

Big Oil, White House—Partners in Crime

Gulf Coast Disaster: Capitalist Profit Drive Kills

Eleven oil workers died a horrible death on April 20 when the British Petroleum (BP) Deepwater Horizon rig exploded in the Gulf of Mexico. The workers were not represented by a union; their safety in this dangerous job was in the hands of a corporation notorious for cutting corners to save money. As media reports and eyewitness accounts from survivors have made clear, a crucial piece of safety equipment, the blowout preventer, was malfunctioning. Oil worker Tyrone Benton, one of the survivors, told the BBC's *Panorama* program that he had spotted a leak and that BP and the rig's owner, Transocean, were informed. But as AOL News (21 June) put it, "repairing the control pod would have meant stopping drilling work on the rig, which was costing BP \$500,000 a day to operate."

Since April 20, two cleanup workers have died. One of them, despondent over the destruction to his livelihood, committed suicide. The death toll will climb. Cleanup workers are being exposed to deadly chemicals, including an oil dispersant so toxic it's been banned in Europe. The disaster is ruining the lives of countless working men and women—longtime black and white residents, Native Americans, immigrant Vietnamese fishermen—whose way of life is sinking in the oil-filled waters and wetlands of the Gulf, where beaches are covered with filthy oil globs ("tarballs").

Many of those involved in the cleanup effort, which includes prison convict labor, are getting sick. At least eleven have been hospitalized with symptoms related to exposure to inhaled irritants. Respirators have not been issued. BP at first threatened to fire cleanup workers who brought their own, including those involved in burning off oil or working near areas where toxic dispersants are being used. BP also initially gagged cleanup workers through contracts barring them from talking to the media. Earlier, Transocean workers on the rig had to sign forms asserting that they did not witness the explosion—the one they just survived.

The Gulf Coast disaster is enormous, incalculable. It is ravaging a region that continues to reel from Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath—a man-made disaster that exposed the venality, class arrogance and utter contempt of the capitalist rulers for black, poor and working people. Today, oil continues to gush into the Gulf of Mexico at a rate of 60,000 to upward of 100,000 barrels a day. Even if the plan for drilling a relief well is successful, it won't be ready until the end of August at the earliest. Marine life has been devastated, imperiling some of the richest fisheries in the world. The Gulf



Fritz/McClatchy



Reuters

April 20 Deepwater Horizon oil rig explosion killed eleven workers. Above: Photos of the dead, displayed at memorial service in Jackson, Mississippi.

Coast disaster has long since surpassed the 1989 Exxon Valdez spill off Alaska's coast, the effects of which continue to be felt, both in terms of a ruined fishing industry and in illnesses suffered by cleanup workers and local residents.

Save a million dollars or so, kill eleven workers: such is the deadly math of the oil barons and the government that serves their interests. It's not a matter of this or that "energy policy," or who is running the regulatory agencies, all of which are totally interpenetrated with the corporations. Under Barack Obama as under George W. Bush and their predecessors, whether Democratic or Republican, the government exists to serve the interests of the tiny class of capitalists who derive their obscene wealth from exploiting labor.

At the heart of the Gulf Coast disaster is the *naked drive for profit* that drives the irrational capitalist system.

Criminality Upon Criminality

As *Rolling Stone* (24 June) documented in its article "The Spill, the Scandal and the President":

"BP shaved \$500,000 off its overhead by deploying a blowout preventer without a

remote-control trigger—a fail-safe measure required in many countries but not mandated by MMS [Minerals Management Service], thanks to intense industry lobbying. It opted to use cheap, single-walled piping for the well, and installed only six of the 21 cement spacers recommended by its contractor, Halliburton—decisions that significantly increased the risk of a severe explosion. It also skimmed on critical testing that could have shown

continued on page 12



Economic Crisis and the Capitalist State.....4

All Labor Must Defend Miners Union!

Mexico: Brutal Cop Attack Breaks Cananea Strike

The following is a translation of a leaflet issued on June 14 by our comrades of the Grupo Espartaquista de México.

On June 7, some 2,000 cops from federal, state and municipal police forces brutally broke the nearly three-year-long strike of miners at Cananea, Sonora [near the border with Arizona] organized in Local 65 of the SNTMSRM [miners and metal workers] union. The pretext was a resolution of the Federal Conciliation and Arbitration Board, issued on June 4, which declared the “end of the labor relationship” (thus laying off the entire workforce) and put an “end to the strike the workers maintained at the mine” (*La Jornada*, 8 June). Illustrating that the ultimate goal is to get rid of the miners union, Javier Lozano (Secretary of Labor) and [mining company] Grupo México plan to impose a company union linked to the Federación Nacional de Sindicatos

Independientes (FNSI, National Federation of Independent Unions), which was created and sponsored by the bourgeoisie of the city of Monterrey, and give it the collective contract that would come with reopening the mine.

The workers refuted the government’s transparent lies that the action had been “peaceful” and that there had been “no casualties.” In seizing the mine, police used tear gas and, according to Marco Antonio del Toro, a lawyer for the miners union, two workers were shot. Five miners were arrested and later declared that they had been tied up and forced to kneel on a hill for several hours. With incredible cruelty, police forces seized the facilities of the Pasta de Conchos mine in a simultaneous action, dispersing people who have been mourning the death of 65 miners in the tragedy of February 2006 [a mine explosion] and arresting the moth-

ers of two of the fallen miners. Several unions, including prominently the United Steel Workers (USW) of the U.S., have declared their solidarity with the miners union. We Spartacists protest this new attack and call on the workers movement as a whole to mobilize in defense of the miners union. ***Defend the miners union!***

The state and the capitalists are determined to bring the miners union to its knees and get rid of its leadership, which has been facing charges for several years now. From the beginning, we have called for dropping all charges against the leadership of the miners union, including [Napoleón] Gómez Urrutia—without giving them any political support—on the basis of the elementary principle summed up in the slogan: bourgeois state, hands off the unions!

In the crusade against the miners union, the Lázaro Cárdenas [steel] workers came first; they managed to achieve victory in their 2006 strike after heroically repelling a brutal police attack (including state police under the command of the PRD [Party of the Democratic Revolution]) in April of that year, at the cost of two dead workers. Then it was Cananea’s turn. (This is not the first time the state has launched an attack to break this strike.) In January 2008, hundreds of police attacked the strikers. Despite the fact that police temporarily took control of the mine, they failed in the end and the strike went on.

The union’s answer at the time was a national eight-hour strike involving some 25,000 workers from 85 steel plants and mines. By June 2010, the strike at Cananea, a place famous for the heroic 1906 strike [whose repression by Mexican troops and Arizona Rangers was an important factor in the lead-up to the Mexican Revolution of 1910-20], had caused losses to the bosses of at least \$1.5 billion—the Cananea workers hit the bosses hard. The

vengeful government, which is the bosses’ executive committee, wants revenge. In this new attempt, the government felt emboldened by the relatively easy victory it achieved in destroying the SME electrical workers union last October, when it did not face a major response from labor.

Should this new attack on the miners union—the union that has been the most combative in the country over the last several years—succeed, it would pave the road for similar attacks on the continuing [miners] strikes in Taxco and Sombretete. It would mean a crucial victory for the bosses and their state in their long-time offensive against this union, and it would be yet another terrible blow against the entire labor movement. After the SME, the miners union is simply next on the list. ***This new attack must not pass unchallenged!***

Despite the militancy of the ranks, the bureaucracy leading the miners union itself shares central responsibility for the enormous defeat inflicted on the SME—a defeat for the entire working class. As we wrote in *Espartaco* (January 2010 supplement), “The responsibility for this ominous defeat lies with the pro-capitalist leadership of the falsely ‘independent’ unions, such as the UNT [National Union of Workers], that line up behind the bourgeois PRD, as well as that of the miners union, who only mobilized the ranks in order to relieve pressure and did not organize any strike action that would hit the bosses where it hurts—in their pockets.” Through their actions, the pro-capitalist union bureaucracies hung the SME out to dry while sowing illusions in the courts, the bourgeois PRD and the PRD’s actions in Congress. Today, in the face of the new government attack, the miners long for a forceful response from their leadership: “And when will the national strike take place? Since the beginning you have been saying that, and nothing happens!” exclaimed a worker, directing himself to the national leadership in Cananea on June 7 (*La Jornada*, 8 June).

Nonetheless, up until now the strategy of the national leadership of the miners union has been limited to legal actions such as *amparos* [constitutional provision of protection against the actions of state authorities]. While the union should use every legal measure to defend itself against the government and the bosses of the powerful Grupo México, workers must understand that ***there is no justice in the capitalist courts***. The central purpose of the courts is to defend private property

continued on page 12



TROTSKY

Capitalist Profit Drive Breeds Disaster

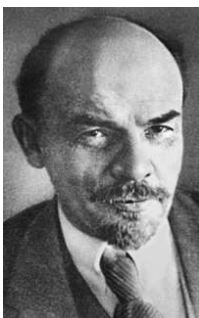
More than 130 years ago, Friedrich Engels, cofounder with Karl Marx of scientific socialism, spelled out the disastrous consequences of the capitalist system of production for profit. Engels’ indictment rings even more true today.

The individual capitalists, who dominate production and exchange, are able to concern themselves only with the most immediate useful effect of their actions. Indeed, even this useful effect—inasmuch as it is a ques-

tion of the usefulness of the article that is produced or exchanged—retreats far into the background, and the sole incentive becomes the profit to be made on selling.

Classical political economy, the social science of the bourgeoisie, in the main examines only social effects of human actions in the fields of production and exchange that are actually intended. This fully corresponds to the social organisation of which it is the theoretical expression. As individual capitalists are engaged in production and exchange for the sake of the immediate profit, only the nearest, most immediate results must first be taken into account. As long as the individual manufacturer or merchant sells a manufactured or purchased commodity with the usual coveted profit, he is satisfied and does not concern himself with what afterwards becomes of the commodity and its purchasers. The same thing applies to the natural effects of the same actions. What cared the Spanish planters in Cuba, who burned down forests on the slopes of the mountains and obtained from the ashes sufficient fertiliser for *one* generation of very highly profitable coffee trees—what cared they that the heavy tropical rainfall afterwards washed away the unprotected upper stratum of the soil, leaving behind only bare rock! In relation to nature, as to society, the present mode of production is predominantly concerned only about the immediate, the most tangible result; and then surprise is expressed that the more remote effects of actions directed to this end turn out to be quite different, are mostly quite the opposite in character; that the harmony of supply and demand is transformed into the very reverse opposite, as shown by the course of each ten years’ industrial cycle...; that private ownership based on one’s own labour must of necessity develop into the expropriation of the workers, while all wealth becomes more and more concentrated in the hands of non-workers.

—Friedrich Engels, “The Part Played by Labour in the Transition from Ape to Man” (1876)



LENIN



Reuters

June 7: Federal police outside Mexico’s biggest copper mine in Cananea. Cop mobilization broke three-year-long miners strike.

Letter

BP Disaster

Brooklyn, NY
22 June 2010

To the Editors of Workers Vanguard:

I’m disappointed you have not yet run an article about the Gulf oil blowout. The ruling class is raping the planet, fouling their own nest, yet they can’t stop themselves. Having allowed high-risk deep sea

drilling without the technology to deal with inevitable accidents, the government can do no more than impotently wag its finger at BP, while Obama makes multiple do-nothing visits to the Gulf to show that he “cares.”

Could there be a better argument for socialism?

Fraternally,
Jack L.

WORKERS VANGUARD

Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League of the U.S.

DIRECTOR OF PARTY PUBLICATIONS: Liz Gordon

EDITOR: Ray Bishop

EDITOR, YOUNG SPARTACUS PAGES: Elizabeth Johnson

CIRCULATION MANAGER: Susan Fuller

EDITORIAL BOARD: Barry James (managing editor), François Donau (production manager), Blandine Hauser (letters editor), Bruce André, Bonnie Brodie, Jon Brule, Ed Clarkson, Paul Cone, Michael Davison, George Foster, Walter Jennings, Jane Kerrigan, James Robertson, Joseph Seymour, Alan Wilde

The Spartacist League is the U.S. Section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

Workers Vanguard (ISSN 0276-0746) published biweekly, except skipping three alternate issues in June, July and August (beginning with omitting the second issue in June) and skipping the last issue in December, by the Spartacist Publishing Co., 299 Broadway, Suite 318, New York, NY 10007. Telephone: (212) 732-7862 (Editorial), (212) 732-7861 (Business). Address all correspondence to: Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116. E-mail address: vanguard@tiac.net. Domestic subscriptions: \$10.00/22 issues. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Workers Vanguard*, Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116.

Opinions expressed in signed articles or letters do not necessarily express the editorial viewpoint.

The closing date for news in this issue is June 29.

No. 961

2 July 2010

As Obama Sends More Troops to Mexican Border

Outrage Over Border Patrol Killings

On June 7, a U.S. Border Patrol guard in El Paso, Texas, killed Sergio Adrián Hernández with a bullet to the face, shot across the Río Bravo into Mexico. No sooner had Hernández's blood dried in Ciudad Juárez than the Border Patrol and FBI launched a vile campaign to justify the coldblooded killing of this 15-year-old boy. First they claimed he had been throwing rocks at the border guards. Then they changed their story, saying that he had been "smuggling" immigrants.

The U.S. government's justification for killing a Mexican—on Mexican soil—by claiming that throwing rocks and helping immigrants cross the border are "crimes" punishable by summary execution only underscores the American imperialist rulers' racist arrogance and contempt for Mexican lives. After defending the Border Patrol killer in a June 8 press release and emphasizing that the only offense committed was a supposed "assault on federal officers," the FBI vowed to carry out a "civil rights" investigation—i.e., a white-wash—with the killer kept on paid leave.

This killing was preceded by the gruesome homicide of Anastasio Hernández Rojas, a Mexican construction worker and father of five, by state forces. On May 28 in San Diego, California, a lynch mob of some 20 Customs and Border Protection agents clubbed and tased Hernández Rojas to death while he was being deported. Like the killing of Sergio Hernández, this incident was filmed on a cell phone and broadcast on television and the Internet. Millions of outraged viewers on both sides of the border have listened to the eyewitnesses' screams of protest and the dying man's cries of "No! No! Help Me! Stop, please!"

According to a report by the Mexican government, U.S. federal agents killed or wounded five people on the Mexican border in the final year of Bush's administration, 12 people in the first year of Obama's administration and 17 people in just the first five months of 2010! President Obama now plans to deploy 1,200 National Guardsmen to the border, add 1,000 Border Patrol agents to the 20,000 already there, increase the border security budget by \$500 million and deploy two more unmanned aircraft, bringing the total to six drones.

Make no mistake: this is Obama's deadly program for "immigration reform."

His chief deputy in this operation is Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano, whom he thanked in an April 23 Rose Garden ceremony for naturalized military personnel "for leading our efforts to achieve comprehensive immigration reform so that America keeps faith with our heritage as both a nation of immi-

tion. But at a time of economic crisis such as this, arrests and deportations of layers of immigrants deemed surplus are the order of the day, no matter which party is in power.

