



The class struggle is the path to a world free of oppression!

Activists at the US Social Forum are fighting many vital struggles against the crimes of world capitalism. In the US and around the world, the rich corporations and the governments that are in their service are driving the working masses to ruin. The economic crisis has hurt millions of workers and whatever programs of social welfare existed are being torn to shreds. New campaigns of racist discrimination are rising, with immigrants being a special target. Militarism and war continue to rage. All this is creating the grounds for new revolts that are popping up.

What is needed is to push forward the class struggle. The workers and poor must get organized. They must have new organizations that express their class demands and methods of fighting. This is important if we are to push forward the immediate struggles of today. And these struggles are also the time for workers to prepare for bigger battles in the future that will bring down the capitalist order and put the workers in charge of building a socialist future.

Obama vs. the masses

One of the major obstacles to this is faith in the Democratic party. Time and again the Democrats have shown that whatever their differences with the Republicans, they too are servants of the rich and enemies of the masses. No sooner did Obama come to office than he embraced Bush's program of showering the banks with our tax trillions. Meanwhile, there are no serious jobs programs and poverty is flourishing. The imperialist wars in Iraq and Afghanistan continue to rage. And Obama has outdone Bush in deporting and hounding working-class immigrants. The administration's big claim to fame is their health care bill, which keeps the greedy private insurers in charge of meting out health care and charging outrageous prices for their "services". And their so-called "green energy" talk cannot hide the continued subservience of the government offices to BP and other energy capitalists who are busy destroying the environment. Indeed, only a few weeks before BP's massive spill, Obama was touting the safety of offshore oil rigs!

There are many more outrages by the Obama government. The differences between Obama and Bush are, it turns out, relatively minor. They both serve the same class of exploiters, and they both are loyal to free-market economics and militarism.

The union officials and the Democrats

The role of the main trade union leaders is an example of how faith in the Democrats and undermining the class struggle goes hand in hand. They claim to stand for the workers but in fact they are a comfy elite helping the capitalists suck the workers dry. They champion concessions in order to "save jobs", but the jobs disappear along with decent wages and benefits. They are dedicated to helping the Democrats, however. They turn over the workers' dues money to the Democrats and rally workers to campaign for them. And who do the Democrats help? The capitalists who are exploiting the workers.

Take the UAW. For decades they have been offering concessions

to the auto capitalists. Here in Detroit, they betrayed the American Axle workers' strike, calling off a major rally as the strike was building its strength. Then, in negotiations with the Big Three, the Gettlefinger leadership gave away the right to strike at Ford and sold out the younger generation, allowing new hires to be paid at the level of non-union shops. And they touted Obama's bailout of GM and Chrysler, which bailed out the executives by slashing jobs, wages and benefits. Now Bob King has replaced Gettlefinger as head of the UAW. But he is promising the same misery, praising Gettlefinger's sellouts and the auto bosses themselves.

The leaderships of the postal workers' unions is engaging in a similar sellout. Postal management is on a massive jobs cutting campaign, part of which requires forced relocations of workers hundreds of miles distant. Postal union officials are excited to mobilize workers to vote for the Democrats. But where are these worthies now? Are they helping rescue the postal workers? No. Conyers, Levin, Stabenow and Carolyn Cheeks Kilpatrick, all darlings of the union heads, are silent.

As the postal workers are being hammered, the national union leaders have refused any serious mobilization of postal workers. Here in Detroit, even after the rank and file voted to have a protest picket at a union meeting, the local APWU leadership opposed it and refused to endorse it. The picket was a success anyway because the rank and file was excited to participate. Meanwhile the Detroit APWU leadership is conducting a slander campaign against postal worker militants who push for mass actions.

What the treachery of the class collaborationist union leadership shows is that the class struggle cannot go forward without the workers having their own independent voice and organizations. Militant workers and activists should produce their own literature, hold meetings for the rank and file, and build networks of various kinds among them. They must give workers a strong voice against the capitalists and help them expose the betrayals of the union leaders. Work should be done along this end within the union structures as well.

We call on activists interested in seeing the revival of a class movement among the workers to take up these tasks. Please visit the Communist Voice Organization literature table at the Social Forum so we can share our views on how to build a real class organization among the workers.

Environmental activists vs. the Obama administration

Today we are facing an environmental crime so massive and ghastly that it stuns the imagination. The Gulf oil spill by BP has exposed the fundamental agreement between the program of the sophisticated Obama and the Neanderthal, Sarah Palin: Drill, Baby, Drill! Even with his temporary moratorium, Obama refuses to give up on offshore drilling. His faith in the market to solve things led to no oversight of BP and other oil giants. And that's why there was no real regulation by the "regulating" bodies. Despite outcries against BP, the administration has continued to rely on the polluters to clean

up their colossal mess.

This reliance on the market is also what lies behind various liberal proposals to clean up the environment. "Cap and trade" regulations, which create a new trading market in permits to pollute, are supposed to curtail pollution, but experience shows they are a failure. A carbon tax on pollution is favored by Democrats like Al Gore, but it too relies on the market to repair environmental damage and for this reason won't work.

