

CHALLENGE



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PLP's Ideas Inspire Workers from Senegal At Harlem Protest

NEW YORK CITY, March 19 — "Abdoulaye Wade, dictator!" and "Wade, degage!" [Wade, get out!] rang out through Harlem. Over 100 Senegalese workers, inspired by the uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt, participated in a demonstration of their own against the flagrantly corrupt president of Senegal, Abdoulaye Wade. Since the PLP convention last August, our PLP club has built a small presence in the West African community of Harlem. A comrade and I were at a Senegalese cafe in the neighborhood when we heard the commotion about the demonstration forming at 116th Street and Lenox Avenue.

Abdoulaye Wade was elected president in a coalition of electoral parties called the "Sopi Coalition" ["Sopi" is Wolof — an indigenous language spoken by many workers in west Africa — for "Change,"] in 2000. Eight years before Barack Obama ran for president in the United States, Wade promised sweeping reforms after 40 years of the corrupt, governing Socialist Party.

Steals \$3.4 Billion

It was recently revealed that over the past ten years since the election, Wade stole over 1.6 trillion francs (about \$3.4 billion USD) from the government treasury, including \$400 million for a new private jet that previously belonged to French president Nicholas Sarkozy, who upgraded to a better jet himself. Wade, who is 84 years old and sick, refitted the jet with a state-of-the-art hospital clinic staffed by French doctors and nurses and (perhaps wisely) insists that only French pilots be allowed to fly the jet.

The workers at the demonstration added to the list of abuses under Wade. According to a recent article, when a journalist recently accused him of looting the government treasury, Wade retorted, "at least I admit I'm using the money!" Wade's son, Karim, is Minister of State for International Corporations, Minister of Regional Development, Minister of Regional Transportation, and Minister of Infrastructure.



NYC, April 9th — Hundreds rallied and marched in Times Square against the wars in the Middle East and North Africa.

Meanwhile, other attacks include:

- 2.5 million workers in the capital, Dakar, suffer electricity blackouts for four hours a day;
- Primary and secondary schools have seen mass layoffs and closures;
- The university in Dakar that is serving primarily working-class students is facing deep cuts, as the bosses' children study abroad in France, Britain or the United States.

The demonstration, led by an organization representing the Senegalese diaspora worldwide, caught us by surprise, and therefore the hour we had to prepare was a limiting factor for us. We only had five CHALLENGES on hand, but we found an internet cafe and quickly revised the PL leaflet "Middle Class Dream or Working Class Power?" (showing the futility of relying on union sellouts and politicians) to reflect the situation in Senegal, and printed off 150 copies.

We ensured that every worker received the leaflet. Although we didn't have time to write a translation in French, the workers translated the leaflet aloud from English to those who only spoke French.

Voting No Solution

The weaknesses of nationalism were apparent in the demonstration; one popular chant, in the language of Wolof went: "Na dem, na dem, na dema dema dem, bou deme ba dem ñou dew akh souñou rew!" In English, "Let him go, go, go so that when [Wade] is gone we'll have the country to ourselves!" However, one worker who grew up in Mali and lived in Senegal for several years before coming to the United States, spit on the ground after a speaker at the rally supported voting as a solution.

"I spit on this because it's all for nothing! Look at what's happening in Egypt, Tunisia, Wisconsin, everywhere — this isn't just about Senegal!" We gave the worker a CHALLENGE and discussed the Party's position on uniting the international working class for communist revolution and smashing all borders. The worker read through a couple of articles, and made an impromptu speech. A small group of five demonstrators and onlookers in the street stopped to listen to him.

He said, "I like communism because it's for everybody. In

continued on page 3

EDITORIAL>>

Bosses' Budget Brawl Masks Rulers' Dogfight over War Needs
page 2

EDUCATION>>

NYS Teachers Convention: Rank and File Ready to Fight — 'Leadership' Not
page 3

TRANSIT>>

Drivers, Riders Unite vs. Service Cuts, Fare Hikes
page 4

BANGLADESH>>

Workers, Farmers Block Rails, Roads Battle U.S.-U.K. Poisonous Coal Mine
page 5

ALGERIA>>

Strike Wave Belies Bosses' 'Democracy' Fraud
page 5

UNEMPLOYMENT>>

'Recovery'? Millions Jobless until Capitalism Is Destroyed
page 7

BOOK REVIEW>>

'The Great American Stick-up'; Crises Inherent in Profit System
page 8

May Day 2011

Assemble in lower Manhattan 12 noon Chatham Square, Bowery & Park Row, Sunday, May 1st

4,5,6,J,M,Z to Brooklyn Bridge/City Hall Station, walk East.

