

Full Citizenship Rights for All Immigrants

Deportation Elections 2012: For a Revolutionary Workers Party

On May 1, the international workers day, millions take to the streets around the world to demonstrate for labor's cause. In the United States, since the massive marches that took place in 2006, May Day has become the day of struggle of immigrant workers as well. On 1 May 2008, when dock workers made history by shutting down every port on the West Coast to stop the war on Iraq and Afghanistan, they also called to defend immigrants' rights. Today again, immigrants are under attack as the U.S. Supreme Court rules on the constitutionality of Arizona's anti-immigrant witchhunt law while raids and deportations are going full-blast.

The most recent nationwide immigration raid, codenamed "Cross Check," was carried out in the last week of March. It involved 2,000 agents of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) with the support of other federal agencies along with state and local police. The black-uniformed *migra* cops broke into the homes of immigrants in dawn raids, supposedly looking for a list of "criminals" but arresting any undocumented immigrants they found. Some 3,200 were seized and declared deportable material.

On May Day 2012, the American presidential election campaign is well underway. In the Republican primaries, each candidate tried to be more reactionary than the other, on every conceivable issue: threatening to "bomb, bomb Iran," promising more tax breaks for the rich and more cuts in social services for the poor, attacking public sector unions, denouncing abortion and thundering against "illegal immigrants." The virtual nominee, backed by big bucks from Wall Street, is Mitt Romney, who has called for immigrants to "self-deport."

Democratic president Barack Obama, meanwhile, is trying to outdo the Republicans in imperialist war abroad and police-state repression "at home." Mired in a capitalist depression that will drag on for some years to come, he has agreed to slash "entitlement" programs in the name of deficit-reduction. Obama has spearheaded a "bipartisan" assault on teachers and public education. And he has frontally assaulted civil liberties while making assassination a mainstay of the "war on terror," including secret directives authorizing the murder of

Workers Struggle Has No Borders



Internationalist photo

Internationalist contingent in New York City May Day 2011 march.

"Mr. Deportation" Obama Expels 400,000 a Year, Romney Targets Immigrants to "Self-Deport"

U.S. citizens anywhere.

Throwing a bone to the "Occupy Wall Street" (OWS) movement which exploded on the political scene last fall, Obama mouths empty populist rhetoric about inequality. Yet his economic policy is in the hands of Wall Street bankers, and his ballyhooed health care reform will fork over billions to the insurance companies. Even as he appeals for the Hispanic vote by again promising to make immigration reform a priority *after* reelection, Obama has deported 400,000 immigrants a year, far more than his Republican predecessor George W. Bush ever did.

Obama deserves to be known "Mr. Deportation," an immigrant worker comrade of the Internationalist Group said in a workshop on "Immigrants and Occupy" at the Left Forum in New York in March. Yet despite the raids and the administration's massive militarization of the Mexican border, the leaders of "mainstream" Hispanic and immigrant organizations continue to back the Democratic Party. Even the organizers of the OWS Immigrant Worker Justice Working Group at the forum workshop urged participants to give Obama "the benefit of the doubt."

The "hope" that Obama proclaimed in 2008 was false from the start. His campaign promise to enact a "significant" immigration reform during his first year in office was simply dropped. Unlike the liberals and various reformist left groups who endorsed or facilitated his election, the Internationalist Group warned that Democrats and Republicans were enemies of immigrants and of all working people. We called then, as today, to mobilize to stop the raids and deportations, to fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants, and to build a revolutionary workers party.

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**No to "Secure Communities" – Drive Out ICE!
Democrats, Republicans – Enemies of Immigrants**

Deportation...

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Bipartisan Anti-Immigrant Offensive

In the Republican presidential primary debates, candidates competed to be the most vicious immigrant-basher. In a debate last September, Texas governor Rick Perry demanded more police and National Guard troops to “secure the border.” Congresswoman Michelle Bachman of Minnesota demanded the construction of an impenetrable wall along the Mexican border, saying we are dealing with “narco-terrorists.” (How about the Americans smuggling guns to Mexico?) Herman Cain wanted an electric fence with voltage high enough to kill.

Republican frontrunner Romney (whose father was born in Mexico) cynically presented his call for “self-deportation” as a kinder alternative to just arresting people. Immigrants would just go home “because they can’t find work here.” How would he do that? By issuing an identity card to “legal” workers – a national ID and computerized employment verification that would be used to tighten police control of everyone. In addition, Romney was endorsing the raft of state laws which seek to ratchet up police repression to make life intolerable for immigrants.

In Arizona, there has been a steady stream of racist anti-immigrant laws starting with a 2002 “English only” law. Maricopa County sheriff Joe Arpaio boasts that he has a private air force of 30 planes to track immigrants in the desert, and a posse of volunteers who go immigrant-hunting.¹ Nativist fascist vigilantes including the Minuteman Project and neo-Nazi paramilitary groups have staged armed patrols along the Arizona-Sonora border, killing several immigrants. Now a new Arizona law (SB 1083) has authorized an official anti-immigrant volunteer militia.

Meanwhile, Tucson schools were ordered to shut a Mexican-American studies program last year for violating state law (HB 2281) banning ethnic studies that “promote the overthrow of the U.S. government.” The district then purged classrooms of any books where “race, ethnicity and oppression are central themes.” Among the books banned in Tucson were Sandra Cisneros’s *House on Mango Street* and Shakespeare’s *The Tempest!* Cisneros joined a *Librotraficante* (book trafficking) caravan that traveled from Houston to smuggle the banned titles back to Tucson.

Laws similar to Arizona’s SB 1070,

¹ Last year Arpaio had actor Steven Seagal riding in a tank to go after a suspected cockfighting site, filmed for broadcast on Segal’s TV “reality show.”

passed in 2010, have since been introduced in Alabama, Georgia, Indiana, South Carolina and Utah. They make it a crime for undocumented workers to seek work or to fail to carry legal immigration papers, and require police to detain anyone they stop that they have a “reasonable suspicion” is not a legal resident. Not only does this promote “racial profiling” against anyone who “looks Mexican,” it recalls Nazi Germany where people were stopped on the street because they “looked Jewish,” or apartheid South Africa’s pass laws.

After Georgia’s law was passed, thousands of farm workers left the state. Growers complain that peanuts, peaches, blueberries and other crops were left rotting in the fields for lack of labor to harvest them. The Alabama law went even further, ordering schools to investigate the immigration status of parents. Fear shot through communities like Albertville, the site of several poultry processing plants. When a federal judge upheld the law last September, panicked families packed up their cars and fled. Within days almost 2,000 Latino students were pulled out of school.

Reactionary immigrant-bashers cheered at the exodus. But the frightened Alabama and Georgia workers didn’t make for the border – they headed to nearby states like North Carolina where business interests have buried legislation to witch-hunt immigrants (they want the cheap labor). And it isn’t just right-wing Republicans and Southern states that are terrorizing immigrant families and blocking any “path to citizenship.” A bill for a state “DREAM Act” recently died in the New York legislature, dashing many undocumented students’ hopes.²

But by far the biggest threat to immigrants comes from the federal government. Barack Obama is using reactionary laws and programs such as “E-Verify” and “Secure

² We have opposed the national DREAM (Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors) Act, in which a central provision would provide legal residency in exchange for joining the military. By this bribery, the Pentagon tried to overcome the lagging enlistment rates and recruit cannon fodder to go kill and be killed in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere. See “The DREAM Act Swindle,” in *Revolution* No. 8, April 2011, the newspaper of the Internationalist Clubs of the City University of New York; and “DREAMS of Citizenship, Nightmare of War,” in *Class Struggle Education Workers Newsletter* No. 2, October-December 2010. The New York state DREAM Act did not include such a military recruitment clause, and was a supportable, if limited and inadequate reform that would have provided lower in-state tuition rates for undocumented students who graduated from New York high schools. However, after completing their degrees, these students still would not be able to get legal jobs.

Communities” to throw undocumented workers out of their jobs and to get local police to turn them over to ICE for deportation when they are stopped for any reason. And he is providing outrageous profits to the private prison industry, which owns and manages many of the 961 sites around the country used for detention, including concentration camps holding thousands of immigrants.

A number of states, including New York last year, have formally opted out of the “Secure Communities” program. But in fact, information exchange with ICE continues as before. This has caused a nationwide crisis among immigrant families as undocumented parents are seized for deportation, leaving their U.S.-born children here. A recent report by ICE revealed that just in the first half of 2011, 46,486 parents of children who are American citizens were forced to leave the country. And that’s not counting many more who are in detention awaiting deportation.

The scope of this horrific government attack is enormous. A 2010 report by the Pew Hispanic Center estimated there at least 4 million citizen children of more than 11 million undocumented immigrants living in the U.S. That’s a population larger than several European countries, and they’re all at risk of falling victim to the *migra* snatch squads. A report by the Applied Research Center, *Shattered Families* (November 2011), revealed that approximately 5,000 children are being held under temporary custody of the Homeland Security Department.

The Obama government is running a monstrous child-trafficking operation here. When the parents are seized, they are held in detention centers, usually distant from their homes. Children who have no legal guardian are placed in foster homes. If the parents are deported or kept in detention for months, child welfare agencies go to court to cancel their parental rights on grounds of “neglect.” The children are then put up for adoption, or continue in foster care, but their parents have no right to get them back even after they finally get out of ICE control.

This has become so well-known that parents in Arizona, Alabama and other states with draconian immigrant pick-up laws have been going to lawyers in droves to draw up papers providing for custody of their children in case they are seized. In sheer wanton cruelty, this recalls the Argentine military dictatorship in the 1970s, which stole the children of leftists that it assassinated. In the U.S. today, where politicians regularly preach phony “family values” to justify reactionary policies, the government is separating spouses, stealing children from their parents and devastating thousands of families.

Workers of the World, Unite!

Anti-immigrant racism is hardly unique to the United States. In Europe, fascists in Greece have targeted African and Near Eastern immigrants for murderous attacks. In the French presidential elections, President Nicolas Sarkozy declared that there were “too many foreigners” in the country, fostering xenophobia to compete for the electoral base of Marine Le Pen of the fascist National Front. In Norway, anti-immigrant terrorist Anders Behring Breivik slaughtered 77 people in a bombing and shooting rampage last August while vituperating against “Islamic colonization” and echoing mainstream politicians’ rhetoric against “multiculturalism.”

Capitalist rulers regularly use national chauvinism to mobilize backward elements

against any perceived threats to their oppressive rule. The current immigrant-bashing in the United States is particularly noteworthy in a country built on mass immigration, where almost everyone originally came from elsewhere except for the Native American population that was nearly wiped out by genocide. From World Wars I (deportation of Italian “reds”) and II (internment of Japanese Americans) to today (U.S. troops’ defiling the bodies of Afghans they have killed), imperialist slaughter feeds off racism, and immigrants are portrayed as the “enemy within.”

In the past, immigrants have been fed hopes that eventually they will be able to legalize their situation as others have before them. For a time, liberal Democrats and reformist leftists talked of an “amnesty,” as in the 1986 immigration “reform,” where immigrants would have to pay big fines and fees but could get residency and eventually citizenship. We in the Internationalist Group have insisted immigrants are not criminals and don’t need to be amnestied or pardoned. We chant, *No rogamus, exigimos, plenos derechos de ciudadanía* (we don’t beg, we demand full citizenship rights).

Since the anti-immigrant backlash scuttled any chance of an amnesty, the Democrats have little to offer. Obama’s latest proposal was that undocumented immigrants applying for residency on grounds of family reunification could get a “provisional waiver” while in the U.S., but would still have to return to their “home country” to get a “green card.” This is no more real than Romney’s delusions of “self-deportation.” What immigrant would risk separation from their family on the hope that a U.S. consulate will grant them a visa without giving them a runaround, extorting huge fees and holding them hostage for years, as is now the case?