In his April 23 speech, Obama raised his criticism of the infamous Arizona anti-immigrant pass law SB1070 (see WV

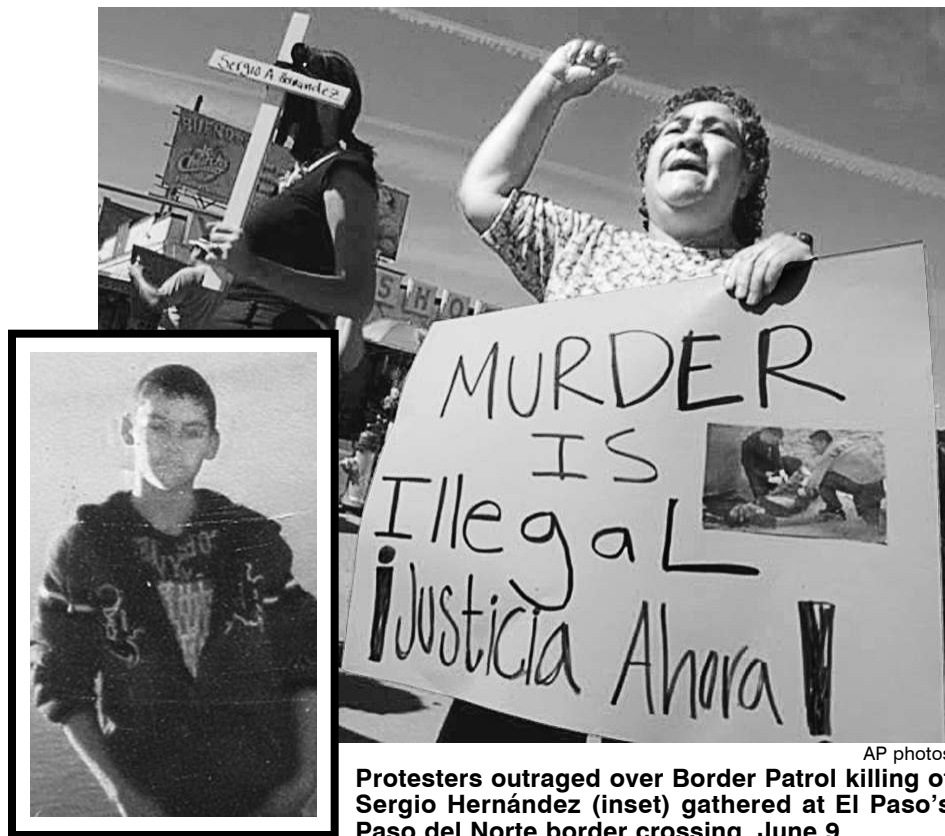
grants, and he finds the Arizona law's overt legal codification of racial profiling an international embarrassment.

In this same speech, Obama's message was clear on one "path to citizenship" that he favors: enlist in the imperialist military, go slaughter people overseas and you too can "earn" your papers. "Like so many others," he intoned, these military men and women "met their responsibilities. They played by the rules. They have earned their citizenship."

While the reformist left seeks to pressure the Democrats in Washington, we know that they are simply representatives of the class enemy. For example, take Democratic Congressman Luis Guterrez from Chicago, who got arrested protesting the Arizona law. A key component of his "immigration reform" bill last year (H.R. 4321) was more border security. That is, more Sergios, more Anastasios dead on the border. The Arizona boycott is really a cheap ploy by Democratic Party politicians to deflect attention away from the thousands of immigrant lives destroyed every day by the Obama administration and by Democratic Party-run state and local governments.

All workers must understand that their fate is vitally linked to that of undocumented immigrants. Attacks on immigrants will only weaken the labor movement further. At the same time, immigrants form a key component of the U.S. working class that has enormous potential social power. Moreover, immigrants are a living bridge to the proletariat in their home countries, many of which have traditions of militant class struggle.

Labor needs to vigorously protest the border killings, oppose the militarization of the border, demand an end to all deportations and organize immigrant workers. For full citizenship rights for all immigrants! This calls for a fight against the class-collaborationism of the chauvinist, pro-capitalist trade-union bureaucracy, which hogties labor's power through its support to the Democratic Party. We of the Spartacist League fight to break workers and youth from the Democratic Party and to build a workers party that will be a tribune of the people and fight for socialist revolution. That is the only way to put an end to the capitalist system and all its murderous brutality once and for all. ■



AP photos
Protesters outraged over Border Patrol killing of Sergio Hernández (inset) gathered at El Paso's Paso del Norte border crossing, June 9.

grants and a nation of laws." It was Napolitano who boasted that Obama's administration smashed Bush's records by deporting 387,790 immigrants in fiscal year 2009. The Obama administration is true to the racist heritage of this "nation of laws," a history that includes black enslavement, Jim Crow segregation, legal lynching under the death penalty, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and Japanese American internment camps during World War II.

The capitalist system is based on the brutal exploitation of all labor, with the ruling class inflaming racial and ethnic hostilities to keep the working class divided and thus ensure a greater extraction of profit. The bourgeoisie at different times has varying approaches to immigra-

No. 958, 7 May). Obama complained that "the recent efforts in Arizona...threatened to undermine basic notions of fairness that we cherish as Americans, as well as the trust between police and their communities that is so crucial to keeping us safe." According to Obama's Orwellian logic, undocumented immigrants need to "trust" the same police officers who, in many localities across the country, are arresting them and turning them over for deportation!

To top it all off, U.S. imperialism's war-criminal-in-chief and overseer of the domestic plantation later vowed to investigate the "civil rights and other implications" of the Arizona law. Obama wants the federal government, not the states, to dictate the terms of persecuting immi-

After 15-Week Lockout

Boron Settlement—Setback for ILWU

The lockout of nearly 600 borax miners in the small desert town of Boron, California by Rio Tinto, a notorious international union-busting mining conglomerate, generated widespread sympathy from workers across Southern California and around the world. But this sympathy was never translated into *working-class struggle* against the company's drive to destroy the miners' union, Local 30 of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU). Instead, the misleaders of the ILWU kept other members of the union on the job, processing and shipping scab borax throughout the lockout, which began in early February. Having strangled labor solidarity—most importantly, "hot-cargoing" and building mass pickets to stop all shipments of scab products—the ILWU tops are now hailing a six-year

contract settlement that was reached on May 14 as a "victory."

While Rio Tinto did not get away with enforcing its first contract offer, which would have completely eviscerated the union, the deal the ILWU tops rushed through for approval by the Boron miners was no victory. Its provisions effectively gut seniority, which is vital to the union's defense of its members against the caprices of the bosses. An article in the ILWU's *Dispatcher* (April/May 2010) reports that seniority was maintained in the case of layoffs, but the settlement allows the company to retain "skilled employees... irrespective of their plant seniority, as it deems necessary" in the event of a "reduction in force." For promotions and job transfers, seniority counts only if the company determines

that other "qualifications" are met. Moreover, the settlement allows Rio Tinto to contract out work to non-union labor during supposedly busy periods.

The new contract replaces guaranteed pension benefits for new-hires with a 401(k) plan. At the ratification meeting, Local 30 members cited in the *Dispatcher* article correctly argued that "this 'two-tier' retirement plan could undermine unity between new-hires and veteran employees, erode the pension funding base for current employees, and will eventually eliminate the defined benefits pensions for the next generation of workers." In short, while the Boron miners' union local was not destroyed, this deal puts in place contract terms that undermine the unity and solidarity that are vital to the union's preservation.

Promoting the settlement, ILWU International press spokesman Craig Merri- lees declared: "With a union that had a reputation for being a strong and militant union, [to fail] would have had massive implications for workers everywhere" (*In These Times*, 19 May). But far from
continued on page 7

NOTICE
Workers Vanguard skips
alternate issues in
June, July and August.
Our next issue
will be dated July 30.

Liberals Push Regulation Hoax

Economic Crisis and the Capitalist State

Throughout the capitalist world, the human cost of the worst economic crisis since the 1930s has been staggering. In the European Union (EU), where a financial crisis now threatens a renewed downturn, 23 million workers are out of work. Unemployment for those under 25 is running over 20 percent; in Spain, youth unemployment is over 44 percent.

PART ONE

The early stages of the current economic crisis overlapped with the 2008 hunger crisis, in which skyrocketing food prices raised the spectre of mass starvation (see “Imperialism Starves World’s Poor,” WV Nos. 919 and 920, 29 August and 12 September 2008). Since 2008, some 130 million additional people have been driven into the ranks of the chronically hungry and undernourished. In many countries food prices have barely fallen from their peaks of two years ago, and in some Asian markets staples like rice and wheat are today selling *above* their 2008 levels. The worldwide total of those who are desperately hungry has, for the first time, climbed to more than one billion people—roughly one-sixth of humanity.

In the U.S., the number of people classified as living in extreme poverty—those unable to provide for the most basic needs of food, shelter and health care—has risen by more than a third over the past decade and now totals 17 million. Some 15 million workers are officially unemployed, a record **46 percent** of them for longer than six months. When those who are constrained to work part-time or have abandoned the job hunt are included in the count, the number rises to over 26 million—almost 17 percent of the workforce. Since the housing price bubble burst in 2007, there have been over seven million foreclosures. And the number of working people who face being thrown into the street is on the rise, with a record 932,000 foreclosures in the first quarter of this year, up 16 percent from the same period last year.

As always in racist capitalist America, black people, typically the last hired and first fired, have been hit the hardest. Even high-income black borrowers are 80 percent more likely to lose their homes to foreclosure than their white counterparts. Nationally, the jobless rate for young black men aged 16-24 has reached Great Depression levels of over 34 percent. In rust-belt states like Illinois, Wisconsin and Ohio, joblessness for blacks is running over 20 percent; in Michigan, the figure is expected to soon hit 27 percent. Nearly one out of two black men in Milwaukee is without a job. Children of immigrant, black, Latino or Native American parents are more than



Mears/Detroit News

Left: 50,000 people crowded Detroit's Cobo Center in October 2009 for 5,000 applications for federal aid to help pay rent and utilities. Right: L.A. union building trade workers rally at City Hall to save jobs, April 14.



Getty

twice as likely as white children to be living in poverty.

Barack Obama and the banker-politicians in his administration, following in the steps of George W. Bush, showered hundreds of billions of taxpayers' dollars on their financier friends and the auto bosses. Banks can borrow money from the Federal Reserve (the U.S. central bank) at 0.5 percent interest and purchase risk-free Treasury bonds paying 3 percent. Trying to kick-start the economy, the government is practically giving money away to the banks. This has in turn fueled a renewed speculative binge propelling a wide range of price bubbles, from corporate shares in stock exchanges to precious metals and fossil fuels—and food items.

Much of what currently looks like economic growth is in fact the froth generated by speculative bubbles. Over the past year, as millions were driven to the brink of starvation, the number of billionaires in the world increased by almost 30 percent to over 1,000. The net worth of this select club skyrocketed 50 percent and now totals a cool \$3.6 trillion.

No sooner had Barack Obama signed into law his health care “reform”—a boondoggle for big business that cuts Medicare and taxes union health plans—than Washington was abuzz with talk of “retooling” Social Security by cutting benefits and increasing taxes, a task that his right-wing Republican predecessor, George W. Bush, took on without success. The *New York Times* (22 March) wrote that “the promise of future reductions would immediately reassure global markets fretful that the United States’

debt is already its highest since World War II.... That argument appeals to Mr. Obama.”

From the U.S. to the EU, capitalist governments are taking the ax to wages, pensions and social welfare programs in an attempt to make working people pay for the economic crisis. Simultaneously, they are mooting various financial regulation schemes in a vain attempt to overcome the sharp economic crises that are and always have been an inherent feature of the capitalist system. Chief among these measures is the much-ballyhooed bank “reform” that is passing through the U.S. Congress. When the final details were worked out, one Wall Street banker said, “We are all breathing a sigh of relief here.... We can live with this” (*Financial Times*, 25 June). At any rate, with the European financial crisis and the ongoing housing crisis in the U.S. threatening a “double-dip” recession, this amounts to something like moving the deck chairs on the *Titanic*.

This situation amply demonstrates the truth of the statement by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in the 1848 *Communist Manifesto* that “the executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie.” This understanding represents a fundamental dividing line between ourselves—Marxist revolutionaries—and self-proclaimed “socialists” who promote illusions in the possibility of reforming the capitalist state, which in the U.S. they seek to do by exerting pressure on the Democratic Party. To such class collaborationism we counterpose the road of *class struggle*. The key is to break the

political chains that shackle labor to the capitalist political parties and state. Break with the Democrats! For a workers party that fights for a workers government! There will be no end to the misery wrought by the capitalist rulers and their boom-bust economic system until the working class seizes power through a socialist revolution that smashes the capitalist state and erects in its place a workers state—the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Exploitation and Profit

The wealth of the capitalist class—the owners of the means of production—derives from the *exploitation* of labor. As Marx explained in *Capital*, his classic analysis of the capitalist economy, the wage-worker is constrained to sell to the capitalist his ability to work. The wage that a worker is paid corresponds to that part of the working day during which he produces the equivalent of what it costs to maintain himself and his family. The other part of the day, he works without remuneration, creating “surplus value,” which the capitalist pockets in the form of profit.

Over the past three and a half decades, in which working people in this country have largely been on the losing end of the class struggle, the rich have fabulously increased their wealth, mainly by holding down and driving down wages. Pay for production and other nonsupervisory workers—80 percent of the private workforce—is today 9 percent lower in real terms (i.e., adjusted for inflation) than it was in 1973. During that same period, labor productivity (output per worker) increased by more than 80 percent.

Break with the Democrats! For a Workers Party That Fights for a Workers Government!

In short, capitalists have enormously ratcheted up what Marx called the rate of exploitation—the ratio of the share of the product of labor appropriated by the capitalists to the share represented by the worker’s wage. They did this by combining mass layoffs with extracting increased output from those workers still employed, including through forced overtime. Last year, through layoffs and short time, total hours worked decreased by 5 percent—twice as much as the 2.5 percent fall in gross domestic product. The London *Economist* (20 March) commented on these figures with evident approval: “America has gone on a diet: it has squeezed extra output from a smaller workforce and suffered a big rise in unemployment as a consequence.”

This likewise corresponds to Marx’s analysis of the basic laws governing the capitalist mode of production. Marx explained that the existence of a large pool of unemployed—the “industrial reserve army”—serves to restrain what he ironically referred to as workers’ “pretensions” to demand higher wages:

“The condemnation of one part of the working-class to enforced idleness by the over-work of the other part, and the converse, becomes a means of enriching the individual capitalists....

“The industrial reserve army, during the periods of stagnation and average prosperity, weighs down the active labour-army; during the periods of over-production and paroxysm, it holds its pretensions in check. Relative surplus-population is therefore the pivot upon which the law of demand and supply of labour works. It confines the field of action of this law within the limits absolutely convenient to the activity of exploitation and to the domination of capital.”

—*Capital*, Volume I

To make ends meet, working families have increasingly gone into debt, maxing out credit cards and borrowing against the value of their homes. Americans today owe a staggering \$13.5 trillion, or around \$44,000 for every man, woman and child in the U.S. Any money that families have to spare after providing for essential needs is being spent not on consumption but on trying to ease that crushing debt burden. The average U.S. household today turns over more than 17 percent of its disposable income directly to financial capitalists to pay down mortgages, credit card debt and the like.

The current crisis has been exacerbated by the deindustrialization of the U.S., already under way for several decades. Despite the massive shift of social product from labor to capital, capitalists in this country have steadily *cut back* on productive capacity. This country already ranks behind every industrial nation except France in the percentage of overall economic activity devoted to manufacturing—13.9 percent, according to the World Bank, down four percentage points in a decade. Since the official start of the recession in December 2007, some eight million jobs have been lost. Many if not most of those jobs are gone for good, especially in manufacturing.

Those industrial workers who succeed in finding new employment are often forced into low-paying, temporary jobs

Toronto: Protest Mass Arrests of G20 Protesters!

We reprint below a June 28 protest statement by the Partisan Defense Committee, a defense organization associated with the Canadian section of the International Communist League.

The Partisan Defense Committee—the legal and social defense organization associated with the Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste—denounces in the strongest terms the brutal police violence unleashed on protesters against the G20 summit in Toronto on June 26-27. Over 900 have been arrested, including many protest organizers. We demand the immediate release of all protesters. Drop all the charges now!

