

International Trotskyist

(New Series) Vol. 1, Issue 3 • Summer 2011
Journal of Humanist Workers for Revolutionary Socialism • \$3.00



**THE "ARAB SPRING":
MARXIST ANALYSIS AND PROGRAM**
Imperialism: Hands Off Libya
Revolutions in North Africa and the Middle East

INTERNATIONAL NEWS AND ANALYSIS
Cuba for Sale
Europe Rising: Draft Action Program
Theses on the World Situation
Launch of RWG in Zimbabwe

CLASS STRUGGLE IN THE US
After Wisconsin, Which Road Forward?
Fighting Back Against Attacks on Public Workers
Budget Cut Response: Taxation or Direct Mass Action?

AGAINST REPRESSION
Free Bradley Manning and Defend Wikileaks
For Bay Area Wide Strike Action to Arrest Killer Cops

Where We Stand

Humanist Workers for Revolutionary Socialism (HWRS) is a revolutionary communist organization. We stand for revolutionary socialism because we base our program and policies on the dialectical materialist method, on the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky, on the documents of the first four congresses of the Third (Communist) International, and on the Transitional Program of the Fourth International. We term ourselves “humanists” because we also believe that in order for a socialist revolution to succeed, workers must transform ourselves and our psyches, transcending and overcoming the alienation we suffer under capitalism, at the same time that we attempt to transform our society.

We believe that capitalism is an anarchic and crisis-ridden economic system based on production for profit. We are for the expropriation of the capitalist class and the abolition of capitalism. We are for its replacement by socialist production planned to satisfy human needs. Only the socialist revolution and the smashing of the capitalist state can achieve this goal. Only the working class, led by a revolutionary vanguard party and organized into workers’ councils and workers’ militias, can lead such a revolution to victory and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat and workers’ democracy. We also believe that only a socialist revolution and a planned economy can make the changes in our production and use of energy that are essential to prevent, or at least mitigate, catastrophic climate change and other environmental degradation.

There is no peaceful, parliamentary road to socialism. Neither the Democratic Party nor any section of it is a genuine friend of labor. It is a bourgeois party through and through. It is never permissible to give the Democratic Party electoral support, even critically, no matter how left they strive to appear. The misnamed Communist Parties that existed during the Cold War era were really Stalinist parties, reformist in program and practice. Their origin was the bureaucracy that ruled after 1927 in the USSR. Their strategy of alliance with the bourgeoisie (the popular front) inflicted terrible defeats on the working class worldwide. The restoration of capitalism by the Stalinist bureaucracy was a logical conclusion of the Stalinist strategy.

Capitalism has been restored in the Soviet Union and most other countries that were workers’ states. In the few remaining workers’ states, Stalinist bureaucracies rule over the working class. Capitalism has ceased to exist but the workers do not hold political power. To open the road to socialism, a political revolution to smash a party, revolutionaries must argue for it to adopt a Trotskyist transitional program, although we will work in any genuinely independent working class party that develops.

Within the trade unions, we fight for the rank and file to oust the reformist and pro-Democratic Party bureaucrats, and to democratize the unions and win them to a revolutionary action program based on a system of transitional demands which serve as a bridge between today’s struggles and the socialist revolution. Central to this is the fight for workers’ control of production. In order to fulfill these goals, we will fight for a rank-and-file movement based on the principle of breaking with the Democrats and building a labor party. We are for the unions running independent labor candidates against the Democratic Party as a part of this strategy. We are for the building of fighting organizations of the working class: factory committees, industrial unions, councils of action, and workers’ councils.

We fight against the oppression that capitalist society inflicts on people because of their race, age, gender, national origin, or sexual orientation. We fight racism, sexism, homophobia, xenophobia, and fascism. We are for the liberation of women by connecting working class women’s issues and struggles to workers’ struggles, not through an autonomous “all-class” feminist movement. We are for the liberation of all of the oppressed, and believe that only socialist revolution can bring about real, lasting liberation, by freeing all humans from the alienation and stress imposed on us by capitalism. We oppose all immigration controls. We call upon the workers to give no quarter to racists and fascists, and to drive them out of our unions and communities. No platform for fascism!

(Continued on page 4)

International Trotskyist

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Where We Stand	2
Editorial.....	5

The “Arab Spring”: Marxist Analysis and Program

End NATO-US Intervention!.....	7
The Revolution Has Begun.....	11
Imperialism: Hands Off Libya!.....	13
Revolutions in North Africa and the Middle East	15

International News and Analysis

Cuba for Sale	21
Europe Rising: A Draft Action Program	25
Launch of the Revolutionary Workers Group of Zimbabwe	29
Draft Theses on the World Situation	30

Class Struggle in the US

After Wisconsin, Which Road Forward?	35
It’s Time for the Working Class to Fight Back!	39
Make the Banks, the Finance Houses and the Corporate Elite Pay!	41
Attacks on Public Workers: How to Fight Back	43
Corporate Taxation or Direct Mass Action?.....	47

Against Repression

Free Bradley Manning and Defend Wikileaks!	50
For Bay Area Wide Strike Action to Arrest Killer Cops.....	52

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(Where We Stand, continued from page 2)

We support the struggles of oppressed nations against imperialism. We unconditionally support the struggles of liberation movements in Latin America and elsewhere who fight the US and its agents. However, our support is critical and we politically oppose the nationalists (bourgeois and petty-bourgeois) who often lead the struggles of the oppressed nations. To their strategy we counterpose the method of dialectical materialism and the strategy of permanent revolution. That is, we believe the anti-imperialist struggle must be led by the working class with a program of socialist revolution and internationalism. In conflicts between imperialist countries and semi-colonial countries, we are for the defeat of “our own” army and the victory of countries oppressed and exploited by imperialism. We fight against imperialist war, not with pacifist pleas, but with militant class struggle methods including forcibly disarming “our own” bosses.

HWRS disdains the centrism, opportunism, and sectarianism of the degenerate fragments of the Fourth International. We strive to overcome, within ourselves and in our dealings with others, the alienated psychology that often results in substituting egocentric competitiveness for objective discussion and debate among the left and progressive movements. We combine the struggle for a re-elaborated transitional program, adapted to the circumstances of the 21st century, with active involvement in the struggles of the working class, fighting for revolutionary leadership.

**If you are a class conscious fighter against capitalism ...
if you are an internationalist ...
if you are a humanist ...
JOIN US!**

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EDITORIAL: AS WE GO TO PRESS . . .

During the winter and spring of this year, working people around the world were riveted by the scenes of courageous mass struggle emerging in North Africa and across the Arab world. As we go to press in mid-July, the working class in Syria appears to hold the key for working class liberation around the world. With the self organization of the working class in Hama, the struggle in Syria has gone even further than in Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, and Greece. In fact, what we are seeing in Hama and other places across Syria is the formation of incipient armed soviets. That is, the workers are in control of the streets and are creating their own self-organized defense guards to fight the Assad dictatorship, which is totally supported by the various imperialist factions.

The Need for Revolutionary Leadership

However, a spontaneous popular uprising cannot carry the revolutionary process further toward victory over Assad and imperialism unless a revolutionary workers' party emerges to provide leadership. Internationalists, revolutionary workers and their organizations must say this – and go further: they must fight for the workers' movement to launch every possible international solidarity action with the Syrian masses and give all possible assistance to the formation of a revolutionary Marxist leadership in Syria.

These incipient soviets or workers' neighborhood councils are the key to the international situation at the present. In this moment, the spontaneity of the masses will be tested – and will show its limitations. Lacking the subjective factor – the revolutionary party – the best hope for the masses in Syria right now would be concurrent uprisings of workers' organizations in Turkey, Kurdistan, and the entire region, to spread the formation of the incipient workers'

and neighborhood councils and create the organizational basis for a federation of Socialist states in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). The most conscious and advanced workers are needed to carry out the task of constructing revolutionary workers' parties across the region and internationally. Only such parties are capable of providing the necessary leadership and program to unite the masses in the struggle against the regime and to open the road for workers' councils to mount a challenge for power. With such leadership, the masses can take the struggle to the next level, that of putting workers' own organizations in control of the economy by creating a workers' government to replace the rule of imperialist lackeys, despots and monarchs.

Workers in the imperialist centers are called upon to take labor actions to isolate the Assad regime; send aid to the beleaguered masses suffering under the brutal assaults of their imperialist puppet governments; and prevent NATO/imperialist interventions, which may step in under the guise of humanitarianism to crush the emergent dual power situation. Syria is not alone – the entire region is inflamed, and our program must link the rise of the entire region.

Revolutionary leadership is also needed in Egypt to advance toward armed struggle through the program of indefinite general strikes and the formation of workers' councils and workers' militias. Under such leadership, the Egyptian working class can and must initiate a drive to split the army, and open its armories to the workers' militias. And, most important, they must link up with the Palestinians, who already have armed councils, but, of course, are under occupation. To avoid Syria going the same way as Palestine and ending up

under military occupation, the Egyptian workers must overthrow the SCAF and break its bloc with Israel against Palestine and Syria!

The World Situation

Meanwhile, in the world at large, the crisis of capitalism is striking hard at any semblance of stability. The USA approaches its debt ceiling. The IMF warns of sovereign debt crises for the USA, Brazil and Japan. The Eurozone is threatened, and the financial papers discuss the possibility of its breakup. Across the nation, and indeed in every corner of the planet, workers, students, and the oppressed are looking for means of fighting back. General strikes have hit the UK, Greece, and France, but have not blocked implementation of the austerity. Mass movements have rejected the misleadership of the Social Democrats in Spain and Portugal, but an independent road for the working class is still elusive. Massive student mobilizations swept Chile on June 30th. Mass anti-government and anti-nuclear protests have been mounted against the shameless Japanese state, which is still staggering from the aftermath of the catastrophic earthquake, tsunami, and Fukushima nuclear meltdown.

The Christchurch earthquake has shown the New Zealand government to be utterly unprepared for disasters, natural or otherwise. Climate change has induced flooding in the USA, causing devastation and promising harvest shortages in the fall, while in India a delay in the monsoon threatens to have the same consequence, inflating the prices of agricultural commodities. The Mexican agricultural economy has collapsed due to the inability of locally grown corn to compete with cheaper American GMO corn imported under NAFTA, plunging Mexico into a drug war with 40,000 known victims so far.

The consequences of the continued rule of capital are dire and ubiquitous. The task at hand is the overthrow of capitalism and its replacement with a planned economy under democratic workers' control.

Regroupment Around the Action Program

Three years into the latest cycle of capitalist crises, the laws of capitalism leave the ruling class economists chasing phantom profits based on speculation rather than production. No one

is immune to the crisis. The capitalists' inability to pull the world economy out of crisis is not for lack of resources. Rather, just as has occurred in every other crisis of overproduction, the forces of production stagnate when capital runs from production toward speculative ventures. In our *Draft Action Program for Europe Rising*, we show how the liberals and radicals misunderstand the nature of capitalism, thus limiting their ability to offer any solution that favors the working class. The strength of the program of revolutionary Marxism flows from its ability to show the worker that the source of inequality lies in the nature of productive relations under capitalism, and that this system must be overthrown for social equality to be made possible.

We offer this program to revolutionary workers who are committed to the Leninist project of international regroupment of revolutionary Marxist forces, in order to put the task of capitalism's overthrow on the agenda. Any action plan and formulation of programmatic demands and tactics must be a living document that is revised to reflect the changes of the moment. Regroupment is a responsibility that can only be met in joint action and in the struggle to deepen and elaborate a living program, tested and adjusted in battle, but based on consistent application of the Marxist method to the current situation. Our Draft Action Program is intended to provide a basis for advancing the regroupment process.

Send Capitalism to the Hospice

The capitalist system has no moral compass. All it has is a mandate to maximize profits – to suck every last drop of surplus value out of the productive process and deliver it into the hands of the shareholders. Despite the best wishes and dreams of utopians, capitalism will not just fade away, nor can it be turned into a benign institution by “good/moral/humanist” leaders and politicians. Even while the likes of Bernie Sanders, Dennis Kucinich, and Ramsey Clark deliver their impassioned morality speeches, assaults on workers and the oppressed continue unabated. Just as long-term unemployment and underemployment are achieving levels not seen since the Great Depression of the

(Continued on page 24)

THE “ARAB SPRING”: MARXIST ANALYSIS AND PROGRAM

End NATO-US Intervention! Defeat Qaddafi! Break with the TNC! Arm the Workers and Youth to Defeat Imperialism in North Africa!

(Statement originally published April 8, 2011)

Class Contradictions in the North African Revolution

Decades of crony capitalism, funded by the flow of petro-dollars to despots, sheiks, reactionary Bathists, and fake socialist regimes alike, have underdeveloped the Maghreb (North Africa) and the Near East. These regimes have held back the “democratic” aspirations of the people and closed book on the Pan-Arab nationalist revolution that appeared to threaten imperialism 30 years ago. Even while posing as anti-imperialist and anti-Zionist, regimes throughout the region have made their peace with both and have become imperialism’s willing pawns. All have done their part to suppress the masses, and in particular the Palestinian revolution, the working class, minorities (tribal and religious), and women. The role of these regimes, today threatened by their own people, has been to maintain the status quo, keeping oil flowing to imperialism’s oil cartels, and dollars and gold flowing back to a small elite concentrated around the inner circles of the dictators, their families, and their military and security organizations.

The aspirations of Pan-Arabism – national independence (from imperialism and Zionism), secular democracy, and social progress – were destined by the weakness of the national bourgeoisie to collapse. Since this occurred, social equilibrium has been enforced by a well-balanced distribution of the carrot and the

stick. In Libya, oil wealth allowed a relatively larger portion of “carrots” to be allotted the masses. In Saudi Arabia, extra “carrots” were quickly distributed at the last moment when the monarchy realized that this equilibrium could not withstand the crisis of capitalism and the uprisings of 2011.

The unfulfilled expectations of the masses, the desire for “democratic” freedoms, and the consequences of high unemployment exploded this winter/spring in a revolutionary upsurge whose leading actors were the under-employed youth, students, and workers (both private and public sector), closely followed and joined by the petty bourgeoisie (small business people, shop owners, professionals and academics). Usurpers to the mantle of leadership, like El-Baradei and the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt or the TNC in Libya, emerged not from the heterogeneous masses who first bared their chests to the bullets of reaction, but only after the initial uprisings, in hope that they would get the nod from imperialism and emerge at the top of the heap.

It is essential to understand that democracy and freedom have different meanings to different social classes. For the workers, basic democratic rights, such as the right to organize and control over one’s conditions of labor, are primary. For the small and large capitalists, bourgeois academics, and intellectuals, the right to exploit labor and participate in the

market free from the dictates of crony capitalism, alongside the desire for political, cultural and intellectual freedom, turned them against the regimes. Although each country has its own unique dynamics, these uprisings, which spread across the region in a firestorm of historic consequence unlike anything since 1848, contain the contradictory aspirations of two opposing classes: one consigned forever to be pawns of imperialism, the other burdened with the historic task of defeating it.

These contradictions are subsumed in this re-emergence of the Arab-national revolution, but they can not be resolved by the emergence of “constitutional democracy”. The aspirations of the mass base that ignited the revolution cannot be successfully met if the revolution limits itself to the fight for “freedom and democracy,” as defined by western imperialism and embraced by the petty bourgeoisie, the academics, and wannabe imperialist lackeys like ElBaradei in Egypt and the TNC in Libya.

For imperialism to maintain its financial position, workers must not be permitted to control the conditions of their own labor or the economy, or even be apportioned their proper share of the economic benefit from the natural wealth of these nations. To achieve this end, a willing pawn is required, one who will feign left

(advance “political freedom”), but strike to the right (crush the workers’ movements and administer exploitative deals with imperialism).

In Libya, despite the higher GDP and limited gains of women under the “Green Revolution,” the masses, led by unemployed youth and inspired by the events across North Africa, stood up against the repression of Qaddafi’s brutal regime. The masses no longer believe the lie that Qaddafi is fighting imperialism and building “Green-Socialism.” Decades of harshly enforced crony capitalism, and Qaddafi’s capitulation to imperialism in 2003, assured that once unleashed, the protests spread across Libya even to Tripoli, where the masses faced an unrelenting violent repression unlike any seen in Tunisia or Egypt. The fantasy of a peaceful “Jasmine” revolution came to an abrupt end. The masses armed to defend themselves from the cruel regime’s commitment to maintaining the status quo – i.e., its deals with imperialism and its hoarding of wealth at the expense of social programs and political freedom.

In the early days of the Libyan rebellion, two forms of organization emerged: on the one hand, councils of the heterogeneous mass of rebels, organizing in the streets and neighborhoods – embryonic workers’ councils like those



NY Times photo

Heavy damage to rebel-controlled Misurata, Libya, where NATO bombings killed rebel fighters in April 2011.

we have seen in Tunisia and Egypt – and on the other, a bourgeois council which has now been transformed into the TNC – a rotten menagerie of defectors, monarchists, tribalists, intellectuals and capitalists. As a consequence of decades of repression, these councils are extremely disorganized, and tendencies within them have not fully consolidated. The rapid escalation of military events outpaced the ability of the working and lower classes to self-identify and differentiate from the TNC, particularly since the latter includes military deserters from the regime who appeared to promise sorely needed military leadership, arms, and forces.

The contradiction between the aspirations of the masses and the TNC are reflected most recently in the refusal of the TNC to arm militant youth who stake their lives driving out to the front. Imperialism sees the contradictory nature of the “rebel force” and is having a hard time differentiating who they can trust, hence the hesitancy in sending arms for fear that they fall into the hands of the working masses and unemployed youth.

Libya: A Test of Revolutionary Marxist Method

Recent events in North Africa have caught the Left playing catch-up. Libya in particular has most of the Left stumbling over itself. The contradictions outlined above are quite obvious in the unfolding of events in Egypt and Tunisia, where the workers, democratic militants, and women are already experiencing the reaction of the interim regimes as they try to keep Egypt and Tunisia “safe” for imperialism by preventing workers’ revolution. But in Libya, the left was caught off guard.

Imperialism is intervening in Libya to remove Qaddafi, a dictator whose brutality has aroused an armed insurrection that threatens to overshoot the US-desired “orderly transition” to bourgeois democracy, and to become a workers revolution. Imperialism’s objective is to replace Qaddafi with more a “democratic” bourgeois leadership, including ex-Qaddafi cronies, that can and will keep a lid on the revolution. Both bourgeois factions are appealing to imperialism to be the chosen regime, using the young rebels and the mercenaries as bargaining chips and missile fodder. But Qaddafi’s shelf life has long since expired, and the TNC

has yet to prove its viability. This instability invites an imperialist-dictated partition of the country, a NATO-US “boots on the ground” invasion under the guise of peacekeeping, or both.

Presented with this spectacle – a semi-fascist dictator currently doing imperialism’s bidding, faced off against a second willing pawn waiting in the wings – the Left has floundered. The self-proclaimed Bolsheviks (in the Spartacist family) claim workers have no side. Other spin-offs from the Healyite legacy revive the fantasy that Qaddafi is defending the gains of the 1969 revolution against Monarchist restorationists and agents of imperialism. Both these tendencies reject the righteous indignation of the workers, the poor, and the oppressed, and attribute the uprising entirely to persistent and ever-present imperialist/CIA/MI6 instigation.