Imperialists vs. Tea Partiers: Bosses' Budget Brawl Masks Rulers' Dogfight over War Needs

Obama averted a government shutdown on April 8 by brokering a flimsy budget compromise between two increasingly hostile camps of U.S. capitalists.

One is composed of imperialists who need ever-expanding and more costly U.S. wars. This faction's power and wealth depend on forcibly reasserting its once almighty control of the world's energy trade. Until 1975, Exxon, Mobil and Chevron — descendants of John D. Rockefeller's Standard Oil colossus — (along with ally Texaco) legally owned all of Saudi Arabia's unsurpassed oil reserves. But today, rival oil and gas barons in China, Russia and Iran, unrest in the Arab world, and al Qaeda threaten the empire headed by U.S. flagship Exxon Mobil.

So, from Libya to Afghanistan, the U.S. war machine seeks to rescue the Rockefeller-Exxon wing of U.S. capitalists, at a cost of trillions of workers' tax dollars; 27% of everyone's federal taxes go to pay for these wars, which consume more than half of the Federal Budget.

On the other side of the split stand smaller, domestically-oriented bosses like oil billionaires Charles and David Koch, who consider war taxes an unnecessary burden. They rally popular support by bankrolling the anti-tax Tea Party. Koch Industries' big new project, a proposed 900,000 barrel-per-day pipeline from Alberta, Canada, to Texas won't require paying one dime for a single aircraft carrier, bomber or soldier. By contrast, Exxon's newfound gushers in Iraq [see box] help explain why U.S. "Defense" chief Gates "suggested that American troops could remain [t]here for years." (San Francisco Chronicle, 4/10)

Each side in this ruling-class divide, highlighted by the budget battle, employs think-tanks to organize opinion among fellow capitalists and mislead the working class. The Cato Institute, founded and funded by the Kochs, decries the U.S. invasion of Libya; calls for halving the Pentagon's financing; and supported the government shutdown Obama sidestepped. The U.S. war machine does relatively little for the Kochs and allied minor-league bosses.

Thus, Cato fellow Doug Bandow complains, "Most American military forces are busy doing tasks which have no recognizable connection to U.S. security." (Forbes, 4/4) But the far more influential Rockefeller-led Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) has the opposite take. CFR big shot Larry Diamond called U.S. military intervention in rebellious Arab lands a matter of life and death for U.S. imperialism: "It's an existential challenge for the United States, because our interests in the region are so profound." (CFR website, 4/8) The CFR cloaks Obama's Mideast-North Africa oil grab with the liberal fig leaf of "humanitarian protection."

Saudi Oil Treasure Is Imperialists' Grand Prize

Holding onto Exxon's reshaped but still sweetheart Saudi deal forms the core of U.S. strategy relative to the "Arab Awakening." Exxon now enjoys first dibs on crude oil from the nationalized Saudi Aramco outfit at undisclosed contract prices far below the current going rate of well over \$100 per barrel.

When the Saudi royal rulers "seized" the Rockefeller companies' holdings in 1975 — with oil selling for \$13 a barrel — they were assured "access to seven million barrels per day...at the rate of 47 cents per barrel." ("Oil, God, and Gold: the Story of Aramco and the Saudi Kings," Anthony Cave Brown, 1998). With figures adjusted for price rises and Chinese encroachment on the U.S. share, this racket still endures.

That's why Obama, while backing pro-U.S. "rebels" in Libya, Egypt and Tunisia, endorses Saudi-backed "shoot-the-protestors" actions in Yemen and Bahrain. They both border Saudi Arabia. Obama's recent \$60-billion arms sale to the kingdom cements both Washington's status as Saudi Aramco's military overlord — dependent on U.S. weaponry — and Exxon's status as its especially favored partner. However, when market conditions force Koch to buy Saudi oil, he pays prevailing prices.