Toronto became a virtual police state as 20,000 cops descended on the city. Following a 15,000-strong demonstration against the G20 on June 26, riot police began rounding up protesters and passers-by in indiscriminate sweeps throughout the city core. The cops have employed deadly force, using tear gas, muzzle blast [of tear gas], rubber bullets and pepper spray, and serious injuries have been reported. Journalists have been arrested in a clear effort to prevent exposure of the cop violence.

Those held at the huge temporary detention centre report being denied access to lawyers, water and medical attention. An arrested CTV television producer called the facilities “Guantánamo Bay-style cages.” He told of a man denied medical care despite a serious head injury. An activist told *Spartacist Canada* that he was taken to a separate prison, denied access to a lawyer, beaten, strip-searched and forced to kneel with his underwear crammed into his face and mouth. As protesters rallied at the detention centre on Sunday, they too were arrested and force-marched into the prison. A young woman was shot in the face with a rubber bullet. Hundreds of cops raided the offices of the University of Toronto Graduate Students



Weil/Toronto Star

Toronto, June 27: Police in riot gear viciously attack protest against G20 summit.

Union and the Toronto Community Mobilization Network [one of the main protest organizers], making many arrests. Meanwhile, anyone wearing black on downtown streets was deemed an anarchist by the cops and subjected to random searches and arrests.

The bosses’ media and politicians claim that a few smashed windows and burned-out cop cars justify the brutal crackdown. Reflecting the labour tops’ loyalty to the rule of capital, Canadian Labour Congress president Ken Georgetti echoed this, declaring, “We condemn these actions.” Jack Layton, leader of the social-democratic New Democratic Party, railed, “The vandalism is criminal and totally unacceptable.”

From the standpoint of the working class such actions are no crime! What is a smashed bank window compared to an imperialist system that condemns millions

to death by starvation, disease and war? Yet successful struggle against capitalist rule must seek to mobilize the social power of the working class. Rejecting this Marxist perspective, the “direct action” activists with their “black bloc” tactics offer only the sideshow of ineffectual rage, bringing them into isolated conflict with the bloody fist of the bosses’ state. It is this racist state apparatus, centrally the cops, courts and army, that maintains the capitalist dictatorship over the working class and oppressed.

Neither pleas for the ruling class to “do right” by the oppressed nor symbolic individual acts will change the system of capitalist exploitation. Only a class-conscious proletariat can put an end to this brutal social system through a socialist revolution that will open the road to an egalitarian communist future. An injury to one is an injury to all! Free all the protesters—Drop the charges! ■

that provide no health insurance, retirement benefits or even sick days. A cover story titled “The Disposable Worker” in *Bloomberg BusinessWeek* (18 January) reflected the bosses’ triumphalism:

“Some economists predict it will be years, not months, before employees regain any semblance of bargaining power. That’s because this recession’s unusual ferocity has accelerated trends—including offshoring, automation, the decline of labor unions’ influence, new management techniques, and regulatory changes—that already had been eroding workers’ economic standing....

“When employment in the U.S. eventually recovers, it’s likely to be because American workers swallow hard and accept lower pay.”

Standing in sharp contradiction to its declining economic base is U.S. imperialism’s overwhelming global military

hegemony. The destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state in 1991-92 removed what had been the only significant counterweight to U.S. imperialism, which sees itself free to ride roughshod in Iraq and Afghanistan and to threaten any other regime that gets in its way. Defense of the interests of workers, blacks and immigrants in the U.S. is integrally linked to opposition to U.S. imperialism’s interventions abroad.

Capitalism’s Labor Lieutenants

What had already been an enormous increase in the rate of exploitation of workers, due to decades of giveback union contracts, two-tier wage systems and similar devices acceded to by the trade-union bureaucracy, has been further jacked up as a result of the economic crisis. Accepting the logic imposed by the capitalist system, the trade-union tops are reduced to negotiating the terms of surrender, from the union-busting auto bailout to attacks on teachers’ tenure and seniority.

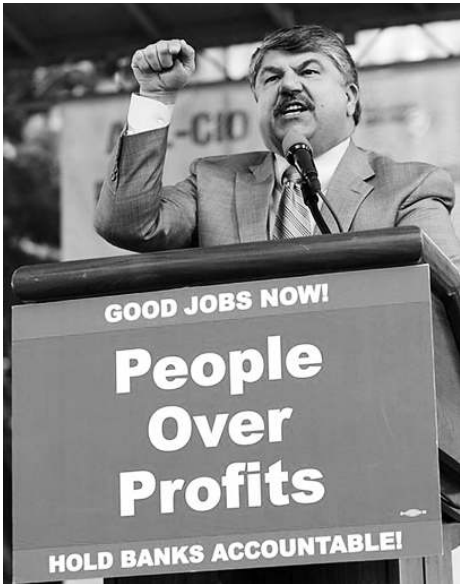
Basing themselves on the mass organizations of the working class, the labor bureaucrats are at times pushed to engage in strike action. Yet their primary function is to ensure the subordination of the workers to the interests of the class enemy, especially through their fealty to the Democratic Party, of which they are a constituent part. No less than the Republicans, the Democratic Party is a party of and for the capitalist class—with the difference that the Democrats cynically pose as “friends of labor” and shed crocodile tears over the consequences of the anti-working-class measures that they themselves seek to impose.

Earlier this year, in support of Obama’s push for a “financial reform” law, the AFL-CIO tops launched a cam-

paign, featuring an April 29 march by thousands of workers on Wall Street, demanding “Make Wall Street Pay.” A couple of weeks later, AFL-CIO president Richard Trumka told a meeting of union officials in Washington: “We can pay for the jobs we need by making Wall Street pay back those bailouts, by taxing those huge Wall Street bonuses, by closing the tax loopholes that benefit hedge fund and private equity managers...and imposing a fee on financial speculation.”

However fatuous, such schemes are premised on the notion that the Democratic administration is at bottom the friend of working people and just needs some pressure to rein in the fat cats. Though occasionally engaging in a bit of tough talk about financial regulation, the Obama administration has done—and

continued on page 6



Reuters




WV Photo

Left: AFL-CIO chief Richard Trumka at NYC union rally, April 29. Right: Workers World-led “Bail Out the People Movement” at March 2009 NYC protest. Labor tops, reformists beg capitalist government to “serve the people,” not its banker cronies.

A Spartacist Pamphlet

Karl Marx Was Right

Capitalist Anarchy
and the
Immiseration of the Working Class



For Workers Revolution!
For an International Planned Socialist Economy!

AUSTRALIA...AUS BRITAIN...GB CANADA...CAN DENMARK...DEN GERMANY...GER GREECE...GRE IRELAND...IRL ITALY...ITA JAPAN...JPN POLAND...POL SOUTH AFRICA...RSA U.S.A...USA

\$2 (56 pages)

Order from: Spartacist Pub. Co.
Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116

Economy...

(continued from page 5)

will do—little to displease its Wall Street cronies. Avoiding serious restrictions on bankers’ pay or their ability to speculate on financial markets makes it more attractive for them to do business on Wall Street rather than in the City of London, the world’s other major financial center.

In response to mass layoffs, the pro-capitalist labor officialdom has renewed its chauvinist protectionist appeals. They pushed for and got the “buy American” clause in Obama’s “rescue” package for industry last year. Such flag-waving serves only to subordinate workers to their red-white-and-blue exploiters while driving a wedge between native and foreign-born workers. In the current economic crisis, capitalist governments in the U.S. and elsewhere have ratcheted up attacks on immigrants which, if not fought, will only further divide the working class. It is crucial for the labor movement to organize immigrant workers. We demand: No deportations! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!

Along with liberal Democrats like New York Senator Charles Schumer, the union misleaders have been in the forefront of protectionism directed against China. In this vein, Trumka & Co. clamor against the Stalinist Communist Party regime for not revaluing its currency, the yuan (also called renminbi), upwards, claiming that its current value against the dollar undermines American exports and hence costs jobs at home.

Anti-China protectionism is directed

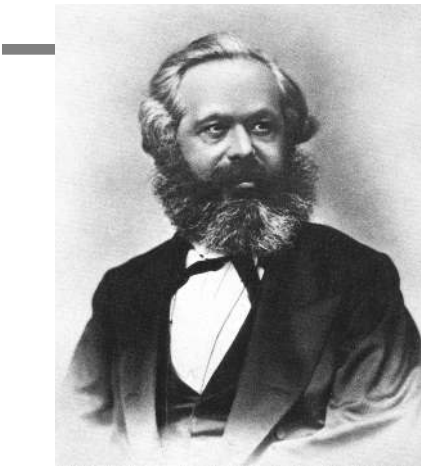


October 2008: Henry Paulson, Ben Bernanke and Timothy Geithner lay out economic recovery plan under Bush.

against the bureaucratically deformed workers state that issued out of the 1949 Chinese Revolution. That revolution was a historic achievement for China’s workers and peasants and for the workers of the world, smashing capitalist/landlord rule and ripping the world’s most populous country out of the hands of the imperialist powers. Despite the rule of a privileged, nationalist bureaucracy, China’s collectivized economy has brought enormous gains to generations of workers, peasants and women. While capitalist property has made huge inroads over the last three decades of “market reforms,” nationalized property remains the core of the economy. The U.S. and other imperialist powers seek nothing less than the restoration of capitalist rule in China. The treacherous AFL-CIO misleaders aid the imperialists by their promotion of “dissidents” like Han Dongfang, who seeks to channel Chinese workers’ struggles in the direction of support to capitalist counterrevolution.

It is vital for the international proletariat to stand for the unconditional military defense of China and the other remaining deformed workers states—Cuba, North Korea and Vietnam—against imperialist and domestic counterrevolution. It is the task of the proletariat of those countries to carry out a political revolution to sweep out their nationalist Stalinist misrulers, who preach accommodation with the world capitalist order, and establish regimes based on workers democracy and revolutionary internationalism.

There has recently been an explosion of strikes by Chinese workers in foreign-owned plants like Honda and Toyota (see article, page 16). While the U.S. labor tops



Progress

Karl Marx was right. In his seminal work, Marx demonstrated fundamental irrationality of capitalist system.

have been prostrate before the bosses’ attacks, the workers in the capitalist plants in China are winning gains the tried-and-true way—through class struggle! These strikes underline the need for international labor solidarity in opposition to the U.S. trade-union tops’ poisonous protectionist schemes, which divide workers along national lines.

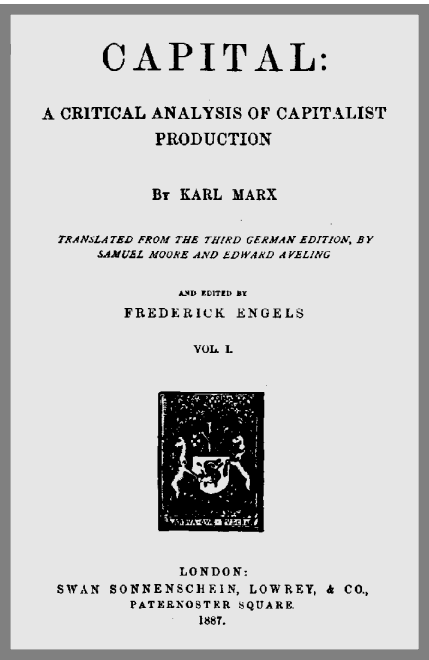
Tea Party Reactionaries

The labor bureaucracy dutifully threw an enormous amount of union resources—money and time—into getting Obama placed in office as U.S. capitalism’s CEO. Liberal-minded workers and intellectuals expected major reforms, from universal

health insurance coverage to tighter financial regulation. These expectations were reinforced by the severity of the economic crisis and the upsurge of popular hostility toward Wall Street. The reformist left—the International Socialist Organization, Workers World Party et al.—hailed Obama’s election as evidence that their program of pressuring the Democratic Party could fundamentally improve conditions for workers, blacks and immigrants. Combating such illusions, we described Obama as a “Wall Street Democrat” and wrote right after the elections: “Obama seeks to socialize the bourgeoisie’s losses on the backs of working people, while helping the exploiters appropriate the profits for themselves” (WV No. 925, 21 November 2008).

And this is precisely what has happened. With the labor movement largely prostrate, organized opposition to the Obama administration’s policies has come primarily from the far-right wing. Racist yahoos, bible-thumpers, militiamen, John Birch Society types and “birthers” (who challenge the fact that Obama was born in the U.S.)—along with a fringe of fascist white-supremacists—were mobilized by the Republican right and their media shock jocks into a loose “Tea Party” movement in opposition initially to the economic stimulus package and then the health care “reform.” But at bottom it was not about particular policy issues. This movement displays the anti-black racism, anti-immigrant nativism and sexual bigotry that have long been wielded by the American bourgeoisie to divide the working class and buttress social reaction.

On March 20, shortly before the Con-



gressional vote on Obama’s health care bill, Tea Party protesters outside the U.S. Capitol yelled the “N” word at civil rights veteran John Lewis and other black Congressmen and spat on another; they confronted openly gay Congressman Barney Frank with homophobic slurs. And no sooner had Tea Party candidate Rand Paul won Kentucky’s May 18 Republican Party Senate primary than he declared that he would have opposed forcing private businesses to desegregate under the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

While partly a response to the current economic downturn, today’s Tea Party movement has roots going back to the white racist backlash against the limited gains for blacks and women, crucially including abortion rights, that resulted from the civil rights movement and other social upheavals of the 1960s. That backlash eventually took the form of opposition to “big government”—identified with court-ordered racial integration in the public schools, giving jobs to blacks and women under affirmative action programs and handing out welfare money to poor black women and their children (a demagogic lie since relatively few government funds went to the poor, black or white). This boiled over into the “tax revolt” of the late 1970s—the so-called revenge of the suburbs—which propelled Ronald Reagan into the White House and began the ascendancy of the Republican right in national politics.

It’s the Capitalist System, Not Personal Greed

At the AFL-CIO’s April 29 Wall Street demonstration, Trumka sought to appeal to workers’ justifiable outrage by denouncing the bankers’ “spirit of greed.” In fact, blaming the global economic downturn on the unbridled greed of a small number of financiers serves to *divert* attention from the destructive irrationality of the profit-driven capitalist system as a whole.

As Karl Marx explained, what drives the capitalist system up and down is the rate of profit: the amount of surplus value

extracted from the exploitation of labor per unit of capital invested. The policies and actions of corporate management—whether of banks, industrial enterprises or retail chains—aim to maximize the return on equity—the ratio of profits to the market value of the firm’s stock.

The role of management is that of agents of the big capitalist shareholders in their corporations. If the return on equity of a given corporation declines or is substantially less than that of its main competitors, the price of its stock will fall. And woe unto management when that happens. *The Sellout* (2009), a book on the financial meltdown by financial journalist and TV commentator Charles Gasparino, is subtitled: *How Three Decades of Wall Street Greed and Government Mismanagement Destroyed the Global Financial System*. Gasparino peddles the notion that excessive greed helped cause the current crisis by leading investment bankers to take unsound risks. But Gasparino himself recounts that some CEOs of major investment banks, such as E. Stanley O’Neal at Merrill Lynch and John Mack at Morgan Stanley, were known for shying away from excessive risk before they took over the top job. They then became obsessed with increasing the bank’s return on equity. The only way they could do that given the economic environment at the time was to invest ever greater sums in mortgage-backed securities, including arcane derivatives, while amassing ever greater amounts of debt relative to the bank’s capital.

Some Wall Street executives recognized to some extent that they were in the midst of a speculative bubble but felt compelled to participate in it lest they lose out to the competition. As then-Citigroup CEO Charles Prince put it in mid 2007: “When the music stops, in terms of liquidity, things will be complicated. But as long as the music is playing, you’ve got to get up and dance. We’re still dancing.” And when the music did stop, the government bailed out Prince and his Wall Street cohorts.

