

# International Trotskyist

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## ***OCCUPY!***

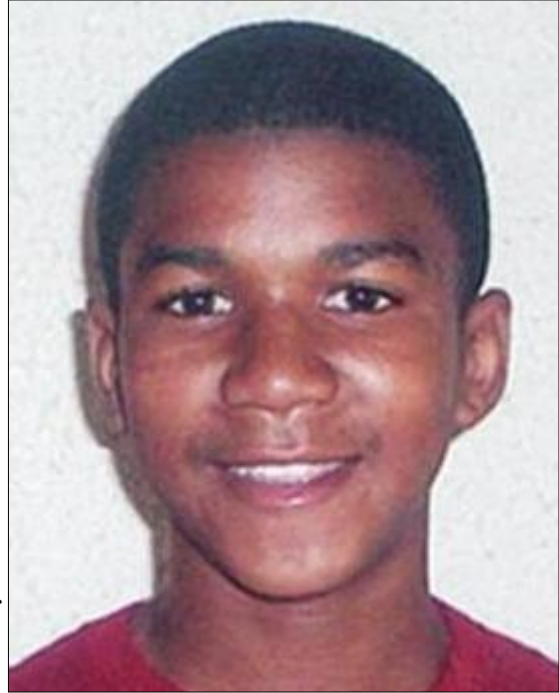
The Occupy Movement:  
Its Impact and Limitations,  
And Our Proposals  
For a Class Struggle Program

Why Climate Change Is Necessary  
For the Leap to Socialism:  
Evolution, Alienation, and Class Society

Justice for Trayvon Martin!  
Supplemental Resolution on Libya  
Defend Iran Against Imperialism  
and Its Zionist Muscle!

# Justice for Trayvon Mar- tin!

## Justice for ALL Victims of



We, the members of Humanist Workers for Revolutionary Socialism, hold the family and friends of Trayvon Martin in our hearts, and grieve with them for their tragic loss. While the family is dismayed at the lack of response by the police, and heartbroken by this obvious racist hate crime, families and youth in the San Francisco Bay Area embrace Trayvon as one of our own. His murder is our loss, and resonates with our experience on both sides of the Bay. We saw the cops shoot Oscar Grant in the back, while he was unarmed and handcuffed, and get away with it! We will not forget that they killed Kenneth Harding, shooting him in the back for the “crime” of trying to ride public transit without paying his fare. And we will forever remember Raheim Brown, who was shot by Oakland school police for having a screwdriver in his car.

And now a vigilante (wannabe cop) has shot a Black youth coming home from the candy store, and the police have not only botched the investigation, but refused to bring in his killer, George Zimmerman. No one can doubt that if the kid with candy had been white, and the man with the gun had been Black, the police would have locked up the shooter and prosecuted him for murder without hesitation, if they did not simply execute him on the spot. The “stand your ground” law offers a convenient excuse for police inaction in the face of racist vigilante murder, but we doubt law enforcement will apply it so easily to Black and Brown workers who stand their ground in the defense of their own communities and families.

When an unarmed Black youth is killed, it is only after a massive public outcry that the bosses’ racist criminal injustice system reluctantly begins to get involved. We saw how the cops got away with the killing of Oscar Grant. We have seen no prosecutions for the killings of Kenneth Harding or Raheim Brown. We join the family and friends of Trayvon Martin in demanding justice. But we must warn the grieving family and friends to expect nothing from the bosses, their racist cops, or their courts! Those institutions exist to keep us down, not to protect us! The only way to bring these racist murderers to justice, and protect our communities from attack in the future, is to convene mass mobilizations of Labor, united with the Black & Brown communities, to organize strike actions, self-defense guards, and workers’ tribunals.

- **No faith in the bosses’ courts!**
- **Bring murdering racist cops and vigilantes to justice before workers’ tribunals!**
- **Build strike actions against racist murders!**
- **Turn mobilizations for justice for victims of racist cop and vigilante violence into organizing meetings for Labor Black & Brown self-defense guards to defend our communities!**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Justice for Trayvon Martin.....	2
Editorial.....	3
The Occupy Movement: Impact, Limitations, Proposed Program .....	5
Longview: A Sellout Contract for the ILWU.....	8
The Pitfalls of “Tax the Rich” Campaigns.....	12
Defend Iran Against Imperialism .....	21
Supplemental Resolution on Libya .....	26
Why Climate Change Is Necessary for the Leap to Socialism .....	29
Where We Stand .....	51

## EDITORIAL: AS WE GO TO PRESS . . .

In the months since we published Issue 3 of *International Trotskyist (New Series)*, we have seen breathtaking explosions of activity by sections of the international working class. So far these have been blocked, blunted and betrayed by the national and imperialist bourgeois agencies, military and political, and by class-collaborators. In no case has the last word been said, even with the frightful human life tallies that are due in no small part to the crisis of proletarian leadership. The return to a more classical class struggle terrain comes alongside new inter-imperialist conflicts, so that we see trade and proxy war dimensions projected onto the democratic struggles of the masses. We saw this in Libya and we are witnessing it again in Syria.

Some defeats of the present, such as in Greece, are serious enough to cause us concern that the Hellenic masses may not be able to recover the initiative. What is lacking is a leadership willing to say what is; to refrain from fixating on the April or any parliamentary elections; and to show how the Troika plan of the EU, the IMF and the ECB has made the “haircut” life on rations the “constitutional” centerpiece of bourgeois rule through at least 2020. Greece’s debt payments are scheduled to come out of the masses’ life itself, to be paid before any other obligation except the costs of maintaining the state. All the maneuver room of Social Democracy and Eurocommunism has

(Continued on page 4)

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been eliminated by the services rendered to the class enemy by these fakers. To seek any relief at all, champions of the workers will immediately and continuously be confronted with the question **which class will rule**.

In China, the worker masses have entered upon a whole period of titanic struggles with private, state and international capitalist bosses. A rudderless majority of the international left has no clue what the outbreak of these struggles signifies. Equipped with no dialectics, they refuse to acknowledge wholesale systemic changes that are contradicting the inflexible schemas they have employed **for generations**. Without the Marxist method the various sects cannot conceive of the restoration of capitalism in China; the “third camp” of all the little latter day Souvarines never acknowledged the consolidation of the 1949 revolution in a deformed, degenerate workers’ state, and now blithely joins Chavez, the Castros, and Wen in foisting a “Fifth International” for a “21st Century Socialism” upon the unsuspecting working classes of some of the most impoverished nations. None of these sects acknowledge the rise of Chinese imperialism, already in sharpening conflict with our own main enemy, U.S. imperialism. With no comprehension of the true facts, our oppo-

nents cannot conceive of the solidarity with the Chinese workers that history demands and we proclaim. Instead, their misconceptions and failure to apply dialectical analysis doom them to find themselves squarely on the wrong side of the barricades in the struggle of the Chinese masses against their latest oppressors.

The geographic breadth and social scope of the Arab Spring has caught the “Arab Revolution” deniers flat-footed. All varieties of these political ostriches are showing their contempt for the masses, to whom they attribute no powers as authors of history. In the absence of the action of a mass Stalinist “blunt instrument,” some can see only plots whipped up by western imperialist spy agencies, such as were carried off just a few times in the 1950s. Others, inspired by “Third Worldist” theory, where the enemy of my enemy is always my friend, find anti-imperialist credentials for Tunisia’s Ben Ali, Libya’s Khaddafi, and now even Syria’s Assad. The result is that each of the offenders denies the existence of the Arab working class; denies its increasing social weight; or else seeks to deny its historic revolutionary role, preferring and exalting the

(Continued on page 46)



Mass protest in Wukan, China, against government corruption and oppression.

# The Occupy Movement: Its Impact and Limitations, and Our Proposals for a Class Struggle Program

Coming hard on the heels of the spring 2011 protests at the Wisconsin state capitol and the popular uprisings in North Africa, the Occupy movement burst onto the scene in the fall of 2011 as a welcome sign that the masses in the world's leading imperialist power were awakening at last from their long slumber. The Occupy protests started, logically enough, at the power center of finance capital on Wall Street, but quickly spread to other cities and internationally. The Occupy Wall Street encampment in New York City's Zuccotti Park began on September 17. By October 9, Occupy protests had taken place or were ongoing in over 95 cities across 82 countries, and over 600 communities in the United States.

By calling attention to income and wealth inequality in a way the traditional Left had been unable to accomplish, the Occupy movement succeeded in refocusing the center of gravity of political dialogue in the United States. Much like the civil rights and antiwar movements of the 1960s, many people, especially youth, identify with the Occupy movement even if they have not actually participated in it actively. But Occupy has achieved its broad popularity at the cost of programmatic, strategic, and tactical clarity. Although it has reached out to the labor movement, it has done so only to a varying degree, and has deliberately avoided adopting a class identity. Worse, it has rejected the traditions of workers' democracy and mass labor actions in the name of "leaderlessness" and "diversity of tactics." In so doing, it has limited its own potential to galvanize the working class, and exposed itself to cooptation by reformism and electoral politics.

Occupy's useful life is not necessarily over. The plutocracy remains sufficiently concerned about it to have moved the G8 summit scheduled for May 2012 from Chicago to Camp David. In late March, Occupy staged attempts to set up new camps in Manhattan and Oakland; as we go to press, these camps are under police attack, and their fate is uncertain. Occupy organizers have announced that they are planning a comeback this spring, leading up to a major action on May 1, 2012. But if Occupy does not move beyond fetishizing the encampment tactic, police confrontation, and the general assembly consensus process to embrace an explicitly working class identity, a mode of organizing based in workers'

democracy, and a class struggle program, it is doomed to eventual demoralization and defeat.

## IMPACT

### Occupy Oakland and the Port Shutdowns

One of the first major Occupy encampments to crop up in the wake of the initial Zuccotti Park action was Occupy Oakland, which took over the plaza in front of Oakland's City Hall and renamed it in honor of Oscar Grant, young black worker and father brutally executed by the local transit police on January 1, 2009. Situated in the heart of the historically progressive San Francisco Bay Area, Occupy Oakland attracted considerable support from the rank and file of the labor movement as well

as left organizations, students, and the oppressed communities.

Occupy Oakland was also one of the first encampments, after Zuccotti Park, to fall victim to a brutal police onslaught. On October 25, 2011, during an attempt to evict the encampment from the plaza, police fired a “non-lethal” projectile point-blank at two-term Iraq War veteran Scott Olsen, critically injuring him. News of Olsen’s injury flashed at Twitter speed around the world, and immediately all eyes were on Oakland. News that Egyptians were marching on the American Embassy in solidarity with Oakland swelled internationalist fervor across the Occupy movement, while live feeds flashed demonstrations across a thousand cities standing militant vigil for Olsen.

Occupy Oakland then took the bold step of calling for a general strike, despite not having the social leverage to accomplish the task of shutting down the entire city. It was quickly acknowledged that labor would not down tools, but that with enough pressure the Port of Oakland could be closed. Thus, the misnamed general strike ultimately manifested itself as a “day of action” culminating in a mass picket to shut the port.

On November 2, a racially diverse cross-section of Oaklanders and other Bay Area residents, numbering in the tens of thousands, marched from Oscar Grant Plaza to the Port of Oakland gates. From there, they spread out over a distance of between three and five miles to the farthest berths, dividing their forces to assure adequate picket lines were formed up at each gate. The vast crowd included workers (organized and unorganized), unemployed, youth, students, parents, elders, disabled, marching bands, affinity groups, anti-police brutality groups, every variation of socialists, communists and anarchists, and Occupy activists. The enormous power latent in the so-called “99%” became self-evident during the port shutdown, and a shift in consciousness percolated across the crowd as the participants experienced the force of solidarity. The working class of Oakland was becoming self-aware and self-expressing. They had broken out of isolation, atomization and demoralization and cast off the shackles of business unionism, and were putting their stamp on the international class struggle in a profoundly significant and exemplary manner. No cargo moved in or out of the port that night. The union tops won’t fight



Occupy supporters streaming across an overpass on their way to shut down the Port of Oakland, Nov. 2, 2011

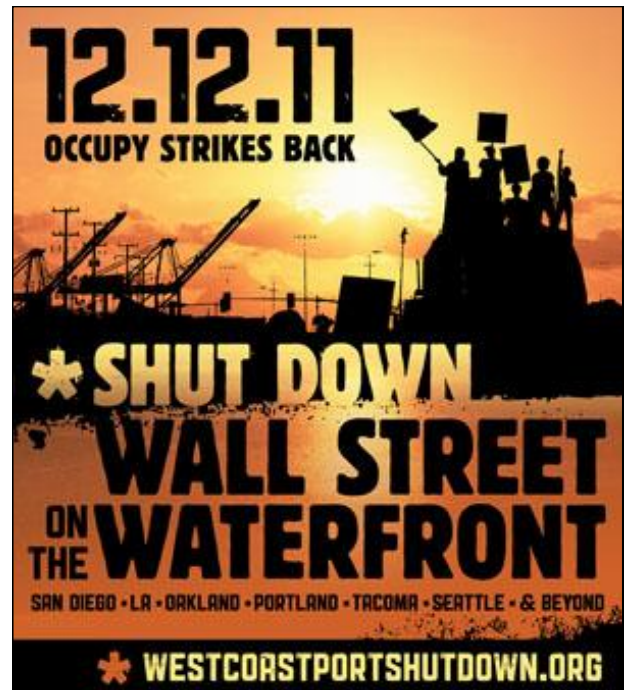
the Taft-Hartley anti-strike laws, but that night, the working class showed that as a class, we can!

Flush with the achievements of November 2, the Occupy movement called for a second port shutdown on December 12, 2011. This time, the reach of the protest was extended to the entire West Coast. Its core focus was the fight to defend the ILWU 21 dockworkers in Longview, Washington, who were threatened with displacement by a scab union at a newly built grain terminal. As it did on November 2, Occupy also sought to call attention to the shameful situation of the port truck drivers, who have been barred from organizing for better wages and working conditions because the law has falsely labeled them “independent contractors” who cannot bargain collectively under the antitrust laws.

The December 12 West Coast Port Shutdown was not uniformly successful, but it did have an impact. It helped to fuel a subsequent effort to organize a caravan of workers and unemployed to block the first grain shipment scheduled to leave Longview. In the face of this organizing effort, the multinational corporation that built the Longview terminal finally bowed to the inevitable, and reached a contract – albeit a deplorably concessionary one (see sidebar, next page) – with ILWU Local 21.

Occupy Oakland’s decision to shut down the ports on the West Coast on November 2 and December 12 was criticized by mainstream media, union officials, and even some labor activists who consider themselves progressive. They complained that Occupy does not represent union workers, that the port shutdowns were not officially endorsed even by the ILWU or the labor councils in the port cities, and that the actions hurt the people who work at the ports. They argued that if Occupy wants to support the labor movement, it should follow the instructions of the labor bureaucrats rather than acting on its own.

If Occupy and its supporters had heeded this advice, the ports would never have been shut down. Oakland’s unions responded to Occupy Oakland’s call for the November 2 port shutdown with letters of support for what they called a “Day of Action,” but not one dared to



defy Taft-Hartley by calling their members to walk out in unison and create a real general strike. Instead, they told workers to take vacation time if they wanted to participate. If you have to take a vacation day to attend an action, or public transit is not shut down, it is not a general strike. Labor did pay for the toilets and lunch, but when it came time to shut down the port, it was the Oakland rank and file working class who took the lead!

In the run-up to December 12th, the labor leadership’s role got worse. The ILWU leadership took a stand against their own rank and file and against the community that supported them. Under pressure from the Port Management Association and the Democratic Party, the Alameda County Labor Council even went so far as to consider a resolution opposing the port shutdown. The resolution was ultimately tabled.

As these facts demonstrate, the criticisms of Occupy for failing to show sufficient deference to the official leadership of organized labor ignore the fact that the present union bureaucracy, hog-tied by its links to the Democratic Party and its craven fear of violating the oppressive Taft-Hartley anti-strike law, has demonstrated time and time again that it is incapable of fighting effectively

## We Have to Do Better Than This: The ILWU Tops Sell Out the Workers in Longview

Occupy's support for the struggle of ILWU Local 21 in Longview Washington was a significant factor in ILWU's ability to win a contract with grain shipper EGT. Unfortunately, the contract itself is a shameful sellout, unprecedented in the ILWU's history. The comments below are based in part on an informed analysis of the contract recently published by Howard Keylor, who says "This is the worst contract imposed upon a longshore local that I have ever seen."

Keylor is a retired member of Oakland's ILWU Local 10, with 34 years experience as a working longshoreman; a widely respected, longtime participant in the militant sector of the workers' movement; and a member of the International Bolshevik Tendency. Keylor's comments note that in making his assessment, he was constrained by Local 21's capitulation to the requirement that its members not discuss the contract with anyone outside their own local.

According to Keylor, Local 21's contract with EGT "is the only ILWU contract with a grain shipping facility which does not include ILWU shipping clerks as part of the work force." The union that represents the shipping clerks in Longview "was shut out of the negotiations and has no jurisdiction under the contract." The contract also differs from the ILWU standard by providing for 13-hour shifts instead of a maximum of 10 hours.

In addition, although the contract requires EGT to hire workers through Local 21's dispatch hall, it allows EGT, in its sole discretion, to reject as "unqualified" any worker that Local 21 offers it. As Keylor notes, "This undermines the hiring hall and in effect allows the company to pick and choose. If the union cannot supply 'qualified' workers, the company can go outside and hire whomever they want." In effect, the contract contains a loophole big enough to allow the employer to ditch Local 21 altogether and hire a scab workforce.

The contract also gives EGT the right to discipline workers, and even terminate them permanently, for any reason that the company finds appropriate "[a]t its sole discretion." This puts no limit on the company's right to get rid of workers it perceives to be troublemakers, such as those who raise workplace health and safety issues or insist on their union rights. The contract also takes away workers' right to stop work altogether based on health and safety concerns; instead, the company can continue the job while the issue is resolved, using supervisors or other workers it designates.

Conversely, EGT has the right under the contract to designate any individual longshoreman dispatched to it by Local 21 to be a "permanent regular employee" of EGT. This may sound innocuous to the uninformed, but as Keylor explains, it "effectively cut[s] off longshoremen in the dispatch hall from future dispatch." For that reason, "[h]istorically, this issue of 'steady men' led to an extended and bitter series of battles in the main longshore division." After a similar provision "was slipped into the contract in 1966," it became "one of the two issues which caused the three and one half months 1971-72 coastwide strike."