Apparently, unless these outfits are themselves in the leadership of a rebellion, they view the masses as the mere fodder of history, to be abandoned to their fate. No, comrades, Marxism does not teach an abstentionist internationalism. Marxism as a method for analysis and intervention guides revolutionaries to *act* in the historic interest of the working class – an impossible task for centrists, who cannot distinguish the revolutionary agents in this struggle from the stooges of imperialism. We in HWRS and the CWG stand in contrast to those on the left who are blind to the class distinction between the bourgeois leadership of the TNC and the working class youth core of the rebels. Instead, we condemn all attempts to co-opt the youth and exclude them from the military action against Qaddafi’s forces; we advocate the rebellion’s political and military independence from the TNC leadership; and we urge internationalist workers everywhere to come to the aid of and arm the struggle of the youth and the workers. In other words, as Marxists, we stand for the *independence of the working class* in its armed insurrection, supporting its promise of defeating Qaddafi; breaking from the TNC’s “alternative” regime, and then – as the revolution requires – joining with other Arab revolutions to defeat imperialism in the Maghreb.

Despite Qaddafi’s attempts to paint himself as anti-imperialist, his actions long ago proved his inter-

ests lie with imperialism and not with the Libyan masses. His attempt to wipe out the popular revolt of the working people, the only class force that can defend what gains remain from 1969 and defeat imperialism, was initiated both on behalf of his imperialist patrons and his gang of crony capitalists. Unlike the “thirdworldist” left (Castro/Chavez), we do not bloc with Qaddafi militarily against imperialism (though we do advocate that the working class base of Qaddafi’s forces defect and join the anti-imperialist fighters).

We are for the defeat of imperialist intervention in every nation oppressed/invaded or bombed by imperialism. The main responsibility for this defeat is in the hands of the workers’ movements in the imperialist countries and their allies in NATO. Therefore, we are against the entire social imperialist left who find excuses for intervention, “humanitarian” or not, of an oppressor country, when they perceive it as necessary to defeat semi-fascism or dictatorship in an oppressed country.

Indeed, the social imperialists (like the German Greens who support the NATO bombing) and the “thirdworldists” are in reality two sides of the same coin. Neither puts any faith in the capacity of the semi-colonial masses, and especially the revolutionary youth, to fight for and win the national revolution as a social revolution. They have a pseudo-revolutionary version of the bourgeois civilizing mission. They believe that either the imperialist bourgeoisie, or the national bourgeoisie in the semi-colonies, can play a progressive role. In either case, their analysis ignores and dismisses the agency of the working masses as the only possible progressive subjective factor in history.

The liberal and progressive pacifists, a sorry strain of social imperialism, place their hopes on NATO/US “humanitarian” intervention. But imperialism cares not one whit for the humanitarian needs of civilians. This lesson – apparently lost on these idealists – has been proved over and over again by history: Hiroshima, Vietnam, “Shock and Awe,” “Cast Lead,” Rwanda, and even today in the Congo today. But in the case of the present Libyan war, the perceived threat of massacre has given imperialism a chance to both “toot its humanitarian horn” and find a road to consolidation and victory for their pawn of choice (or last resort), the TNC. Both the

pacifist interventionists and the sectarian abstentionists, with their grand pronouncements, ignore the independent role of the working class, and are thereby opening the road for the only other “realistic” solution: imperialist intervention.

The Tasks at Hand

To defeat imperialism, Libyan workers and their allies in Tunisia, Egypt, the Middle East, and Europe must give their IMMEDIATE attention to these urgent tasks facing every working class in the region:

1. Independent mass political organization is essential. A body such as an All-Libyan Conference of Workers’ Councils must be formed, with the explicit project of taking sole, unitary political power throughout the country.

2. Underground and exiled workers’ forces should be represented with delegates, so that the population in Qaddafi-controlled territory will know that it is not the working class that is bargaining with imperialism over a division of Libya into two poverty-stricken semi-colonial, countries! **OPPOSE PARTITION! FORWARD TO THE FEDERATED SOCIALIST REPUBLICS OF NORTH AFRICA AND THE NEAR EAST.**

3. Workers must found and build a revolutionary Marxist party now, to delineate a programmatic response to the revolutionary crisis, to popularize the program among the masses, and to win the majority of the Workers’ Councils to support its demands and objectives.

4. No to “power sharing” and to “national” or “people’s” fronts. Each of these is a bayonet pointed at the working class! *The TNC’s program is civil war in place of class war.* This means a thousand kilometers of desert to cross, at a military disadvantage even with on-again/off-again imperialist air support. This is all the TNC has to offer imperialism, and all it can possibly offer in return for imperialism’s support.

5. Without independent political organization, the working class and youth can expect to be ground between two bourgeois millstones – the old goons of Qaddafi, and the new goons of the TNC – in a war of exhaustion and elimination. Meanwhile, the young fighters’ relatives

(Continued on page 12)

The Revolution Has Begun: Let's Make It International and Permanent!

The downfall of Hosni Mubarak, and the transfer of power to the Egyptian Military high command, is an important victory for the Egyptian masses who rose up against the 30-year-old dictatorship. The blood of over 300 martyrs and many thousands killed in under the dictatorship; the idealism of the youth of the April 6th movement; the long battles fought by the industrial workers which led to the current strike wave; the soldiers and officers who joined the opposition; and all those from every class who rallied for 18 days to end the regime, have struck the first blow in the battle for democracy and national independence.

This battle so far has proved many things. First, it proved that the revolutionary struggle of the masses of poor workers and farmers, joined to the fight of the marginalised youth, can begin to make a revolution. All those who claimed that the age of revolution was over with the collapse of the Soviet Union and that capitalism had triumphed, and declared the End of History, are proven wrong. Imperialism and its client dictators are not evidence of the End of History, but of its impasse. The Egyptian masses stood up after 30 years of dictatorship, broke through that impasse, and removed the hated dictator.

Second, against the liberal commentariat who excitedly rediscovered the semi-colonial masses and praised the miracle of the "revolution," searching for metaphors and fancy allusions to mask their ignorance, is the flesh and blood proletariat. There was nothing "miraculous" about this revolution. It was a revival of the national democratic revolution fought against the British, breaking out as a Pan-Arab nationalism under Nasser, but then being pushed backwards by a succession of military regimes subordinated to the neo-colonial rule of US imperialism and its Middle Eastern attack dog, Israel. The reopening of the Arab national revolution sparked by the Tunisian uprising proves that this revolution did not fall out of thin-air, that the national revolution has been fomenting for decades, and that every other national democratic revolution, suspended in its tracks by imperialism, is over-ripe for completion.

Third, the revived national revolution will have to be completed as an international socialist revolution to realise the demands raised by the

mass movement. "Freedom" and "democracy" are not possible in the modern capitalist imperialist world. Neither the military nor any new parliamentary democracy can realise these demands in any single country while imperialism and the national bourgeois regimes rule the nation and the region. The fact that Tunisia sparked off the uprising proves that the revolution has to be based on the pan-Arab masses who are suffering terrible misery, oppression and repression at the hands of imperialism and its local lackey dictatorships. The fact that the US, Israel, and the whole Arab national bourgeoisie, from Hamas to the Saudi princes, backed Mubarak shows that the forces of the Arab counter-revolution are a real danger to the revolution.

Fourth, all of these realities point to the truth that all of the demands raised by the youth and the workers and farmers cannot be won while capitalism and imperialism rule the world. The crisis facing imperialism demands that the workers and farmers of the world pay for the crisis with slave labor, hunger, and even death. The most basic demands for a wage, a house, and human rights are incompatible with the survival of imperialism. Just as this revolution was part of a wave of uprisings begun across North Africa and the Middle East, its completion will not be possible without the masses of the imperialist countries turning on their ruling classes to stop armed invasions to suppress the popular revolutions in the Middle East such as that of the Palestinians.

The victory of the revived national revolution in Egypt must open up the prospect of the international socialist revolution. To prevent the Egyptian revolution from being overturned by the military or by imperialist counter-revolution, the Arab masses must rise together. To prevent the Arab masses from military defeat by US invasion and Israeli attacks, the workers of the US and EU must strike against the military machines of their ruling class. The images of the millions mobilised in Egypt must become the inspiration for new workers' struggles across the world. We must all learn to lose the fear and walk like Egyptians, and not rest until we have completed the revolutionary process that has just begun.

– Statement by CWG-NZ, endorsed by HWRS,
published on HWRS Facebook page Feb. 11, 2011.

(End NATO-US Intervention, continued from page 10)

who are in Qaddafi's hands will pay with their lives. It is only an independent workers' political program that will cause new revolts in Qaddafi's rear and advance the workers' front line to the door of his tent!

6. Victory over imperialism, Qaddafi, and the TNC will require an independent military organization subordinate only to the Workers' Councils. The TNC leadership will attempt to turn its troops on the youth and the workers tomorrow. Should the youth be so fortunate as to bring Qaddafi's head back to Benghazi on a plate, the TNC would soon enough fête the heroes with firing squads! Workers must assume that getting the TNC leaders to commit to class warfare is the true mission of the envoys Washington has sent, in place of arms or Libya's impounded funds. Neither will be released to the workers and the youth! Not by Washington, and not by the French bourgeoisie, who may invade their country to save it from them! Right now, Washington has a shortage of available troops, and the E.U. NATO countries have even bigger money worries. We say to the Libyan workers: You must build your own workers' army! Only in this way you can persuade them to give up their invasion plans and return to their secret agent plots.

7. All internationalist fighters must appeal immediately to the unions and sympathetic troops of Tunisia and Egypt to send arms of all calibers, and to form up brigades of trained worker-soldiers to come to the aid of the Libyan revolution! Libyan workers must pledge to return the solidarity when their comrades' own national bourgeoisies try to loose the professional armies on them! Meanwhile, workers in the imperialist countries have an obligation to wage class struggle against every design the exploiters and their smiling "public servants" have upon your lives, labor and national treasure! This is more possible now than it has been at any time since 1946-47. European workers trained in conscript armies have the experience to form up armed internationalist workers brigades and join the revolution! Workers of Europe and the USA: the victory of the North African workers' revolution depends to a large extent on our ability to arrest imperialism's bloody death grip!

In an epoch when imperialism is facing an ever-deepening crisis, the interests of the capitalist imperialist class and its semi-colonial agents can only be realized by intensifying reaction and counter-revolution. Only a national revolution that fulfills the tasks of the permanent revolution can defeat the counter-revolution and open the way to socialism – in the Maghreb, in the Near East, and worldwide.

**For the workers to live, imperialism must die!
Victory to the Libyan and Arab masses!
Defeat US/NATO in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan!
Reignite the Palestinian revolution!**

Victory to the popular uprisings in Yemen, Bahrain, Syria, and Jordan!



A former Libyan army soldier, now supporting the rebel cause, shows new Libyan rebel recruits how to use a weapon during a training session in Benghazi, eastern Libya, March 3, 2011.

Photo courtesy B.R.Q. (brqnetwork), via Flickr

IMPERIALISM: HANDS OFF LIBYA!

The US and EU are planning a military intervention to protect their oil interests!

Statement of the Liaison Committee of HWRS and the CWG-NZ, February 24, 2011

Libya is on a knife edge poised between victorious workers' revolution that can defeat both the dictatorship and imperialism, and turn the Arab Revolution into socialist revolution in the whole region, and the counter-revolution that will halt, reverse and defeat the Arab Revolution and prevent the formation of a United Socialist States of North Africa and the Middle East. The outcome will depend on whether or not the international working class can stop the US and EU imperialists from invading and imposing a new compliant national leadership.

The uprising of unemployed youth has won control of much of the country by sacrificing their lives in the thousands to the Gaddafi dictatorship. Not until the youth had stormed the military base in Benghazi and taken the airport did the Libyan army split and sections of it come over to the rebels. Even then the Generals and Ministers who defected did not take command of the situation and organize a national popular militia to defeat the regime. This tells us much of the old guard that is thoroughly discredited by its immersion in the dictatorship and which should not be trusted an inch. It has been left to the worker youth who armed themselves and the ranks of the military and other workers who have joined them to form local militias.

The gains of the revolution are entirely due to the sacrifice and martyrdom of the unemployed working class youth. First in Tunisia to the West where youth laid down their lives to remove the Ben Ali dictatorship. And in Egypt to the East where the youth suffered more than 1000 martyrs to remove Mubarak. Now the Libyan youth have lost 1000s of dead to seize the leadership of the Arab Revolution. They have led

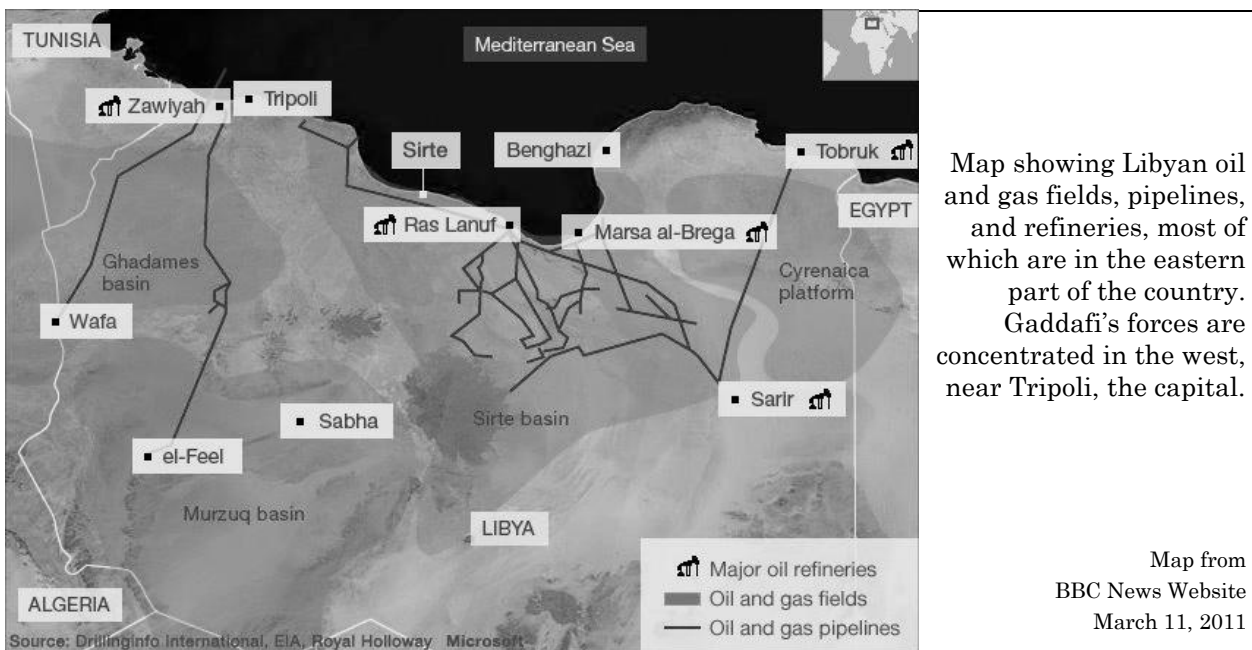
the furious fight that has brought down on them the military might of the Gaddafi regime.

Such was the ferocity of this repression, employing the special forces and foreign mercenaries, that its failure to intimidate and defeat the unemployed youth rebellion forced the military to split. The defection of the Generals who had long been cronies of Gaddafi was forced only by the rebellion of the rank and file soldiers who refused to fire on the masses and were in turn executed by the Gaddafi forces.

The young workers proved themselves to be the leaders of the workers' revolution and they alone must form the backbone of a national popular militia drawing on the workers, the poor farmers and the soldiers. The working class internationally must make the Libyan revolution its own revolution to prevent imperialism from intervening on the pretext of 'humanitarian disaster' to roll back the advance of the revolution and install a new regime that retains the oil wealth for imperialist super-exploitation.

In the last analysis, the violence of the reaction of the regime to prevent a revolution at all costs is the creation of imperialism and its subordination of the Arab countries to dictatorships to maintain its economic dominance. In Libya it is unquestionably oil that interests imperialism, and its current concern to stop a 'humanitarian disaster' is entirely motivated to prevent a revolution from coming to power and kicking out its oil companies and socializing Libyan oil for the benefit of the people.

We call on the ranks of the army, the airforce and navy who have defected to the opposition to take their place in the popular militia and turn over their weapons, planes and ships



to the cause of the revolution. The terrorizing of Tripoli must end. Use the ships to bombard Gaddafi's compound in Tripoli! Use the planes to strafe the armed goons who are driving around in their SUVs murdering unarmed youth with impunity!

We call on the Arab revolution that is under way in Egypt and Tunisia, and is beginning to rise up in Algeria and in the Middle East, to immediately send material and military aid to the liberated part of Libya to strengthen the revolution against the regime's extreme repression, to complete the revolution and stop mass murder of workers on an even greater scale.

We call on the workers in the imperialist countries to take immediate steps to oppose the

military intervention in whatever form in Libya. Imperialism is the No 1 enemy of the Libyan people. Gaddafi is a creature of imperialism. His 1969 revolution had the guise of a national socialist liberation but in reality it installed a national bourgeois crony capitalist regime to serve imperialism.

All those who on the left who gave support to Gaddafi in the name of Communism or Trotskyism and were responsible for disarming the Libyan people in their long resistance to Gaddafi must be exposed and condemned. They share a large part of the blame for the failure to build a revolutionary workers party in Libya and the others states of the region to play a leading role in the Arab Revolution.

- **Imperialist hands off Libya! No to sanctions! No to aerial overflights!**
- **No to cynical US, EU and UN military invasion in the name of 'human rights' which are always sacrificed in the interest of the oil monopolies!**
- **For international workers' support of the Libyan revolution!**
- **For material and military aid to the revolutionary working class fighters!**
- **For strikes and mutinies to stop any imperialist intervention that will only take over the counter-revolution from Gaddafi and defeat the revolution in Libya and stop it from setting an example for all the world's workers to follow!**
- **For an international revolutionary party to coordinate the struggles of workers, youth, poor farmers and street vendors in every country!**
- **Forward to the Socialist Revolution in Libya that socializes crony capitalist and imperialist property and creates a genuine socialist plan based on a democratic national assembly of working peoples' committees and militias!**
- **Forward to a United Socialist States of North Africa and the Middle East!**

Revolutions in North Africa and the Middle East: The Permanent Revolution Unfolds!

Editor's Note: This statement was originally written during the early days of the Tunisian revolt, and published on the Internet on January 30, 2011. It does not attempt to deal in detail with the quick moving escalation of revolutionary uprisings in Egypt and elsewhere in the Middle East that occurred shortly thereafter, nor does it deal with the subsequent developments that have caused many of these uprisings to stagnate, or worse. We publish it here to put on record the Liaison Committee's position in the earliest days of the Arab Spring.

The National Revolution revives

Two and a half years since the onset of the world imperialist crisis, we are seeing a revolutionary development in the Arab world that resembles the generalized revolutionary upsurge that accompanied and followed the final days of WWI. These uprisings are developing in many countries in the North Africa and the Middle East. In Egypt we see the toilers climb on the tanks hug the soldiers, carry them on their shoulders and ask them for their participation in the revolution. We saw similar fraternization in Tunisia.

We are not surprised that revolutionary uprisings in which the workers and the impoverished toilers throw themselves bravely against the batons, shields and armored vehicles of the police, are not happening in Europe but rather in North Africa where American and European imperialism has driven down the masses livelihood to nothing; and has, for decades, crushed the inspiration to fight imperialism and the Zionists via the brutal services of the most vicious puppet dictators. Now the masses flow by the tens of thousands into the streets fighting to overthrow the dictatorships installed, armed and defended by imperialism.

The goal of overthrowing these dictators and

the class of comprador capitalists with them, expresses the democratic nature of this re-opening of the national democratic revolution. The masses of North Africa and the Middle East despite their de-colonization struggles have never gone through the experience of bourgeois democracy and its associated illusions (that democratically administered capitalism can provide the greatest good for the most people). Naturally many of the people in the streets believe that by overthrowing the dictatorships and creating a democracy, under the control of the masses, or with the support of the army, their basic needs will be met. Yet, this "democratic" re-opening of the national revolution will be crushed if it aims only at the creation of a parliamentary democracy and does not develop over into a workers' revolution spreading across the Arab world and ultimately Europe.