“Socialism for the Rich”: Wall Street Bailout Revisited

A case study of how the government serves as the executive committee of the capitalist ruling class is offered by the massive bailout of the big banks and other major financial players. The story of that bailout was detailed in two books that came out last year, both written by well-informed financial journalists: David Wessel’s *In Fed We Trust: Ben Bernanke’s War on the Great Panic* and Andrew Ross Sorkin’s *Too Big To Fail: The Inside Story of How Wall Street and Washington Fought to Save the Financial System from Crisis—and Themselves*. Wessel is the economics editor of the *Wall Street Journal* and Sorkin is a mainstay of the business section of the *New York Times*.

Both books recount that the Bush administration collaborated closely with top Democratic as well as Republican

continued on page 13



Reuters

Madrid, June 8: Public sector workers protest government austerity plan. Banner reads: “No to the Cutbacks.”

Boron...

(continued from page 3)

bringing the strength of the ILWU to bear in defense of the Boron miners, the ILWU bureaucrats blocked the mobilization of union power. The bureaucrats set up one section of the union to undermine another. Local 20 members processed scab borax at Rio Tinto’s privately owned processing terminal on the docks in Wilmington, California. Local 13 longshoremen at Los Angeles-area docks, and perhaps other ILWU locals, shipped scab Boron products, although the longshoremen were not informed that containers of scab borax were moving through the port. This will indeed have “massive implications,” particularly for the ILWU.

Next in line for the Rio Tinto bosses are members of Local 20, whose contract is up next year. These workers continued to process scab borax throughout the Boron lockout, but this was not for want of solidarity. As we wrote in “ILWU: Don’t Handle Scab Borax!” (WVNo. 956, 9 April): “These ILWU members have been kept on the job by the union misleaders who bow in homage to the bosses’ laws banning hot-cargoing and other ‘illegal’ labor actions.”

If the ILWU tops were serious about struggle, they would have at least negotiated common contract expiration dates for Locals 20 and 30, which face the same employer. Instead, the contract settlement with Rio Tinto at Boron in 2004, which cut health benefits by 20 percent, set a pattern for the same cuts in the Local 20 contract two years later. Allowing the bosses to pick off the smaller ILWU locals sets the stage for the port employers of the Pacific Maritime Association (PMA) to go after the key longshore and clerks divisions when their contract comes up in 2014. That the ILWU’s largest local, L.A./Long Beach Local 13, shipped containers of scab borax throughout the lockout will not be lost on the PMA in assessing the fighting capacity of the ILWU.

The Real Lessons of the Boron Lockout

An article in the same issue of the *Dispatcher*, “Lessons of the Lockout,” points to the tens of thousands of dollars in food and money that was raised for the Boron workers from the ILWU and other unions. The “Docks to the Desert” food caravan, organized by integrated unions from the L.A. region in the early days of the lockout, overawed this tiny Mojave Desert mining town. But real solidarity is more than a charity drive. The workers’ power lies in their numbers, solidarity, and above all their ability to shut down production. While trucks of food rolled into town, Boron workers counted the trucks with containers of scab borax rolling out of the mine. These containers, reportedly in the thousands, went to L.A.-area ports. More scab product was shipped by rail to non-union docks on the Gulf of Mexico, particularly Houston, according to ILWU workers.

ILWU International organizing director Peter Olney told *Labor Notes* (4 June) that the reason Rio Tinto was “able to hang on is the inventory they built up before the lockout.” In other words, the company was only able to keep the miners locked out for over three months because the ILWU itself kept shipments of this stockpiled inventory moving! Olney himself points out that a central reason for Rio Tinto even coming back to the bargaining table was that production by the outfit of scabs the company had hired was at a mere 35 percent—i.e., inventory was running out. But as a May 14 leaflet put out by left-talking ILWU bureaucrat Jack Heyman and others reported, the ILWU tops blocked Boron miners and other union members who wanted to set up pickets at the L.A. dock to stop these shipments.

A motion authored by Heyman calling on transport workers to refuse to handle scab cargo from Boron was passed in the union’s Bay Area Local 10. A similar motion was passed in the Portland local.



Getty

Left: ILWU members picket Rio Tinto borax mine at onset of Boron lockout, February 2. Right: Scab borax was processed at ILWU-organized Rio Tinto plant in Wilmington, CA.



WV Photo

Yet when this motion was put forward by a Portland delegate at an early April meeting of the Coast Caucus of the ILWU’s longshore division, the assembled bureaucrats resoundingly voted it down. Instead, a standing ovation was reportedly given to the ILWU leadership for its “public relations” strategy, which was based on portraying the Boron miners as helpless victims of a “British-owned” company. This line was carried out in American flag-waving protests against Rio Tinto at British consulates around the world and at a Rio Tinto shareholders meeting.

In the early days of the lockout, workers from South Africa, Turkey and Australia who themselves have engaged in

of the capitalist media, corporate shareholders and bourgeois politicians.

For a Class-Struggle Leadership!

Heyman presents the current International leadership as trampling on the union’s “militant history of organizing mass pickets on the docks” (see Heyman’s “Bad Strategy in the Boron Strike,” *Socialist Worker*, 27 May). The union’s founder and longtime leader, Harry Bridges, is often invoked as the exemplar of this tradition. However, it was none other than Bridges himself, as ILWU International president, who stabbed the Boron miners in the back during their 1974 strike, at the



Dispatcher

October 2009: Workers at International Maritime Conference in New Zealand express support for Boron miners in lead-up to lockout.

struggle against Rio Tinto’s rapacious union-busting sent delegates to Boron to show their solidarity. But the potential for real international working-class solidarity was undermined by the red-white-and-blue patriotism promoted by the ILWU misleaders. Instead of appealing to transport workers internationally to refuse to handle scab borax, the bureaucrats portrayed the fight against Rio Tinto not as a fight of the working class against its capitalist class enemies but as a defense of America against a “foreign-owned company.” Such chauvinism is nothing more than an alibi for America’s imperialist rulers, who are second to none in subjugating the workers and oppressed in the U.S. and internationally to their drive for profit and world domination—from the murderous occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq to the racist cop terror meted out to blacks and immigrants at home.

The ILWU tops promote their “relationships with politicians who are willing to stand up for working families” (*Dispatcher*, April/May 2010). This encapsulates a fundamental lesson of the Boron lockout: the role that the labor bureaucracy plays in subordinating the interests of the workers to the interests of U.S. capitalism, particularly as represented by the Democratic Party. So strong are the bureaucrats’ ties to the capitalist order that they renounce the class-struggle means through which the unions were built in favor of “corporate campaigns” based on winning the “hearts and minds”

cost of 400 jobs. As the “Longshore-Warehouse Militant,” published by a class-struggle opposition in the ILWU which was supported by *Workers Vanguard*, stated following this defeat:

“At Boron the International allowed a militant local to be defeated by company scabberding. The International allowed things to degenerate so far that Local 20A [now Local 20] went back to work processing scab Boron products while Boron Local 30 was still striking. The International then refused to authorize the longshore division to stop scab borax shipments. Boron was a landmark defeat for our union and *Fortune* magazine, December 1974, has written the strike up as a management manual for future strikebreaking.”

For all of Heyman’s talk about the need for labor action by the ILWU and transport workers internationally to defend the Boron miners this time around, he never challenged the policies of the bureaucracy that undermined such action head-on. Instead of fighting the ILWU International’s grotesque patriotism, which is counterposed to international labor solidarity, in an April 15 leaflet he merely declared that “flag-waving will not win this battle.” Similarly, in the May 14 leaflet Heyman described the bureaucrats’ “corporate campaign” simply as a “failed strategy.” But this strategy was born of the bureaucracy’s pro-capitalist worldview, which must be fought if the unions are to actually struggle against their exploiters. Instead, the likes of Heyman provide a more “militant” gloss for the class-collaborationist policies of the ILWU bureaucracy of which he is an integral part.

The defense of the livelihoods of the workers against powerful corporations like Rio Tinto is no easy task, particularly in the midst of an economic crisis with millions of jobless. Any real fight is going to come up against the full arsenal of the ruling class, from anti-strike propaganda to naked repression by the courts and cops. To revive the fighting strength of the unions and to bring the mass of unorganized workers into their ranks will take a hard fight against the capitalist class enemy. In the course of this fight must emerge a new labor leadership based on a program of class struggle.

There are real lessons to be drawn from the Boron lockout. First among these is that if the working class is to struggle in its own interests it must be mobilized independent of all the political parties, state and other agencies of the capitalist class enemy. Equally important is the understanding that the workers’ fight is international, based on active solidarity with their class brothers and sisters around the world against the increasing depredations of capitalist imperialism. This needs a political expression: the forging of an internationalist multiracial workers party, whose purpose is to link the struggles to improve the present conditions of the workers and oppressed with the revolutionary aim of sweeping away the entire system of capitalist wage slavery in which their exploitation and oppression are rooted. ■

WORKERS VANGUARD

Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League

- ☐ \$10/22 issues of *Workers Vanguard* (includes English-language *Spartacist* and *Black History and the Class Struggle*)
international rates: \$25/22 issues—Airmail \$10/22 issues—Seamail
- ☐ \$2/6 introductory issues of *Workers Vanguard* (includes English-language *Spartacist*)
- ☐ \$2/4 issues of *Espartaco* (en español) (includes Spanish-language *Spartacist*)
- ☐ I would like to contribute \$ _____ to the production of *Workers Vanguard*.

Name _____

Address _____

_____ Apt. # _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (____) _____ E-mail _____

961

Make checks payable/mail to: Spartacist Publishing Co., Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116

Italy: Unions Must Defend and Organize Immigrant Workers!

We print below an article translated from Spartaco No. 72 (March 2010), newspaper of the Lega Trotskista d'Italia, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist). The term *caporali* refers to people operating the caporalato, a mob-run system of exploiting immigrant labor in conditions of virtual slavery. The 'ndrangheta is a powerful crime syndicate based in southern Italy.

SPARTACO 

In early January, the town of Rosarno, located in one of the main agricultural areas of Calabria, was the scene of a bloody manhunt against dozens of farm workers of African origin. Racist gangs, armed and instigated by the *caporali*, wounded the immigrant workers with clubs and gunshots. The racist violence exploded after several hundred farm workers, fed up with the violence of the local landowners' *caporali* and the 'ndrangheta mobsters' hired hit men, courageously protested in the town streets, overturning cars and garbage cans and clashing with cops in riot gear. Approximately 2,000 immigrants later demonstrated in front of city hall with placards reading "We Are People, Not Animals" and "Italians Are Racists."

While the government takes the lead in inciting lynching, with Maroni, the Northern League [a racist, far-right party] Minister of the Interior, going so far as to denounce "excessive tolerance toward foreigners" while the newspaper of the family of [Prime Minister Silvio] Berlusconi (*Il Giornale*) encouraged lynching with the headline, "Shoot the Mafia Instead of the N-----s"). Meanwhile, the police intervened to stamp out the workers' protests, leaving the bosses' armed thugs to carry on without interference for almost two days. The racist terror against the immigrant farm workers ended in a variant of "ethnic cleansing," entirely to the benefit of the bloodsucking capitalists.

As soon as the orange harvest was finished and the bosses no longer needed labor, the police "evacuated" some 100,000 workers, locking them up in hundreds of Centers for Identification and Expulsion (CIE). From there, the workers were deported. Those with residence permits were dispersed to various cities, without a job or a roof over their heads. Many of them also lost the miserable wages they had spilled their blood and sweat for, under the heel of the *caporali*. (Calling on



Above: Immigrants in southern Italian town of Rosarno protest living conditions and racist attacks, January 8. Below: Immigrant workers from Rosarno being rounded up and sent to deportation centers.



the cops to arrest and deport undocumented immigrant workers is a timeworn practice in the fields of southern Italy.) We demand: **Free all the arrested immigrants now! No deportations! Shut down the Centers for Identification and Expulsion now!** We fight for **full citizenship rights for all those who live in this country**—an elementary democratic demand for complete equality for all, not merely the right to a residence permit and a vote in local elections, which is the most that the reformist left is willing to concede.

The Unions Must Defend Immigrants

In the face of mass racist violence such as occurred in Rosarno, it is essential to

mobilize the social power of the unions. The workers movement must not permit one of its most isolated and vulnerable sections to face racist gang violence by themselves. The unions must confront the racist violence of Rosarno by organizing protest actions and strikes. They should have sent dozens of busloads of workers to put an end to the racist riots. Workers' self-defense guards, made up of immigrants and Italians, would have been indicated.

Even if this may be difficult in the present reactionary political climate, it is necessary to learn from the traditions of solidarity and class struggle that built the unions in this country. After the police massacre of Calabrese farm workers in Melissa in October 1949, there were protest strikes in all the major plants in the North, and workers from the OM truck factory in Brescia and from Turin drove back the police attacks. In 1972, the CGIL [General Confederation of Italian Workers] organized special trains to bring more than 40,000 workers to Reggio Calabria, where they braved eight dynamite attacks and held an impressive demonstration against the fascist-led riots in which a number of leftist militants had been killed.

By contrast, in Rosarno the union bureaucrats acted as auxiliaries of the police repression. The secretary of the Calabria CGIL wrote an open letter to Maroni and public institutions demanding a police intervention, allegedly to protect the immigrants, and "a guarantee that a sufficient number of police will be maintained in Rosarno and the surrounding area to ensure adequate control of the town" and to "designate 'welcome centers' where immigrants who are living in

Rosarno in intolerable conditions that 'destroy human dignity' would be brought together." In this situation, the intervention of the repressive apparatus of the state necessarily augments racist oppression and mass deportations to the CIE's horrendous ethnic jails!

The pro-capitalist bureaucrats currently running the unions do not base themselves on the perspective of class struggle, but collaborate with the bosses to enable them to compete with their foreign rivals, hoping to obtain in return a few crumbs from their profits. Thus in Rosarno, CGIL secretary Epifani called for an improvement in the farm workers' conditions "through a commitment by the employers' associations and all national and local institutions, with an appropriate plan to provide the labor the agricultural industry needs and an obligation to normalize labor relations and respect national wage contracts." To make an appeal to the "employers' associations" and the capitalist "institutions," in other words to the class of bloodsuckers who live off the workers' labor, to improve conditions for immigrant farm workers serves only to deceive the workers and send the capitalists a clear signal that the union tops are willing to collaborate to fulfill "the need for manpower."

For their part, the reformist left's only perspective is to give capitalism a more human face. Thus the editor in chief of *Liberazione*, Dino Greco, lamented the absence of state forces in Rosarno, demanding "that the state ally with the migrants to promote a policy of integration and shared citizenship." The capitalist state was only too present in Rosarno as a repressive force against the agricultural workers. The police, the courts and the army are the core of the capitalist state, which is an instrument for the defense of private property and the power of the ruling capitalist class. Every strike, every important struggle inevitably confronts this armed force of the ruling class. One need only recall how the police attacked the Innse workers [strikers at a metallurgical plant] last summer or, more recently, attacked immigrant workers at the Fiege and GLS plants in Lombardy and FMA-Fiat workers in Pratola Serra.

On the basis of racist laws passed during the past few decades by right-wing governments and by the Unione and the Olive Tree and Rifondazione Comunista coalition governments, the cops and courts persecute, imprison or deport hundreds of immigrants every day, accompanied by beatings and abuse. **No illusions in the capitalist courts! Cops out of the unions!** As the Russian revolutionary V. I. Lenin wrote:

"The basic rule, the first commandment, of any trade union movement is not to rely on the 'state' but to rely only on the **strength of one's own class**. The state is an organization of the ruling class. Don't rely on promises. Rely only on the strength of the unity and political consciousness of your class!"

