

# Update **THE WORKER**

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## Racism and Chauvinism Are the Only Arguments Left

by Bill Foster

As part of the ongoing war against Iraq, the U.S. government keeps spewing out the most vile racism.

In the lexicon of the politicians and the monopoly-controlled media, such words as “terrorist,” “murderer,” “Al Qada,” “fundamentalism,” “extremism,” “Arab,” and “Islam” have all become synonymous. The struggle in Iraq is portrayed as one between the forces of “barbarism” and “civilization,” which is, of course, equated with “Western values” and the “American way of life.” Overwhelming military force is called for as the only way to stamp out the “terrorists,” the “evil-ones.” In his September 7 speech, George Bush declared that the U.S. occupation and war “must be the cause of the civilized world” because “The Middle East will either become a place of progress and peace, or it will be an exporter of violence and terror...”

For those who find such open racism and fascism hard to swallow, the liberal politicians spread a slightly different strain, insisting that if the U.S. pulls its troops out of Iraq, “there will be chaos” and “age-old rivalries will lead to civil war,” because the Iraqi people lack

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## Political Crisis: What Can We Do About It?

These elections have shown once again, that millions and millions of Americans are not satisfied with more sloganeering about change, but want a real means of participation.

The problem is that NONE of the concerns and needs of the people ever even get on the agenda. And attempts are constantly being made by both parties to marginalize even people’s defense of the political and economic rights that we’ve won through struggle in the past.

Today the crisis is such that even the ABCs of politics are marginalized. Not just the knowledge that society is divided into classes and that classes organize political parties in order to fight for their interests is denied. Even the very fact that the currency of politics

is public opinion is denied except in its superficial recognition by means of rigged public opinion polls. When a politician like Trump can win and have as little acceptance among the population as he has, it means that the political crisis is far past the breaking point. However, the wishful thinking of the capitalist politicians is to dream of a political system where people’s responses don’t matter and mass movements of the people can be scorned and disregarded as nothing but petty irritating noises arising from sniveling “crybabies.”

None of this is going to change unless consciousness and direction is provided to the various spontaneous struggles and on-going movements of

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## Merit Pay

This article appeared in a previous issue of The Worker.

Many states and cities across the country, including Colorado, Ohio, Minneapolis, and others, have begun implementing pilot “merit pay” plans for public school teachers. Under these plans, part of a teacher’s pay becomes dependent on administrative review or students’ performance on standardized tests. Amongst other things, the “merit pay” schemes would eliminate seniority (years of service) as the basis for regular salary increases.

The goal of the state governments and school administrators is anything but actually paying teachers according to their merit. If this were the goal,

public school teachers across the country would immediately get a big, across-the-board raise just to bring their salaries up to the average level of workers with similar education and experience. For example, on average, an accountant is paid 12% more than a teacher, an engineer 64% more, and a lawyer 82% more. These statistics not only show the extent to which teachers are underpaid but also indicate the low priority which the government assigns to the education of the youth.

“Merit pay” schemes are really a way to cut wages by making raises dependent on arbitrary standards and subjective whims of school administrators.

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the most vile anti-social rhetoric. Above all, a demand is made on the people that they must recognize the elections as having established a mandate for the capitalist program of war, robbery and repression. That the people have no role to play in setting the agenda of government is treated as an unchallengeable maxim. Those refusing to give their consent to a political process from which they are locked out and excluded are blamed for not “recognizing authority” and for “lacking morality.”

Such cursing of the people is meant to cover over the depth of the political crisis.

Whenever the capitalist politi-

cians want to launch a new initiative – whether it be a war against another country, or the buildup of the repressive apparatus of the state or turning a collective struggle of the people into an issue of “law and order” or “legitimizing” an attack on the democratic rights of the people – the people are bombarded with disinformation designed to mystify the causes of the problems facing the people and to impose a pre-set agenda on the people. In addition to the straightforward reactionary propaganda, it is always openly or tacitly assumed that the existing economic, political and social relations are the only possible way in which the society can be or-

ganized. That is, the capitalist system based on the exploitation and oppression of the people is the only way the system can be organized. The aim is to impose a straitjacket on political thought and action in order to depoliticize the people and confine the opposition to political channels harmless to the status quo.

Opportunism and revisionism also serve to worsen this stifling atmosphere. Opportunism and revisionism surrender the general and fundamental interests of the workers to the politics of the capitalist class. For example, a big part of what fueled the current crisis is Obama’s policy of carrying out governance behind closed doors. This was done because of the anti-social character of his program which was taken over intact from the Bush administration.

