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## The 2010 Election Charade in the Crisis-Ridden USA

As of this writing, the official results have largely been finalized in the 2010 midterm U.S. elections. The Democratic Party has lost about a half dozen Senate seats but has retained a narrow majority there. In the House of Representatives the Republican Party has returned to majority status after a four year hiatus, gaining more than sixty seats to the detriment of the Democratic Party. In the gubernatorial races, the Republican Party won the top job away from the Democrats in ten states, while they lost only the California and Hawaii governorships to the Democrats. A number of state legislatures also went over to Republican control just in time for the redrawing of both congressional and legislative districts to conform with census results. Clearly, the Republican Party was the big winner and the Democratic Party was the big loser.

For the Democratic Party, which held the Presidency and majority control in both houses of Congress the past two years, this is comparable to their reversal of fortune in the midterm election in 1994, during Bill Clinton's first term. On the one hand, the Democrats suffered even greater losses in numbers this time; however, in 1994, the Democrats and their new president lost *both* houses of Congress. It is also noteworthy that, in the post World War II period, the political party of first term Presidents Truman, Eisenhower and Clinton (Democratic, Republican and Democratic respectively) all lost Congressional control in midterm elections; yet all three men went on to win a second term! This is an indication that, over a long period, *the masses of U.S. voters have had no real choice in the Tweedledum-Tweedledee, Republican-Democratic or "Republicrat" political duopoly, loyally representing U.S. monopoly capitalism and imperialism.*

This point is further underscored by Mark Barabak and Kathleen Hennessey writing for the *Tribune Washington Bureau* on the 2010 election. They report that extensive polling, conducted on Election Day, "show that neither party is well-regarded. The election was the third in a row in which 20 or more House seats changed hands, a level of upheaval unseen in more than half a century; these days, voters seem willing to discard unwanted politicians like so much used tissue." Moreover, despite the hundreds of millions of dollars aimed to convince the U.S. masses that their vote was "important," almost three in five people eligible to vote, the large majority, expressed their indifference and/or disgust

with the two parties, i.e. the “Republicrats,” by staying away from the polls altogether. Almost 60 million more people in the U.S. voting age population are not even registered to vote.

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Already, more than one hundred and twenty years ago, comrade Frederick Engels observed that, in a democratic republic, “Universal suffrage is the gauge of the maturity of the working class. It cannot and never will be anything more in the present-day [capitalist] state.” And, on the eve of the victorious October Revolution in Russia which Lenin led, he added: “The petty bourgeois democrats [including] ... all the social-chauvinists and opportunists of Western Europe, expect just this ‘more’ from universal suffrage. They themselves share and instill into the minds of the people the false notion that universal suffrage ‘in the *modern* state’ is really capable of ascertaining the will of the majority of the toilers and of securing its realization.” (see Lenin’s *The State and Revolution*)

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*What, then, is the significance of the election results for the working class and the oppressed nationalities of the USA and the world?*

First of all, after four years of a Democratic-controlled Congress, combined in the last two years with Democratic Presidential power, the workers and oppressed of the USA (and the world) are *worse off* in 2010 than they were at the end of the Bush years when the economic crisis was still in its beginnings. This is a source of demoralization for the masses of newly active people who had become politically energized in the Obama campaign. The youth vote, for example, was 51% in the 2008 Presidential election. Only 20.9 percent of eligible voters under 30 went to the polls in the 2010 midterm election, not only a precipitous drop from 2008 but also a substantial drop from the youth vote in the 2006 midterm election. The outrage of the U.S. population at the calamitous eight year Bush-Cheney Republican reign which, in 2008, led to an “ObamaMania” massive labor and oppressed nationality and youth participation in the electoral process has ultimately been channeled into *dead end* Democratic Party rule.

Secondly, in the two years leading up to the 2010 election, the mass outrage, anger, worry and confusion at the bailout of Wall Street and the growing desperate conditions of Main Street was channeled by the U.S. ruling class, by Wall Street itself, with the connivance of the “Republicrats,” into a *harmless* direction for Wall Street and a *harmful* direction for Main Street. Accordingly, the most dynamic new element in the U.S. political arena has been *the emergence of the right wing reactionary tea party movement* as a force to be reckoned with. This is dramatized by the fact that, reportedly, “a remarkable 4 in 10 voters in exit polls [were] expressing support for the movement.” (Kate Zernike, *NewYork Times*, 11-3-10)

Thirdly, even more than most bourgeois elections, the 2010 midterm U.S. elections were a charade, an elaborate swindle, a hoax perpetrated on the people. It was a lose-lose proposition for the working class and the masses from beginning to end. The Citizens United Supreme Court decision, allowing unlimited and untraceable corporate money to buy elections, helped to permeate this imperialist bourgeois election with such fantastic narratives (such as “Obama is a Socialist”) that even its usefulness in “gauging the maturity of the working class” is impaired.

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## **The Capitalist Economic Crisis - Setting for the 2010 U.S. Elections**

### **-The Poor get Poorer-**

On the eve of the 2010 elections, the media pundits of every hue across the entire bourgeois political spectrum agreed that, throughout the USA, the voters were angry, frustrated and scared. But what do the people of the USA have to be upset about? After all, these same U.S. imperialist “experts” have been constantly promoting the notion that “the Great Recession officially ended in June 2009.” And they constantly point to new “green shoots,” allegedly proving that the worst is over and the U.S. monopoly capitalist economy is bouncing back. The proletarian truth, however, is that the Great *Depression* is still in the process of unfolding. And it is this *real* mass experience that the voters (and the even larger number of *non-voters*) were reacting to in the 2010 election.

An Associated Press article written by Paul Wiseman just before the election cited a government report that the U.S. gross domestic product (GDP), the broadest measure of goods and services produced, grew at an annual rate of 2 percent from July through September. In the current economic climate, Wiseman characterized this 2 percent growth rate as “a near-disaster,” as “it takes GDP growth of 3 percent a year just to keep the unemployment rate from rising.” Wiseman pointed out that, “Recoveries from deep recessions are usually robust. Once the recession of 1981-1982 finally ended, the economy boomed ... the economy generated 3.5 million jobs in 1983 and 3.9 million jobs in 1984.” He continued, “By contrast, since the Great Recession officially ended in June 2009, the economy has *lost* a net 439,000 jobs. The unemployment rate was 9.5 percent in June last year. Now it’s 9.6 percent.” (Our emphasis, ROL)

Even most bourgeois economists admit that the official statistics they use regarding employment issues seriously understate the true jobs crisis. Discouraged workers, suffering from record *long-term* unemployment in the current economy, largely disappear from the ranks of the *official* jobless; likewise, the vast numbers of underemployed who are seeking regular employment are also uncouned. Consequently, the real U.S. unemployment rate is closer to 20%! The fact that even the official government statistics cited above acknowledge that the ranks of the unemployed have continued to *grow* since “the official end of the recession” (the so-called “jobless recovery” with no end to this crisis in sight) underscores the serious and protracted nature of the joblessness problem faced by the more than seven million workers and their families who have lost their jobs in this period alone and the millions of long term unemployed; it underscores as well the looming threat to those who still have jobs and are experiencing a sharp downward pressure on their wages and working conditions.