Today, given the lack of any prospect of immigration reform by the capitalist parties, some on the left have dropped forlorn appeals for amnesty and talk of “full rights for all immigrants,” as the May 1 Coalition does in New York, without saying exactly what rights. This is a watered-down version of the program we have defended for years, *full citizenship rights for all immigrants*. The workers movement has a vital interest in everyone who lives here having equal rights so that the bosses can’t use the lack of legal status to drive down wages and divide workers. In recognition of that, the Portland, Oregon May Day 2012 march is calling for “full citizenship rights for all.”

It must also be emphasized that this demand will not be willingly granted by any sector of the ruling class. It is necessary to break with the Democrats and all capitalist parties in order to build a revolutionary workers party. Such a party will connect the fight for immigrant rights to a broader class struggle for the defeat of imperialist war, against the racist death penalty, for the liberation of women and black liberation through socialist revolution. It must also call to mobilize the power of the workers movement to defend immigrants, African Americans, Latinos and Asians against racist police and vigilante attacks.

A working class with revolutionary leadership that fully understands that “an injury to one is an injury to all” will be able to realize the promise of the Paris Commune of 1871 and the Russian Revolution of 1917, which granted citizenship to all workers and revolutionaries as they took power under the watchword of the Communist Manifesto: *Workers of the world, unite!* ■

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Trotskyism vs. Social Democracy and Anarcho-Liberalism

The Left, Labor and Occupy

Six months after Occupy Wall Street began – when a few hundred people sparked worldwide protest with a march and sit-in in lower Manhattan against political corruption and corporate greed – OWS was back. And four months after Occupy encampments were brutally evicted around the country, the police were there to greet them. Demonstrators chanted “this is what democracy looks like” as cops dragged scores out of Zuccotti Park in downtown Manhattan. More accurate would have been “this is what a police state looks like.” At the same time, the sharpening *internal* contradictions within the Occupy movement were also on display.

On March 17, OWS supporters flowed into the public-private park next door to the center of world finance capital. They were met by the New York Police Department, which once again evicted protesters with an iron fist: charging into the crowd, slamming people to the ground and arresting a French bagpipe team serenading the occupiers. Cops threw a well-known OWS activist, Cecily McMillan, to the ground, kicked her and cracked her ribs, refused to remove zip-cuffs as she began to have a seizure, and then charged her with deadly assault on a police officer. This time 73 were arrested, despite a court order allowing protesters into the square.

Meanwhile, meeting a few blocks away was the annual Left Forum. This year’s theme was “Occupy the System: Confronting Global Capitalism.” But when 30 to 40 Occupy activists showed up at the gate, they were blocked from entering by security guards under instructions from Forum organizers, because they wouldn’t pay the outrageously high entrance fee. Rightly denouncing the “fake left,” the Occupiers marched back to Zuccotti Park, only to be busted by the NYPD a few hours later. The next day, the liberal/reformist gab fest was addressed by Chris Hedges, a Cold War anti-Communist who has denounced “black bloc” anarchists as a “cancer” and “criminal” for supposedly seeking to “hijack” and “destroy” Occupy.

Clearly, fissures have begun to show in the “99%,” in the populist vocabulary of OWS.

Only a few months ago, Occupy Wall Street was being hailed as the greatest movement since civil rights. Occupiers chanted, “We are unstoppable, another world is possible.” (What kind of other world was not specified.) At its high point last fall there were over 600 Occupy groups around the U.S., up to 1,000 by one count. They mushroomed in the space of a few weeks because OWS crystallized widespread anger over the obscene spectacle of bankers, who had triggered the worst economic crisis since the 1930s, looting billions more as mass unemployment persisted. Many saw it as a continuation of the labor upsurge in Wisconsin and the popular revolts in Egypt and Tunisia earlier in 2011.

Barely half a year later, Occupy is splintering left and right. This was inevitable in a movement that was united only in what it opposed and could never put forward a positive program, whether of reformist “demands” on the capitalist state or of revolutionary action against it. The question is: along what lines will it polarize?



Rick Bowmer/AP

Occupy protesters in Portland picket Terminal 6 on December 12.

OWS Splintering: The Honeymoon Is Over

When Occupy Wall Street burst on the political scene last fall, the bulk of the labor movement and many liberal Democrats embraced it after initial hesitation. Among the unions issuing statements of support and/or contributing in various ways to the Occupy movement as it spread across the U.S. were the United Federation of Teachers, Transport Workers Union, 1199 Service Employees International Union, DC 37 AFSCME, Communications Workers of America, Teamsters, International Longshore and Warehouse Union and the AFL-CIO itself.

Liberals latched onto Occupy hoping that it could pressure the Democratic Party in a more populist direction, away from the tight embrace of Wall Street financiers under presidents Bill Clinton and particularly Barack Obama, whose campaign started with a hunk of seed money from Wall Street. Many hoped that OWS could play a role akin to the right-wing populist Tea Party in the Republican Party. Union activists, for their part, hoped that Occupy could give a shot in the arm to a labor movement that for years had appeared to be asleep at the switch.

The bulk of the left, meanwhile, sought to bury itself in the Occupy movement. In New York, OWS was started in reaction against left groups such as the Workers World Party (WWP) and its various offshoots. So others on the opportunist left such as the International Socialist Organization (ISO) were notably hush-hush about their affiliations, and told supporters of the Internationalist Group selling our paper at Zuccotti Park was “not appropriate.” Many social-democratic and Stalinist reformists tried to give the populist slogan of “99%” a veneer of class content by claiming that the 1% is a synonym for the capitalist class. On the West Coast, where Occupy groups have been more left-wing, the encampment in the renamed Oscar Grant Plaza in front of

Oakland City Hall was dubbed the Oakland Commune.

The all-sided love fest (even extending to supporters of right-wing Republican Ron Paul) was extremely brief. From the outset, many OWS activists were wary of being co-opted to the Democrats, which of course was exactly what the liberals and labor leaders were after. Certainly, if anyone is trying to “hijack” Occupy, well-funded liberal operations like Moveon.org are right up there at the top of the list. And the effort to put an Occupy label on re-elect Obama efforts is continuing, in the form of outfits like “Occupy Congress” and “Occupy the Dream.” OWS protests against fundraising events for Mitt Romney call the Republican front-runner “Mr. 1%.” As if Barack Obama (2011 reported income \$1.73 million) isn’t?

As the encampments in city centers persisted and multiplied last fall, the ruling class became increasingly irritated. Beginning in late October, big city mayors (overwhelmingly Democrats) launched a wave of coordinated evictions with help from Obama’s Department of Homeland Security. But what really tipped the balance was Occupy’s intervention in labor struggle. When Occupy Oakland called for a “general strike” on November 2 in response to a bloody cop eviction a week earlier, up to 40,000 people marched on the port and shut it down. Union bureaucrats and Democrats suddenly changed their tune. And when Occupy responded to the nationwide evictions later that month by vowing to do it again, the bourgeoisie went ballistic.

In the lead-up to the mid-December West Coast port blockade called by Occupy, the media were on a tear denouncing wild-eyed anarchists trying to take over respectable unions. Left-talking liberals and reformists sternly lectured would-be radicals on the danger of substitutionism. When the ports of Oakland, Portland and Seattle were effectively shut down on December 12, the backlash against Occupy

militants reached a fever pitch. The ILWU president warned against cooperating with outside groups in the fight against union-busting at the new EGT grain terminal in Longview, Washington (see “Longshore Workers, Truckers: Shut the Ports, Coast to Coast!” *The Internationalist* supplement, January 2012).

In early January, the Obama administration announced it was ordering the U.S. Coast Guard to protect the first shipment from the EGT scab terminal. Rather than protesting this outrage, the longshore union tops ordered that there be no port shutdowns... and dispatched a couple dozen bureaucrats and hangers-on to bust up a Seattle forum called by Occupy for solidarity with the struggle in Longview. The heat was on, and soon “moderate” Occupy supporters began calling to purge radicals. Some sought to form squads of “peace police” to boot out anyone who would resist the cops. When Oakland police arrested 400+ demonstrators on January 28, the media and liberals denounced “vandalism” in City Hall by a few people protesting the mass bust.

Following the November evictions, the highly visible Occupy encampments have been replaced by a mishmash of committees, coalitions, community assemblies (Occupy the Hood/ Barrio), etc. Occupy Homes groups have mobilized to stop evictions. In some places, Occupy labor solidarity committees have aided workers in struggle. Reformist leftists operate under an Occupy label (WWP d/b/a Occupy4Jobs) or through working groups (ISO in Occupy the DOE in New York). The more militant elements have formed collectives (e.g., Hella503, Portland Action Lab and Radical Caucus of Occupy Portland) and looser “anti-capitalist” blocs. Sometimes they act in concert, sometimes not, and under the rubric of “diversity of tactics,” everyone does their own thing.

In the meantime, Occupy marches dwindle from many thousands to a few hundred



Oakland police arrest over 400 demonstrators, January 28. Bourgeois media, liberals and social democrats scream about “vandalism” in City Hall. ISO calls burning U.S. flag “criminal.”

protesters. There will be an uptick on May Day, though hardly a “general strike” – not even in the fantasy form some anarchists dream of. Despite the liberals’ frenzied denunciations of “disrupters,” many credit Occupy with “changing the conversation” of mainstream politics by raising issues of inequality. But even if millionaire Democrat Obama mouths some populist rhetoric – quoting “rough rider” imperialist Teddy Roosevelt! – against billionaire Republican Romney, whoever wins, Wall Street will still be running the White House. So much for “hope” and “change.”

Occupy Wall Street did bring substantial numbers of white, middle-class youth – many of them disappointed Obama voters – into protest action and acquainted them personally with state repression. As the cops pepper-sprayed and mass-arrested demonstrators, the outrageous appeals to the police as fellow 99%ers became less and less frequent. There has also been some below-the-surface resentment of the “small-time bankers” in charge of OWS funds.¹ But even the more radical activists have not broken from the bourgeois populism which is the point of political convergence of the diverse currents that make up the Occupy conglomeration (see “Expropriate Wall Street Through Socialist Revolution,” *Revolution* No. 9, November 2011).

The “Declaration of Occupy Wall Street” (29 September 2011), speaking as the voice of “one people, united,”² denounces greedy corporations and a tiny number of super-rich. Rather than a struggle of class against class, OWS presents a populist image of a united people – the “99%” – against a statistically defined tax bracket, the 1%. This populist rhetoric serves to divert protest away from struggle against the capitalist system and the ruling class as a whole. Some on the left have argued, in order to justify their opportunist policies toward OWS, that “99% and 1% can be defined in any manner desired. Marxists are free to define it as bourgeoisie and proletarian.”³ That sort

of opportunist sleight-of-hand may make it easier to sidle up to politically undefined Occupiers, but it does not help the most thoughtful among them to see their way to a revolutionary political program that gets to the root of the social ills they are reacting against.

It is necessary first of all to explain that the idea of eliminating, or even significantly curbing, the influence of money in politics while capitalism holds sway is far more “utopian” than a revolution overthrowing the production-for-profit system. But how do we get from here to there, any serious radical will ask, and what comes after? To begin with, it means breaking with the Democrats, ousting the labor bureaucrats and politically combating the misleaders who tie the black and Latino masses to the Democratic Party. It means unmasking the “NGOs” (non-governmental organizations) who act as a transmission belt for this partner party of racist American capitalism. And it requires building a revolutionary workers party against all the bourgeois parties, in order to fight for socialist revolution.

Social Democrats Look to Split Off Occupy “Moderates”

A host of social-democratic left groups (ISO, Socialist Action, Socialist Alternative, Socialist Appeal, Socialist Organizer, Workers Action) have been assiduously courting “moderates” in the Occupy constellation. To do so, these reformists have taken up many of the battle cries of the liberals and labor bureaucrats. The ISO, in particular, scandalously excused the ILWU bureaucrats’ disruption of the Occupy Seattle labor solidarity forum⁴, while the increasingly erratic centrist Spartacist League actually defended this attack on workers democracy (see “January 6: An Outrage in Seattle,” “Socialist’ Excuses for Disruption of Labor Solidarity Forum” and “SL’s Wrong Lessons of Longview,” *Internationalist* supplement, March 2012).

