

Update

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This Fascism Must be Stopped!

As The Worker goes to press more than 100 of the 166 prisoners at Guantanamo Bay are on a hunger strike to protest their imprisonment. Most of the prisoners have been there for 11 years. According to lawyers who visit the prison the number of hunger strikers has continued to grow since the strike began in early February.

The prisoners have never been charged with crimes. Most were captured during the U.S. war against Afghanistan and according to international law should have been treated as prisoners of war and released when the U.S. declared the war over.

Instead Bush and then Obama relied on special "executive powers" to declare them "enemy combatants" and then trample their rights, as well as the U.S. constitution, under foot.

Rather than uphold the most elementary human and legal rights, the U.S. government has not only kidnapped and detained the Guantanamo prisoners for 11 years, it has tortured them.

Today the U.S. government is trying to cover up its crimes by continuing to hold the prisoners. In order to suppress the strikers the U.S. military has already begun

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

The Immigration System of the U.S. Capitalist Class

The immigration policy of the U.S. capitalist class has long been to encourage large scale immigration while relying on its state machine to impose a system of discrimination and persecution against immigrants in order to maintain a cheap pool of labor. It is precisely because of the fact that immigrants in the U.S. are subjected to a host of repressive laws passed by the capitalist politicians that millions remain in a condition of virtual slavery. Today, as the crisis of capitalism deepens, the capitalist state is again entrenching a legal system of discrimination and increasing

repression against immigrants in order to create a large caste of people who, denied their most basic human rights, can be exploited and oppressed without restraint.

The aim of strengthening this anti-people system is the aim of the U.S. monopoly capitalist class. It is an aim which goes directly against the struggle for progress and the demand for a modern definition of citizenship and democracy which recognizes the common humanity and rights of everyone who lives in the country.

U.S. policy towards Mexican
CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Government Must Make All the Investments Necessary to Extend the Social and Public Sectors of the Economy

On April 10, Obama sent his fiscal 2014 budget proposal to Congress. The proposal calls for a \$93 billion increase in federal spending for the year. Obama's proposal includes plans to slash future Social Security benefits by cutting back on cost-of-living increases and plans to slash future Medicare benefits by increasing co-payments and co-premiums. Once again Obama himself has ex-

posed the lie of the sold-out leaders of the AFL-CIO and the the so-called "friends of labor" in the Democratic Party who advertise him as less anti-worker than the Republicans.

Today the so-called budget debate between Obama and the Republicans is not even over which programs to cut and by how much. Instead, the debate is over how

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

Immigration System

from page 1

workers provides one example of the real class character of the immigration policy of the U.S. capitalist state. For over 150 years, the U.S. capitalist class, while maintaining a stranglehold over the Mexican economy, has used Mexican workers as a vast reserve army of cheap labor. The capitalists and the government have created a "revolving door" whereby they simultaneously import and deport large numbers of Mexican workers while maintaining a pool of surplus workers who by their "illegal" status can be paid sub-minimum wages and used as a weight to drive down the wages of the entire working class.

The super-exploitation of Mexican labor began in earnest with the Mexican-American War of 1848. After dismembering Mexico and annexing – by force of arms – what today is the Southwest of the U.S., the capitalist class proceeded to disenfranchise the indigenous population. The land of the peasants was arbitrarily stolen and virtually the entire Mexican-American population (as well as the Native Americans) was reduced to the status of peons or super-exploited workers. A reign of racist terror was initiated and brutal national oppression imposed in order to maintain this super-exploitation. Subsequently as workers from Mexico were imported into the U.S. to meet the growing needs of the capitalists for cheap labor, these workers were held under the thumb of immigration laws as well as branded with the stamp of national oppression already burned in the flesh of the Mexican-American mi-

nority.

By the 1880's with the development of monopoly capital and its increased penetration of the southwest, the U.S. capitalists opened up labor recruitment centers in Mexico importing hundreds of thousands of workers, through both legal and illegal means, to work in the cotton and sugar-beet fields as well as on the railroads and in the mines. "Colonias" were set up as ghetto communities, owned by the companies, to house Mexican and Mexican-American itinerant workers. Deprived of all rights, these workers filled the dirtiest and most back breaking jobs at less than half the average wage. Attempts by the workers to unionize themselves or strike for improved wages and working conditions were met with racist lynchings and deportations.

By the 1920's and 30's, the need for immigrant labor declined and the capitalist class began wholesale deportations of Mexican workers. In 1924 the Border Patrol was set up as the first national police force with the specific task of helping to impose a reign of terror on migrant workers. During the depression era hundreds of thousands were deported, about half of whom were legal American citizens but of Mexican heritage. The city of Los Angeles, for example, between 1931 and 1933 sent trainloads of Mexican and Mexican-American workers "back" to Mexico every month in order to avoid relief and welfare costs for the unemployed. During the same years the state of Colorado de-

clared martial law and used the national guard to patrol its borders and turn back any migratory Mexican or Mexican-American workers.

During World War II the demand for immigrant labor increased again and the U.S. government initiated the infamous bracero program, which lasted until 1965. The U.S. Department of Agriculture itself recruited, contracted for and transported hundreds of thousands of Mexican workers in order to supply cheap labor for the agribusiness and railroad interests, especially in the Southwest. The braceros were forced to live and work in inhuman conditions. After mandatory deductions for food and housing supplied by the companies the braceros generally received no wages whatsoever. In the meantime they were exposed to dangerous pesticides, debilitated and often killed in the fields. For every 1 legal bracero, it is estimated that 4 "illegal" braceros were employed by the big capitalist farmers while the Immigration and Naturalization Service enforced immigration laws only after each year's harvest – that is, deporting the workers after the capitalists had sweated them dry. In many cases illegal braceros were placed under arrest, only to be "paroled" to the big growers for the duration of the harvest system.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

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Investments

from page 1

quickly to introduce "reforms" which lead to reductions in the "burdensome expense" of social programs. Specifically the politicians claim that cuts to the few social programs which help the workers and great majority of Americans are necessary in order to "balance the budget."

