

Capitalist *Private Property* Creates Monumental *Social* Disasters



Photo: AP

Oil-covered pelican in the Gulf of Mexico, June 2010.

Gulf of Mexico Oil: Ecological and Human Catastrophe

The capitalist system we live under is hooked on profits from oil, gas, and coal. The capitalists depend on these fuels to run their economy—even though the “greenhouse gases” from burning them is causing global climate changes that could threaten the very existence of life on this planet. Oil companies are in cutthroat competition to control fuel sources and to drill in environmentally hazardous areas. That’s why BP (and others) has been drilling in the deep waters of the Gulf of Mexico, *without any idea of how to stop an oil spill at that depth*. BP rejected a \$500,000 safety device that might have prevented the oil gusher at its Deepwater Horizon well. Why? In their calculations based on maximizing profits, the safety device cost too much. The U.S. government, representing the overall interests of the capitalists, gave the go-ahead to the Gulf drilling.

When the BP well blew and millions of gallons of oil began pouring out, did the powers-that-be go all out to put the needs of humanity and the environment front and center to confront what is now the largest marine oil spill ever? Did they unleash the creativity and energy of people to deal with the disaster? *No*, they did the opposite. They discouraged and sabotaged people’s efforts to deal with the emergency. They hid the truth about how much oil was spewing out and its toxic effects. They dumped huge amounts of oil-dispersing chemicals in the water so there would be less oil seen on the surface, even though they have *no idea* what this might do to the whole ecosystem—the complex web of interrelated and interacting life—of the Gulf and beyond.

Actually, this system—by its nature—*cannot* confront problems like this by unleashing the people’s initiative, because any such mobilization would undercut capitalism’s all-important “sanctity of private property.” What has been happening in the Gulf of Mexico is a *capitalist disaster*—and a *capitalist response*—that is causing deep and immense harm to the environment and to human lives.



Photo: AP

BP oil rig burning, April 2010.

Every year hundreds of people die trying to cross the vast, waterless desert along the U.S.-Mexico border on foot. The Pima County morgue in Arizona reported at the end of July 2010, they were running out of space for bodies, with the number of immigrants found dead in the desert soaring during this summer’s heat wave. Those who do make it across are shunted into the most dangerous and low-paying jobs and overcrowded housing—while being vilified as “freeloaders,” “drug mules,” and worse. Hanging over their heads is the threat of being kidnapped from their workplaces, the streets, or their homes by Gestapo-like cops and federal agents... torn apart from their families... deported—or imprisoned. And now, with the rabid venom of the Tea Party fascists and others, along with intensifying anti-immigrant laws and border militarization, immigrants are being forced even deeper into the shadows.

Each immigrant who crosses the deadly border has his or her own story—but zoom back the lens, and what you see are larger forces at work. You see how huge changes in the world economy and power relations brought about even more intense global exploitation. The capitalists (with the U.S. as the sole super-power) moved vast investments around the world in search of the greatest profits. The 1994 NAFTA treaty enabled the U.S. to plunder Mexico in new ways, including opening up Mexican agriculture to U.S. agribusiness. Small farmers (campesinos) who had survived growing corn, beans, and other crops could not compete. Six million campesinos were driven out of the countryside between 1994 and 2004, forced to find other means to survive. These developments, along with the dependence of U.S. capitalism on highly exploitable cheap immigrant labor, are a big part of what has forced millions to make the dangerous and often deadly border crossing.

The Deadly U.S.-Mexico Border



Photo: AP

Above: The decayed remains of a male, aged 18-40, in Tucson, Arizona. Bodies of immigrants who die in the deserts by the hundreds near the border fill the morgues and anonymous cemeteries of the southwest U.S.

Right: Slums in Tijuana, Mexico, just across the border from the U.S.