Massive job loss has also resulted in the largest annual jump in the number of U.S. people who have no health insurance coverage since the government began keeping such records in 1987. Last year that number rose by 4.4 million to 50.7 million. Not surprisingly, the percentage of people covered by private insurance is now at its lowest ebb since 1987. And the number of people with some form of health coverage (insurance or otherwise) *dropped* last year for the first time since that year.

It is also this jobs crisis that has continued to fuel the home mortgage crisis. According to *USA Today*, 7-15-10, “[While] historically, lenders have taken over about 100,000 homes a year, ... Nearly 528,000 homes were taken over by lenders in the first six months of the year, a rate that is on track to eclipse the more than 900,000 homes repossessed in 2009.”

The growing impoverishment of the masses of the U.S. population can also be seen from the following: “The number of U.S. households receiving food stamps surged by 2 million last year to 11.7 million, the highest level on record, meaning that 1 in 10 families was receiving them.... The poorest of the poor hit record highs as twenty-eight states had increases in the share of people below \$10, 977 in income, half the poverty line for a family of four.” (Hope Yen, Associated Press writer, 9/28/10)

Finally, the Census Bureau's annual snapshot of U.S. living standards shows that "some 43.6 million Americans were living below the official poverty threshold ... the downturn that some have dubbed the 'Great Recession' has trimmed the typical household's income significantly, following years of stagnant wage growth ... [and] *made the past decade the worst for American families in at least half a century.*" (ROL emphasis, "Lost Decade for Family Income," *Wall Street Journal*, 9-17-10)

### **-The Rich Get Richer-**

Meanwhile, Wall Street is booming!

"An analysis by the Wall Street Journal found that companies in the Standard & Poor's 500-stock index posted second quarter profits of \$189 billion, up 38% from a year earlier and their sixth highest quarterly total ever, without adjustment for inflation.... For all U.S. companies, the Commerce Department estimates second-quarter after-tax profits rose to an annual rate of \$1.208 trillion, up 3.9% from the first quarter and up 26.5% from a year earlier. That annual rate is the highest on record, though it doesn't account for inflation. As a percentage of national income, after-tax profits were the third-highest since 1947, surpassed only by two quarters in 2006, near the peak of the last economic expansion." (*Wall Street Journal*, 10-3-10, "Propelling the Profit Comeback")

The *Wall Street Journal* article goes on to explain: "The data indicate that big companies are recovering from the downturn faster and more strongly than the overall economy, helping send stock prices higher this year. To achieve that performance, companies laid off hundreds of thousands of workers, closed less-profitable units, shifted work to cheaper regions and streamlined processes." In other words, ***the key to Corporate America's new prosperity is, at the same time, the key to the misery of the working people of the USA; namely, the massive elimination of jobs.***

Just as outrageous is the fact that Wall Street executives, the lords of finance capital, are doing better than ever thanks to the government channeling of the tax funds of the working people into *their* pockets. Saved by the several trillion dollar federal government bailouts under the Bush *and* Obama regimes, "the pay on Wall Street is on pace to break a record high for the second straight year. About 3 dozen of the top publicly held securities and investment-services firms – which include banks, investment banks, hedge funds, money-management firms and securities exchanges – are set to pay \$144 billion in compensation and benefits this year, a 4% increase from the \$139 billion paid out in 2009 ... revenue was expected to rise at 29 of the 35 firms surveyed, but at a slower pace than pay." (*Wall Street Journal*, 10-11-10, "Wall Street Pay: A Record \$144 Billion")

A few days before the election, *Wall Street Politico* pointed out that corporate profits have risen faster under President Obama than during any other 18-month period since the 1920's. "Profits have surged 62 percent from the start of 2009 to mid-2010 ... faster than any other year and a half ... Under another president, especially a Republican president, the data on corporate profits would be envied ... It took Bush nearly four years to post the gains that Obama has managed in less than half the time." (*Wall Street Politico*, 10-28-10)

Interestingly, Politico raises the question of whether Obama *wanted* the credit from the business community?! The fact that the setting for the 2010 midterm election was the continuing acute capitalist economic crisis which has represented increasing misery for Main Street and almost unprecedented prosperity for Wall Street raises the more fundamental question of *whether the U.S. ruling class which controls the "Republican Party," i.e. the Republican and Democratic parties working in tandem, threw the 2010 election to the Republican Party?!*

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## **-The Parade of Characters in the 2010 Election Charade-**

***Barack Obama and the Nancy Pelosi/Harry Reid-led Democratic Congress:*** Of course, as the Democratic Party-elected president, Obama's and the Democratic Party role in the Tweedledum-Tweedledee Republicrat Party election charade is to *appear* to be the champion of the common people and *not* the savior of the monopoly capitalist system at the people's expense, which the record of Obama, Pelosi, Reid et al. actually shows them to be.

However, as the election approached, Obama *did* briefly let the cat out of the bag. He pleaded with Corporate America to acknowledge all he had done in the service of the U.S. ruling class and to allow him to let the George W. Bush tax cuts for the wealthy expire. Obama stated: "My entire focus right now is to make sure that the private sector is thriving, is growing, is investing. That's why we haven't increased taxes on corporations. We are not proposing ... taxation on dividends to go up above 20 percent. I think we've been very responsible stewards." (*The Washington Post*, 9-21-10, "Recession is officially over, but anxiety lingers")

Despite Obama's stellar performance in defense of U.S. monopoly capitalism and imperialism during his first two years in office, U.S. finance capital continues to demand more from him and the Republicrats. This is perfectly fitting for the financial oligarchy which has captured control of the U.S. government, a fact exposed by Simon Johnson, the former chief economist for the International Monetary Fund (IMF), who is certainly in a position to know. (See "The Quiet Coup," *Atlantic Magazine*, May 2009) Thus, one important aim of the U.S. ruling class in the 2010 mid-term election was to have a strong enough showing by the Republican Party to "compel" Obama and the Democrats to back away from his commitment to eliminate the Bush tax cuts for the super rich. Already, bourgeois political guru Joe Klein has projected that Obama will now "agree to tax reductions," *including for the wealthy*, as a "compromise" with the congressional Republicans.

Obama was swept into office by a mobilized citizenry that wanted and needed universal healthcare. Likewise, a significant section of U.S. monopoly capital that had bankrolled Obama's campaign also needed U.S. healthcare reform. The U.S. auto industry and other U.S. industries were at a serious competitive disadvantage in relation to their imperialist corporate rivals from other countries because of the gross inefficiencies of the private profit-driven U.S. healthcare system.\*

\*NOTE: [Of course, the Obama government bailout of the U.S. auto industry, including the drastic lowering of wages and benefits, ultimately addressed the part of the healthcare crisis that adversely affected the U.S. monopoly capitalists' competitiveness without substantial healthcare reform for the U.S. masses.]

Obama's "mandate" included bringing health care reform in the form of a single-payer health plan (variations of which have been remarkably more successful than the U.S. private health care "system" in every other advanced capitalist country in the world) *or at*

*least* a substantial public insurance option or some form of universal healthcare coverage or *at least* some form of universal healthcare *insurance* coverage.