The national and the democratic character of the revolution are combined and cannot be separated. Imperialism divided the Arab world into many countries in order to divide and control the masses. The national question in the Arab world cannot be fully answered unless the revolution becomes international and creates one Arab nation. This was understood by different left Bonapartist dictators in the region who tried several times to create one unified Arab nation. The most famous of which was Nasser's project with the Ba'athist regime in Syria to create an Arab nation from north to south. The betrayal of this pan-Arab nationalist project of Nasser and the Ba'athists by the national bourgeois lackey's of imperialism and the Stalinist parties contributed to decades of defeats in the Arab countries and passivity of the masses.

Now the democratic and the national question are back on the agenda. This time the

masses are the sole driving force behind it. The events, in Egypt and Tunisia showed that the nationalist pan-Arab unification is not yet a serious concern of the masses. Their focus today is the economic question. Like in the Russian revolution the demands today are for bread, jobs and the end of the dictatorships who have failed to provide them. However these economic and democratic aspirations of the masses cannot be resolved by ignoring the national question, since without defeating imperialism these neo-colonies cannot win true national independence.

Therefore in order to succeed, the revolution must be unified across borders and this can be done only if the masses struggle to complete the democratic tasks of the national revolution carries over to the socialist revolution; to defeat the imperialists and to overthrow their agents, not only the dictatorships but the national bourgeoisies in all these countries creating a federated socialist Republic of North Africa and the Middle East. This is the only progressive way to resolve the national question.

Yet since the masses emphasize the question of democracy and their economic conditions, the national question, at the moment, is important only insofar as it encourages the spread of the revolution across borders to make it permanent and socialist. The economic yoke of imperialism has enriched a small comprador bourgeoisie at the expense of the masses who are now wary of solutions that maintain these elites in power.

Imperialism will seek to resolve this crisis by imposing a democratic façade, either coalitions or 'patriotic' popular front governments of 'national salvation', with or without Constituent Assemblies to protect the rights of capitalist property. In the interim, left Bonapartist officers coups may arise to manage the transition to 'democracy'. But ultimately these cannot meet the masses needs and imperialism will, if it is necessary, conspire with the military high command to unleash counter-revolutionary coups to crush the masses as we have seen recently in Honduras. If local "democratic" solutions or home grown military solutions are not sufficient to contain the masses, then imperialism will not hesitate to send NATO or Zionists dogs to crush the

revolutions. That is why it is critical for the Palestinians, Syrians, Jordanians, Yemenis, Iraqis etc to join the North African uprisings and unite with the masses to drive imperialism and Zionism out of the Middle East.

The Tunisian Revolution

It's clear that the Tunisian uprising has sparked off a re-opening of the Arab national democratic revolution. There are now demonstrations going from Algeria to Jordan and the West Bank and Yemen. The massive revolutions erupting throughout the Arab world express the fundamental character and contradictions of the following revolutionary aims: The struggle for national independence, agricultural reform, control of foreign trade, control of national resources, expansion of workers and lower-peasants wages and rights (relative to those enjoyed under imperialism and neo-colonial dictatorial rule); these are all goals which can be achieved only by the leadership of the working class pushing the struggle on to the formation of workers' state.

These lessons from which the theory of permanent revolution was derived have been played out over and again in countries across the colonial world where the working class has been prevented from taking power into their own hands. During the post colonial period, in wars and struggles for liberation, a weak comprador bourgeoisie subservient to imperialism came to hold the reins of power, often using revolutionary rhetoric but ultimately acting in the interests of imperialist finance capital and a small homegrown crony capitalist class. Without the rapid emergence of a revolutionary workers' party capable of leading the masses to create democratic organs of worker's power, the consolidation of power in the hands of the counter-revolutionary comprador bourgeois will strangle the revolution.

Today the Tunisian, the Maghreb and North African working class is faced with the necessity of accomplishing the national and democratic tasks of the bourgeois revolution, which today, can only be done through the formation a workers' and farmers' state. The bourgeoisie of Tunisia has proven too weak and too corrupt to carry the revolution against the dictatorship through to full independence from



Photo courtesy Monasosh, via Flickr

Cairo's Tahrir Square during the revolutionary upsurge (photo taken February 4, 2011).

imperialism, neither can they advance and sustain democracy nor overcome the structural constraints imposed by French and US imperialism through the IMF over the decades. The largest sector of the elite is a crony class in the worst sense. Researcher Juan Cole reports that 50% of the financial elite are tied to the Ben-Ali family's financial empire. The petty bourgeois layer of lawyers and civil servants have taken to the streets, joining the most oppressed who have no faith in the oligarchy or the Ghannouchi interim government. The inability of the local capitalists to liberate the nation places those tasks squarely in the hands of the proletariat, which will come to see its own economic liberation as tied to the unfinished tasks of the national revolution of the whole region – the defeat of imperialism and its national bourgeois lackeys.

The driving force in the revolution so far has been the working class, the youth and the unemployed. Any governmental solution short of a workers' state will perpetuate the economic crisis because the bourgeoisie has no choice but to maintain subservience to imperialism. The class character of the uprising and revolutionary process is therefore proletarian. However, for lack of a revolutionary leadership, mass organizations of workers, unemployed councils, and neighborhood committees have, to the extent they have begun forming, not become true organs of workers power or generalized as of yet. Therefore, true dual power, which is a necessary stage to complete the proletarian revolution, has not yet developed. In this vacuum the grave danger is that the formation of a popular front, coalition bourgeois government, or left Bonapartist

'officers' coup', would be a setback for the revolutionary process and would set Tunisia up for a solution to the crisis much like Haitian masses received following the ouster of "Baby Doc" Duvalier.

Only the working class can lead

Immense pressure from the spontaneous outrage of the masses has already resulted in the release of many Tunisian political prisoners, and a relaxation of the curfew. The revolution requires the end of all restrictions on assembly and the freedom of all political and economic prisoners. Pitched battles between the military and the counter-revolutionary militias followed the ouster of Ben-Ali. The violence of the counter-revolution has been met with by the formation of neighborhood committees and to a large extent has been rooted out (for now). Reports of battles with the police mix with reports of some police coming over to join the demonstrators creating cracks in the state power structure.

The neighborhood defense committees are not controlled by any left or other organizations. They are truly spontaneous controlled by the workers in their areas. We don't know what's going on inside them or if they are trying to connect nationwide. This is the task of the vanguard to build the councils, spread their influence and coordination. According to a few sources the committees so far have no ideology or direction, representing 'anarchism' or 'chaos'. But this is not true. The street protesters are part of the rising defense committees across the country that wants to overthrow the "coalition" government and in particular all those forces linked to the dictatorship seeking to maneuver a foothold in the new administration.

This populist anger has already forced the prime-minister and president to distance themselves from the hated (former) ruling Constitutional Democratic Rally (RCD). It has also pressured representatives of the UGTT to withdraw from the first attempt at a popular front. But this has not stopped these treacherous labor bureaucrats from endorsing the second proposed cabinet. The UGTT has long associated itself with the regime and the rabidly anti-communist International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. During the build up of the movement the UGTT did not

take a leading role. Rather they appealed for calm, at first tried to distance the organization from the uprising with a call for a council for a national dialogue. As the masses ran out in front of the UGTT they tried to catch up calling a two-hour strike on January 14th, all the while hoping the masses would forget its treacherous role over the decades and in the first stages of the uprising. Find a crowd and jump in front of it an old technique but one the masses would not stand for.

As noted when the UGTT maneuvered into the first attempted coalition government with the RCD they felt the heat of the uprising and backed out. The masses have nothing to expect but conciliation from the UGTT leaders who would be happy to participate in a popular front to stop the revolution. The UGTT will maneuver to create a popular front 'unity' government that includes 'progressive' bourgeois parties but with sufficient trade union Ministers to 'push the popular front left.'

The revolution must go around, over or through this obstacle to democratic workers' mobilizations and self organization. Members of UGTT must oust the leadership which is tainted with this collaborationist history and build rank and file democratic organizations in defense of the revolution. Today the UGTT threatens strikes in defense of the revolution but we can see this is only hot air as they have not dared to call for indefinite General Strike until all the demands are met and the old guard of the government is driven out.

Liberals are returning to Tunisia and without a doubt will try to either convince the masses to accept a "reformed" version of the coalition or call for a bourgeois government without the elements of the corrupt regime. None of this is acceptable to advance democracy or the revolutionary process.

Vanguard workers need to counter-pose the power of the spontaneous organizations of workers, unemployed youth, and students who organized the revolutionary uprising as the bread the butter protest developed; these organizations need to link with the street defense committees to form incipient workers councils.

These forces should be linked to newly formed rank-and-file action committees within

a revitalized UGTT, the factories and the army. Thus such workers councils will rise as a challenge to the capitalist regime in a dual power situation. We have already seen the soldiers (who are mostly short term conscripts with close ties to the working class) hesitate in suppressing the masses; the short next step to opening the armories to incipient workers militias must have imperialism and its local lackeys sweating. If North Africa falls to armed workers' revolution, the workers and youth of Southern Europe will take the struggle into the heart of Imperialist Europe.

The Madagascar experience from 2009, of soldiers arming the workers must be popularized in the workers discussions in the coming weeks. Workers' militias are needed to defend the revolutionary process and to unite the workers with the neighborhood committees and the soldiers who break rank and come over to the revolution. Soldiers must be pressed to open the armories to the workers to defend the revolution through the formation of a popular worker's militia.

To defeat imperialism this revolution must spread

Defense of the revolution by necessity is a confrontation with imperialist forces and that confrontation has begun. Imperialism will first try to undermine the revolution from within. If their coalition governments and popular fronts, or military putsches, are not successful we can expect to see US, French, Zionist, NATO or UN imperialist troops arrive to 'restore order'. Internationalist workers and anti-imperialist fighters must take action to demand:

No to Imperialist or Zionist intervention! Prepare to stop shipments of troops and supplies! Internationalist dock workers prepare to tie up the docks! French and US workers: build general strikes to stop imperialist intervention!

The forces arrayed against the Tunisian working class far outweigh its own isolated power necessitating an internationalist perspective in order to advance the revolution and drive out imperialism. Already this uprising has the imperialist overlords and bourgeoisie of the Maghreb and the entire Arab Middle East trembling, as the masses realize

the dictators are paper tigers and the forces of theocratic control (militant Islam) cannot be counted on to contain the masses.

But imperialism has too much at stake knowing full well the internationalist implications of a victorious revolution. For the Tunisian revolution to be victorious it must spread past borders and reignite the Arab workers revolution. Today we see Egypt in flames, the masses are taking to the streets in all the major cities. Jordan, Yemen, Lebanon, Syria and even Albania are all feeling the ripple effect. The occupied masses of Palestine and Iraq are lifting their eyes in hope towards these events. A wave of revolutionary fervor is awakening the oppressed masses. For the Tunisian revolution to be successful it must spread and break out of its national and regional isolation.

We have seen the terrible consequences of the isolation of the revolutionary process to one country. First, with the USSR which through isolation had its revolution overturned by the Stalinists who made their peace with imperialism, selling out world revolution, engaging in pacts with Hitler and later at Yalta with Churchill and Roosevelt. Isolated, invaded and outspent militarily the revolution was destroyed from within. Now in Cuba the PCC rapidly restores capitalism as socialism on one island could not survive without the advance of socialism in the Americas. Tunisia's revolution will either be corrupted and reintegrated into imperialism's structures or will be the spark that ignites revolutions that initiate and sustain the world revolution.

Events are moving fast. Yesterday the call was to free political prisoners; today many are free, and the demand to free all remaining political prisoners must not be forgotten. In the next days and weeks we say:

- Generalize the neighborhood committees. Unite with workers committees in the factories and form workers assemblies where the demands of the revolution can be debated and voted on. Rise up worker's councils, soldier's councils, student and unemployed councils. These are the embryonic organs of dual power and the workers state.

- Demand the immediate sacking of the officer corps and the disbanding of the army into a popular soldiers and workers' militia with elected officers.
- Demand the immediate expropriation of the property of the imperialists, and of the Tunisian and Egyptian ruling classes that serve imperialism
- Repudiate the foreign debt!
- Nationalize the land! Distribute land to the peasants.
- Nationalize major industry without compensation to the imperialist and comprador bourgeoisie. Take the planning and direction of these industries under democratic workers control!
- Expropriation of the banks and formation of one state bank controlled by the workers representatives.
- For the formation of workers food and transport commissions to administer just distribution.
- No to coalition governments of the bourgeoisie! No to popular fronts between capitalist parties liberals or and the UGTT! For an independent workers government!
- For a workers, soldiers and farmers Government!
- Reverse the structural adjustment privatizations!
- Bread for all, jobs for the unemployed and land for the poor farmer.
- Stop all capital flight demand return of all stolen wealth to the people!
- Immediate suspension of debt to the IMF!
- For full employment! To provide a job for every unemployed youth and worker we fight for thirty hours work for forty hours pay at full union scale. For an immediate implementation of sliding scale of wages and prices.
- Solidarity with the workers of Algeria, Morocco Libya, Egypt, Jordan, Palestine rise up only together can we defeat imperialism.
- Solidarity with the workers of Southern Africa! US, European and Chinese imperialism have turned the continent into a blood bath over your resources. Your oppressors are our oppressors rise up to defeat all imperialisms, together we can build a rich and united federation of democratic workers states of Africa!
- Solidarity with the workers and students of Europe. We have watched you fight from Greece, across Italy, Spain, Portugal, France and event into England where your youth attack the Prince! Your dying system which has enslaved us for centuries can no longer share its wealth and elevate European worker far above our plight. Our present conditions are your future unless you join us to defeat your own bourgeoisie. Only a socialist United States of Europe can stand with the African workers to remake a just and viable world.
- Solidarity with the workers and students of America! Your empire is crumbling; we know our oppressors and your exploiters sit on the same boards of directors. This makes us family, the family of the exploited. We see your millions in prison. We see your multimillions out of work. You have more people out of work than Tunisia has people.
- We see your cities, counties and states collapsing. We see your financial bulwark is a house of cards. Brothers and sisters blow it down! Join the oppressed and super-exploited of the world stop giving your sons and daughters to imperialism's military. Stand down any attempt to crush our revolution; the best way to support the revolutionary process is to defeat your own ruling class. A successful socialist revolution in the US will guarantee the victory of socialism in North Africa.
- Brothers and sisters, learn the lessons of the revolutionary history. Unite to form a World Revolutionary Party that draws on the tradition of struggle of the previous communist internationals, based on the Trotskyist program of 1938, to coordinate and lead the international revolution to a victorious socialist revolution!

Statement of the Liaison Committee of
Communist Workers Group (NZ) &
Humanist Workers for
Revolutionary Socialism (US)
Originally released January 30, 2011

INTERNATIONAL NEWS AND ANALYSIS

Cuba for Sale

Cuba is going through the process of capitalist restoration. The 6th Cuban Communist Party Congress held in April 2011 resolved to make major changes for the Cuban economy to overcome its stagnation. These changes represent a wholesale embrace of the capitalist market. No longer limited to the 'international sector' where foreign corporates have made joint ventures with state corporates for years, but for the whole economy. Cubans are now being encouraged to adopt market practices such as buying state property as private property and employing wage workers. Thus the capitalist market will replace state allocation of resources as the main mechanism of the economy. Marxists analyze this as a shift from state planning to the law of value, and hence a shift from a Workers State, albeit deformed from its birth in 1959, to a Capitalist State.

The Cuban bureaucracy has ruled in place of workers, and thus deformed the character of the workers state since the revolution. It has played a counter-revolutionary role in the class struggle since it became dependent on the Soviet Union in the early 1960s. Cuba modeled itself on that Stalinist Degenerated Workers State and its theory of 'socialism in one country,' cutting itself off from the workers in the rest of Latin America and Africa where it consistently backed the national bourgeois leaderships against popular anti-imperialist struggles.

To cite one glaring example, Castro visited Chile to back Allende's parliamentary road to socialism against the independent armed struggle of the organized workers. The Pinochet coup was the result. Despite its loyalty to the Soviet Union the parasite bureaucrats of the Cuban CP learned the lesson from its collapse that workers' property could no longer allow it to extract its privileges from workers labor. But to

avoid the fate of the USSR which opened itself up to capitalism by means of rapid 'shock treatment,' Cuba looked towards China's gradual restoration of capitalism. It began to open a sector of the economy to foreign private investment and found that the new market relations with imperialism were much more lucrative for the bureaucracy than trying to defend the planned economy. So it now seeks to complete the process and turn itself into a new bourgeois class. The April Cuban CP Congress marks a decisive break from the revolution and the sealing of the capitalist counter-revolution as a world historic defeat of the international working class.

Following China's 'capitalist road'

The Cuban bureaucracy, desperate to become a new bourgeoisie, has 'sold' capitalist restoration using the same language as that used by the Chinese CP to cover its restoration of capitalism – 'market socialism.' China underwent a deformed workers revolution in 1949 where the bourgeoisie were overthrown and expropriated, but where the bureaucracy usurped the working class to rule 'Communist China' as a privileged caste living off workers' labor. But the planned economy underwent long term stagnation due to its isolation from the world economy and its failure to develop the forces of production.

A faction of the bureaucracy, 'the capitalist roaders,' took power and opened up the economy to the capitalist market. Resistance to restoration was decisively suppressed at Tiananmen in 1989. In 1992 at the 14th Chinese CP Congress and at the political committee meeting that immediately followed, the Chinese bureaucracy formally took the decision to restore capitalism and the law of value to organize the economy in place of the state plan. The CCP 'sold' this fateful decision as 'market socialism'

to disguise the end of the Deformed Workers State and the emergence of a new capitalist state. Since that time China has reintroduced capitalism in the whole of the economy. It encouraged imperialist powers to play a central role in revolutionizing production in the export sectors, rapidly accumulated capital in the state sector and adopted new technology. Today China is an emerging imperialist economy now recognized not only as an economic rival to the US and EU imperialist powers, but also a political rival that has become a model for many semi-colonial countries to break away from the domination of US and EU powers. This is clearly the case in Cuba where the Castroite CP since the demise of the Soviet Union has looked to China as the 'socialist' alternative to US imperialism, and thus a successful model for Cuba to follow along its own 'capitalist road.'

Chavista Popular Front

Cuba's 'capitalist road' converges with the much vaunted Chavista '21st century socialism.' This is the key to the defeat of Latin American workers which is necessary to allow Cuba to complete its historic counter-revolution. Chavez's Bolivarian revolution in Venezuela (which leads the ALBA countries including Bolivia and Ecuador) has trapped Latin American workers behind a popular front with China. Chavez famously talks of walking

hand in hand with China towards '21st century socialism.' It is the counter-revolutionary role of the Chavista popular front in Latin America that allows Cuba to complete a historic counter-revolution by the Chinese method of many defeats and repressions of workers over the decades and then to complete that historic defeat.

It follows that if the Cuban counter-revolution is to be defeated before it is altogether victorious, it is necessary to smash the Bolivarian popular front. We cannot stress this enough. Chavez and Castro are part of an 'anti-imperialist' bloc with China and semi-colonial semi-fascists like Gaddafi and Assad to stop the new wave of workers' uprisings against the global crisis-uprising which can play the critical role of breaking up the popular fronts and the fake 'market socialism' that ultimately serves imperialism.