The liberal war-making Rockefeller wing needs

Why Articles Are Not Signed

The fact that CHALLENGE/PLP articles are not signed grows from PLP's criticism of the cult of the individual in the former socialist Soviet Union and China. We do not want to encourage the possibility of building up a "following" around any particular individual. While an article may be written by one person, the final version is based on collective discussion and criticism. Many times this collective discussion even precedes an individual's writing of an article.

Two Million Iraqi Lives, 5,000 Dead GIs Reap Profit Bonanza for Exxon

When Exxon invests in Iraq's oil, its government pays Exxon \$1.90 for every barrel Exxon pumps out of the ground. But it costs Exxon far less to pump that oil. Nominally the oil Exxon gets from Iraqi soil belongs to the Iraqi government. But the 2010 "Entitlement" program forces Iraq to sell the lion's share of that oil to Exxon and to British firms Shell and BP.

This would be at a price far lower than the current potential \$120-a-barrel, as well as less than Iraq sells to other imperialists. This enables Exxon to make fabulous profits. And Exxon's Iraqi oil fields have enormous potential. The West Qurna field's yield alone could soon out-produce that of entire oil powerhouses like Venezuela, Kuwait and Nigeria.

So the invasion of Iraq enabled Exxon to gain these enormous profits over the dead bodies of two million Iraqis and 5,000 dead GIs.

an all-out purge of imperialism-thwarting businesses like Koch as well as a mass, liberal, pro-government, ideological civil war against the Tea Party. But they can't pull off either yet.

Ex-New York governor Eliot Spitzer tried to force the imperialists' war agenda throughout Wall Street. But some bankers — more focused on their bottom line than on "sharing sacrifice" to counter China and other imperialists — torpedoed him.

Meanwhile, the rulers face a contradiction: On the one hand, capitalists cut workers' services to make the working class pay for the current economic crisis. But this severely reduces their ability to win these same workers' loyalty to Washington's war agenda.

Headed for World War III, U.S. Rulers Need 'Roosevelt 2'; But Obama's Not Achieving It

In The Great Depression, President Roosevelt carefully constructed a host of federal job programs such as his Works Progress and Civilian Conservation schemes which — along with his concessions to mass (communist-led) working-class struggle for Unemployment Insurance, Social Security and the 40-hour week — won a great deal of worker support that U.S. rulers needed to eventually wage World War II.

Presidents Kennedy and Johnson tried similar policies — a militaristic "high-tech jobs" space program in response to the Soviet 'Sputnik' (the first shot into space); Medicare and voting rights for black people in response to the Civil Rights struggle. However, they had far less success for the cold war against the phony "communist," but anti-U.S., Soviet empire. And their efforts eventually failed to win backing for their war of aggression in Vietnam.

Obama, faring even worse, has yet to come up with anything to mobilize the working class for the wars the rulers' dominant imperialist faction must prepare to wage against Iran, China and Russia. Al Gore's liberal environmentalism didn't quite succeed in winning masses to government service. So Obama, or his successor, must find another smoke-screen for imperialism.

There exists, nevertheless, a viable but demanding course for workers against worsening ruling-class-enforced war-making and cutbacks. It lies in relying neither on liberal/imperialist nor Tea Party politicians but on our class alone. Exposing the profit motive of both capitalist factions' attacks on us — on the job, in schools, neighborhoods, universities, among rank-and-file GIs and in every mass organization we work in — can help build a mass base for our revolutionary, communist Progressive Labor Party. We have the long-term outlook of forcibly replacing the bosses' unceasing wars and repression with rule by the working class in our own class interest. ☉

OUR FIGHT

★ **Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to destroy capitalism and the dictatorship of the capitalist class. We organize workers, soldiers and youth into a revolutionary movement for communism.**

★ **Only the dictatorship of the working class — communism — can provide a lasting solution to the disaster that is today's world for billions of people. This cannot be done through electoral politics, but requires a revolutionary movement and a mass Red Army led by PLP.**

★ **Worldwide capitalism, in its relentless drive for profit, inevitably leads to war, fascism, poverty, disease, starvation and environmental destruction. The capitalist class, through its state power — governments, armies, police, schools and culture — maintains a dictatorship over the world's workers. The capitalist dictatorship supports, and is supported by, the anti-working-class ideologies of racism, sexism, nationalism, individualism and religion.**

