

**Editorial**

# The Elections Have Not Settled Anything

The one thing that stands out most clearly about the 2008 elections is that the masses of people are fed up with the current political situation. Despite unprecedented efforts by the forces of the status quo to "get out the vote," 40% of the electorate chose not to vote. Further, vast numbers of the people who cast a ballot were only reluctant voters for the so-called "lesser-evil." This is evidence of people's alienation from the current setup in which the Democrats and Republicans monopolize political affairs. It is a clear rejection of a politics that goes against the basic interests of the vast majority of the people and prevents their voice from being heard in the political arena.

And it is no wonder. Throughout the entire post-election period, Obama has made it clear that he will continue the capitalist offensive against the people, and that he will not be bound by any of the promises he made during the election campaign. On foreign policy, Obama's transition team is already admitting that Obama seeks "continuity" with the policies of the Bush administration. On the issue of the economy too, he embraces the logic of "trickle down economics," and has already announced plans to pass new tax cuts for business.

No, the elections have settled nothing. The economic, political and other crises afflicting our society will continue. The government will continue to base its actions on the narrow, selfish interest of the big capitalists and will continue to attack the basic rights and needs of the workers and vast majority of people.

The profound political polarization between rich and poor, between the government and the people, reflects the fact that our country is at a turning point. Will the workers and people come forward to assert themselves as the real sovereign power, or will the few continue to rule over the many? While it is true that huge sections of the people are disillusioned and are already rejecting the current system, this is only a starting point.

The post-election period is not a time to sit back and wait. It is a time for the workers and people to advance our struggle by coming out in large numbers to fight for our own political program and to build up our own independent political party and organizations.

Throughout the entire election circus, the Workers Party did not give way to the pressure of capitalist politics. We held high the deep aspirations and independent agenda of the people by sticking to the fundamental demands for peace, economic rights, and for the genuine empowerment of the people. We used the elections to deepen the politicalization of the people, to criticize and struggle against the parties of war and imperialism, exposing their ideologies and isolating their politics. We created new space for the independent political movement of the people--we initiated political forums, carried out political mobilizations in schools, communities, and workplaces, and we worked to strengthen the independent press.

In all of these situations, the Workers Party refused to be confined to the agenda set by the Democrats and Republicans. For example, we did not accept the "logic" that the

people must bail out the bankers or face disaster. We pointed out that all we have to do is to force the rich to pay for the crisis of their capitalist system.

Building up the consciousness and independent organizations of the people is the decisive factor for pushing forward the manifold struggles of the people. The Workers Party will strive to lead the many partial struggles which break out everyday--struggles against wage cuts and lay-offs, struggles against racial discrimination, immigration raids, etc.

At the same time, the Workers Party will continue to fight for generalized and fundamental solutions to the problems of the people--for the independent political aims of the working class. Ours is a forward-looking agenda based on the program of economic rights, democratic renewal, a democratic foreign policy and socialism.

Only the working class and its independent political movement can find solutions to the grave problems affecting our society. The decisive task in accelerating this movement is to build and strengthen the workers' own political party. Join with us in this vital work.

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# From the Draft Program of the Working Class

The working class, deprived of all private property in the means of production and representing the advanced, socialized productive forces of society, cannot create conditions for its emancipation except by abolishing the system of exploitation of human beings. Thus the program of the working class is for socialism. The socialist economic system, based on the social ownership of the means of production, will insure the uninterrupted development of the productive forces based on a conscious plan which places the well-being of the people at the center.

In order to carry out the socialist transformation of society, the working class and broad masses of people must win the battle for democracy. The current state, which represents the class power of monopoly capital, must be replaced by a new political power which arises from and is wielded by the working class and broad masses of people themselves.

The immediate program of the working class aims at opening the path for the progress of society and creating conditions for the realization of the strategic program.

The immediate program of the working class includes:

## **Guarantying the Economic and Other Inviolable Rights of the People**

Every human being has certain inviolable rights simply by dint of being human, and it is the elementary responsibility of society to provide guarantees for these rights. They include the right to a secure job or livelihood at the highest possible standard commensurate with the level of development of society, the right to comprehensive and free medical care, the right to secure pensions and for retired workers to live in dignity, the right to free and equal education at all levels (including child care and university education), the right to housing, shelter and food.

In addition to these rights which belong to everyone simply by virtue of being human, the workers, women, the youth, senior citizens, and the members of various nationalities all have rights which arise from their position in the society. The people have the right to work and live in a safe and healthy environment. All these rights also must be recognized and guaranteed.

One immediate step in terms of guarantying these rights is for the government to stop bankrupting the public treasury and dislocating the country's economy in order to guarantee privileges for the big capitalists. Instead, the government must make the needed investments in such vital programs as education, health care and so forth.

## **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 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....

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.

## **Democratic Foreign Policy**

The working class strives for a democratic foreign policy. The working class demands the immediate withdrawal of all U.S. troops abroad, the withdrawal of the U.S. from all aggressive military pacts and alliances, such as NATO, an end to the militarization of U.S. society and an end to U.S. interference and intervention against other countries in any form - economic, diplomatic, political, military, etc.

A democratic foreign policy demands an end to Big Power interference and intervention against sovereign nations, and the democratization of international relations on the basis of recognizing the inviolable right of every nation to determine its own affairs. Every nation must be recognized as equal.

The working class is an international class. The U.S. working class, while carrying forward its short-term and long-term program, necessarily supports the struggle for emancipation of the workers of all countries.