So will the Cuban bureaucracy succeed in completing the restoration process before the world revolution destroys the Stalinist/fake Trotskyist barrier to socialist revolution in Latin America and brings a political revolution to Cuba? It depends on whether the Arab revolution deepens and spreads into the rest of Africa, into Europe, Asia and Latin America, where the strangle hold of the Stalinist/Menshevik popular front which ties the workers to imperialism is destroyed, and the international revolution advances to victory. Of



Closing session
of the
6th Congress
of the
Communist Party
of Cuba,
April 2011.

Photo by Jorge Luis Baños, Havana Times

course this means first and foremost a program for political revolution even at this late stage in Cuba.

Political Revolution, Socialist Revolution and the Permanent Revolution

Reality is complex and Marxists know that simplifying it unnecessarily results in tragic outcomes for the toiling masses. We are not 'objectivists.' We do not believe the 1938 program of Political Revolution against the usurpers of the workers' political power, the Stalinist parasite bureaucracy, will suffice in the Cuban case to produce a healthy workers state on the developmental path to socialism and communism. Methodologically speaking, the Transitional Program prepared us to analyze whatever situation would come the workers' way. But this is not at all to say that it gave us an exhaustive catalog of historical possibilities, as some sectarians would have us believe.

As the capitalist restoration has been underway for some time and has now, with the firing of a half million workers, gathered speed and force, increasingly the Transitional Demands of the program for socialist revolution are objectively called for. As the Castroite bureaucracy goes about transforming itself into a Chinese-model 'red' bourgeoisie, the Cuban working class must see in itself its own best hope for reversing this historic defeat by overthrowing the usurpers of the workers' political power and 'expropriating the expropriators' of the social wealth, of the labor of the revolutionary generations. Today combined tasks of the political revolution (against the bureaucracy) and social revolution (to defend social property, seize capitalist property, and put it under workers' control) are on the agenda. To accomplish these tasks, moreover, they need more than hope; they need a vanguard internationalist workers party of their own making, a new International, World Party of Socialism, based on the 1938 Transitional Program, one which never subordinates their well being or future to alien class interests.

Armed with a revolutionary workers' internationalist program, the Cuban working class remains the best hope in reversing this historic defeat by overthrowing the Castroist bureaucracy which is on the point of transforming itself

into a copy of the Chinese 'red' bourgeoisie. But of course, behind the Cuban workers it is necessary to mobilize the Latin American masses currently contained behind the Chavista popular front. Here we have a program for socialist revolution that must break from the popular front, exposing its leaders as bourgeois Bonapartists who while posing left in the anti-imperialist fight, are actually the agents of imperialism. There is no better weapon to explode the Chavista popular front than the exposure of its complicity in defending the dictatorships in North Africa and the Middle East. Why does Chavez defend Gaddafi and Assad, the two most murderous dictators posing as 'socialist'? Because Chavez recognizes, in their bloody suppression of the masses, precisely what steps he will have to take to repress the masses when it becomes clear to them that he too is the agent of the imperialist bourgeoisie! The role of revolutionaries today then is to awaken the youth vanguard who are leading the revolution in North Africa and the Middle East, with our program for Permanent Revolution, and to fight for the unity of this vanguard with the workers organized in the base of the unions, to fight for socialist revolution, defeating by armed struggle not only the dictatorships imposed by imperialism, and the facade of 'democratic' imperialism represented by social democracy in the imperialist countries, but also and most critically, the death trap of the Chavista popular front that ties the hands of the vanguard of the revolution behind Bonapartists whose role is to prepare for the full-on fascist reaction when it becomes clear to imperialism that it faces a revolutionary challenge to its class rule.

Defend the right to a job! No Layoffs!

Defend Socialized Medicine!

Defend and expand socialized agriculture!

For workers' control of the economic plan!

Stop the capitalist restorationists!

Drive out the Castroite fake communists!

No to 21st century "market socialism"

Down with Canadian, Chinese and Spanish imperialist exploitation!

Defeat the stranglehold of US imperialism!

(**Editorial**, continued from page 6)

1930s, government budget cuts target those most in need of housing, food, health care, education, and other necessities. Black and brown youth are sent to prison for life in record numbers, while poor women who lose their babies to miscarriage or stillbirth face murder charges from the same state that refuses to provide sufficient funding for prenatal care and substance abuse treatment.

Contrary to what utopians and “progressives” would have workers believe, the truth is that capitalism is bound to drag the working class and the oppressed along with it as it suffers its death agony, subjecting us to one bloodletting after another unless and until the working class puts it out of our misery. As the system implodes, it will create trade wars, currency wars, proxy wars, black ops, drone wars, and hot wars. It may even launch the last war, by ushering in a global catastrophe, nuclear or climatic, that destroys civilization.

Short of total destruction, two possibilities exist. In response to a major upsurge in working class resistance to the imposition of austerity, the state will move more and more toward fascism and use of Bonapartist and semi-fascist means of control. Alternatively, the working class can take the road to self-emancipation through the mechanisms of building the revolutionary party of the working class, nationally and internationally, to advocate for, advance, and lead the workers to the creation of extra-parliamentary workers’ democracy.

Organizations based on the rank and file workers, the unemployed workers, and the oppressed communities offer the road out of the conundrum of the cycles of capitalist crises. Only a workers’ government rooted in the workplace in factory and other workplace committees, and on the street in neighborhood councils and in district and regional workers’ councils, can carry out the restructuring necessary to eliminate want and institute democratic distribution of the social wealth. Standing in the way is the labor leadership.

Labor Fakers Use Fear to Keep Us in Line

Today we have leaders in the trade unions, as well as in the Social Democratic, Stalinist,

Democratic, Green, and Labor Parties, who work to prevent the political independent organization of the working class and to tie the workers with a thousand cords to the very capitalist class that exploits us. In our pieces on the Wisconsin episode, as well as the *Draft Program for Europe Rising*, we examine the role that these forces play in corralling the working class into acceptable forms of struggle. The liberals, progressives, and radicals rely on a flawed analysis of the wrongs of capitalism as a moral failure, which drives them to an activist frenzy of bourgeois reform solutions such as tax reform, fair trade, green capitalism, spirit-based exchange, and barter. These idealist visionaries ultimately collapse their critique into support for the “lesser evil” of the capitalist solutions.

You can count on these intra-election cycle “rebels” to beat a path back to the Democrats as fast as you can say President Michelle Bachmann. Despite the nostalgia for FDR’s rhetoric, “the only thing we have to fear is fear itself” – reinterpreted by today’s new agers and pop-psychologists as “don’t run from your fear-look deeply into it” – when push comes to shove, these liberals, progressives, and radicals capitulate to and sell fear, objectively carrying out the will of the ruling class. “Be very afraid; vote for the Democrats or else you’ll get worse . . . beware the boogie man . . . Romney, Palin, Bachmann . . . oh my! . . .” Yes, Dorothy, we’re not in Kansas any more. We Marxists can see the man behind the curtain, and we are not afraid! But our leaders want us to be. They count on that fear to keep us from taking independent political action – from launching the political general strike to fight for workers’ power.

Despite the anger AFL-CIO top Richard Trumka expresses at the Democratic Party, neither he nor any other major labor leaders have uttered a word about running labor candidates, launching a labor party, or heaven forbid preparing for a general strike. Rather, these social imperialist labor fakers tell workers to stand down our critique of Obama’s wars, and not to mobilize the antiwar movement despite the drone attacks on Somalia, Yemen, and Pakistan, and the new air war on Libya.

(Continued on page 54)

Europe Rising: A Draft Action Program

***Editor's Note:** This draft program is the product of a joint effort by HWRs and its liaison committee partner, the CWG-NZ. It was posted on July 4, 2011, both on HWRs's Facebook page and on Redrave, the CWG-NZ's blog. We are publishing our draft in the interest of promoting discussion among those interested in pursuing the possibility of principled regroupment.*

The revolution will not be twittered says a facebook friend. To which we answer: #tahrir #spanishrevolution #Libya #Yemen #Syria #italianrevolution #frenchrevolution #palestine etc. What is happening in Spain, Portugal, Greece, Italy, France and elsewhere in Europe, is the opening of a social revolution promoted by social media, inspired in part by the Arab Spring, the pro-democracy revolutions in North Africa and the Middle East, and also by the 'outrage' sparked by the treacherous role of social democracy. But all of these uprisings have their roots in the resistance of the labour movement to capitalist austerity coming up against dictatorships as in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), and the failure of institutionalised social democracy to stop austerity, as in Spain, Portugal and Greece.

This has led to the mobilising of unemployed and educated youth by means of facebook and twitter against these austerity regimes. In MENA the unions have been outlawed or repressed by the dictatorships. In Europe the unions have been tied to social democracy to act as barriers to mass mobilisations. Ostensibly, these uprisings take the form of democratic revolutions rejecting the political system and main political parties that are 'owned' by the banks, or by corrupt dictators. There is a common opposition to being mere 'commodities – bought and sold by the banks' with no political rights.

A moment's reflection shows that rejection of fraudulent politics 'owned' by banks and

corrupt politicians is objectively targeted at the heart of capitalism at a time when to survive it has to force young workers to work for slave wages to pay for its structural crisis. We can therefore see that the content, if not the form, of these uprisings are in fact the opening shots of potentially anti-capitalist and socialist revolutions. This seems to be taken for granted on the streets and is reported in the mainstream media. What is not yet widely understood, is that these revolutions that are beginning, to meet the demands of the youth and other working people, must become openly socialist to succeed, and failing that they will subside into defeat and worse, counter-revolution.

So what has to happen to make these revolutions succeed? There are many competing theories and programs on offer each putting forth a program for success but we can roughly put them into three categories, liberal, radical and Marxist.

Liberal Reform

If we start with the liberal reformists such as Democracia real Ya! their program asks for no more than making capitalists pay their fair share of austerity rather than imposing it upon the youth and other workers. Their understanding of capitalism is how capital presents itself at the level of distribution of income shares. They don't want to be bought and sold by the banks, but do not object to fair wages paid by fair employers. So these street reformers have rejected the institutionalised reformists such as the Spanish Socialist Workers Party, who they see as 'owned' by the banks, but they are not opposed to the masses creating new parties or backing more radical parties, to challenge the excess power of the finance sector. They are not yet anti-capitalists. This is the stage that the Egyptian revolutionaries have reached. They are negotiating with the Supreme Command of the

Armed Forces (SCAF) to prevent the old parties, notably the PSA of Mubarak, and the Muslim Brotherhood, from dominating politics and open the elections to the new forces for change. Its reformist objectives embrace both secular and liberal Islam currents.

These street reformists will quickly find their liberal assumptions are put to the test as they come up against the class character of the state which is to manage exploitative class relations on behalf of the ruling class. So if the European uprisings that we are now seeing spreading from Spain and Portugal to Greece, Italy and France etc., are in part inspired by the MENA revolutions, then the reformists will quickly learn the lessons of those revolutions as the struggle to make even the most minimal changes to the existing 'system'. The reformists will be radicalised as anti-capitalists.

Radical Reform

The second grouping is of the anti-capitalist radicals who speak of the need to make a revolution to overcome capitalist exploitation and oppression but without taking state power. This includes a range of modernist political currents from anarchist, autonomist to indigenous and Islam. They view really existing capitalism as exploitative at the level of exchange. This means they are still stuck at the level of the appearance of inverted production relations as exchange relations. It appears that to get profits bosses pay workers less than the value of their labour. The state is totally complicit in its legal backing of this unequal exchange. Typically, Radicals think they can defeat the power of the capitalist state by non-violent mass movements that refuse to play by the rules of existing institutions. Therefore to break with the state and the law mass resistance is necessary in refusing to work as wage slaves. The state will try to smash resistance to work by bringing out the police etc, but resistance on the street and workplace will destroy the state's legitimacy so its moral authority will dissolve and with it the employers ability to enforce unequal exchange.

The pitfalls of this radicalism all flow from its fetishised exchange analysis. The masses cannot impose a radical reform that equalises exchange without a social revolution that

overthrows the capitalist state and capitalist social relations. The capitalists and their state are not constrained by a morality that acknowledges unequal exchange. They think they have the total right to impose their property rights on workers and to force them to work, and will use the state to smash resistance unless it is organised as a revolutionary power capable of defeating capitalist state power in an armed struggle for socialism. The danger of radical anti-capitalism is that young workers won't learn these lessons until they have been defeated. To avoid this danger it is necessary for Marxist revolutionaries to use the conditions for intense ideological struggle and debate to convince reformists, radicals, and non-Marxist socialists that they need a Marxist program for revolutionary socialism.

Marxist Revolution

While the liberals think that capitalism can be reformed to produce a fair distribution of income, and radicals think that capitalism can be reformed to produce equal exchange of value, Marxists understand that capitalism is based on fundamentally unequal production relations that have to be overthrown before social equality is possible. But this is not a consciousness that can be arrived at spontaneously by camping in the city square or even by heated ideological debates. Capitalism is able to hide its exploitation at the point of production by turning production relations on their head as exchange relations which makes it appear that individuals can be made equal by getting paid the full value of commodities they produce. Marx called this commodity fetishism because instead of labour-time being understood as the measure of value, value now presents itself mysteriously as inherent in the commodities themselves. Marx discovered that while workers got paid the full value when they sold their labour power for a wage, that unique 'queer' commodity is able to produce more value than its own value.

The result is the expropriation of surplus value from the working class in the production process. Surplus value is the source of profits, and when insufficient surplus value is produced profits fall. When profits fall capital is not invested in production but in speculation



Photo by John Kolesidis, Reuters

Greek workers show the way by fighting back against the forces of state repression during a rally against the imposition of austerity measures in June 2011.

in existing values. This causes price bubbles in excess of values that must go bust. Capitalist crisis therefore begins at the point of production not in the banks which must go bust when the speculative bubbles burst. Thus the role of Marxist revolutionaries in the revolutions that have begun in MENA and Europe is to critique liberal and radical reformist politics as unable to confront the basic cause of capitalist crisis and austerity – capitalist social relations and the state which exists to reproduce and enforce those relations. Marxists explain what causes the ‘outrage’ and ‘indignity’ and also what must be done to eliminate that cause by means of socialist revolution.

What Must Be Done!

Commodity fetishism means that workers do not become spontaneously revolutionary. Things are not as they appear. It is necessary to go from surface appearances to the essence of capitalist production relations. Marxism is a revolutionary critique of capitalism that penetrates this essence and exposes the

fundamental contradiction between use value and exchange value as the basis of class struggle – the motor of history. Marxist revolutionaries intervene in these uprisings of the outraged and indignatos to resolve the basic contradiction by overthrowing capitalism and creating a socialist revolution. Our method is the transitional method of Trotsky.

Trotsky’s method is called transitional because it starts with what is necessary to resolve the contradiction, not what seems to be possible. We start with what we need to live, not what the bosses can afford: that is, immediate democratic and economic demands. We recognise that we are in a

structural crisis that has two possible outcomes – either the bosses’ need to defeat the uprisings and make us pay for the survival of their rotten system, or we need to make a revolution to expropriate the expropriators and create a socialist society. By raising these demands we prove that in fighting for them workers must then ‘cross the bridge’ to fight as an independent class prepared to take state power. There is no halfway house. For the working class to survive, capitalism must die!

Democratic and immediate economic demands:

- **Jobs for all by cutting working hours!**
- **Living wage and basic income!**
- **Freedom of speech and assembly!**
- **Equal rights on basis of nationality, gender and sexual orientation!**

Revolutionary leadership is necessary to transform ‘peaceful’ demonstrations in city squares from Egypt to Spain into armed working class revolutions. Our demands are designed to take workers consciousness from liberal pro-democracy to the proletarian

dictatorship through the process of 'fighting and learning' how to become an independent class. Class independence means a total break from the bourgeoisie and its class state. We can prove that the state is not class neutral by fighting for 'bread' and 'freedom'; being the best defenders of bourgeois democracy when the capitalists cannot afford it. We can expose the union bureaucracy as the agents of the bosses' by demanding they take sides. We can unmask Social Democracy as bourgeois parties run by the labour bureaucracy to impose austerity. We demonstrate that popular fronts which trap workers in political alliances with the bourgeoisie are in fact counter-revolutionary disarming workers preparing the way for fascists to smash the working class. We prove beyond doubt that the armed forces of the state exist to defend the class interests of the capitalists when they attack peaceful demonstrations. We do this by praxis – saying and doing. Our main tool for this revolutionising of proletarian consciousness is the Political General Strike.

Class independence demands:

- **Break with the bureaucracy! Rank and file control of unions!**
- **Break with the bourgeoisie! No to Social Democrat traitors! No to popular fronts!**
- **Down with the Officers caste in the Military!**
- **Smash the Fascists, no quarter!**

The Political General Strike

There is an almost universal vagueness in talking about the General Strike. That's because it has been debased by reformists to mean days of action to pressure bourgeois governments. But revolutionary Marxists regard the Political General Strike as a political strike to take power. We strike until we win state power. For that reason the demand should never be raised unless we also state what must be done to prepare for a successful General Strike. A General Strike concentrates workers power by taking control of production, and by splitting the army and winning over of the rank and file so that a 'dual power' situation is created. But it can only do that if it is armed to defend itself from state forces, paramilitaries and fascist thugs. There

is never a peaceful transfer of power from a ruling class to a revolutionary class. Only a revolution that is armed can defeat the armed counter-revolution.

In Egypt the revolution is currently contained by the SCAF. This is because those who rose up to remove the Mubarak regime had illusions in the army and the bourgeois state as class neutral. To win, the revolution must now unite the youth rebels with the unions and prepare a general strike to split the army and create a dual power situation. In Greece where the pro-democracy revolutions are most advanced in Europe, the same demands are necessary. Workers have to prepare for a Political General Strike by forming strike committees, councils, militias and the national coordination of these organs to win the strike and take power, smash the state and impose a proletarian class dictatorship, or Workers Government.

Workers' power demands:

- **Build workers' councils!**
- **Form defence committees and workers' militias!**
- **Unite workers' councils nationally and internationally!**
- **For an Indefinite Political General Strike!**

The Workers' Government

The crowning demand of a revolutionary program is the seizure of power and smashing of the state. This was the only major change that Marx and Engels made to The Communist Manifesto after the defeat of the Paris Commune in 1871. The crisis of Marxism and of revolutionary leadership in the period since WW2 has forced a retreat from the Marxist/Bolshevik position on the proletarian dictatorship. Reformists of all colours have baulked at the use of this term and watered down the question of talking power to one of a peaceful evolutionary transition from bourgeois democracy to workers democracy. But Marx proved in 1871 that bourgeois democracy is only a mask for bourgeois dictatorship and that a revolutionary class must be a dictatorship to

(Continued on page 29)

(**Europe Rising**, continued from page 28)

defeat the reactionary class. The Bolsheviks confirmed this in practice in 1917. For the first time in the history of class societies, however, socialist revolution can create the conditions for the revolutionary proletariat to end classes and with it the need for a class dictatorship.

So when Trotskyists talk about a Workers Government, we do not mean that in Egypt workers will vote for a party where the working class majority is represented. Or that in Spain or Greece a new workers party will successfully defeat Social Democracy and resolve the contradiction between use-value and exchange-value peacefully. That is a reactionary utopia that can only lead to the defeat of the

revolutions that have begun. Our revolutionary utopia is based on the real prospect that capitalism has prepared the way for socialism. The working class is the revolutionary class, the vast majority. It is proving every day that it is ready, willing and able to fight. All that is lacking is a revolutionary Marxist party that can intervene with a revolutionary program as a guide to socialist revolution, to transform the necessary fight for survival into the utopia of a socialist future.

For a new World Party of Socialist Revolution based on the 1938 Transitional Program!

For socialist federations of North Africa, Middle East and Europe!

Workers of the world, unite; you have nothing to lose but your chains!

