

Pakistan after the floods: “The situation is explosive”

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The World Socialist Web Site received the following letter Sunday from a supporter in Pakistan.

The situation in Pakistan is increasingly explosive. The floods are a natural calamity. But if a large portion of the population, especially the workers, peasants and toiling masses, are now suffering hunger and lack of water and shelter, it is because of the criminality of the country’s capitalist elite and their imperialist backers. They have plundered the people, while failing to provide elementary public infrastructure.

Cases of cholera due to the non-availability of drinking water are spreading. In the one-fifth of the country that has been flooded, the population continues to be besieged. Livestock and crops have been destroyed over a vast area. Most of the roads linking the four provinces are ruined. Anger is growing steadily among the people against the government, the ruling class, and US imperialism.

Washington is watching the situation in Pakistan after the flood very closely. The US military is determined to expand its intervention in Pakistan and under the guise of providing humanitarian aid is now trying to do so. That the US is maneuvering to advance its predatory geo-political interests in the region is underscored by the fact that the US, despite its massive presence in the region, had delivered next to no aid to the flood victims.

The Pakistani ruling class are afraid of a possible mass upheaval against the government and state. Yesterday President Zardari and his arch-rival, Nawaz Sharif of the official opposition Muslim League (Nawaz), came together to announce a joint relief campaign for the flood sufferers.

The vast majority of the people want to help those whose homes and livelihoods have been destroyed, but they do not trust the government and state institutions.

They saw what happened after the earthquakes in Kashmir in 2005 and Ziarath in 2008—how the politicians and military and their business cronies diverted aid, in cash and kind, into their pockets.

Anarchy is spreading daily. Yesterday 10 working class people were killed by the BLA (Baluch Liberation Army) in Baluchistan, where a separatist insurgency has gained a popular following due to the ruling elite’s indifference to, and repression, of the Baluchi masses. And on August 14 (so-called Independence day) there were rocket attacks and bomb blasts in different parts of Baluchistan.

The Pakistani bourgeois national project has utterly failed the masses. Even before the floods, Pakistan was crippled by power shortages and there was mass popular disaffection and anger at soaring food prices, the gargantuan gap between rich and poor, the military’s continuing dominant role in the country’s political and economic life, and the Pakistani bourgeoisie’s pivotal role in assisting the US occupation of Afghanistan.

Two years after assuming the presidency, the Pakistan People’s Party dynastic leader, Asif Ali Zardari, is as hated as the previous US-sponsored military强人, General Pervez Musharraf. The burning need is for a vanguard working class party that can mobilize the toiling masses against the Pakistani bourgeoisie and imperialism.

Please give my regards to the International Committee of the Fourth International.

Z.



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