

FOR PUBLIC OWNERSHIP OF BP AND BIG OIL

Transition to Clean Energy NOW!

They ignored the warnings about dangers of a spill. They disregarded safety procedures. They cut corners on methods for preventing blowouts. All of this was done in pursuit of one thing: the 'black gold' of crude oil found miles below the oceans surface which can be turned into mega-profits.

Now 11 workers are dead and BP's endless thirst for profits has created what is probably the worst environmental catastrophe in U.S. history as thousands upon thousands of barrels of crude oil spill into the Gulf of Mexico every day. All efforts to stop the spill have failed, and the well probably won't be sealed until a relief well can be drilled by August at the earliest.

The oil spill will cause untold devastation to the sea-life and the delicate ecosystem around the coastal waters for years, perhaps decades, to come. The livelihood of those that depend on the fishing industry in the region will be destroyed.

Leave it to BP?

Initially BP said only 1,000 barrels of oil were leaking a day. A government estimate based on aerial photos later put the amount at 5,000 barrels a day. But independent scientists have made estimates between 25,000 and 100,000 barrels per day. A device to measure flow exists, but BP refuses to let scientists use them.

Meanwhile, BP has injected enormous amounts of toxic dispersants to break up the oil which prevents it from rising to the surface. This has created vast underwater plumes of oil, one reason scientists have made the higher estimates of the flow.

BP, with the help of the Coast Guard, has kept media away from affected public beaches and federal waters. They clearly want to hide the full extent of this crisis, and the government is helping them hide it.

Obama and the Government

Many thought the election of Obama would end the days of the Bush era and government support for Big Oil. But the reality is virtually nothing has changed! The Department of the Interior has continued to hand out hundreds of waivers to big oil companies so they don't have to produce the required environmental impact studies.

Only a month before the BP spill the Obama administration announced a plan to expand off-shore drilling while continuing to turn a blind eye to the oil industry and allowing companies like BP to "regulate themselves." Despite the Obama administration's new tough rhetoric, the federal government has let BP handle the cleanup without any meaningful government or public oversight.

This clearly demonstrates, as socialists have consistently argued, that the Democratic Party is as beholden to the oil companies and big-business interests as the Republican Party. It also shows that the endless drive for profits of privately-run oil companies leads to reckless behavior, unaccountability, destruction of the environment, and a complete disregard for the livelihoods of ordinary working people.

This disaster takes place under the backdrop of the worst crisis of global capitalism since the 1930s which is leading to the sharpest decline of living standards in generations as working



people suffer job loss, wage cuts, home foreclosures, and the slashing of public services.

Public Ownership of Industry - The Only Real Solution

Socialists argue for an end to the privately run for-profit model. This means taking BP out of the private hands of the profit-driven shareholders who created this disaster and bringing BP into public ownership under democratic control to ensure a plan of cleanup based on protecting the environment and the interests of working people.

The problem is not only with BP but the entire for-profit energy industry as a whole. We can expect more disasters like the BP spill if the private industry is left to its own devices, not to mention the crisis of global warming posed by the continued dependence on fossil fuels.

Socialist Solutions to the Oil Spill:

- Nationalize BP to use its vast resources to clean up the oil spill more efficiently and provide full relief to the working people and communities affected by the spill
- Bring the giant oil, coal and energy companies into public ownership. Run them democratically by an elected council of representatives of the workers, community members, and environmental and economic planners.
- Massive investment into clean, renewable energy and public transportation to create millions of union jobs and end global warming by ending our dependence on fossil fuels. Retrain workers in polluting industries with full pay and benefits.
- End the rule of profit. Create a democratically planned, socialist economy to base the energy industry, transportation, and production on the needs of working people and the environment.

Socialist Alternative is part of an international organization looking for individuals and organizations who want to help organize more protests against corporate greed and fight for a better world. For more info, to help, or join Socialist Alternative, contact us!