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The Two Parties are the Parties of the Billionaires

The Democratic and Republican parties, relying heavily on the monopoly-controlled mass media, seek to dominate the discussion over the country's economic problems, to circumscribe the debate so that the only policy options considered are ones based on the interests of big business. The needs and concerns of the people are left as chance side effects relegated to the aftermath of business success and everything is done to prevent the program of the people from being heard and from being taken up for implementation by society as a whole.

Of course, all those tied to a Federal election campaign insist that the national economy must headline in all the so-called "debates," and be the first priority. However the proposals found in every campaign uniformly reflect the claim of big business that the crisis of the country — the crisis of the deficit and the crisis of productivity and competitiveness — are a sufficient justification for putting the needs of the people on the back burner.

The candidates of both parties are taking up the program of using the power of government to put the economic resources of the country at the disposal of big business. There is not even a whisper of "heresy" against this sacred cow of capitalist politics. Across all the candidacies, the consensus slogan is that the crises must be resolved by "improving the health of big business."

A keynote of the anti-social offensive reflected in the platforms of this year's candidates is a program of further reforming taxpayer-funded social programs in order to use more taxpayers' monies for building the infrastructure needed by the corporations and providing other forms of assistance to big business. The celebrated ideal is for the working people to consume less and for big business to invest more.

As things already stand there are many laws on the books which require the government to provide Medicaid, housing assistance and other guarantees to poverty-stricken workers. And yet, the executive branch, through its administrative apparatus, systematically and arbitrarily denies such assistance to tens of millions of people by claiming that it simply doesn't have the money.

But that is not all. The government is actively intervening to make things worse. The role of the state as an organ to enforce the system of capitalist exploitation is being fulfilled today by the monopoly capitalist class and the two parties through an anti-social offensive against the gains which the working masses made through generations of struggle. In service of this agenda, the two big political parties

and the mass media are trying to disorganize the opposition to their agenda by depoliticizing the people.

The stakes are very high. The social programs that are coming under attack are products of the struggles of the workers against the unemployment and the poverty that are repeatedly imposed on them by the capitalist system. Through these struggles the workers forced the social system and government to recognize that everyone was entitled to, at least, a minimal standard of existence. In asserting this human right, the workers also created a floor which helped raise the general price of labor-power.

The anti-social offensive strikes at the very hallmark of modern society by denying that such

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U.S. State Department Issues Ultimatum to its Enemies in Afghanistan

In Doha, Qatar on 2/29, the U.S. Occupation presented anew the demand for the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan to accept the role of protector of U.S. "national security interests."

The foreign policy document made available to the public that day expressly defines a U.S. right in future diplomatic relations with the Taliban to seek, "Guarantees and enforcement mechanisms that will prevent the use of the soil of Afghanistan by any group or individual against the security of the United States and its allies."

How does this serve the class interests of the U.S. monopoly capitalist class?

It does so by duplicating the existing blank check for "preemptive war" handed to the U.S. executive branch which asserts that U.S. imperialism will launch war whenever and wherever it wants. Through the ultima-

tum, the warmakers are not only falsifying the history of the war in order to hide U.S. imperialism's aggressive aims and monumental crimes against humanity but also are once again declaring that the U.S. government is free to launch war anywhere it labels a "safe haven for terrorists." According to the fascist logic of this U.S. blueprint for world domination, the onus of guaranteeing U.S. interests is on the victims of U.S. aggression.

The Trump administration's demand that the people of Afghanistan provide guarantees for U.S. "national security interests" tears down the entire edifice of international law. It sets out to render more intractable than ever the plague on humanity that is U.S. imperialism's program of "war against international terrorism."

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things as public health, universal public education, income support for the poor and most vulnerable, and so forth, are public responsibilities — matters which must belong to the public as a whole, guaranteed by the government in full view of the people.

Thus, the slogan of "improving the health of big business" translates into a demand for the working class and broad masses of Americans to sacrifice their economic interests in order to insure the growth and profitability of big business. It is an agenda which demands that the first responsibility of working people is to fatten the profits of the finance capitalists and multi-national corporations.

While across the country the working people are demanding a solution to the problems of wage cuts and unemployment, are demanding decent jobs at living wages rather than contingent work at wages insufficient to provide the ordinary necessities of life, are demanding an end to homelessness and hunger, are demanding education and economic security for the children and youth, are demanding medical care and a future for retired workers, the government continues to be completely **irresponsible** when it comes to the needs and rights of the people.

The two-party political system refuses to allow the question to be presented honestly: **the economy for whom? the capitalists or the workers?**

Of course the reason boils down to class interests. The two parties readily admit the masses of people are expressing deep dissatisfaction with the government and grave concern over the direction in which our society is going. Nor do they pretend this is new information, as the current elections are merely one moment in a continuing political battle. The bottom line is that the capitalist class and the entrenched political forces at its service are already proficient at fighting tooth and nail to prevent open political discussion from developing over the burn-

ing issue of the day.

And indeed, whenever the issue is presented squarely, very few people find themselves interested in accepting the economic program and agenda of the two parties and their billionaire sponsors. The mass media, the government and the political parties ceaselessly bombard the people with propaganda about the alleged impossibility of providing ironclad guarantees for the economic rights of the people precisely in order to obscure the fundamental issue — the decision making power. They invest so much money into it in the hope of giving the impression that nothing can be done about it.

There are many class conscious workers and activists who have the experience of coming forward to participate in organizing the working class alternative and who recognized the need to build an ongoing movement and to develop the struggle in more and more of a planned way in order to advance toward their goal. Yet the organizations keep getting liquidated, unprincipled splits are perpetrated, and again and again people have to start from scratch in order to get organized.

The Democratic Party traditionally has a central role to play in this regard, as in this year's elections. As they have done so many times before, the Democrats are using their alliance with the sold-out trade union bosses to cover over their history and deeds and instead advertise themselves as the "friends of the workers."

This small "upper crust" of the trade union movement, ensconced in the leadership of the AFL-CIO, are invited to sit on the Boards of Directors of corporations, given positions in government, the universities, etc. The capitalists invest heavily in creating similar bought-and-paid-for positions of influence as well in the movements of the oppressed minorities, the women, and so on. These forces reflect the logic of a real traitor to the working class when they argue that their billionaire sponsors are "reasonable capitalists — ones

who recognize the need to live cooperatively with the workers."

Of course, from time to time politicians from the two parties are found that are good at issuing the odd phrase to console the workers. But whenever push comes to shove — whenever the real interests of the capitalists are at stake — the two parties expose themselves as the most vicious exploiters, strike-breakers, union-busters, etc.

In this way, even within many of the workers own organizations, there is a system in place which refuses to allow the question to be presented for discussion: **the economy for whom? the capitalists or the workers?**

However, this situation can be changed.

In the first place, the workers must expect no cure from the gods of plague. Rather the workers must emancipate themselves. We must beat back the blackmail of the capitalist class which insists that there are no solutions and no future. We must puncture the myth that there is no alternative to the existing system and we must break the stranglehold of the capitalist political parties.

The decisive pre-requisite for bringing about the transformations our country needs is precisely the independent, self-conscious organization of the working class and people themselves. The path for the workers is not to surrender their class interests by remaining under the tutelage of the capitalist parties, but to organize their own political party, independent of and in opposition to both the Republicans and Democrats.

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