In another break with precedent, the contract did not give Local 21 amnesty for the outstanding penalties it and its members incurred during the course of the struggle for the contract. Worst of all, and also unprecedented, "the contract requires [Local 21] officers to order longshoremen to cross and work behind a community picket line or blockade and to announce publicly that such a blockade is unauthorized." If workers refuse to cross a picket line and an arbitrator rules the picket did not pose a legitimate health and safety issue, this constitutes an unauthorized work stoppage. If that happens three times, the *entire contract can be cancelled*. We concur in Keylor's assessment that "This language is clearly intended to intimidate longshoremen from participating in joint actions with Occupy or other outside organizations." Thus, the ILWU bureaucracy has allowed a wedge to be driven between the labor movement and Occupy, in the face of the obvious fact that the best hope of victory for both is increased solidarity between them.

Keylor predicts that "When the various coastwide grain handling and shipping contracts come up for renewal shortly[, the shippers] will demand the same give-away contract to remain 'competitive.'" In other words, now that the grain shipping bosses have their noses under the ILWU's tent, they will undoubtedly make every effort to overturn it entirely. We have no doubt that shipping companies outside the grain industry will try to follow suit.

Finally, Keylor speculates that "Local 21 agreed to this contract after being told by the International Officers that if they don't accept it they are 'on their own' and that the International will withdraw all financial and legal support." If Keylor's intuition is correct, the International has shamefully betrayed not only the members of Local 21, but also every longshore worker on the Pacific Coast. If betrayals like the Longview contract continue to be the order of the day for the ILWU tops, the union's proud history of militancy will end in a sad and ignominious defeat.



for the interests of even those few workers who belong to a union, much less the interests of the working class as a whole. Although unions in the US did wage militant struggles in the distant past, under today's leadership, we cannot rely on them to do so again. At least three factors prohibit labor, under the current leadership, from launching the overdue counterattack. First: no working class political independence; second: anti-labor laws; and third: professionalization, institutionalization and class collaboration of labor's leadership.

That is why, having run out of patience waiting for the union leadership to take action in the face of the current economic crisis, the working class of Oakland took action on its own, and kicked Wall Street where it counts by shutting down the Port of Oakland – twice!

### **Occupy and the Oppressed Communities**

When Occupy emerged in Oakland, youth, the Black and Brown communities, and the most radical elements of the labor movement were already primed to present the generally white “middle class” Occupy supporters with tasks that would challenge the movement on questions of special oppression, class exploitation, and class struggle. Occupy Oakland has been perhaps the most successful in integrating the agenda against police brutality into the movement, and in igniting conversation among its labor and Black and Brown communities.

The Oakland community had already been organizing against police brutality for the last three years following the BART police execution of Oscar Grant. As the racist and anti-working class nature of this police brutality was revealed, a block between labor activists and anti-police brutality activists developed into a one-day political strike by ILWU Local 10 on October 23, 2010. This action shaped and promoted the development of an anti-racist class consciousness among many workers and youth in Oakland.

During the occupation of the Wisconsin Capitol in the previous winter, many of these same forces came together around a port shutdown in solidarity with public workers that was spearheaded by ILWU Local 10 on April 4, 2011. These actions exemplified, for many, the role labor could and should be playing in organizing actions to defend the

most oppressed communities and the interests of the entire working class.

Thus, the fact that Occupy Oakland chose to memorialize Oscar Grant when it renamed the site of its occupation was significant. Occupy Oakland drew racially and otherwise diverse crowds to its encampment, its general assemblies, and its major actions on November 2 and December 12. Yet as time went on, some participants from the oppressed communities began to feel marginalized. The organizational machinery behind the scenes was increasingly dominated by privileged young white activists who could afford the time and energy to attend countless working group meetings and prolonged evening General Assemblies. It did not help the oppressed communities' perception of Occupy when the police action that injured, but did *not* kill, white Iraq war veteran Scott Olsen triggered far larger demonstrations and a far more militant reaction than had appeared in the wake of the police *murders* of several local Black youth (Oscar Grant, Kenneth Harding, Raheim Brown). Occupy Oakland gave little or no support to the campaign to support and defend Sean Gillis, the whistleblowing paramedic who called attention to Oakland Fire Department paramedics' bungled treatment Oscar Grant's bullet wounds, and was harassed and demoted for his truth-telling. When Trayvon Martin was murdered in Florida in March 2012, only a few hundred attended the ensuing protests in the Bay Area.

By the time Occupy Oakland's goals and tactics shifted from the successful port shutdowns to the disastrous attempted building takeover on January 28, many in the local Black and Brown communities had lost faith in the Occupy movement. Its blindness to the unconscious racism inherent in its mode of functioning, and its failure to give sufficient emphasis to the fight against racial injustice, had alienated them.

### **Internationalism**

From the first pizza pie ordered by the Egyptian movement and sent to the public workers at the Wisconsin Capitol occupation in the early winter of 2011, a revived internationalism began to develop in the working class. The Occupy movement was inspired in part by the struggles of the people of Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and the Middle East during the Arab Spring. As the tents went up in Zuccotti Park, American workers began to



Occupy marchers in Oakland, California express international solidarity with the Egyptian workers who occupied Tahrir Square in Cairo.

look internationally for class inspiration, to a degree not seen since the days of the Spanish Civil War.

In its turn, the Occupy movement has gotten both the attention and support of its working class brethren around the world. Occupy has revealed to the world that the US is a declining imperial power, and that its working class is as desperate as those in others parts of the world. Occupy has also shown that even US workers, widely viewed abroad as passive and subservient to capital since the postwar boom years, are capable of rising up and fighting back when pushed to the wall.

The globalization of capital has made it more important than ever for those who wage the struggle against capital to form ties with our counterparts around the globe. The workers' movement cannot succeed unless it develops an internationalist consciousness, in solidarity with our brother and sister workers overseas. It is in all of our common interest to defeat the imperialist wars and interventions waged by the United States, NATO, and their allies. The international inspiration and impact of Occupy have brought us closer to this goal.

#### LIMITATIONS

The Occupy movement deserves credit for galvanizing support, across the US and worldwide, for a popular struggle against the global domination of big capital and its imposition of austerity measures on workers and youth. But Occupy, with its cross-class, left-wing populist identity and ideology, is no substitute for an organized, disciplined, class-conscious movement with a solid anticapitalist program. As we will show, Occupy's

susceptibility to reformism and its espousal of consensus decisionmaking and "leaderless" anarchism are actually two sides of the same coin. If the Occupy movement does not transcend its organizational and ideological limitations – and soon – it cannot succeed, or even survive.

#### The General Assembly and Consensus Processes

"Mic check! Mic check! Mic check!" This is how you take the floor during the general assembly. "Direct response! Direct response!" With a little chutzpah and these two phrases an individual can control the discussion. Is it expedient, yes, and at times it works. It can be used to make group decisions which the majority can understand and decide upon quickly. Furthermore, if any leader (or a layer of members) comes forward and plans an action and can muster the votes at the GA then that action simply becomes part of Occupy's "diversity of tactics."

At the same time, this system – combined with the consensus (100%) and even modified consensus (90%) requirement for proposals to pass – has effectively kept the Occupy movement from charting a course toward working class action independent from ruling class politics. Rather, this system allows and promotes the ruling class ideology through the multiple transmission belts of the liberals, progressives, labor leaders, pacifists, fake socialists, and anarchists.

Our enemy is the most organized, centralized, militarized national security state ever assembled, and is united to take every action "necessary" in defense of private ownership of the means of production. Its defeat will not be accomplished by public

assemblies where a handful of reformists can block the development of program, or a handful of pacifists can block the formation of labor, Black and Brown self-defense guards, the arming of pickets, or the formation of workers' militias. Invariably, in public assemblies using the Occupy method, a minority will block the assembly from drawing the class lines that are necessary to lead the working class past the illusions of pacifism, the class collaboration of the labor leaders, the moral imperative of the liberals, the ultra-leftism and susceptibility to provocateurs of the so-called "black block" anarchists, and the pseudo anti-leadership philosophy being promoted.

In an attempt to self-define, the movement identifies with the "99%". But that is clearly a rhetorical ploy based on fuzzy sociology. The real ruling class, the top oligarchs are more like 0.01% and they have a good 7-12% of the population materially dependent on them and committed to the perpetuation of their rule. But what kind of movement could you build around the slogan "We are the 87.243%!" Left to its own fuzzy sociology and its own interactive process, Occupy is an expression of the radicalized petty bourgeois feeling the pressure of capitalism's implosion. Yet at the same time, and despite the fuzzy sociology, the class character of the mobilization at Occupy can change on a dime, with massive gathering of trade unionists and workers at the encampments. This has happened a number of times, with masses of trade unionists coming to Occupy Wall Street events in New York City, and in Oakland when the Occupy Oakland Labor Solidarity Committee assembled in the days after Scott Olsen was injured.

The result of changing class characterization, lack of leadership and no real programmatic demands, leaves Occupy at the whim of the most charismatic speaker at the assembly. The illusion represented by "diversity of tactics" leaves the movement open to any and every scheme proposed, thereby undermining its ability to move in a focused, productive direction. "Diversity of tactics" is a measure to take when you have a plan and it's not working, so you need to change the road you take to get to your destination. Without a destination in mind, however, "diversity of tactics" becomes a diversity of directions which

weakens the movement and is one of its greatest limitations.

### **Reformist Demands**

The Occupy movement has spoken to people unlike any other in our recent history, and has jostled people out of their resigned and conformist slumber to take a stand and act for the future of themselves, their children and the world society as a whole. Unfortunately, however, Occupy has failed to identify and articulate a program that can bring about the necessary fundamental change in the structure of our economy and our society. The Occupy movement has developed many lists of the wrongs of capitalism, but under the guise of adherence to its consensus process, has assured that discussion of demands to define the movement is not entertained. The end result is to edge out, contain, and prevent debate over working class program and revolutionary action. As the "99%" tries to self define, the programmatic vacuum resulting from insistence on consensus and leaderlessness prevents the movement from overcoming the politics of the dominant paradigm, allows the liberal/progressive critique to prevail, and limits the movement's program to "logical" or "common sense" demands.

A typical example is the Occupy movement's emphasis on opposing "corporate personhood," the doctrine espoused by the United States Supreme Court in its infamous *Citizens United* decision. The abolition of "corporate personhood" was the focus of a national Occupy-sponsored day of protest on January 20, 2012. But emphasizing this reform obscures the truth that the problems we face are not a result of "corporate personhood," or even of corporations in and of themselves, but of capitalism.

Under the capitalist economic system, the means of production (factories, mines, technology, etc.) are privately owned, and the people who own the means of production use them in the way that will make the most profit, rather than choosing to make the things that people need most. Capitalists have no interest in housing the homeless, employing the jobless, feeding the hungry, healing the sick, protecting the environment, or educating the young. There is always more profit to be made doing other things. Even if we got rid of corporations altogether, our system would still treat

### THE DEMISE OF THE MILLIONAIRES TAX INITIATIVE IN CALIFORNIA

The illusions of “progressives” in the ability of the system to be reformed by electoral means have been dealt a blow by the “compromise” (or more accurately, capitulation) announced in mid-March 2012 by the backers of the so-called “Millionaires Tax” initiative in California. The Millionaires Tax was much touted as a solution to California’s budget problems, not only by the leaders of its sponsoring union, the California Federation of Teachers (CFT), along with “progressive” Democrats and Greens, but also by fake socialists, ex-Communist Party members, Solidarity adherents, and Labor Notes leaders. These reformist forces – including many participants in the Occupy movement – had been pushing for this initiative at least since December 2011.

Now, despite all their hot air, the CFT tops and their backers have abandoned their “Millionaires Tax” initiative. Instead, they have thrown their support to a revised version of the regressive tax plan proposed by Democratic Governor Jerry Brown.

The willingness of the backers of the Millionaires Tax to capitulate to Brown’s political pressure exposes the fact that the initiative was never intended as a solution to attacks on public workers and public services. Rather, it was intended as a method to channel the anger and frustration of the working class away from independent political action, and away from building a rank-and-file mass strike movement based on democratizing the trade unions.

Throughout the Occupy movement, forces such as these have advanced their reformist program of “tax the rich,” while opposing the working class program which calls for the expropriation of the expropriators. In so doing, they have shown themselves incapable of offering the workers a road out of the crisis. In contrast, when revolutionaries call for massive spending on public services, health care, and public works, we say “Make the Banks, Corporations, and Capitalist State Pay! It’s the Bosses’ Crisis, Not Ours!” This slogan draws the class line clearly, and implicitly recognizes that “making” the bosses pay will require more than votes – rather, it will take massive direct action by the politically independent working class.

In the end, all variants of the “tax the rich” meme serve to keep the workers tied to the electoral process, and in particular to the “lesser evil” – the Democratic Party. The effect – and on the part of at least some, the intent – is to divert the Occupy movement away from advancing the struggle for working class independence.

One of the backers of the initiative, labor activist Harry Brill, wrote in a comment published on the *Berkeley Daily Planet* website that “what we learned from this experience is that the strong ties of labor to the Democratic Party sabotaged what could have been an effective campaign on the millionaires tax.” Brill went on to opine that “[t]he Labor Movement must find a way to maintain independence from the Democratic Party.” So far, so good, until one reads further and learns what he means by this, which is that “Labor should be acting independently while still working to elect New Deal Democrats” who “represent the best interests of the 99 percent.”

The truth that reformists such as Brill refuse to acknowledge is that no matter how many “progressive” Democrats we elect, and no matter how many reform initiatives we pass, workers will find no solution to the economic crisis at the ballot box. The problem lies with the basic contradictions of capitalism itself, not with which political party administers the capitalist system.

Even if we were to build a workers’ party, it could not eliminate those contradictions through electoral politics alone. The type of workers’ party we need is one that uses the elections only as a tool to educate the working class as to the limitations of constitutional democracy – that is, a fighting workers’ party. Such a party would focus its primary efforts on organizing the class to take mass direct action and to form organs of workers’ democracy, such as councils of workers, neighborhoods, students, the oppressed, the retired, and the unemployed. Only such a party can accomplish the ultimate and necessary task of taking power away from the capitalists and organizing an economy planned and run by the working class for the benefit of people’s needs.

protecting private property and maximizing profits as the top priority. This is not because of corporate personhood, but because of the capitalist system itself.

It is capitalism, not corporate personhood, that is responsible for the current worldwide depression. Why? Big businesses moved most of

their manufacturing out of the developed countries, where workers’ standard of living was relatively high, because they could make higher profits by building factories in countries like China, where wages were lower. Meanwhile, Wall Street used the money that flowed back to the United States to gamble for

profit on speculative bubbles like mortgage-backed securities. When the bubble burst, the economy tanked.

For the same reason, Occupy's focus on "tax the rich" – including its ill-fated campaign for a "millionaires tax" in California (see sidebar, opposite page) – ignores and obscures the fact that the priorities for spending tax revenues are not set by the working class or the "99%," but by politicians whose job it is to serve the interests of the plutocracy. Putting more money in the coffers of government will do nothing to change the balance of power between capital and labor.

In order to build the kind of society we all want to see, we first have to grasp the simple fact that what lies at the root of the world's problems is not corporations or rich people, but the profit-driven economic system as a whole – that is, capitalism. Calling for reforms like "abolish corporate personhood" and "tax the rich" implies that the social problems of our country (not to mention the global economic crisis) can be solved by limiting big business's political campaign contributions and forcing rich people to hand over more tax dollars to the government. This is a pipe dream. The truth is that these reforms will do little or nothing to solve our economic, environmental, and human needs problems, bring peace to the world, or create a genuinely democratic political system.

The struggle for this type of reformist demand misleads workers and their allies into thinking that capitalism could work better, if we only change this law or that. It focuses the masses on the illusory dream of fixing capital, instead of setting them on the road to workers' power through the expropriation of big capital. It robs the working class of its role as the agent of revolutionary social transformation, casting it instead as just another pressure group seeking to bring about incremental change that will make the capitalist system more "fair."

#### **Absence of Working Class Identity and Program**

The impulse underlying the Occupy movement is that there is a class war going on – and the "99%" did not start it. The corporate plutocracy has been waging an all-out war against organized labor for decades, to the point where 89% of workers no longer belong to a union. Their latest ploy is to blame public workers and their unions for the current

structural crisis of capitalism – as if the demands, of teachers, firefighters, and public health workers for a "fair wage" and a threadbare pension were responsible for crashing the biggest economy in the world.

As a result, over the past decades, the situation of working people and the poor in the United States has gone from bad to worse. While this was happening, the "leadership" of the union movement did nothing to fight back directly, instead contributing money, volunteers, and votes to the Democratic Party. They have continued in this vein even while Democratic politicians have cut budgets, slashed social services, and imposed take backs on public workers. When Obama promised "hope" and "change," the union tops cheered, and they will back him again in 2012.

By now it is crystal clear that channeling our discontent into electoral campaigns brings working people nothing but false hope, and change for the worse. The Democrats have promised us health care reform; jobs; the Employee Free Choice Act to boost union organizing; and environmental protection. They have delivered precisely NOTHING. We are still faced with a shrinking job market, a lower standard of living, rising education costs, cutbacks in social services, home foreclosures, budget cuts, tax cuts for the rich, and bailouts for the banks. And still, the union leadership backs the Democrats, refusing to assert labor's political independence and fight back with mass working class actions. As the international crisis of capitalism imposes austerity on all the working people, dependent peoples, and marginalized and specially oppressed communities, the labor bureaucracies have displayed their inability to respond with appropriate class force to turn the tide against capital and in favor of labor.

As for the Occupy movement, while it self-defines as independent of both corporate parties, the vacuum left by its leaderlessness and lack of program creates an opening for reformists, pacifists, and labor (mis)leaders to steer it in the direction of Democratic party electoral politics. As we head into the 2012 campaign, we can expect to see reformism, pacifism, liberalism, and business unionism join forces to corral the working class away

from independent political action and back to the big Democratic umbrella. The centrists, fake socialists, and anarchists play along by not challenging these reformists, and by failing to fight for demands and actions that pose working class solutions based on resolving the basic contradictions of capitalism.

The most egregious variants of these methods are displayed by figures such as ex-Black Panther and ex-CP member Angela Davis, who, for all her experience, offers no program other than self-actualization platitudes from author June Jordan, and by Michael Moore, who evokes the moral imperative against “capitalist greed,” and proposes “democracy” as the solution. No better are fake socialist organizations such as the ISO, which in San Francisco has endorsed anti-working class proposition C and freely distributed “tax the rich” posters. The ISO, at least, should have read the 1938 Transitional Program of the Fourth International, which demonstrates how to articulate a program of transitional demands designed to guide workers to take production into the hands of the working class.