We Salute the Launch of the Revolutionary Workers Group of Zimbabwe (RWG-Z)

It is with rare and wonderful satisfaction that we note the organizational launch of the Revolutionary Workers Group (Zimbabwe) (RWG-Z). We salute them for their break from the theory of Cliffism, which sought to chain them to the popular front politics of the MDC. We rejoice with them in their escape from the suffocating diktat politics of the centrist FLTI, whose Argentinian "Liders" sought to mislead the African working class into a political dead end by refusing to recognize the gold rush of Chinese imperialism onto the terrain of interimperialist competition in Southern Africa.

The RWG-Z's recent progress has been breathtaking. Not yet two years have elapsed since a rank-and-file revolt in the then-International Socialist Organization-Zimbabwe (ISO-Z) tossed out the leadership hand-picked by London. After junking the MDC-entry project that London had sought to impose, the RWG-Z comrades set themselves the task of reviewing the entire development of the Trotskyist movement. This put them on a theoretical and programmatic path of their

own, and on a convergent course with those political forces which seek to build a new revolutionary international based on the principles, program, and statutes upon which the Fourth International was founded in 1938.

There is a Leninist lawfulness to this historical development, the launching of the RWG-Z. The crucible of contemporary Zimbabwe in which this young proletariat is immersed is bound to separate different class political interests and forces, but along with these somewhat usual facts of life in neocolonial and postcolonial countries we have the rare development of a Marxist workers' leadership that has manifested an honest political conscience! For our Liaison Committee the launch of the RWG-Z is an important and welcome event. So long as they continue on their current political path, we will render them every assistance our resources permit. **Workers of the World, Unite! Forward to the World Party of Socialist Revolution! Forward to the World Socialist Revolution!**

Draft Theses on the World Situation

Joint Statement by HWRS and the CWG-NZ
October 31, 2010

1. Objectively we are living through a major structural crisis of global capitalism. We said when this crisis hit in mid 07 that it was a major crisis of falling profits endemic to capitalism. The subprime crisis was only a surface effect of underlying failure to invest in production that was not profitable. So-called 'financialization' is just the appearance of 'finance capital' (understood in Lenin's terms as the fusion of industrial and banking capital) being driven out of the productive circuit by the tendency for the rate of profit to fall. The result has been many trillions of overproduced surplus capital speculating in existing commodities driving up their prices creating a bubble of fictitious capital. The crisis will only be resolved for the ruling class when they have devalued sufficient surplus capital to enable profits to be restored.

2. The first phase of the crisis brought about the biggest rescue of capital by the state in history yet the crisis is not over and capital is still facing trillions of bad debts which have yet to be devalued or destroyed. Nor have the ruling classes yet imposed the deep austerity measures that they need to restore their profits. The initial reaction to the 'financial crisis' was to increase state spending i.e. reflation. According to Ticktin, however, this year the G20 made the decision to reverse reflation and radically deflate by massively cutting state spending to reduce budget deficits. Only the US resisted this change, probably because the US is not bound by the normal rules and can run massive debts because the dollar is the world currency. The logic of a structural crisis as the 'solution' to falling profits is to 'restructure' or devalue

capital – both constant (plant and raw materials) and variable capital (wages) – by concentrating and centralising capital as the weak firms go bankrupt and strong firms buy up their cheap assets. This means necessarily in the epoch of imperialism a growing rivalry between imperialist powers to re-divide the world in the survival of the fittest monopoly firms. This rivalry takes economic form in trade rivalry as each state attempts to block imports but increase exports, but can only be resolved by imperialist war and international class war. Today at this point in history this rivalry is most intense between the US led bloc and the China bloc, and it is this growing antagonism that gives concrete expression to the dominant aspects of the epoch of imperialism, of crises, wars and revolutions. Once again a structural crisis means we have to choose between socialism or barbarism and we are well down the road to barbarism.

3. The so-called currency war is a first step in a trade war with China that the US cannot win because China's low labor costs combined with rapid technological upgrading means it is the most productive of commodities with least labour time (value) and can out-compete its rivals. China has overtaken Japan and Germany as the workshop of the world and cannot be beaten in the trade war. The value of the yuan is therefore not artificially kept low but reflects China's capitalist productive dynamism. What is more China is moving rapidly from a capital importing country to a capital exporting country which means it is extending its high productivity base globally in sourcing cheap raw materials and labor power and find-

ing new markets outside the US and Asia in which to manufacture and sell its cheap commodities.

4. China is winning the trade war and rapidly expanding its spheres of interest at the expense of the US and its main partners the UK, France and Spain. A number of countries have avoided the worst aspects of the recession through trade driven by China. US allies like Italy, Germany and Australia are trading and investing heavily with China. Turkey is turning from the EU towards China. In Brazil one fraction of the national bourgeoisie is opposed to further growth in China investments especially in agriculture and in key sectors such as communications. The ALBA states are becoming dependent on China and looking for new loans to maintain popularity with the masses. In Ecuador, Correa is doing deals with China to build dams and infrastructure and loan money to balance the budget. The recent attempted coup was a weak move by the US to exploit discontent with Correa's move to the right which was, not to appease the US but rather China which is driving hard bargains with Ecuador.

5. This growing rivalry with China and the increasing power of the China bloc (which threatens to split NATO) means that the US must rev up its use of military force around the world to counter China's influence. The struggle for control of Central Asia that has justified the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan has not been able to contain or weaken China or Russia. Russia is now looking to collaborate with NATO in its military intervention in Afghanistan. The Wikileaks expose the fact that Iraq was always under the dominance of the Shi'ites. Karzai gets money from Iran and seeks a deal with the Taliban. The dominant national blocs in Iraq and Afghanistan are aligned to Iran and Pakistan respectively both of which are closer to the China bloc than the US bloc. Therefore the US must move on Iran and Pakistan to squeeze out China. The US is renewing its plans for building the TAPI pipeline from Turkmenistan through Afghanistan and Pakistan to India to weld an alliance in South Asia to break Russia and China's domination of Central Asian oil.

6. The growing US drone attacks on Pakistan mean that the US wants to take direct

control of Pakistan to isolate its nuclear weapons and to checkmate China's overland access to Arabian Gulf and Iran. Bangladesh has now been incorporated into NATO South Asian allies and is sending troops to the war in Afghanistan. In the growing military confrontation over control of Central Asia is that nuclear armed India is being pressured by the US into buying Patriot 3 missiles to complete the ring of missiles surrounding Russia and China stretching from Japan to Afghanistan. India is also preparing for border wars with China over Kashmir and Nepal. Bangladesh is now part of the encirclement.

7. Ultimately, and inevitably these actual and impending wars must be at the expense of the workers of the world. The huge cost of military spending is driving the US further into debt. While it is still reflating with Quantitative Easing Mark 2 (printing money) this money is going to the banks which are not investing but paying out profits and bonuses. It is not going to the workers who are still losing jobs and homes. With reflation causing inflation the US working class is suffering an historic decline in living standards not seen since the 1930s. The US is bullying Japan and China to carry the debt which becomes translated into attacks on workers living standards in these countries. China is easing back on buying US bonds and shows no signs of bending to any of the threats being issued by the US. It appears instead to be moving to more FDI in the US. Japan is more compliant but unable to finance US debt but its economy is not strong enough. Japan under the Democratic Party government is under pressure from Japanese workers opposed to paying billions for US bases.

8. Thus the US and other increasingly bankrupt imperialists have no option but to impose the cost of the crisis onto the backs of the world's workers with so-called austerity measures. The bailouts of the banks has imposed big budget deficits which the ruling class is determined to cut by cutting social spending and/or by "quantitative easing" both of which cuts the value of variable capital (wages). The US, UK and EU imperialist states are forcibly expropriating surplus value not only from workers today, but from workers in future generations, to maintain the monopoly profits of their imperi-

alist classes. This means massive unemployment and social spending. These so-called austerity measures are draconian. In every country the ruling class is trying to solve its crisis of falling profits by reducing taxes on capital, and this means massively cutting social spending on the social wage. In Britain the Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition government is promising a cut in public sector spending in excess of 20%. In Greece, Spain, Portugal, Ireland and France there are major cuts on social spending being imposed on workers.

9. As unemployment rises and services are cut, the anger of millions of workers facing poverty and destitution is growing. But this anger is being steered by the main union bosses into token protests to build mass pressure to push the bourgeois regimes to the left containing and diverting the rise of working class militancy onto the parliamentary road. Where the social democratic parties are in power imposing austerity as in Greece and Spain, the fight-back is being limited by the unions to pressuring these governments to make these austerity measures less damaging. In the US where the open bourgeois Democrat Party controls Congress and the Presidency, the One Nation Project is being organized by the union tops to put pressure on the Democrats to adopt a new deal Keynesian counter-cyclic policy. Where it is out of power, social democratic parties are shifting slightly to the left to head off mass militancy against the ruling conservative parties, so that this fight-back is contained and channelled into the election of Social Democratic governments at the next elections. In Britain the Blairite Labour Party under Ed Milliband has feinted slightly to the left in recognizing that if the CONDEM regime cannot contain a mass fightback and is brought down, then social democracy can still try to play a role in containing militant industrial action from developing into a revolutionary challenge to the bourgeois system itself.

10. These social democrats or left liberals are arguing that austerity is a wrong policy since it leads to deflation and depression. They hope to direct workers anger into social democratic and left liberal programs that can solve the crisis. In Britain the fake left SWP (see New Left Blog) argues that the CONDEM austerity is not necessary for the restoration of

profits! Of course this exposes their non-Marxist view that capitalist crises are merely the result of wrong policies and elite greed. Marxists know that capitalist crises are the inevitable result of capital over-accumulation, and while reformists sow illusions in the possibility of reflation to boost jobs and incomes, crises can only be resolved in the bosses' interests by massive deflation. The crisis forces a devaluation of total capital by destroying the weakest banks and firms allowing the strongest to concentrate and centralize their 'good' assets into even bigger monopolies. We can see this has been happening since 2007. It is not in the interests of Morgan Stanley, HSBC, Citibank etc as well as the big Euro banks and big Chinese banks, resort to reflation if it devalues the good assets and prevents the devaluing of bad assets. These gigantic monopolies completely control their nation states and dictate economic policy to protect their class interests. This is why the bailouts have gone into bosses' pockets and not into new investment in production. This means that the ruling class will close ranks behind their national states in defence of their monopoly corporations and make weakest firms, nations, and of course workers, go to the wall.

11. The result is that the destruction of total value to restore profits includes the total value of labour power through job losses and wage cuts. Thus it is the working class that ultimately always pays for their crisis. As the austerity bites we can see the spontaneous fight-back spreading from Greece to Spain, to France in the EU. From the first strikes that began in 2008 in Greece we have seen a succession of strikes controlled by the bureaucracy. In Spain it is the same, no strike call has led to a national coordination of strike actions, or an indefinite general strike. Not until France have we seen the strikes spread and threaten to break out of the control of the bureaucrats. Yet, even here we do not see a breakdown of bureaucratic control, because no revolutionary leadership has emerged that can turn spontaneous strikes into a general strike to bring down the bourgeois government and put a workers government in their place. The fake Trotskyists of the NPA say that they will not call for a general strike and will back the nego-

tiations between the bureaucrats and the bourgeois regime. (Le Monde.) The IMT calls for a general strike to defeat the government and paralyse the economy, and for the Communist Party to demand the nationalisation of the big companies and the banks!

12. The objective dynamic of worsening crisis clashes with the subjective absence of a revolutionary leadership to lead the working class to solve the crisis in its class interests. The failure to build this leadership will mean that working class struggle is unable to challenge the power of the ruling class leaving the middle classes who are also hit by the crisis and the more backward non-unionized sectors of the working class ripe for fascist mobilization to smash the workers organisations as responsible for the flood of migrant workers, and for the loss of jobs and the austerity measures rather than the capitalist class itself. In France while the unions mobilise strike action there is almost no organized opposition to Sarkozy's campaign of forced extradition of Roma and the ban against the wearing of burqa in public. It is clear that the bureaucratic leadership of Labour and social democratic parties are part of the national salvation blocs that are always formed by the imperialist and national bourgeoisie to unite workers and middle class with the bourgeoisie against foreign workers and against the international threat of a socialist revolution.

13. In the face of mounting evidence of man-made climate change and big changes in

weather patterns that cause devastating floods and crop failures, the climate change denier lobby is working for the corporates to enflame the populist petty bourgeois and backward workers into blaming carbon taxes on profits as more taxation of the little person by big states. The oil giants like BP can still get away with massive destruction in wars for oil in the Middle East, and a catastrophic oil spill in the Caribbean and pays only a small part of the social and environmental costs of such capitalist disasters. Here we see the full face of capitalism riding roughshod over national states to destroy the forces of production including the habitat of whole populations as in Pakistan and in the Gulf of Mexico. And while China is now leading the world in 'green' technology, it is still building dams and nuclear plants, rail-tracks through tundra and forests around the world, high speed rail even in California, cultivating vast tracts of agricultural land despoiling natural habitats in Brazil and Tibet, enlarging its carbon footprint with each giant step around the world.

14. We can see the proto-fascist movements already in existence. In Britain the national salvation bloc is the B4Bw campaign of 2009 which sought to protect jobs for British workers against other EU workers. This puts the British trade unions in the same reactionary national camp as the BNP and other extreme right forces. In Germany and the Netherlands there are proto-fascist organisations campaigning against migrant workers, especially of Is-



**Pollution spews from
an industrial site
near the
Yangtze River in China
(April 2007)**

Photo courtesy Maxful
via Flickr

lamic religion. Germany has had a backlash against immigrants and bailing out Greece. Merkel has called 'multiculturalism' a failure. The EU is in danger of being torn apart by the centripetal forces of the bipolar world into rival xenophobias. In the US the Tea Party is a rightwing populist movement aligned to the Republicans that can easily develop into a fascist movement. As the crisis deepens we will see the working class organize to resist its attacks and this will pose a threat to the bourgeoisies who will revive the old fascist arguments for national salvation against alien forces.

15. While Islam has been projected as the main enemy of freedom and democracy since the collapse of the Soviet Union, it is now being rivalled by Chinese 'communism.' The US ruling class is leading the demonizing of China as a communist regime that is putting capitalist democracy under threat. What underlies this demonization of Chinese 'communism' is of course the rise of China as a threat to US hegemony. The weakness of the US economy has prompted a suggestion by a US professor teaching in China that China could even invest its excess finance capital in the US to fund a 'new deal'? That this can even be proposed marks the perception of a real decline of the US as the hegemonic imperialist power to one that can become dependent on China as the newly hegemonic power. This sense of a loss of hegemonic power is what underlies the blaming of the crisis on China. The rallying of the Tea Party reactionary populism against liberal or 'socialist' elites implies that the US people have been sold out to China and to Latin American migrants. China and Bolivarian 'socialism' becomes perceived as the overarching enemy of the American people and the cause of its historic decline.

16. The fake 'left' defends Castro and Chavez from US imperialism, but sows illusions in their converging brand of Chinese-style 'market socialism', or 'green capitalism', and so disarms the international working class against the rise of anti-China xenophobia and proto-fascism in the imperialist countries. (Green Left News). The reformist left puts its faith in bourgeois Bonapartist leaders (who balance between the masses and the imperial-

ist bourgeoisie) in the ALBA countries and the restorationist bureaucratic Bonapartists in Cuba rather than call for a political revolution because they think that China as a global power offers a progressive alternative to the imperialist US and its allies. This treachery leaves workers unprepared to stop the restoration of capitalism in Cuba and the coming counter-revolutionary wars at the hands of all the imperialist ruling classes, including China.

17. Facing this objective crisis and the subjective crisis of the failure of revolutionary leadership this puts a huge responsibility on the shoulders of revolutionary Trotskyists to struggle all the more urgently to re-found a revolutionary international on the basis of the Transitional Program of 1938. Trotsky laid down the principles of revolutionary internationalism to fight imperialist crises in the 1930s. In the epoch of imperialism workers have to break from the patriotic popular fronts with their bourgeoisie, and with the labor bureaucrats that act as the agents of the bourgeoisie, and refuse to fight against the workers of other nations. Instead they become brothers and sisters of working class fighters in every nation. Facing a deepening crisis and the inevitable transformation of trade wars between rival imperialist powers into military wars, we must demand the unity of workers of all countries to fight for an international socialist revolution. We must defend all workers especially the most oppressed – on national, ethnic, gender and sexual grounds – against attacks by uniting them into one force across national borders to defeat all attempts by the ruling class and their labor lieutenants to divide and rule the world proletariat.

18. The refounding of a new World Party of Socialism based on a Leninist Trotskyist program will solve the crisis of revolutionary leadership. The only way for workers internationally to stop the fascist counter-revolution is to break from the Bolivarian and Chinese Bonapartist bourgeoisies and their bureaucratic lieutenants and organise their own independent workers councils and workers militias to mount political general strikes to bring down the bourgeois regimes and replace them with Workers and Peasants governments forming socialist federations on every continent!

CLASS STRUGGLE IN THE US

After Wisconsin, Which Road Forward: Class Independence or Class Collaboration?

Prepare for a General Strike, or Carry Water for the Democrats Through 2012?

Editor's Note: *HWRs distributed the following article as a flyer at the Labor Notes Troublemakers School in Oakland, California, on June 18, 2011. Two of the other articles in this section are based on flyers that HWRs distributed at rallies and other public events supporting the Wisconsin State Capitol occupation during the spring of 2011.*

Our unions' leaderships are not prepared to fight and win in the current economic crisis. They lack an analysis of the nature of the crisis and are therefore incapable of mapping a road forward. They have buried themselves so far inside the corporate Democratic Party that they can't see they are feeding the hand that bites us! They believe their own mythology that corporate capitalism can be run in a "moral" manner, and that rational pressure exerted in the traditional manner can resolve the crisis in the interest of the working class. Not only are they mistaken at every step in the road, but their strategy and tactics are leading the working class to defeat and preventing the independent political action needed for the working class to defend and advance our own historic interests. After serving as a tool of class peace for so many decades, these leaders do not know how to respond to the objective fact that the bosses have declared class war on us, and this is a fight to the death!

What the Labor Tops Don't Want Workers to Know

Labor leaders bemoan the decline of the "middle class," but the real crime is that they went along with academic sociology and the TV culture which for decades has told workers they are not a "working class," defined by their social/economic relationship to the means of

production, but rather a "middle class" defined by income level and the culture of consumerism. In the face of the economic decline of the American empire and the realignment of economic power toward a rising China, the "middle class" expectations of the American labor movement are no longer affordable in a "profit first" driven economy. Our expectations have burst the limits of capitalism! This objective fact leaves the labor tops with nothing to offer workers today!

The international economic crisis has not been resolved. Billions were thrown at banks and none of it trickled down to jobs. Rather the big banks, speculators and corporate elite used it for personal bonuses, to continue speculative trading and to "rationalize" their companies, increasing capital expenditure and cutting employees to assure returns for stockholders. As American workers' wage packages (wages, COLAS, pensions and healthcare) are slashed in an "employer's market" here at home, across the world in China workers' wages are rising under the pressure of a working class which holds, on average, 435 strikes a day. Businesses, *The Economist* tells us, are seeking to set a price point in their purchase of labor power (the commodity that workers sell) on the international market, before they can bring jobs back to the USA. But even the most optimistic economists predict that lowering American wages would not bring back enough industrial manufacturing, or even service jobs, to put the 12-20% unemployed back to work, much less to preserve the much vaunted "middle class" lifestyle. The result is a marginalized youth, black and Latino

population with no prospects for inclusion in the productive economy, and a prison industrial complex housing two million prisoners who are disproportionately people of color, and overwhelmingly come from the poorest layers of the working class.