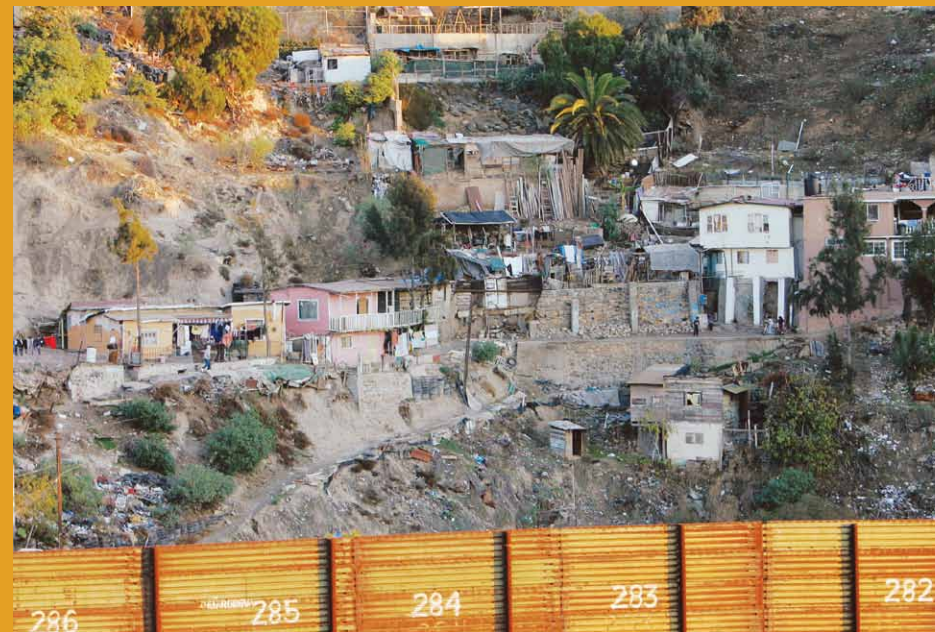


Photo: AP

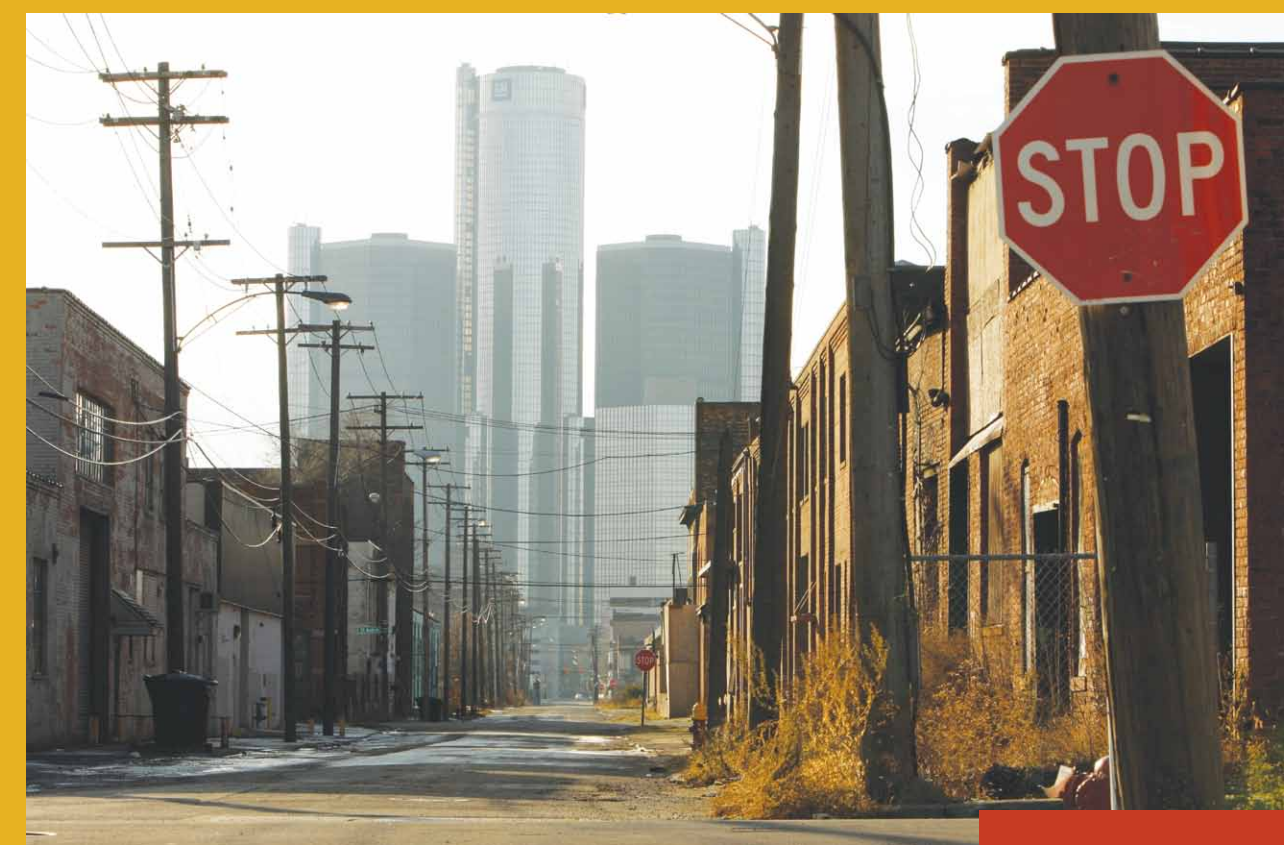


Photo: AP

Abandoned buildings in Detroit, with GM headquarters in background.

Detroit: Strangled by the System

There used to be two million people in Detroit. Now there are less than a million, 85% of them Black. Half the children live in poverty. The unemployment rate is over 30%. Thousands of houses have been abandoned. This summer 32 schools—almost 20% of the city’s total—were shut down, on top of the 29 closed last summer. Meanwhile, the state of Michigan has the second highest incarceration rate in the country.

The larger workings of global capitalism have deeply impacted Detroit, leading to widespread factory closings in auto and other industries, massive loss of jobs, and many people moving out. The government has responded by throwing Detroit and its people to the dogs.

What’s happened in Detroit is a concentrated example of how, especially among African-Americans, huge numbers of people in the U.S. have been cruelly cast aside because they can no longer be profitably exploited. Instead of treating the oppressed youth as human beings, those on top of this system have *criminalized* them. Look at how one in eight young Black men are locked up in prison. How Black and Latino youth are routinely harassed and brutalized and constantly face the threat of being outright killed by the police. How seven-year-old Aiyana Stanley-Jones was shot dead in May, as she slept next to her grandmother, by the Detroit police who swarmed into their home.

Things Do NOT Have to Be This Way