### **The Role of Anarchism**

Occupy is also home to many strains of anarchists. Most of the anarchists ignore or disparage discussion of program, and when challenged to a discussion at the Occupy in Oakland to compare Marxism and Anarchism, the anarchists refused to show up. This anti-political posture actively impedes the working class from developing a class-identified program that can serve as a pole of attraction away from reformism. Worse still is the small, isolated group of self-defined anarchists who espouse “black-blocking” and refuse to discuss program or to prepare for joint action. Instead, under the rationale of “diversity of tactics,” they go on sprees of window smashing and random vandalism, which are easily infiltrated by police provocateurs and used to evoke violent backlash against the entire movement.

Following the port shutdown on November 2, 2011, some anarchistic youth and squatters attempted to seize a vacant building in Oakland, previously used by a homeless services organization, to bring it back to the

service of the homeless. A much larger and more significant attempted building takeover was organized by Occupy Oakland on January 28, 2012. These actions challenged the irrationality of capitalism, which allows housing to remain vacant while people are driven out of their homes and onto the streets.

This tactic is exemplary, but as the experiences of November 2 and January 28 showed, it cannot be carried out effectively without a disciplined mass effort built with the support of labor and the communities of the oppressed. When attempted without proper planning and discipline, actions like these are highly vulnerable to infiltration by unprincipled thrill-seekers and police provocateurs. Actions such as lighting fires in the street and breaking windows can easily be taken by cops dressed as “black blockers” in order to give their storm trooper colleagues an excuse to crush the squatters. These outbursts of violence do nothing to organize the working class and prepare for the seizure of power, and are therefore just as counter-revolutionary as the non-program “program” of the liberals and reformists.

The unfortunate events that transpired in Oakland on January 28, 2012, threatened to be the nail in the coffin for Occupy. Several thousand activists showed up to march towards and occupy an empty city-owned building (the defunct former Henry J. Kaiser Convention Center), which was to be set up a working “home” for the Occupy movement. This was an anarchist inspired and led action, planned as a stunt. The action served only to prove (as if we did not already know this) that the state will smash heads to prevent the movement from seizing property. The planners had to know that trying to seize a valuable piece of city-owned property would result in confrontation; indeed, some came prepared with helmets, body armor, shields, and metal barricades to protect the crowd.

The small core anarchist group was swelled by a number of socialists, communists, students, church groups, and even disabled activists and parents with kids, about 2000 in all. Many were not prepared for the violence that ensued. Those who had come with shields are to be commended for forming up defense

lines to try to shield the crowd from the blast of tear gas grenades. But despite this effort, it was clear early on that the action was doomed to end in failure and mass arrests. After the crowd was turned back from its original target and began to march through the streets of downtown Oakland, the OPD pursued and contained them with a wall-to-wall phalanx, sweeping the crowd in front of their formation. Ultimately, the cops kettled the protesters and filled their paddy wagons with arrestees.

This was not a working class demonstration. It was, instead, an infantile leftist action which put many unarmed activists in danger. In Greece, these same type of anarchists worked together with the union bureaucracy to betray the historical needs of the working class. In sum, the January 28 action was a tactical mistake, brought about by the “leaderless” quality of the movement, which lacks a clear plan and goal, not to mention discipline; has no grasp of military tactics; and entered into a confrontation without the overwhelming numbers and force of arms that were needed to have any hope of success. The day served to demoralize Occupy supporters and was a real setback for the movement, linking it to the black block anarchists in the eyes of many previously sympathetic workers,

and opening it up to the accusation that it has fetishized a tactic (occupation) rather than focusing its efforts on goals that matter.

Again, the entire debacle was caused by lack of leadership, an eagerness to employ a “diversity of tactics,” and the absence of any clear direction, leaving Occupy like a cork floating at sea, at the whim of every passing storm and island. Without a concrete program to fight for, Occupy’s efforts to remain active, visible, and relevant have an artificial tone, and cannot motivate the thousands of rank-and-file workers, unemployed, and youth who are still hungry for a way to contribute their energy to changing the system.

### **The Pitfalls of Pacifism**

Seemingly opposite to the appetite for violence of the “black block” are those pacifists who can be heard calling out to the cops, “You’re part of the 99%.” These pacifists perpetuate the lie that the state is class-neutral, and the cops are workers just like the rest of us. As left historian Howard Zinn succinctly put it, “You cannot be neutral on a moving train.” Promoting the lie that cops are part of the “99%” ignores the fact that every working class kid in the United Kingdom learns as a child, and that most people of color figure out by their teen years: the role of the



Police beating up workers trying to block a train from delivering grain to the Longview, Washington port during ILWU Local 21’s struggle for a contract. The cops’ role is to protect business and its profits from workers’ actions in defense of their rights.

cops is to keep poor and working class people in their place, especially when they organize strikes and community self defense, or when the “99%” decide to fight back. The cops are enforcers for Wall Street. They, as an institution, cannot be won over by moral arguments, any more than corporate stockholders can be convinced to elevate morals and ethics over profit.

Ultimately, the mythology perpetuated by the pacifists prevents workers and oppressed people from preparing workers’ and Black and Brown self-defense guards, and thereby allows the cops, the ICE, the racists, the homophobes, and other bigoted elements to brutalize our people and our movements, and to smash our organizations and our picket lines. The anarchists and pacifists, the liberals and fake socialists, all come together to disarm the working class by elevating the movement over program. This opens the road for myths such as cops being part the “99%”, and the crisis of capitalism being seen as a moral failure rather than the trajectory of an outdated mode of production unable to contain its own contradictions.

In short, by denying the need to clearly define a working class action program in order to create a class struggle movement, the reformists, anarchists, and pacifists alike mislead the unaware into class collaboration and capitulation to our class enemies’ program, and into adopting modes of struggle that lead to the defeat of our class. Neither window breaking nor turning the other cheek will ultimately serve us, any more than electoral politics. Only mass independent working class action, planned under workers’ democracy and using tactics based in the power of the class, can bring us victory over the capitalist state and its body of armed men.

### **TOWARD A CLASS STRUGGLE PROGRAM**

#### **The Need for Revolutionary Leadership**

Revolutionary Marxism recognizes that to overcome the pitfalls of reformism, pacifism, liberalism, anarchism, and centrism, the working class must construct its own revolutionary party based in the working class and among the most oppressed peoples. The task of building a revolutionary leadership

involves an ongoing critique of these ideologies and a concrete challenge for leadership of the workers’ movement. The most pressing task is the construction of an internationalist workers’ party that can hone a multinational cadre of revolutionaries who can intervene in and provide leadership to the workers’ movement, and prepare it for the seizure of power through the development of a living transitional program that exposes the limits of capitalism and outlines the working class alternative.

The uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) provide many warnings and lessons. Despite the media focus on Tahrir Square, much of the background organization came from the working class quarter, which engaged in rolling waves of strikes and formed neighborhood committees to defend against both cops and thugs. Those struggles relied on support from working class strikes and the defection of rank-and-file members of the armed services to the side of the protesting masses. Workers in the United States need to learn many of the same lessons in working class independence, rank and file organizing, and workers’ democracy.

The Arab Spring also offers us another, equally important lesson. Despite the sacrifice and struggle of the Egyptian and Libyan masses, their lack of an alternative leadership left a vacuum into which the repressive forces of the bourgeoisie and the top army leadership later stepped, only to renew the repression of the people. This development exposes the limitations of leaderlessness, and of mass resistance unsupported by a class identity and a class struggle program.

Working class political independence must be both international and local, and is based on the formation of representative bodies composed of democratically elected workers’ deputies subject to immediate recall, who form factory committees, neighborhood councils, and inter-factory and inter-district workers’ councils, supplemented by the unemployed and marginalized layers of the population similarly organized. These bodies jointly take to themselves the tasks of seizing, defending and reorganizing the economy. The formation of workers’ councils of this sort is essential to centralize and guide the strike movement, to



win the soldiers to the people's side, and to take united action to defend the socially created wealth from the grasping hands of imperialist exploiters and their comprador lackeys who enjoy the fruits of subservience to imperialist dictates.

### **The Need for an Anticapitalist Program**

To fix the problems in our economy, our environment, and the world, we need to eliminate the cause – the capitalist profit system – and replace it with an economy based on human needs, not quarterly profit. If we do not develop a program that unites us in an open struggle against the capitalist system itself, the Occupy movement is doomed to be demoralized and eventually defeated.

To be victorious is to establish a workers' government and a workers' state. Illusions in pacifism, gradualism, and reformism, and faith in the parliamentary road, must all be navigated and swept aside by the concrete experience of the masses; this is the process of consolidating the lessons of the class struggle. Otherwise the movement will be defeated and disarmed, and the rule of capital will perpetuate with increased levels of exploitation and misery. Many of these same lessons in working class independence, in rank and file organizing, and in workers' democracy that needed to be learned for successful revolutions in MENA need to be learned by Occupy as well. And just as the Egyptians sent pizza to Wisconsin and marched on the American Embassy in solidarity with Oakland and Scott Olsen, Occupy needs to further develop its internationalist consciousness, and oppose and fight to defeat US imperialist wars and interventions. Otherwise, Occupy will fall into the trap of nationalism and social pacifism.

The Occupy movement must also outgrow its original base, and focus on drawing in more working class people. A movement, a series of actions, or a strike call without demands may mobilize those already in Occupy's camp, but



General Strike banner at Occupy Oakland march, Nov. 2, 2011

a *program* is required to drive a wedge between the union leaders (who seek to divert the workers into the Democratic Party campaign) and the rank and file, who are looking for real answers. To attract these workers, Occupy must propose real answers to the questions of declining wages; attacks on defined benefits; increased costs of medical insurance; declining educational resources; the lack of jobs for our youth; the mass incarceration of black and brown young men; the ongoing foreclosures; the ICE and La Migra attacks on our immigrant brothers and sisters; the imperialist wars and ongoing war drive run by the Democratic leadership, and the imminent climate change catastrophe.

### **Building for a General Strike Movement**

How can we organize for real, lasting change? There is one thing that capitalism still needs from us: our labor. The most effective weapon we have in this struggle is our ability to refuse to allow big business to profit from our labor – that is, to go on strike. So to win this fight for once and for all, we need more than demonstrations in support of reforms. We need to develop the Occupy movement into a nationwide set of popular/worker/labor assemblies that meet to plan and prepare for a nationwide, political, indefinite general strike, with the aim of taking power into the hands of working people and their allies.

As anyone who has studied the history of the workers' movement knows, the action on November 2, 2011, which Occupy Oakland referred to as a general strike, was nothing of the sort. To overcome its current limitations and succeed, Occupy must develop an *action* program oriented to the goal of building a real general strike – one that calls all workers, public and private, organized and unorganized, out of their workplaces and onto the streets, all over the nation, and not just for a day. Preparing for such an action requires the creation of class struggle caucuses, intent on transforming the unions into class struggle organizations fighting for the historic interests of the entire working class. Independent workers' organizations that unite the most oppressed and marginalized people with the ranks of labor and the Occupy participants need to be formed. Common working class demands should issue forth from independent class struggle organizations to guide the working class into taking actions that lead to class power!

Only workers' assemblies, based on democratic representation by elected workers' deputies from the factories, offices, schools, and other workers' organizations, can mobilize the social power needed to take mass unified action in the form of indefinite general strike action leading to the seizure of power by the working class. This lesson needs to be learned and relearned by each generation that comes into conflict with capitalism. Such assemblies have emerged in every workers' uprising since the Paris Commune. But their emergence alone is no guarantee of victory. Indeed, the same social forces we see holding back the Occupy and "indignados" movements today will find their way into workers' assemblies and will do their best to hold the workers back.

Only when deputized representative rank-and-file militants from the BART union, AC Transit, the supermarket workers, ILWU, OEA and other key unions, call for and attend a real workers' general strike committee (WGSC) can a general strike become a reality. In addition to representatives from these unions, representatives from the oppressed black and brown communities must also have a sizable representation in the WGSC. WGSC must win

the rank-and-file militants from the key unions who participated in the November 2 port shutdown. This can be done by mass leafletting at job sites, use of independent media such as Pacifica radio, black and brown media, the left press, labor/workers' media, as well as social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.

Strikes alone are not a panacea, but in the process of organizing for a strike, we will lay the foundation for the formation of a mass workers' party – not an electoral party, but a unified body that fights for a workers' government. Only a workers' government can replace capitalism with a new system that is based on workers' self-management, workers' planning for human needs, and workers' democratic control.

And, because capitalism is a global system, we need to make connections with our brother and sister workers internationally. Just as the original Occupy Wall Street action was inspired in part by the Arab Spring, we need to join forces with, inspire, and be inspired by the mass movements of working people everywhere. We are all oppressed by the same tyrant: the capitalist system! We must all work together to overthrow it and replace it with a system that focuses on meeting human needs, improving the quality of life for all people, and repairing our damaged planet, rather than the accumulation of profit, privilege, and power in the hands of a few.

Therefore, in addition to developing real leadership for itself, the Occupy movement needs to:

1. **Galvanize rank-and-file workers** to defeat business and corporate unionism and turn our organizations into a weapon that can and will wage a militant struggle for the interests of the entire working class. Reinvigorate and democratize organized labor, and raise a new cadre of class struggle driven leaders who will work with the rank and file to smash Taft-Hartley and mount united mass strike actions.

2. **Convene Workers' Assemblies and Workers' General Strike Committees.** The Occupy-style General Assembly, with its consensus method and cross-class character,

cannot substitute itself for a Workers' Assembly or a Workers' General Strike Committee (WGSC). The WGSC must be built seriously and professionally, not via the anarchist/pacifist petty bourgeois methods of Occupy. A combination of representatives of union militants and Black and Brown community militants should constitute the core membership of the WGSC. The method of functioning should be workers' democracy, as it is the only method that has worked successfully in the struggle against capitalism since the days of the Paris Commune.

**3. Fight to organize real general strikes**, starting with local and/or short-term general strikes, but with the goal of building toward an indefinite nationwide general strike.

**4. Forge a series of transitional demands** that unite the masses against capital, and fight for their adoption by the workers' committees. These demands include:

- **Full employment at prevailing union rates for all** who are willing and able to work! The demand for "Jobs for All" based on shared work at "30 hours work for 40 hours pay" exposes the contradiction between the increased productivity of labor and its declining wages. We must also push for massive public works programs to employ workers and rebuild infrastructure, and for a program of nationalizing under workers' control any company that claims to be "too big to fail" and demands a bailout.

- **No layoffs!** When the bosses lay off workers, workers should go on strike and occupy their workplaces. If the bosses try to close down the business, workers should take it over and run it under their own control.

- **Stop all foreclosures and evictions, and end homelessness!** Housing is a human right! Forgive all debt on homes that are worth less than the mortgage because of the real estate crisis caused by Wall Street speculation and financial manipulation. Organize mass seizures of foreclosed properties led by the labor councils of every city. Move the homeless and those in overcrowded or low quality housing into foreclosed and vacant homes.

- **Make education high-quality and free** from infant daycare through graduate school and adult education! Forgive all student loans!

Seize all private educational institutions, seize all charter schools, and open them to the public. Remove the regents, school boards, and similar bodies, and administer the institutions by the democratic assembly of students, educators, workers and community members.

- **No budget cuts!** Restore and increase budgets for welfare, child care, health clinics, schools, and all public services and benefits. Full pension and health care benefits for all retired workers, public and private sector alike.

- **Quality free universal health care** at no charge from prenatal to the grave! Remove the profit motive, expropriate the assets of the entire for-profit health care industry, including the insurance companies, the for-profit hospitals, and the drug industry, and place them under workers' control.

- **Protect the environment!** Minimize climate change, fight for workers' control of industry, take the profit incentive out of big industrial production, place scientific resources under workers' control, reorganize production for clean production. Phase out polluting industries (nuclear, fossil fuel) and replace with wind, solar, geothermal and eco-friendly, energy conserving, sustainable architecture.

- **Healthy food for all people!** Seize big agribusinesses, end petroleum based production! No more GMOs and patented seeds! Put billions into organic farming practices to clean the land and the water and promote healthy, sustainable, locally based food production. Apply public resources to build local gardens to feed the communities and put youth and unemployed to paid work growing our own food.

- **End attacks on undocumented workers!** The demand for "full citizenship rights for all immigrant workers and their families" unites the most oppressed workers with the rest of the class. End the ICE (La Migra) raids! Free all detained undocumented workers! Full employment rights for all workers! Let workers choose where to work by demanding that all workers who do the same work get the same contract, same wages, and same working conditions, regardless of country!

- **Form up labor/black/brown self defense guards** to disarm the police, fascists, and ICE, and unite the working class to fight for the

defense of Black and Brown communities and for full citizenship rights for immigrants. The cops have no place in our future and are not part of the “99%”! No reliance on the bosses’ courts for justice! Form workers’ tribunals to arrest and try racist killer cops and vigilante thugs!

- **No more “too big to fail”! No more giving away tax money to rescue Wall Street** and big business. Nationalize all failing industries under workers’ control and without compensation! Open the books of the major finance houses and corporations to exposes their hoarding of our social wealth. Nationalize finance capital, the big banks, and major corporations and run them under the control of the democratic workers’ assemblies.

- **Defeat Wall Street’s ongoing imperialist war drive.** Massive indefinite general strikes to unite American workers with the people of the world to defeat the ongoing imperialist wars. Withdraw all US troops from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, and throughout the world. Stop the threatened attack on Iran, and call a halt to the hundreds of ongoing covert actions by the CIA around the globe.

- **Break with the Democrats and build a fighting workers’ party** based on democratically run unions and organizations of the oppressed and the unemployed. Fight for the political independence of the working class! Replace the sell-out labor bureaucrats who give our hard-earned money to Democratic Party politicians. Down with the twin parties of capitalism. Build a fighting workers’/labor party to fight for a workers’ government!

## CONCLUSION

Occupy is not dead, but it has not lived up to its promise. As presently constituted, the Occupy movement is not capable of leading the masses into the kind of sustained purposeful action that can bring victory. The labor

movement’s participation in Occupy actions has diminished when it should be growing. While Occupy should be building solid links with militant rank-and-file workers, it has instead permitted itself to remain dominated by anarchists, liberals, and idealistic but rudderless youth. This has opened it up to the prospect of being coopted into the Democratic Party by the likes of Move On, Rachel Maddow, Michael Moore, and labor bureaucrats like Mary Kay Henry, and driven to irrelevancy by supporting the fake solutions offered by bourgeois democracy. Thus, we have to wonder whether Occupy Wall Street’s slogan “world revolution is the only solution” can withstand the election year pressure of its reformist friends among the pundits and glitterati.

Cross-class, consensus-based general assemblies cannot and will not build the movement we need. What is required are mass workers’ assemblies to debate and adopt a program that answers the question: How can we establish and run an economy whose purpose is to provide for the needs of all? The list of concrete demands and solutions generated from these assemblies can then be utilized to provide consistent and meaningful direction for every action, and to attract working people to supply the numbers needed for *effective* mass direct action.

