

Update

# THE WORKER

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## The Two Parties are Parties of the Billionaires

In the last several local elections the officialdom of the labor aristocracy has on several occasions endorsed Republican Party candidates for state offices in Illinois.

These endorsements were supported in each case with the claim that, "These are the more responsible capitalist politicians, ones who recognize the need to live cooperatively with the workers."

But just as with the Democratic Party, it is the biggest commodity speculators, billionaire and multi-millionaire contributors who control the purse-strings and call the shots in the Republican Party.

These are the people who "make" their millions and billions of dollars by

exploiting the labor of the working class. These are the people who, through downsizing and restructuring are imposing two-tier and three-tier wage systems in order to slash the wages of younger workers and to undermine the standard of wages and benefits achieved by the older generation of workers. These are the people who, by relocating factories and contracting out, are working to replace higher-paid unionized workers with non-union workers. These are the people who have cut back on the workforce in order to maximize the amount of labor they can sweat out of each individual worker.

How could the Republican Party, a party of swindling blood-suckers, ever

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## Attacks on Democratic Rights

While most estimates place the number of undocumented immigrants in the United States at 3.5%, this "topic" has far and away dominated the entire election circus this year. This distorted emphasis alone is enough to set off alarm bells for all about the fascist aims of the capitalist offensive.

The capitalist class is scapegoating immigrants as part of its preparations for increasing the government's control and repression against the entire working class.

For example, the Department of Homeland Security has launched "pilot projects" over the last several

years to provide employers with a data bank for immediate verification of the status of every prospective employee. Through these systems, the government is working to place itself in a position capable of establishing a national blacklist, providing the capitalists with immediate information on a workers' affiliations, his or her indebtedness and spending habits, etc.

This entire program of government control and supervision over the workforce is a brutal attack on the democratic rights of the workers and a further step in consolidating more arbitrary power in the hands of the executive branch.

## The Working Class Must Build and Strengthen Its Own Political Party

In the battle for political power, the working class must come out as an independent political force, as a class for itself with its own aims, agenda and program.

A key to developing the political independence of the working class is the fortification, consolidation and growth of the mass workers' press.

Such a mass workers' press must be radically different from the political organs that serve the Democratic and Republican parties or other parties of the capitalist class.

Such mass workers' press is absolutely not a vote generator, presenting political "choices" to the people every 2 or 4 years. That is, as the voice of a genuine political party of the working class, it must not – like the capitalist press – aim at assisting the party to win political power for itself. Rather it must aim at creating a new political power in which the people, not political parties, actually are sovereign and rule.

Such a mass workers' press must be built by the workers themselves. And it must continuously place itself in the forefront of the struggles of the working class and broad masses of people to open the path for the progress of the movement for economic rights, democratic renewal, a democratic foreign policy, and socialism.

At every step of the way, such a

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# Parties of the Billionaires

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be a “friend of labor”?

As the permanent crisis of capitalism intensifies, a question on the minds of people everywhere is: what politics guides the trade union movement?

And it is exactly this line of pretending the interests of business are anything other than to maximize profits by exploiting the workers, this line of subordinating the trade union movement to a politics that claims to be both “pro-business” and “pro-labor,” which is placed in the forefront by the officialdom of the labor aristocracy and which threatens to drag the workers’ movement backwards.

There can never be cooperation and reconciliation between the working class and the capitalist class. The path for the workers is not to surrender their class interests by remaining under the tutelage of the capitalist parties. Rather it is to organize its own political party, independent of and in opposition to both the Republicans and Democrats.

Today as more and more people are seriously looking into the question of how to build up the workers’ own independent political party and political movement, the social-democratic “left-wing” of the labor aristocracy has stepped up its propaganda about the need for “workers to find their own candidates” and to “build an alternative.”

The so-called “alternative” provided by social-democracy begins with renouncing the struggle for social ownership of the means of production; that is, it starts from the aim of preserving and defending the capitalist system. At most, social-democracy demands that “workers get a fair share of what they contribute to profits and productivity.” But just what is the workers’ “fair share?” Experience shows that there is no limit to the amount of concessions these “labor leaders” are willing to accept.

On the basis of the economic program of “fair share,” social-democracy conceives, at most, of a “Labor Party” which will “lead” the workers within the limits set by the capitalist economic and political system. Thus the maximum political program of social democracy – like the labor aristocracy as a whole – calls for laws protecting the right to organize unions and demanding “equality of opportunity.” The minimum (and actual) program of social-democracy is to advertise the Democratic Party as “pro-worker” and even to seek out Republican “friends of labor.” This entire politics straight-jackets the workers’ movement, turning it into a reactive force which only responds to the agenda set by the bourgeoisie.