The system of capitalism-imperialism has been—and continues to be—a complete disaster for the great majority of humanity, all around the world and here in the U.S. And this system will continue to be an utter horror so long as it continues to exist and prey on the people. But, as the *Constitution of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA*, says:

...the cruelest fact of all is this: **IT DOES NOT HAVE TO BE THIS WAY!** For here is the glaring contradiction: in today’s world the production of things, and the distribution of the things produced, is overwhelmingly carried out by large numbers of people who work collectively and are organized in highly coordinated networks. At the foundation of this whole process is the *proletariat*, an international class which owns nothing, yet has created and works these massive socialized productive forces. These tremendous productive powers *could* enable humanity to not only meet the basic needs of every person on the planet, but to build a new society, with a whole different set of social relations and values...a society where all people could truly and fully flourish together.

Yet this cannot and does not happen; instead, for the great majority of humanity, and for large numbers of people in this country, things get worse, and seem ever more hopeless.

Why? Because these productive forces are socially created and worked, through the labor of vast numbers of people, but they are owned and controlled by a relative handful: the capitalist-imperialist class. And the imperialists’ private appropriation of socially produced wealth is backed up by law, by custom...and by the armed forces of the state.

This Is NOT The Best of All Possible Worlds...And We Do NOT Have To Live This Way Coming Soon: Constitution for the New Socialist Republic in North America (Draft Proposal)