A few weeks later, the ISO echoed the bourgeois press and liberals in screaming about “vandalism” by some Occupy activists. One article (“The Backlash Against Occupiers” (2 April), <http://calebmaupin.blogspot.com/2012/04/no-one-knows-where-ows-and-role-of.html>

⁴ In their article, “The Solidarity We Need for Longview,” *Socialist Worker* website, 19 January.

occupy Oakland,” *Socialist Worker* web site, 6 February) used the “v-word” five times, to describe what? Some spray-painting in City Hall and “burning an American flag while the cameras rolled.” Horrors! This was labeled “irresponsible” and something “to be condemned” (“Discussing the Way Forward for Occupy,” 8 February). The ISO also condemned demonstrators using homemade shields to ward off blows from the cops, and “in retrospect” opposed the main purpose of the January 28 demos seeking to occupy an empty building to turn it into an organizing center.

From the very outset, there have been sharp differences between the anarchist “occupy everything, demand nothing” crowd among the initiators of Occupy Wall Street and the social democrats who have repeatedly called for raising reformist demands aimed at improving the bourgeois state. The ISO complained early on about “an influential group within Occupy Wall Street that sees the occupation as prefiguring a future society – and that argues against raising any demands because that would only legitimize the existing power structure” (“A Spotlight on Wall Street Greed,” *Socialist Worker*, 28 September 2011). But the demands raised by the assorted social democrats in OWS do in fact call for reforming of the bourgeois state within the framework of capitalism.

In New York, a coterie of reformist groups and individuals formed a “Demands Working Group” which put forward a program of measures which amounted to a call for a “new New Deal.” (The response of the anarchist non-leaders, supposedly committed to “consensus decision-making,” was to kick this group off the OWS web site.) The program centered on a demand for “a massive, democratically-controlled public works and public service program ... to create 25 million new jobs at good union wages,” to be “paid for by new taxes on the wealth and income of the rich, on financial transactions, and on corporate profits, by reinstatement of the Glass-Steagall Act,”⁵ as

⁵ The Glass-Steagall or Banking Act of 1933 prohibited commercial banks from engaging in investment banking activities, in order to insulate depositors from the kind of bank collapse that occurred in 1929, triggering the 1930s Depression. The key parts of that act were repealed in 1999 under Democratic president Bill Clinton. Some blame the 2008 Wall Street crisis

well as by ending all U.S. wars....”

This is just a slightly more left-wing version of the policies of Democrat Franklin D. Roosevelt in the 1930s. Today Obama says his jobs program will create 6 million jobs, the Demands Working Group asked for 25 million. The workers movement needs to fight for jobs for all, but the issues we face today result from a crisis of capitalism. “Demanding” the capitalist government provide more jobs no more challenges capitalism than when American Federation of Labor leader Samuel Gompers summed up what trade unions want in the word “more.” And the call to “tax the rich” (an ISO favorite) is perfectly compatible with capitalism. Not only does mega-billionaire Warren Buffet call for a 30% minimum tax rate on millionaires, Democrats and Republicans just voted a New York state budget raising taxes on the rich. So what, the top marginal tax rate under Republican Dwight Eisenhower was 91%. But “Ike” was no red.

Various anarchist and semi-anarchist groups wrongly consider the International Socialist Organization to be Trotskyist and equate its calls for “demands” with Trotsky’s Transitional Program. In reality, the ISO’s godfather Tony Cliff broke with Trotskyism in refusing to defend the Soviet Union during the post-WWII Cold War, justifying this betrayal by labeling the Stalinist-ruled USSR “state capitalist” (as does the ISO) against Trotsky’s insistence that it remained a bureaucratically degenerated workers state.

Moreover, the demands the ISO raises are calls to reform the bourgeois state. In contrast, as Trotsky wrote in 1938:

“[T]he Fourth International advances a system of *transitional demands*, the essence of which is contained in the fact that ever more openly and decisively they will be directed against the very bases of the bourgeois regime. The old ‘minimum program’ is superseded by the *transitional program*, the task of which lies in systematic mobilization of the masses for

on the “financialization” of the economy, giving megabanks and investment houses undue influence. Yet as we have explained elsewhere, the ultimate cause of the 2008 crisis was a falling rate of profit (“From Wall Street Crisis to International Socialist Revolution,” *The Internationalist* No. 28, March-April 2009). Today, forces ranging from reformist leftists to right-wing populists (Ron Paul) and the fascistic Lyndon LaRouche call for reinstating Glass-Steagall.

the proletarian revolution.”

—Leon Trotsky, *The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International*

The demands raised by this Transitional Program for socialist revolution are essentially calls for action by the workers movement, not the capitalist state. When Trotsky raises the demand for a sliding scale of wages and hours in order to combat mass unemployment and inflation, he is not asking the capitalist rulers to legislate a “welfare state.” He is calling on the workers to impose this in a struggle aimed at bringing down the profit system and prefiguring a socialist planned economy. Trotsky distinguishes his revolutionary call for expropriation and workers control of production from reformist calls on the government for nationalization of certain (usually bankrupt) industries or banks.

Social-democratic and Stalinist reformists call for changing budget priorities, as with their demands for “books not bombs,” “jobs not war,” etc. Trotskyists insist that imperialist wars are not a question of *policy* but the inevitable product of the decaying capitalist system. Against these wars it is necessary to fight to *smash imperialism through socialist revolution*, calling for the *defeat* of one’s own imperialist government rather than nebulous appeals for “peace” or simply for withdrawal from a particular war. Such appeals are the staple of the popular-front “antiwar” coalitions that all the opportunists participate in, and are intended to draw support from bourgeois sectors who want to save the capitalist rulers from their folly.

For a time, the social democrats’ bid to be a player in Occupy meant taking part in actions that were abnormally militant for this aggressively “peaceful, legal” crowd, examples being the December 12 West Coast port shutdown and the attempt by Occupy the DOE in New York to take over the mayor’s puppet Panel on Educational Policy with a “people’s mic.” But after getting nowhere with their calls for OWS to raise “demands” and in the face of growing bourgeois hostility to Occupy radicals, the ISO’s bid to recruit “moderates” out of the dwindling movement has meant shamelessly echoing the propaganda of the bourgeois liberals and pro-capitalist labor bureaucrats. This left some ISOers distinctly uncomfortable.

The main concern of the social democrats is to avoid, as the ISO put it, “further opening the gap that has begun to develop between Occupy Oakland and the wider community.” What they mean by the “wider community” is of course bourgeois “public opinion,” or at least the liberal section of it that supports the “principles” of Occupy Wall Street while opposing any actions that might call into question property rights or the functioning of the (capitalist) economy. These days, the ISO and Socialist Alternative (SAlt) are mainly exercised to oppose calls for strike action on May 1 while vituperating against the “the danger of ultra-leftism” in Occupy. (SAlt also denounced the supposed “vandalism” in Oakland City Hall.)

“Ultra-leftism” is the big problem facing the left in the U.S. today?! What country are they living in? Obviously the ISO, SAlt et al. are worried that new layers of youth may be attracted to something more militant than the insipid reformism they peddle. But this also shows a fundamental misreading of the politics of the supposed radicals they are railing against. Even the more tactically militant sections of Occupy are politically populist, appealing to “the people united,”

rather than working-class struggle. While social democrats may recoil at clashes with the cops, fearing it will cost them in “public opinion,” certain anarchist sectors revel in street battles – in good part because they think that media coverage of cops bashing protesters will gain them sympathy. With different tactics, both are playing for support from the liberals.

So now we have the 2012 U.S. election campaigns running full blast. Despite Occupy complaints, money will play a bigger role than ever in deciding who will be president, with Democrat Obama aiming to spend over \$1 billion, while the Republican Romney is shooting for \$800 million, plus untold millions from corporate “Super PAC” political action groups. At this point in the normal election cycle, the reformists would be promoting some minor bourgeois “third party” or politician, such as the Greens or Ralph Nader (backed by the ISO in 2000 and 2004, begged by SAlt to run in 2008) or siding up to the Democrat (as ISO did with Obama in 2008, repeating his “yes we can” slogans).

However, this time around they are pretty much blocked. Some hoped for an Occupy candidate, but the political heterogeneity of the movement has ruled that out. While unable to tail shamelessly after Obama as imperialist commander in chief because of anger over his blatantly right-wing policies in office, the ISO also doesn’t want to be held responsible for siphoning off potential Democratic votes to make possible a Republican victory (as Nader was in 2000). SALT, meanwhile, produced a truly tortured election perspectives document saying that while a workers party would be nice, they would support a left populist (capitalist) candidate, except they still can’t find a “dynamic contender” (“Socialists and the 2012 Elections,” 25 March).

So despite their ingrained electoral opportunism, all the social democrats have on offer this time around is “systematic and patient organizing” for “struggles – large and small” (ISO). A handful of left groups (SPUSA, PSL, SEP, FSP) are ritually running their own candidates, on indistinguishable reformist programs. This is hardly appealing to youth who thought they were taking to the streets to fight Wall Street. And, while the pseudo-socialists may denounce Goldman Sachs and even timidly criticize Obama, they do not call, as the Internationalist Group does, for a fight for the political independence of the working class from *all* capitalist parties and politicians, and to build a revolutionary workers party that can overthrow capital.

Pseudo-Radical Labor Haters

In contrast to the hapless opportunists, in Occupy Seattle, Occupy Portland and Occupy Oakland there are groupings that are distinctly hostile to bourgeois electoralism, but also to trade unions and “politics” in general. In our experience, some of these would-be radicals are quite full of themselves, know-it-all who know nothing – or very little – about the class struggle, and treat workers with petty-bourgeois arrogance. Others seem to be grappling with real problems encountered in the struggle, yet drawing radically wrong answers.

During the December 12 port action, some anarchists and semi-anarchists cursed port truckers, spitting on their trucks and treating them as scabs rather than asking for their solidarity in a blockade that was not a union action. This put the success of

the port shutdown at risk, threatening to pit blockaders against workers – which the bosses and their media would love. Incidents of this sort occurred at least in Oakland and Portland, Oregon but in Portland class-conscious trade unionists were able to defuse the potential confrontation (see “Why Labor Solidarity Matters: Lessons from Portland’s D12 Port Blockade,” on page 7 in this issue).

Some who would consider themselves class-struggle anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists – particularly, but not exclusively – in and around the IWW (Industrial Workers of the World), do not share the anti-worker and anti-union prejudices, although they do oppose parties, “politics,” etc. However, others among the Occupiers have elaborated a whole ideological construct justifying action by the unemployed, the homeless and lumpenproletarians independent of and potentially *against* the unions and employed workers.

In the lead-up to the December 12 port blockade, a group calling itself OaklandCommune posted such a piece on the “anti-capitalist” web site Bay of Rage, titled “Blockading the Port Is Only The First of Many Last Resorts.” In clear opposition to the Marxist analysis of capitalism, the authors argue that today “circulation of capital, rather than its production” is key in “postindustrial countries.”

What countries might those be? The United States? Nonsense. The U.S. is today producing more industrial goods than ever, just with fewer workers.⁶ This only makes industrial workers *more* powerful, rather than less. Witness how big business raged against the West Coast port shutdown threatening just-in-time production and distribution schedules. Yet union misleaders justify their capitulation by claiming they lack the strength to fight. In reality, what’s lacking is the will and program.

Hostile not only to unions but to employed workers, the anti-Marxists of OaklandCommune glorify lumpenproletarian rage. Under the heading “Power to the vagabonds and therefore to no class,” they write:

“The strike no longer appears only as the voluntary withdrawal of labor from a workplace by those employed there, but as the blockade, suppression (or even sabotage or destruction) of that workplace by proletarians who are alien to it, and perhaps to wage-labor entirely. We need to jettison our ideas about the ‘proper’ subjects of the strike or class struggle. Though it is always preferable and sometimes necessary to gain workers’ support in order to shut down a particular workplace, it is not absolutely necessary.... It has gone curiously unremarked that the encampments of the Occupy movement ... are formed in large part from the ranks of the homeless and the jobless, even if a more demographically diverse group fills them out during rallies and marches.”