What's needed is serious regulation and planning. The capitalist governments here and abroad have balked at this, lest the capitalists be upset by such interference. And for there to be real enforcement and planning, there is a need for the working masses to put their imprint on this process, ensure transparency of the process, and insure that the needs of the masses are taken account of. Workers must be mobilized to be environmental stewards keeping an eye on every governmental measure. What we need is a working-class environmental trend.

The class issues in fighting imperialism

US world domination and militarism is taking a heavy toll on the world's people and the working class youth who wind up in the armed forces. Besides the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan continuing on Obama's watch, there are numerous US-backed brutal regimes, from Israel to Saudi Arabia to Colombia and so on. The fight against militarism is a class issue because they are wars on behalf of the corporations and because the masses pay the price of death, injury and through massive taxes to finance the war efforts.

There's also the issue that in opposing US intervention, we must not shove aside the class struggle going on inside countries subjected to US invasions or bullying in the name of "anti-imperialism." Unfortunately, this is a popular pastime in sections of the left. Take the issue of occupying Iraq and Afghanistan. The US tries to justify its own savagery and drive for domination by pointing to the horrible tyrants like Saddam Hussein or bin Laden and the Taliban. Now, we must go all out to oppose US imperialist wars and occupations. At the same time, this by no means requires us to dress up the local dictators in anti-imperialist colors. We must support the working people in these countries and their fight against their local oppressors. By no means does this mean undermining their fighting against US wars and bullying. Quite the opposite. The struggle against imperialism should not be a struggle to see the old thugs stay in power, but should be part of the effort to win freedom from tyranny itself. Yet, time and again, various leftist groups tout the local tyrants as a force worth supporting, since they are in conflict with the US.

This comes up on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict too. There are groups which swear to be for the just cause of Palestinian liberation from the Israeli Zionist rulers. But in so doing, they portray Iran's aid to the likes of Hamas, the local government in Gaza, as a great thing. They do not pay attention to the fact Iran is not interested in liberation of the masses anywhere, as their brutal massacres during the last election there showed once again. They, and Hamas as well, are for a suffocating regime that drives down the masses. We must support the struggles of the Palestinian people and fight US aid to Israel. But on no account should this mean painting Iran or Hamas in pretty colors.

Working-class anti-imperialism means we must stand up against US domination of the world. It means we must bring out the capitalist nature of the warmongers who fight not for freedom, but profit. We should seek to build the anti-war activities in working class districts, workplaces and schools. The fight against war is part of the workers struggle here. Abroad, we should stand with the workers and poor in their efforts to fight US interference and war. But in so doing, we should encourage their efforts to organize against native oppressors. This is what will help give the anti-

imperialist movement here a real class character.

The building of a new society to replace capitalism

As can be seen, the capitalist world is filled with endless horrors for the masses. This raises the question among workers and activists of getting rid of the whole present social order. After all, even with stronger mass movements, and victorious reforms, the capitalists will still be around trying to reverse any progress and crush the oppressed.

The class struggle in the future will therefore have to directly take on revolutionary tasks. At present the modest level of struggle and lack of class organization will not allow this. But what can be done today is for class-conscious workers and activists to organize themselves and bring revolutionary ideas to the workers in the midst of their current class battles.

In the future, workers will no longer just fight to improve their situation in some way, but will have to establish their own political power. They must take power from the capitalists and suppress them. Stepwise, the working masses have to learn to run the governing bodies and other organizations from the local to the national level. And with this power they can stepwise end the capitalist economy, replacing it with social ownership of the economic enterprises. This will take a protracted period. But this period will create the conditions for ending exploitation and oppression and moving to a classless, communist society.

Well, that sounds nice. But what about what actually happened in the former Soviet Union, China, Cuba, etc.? In these countries there were mass revolutions that got rid of the old exploiters and brought some positive changes. But after a while these revolutions died and a new oppressive order was set up. The ruling party and state leaders became a new elite over the masses. The economic enterprises were often formally under the control of society, but various sections of the top managers and bureaucrats in fact controlled them, each elevating their own enterprises interests over those of society. The enterprises became part of a system of state-capitalism, where state-property dominated, but this state property ran along capitalist lines. This paved the way for the eventual privatization that took place with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the spread of private capitalism to China, Cuba and others. These societies in fact had nothing to do with socialism. But the US ruling class taught us all that that's what they were. Unfortunately, a good deal of the left also holds up these societies as workers' states or socialist, reinforcing a negative connotation for socialism.

Our trend, represented by the Communist Voice Organization, has long sought to clarify the differences between these fake communist societies and the teachings of genuine communism as found in Marx, Engels and Lenin. We consider it our communist duty to oppose the Stalinist and Trotskyist apologists for state-capitalism masquerading as workers' rule. For us there's no communism possible without opposing its revision by the leaders of the phony communist countries.

Come to the CVO table at the Social Forum to discuss these issues further with us! []

Read

Communist Voice

CV is a journal of revolutionary theory. It exposes the capitalist system, and tackles controversies facing activists. It upholds real Marxism-Leninism, which has nothing in common with the false "communist" regimes like the former Soviet Union, or China and Cuba, or with Trotskyism, Stalinism or Maoism.

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