Actions such as port shut downs, mass rallies, and even general strikes only offer solutions if their goal is to fight for concrete transitional demands leading to the ultimate goal of the seizure of power by the working class. Only in this way can we build what the “99%” really needs: an entirely new system, organized to meet human needs of rather than to generate profits for the 1%! **Only by building a fighting workers’ party with a concrete program, and taking mass direct action under its leadership, can we truly realize this goal.**



# Defend Iran Against Imperialism and Its Zionist Muscle!

Statement by HWRS adopted on January 29, 2012

Western imperialism, and the United States in particular, are in an unrelenting crisis. In the bloody game for world domination, US imperialism has just lost Iraq, which is aligning closer to Iran. It has also practically lost Pakistan—all in mere one year!—and it will likely lose Afghanistan as well, despite 9 years of occupation and war.

This is not an accident, but a reflection of the economic decline of US imperialism. As we are seeing, the military decline of the US has finally started to catch up with its economic decline. In a nutshell, the latest aggression of western imperialism against Iran is an attempt by the US to reverse its own economic decline by overthrowing the present regime in Iran and replacing it with a US puppet regime. Why? Controlling Iran is critical for controlling oil, both because of Iran's plethora of land-based pipelines, and because of its strategic position next to the Strait of Hormuz, the world's most important shipping route for oil and gas.

## **Of Course It's About Oil**

Iran sits in the middle of the world theater when it come to oil and the plundering of the natural resources of southern and central Asia. Everything that passes by sea from Iraq or Kuwait, or through Iran from western Asia, to anywhere else in the world, and vice versa, must pass through the Strait of Hormuz, which is essentially part of Iran's territory. This includes 80-90% of the world's oil. Thus, any

imperialist country that controls Iran also has its foot on the transit of world oil. One does not need to be Einstein or a Marxist to understand that the latest stiff embargo and sanctions against Iran is not about its nuclear program, but about overthrowing the present regime of the Mullahs and putting a pro-American puppet regime in its place.

Iran is a semi-colony. If the US does attack Iran, either directly or via its Zionist muscle, revolutionaries must defend Iran, and call for Iran's victory, despite its reactionary regime. A victory for Iran in such a conflict would shake up the entire imperialist/capitalist world order. It would encourage the struggle of the working class and the oppressed throughout the world. In particular, it would encourage the Palestinians in their struggle for liberation from the Zionist yoke.

We don't know whether Iran is actually developing nuclear weapons, as western imperialism and the Zionists claim. But even if it is, its stock of missiles is a joke compared to the thousands of missiles in the hands of the US and Europe, not to mention the unknown number of nuclear weapons that Israel refuses to admit are in its possession. The US's nuclear arsenal alone is large enough to destroy all life on Earth a million times. What we do know is that a Pakistani scientist sold the Iranians some of the technological know-how needed to build a nuclear weapon. Specifically, Iran got

the plans for the kind of centrifuge that can refine nuclear materials to a weapons-grade concentration, as well as the plans for constructing bombs.

This illustrates that for the right price, plans and possible materials for nuclear bombs can leak from Pakistan and possibly other countries. In addition, countries and organizations can get the parts and material for nuclear weapons for the right price, as an unknown quantity of these was stolen or smuggled from the former Soviet Union. Thus, one problem that imperialism faces is the trend of proliferation of nuclear weapons to many semi-colonies. Such proliferation is inevitable in the coming decades. India, Pakistan, North Korea (which is technically still a deformed workers' state), and Iran are just the beginning. With today's technology, one can put an entire nuclear bomb in a suitcase. Thus it is inevitable present and future technology will bring upon us wars that will become nuclear wars. If western imperialism does not start it, the country under its attack will do so. Then many countries will push the button, and it will be bye-bye to civilization, and possibly the human race. Only a socialist revolution can prevent this horrifying development.

Of course, the US accusations against Iran are nothing but hypocrisy. It was the US that gave the Shah of Iran the secrets and material for the bomb in the first place, so he could build two nuclear plants to provide electricity for his country—all while Iran was sitting on top of one of the largest reservoirs of oil in the world! The point is that for the right pro-imperialist regime (Israel, Brazil), US imperialism has no problem with supplying the material for the bomb.

### **The Imperialist Bloc of China and Russia Is Also a Target**

Behind the embargo and sanctions against Iran looms the conflict between US imperialism and the

imperialist bloc of China and Russia. While formally Iran is considered an "independent" country, in reality it is falling into dependency on China, and thus it is becoming a Chinese semi-colony. This is what is really alarming the US. China's trade with Iran reached \$30 billion in 2010. China is also heavily buying oil from Iran. Around 22% of China's total oil imports consist of Iranian oil. China has clearly told the Americans that they can go to hell with their sanctions. According to *Asia Times*, "Washington taunted Beijing on Thursday by slamming sanctions on Chinese firm Zhuhai Zhenrong Corp for allegedly selling refined petroleum products to Iran. But China voiced

## **GUESS WHO'S BUILDING NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS.**



The Shah of Iran is sitting on top of one of the largest reservoirs of oil in the world.

Yet he's building two nuclear plants and planning two more to provide electricity for his country.

He knows the oil is running out—and time with it.

But he wouldn't build the plants now if he doubted their safety. He'd wait. As many Americans want to do.

The Shah knows that nuclear energy is not only economical, it has enjoyed a remarkable 30-year safety record. A record that was good enough for the citizens of Plymouth, Massachusetts, too. They've approved their second nuclear plant by a vote of almost 4 to 1. Which shows you don't have to go as far as Iran for an endorsement of nuclear power.

**NUCLEAR ENERGY. TODAY'S ANSWER.**

BOSTON REGION: EASTERN UTILITIES ASSOCIATES NEW ENGLAND POWER COMPANY  
PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE NEW ENGLAND GAS AND ELECTRIC COMPANY

Ad from the 1970s Touting the Shah's Support for Nuclear Energy

‘strong dissatisfaction and firm opposition’ and expressed its intent to carry on ‘normal cooperation with Iran in energy, the economy and trade.’” China has also reached a deal in regard to Iran’s largest oil field, Yadavaran. China has an oil pipeline that starts in the Caspian Sea next to Iran. The pipeline extends to Kazakhstan and then to Western China. China already gets 15% of its oil and natural gas from Iran. In addition to oil and gas, China has automobile and fiber optics factories in Iran, and it is working on expanding the Tehran subway. Anyone who thinks that China will let go of any of this is crazy.

Not only is the strategy of Chinese imperialism to have Iran as its semi-colony, but China has also recently firmly planted its feet in the neighboring Gulf countries, just as the fortunes of the US are declining there. Saudi Arabia supplied 45.5 million tonnes of crude oil to China in 2011—a 13% increase from 2010. Qatar and other Gulf kingdoms are also shifting their exports from the US to China. According to the *Asia Times*, “Qatar is a major supplier of liquefied natural gas (LNG) to China, and in the first 11-month period in 2011 it shipped 1.8 million tonnes, an increase of 76%. Trade with the UAE exceeds \$36 billion and the sheikhdom is emerging as a major trans-shipment point for Chinese exports to Africa and Europe.”

While the US was imposing sanctions on Iran, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao was touring the Gulf states. **That is, China’s answer to US meddling in Iran was to consolidate its grip not only on Iran, but also on the Gulf countries.** Indeed, Saudi Arabia was eager to bring Wen into the country despite China’s relationship with Iran. This was a huge snub to the US by Saudi Arabia. The list of Wen’s achievements is impressive, as the Gulf states rushed to make record-breaking deals with China. As *Asia Times* reported on January 21, 2012: “Wen witnessed in Saudi Arabia the signing of a contract between China Petrochemical Corporation (Sinopec) and Saudi Aramco to build an \$8.5 billion refinery with 400,000 barrel-a-day capacity in Yanbu on the Red Sea coast by 2014, with the two sides holding 35.5% -62.5% stakes respectively.” And in Qatar, Chinese accomplishments were just as

impressive. On January 24, 2012, *Asia Times* reported: “Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao, who visited Doha last week, disclosed at a press conference on Friday: a) China proposes to invest in the manufacturing of ‘downstream oil products, which are most urgently needed by Qatar’; b) China and Qatar signed an agreement to jointly build a refinery in Taizhou, Zhejiang, in China; c) Chinese companies propose to participate in infrastructure projects in Qatar; and d) China and Qatar are discussing a ‘long-term, stable and comprehensive cooperative partnership’ in natural gas.”

### **The Isolation of Iran Is a Myth**

What we are seeing is that the US and Europe are getting weaker because of their economic crisis. That is not to say that China can avoid the deepening crisis of global capitalism. But while the US and its meek allies in Europe can only scream “sanctions and embargo,” China is strengthening its economic grip on Iran and the Gulf states. This is the real history. The declining powers talk war as the ascending imperialist power (China) takes control over the disputed areas. Even Afghan President Hamid Karzai announced in front of 2,000 tribal leaders that he plans to get closer to Tehran. The reality is that the road from Tehran to China is getting shorter by the day as China increases its influence in Central/South Asia. That means that when US leaves Afghanistan, China will get in there in a big way. It already has projects in Afghanistan, such as copper, while the US wastes its resources fighting “terrorists” there.

Similarly, as Pakistan increasingly snubs the US, the Chinese are taking over. Historically, Pakistan was allied with Saudi Arabia against Iran, i.e., against the Shiite regime that was perceived as a threat to the Sunni elite in Saudi Arabia. In 2011, however, Pakistan largely broke from the US sphere of influence and joined the Chinese-Russian economic web. Today, Iran and Pakistan are lining up together against the U.S. in the world trade war, and the Iran-Pakistan natural gas pipeline is a done deal—with the blessing of the Chinese. Thus, Pakistan is another country that is going to ignore the sanctions against Iran.

In short, it is a total myth that Iran can be

crushed by the embargo and sanctions. It is surrounded by “friends” who need its oil, while to its north, Russia is watching out for its interests. Russia recently engaged in a revealing exercise in self criticism in regard to Libya. It announced that it was a bad mistake for Russia to abstain when the UN Security Council voted to allow NATO to bomb Libya. That will not happen again, said the Russians. This is a signal that Russia will not tolerate NATO bombing of Syria and Iran, because these countries are under the influence of the Russian-Chinese imperialist bloc.

### **Bye Bye Petrodollars**

The Western imperialist aggression against Iran only brings Iran closer to Russia and China. Iran trades with Russia now in rials (Iran’s currency) and rubles. Now all Iran’s new deals with China are made with yuan (renminbi) and rials. Iran is making similar moves in oil deals with Japan and India. The reality is that less and less Iranian oil is traded with petrodollars.

That also means that the Gulf countries in general are trading less and less with petrodollars. For example, the yuan has started to make itself known in Doha. “The China-United Arab Emirates (UAE) currency swap deal which was signed during Wen Jiabao’s visit to Abu Dhabi last week already brings the yuan to the Emirates. The deal with the UAE is worth US\$5.5 billion and the Chinese central bank statement said that it aims at ‘strengthening bilateral financial cooperation, promoting trade and investments and jointly safeguarding regional financial stability.’”

India is also snubbing the US by spending around \$12-14 billion for oil in Indian rupees which “would subsequently be converted into a separate designated currency.” Tehran’s ambassador to Moscow, Seyed Reza Sajjadi, summarized the new emerging petrodollarless world order when he stated recently that Iran’s trade with Russia “is based on our national currencies. We started this work long ago. Iranian businessmen are buying products in Russia and are using the rouble as [payment] currency. . . . The US dollar has no [economic] support base. . . . There is a similar interest on the Russian side.”

We are in the center of a trade and currency

war between Western imperialism and the Chinese-Russian Eastern imperialist bloc. Iran is the big prize. Right now it is in the hands of the Eastern imperialist bloc. Anyone who thinks that this bloc will drop Iran because of the embargo and sanctions needs to wake up. What we are seeing is that the petrodollar is losing to the ruble and the yuan. **The sanctions and embargo will only strengthen the position of China in the Middle East and the Gulf countries.**

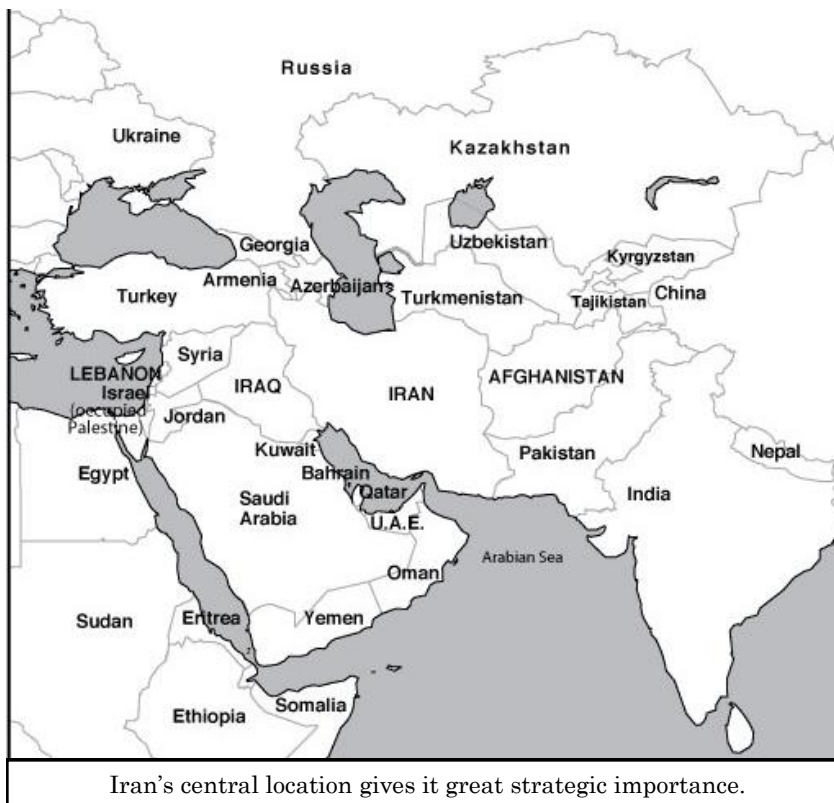
Iran indeed feels protected to the point that it can laugh at the European sanctions. Europe (read Germany, England and France) wanted to delay the start of the embargo in June in order to allow the weak links in the South to find an alternative oil supply. Iran answered by saying, in effect, “We don’t care about supplying Europe. We are locking Europe out by starting European sanctions against us now!” Iran said that there are anxious clients who will buy the oil that Iran supplies to Europe. If Iran stops supplying oil to Greece, Italy, Spain and other countries in southern Europe that have no alternative source of supply, these countries will slide even deeper into economic depression, and **the European crisis will fly through the roof along with oil prices.**

We are not saying that the dollar and US imperialism have been beaten. Weakened is not the same as beaten. The US is still the most powerful imperialist power. It will take time before the dollar stops being the main international currency. Thus, the sanctions will still hurt Iran. The rial is sliding dramatically against the dollar, causing significant inflation in Iran. The ruling class and the Mullahs are not seriously affected. They can find alternative oil buyers, and they can trade in yuan and rubles. But the Iranian working class has no escape from the inflation. The Iranian workers are pawns in the increasing tension between Eastern and Western imperialism. They are the ones who will pay the price of the global crisis of capitalism, which is ultimately the cause of the embargo and sanctions.

### **The Way Forward for the Working Class**

As China’s global influence increases, and it attempts to use the broken backs of its workers as a stepladder to the height of imperialist world power, the workers and villagers are





while imperialism carries out the embargo and sanctions. Down with all anti-Muslim propaganda, government spy programs, and anti-immigrant laws!

The ruling class in the US is using nationalist chauvinism and racism not only to develop support for a possible war against Iran, but to hurt the workers in the US as well. They are using the threat of “terrorism” from Iran and the Arab world as an excuse to curb workers’ rights in the US. Under the new law signed by Obama, the FBI can grab anybody, including any American citizen, and incarcerate them indefinitely for having a “loose” connection to “terrorists” and to the “enemy” behind them—Iran, for example—without filing

fighting back and confronting the state and its cops. Their Iranian brothers and sisters can follow their example. They can fight inflation by striking for a sliding scale of wages pegged to inflation. They can take over the oil industry and the oilfields, nationalizing them without compensation. That means overthrowing the reactionary, capitalist Mullah regime and replacing it with a workers’ government. The best way for the Iranian workers to confront US imperialism is to fight it without hindrance from the oppressive regime of Ayatollah Khamenei and company.

In the US and Europe, workers must take action to smash the embargo and sanctions against Iran. As **sanctions are an act of war**, the working class in Europe and the US has a class duty to fight to defeat their own ruling class’s imperialist war machine! They should combine their own class struggles with actions against the imperialist sanctions and embargo. The main enemy is the banks and the ruling class at home. This means that workers must fight against the racism and chauvinism employed against Muslims, which is used to poison the mind of the workers and pacify them

charges or producing any evidence to back them up. This means that the US is becoming a dictatorship under the cover of the “democratic” two-party system.

We, the American working class, must fight this and other reactionary laws that curb democratic freedoms, such as the right to assemble and protest in public places, the right to express our political opinions, and the power of organized workers to go on strike. By defending Iran against imperialism, we also defend the democratic rights of the workers and anyone who fights this reactionary Congress and President. Down with the new American dictatorship! For a fighting workers’/ labor party that fights for a workers’ government! For a militant, worker-led mass struggle to overthrow the dictatorship of the Democrats, the Republicans, and Obama. They are the ones who conspired to allow the police and the FBI to detain anyone permanently without trial. They are the ones behind the brutal repression of Occupy and the indiscriminate killing and incarceration of Black and Latino youth. The main enemy is at home—not in Tehran and Beijing!

# Supplemental Resolution on Libya

Statement by HWRS originally adopted January 15, 2012

1. The civil war in Libya that culminated in the overthrow of Gaddafi started as a popular uprising – a straightforward revolution against a brutal dictatorship – with only two sides to the conflict. But once the imperialists (in the form of NATO) intervened on behalf on the TNC, the nature of the civil war became much more complicated. In order to develop the correct tactics, revolutionaries need to understand that once the NATO bombing started, there were actually **two** wars going on in Libya simultaneously.

The first was the original popular uprising. The consciousness that drove the revolt was not socialist working class consciousness, and despite incipient neighborhood committees and the emergence of hundreds of small local fighting units, the uprising was predominantly tribal, local, and cross-class, rather than being the mobilization of a self-conscious independent working class. Nonetheless, the uprising remained totally supportable, even after the NATO bombing began, since it was part of the Arab democratic revolution. Indeed, the courage of the masses and their acquisition and use of arms was an example and an inspiration for the masses in countries like Yemen and Egypt to follow. The uprising in Syria was greatly encouraged by the example in Libya.