Under the heading “Twilight of the unions,”⁶ According to a statistical series compiled by the Federal Reserve Board, the value of industrial production in the United States more than doubled (in constant dollars, adjusted for inflation) in the quarter century from 1982 to 2007.



Clueless in the class struggle. A strike is a collective action by the workers, not an individual click of protest. Poster for May Day 2012 at City University of New York.

they add, speaking of the December 12 blockade:

“For the most part, the initiative here has come from a motley band of people who work in non-unionized workplaces, or (for good reason) hate their unions, or work part-time or have no jobs at all.... The coming intensification of struggles both inside and outside the workplace will find no success in attempting to revitalize the moribund unions.”

With such supposed “radicals” there is really nothing to discuss. They pretend to speak for the unemployed, the unorganized workers, lumpenproletarians, etc. – but their class outlook and visceral hatred and contempt for the organized workers movement reflect the views of the privileged middle class. Their disdain for unions and employed workers in general is such that it could lead them to act as instruments of right-wing labor bashers – and to be treated accordingly. Moreover, they are oblivious to the fact that their “motley band” of unemployed union-haters could never have shut down the ports. Without substantial support from working people and union members they would have been crushed by state repression.

Unions Today: A “Labor Aristocracy”?

What about the others among the anarchist groupings in the heterogeneous Occupy milieu who share many of these anti-union prejudices but at least touch on real problems? Many of them collaborated with union members and even local union leaders despite the fact that their heads are filled with anti-labor ideological garbage ultimately originating with the bourgeoisie. The Black Orchid Collective (BOC) in the Pacific Northwest, in collaboration with Advance the Struggle in the Bay Area, produced a lengthy piece titled “Longview, Occupy, and Beyond: Rank and File and the 89% Unite!” (30 January) partly in response to the ISO article which excused the disruption of the Seattle January 6 forum. In its document, the BOC glorifies “the precarious proletariat” of unemployed and partly employed, and hails the “hip hop picket line.”

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Lynch Law U.S.A.: The Racist Murder of Trayvon Martin

The refusal of Florida authorities to arrest the killer of black teenager Trayvon Martin, in a clear case of racist murder, sparked massive outrage. Hundreds of thousands demonstrated coast to coast and millions signed a petition demanding that George Zimmerman be jailed.

After a month of protests, the judicial system ceded, and on April 11 a special prosecutor charged Zimmerman with second-degree murder. However, that is not the end of the story. The murderer is out of jail, and with the media now trying to absolve him of guilt, the outcome of a trial is far from certain.

MARCH 26 – Outrage over the murder of 17-year-old Trayvon Martin compounds daily as the killer remains free, facing no criminal charges for gunning down the unarmed black youth from Miami Gardens, Florida. On February 26, George Zimmerman, 28, a white self-appointed captain of a “neighborhood watch” team in the Retreat at Twin Lakes, a gated community in the Orlando suburb of Sanford, shot Martin, a black high-school student, who after going out to buy a bag of Skittles and an ice tea at a convenience store was returning to the home in the development where he and his father were staying. As many have noted, *Trayvon Martin was killed for the “crime” of “walking while black.”*

Police and local prosecutors never charged Zimmerman and accepted his cynical claim that he shot the unarmed youth in “self-defense.” Detectives brushed off residents who reported Martin’s cries for help. Nor did the cops attempt to contact neighbors to see if anyone’s son was missing. They bought the killer’s story that Trayvon looked “suspicious” (for having the hood of his sweatshirt up in the rain), was “up to no good” and “on drugs or something” because he was “walking around looking at stuff” (trying to find a house in an unfamiliar neighborhood). This was “racial profiling” like the cops do all the time. If the killer’s story wasn’t believable, no matter: they assumed that Trayvon was a “perp” and a “bad guy.” End of story, case closed.

In Miami, the reaction was different. More than 1,000 people attended Martin’s funeral on March 3. Classmates, acquaintances and relatives recalled how Tray dreamed of being a pilot or airline mechanic (attending an aviation school part-time) whose favorite subject was math. An English teacher described him as extremely creative, an A and B student who majored in cheerfulness. The story of his slaying was reported in the local press, one more of so many killings of young black men, destined to be soon forgotten. But his parents were determined that Trayvon not be forgotten and kept on demanding that Zimmerman be arrested and tried for the crime he committed.

There things stood until mid-March when lawyers for Trayvon’s mother and father, Sybrina Fulton and Tracey Martin, managed to break into the national media. Protests mushroomed particularly after the police released their tapes of 911 calls by Zimmerman which plainly showed that he was stalking Martin, even after being told by the dispatcher to stop. People could hear



Furious demonstrators in Sanford, Florida on March 22 protest racist murder of Trayvon Martin and state’s refusal to charge the murderer, George Zimmerman. Coast-to-coast protests forced authorities to change tack. As Internationalist signs at an April 4 protest in NYC (below) stated, there is no justice in the capitalist courts.

the killer saying about his soon-to-be victim, “the assholes always get away.” A listener noted Zimmerman muttering what after enhancement sounds like a racist epithet (“f--king c--n”) under his breath. The evidence points to the slayer being a racist vigilante on the prowl.

On March 21, the day after the 911 tapes were released, a crowd of over 1,000, mainly black and white young people, showed up in Union Square Park in New York City in response to a Facebook appeal for a “Million Hoodie March for Trayvon Martin.” His father vowed, “we’re not going to stop until we get justice for Trayvon.” More than 8,000 packed into a park in Sanford the next night and thousands more protested in rallies around the country including Seattle, Portland, Chicago and elsewhere. On March 23, students at 50 Florida schools walked out in protest, the Miami Heat posed in team hoodies for Trayvon and President Barack Obama lamented the “tragedy,” but carefully tiptoed around the central question of race.

Now that protests over the killing of have gone mainstream, with approval from the top, more are scheduled this week. Church services from Harlem to Miami Gar-



dens this past weekend eulogized Trayvon. As pressure mounted, the U.S. Department of Justice quickly launched a federal civil rights investigation and a Florida state special attorney is investigating. Almost two million people have signed an on-line petition calling for the arrest of George Zimmerman. But the main thrust of liberals, from the *New York Times* to black Democrats like Jesse Jackson, is to divert the protests into a movement for gun control laws and to get rid of “Stand Your Ground” laws such as Florida’s which make it legal to shoot in self-defense.

The ruling-class response deliberately tries to obscure the key fact: *the killing of Trayvon Martin was racist murder.* It had nothing to do with self-defense, it was a cold-blooded execution. The first witnesses reported Zimmerman, gun in hand, straddling his victim who was lying face down in the grass. Taking guns away from civilians is no answer: the cops are far and away the biggest racist killers in the U.S. And if shooting in self-defense is ruled illegal, you can bet your bottom dollar that blacks will be the first to pay, like Long Island father

The Internationalist

John White who was jailed for accidentally killing a white youth in a mob in front of his suburban house shouting racist epithets and threatening his son in 2006.

Certainly racist vigilantes will take advantage of “Stand Your Ground Laws” to justify murderous attacks. But to call for the capitalist state to control firearms (as Jesse Jackson did this weekend) is to suggest that the police are or could somehow be neutral or even favorable to the black, Latino, Asian and immigrant population when they are in fact the greatest force of oppression. From the White Citizens Councils of the 1960s to “community watch” groups today, vigilantes get their power from their connection to the state. And following the Monroe, North Carolina NAACP¹ and Bogalusa, Louisiana Deacons for Defense² in the 1950s and ’60s, to fight them we stand for *the right of black armed self-defense*.

George Zimmerman is a murderer who certainly belongs behind bars. Even then, calling on the capitalist courts to deliver a “fair” trial or a just verdict only builds illusions in the racist *injustice* system. So far, the state has backed up the killer, claiming he was “squeaky clean” and had no record, when in fact the record had been expunged. It is possible that in this case, the rulers will eventually give up the killer, who is not a police officer but a cop wannabe. For the ruling class there is an important difference, since it seeks to uphold a monopoly of violence in the hands of its official thugs, in and out of uniform.

Black residents of Sanford were not surprised at the police cover-up of the murder of Trayvon Martin. Chief Bill Lee, who has now “temporarily” stepped down under fire for his defense of Zimmerman’s alibi and character, was appointed to “clean up a department tainted by racial scandals” (*Miami Herald*, 21

March). In 2005, two security guards, one the son of a longtime Sanford police officer, the other a department volunteer, killed a black man they said was trying to run over them. In 2010, the police waited seven weeks to arrest a lieutenant’s son who beat up a homeless man, and only did so after a video of the incident surfaced.

In this case, Trayvon Martin’s girlfriend was not contacted by police in their “investigation,” despite hers being the last recorded call on his cellphone. In an affidavit, she reported that that he phoned her to say that a man was following him and that he was walking briskly, trying to get away. Another 911 call from a frightened neighbor, in whose backyard the shooting took place, records Trayvon in the background repeatedly pleading for help, then silenced by a single gunshot. Martin’s lawyers charge that the police made a second incident report claiming Zimmerman had a bloody nose, not mentioned in the original report, to justify not arresting him.

Police knew from the beginning that, far from “standing his ground” in self-defense, Zimmerman was a busybody with a history of dozens of frivolous 911 calls about “suspicious” black people. The *Miami Herald* (13 March) reported that “Zimmerman went door-to-door asking residents to be on the lookout, specifically referring to young black men who appeared to be outsiders.” Now Zimmerman has been endowed with an Hispanic ethnic identity and the media are running interviews with the shooter’s neighbors saying he was a former altar boy who helped little black children. But whether or not he was a certified bigot, of which there are plenty of indications, he was a vigilante carrying out lynch law “justice.”

And whether or not Trayvon Martin attempted to defend himself from his pursuer, the frightened teenager was stalked and executed because he was black, and his killer is free, because in 2012 in racist, capitalist America, killing an unarmed young black man is considered a minor offense by the authorities. It’s not hard to imagine what the police would have done if a young black man had shot a white adult. There are plenty of other recent examples of racist murders and lynchings, notably the gang of white youths who robbed, beat and ran over *James Craig Anderson*, a middle-aged black family man in Jackson, Mississippi in June 2011.

There was also *Brandon McClelland*, killed in 2008 in the East Texas town of Paris after being run over by a pick-up truck and dragged by a couple of white youths with a criminal history and ties to white supremacist groups. Charges were dropped for “lack of evidence” even though they found the victim’s blood on the truck and an admission. That case eerily resembled the 1998

lynching-by-dragging in another East Texas town, Jasper, of *James Byrd, Jr.* by three white men, who chained him to a pick-up truck and pulled him for three miles, severing his head, and then dumped his torso in front of an African American cemetery.

Lynching and racist murder are directed at others as well as blacks and don’t just take place in the South. In September 2008, an Ecuadorian

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Why Labor Solidarity Matters: Lessons from Portland’s D12 Port Blockade



Rick Bomer/AP

Confrontation at Gate 5 of Port of Portland on December 12.

By the Portland Trotskyist Study Group

On December 12th, 2011, hundreds of activists from Portland, Oregon converged on the Port of Portland to shut it down as part of the West Coast Port Shutdown called for by Oakland activists. Protesters targeted EGT, the union busting grain giant, and called for solidarity with the Longview ILWU members in their struggle for a contract. The action also supported the port truckers who are paid very little and have no union recognition, as well as criticizing labor and environmental abuses, both domestically and abroad, on the part of the corporations running the ports.

As the pickets reached two strategically chosen gates, it was clear that the blockade had already had some success. The gates were closed before the workers were even due for their first shift. Police made an attempt to turn away protesters at Gate 5, but as the morning wore on and not a single Longshore worker entered the port, they took their tear gas canisters and riot suits and retreated. The blockade was then left in charge of the two gates where cargo was to be exchanged that day, as well as the train tracks leading to the grain terminal at Gate 5. Not a single longshore worker crossed the line to go to work.

Many activists on the picket lines were new to this type of action. Many had never been on a picket line before, and debates began as the pickets settled in at the entrances to the Port about the strategies and tactics necessary to carry the day.

