either the liberty or sovereignty of the capitalists to conduct business as they see fit.

In fact, at the time of the founding of the American Republic in 1787, only male property-owners were considered part of the polity. It was never even imagined that those who did not own property – such as the indigenous peoples, the African slaves, women or a large percentage of the laboring classes – should enjoy “individual liberty” or participate in governance. Today, of course, the capitalist state has been forced, under the impact of the

democratic movement of the people, to extend various civil liberties to the masses of the people. But the rights of private property in the means of production still remain as the very foundation of the political superstructure. As they have done for the last 300 years, today’s ideologues of capitalism want to hide the fact that under capitalism the “individual liberties” and “freedoms” of the private owners of the means of production are predicated on the denial of the rights and freedom of the vast majority of the population.

Capitalism is a system in which the social property (including the tools and natural resources) created by the whole society over many generations

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Militarism and War

The inherent economic processes of modern capitalism – the process of monopolization at home and the export of capital abroad – give rise to violence and domination in politics. The very foundation of the capitalist-imperialist system – the social relations of subjugation and exploitation of the oppressed nations and classes, rests on violence and war.

It is well known that the history of the rise of capitalist-imperialism is the history of conquering the colonies through fire and sword. In the beginning of the 20th century, U.S. imperialism entered the scramble for colonies and economic territory by grabbing the Philippines, Cuba and Puerto

Rico through war. For decades, the U.S. marines openly made the law in Latin America while the U.S. companies plundered the wealth of the continent.

U.S. imperialism, at the end of WW II, emerged from the war at the head of the camp of capitalism. But faced with the worldwide growth of the camp of socialist countries and the ever-rising tide of national liberation, U.S. imperialism initiated the most ferocious counter-revolutionary campaign, stepping into the shoes of Hitler.

Under the banner of “containing” communism, U.S. imperialism militarized the entire world, launched

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Rights

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are owned by a small number of private individuals. The capitalists, by monopolizing the very means required by the majority in order to secure their livelihood, are able to grab hold of fabulous riches by exploiting the labor of the workers. The workers, on the other hand, have no choice but to sell themselves, day in and day out, to the capitalist owners. Thus freedom for the capitalists to monopolize the means of production and exploit labor rests on the fact that the vast majority of the population have been reduced to the level of wage-slaves. Furthermore, the inherent and insatiable drive of capital to maximize profit places it in irreconcilable opposition to the needs and requirements of society as a whole. Attempts by society as a whole to protect the natural environment or guarantee workers a safe work environment, the struggle of the workers to restrict the “right” of the capitalists to hire and fire at will or increase exploitation to the maximum – all these things, are looked upon by the capitalist as just so many infringements on his/her “individual liberty” – on the sanctity of the rights of property. Thus when today's politicians insist that everyone must fend for herself/himself in the so-called “free market system,” they are saying that society and the state only recognizes the “rights” of private property and that the people have no human rights which they can claim simply on the basis of their humanity.

The question that must be asked is: freedom and rights for whom? Is the capitalist to have unlimited right to exploit or does the working class have the right to live free of capitalist exploitation? Does society as a whole and the vast majority of its individual members have the right to a healthy

environment or does the freedom of the capitalist to dispose of his property as he sees fit give him/her the right to poison the air we breath and the water we drink?

As for the catch phrase of “getting government off the people's backs,” this is only further demagoguery on the part of the Republican and Democratic Parties. As we said above, the present-day state arose to protect a civil society based on private ownership of the means of production – that is to protect the class domination of the capitalists and enforce the system of wage-slavery on the workers. And it is precisely this capitalist state which over the last 200 years has grown to gigantic proportions. It is also precisely this capitalist state – a state which protects the “free market system” and “enhances U.S. capitalism's global competitiveness” which the Republicans and Democrats are sworn to defend.