Up front, the pharmaceutical industry, with its obscene mega-profits, got agreement from Obama's chief of staff, Rahm Emanuel, that "Big Pharma" would not be affected by Obama's healthcare reform. Then, the rest of the medical-industrial complex, the insurance companies, the hospital corporations, etc. sensed an opportunity to block any move to cut into their profits at all, despite the "commitment" of the Democratic President and the Democratic Congress to the U.S. populace. And the extremely complex healthcare reform bill passed into law, despite all the hoopla about being socialistic, etc. leaves the medical-industrial complex and Big Pharma still in the strong and intact position to squeeze maximum profits out of those of us who need healthcare. Nevertheless, like the Wall Street financiers, the medical-industrial complex strives to grab as much as it can, whenever it can! So its main aim in seeking a Republican "victory" in 2010 is to roll back even the slightest concessions to the U.S. people contained in the healthcare reform, while retaining all the features of the new law, such as compulsory coverage, that will line the pockets of the medical-industrial complex.

With regard to Big Oil, once elected, Obama carried out the Sarah Palin-led "drill, baby, drill" platform of virtually unlimited offshore oil drilling. And, in the Gulf Coast oil rig disaster that produced worker deaths and an unprecedentedly widespread pollution of that entire region of the USA, Obama protected the British Petroleum corporation, as much as he could, from liability *and* from the wrath of the U.S. people. Obama initially assigned BP not only the task of supervising the clean-up but even the responsibility to calculate how much oil this BP disaster was responsible for spewing into the Gulf and therefore BP's financial liability.

Also in defense of Big Oil, Obama, who became the Democratic Party nominee for President over Hillary Clinton in large part because he had opposed Bush's launch of the war in Iraq (while an Illinois state senator), continues to prosecute that war. At the same time, he has intensified the Afghanistan theater of the so-called "war on terror" and expanded it into Pakistan. Obama and the Democrats continue these brutal wars to retain the U.S. oil companies' control of the vast oil and natural gas resources of the Middle East, in particular. They are currently preparing the ground for extending U.S. military action in the region into Yemen and Somalia. Also, in the interests of Big Oil, in two other oil rich regions of the world, the Obama Regime's seven new U.S. military bases in Colombia are directed in the first place against the Chavez government in Venezuela and U.S. imperialism maintains a constant military combat presence in Mindinao in the south of the Philippines.

Furthermore, Obama and the Democrats have accelerated the Bush-Cheney regime's drive to militarize the civilian U.S. government and to spy on the U.S. citizenry. On the eve of the election, *on Obama's watch*, the FBI raided the homes and offices and instituted Grand Jury proceedings against a number of anti-war and anti-imperialist activists in the U.S. Midwest, including people associated with the Freedom Road Socialist Organization.

### **-How Obama Saved Capitalism and "Lost" the Midterms-**

The insatiable drive for no taxes and for maximum profits for Wall Street, Big Oil and the medical-industrial complex, for the U.S. ruling class, led to the result summed up in the

title of a Timothy Egan column: “How Obama Saved Capitalism and Lost the Midterms.” Egan writes, “If I were one of the big corporate donors who bankrolled the Republican tide that carried into office more than 50 new Republicans in the House, I would be wary of what you just bought. For no matter your view of President Obama, he effectively saved capitalism.... Of course, the big money interests who benefited from Obama’s initiatives have shown no appreciation.... Money flows one way, to power, now held by the party that promises tax cuts and deregulation – which should please big business even more.” (NYTimes.com)

While Egan “gets” the fact that the U.S. monopoly capitalists and imperialists are insatiable, he apparently believes or at least promotes the illusion that the U.S. imperialist bourgeois political system is run by and for the Republican and Democratic parties rather than by and for U.S. finance capital through the “Republicrats.” For Egan concludes his article by advising Obama on how he can get back in the good graces of the voters in the two years leading up to the 2012 presidential election.

Likewise, Joe Klein, in his analysis of the 2010 election for *Time Magazine*, promotes the same illusion that the Democrats and Republicans are independent actors (independent of the U.S. monopoly capitalist ruling class, of Wall Street, etc.) and, like Egan, offers Obama advice on how to make a political comeback in 2012. On this erroneous basis, Klein, too, finds the conduct of Obama and the Democrats in this election to be mystifying. Klein blurts out, “Why on earth would a political party enact major pieces of legislation and then refuse to take credit for them?” (*Time Magazine*, 11-15-10)

Klein points to the successful reversal of the tide of “illegal immigration across the Mexican border” which he claims is at least in part due to “the Administration’s amped-up security efforts at the border.” He describes Obama’s failure to raise this issue that has “gut-level resonance with the working class Democrats and independents who turned against him this year” “**political malpractice of the highest order** as is the President’s inability --- or unwillingness --- to tell 95% of the public about the tax cut he bestowed on them, or the prescription drug doughnut-hole he filled for senior citizens.” (*ibid.*, our emphasis, ROL)

Neither Egan nor Klein can explain the seemingly self-destructive conduct of Obama and the Democratic Party in the 2010 election. For they see the U.S. *political* system as separate from and independent of the U.S. monopoly capitalist and imperialist *economic* system. What *does* explain this conduct is the recognition that the Democratic Party (and Obama) are only one side of the “Republicrat” party through which Wall Street and U.S. imperialism rule the USA.

Klein observes that, “Congresswoman Kathy Dahlkemper, who inserted the popular provision allowing children up to the age of 26 to remain on their parents’ health care plan, faced a difficult re-election fight this year. The President never saw fit to campaign with her and thereby publicize her idea. Dahlkemper lost.” Klein is perplexed by this. Given “Republicrat” rule, however, it makes perfect sense.

Getting rid of Pennsylvania Congresswoman Dahlkemper, whose provision is one of the few things in the healthcare reform law that will cost the medical-industrial complex plenty of money, is good for the monopoly capitalists, for she is clearly not controlled by big money. Had Obama and the Democrats touted and claimed credit for such provisions,

it would have jeopardized the Republican victory in the U.S. House that likely will result in the elimination of *any* pro-people provisions contained in the healthcare reform. Accordingly, Klein is already speculating that Obama “will accede to moderations in his health care plan.”

Klein unwittingly points to Republican Obama’s “victory” in the election when he acknowledges that Obama “will take his [bi-partisan Democratic Bowles and Republican Simpson-led] deficit-reduction commission’s recommendation for reforming Social Security, *a provision favored more by Republicans than Democrats*, and try to pass some form of it, which would be regarded as a historic achievement.” (*ibid.*, our emphasis, ROL) Clearly, the gutting of Social Security would be considered “an historic achievement” by the U.S. ruling class forces on Wall Street but almost no one else.

