

Update

THE WORKER

April 17, 2011

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

Vol. 25, Number 5

For a Moratorium on the Debt

The Workers Party has called for a moratorium on interest payments on the federal debt. Such a moratorium would immediately free up hundreds of billions of dollars which the government must use to guarantee investments in Medicare, Medicaid, education, welfare and other social programs so urgently needed by the masses of American people. Such a moratorium is an important step in resolving the "deficit crisis" and changing the direction of the economy in favor of the people.

To see more clearly what is at stake, let us again examine the origin and character of the on-going debt and deficit crisis.

To begin with the government has gone into debt precisely because it allowed the big corporations to plunder the public treasury. During the last 15 years, the federal government's total debt has grown by some \$8 trillion. Yet during these 15 years, the government has spent \$7.7 trillion on the military alone (not counting billions more spent on nuclear weapons, funding for NASA, the billions spent for the Department of Homeland Security and billions spent in "supplemental funds" for

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

The Necessity for Independent Working Class Politics

The very fact that, under capitalism, the working class is an exploited and oppressed class forces the workers to wage a two-fold struggle, to continuously and at the same time fight for social reforms and social revolution.

The workers have no choice but to fight for reforms in order to ameliorate their exploitation and oppression and improve their conditions. At the same time, the workers continually aspire to and struggle for an end to their existence as an exploited and oppressed class – that is they can not but seek their emancipation through the revolutionary struggle to overthrow the social relations which enslave them.

In the U.S., bourgeois ideology has long tried to erect a wall between these two aspects of the working class movement and in this way liquidate both the struggle for reforms as well as the struggle for social revolution.

Liberalism and social democracy love to promote themselves as champions of the immediate, partial struggles of the workers and people. But their very starting point is to insist that the workers must renounce the general aims of their movement and the struggle for social revolution. They never tire of cursing socialism, ridiculing workers for "day-dreaming" of emancipation and insisting that such aspirations interfere with the "day-to-day", pragmatic business of reforms.

Samuel Gompers, the grandfather of bourgeois trade unionism in the U.S., formulated this program under the slogan: "the aim is nothing, the movement is everything."

It is easy enough to see that liberalism and social democracy look on the working class as a slave class, a class eternally destined to be exploited and oppressed by the capitalists. In renouncing the general aims of the movement, liberalism and social democracy deny that the workers are a "class-for-themselves," a class with its own mission and own political agenda.

But precisely because liberalism and social democracy suppress the independent politics of the working class, they inevitably disrupt and liquidate not only the struggle for social revolution but also the struggle for reforms. Social democracy and liberalism continually seek to subordinate the workers' movement to the politics of the bourgeoisie. Thus the struggle for reforms is not conducted developed on the basis of the class struggle – on the basis of the independent strength and organization of the workers themselves – but on the basis of class compromise and conciliation, by relying on the "reasonableness" and "charity" of the capitalists. In the trade union movement, Richard Trumka expresses this line by insisting that

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

Moratorium on the Debt

from page 1

the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.) Trillions more in direct hand-outs as well as tax loopholes have also gone into the coffers of big business. Score one for the capitalist class.

Round two. Having allowed the corporations to stuff themselves at the public trough and put the government in debt, the politicians turned around and financed this debt by borrowing money from the big banks and Wall Street investment firms. But where do the funds which comprise these loans come from? These billions of dollars loaned by the bankers to the government are not part of the personal wealth of the bankers but rather a portion of the social capital of the whole country, which in the form of individual and business savings, had been concentrated and accumulated in the banks. Yet, in the hands of the bankers these billions function as private capital – as a means through which the bankers enrich themselves. Thus, while the monies loaned to the government by the bankers were in fact public resources, the interest payments received by the banks are purely profits which accrue to the individual bankers. Score number two for the capitalist class.

Over the last 15 years, the government's total debt as well as its annual interest payment on this debt have both continued to soar – each feeding the other in a vicious cycle. Every year the government pays some \$300 billion in interest to the big bankers. Score number three for the capitalists.