—"The Need for an Agricultural Laborers' Union in Russia," June 1917

Unlike Lenin, the Partito Comunista dei Lavoratori (PCL—Communist Workers Party) wants to use the organized working class not to overthrow the bourgeois state but to aid the work of the police. In Milan, after the killing of an Egyptian immigrant in a brawl, the police laid siege—colonial style—to the multi-ethnic district of Viale Padova, with armored police vans on every corner. Salvini of the Northern League demanded that the immigrants be mopped up with



January 10: Authorities bulldoze immigrant encampments outside Rosarno.

“checkpoints and expulsions, house by house, floor by floor.” The only response from the PCL was that vigilante squads should be organized against “crime”:

“We call for a cleanup too. But not the cleanup by police and right-wing squads against the migrants that Salvini (Northern League) would like. Instead, organized action of mixed groups of Italian and migrant workers against criminality in neighborhoods of any color. Against dealers in hard drugs, Italian or ‘foreign.’ But also against the criminality of the property owners...against the criminality of the oh-so-Italian moneylenders who act as loan sharks against small neighborhood shopkeepers, especially immigrants; against the criminality of the underworld, Italian and ‘foreign,’ which extorts protection money from neighborhood businesses. And finally, of course, against the provocations and aggression of bands of racists or communal gangs, which harm both migrant and Italian workers.”

—*pclavoratori.it*, 17 February

In practice, the PCL offers their own services to the ruling class to impose bourgeois “legality” in the immigrant districts. We oppose organizations of this type, which would be nothing but auxiliaries to the racist police and would encourage the hysteria of the “patrols” even more. The PCL also tails the “war on drugs,” the battle cry of all the reactionary forces targeting immigrants and the left. Communists fight for the decriminalization of the use and sale of *all* narcotic substances.

For Unionization of All Immigrant Workers!

The explosion in Rosarno threw a spotlight on the conditions of more than 50,000 immigrant agricultural workers who move according to the needs of the harvest, forming the backbone of entire agricultural sectors, in the South and in the North. The inhuman conditions in

trial sectors of this country. Indeed, they can be found all over the world, everywhere the bourgeoisie imports vulnerable, low-cost labor and succeeds in dividing the proletariat along ethnic and national lines, as has been seen in the repeated revolts of immigrants and the racist violence in Andalusia, Spain. The brutal exploitation that immigrant farm workers endure is a poisonous fruit of the capitalist profit system: a system in which the bosses of a whole branch of industry (from the *caporali* to the lords of agribusiness, the food industry, information technology, marketing, finance) divide up the profits derived from the workers’ labor and constantly try to raise the rate of exploitation to compete on the market.

The *caporalato* system and super-exploitation are certainly not limited to agriculture. Recently the transport workers’ section of the CUB trade-union federation denounced the fact that there are thousands of immigrant workers at Milan’s Malpensa airport working under *caporalato* conditions—and this is but one example. It is essential that the unions launch a campaign to unionize *all immigrant workers and all non-unionized workers in general*. These workers represent the weakest and most vulnerable sector of the proletariat. It is necessary to fight so that all workers, Italian and immigrant, legal and “clandestine,” under contract or working “off the books,” are guaranteed *equal pay for equal work* and union protection based on the best contractual conditions.

In *caporalato* country as well as on building sites and in warehouses throughout Lombardy, just as in the “cooperatives” of Emilia Romagna, this will require a hard struggle of *class against class* with strikes, flying pickets and solid



which they live were described by Fabrizio Gatti in *L'Espresso* (“I Was a Slave in Puglia,” 1 September 2006):

“To protect their business, the growers and landowners have cultivated a network of ruthless *caporali*: Italians, Arabs, Eastern Europeans. They house their farm workers in unsafe hovels, where not even stray dogs will sleep anymore. Without water, light or toilets. They make them work from six in the morning until ten at night. And they are paid—if they are paid at all—15 or 20 euros a day. Anyone who protests gets hit with an iron bar to shut them up. Someone went for help to the police station at Foggia. And then discovered the law that [right-wing politicians] Umberto Bossi and Gianfranco Fini wanted: he was arrested and deported because his work permit was not in order. Others ran away. The *caporali* searched for them all night long. Just like the man-hunt recounted by Alan Parker in the film *Mississippi Burning*. In the end someone was caught. Someone else was killed.”

These conditions are not caused by the fact that the South is under the control of Mafia organizations, or that there is a particularly racist right-wing government at the helm of the capitalist state, as the reformist left would like you to believe. Conditions like this exist in entire indus-

trial sectors of this country. Indeed, they can be found all over the world, everywhere the bourgeoisie imports vulnerable, low-cost labor and succeeds in dividing the proletariat along ethnic and national lines, as has been seen in the repeated revolts of immigrants and the racist violence in Andalusia, Spain. The brutal exploitation that immigrant farm workers endure is a poisonous fruit of the capitalist profit system: a system in which the bosses of a whole branch of industry (from the *caporali* to the lords of agribusiness, the food industry, information technology, marketing, finance) divide up the profits derived from the workers’ labor and constantly try to raise the rate of exploitation to compete on the market.

As the investigation by *L'Espresso* (1 September 2006) noted, one of the areas where exploitation and racist oppression are the most brutal is “a lawless triangle which covers almost the entire province of Foggia. From Cerignola to Candela and above, further to the north, as far as San Severo. And in Nichi Vendola’s progressive region.” [Nichi Vendola is a former Rifondazione Comunista leader, now head of Sinistra Ecologia Libertà (Left Ecology Freedom).] In reality, the fact that the person running the Puglia plantation in the capacity of “governor” is the leader of Sinistra Ecologia Libertà hasn’t changed the wage slavery of immigrant agricultural workers one iota. It has only served to chain the workers to the bosses, reinforcing illusions in the possibility of capitalism “with a human face.”

Bourgeois ideologues, particularly those



Above: Immigrants in Milano being sent in armored buses to Centers for Identification and Expulsion prison hellholes. Top: CIE facility in Rome.

like journalist Roberto Saviano in the “fight the Mafia” chorus, which is so much in vogue on the reformist left, try to blame the power of the local Mafia for the brutal exploitation of immigrant farm workers. They keep themselves busy appealing to the repressive institutions of the capitalist state (police, courts) to intervene to impose “legality.” But Mafia, *camorra* crime syndicates or *’ndrangheta* are particular components of the capitalist class, originating under the stifling conditions of the belated capitalist development of southern Italy. Capitalists, wherever they are located, whether “honest” or “criminal,” live off the exploitation of workers’ labor. They don’t need the *’ndrangheta* to subject workers to brutal exploitation, as the cooperatives of the North or the sweatshops of America remind us. And the bosses don’t always need *caporalis* from the *’ndrangheta* to suppress those who revolt: when the police or private guards don’t show up, they have always found a reservoir of anti-working-class forces when their profits and property are at risk.

The capitalist state, which wants to keep the monopoly of organized violence in order to maintain the bourgeois status quo, does not really like the existence of armed bands that escape its control. But in decisive moments of the class struggle, the Mafia was a tool for the bourgeoisie in the bloody repression of land occupations in Sicily after World War II, and thus became an integral part of Italian capitalist rule. Among the services the Mafia “offers” to businessmen who accept its “protection” in exchange for a cut is certainly the guarantee that it will stifle any attempt whatsoever to organize unions. In 1989, Jerry Maslo, a South African

immigrant fleeing apartheid, was murdered by the *camorra* for trying to unionize immigrant farm workers in Campania.

The conflict between the Mafia and the state (insofar as they oppose each other) reflects a conflict within the bourgeoisie for distribution of the profits derived from the exploitation of workers’ labor. The problem is not to replace “dishonest” exploiters with others who claim to be honest, but to get rid of the entire system of capitalist exploitation, expropriating the land and factories from the bosses and running them in a collectivized and centralized way under a government of workers power.

Class Struggle and the Oppression of Immigrants

The capitalist crisis of the past two years has brought poverty and devastation to the lives of millions of workers around the world. In Italy alone, in less than two years more than 600,000 people have lost their jobs, not to speak of the thousands who were working off the books, who are officially excluded from the statistics. The list of factories laying off workers or closing down is getting longer every day, and some hard struggles are being waged to prevent whole branches of industry from being dismantled. These are often the last proletarian concentrations in entire regions of the South, such as Fiat in Termini Imerese or Alcoa in Portovesme. Six out of the 12 European regions with the highest rate of youth unemployment (greater than 30 percent) are in southern Italy.

In the face of this carnage, what is needed is a massive mobilization of the working class, with strikes that go beyond

continued on page 10



Agricultural laborers in Calabria.

Italy...

(continued from page 9)

the plants in crisis and demand the distribution of all work among everyone able to work, with no reduction in wages. With the workers facing this crisis and the burden of poverty and layoffs, the capitalists seek to further divide them along ethnic and national lines to prevent them from fighting together against the real cause of their suffering, the capitalist profit system. But there are no trade-union solutions to the cyclical crises of capitalism. In the face of mass unemployment, two tendencies develop among workers. One is the reactionary, losing one of competing with each other to sell the only property they have—their labor power. This is the road, often supported by the reformist left, of nationalist protectionism, which calls for defending “Italian jobs” at the expense of workers in other countries, or racism against immigrants accused of “stealing jobs from Italians.” This road leads to lining the workers up with their compatriot exploiters, undermining the solidarity of the working class and worsening conditions for all.

The other road is that of uniting in class struggle against the capitalist bosses, based not on what’s possible from the standpoint of profits for the industrialists and their banks, but on what is *indispensable* for the proletariat: a job and a decent wage for all, new homes, new streets, new factories, free quality education and health care. If capitalism is not capable of guaranteeing what the masses of workers need, then it must be overthrown by a proletarian revolution and replaced with a planned economy on an international scale. But to be able to take this second road, the working class needs a revolutionary party, based on the internationalist program of Leninism and Trotskyism. *The interests of workers and immigrants go forward together or they will be defeated separately.*

The special oppression of the immigrant population—or those of immigrant origin, given the growing presence of a generation of youth born in Italy, whom the bourgeoisie refuses to consider Italians and would like to ghettoize from kindergarten onwards—goes well beyond economic exploitation.

Immigrant workers employed in small and tiny businesses, often working without a contract or union protection, have paid a very high price for the crisis and were the first to be thrown onto the streets. Since the racist Bossi-Fini law links a residence permit to a work contract and a minimum income, poverty and unemployment for immigrants also means the risk of arrest and deportation. Racist discrimination is encountered in every corner of society, with mayors and governors competing to ban phone centers, mosques and kebab cafés. In Milan, the city council and the ATM public transport company are jointly organizing dragnets on buses, during which immigrants’ documents are taken away and



Getty

February 2009: Fiat auto workers from Pomigliano d’Arco plant near Naples face off against cops during protest.

they are locked in vans with barred windows and taken to the CIE. In the province of Brescia, the Northern League administration launched operation “White Christmas” to cleanse the area of “illegal” immigrants before Christmas.

On top of this is the pervasive legal violence of the state, symbolized by the ethnic CIE prison hellholes, as well as police violence and abuse. Encouraged by the continuing racist campaigns and laws, carried out by the current Berlusconi government and by the previous governments of Unione and Rifondazione, extralegal violence is also on the rise, carried out by gangs of fascist thugs who target immigrants, Roma [Gypsies] and homosexuals.

We support and in fact emphatically demand that the unions organize militant actions and strikes *by the whole working class* in defense of immigrant rights and against every manifestation of racist oppression. Strikes of this kind would be powerful actions whose value would be anything but symbolic.

Under the umbrella of the “First of March Association” (and using the sham “political neutrality” of the color yellow, historically the color of the Vatican and scabs), a coalition of bit players from the Democratic Party (PD), the ARCI [a cultural and recreational organization linked to the PD] and the Catholic church proclaimed a “day without immigrants”—a horrible name that could also please the Northern League. The organizers’ aim was “a large nonviolent demonstration to broaden public opinion by showing how indispensable immigration is for our society and how defending rights is key to upholding democracy” (*primomartzo2010.it*, 10 January).

The message the organizers of the First of March Association want to send to capitalist public opinion is this: our (capitalist) economy needs immigrant manpower, and if you want to keep exploiting it to your advantage without provoking social explosions, you have to make some

concessions. The bourgeoisie is divided over what immigration policy to adopt. On one side are the racist ideologues who call for segregation, roundups and deportations. On the other there is a political spectrum ranging from the reformist left (Rifondazione & Co.) to the Democratic Party and all the way over to the Catholic church. Aware that whole sectors of industry depend on the availability of cheap immigrant labor, they are open to a limited extension of immigrant rights and they want to keep racist excesses in check. For example, they are open to a more rational system for residence permits or giving “legal” immigrants a vote in local elections.

It was not to the working class but to this sector of the bourgeoisie that the Democratic Party and Rifondazione, and those that tail them, oriented with their “day without immigrants,” exploiting as usual the fairy tale of anti-racism in the final days of campaigning for the regional elections at the end of March. Proof of this is the fact that Livia Turco was among the first and most prominent supporters of the First of March Association. Turco was the author of the racist laws that created the Centers of Temporary Residence [CPT, precursor of the CIE] and approved tens of thousands of deportations.

The political practices and program put forward by the organizers of the “day without immigrants” are antithetical to the idea of a class-struggle mobilization in defense of immigrants and are bound to perpetuate the oppression of immigrants. Nevertheless, the burning need for a social mobilization in defense of their rights drew a lot of support from a large sector of immigrants who perceive that they have some weight and growing social power and are tired of being victims of one-sided racist attacks.

Instead of giving an organized class expression of immigrant workers’ anger and willingness to struggle, the union bureaucracy was against calling a strike, even if only to provide union cover to the “day without immigrants.” Exceptions were the CUB health workers and a few “rank-and-file” local unions in companies where the majority of workers are immigrants. Petro Soldini, the CGIL leader responsible for immigrants, refused to call a strike, arguing that this could “boomerang.” Instead he proposed “a consumer strike and logos people could wear to an event organized on a Saturday when most people are already not working” (*L’Espresso*, 21 January).

Without a serious mobilization of the unions, a “strike of immigrants” could only be a show of weakness and a confused mess because many immigrant workers would feel they had to work in any event, and those with enough class consciousness to strike would risk losing their jobs. And even if it had the support of the unions, a strike limited to immigrant workers would be nothing but a mirror image of a racist mentality like that of the Northern League, according to which “Italian” workers would never mobilize in defense

of immigrants, and the only people willing to do so would be immigrants themselves plus some philanthropists in the editorial offices of newspapers and in the parishes. We communists base ourselves on the principle of working-class unity in the unions: *one out, all out!*

Bitter Fruits of Class Collaboration

For the unions to be able to fight effectively in the interests of immigrants and the poor, they need a class-struggle leadership forged in political struggle against the current sellouts at the head of the main union organizations. If they don’t support the government directly, the current leaders are often linked to the Democratic Party or to Rifondazione Comunista, as is the case with leaders of the FIOM metalworkers union and many “rank-and-file” unions. This struggle in turn requires building a revolutionary party forged in opposition to the class-collaborationist politics shared by the various reformist left organizations.

Today the Democratic Party and Rifondazione Comunista shed crocodile tears over the suffering of immigrants. But when Prodi’s Olive Tree coalition—a capitalist popular-front government, i.e., a coalition of parties of the bourgeoisie supported by reformist workers parties like Rifondazione Comunista—was in government in 1997, it was they themselves who approved racist laws such as the notorious Turco-Napolitano law that introduced the Centers of Temporary Residence. When they returned to gov-



La Sicilia

Leftist workers leader Accursio Miraglia, one of many killed by Mafia in collusion with Italian bourgeoisie in post-World War II period.

ernment in 2006, Unione and Rifondazione did nothing to abolish the racist Bossi-Fini law linking the residence permit to a work contract. Quite the contrary. On 31 October 2007, one of the last actions of the Prodi government was to pass a law (with the direct vote of Ferrero, secretary of Rifondazione and a government minister) which established numerous racist policies against Roma and Romanians, including deportations and razing of their encampments. This law made the Bossi-Fini law even worse and paved the way for the Berlusconi government’s subsequent security package that in 2009 introduced the crime of “clandestinity”!