More than six months ago, we pointed out that, “Obama and the Federal Government Preside Over the U.S. Empire in Decline.” We observed: “Barack Obama is well suited for the difficult task of presiding over an orderly march of the U.S. population to impoverishment in the desperate effort of the U.S. monopoly capitalist and imperialist ruling class to save itself and its hegemonic position in the world capitalist system.... This march to impoverishment, however, is still only in its beginning stages. And the challenge to the U.S. monopoly capitalist and imperialist ruling class and President Obama to lead the masses of working people and oppressed nationalities in the USA to poverty without us opting to revolt, without us turning to socialist revolution for the way out of our difficulties, will only get more difficult.” (*Ray O’ Light Newsletter #59*, March-April 2010, “The Tea Party Movement, the Obama Regime and the Growing Fascist Danger in the USA”)

The 2010 midterm election stands as an object lesson in how U.S. imperialism intends to carry this out, utilizing its “Republican” political duopoly to maximum effect.

**Congressman John Boehner and the Republican Party:** Ohio Republican congressman John Boehner is now set to replace Nancy Pelosi as the Speaker of the House, third in line to the Presidency. In the 2010 midterms, Boehner and the Republicans campaigned as champions of small government, defenders of the “Bush tax cuts,” and opponents of big government with its earmarks or “pork,” “government health care” and government “bailouts” in general, but including the Wall Street bailout. This was the Republican Party part in the “Republican” election charade.

Boehner’s record, for example, demonstrates just the opposite. In the Fall of 2008 with the U.S. and global capitalist financial system in deep crisis, House Minority Leader Boehner took the floor and “nearly wept” as he pleaded with his members to support the \$700 billion financial industry bailout that was spearheaded by Republican President George W. Bush and his Secretary of the Treasury, Henry Paulson but was shepherded through Congress by Nancy Pelosi and the Democrats. (Months later, Paulson casually reported that he had used the hundreds of billions of dollars for something entirely different than what he had initially wanted it for!!)

Furthermore, according to *Time*’s Michael Grunwald and Jay Newton-Small, Boehner is a notoriously high liver and party giver. His parties are “practically lobbyist conventions.” And he has received tens of thousands of dollars from clients of corrupt Republican lobbyist Jack Abramoff and raked in \$2.6 million from the financial sector. When he chaired the Education Committee, Sallie Mae gave him \$122,500 and gave his daughter a job. Boehner is a “pin-striped fundraising machine who once distributed campaign checks

from a tobacco company on the House floor.” (Citations from “Mr. Speaker,” *Time*, 11-15-10)

For those conservative voters who desire “*small* government,” Boehner’s track record certainly provides no proof that he’s their man.

The same is true for the Republican Party.

A key imperialist bourgeois thinker, Fareed Zakaria, now *Time* magazine’s editor at large, has punctured the Republican election façade. (In keeping with his role as a leading apologist for U.S. imperialism, however, he has done so *after*, rather than *before*, the election.) Zakaria points out that, “If Republicans were really serious about cutting spending, they had a golden opportunity after 2002, when they controlled all the levers of government in Washington. The result was the most reckless expansion of government spending and debt in two generations.” (“A Real Revolution?” *Time*, 11-15-10)

In fact, Zakaria says, “The historical record is clear: since the 1960’s, it was the [Democrat] Clinton terms that saw the lowest average deficits of any President – the only period of restraint in the growth of the federal government – and the biggest surpluses.” (*ibid.*) Zakaria points to steep reduction of the number of federal employees as a key Clinton-Gore initiative of the time. In the 2010 election, this same prescription was presented as one of the few “specific” ideas the *Republicans* had for where they could make the spending cuts!\*

\*NOTE: [Moreover, Zakaria cites Ronald Reagan’s Republican budget director, David Stockman, who blamed the congressional *Republicans* for what Stockman calls the failure of the Reagan Revolution. These Republicans, says Stockman, never went along with efforts to cut government spending which led inexorably to an explosion of the government deficit after they enacted the Reagan tax cuts. On the eve of the 2010 election, Stockman appeared on *60 Minutes* and exposed the madness of the Republican campaign platform. Stockman observed, “We’ve demonized taxes ... It’s rank demagoguery ... to stand before the public and rub raw this antitax sentiment, the Republican Party, as much as it pains me to say this, should be ashamed of themselves.”]

Similarly, the healthcare reform law that the Republican Party ran *against* in the 2010 election was essentially a *Republican* proposal from the last great healthcare debate in the USA.

*On all the important issues, the Republicans and Democrats are largely interchangeable in service to the U.S. imperialist ruling class.* But there is one important new force that has emerged in the U.S. political arena under the pressure of the past two years of acute capitalist economic crisis in the USA, the tea party movement.

***Sarah Palin, Glenn Beck and The Tea Party Movement:*** This movement had begun as a highly decentralized and localized conservative tax protest movement in 2008, as the U.S. economic and financial crisis stirred resentment of the federal government bailout of the wealthy. In the summer of 2009 the medical-industrial complex bankrolled the tea partiers to wage a messy and irrational battle against any public healthcare option that would threaten their corporate profits. Remember the raucous healthcare “town hall meetings”

where ardent tea party supporters would make nonsensical statements such as “Keep your government hands off my Medicare.”

At the beginning of the debate, a clear U.S. popular majority wanted a *public* healthcare option but there was never a concrete proposal from the already compromised and corrupted Democratic Congress and President to mobilize around. Meanwhile, the tea party and its medical-industrial complex pay-masters focused their animosity and anger against a fantastical “Obama-Care.” The tea party movement emerged and grew strong in the course of this “debate” over healthcare reform. With this scenario, the medical-industrial complex with its growing tea party movement was victorious in blocking any meaningful healthcare reform at the expense of our public health; and they emerged with a blueprint for waging a victorious campaign in this election to make sure that any provisions in the healthcare bill ultimately passed last year would have no adverse impact at all on their profits.

The financial oligarchy that controls our government also recognized the value of the tea party movement for their Wall Street campaign to keep the Bush tax cuts for the super-rich from expiring and also to divert the attention and anger of the U.S. working people and voters from the unprecedented corporate and financial profits of the Wall Street ruling class.

At the same time, small (non-corporate) business has *not* done well under Obama. “Profits from those mostly smaller businesses are basically flat for the past 18 months, far worse than the gain under Bush and most other presidents just after recessions.” (*Politico, ibid.*) This angry, desperate, worried small business sector has been fertile soil for recruitment to the semi-rational but angry and indignant *and* growing Tea Party Movement with its “know-nothing,” semi-literate and semi-fascist leaders such as Sarah Palin and Glenn Beck. Thus, the ruling class narrative for the 2010 midterm election found its loudest and most insistent voices in the ranks of the tea party and featured the painting of Obama as a “big government,” anti-business “socialist.”

**Sarah Palin**, then governor of Alaska, was catapulted by the John McCain Republican presidential campaign onto the grand political stage, when she was selected to be McCain’s running mate in the 2008 Presidential election. At that time, she was a cheerleader and accomplice for the big oil companies in their drive for unlimited offshore oil drilling, launching the chant that rocked the buttoned down conservative crowd at the Republican National Convention. “Drill, baby, drill!” she screamed and the Republican crowd did their best to join in. We now know where that political stand has led us. Under the Obama Regime, the British Petroleum-Halliburton oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, became a catastrophic corporation-made event.

Even though, once it became impossible to keep her from revealing how deeply ignorant she is, Palin ultimately became a liability for the McCain Campaign, she has gone on to thrive as the most popular figure for the highly decentralized tea party movement and is now being talked about as a serious Republican *and/or* tea party candidate for President in 2012!

