

THE WORKER

75¢

March 14, 2021

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

Vol. 35, Number 5

U.S. Imperialism, Hands Off Latin America!

Today we see U.S. imperialism enhancing its economic penetration of the Western Hemisphere, dictating austerity budgets and privatization programs to various governments, pressuring governments to accept so-called "free trade" treaties which aim at virtual U.S. annexation of Latin America.

Historically, Latin America is the foundation of the U.S. empire. And as U.S. imperialism fights to extend this empire – to create a unipolar world with itself as the "sole superpower" – it is determined to secure and fortify its strategic base.

For more than 100 years, U.S. imperialism has imposed a series of fascist, military regimes on the peoples in Latin America and has been in *a permanent state of war against the continent*.

Just as today the U.S. government, in its war against Iraq, can rely only on doublespeak to advertise its aggression as "defense of democracy," to label its destruction and devastation of Iraq as "preventing chaos," etc., so too all the war and fascism imposed on Latin America by U.S. imperialism has been carried out in the name of "freedom" and "democracy."

At the time of the Monroe Doctrine, Henry Clay, Secretary of State (1820), explained U.S. Manifest destiny this way, by calling for "a human freedom league encompassing all nations from Hudson Bay to Cape Horn."

The U.S. wars against the Puerto Rican and Cuban people were waged in the name of "bringing freedom and civilization" to the people.

The invasions of Guatemala and Grenada were carried out in the name of "restoring democracy." The contras mercenaries and the paramilitary death squads in El Salvador, Colombia and elsewhere are called "freedom fighters" by the leaders of

the U.S. government.

The 1965 invasion of the Dominican Republic like the ongoing occupation of Haiti are justified as a means to "prevent chaos and anarchy."

The U.S. blockade of Cuba and its plan for armed intervention are given such names as the "Cuban Democracy Act" and "Assistance for a Free Cuba." The U.S. government works to destabilize the elected government in Venezuela by branding President Chavez as a "dictator."

The truth is that the path to democracy for peoples in Latin America is and can only be the path of struggle against U.S. imperialism - against its subversion, aggression, and support for internal reactionary regimes.

For the American people, a very touchstone of our commitment to genuine democracy is resolute, uncompromising struggle against any and all interference by the U.S. capitalist-imperialist government in Latin America. The touchstone of genuine American democracy, a vital part of opposition to the colonialism, racism and war program of "our own" government's struggle to *get U.S. imperialism out of Latin America, lock, stock and barrel!*

Economic Basis

Of course, behind all this military intervention are the economic interests of the U.S. monopoly capitalist class.

Everyone knows that in Latin America whole countries have been turned into plantations - banana plantations, coffee plantations, sugar plantations, rubber plantations, etc. - owned by U.S. agri-businesses.

The fertile soil of Latin America has not been used to feed its people but turned into profits for the U.S. capitalists. Thus for example El Salvador has lost its self-sufficiency in food as its land has been used to grow and export coffee for the U.S. capitalists. And along with pillaging the land, U.S. imperialism - in alliance with the local

oligarchy and fascist regimes - expropriated, by force of arms, the land of the peasants, abolished their communal and other indigenous ownership systems, and deprived millions of people of their livelihood. This same story, repeated in different forms all across the continent, is one of the root causes of today's war in the Colombian countryside, where for 100 years peasants have been fighting to keep their land and livelihood from armed expropriation by landlords in alliance with U.S. imperialism.

So too the mineral wealth of the soil, the patrimony of the peoples, has literally been drained and carted out of Latin America. Just as the conquistadors looted the gold of the indigenous peoples, the U.S. capitalists have grabbed billions of dollars in wealth by taking the copper of Chile, the tin of Bolivia, the oil of Venezuela and Mexico, the bauxite of Haiti, etc., etc.

While grabbing the raw materials and mineral wealth, the U.S. multinational corporations have set up branch plants across Latin America in order to exploit the working class. Under the thumb of U.S.-imposed governments, Latin American workers are super-exploited and often prevented from exercising such elementary rights as the right to unionize. Today, for example, after U.S. imperialism drained Haiti of its huge bauxite reserves, robbing the national patrimony of the people, 150 U.S. companies have set up shop in the country, paying workers as little as \$1.60/day.