The “alternative policy” on immigration put forward by the Democratic Party and Rifondazione rejects the racist “excesses” of the Northern League and its friends, but its fundamental aim is to guarantee that a spigot of vulnerable, low-cost immigrant labor remains firmly in the hands of the capitalist state and is used to satisfy the needs of the Italian capitalists. In fact, after the aggression in Rosarno, the PD accused the government of not having “put the brakes on illegal immigration at all, and of having no serious government policy with regard to the fluctuation of migrants, which should correspond to the needs of the labor market and companies as well as the capacity to receive them” (*partitodemocratico.it*, 8 January).

The Democratic Party is a capitalist party which offers itself as a rational and efficient force for managing the interests of the Italian bourgeoisie, and

ICL Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program

The Declaration of Principles of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) is a concrete expression of our purpose: to build national sections of a democratic-centralist international which can lead the struggle for worldwide socialist revolution.

Chinese	\$1	Japanese	\$2
English	\$2	Polish	\$1
French	\$2	Portuguese	\$1
German	\$2	Russian	\$1
Greek	\$1	Spanish	\$1.50
Indonesian	\$1	Tagalog	\$1
Italian	\$1	Turkish	\$1

Make checks payable/mail to:
Spartacist Publishing Co.
Box 1377 GPO
New York, NY 10116

SPARTACIST

NUMBER 54 ENGLISH EDITION SPRING 1998

For New October Revolutions!

Third International Conference of the ICL
SEE PAGE 2

Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program
International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist)
SEE PAGE 9

SPARTACO

APRILE 1998 Edizione di supplimento L. 1000

Lega Trotskista d'Italia - Lega comunista internazionale (quartinternazionalista)

Dichiarazione di principi e alcuni elementi di programma
Lega comunista internazionale (quartinternazionalista)

which, especially when in opposition, dresses up as the “friend” of workers and immigrants. Rifondazione Comunista, a party with a working-class base and a bourgeois program, is groping around in a permanent crisis after being discredited by its participation in the anti-worker Prodi government and marginalized by the Democratic Party. In spite of the slaps in the face it has received, Rifondazione continues to beg for electoral alliances with the Democratic Party. [RC] secretary Ferrero went so far as to propose to put Pierferdinando Casini, ex-minister in the Berlusconi government, at the head of a new electoral coalition against Berlusconi, christened by Ferrero: “Committee of National Liberation” (*La Repubblica*, 21 December 2009). We of the Lega Trotskista d’Italia have always ***opposed voting in any way*** for Rifondazione and Unione (or today Rifondazione and the PD) coalitions in capitalist popular fronts, which tie the workers to their exploiters. These coalitions are based on the lie that workers can run capitalism alongside a supposedly progressive wing of the bourgeoisie; in the name of the coalition, the workers are forced to accept the interests of their exploiters.

The various decomposition products of Rifondazione—Partito Comunista dei Lavoratori, Sinistra Critica and Partito di Alternativa Comunista (PDAC)—share these politics. Even if at the moment they do not want to be compromised directly by electoral blocs with Rifondazione, they supported this party for 15 years, voting for the coalitions Rifondazione was part of; their political horizon is to “get rid of Berlusconi,” the lowest common denominator of today’s parliamentary cretinism.

The head of the PCL, Marco Ferrando, displayed his enthusiasm for the desperate revolt in Rosarno, but his conclusion is as always the request for “an immediate united mobilization of the entire political left and the unions to side with the revolt against state repression” (*pclavoratori.it*, 8 January), i.e., a mobilization of those very forces that contributed to creating the conditions for the current racist oppression when they were in government. On a more general political level, the PCL argues: “It is time, therefore, for the entire left everywhere to break with the PD and with the center-left to stand as an autonomous pole, as an alternative to the two existing poles, representing independent rights of the working world” (*pclavoratori.it*, 26 January). For more than ten years, the PCL (and its predecessors) have been calling for an “autonomous pole” of “the whole left.” At present, this seems to be limited to Rifondazione Comunista and Sinistra Ecologia Libertà, which in turn contains various scraps of Democratici di Sinistra [Left Democrats, the more right-wing component of the former Italian Communist Party, which had parted ways with Rifondazione] and bourgeois parties like the Greens.

This “autonomous pole” serves no purpose except to demonstrate the PCL’s willingness to be the last link in a syphilitic chain in which the PCL would hang on to the coattails of Rifondazione, which is glued to the trouser legs of Di Pietro [ex-public prosecutor, now leader of the bourgeois party Italia dei Valori], who swears loyalty to the Democratic Party. Over the last 15 years, Rifondazione, precursor of the current PCL (and of PDAC too), gave electoral support to the anti-worker and anti-immigrant coalitions of Unione and Rifondazione.

In its statement on Rosarno, the PCL rightly demands “the abolition of all the anti-immigrant legislation of the last 12 years.” They forget to say where they were during those 12 years: inside Rifondazione, where they remained peacefully, even when all the RC parliamentarians voted en bloc for the Turco-Napolitano law.

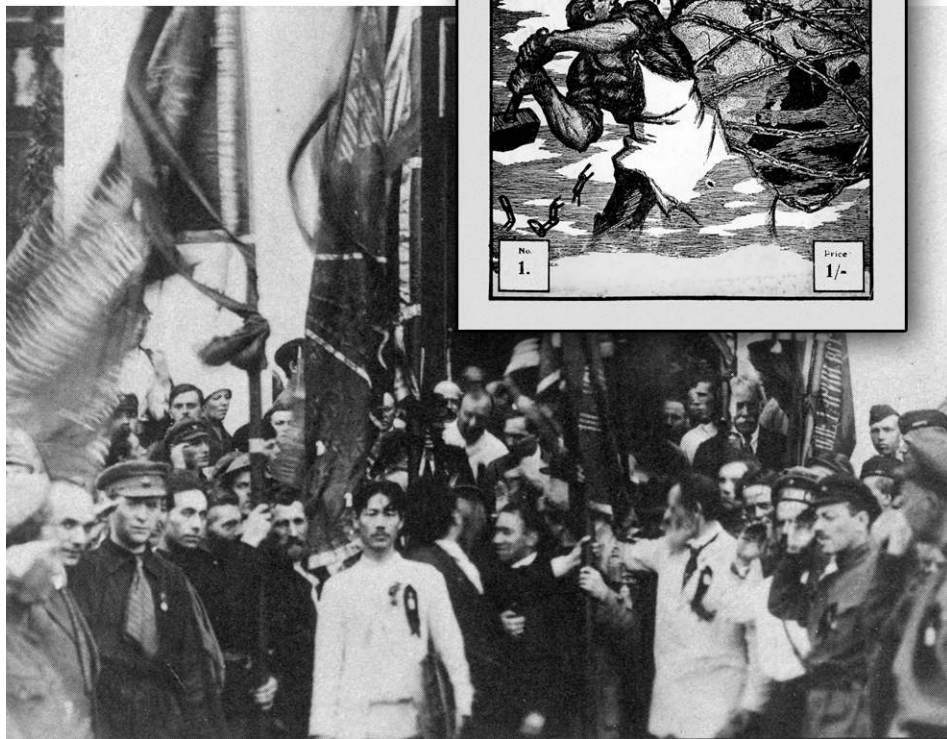
Workers of the World Unite!

Since Italy was transformed from a country of emigration into a country of immigration at the beginning of the 1990s, the oppression of immigrants has become

one of the key aspects of capitalist rule in this country. Today more than 4.5 million immigrants live in Italy (7.2 percent of the population), relegated to the lowest rungs of the proletariat, doing the hardest and worst-paid jobs under conditions of extreme vulnerability. These workers, deprived of rights, can be exploited by the capitalists to the limits of their physical tolerance. They are hired and fired simply according to seasonal or temporary demand.

At the same time, the social power of immigrant workers, who represent a

Petrograd, July 1920: Delegates leave opening session of Second Congress of Communist International. Inset: First issue of journal of Comintern, founded in 1919.



International Institute for Social History

growing and significant component of the working class in whole industrial sectors, from the building trades to the metal industry, has increased. This is demonstrated by the one million immigrant workers who have joined the unions, almost all of them only in the last ten years. The fact that in the course of a few years, hundreds of thousands of immigrant workers have joined unions and taken part in hard class battles is evidence of their consciousness and combativity. In the last two years, it has often been immigrant workers in the cooperatives (at Bennett in Origgio, at Fiege and at GLS in southern Milan, to mention but a few cases in Lombardy), who have played a leading role in hard strikes that succeeded in spiking the bosses' arrogance.

The struggle for full citizenship rights for all immigrants and to eliminate racist oppression is indissolubly linked to the struggle to bring down the system of capitalist exploitation. As we wrote in the “Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program” of the International Communist League (*Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 54, Spring 1998):

"Modern capitalism, i.e., imperialism, reaching into all areas of the planet, in the course of the class struggle and as economic need demands, brings into the proletariat at its bottom new sources of cheaper labor, principally immigrants from poorer and less-developed regions of the world—workers with few rights who are deemed more disposable in times of economic contraction. Thus capitalism in ongoing fashion creates different strata among the workers, while simultaneously amalgamating the workers of many different lands. Everywhere, the capitalists, abetted by aristocracy-of-labor opportunists, try to poison class consciousness and solidarity among the workers by fomenting religious, national and ethnic divisions. The struggle for the unity and integrity of the working class against chauvinism and racism is thus a vital task for the proletarian vanguard."

Our aim in defending immigrants is to win workers to the consciousness that they must oppose the whole capitalist system. We do not seek to patch up the system by putting forward an alternative policy on

immigration. We fight against every form of oppression and discrimination and to wrest improvements, however minimal, from the capitalists and their state. But only when the working class and its revolutionary leadership have seized political power from the ruling class and taken control of the economy away from them can we be concerned with the ebbs and flows of the workforce. We take no responsibility for the bourgeoisie's immigration policy today. We have no advice to give them. We try to organize the proletariat to destroy this system and establish proletarian rule.

tarian power. Our ideal, as explained by Lenin in *What Is To Be Done?* (1902):

“should not be the trade-union secretary, but *the tribune of the people*, who is able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression, no matter where it appears, no matter what stratum or class of the people it affects; who is able to generalise all these manifestations and produce a single picture of police violence and capitalist exploitation; who is able to take advantage of every event, however small, in order to set forth *before* all his socialist convictions and his democratic demands, in order to clarify for *all* and everyone the world-historic significance of the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat.”

Our model remains that of the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. The rule of the capitalists and landowners was replaced by that of the working class, which waved the banner of world socialist revolution. In spite of Stalinist degeneration, which in the end threw open the doors to capitalist counterrevolution in 1991-92, the Soviet Union demonstrated the capacity of a collectivized, planned economy to provide work, education, health care and decent conditions of life for all. We carry forward the battle for the emancipating

principles of the Bolshevik Revolution. And as far as universal and not merely formal equality for workers is concerned, this is what the Constitution of 1918, on which the Soviet workers state was based, said:

"Article 20. Proceeding from the principle of solidarity of the working people of all nations, the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic grants full political rights of Russian citizens to foreigners residing in the territory of the Russian Republic for purposes of employment, and belonging to the working class or to the peasantry not employing the labour of others: and it empowers the local Soviets to grant to such foreigners, without any cumbersome formalities, Russian citizenship rights."

—quoted in *First Decrees of Soviet Power*, Lawrence & Wishart (London) 1970

The ever-more multiethnic working class in Italy has the social power to liberate itself and all the oppressed in a socialist revolution. The immigrants are not only victims, but increasingly an integral part of the proletariat. Just as the workers who migrated from southern Italy played a key role in the pre-revolutionary struggles which shook capitalist power in the Italian “hot autumn” of 1969, so too are immigrant workers destined to play a fundamental role when class struggle heats up in this country. In addition, immigrant workers represent a human bridge to the oppressed masses of the semicolonial countries from which they come, posing the question of the struggle for proletarian revolution internationally. As Lenin wrote in a 1913 article titled “Capitalism and Workers’ Immigration”:

"There can be no doubt that dire poverty alone compels people to abandon their native land, and that the capitalists exploit the immigrant workers in the most shameful manner. But only reactionaries can shut their eyes to the *progressive* significance of this modern migration of nations. Emancipation from the yoke of capital is impossible without the further development of capitalism, and without the class struggle that is based on it. And it is into this struggle that capitalism is drawing the masses of the working people of the *whole* world, breaking down the musty, fusty habits of local life, breaking down national barriers and prejudices, uniting workers from all countries in huge factories and mines in America, Germany, and so forth."

In order for class unity to prevail, it is necessary to construct a revolutionary vanguard party on the model of the Bolshevik Party that Lenin and Trotsky built in the Russian tsarist empire, a party which fights for socialist revolution and for a planned, collectivized economy. A party that fights to win the working class to the struggle against all forms of oppression, a party that knows how to generalize every battle into the consciousness of the need to overthrow the bourgeoisie. Only proletarian revolution, which establishes the power of workers' councils, expropriating the means of production (factories, land, means of transport) and constructing a planned economy on an international scale aimed at meeting the needs of the masses of millions of people and not of a handful of exploiters, can create the social wealth and equality to eliminate wars, crises and racist discrimination. This is the aim of the Lega Trotskista d'Italia and all the sections of the International Communist League. ■

SPARTACO

MARZO 2010 No. 72 € 1,00

Lega trotskista d'Italia - Lega comunista internazionale (quartinternazionale)

**La guerra contro gli immigrati è una guerra
contro tutti i lavoratori**

Movimento operaio e lotta contro l'oppressione razzista

A sinistra: Immigrati in fuga dalla violenza razzista di Roma. A destra: Le piazze cariche di operai dell'Alcoa di Portovenere.

*Migliaia di giovani in ottobre e febbraio di questo anno, i comizi di partito hanno contribuito al...

SPARTACO

No. 71 € 1,00

Abbasso le cariche esecutive dello Stato capitalistico!

Principi marxisti e tattiche elettorali

Le cause materiali della crisi capitalistica sono le contraddizioni insuperabili tra le forze di produzione e le relazioni di produzione, che si manifestano in crisi economiche, rivoluzioni sociali, guerre imperialiste, ecc.

La prima pagina del numero 71 di Spartaco è dedicata ai principi marxisti e alle tattiche elettorali.

V. Lenin parla al Secondo congresso dell'Internazionale comunista, 1920, in cui si discute la tattica elettorale. Sotto: il movimento 1967, in cui si discute la posizione marxista sullo Stato e uno dei documenti fondatori dell'Internazionale.

No. 72, March 2010

\$1 (36 pages)

No. 71, April 2009

\$1 (40 pages)

Publication of the Lega Trotskista d'Italia

Subscription: \$7 for 4 issues

Make checks payable/mail to:

Spartacist Publishing Co., Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116

Gulf Disaster...

(continued from page 1)

whether explosive gas was getting into the system as it was being cemented, and began removing mud that protected the well before it was sealed with cement plugs.”

As the *New York Times* (21 June) documented in depth, to save money BP directed Transocean to remove a layer of redundancy from the blowout preventer and replace one of its secondary rams with a “test ram” that would reduce the time it took to conduct certain well tests. That preventer was supposedly the last line of defense, “but the line did not hold.”

On April 2, Obama declared that oil rigs “don’t cause spills.” Eighteen days later, the Deepwater Horizon went up in flames. Since the spill, Obama has worked overtime to protect BP, even as he prattled on about looking for “whose ass to kick.”