Meanwhile, **Glenn Beck**, the unstable recovering alcoholic/narcotics abuser, has parlayed his way-out Fox TV talk show into a position of national leadership with the tea party, also. As we pointed out previously, on August 28<sup>th</sup> Beck led a very well attended

“Restoring Honor” Rally in Washington, D.C. bankrolled by “the Special Operations Warrior Foundation.” Beck described the rally as a “non-political event that pays tribute to *America’s service personnel* and other upstanding citizens who embody *the nation’s founding principles* of integrity, truth and honor.” (Our emphasis, ROL) Note that Beck was providing mass public support to the U.S. military which funded the rally and contrasting “pure” military organization with “corrupt” civilian rule. Beck’s rally thus promoted the military-industrial complex and the increased militarization and fascisization of U.S. society.

At the same time, even though Beck had asked tea partiers not to bring political placards to the rally, in linking the rally to the “nation’s founding principles” he was also referencing and reaffirming the tea party movement and its political aims and objectives, including its involvement in the Republican Party’s campaign in this midterm election. This rally served to encourage tea partiers as they fight for government spending cuts to avoid demanding that the cuts come out of the U.S. military budget that makes up more than half the total federal government budget!

There are a number of varied and contradictory streams that flow together into the tea party movement, most of which were channeled into support for the Republican Party in this election. And the energetic involvement of tea party folks in the Republican Party certainly helped the overall performance of the Republicans in the election. But it may have also been responsible for the Republican Party failure to gain control of the U.S. Senate. In a number of states where a Democratic Senator was vulnerable, including Nevada where Senate majority leader Harry Reid was running, an upstart tea party candidate knocked out a stronger Republican regular to win the primary, paving the way for Reid and other Democratic Party stooges for Wall Street to win their re-election.

In Alaska, Sarah Palin’s home turf, she was able to lead her unknown Senatorial candidate, Joe Miller, in knocking out the sitting Republican Senator Lisa Murkowski in the Republican primary. Yet Murkowski has apparently come back and won the election with a write-in vote! This is a decisive repudiation of Sarah Palin in her home state; it exposes her and the tea party movement as divisive of the Republican Party in Alaska and could damage her ability to continue to play a leading role in the tea party movement *and* the Republican Party.

It is also ironic that key Republican *Washington insiders and operatives*, such as George W. Bush’s chief strategist, Karl Rove, have helped guide the anti-Washington, anti-federal government tea party movement and its relationship with the Republican Party. Rove appears to have been the main “bag man” for the untraceable corporate cash that played such a big role in this election. And Dick Arme, the former Republican bagman for convicted super lobbyist Jack Abramoff, exactly the type of individual the tea party is purportedly most opposed to, is the leader of *Freedom Works*, one of the three national-level conservative groups that have guided this “bottom-up, grass roots” protest “against Washington.” Thus, the tea party leaders’ part in the 2010 election charade is as hypocritical and contradictory as that of the regular Republicans and Democrats.

***Tea Party “principles,” Democratic Party “loyalty,” and the Senate Race Defeat of Wisconsin’s Russ Feingold:*** Were the tea party movement folk really serious and consistent about their small government and individualist principles, perhaps no other

Senatorial candidate in the country would have received stronger support from the tea partiers than Feingold, arguably the most “progressive” member of the U.S. Senate.

- On “morality” and bipartisan cooperation*, Feingold was the only Senate Democrat to vote against Senator Robert Byrd’s motion in 1999 to dismiss charges against President Clinton. He also “reached across the aisle” to cosponsor, with Republican Senator McCain, the McCain-Feingold campaign finance reform bill.

- On government spending*, Feingold was the only Democrat on the Budget Committee to join with Republicans on a five year cap on spending in 2002. In 2008 Feingold voted against the bailout of Wall Street finance capital. He also voted against Senator Byrd’s \$15 billion dollar bill establishing the Homeland Security Department, a new government bureaucracy. More significantly, he opposed the Bush-led invasion of Iraq and Obama’s expansion of the war in Afghanistan. These unjustified, unjust wars have been key elements in the record “defense” budgets that make up more than half of the record-level federal government spending.

- On the Wall Street Bailout*, Feingold voted against the bailout of Wall Street finance capital. He opposed the confirmation of Wall Street insider, Timothy Geithner, as Obama’s Secretary of the Treasury. He opposed the 2010 regulations supposedly passed to safeguard the public against the criminal Wall Street misconduct that led to the current financial crisis because there were too many loopholes allowing Wall Street to repeat this criminal activity at the people’s expense.

- On individual liberties*, Feingold opposed the Clinton-era 1996 “anti-terrorism” bill. In the teeth of the post 911 Bush-led hysteria, he was the only Senator to vote against the USA PATRIOT Act. He opposed the illegal detentions, torture and rendition associated with this hysteria. In 2008 and 2009 he voted against the Bush and Obama Administrations’ illegal wiretaps and surveillance of U.S. citizens and the after the fact immunity provided to the telephone monopoly corporations for their blatant violations of privacy laws. And he voted against the new FISA (Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act) law passed under Obama.

But, even though Russ Feingold has fought Washington corruption and been more of “a maverick” than either John McCain or Sarah Palin ever dreamed of, the tea party folks backed a millionaire businessman, new to politics, against Feingold. President Obama, in a highly publicized dismissal of Feingold’s chances on the eve of the election (even though polls showed a close race), gave the monopoly capitalist media the opportunity to portray Feingold as a “loser,” as if he had already lost, discouraging his supporters from going to the polls.\* And he was ultimately defeated 52% to 47% with the help of “an extraordinary saturation advertising by independent political groups attempting to sway public opinion” (AP), fueled by unlimited and untraceable corporate money as blessed by this year’s Supreme Court decision in the Citizens United case.

\*NOTE: [On behalf of the monopoly capitalist ruling class, Obama pulled the rug out from under Feingold in much the same way as he had failed to come to the aid of Pennsylvania Congresswoman Dahlkemper. Interestingly, Ohio Congressman Dennis Kucinich, like Feingold, one of the few principled and outspoken anti-Wall Street politicians in Washington, managed to win his re-election, while five “regular” Ohio Democratic members of Congress lost their seats.]

Thus, the “anti-Washington” tea party movement was used by the finance capitalists to get rid of Feingold, one of the few politicians in Washington willing to consistently stand up to Washington and its master, Wall Street finance capital, the U.S. ruling class.

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### **-The Democratic Party---The Main Political Prop of U.S. Imperialism-**

Despite the fact that the Obama-Biden Administration and the Democratic Congress have done virtually nothing to help **the labor movement and the U.S. working class** in this time of deep economic crisis, *the AFL-CIO leadership* has remained so tied to the Democratic Party and U.S. imperialism that it mobilized no significant street demonstrations demanding a massive jobs program until October 2<sup>nd</sup>, in Washington, D.C., just a month ago.\*

\*NOTE: [Over the past two years, there was not even an attempt to pass the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA) which was the main carrot dangled by the AFL-CIO bureaucracy to get union workers to vote for Obama and the Democrats in 2008. And the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) was used to delay union elections in an attempt to destroy the new National Union of Healthcare Workers (NUHW), the best new U.S. union to come along in generations. Indeed, the most frequent visitor to the White House in Obama’s first six months there was Andy Stern, the SEIU chieftain who was the main nemesis of the progressive, militant and democratic NUHW. Finally, in the 2010 midterm election, the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Union (AFSCME) reportedly spent over \$87 million to elect Democrats. And many other AFL-CIO and Change to Win unions spent huge sums in the same effort.]