The nature of the second war was profoundly different. It was, in essence, a dispute between imperialist rivals over oil. Libyan oil is of extremely high quality, so it is highly desired. This is one of the reasons that France, for example, was so eager to get a lot of it that it led the assault on Gaddafi. A competing imperialist faction, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), consisting of

Russia and China sought to preserve their own access to Libyan oil (possibly with the tacit support of Germany) by siding with and arming Gaddafi behind the West's back, counting on Gaddafi's victory – a move that proved to be a miscalculation.

When Western imperialism turned against Gaddafi, he realigned himself with this Chinese and Russian bloc in a desperate attempt to survive. At the same time, the TNC and the militia leaders aligned themselves with Western imperialism, acting as its proxy army and coordinating all their assaults on Gaddafi's forces with NATO's air attacks. Thus, in this inter-imperialist conflict, the TNC and the militia officers become a proxy army for Western imperialism, whereas the forces loyal to Gaddafi became a proxy army for its Chinese and Russian rivals.

In a dispute between imperialist blocs, communists do not take sides. Nor do we believe that a victory by one is preferable to a victory by the other. Instead, if the popular insurrection had been better and more generally prepared, under the leadership of a revolutionary party, we would have called upon the Libyan people to reject and rebuff the imperialists' "assistance" (in the form of NATO airstrikes), as many in Benghazi and elsewhere tried to insist.

2. During the early stages of the inter-imperialist phase of the war, when NATO had just started to bomb Libya, it would have been suicide for the forces of the popular uprising to fight against both Gaddafi's army and Western imperialism simultaneously. So during that period, while communists would have continued to put forward our anti-imperialist

and transitional demands, on a military level we would have supported the militias in putting their emphasis on defeating Gaddafi and his loyalists.

At the same time, it was our revolutionary duty to tell the militias' rank-and-file that as soon as the militias finished with Gaddafi, it would be necessary to turn their guns on the TNC, because of its alliance with imperialism. It was necessary to make clear to the masses that unless the TNC's Western imperialist backers were defeated, the victory of the popular uprising against Gaddafi would come to naught, because Western imperialism would take over all the oil fields and re-enslave the masses to imperialism. In other words, every bit of the "assistance" the uprising received from NATO was delivered for the purpose of heading off and interdicting the people's democratic aspirations. Never was it truer than in Libya's recent history to say that the enemy of my enemy is NOT my friend. This was confirmed at the end of the civil war. While the guns were still warm from fighting Gaddafi, the TNC gave many oil companies access to Libya, and oil production started to roll again, mostly for the benefit of American and European companies.

3. At some point toward the end of the war, after Gaddafi's army had largely been routed and was confined to Gaddafi's "home town" (the city of Sirte and its immediate environs), the military situation no longer required the popular forces to hold back from an active military struggle against Western imperialism (as represented by NATO) and its TNC allies. By then, victory against Gaddafi had essentially been secured. In addition, by then the militias of the popular uprising had at their disposal a wide range of arms and munitions seized from the retreating Gaddafi loyalists. This situation gave rise to an opportunity – and a pressing necessity – to stop the TNC and its imperialist allies from taking control of Libya's oil resources in order to put them at the disposal of Western imperialism.

At that juncture, the exact timing of which is a matter of military tactics that cannot be determined with precision from a distance, the duty of revolutionaries was to agitate for transforming the civil war against Gaddafi

(which had practically already been won) into a civil war against the TNC and its pro-imperialist supporters. Revolutionaries should have urged the fighters allied with the masses and the working class to recognize the still-present menace to the revolution posed by the TNC, poised to become imperialism's new broker of the poverty and exploitation of the Libyan masses. Thus, as soon as it was militarily feasible, the militias should have begun to employ their arms and armaments in an all-out effort to deny power to the stooges of all imperialisms, Western and Eastern alike.

4. A military struggle by the masses against the TNC at this latter stage was not an impossible task. To begin with, the TNC had support only in the eastern part of Libya, around Benghazi. It was (and is) hated in the rest of Libya. If the militias that were politically independent from the TNC had seized the oil fields as soon as they were militarily able to do so, after Gaddafi's forces were largely routed, they could have been in a position to rally the workers, form additional workers' militias, and wage a struggle to prevent the TNC from taking power.

Even now, the militias remain well-equipped with munitions captured from Gaddafi's forces. Meanwhile, NATO air strikes have ceased, and the TNC has not been able to put together a "national" army capable of disarming the regional and tribal militias. The present "national" army of Libya consists of soldiers from the Benghazi region, who are currently engaged in frequent skirmishes against militias from the mountain regions in the western part of Libya. In fact, the "national" army has proven to be a joke. For example, the western mountain militia that controls Tripoli and its airport captured the national army chief as he was trying to speed past their checkpoint. They let him go on the condition that he promise to be a "good boy" and not interfere with their control of the airport.

Because the militias are still armed and active, the historic opportunity for the Libyan masses is not over even now. But time is running out. NATO was supposed to have cleared out militarily by now, but late in 2011 the U.N. extended its "mission

mandate” (giving legal and propagandistic cover to imperialist intervention) for another 3 months! Thus, it is imperative for the independent forces of workers and their allies to act as soon as possible to organize supra-tribal militia forces; revive the neighborhood councils and establish them as the sole local authorities; and link those councils and militias, together with other independent organs of workers’ power, to fight nationwide against the TNC and seize state power. Intertribal bloodshed over crumbs from the imperialists’ table is no way to develop Libya’s economy, safeguard its workers from oppression, or honor those who died fighting the more obvious of the two equal enemies of the Libyan masses!

5. The problem in Libya is that because there is no revolutionary party to unite the masses against the TNC and imperialism, what is happening instead is fighting among the militias based on tribal loyalties. A revolutionary party would agitate against inter-tribal conflict, and instead **fight for unity based on a class line** under the leadership of the diverse proletariat in the oil industry. The party would also fight to integrate all workers, including foreign workers imported to serve in the oilfields, into a unified network of militant unions that is committed to supporting the unified mass workers’ movement.

Unfortunately, there is no such party in Libya. Nor does it appear that there is even any Bolshevik-type nucleus of internationalist communists among the Libyan exile community, even in Europe, where militant struggle was not unknown during the 40-odd years of the Gaddafi dictatorship. This is chiefly because of the muddleheaded petty-

bourgeois leaderships of the main left-wing tendencies in Europe. They fostered nothing like an adequate revolutionary leadership, and indeed did not want one, preferring to believe that the “Arab Nationalism” of Ghaddafi, whom they saw as a second edition of Gamal Nasser, was objectively an advance toward socialism and even in some way a form of workers’ state.

As revolutionary socialists, our slogans should be:

**Down with the TNC**, the unelected puppet regime that serves the interests of imperialism and facilitates its plunder of Libyan oil! For the revolution to advance, the TNC and its power must be quickly and forcibly suppressed!

**Expel all imperialist oil companies from Libya!** Unite the militias and the oppressed, under the leadership of the oil workers and the urban proletariat, against imperialism and its puppet capitalist regime! Expropriate the oil industries under workers’ control without compensation!

**For workers’ and soldiers’ councils**, with representatives from every militia, workplace and neighborhood, to stop inter-tribal fighting and direct the masses’ united fire against the enemies of all: the TNC and imperialism! Libyans, take charge of your future and fashion the first workers’ republic in the region!

**Let every conscious worker and champion of social justice everywhere join in solidarity with the Libyan revolution!** Victory to the Libyan proletariat, its youth and its oppressed allies! Let the Libyan example inspire all the anti-imperialist fighters of the Middle East and North Africa, and all fighters for the survival of the planet and the human race!

**For a world party of socialist revolution! For world socialism! For humanity to survive, imperialism must die!**

#### Previous HWRS material on Libya:

- “End NATO-US Intervention” and “Imperialism: Hands Off Libya!” (Articles in *International Trotskyist (New Series)*, vol. 1, no. 3 (Summer 2011), available online in the Publications section of our website)
- “Advance the Libyan Revolution: A Program for Permanent Revolution” (Statement adopted September 5, 2011, available online in the Current Articles section of our website)

# Why Climate Change Is Necessary for the Leap to Socialism: Evolution, Alienation, and Class Society

The long perspective of human evolution portrays a consistent depiction which is of great relevance to the problem of climate change today. What emerges is that climate change played a **critical** role every time that hominids and *Homo sapiens* (modern humans) had to go through a decisive evolutionary leap. It appears now that climate change is again playing a **critical** role in the transformation of primitive (socially speaking) *Homo sapiens* under the capitalist social order into a free egalitarian *Homo sapiens* society that is free from the shackles of class societies. We'll return to this later. For now, we will show how climate change played a critical role in the most important leaps: from apes to the so-called modern humans in capitalist society.

## Climate Change in the Early Stages of Human Evolution

The evolution of certain apes that resulted in the evolution of our species (*Homo sapiens*) began about 6 to 7 million years ago. Between 10 million to 5 million years ago Africa became much drier. The forests shrank and open savanna developed in many areas. Climate change, which made Africa drier, was responsible for the first major leap in the evolution of some apes. With less food to share in the shrinking forest, certain apes were forced to climb down from the trees and roam the open savannas for food. To survive, these apes had to go through the evolution of bipedalism, that is, they had to become bipedal to stand or run on two feet. This was a necessary adaptation to see predators in the grass.

These hominids/apes could not hunt as of yet. They were scavengers that were always on the run. But with bipedalism these apes could

walk and run dozens of miles on the open savanna watching for predators while grabbing carcasses when they could get away with it. This was also a critical evolution for later stages. Bipedalism allowed these apes to have free hands that in future evolutions would enable them to make tools. None of the above would have been possible without a warmer climate in Africa that opened up the vast savannas. In other words, **climate change was the main factor that allowed the evolution of apes into bipedal hominids.**

## Ice Ages Key for Human Evolution

Although our first ancestors were bipedal, their brain and body were more ape-like than human. This was so for millions of years, or more precisely, until the cycle of ice ages started with the paleoclimatic era about 3 million years ago. In the paleoclimatic era, the climate changed dramatically, alternating between long dry and cooler climates in Africa (thus increasing the savannas at the expense of the forests and lakes) and shorter wet periods, that were very productive for the development of our *Homo sapiens* species. According to Anna K. Behrensmeyer, one of the scientists who is inquiring about the relations of climate and human evolution, "The biggest challenge involves how to relate different types and scales of paleoclimatic evidence between the marine and terrestrial realms. Marine-core records show that a cooler, drier, and more variable global climate regime began about 3.0 million years ago (Ma), gradually intensifying into northern continental glacial cycles by 1.0 Ma. The climate shift between ~3.0 and 2.5 Ma thus marks the onset of Northern Hemisphere glaciation, and this coincides generally with the

timing of the origin of the genus *Homo*. Fluctuations in continent-derived dust and biomarkers in the marine record indicate that climate shifts recorded in the oceans affected the land as well.” (Science 2006 311:476)

This cycle of cool arid climate of the ice ages alternating with wet short cycles created us – humans. The more ape-like creatures started to use stone tools as the size of their brain increased. William H. Calvin, the author of *A Brain for All Seasons*, comments in his book that “I’m one of the many scientists who try to figure out what’s behind an interesting correlation: What did the ice ages have to do with ratcheting up our ancestors’ brain size? Our australopithecine ancestors, though they were walking upright, had an ape-sized brain about 2.5 million years ago. Ape brains probably hadn’t changed much in size for the prior 10 million years. But when the ice ages began 2.5 million years ago, brain size started increasing – not particularly in the other mammalian species, but at least in our ancestors. About 120,000 years ago, in the warm period that preceded our most recent ice age, modern type *Homo sapiens* was probably walking around Africa with dark skin – and sporting a brain that was three times larger than before the first ice age chatters 2.5 million years ago.”

All scientists agree that onset of the ice ages played a critical role in human evolution. For a long time scientists believed that it was the arid periods, when life was tough on the dry savannas that forced our ancestors to adapt and change. But the current thinking is that the wet productive periods were responsible for our evolution:

“New evidence suggests human evolution was caused by specific periods of climatic change in Africa according to research presented at the Annual Conference of the Royal Geographical Society. These climatic influences played a crucial part in enhancing human development says Dr. Mark Maslin, Senior Lecturer in Geography at University College London.

“New findings suggest that during the long-term trend of desertification in Africa over the last 2.7 million years, there were clearly identifiable wet and humid periods. According to Dr. Maslin, this is the first study to identify

the presence of a series of ancient lakes, some more than 100m deep and over 100 square kilometers in size at critical times when humans first appeared. “This research challenges the old and accepted theory that a prolonged period of desertification in Africa initiated human evolution by forcing adaptation to a drier environment. The new theory suggests that humans actually evolved during short periods of great environmental change – when dry periods were punctuated by large rapidly appearing and disappearing lakes. It was these rapid changes in water sources that forced communities to rapidly change and adapt.” (Human evolution linked to climate change says study, mongabay.com, September 6, 2005)

The truth is that most evidence, including remains of Hominids, is very scant and it will be a long time before we will be able to create a clear picture for the first stages of hominid development 3 to 1 million years ago. Bourgeois scientists tend to emphasize one aspect of evolution while ignoring the others. As a conscious dialectical materialist, I will try to synthesize dialectically this crucial era for our species that resulted in the development of the *Homo* line in evolution. The first was *Homo habilis*, a creature with a larger brain, and later appeared the *Homo erectus* (1.8 million years ago). We know for sure that *Homo erectus* used stone tools (it is debatable whether *Homo habilis* used stone tools). The wet periods were very productive. **These were the periods that specific species flourished.** We are now in a “wet” period that has lasted for 10,000 years. This is the era in which class societies have grown and flourished.

But it was the long dry arid periods that forced a leap in human evolution. The adverse climate conditions forced us to adapt by creating better tools, and a larger brain with more “intelligence.” The *Homo erectus* emerged 1.8 to 2 million years ago when the climate in Africa was cooler and harsher. The *Homo erectus* responded by creating very sophisticated stone tools like the hand ax that lasted for a million years!

**Here is the most basic dialectic materialist understanding of human evolution. Adverse conditions of scarcity resulted in leaps of**

**human evolution. It forced us to adapt to the harsher climate by evolving our tools and social structure in some fundamental ways. The stable short periods between ice ages were the periods in which we did not need to create fundamental changes: The favorable conditions of having an easy food supply allowed us to stabilize our social and economic order and sometimes flourish.**

The rise of *Homo erectus* was also associated with the development of fire as a *Homo erectus* tool. We don't exactly know when they started to use fire. But it is clear that the cold and dry climate from the ice age was the main motive for the adoption of fire as a tool. It was used to protect groups from the cold nights as well as predators. Fire was also used to corner prey. Fire is without a doubt one of the most important tools to date. It allowed *Homo erectus* to evolve more successfully than its ancestors. *Homo erectus* was the first of the *Homo* line to move to the Middle East, Asia, and finally Europe, a continent that was harshly cold. *Homo erectus* was successful because it could adapt to the cyclical changes in Ice Age eras.

As the most successful of the *Homo* line, *Homo erectus* used increasingly more complex tools for hunting and living. Its groups became larger with more multifaceted social relations. For example they planned hunting and coordinated with others for the hunting of large animals. They also hunted in larger groups. Between 1.8 million years ago to 700,000 years ago, *Homo erectus* spread to the Middle East and the rest of the world. Using fire and increasingly more complex tools and social organization, *Homo erectus* showed a remarkable ability to adapt to the harsh ice ages. Its groups adapted to the severe cold in Europe and to the Asian forests. All this was reflected in their increasingly larger brain.

**The human race must thank climate changes for spreading us all over the world.** Without climate change, *Homo erectus* (as well as many animals) could not have moved from Africa to Asia and Europe. *Homo erectus* migrated out of tropical Africa and into the Sahara, which, with its big lakes, was a better place for water and food in the wet periods. As the climate oscillated between wet periods and

long dry periods, the Sahara was like a pump. The Sahara brought people in during the wet periods as it flourished with lakes and life. During the colder and dry periods of the ice ages the lakes dried and *Homo erectus* was pushed out of the Sahara, together with the animals and their prey. Its groups moved to the Near East and Asia. This culminated about 700,000 years ago as ice ages became longer and more dramatic.

### **How Climate Change Shaped the Evolution of *Homo sapiens*: The Modern Human Species**

Could we claim that the birth of *Homo sapiens*, our own species, should be credited to climate change as well? Because of the scant archeological data from the birth of *Homo sapiens* we can only use the dialectic logic without much hard evidence to back it up. We know very little about the time of *Homo sapiens*' birth, which scientists claim is us: modern humans. In other words, they claim that our brain has not changed since the birth of our species. The extremely scant evidence suggests that *Homo sapiens* was born somewhere between 190,000 years ago and 150,000 years ago. This was when central Africa experienced severe droughts because of a deep ice age known as the marine isotope stage 6 (MIS6) that started about 200,000 years ago. This was a very severe ice age in Europe that caused a cold and dry climate in central Africa, where *Homo sapiens* emerged. Sea level fell to about 30 m below present, a level to which sea level has not fallen since then. The birth of our species toward the end of MIS6 took place under very adverse and difficult conditions. But this coincides perfectly with my understanding as stated before. Very adverse climate change is responsible for a big evolutionary leap. In fact it gave birth to the hominid that had the biggest brain and later had magnificent achievements. The most resilient and adaptable *Homo* was born.

Climate change caused expanding desertification in central Africa. On the other hand, a very low sea level exposed the continental shelves of Africa and the Near East. It proved to be a refuge with fresh water springs. *Homo sapiens* was forced to migrate with animals to these protective coastal areas of Africa. At the end of MIS6 they appear to be

spreading south, to South Africa's coasts, and North, to the Red Sea coast of Eritrea. (*The Climate Connection*, pages 212-213.)

The time modern humans moved out of Africa is speculative. Most archeologists believe it took place during the time of the great Diaspora. The era before 100,000 years ago was a "wet" spell, when Africa flourished with rain and lakes in the Sahara. During this period *Homo sapiens* flourished in Africa and stayed with many animals in the wet and productive Sahara. A climate change occurred around 100,000 years ago as a new ice age emerged and dried the Sahara. With the droughts, the animals and humans moved out to edges of the desert and into southwestern Asia. The first archeological evidence of *Homo sapiens* in the Middle East dates back to 90,000 years ago.