As in the past, liberalism, social democracy and modern revisionism never stopped telling the workers to give up the “hopeless dream” of emancipation during this time. In their view, the workers could never be anything more than a slave class which could do nothing more than be “pragmatic” and participate in political affairs by aligning themselves behind Obama who was allegedly representing a “progressive” wing of the capitalists.

Thus for the liberals and opportunists, it isn’t conceivable that the people and the class struggle are the motive force of history, but rather it must be the contradictions between

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“democratic traditions” and need a period (of indefinite length) of U.S. and U.N. “trusteeship and mentoring.”

This strain of racism is, in fact, no less virulent. It too decrees the superiority of “American values” and “way of life” and dehumanizes the Arab people.

Part of this racist propaganda is the portrayal of the Iraqi people’s resistance to U.S. occupation as the work of a small group of “murderers,” “foreign infiltrators,” “extremists,” etc. At all costs, the U.S. government wants to hide the fact that the whole Iraqi nation is rising to its feet in struggle against U.S. occupation and U.S. colonialism.

Thus one of the touchstones of the struggle against racism and chauvinism is to defend the Iraqi people’s right to self-determination and sovereignty. Recognition of this right includes support for the Iraqi resistance to U.S. occupation.

Of course behind the racism

and chauvinism of the government and the monopoly-controlled media are the real economic and strategic interests of the U.S. capitalist class. Bush, Rumsfeld, Powell, Bremer, etc. have repeatedly admitted that their vision of “liberated Iraq,” is a “free market” Iraq which serves as a base for a U.S.-dominated “free trade zone throughout the Middle East.” Already the U.S. corporations are falling over themselves to grab Iraqi oil and the other spoils of war.

The U.S. capitalist class advertises the superiority of the “American way of life” to justify its domination and enslavement of other countries. The capitalists incite racism and are literally calling for the blood of the Iraqi and Arab peoples because the capitalists want and need to expand their empire. Thus any government or people who resist U.S. domination are “terrorists,” “evil,” etc.

This racism and chauvinism must not and will not be allowed to pass.

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competing capitalists which are decisive.

Above all, opportunism continually tries to erase the consciousness of the workers about their own role and tries to deny the class character of politics.

In fact, for quite some time, the capitalists in the U.S. have worked systematically to strengthen the objective basis for opportunism and revisionism by creating an “aristocracy of labor.” This small upper crust of the trade union movement, ensconced in the leadership of the AFL-CIO are given positions in government, the universities, etc. The capitalists have created similar bought and paid for “leaders” in the women’s movement, and the anti-war movement, etc.

Like the capitalists themselves, the labor aristocracy and opportunism negate the need for theory and try to degrade the thinking of the workers.

Amongst other things, the relentless propaganda about the “impossibility” of social emancipation aims at getting the workers to resign themselves to the “fate” of being exploited and oppressed. According to the metaphysics of the bourgeoisie, social development has come to an end and capitalism will last forever.

This “perspective” seeks to obscure the basis of every problem and in particular cover up the capitalist system as the source of the oppression and the exploitation of the people. Resurrecting Medievalism, the bourgeoisie, can only assert its arbitrary, dictatorial ideology through the power of its state and insist that anyone who denies the “virtues” of American capitalism is “unpatriotic” and “immoral.”

However, despite all attempts of the bourgeois ideologists to deny

it, the fact remains that the workers are exploited by the capitalist system based on private property in the means of production and our society is divided into antagonistic social classes. While these ideologists are busily attempting “refutations” of Marxism-Leninism, the capitalists themselves have not and will not stop trying to maximize their exploitation of the workers.

Furthermore, they will never stop cursing the poor and most vulnerable even while preaching that American capitalism is “the best of all possible worlds” and that history has come to an end.

The demand of social development today is that the workers and people take the destiny of our country in their own hands. The need is to create a new political unity amongst

the American people, a political unity based on a program of taking our country into the future on the high road of progress, on the road of the emancipation of the people.

The starting point of this process is to bring into political life the masses of people who are locked out and excluded from the political mechanisms set up by the capitalists and the opportunists.

In contemporary America, only a revolutionary politics – a politics which arises from the real interests of the working class and broad masses of people, a politics which unites and empowers people to fight for the profound economic and social transformations demanded by the very development of society – only such a politics can inspire and mobilize the people.