As we pointed out in our leaflet to the October 2<sup>nd</sup> marchers, “The national AFL-CIO and NAACP bureaucracies are more concerned about electing Democrats than about winning the difficult battle for JOBS, and other Public Works. This is the reason that, two years into the economic crisis, today’s demonstration is the first national march for jobs and it is occurring exactly one month before the election.” (“To Win the Fight for Decent JOBS – Tackle the Republican Party and the Democratic Party – and Make Wall Street Pay!,” Statement of the Revolutionary Organization of Labor, USA) Sure enough, the speeches at the October 2<sup>nd</sup> Demonstration were not filled with anger at the Democrats and determination to mobilize and win a massive jobs program, but entreaties to the assembled workers to simply *vote again for the Democrats!*

This is in stark contrast with the bitter struggle being waged throughout much of Western Europe in this period by union workers and their allies, including massive numbers of youth. The recent two month battle of the French working class against the attempt of the Sarkozy government to cut the fast growing deficit of France’s pension system by raising the minimum retirement age from 60 to 62 years of age and the full retirement age from 65 to 67 years of age sparked at least six different days of nationwide protests.

Reflecting a healthy approach to the working class and to work, as many as ten percent of high school youth of France went into the streets in solidarity. As one 17 year old delegate from the UNL high school union explained, “If our parents don’t retire at 60, we won’t get jobs.”

On September 23<sup>rd</sup> three million French people were in the streets. According to MSNBC (10-19-10), “Many workers feel the change would be a first step in eroding France’s social benefits – which include long vacations, contracts that make it hard for employers to lay-off workers and a state-subsidized health-care system – *in favor of ‘American-style capitalism.’*” (msnbc.com, 10-19-10, Our emphasis, ROL)

Likewise, the NAACP and the few other organizations still promoting Afro-American rights (in the so-called “post racial” society allegedly ushered in with the Obama presidency) have remained in lockstep with the Democratic Party. Despite the fact that **Afro-American working people** are still the “last hired and first fired” and that the epidemic of unemployment has ravaged the Afro-American community harder than any other, the National NAACP organized no masses to demand jobs until it cosponsored the October 2<sup>nd</sup> March with the AFL-CIO in which the jobs issue was just the bait for a Democratic Party election rally.

A few months ago, the National NAACP, shamelessly jumping on the Obama Administration bandwagon without stopping to consider the situation, vilified U.S. Department of Agriculture official and former civil rights fighter Shirley Sherrod and supported her forced resignation by Obama’s Agriculture Secretary, Tom Vilsack. The NAACP’s cowardly act reflects the subordination of virtually all Afro-American civil rights organizations to the Democratic Party and the high degree of powerlessness being experienced by the Afro-American people in this period. (For a fuller discussion: see the Boxed Article, “The Obama Administration Continues to Enrich Wall Street at the Expense of Black Farmers” at the end of this Newsletter)

Similarly, **the Latino people**, both documented and undocumented, are experiencing increasing repression and antagonism from the U.S. government and much of the frustrated U.S. citizenry. Despite the fact that the Latino population largely supported Obama and the Democrats in the 2008 election, ICE raids and deportations have *increased* under the Obama Administration. Nevertheless, the Obama Justice Department’s “opposition” to the part of the nefarious Arizona immigration law that blatantly commits racial profiling violations of the rights of citizens under the Constitution helped garner the support of Latino voters in the 2010 election as well.

Democrats, aided by reformist and pro-imperialist NGO’s and other groups, including Reform Immigration for America (RIFA), have also been promoting the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors Bill, informally and demagogically known as the “Dream Act.” The Dream Act would provide a path to U.S. citizenship for young Latinos, brought to the USA illegally, while they were younger than 15 years old, who are enrolled in college *or* serving in the U.S. military for two years within a six year period. With the college option rapidly becoming out of reach for more immigrant working class youth in the current economic crisis, it is the military manpower provision of the Dream Act that would be used most often.

On this basis, supporters of the Dream Act include retired General Colin Powell and many other military officials. “Pentagon officials support the Dream Act. In its strategic plan for fiscal years 2010-2012, the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness cited the Dream Act as a ‘smart’ way to attract quality recruits to the all-volunteer force.” (“A Route to Citizenship in Defense Bill,” *Wall Street Journal*, 9-18 and 9-19-10) And the *Washington Post* quoted Jim Manley, the spokesman for Senate Majority leader Harry Reid (D-NV) as follows: “The Defense Department Strategic Plan explicitly says the passage of the Dream Act is critical to shape and maintain a mission-

ready all-volunteer force.” It was on this basis that Democratic Senator Reid had included the Dream Act in the Senate defense reauthorization bill.

Thus, the passage of the Dream Act, as currently constructed, would misguide a large number of Latino youth, rendering them mere cannon fodder for U.S. imperialism as it tries to hold on to its Empire, and its hemispheric hegemonic hold on Latin America, in particular. Hence the importance for the Latino masses in the USA to develop and strengthen liberation organizations that *break with the Democratic Party and U.S. imperialism* and uphold the rights of the millions of Latino immigrants in the USA in solidarity with the oppressed peoples and workers of Latin America and the world in *opposition* to U.S. imperialism.

Finally, the brutal unjust U.S. imperialist wars of occupation, plunder and oppression in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere have not stopped. However, the U.S. **anti-war movement**, including United for Peace and Justice, just about melted away following the victory of Obama and the Democrats in 2008. And this occurred despite the fact that the U.S. masses know that the Bush Regime’s justification for invading Iraq, for example, were outright lies. In essence, this U.S. movement is not only *not* an anti-imperialist war movement, it is *not* an anti-war movement. Genuine anti-war heroine, Cindy Sheehan, was 100% correct in exposing the fact that, it has proven to be mostly an *anti-Republican war* movement.

Now, in the weeks leading up to the 2010 election, it has been *under the Obama Regime* (and not the Bush Regime) that the FBI has taken the gloves off and begun to harass some of the few U.S. citizens who have participated in the anti-imperialist war movement and carried out solidarity with the revolutionary liberation forces around the world fighting against U.S. imperialism in this period. It has been *under the Obama Regime* (even more than under the Bush Regime) that liberation fighters and their U.S. supporters are equated to “terrorists.” Shamefully, the anti-war movement in the USA is largely led by organizations and individuals that remain connected “at the hip” with the Democratic Party and U.S. imperialism. And most of these forces continued to support the Democrats in the 2010 election, in spite of the fact that Obama and the Democratic Party-controlled Congress have continued to wage brutal and barbaric imperialist war in defense of the U.S. Empire.