As the Port began to open for business and trucks began to move through the sprawling facility, confrontations broke out at Terminal 5 between protesters and drivers. As a section of picketers attempted to set up a barricade at the gate with some construction fencing, the situation became tense. Although the organizers of the shutdown had specified that no vehicles should be prevented from moving, the protesters with the barricade were undeterred.

The barricade was a clear departure from the methods that the organizing committee had democratically decided were appropriate for the action. Still, activists who were part of the committee were reluctant to interfere with the barricade. Because the activists with the construction fence were acting according to their own plan, it was argued that the protesters who didn’t want to stop trucks should just continue not

stopping them, and allow the barricade to persist. However, since the demands of the demonstration clearly stated solidarity with the port truckers, it was decided that the trucks should be allowed to pass.

Organizers of Shutdown the Port, in which we participated, called on experienced class-struggle trade unionists from the ranks of the picket to deal with the confrontation, as some protesters flung insults such as “redneck” at the drivers, even though the drivers were a part of the solidarity effort of the day. We explained that the port was already closed, thanks to solidarity on the part of ILWU members who were not at work, and that the effort to blockade the port would benefit more from outreach to the truckers than confrontation with them.

The conflict that erupted at the entrance to the terminal continued as trucks reached the gate and activists again attempted to turn them away, with one protester calling a trucker a “scab” in the process. As the pickets parted and the truck finally turned in to the driveway, the picketer was challenged by another activist, asking the reason for the use of that word. The picketer had been operating under the misunderstanding that “scab” was a word to describe any non-union worker, and not a worker who entered a struck workplace to reopen it.

The Portland shutdown was a success, with only one ship being loaded at nearly midnight, and only because there was no picket in place at the beginning of the work shift. Although the ILWU leadership resisted the shutdown from beginning to end, the membership decisively supported the action by not going to work that day.

Without that contribution on the part of the workers at the Port, the blockade that constituted a few hundred people would never have been able to shut the Port of Portland down for the day. Without the experience and dedication of the ILWU members who resisted the bureaucracy’s attempts to demobilize and vilify the D12 shutdown, the day may have ended in disaster. Instead, not a single train was loaded, and the shipping terminals were idle.

Building a struggle that challenges capital’s rule will require more than just good demands; it will require the will of workers and their allies to enforce those demands. The lessons from the D12 shutdown are clear: Rather than acting on behalf of Port workers, it’s far more effective to act in solidarity with them. ■

¹ While the bulk of the liberal-led civil rights movement called for turn-the-other-cheek non-violence and looked to the federal government to aid them, some of the most militant sectors understood that it was necessary for African Americans to organize their own defense against the Ku Klux Klan nightriders and other racists. During 1959-61, the Monroe, North Carolina chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, led by Robert F. Williams organized armed self-defense guards to protect black neighborhoods from repeated KKK incursions.

² During 1964-68, as civil rights workers and black voters faced terrorist assault by the KKK, some of the more militant sections of the NAACP, CORE and SNCC began to take armed self-defense measures. In Bogalusa and nearby areas of Louisiana and Mississippi, an organization consisting primarily of black veterans was formed which came to be known as the Deacons for Defense and Justice. The Deacons provided defense guards for a number of events, including the 1966 March Against Fear from Memphis, Tennessee to Jackson, Mississippi.

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Left and Occupy...

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The BOC portrays the unions as a preserve of white, male privilege:

“Good, well paying jobs are often preserved for predominantly white workers, through seniority systems and other tiers in pay structures. We recognize that there are many people of color and women in unions, but these particular unions have been less able to maintain higher wages and benefits than the ILWU.”

One might have that superficial impression in places like Seattle and Portland, but the writers seem to have missed the fact that in San Francisco/Oakland, a union stronghold, the ILWU is predominantly black and in Los Angeles it is heavily Latino. In New York City, the powerhouse of local labor, Transport Workers Union Local 100 – which shut the city down with its “illegal” 2005 strike – is also heavily black, Latino and immigrant. Nationwide, black men and women are significantly *more* likely than whites to be union members. Latino union members have wages that are 50% higher than non-union members, they are twice as likely to have health insurance and three times as likely to have a pension. Although there is plenty of discrimination that must be fought, it’s inaccurate to portray unions today as simply white male job trusts.

Most ILWU longshore workers, for example, are dispatched from the hiring hall and receive wages no higher than many city bus drivers. If their annual income is higher it is because of tons of overtime, and there a fight must be waged in the union over the discriminatory impact of this setup in which “B” workers and casuals get the short end of the stick. However, there *are* sections of the ILWU, notably steady man crane operators with triple-digit incomes, who constitute a genuine “labor aristocracy,” as Lenin described it. Many are ideologically loyal to capitalism, and anxious to protect their privileged position at the expense of the mass of workers. Although the ILWU still has remnants of its leftist past, it is among this labor-aristocratic layer that the present ILWU officialdom has its base.

When the Black Orchid Collective document gets down to a more concrete level, it argues concerning the December 12 blockade that “it was an action done autonomously from the ILWU” and therefore “it was not up to them to decide whether or not it should happen.” This confuses several important points. For starters, under the term “ILWU” it equates the union as a whole with the sellout labor *bureaucracy*. It also fails to understand that if the ILWU ranks hadn’t respected the Occupy blockade it would have been a total bust. In fact, *support by the union membership was key* to deciding whether or not the port shutdown *would* happen.

Occupy is a highly contradictory conglomeration. It’s good that this layer of overwhelmingly white, predominantly young people, many of them new to organized protest, wanted to show solidarity with Longview longshore workers and port truckers. Both on November 2 in Oakland and on December 12 coastwide, class-struggle unionists urged longshore workers to refuse to work. The union tops sabotaged this, as pro-capitalist bureaucrats generally do. On the other hand, if the members of Longview ILWU Local 21 didn’t want Occupy to undertake an action, it would have been foolhardy and wrong to go ahead. But the Longview local greeted the Occupy actions.

The top ILWU leaders were opposed to a port shutdown on both occasions, and *particularly opposed to job action by longshore workers*. This was not just to cover their rears legally but because they were feeling the pressure of the capitalist rulers. We have explained before that the January 3 letter by union president McEllrath and the disruption of the Portland and Seattle forums by ILWU bureaucrats *were aimed mainly at ILWUers*, even more than against Occupy. The ILWU misleaders’ opposition to the Occupy actions undercut solidarity with Longview, and ultimately led them to sign a concessionary contract that threatens vital ILWU gains.

In this case, where the union tops sought to keep the ports running in order to please the bosses and the government, it was legitimate to proceed with the solidarity blockade, particularly as longshore workers overwhelmingly respected the Occupy lines. But to assert that Occupy has the right to blockade any time and anywhere they feel like, independently of the wishes of the workers directly affected, is to set the stage for exactly the kind of conflict between Occupy and labor that the bourgeoisie is trying to provoke. *It is the workers that must decide*, not a class-collaborationist labor bureaucracy but also not a heterogeneous populist movement.

A shutdown at the ports should be an action by the workers themselves. The ILWU has engaged in powerful labor action for political causes, including the 1999 coast-wide work stoppage demanding freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal and the 2008 West Coast strike against the Iraq and Afghanistan war. Local 10 in San Francisco/Oakland also has on many occasions respected “community pickets” for boycotting Israeli ships, protest against the Iraq invasion, solidarity with anti-apartheid struggle, etc. But in every case, the protests were undertaken in consultation with the union ranks.

This was not done on the December 12 Occupy West Coast port blockade, which was simply announced to longshore unionists as a done deal. Militant ILWUers should have nevertheless welcomed the Occupy action as an attempt to show solidarity, as many did. But to hold this up as a model is to court disaster. Had port workers crossed the Occupy lines, it would have been a fiasco. On the other hand, Occupy preparations for mass mobilization in Longview to meet the first ship to dock at the scab grain terminal *were* being consulted with Local 21, with Bay Area Local 10 and rank-and-filers in other ports. That’s precisely what so enraged the ILWU chiefs.

Occupy and the “89%” of Non-Unionized Workers

In several documents, the Black Orchid Collective claims that Occupy represents “the 89%” of workers who are not in unions. In your dreams, BOC. So who does Occupy really represent? As we have noted, the unusually broad sympathy for OWS stems in good part from the fact that it has *not* put forward a positive program. Thus Occupy groups have to a degree served as a lightning rod to absorb the energy of the massive discontent among working people and middle-class sectors that have been hard-hit in the capitalist crisis, and lead it nowhere. But Occupy groups don’t *represent* anyone but themselves.

Furthermore, far from “hating” organized labor (as the right-wing bourgeois press pretends, and anti-union anarchists echo) many in the “89%” would dearly *love* to be in unions. This is something that “class-struggle anarchists” and anarcho-syndicalists like the IWW at least under-

stand, as well as the crucial distinction between the union rank-and-file and the sellout leadership. Moreover, some among them are getting fed up with the anti-labor crap being put out by sections of Occupy.

In an earlier document (“Jan 6th 2012: Unity vs. Union Bureaucracy,” 11 January), the BOC wrote that:

“Occupy is a new type of working class movement that goes beyond the limits of traditional trade unionism by bringing together working class people across industrial lines, and across lines of race, gender, and national origin. Building off the example of the December 12th West coast port shutdown (D12), speakers [at the January 6 Seattle forum] dared to envision forms of class struggle that exceed the limits set by 20th century labor laws purposed to constrain past struggles into tame truces that are being broken now by companies like EGT.”

Later in the same document, we read:

“Narrow minded, parochial tunnel visions held by bureaucrats and their loyal followers, will only destroy class struggle. It is exactly the tunnel visions of union bureaucracies that have brought us to a 2012 where only a tiny percent of the workforce is unionized and where Trumka, president of the AFL-CIO is simply a tool of the Democratic Party. The problem is not simply that union leaders keep betraying us because they are cowardly or greedy. The problem is that old forms of struggle that gave birth to the unions no longer work in this globalized world, and the union leaders are sending goons to prevent us from building something new that actually would work; they are trying to prevent us from transcending their dying structures, and they are insisting that we all go down with the ship.”

The idea that the unions cannot “exceed the limits set by 20th century labor laws” and the Occupy movement can reveals deep democratic illusions, and more specifically illusions in the Democratic Party. The Occupy December 12 blockade broke numerous laws, and the main reason its lines weren’t dispersed by the cops in Seattle, Portland and Oakland is that city administrations instructed the police not to try to stop them. Democratic Party politicians were worried about the political hit they would take with another bloody confrontation as in Oakland last October 25. But they could have made the opposite decision. The American ruling class is the most murderous in the world.

Certainly the *pro-capitalist labor bureaucracy* cowers in fear of violating labor laws which hamstring the unions’ ability to struggle. But far from representing the unions, such craven leaders *undermine them*. When the ILWU membership forced through the decision to hold a May Day 2008 strike to stop the wars on Iraq and Afghanistan, the maritime employers’ Pacific Maritime Association sued the union for violating Taft-Hartley Act provisions against political strikes. But because of the longshore union’s tremendous industrial power it was able to force the bosses to drop that legal attack unless they wanted to face an extended strike over the contract. The Occupy movement does not have that power – it is essentially an extended demonstration.

And when didn’t union militants face anti-labor laws? Back in the early 20th century when the Industrial Workers of the World were organizing on the West Coast, they were jailed in free speech fights from Missoula to Spokane and San Diego just for trying to agitate for unions. In 1918, Marie Equi was

jailed under the Sedition Act for giving an anti-war speech in the Portland IWW hall. At the same time, employers enacted “criminal syndicalism” laws in Idaho, Oregon, Washington, California and elsewhere which banned everything the Wobblies did. But that didn’t stop the IWW from organizing labor unions. On the contrary, they organized unions that defiantly violated the bosses’ laws, and for that they were constantly in and out of jail.

Nor is the rise of a “precarious proletariat,” or “precarariat” as some in Europe are calling it, a new phenomenon that makes unions obsolete. Read Friedrich Engels on *The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844*, or about unemployed workers riding the rails from the Midwest to California in search of work during the 1930s Great Depression. Workers holding long-term jobs is a relatively recent phenomenon, basically since World War II, and the result of union struggle. But lack of steady employment didn’t sour workers on unions. Bud Simons, the Communist Party worker who led the Flint sit-down strike in 1937, had previously worked in 13 different auto plants before ending up at Fisher Body No. 1 and making history.