To move from the Middle East to Europe required adaptation to extreme cold. Around 45,000 years ago the cold in Europe diminished by some warming. This allowed *Homo sapiens* to move to Europe even though the climate in Europe was still extremely cold. Our species was able to adapt by using innovative and more sophisticated tools and practices such as "stone flaking using parallel-sided stone blades removed from a core of fine-grained rock with a punch." (Brian Fagan, *Human Prehistory and the First Civilizations*, part 1, page 34.) The

blade technology was a critical technology that allowed *Homo sapiens* to adapt to the extreme cold of Europe and further North.

As humans settled in Europe they developed more complex social abilities with complex tools. This was the time that many believe language really evolved (I mean specifically in Europe) as we evolved into societies or bands that resembled more what we Marxists call primitive communism where everybody shared resources and food. And we developed more and more sophisticated technology to survive in the cold: *Homo sapiens* in Europe developed clothing, the stone needle, and finally art and culture – all in the period of a mere 5000 years.

This was a huge leap in human evolution that was culminated about 30,000 years ago by the successful primitive communist society. This society, the Cro-Magnons, made the most beautiful cave paintings that rightfully represent some of the greatest paintings of *Homo sapiens* to date. The Cro-Magnons wore multiple articles of clothing to cover their bodies; this was a huge revolution and evolution. Clothing and survival in Europe was possible because of an amazing technology: the eyed needle that was made from antler bones. With the eyed needle they were able to make multilayered tailored clothing for extremely cold weather. This enabled them to work



One of the stunning portrayals of animals painted on the walls of a cave in Lascaux, France, by prehistoric Cro-Magnon artists.



outside in subzero cold weather and it enabled them to settle on the open plains in central Europe. Their spears were also longer and better suited to hunt big animals like bison, reindeer, wild ox, and many smaller animals. Humans started to plan and cooperate in hunting to a degree unknown before. The hunting and fishing created complex social relations in which advanced planning and discussions about the past and future became part of human consciousness. Humans put arts and crafts on their bodies as well (sea shells for example), that allowed them to display their human connection with nature via human creativity for the first time. They traded sea shells from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean coasts and deep into the interior of Europe.

This amazing leap in human development in Europe in such a short period of time (in comparison to past leaps) clearly illustrates, once again, that **survival under the harshest conditions of climate is always the motor for the biggest evolutionary leaps in the shortest period of time.** These were revolutionary leaps in human evolution. The Cro-Magnon “revolution” lasted thousands of years. Yet previous eras of humans’ evolutionary leaps lasted tens of thousands of years, and the first evolutionary leaps in which apes became bipedal lasted more than a million years. Thus, as we see, the general rule is that the more developed the human productive forces (or technology) are, the more developed the social relations and culture become, resulting in a shorter leap to adapting to adverse changes in climate.

#### **The emergence of agriculture and class societies**

The most relevant and interesting connection between climate change and human evolution took place with the emergence of agriculture and class society. Humans in the Middle East were thriving as hunter gatherers because of the pleasant wet climate until climate change prompted them to use agriculture. Before 10,000 years ago the Middle East was covered with forests and lakes. People ate nuts such as pistachios and acorns. Hunting was easy as many deer and wild goats were ready targets near the roaring rivers. Humans also ate wild grasses.

In the warm period, before agriculture, humans thrived and developed technology

further. The Natufians, for example, who live in what is now Lebanon, developed sickles to cut edible wild grasses.

With such success in feeding people, the human population grew quickly. For the first time settlements became permanent. The settlements were run like primitive communist societies. Without surplus grain and food, the “leaders” tasks were to make sure that food was distributed equally among the people in settlements that reached dozens. Social relations had become more complex and disputes between small villages had to be mediated as tribes were getting “ready” for class inequalities. Yet the chiefs in the tribal settlements did not have material privileges before the rise of agriculture.

The Natufians and others in the Middle East experimented with the abundant wild grasses in the good times before the big droughts that led to agriculture. In the dry season they set the grass on fire, deliberately, so that the seeds would spread to new areas. The grasses were also set on fire to corner animals they were hunting. **Human consciousness had to be ready for every fundamental leap in human evolution. Thus, pre-agricultural humans achieved a very advanced consciousness as hunter-gatherers before they were forced by nature to become farmers.** Although they knew how to deal with plants, there was no pressure, in the good times, to develop agriculture.

About 10,000 years ago, the big lakes, where what is now known as the great lakes in the USA, spilled into the Atlantic Ocean. This was because of the pressure of the rapidly melting glaciers. This caused the warm ocean current to Europe to stop. Europe and North America experienced a 1000 year long ice age (known as the little ice age). The Middle East became cool and dry with lasting droughts. Hunting and nut gathering became harder and harder. Humans, who already knew a great deal about different edible plants and their seeds, were forced to grow them in permanent settlements or starve.

There is evidence that suggests that the change to agriculture took only one century! This is because humans already knew how to cultivate wild grass. First, they grew it near

rivers and streams; later, they dug channels to water the cultivated grass. In an example of the dialectical relationship between nature and human knowledge, the wild grasses grew better with human intervention. The increase in village size and the readiness for permanent settlement illustrate the readiness for the **leap** to agriculture that set up the era of class societies. The permanent villages, the know-how to grow food from plants, the development of productive forces (the sickle for example) were the factors that triggered agriculture and the domestication of animals. Yet none of it was possible without the severe droughts that forced humans towards the leap to agriculture. **Climate change, once again, was the main factor causing this leap in human evolution.**

With improved knowledge of plants and watering techniques, agriculture eventually created a surplus of grain. After generations of tilling, the ownership of the fields became an issue as they generated surplus grain. Class society is based on surplus value, which expressed itself in its very incipient stage by surplus grain. Surplus value emerged when there was more than enough grain to satisfy everyone's needs. This was the material basis for the evolution of class society; hence the rise of the "chief" with his family and relatives who owned more fields. This circle of the "ruling class" was based on family and kin connections. They started to use the surplus of grain to trade for desired things with other villages' elite. With the chief and his relatives getting rich in comparison to others, class differentiation emerged. The ownership of the fields also started to be passed on from fathers to their sons and relatives, who became the incipient ruling class. This evolution was clearly completed by 6000 BC with emergence of states in what is known now as Iraq.

Since men had the upper body strength to dig channels and work in the fields, women became the second class citizens of the tribe. This was the beginning of female oppression. The women worked with the grind-stones which was harsh labor. Female bones, from the early days of surplus grain, show pathological conditions from kneeling over grind-stones day after day, for years, as they were pushing the heavy grinders. This was the beginning of the

division of labor and of women's oppression.

Our conclusion is, by now, clear. Once again, we see the correlation between evolutionary leaps and unstable or harsh climate periods, versus "gradual" changes when the climate cooperated. Before the little ice age 10,000 years ago, when the climate was stable, humans had the know-how for agriculture, but under conditions of plenty, they did not yet have to use it. Climate change forced humans to transform their knowledge of wild grass into consistent planting of the grass near water sources. Over the ensuing period, many of the grasses were domesticated, along with certain animals (goats, sheep, etc.), and the era of agriculture started. The evolution of agriculture brought about massive economic and social changes; **yet none of this was possible without the harsh conditions of scarcity, brought about by abrupt climate change.** That scarcity forced an essential leap in human evolution from hunter gatherers into permanent settlers based on agriculture.

Modern bourgeois society considers the rise of "civilization" and the last 6000 years of class societies to be "history." We are fascinated by the ancient forms of violence as surplus value was extracted from slaves; we are fascinated with feudal class societies in which the exploitation of the peasants was the base for feudalism's stability and, of course, for the present capitalist society's history and structure in which wage-slave labor is the source of surplus value. Yet, from the mega point of history (the long retrospective history from when future-humans climbed down from the trees through capitalism today), we should lump the history of all class societies into one era of human development called **the era of primitive class societies.** With the inevitability of climate change, nature will force us to go to the next dramatic change: a huge leap from class society to advanced egalitarian classless society, or communism. We must do this or all aspects of "civilization" will be destroyed.

History is showing us that, contrary to all previous Marxist analysis, the first stage of classless societies will take place under difficult conditions of scarcity. It will not rise under the abundance that classic Marxism assumes will prevail, because of the advanced state of the

productive forces under capitalism. The fundamental Marxist understanding assumes that the change from capitalism to socialism will take place because the capitalist productive forces have created the basis for advanced material conditions in which everyone will live with plenty. This analysis is only partially right because it does not take climate change into account. It assumes that the socialist revolution will take place under conditions in which the climate is stable and the earth provides us with abundance.

Classic Marxism underestimates how fundamental and difficult the change from capitalism to socialism will truly be. It will be at least as fundamental as was the change from hunter-gathers to human social structure based on classes. Scarcity, due to harsh conditions from climate change, is already in the making for the transition from class to classless societies (as was always the case when humans had to undertake a big leap to survive and later prosper). This is already a reality as millions just last year, in 2011, died from floods and famine around the world. This begs the question: are climate change and scarcity necessary to facilitate the big leap from capitalism to socialism? A positive answer will rock many of the Marxist assumptions about social change. But a positive answer explains partially (lack of a revolutionary leadership is also a critical factor) why we, so far, have failed to accomplish the socialist revolution.

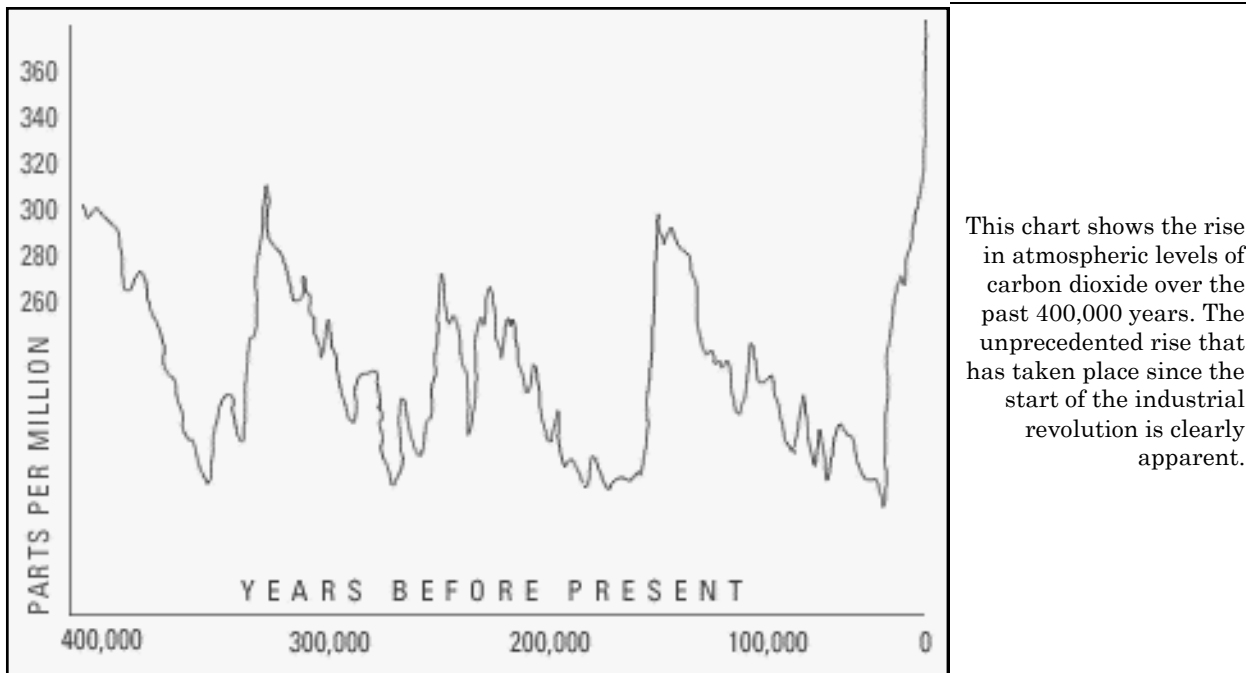
### **The meaning of climate change today**

From the mega perspective of human history it does not matter that the great majority of the masses today are wage slaves and not slaves who are owned by someone. Capitalism has killed many millions of the wage-slaved already, and is destroying the planet; it is pushing many species on this planet into extinction via the process of extracting surplus value. Thus, despite its “high tech” nature and fast development of the productive forces, capitalism is the most barbaric class society. It is causing mass extinction of species that were seen only in times of massive climate change; it is destroying the surface of the planet, making it difficult for life to adapt; and it has been killing many millions through its wars and

environmental diseases; and finally, it will leave billions (in Asia alone) to die from lack of food and water as the glaciers, that contain the source of life, are disappearing because of capitalism. I am not arguing here that no progress has been made since the Sumerian Civilization in Mesopotamia. On the contrary, enormous progress has been made in culture and the development of the productive forces. But this is relative and must be viewed in the context of the destruction that capitalism is causing as it ignores the dire need to stop the severity of climate change. Over the last 6000 years, class societies developed in a “wet” and stable period. By releasing such a massive amount of CO2 and other green house chemicals into the atmosphere, capitalism has been putting a brutal end to the wet period.

So, with all due respect for the evolution in the productive forces and “culture,” capitalism is just the highest and the last stage of class society. Unlike previous class societies, where social development and a new mode of the productive forces outlived the old productive forces and forced a change (for example the development from feudalism to capitalism.), the human race so far has failed to make the change from capitalism to socialism. This is the case even though millions, if not billions, of workers are realizing that the productive forces are generating maximum profit for the ruling class while devastating their life and culture as human beings. The painful truth is that a great many workers in the world know about the need to transform capitalism into socialism, but there is no leadership to guide them into successful revolutions. They realize the need for the leap, but are now unlikely to start the revolution without the “help” of climate change that will bring the collapse of capitalist civilization. We are just entering this era in *Homo sapiens* history that should bring another leap in human development.

One may object: “But humans brought climate change upon themselves. Humans started the industrial revolution. Thus climate change today, has nothing to do with the forces of nature alone.” True. But the industrial revolution that brought the pollution necessary for climate change was not a conscious choice. Capitalism was a historical link that could not



be avoided. Human development via capitalism was not possible without the mass pollution that is bringing now a dramatic climate change. Thus, dialectically speaking, we can say that humans broke with nature through the evolution of class society. But humans cannot fully break from nature. Nature created the *Homo sapiens* race. Human evolution up till today was not done via the “intellectual guidelines” or “wisdom” of the leaders of class societies’ empires.

Capitalism views nature as an object for exploitation, but regardless of capitalist values, humans cannot fully break with nature. Nature, that is, the material basis for all life, must be suitable for living and thus it will have the last laugh. We can say that capitalism and its industrial pollution are part of “natural” evolution. It had to be done this way; there was neither a conscious choice for capitalism to evolve as a “green” society, nor the technology to allow it to do so. The *Homo sapiens* race was not aware that capitalist pollution would cause massive climate change. Even now that it is becoming aware, the profit of the oil and other companies always comes first. By the time awareness of climate change developed, the ruling class that depends on industry, cars, and many other aspect of human life that are run by fossil fuel, had no interest in making the fundamental

changes to stop the earth’s warming.

The liberal opposition to fossil fuel is not willing to deal with the main force behind climate change and the other environmental disasters: capitalism and the fundamental need to overthrow it (hence, once again, the need for a revolutionary leadership). The green opposition pushes the complete nonsense that capitalism can reform itself and become green if we put enough pressure on its politicians. But this idealist scheme contradicts history and the material world itself. Capitalism, in a period of decay and immense crisis, cannot make the conversion to green industry. Industries must use the cheaper fossil fuel to generate enough profit to win the struggle against their competitors. In this period of world depression and overproduction, reliance of fossil fuel is bigger than ever.

Just think about it for a moment. Recently, it was revealed that, in 2010 carbon dioxide rose 6%, the highest ever! This level of carbon dioxide has been allowed to continue to rise into the atmosphere. Just the continued release of carbon dioxide (without the other factors that are causing climate change) will bring the temperature, at the end of the century, to be over 5 degrees Celsius higher than today. I posted an email that says, “With this rate we are all doomed. Why? Because what triggered

the biggest extinction of all living creatures on this planet (life in oceans was gone and 95% of all beings were extinct) was a temperature rise between 4-5 degrees C. That was 250 million years ago. It looks like we'll be there (at a 4-5 degree temperature rise) sometime in the 21 century. And don't forget about the speed with which the temperature is rising today in comparison to 250 million years ago. 250 million years ago it took thousands of years for the temperature to rise 5 degrees. Now it is taking less than 100 years. A simple calculation (plus a little dialectics) tells me we have 10 to 30 years max to make a successful international (and I mean international, i.e. in every country in the world) socialist revolution.

All those who call themselves Marxists should take a notice. You must change quite dramatically your transitional program and put much more emphasis on this. It matters little whether the American masses like to put their heads in the sand when it comes to this question. We must bombard them with the real urgency of this and the full truth until they take their head out of the sand or get baked there. There is no time left to mince with 'transitional' words by occasionally calling for workers control of the energy industry and for its conversion to 'green' industry. Stronger demands with harsh reminders of what capitalism is doing to wreck the planet must be used."

### **How Human Alienation Cripples Us and Fuels Climate Change**

Here I am leaving behind my reputation as an "Orthodox" Marxist and using the dialectics instead of repeating formulas. Many scientists say that we have passed the point of no return for climate change, and it is now up to nature to decide how destructive it will be. If it is mild to moderate, it will just bring down civilization as we know it. If it is severe, then the human race may be gone forever.

So why are we still under capitalism? Clearly the socialist revolution has so far failed. Orthodox Marxism claims that the only reason capitalism is still around is because we failed to build a revolutionary leadership to lead the working class to power. Yet this is only one factor. The human race has, so far, proven to be too primitive to bring about the social

revolution that is needed for an egalitarian classless society based on green industry. People's social and emotional make-up is thoroughly distorted by the influence of capitalism. Under capitalism, most of the time, people are driven by forces outside of their control and understanding. Capitalistic values such as individualism (life is about me and my success in capitalism and I don't care about the rest) instead of solidarity keep capitalism alive. Like in any other class society, under capitalism, people cannot look at life and themselves objectively. They do not use objective reasoning to arrive at the truth. People operate from a distorted subjectivity based primarily on fear, anxiety and stress. These are our gifts from the capitalist elite. It is easy to immerse such fragile and insecure people in the values of capitalism.