## **CONCLUSION:**

### **-The 2010 Midterm Election: A Win-Win for U.S. Imperialism-**

Last Spring, *Ray O’ Light Newsletter #59* discussed an important ruling class article entitled “The Dollar and the Deficits” by C. Fred Bergsten,\* a former leading figure in the Republican administration of Richard Nixon and then the Democratic administration of Jimmy Carter, a key architect of the Rockefeller-led Trilateral Commission and currently an employee of billionaire Peter G. Peterson.\*\* We pointed out then that Obama and the Democrats were already implementing Bergsten’s recommended procedural reforms – “pay as you go” rules that required all spending increases or tax cuts be financed by savings elsewhere in the budget and creation of a “fiscal future commission” which could exercise great bipartisan influence over Congress’ decisions on Social Security, Medicaid and Medicare, i.e., to cut and gut them.

\*NOTE: [C. Fred Bergsten, “The Dollar and the Deficits,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 88 No. 6, November-December 2009]

\*\*NOTE: [Peterson himself is a former Secretary of Commerce under Nixon and long time Chairman of Wall Street giant, Lehman Brothers. He is currently “Chair” of *Foreign Affairs* magazine.]

We stated: “To bolster the U.S. economy Bergsten calls for three immediate reforms:

1. ‘*Containing long-term medical costs.*’ The medical-industrial complex has successfully blocked positive healthcare reform so the impending healthcare bill, with budget rectitude, will mean worse healthcare for the people of the USA.
2. ‘*Comprehensive Social Security reform.*’ Raising the retirement age and shrinking the benefit [and thus preventing much of the younger generation from obtaining a stable job].
3. ‘*Raising taxes on consumption.*’ Such taxes are always regressive, targeting the working class and the poor, for they spend a bigger share of their money (consume) to survive than the richer and more privileged classes.

“Bergsten’s naked imperialist proposals also include ‘increasing productivity’, i.e. the intensification of the exploitation of the U.S. working class; and ‘cutting corporate tax rates’ so as to ‘create incentives for both U.S. and foreign firms to locate their production in the United States.’” (*Ray O’ Light Newsletter #59, March-April 2010, “The Tea Party Movement, the Obama Regime and the Growing Fascist Danger in the USA”*)

The fact that Bergsten’s list seems virtually assured of being *fulfilled* in the aftermath of the 2010 midterm election is a reflection of ***how firmly in control of the current U.S. political process the financial oligarchy (Wall Street) is!***

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The 2010 midterm election provided dramatic proof of the collaboration of the Democratic and Republican Parties (i.e. the “Republicrat” Party) in defense of Wall Street and the tottering U.S. imperialist empire. It also demonstrated that those middle class citizens most angry, worried and upset by the federal government bailout of Wall Street and the continuing hardship on Main Street under the pressure of the persistent U.S. capitalist economic crisis were able to be channeled into a tea party movement supporting the very interests they were trying to oppose!

As Kate Zernike pointed out, “For many voters the Tea Party has been a blank screen on which they have projected all kinds of hopes and frustrations – not always compatible or realistic.” (*New York Times, ibid.*) She continues, “While the more ideological Tea Party supporters embrace ideas like phasing out Social Security and Medicare in favor of private savings accounts, most do not.” “But,” as she observes, “the movement is also animated by a belief that the entire political system has become disconnected from the practical needs and values of Americans, suggesting that its voting power stemmed as much from a populist sense of outrage in a tough economic moment as it did from ideology.” (*ibid.*)

Tragically, in the 2010 election, this right wing tea party movement has been the only political vehicle expressing the outrage of the U.S. populace at the unprecedentedly open pillage and plunder by Wall Street in the midst of the worst capitalist financial and economic crisis since the Great Depression seventy-five years ago.

The U.S. left, including the socialist left, has shown itself to be *unwilling and/or unable to break with and oppose the Democratic Party* which has had control of both the Congress and the Presidency during the past two years of the protracted joblessness and home foreclosure crises that show no signs of improving.

Meanwhile, given the bitter experience of these two years of Democratic Party rule, the hold of the Democratic Party on **the U.S. working class**, especially in the economically hard-hit industrial heartland in the U.S. Midwest, seems to be weakening. States like Ohio,

Pennsylvania, Iowa and Michigan had a lower voter turnout than predicted and, in each state, it was a lower turnout than four years ago. The percentage of union households voting was also significantly smaller there.

These states contain some of the most organized and most enlightened workers of the USA and they generally have voted at a significantly higher rate than the national average. The Ohio Secretary of State's office reported, for example, that 48.7 percent of the state's registered voters cast ballots in this election, down from nearly 70 percent in 2008 and a 56 percent turnout in 2006, the most recent midterm election.\* After two years of a Democratic President and Democratically-controlled Congress, the sharp drop in turnout indicates that a number of these working class folks recognize that they do not have a political party that represents the interests of U.S. working people. Certainly some recognize that there is a Republican/Democratic Party political duopoly that represents U.S. imperialism.

\*NOTE: [While the 2010 voting percentage was slightly higher for the USA as a whole than in the 2006 midterm elections, this was not the case in these heartland states.]

This is a cause for some cautious optimism, especially when combined with the fact that, according to the *Christian Science Monitor* (11-1-10), "Fifty-eight percent of Americans now believe the nation needs a third major party." And while a significant number of these people would no doubt gravitate toward a right wing tea party-type party at this point, the fact is that a plurality of voters are opposed to a number of the fundamental policies promoted by the new tea party lawmakers. For example, a Pew Research Center poll conducted just before the election found that, "a majority disapproved of permanently extending the Bush-era tax cuts on incomes greater than \$250, 000." (*op. cit.*, Kate Zernike, *New York Times*) But while most U.S. people may disagree with tea party goals, they weren't organized to vote and to fight against Wall Street.

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Under the impetus of the world capitalist economic crisis the U.S. Empire is in an accelerated decline. The hegemonic position of U.S. imperialism has been weakened. The U.S. ruling class desperately seeks to keep its place in the sun by shifting the burden of the crisis onto the shoulders of the workers and oppressed nationalities inside the USA, where it still maintains almost total political control, as well as internationally.

Obama and the Democrats and Republicans ("the Republicrats") are vital to the efforts of the Wall Street rulers of the USA to cut and destroy all our social benefits (Social Security, Medicare, etc.) and our civil rights (the right to form and operate labor unions and other self-defense mass organizations of workers, Afro-Americans, Latinos, immigrant rights groups, anti-fascist organizations, etc.) The Tea Party movement which appeared on the scene in the name of defending citizen rights *against* federal government encroachments has already been transformed into a battering ram, a fascistic bulwark of the drive toward the *even more rapid* elimination of social benefits and civil rights of the people of the USA, propelling forward the Obama-"Republicrat" drive toward the pauperization of U.S. society on behalf of Wall Street and U.S. imperialism.\*

\*NOTE: [Tea Party leader, Glenn Beck, Fox News front man for the military-industrial complex, has already made clear his view that there should be no "community" in the

USA, no social benefits at all. Beck wants all the wealth of the USA to be spent on police, prisons, and most of all, the U.S. military.]