★ **While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions worldwide. Capitalism returned to Russia and China because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system, like wages and privileges. Russia and China did not establish communism.**

★ **Communism means working collectively to build a worker-run society. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. Everyone will share in society's benefits and burdens.**

★ **Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of "race." Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit black, Latino, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working class.**

★ **Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women — sexism — and divisive gender roles created by the class society.**

★ **Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.**

★ **Communism means that the minds of millions of workers must become free from religion's false promises, unscientific thinking and poisonous ideology. Communism will triumph when the masses of workers can use the science of dialectical materialism to understand, analyze and change the world to meet their needs and aspirations.**

★ **Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!**

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NYS Teachers Convention: Rank and File Ready to Fight — 'Leadership' Not

NEW YORK CITY, April 7 — The hall was packed with 2,500 New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) delegates, many from districts plagued by budget cuts and layoffs. Usually soft-spoken union President Ianuzzi opened the assembly by leading chants of, "This is what democracy looks like!" and "We are all Wisconsin!" But Ianuzzi & Co. have no plans to lead workers in fighting back.

He proudly showed pictures of himself speaking in Wisconsin but New York labor leaders did not organize the rank and file to support that struggle. When he reported that 180,000 NYSUT workers (one-third of the membership) from Buffalo to NYC were working under long-expired contracts, someone yelled, "Well, what are we going to do about it?"

The main speakers at the convention and at a Saturday outdoor rally spoke about the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer but made no criticism whatsoever of billionaire Mayor Bloomberg or millionaire Governor Cuomo!

A weekend highpoint was a workshop, "From Wisconsin to New York — Building the Struggle," organized by the American Federation of Teachers Peace and Justice Caucus. The main speaker, a teaching assistant from Madison, Wisconsin, gave a detailed report about the attacks Wisconsin public workers faced and how they organized the occupation of the Capitol.

Two NYC school workers reported how parents, teachers and students were fighting the privatization of public schools, noting its racist nature, given that the students were overwhelmingly black and Latino and suffering disproportionately from these attacks.

The next panelist made a systemic analysis of the crisis of capitalism. She explained how both the Democratic and Republican parties were enemies of working people and warned that organized national campaigns attacking unions could pave the way for fascism.



At the Saturday street rally delegates were joined by thousands of other workers, NYSUT rank-and-filers and members of other unions as well. The crowd was militant and ready to fight but clearly the "leadership" is not going to lead a fight against capitalism — they're part of that system. While Wisconsin Governor Walker aims to eliminate collective bargaining and unions entirely, governors like Cuomo here want to retain the unions as long as they're led by phonies who hold workers back.

The only speech at the rally which had any analysis and substance was from a leader of CUNY's Professional Staff Congress who described the harsh effects of the cuts and explained their racist and sexist nature. CUNY's student body is pre-

dominantly black, Latino, and Asian and they are taking the brunt of these cuts while most of the budget is paying for wars, not workers' needs.

PL members distributed CHALLENGE at the Peace and Justice forum and at the outdoor rally. We should have had mass distribution inside the convention and issued a special convention leaflet similar to efforts at national conventions. The workers are open to communist ideas and we'll do a better job next time. ☺

Debate on Revolutionary Violence Marks Pre-May Day Dinner

NEWARK, NJ April 9 — There is nothing better to accompany some good BBQ chicken than with a discussion about the need for revolutionary violence. That is what happened here at our pre-May luncheon with 15 students and workers. The purpose of the luncheon was to encourage some of our friends to become active organizers in the last few weeks leading up to May Day. One comrade spoke about the history of May Day. A student then explained her experiences at last year's May Day. She described how exciting the rally was and how the dinner was "awesome."

After reviewing the plans for this year's May Day, we began to discuss a Neo-Nazi rally in Trenton on April 16th. Everybody agreed that we needed to have a presence at the rally. However, when a comrade raised the use of violence to try and stop the Nazis, one student questioned the usefulness of this strategy. The students believed that by using violence, we might undermine our own ability to organize future workers and students into the Party because the media will be able to cast a negative light on what we are doing.