As the crisis heads into what is termed a “double dip” recession, imperialism has its tentacles spread thin. Three wars, responsible for countless tens of thousands of civilian deaths, are being run by the Democrats, while covert actions and drone strikes cross more borders than Wikileaks can keep up with. The workers of North Africa, the Middle East, Europe, and China are attacking their governments and taking massive strike and protest actions. With the collapse in the bailouts of Greece, Spain, Portugal, Ireland, and the potential downgrading of the USA’s bond rating by Moodys, it is clear the big bosses of the world economy see no way out except imposing massive austerity measures, which they expect the trade union leaders, the Social Democrats, the Labor Parties, and, in the USA, the Democratic Party to administer. And the class traitors at the head of our unions are following right along – witness SEIU Local 1000’s endorsement of Governor Brown’s regressive tax plans in California.

The bosses’ current strategy translates into attacks on all workers. The halving of UAW auto workers’ pay has set a new lower wage standard for American industrial and manufacturing work. The increase in class sizes and tuition for students, the cuts in public

services, the gutting of public health and other essential governmental services and the scapegoating of the public worker have become standard measures across the nation. The attack on the last and largest bastion of the American labor movement, the public employee sector, is an all-out class war launched by big capitalists with the intention of imposing a historic defeat on the American working class.

In order for market forces (remember the free hand of the market) to drive American workers’ compensation down to the price point where capital can rationally invest here again, the market demands gutting of defined benefit pension plans, driving down public sector wages, cutting the social wage (government benefits), and shifting the burden of the crisis further onto the backs of the poor, workers, and the oppressed. The market requires the destruction of the unions and any organizations that organize the working class, the poor, and the oppressed. Today’s union leaderships are not prepared for this onslaught. In fact, these class collaborators act in diametric opposition to the interests of the working class; they are doing everything they can to stop us from organizing independently of the bosses’ political parties, from launching solidarity actions, and from striking at all – let alone building for the widespread, indefinite general strikes that will ultimately be needed to confront the bosses’ attacks.

A Failed Strategy for Labor

In the period of the expansion of the US Empire during and after WWII, the labor tops made peace with the American ruling class.

“[T]he sections of the Fourth International should always strive not only to renew the top leadership of the trade unions, boldly and resolutely in critical moments advancing new militant leaders in place of routine functionaries and careerists, but also to create in all possible instances independent militant organizations corresponding more closely to the tasks of mass struggle against bourgeois society; and, if necessary, not flinching even in the face of a direct break with the conservative apparatus of the trade unions. If it be criminal to turn one’s back on mass organizations for the sake of fostering sectarian factions, it is no less so passively to tolerate subordination of the revolutionary mass movement to the control of openly reactionary or disguised conservative (‘progressive’) bureaucratic cliques. Trade unions are not ends in themselves; they are but means along the road to proletarian revolution.”

– Leon Trotsky, *The Transitional Program* (1938)

Under the threat of rising working class rank and file militancy in the 1930s (the rise of the CIO; general strikes in Minneapolis and San Francisco), Congress passed the National Labor Relations Act – much lauded as a victory for workers, as it guarantees the right to organize, but the actual purpose of which was to corral the working class into reliance on a state structure rather than our own self activity. The NLRA was followed quickly by anti-labor laws such as the Taft-Hartley Act, which constrains labor by making it illegal to offer solidarity to other workers in the form of strike action. Today we see the result: the MUNI rank and file rejected a sell out contract, only to have the “impartial” arbitrator impose it over their objection. If workers in the Bay Area can be stripped of the right to collective bargaining without a fight, it exposes the role of the sell-out labor leaders, which is to constrain the working class during the imposition of austerity. We need to shut down the entire Bay Area transportation grid to defend our MUNI drivers, but solidarity strikes are against the Taft-Hartley law and the craven leadership uses that law to keep the rank and file in line.

As long as the preeminent position of US imperialism brought home super-profits after WWII, infrastructure, education, technology and industry (particularly the military-industrial complex) created a high demand for labor. Rising wages increasingly came with labor peace, enabling the labor bureaucracy to transform itself into a self-perpetuating dues collection agency that acted in its own interests, abandoning class conflict for the “rational” road of arbitration, lawsuits, legislation, and buying politicians.

This worked well for about 25 years, but the laws of capitalist economics precluded the fantasies of the labor bureaucracy from enduring. As the economy changed and wages started to stagnate in the early 1970s, the illusion began to evaporate. There never was a “middle class”; we had been workers all along, and we could pay for the new consumerist culture of a “middle class American dream” only by sending the women of the household to work, by taking second jobs, and by incurring debt in the form of student loans, credit cards, and second mortgages against our houses. Now

all these stopgaps are running out, and the explosion of the speculative stock market and inflated housing bubble economy is gutting the standard of living of the American working class. Wages have been flat or declining for decades; we work more hours than before; we have less vacation; we are less secure, and all the money has floated to the top 0.01% while we are scrounging to hold on to a declining paycheck. The labor bureaucracy was not prepared for this! They still cling to their failed strategy of class collaboration with the Democrats, reliance on the courts, and lobbying legislators to “tax the rich.”

This strategy is not just a mistake. Rather, the union tops are doing their job, as defined for them by the bosses’ legal system. They will do everything possible to keep workers from taking strike action, and from mounting solidarity actions with workers with workers in other unions, counties, districts, states or nations. The labor bosses see the upsurge in rank-and-file militancy as a threat, which they can only contain by corralling it into electoral politics. Thus, the popular sentiment for a general strike in Wisconsin was diffused into a recall campaign, which prevents immediate militant action, and steers workers into placing faith and hope in the Democrats rather than in our own self-organized mass actions. Thus, the AFL-CIO forbids any mention of opposition to foreign wars as they prepare to rally the troops for the 2012 electoral cycle.

How to Prepare for a General Strike

The current crop of union leaders is not going to prepare for a general strike. Instead, they spend most of our dues dollars selling concessionary contracts to the members, while giving the rest to lobbyists and lawyers, leaving our strike funds dry and our membership unorganized, frustrated, and demoralized. For the working class to avoid the historic defeat the Koch brothers have planned for us, we must first take back control of our unions! New militant rank and file leaders not afraid to confront Taft-Hartley through strike action must rise in the ranks to replace the functionaries and careerists who sap our dues while shedding crocodile tears about their inability to mobilize the membership and bring home the bacon.

Effective strike action and general strikes cannot be organized unless we first either take over our unions, or else build new unions and other workers' organizations with a new leadership. Our current union misleaders' attitude is that they are only responsible to act in the interest of the dues-paying membership – not the future members, not the unorganized workers, not the unemployed, and certainly not the workers of the world, oppressed, exploited and brutalized as we are by Wall Street and the military industrial war machine. But our class can only survive and win if we take up the old Knights of Labor slogan: An Injury to One Is an Injury to All! Solidarity is our only power, and the ability to strike in the historic interest of the class is our strongest weapon. When the leaders of today's unions spurn these tools of the international working class, they act as the agents of the ruling class in our organizations, and must be driven out and replaced. That means we need rank-and-file class struggle caucuses to promote a new militant leadership, to fight for working class independence, and to build a fighting workers/labor party that unites the entire working class and all our allies nationally and internationally to strike as one against the rule of the exploiters and build a movement for workers' power and workers' ownership of the means of production. Even though we have experienced a series of multiple defeats, and the prospects look gloomy, we cannot ignore the escalation in the class struggle across North Africa, Europe, and Asia, nor the aspirations of the workers and peasants of South America. All of the developments overseas will have repercussions here in the U.S., ultimately taking the struggle against the bureaucracy from the realm of abstract theorizing to the concrete reality of shop floor and union hall confrontations, and battles to take our unions back!

The drive to build for a general strike must be pursued in conjunction with the democratization of the unions and/or the formation of new workers' organizations. As the current leaders continue to mislead the masses, workers' frustration will rise, and the

opportunity to form class struggle rank-and-file caucuses that can challenge for power will grow. To win, these caucuses must advance strategy, tactics, and demands that unite the entire working class, and forge independence, and must prepare for and take united strike actions.

Demands such as **no concessions, no take aways, and pay me my COLA** are of immediate concern. Demands such as **jobs for all** and **30 hours work for 40 hours pay** can unite labor with the unemployed and those on furloughs and reduced hours. Demands for **universal health care**, not handouts to the insurance companies, will unite the organized with the underinsured. Demands to **nationalize the banks and major industries under workers' control to provide immediate access to capital for job creation** offer solution to the crisis of market control. Demands to **end imperialist interventions abroad** can unite our organizations with the workers across the planet who struggle against the same corporate criminals who are crushing us! Demands for labor to **declare class independence and form a fighting workers' party**, organized shop by shop, office by office, block by block, and school by school, can unite the entire working class in struggle. Ultimately, we need to **organize to run our own candidates** and to **mobilize mass political actions, up to and including an indefinite general strike**, to resolve the crisis in favor of the working class majority – the 85% of us who do the work! This demand exposes the traitorous role of subsuming the workers into the corporate political machine and shows the road out of the trap of electoralism.

These demands cannot be won by the current leaders, but can be when we take back and rebuild rank and file workers democracy. The fight to defend the working class from the bosses' class war requires that labor must clean its own house! **Drive out the functionaries, imperialists, corporatists, and class collaborators!** Then we can **remake our unions into a militant organizing force** in the fight for the historic interest of the working class.

From Wisconsin to California and Beyond: It's Time for the Working Class to Fight Back!

Labor is in a fight for its very survival. Workers in California and across the nation are at a crossroads. We can continue down the road of dependence on the Democratic Party, political lobbyists, and court rulings. We can persist in our reliance on business unionist leaders who pedal concessions, and tell us to “share the pain” instead of taking the militant actions needed to win and make the capitalists pay for their crisis. Or, we can open a new road of independent working class action defend our gains and organizations!

In the face of the occupation of the Wisconsin State Capitol and a growing wave of militant worker actions (April 4th ILWU 10 strike, May Day unity of labor and immigrants), the Democrats and union tops are trying to put a lid on workers’ militancy, telling us to “put down the placards and pick up the clipboards”; they intend to take the masses off the streets and depend instead on electoral and judicial solutions. This dead-end strategy leaves the resolution of the crisis in the hands of the bosses’ institutions and their politicians. The Democrats could not deliver the Employee Free Choice Act, and have not hesitated to join in the current attacks on public workers’ collective bargaining rights, salaries, and benefit packages nationwide. Reliance on the Democratic Party is not the answer. Instead, to arrive at a solution to the crisis that favors the working class, we must develop and pursue a strategy of self-organized activity and political independence.

The outcome of this struggle will be decisive for the entire working class. Either the workers’ movement will prevail, and based on this victory a sense of revitalization will infuse the ranks of labor with a new spirit to turn the tide, or the capitalists will be victorious, and will expand their campaign from state to state,

picking the unions to the bone and crushing the working class. For big capital, this is an international and nationwide attack; for the working class, the response must be internationalist and nationwide as well.

Workers Must Break with the Pro-Capitalist Democratic Party!

The old strategy of class collaboration between labor and the Democrats has long tied the American worker to the imperialist project, pitting workers here against the workers of the world. Labor, allied with the Democrats, has for over a century endorsed imperialist interventions supported and planned on a bipartisan basis by Wall Street politicians who took labor for granted, tossing us crumbs while militarily plundering and exploiting the resources and workers of the world. We need a new strategy that breaks the stranglehold of class collaboration, understands that workers’ interests are not the same as Wall Street’s, and opens the road to international workers’ solidarity. Our allies are the workers of the world, not the bosses’ politicians!

To resolve the economic and political crisis in the interest of the working class, we must organize from the bottom up (factory/office/jobsite committees), and we need to develop new leaders who will prepare for general strikes. We need to reject the Democrats who take our support for granted, and instead run independent labor candidates. This way, we can build working class political independence and lay the foundation for a fighting workers’/labor party that will not hesitate to use working class methods of struggle to defend public education, health care, immigrants, and the rights of all the oppressed against attacks by Wall Street. Only through mass, militant, independent working class based action can we remake our society into one that puts people be-

fore profit. The capitalist parties put finance capital first! To put working class interests first, we need a fighting workers' party based on labor, the oppressed communities, students, and the unemployed!

Our Task: To Exploit the Cracks in Consciousness

The consciousness of the working class in America is changing under the pressure of deteriorating material conditions. Old prejudices, as well as illusions in the "American dream," are daily being crushed under the weight of



Photo courtesy "OnTask" via Flickr

**Class consciousness on the rise!
Madison, Wisconsin, March 5, 2011**

unfulfilled expectations. Workers are starting to question the efficacy of the strategy and tactics of the current crop of labor fakers. As workers find that their dependence on the Democrats – even when coupled with daily protests, candlelight vigils, tent cities, and occupations of state capitol buildings – will not and cannot produce the desired results, they will be looking for solutions that actually work.

The general strike and a program of transitional demands are our answer. With these working class weapons, we fight for control of the work and the workplace. The bosses have shown they are no longer capable either of administering the work process, or of guaranteeing the work product – which, in the case of public work, is providing services (education, health & safety, transit, home care, etc.) to the people. **WE DO THE WORK! WE SHOULD CONTROL IT! SHARE THE WORK: JOBS FOR ALL! 30 hours work for 40 hours pay!**

Advocacy for a general strike, today, exposes the existing union leadership's inability to fight. The call for the general strike puts them on notice that we know they do not have a strategy or tactics that can resolve the crisis in the workers' interest. Our strategy is to take every step with the masses toward ever greater self-expression of the historic interest of the working class. The tactics we use must rely on workers' self-organization, united front action, and the international workers' solidarity needed to win. As the economic crisis grows more acute, making it increasingly apparent that capital cannot resolve it, the emerging call for a general strike poses the question of which class should run society: the capitalists or the workers.

Confronting old limitations and roadblocks

Decades of beseeching "friendly" Democrats for their help have proven beyond doubt that reliance on elected capitalist politicians to protect our rights is a dead-end strategy. Solidarity actions, such as the May 9 protest in Sacramento, are a starting point, but if their goals are limited to pressuring politicians through lobbying and rallies, they will ultimately go nowhere. Even if we could persuade the Legislature to "tax the rich," it means nothing as long as we must depend on pro-capitalist politi-

(Continued on page 48)

Make the Banks, the Finance Houses and the Corporate Elite Pay! From Wisconsin and Oakland to Detroit, New York, and Cairo: Same Crisis, Same Fight!

Across the nation, the states and localities are incapable of meeting their obligations. The elite and their pit-bull, the Tea-Partiers, have targeted the last bastion of union strength, the public workers' unions. Today the front line is in Wisconsin, but workers know the same crisis in Wisconsin affects us all. The Democrats led by Obama, no less than the Republicans, are bent on destroying the gains made by unionized workers. From the ongoing furloughs affecting 65,000 state workers in California (enforced by labor's choice, Governor Brown), to the freeze on federal workers' pay in the 2012 budget proposal, the Democrats stand firmly on the side of austerity for the workers and the poor and for bail outs and tax breaks for the bankers and corporate elite.

Today Arne Duncan announced the only way to save the Detroit schools is to close half of them and increase class size to over 60 students per class; and this, after bailing out GM in a deal that forced down auto workers' wages. The attack in Wisconsin today, the furloughs we still suffer across the nation, and Governor Brown's proposed 10% cuts in wages, are all part of the corporate elite's need to enforce the crisis on the backs of the great majority while the top 1% and their well paid lackeys enjoy bloated stock portfolios, and shiver at the thought that the American workers might learn from the Egyptian workers currently forming unions, occupying factories, and throwing out their bosses.

Today big capital moves freely across borders, moving funds from the industrialized world to the neo-colonial world, where production at the lowest wages possible inflates Wall Streets profits, leaves the local workers in

Dickensian conditions, and all the while abandoning the industrial and manufacturing base in the "first world" which previously afforded the working class the means to view itself as "middle class." The "free-market" today can no longer afford both the profits demanded by the owners of capital and the comforts the misnamed "middle class" has come to expect: a job with benefits, a vacation, a semblance of health care, a defined pension, half-way decent schools, affordable public higher education, affordable gasoline and home heating oil. The tendency of the rate of profit to decline (the law of diminishing returns) has put the squeeze on the corporate bottom line and they, in turn, have "no choice" – their fiduciary responsibility is to the bottom line and the next quarterly statement.

Union leaderships tie workers to the bosses' political parties!

Since the onset of the crisis, we have heard the public workers unions' leaders set the tone, calling on their membership to "share the pain." Today in Wisconsin we hear the echo of the "share the pain" jargon as the union leaders beg for understanding in the media: "...we are willing to concede on wages..."; their real message is "...just let us keep the right to take members' dues, give funding to the Democrats, and prevent the workers from taking strike actions, which might upset the status quo." These union leaders are entrenched and committed to the lie that there is no money, that cuts are inevitable, and that labor has to make concessions even after pouring millions of dollars and volunteer hours into the election of Democrats each election cycle. Just a few weeks ago, SEIU 1000 president Yvonne Walker,

speaking on KQED, said she supports Brown's proposed pay cut for the 65,000 workers still without a contract. This is no surprise, as it would subject workers in other state unions to the same rotten deal she sold her own members.

Selling out private and public sector workers alike is the task taken on by the California AFL-CIO leaders. Auto workers will remember when they came down to the NUMMI plant in Hayward during the firing ceremony for 5,000 workers to assure the Democratic politicians, also in attendance, that capital could abandon labor without fear of labor abandoning the Democratic Party. Workers need our own political party – one willing to fight, by any and all means, for a workers' government committed to meeting human needs, not to preserving corporate profit.

Fake “tax the rich” and tax reform scams leave control in the hands of the rich!

Today these same labor leaders are joining with the Democrats again, this time to misdirect our union members into a feckless campaign to advance so-called tax reform, instead of mobilizing for what we really need to do to fight back: organize widespread, prolonged strikes and build for long overdue independent political action.

Labor leaders and fake socialists, like Alan Benjamin of Socialist Organizer and Connie Ford of the SF Labor Council, have joined forces with the Democrats to demobilize the working class by directing us into useless plans to solve the capitalist crisis on Wall Street's behalf by campaigning for so-called “progressive taxation.” What this amounts to is the working class telling the capitalist politicians how to administer the collapsing system that is victimizing us all, instead of working to replace it with an economy based on human need, not quarterly profit.

Calls for “tax the rich” foster the illusion that the social problems of our country (not to mention the global economic crisis) can be solved by getting wealthy people to pump more tax dollars into government coffers. This begs the question: whose government, and whose interests does it serve? Do the “tax the rich” proponents really expect us to believe that governments controlled by the plutocracy will spend increased tax dollars on meeting the

needs of workers, the poor, and the oppressed? If that were what they wanted to do, they could do it without increasing their own taxes, by calling a halt to their ruinously expensive criminal military adventures in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan; ending aid to Israel and other repressive foreign governments; and ending the billions of dollars spent annually on various forms of corporate welfare.

Of course “tax the rich” reform is not going to be enough. This worldwide economic collapse is much deeper than even the most liberal Keynesians will admit. If the capitalist class could dig themselves out of this hole by simply spending public funds to put people to work, they would. But today it is so hard for the capitalists to make a buck in the market, they have replaced productive activity with what they call “financial services,” which basically means gambling on speculative bubbles for profit. Equities, real estate, and commodities all have gone through their bubbles as capital chases from one popped balloon to the next super-inflated sector.

The capitalist class has abandoned the social contract, which read something like this: “Allow us (the capitalists) to own the capital and invest it productively, according to the dictates of the market, and (Adam Smith willing) there will be work for everyone, profit will abound, bankers and bakers will all be happy, and the invisible hand of the ‘free market’ will keep the boat of the economy afloat.” Well, that was fine for a short period, but today there is too much paper capital seeking a diminishing volume of profit, leading to the cannibalism of the speculators. Seeking paper profits based on inflated values of a non-productive economy, western capital has no choice but to collapse the historic gains of the working class, because workers cannot eat, wear, or live on paper profits.