During the last several years, under the signboard of "neo-liberal economics," U.S. imperialism has been intensifying its economic penetration and superexploitation of Latin America. Through military, economic and political pressure, through bilateral and multilateral treaties such as

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the North American Free Trade Agreement, the Central American Free Trade Agreement, the Free Trade Area of the Americas, etc., through the IMF and other international financial institutions, imperialism is directly dictating the budget of Latin American countries, forcing the privatization of state-owned industries, grabbing control of virtually the entire economic infrastructure. The goal is the virtual annexation of the continent by U.S. capital.

By 2001, the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean owed \$787 billion to U.S. and international bankers and were paying more than \$150 billion/year in debt service (see U.S. Commerce Department's "Survey of Current Business," September 2002).

This huge debt in turn is used by imperialism as a lever to further open up the economies of Latin America to imperialist penetration and take-over.

For example, from 1982 to early the 1990's Mexico was forced to privatize 886 state enterprises out of a total of 1,155 with U.S. monopolies gaining control over telecommunications, airlines, banking, mining, steel and other sectors. Similarly in Chile, the Pinochet regime (installed through a CIA coup) privatized 160 state corporations, 16 banks and thousands of mines and agricultural enterprises from 1975 through 1989.

Today, U.S. imperialism is demanding that literally all the wealth and labor of Latin America be put at its disposal. Various U.S.-dictated treaties are turning even the water resources over to U.S. multinational corporations and forbidding Latin American governments from protecting even such sectors as health care, education, or the national forests from foreign ownership. U.S. imperialism aims at nothing less than the virtual annexation of the continent.

As U.S. imperialism spreads its net across Latin America, the apologists for capitalism, portray this process as the road to "economic opportunity, freedom and development."

But, this is just economic doublespeak. The only "freedom"

aimed at is the "freedom" of the U.S. monopolies to rob the wealth and exploit the peoples.

Why is it that Latin America remains economically underdeveloped and so many of the people live in poverty and hardship? The continent has fabulously rich soil and vast mineral wealth. And only the racist filth of imperialism could claim that the people don't work and create new values.

The real problem is precisely that the values created by the labor of the people leaves their countries and goes to Wall Street and Washington, D.C. to fill the pockets of the U.S. capitalists. The labor of the people does not go to insure their well-being or the economic independence and development of the Latin American countries, it is, instead, poured into the foundations of U.S. imperialism's empire.

So just as the path to genuine democracy in Latin America can only be the path of struggle against U.S. intervention, so too, the path of economic development and social progress can only be the path of struggle against the exploiting, colonial relations imposed on Latin America by U.S. capitalist-imperialism. This is the path of cancelling the debt, the path of putting the handcuffs on the multinational corporations, the path of nationalizing the economic infrastructure and putting the economic resources of Latin America in the hands of the peoples themselves.

Looking into the economic basis of U.S. intervention again teaches the people in the U.S. that our struggle against U.S. militarism and colonialism in Latin America must strike against the very foundations of the capitalist-imperialist system. In political terms it means that the struggle against U.S. intervention must be directed against the parties of monopoly capital and imperialism -

against the Republicans and Democrats, i.e. the parties of the capitalist ruling class.

In order to conceal its real economic as well as strategic aims, U.S. monopoly capital relies on the slogans of "human rights" and "democracy. When the U.S. government speaks of the "universality" of "American values," and the "necessity for American leadership" it is talking about the "right" of the capitalists to exploit and dominate the whole world. Through these slogans the two parties of war declare the "moral superiority" of the "American way of life." These are the banners of American chauvinism.

The U.S. working class can never rise to its feet and win its emancipation without rejecting and defeating the chauvinism and militarism of its own ruling class.

The reality is that the entire U.S. foreign policy arises from the fact that the monopoly capitalist class lives not only by exploiting the U.S. working class, but also by the super-exploitation and enslavement of peoples throughout the world. And indeed, the American people have always opposed the aggressive, imperialist wars of "our own" government.

In the struggle of today against the exploiting, colonial relations imposed on Latin America by U.S. capitalist-imperialism, we cannot let U.S. imperialism – which has committed innumerable crimes against humanity – pass off any of its program in the name of "human rights," "democracy," "humanitarianism," etc.

The struggle against American chauvinism and to organize the anti-war movement on an independent political basis includes unmasking the demagoguery of the two parties of war and taking a principled stand in support of the liberation struggles of the oppressed peoples and in defense of the right of every people to determine their affairs for themselves.

The Worker
Newspaper of the Workers Party

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Subscriptions: \$9/6 months; \$18/1 year
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