When these politicians rail against “big government,” they are only demanding the abolition of the few regulations which big business is asked to comply with and the elimination of the few entitlement programs which the working people, through decades of struggle, have forced the state to recognize. Yet the politicians are not cutting back but rather enlarging the gargantuan military machine as well as the police forces. Yet more, in this era of monopoly capitalism, the politicians all agree that the state must play a direct and primary role in guarantying and increasing the profits of the biggest capitalists. While social programs providing a minimum of support for the workers are slashed, trillions of dollars in public monies are given to the capitalists in the form of interest

payments, research and development grants, tax loopholes, lucrative contracts, etc. The privatization schemes, so much in vogue with today's politicians, are nothing but plans for turning even more public monies, as well as the national infrastructure and natural patrimony, over to the big monopolists.

Today's huge bureaucratic state, which accounts for nearly 1/3 of the country's economy and which imposes the immense burden of militarism on the people, is more and more devouring society precisely because it is an organ of the capitalist class – an instrument protecting the special interests and privileges of the capitalists in opposition to the needs and interests of society as a whole. And it is precisely this primary function of the capitalist state – to protect private property in the means of the production – which the Republicans and Democrats want to perfect.

No, the problems facing the American people will not be solved by enhancing the “individual liberty” of the capitalist owners nor by strengthening the parasitic state which protects this system of capitalist wage-slavery. On the contrary, the problem is precisely to create a society which takes as its starting point guarantying the human rights of the broad masses of people. This requires creating a new political power which advances the general interests of society as a whole, as well as each of its individual members, and which returns sovereignty to the people themselves. These rights can be realized and this new power created only through unremitting struggle against the “rights” of private property in the means of production and against the capitalist state.

Militarism

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wars against the national liberation movements and prepared for nuclear war against the socialist countries.

Since the end of World War II alone, U.S. imperialism has launched hundreds of armed interventions against the peoples and their movements for national liberation – in Korea, in Lebanon, in the Dominican Republic, in the Congo, in Vietnam, in El Salvador and Nicaragua, etc., etc.

In addition, U.S. imperialism has deployed its armies on every continent and filled the oceans with its warships. It has established its network of military bases over the entire globe. Over 500 U.S. military bases have been established on the soil of 100 countries. Such bases put the peoples under the thumb of military-colonial occupation, trampling on the sovereignty of countries and the dignity of the peoples in the Philippines and Puerto Rico, in Korea, etc. More than 100,000 troops are deployed in Europe as the “frontline” of defense of U.S. capitalism. So too, in Asia, the U.S. relies on the “forward-deployment” of 100,000 U.S. troops to project the strategic and economic interests of U.S. capital. In the Middle East, tens of thousands of U.S. troops, including a large war flotilla and nuclear-armed subs, are kept “combat ready.”

Yet, the Obama administration is not satisfied with this arsenal of mass destruction. Obama is carrying forwards a further buildup and “modernization” of U.S. military forces, including building a new generation of nuclear weapons, a series of new high tech weapons systems including nuclear submarines, battleships, new bombers,

counter-insurgency forces, etc., etc.

In addition to strengthening its own military machine, U.S. imperialism is strengthening a world-wide network of alliances and pacts and drawing reactionary governments into the Pentagon's war strategy.

The Obama administration is continuing to push for “the enlargement of NATO to include nations with democratic values and free market economies” and to extend the operations of this aggressive military alliance “to deal with the geopolitical problems of the Middle East and Eurasia.”

In addition, U.S. imperialism keeps extending its alliances through the Middle East, “pre-positioning” armaments in the Arab countries and carrying on joint operations with various local armies, further militarizing the Israeli state as its watchdog in the region, etc.

Similarly, the Pentagon is working to integrate the armies of Latin America into the command structure of the Pentagon, using the so-called “war on drugs” to set up new counter-insurgency bases and deploy its own “advisers” on the continent.

In Asia, the Obama administration is strengthening its military alliance with South Korea, instigating the rearming of Japan, sending new weapons systems to Taiwan, establishing new bases in the Philippines, etc.

U.S. imperialism remains the main prop for reactionary and fascist regimes throughout the world. Since colonialism is based on the subjugation of the peoples, imperialism invariably attaches itself to and gives strength to the reactionary classes and social stratum. While imperialism finds it useful in many cases to maintain the fiction of the

formal political independence of various countries, the reality is that not only the economic lifelines of these countries remain in the hands of foreign capitalists but also the political, military, cultural and other aspects of the life of the people.