A comrade responded by saying how non-violence is an idea promoted by the ruling class to keep workers docile. He said Martin Luther King, Jr. and Gandhi are used as examples of how non-violence won freedom and liberation. In actuality, black workers in the U.S. and the working class in India still face dire levels of poverty, racism, and exploitation. In fact, according to author Michelle Alexander in her book "The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration In the Age of Colorblindness," there are more black workers in jail, prison, on parole or probation now in the United States than there were black slaves in 1850 (about 10 years before the Civil War).

Another argument was that while the ruling class continues to push the idea of non-violence, they in-

vade and bomb countries from Afghanistan to Libya to maintain control of oil.

Two comrades recalled the events of the 1975 summer project in Boston and the need for violence to smash the racists who were attacking black school children while riding the buses. The mixture of excitement and nervousness was evident as they evoked memories of charging up a hill with their belts ready to attack a group of racists.

Some workers said that they don't want to use violence, whether it is to defeat Nazis or to take state power, but the working class is left with no other choice. From the revolutions in Russia and China to the "left" movements in South America and Africa to the Civil Rights and Anti-Vietnam movements in the U.S., the ruling class has shown that they will always use violence to hold onto power.

The last person warned that the media will always put the Progressive Labor Party in a negative light since the media is controlled by the bosses and only supports their ideology.

The youths may not have been convinced at the end of the discussion that revolutionary violence is necessary, but overall it was a very positive experience and some of them will join us in opposing the Nazis on April 16.

We will continue to strengthen the personal and political relationships with our friends and coworkers to help break down the bosses' myths, one of them being that non-violence is the only tool for the working class.

What seemed like a routine talk about May Day turned into a lively discussion about smashing Nazis and the need for communist revolution, always a great way to end a pre-May Day event. ☺

Harlem Protest

continued from front page

the United States they say they're 'for' everybody, but in January the cops in Brooklyn beat me. That's what a democracy is! Everything happening in Egypt already happened in Mali in 1991. I was a schoolboy and we filled our bags with rocks instead of books because the police shot at us. If you saw a cop, then BOOM! A rock to his head or a bottle if you could find one.

This I'll never forget: a cop shot my best friend when we were throwing rocks one day. He died in my arms, so with his blood still on me I found that cop and broke his skull open with the biggest rock I could find. He murdered my friend so it was fair.

"I tell people all the time that people, black or white, are working people and we're the majority of society. Look what's happening in Japan! In Libya! This would never happen if we took care of each other...I'm not fighting because I want money. I make enough. But I have two children now and I'm sick when I think of them being attacked in the street like me because their lives are worth nothing. We need to fight!"

When the worker wanted to know if the Party would help organize a demonstration against police brutality, "with ten other friends of mine who were beaten too," we suggested to have a meeting (see page 6).

Our efforts at the demonstration had positive results: we made four contacts, met a few raised fists and heard many positive remarks. We were completely ignored by the organizers of the demonstration, who just read our leaflets and shrugged; we were lucky, and can't always expect such a passive greeting. Even though there were only two of us, it reaffirmed that even modest efforts to bring our revolutionary politics to the working class creates opportunities to elevate the class struggle and build a new mass international communist movement. We also agreed from now on we should carry more CHALLENGEs with us, in case we're ever caught off-guard again. More to follow. ☺

Drivers, Riders Unite vs. Service Cuts, Fare Hikes

SAN FRANCISCO-OAKLAND BAY AREA, April 9 — "I really don't have a problem raising the price of the youth pass." These were the words of one of the AC Transit Board of Directors last month, as they discussed a range of plans to raise bus fares. How insulting! These are the bus passes that kids need to get to school!

The bus already costs \$2 a ride, plus 25 cents for a 1-use transfer. On top of that, service was cut 15 percent in 2010, stranding many passengers and leading to longer waits and crowded buses. Where else but public transit can you get away with charging much more for less and worse service?

Several transit activists and transit workers attended the meeting and spoke out against the proposed fare increases: "You say there's no money. Why don't you go talk to Chevron?" said one speaker. Another commented, "It's ironic that you talk about honoring Rosa Parks with a poster — if Rosa Parks were here, she would be disgusted by these proposals. It's not about whether you sit in the front or back of the bus, but about whether there's even a bus at all to catch!" These fare increases will have a racist and anti-working class effect as they hit our riders who are around 70% low income.

