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## Do Tell: Gays in the U.S. Military

By Ray O. Light  
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In November and December 2010, a strange thing happened. The Democratic Party-controlled Congress that had been so “lame” for so long all of a sudden came to life *after* the Republican Party victory in the 2010 election! This “lame-duck” Congress featured the cooperation of the Congressional Republicans with the Congressional Democrats under the inspired leadership of the Democratic President. Alas, it was all in the service of the U.S. monopoly capitalist ruling class.

Together Obama and the “Republicrat” Congress provided bountiful Christmas gifts to the wealthy including the extension of the Bush era tax cuts for the rich and a sweeping estate tax exemption that exempted half the millionaire estates previously affected and cut almost in half the percentage of the inheritance to be taxed for the other half, those “unfortunate” rich folks whose fortunes are so immense that they exceed the exempted millions.

It was in this context of the Congressional “season of giving” (to the rich) that the Obama Administration shepherded the repeal of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” through Congress. On December 22, 2010, President Barack Obama signed into law the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell Repeal Act of 2010.” Thus the seventeen year old policy of banning gay and lesbian service members from serving openly is coming to an end. As Obama said, “...no longer will our nation be denied the service of thousands of patriotic Americans forced to leave the military, despite years of exemplary performance, because they happen to be gay.”(Huffington Post, 12-18-10)

Indeed, *what this law provides to the rich is more cannon fodder with which the U.S. military can defend U.S. imperialism and oppress and terrorize the international proletariat and oppressed peoples for the sake of maximum capitalist exploitation and profit.* Earlier this year a Pentagon study recommended that the more than 13,500 gay and lesbian soldiers discharged

under “don’t ask, don’t tell” “be considered for re-entry, assuming they qualify in all other respects.” (“Gays Ousted From Military Now Hoping to Return”, AP, 12-23-10)

President Obama encouraged those who had been discharged to re-enlist once he, along with Defense Secretary Robert Gates and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Navy Admiral Mike Mullen certify the military’s readiness to implement the repeal. “As commander in chief, I am certain that we can effect this transition in a way that only *strengthens our military readiness.*” (Our emphasis, ROL)

For those on the U.S. left -- petty bourgeois reformists, social democrats, anarchists, revisionists and Trotskyites -- who are seeking desperately to maintain support for Obama, the Democratic Party in the face of their outrageous service to the U.S. monopoly capitalist and imperialist system in their season of giving, this new “pro gay and lesbian” law is the latest straw they are grasping at.

For example, in her 12-22-10 column in *The Nation* (January 10/17, 2011 issue), Melissa Harris-Perry, the current token Afro-American columnist, tries to justify Obama’s season of giving to the rich, saying that “the lame-duck Congressional session of 2010 brought with it hard fought successes, painful losses and the difficult pill of compromise.” She refers to the repeal of Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell as “the week’s biggest win.”

In the same issue, in an editorial entitled, “Lame Duck Congress Victories,” *The Nation’s* Editors acknowledge that “the lame-duck session saw President Obama and the Congressional Democratic leaders force both chambers to accept a tax cut ‘compromise’ that extended Bush-era tax breaks for billionaires, developed a sweeping estate tax exemption for millionaires and put Social Security at risk.” (*The Nation* (January 10/17, 2011) Incredibly, *the Nation* editors try to justify or cover up the Obama-Reid-Pelosi Democratic Party service to U.S. imperialism by referring to the repeal of Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell as “historic gay rights reform” and they credit blood-stained arch U.S. imperialist and Zionist Senator Joe Lieberman as key to this “peoples victory!”

The heroic anti-war and anti-U.S. imperialist activist, Cindy Sheehan, has it right in her 12-23-10 article, “Don’t go, don’t kill!” Sister Sheehan states: “While I am a staunch advocate for equality of marriage and same-sex partnership, I cannot-as a peace activist-rejoice in the fact that now homosexuals can openly serve next to heterosexuals in one of the least socially responsible organizations that currently exists on earth: The U.S. military “....The capacity for increased carnage should not be celebrated as a victory! I cannot help but think about those that are on the receiving end of US military aggression “...Don’t equal human rights extend to those that the Empire has mislabeled as the ‘enemy’?”

Meanwhile, even the militant, socialistic Workers World Party helped pave the way for this victory for U.S. imperialism and reaction. In a June 23, 2010 WW Pride Statement, Workers World tries to have it both ways. While they call for the complete dismantling of the U.S. military in one breath, in the next they assert: “Workers World Party supports the right of LGBT people to serve in the military free of harassment, intimidation and discrimination. This becomes especially important in this harsh economic climate, when an economic draft is forcing more LGBT workers, to enlist.” (“Repeal ‘don’t ask, don’t tell’—and the military”) To their shame, Workers World, a self-proclaimed socialist and internationalist party of workers has not one word about the need to oppose military recruitment and enlistment in this article.

Here, Workers World Party (WWP) exposes their social-chauvinist tendencies. For they treat a job in the U.S. military as if it were any job that a worker in the USA has a right to fill. As students of Lenin, WWP has failed to learn the lessons of Lenin’s most militant and

revolutionary work, *The State and Revolution*. (Lenin was unable to finish this work as he was interrupted by the need to lead the successful Russian Revolution which this work helped him and the Bolshevik Party to accomplish.)

In *The State and Revolution* Lenin taught that, “The state arises when, where and to the extent that class antagonisms objectively *cannot* be reconciled.” He continues, “according to Marx, the state is an organ of class *rule*, an organ for the oppression of one class by another...” (Lenin’s emphasis) Lenin further points out, “A standing army and police are the chief instruments of state power.”

In the current world situation, where U.S. imperialism is still the chief bulwark of world capitalism, where it is still the hegemonic imperialist power despite being the biggest debtor country in the world, largely due to its military power vis-à-vis its creditors (China, Japan, Germany, etc.), where two large and protracted wars of aggression and occupation are being waged by the U.S. military in Iraq and in the Afghanistan-Pakistan theater, and dozens of other covert and overt military operations are being carried out around the world, anything that strengthens the U.S. military is counter revolutionary.

Today, the repeal of Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell objectively strengthens the U.S. military, as dramatized by the support of Joe Lieberman, the Pentagon and the Obama Regime. It is a blow to the struggle of the oppressed and exploited of the earth, including those homosexuals and lesbians in our ranks, for freedom from imperialist enslavement.