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Especially during the last 30-40 years, teachers have joined together in unions and come out in many struggles to demand improved wages and objective standards for pay scales and periodic raises, based on years of service, education, hours of work, etc. “Merit pay” aims at erasing these collective standards and rights.

“Merit pay” is also part of the campaign of the government and school administrators to absolve themselves of any responsibility for our country’s educational system. For several years, the government has been under funding the public schools and slashing needed investments. But to avoid the blame for these crimes, many politicians have carried a deafening propaganda condemning teachers and their unions as “overpaid bureaucrats.” This is like listening to the capitalists blame the workers for “low

productivity.” After all, it is the teachers who are doing the work of educating the youth, while it is the government which refuses to make the investments needed to implement a modern curriculum and educational system, which is letting the school buildings crumble and herding students into overcrowded classrooms. “Merit pay” schemes aim at letting the government off the hook while holding teachers responsible for falling student achievement.

The struggle of public school teachers against “merit pay” schemes and for higher wages demands the support of everyone. Investing in education and bringing our public school system up to the level of the twenty first century means bringing teachers’ salaries in line with their vital contribution to the development of our country.

From the Anti-Imperialist News Service

# More “Collateral Damage” from “Resolute Support” in Afghanistan

November 7, 2016 – Protests took place in Kunduz, Afghanistan last week after 30 civilians and 2 U.S. soldiers were killed on November 3rd. Some 40 people were wounded in the airstrike responsible for the casualties.

Dozens of people rallied outside the governor’s office, some of them carrying the bodies of the victims. Protesters denounced the brutality of the U.S.-NATO war, especially the systematic targeting of civilians. Anger was expressed especially at the killing on November 3rd of children as young as three.

The latest atrocity in the U.S.-NATO war shows for the quadrillionth time that the real target of the war is the Afghan people.

Today, over 13,000 U.S.-NATO forces remain in Afghanistan. The U.S. occupation aims not only at subjugating Afghanistan but at using that country as another strategic base in its struggle for world domination. However it is regularly admitted that troops are facing a classical guerrilla-type campaign and that U.S.-NATO forces have been unable to “pacify” Afghanistan.

Amongst other things, political demonstrations and armed resistance against the occupation keep growing.

It is the elementary duty of every supporter of genuine democracy to oppose the colonialism of “our own” government and support the Afghan people’s struggle for their inalienable right to self-determination. The American people demand the immediate withdrawal of all U.S. and foreign troops from Afghanistan, and the restoration of the sovereign right of the Afghan people to determine their own affairs.

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the people with the aim of merging these many partial struggles into a generalized political movement. The people must be able to get together to bring their collective tasks to the fore and create space in which people can investigate, clarify and mobilize themselves to advance their independent political movement. The starting point of every genuine defender of democracy has to be to work to bring into political life the masses of people who are locked out and excluded by the political mechanisms set up by those who do not want us to have a genuine voice – by those who do not want us to participate.

In fact, one of the most obvious things in American political life today is that the masses of the people are fed up with the Democratic and Republican parties.

Despite all the money poured into the elections by the two party machines, less people turned out to vote this year than in the previous two elections. Out of the total population, less than 20% of people voted for

Trump. Out of the population old enough to vote, less than 1/4 voted for Trump. Of all registered voters over 59% refused to vote for Trump. Furthermore, it is universally acknowledged that out of the people who voted for Trump, the vast majority did so as nothing more than a protest vote against Hillary Clinton. Hence, the so-called “mandate of the people” which the American system of representative democracy claims for its elected officials is today, thoroughly exposed as nothing more than a “mandate of the Party” which, through the privilege of nomination, exercises absolute control over who gets elected to government.

However, the workers and broad masses of the people must and will have their say. Already, post-election demonstrations are taking place across the country which reflect not only this mass rejection of capitalist politics, but also the intensity of the legitimation crisis faced by the capitalist class in the U.S.

Even while they advertise the

U.S. political system as the “model” for democracy the world over, their world has fallen into a dangerous state of collapse when confronted with the cold hard fact that the masses of the American people feel alienated and excluded from the political process and the political system.

Just look at how the two parties are responding to their current legitimation crisis. They have NO solutions. All they can do is try to “demand” that people accept them when they clearly don’t. And from the moment the outcome was called, both Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama lined up behind Trump and called on people to “give him a chance” – thus proving for the millionth time in this process, that their alleged “opposition” to his politics was nothing but competition with him over the spoils of office.

After the “votes” were counted an even more stifling atmosphere than ever was and is being promoted by the bourgeois press and capitalist politicians, both of which are spewing

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