As for unions in the U.S. today being on the verge of extinction, as the BOC argues, they are certainly in bad shape. The labor lieutenants of the capitalist class, as Daniel De Leon accurately described the labor bureaucracy, would rather see the unions they preside over go down than break the bosses’ laws. That’s why we have to *get rid of the bureaucrats*, not the unions whose defense they are sabotaging. Remember, as T-shirts worn by labor protesters in Wisconsin proclaimed, it was unions that brought you the weekend. When you get right down to it, by writing off the unions, supposedly radical anarchists end up siding with the employers.

So what is to be done? Workers have gone through periods of defeats before. In the 1920s, union membership fell to barely 5% of the workforce (compared to 12% today). Most strikes in the early years of the 1930s Depression were smashed, up until 1934. In that year, a series of citywide strikes (longshore in San Francisco, Teamsters in Minneapolis, auto parts workers in Toledo), all led by “reds,” broke the cycle of defeat by defying cops, courts and martial law imposed by the National Guard. This laid the basis for the explosion of industrial unionism in 1935-36 when millions of workers flooded into CIO and AFL unions.

To break the legal stranglehold on the unions, it is necessary to forge a leadership that is prepared to defy the capitalist state. That requires a program and determination, and a deep-going struggle inside the unions to drive out the sellout bureaucracy and replace it with a class-struggle leadership with a solidly organized rank-and-file prepared to act. It means the unions must break politically with the capitalist parties, particularly the Democrats, and struggle to build a fighting workers party, not a parliamentary reformist labor party as in Britain, but one prepared to wage the class struggle through to achieving a workers government.

Drive Out the Bureaucrats – Break with the Democrats!

The conclusions drawn by the Black Orchid Collective are wrong, its analysis is skewed, but the issues are real. These anarchist and semi-anarchist radicals clearly do not have a Marxist understanding of the *labor bureaucracy*, which is the key obstacle to

militant workers struggle. Either they bandy about the term bureaucrat around as an insult, or they apply it to anyone who is an elected official of a bureaucratic organization. Yet there is a big difference between leaders of ILWU Local 21, for instance, none of whom receives a salary and who carry out union duties in addition to working on the docks, and top ILWU bureaucrats in their cushy posts who seek “partnership” with the maritime bosses.

The labor bureaucracy, like the labor aristocracy Lenin analyzed in World War I, is a parasitic petty-bourgeois layer that sits atop workers organizations and seeks to control them on behalf of the bourgeoisie while protecting its own privileged positions. They act as transmission belts for the bosses, and their privileges are quite concrete. Moreover, this layer is increasingly intertwined with the employers. A prime example: ILWU Coast Committeeman Leal Sundet (who gets \$217,000 from union dues), a former top labor relations official for the PMA maritime employers who went over to the union where he is selling out the workers. Sundet is still working for the bosses, only his job title changed.

The BOC document on “Longview, Occupy and Beyond” shows some familiarity with, and misunderstanding of, Trotskyism. Misidentifying the ISO as “part of the Trotskyist tradition,” it cites Trotsky’s thesis from the Transitional Program that the crisis of the working class is a crisis of leadership. But the BOC then concludes that for Trotskyists, the problem is “to replace the leaders they think have sold out with new leaders who they think will lead the union to struggle more effectively.” (At the same time, it recognizes that “Many other Trotskyists would argue that the ISO betrays their tradition when it fails to challenge current union leaders concretely, directly, in practice.”) However, Trotsky’s analysis and program went much further.

“The problem is not just with the current leaders. Replacing them with new leaders through organizing inner-union reform caucuses will not solve the problem,” writes the BOC. True enough. So what is the problem? Saying that its critique is not of individual leaders, the BOC points to “the structure of the unions which are shaped by and bound by anti-labor laws in this country.” It is certainly true that the unions are “shaped by” the web of anti-labor laws, but they are not bound by them: *that* is the question of leadership. And that is why genuine Trotskyists do not call for simple trade-union reform caucuses but for organizing a *revolutionary, class-struggle opposition to oust the pro-capitalist labor bureaucracy.*⁷

In his 1940 essay “Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay,” which lay on his desk unfinished when he was struck down by a Stalinist assassin, Trotsky began by noting that trade unions throughout the world are “growing together with the state power,” and this was true not only of politically neutral unions but also those led by social democrats, Stalinists or anarchists (as in Republican Spain). Therefore, he wrote:

“[T]he trade unions in the present epoch cannot simply be the organs of democracy as they were in the epoch of free capitalism and they cannot any longer remain politically neutral, that is, limit themselves to serving the daily needs of the working class. They cannot any longer be anarchistic, i.e.



Unions are bound by anti-labor laws? Only if they bow down to capitalist state. On May Day 2008, ILWU shut down all West Coast ports to stop war on Iraq and Afghanistan, an openly political strike and the first time U.S. unions had struck against a U.S. war. Employers sued for violation of Taft-Hartley Act, but union power stopped them.

ignore the decisive influence of the state on the life of peoples and classes. They can no longer be reformist, because the objective conditions leave no room for any serious and lasting reforms. The trade unions of our time can either serve as secondary instruments of imperialist capitalism for the subordination and disciplining of workers and for obstructing the revolution, or, on the contrary, the trade unions can become the instruments of the revolutionary movement of the proletariat.”

Trotsky called for a fight for trade-union democracy, but he emphasized that to achieve this depends on realizing the main slogan for labor struggle, “*complete and unconditional independence of the trade unions in relation to the capitalist state.*”

Unions are the main mass organizations of defense that workers have under capitalism. Yet the labor bureaucracy that sits atop them is wedded to the program of class collaboration. That cannot be changed by simply putting in new, more honest or less corrupt leaders. If a leadership committed to turning the unions into vehicles of revolutionary proletarian struggle comes to the fore in a particular union or struggle, it would have to defeat and drive out the bureaucracy, or be driven out itself. After the Trotskyists led the Minneapolis Teamsters to victory in 1934, the Teamster bureaucracy went after them relentlessly for years until 18 Trotskyist and Minneapolis Teamster leaders were jailed by the government in 1941 for their revolutionary opposition to the second imperialist world war.

The BOC argues that workers committees would be a better vehicle than ossified and bureaucratized unions. So would soviets (workers councils). But such organizations, which can more accurately transmit the will of the working class, only arise during exceptionally intense class struggle. At the height of the working-class mobilization in Wisconsin in February-March 2011, our call for a general strike was coupled with the demand for the election of strike committees, which would necessarily have gone beyond a narrow union framework. But the class-collaborationist leaderships of the workers movement blocked class struggle

and led to the victory of reaction. Note also that in Wisconsin, neither the ISO nor the syndicalists of the IWW challenged the left-talking union bureaucrats of the South Central Federation of Labor who first suggested a general strike and then dropped it in favor of the Democrats’ recall drive.

The central issue is not so much the structure of unions, but a matter of leadership and program. What is key is not some empty “rank-and-file” structure but forging a cadre of class-struggle militants to defeat the pro-capitalist bureaucracy politically, and then reorganize the unions from top to bottom to turn them into instruments of class struggle governed by workers democracy. To accomplish that requires, first and foremost, building the nucleus of a revolutionary workers party to lead the fight.

This lesson has been confirmed over and over by history. Far from invalidating it, the sudden appearance of a new mass phenomenon like Occupy Wall Street underscores the need for a conscious vanguard. As it is, the Occupy movement is going nowhere, precisely because of the wildly divergent nature of its supporters that made its explosive growth possible in the first place. As Trotsky wrote in a 1937 article, “The law of the parallelogram of forces applies in politics as well.... When political allies tend to pull in opposite directions, the resultant proves equal to zero” (“The Lessons of Spain: The Last Warning”).

Nevertheless, those activists brought into the streets by Occupy Wall Street who genuinely seek to overturn the rule of capital can play a vital role, by subjecting their recent experience to rigorous analysis and drawing genuinely revolutionary conclusions. This means coming to grips with Marxism, and its contemporary expression: Trotskyism.

What Is To Be Done: Build a Party to Fight for International Socialist Revolution

Every few years since the demise of the Soviet Union a new movement has suddenly appeared out of nowhere and quickly found supporters and imitators everywhere. On New Year’s Day 1994 the Zapatista Liberation Army made its debut

in Chiapas, Mexico. Soon the whole left was avidly reading the declarations of the Lacandón Jungle and the “intergalactic communiqués” of Subcomandante Marcos and talking of “making the revolution without taking power.” Yet the Zapatistas’ strategy of “autonomy” has only left them isolated and mired in overwhelming rural poverty.

A few years later, in late 1999 came the “battle of Seattle” protests against the World Trade Organization that gave rise to the “anti-globalization” movement. As the embrace of protectionist labor bureaucrats became too embarrassing, this morphed into the “alternative globalization” or global justice movement and world social forums. After bloody repression of protests against a G8 meeting in Genova (2001) and as protests petered out, leftists began talking of an “anti-capitalist” movement, but one which would not call for revolution or socialism. At most they opposed “neo-liberal” free trade policies and yearned for a return to the (capitalist) welfare state of yore.

The Occupy movement is the latest variant of this phenomenon, following on the heels of the *indignados* in Spain/Portugal and *aganaktismeni* (outraged) in Greece who occupied city squares, which in turn was inspired by the “Arab Spring” that brought down dictators (but not the dictatorship) in Tunisia and the Egypt in early 2012. What all these movements have in common is their bourgeois populist politics, focusing on hated symbols (the local strong man), social ills (corruption, growing inequality) and policies (“neo-liberalism”) rather than going to their origins in the capitalist system.

Another thing they have in common is that they have all been stymied. The Zapatistas have barely been heard from since 2006. The anti/alternative globalizers have not even put a dent in the spread of free market policies. And contrary to a lot of starry-eyed propaganda at the outset of Occupy Wall Street, there have been no revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt: the old regimes were based on the military and the military are still in power, while ultra-reactionary Islamic fundamentalist movements are now the dominant political current. Meanwhile, in Portugal, Spain and Greece right-wing

⁷ See, for example, our analysis, “Lessons of Chicago CORE,” *The Internationalist* No. 33, Summer 2011.

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Trotskyism and Trade-Union Struggle



Battle of the Market during 1934 Minneapolis Teamsters strike led by Trotskyists. Pickets disperse attack on strike by police and bosses' vigilantes.

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governments have been installed that are enforcing IMF austerity with a vengeance.

Occupy Wall Street talks of revolution, even "world revolution," but what they are talking about is "true democracy." More specifically, they mean *bourgeois* democracy, because while OWS criticizes "corporations, which place profit over people," they are *not* talking about a revolution in the ownership of the means of production. Why not? For one thing, because the initiators were largely petty-bourgeois, many of whom harbor hopes of becoming business owners (as some already are). OWS working groups include alternative banking, cooperatives and other initiatives which defend small capital against big rather than opposing capitalism.

With their purely *democratic* politics, they all purvey the illusion that it is possible to change these injustices without a social revolution through *class* struggle. This is just as true of the tactically more militant anarchists as of the liberals and reformists. If Lenin referred to the Narodnik anarchist-populists of his time as "liberals with bombs," the anarchist black blocs of today are *liberals in bandannas* who engage in ritual street battles with the cops in hopes of awakening popular sympathy and at most smash or spray paint a few windows. Such antics can never bring down the capitalist edifice; workers' struggle, with revolutionary leadership, can.

While Occupy Wall Street began a liberal-anarchist coalition, it was met with a largely spontaneous outpouring of protesters numbering in the tens and even hundreds of thousands. They came out because they were fed up with the conditions, many of them because they didn't see the "change" promised by Obama. But spontaneous popular protest does not provide the consciousness and program necessary to actually smash the power of Wall Street. As the Occupy movement polarizes along moderate/radical lines, neither side can provide a way forward.