Human alienation and bourgeois subjective consciousness are widespread. They affect everybody, **including the entire socialist camp**. They paralyze the Marxist left, and disable its ability to lead the masses to socialism. As long as this is the case, no leap to socialism is possible. The claim of a lack of revolutionary leadership as the only reason why we are still under the boots of capital is banal. The truth is that without overcoming the **bourgeois subjectivity** of the so-called revolutionary left, it is not possible to build a revolutionary leadership. Trotsky, in the book *Stalin* and in other writings, illustrates that most of the Bolshevik leaders lacked the capacity to think independently, and they reacted to events emotionally and mostly subjectively as any typical person. Trotsky did not include Lenin in this category. But even Lenin brought Stalin into the Central Committee in 1913 because he was a good organizer, even though everybody knew how alienated, manipulative, cunning and dangerous Stalin was. This mistake by Lenin was one of the factors that brought about Stalin's rise to power. Yet we cannot really blame Lenin. In those days (and today!) the alienated, individualist, power-grabbing character of many "Marxist" leaders was not something that the Marxists took into account. Ultimately, the number of revolutionaries who mastered the dialectic and are able to use it consciously were (and remain) too few.

This weakness of the alienated individual helps us to understand why so many communists in the 1920s and 1930s capitulated to Stalin and became opportunists. This is also a big factor for understanding why practically all leftists today are opportunists, sectarians or centrists. Trotsky himself examines how emotional bourgeois subjectivity was deeply ingrained in the minds of key Bolsheviks. In Chapter 12 of my book *Alienation in the Post Cold War Era* (available on the HWRS website), I noted that:

“The CP leaders identified with the Soviet Union and ‘father’ Stalin to foster their power inside the mass communist parties. Their emotional security depended on their position inside the party which was dependent on their loyalty to Stalinism. But this security was achieved at the expense of feeling and thinking independently. As long as each of their personalities remained alienated and weak, the socialist and communist parties provided them with the security of the herd in a similar fashion to any other party or cult in capitalist society.

“This emotional immaturity can be traced to the conduct of key Bolshevik leaders in the period before Stalin rose to power. In his books *The History of the Russian Revolution* and *My Life*, Trotsky examined the psychological weaknesses of the most important Bolshevik leaders – weaknesses that led to opportunistic positions before the Russian revolution and to capitulation to Stalin later. While Trotsky does not give a full analysis of the interaction between the psychology of such leaders and the objective development of the revolution, his insights are nevertheless quite revealing. Two of the key Bolshevik leaders were Kamenev and Zinoviev. This is what Trotsky wrote about Kamenev:

‘Although a Bolshevik almost from the very birth of Bolshevism, Kamenev always stood on the right flank of the party. Not without theoretical foundation or political instinct, and with a lot of experience in factional struggle in Russia, and a store of political observations made in Western Europe, Kamenev grasped better than most Bolsheviks the general ideas of Lenin. He grasped them, however, only in order to give them the mildest possible interpretation in practice. You could not expect

either independence of judgment or initiative in action from him. A distinguished propagandist, orator, journalist, and not brilliant but thoughtful, Kamenev was especially valuable for negotiations with other parties and reconnoitres in other social circles — although, from such excursions, he always brought back with him a bit of some mood alien to the party. These characteristics of Kamenev were so obvious that almost nobody ever misjudged him as a political figure. Sukhanov noticed in him an absence of ‘sharp corners.’ ‘It is always necessary to lead him on a tow line,’ he says. ‘He may resist a little, but not strongly.’ (Trotsky, *History of the Russian Revolution*, Vol. 1, pp. 273-4.)

“In other words, an opportunistic political character, that impels one to dilute political principles, can always be traced to a weakness in the fundamental personality – to the inability to withstand social pressure and maintain independent thinking and initiative; to the fear of being ostracized, and of being alone. It is always the case that when a person has a weak core, that person does not have a real nourishing connection to him/herself and to his/her closest friends and comrades. In such cases, political leaders including the best Marxists and Socialists, cannot withstand the adverse pressure that is involved in defending the big political principles. Such leaders will be driven to embrace the prevailing views of their social milieu. In the case of Kamenev, and many other Bolshevik and Communist Party leaders, this meant an abandonment of independent thinking and principles, which are exchanged for the security of the herd.

“Zinoviev’s opportunism was not as straight forward as Kamenev’s. Trotsky explains that on a superficial level his character seems to contain the opposite attributes to Kamenev’s political identity:

‘Where Kamenev was a propagandist populariser, Zinoviev was an agitator, and indeed, to quote an expression of Lenin, ‘nothing but an agitator.’ . . . Lacking inner discipline, his mind is completely incapable of theoretical work, and his thoughts dissolve into the formless intuitions of the agitator. Thanks to an exceptionally quick scent, he can catch, out of the air, whatever formulas are necessary

for him – those which will exercise the most effective influence on the masses. . . . Although far more bold and unbridled in agitation than any other Bolshevik, Zinoviev is even less capable than Kamenev of revolutionary initiative. He is, like all demagogues, indecisive.’ (Trotsky, *History of the Russian Revolution*, Vol. 1, p. 285.)

“Zinoviev’s capitulation to the social pressure of Stalinism and the Communist Party can be traced to his demagogic character – that is, to the demagogue’s symbiotic relationship to others in general. The demagogue needs the cheering and the approval of the people in the street to achieve unity with others, to overcome the painful separateness. But underneath, rules the anxiety of the insecure person who cannot think clearly and independently. The thoughts of the subjective demagogue do not come from the ability to assess the objective situation, but from the gut feelings of the ego that knows how to say to [sic. Should be the] right things to get the caressing of the crowd. Underneath, lies a damaged core that depends on the crowd’s approval to feel the self worth. Thus, Zinoviev, who **depended on the approval of the crowd, also, like Kamenev, depended on the prevailing social mood of the Bolshevik party and ultimately on Stalin’s approval** – such approval, as in the case of many other Communists, was more decisive than the principles of a humanistic socialist society that failed so miserably in the Soviet Union.” (Winter, *Alienation in the Post Cold War Era*, ch. 12, p. 4.)

The Trotskyist movement died with the death of Trotsky. The post-second-world-war leaders proved to be much worse than Zinoviev and Kamenev. Today, when we have perhaps the last chance to lead the international revolution before it is too late, the Trotskyist movement is literally dead. We can go on and on about how Canon, Pablo and Mandel and company took Trotskyism to the swamp. A detailed examination of their social alienating characters and how it connected to their bad centrist politics is outside of the scope of this article. Suffice it to say that the failure of the post-second-world-war leaders was decisive. Without it, we cannot explain the little Stalins

such as Healy, Robinson, Moreno (Argentina) etc., and their the cult followers: members who could not produce any independent thinking due to their emotional fears and dependence on the “leaders.”

Yet the need for a revolutionary leadership for the socialist revolution is more urgent than ever. The crisis of capitalism is profound, and will not go away without a socialist revolution worldwide. Thousands of Trotskys and Lenins (with their own individual characteristics and with deep non-alienating humanistic values and understanding) will have to emerge for the world revolution to happen. The reason why they have not emerged has to do more with the general characters of human beings under this system than the mechanical “orthodox” reasoning for the lack of a revolutionary leadership. The failure of building a leadership has more to do with the fact that all humans, with very little exception, run by subjective emotions not rational reasoning. Everybody is very subjective most of the time. Independent thinking is the extraordinary exception, since subjective people with alienated bourgeois values and emotions cannot think independently. On the other hand objectivity is a rare thing. Yet without the ability to be objective it is impossible to use the dialectics.

Without hundreds, and more likely thousands, who use the dialectic consciously and on a regular basis, the building of a revolutionary leadership on the international scale (the most important requirement for the socialist revolution) cannot take place. We can hate the system until we are blue in the face, but no leap to a classless society is possible as long as our emotions and personalities are determined by capitalism and the capitalist environment that we live in day in and day out. Some of us (and I mean many thousands) will have to transcend this to become real revolutionary leaders.

Why is there **so little reaction** to the news that capitalism and climate change are destroying all living things, including hundreds of thousands people on the planet every year? Every year there are more droughts and flooding. The number of people dying because of climate change is reaching the millions. The news reports that we are in middle of one the

greatest extinctions of all livings on this planet. Scientists discover every year that they have been underestimating how far climate change has already developed. They tell us that unless we quickly transform our industry into green industry, human civilization as we know it will be gone. Human civilization will decay to such a degree that we will have wars over scarce water and food. Millions are expected to die on the horn of Africa from droughts that are likely associated with climate change, while many thousands already died in Asia and Latin America from powerful floods never seen before. The entire country of Thailand was covered with water, meaning one of the biggest exporters of rice and its capital Bangkok is/was under water!

A typical news day, these days, goes like this:

“According to new data from the Department of Energy’s Oak Ridge National Lab, global carbon-dioxide emissions just saw their biggest one-year rise, a 6 percent jump in 2010.

“The striking thing is that emissions are now rising *faster* than the worst-case scenarios envisioned by the IPCC in its 2007 report. What would this mean for global warming? ... [A] 2009 study by MIT’s Joint Program on the Science and Policy of Climate Change, lays out

the possibilities. If emissions keep growing at their current pace, then the average prediction from MIT’s modeling is that the world could heat up 5.2°C by 2100. But that’s just the average. There’s a 9 percent chance that global surface temperatures could rise more than 7°C – truly uncharted territory. And as we keep adding carbon-dioxide into the air, the odds that we’ll be able to dodge a drastic rise in temperatures become very, very low.” (*The Washington Post*, Nov. 6, 2011.)

Or like this:

“2011 has been a year of extreme weather, the weather service said. Parching drought in East Africa has left tens of thousands dead, and there have been deadly floods in Asia, and 14 separate weather catastrophes in the United States with damage topping \$1 billion each.” (Associated Press, Durban, South Africa, Nov. 29, 2011)

A growing number of scientists think that we have crossed the tipping point. James Hansen, a leading climatologist, concluded after extensive research that we are at the tipping point:

“The upshot of the combination of inertia and feedbacks is that additional climate change is already ‘in the pipeline’: even if we stop



Women wading through flood waters in Bangkok, Thailand, October 2011.

Many coastal and riverside cities will be subject to floods like these if climate change worsens.



increasing greenhouse gases today, more warming will occur. This is sobering when one considers the present status of Earth's climate. Human civilization developed during the Holocene (the past 12,000 years). It has been warm enough to keep ice sheets off North America and Europe, but cool enough for ice sheets to remain on Greenland and Antarctica. With rapid warming of 0.6°C in the past 30 years, global temperature is at its warmest level in the Holocene. The warming that has already occurred, the positive feedbacks that have been set in motion, and **the additional warming in the pipeline, together, have brought us to the precipice of a planetary tipping point. We are at the tipping point because the climate state includes large, ready positive feedbacks provided by the Arctic sea ice, the West Antarctic ice sheet, and much of Greenland's ice.** Little additional forcing is needed to trigger these feedbacks and magnify global warming. If we go over the edge, we will transition to an environment far outside the range that has been experienced by humanity, and there will be no return within any foreseeable future generation." (2008–2009 State of the Wild, my bold)

We know that if the temperature rises 5.2° C, as predicted, the Earth may experience massive extinction similar to the mass extinction of 250 million years ago, during which 95% of all life on the land and the oceans was gone. The scientific knowledge about the catastrophic potential of climate change is widespread. Hundreds of millions in the US and Europe alone are perfectly aware of it. **Yet outside of a few protests the human race is silent.** You'd think, if this human race consists of millions of sane people with egalitarian values deep in their souls, climate change would not just be a discussion at the dinner table. Millions would stop their lives and stay on the streets until capitalism was overthrown and the human race would start dealing with the massive problems seriously. Every one of us, all over the world, should be out on the street crying: "If I am human I must stop this mad destruction of life and my own race" – like the scene in the movie *Network* in which everybody is looking out their window screaming "I'm mad as hell, and I'm not going

to take this anymore." **Yet even the millions who are aware do nothing.** They are alienated and dehumanized to the point of accepting the destruction of the planet: putting their heads in the sand and focusing on their survival or yuppie success.

Demoralization and lack of leadership alone does not explain why millions are putting their heads in the sand, even though they know perfectly well that what is at stake is the extinction of most life and possibly the human race itself. Knowing what is at stake here, every *Homo sapiens* who is truly mature, egalitarian and loving toward humanity would stop anything in his/her life and would try to stop this mad destruction of nature by capitalism. The reason why such spontaneous outrage by millions does not happen is because people, who are truly mature, egalitarian and loving, are rare. Most people are deeply alienated. They exist as typical self-centered individuals, who focus on their deep insecurities, fears of themselves and others, distrust of others, attachment to a delusional enhancement of their ego, or just the need to survive under capitalism.

For a dialectical materialist, being determines consciousness. That means that the capitalistic influence on the daily life and history of the average individual in capitalism determines their state of being; in other words, their feelings and "views" (their consciousness) are not authentic. The truth is that the fears and insecurities that the capitalistic environment inflicts on us are much more powerful than the best parts of the average person humanity. The "me, me, me" consideration, or "I am too busy with this or that, surviving and advancing my social status" are much more powerful than "I cannot take it anymore. I am going into the street to call on the human race to overthrow capitalism and save my people, the animals and plants."

I will not hesitate to say that the human race's social consciousness today is as primitive as it was for thousands of years. The social and emotional consciousness will remain primitive as long as it reflects the values of a class society. The planet (as we know it) and our race is facing catastrophic changes, but we choose to put our heads in the sand and go shopping or

watch escapist programs on TV. This tells me that our race is still primitive and has not advanced much, emotionally, since the Stone Age. **This is so because class society cannot generate human maturity.** A number of progressive psychologists determined that the emotional maturity of most adults remains stuck between the age of 9 and 12. To be honest, this is the case with many “revolutionaries” and “Marxists” that I have met. From this alone, I cannot avoid concluding that the alienated character is as much a factor for the survival of capitalism as is the lack of revolutionary leadership and program.

I am not minimizing the need for a revolutionary leadership and program. Without them no socialist revolution is possible. I contend, however, that the difficulties to build such a leadership must be traced at least partially to the human immaturity of the alienated character. Nearly everyone is raised by parents with the emotional structure that is typical for *Homo sapiens* growing up under capitalism. In school, these emotions and values are reinforced. The relations between friends, what is considered “love,” the existence of unstable marriages and unstable nuclear family, are all based on unstable emotions and values generated by capitalist society. Economic crisis always brings out the negative emotions of the immature persons to the point of explosion.

Popular thinking that humans are irrational is not incorrect. Humans in a class society cannot be rational. If humans were rational, the ruling class could not manipulate and control them. The irrationality of human beings can ultimately be observed within the human brain. In the last few years, scientists were able, for the first time, to look at and understand how different parts of the brain “talk” with each other. Researchers found that when people make decisions, areas in the emotional parts of the brain (the limbic system) are activated. Researchers also found that, most of the time, the areas in the brain that are activated are related to “negative” feelings. It is normal that rational decisions can bring sadness or happiness. But the level of negative emotional components (anxiety, fear) for most people when they make decisions is staggering, when one

looks at a typical person’s fMRI. For most people, the amygdala (the fight or flight section in the brain) and its associated networks are triggered when they think. The amygdala is associated with fear, stress and depression. All of these feelings are epidemic today. I believe that it is not wrong to assume that they were the main feelings in all class societies.

Of course, even in a healthy society, it is OK to have an emotional component in rational decisions. Emotions by themselves are not alien to rational thinking. Emotions, by themselves, do not prevent one from being objective while making decisions, as long as one is aware of those emotions. The ability to remain rational depends on the maturity of the person and his/her ability to use complex logic: the dialectics that reflects how matter in social life works.

Today’s economic crisis makes living conditions unbearable. The emotions of fear and anxiety are transforming into rage, anger and readiness to be active. Such emotions, with the right political leadership and program, could be a motor for fundamental change: a social revolution. Here we have an intriguing contradiction. There are not enough revolutionaries to build a mature and strong revolutionary international. Yet climate change is already causing havoc around the world. Orthodox Marxism and Trotskyism tells us that we need to build a revolutionary international based on the 1938 transitional program and dialectical materialism to lead the socialist revolution. Yet we are today not any closer in building such a revolutionary leadership than we were in 1938. In fact we are pathetically much less advanced in building such a leadership. **Thus, the main contradiction of this period is that the effects of climate change are spreading much faster than the building of a revolutionary international.** Unfortunately, orthodox Trotskyism is too narrow-minded and thus incapable of examining this contradiction seriously.

The difficulties for the birth of a classless society shows that climate change is apparently a necessary catalyst for the leap to socialism. Our hope is that the combined suffering and anger from the deteriorating economic conditions and climate change should be powerful enough impetuses for the next social

revolution. Living with inadequate water or food will bring about conditions of scarcity. The only way to adapt, will be to build a world social order based on collective planning that stops all aspects of the disastrous climate change. Ultimately this can be done with a society that reconnects people with nature without compromising the development of the productive forces, that is, a society that relies on the clean “green” technology of an egalitarian socialist system. The alternative is a human race that descends into total barbarism or back to the Stone Age.

Our species must begin the biggest leap since the development of agriculture. This is so, because only in a classless society will human beings be able to give full expression to their humanity and positive potential for the first time. If the humanistic communism that Marx described arrives, the human brain is likely to change after centuries of evolution. Under capitalism, the amygdala and its networks are growing and growing because there is no outlet for the stress and depression that late capitalism forces people to endure. The amygdala and other very old parts of the brain are likely to become less relevant if the human race matures in the coming centuries.

#### **Did Human History Start With the “Glory” of Class Warfare?**

Who said that today’s humans are fundamentally more advanced than the early *Homo sapiens*, who supposedly belongs to pre-history? Curiously, today we believe that human “history” started with the creation of the state that defends the interests of the ruling classes. So the first “civilization” according to bourgeois scholars was the Sumerian Civilization of Mesopotamia (in what is known today as Iraq) about 5000-6000 years ago. But the ruling classes then were as brutal as the ruling classes today. The common features of class societies tell me that these are not civilized societies. They all share the greediness of the elite who oppressed the great majority. In **all** cases of class societies, the masses are treated as slaves.

For advanced Marxists, who use the megaperspective of history (meaning history started when we became bipedal), class societies in all their forms and evolutions are still part of pre-

history, because the great majority of the human race (due to severe oppression, exploitation and great pressure to conform) can use very little of their human potential. The life of a worker who needs two jobs to survive is not that different, from the mega point of view, from the life of the peasant in feudal society who had to work from sunrise to sunset to survive. The roughly 6000 years of societies based on surplus value is just a historical bloc in pre-history. Real human history will begin in classless society’s culture: when each person can develop human values based on love, compassion and the rest of the positive feelings and culture that we all talk about but, are clueless regarding to how to achieve them. In reality, we remain a primitive society that puts its head in the sand, ignoring the coming disaster from climate change.

From the point of view of evolution, it makes perfect sense that we need climate change. As climate change begins to grip our planet, it will be giving us a kick in the butt, forcing us to overthrow the latest version of primitive class society: capitalism, or face dire consequences. It appears to be an evolutionary necessity to make the leap that *Homo sapiens* needs once again, this time from 6000 years of class society to a truly humanistic classless society or socialism.