Unfortunately, there were very few in attendance (perhaps 15 passengers and nine transit workers). It will take much, much more pressure to slow down these major attacks on the ridership. Our union leadership says they are in favor of this type of activism, but they didn't even put out a memo to the members, letting them know about this board meeting!

For those of us who did organize for the meeting, it was a positive start. Two drivers spoke at the union meeting, and passed out flyers at work for about five hours during the week. We also called around 15 drivers and texted about 50; this resulted in four drivers coming with us to the meeting.

Despite the fact that we just suffered a disastrous arbitration and currently pay back 6% of our check every week, many drivers are still hesitant to see themselves as activists. There was much more interest at the union meeting around the issue of whether to hold a special election for a new union president or to wait eight months for the scheduled election. Most drivers believe that the key is having a good leader (a "fighter," someone "knowledgeable," someone who "can't be bought," or all of the above). Also, most drivers are hanging on to the hope that things will get better once the

economy starts to recover, and we can hold on to our standard of living.

But these attacks seem likely to continue for the foreseeable future. As CHALLENGE frequently reports, the U.S. corporate class is in worldwide competition. Their main solution is squeezing the working class here in the U.S., and waging war abroad to maintain their stranglehold on oil and other resources. Once more drivers take a serious look at this "world situation," they might conclude that we need many, many more rank-and-file leaders.

We invite all transit workers to Progressive Labor Party's May Day celebration this year, where we will celebrate international working-class unity, discuss the rebellions in the Middle East and the Wisconsin fight-back, and look toward a world free of capitalism, where public services would come first, not last. ☺

'Education' in France: Layoff Protest Hit By Riot Cops' Clubs, Tear Gas

BESANCON, FRANCE, April 6 — Riot police attacked 500 parents, teachers and high school students with riot clubs and tear gas during a peaceful demonstration outside the board of education protesting teaching staff layoffs in this city of 117,000.

The action was called by Federation of Councils of Parents of Pupils (equivalent to the Parent-Teacher Association [PTA] in the U.S.). The demonstrators chanted, blew on whistles and beat saucepans with wooden spoons. When a long-distance coach drove down the narrow street, the crowd was forced to surge towards the police, who immediately reacted violently.

Some parents had brought small children. One two-year-old child's eyes went all red and was seized with a fit of trembling.

The demonstrators denounced the attack as proof of "the feverishness of a government which is attempting at all costs to force through the destruction of public services and whose only answer to our demands is force and obstinate silence."

Since 2007, over 50,000 education jobs have been cut nationally, with another 16,000 slated for September. This is part of the government plan to reduce the budget deficit by 100 billion euros (US\$136 billion) in order to satisfy "the financial markets." The budget "deficit" is due mostly to the bailout of the banks.

According to Eurostat, the European Union's (EU) statistics bureau, the EU bank bailout cost 15.4 billion euros (US\$21 billion) and the EU's total government debt in 2009 amounted to 8.7 trillion euros (nearly US\$12 trillion). The interest on that debt goes straight into the pockets of the capitalists. To ensure they get their's, the capitalists demand public service cuts.

Under capitalism, education is always run in the bosses' interest. Only under communism can education be totally transformed into an activity that promotes both the development of the individual and the good of society. ☺



CHALLENGE Is Exciting Students in Portugal

PORTUGAL, March 31 — In recent months here a group of fifteen high school students, aware of the ongoing national crisis in Portugal, have begun weekly meetings to discuss various political and economic issues. We review the consequences of capitalist society, our thoughts on solutions, as well as organize different awareness events.

After being introduced to CHALLENGE the group was excited to know their fight was happening all over the world and that it was supported by many people. The students have read and discussed many of the articles, integrating them with their usual topics of discussion. They've begun to sneak CHALLENGE into school and pass them out to other students who are curious about the fight against capitalism.

It was also discussed that the country's Prime Minister, José Socrates (representative of the Socialist Party), was re-elected for a second five-year term on the promise that he would no longer raise taxes. It's a promise that hardly seems plausible due to the country's excessive external deficit.