As the debt and deficit crisis deepened, the bankers, to insure

the security of their loans, issued the battle cry to "balance the budget" by slashing social spending. And the Democratic and Republican party politicians – loyal soldiers for the bankers – have marched to this drum beat, drastically cutting Medicare, Medicaid, education and other vital social investments. While the politicians are trampling the rights of the people underfoot, they have declared, over and over again, that the government must uphold its "creditworthiness" by meeting its "obligations and commitments" to the bankers. Score number four for the capitalists.

In sum, the government has helped to create and solidify the position of the Wall Street money-lenders as a parasitic class of coupon-clippers – usurers – who have a legal title to receive every year a hefty portion of the wealth produced by our country and its people. The solemn "obligation and

commitment" of the politicians is to ensure that these parasites – literally in the manner of feudal lords – receive their annual tithe out of the public treasury.

It is this class of parasites and the government's "commitment and obligation" to it which are sucking the lifeblood out of the working class and stifling the progress and development of our country. Our country does not lack the resources and the government does not lack the funds to guarantee the economic rights and well-being of the people. By cutting the parasitic money-lenders off the body of society, we can begin to reinvigorate our economy and direct it in service of the people. As a first step, by declaring a moratorium on interest payments to the Wall Street bankers, we put hundreds of billions of dollars at the disposal of society as a whole and use these resources to make the social investments needed to guarantee the rights of the people.

Building The Worker

from page 4

cal and ideological work cuts through the muck and confusion of the bourgeoisie and empowers the workers and people to come forward actively in the fight for their own emancipation.

But the work does not stop with the investigation or the clarification of various questions. This is only the starting point from which the

Party's theory must be vigorously and continuously taken amongst the people in order to translate it into real consciousness and organization of the people.

The key thing is that building the mass workers press means taking initiative to consciously help create the subjective conditions for revolution.

Working Class Politics

from page 1

the workers' first concern must be with the "competitiveness and productivity of American capitalism." Similarly, in the struggles to guarantee secure pensions for the working class or the right to health care, social democracy and liberalism begin by renouncing these rights and the independent struggle to win these rights by struggling against the privileges of private property in the means of production. Instead they try to force the workers to swallow the ideology of the capitalists which insists that "Social Security is going bankrupt" or "our country can't afford the privilege of universal health care." On this basis they reduce the political struggle for reforms to embroiling workers in squabbles over how much will be cut or what section of workers will suffer the most. In practical politics, social democracy and liberalism are nothing but the influence of the Democratic Party in ranks of the workers.

One of the dirtiest deeds of social democracy and liberalism is that in embracing bourgeois politics and renouncing the class aims of the workers, they create splits, pitting different sections of the workers against one another. For example, time and again the labor aristocracy has supposedly "defended" the interests of the most skilled or most senior sections of the trade unions at the expense of younger or less skilled workers. Thus contracts are signed allegedly guarantying the pay scales of the most senior workers while allowing the capitalists to hire a "second tier" of workers at substantially lower wages.

Inevitably of course, not only are the new hires super-exploited but companies find every excuse for firing and eliminating the most senior workers precisely in order to replace them with lower-paid second tier workers.

Various currents of anarchism and left sectarianism promote themselves as alternatives to social democracy and liberalism by beating their chests about their devotion to the cause of revolution. Such sects take as their starting point, as a "principle," renunciation of any partial struggle and even utter the word "reform" as if it is a curse word. The lunacy of their politics is that while today they are against the trade unions and the struggle to lessen capitalist exploitation by winning higher wages, they are allegedly for "higher wages" later – that is after the revolution. Their slogan boils down to: "Starve today but eat pie-in-the-sky tomorrow." Similarly, such windbags oppose struggles against particular wars by asserting that "war is inevitable" under capitalism.

But for all their posturing, these "super-revolutionaries" refuse to lift even a finger against the capitalists and their politics. Just like social-democracy and liberalism – only from the other side - they look on the working class as a slave class, incapable of mounting struggle against capitalist exploitation and reaction. Rather than recognizing the people and their movement as the decisive force in society and helping to provide the workers' real, actual movement with political independence, these "leftists" sit on the sidelines cursing the movement itself.

