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## **While the Rich Get Richer the Ranks of the Industrial Reserve Army Expand**

There is no question that the political program of Trump and the Republican Party openly calls for stepping up the exploitation of the working people, for more imperialist wars and more attacks on the rights of the masses. Neither is there any need to recapitulate the history and facts which expose the Democratic Party's call to "Dump Trump" as nothing but a road to the preservation of the same anti-social agenda experienced over the last 12+ years.

The 2020 platform of all the candidates openly calls for more working class sacrifices – more wage cuts for the workers and tax incentives for the rich in order to help "America reindustrialize," more militarization of the society and more wars of intervention abroad in order to "defend" the colonial empire of the capitalist class, more attacks on the immigrant workers, the national minorities and the democratic rights of the masses generally.

On the one hand, the two parties refuse to end the unparalleled "welfare dependency" of the Pentagon arms contractors, the Wall Street bankers and other capitalist moneybags who merrily loot the government treasury while the workers go hungry. On the other hand, the program of the government at every level is to strip away any and every economic right gained by the working masses over decades of struggle.

Today, while tens of millions of workers are suffering the effects of the capitalist economic crisis, all of the 53 unemployment insurance systems across the United States are refusing to qualify tens of thousands of unemployed workers for benefits. And the diminishing sections of the

unemployed workers who do qualify are receiving far too little a month to make ends meet.

Of course it is clear which class interests this program serves. The capitalist finds it handy to have a reservoir of "redundant" labor power for the capitalist wants men and women who are prepared to work on the terms the capitalist dictates. The capitalist wants the workers to be "trained" in the school of unemployment to make them more pliant and less demanding.

The formation and growth of the industrial reserve labor army is a specific law of the population intrinsic to capitalism. It is a law under which the laboring population works to accumulate capital and thereby produces on a growing scale the means which make it a relative surplus population.

Capitalism is characterized by expanded reproduction, and not by simple reproduction that keeps being resumed on the same scale from year to year. This expanded reproduction takes place through a process where a part of the surplus-value created by the workers' labor power is used by

the capitalist for their own personal consumption, while the rest is used to purchase additional machinery and raw materials and to recruit new labor-power in place of the old. In this way the scale of functioning capital is increased and it is accumulated.

As Karl Marx points out, "We have seen that the development of the capitalist mode of production and of the productive power of labor ... enables the capitalist, with the same outlay of variable capital, to set in action more labor by greater exploitation (extensive or intensive) of each individual laborer ... The over-work of the employed part of the working class swells the ranks of the [unemployed], whilst conversely the greater pressure by the latter by its competition exerts on the former, forces these to submit to over-work and to subjugation under the dictates of capital. The condemnation of one part of the working-class to enforced idleness by the over-work of the other

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# While the Rich Get Richer

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part, and the converse, becomes a means of enriching the individual capitalists, and accelerates at the same time the production of the industrial reserve army on a scale corresponding with the advance of social accumulation.”

The industrial reserve labor army which takes shape in this way is not only the product of the capitalist economy, but also a condition for its development. Lenin says that, "the surplus population, being a necessary concomitant of surplus production is an indispensable attribute to the capitalist economy, which could not develop without it."

The army of the unemployed is the inevitable escort of capitalism. Unemployment is a grave social evil, and no amount of statistics can tell the whole story of the sufferings of the jobless. Unemployment is not just poverty or lack of money. Being unemployed means being doomed to terrible and humiliating privations, because it means being ejected from the economic and political fabric of the society. It means being reduced to the condition of impotence when human dignity itself is trampled. The sufferings of the jobless are horrendous. They live in constant fear of never finding another job, and they have to keep queuing up at the labor exchanges. They are evicted from their homes, their property is auctioned off, and the things they have bought on hire-purchase are taken away from them. They are deprived of the most vital necessities and the hunger and lack of shelter often drive them to suicide.

In short, the capitalists treat the workers worse than they treat their machines. They turn their sweat and blood into fabulous profits for themselves and then throw them into the dustbin.

As for the government, as has been pointed out above, its only contribution is to make matters worse. The bipartisan plans of the two parties for “reindustrialization” and “to make America more competitive” are designed to accelerate the pro-

cess of get more and more work out of fewer and fewer workers. In industry after industry, the capitalists are “modernizing” and “robotizing” their production at the expense of the workers. Millions of workers are thrown into the dustbin, while the capitalists sweat and bleed the employed workers into early graves. Furthermore, the two parties which monopolize political affairs in the United States have become open cesspools of corruption. And the professional liars (politicians) who make up the two big parties are never held accountable to the masses of people.

Even as the two parties are free to guarantee the well-being of the corporations, 50% on average of a worker's paycheck is eaten up by federal, state and local taxes. And while taxes spiral higher and higher, the government has slashed or eliminated basic social services. Welfare and other income-support programs have been cut. Job insecurity preys on the whole working class. Medicare for the elderly and Medicaid for the poor have been cut. Funds for public education, at all levels, are being slashed. The capitalist politicians wantonly break even their own laws and openly carry on the robbery of the people on a grand scale. Scandal follows scandal but no one is ever brought to account and punished. In the housing scandal, the politicians admitted that their very way of life was to divert tens of billions of taxpayers' dollars in order to enrich their capitalist cronies and in return receive kickbacks. Through the bail-out of the banks, the government and big bankers have literally robbed the people of hundreds of billions.

Quite obviously in the U.S. today, our problems are not due to a lack of resources or technological know-how. They are a result of the way in which our society organizes its economic life and it is precisely by changing the social relations which determine our economic life that we can resolve the economic crisis. It is the capitalist class and capitalist system (the organization of economic life

on the basis of maximizing profits for a few) which are the cause of all the grave economic problems experienced by the working masses.

In pursuing anti-popular goals while needing mass support, the two parties in the U.S. tend to mask their true objectives by advancing demagogical programs and slogans and adopting names which do not reflect their essence. Yet the true face of a political party can be seen from its specific activities, rather than its name or program.

Since every political party is firmly tied to a certain class, the role it plays in the social life of a country is determined by this class's social position. Society does not know of any extra-class political parties.

In the U.S. the Republican and Democratic parties stand on the bipartisan program of shifting the economic burden onto the masses; both stand for the program of stripping away the political rights of the people; both stand for the program of militarism and imperialist war.

The reality is that progress and change can only come from the struggle of the laboring masses themselves, from the independent movement of the working class which aims at finding real solutions to the fundamental problems of exploitation and poverty, national oppression and racism, war and militarism, etc., etc.

In order to defend their rights and put our country onto the high road of progress and civilization, the working people must create a new political culture and a new political unity amongst themselves. Thus, the first and indispensable necessity facing every worker and progressive political activist is to help give independent political expression to the class interests of the workers – to join in building the workers' own political party.

The more acute the class struggle, the greater the need for the working class to create a united powerful political party capable of consistently protecting its fundamental interests.