To meet the needs of workers and ordinary people, and maintain a healthy economy, the resources of our society must be put to work producing real goods and services, not paper profits from gambling. But capitalism is no longer capable of investing in industrial production in developed countries, because

(Continued on page 48)

Attacks on Public Workers: How to FIGHT BACK!

Editor's Note: *The text of this article was drawn from a blog post written in September 2010, which in turn was adapted as the basis for a flyer distributed by HWRS at a forum on Privatization of Public Education & Public Services. The forum was sponsored by United Public Workers for Action (www.upwa.info), and took place in Richmond, California on September 25, 2010.*

California state workers have had 18 months of furloughs, and the threat of being paid minimum wage will still hang over our heads as long as the budget impasse continues. The furloughs ended June 30 after 18 months, but then the courts agreed with the Controller that paying minimum wage could not be accomplished with the current payroll system. Having lost his minimum wage gambit, at least pending appeal, the Governor in turn reinstated furloughs in August. The message to State workers is contradictory and confusing, and changes on a dime. Management says come to work on Friday, then two days later they say stay home. Oh yeah, State workers are feeling like ping pong balls.

From the trenches of Cal-Trans, to the drudgery of DMV offices; the cubicles in thousands of offices; the facilities and workshops maintained by stationary engineers, and the washrooms tended to the custodial staff, as well as at the benches of the laboratories and in the bio-safety rated clean rooms, the sentiment toward the Governor is clear: workers see him as a vindictive bastard who hates workers and loves the rich.

State workers find it hard to make financial plans for our families not knowing if our monthly paycheck will be full pay, partial pay, or minimum wage. State workers feel like pawns in the fallout of the world economic crisis. All the while, the politicians shed crocodile tears for us while they blame their

partisan rivals for the budget standoff. But we know their task is to drive down the living standard of the American workers by crushing our unions. The saddest thing is that workers feel there is nothing we can do about these unending attacks on our wages and benefit packages, which have been embraced by both Republican and Democratic politicians alike.

Furloughs Hurt Public Services and the State Economy

Beyond the financial burden on California state workers' families, the 18 months of furloughs, followed by the instability in July and August this year, has wreaked havoc on the management of work flow and accomplishment of tasks the state is mandated to attend to by law. Chaos and demoralization of the workforce is leading to safety, worker retention, and productivity problems, which create waste and non-recoupable losses to the taxpayer.

While the Governor attempts to continue driving down state workers' income by 15%, he is draining the state economy of millions in lost circulation of retained wages. Meanwhile, the lines just get longer at the agencies that deal with the public directly, making it even more frustrating and time-consuming than ever to access vital public services like signing up for unemployment benefits or registering your car.

Keeping the Workers in Line

Lacking class consciousness, workers have not developed a class struggle perspective or a politically independent strong fighting leadership to fight back against these attacks. Feeding on and perpetuating this backwardness, the union tops are content – and indeed are counted on – to deliver the workers for the Democrats at the polls each November, regardless of the Democrats' ability to deliver on anything they promise in return. The class collaborationist union leaders limit our resistance to appeals to the bosses' courts and



Photo by Andrew Oh, UCSD Guardian
Workers at the University of California in San Diego protesting cutbacks (January 2011)

to ineffectual minor mobilizations.

While workers wait for the other shoe to drop, the leaderships of our various unions are intent on keeping us sitting passively at our jobs, instead of organizing the rank and file for the massive strikes it will take to defend livelihoods, working conditions, and the services we provide.

Objectively, only an indefinite general strike of all state workers, coupled with teachers and other public workers, can defend our wages and benefits, not to mention catching up with the buying power lost to inflation over the last decade. To defend our standard of living successfully, labor must unite to smash the barrier of class-biased anti-labor laws such as Taft Hartley, which strictly limit strikes, resulting in the concept of being “strike legal” that keeps us chained to our workstations. These laws shackle our psychology and set the parameters of labor’s options too narrowly, preventing us from using our only really effective tools: **UNIFIED STRIKE ACTION AND CLASS SOLIDARITY!**

Today’s labor leaders, like good slaves, have grown accustomed to the chains imposed by laws like Taft Hartley, and they cower at the thought of confronting them. But to win against the retrenchment today, these laws must be swept away by direct massive action. Only by linking the struggle of the state workers to that of other public workers, of students and teachers, and of the unemployed and underemployed, is it possible to build a workers’ movement that can stand down the

capitalist crisis. Instead, labor leaders committed to business unionism keep the working class separated into dozens of competing unions, whose only joint role is to corral the workers into the dead end submission to the twin parties of Wall Street.

We know all our unions are giving money to the Democrats, and now we see the SEIU is hedging its bets by giving \$100,000 to the Republican governors’ conference. Ultimately, workers have no faith in the Democrats; the only expectation or hope they have is that the Democrats will wield the cuts against us a little less severely. The union tops’ dedication to giving our money to the Democrats despite the workers’ justifiable cynicism is a formula for creating disaffected members, who become apathetic and resigned to the atomization and alienation we feel as workers in the absence of genuine class consciousness. The union flunkies’ role is to assure that our labor organizations, which should be at the forefront of defending our rights, instead remain captives of the two-capitalist-party system, instead of seeking an independent political role for the workers based on class struggle methods of organization.

The breakdown of government is only a reflection of the generalized collapse of the capitalist system’s ability to continue providing a “middle class” lifestyle to working people. The post-WWII Donna Reed, Leave it to Beaver mythology of the rising middle class in perpetuity is now a faded dream of what the worker could achieve. The 35-year decline in workers’ real wages should be an indication that the days of “go along to get along, bosom buddy with the Democrats business unionism” is not working to protect even our basic standard of living.

While we are told to be happy to have a job at all, we have to consider what has happened to our income over the years. On top of an inflation-to-COLA ratio that has diminished our take-home pay by 18% over ten years, we have lost 15% to the furloughs – adding up to approximately a 25% decline in wages over 10 years. This drive to push down union wages coincides with the generalized decline in labor share, and increase in the capital share, of the GDP.

The Bosses' Agenda: Drive Down Wages and Destroy Pensions

The ruling class's politicians are tasked with administering the economic crisis in such a way as to protect corporate profit at the expense of workers' jobs, salaries, and benefits. In particular, their task is to crush the few remaining unionized sectors of workers. Public workers, as the largest remaining unionized sector, are targeted not only here in California but almost everywhere, at every level of government, across the United States and internationally. And judging from the weak response of our unions, we have to conclude they are close to dead, if not already buried. They have become little more than dues collection agencies, with no winning perspective of how to fight for our interests.

The first six California state worker unions that signed tentative agreements with Governor Schwarzenegger gave concessions without even a hint of a fight.

The kinds of concessions already extracted from public workers will soon be expected from workers in private industry. When the economy picks up and provides new jobs (if that ever happens, which is far from certain), workers will be forced to accept lower wages and weaker benefits. Auto workers, traditionally among the highest paid industrial workers in this country, have seen their wages fall from \$28 down to \$14 per hour. Even before the G-20 meeting in Toronto last summer, it was clear that the plan was to limit social spending and drive down unionized workers' wages.

Playing the Blame Game

State and public workers have been made scapegoats for the budget impasse. The message to the public from the politicians and media pundits is that the budget crisis is caused by the state workers and our pensions. These liars point to the pensions of the relatively few top earners who have spiked their earnings and finagled pensions way above those of average retirees, whose checks are under 30K per year. But these same media hacks never point to the majority of state workers who will retire with these bare bones pensions.

The supposed need for "pension reform" is

just part of an overall drive by the free marketers today to do away with defined benefit pensions (those that pay a guaranteed amount, determined by a formula based on years of service, age, and income while working). Although CalPERS is not going away soon, the bosses prefer 401K's to defined benefit plans. The 401K leaves one with little option but to invest in the market, so the bosses' friends on Wall Street, who fix the game, can drain our "investments" through exorbitant fees and market fluctuations. The cost and risk of managing investments tends to kill the small investor, who generally has little understanding of financial instruments or ability to "play the market." (Not that we should ignore the bozo moves made by CalPERS in buying into the collateralized mortgage racket at the top of the bubble and losing billions of workers' hard earned savings ... but that is another sad story.)

The same hype is used in each attack on public workers. The Sacramento Bee and other California newspapers post links to public workers' salaries as a way to show how high they supposedly are. This method was used to



Photo from CSUEU News
California state workers demonstrating in solidarity with Wisconsin public employees
(Los Angeles, April 4, 2011)

discredit the BART workers during negotiations last year. But you don't have to scratch too deep to see that a pyramid structure exists in all public worker salary scales, which mimics the income stratification in private industry. A few at the top are well-paid, and the bulk of us are stuck far below in the middle. But the media makes hay over the top earners as a way to turn the public against all state and public workers. It would be interesting to post the salary of the corporate media hounds and their publishers alongside that of the average state worker.

The attack on pensions and wages is couched in the manufactured anger of the have-nots. State and other public workers are implicitly and in some cases explicitly being told to be happy we have a job, because many people these days have none, and hate us for what they think are our fat salary and benefit packages. We are told to be happy we have health care because so many must go without. We are told not to fight the capitalists or their politicians, but just sit and wait out the crisis, tighten our belts, and continue to vote for the Democrats – including Jerry Brown, even though he has already promised to “do some things that organized labor doesn't like” if he is elected to the governor's office in November.

This is a combined attack from both the right and left wings of the capitalists. And the union bureaucracy only backs them up, trying to keep us complacent while they tell us to wait for the next court decision when the California Supreme Court issues its decision in the furlough cases that were argued on September 8th.

Editor's Note: Not surprisingly, the California Supreme Court decided on October 4, 2010, in Professional Engineers in California Government v. Schwarzenegger, that the furloughs were legally imposed, because the California Legislature ratified them after the fact. This ruling keeps the door wide open for future legislative attacks on California public employees' wages and benefits.

How to Win the Struggle

Meanwhile, the reformists among both the liberal/progressives and the left/socialist/anarchist milieu clamor on about how the crisis can be resolved by taxing the rich. Oh, if only

California's budget weren't held hostage by the two-thirds rule, the progressive Democrats could pass progressive taxes and all would be rosy in California. This is the idealist dreaming of small minds, who seek endlessly to reform that which can no longer be reformed. Progressive taxes are off the table, as is any economic reform that favors workers, the unemployed, the dependent and the poor. The whole question is not how to make the capitalists pay the minimal taxes that their government gently “imposes” on them, but rather, who should control the economy: the plutocrats and their captive government, or the workers?

For workers to win, we must revitalize our unions, drive out the class collaborationist leaders, break with the bosses' twin political parties, and take independent political action. Such action can take the form of an independent fighting workers'/labor party, but must not rely on legislative or judicial action to win. Political independence for the working class must seek a transitional program to take us from where we are today toward the development of mass organizations of workers' democracy, such as worksite committees, factory committees, and councils of the unemployed, followed by the formation of regional workers' councils. Through these steps, we can ultimately replace the capitalists' government with a workers' government that will manage the economy to meet the needs of the many rather than stuffing the pockets of the few.

- **Break with the twin parties of the plutocracy!**
- **Build an independent, fighting workers' party!**
- **No illusions in legislatures or courts!**
- **No capitulation to repressive anti-labor laws!**
- **Defend all workers' standard of living by organizing massive, direct workers' actions to fight privatization and defend public workers, public education, and social services!**

Responding to the State Budget Crisis: Corporate Taxation or Direct Mass Action?

At the end of June 2011, the California Legislature passed a state budget generated as a final compromise between Governor Jerry Brown and the Democrat-controlled legislature in Sacramento. Earlier in the spring, correctly anticipating that massive cuts in education (from preschool through graduate school) would be included in the final state budget, education advocates launched a signature-gathering drive to place an oil extraction fee initiative on the November 2011 ballot.

For petition circulation purposes, the proposed law has been labeled as Proposition 1481, but it is known on the website of its primary sponsor, Rescue Education California, as the “Oil Extraction Fee to Rescue Education.” The initiative was drafted by Professor Peter Mathews of Cypress College in Orange County, a member of the California Teachers Association. Its aim is to tax oil extraction by imposing a fee on each barrel of crude oil taken out of the ground in California, set at 15% of the oil’s value.

Professor Mathews believes that the oil extraction fee can resolve the present education funding crisis in California. His supporters among progressives and liberal activists in California widely advocate this position, just as they argue that future shortfalls in the California state budget can be prevented by rewriting Proposition 13 to tax corporate-owned property at current market value, and by “taxing the rich” in general.

The San Francisco Labor Council and several teachers’ unions have endorsed the proposed initiative, but much of the union bureaucracy in the rest of the state, obedient to its role as the tame pet of the bourgeoisie, is opposed to it. What is more surprising is that so-called socialist organizations on the far left have decided to jump onto the reformists’ bandwagon and call for an oil extraction fee in California. We see these activists zigzagging between revolutionary exhortations on the one

hand, and pragmatism on the other, as when they offer clever remedies to solve the financial problems of the capitalist governments’ budgets. This calls into question the class political consciousness of these fake socialists as it applies to other social questions. Is their programmatic call for the expropriation of the expropriators just holiday speechifying, or do they ever stand by the workers’ program and fight for it?

The demand of “Tax the Rich” has become central to the program of the union bureaucracy, the left Democrats, and the fake Trotskyists, not only in California but in every state that has suffered draconian budget cuts. Unlike the left-wing cheerleaders of the liberal Democrats and the union bureaucrats, however, revolutionary Marxists have no illusions that increased taxation can resolve the massive budget deficits in California or elsewhere in the United States. While the call for a more progressive, rather than the present regressive, tax structure in the US is fully supportable, we do not advocate increasing taxes on the rich or implementing fees on oil extraction as a response to budget cuts, because the working class has absolutely no control over how tax revenues are spent. So long as the bourgeoisie has control of the state apparatus in the US, workers’ education will still suffer even if – against all odds – the proposed initiative makes it onto the ballot and passes. Rather than making higher education more affordable, it is more likely that Proposition 1481 will provide funds for likes of U.C. Regent Richard Blum, husband of California Senator Dianne Feinstein, to funnel to his corporate crony contractor friends.

The bottom line is that California (like the rest of America) is not broke. Trillions of dollars have been allocated (printed or borrowed via quantitative easing) to bail out

(Continued on page 49)

(**Time to Fight Back**, continued from page 40)

cians to set the priorities for how to spend those taxes. Our workplace rights, our families' health care, our children's education, the preservation of our environment, and the human needs of our working class communities will still be at the mercy of corporate lobbyists and campaign donors who thrive on non-productive expenditures such as the prison-industrial complex, the military-industrial complex, and corporate welfare.

What we need, instead, is a strategy based on workers' self-organization and solidarity! Our goal must be to build on actions like the Wisconsin State Capitol occupation and the May 9 action in Sacramento by turning them into popular/worker/labor assemblies that meet everywhere to plan and prepare for a nationwide indefinite general strike. Local assemblies should delegate strike committees of the activists in the ranks to go to all worksites to organize meetings, help establish rank-and-file committees, caucuses, and networks, and enlist support for the strike to build locally and re-

(**Make the Banks Pay**, continued from page 42)

workers' relatively high standard of living in those countries means more profit can be made elsewhere. Thus, the only way to direct our resources back into providing real goods and services is to take capital out of the hands of the speculators. This is the historic task of labor – one which the leaders of the labor have abandoned. Instead, they convene a conference with the likes of Lenny Goldberg, executive director of the California Tax Reform Association, who favor Brown's austerity, fake "tax reform," and increasing the collection of the sales tax from online retailers – a regressive measure, as sales taxes are charged at a flat rate to all purchasers regardless of their income.

Abandoning the class struggle, the SF Labor Council instead joins with the other labor tops to misdirect workers into putting their efforts behind Brown's tax and cut plan. This is a strategy of defeat!

Where are the labor leaders who embrace the **fight for an indefinite general strike**, instead of carrying water for the Democrats?

Where are the leaders willing to **fight to nationalize the banks and major industries under workers' control**?

gionally before setting the date for the big one. Such organizational developments can lay the foundations needed for the formation of a workers' party that fights for a workers' government capable of administering the economy in the common interests of the majority.

The path to victory for working people nationwide is via general strike, but we must not ignore what it will take to win. All the hurdles in the way need to be consciously considered by mass assemblies of workers and popular forums, run on the principles of workers' democracy. Organized labor's ties to the Democrats and the entrenched labor fakers need to be broken. A new militant rank-and-file leadership committed to class struggle methods and class independence must be forged, and must fight for and win leadership. Unless we first oust the business-unionist bureaucracy and reclaim the unions as democratic bodies run by the most militant workers, the general strike will not happen, or if it does, it will flounder and be smashed. – *HWRS flyer for May Day 2011*

Where are the leaders who will **mobilize the masses for full employment under the demand "30 hours work for 40 hours pay"**?

Where are the leaders who **remind the workers of their historic task, linking our struggles to the students, the unemployed, the elderly, and the homeless**, both across the nation and the world?

Obviously, they are not in the top ranks of the SF Labor Council, the California AFL-CIO, or the Change to Win leadership. Those folks are too busy celebrating their unholy alliance with Jerry the Butcher to get down to the barricades and wage a real struggle. For labor to win, we must revitalize our unions with new leadership ready to fight for the historical interests of the working class, and forge an independent fighting workers' party that will prepare to take economic and political power by engaging in internationalist solidarity and class struggle methods!

Editor's Note: HWRS distributed the foregoing article as a flyer at a rally in solidarity with protestors in North Africa and Wisconsin on February 26, 2011 in San Francisco, California.

(Taxation or Mass Action, continued from page 47)

banks and investment companies. Billions of dollars are available to build new prisons. The real problem is not lack of money. The real problem is that the present economic crisis was created by Wall Street and the American ruling class, and they demand nothing less than that the working class and the oppressed, in particular the unionized working class, pay for it.

Unfortunately, neither calling for increasing taxes on the rich, nor introducing oil extraction fees, will protect the workers and poor of

services is through militant labor actions on a mass scale. As the situation in Wisconsin shows, nothing short of indefinite general strikes will defend the right to collective bargaining, if not the future of the American union movement.

It cannot be emphasized strongly enough that the Democrats in Sacramento, like those in Washington, are not accountable in any way to the working class – including the union rank and file – of California. They are accountable only to the interests of corporate America and the ruling rich of California. The proposed oil extraction fee initiative says that the revenue it

The only way to prevent massive layoffs, work furloughs and cuts in public services is through militant labor actions on a mass scale. As the situation in Wisconsin shows, nothing short of indefinite general strikes will defend the right to collective bargaining, if not the future of the American union movement.

would generate is supposed to be used to increase the education budget, not to free up general fund revenue for other purposes. But even if the proposal is implemented, without direct accountability to workers' organizations, there is absolutely no guarantee that Sacramento legislators, beholden to their wealthy campaign contributors, will not find a way to use the increased revenue to free up money for increased corporate subsidies and tax loopholes, instead of spending it on public education and workers' other needs.

California. In the present situation, when the electoral parties that dominate US politics (the Democrats and Republicans) both represent the interests of corporate America and the ruling rich, the working class cannot have any confidence that any increased tax revenues will be spent on services critical to workers, such as public education and healthcare. We need a fighting workers' party, a US Labor Party that will mobilize the masses of workers and unemployed in the workplaces and on the streets, to represent the independent interests of workers and the oppressed. Without such a party, any increases in tax revenues are more likely to be spent on corporate welfare and on overseas military adventures that serve the interests of Big Oil and Big Business.