Can't Afford More Than One Meal A Day

One year into his term and three "Stability and Growth Plans" (SGP) later, the country is paying 23% Value Added Tax (VAT). Most families are running on 400 euros (approximately U.S. \$562) a month; retirement funds are as low as 200 euros (approximately U.S. \$281.4) a month; the welfare funds have been cut and social services have rejected help for most families. This makes them unable to afford more than one meal a day.

The official unemployment rate is at 9.3%, making it one of the four European countries with the most unemployment. All the while the Prime Minister and his board of Ministers are being paid 4,000 euros (approximately U.S. \$5,657) a month.

So it was no surprise when the Left Bloc (BE), supported by the Portuguese "Communist" Party (PCP), announced they were promoting a Censorship Mo-

tion based on evidence that the current legislative government was incompetent in creating quality living for the people. Although the Censorship Motion would probably be vetoed due to the "right" parties' opposition, people are looking for the dismissal of the government.

However the motion never went to a vote because the Prime Minister announced that if his next "Stability and Growth Plan" (SGP IV) didn't pass in Parliament, he would resign. The plan aimed to increase taxes again and reduce more social benefits, creating economic austerity in order to lower the external deficit.

IMF Invades

On March 23, the plan was presented in Parliament and was voted down by every single opposition party. Moments later the Prime Minister resigned. New elections are set for the end of May. Until then the Portuguese political crisis has been a factor in lowering the value of the Euro and is now more likely than ever to have the International Monetary Fund intervene in Portugal's economy.

Amid such a political crisis, infuriating people with awful living conditions, the "Communist" party is seen as the left party, but they are far from revolutionary. They only propose reforms that just continue to support the capitalist system. The removal of the Prime Minister might bring a lot of smiles to working people here, but it is far from the solution. The bosses have always been able to get rid of their puppets while still maintaining capitalism. The struggle is to organize and recruit millions to fight for a communist world, free of exploitation.

Portugal has a history of revolutionary movements that were created and led by students. It's no surprise then, that it is the students who are now taking the fight into their hands and organizing. With clearer knowledge of the fight between classes around the world, as well as these discussions that are open to anyone who wants to join, we are one step closer to organizing and recruiting for the fight against the capitalist system and exploitation. ☺

Bangladesh: Workers, Farmers Block Rails, Roads Battle U.S.-U.K. Poisonous Coal Mine

DHAKA, BANGLADESH, April 6 — Tens of thousands of workers and farmers have been waging a six-year battle to stop construction of one of the world's largest open-pit coal mines — backed by U.S. and British imperialists — that would evict 50,000 members of 23 indigenous groups and directly affect the farming and access to water for another quarter of a million people.

On February 28, over 2,000 protestors blocked railways and highways, disrupting traffic across the country. They're demanding the government halt the Phulbari Coal Project and expel its sponsor, the U.K.'s Global Coal Management Resources (GCM). A July 2009 diplomatic cable, released by Wikileaks, reported that the U.S. ambassador to Bangladesh, James Moriarty, urged the government to authorize the Project as "the best way forward," citing 60% U.S. corporate investments in GCM. In a December 2010 cable, he again urged the government to push the Project.

In addition to forcing the eviction of 50,000



from the region, a 2006 government Expert Committee concluded that 130,000 would be directly affected and 220,000 would suffer a reduction of water for drinking and irrigation for farming. The mining would unearth toxic heavy metals (mercury and acid-forming sulfur) that would contaminate soil, water and air.

Eighty percent of the area covered by the Project is farmland and, due to its elevation, is one of the few regions in Bangladesh protected from flooding. Its destruction would worsen hunger in a country in which half the people already don't have enough food. The mine's lifespan would be 36 years and would extract 16 million tons of coal annually, two-thirds of which would be exported.

Its profits would impoverish thousands while "lin[ing] the pockets of a few hedge-fund managers in the U.S." (Joanna Levitt, executive Director of the International Accountability Project; Truthout website, 4/8)

When tens of thousands initially protested on August 26, 2006, government-backed paramilitaries fired indiscriminately into the crowd, killing three and wounding over 200. This sparked a four-day general strike, forcing the government to agree to expel GCM and ban open-pit mining. The company suspended operations and its personnel fled under police escort following the burning down of its information office.