Thus, for example, just as the line of the labor aristocracy leads it to accept wage and other economic concessions in the name of being “pragmatic,” so too, in politics, social-democracy by accepting the line of “fiscal restraint” is led to make endless concessions to the monopolies’ program of slashing social investments.

So too, social democracy denies that the workers can only eliminate their exploitation and guarantee that everyone is paid wages commensurate with society’s level of development as well as with the quality and quantity of work performed by abolishing the system of wage-slavery altogether.

Social-democracy gives rise to these glaring contradictions precisely because its political goals place it on a razor’s edge. Social-democracy arises from the labor aristocracy and as such is part of the social prop of the bourgeoisie within the working class movement. In other words, its entire existence is dependent on monopoly capital and it is sworn to defend the capitalist system. As the candidacy of Bernie Sanders showed, the labor aristocracy and social-democ-

racy, are in fact, part of the entrenched hierarchy of the Democratic Party. Thus the immediate aim of social-democracy is to give a “left” cover to the Democratic Party while its fundamental aims are to create illusions in the capitalist system and fight against socialism and the independent working class movement.

Social-democracy, by creating illusions in capitalist politics, seeks to de-politicize and demobilize the workers, seeks to stop the discussion which life itself constantly generates amongst the workers. On one side, social-democracy proclaims the need for a political “alternative” while on the other side, it says this task must be assigned to the distant future.

Yet despite the all-sided pressure against it, the working class is continuously involved in activity and struggle – from daily economic struggles against exploitation to political protests and active discussion over all the problems facing society. But as with all human activity, to succeed the class struggle of the workers must be guided by a definite aim. One does not just randomly go about dismantling her/his car but rather, sets the aim of fixing it and then proceeds to step by step accomplish that goal. It is the same in politics. When the workers’ movement is informed with consciousness of its class aims, and organized on that basis, it can unfold its manifold struggles and activities in a systematic way, merging together many streams of the struggle and consciously working out the decisive tactics for organizing their own political party, independent of and in opposition to both the Republicans and Democrats.

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# Attacking the Chicago Teachers' Union

What is hailed as another potential victory for Mayor Rahm Emmanuel in his fight against the Chicago teachers is of concern to the entire workers' movement, as well as all of the students and adults in the country.

The mayor of Chicago and the Chicago public school district have made another proposal to increase the expenses of the teachers. The proposal is a demand for contractual givebacks

which slash district support for teachers' pensions and demand teachers pay out of their wages to cover the difference. It would not only be a further intolerable deduction from the teacher's wages but also a reversal of fortune for all teachers and workers across the country with an interest in defending guarantees for a retirement annuity to secure against the risks of old age.

In Chicago, the plan for supporting the teachers' pension works by

means of the joint support of the state and the community. A portion of the teachers' base pay is withdrawn and set aside as a contribution as well, to cover a part of the cost of the future retirement annuity.

Pensions are a differential of teachers' wages. They are itemized differently on each teacher's paycheck to accommodate the fact that the teacher will not collect that part of his/her wage until certain agreed upon conditions as to age and length of service are met.

Just like in the private sector, the employer is entrusted with these sums in the belief that the employer will not violate its contractual obligations in that regard. There is no real guarantee in either the public or private sector that they will do so – the agreement is taken in good faith and if violated the only recourse the workers have is to band together and withhold their labor until the employer is compelled to fulfill its end of the bargain. However, in the case of the executive branch, there is the additional fact that when the employer violates these contractual obligations it is violating not only its agreement with its employees, but also its fiduciary responsibility to keep the hands of its officials out of the cookie jar.

In order to give themselves a free hand to rob the pension funds of their employees the government bureaucrats are attacking the teachers' union. Fraud is perpetrated against the teachers in the context of bad faith negotiations. The monopoly-owned media adds salt to the teachers' wounds by carrying out a blockade of silence about the actual conditions of the schools. No mention is ever made of the conditions of understaffing and job instability. Not to mention the failure of the government at all levels to fulfill its minimum responsibility to provide adequate investment in public education.

The teachers must build up the conscious and organized strength of their rank and file and appeal for support to the working class and people themselves.

## Its Own Political Party

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mass workers' press must seek to draw the broadest possible sections of the people into active political life.

By reading "The Worker," by sharing it with friends, by joining in the organized activity of a group to discuss and distribute "The Worker," by sending in reports and contributing articles to the mass workers' press, people equip themselves with the

consciousness and organization needed to provide the immediate struggles with perspective, confidence and militancy. Furthermore such activity helps to prepare the ground for the workers to come out as a class for themselves and wage the political struggles needed to bringing a new agenda – a genuinely pro-social agenda – to center-stage in the life of our country.