We are facing formidable foes who have all the resources of state power and global capitalism at their disposal. The NYPD and Oakland PD are nothing compared to what the capitalists will throw at us if they feel their rule threatened. This is the ruling class that laid waste to Korea, Vietnam and more recently Iraq and Afghanistan. They will not be defeated by shouting "mic check" or wiggling twinkle fingers, and certainly not by the

fickle vagaries of public opinion. They can only be brought down by putting in motion an even more powerful force. That force can only be the working class that produces the capitalists' wealth, that makes the economy run, and that can bring it to a screeching halt.

The key to mobilizing that force is building a party of the proletarian vanguard, whose cadres educate themselves to become professional fighters for international *socialist* revolution. Such a party would intervene in "struggles, large and small," emphasizing that reforms to this rotting system are not enough, it is necessary to replace production for profit with a planned economy to fill human needs. It would fight to defeat imperialist wars and to stop police-state repression at home, serving as a "tribune of the people" in fighting for the liberation of all the oppressed. It would be a party that Lenin and Trotsky would recognize as their own. Join with us in the Internationalist Group and the League for the Fourth International in building that party. ■

Lynch Law...

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immigrant, *Marcelo Lucero*, was stabbed to death by a racist mob of youths in Patchogue, Long Island who had gone out looking for Mexicans to assault (what they called "beaner-jumping").³ Or there is the recent killing of *Shaima Alawadi*, an Iraqi woman in San Diego who was beaten to death in her home on this past Wednesday, March 21. A note found by her side read, "Go back to your own country. You're a terrorist." And there are numerous cases of lethal violence against homosexuals, such as the 1998 torture-murder of gay student *Matthew Shepard* in Wyoming.

In 2009, Congress passed the Matthew Shepard James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act, but such legislation has done nothing to curb violent racist, sexist and homophobic attacks. How could it be otherwise in a country where, as Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee leader H. Rap Brown said in the 1960s, violence against the oppressed is "as American as apple pie." And where in the vast majority of cases, it comes straight from the police.

³ See "Lynch Mob Murder on Long Island," *The Internationalist* No. 28, March-April 2009.

When it comes to the cops, America's rulers will stop at nothing to uphold the guard dogs of capital, not hesitating to execute an innocent man, as they did last September with *Troy Davis* in Georgia and as they tried to do for three decades to class war prisoner *Mumia Abu-Jamal*.

At the March 21 protest in New York's Union Square, some demonstrators carried signs calling for "Justice for Trayvon Martin and *Ramarley Graham*," referring to the 18-year-old Bronx youth who was shot and killed in the doorway of his bathroom by police who had broken into his home. Naturally the cops claimed to think he had a gun, although none was found. Everyone recalled the 1999 police murder of *Amadou Diallo* with 41 bullets fired as he reached for his wallet at the door to his home; and the cop death squad which murdered *Sean Bell* in a fusillade of 50 bullets on his wedding day in 2006. In both cases the killer cops went free: the most that happened to any of them was that one was fired and lost his pension and health benefits.

The pervasiveness of murderous attacks on the oppressed underscores that this is not a case of a "lone wolf" gunman but a deep-seated social problem. Since the time this country was founded on the economic bedrock of chattel slavery, racism has been part of the DNA of American capitalism. No matter what laws are passed, such as civil rights laws, and what courts rule, as in the formal desegregation of the schools, such laws and decisions are eventually rolled back as reaction sets in. Ultimately, it will take a socialist revolution to put an end to racist police brutality and lynch law murders.

In the meantime, revolutionaries combat illusions in bourgeois "justice" and seek to mobilize the social forces that have the power to bring down the system of capitalist wage slavery: the working class marching at the head of all the oppressed. In November 2010, International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 10 in the San Francisco-Oakland (California) Bay Area stopped work for a day to protest the murder of the young black worker Oscar Grant carried out by police on New Year's Day 2009. As we wrote, "the ILWU action points toward a real mobilization of workers' power against the brutal enforcers of capitalist 'law and order'" ("ILWU Shuts Port Demanding Justice for Oscar Grant," *Revolution* No. 8, April 2011).

George Zimmerman is guilty as hell, and so are the capitalist rulers of America. Their cops and courts kill dozens of black people like Trayvon every year. In some places, like Albuquerque, New Mexico and Phoenix, Arizona, the killer cops get a bounty check from the police "union" of up to \$500 for every killing, to compensate for "stress" (in Phoenix they give a \$25 dinner card and free movie tickets every time a cop pulls the trigger). Most of the time they get away with it. Zimmerman the wannabe cop was just doing what police from coast to coast ... and what imperialist military occupiers the world over do on an industrial scale.

NBC TV this morning showcased back-to-back interviews by its top reporter Matt Lauer favorably portraying vigilante Zimmerman and then gushing over the wife of Sgt. Robert Bales, the U.S. soldier charged with murdering 17 civilians in the Panjwai district of Kandahar province, Afghanistan. Yet the heinous crimes of these murderers, for which they should pay, come

straight from the slaughter ordered by the generals and their commanders, right up to commander in chief Barack Obama in the White House (like George W. Bush, Bill Clinton and their predecessors, mass murderers one and all).

Rather than appealing forlornly to Obama to "do the right thing," we need to build a revolutionary workers party that can sweep away the capitalist system which produces endless lynchings and imperialist massacres. Trayvon Martin, Ramarley Graham, Troy Davis, Shaima Alawadi, Marcelo Lucero, Sean Bell, Patrick Dorismond, Anthony Baez, Malcolm Ferguson, Amadou Diallo, Kathryn Johnston and so many others will be avenged by workers revolution. ■

Elecciones...

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La bipartidista ofensiva antiinmigrante

En los debates realizados durante las primarias republicanas, Romney, el republicano que encabeza las preferencias (y cuyo padre nació en México) presentó cínicamente su llamado por la "autodeportación" como una alternativa más amable que la de arrestar a la gente. Los inmigrantes volverían a casa simplemente "porque no pueden encontrar trabajo aquí". ¿Y eso, cómo se conseguiría? Estableciendo una credencial de identidad a los trabajadores "legales" — una tarjeta de identidad nacional y un sistema computarizado de verificación laboral que sería utilizado para estrechar el control policíaco sobre toda la población. Además, Romney ha venido respaldando la pila de leyes estatales que pretenden fortalecer la represión policíaca para hacer intolerable la vida de los inmigrantes.

En Arizona, ha habido un flujo constante de racistas leyes antiinmigrantes desde que se aprobó en 2002 la ley "English only" (sólo se habla inglés). El sheriff del condado de Maricopa, Joe Arpaio, se jacta de que cuenta con una fuerza aérea privada de 30 aviones para rastrear inmigrantes en el desierto y con una partida de voluntarios cazamigrantes. Grupos fascistas de cazadores de humanos, como los del Minuteman Project y grupos paramilitares neonazis, han montado patrullas armadas a lo largo de la frontera entre Arizona y Sonora, y han asesinado a varios inmigrantes. Ahora, una nueva ley en Arizona (SB 1083) ha autorizado la formación de una milicia paramilitar oficial compuesto de voluntarios.

Entretanto, se ordenó a las escuelas de Tucson el año pasado que cancelaran un programa de estudios mexicano-americanos por violar la ley estatal (HB 2281) que prohíbe la realización de estudios étnicos que "promuevan el derrocamiento del gobierno norteamericano". Luego, al implementar la medida, el distrito expurgó los salones de clase de cualquier libro que tuviera "como temas centrales cuestiones de raza, etnicidad y opresión". Entre los libros prohibidos en Tucson se encuentra *House on Mango Street* de Sandra Cisneros y *La tempestad* de Shakespeare (¡!). Cisneros se sumó a la caravana Librotáfico que partió de Houston para introducir nuevamente y de contrabando los libros prohibidos a Tucson.

Leyes similares a la SB 1070 de Arizona (aprobada en 2010), han sido promulgadas en Alabama, Georgia, Indiana, Carolina del Sur y Utah. Estas leyes convierten en delito el que los trabajadores indocumentados busquen trabajo o carezcan de documentos migratorios, y exigen que la policía detenga

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a quienquiera de quien tenga la “sospecha razonable” de que no es un residente legal. Con esto no sólo se promueven los “perfiles raciales” contra los que “parecen mexicanos”, sino que realmente trae a la mente a la Alemania nazi en la que la gente era detenida en la calle porque “parecía judía”, o a la Sudáfrica del *apartheid* con sus leyes de pases.

Después de que se aprobó la ley en Georgia, miles de trabajadores agrícolas abandonaron súbitamente el estado. Los rancheros se quejaron de que los cacahuates, duraznos, moras y otros productos se estaban pudriendo en los campos por falta de trabajadores que los cosecharan. La ley de Alabama fue aún más lejos, al ordenar a las escuelas que investigaran el estatus migratorio de los padres de los estudiantes. El temor sacudió a las comunidades como la de Albertville, localidad en la que se encuentran varias plantas procesadoras de aves de corral. Cuando un juez federal autorizó la ley en septiembre pasado, familias aterrorizadas subieron sus pertenencias a sus automóviles y huyeron. En unos días, casi 2 mil estudiantes latinos tuvieron que abandonar la escuela.

Los reaccionarios antiinmigrantes se vanagloriaron con el éxodo. Sin embargo, los aterrorizados trabajadores de Alabama y Georgia no se dirigieron hacia la frontera, sino a estados cercanos como Carolina del Norte, donde los intereses empresariales han puesto las leyes cazamigrantes en la congeladora (por querer la mano de obra barata). Y no son sólo los estados gobernados por republicanos derechistas en el Sur los que están aterrorizando a las familias inmigrantes y bloqueando toda posibilidad de conseguir la ciudadanía. Una iniciativa para establecer una ley estatal “DREAM” pereció recientemente en la legislatura de Nueva York, haciendo trizas las esperanzas de muchos estudiantes indocumentados.¹

Sin embargo, la mayor amenaza contra los inmigrantes —y por mucho— es la que representa el gobierno federal. Barack Obama utiliza leyes y programas reaccionarios como “E-Verify” y “Comunidades Seguras” para echar a los trabajadores indocumentados de sus empleos y hacer que la policía local los entregue a la ICE para que sean deportados cuando son detenidos por cualquier razón. También está dando unas ganancias jugosas a la industria penitenciaria privada, que posee y administra muchos de los 961 locales utilizados en el país para mantener a los detenidos, incluyendo campos de concentración en los que se mantiene a miles de inmigrantes.

¹ Nos hemos opuesto a la ley federal DREAM (Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors [Desarrollo, alivio y educación para menores extranjeros]) en la que una provisión central otorgaría residencia legal a cambio de servicio en el ejército. En virtud de este soborno, el Pentágono pretendió superar las tasas decrecientes de alistamiento en el ejército, y reclutar carne de cañón para ir a matar y morir en Irak, Afganistán y otros sitios. Véase nuestro artículo “The DREAM Act Swindle” en *Revolution* No. 8, abril de 2011, el periódico de los Clubes Internacionalistas de la Universidad de la Ciudad de Nueva York; véase también “DREAMS of Citizenship, Nightmare of War” en *Class Struggle Education Workers Newsletter* No. 2, octubre-diciembre de 2010. La ley DREAM del estado de Nueva York no incluía esta cláusula de reclutamiento militar y era una reforma que, si bien limitada e insuficiente, podría ser apoyada al otorgar a los estudiantes indocumentados que se graduaron en las preparatorias neoyorquinas cuotas más bajas en las universidades públicas. Sin embargo, tras obtener sus grados, estos estudiantes no podrían, de todas maneras, conseguir empleos legales.

Varios estados, incluyendo Nueva York el año pasado, han optado formalmente por salir del programa “Comunidades Seguras”. Pero de hecho, el intercambio de información con la ICE sigue como antes. Como resultado se ha generado una crisis nacional entre las familias inmigrantes, debido a que cuando los padres son deportados quedan en el país sus hijos nacidos en EE.UU. Un informe reciente de la ICE reveló que en la primera mitad de 2011, 46,486 padres de niños que son ciudadanos norteamericanos han sido obligados a abandonar el país. Y estas cifras no incluyen a los muchos más que se encuentran detenidos en espera de ser deportados.