In fact, the Obama administration stands out for its special relationship with BP, which donated more to his 2008 election campaign than to the McCain-Palin ticket. The administration purveyed ludicrously low estimates of the oil spilled and intimidated government scientists who pointed to higher numbers. Obama’s vaunted \$20 billion escrow fund to be paid by BP over the next four years is a drop in the bucket compared to the actual cost of the devastation. More to the point, the fund is designed to help *protect* BP from potentially losing hundreds of billions in lawsuits.

The Minerals Management Service—now renamed the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation, and Enforcement—supposedly regulates the oil industry for the Department of the Interior. The MMS provides a literal definition to being in bed with one’s adversary (as in sex and cocaine parties for executives). Two months after Obama took office, the agency dutifully approved BP’s application for its Deepwater Horizon well, a work of fiction that promised, among other things, to protect such animals as walruses, sea otters and sea lions. Needless to say, such cold-water mammals do not exist in the semitropical Gulf.

White House residents change, but not the role of the government and its agencies. The *Rolling Stone* exposé quoted a representative of Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility, which represents federal whistle blowers: “Employees describe being in Interior—not just MMS, but the other agencies—as the third Bush term.”

BP—with its track record of workers

maimed and killed through cost-cutting and ruthless speedup and its CEO Tony Hayward, a study in capitalist swineman-ship—is easy to hate. A 2005 explosion at a BP refinery in Texas killed 15 workers and injured 170, while in November 2009 a pipeline at Prudhoe Bay, Alaska, ruptured. But BP is no exception to the functioning of this industry—whether the owners are American, British or anything else. In the eyes of the capitalist cut-throats, fatalities in the dangerous extractive industries are just so much collateral damage. On April 2, less than three weeks before the Deepwater Horizon disaster, five workers were killed in an explosion at Tesoro’s oil refinery plant in Anacortes, Washington. Three days later, 29 miners died in an explosion at the Upper Big Branch coal mine in Raleigh County, West Virginia.



May 3: Convict labor from Elayn Hunt Correctional Center in Louisiana being drilled for Gulf Coast cleanup.

The destruction wrought by oil and mining companies spans the globe. A big difference between the explosion in the Gulf of Mexico and other disasters is that this one hit right off the U.S. coastline. In Nigeria’s Niger River delta, some 1.5 million tons of oil—50 times the pollution unleashed by the Exxon Valdez disaster—has been spilled over the last half century. Oil companies in the region, including U.S.-owned Chevron and ExxonMobil, are protected by government and private troops who not only wage war against rebels but also mete out repression against residents seeking redress for the oil giants’ ravages. A *New York Times* (16 June) article reported: “The oil pours out nearly every week, and some swamps are long

since lifeless. Perhaps no place on earth has been as battered by oil, experts say, leaving residents here astonished at the nonstop attention paid to the gusher half a world away in the Gulf of Mexico.” The article quoted a Nigerian official who said, “Whatever cry we cry is not heard outside of here.”

Industrial murder and environmental devastation are endemic to the workings of the capitalist system. Only when the working class rips industry from the hands of the capitalists and establishes a planned socialist economy on a world scale will the enormous resources of the planet be put to use for all of humanity. When the workers rule, technology and productive resources will be expanded to overcome scarcity and provide a decent life for all. The fight for a socialist future requires forging revolutionary workers

(USW). Today, a June 15 AFL-CIO posting on the Gulf disaster admits, “offshore exploration, production and service industry in the Gulf of Mexico, to the best of our knowledge, is 100 percent nonunion.” This is a striking indictment of the pro-capitalist trade-union bureaucracy, which has overseen a massive decline in union membership throughout industry over the last several decades. The union tops’ class collaboration is exemplified by their loyalty to the Democratic Party and their reliance on the state agencies of the class enemy. Instead of initiating a drive to organize non-union oil workers in the wake of the Gulf Coast disaster, the USW bureaucracy begged for greater government oversight—i.e., leave the lives of workers in the hands of the bosses’ political representatives.

There must be a fight for a new labor leadership, one based on a program of class struggle and political independence from the capitalist political parties and state agencies. Crucial to this perspective is the struggle against the flag-waving of the labor tops, who preach the lie of a unity of interests between American workers and “their own” exploiters, poisoning the potential for international labor solidarity. Typical is the June 15 AFL-CIO statement, which complains that the oil industry is “increasingly foreign.”

American companies are second to none in injuring and killing workers. A list of refinery fires and fatalities for 2009 and 2010 in the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees newsletter (Spring 2010) includes a veritable who’s who in the oil industry, with such U.S. companies as ConocoPhillips, ExxonMobil, Shell (U.S. subsidiary of Royal Dutch Shell) and Chevron as well as BP and others. The newsletter detailed 40 deaths and injuries in the petroleum industry in April alone. Three workers were injured in a fire at ExxonMobil’s Baton Rouge, Louisiana, refinery on April 14. On April 19, the day before the BP rig exploded, a contractor died in a crane accident at a Motiva Enterprises refinery in Port Arthur, Texas. On April 29, two workers and a supervisor were injured in a fire at Valero Energy Corp.’s Memphis refinery.

It was, in fact, a U.S. company that perpetrated the world’s worst industrial catastrophe. In the early hours of 3 December 1984, Union Carbide’s pesticide plant in Bhopal, India, began to leak methyl isocyanate gas and other toxic chemicals. Nearly 600,000 people were exposed, resulting in the deaths of some 15,000 human beings. The U.S. has since ignored demands that Warren Anderson, the head of Union Carbide at the time, be extradited to India.

Expropriate Big Oil! For an International Planned Socialist Economy!

The devastation in the Gulf of Mexico, the Niger Delta and elsewhere is but a piece of the picture of plunder carried out by Big Oil, which has controlled the economic fate of entire nations. It was to save Anglo-Iranian, a prior incarnation of BP, that the CIA and British imperialists overthrew the nationalist regime of Mohammad Mossadeq in Iran in 1953 after he nationalized the company’s holding in that country. (The company’s name changed the year after.) In his classic 1916 work,

Mexico...

(continued from page 2)

and maintain capitalist exploitation. The bourgeois state (in essence, the army, police, courts and prisons) is an organ of systematic repression to maintain the rule of the capitalists. The power of the working class lies in its relationship to the means of production and its role in setting the gears of the economy in motion.

Over the last decade, workers in the miners union have given ample displays of their will to fight and have achieved important partial victories. However, these struggles have been ideologically framed within the nationalist populism of the bourgeois PRD. But the PRD is a party of capital—the class enemy—that represents the more nationalist wing of the bourgeoisie. The differences between the PRD, the PAN [ruling right-wing clericalist National Action Party] and the PRI [Institutional Revolutionary Party, which ran Mexico for decades] are reduced to *the manner* in which capitalist exploitation is administered: whereas the PAN considers it more appropriate to march hand in hand with the imperialists and rules ever more with the iron fist of repression in order to push forward its starvation measures, AMLO [PRD politician Andrés Manuel López Obrador] and the PRD seek to win the support of the

working class in order to renegotiate the terms of subordination to American imperialism while trying to stabilize this system of exploitation and oppression.

Regardless of the ideology of this or that section of the bourgeoisie, the interests of workers and bosses are fundamentally counterposed. There are only two real choices: the side of the workers or that of the capitalists who exploit them. The union bureaucracy, while obtaining its salaries and benefits from the unions, in the end supports the capitalist system and the politicians who front for it. As we wrote in March 2006 in the aftermath of the Pasta de Conchos tragedy and in defense of the miners union against the attacks of the bosses and their state [see “Protest Cop Killing of Steel Workers,” WV No. 869, 28 April 2006]:

“Class-struggle defense of the unions requires a fight for their complete and unconditional independence from the bourgeoisie and its state—the prerequisite to achieving trade-union democracy and to transforming the unions into organs of struggle for the interests of the great exploited masses. This means breaking with all illusions in the bosses’ parties—PRI, PRD, PAN. This means a fight to build a revolutionary workers party to smash the profit-driven, murderous system of capitalism and replace it with the rule of the working class through international socialist revolution. That is the purpose of the Grupo Espartaquista de México, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).”■

parties that will lead all the exploited and oppressed in proletarian revolution.

Labor: Organize the Oil Industry!

Across the U.S., an estimated 177 workers on average die *every day* from work-related causes. As we noted following the Upper Big Branch mine explosion, outfits like the Mine Safety and Health Administration “do not exist to protect workers. While occasionally giving the employers a slap on the wrist, they serve to breed faith in the agencies of the ruling class as a substitute for union struggle” (“Industrial Murder in West Virginia,” WV No. 957, 23 April).

The trade unions are the only effective safeguard working people have against the rapaciousness of the capitalist bosses. It is necessary to fight for *the union organization of the oil industry, for union safety committees able to shut down production at any point*. This is a question of life and death for oil and gas workers, who between 2002 and 2007 suffered a work fatality rate that was seven times the average for all occupations.

Organizing the oil extraction industry will be no easy task. The bosses, backed by the capitalist state, are hell-bent on keeping the industry union-free. Large numbers of oil workers used to be represented by the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers union, which in 2005 became part of the United Steelworkers union

Programmatic Statement of the Spartacist League/U.S.

Adopted in 1999 at the Tenth National Conference of the SL/U.S.

\$2 (40 pages)

Make checks payable/mail to:
Spartacist Publishing Co.
Box 1377 GPO
New York, NY 10116

Programmatic Statement of the Spartacist League/U.S.

For a Workers Party That Fights for a Workers Government!

For Socialist Revolution in the Bastion of World Imperialism!

SEE PAGE 2

Organizational Rules and Guidelines of the Spartacist League/U.S.

SEE PAGE 30

Opponents of the Revolutionary Internationalist Workers Movement

SEE PAGE 37

52 November 2000 Spartacist Publishing Co., Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116

Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism, Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin explained:

“Imperialism is the epoch of finance capital and of monopolies, which introduce everywhere the striving for domination, not for freedom. Whatever the political system the result of these tendencies is everywhere reaction and an extreme intensification of antagonisms in this field.”

In thrall to the “democratic” political system of American capitalist rule, the reformist left responded to the disaster in the Gulf with a new round of pleas to the Obama government. In a June 14 online statement, the Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL) credited the Obama White House for the \$20 billion escrow fund, calling this ploy “a dramatic shift in their policy towards BP” and claiming that this was the result of “mass grassroots organizing” like the PSL’s “Seize BP” campaign. Warning that this “does not mean the Obama administration is firmly against BP,” the PSL aims to stiffen the administration’s resolve through the pressure tactic of an “independent body” to control the fund “run by representatives of the fishers, shrimpers, crabbers, unions, small business people and workers in the tourism and recreation industry, local elected officials, clergy, as well as independent scientists and environmentalists.”

For its part, the International Socialist Organization (ISO) published a lengthy online piece titled “The Making of an Eco-Catastrophe” (25 June) that criticized Obama’s “concessions to the right” on oil drilling. The article concluded that the only way such concessions will stop “is if a grassroots movement puts more pressure” on Obama “from the left.” Echo-



Lohuizen/NOOR

Nigeria: Villagers survey damage caused by Shell Oil wellhead that has spilled toxic oil on farmland for years. Some 546 million gallons of oil have spilled into the Niger Delta over the last five decades.

ing petty-bourgeois environmentalists, the article demands “an immediate halt to all deep-water drilling” and a plan to “phase out offshore drilling altogether.” The ISO calls for Congress to pass “a comprehensive energy bill,” offering advice to the capitalist rulers on how they can rearrange tax policies in favor of “green” jobs and other liberal causes.

Through their insipid pleadings, the PSL, ISO et al. promote the illusion that bourgeois—i.e., Democratic—politicians

can be pressured to represent the interests of working people and the oppressed. These reformists see their role as tinkering with the machinery of the capitalist state. They appeal to the government that, as Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels explained in the *Communist Manifesto*, serves as “a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie.” All the reformist chatter about “pressure” and “people’s committees” is an obstacle to the necessary struggle for a

Economy...

(continued from page 6)

officials of the Federal Reserve and Democratic Congressional leaders. Whatever right/left ideological divide exists between the two parties had, in this instance, no import whatsoever. Given the Republicans’ vocal opposition these days to Obama’s tepid proposals for additional regulation of the financial system, one might think that the visceral hostility between Republicans and Democrats would have prevented a bipartisan policy in response to the financial crisis. Quite the contrary. When the vital interests of American finance capital were at stake, the two parties acted in unison.

The three men primarily responsible for the \$700 billion bailout fund called TARP (Troubled Asset Relief Program) and related measures were Treasury secretary Henry Paulson, Federal Reserve chairman Ben Bernanke and the president of the key New York branch of the Federal Reserve, Tim Geithner (now Obama’s Treasury secretary). Paulson was CEO of Goldman Sachs when in 2006 the Bush gang recruited him as their main economic point man. Paulson’s predecessor at both Goldman and the U.S. Treasury was Robert Rubin, a centrist Democrat who served as economic *consigliere* in the Clinton administration in the 1990s. Bernanke, known as a moderate Republican, was chosen in 2005 to replace right-wing ideologue Alan Greenspan as Fed chairman by a presidential committee headed by Dick Cheney, the Darth Vader of the Bush administration. Geithner, a centrist Democrat, was a protégé of Robert Rubin in Clinton’s Treasury. Paulson, Bernanke and Geithner worked closely together on behalf of their Wall Street masters without substantive political differences.

Bush and Cheney, for all their strident championing of “free market” capitalism, did not hesitate to invoke massive government intervention in the face of the financial collapse. To do so, they simply turned over policymaking during the crisis to Paulson and Bernanke. Likewise, Democratic Congressional leaders gave the two a green light to do what they wanted. In July 2008, Paulson told Barney Frank, a liberal Massachusetts Democrat who heads the House Financial Services Committee, that he and Bernanke were consid-

ering taking expansive and unprecedented measures in an effort to calm the increasingly troubled financial markets. Frank advised him “to ask for what you need” and promised to support him.

Defending the bailout today, Geithner and others point to the fact that almost all of the TARP money has been repaid. But the financial institutions were able to do so only because the Fed subsequently lent them some \$2 trillion, taking as collateral their more “toxic” assets. The government also guaranteed some **\$5.4 trillion** of the banks’ loans and those of other financial institutions (so-called “counterparties”) with which they do business.

Wessel, in particular, underscores that the Wall Street bailout violated the professed ideological principles not just of the Bush administration but of the American capitalist class in general. Indeed, American capitalists will support extensive government intervention in the economy when it serves their interests and is on terms they can dictate—for example, the nationalization of the American Insurance Group (then the largest insurance company in the world) and the bailouts of General Motors and Chrysler.

In this regard, Wessel quotes Gao Xiqing, the head of China’s sovereign wealth fund, who quipped: “Now our people are joking that we look at the U.S. and see ‘socialism with American characteristics.’” This is a play on “socialism with Chinese characteristics,” the term long used by the Beijing Stalinist regime to describe its own economic system, one that remains primarily based on state-owned enterprises and banks but has a large capitalist sector.

For Class Struggle to Fight Capitalist Austerity!

As happens in all economic downturns, workers’ apprehension over possible job losses has taken a toll on the already low level of labor struggle in the U.S. Last year saw the lowest level of strike activity of any year since World War II, by far. But as the experience of past economic crises also shows, that state of affairs will not last indefinitely.

It is necessary to forge a new leadership of the unions based on the understanding that there are two decisive classes in capitalist society, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, whose interests are irreconcilably opposed. Such a leadership, fighting for the unity of the multi-

racial proletariat in hard class struggle, would link those struggles to defense of the social interests of black people, Latinos and other oppressed minorities.