We must remember that the industrial “revolution” was a necessary evolutionary change from feudalism. Capitalism was needed to develop the productive forces to the point where they now stand in contradiction to human needs and now possibly human existence. Since capitalism is based on maximum profit and the competition for it **at the expense of everything that is alive**, it could not have developed differently – that is, without destroying the environment and without causing climate change. So we can say that climate change and the rest of the environmental disasters from capitalism are just **necessary “products” of the last stage of class societies**.

To transform from primitive (socially speaking) class societies to a classless society, the human race apparently needs the shock from climate change. This is so, because the change to an egalitarian classless world order

is so fundamental that we simply cannot compare it to the change from one stage of class society to a higher form of it. It is more like the change from hunter gatherers to class societies; or it may be even a greater leap: like the evolution from apes to bipedal hominids. The leap is so fundamental because for the first time, under socialism, humans will no longer be (wage) slaves or suffer from other severe oppressions which are all standard in a class society. The change will be so profound because people will have their basic material needs satisfied; thus, they will be free, for the first time ever, to pursue their potential.

### **Can Climate Change Bring About Social Revolutions? (And Other Possibilities From Climate Change)**

We cannot be certain how intense climate change will be. Climate change is interacting with lots of other major damage to the environment by *Homo sapiens*. The complexity is such that it is almost impossible to predict what will happen. Climate change can be relatively mild. It can also become “moderate” or severe. We should not discount the possibility that it could become severe. Unfortunately, data from the previous eras of major climate change do not support a nice ending for the human race, if it is severe. An increase of over 5°C, since the industrial revolution, is now being discussed as a “realistic” possible increase by bourgeois politicians. But earth’s history shows that such an increase started an unstoppable cycle that wiped out 95% of life from the planet about 250 million years ago. It was a turning point after which the oceans released enormous amounts of methane that accelerated global warming by another 5°C. Thus, an increase of 10°C was enough to wipe out most life from the planet. However, 250 million years ago, the 5°C increase took place slowly, in a natural way, over tens of thousands of years. Now we may be seeing a change of 5°C in a mere 200 years (!), something unprecedented in nature.

Recent research observes nervously the release of methane from the Arctic Ocean and Siberia in Russia. We know now that about 700 million years ago there was a switch in the climate that was very fast. Massive amounts of methane rose from the Arctic Ocean. This rise

of methane from the Arctic Ocean, which was much warmer than today, transformed the world into cold ice. Today scientists are nervously watching the rise of methane bubbles from the Arctic Ocean and Siberia. They are scared because the number of bubbles can increase suddenly and dramatically. This information does not look good. If we allow capitalism to continue in this century, we will see many, if not most, life forms gone, and the human race itself will be in extreme danger. (For more info, see my article “A Dire Emergency Regarding Climate Change,” available on the HWRS website.)

I can only laugh at the climate computers and scientists who every so often upgrade the severity of climate change, as new data shows that climate change is progressing more rapidly than the computers “thought” it ought to proceed. The truth is that nobody has a clue about the severity of the climate change. So I can only talk about a number of scenarios.

While a severe climate change does not give us a chance of survival, this is not the case for a mild to moderate climate change. The human race has survived mild to moderate climate changes a number of times. In fact, such changes brought about leaps in human evolution (as we discussed earlier). I am not a prophet, and it is ridiculous to attempt long-term predictions. Yet I can deal here with a number of possibilities relating to what will happen if climate change is mild to moderate. The flooding of Thailand and its major city Bangkok, the flooding of large parts of Pakistan in 2011 as well as many areas in Asia, and the severe drought in the horn of Africa last year (2011) gives us a good idea of what will happen as tragedies like these intensify dramatically throughout the world. Even under the best circumstances, civilization as we know it will be gone. Global climate change will bring more starvation and death as millions cannot find food and water.

We know that massive droughts and flooding, the rise of the ocean that will bury many cities, and the disappearance of glaciers and logged rain forests, will result in mass starvation, sickness and death. Unfortunately, this is what may trigger the world revolution against capitalism. The mass struggles are

already intensifying because of capitalism's worsening economic crisis. Thus, what may precipitate the massive evolutionary leap will be the combination of struggles against the capitalist economic and social evils combined with dramatic climate change (I still mean mild to moderate climate change which will be dramatic to humans). If we build a revolutionary international within the next 1 to 3 decades, it may not be too late for a successful world revolution, provided that climate change is mild to moderate. But the oppressed and the working class will need leadership. If this leadership can be there on the international scale, the human race could eventually march forward and make the necessary leap.

Why eventually? Because the dictatorship of the proletariat may have to persist for a long time before a classless society can emerge. Conditions of scarcity will last for a long time. Planned economy is without a doubt the best way to deal with this. If technological advances are preserved under the dictatorship of the proletariat, it will be possible to convert the global economy to green energy and stop the complete destruction of the human race. But scarcity means that everybody will have rations of food and water; and millions could still die from the trauma of climate change. With such conditions, the state that defends the collective productive forces may stay for a longer time than desired; counterrevolutionary forces will try to take advantage of the scarcity to overthrow the planned economy and the proletarian state. It is difficult to go much further as far as predictions are concerned. But at some point, conditions should stabilize (due to planning and possibly the thawing of the climate change) and scarcity will be diminished. Marx, Lenin and Trotsky did not have to worry about building the transition to socialism under conditions of scarcity. Yet I am certain that now this will be a given.

Marxism has so far failed in its prime task, which is to build a revolutionary international that would have led the world-wide socialist revolution. Here in 2012, we have very few Marxists and revolutionaries, and nothing that resembles a revolutionary international. Thus, we have missed the train for socialism without climate change. At this point, any successful

socialist revolution will have to deal with massive climate change. The reader should remember that by mild to moderate, I don't mean a short and easy climate change, but massive and disastrous, yet still not strong enough to eliminate the human race.

Without a successful socialist revolution, humanity is certain to descend into total barbarism. Civilization will fall apart. Billions could die from lack of water and food and from disease. In Asia alone, the complete melting of the Himalaya glaciers will put at risk the billions of people who depend on water from the glaciers. Those who manage to survive under the regimes of profit will fight for water and food, with possibly many small states or bands competing and waging wars against each other. Eventually something new may emerge. How long this dark era will last depends on the severity of climate change. As we recall, Europe had the Dark Ages after the collapse of the Roman Empire. It took about 500 hundreds years before a "stable" feudalism spread throughout Europe. With the effects of climate change, it could take thousands of years, if not tens of thousands of years, before the human race will re-emerge from the crisis. It all depends on the duration of the climate change, its severity, and many other factors that I do not dare predict. It is not out of the question that the human race will regress to the Stone Age. On the other hand, if the memory of technology is retained, we may not have to start rebuilding civilization again from the Stone Age.

We hope that mild to moderate climate change will be a factor in triggering a socialist revolution and establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat. We still have to go through many years of hardship before egalitarian socialism will be established. However, from the logic of evolution, or more accurately the mega picture of human evolution, this will be normal because the transition from capitalism to socialism is the most difficult and dramatic leap in human evolution.

**Editor's Note:** An unedited version of this article by Dave Winter, with links to sources, is available in the Current Articles section of HWRS's website.

(**Editorial**, continued from page 4)

bogus anti-imperialism of nationalist bourgeois figureheads. One year of struggle has produced significant gains, serious setbacks and a terrible human toll, but nowhere has the Arab Revolution suffered a historic defeat. So we see, for just one example, that after the monarchy's monstrous repressions of a year ago, the Bahraini masses are on their feet again.

The Arab revolution has a portion of left misleaders on its own soil. We have seen economist friends of the AFL-CIO sounding calls of retreat while the masses advanced in Egypt. We have read the Cliffites' call for the formation of trade unions as the number one need of the moment when Mubarek was driven from power, lowering the ante just when a vast underground union federation was taking to the streets in strike action, and the number one need was clearly for workers' councils, their proliferation and national affiliation. Likewise in the U.S., petty-bourgeois political forces work to inoculate the favorable labor rank and file response to the Arab Spring with resolutions demanding oaths of Ghandian non-violence. This while the bourgeoisie openly debates the advisability and possible timetable for a war on Iran! Expect no political shame from this type.

Here in the U.S., we are entering upon another bogus electoral season. Here the capitalists will pretend to let us choose who it is who will chop our lives to pieces; who will fob off our fright at their wars of volition and degradation of the planet; and who will ignore or flimflam us about the melting polar ice caps and hundreds of vanishing species. The stock markets have recovered almost all of their 2008 losses, making their gains on the same kind of fictitious basis as last time. Dodd-Frank regulation is a dead political fish and could even be said to have been "Dead On Arrival," with no regulator funding and the crash perpetrators populating the Obama cabinet and administration wall to wall. Meanwhile no basic part of the economy has been repaired. The crisis of overproduction is still charging along, and home prices continue to tank while gas prices skyrocket. A minor uptick in consumption and employment is traceable to absorption of cash liquidity. Behind this comes no increased circulation of credit, which mostly exists by fiat now and mostly for survival of the state. Four major financial holding companies, including Citigroup and MetLife, have just flunked the low bar of the Federal Reserve's stress test. On the other end of those tautening strings are the debts of Italy and South Africa. It is U.S. banks that are "exposed" if the deals in place stop working. Think of the Greek crisis multiplied many times.



The face of class collaboration: AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka with President Obama

The object of the electoral enterprise, as always, is the manufacture of the illusion of mass consent and/or resignation to twin party rule. Labor lieutenants of Capital, paid and otherwise, want to put you up to derauling Occupy and Union defense struggles into the voting booth with Keynesian pipedreams that none of the contenders for higher office support. This was how Cuomo and Brown were elected. Just like the Egyptian Army-affiliated and Muslim Brotherhood candidates who scammed the workers with a constituency scheme favoring the representation of villages, little has changed since the middle ages. On the principle of class independence, we expect nothing good whatsoever from the twin parties. This year, rally instead to your own struggles and enlightened self-interest! As modest as our forces are, if you make a good beginning we will help you.

Such a good beginning was made by Labor Black & Brown in the Bay Area. This is a revolutionary workers' organization founded squarely on the principle of self-defense of the oppressed communities. We support Labor Black & Brown! Our humble forces have had a hand in shaping it, and in modest ways in its first successes. We support its efforts to put the call for justice for all victims of police murder at the center of the general strike movement. We won't forget Jerrold Hall or Oscar Grant, whose own cousin has recently been shot (though fortunately not killed) by the police! We continue to fight on behalf of Mumia Abu Jamal, whose continued incarceration gives the lie to the Obama "post-racial America." Bowing to the pressure of the international working class and oppressed, who campaigned against his death penalty for decades, the state has released Mumia from Death Row. But this is not enough. Mumia is innocent, and he must be freed. The state wants to crush the voice of the voiceless; our campaign against injustice does not end until we have freed **all** political prisoners!

Most recently, the murder of Trayvon Martin by an armed “Neighborhood Watch” vigilante in Florida means that on May Day, and from then until the indefinite general strike becomes a reality, Labor Black & Brown will campaign for the trade union movement to contribute resources and militants to the defense of the communities of the oppressed. In pursuit of a justice impossible to find in the bosses’ courts, we, alongside Labor Black & Brown, call for Community/Labor Tribunals to try and to pass judgement on racist murderers and brutalizers, in the first place racist police. In the same vein, Labor Black & Brown embraces taking the struggle of the immigrant communities against ICE to the streets; builds the defense of political prisoners; fights environmental racism, and conducts political education. Build Labor Black & Brown where you are! (Others are doing so now!)

Looking ahead, we will seek to mobilize all working people and their allies against an anti-woman legal onslaught that we expect to crest in October. We are not waiting, but are putting out the alarm now that the Supreme Court threatens to further curtail a woman’s right to control her own body. Just as Obama has

proven to be The Great Deporter, so his administration has let the religious right romp at will through the statehouses in pursuit of scalawag misogyny. Tune out the lying electoral din and defend the rights of the indispensable half of the working class and the oppressed!

Speaking of the current election season, we have to wonder whether Occupy’s call for world revolution as the only solution can withstand the election year pressures of its host of reformist celebrity friends. The Michael Moores of this world do not want world or any other revolution, any more than Bill Moyers does. Rachel Maddow connives all day every day to put Occupy in the Democratic column. Nonetheless, great numbers of radicalizing youth identify with Occupy; the initiative still lies with them, and there can be fresh springs of actions forthcoming from them.

About Occupy’s “no leadership” leadership we are not nearly so thrilled. This is almost entirely due to the shortcomings of the anarcho-feminist leadership of this “movement without leaders.” What began last year as a positive adaptation of some ideas from the Spanish movement of the *Indignados* (Indignant Ones), i.e.,



Outraged marchers demand justice for murdered Black teenager Trayvon Martin.

organizing actions to respond to the foreclosure on the American Dream for the up-and-coming generation, now is lacking any new ideas and maintains control by increasing reliance on its reformist allies and by resort to bureaucratic means. That means here the fake socialists, there the Barbara Ehrenreichs and Cornel Wests – and even a wing of the Ron Paul campaign, with its perorations against “crony capitalism.” We see the bureaucratism everywhere that “moderators” are appointed to cordon off political debate from public consideration, and to pass judgment on what proposals will be discussed. Such high-handedness sends Occupy’s already alienated blue collar supporters running for the exits.

The Avenue B anarcho-feminists claim to have no program, but everywhere we see Occupy, we see them stuck like epoxy to the “Tax The Rich” program. This although Jerry Brown has co-opted and undercut the Millionaires Tax, and despite the lack of political traction for the whole idea among the same “political class” who are putting over the stealth Obama-Trumka no-strike plan. The Occupy “revolutionaries” still don’t get the idea that even the education-targeted Millionaires Tax would be spent ensuring the bloated salaries of School District Administrators, holders of cushy appointed positions, and other bourgeois government loafers.

Attendance at Occupy-sponsored actions has already diminished owing to the sheer number of arrests. In the Bay Area, General Assemblies are now attracting fewer than 100, and in New York they are becoming infrequent due to the split in Anarchism, between the pacifist and direct action wings, that is yawning for all to see. Overseas, Occupy is almost history as we write this. Of course, we do see contradictory happenings, and we too read the “Occupy Wall

Street Journal.” We will be watching the upcoming Occupy Chicago month and the Occupy DC month of events, though we expect the latter to degenerate into lobbying, and we will be interested to see how many rank-and-file workers turn out for the Occupy May Day events.

Washington’s wars are going badly. Too many deployments, and too crooked a military medical establishment, means that troops who should be given more treatment, or released as disabled and treated as combat vets, are shoveled back into the meat grinder. If this were not enough, troops get racist and sexist training that causes unchecked paranoia episodes in combat conditions. Troops lose it and kill their families when at home, commit suicide, or flip out in Afghan villages, with resulting atrocities. Troops who do this have to face military justice, just as the real hero Bradley Manning does, because the premises of the wars cannot be questioned. The War On Terror is the great long-term racket. That its effects are the index of the decay of the U.S. empire does not bother those plutocrats who exported their capital years ago. That its drain on the budget and invisible drain on the productive forces are contributing to the impoverishment of every U.S. wage earner doesn’t bother them either. They bankroll the union-busting drives, profit from the soar of gasoline prices due to their Iran war scare, and are squeezing for more budget and tax cuts. Their expert Sunday TV talking heads are calling for keeping the Afghan war going with U.S. combat troops for at least another ten years. Meanwhile, sabres continue to rattle in the direction of Iran, despite Obama’s request that Netanyahu wait at least until he is reelected, and the skepticism of the Joint Chiefs about the whole idea.

We want to shake you up with a thought: If it were not enough of an outrage that the twin parties have reached in your pockets to reward the authors of a world recession/depression, the gutting of our kids’ present chances means we are heading into a police state. This is what it means when Gingrich says laws against child labor are stupid. This is what it means when the San Onofre and Indian Point nuclear plants – our own lurking Fukushimas – fail their stress tests; when **all** the U.S. nuclear plants have exceeded their design life and we still have no plan for their waste, yet the administration approves a new nuclear plant for Georgia. At the same time that the minuscule \$21 million federal budget for fighting childhood lead poisoning was cut to \$1 million, Congress has legalized (and funded) domestic spy drones both police and private, obviously with the intention of making somebody feel more secure. Meanwhile, the Justice Department has







A glimpse of the coming police state in the U.S.?

okayed the assassination of U.S. citizens overseas, and Obama has signed the all-time abomination of civil liberties, the National Defense Authorization Act, which will permit the **military** to judge you a threat to national security, scoop you off any stateside street, and detain you without charge or trial or contact with anyone – indefinitely. Obama says he won't use it. Any bets? Consider how Iraq whistleblower Bradley Manning has been treated by Obama's own military, which undoubtedly thirsts to pursue Wikileaks founder Julian Assange as well.

We think those who will not take that bet now will consider how Leon Trotsky said in 1938 that bourgeois democracy was an expensive system – too expensive for some countries, and possibly even too expensive for the U.S., then already the world's leading imperialist power, and poised to clean up the pieces of all the others in another world war. Obama has announced that the Pentagon now has a new basing policy for Marines in Australia. The armed services will now have a "Pacific focus." China has its first aircraft carrier, and its shipyards have laid the keels of a whole

fleet of them. These are war preparations. Would our "rights" and "civil liberties" withstand such a war? We don't think an Occupy type movement is remotely up to the task of defending them, never mind extending human democratic rights.

Nor do we believe the bourgeois state can be recast in another shape that will somehow serve human survival. For the defense of human rights, and their extension to encompass equality and beyond, even to the satisfactions of a life everywhere worth living, the final form of the state, the workers' state, is required. Such a state will set about the construction of socialism, and those delegated to administer it will **work** at tasks set for the state by all the self-organized bodies of the working people and the oppressed. Work, or be recalled at any time. Work, and be paid wages **only**.

We are well aware that previous attempts to build a socialist state have been suppressed, or have succumbed to external pressures

and misleadership by bureaucratic and counterrevolutionary forces. But we are not convinced that this is inevitable, though it requires the difficult work of overcoming not only the capitalist power structure, but also its internalization in our own alienation. We in Humanist Workers for Revolutionary Socialism study the entire experience of the workers' movement, as well as live it in the present. If, like us, you believe humanity still has some time to secure the survival of itself, its planet, and all its living things, work with us and join us as soon as you are ready!

**Forward to the World Party  
of Socialist Revolution!**  
**Forward to the  
World Socialist Revolution!**  
**Forward to  
World Socialism!**

(Continued from page 51)

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.

WRS 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.

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if you are an internationalist ...  
if you are a humanist ...  
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**[humanistworkers@ymail.com](mailto:humanistworkers@ymail.com)**

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# Where We Stand

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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 50)