

The only solution is revolution

The Gulf crisis: beautiful planet versus deadly profit system

“It’s like a nightmare you can’t wake up from.” This is how Danielle Brutsche described the plight of Gulf of Mexico residents at a May 30 rally in New Orleans demanding that the government take control of managing BP’s disaster.

The horror grows day by day as the cover-up by BP and its government co-conspirators is peeled away. It started with the deaths of the 11 workers who were victims of the April 20 explosion and now threatens whole cultures, both ecological and human — the unique ways of life of fishers, shrimpers, and the Gulf’s other inhabitants.

There are actions that can and must be taken to help those cultures survive. But can the area and its people truly be “made whole”? And when and where will the next profit-driven catastrophe strike? And how could anyone reasonably expect that the government, whether run by Democrats or Republicans, will someday stop being at the beck and call of the corporations?

The crisis in the Gulf is an argument with terrible force for a *fundamental change* in how people produce and distribute what we need and how we interact with nature in the process. It is an urgent argument for *socialist feminist revolution*.

A corporate atmosphere of heedlessness and death

The march of oil and chemical companies into the Gulf has been wreaking havoc for decades.

In the infamous “cancer alley” near the mouth of the Mississippi, at least five towns founded by African Americans before or after the Civil War have been turned into ghost towns. Chemical facilities overran the areas, poisoned them, and then paid the suffering



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residents to relocate.

Meanwhile, oil companies were destroying the wetlands, creating about 10,000 miles of navigation canals that eradicated forests, marshes, and neighborhoods. Invading salt-water kills vegetation, displaces wildlife, and increases erosion. It is contributing heavily to the loss of one football field’s worth of land in Louisiana every 45 minutes.

Today, the angry spotlight is on BP. But BP’s abhorrent practices are just business as usual for the corporations that carelessly control the fate of everyone from Honda workers in China and miners in Virginia and Colombia to Vietnamese American fishers and French-speaking Native Americans on the Gulf Coast.

The cost to women and children is especially harsh. Around the world, women are

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extra-exploited as workers while also bearing the burdens of finding clean water for their families, caring for the injured and disabled, and holding things together in conditions of poverty and crisis. In the Gulf, the health risks of the oil and the chemicals BP is using to fight its spread are magnified for pregnant women and their fetuses and for babies and young children.

Commentators on the Gulf crisis have pointed out that male-dominated corporations today have reached a point of extreme aggression and risk-taking. At BP, after current CEO Tony Hayward took over, many of the company's female executives took off, apparently repelled by a heightened emphasis on profit-making at any cost.

Especially in a time when the whole capitalist system is under extreme stress, like today, it breeds a corporate culture of smash, grab, take the money and run. The answer does not lie in shifting the gender and colors of the obscenely paid people in charge or letting huge corporations persuade us they are serious about "going green." The answer is for *working people* to take charge, restore a balance with nature, and make sure that every last person is safe, secure, and happily productive.

Let's start *now* to make the change the planet needs

To move toward this goal will take the building of a mass movement for socialism. In the meanwhile, the residents of the Gulf and the ecosystem there cannot be abandoned. Below are ideas of what we should be fighting for (find more at murderedgulf.wordpress.com):

- Seize BP and its assets immediately! Nationalize the entire energy industry under the control of its workers.
- Halt the use of dangerous chemical dispersants to fight the spread of oil. Use the highest safety standards and maximum protection for workers involved in the cleanup. Seek community input and call on scientists with no ties to the energy industry to advise on methods of cleanup and restoration. Ensure health-care for all of the affected Gulf residents.
- Hold the heads of BP criminally responsible for the deaths in the explosion and the damage to the Gulf and its people.
- Stop all offshore drilling immediately, including current projects, and ban deepwater drilling permanently.
- Take urgent measures to move to energy sources other than oil. Create jobs through ample funding for expanding and running mass transit systems nationwide.
- Establish an agency in the Gulf that can launch a massive program of public jobs at union-scale wages, oversee the cleanup, rebuild the area's ecology, and distribute financial relief to fishers and other workers and small businesses. Give authority over this agency to assemblies of affected workers and communities, including local tribes, that are independent of government and big business.
- End war and its terrible consumption of oil in pursuit of oil. Redirect Pentagon funds to jobs and the environment.

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