Today the question of revolutionary leadership is sharply posed in Europe, where there has been a wave of one-day general strikes against attempts by the capitalist governments to slash the wages of public-sector workers, gut pensions and jack up sales and other taxes. Greece has had a total of six one-day general strikes so far this year. On June 24, some two million demonstrated across France as the country was rocked for the second time in a month by strikes against a government plan to raise the retirement age. In Spain, hundreds of thousands of public-sector workers struck on June 8, while in Italy the six-million-strong CGIL union federation carried out a nationwide stoppage on June 25. However, the workers’ evident combativity runs up against the political program of the labor bureaucracies, all of which have a bankrupt strategy of seeking to reform the capitalist system of exploitation. What is needed is the forging of revolutionary parties that can lead the proletariat, at the head of all the oppressed, in sweeping away the capitalist order.

This road was outlined in the 1938 Transitional Program written by Leon Trotsky, co-leader with V.I. Lenin of the October Revolution in 1917. Titled *The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International*, the document, written in the midst of the Great Depression, put forward a series of demands that provide a bridge from workers’ current consciousness and daily struggles to the need for socialist revolution. Declaring “uncompromising war on the politics of the capitalists which, to a considerable degree, like the politics of their agents, the reformists, aims to place the whole burden of militarism, the crises, the disorganization of the monetary system and all other scourges stemming from capitalism’s death agony upon the backs of the toilers,” the document stated:

“Against unemployment, ‘structural’ as well as ‘conjunctural,’ the time is ripe to advance, along with the slogan of public works, the slogan of *a sliding scale of working hours*. Trade unions and other mass organizations should bind the workers and the unemployed together in the solidarity of mutual responsibility. On this basis all the work on hand would then be divided among all existing workers in accordance with how the extent of the working week is defined. The average

socialist revolution that expropriates Big Oil and all the means of production.

In the wake of the Gulf disaster, many liberals and environmentalists have renewed calls to slash oil production in favor of “renewable energy.” We wrote in “The World Oil Racket” (WV No. 535, 27 September 1991) that it is commonly assumed that the boards of directors of, say, Greenpeace, and of Exxon are fundamentally antagonistic to each other. Yet each in its own way propagates the false notion that consumption is outgrowing oil supplies. Ecology activists use this argument to push a utopian program of economic conservation and primitivism; the heirs of Rockefeller use it to justify extortionate prices and the imperialist rape of impoverished oil-producing countries.

The fact is that fossil fuels are necessary for any modern civilization. Criminal disregard for human life and ecological devastation stem from a social system in which production is based on profit rather than human need. As we stated in “The World Oil Racket”:

“The ecology activists are right in one important respect: the massive burning of hydrocarbons—whether oil or coal—is in the long term bad for the earth’s atmosphere. The answer, however, is not to save oil by cutting the living standards of North American and European working people. A planned socialist economy would carry out the scientific research required to develop safer, more efficient sources of energy (including nuclear and solar energy). But there is one absolutely necessary *precondition* for an energy-efficient future. The heirs of Rockefeller and sheiks of Araby must be swept into the dustbin of history.”■

wage of every worker remains the same as it was under the old working week.”

As Trotsky laid out, the fight for employment and decent living conditions for all must point to one final conclusion: the seizure of power by the proletariat and the expropriation of the capitalist class.

The struggle for a shorter workweek under capitalism also points to a fundamental goal of communism: a radical reduction in the labor time necessary to produce the means of consumption. The setting up of an internationally planned, socialist economy will lay the basis for a qualitative development of the world’s productive forces for the benefit of all. In a future communist society, everyone (not just a privileged elite) will have the free time and material and cultural resources to fully develop their creative capacities. In his work the *Grundrisse* (also known as the *Economic Manuscripts of 1857-58*), a precursor to *Capital*, Marx noted how such a development of the individual will, in turn, provide for a still greater development of human productivity:

“The saving of labour time is equivalent to the increase of free time, i.e. time for the full development of the individual, which itself, as the greatest productive force, in turn reacts upon the productive power of labour...”

“Free time—which is both leisure and time for higher activity—has naturally transformed its possessor into another subject; and it is then as this other subject that he enters into the immediate production process.”

[TO BE CONTINUED]

Spartacus Youth Club Class Series

NEW YORK CITY

The Workers State and Proletarian Democracy
Wednesday, July 14, 3 p.m.

Trotsky’s Fight Against Stalinism

Wednesday, July 28, 3 p.m.

299 Broadway, Suite 318

(Take 1, 2, 3 to Chambers St.; 4, 5, 6 to Brooklyn Bridge-City Hall; R, W to City Hall.)

Information and readings:
(212) 267-1025 • nysl@tiac.net

Visit the ICL Web Site:
www.icl-fi.org

China...
(continued from page 16)

despite the present sellout labor leadership, so they must defend China against capitalist counterrevolution despite the Stalinist bureaucracy's repressive rule and its many accommodations to capitalism.

In offering up low-wage migrant workers for exploitation by foreign corporations, the CCP bureaucracy effectively acts as a labor contractor for the imperialists and offshore Chinese capitalists. The bureaucracy itself now includes substantial elements with family or other ties to capitalist entrepreneurs, and several years ago the rubber-stamp National People's Congress enacted a law strengthening private property rights. Nonetheless, the CCP bureaucratic caste still rests on the material base of the collectivized economy, from which its power and privileges are derived.

The Chinese working class must sweep away the parasitic Stalinist bureaucracy, which has gravely weakened the system of nationalized property internally while conciliating imperialism at the international level. A proletarian political revolution is needed to defend and extend the gains of the workers state and place power directly in the hands of elected workers and peasants councils. This could inspire proletarian socialist revolution throughout capitalist Asia, including in the indus-

trietic, while authorities in many provinces and major cities have felt compelled to substantially raise the minimum wage. The bureaucratic CCP regime defends the gains embodied in the Chinese deformed workers state only to the extent that it fears the working class.

Unusually, the CCP rulers initially allowed extensive domestic media coverage of the strikes, especially those at Japanese-owned factories. This was accompanied by an equally unusual candor about China's increasing social inequalities. Citing a leader of the All China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU), China Daily (13 May) reported that the portion of the country's gross domestic product going to workers' wages fell from 57 percent to 37 percent from 1983 to 2005. An editorial in Global Times (2 June), a China Daily spin-off, stated:

"Admittedly, in the three decades of opening-up, ordinary workers are among those who have received the smallest share of economic prosperity.... The temporary stoppage of production lines in the four Honda plants, at a time of increasing market demand for Japanese-brand cars, highlights the necessity of organized labor protection in Chinese factories."

Doubtless concerned by the spread of the strikes, the bureaucracy has since sharply curtailed such media coverage.

Most of the strike leaders appear to be young migrant workers, notably including women workers. They have shown impressive militancy and organizational



High-speed railway in Wuhan, December 2009. Collectivized core of China's economy has spurred economic growth and development while capitalist world has been mired in crisis.

31, causing several injuries. The next day the same ACFTU bureaucrats issued a public apology, while trying to play down their role in the assault.

Among the demands raised by the Foshan strikers was "a reorganization of the local trade union; re-elections should be held for union chairman and other representatives." Strikers in Zhongshan held a protest march on June 11 that similarly demanded the right to choose their own union leaders. While the Stalinist rulers removed the right to strike from China's constitution in 1982, various reforms to labor laws in 2008 have made it easier for workers to organize to defend their interests. Many strikers have made clear to reporters that they believe they have the right to take strike action, citing the legal reforms.

An open letter issued on behalf of the Foshan strikers' negotiating committee by Li Xiaojuan, a young woman worker, declared:

"We must maintain a high degree of unity and not let the representatives of Capital divide us.... This factory's profits are the fruits of our bitter toil.... This struggle is not just about the interests of our 1,800 workers. We also care about the rights and interests of all Chinese workers."

—quoted in Financial Times (London), 10 June

Chinese workers need a class-struggle leadership to advance their struggle to wrest as much as possible from the capitalist companies that are exploiting them, fight the ravages of inflation and improve their working and living conditions. Workers in state-owned industry also need such a leadership to protect and advance their living standards and to fight against bureaucratic abuse. Integral to the fight to replace the parasitic CCP regime with the rule of workers and peasants councils is building trade unions free from bureaucratic control. Even in a workers state ruled by genuine workers democracy,

unions are necessary to protect against possible encroachments and abuses, and to help plan production and work methods. Addressing the question of trade unions in the early Soviet workers state, V.I. Lenin insisted that communists should fight for leadership of the unions based on their program and practice on behalf of the workers state. They must be selected by the workers and not appointed by the state.

The fight for unions free of bureaucratic control must take as its starting point defense of the social gains of the 1949 Revolution against imperialism and capitalist restoration. This is especially important given the maneuvers of pro-capitalist forces like the Hong Kong-based China Labour Bulletin (CLB), which promotes Western-style "democracy," i.e., the rule of the capitalist exploiters with a parliamentary facade. Formerly a partisan of so-called "independent unions," the CLB now calls to work inside the ACFTU in order to break it from CCP control. While masquerading as a workers organization, the CLB is a counterrevolutionary group with direct ties to U.S. imperialism. Its leader, Han Dongfang, is also vice-chair of the World Movement for Democracy, an outfit founded and run by the National Endowment for Democracy, a notorious CIA front.

In covering the Chinese strikes, the Western bourgeois media raise the spectre of Polish Solidarność, the anti-Communist "trade union" that spearheaded the drive for capitalist counterrevolution in East Europe and the Soviet Union in the 1980s. The media's line, stated or otherwise, is that Chinese workers must strike out against the Communist Party regime and embrace the "free market." For its part, the CCP regime also raises the spectre of Solidarność, falsely claiming that any organized opposition to its rule must be pro-capitalist and counterrevolutionary. An article by Willy Lam, a professor at the Chinese University of Hong Kong,



August 2001: Workers protest layoffs and official plundering at factory in Beijing. Banner reads: "Where Has 150 Million Yuan of State Property Gone?"

trial powerhouse of Japan, and elsewhere. The emergence of a China ruled by workers and peasants councils would also help spur the workers of Taiwan to overthrow their capitalist ruling class, leading to the revolutionary reunification of China.

The Chinese Tinderbox

Faced with growing discontent at the base of society, Hu Jintao's CCP regime has been slowing down some "free market" measures in the name of building a "harmonious society." The CCP bureaucrats have increased their "pro-worker"

skills, including the use of the internet and text messaging to rally the workers and follow developments elsewhere. Significantly, workers in Foshan and at another Honda plant in Zhongshan decided to elect their own strike leaders and negotiating committees independent of the ACFTU, the official union federation tied to the ruling CCP. In a number of cases, ACFTU bureaucrats have openly colluded with management to try and force a return to work. Thugs organized by the union bureaucracy physically attacked Foshan Honda strikers on May

SPARTACIST LEAGUE/U.S. Local Directory and Public Offices
Web site: www.icl-fi.org • E-mail address: vanguard@tiac.net
National Office: Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116, (212) 732-7860
Chicago Box 6441, Main PO, Chicago, IL 60680, (312) 563-0441
Los Angeles..... Box 29574, Los Feliz Sta., Los Angeles, CA 90029, (213) 380-8239
New York Box 3381, Church St. Sta., New York, NY 10008, (212) 267-1025
Oakland Box 29497, Oakland, CA 94604, (510) 839-0851
Trotskyist League of Canada/Ligue Trotskyiste du Canada
Toronto Box 7198, Station A, Toronto, ON M5W 1X8, (416) 593-4138
Vancouver Box 2717, Main P.O., Vancouver, BC V6B 3X2, (604) 687-0353

WORKERS VANGUARD



Reuters



Lindquist/NY Times

Left: Striking Honda workers in Foshan confront thugs (wearing caps) from official ACFTU union federation, May 31. Right: Workers demonstrate outside Honda factory in Zhongshan, June 11.

Militant Strike Wave in China

For Class-Struggle Leadership!

Defend the Chinese Bureaucratically Deformed Workers State!

For Proletarian Political Revolution!

The wave of strikes for higher wages and better working conditions that has swept through China in recent weeks must be supported by class-conscious workers around the world. The strikes began on May 17 at a Honda transmission plant in Foshan in the southern province of Guangdong, which workers shut down for nearly three weeks. With the flow of parts from the factory choked off, production was halted at all the company's assembly plants in China.

After the Foshan workers won wage increases of about 30 percent, strikes spread to other factories in the booming Guangdong industrial area and beyond. Most have been at plants owned by foreign corporations, notably the Japanese auto companies. Workers have also struck several Taiwanese-owned factories, including a rubber products plant near Shanghai where around 50 were injured in clashes with police, as well as facilities owned by mainland Chinese capitalists.

The foreign and domestic capitalists operating in China have amassed huge profits by exploiting a workforce largely composed of migrant workers from the countryside. Many workers are forced to work 60 to 70 hours a week at wages barely above subsistence levels. The conditions they face were made vivid in the widely reported wave of suicides at Foxconn's massive electronics facility in Shenzhen, also in Guangdong. At least ten workers have killed themselves this year at this Taiwanese-owned factory complex, where more than 300,000 workers toil long hours under harsh discipline assembling computers and phones for Apple, Dell, Sony and other major American and Japanese corporations. At the same time, the enormous concentration of workers at Foxconn points to the immense potential power of the Chinese working class.

With its vast economic development over the last several decades, China now has by far the largest industrial working class in the world. Thus the struggles waged by workers there are of major significance. As a result of the 1949 Revolution, capitalism was overthrown in China and a collectivized economy was established. Although deformed from its inception by the rule of the Stalinist Chinese Communist Party (CCP) bureaucracy, the revolutionary overturn was a huge victory for working people everywhere. Despite the capitalist inroads created by the CCP regime's "market reforms," China's core economy is still based on nationalized property (see "China's 'Market Reforms'—A Trotskyist Analysis," WV Nos. 874 and 875, 4 August and 1 September 2006).

In contrast to the major capitalist countries, which have been mired in deep

recessions with tens of millions of job cuts, China's economy has continued to expand over the last two years, even though the export-oriented sector of its economy was buffeted somewhat by the global downturn. It was the ability to marshal resources in the core collectivized sector that prevented China from being dragged into the kind of deep economic crisis that is intrinsic to the capitalist system of production for profit. China's economy is now again growing rapidly, producing significant labor shortages. State investment in cities in China's interior has absorbed much of the labor that had been migrating to the factories of the eastern coastal areas.

The big imperialist powers—the U.S., Japan, Germany et al.—remain determined to restore capitalist rule and fully open up China to capitalist exploitation. Just as workers in capitalist countries must defend their unions against the bosses

continued on page 14

As Obama Ramps Up Attacks on Civil Liberties

Supreme Court Decision Shreds First Amendment Rights

On June 21, the U.S. Supreme Court shredder took another big chunk out of the Bill of Rights. In a 6-3 decision, the high court of U.S. capitalism upheld the prohibition on "material support to terrorism" in a case brought by the Humanitarian Law Project (HLP), civil rights activist Ralph Fertig and other groups and individuals. The plaintiffs had wanted to advise the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and Kurdistan Workers

Party (PKK) on how to appeal to the United Nations in regard to their struggles against the genocidal wars waged by the U.S.-supported Sri Lankan and Turkish governments against the oppressed Kurdish and Tamil national minorities. They also sought to engage in political advocacy on behalf of Tamils and Kurds and train LTTE members in appealing for tsunami-related relief. In Orwellian "War is peace" fashion, the Court deemed such

activity "material support to terrorism."

There should be no misunderstanding of the danger the Court decision represents for any who seek to engage in political dissent, social protest or advocacy of the rights of the oppressed anywhere. By the Court's light, any activity that is considered as giving legitimacy to "terrorists"—from giving money to Muslim charities to interviewing a guerrilla fighter for the press—would be deemed "material sup-

port." Engaging in such standard liberal fare as appealing to the imperialists' UN could have gotten the plaintiffs 15 years in prison.

The Supreme Court decision caps a case brought by the HLP 12 years ago. Seeking to avoid prosecution and imprisonment, the HLP had sought a court declaration that their projected activities would not run afoul of the Clinton

continued on page 15