Under the neo-colonial system, U.S. imperialism carries out its exploitation of the peoples through an alliance with the internal capitalist and landlord classes. Representatives of the local exploiters are sent to Washington for political and military training and returned to their “native” land to rule on behalf of the U.S. multinational corporations. Such regimes rely on U.S. military aid and training to maintain their countries as “safe havens” for U.S. corporate investments.

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In fact, the movement against militarism and war is one of the profound currents of the class struggle in the U.S. Every generation of Americans has come out to oppose aggressive wars launched by the capitalist government, come out against the war in Vietnam, against the counter-insurgency wars in El Salvador and Nicaragua, against the Gulf War, the war in Yugoslavia, etc., etc.

In the present period, activists are involved in many fronts of

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Stop U.S. Aid to Israel!

The Workers Party supports the Palestinian liberation struggle which aims at establishing an independent Palestinian state. To this end, we call for the immediate end of all U.S. aid to Israel, the withdrawal of Israel from occupied territories, the dismantling of Israeli settlements, and the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their area of origin.

Since WW II U.S. imperialism has sponsored and relied on the state of Israel as its military outpost in the oil-rich and strategic Middle East. Over these years, the U.S. has sent more than \$100 billion in economic and military aid to Israel (an estimated \$15 million per day) and continues to support Israeli aggression and annexation of Palestine.

The resistance of the Palestinians, armed with little more than their determination to be free, is inspir-

ing peoples throughout the world. Across the Middle East, in Europe and the U.S., in Latin America, Asia and Africa, millions of people are coming out to support the Palestinian liberation struggle and demand the complete cutoff of U.S. aid to the Israeli aggressors, an end to Israeli occupation and recognition of the sovereign right of the Palestinians to organize their own independent state.

These actions are not only a powerful support for the Palestinian liberation struggle. They are expressing the conscience of humanity and opening a new front in the international struggle against U.S. imperialism's program of fascism and war.

In the U.S., broad sections of the people, including a new generation of anti-war activists, have already gone into action and have

again put the political demand for an immediate cutoff of U.S. aid to Israel on the political agenda.

The immediate task is to keep this demand in the forefront and carry the struggle through to the end.

The American people must do their duty and carry through the struggle to cut off all U.S. aid to Israel.

The Palestinian liberation struggle is calling forth the humanity of all of us. The Palestinian people, like every nation, are asserting their inalienable right to self-determination and independence. This right will be won through the path of struggle against imperialism and in taking up this struggle, the peoples are moving closer to that new world without colonialism, racism, and war – a world of peace and friendship based on the sovereign equality of all peoples.

Militarism

struggle against the government's aggressive foreign policy. There is a big movement underway demanding the immediate withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Afghanistan. There are struggles against U.S. aid to Israel, against U.S. intervention in Iraq, against expansion of the wars to Pakistan, Yemen and elsewhere. There are growing struggles which fight against the gargantuan military budgets, for nuclear disarmament and for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction. There is the struggle to close down Guantanamo Bay and to end the entire program of "extraordinary renditions." There is the struggle to close down the infamous School

of the Americas. There are struggles against U.S. intervention in Colombia, Mexico and throughout Latin America. There are ongoing movements in friendship and solidarity with the people of Cuba and other people oppressed and attacked by U.S. imperialism.

How can we push forward these on-going struggles against militarism and war and how can we win permanent victory? We say that as a starting point we should strive to: 1) unite the many currents of anti-militarist, anti-war struggle into one common front; 2) organize our movement on the basis of its own aims and agenda so that it is a proactive rather than a reactive move-

ment; and 3) build the anti-war movement as part of the independent movement of the working class and people, build it in opposition to and struggle against the capitalist class and the imperialist system which are the source of war and militarism.

In other words, we say let us build up a broad, popular front against war and militarism which fights for a democratic foreign policy – for the withdrawal of all U.S. military forces stationed abroad, for an end to all aggressive military alliances and pacts, for an end to U.S. interference and intervention against other countries and people.

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