## Against Fascism

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tionalists try to console the oppressed peoples by claiming that their political oppression and exploitation will be abolished when the state incorporates more capitalist politicians from amongst the oppressed nationalities or when the capitalists finance more "black" and "brown" cultural institutions.

This is part of the pluralist ideology of the capitalists which seeks to mystify the real class character of the state power by covering over the fundamental relationship between the economic base of society and its political superstructure.

But the truth is that ever since the division of society into social classes, the ruling class has created and fortified the state as an instrument for maintaining its power – for keeping the laboring classes oppressed and exploited and for suppressing their struggles. In

class society, the political system and the state enforce existing property relations. In capitalist society in particular, "democracy" and "equality" are only empty phrases because at its very economic foundation, society is divided into rich and poor, into exploiters and exploited.

The Workers Party holds that the struggle for modern democracy, in all its permutations, requires the mobilization and leadership of the working class. We fight against the capitalist line of splitting the masses on the basis of race, national origin, sex, etc. We strive to bring the whole working class out in defense of the rights of all sectors. The Workers Party recognizes that the rights of one are inseparable from the rights of all and that the capitalist state can never be an instrument for the liberation of the workers and oppressed peoples.

# The Struggle of the American Working Class and Broad Masses of People Against Fascism

As the capitalist state first turned more and more to violence, the workers then, as today, were always in the forefront as the resolute defender of democracy, waging countless struggles to defend their picket lines and their right to strike. Later, the workers and people began to step up resistance to the capitalist program of attacking political demonstrations and restricting democratic rights and liberties.

Yet today, the women as well as the oppressed nationalities, are being forced to come into the streets in even large numbers, again and again, in order to defend the few gains made over decades of struggle. Today, under the signboard of the “war on terrorism” the capitalist state is marching down the road of fascism, taking aim at all the elementary rights of the masses.

A vital front of the struggle for democracy is the struggle against the system of national oppression imposed on the black people, the Puerto Rican people, the Mexican people, Native Americans and other oppressed nationalities and immigrants. These struggles are a clarion call for the working class to again come out as a class-for-itself, organized in its own political party and independent political movement, with the aim of winning the battle for democracy by gaining the political power.

In addition to the struggle against police violence and against the reign of state terror imposed on the oppressed nationalities, a sharp focus of the struggle against national oppression includes the struggle against super-exploitation and discrimination in hiring and firing, as well as the struggle against segregation in housing, education and elsewhere.

When the real face of the super-exploitation of the women and oppressed nationalities is dragged into the

light of day, a whole army of swindlers, cultural nationalists and opportunists are set in motion. These forces do everything they can to hide the class character of modern America. They preach that the capitalist government as a whole is the epitome of modern civilization but that it is threatened by an “ultra-right fringe.” Next, the people are told that the very State which spawns racism, fascism and war will protect the rights of the masses – that one section of the state (for example the courts) will punish another section

(for example the police.)

The goal of these tactics is to suppress the mass struggles which break out against the capitalist politics of racism and fascism.

The cultural nationalists and opportunists invariably curse the working people and blame the masses as the source of racism and fascism. This politics aims at inciting national and racial antagonisms amongst the masses, at splitting the anti-racist and anti-fascist struggles. Even today, the cultural na-

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## From the Draft Program for the Working Class Democratic Renewal

The working class strives for the democratic renewal of the political process and political system so that the decision-making power is placed in the hands of the people.

The program of democratic renewal demands the abolition of any and all political privileges and the creation of mechanisms which guarantee the masses of the people the right to participate fully and directly in the political process and in governance.

Political parties must be denied the privilege to nominate and select candidates for public office and this right must be returned to the people. The electorate must also retain the right to recall elected officials at any time.

Further, the chasm between the legislative and executive branches of government must be overcome and the arbitrary power of the executive branch must be broken. The entire operation of government must remain under the direct supervision of the people. Any power not expressly delegated by the people to the government remains with

the people themselves.

Constituency committees comprising all citizens must be organized in workplaces, communities and wherever the people are concentrated. Such committees will have the right to nominate and select candidates, to hold elected officials accountable, to set the agenda of government, and to participate directly in governance.

The program of democratic renewal recognizes the right to self-determination, up to and including the right to secession, for the Native peoples, the people of Puerto Rico and other oppressed nations.

The program of democratic renewal demands equality – equal rights and duties – for all regardless of race, national origin, sex, etc. This includes the right for all nationalities to develop their own culture, language, etc. Most importantly, equality means that everyone has the right to participate fully in the political process and governance, to take part as decision-makers in exercising control of their lives.