At the same time, we cannot let the Republicans and Democrats balance the state budgets on the backs of public employees and other workers. Our response to the budgetary crisis is that if the capitalist class and their politicians cannot provide services essential to working people of California, then those services (for example, public education) and the means to provide them should be brought under social ownership and full democratic workers' control. In concrete terms, this means a working class takeover of the educational resources that the ruling class has effectively taken out of our reach. Not only public schools, but also charter schools, private schools, and public and private universities, with their endowments, must be expropriated and placed under the control of workers, teachers, students, and parents. Equal educational

In any event, electoral solutions are not the answer. The only way to prevent massive layoffs, work furloughs and cuts in public

(Continued on page 50)

AGAINST REPRESSION

Free Bradley Manning and Defend Wikileaks!

Editor's Note: This article was written by the CWG-NZ, and posted on its blog, redrave (redrave.blogspot.com), on January 11, 2011.

Capitalism trains its own gravediggers

Marx observed that capitalism had to create its own gravediggers. It had to empower its working class in order to exploit it and so its fate was sooner or later sealed. But capitalism doesn't just roll over and die leaving only the need for a burial. Workers are not handed socialism on a plate they are propelled towards it by the whole of capitalist history which begins with a revolution to overturn feudalism, then the rapid development of its incredible productive forces, before ending its life as a parasite living off the blood of its workers and of nature. The gravediggers are the working class which becomes an organised revolutionary class because it is enmeshed into a total global labour force which has to free itself from the shackles of capitalism or die. Marx even referred to this global capitalist labour force as 'socialised'.

Nothing expresses the extent of its global 'socialisation' at this point in history more than

the role of the internet and cyberspace. While century-old capitalist imperialism is locked into its need to maximise profits, it now makes its biggest profits by speeding up the circulation time of capital via the new digital technology of the internet. And it competes with its rivals by speeding up communications, espionage and warfare via cyberspace. Its like the old man going out on a dose of adrenoline or viagra. He has had several bypasses and at least one heart transplant (China) but is more and more exhausted. Who will administer the final rites of passage? China?

China is no way out for capitalism

China cannot despite being the dynamic new imperialist power that has stopped a full slide into global depression. The new Chinese imperialism is winning the battle for the global economy and its rivalry with the US is becoming increasingly hostile. But China will not replace the US as the hegemonic power for some years, and meanwhile its own working class is emerging as the most powerful and dynamic section of the global labour force. Thus the China/US rivalry may spill over from proxy

(Taxation or Mass Action, continued from page 49)

opportunities for all! No special schools for the rich and the elite!

Rather than calling on the Democrats to tax the rich, what we fight for, instead, is billions of federal dollars to finance essential public services, and a massive public works program – operated under the control of the workers themselves – that can create jobs while rebuilding and “greening” America’s decaying infrastructure – its roads, schools, clinics, public transit, utilities, and housing.

Liberals and their centrist buddies alike obfuscate the nature of the crisis by offering tax solutions which only switch the ruling

class’s money clip from one pants pocket to the other. The workers’ solution to the crisis demands that a fighting rank and file leadership take the reins of the labor movement and advance workers’ democracy by creating new democratic institutions such as workers’ neighborhood councils; shop, school and factory committees; and price setting councils of consumer and worker representatives who will marshal the sources of surplus value for investment in human survival and social well being. In other words, the workers’ program to solve the capitalist budget crisis is nationalization of the oil, energy, banking, finance, and other major industries under direct workers’ control.

wars such as in the Sudan to regional wars and even wider nuclear destruction, but the global working class, which now includes a billion Chinese workers, has the power to stop these wars before it is buried along with capitalism in a nuclear catastrophe.

The death rites of imperialism are now being prepared as the global working class moves stage center. Cue the awakening of the world proletariat to the reality of the brutality and barbarism of capitalism in its dying days. When ordinary enlisted soldiers break ranks to blow the whistle on mass murder; when the middle class libertarians use their advanced computer skills to home in on the US as the NO 1 threat to human rights; when hundreds of thousands are risking their lives engaged in spontaneous street protests, general strikes and occupations; then capitalism's days are numbered.

Death sentences for cyberwarriors

Private Bradley Manning, the international working class hero of 2010, risks his life (did he do it, or didn't he?) because US imperialism must make an example of an enlisted whistleblower who disregards orders and leaks its military secrets while listening to Lady Gaga. The US ruling class has no sense of humor. Manning is now incarcerated in a US marine prison at Quantico in solitary confinement for one reason only, to break him and make him confess to conspiring with WikiLeaks boss Julian Assange to reveal the secrets that expose US imperialism as a giant mafia with millions of hired killers on its payroll. While Assange has to answer the rape charges made against him, we are opposed to his extradition to Sweden if this is likely to result in his 'rendition' to the US.

Such is the fear of the US ruling class that exposure of its lies and secrets will threaten its 'legitimacy' and lead to socialist revolution, that its natural impulse is to extend its many global wars, occupations and missile rings, into the total surveillance of cyberwars. They will try to lock up Manning for 50 years, and if they can cook up a story that Assange is a spy, they will try to get him lynched under the 1917 US Espionage Act. The clear intent of the US to kill those who blow its military secrets will politicise another mass layer of anti-US imperialist militants, bringing the end of US hegemony even

closer. If the US goes down this road expect a mass worker uprising that will unleash the full repressive state apparatus on its head.

The emperor has no clothes

So US imperialism since 9/11 has been forced to expose its open hypocrisy in destroying bourgeois democracy in order to save it. Since it cannot win the battle for the hearts and minds of even its own working class majority that opposes its wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, it must resort to force to suppress the rise of a militant working class. It will try to divide and rule the militant working class. It will have to turn the Tea Party into a fully fascist militia. This will raise the stakes and lead to sacrifices such as those of the youth in North Africa who have burned themselves alive to prove they are prepared to die to live. These state forces are made up of working class or peasant ranks and can be split from their officers who represent the ruling class. Armed workers, peasants and soldiers militias will deprive capital of its state forces allowing the working class majority to take power and remove all barriers to socialism.

The class war has never stopped. But today the ongoing global crisis of capital has shifted the many fronts from the occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan into cyberspace. Drones are now the US weapon of choice, and computer viruses are used to destroy the enemies' weapons control. We are approaching Star Wars, where the evil empire is surrounded and undermined by myriads of subversives and freedom fighters who are not only at home on the streets but in the internet and cyberspace. The old man is dosed up on adrenaline and all dressed up to kill but has nowhere to go.

Free Bradley Manning! Defend Assange and Wikileaks from state repression! Defeat US and Chinese and all other imperialisms! For international class struggle across borders! For a Revolutionary World Party of Socialism! For Workers' and Peasants' Councils and Militias! For rank and file soldiers councils to overthrow their officers! For general strikes to unite the working class and take power! For Workers' and Peasants' Governments everywhere!

**For Bay Area Wide Strike Action to
 Arrest Killer Cops and
 Put Mehserle Behind Bars!
 Initiate Workers' Tribunals!
 Never Forget Oscar Grant! Never Forget Jerrold Hall!
 Remember Amadou Diallo and Rodney King!
 Defend the Community!
 Defeat the Bosses' Gang in Blue!
 Break Illusions in the Bosses' Racist Courts!
 No Illusions in Police Review Commissions!**

***Editor's Note:** This article is based on a flyer distributed by HWRS at a rally in Oakland, California on June 12, 2011, demanding justice for Oscar Grant.*

Oscar Grant's racist murderer, Johannes Mehserle, is to be released on Monday June 13. As could have been predicted, the racist legal system protected the killer cop from any semblance of "justice." Last November, Judge Robert Perry of L.A. Superior Court sentenced the former BART cop to two years in jail for "involuntary manslaughter," after he shot Oscar execution style, as the young father lay handcuffed face down on a BART platform New Year's Eve 2009. A racist murder was reduced to a mere mistake.

Seeking a whiter venue, the trial was moved out of Oakland. And while the demographics of Los Angeles is 25% Caucasian, 75% of the jury in Mehserle's trial was white. No potential black jurors who had any encounters with police were allowed to serve – while white jurors who had friends in the police department were selected. The jury found that Mehserle should serve additional time for using a gun in the crime (14 years for gun enhancement), but Judge Perry rejected the jury's finding. He gave Mehserle a slap on the wrist with a two-year jail sentence. In the "land of the free," a black youth charged with a similar crime would be sentenced to jail for life – if not death row. But with credit for time served, Mehserle will be set

free after serving a mere 11 months of a two-year sentence.

Even as we head into the 21st century, the United States – with its "progressive" liberal enclaves like the S.F. Bay Area – deepens its global reputation as one of the world's most racist nations. In Oakland, we do not forget the unarmed youth, Jerrold Hall, who was killed by BART cops 18 years ago. The world will never forget the images of Rodney King bludgeoned to within inches of his life by a gang of racist L.A. cops. It will never forget the images of stripped and hooded prisoners tortured with phosphoric acid at Abu Ghraib. And now, despite the cell phone videos of the killing of Oscar Grant on the internet, his state-backed racist executioner will walk the streets a free man on June 13. The verdict is in: the bosses' courts protect the bosses' thugs. **FOR JUSTICE, THE WORKING CLASS AND OPPRESSED COMMUNITIES CAN ONLY RELY ON OURSELVES!**

Last October, the longshore workers of the ILWU shut down all the ports in the Bay Area in opposition to the racist verdict in the Mehserle trial. While the demands of that one day action – "Justice for Oscar Grant, Maximum Sentence for Johannes Mehserle" – were not achieved, they created the kind of united front action – linking the struggle of oppressed communities, youth, and labor – that makes the ruling class tremble. When labor

and black and brown communities come together and take strike action against the oppression of the state, ruling class control is challenged. That is why today the bosses are coming after the ILWU 10 for their subsequent April 10th political strike.

Violent police brutality and racist cop murder will continue to be a feature of everyday life in the U.S., just as U.S. imperialist military interventions abroad will continue, until we link our youth and community organizations, our marches, and our rebellions to organized labor, and launch class war against the exploiting class – the top 0.01% that own it all and control our labor power. Only organized labor actions can challenge the capitalist system, with its racist courts and cops.

In 1934, the dock workers of San Francisco responded to the cop murder of a longshore worker by organizing the San Francisco General Strike, shutting down the entire city and most of the Bay Area. Likewise today, to

achieve Justice for Oscar Grant, we must demand:

- **Organize strike actions against the racist verdict and against the release of Oscar Grant's murderer!**
- **Set up multi-racial workers' tribunals drawn from the trade unions and the African-American and Latino communities to try all cases of police brutality!**
- **Build workers' self defense guards to protect our black/brown/LGBT and labor communities against the police!**
- **Break with the Democrats and Republicans and build a fighting workers/Labor Party to organize the unemployed, the black and brown communities, and youth!**
- **Build a revolutionary workers' international party based on the 1938 Transitional Program of the Fourth International to lead the working class to power!**



Photo by Oriana Bolden, Oakland Local

ILWU Local 10 members and supporters displaying the union's banner at a rally in Oakland, California on Saturday, October 23, 2010 – the day the union shut down Bay Area ports to protest the verdict in the Oscar Grant murder case.

(Editorial, continued from page 24)

Social Imperialism Ties Labor to Wall Street

Be silent, the workers are told, as Obama charts a course for long term occupation of western Asia, promising to keep 100,000 troops in Iraq and 70,000 in Afghanistan for as far as the eye can see, essentially on the old model of the British Empire. To say the combat role will be over in 2014 is to pull the same gag twice. But the ruling class has its agents in the workers' movement to help them pull it off. We could not help but notice that while the rest of the labor movement answered the call for a "day of action" to support the Wisconsin public workers on April 4th, Dennis Hughes, head honcho of the New York State Federation of the AFL-CIO, changed the date and time of the action in New York City to April 9th at noon, so as to accommodate the pro-war, pro-Zionist leadership of the Teamsters, the Teachers, and the Retail Clerks, among others. In this way, these tools of imperialism nakedly connived to prevent trade union activists from embodying a proletarian internationalist viewpoint by joining the national antiwar mobilization that took place at the exact same time, 25 blocks away. At the same time, these bozos tell workers to stand behind Democratic Governor Andrew Cuomo, whose budget will do to New York what Jerry Brown's is doing for California!

Separating the interests of the American worker from the workers of the world, who today are organizing and participating in rebellions against the dictates (and dictators) of imperialism (e.g., the IMF, the World Bank, and the oil companies) is the task embraced by these agents of the ruling class in the workers' movement. Only by driving these social imperialists out of the trade unions can the American labor movement take up its responsibility to lead the American working class into anti-imperialist solidarity action aimed at bringing down the rule of capital from Wall Street to London and beyond. We should take a lesson from ILWU Local 10, which shut down the docks against the Iraq war in May 2007.

The social imperialists stand down any labor antiwar critique, and look the other way as the workers' movement of Bahrain is mowed down in blood by the Saudi army to make the

world safe for the Saudi monarchy and its allies – among them the 5th Fleet of the US Navy. Doctors in a hospital just a mile from the base of the 5th Fleet were arrested, and many of them have been beaten, tortured, or "disappeared," for trying to treat injured protesters. Meanwhile, in the White House, phony humanitarianism is called upon to justify the bombing of Libya, but nary a word of concern is uttered for the slaughter in Bahrain.

Shifting Sands

Even the big states get on board with the hypocrisy. This past week, California announced it will not do business with companies that do business with Iran. That action might have gone unnoticed, except that on the same day, the Feds were promoting a gas pipeline from Iran to Iraq. So today's shifting sands make soft footing for believers in morality and humanitarianism.

Meanwhile, NATO and the US are bombing Libya, utilizing satellite communications and the US Navy to assure a smooth transition for the major oil companies who aim at installing the bourgeois TNC. We recognize the heterogeneity of the opposition and support neither the TNC leadership nor Gaddafi. Instead, as we explain in the articles on Libya in this issue of *International Trotskyist*, we advocate an independent course for the working class.

China and the Crisis

As the upheavals and wars in northern Africa and western Asia continue to develop, it appears Pakistan is shutting down drone operations and moving closer to the Chinese sphere of influence. We have pointed previously to the economic penetration of Africa by Chinese imperialism. Indeed, Chinese companies are looking for investment opportunities around the globe, exploiting local resources and labor, and challenging dominant US imperialism for the position of top capitalist dog. In South America, they make deals for soy production in Argentina, for oil in Venezuela, and for mineral rights in Peru.

Even US is not exempt from this trend. The US has a massive trade deficit with China, and China owns trillions of dollars worth of US government debt, more than any other foreign country. Despite the undeniable evidence of

China's growing transformation into the world's leading economic powerhouse, many subjectively revolutionary individuals and centrist groupings have yet to recognize China as either capitalist (the Spartacist League, Bolshevik Tendency, Internationalist Group) or imperialist (USec, the FLTI, the Lambertists). How do they explain China's massive outward foreign direct investment and the growth of its global economic power?

As China rises and the US empire weakens, an inter-imperialist confrontation is brewing. Capitalist crises have been resolved by world wars in the past, and it is not unlikely that these two great powers will come to loggerheads over exploitation of resources. It is the task of the proletarian vanguard to warn of this catastrophic trajectory, and mobilize the working class to take power before the next inter-imperialist war can be launched.

Wall Street's Aim: Use Democrats to Foster Terror and Intimidation

Here in the US, the Democrats are apt at enforcing the austerity needed to allow Wall Street to maintain the wealth disparity it requires as its due for managing the social capital of society. The working class and its organizations must be crushed before capital will be willing to reinvest at home. To that end, the

collective bargaining rights of workers are being attacked, and pensions, schools, the elderly, and the dependent are being abandoned, by the very same Democrats they helped to elect. Witness the timely budget signed on June 30th by Governor Brown of California, which has already resulted in another round of tuition hikes at the state's public universities and colleges, as well as billions in cuts to schools and social services.

Meanwhile, the real unemployment levels are far greater than the 9% nationally or the 12% in California that the authorities are willing to admit. In the black and brown communities, youth have more of a chance at going to jail than of finishing school and getting good jobs. With over two million incarcerated, the USA can proudly say we are number one!

In California, the overcrowded condition of the prisons has resulted in a court order for early release. Instead, the Californian government is looking for a solution based on shipping inmates to distant private prisons or back to county jails rather than releasing non-violent offenders or overturning the "three strikes" law. Terror against black and brown communities, immigrants, and the working poor continues unabated. The killer cop who executed Oscar Grant while he lay handcuffed face down

Support the Pelican Bay Prison Hunger Strike!

Prisoners in the maximum security Pelican Bay State Prison in California – notorious for its barbaric conditions and brutal treatment of prisoners – began an indefinite hunger strike as of July 1, 2011, to protest the cruel, inhumane, and tortuous conditions of their imprisonment. The prisoners who organized the hunger strike have galvanized an inspiring show of unity across racial and geographic lines within the prison system, as well as international support in the outside world. As of mid-July 2011, hundreds of prisoners at Pelican Bay remain on strike, with thousands more participating throughout California's 33 prisons.

HWRS salutes the striking prisoners' courageous struggle, and urges all individuals and organizations in the workers' movement to join in solidarity and support their efforts. More information can be found on these websites:

<http://prisonerhungerstrikesolidarity.wordpress.com/>
<https://www.facebook.com/event.php?eid=188129111230675>

at the Fruitvale BART station on January 1, 2009 has been set free with a mere slap on the wrist. And now it comes to light that the Oakland fire department, long a bastion of white privilege and nepotistic hiring practices, neglected to bandage Oscar Grant on both sides of his body after the shooting, leaving his wound untreated and possibly leading to his death. An investigation launched by Sean Gillis, the senior EMT trainer, was scuttled, and evidence was destroyed. Today Sean Gillis is being targeted and hounded out of his job by the OFD for coming forward. Just as in the case of Bradley Manning, the messenger who exposes the crimes of the State is the one who is made to pay.

Revolutionary fighters must join together, despite any differences, to forge strong labor defense for courageous fighters who stand shoulder to shoulder with the oppressed. HWRS calls on all the tendencies of the revolutionary Marxist and workers' movement to advocate for and build united labor defense of Sean Gillis, Bradley Manning, Leonard Peltier, Mumia Abu Jamal and all class war prisoners. Unity in defense of the working class's fighters is essential for us to advance toward regroupment.

Defend ILWU Local 10!

The rank and file of ILWU Local 10 has engaged in three strike actions this past year in

the interest of the entire working class. One against the unloading of a ship belonging to the Israeli company Zim Lines in solidarity with the Palestinian people; one demanding the jailing of the killer cops who executed Oscar Grant; and their last action on April 4th in solidarity with the public workers under attack in Wisconsin. For their efforts, their employer group, the PMA, has filed a lawsuit against the ILWU, demanding that it pay for the revenue lost during the April 4th action. Worse yet, they have expressed a willingness to settle the case without financial remuneration if Local 10 will sign a statement to the effect that "I was a bad boy and broke the law and the contract."

We call on the entire workers' movement to stand shoulder to shoulder with Local 10 and force the PMA to back down. Signing a "bad boy" agreement would make it harder for the union to undertake future political job actions. Despite the exemplary nature of these actions, and the relatively small financial impact they have had on the ruling class, so far, these actions show the way toward independent workers' political action. They teach us that we can have an impact, and inspire us all to rise to the task of building militant class struggle caucuses to take back control of our unions, so that the working class can express its political will through its own organizations.



Photo courtesy Confetti, via Flickr

Transport Workers Solidarity Committee banner at demonstration in defense of ILWU Local 10
Photo taken in San Francisco, California, on April 25, 2011