In this situation, the genuine left-wing, anti-imperialist and revolutionary forces within the USA, “in the belly of the beast,” need to take the lead in organizing the increasingly hard-pressed masses to resist the crushing burden of the crisis being foisted upon us by the desperate U.S. ruling class in decline.

We must help lead the fight against evictions and home foreclosures; the serious no-holds-barred fight for JOBS, including for a shorter work week and a shorter work life (earlier retirement pension eligibility – not later); the fight for working class unity with and against the scape-goating of Latino and other immigrants and for the targeting of Wall Street in the struggle to make Wall Street pay for this crisis that it and its capitalist system have created.

For these purposes, politically, we must begin to build at the local level, a Labor, Afro-American and Latino based mass working class party uniting all those who can be united against Wall Street, against the dictatorship of U.S. finance capital. Such a Labor Party will need to reach out its hands in friendship and solidarity to the working class brothers and sisters of all lands fighting monopoly capitalism and imperialism in the throes of the world capitalist economic crisis.

To begin the long march toward workers power and socialism in the USA, the first step has to be for genuine working class and anti-imperialist revolutionaries to expose the Democratic Party as the principal political prop of U.S. imperialism. We need to aim our key political blow at the right opportunist and social democratic forces such as the Communist Party, USA, AFL-CIO and NAACP bureaucrats, RIFA staffers among the Latino masses, United for Peace and Justice and other “progressive” NGOers who continually try to keep the working class and the oppressed nationalities in the USA *and* internationally tied to the Democratic Party and U.S. imperialism. This is the outstanding lesson of the 2010 U.S. election. #

## **Even After the Shirley Sherrod Incident- The Obama Administration Continues to Enrich Wall Street at the Expense of Black Farmers**

In 1910, Afro-American farmers collectively owned 15 million acres of land in the United States. By 1997, the number of acres they collectively owned was only 2.4 million. In the interim, massive land stealing from Black farmers was carried out through political, economic and social attacks, including outright terror, on the Black community, mainly in the U.S. South. In 1982, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights reported that a primary cause of the loss of land of Afro-American farmers was discrimination at the hands of the

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). (See “Race and the USDA,” *Southern Exposure Fact Sheet*)

USDA’s historical discrimination against Afro-American farmers was admitted by the U.S. government in the Settlements of Pigford I and Pigford II. Pigford I was a class action lawsuit filed by hundreds of Afro-American farmers in 1997 on behalf of themselves and thousands of others against years of USDA discrimination, including the denial of loans and disaster relief. Pigford I was settled with the government in 1999 for over \$1 billion. Pigford II, the second phase of the lawsuit, based on claims of over 73,000 additional Afro-American farmers, was settled in February 2010 for a total of \$1.25 billion. This second settlement is still awaiting Congressional appropriation of money for the payment of compensation to the aggrieved Black farmers.

While not one official of the USDA was fired for discrimination against all those Black farmers over all those years, in July 2010, the mere *allegation* that Shirley Sherrod, USDA Georgia State Director of Rural Development, a Black USDA official, had discriminated against a white farmer led to her being forced to resign by Tom Vilsack, Obama’s Secretary of Agriculture. The National NAACP immediately and shamefully jumped to support Obama’s ouster of Sherrod. (How many demands or campaigns for the ouster of white supremacist USDA officials has the national NAACP ever initiated?!)

Former Georgia Afro-American Congresswoman Cynthia McKinney who has been active for years in defense of Black farmers issued a statement July 21 denouncing USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack’s treatment of Shirley Sherrod and calling on President Obama to meet with Black farmers who are leading the Pigford lawsuit. McKinney warned that “over one million black-owned farm acres are at risk of being lost due to acceleration of debt, foreclosure, bankruptcy *and USDA and USDOJ deliberate delay.*” (Our emphasis, ROL)

When it was discovered that the allegation against Sherrod was a tea party reactionary’s fabrication and especially after the white farmer in question publicly praised the role of Shirley Sherrod and credited her with saving his farm, even the reactionary FOX News talking heads were compelled to admit their error and apologize to Sherrod. Of course, the National NAACP and the Obama Administration apologized and Agriculture Secretary Vilsack offered Sherrod an even better job in the USDA. Despite the tremendous amount of publicity which the Sherrod affair received, a few days later, for the third time this year, the U.S. Senate voted *not* to pay the \$1.2 billion due to Black farmers in the Pigford Settlement – citing a “lack of funds.”

On July 24, 2010, the same day that the Associated Press reported the Democratic-controlled Senate’s decision not to approve the Pigford II settlement money, AP’s Daniel Wagner reported that Kenneth Feinberg, “the Obama administration’s pay czar said that he did not try to recoup \$1.6 billion in lavish compensation to top executives at bailed-out banks because he thought shaming the banks was punishment enough. Kenneth Feinberg said 17 banks receiving taxpayer money from the \$700 billion financial bail-out made ‘ill-advised’ payments to their executives.” The amount that Feinberg decided not to fight to collect from Wall Street companies to return to government coffers is greater than the amount of the Pigford II Settlement that the U.S. Senate owes to Black farmers, but refuses to pay for lack of funds!! So Wall Street executives got to keep their ill-gotten wealth, while the U.S. Senate continues to deny Black farmers the settlement that the government itself has already agreed to pay them.

Conclusion: Precisely because the Afro-American people did not receive the forty acres and a mule that they were promised at the time of their emancipation from slavery in the Civil War and still have not been compensated for the years of unpaid slave labor, and because land in 2010 is still a most valuable source of wealth, and because, most

importantly, land is essential to the sovereignty of any oppressed people, the issues raised by the Pigford Settlements and by the ouster of Shirley Sherrod are an excellent barometer of *the high degree of powerlessness currently being experienced by the Afro-American people under the Obama Administration.*

Furthermore, the 2010 Midterm elections have done nothing to strengthen the position of the Afro-American farmers in their bitter struggle to defend their land. On the contrary, pro-Wall Street, reactionary white supremacist forces have been strengthened. Far from being a “post racial” society in which civil rights organizations such as the NAACP are no longer necessary, white supremacist power, now strengthened by the tea party movement, is riding high. It is clear from the above that the Afro-American people need civil rights organizations like the NAACP to continue to exist and become stronger and more active in defense of the people. Even more urgent is the need for the development of Afro-American national liberation organizations, based in the Black Belt South Afro-American homeland, that are far more militant, democratic and revolutionary and are connected to the struggle for workers power throughout the USA and the world.

“For the proletariat needs  
the truth  
and there is nothing so  
harmful to  
its cause as plausible,  
respectable  
petty-bourgeois lies.”  
—V.I. Lenin,  
*Selected Works*, Vol.  
X, p. 41

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Additional materials are available from the Revolutionary Organization of Labor, USA (formerly the Ray O. Light Group) at the address below — including Newsletters, pamphlets, bulk materials, a publication list and books. These include materials exposing the global capitalist economic crisis, rallying the world’s workers and oppressed to resist monopoly capitalist and imperialist exploitation and oppression, and opposing the U.S. imperialist-led war of terror on the world’s peoples. Please direct requests for such materials, as well as all correspondence, comments, etc. to:

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