La dimensión de este espeluznante ataque gubernamental es enorme. Un informe de 2010 del Pew Hispanic Center estimaba que hay al menos 4 millones de hijos con ciudadanía de más de 11 millones de inmigrantes indocumentados que viven en EE.UU. Se trata de una población mayor que la de varios países europeos, y todos se encuentran en riesgo de caer víctima de las operaciones de rapto orquestadas por la migra. Un informe del Applied Research Center, *Shattered Families* ([familias destrozadas], noviembre de 2001), reveló que aproximadamente 5 mil niños se encuentran temporalmente bajo custodia del Departamento de Seguridad de la Patria (DHS, por sus siglas en inglés).

El gobierno de Obama está realizando una monstruosa operación de robo y tráfico de menores. Cuando los padres son detenidos, se los mantiene en centros de detención, usualmente distantes de sus hogares. Los niños que se quedan sin guardián legal son colocados en hogares adoptivos. Si los padres son deportados o mantenidos en detención durante meses, las agencias de seguridad infantil acuden a los tribunales para cancelar patria potestad por “negligencia”. Los niños son luego puestos en adopción, o dados a familias de acogida. Sus padres no tienen derecho a recuperarlos incluso cuando finalmente logran salir del control de la ICE.

Esto se ha tornado tan notorio que los padres en Arizona, Alabama y otros estados con leyes draconianas han acudido por miles con abogados para formalizar documentos que garanticen la custodia de sus hijos en caso de ser detenidos. Por su vil y gratuita crueldad, esto recuerda a la dictadura militar argentina en los años 1970, que robaba los hijos de los izquierdistas a los que asesinaba. Un país como EE.UU., en el que los políticos regularmente hacen prédica de falsos “valores familiares” para justificar políticas reaccionarias, está separando a maridos y esposas, a hijos de sus padres, y devastando a miles de familias.

Proletarios del mundo, ¡uníos!

El racismo antiinmigrante no es privativo de Estados Unidos. En Europa, los fascistas griegos han hecho de los inmigrantes africanos y de Europa Oriental blanco de ataques asesinos. En las elecciones presidenciales francesas, el presidente Nicolas Sarkozy declaró que había “demasiados extranjeros” en país, azuzando la xenofobia para conseguir el apoyo electoral de la base de Marine Le Pen del fascista Frente Nacional. En Noruega, el terrorista antiinmigrante Anders Behring Breivik asesinó a 77 personas en una orgía de sangre mediante bomba y balazos en agosto pasado, al despotricar en contra de la “colonización islámica”, haciéndose eco de la retórica contra el “multiculturalismo” azuzada por diversos políticos convencionales.

Continuamente los gobernantes capi-

talistas se valen del chovinismo nacionalista para movilizar a los elementos más atrasados de la sociedad en contra de lo que perciben como amenazas a su opresivo dominio. La actual ofensiva antiinmigrante en Estados Unidos es particularmente notoria en un país construido sobre la base de la migración masiva, en el que prácticamente todo mundo proviene originalmente de algún otro país, con la excepción de la población indígena norteamericana que fue prácticamente eliminada mediante un genocidio. Desde la Primera Guerra Mundial (con la deportación de los “rojos” italianos), pasando por la Segunda Guerra Mundial (con la retención en campos de concentración de norteamericanos de origen japonés) hasta la actualidad (con soldados norteamericanos que profanan los cadáveres de afganos que han asesinado) las carnicerías imperialistas se alimentan del racismo, y los inmigrantes han sido presentados como el “enemigo interno”.

En el pasado, los inmigrantes han alimentado la esperanza de que en algún momento podrán legalizar su situación, tal como otros han hecho en el pasado. Durante algún tiempo, los demócratas liberales y los izquierdistas reformistas hablaron de una “amnistía”, como la de la “reforma” migratoria de 1986, en virtud de la cual los inmigrantes tuvieron que pagar enormes multas y cargos para poder obtener la residencia y eventualmente la ciudadanía. El Grupo Internacionalista ha insistido en que los inmigrantes no son criminales, y en consecuencia no necesitan ser amnistiados ni perdonados. Coreamos la consigna, “No rogamus, exigimos, plenos derechos de ciudadanía”.

Puesto que ahora la arremetida antiinmigrante ha eliminado toda posibilidad de conseguir una amnistía, los demócratas tienen poco que ofrecer. La última propuesta de Obama fue que los inmigrantes indocumentados que solicitan la residencia por concepto de reunificación de la familia podrían obtener un “permiso provisional” para estar en EE.UU., teniendo que sin embargo volver a su “país de origen” para obtener la famosa “green card”. En esto no hay más realidad que en los engaños de Romney de una “autodeportación”. ¿Qué inmigrante se arriesgaría a separarse de su familia con la esperanza de que un consulado norteameri-

cano le otorgue un visado sin tomarle el pelo con la imposición de cargos estratosféricos y de mantenerlo como rehén durante años, como ahora ocurre?

Hoy en día, dada la falta de algo que tenga el menor parecido con una reforma migratoria por parte de los partidos capitalistas, algunos en la izquierda han abandonado sus vanos llamados a favor de una amnistía, y hablan de “plenos derechos para todos los inmigrantes”, como en el caso de la Coalición 1° de Mayo en Nueva York, sin precisar exactamente de qué derechos se trata. Esto constituye una versión suavizada del programa que hemos defendido por años de *plenos derechos de ciudadanía para todos los inmigrantes*. El movimiento obrero tiene un interés vital en que todos los que viven aquí tengan derechos iguales, de modo que los patronos no puedan utilizar la falta de estatus legal para disminuir los salarios y dividirnos. Al reconocer esto, este año la marcha del Primero de Mayo de Portland, Oregon, se pronuncia por “plenos derechos de ciudadanía para todos”.

Debe enfatizarse también que esta exigencia no será voluntariamente concedida por ningún sector de la clase dominante. Es necesario romper con el Partido Demócrata y con los demás partidos capitalistas para construir un partido obrero revolucionario. Tal partido conectaría la lucha por derechos para los inmigrantes con una lucha de clases más amplia para derrotar la guerra imperialista, para abolir la racista pena de muerte, por la liberación de las mujeres y liberación de los negros mediante la revolución socialista. Debe también llamar por la movilización del poder del movimiento obrero para defender a los inmigrantes, a los afroamericanos, a los latinos y los asiáticos en contra de los racistas ataques de la policía y los cazadores de humamos.

Una clase obrera dotada de una dirección revolucionaria que comprenda a cabalidad que “un ataque contra uno es un ataque contra todos” podrá hacer realidad la promesa de la Comuna de París de 1871 y de la Revolución Rusa de 1917 de otorgar ciudadanía a todos los trabajadores y revolucionarios cuando tome el poder bajo el lema del Manifiesto Comunista: *proletarios del mundo, ¡uníos!* ■

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Plenos derechos de ciudadanía para todos los inmigrantes

Deportaciones y elecciones 2012: ¡por un partido obrero revolucionario!

¡La Lucha obrera no tiene frontera!

El Primero de Mayo, día internacional de los trabajadores, millones de personas alrededor del mundo toman las calles para manifestarse a favor de la causa obrera. En los Estados Unidos, desde las masivas marchas que tuvieron lugar en 2006, el Primero de Mayo ha sido también el día de los trabajadores inmigrantes. El 1° de mayo de 2008, cuando los estibadores hicieron historia al paralizar todos los puertos en la Costa del Pacífico de EE.UU. para poner alto a la guerra de Irak e Afganistán, también llamaron a defender los derechos de los inmigrantes. Hoy en día, los inmigrantes están bajo ataque mientras la Corte Suprema prepara su dictamen sobre si la ley cazamigrantes de Arizona es consistente con la Constitución, mientras las redadas y deportaciones siguen a todo vapor.

La más reciente redada a escala nacional, llamada *Cross-Check* (Chequeo Cruzado), se realizó en la última semana de marzo e involucró a 2 mil agentes de la ICE (Agencia de Control de Aduanas e Inmigración) con el respaldo de otras agencias federales y con policías estatales y municipales. Los policías vestidos con uniforme negro, llegaban sigilosamente en horas de la madrugada para irrumpir violentamente en los hogares de miles de inmigrantes, supuestamente en busca de personas que aparecían en una lista de “criminales”. En realidad detuvieron a toda persona que ahí encontraron: 3 mil 200 en total fueron arrestados y declarados material deportable.

Para el Primero de Mayo de 2012, la campaña electoral para la presidencia norteamericana marcha a toda velocidad. En las primarias del Partido Republicano, cada candidato intentó adoptar posiciones más reaccionarias que los demás, y eso en torno a cualquier asunto: al amenazar con bombardear Irán, con la promesa de más exenciones tributarias para los ricos y más recortes de servicios sociales para los pobres, de atacar a los sindicatos del sector público mientras vituperan contra el aborto y truenan contra los “inmigrantes ilegales”. El virtual candidato republicano, con el sustento financiero de grandes sumas de los banqueros de Wall Street, es Mitt Romney, quien ha instado a los migrantes a que se “autodeporten”.

Mientras tanto, el presidente demócrata Barack Obama busca aventajar a los republicanos en materia de guerra imperialista en el exterior y de represión policíaca al interior. Atascado en una depresión capitalista que seguirá durante varios años, se conformó con recortes drásticos en los programas de ayuda social en aras de reducir los déficits



Contingente internacionalista en la marcha del Primero de Mayo de 2011 en Nueva York.

Obama deporta a 400 mil migrantes por año, Romney los persigue para que se “autodeporten”

presupuestarios. Obama ha tomado la delantera en una arremetida bipartidista contra los maestros y la educación pública. Atacó frontalmente a las libertades civiles e hizo del asesinato una arma principal de la “guerra contra el terrorismo”, emitiendo decretos secretos que autorizan el asesinato en cualquier lugar incluso de ciudadanos norteamericanos.

Al arrojar algunas migajas al movimiento Ocupa Wall Street que irrumpió en la escena pública en otoño del año pasado, Obama pronuncia unas huecas frases populistas contra la desigualdad. Sin embargo, su política económica está en manos de banqueros de Wall Street, y su “reforma de la salud”, anunciado con bombo y platillo, entregará miles de millones de dólares a las aseguradoras. Al mismo tiempo que solicita los votos de los hispanos al prometer una vez más que hará de

la reforma migratoria una prioridad *después* de la reelección, Obama ha deportado unos 400 mil inmigrantes cada año, un récord que sobrepasa con creces el número de deportados alcanzado por su antecesor, George W. Bush.

Obama merece el título de “Mr. Deportation”, como remarcó un camarada trabajador inmigrante del Grupo Internacionalista en un taller sobre “Los inmigrantes y el movimiento Ocupa” en el marco del Foro de la Izquierda celebrado en marzo en Nueva York. Sin embargo, no obstante las redadas y la masiva militarización de la frontera con México realizada por su administración, los líderes de las principales organizaciones hispanas y de inmigrantes siguen apoyando al Partido Demócrata. Hasta los dirigentes del Grupo de Trabajo de Ocupar Wall Street por la Justicia para los Trabajadores Inmigrantes, que orga-

nizaron el taller, instaron a los asistentes a dar a Obama “el beneficio de la duda”.

La “esperanza” que proclamó Obama en 2008 fue falsa desde el inicio. Su compromiso de campaña de promulgar una reforma migratoria “significativa” durante su primer año en funciones se archivó sin más. A diferencia de los liberales y de varios grupos de izquierda reformista que refrendaron o promovieron su candidatura, el Grupo Internacionalista advirtió que tanto Demócratas como Republicanos son enemigos de los inmigrantes y de todos los trabajadores. Llamamos en ese entonces, como hacemos hoy también, a movilizarnos por poner alto a las redadas y deportaciones, a luchar por plenos derechos de ciudadanía, y a construir un partido obrero revolucionario.

sigue en la página 10

¡No a “Comunidades Seguras”! ¡Fuera ICE!
Demócratas y republicanos: enemigos de los inmigrantes