But this is just a lie. The Workers Party has repeatedly shown that the budget crisis can readily be addressed by declaring a moratorium on the government's debt and by putting a stop to the militarization of the economy. This program is rejected by the Republican and Democratic Party politicians because their real concern is to put all of the taxpayers' monies at the disposal of big business. Any investment in social programs is considered an unnecessary cost which limits the funds that the government can make available to big business.

The entire fiscal policy of bleeding the people through taxes while starving them by withdrawing all social programs is part of the response of the capitalist class to the unresolvable crisis of their system. As the crisis of capitalism continues and intensifies, the capitalists and their government are determined to put the entire burden of the crisis onto the backs of the working people. That is why any and every measure proposed by the Republicans and Democrats to allegedly "solve" these crises is based on shifting an ever greater burden onto the working people by slashing social investments and taking huge sums out of the public treasury in order to fatten the profits

of the monopoly capitalists.

And while the Democrats and Republicans go on shifting the burden on to the people, the majority of Americans are denied their fundamental economic rights. In the midst of Obama's so-called "economic recovery" 90 million workers find themselves permanently unemployed and millions more can only find part-time or temporary jobs. The real wages of the workers have been falling for many years, often to a point even below subsistence. Forty-five million people have no health insurance whatsoever and tens of millions more are denied needed health services. Millions are homeless and tens of millions are forced to live in substandard housing. Millions of children suffer malnutrition and hunger. The public schools are crumbling and millions of working class children are denied their right to a modern education. And already the capitalist economists are predicting that another recession is just around the corner.

Facing this situation, the working class and people have no choice but to demand a fundamental change in the government policy and in the economic direction of the country. The people must demand that the first priority be to recognize and guarantee all the inalienable rights of the people including such rights as the right to free, comprehensive health care, to secure pensions, to a job or income commensurate with our country's high level of development, to the best possible education at all levels, and so on.

Clearly our country has all the resources necessary to guarantee these rights. It is up to the people to organize themselves as a political force capable of securing their rights.

This Fascism

from page 1

force feeding a large number of them.

U.S. imperialism refuses to be restrained either by international law or the most elementary demands of humanity and democracy. In its "war on terrorism," it asserts that its military might gives it the right to be judge, jury and executioner of the entire human race and to commit any crimes against the people.

The prisoners at Guantanamo Bay must be released now!

This fascism must be stopped!

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Immigration System

from page 2

Lee Williams, in charge of the bracero program from 1959 to 1964, called it "legalized slavery, nothing but a way for big corporate farms to get a cheap labor supply from Mexico under government sponsorship."

From 1965 the capitalists continued to import millions of undocumented Mexican workers every year and to super-exploit them in the fields, sweatshops and factories throughout the country. During the 1970's and 80's the government and media relentlessly bombarded public opinion with chauvinist propaganda directed against the undocumented workers and allegedly debated the question of "immigration reform." This debate resulted in the passage of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (popularly known as the Simpson-Rodino Act) which was advertised both as a "final solution" to the "immigration problem" as well as a "humanitarian gesture" which allegedly provided "amnesty" for undocumented workers.

By August of 1989 over 1 million workers who applied for amnesty under provisions of the Simpson-Rodino Act had already been summarily deported. Another 5-10 million undocumented workers who could not meet the stiff requirements for "amnesty" found themselves buried deeper than ever in the underground economy.

Today the results show that the capitalists continue to use the U.S.-Mexico border as a "revolving door" for immigrant workers who, facing ever-greater persecution in the U.S., are super-ex-

ploited more than ever.

For the last quarter century millions of Mexican workers, unable to secure a livelihood in their own country due to the conditions imposed by U.S. imperialism, have been forced to come here every year. Upon arriving in the United States these immigrants find that they are without rights and subject to the most brutal treatment at the hands of the employers. The repressive apparatus of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has swollen to gargantuan proportions – with a budget of \$5.8 billion, over 21,000 border patrol agents and hundreds of detention centers. Through "enforcement and removal operations" or "raids," the ICE regularly invades factories and communities rounding up anyone who "looks foreign," thus persecuting not only the undocumented but also the Mexican-Americans and other national minorities. The capitalists, making full use of this situation, confine the undocumented workers to the dirtiest and most back-breaking jobs at sub-minimum wages. Instead of laying off workers during seasonal downturns, the companies simply call in La Migra (ICE) to deport the undocumented, only to hire a new crew when production peaks again. In the process the companies cheat the workers out of several weeks pay and so on.

This situation must be changed. The entire system of persecution and discrimination against immigrants goes directly against the profound democratic aspirations and history of the American people,

who have always striven to build this country as a land of asylum where everyone could enjoy equal rights. The interests of the American working class in particular require that everyone who comes to the U.S. enjoys equal rights. Any oppression on the basis of nationality, language, country of origin, "legal" status, any denial or suppression of the rights of any section of the workers can only serve to limit the rights of the entire class.

It is not – as is claimed by the capitalist government and media – undocumented workers or immigrants who force down wages and take away "American" jobs. Capitalism, by systematically forcing immigrant workers into a caste without economic and political rights, lowers the price of labor power and drives down the wages of the entire working class. When all who labor are assured the same democratic rights, the workers can more easily enforce the same standards of wages and working conditions for all. Furthermore, the working class can only emancipate itself by abolishing all forms of discrimination and oppression on the basis of race, national origin, sex, etc. The fundamental demand of democracy is that everyone be guaranteed full and equal rights.

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