Thus for all their "heated opposition" to "reformism," these pseudo-revolutionaries, are really the biggest conciliators with and promoters of social democracy and liberalism. According to their logic, since the struggle for reforms belongs to the bourgeoisie, social-democracy and liberalism are the natural and rightful leaders of these movements. In other words they assist social democracy in trying to lead the struggle into the dead-end of Democratic Party politics.

Such a politics – which is really more religious than political – not only disrupts the struggle for reforms. It also undermines the movement for social revolution because it slows down the organization of the working class as a "class-for-itself." It is precisely through the struggle to assert itself, to improve its conditions and provide a perspective that constitutes a real-life alternative to the capitalists that the workers gain strength, organize themselves, rally the whole people around the program for progress and accumulate forces for the social revolution.

More than a few sincere activists have not yet seen how to break down the wall between the immediate struggles of the workers and the general aims of the movement. In present conditions, many such activists – in the face of the objective retreat of revolution and trying to reject the morbid intellectualism and sideline pamphleteering of the anarchists – claim to be "immersing" themselves in so-called

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Building The Worker

Building The Worker is the basic task which the Workers Party has taken up in the present period.

This task involves recognition of the need to carry on continuous investigation of the social, economic and political conditions. The point of

the investigation is to profoundly bring out the features and causes of the anti-social agenda and help make the people conscious of their own aims and agenda. At this time, when the intensifying contradictions are causing tens of millions of people to ask

fundamental questions and seek answers, the Party must fulfill its role of developing the contemporary Marxist-Leninist theory which can orient the working class movement for emancipation. The Party's theoretic-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Working Class Politics

from page 3

"partial or immediate struggles." Such activists think that they are immune to social-democracy and liberalism and are, at the same time, inoculating themselves against left sectarianism by "integrating where the people are at."

But the balance sheet shows that this is not a solution, not a way to develop the independent working class movement. In fact, the balance sheet shows that without building up the workers' movement on the basis of its own thinking, organization and program, the struggles are diverted into sideline actions, liquidated and prey to liberalism.

Simultaneously developing the two-fold struggle for reforms and revolution is a decisive part of orienting the working class movement.

The key thing is the enunciation and development of the independent class aims and political program of the workers.

The Workers Party has always paid utmost attention to working out such a concrete program and concrete politics, based on the general aims of the working class move-

ment and the concrete conditions. In the present conditions, when the bourgeois offensive remains in high gear, our Party has formulated the immediate program of "economic rights, democratic renewal and a democratic foreign policy."

This program meets the challenge of the bourgeois offensive, mobilizes the people on the basis of the problems which are demanding solution and, at the same time, brings into play the independent and energizing role of the working class and its mission to create the new socialist society. This immediate program aims at overcoming spontaneity and breaking the limitations imposed on the movement, at transforming the movement from being merely "reactive" to being pro-active. It aims to bring the workers and broad sections of people to the social front, arrayed against the bourgeoisie and challenging the foundations of the private property in the means of production and the capitalist state. This politics brings the class to the point of social revolution.

By organizing this politics on the day-to-day basis, the Party develops the consciousness, organization and independence of the workers. While continually creating new space for the workers and the social political agenda, this work

also, in turns, helps to lend militancy, direction and organization to the spontaneous struggles and partial movements which continually break out. For example, in the course of fighting against each and every aggressive war launched by U.S. imperialism, the Party helps the movement organize itself independent of the capitalist warmakers, exposes the root of the problem and the politics of both Republicans and Democrats, links together various fronts of the anti-war struggle and builds up, in the center of the movement, a conscious and organized section capable of carrying the struggle through to the end.

Similarly in the trade union movement, by continually exposing the new forms of exploitation imposed on workers and developing the movement for generalized political solutions, the Party is able to extend the reach of the day-to-day struggle against exploitation and orient these struggles as part of the motion of the workers to come out as "class-for-themselves." So too, in the Campaign for Economic Rights, the Party maximizes the struggle against the bourgeois offensive by developing an on-going movement in which the initiative is in the hands of the people themselves.

Workers Party

PO Box 25716, Chicago, IL 60625

(773) 642-6298

www.workersparty.org