Two months later, "Despite violence and intimidation aimed at silencing opponents, some 100,000



people participated in the final rally," notes Levitt, which ended at "an incredible one-week, 250-mile Long March from Dhaka [the capital] to Phulbari." The source of the violence in this six-year campaign is the notorious Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), government death-squad killers, trained by the UK in "investigative interviewing techniques" — torture.

With all the hoopla about "the West" advocating "democracy" in the Middle East, when profits are at stake this is the kind of imperialist exploitation "democracy" has been visiting on the workers and indigenous farmers of Bangladesh. We should support the latter in any way we can, including demonstrating at the government's embassies to let the protestors in Bangladesh know we stand in solidarity with them. Their struggle is one more example of why a society controlled and run by workers — communism — is the only solution to the horrors visited on the working class by the profit system. ☸

Algeria: Strike Wave Belies Bosses' 'Democracy' Fraud

ALGIERS, April 6 — Strikes, demonstrations and confrontations with police are sweeping Algeria as workers and youth realize that the movement which forced the country's dictator to flee has not produced the "democracy" touted by the world capitalist media. What has emerged includes:

- A strike of workers at the Sonatrach Oil Co. demanding higher wages;
- A rail workers' strike that paralyzed the country for 48 hours;
- An unlimited strike of paramedics and doctors in nine cities demanding improvement in working conditions and a wage hike;
- A strike by sanitation workers in Biskra demanding a wage increase, and compensation for work clothes, boots, gloves and payment for overtime;
- Continuing demonstrations by the unemployed angered over the broken promise to create 300,000 jobs;
- Violent clashes between inhabitants of one Algiers neighborhood and the police over the demolition of ramshackle dwellings;
- Protests by families of the victims of terrorism demanding government-promised indemnities;

- A scheduled May 3 general strike of 4,000 journalists working for the public media.

In addition, the country's dumping of its dictator has not done much for the university system. Today, thousands of unionized teachers marched towards the seat of the "wilaya" (administrative unit) of this city, following a sit-in in front of the education ministry while students continued their long strike in several other cities. The teachers here are demanding unpaid back wages, permanent jobs for temporary teachers and an end to attacks on union activity.

Meanwhile, the student strike that has paralyzed Algerian University led to a confrontation yesterday between students and the schools' superintendent. Angry students forced their way into Board of Education offices, removed furniture and computers and then set them afire outside the building during a protest rally of thousands of students.

And in Boumerdès yesterday, hundreds of marching students faced down cops using riot sticks blocking the main entrance to the campus. Some student strikers, prevented from leaving their dormitories, threw water bottles at the cops from their balcony.

It is becoming clearer that, as CHALLENGE noted when the rebellion ousting the dictator occurred, only a communist-led revolution abolishing capitalism — in which the working class seizes state power — can create the decent future desired by the workers and youth. ☸



1,000 March vs. Indiana's Fascist Anti-Immigrant Law

EAST CHICAGO, INDIANA, April 2 — Today, a large multi-racial group of nearly 1,000 people marched against SB 590, the proposed state anti-immigrant law. This may have been the largest protest in this part of Indiana in decades, demonstrating that the working-class is ready to fight back.

The bill, similar to Arizona's racist SB 1070, would allow local police to question and potentially detain individuals who they "suspect" to be "illegal." In fact, the Indiana bill even exceeds the Arizona bill. Indiana's bill would require that only English be used in a variety of public and formal settings. The bill also enables the state to maintain its independence of federal law, something that slowed the enactment of Arizona's law.

The demonstration, named "La Gran Marcha (The Great March)," was organized mainly through numerous different churches and immigrant rights coalitions in northern Indiana and had a distinctly religious tone. Numerous bishops and religious leaders dominated the microphones during the opening rally, leading chants with slogans such as "Somos el pueblo de Dios (We are the people of God)."

Though church leaders organized the bulk of the demonstrators, the contingent of PL'ers and allies projected a communist perspective, countering the church leaders' dead-end liberal reformist "solution." Signs expressing the need for international working-class solidarity were proudly held high, in stark contrast to the few U.S. and Indiana state flags being waved. During lulls in the religious hymns, chants of "Obreros unidos jamas seran vencidos!" won a positive response.

Next time we will make an even more organized effort to distribute PLP's literature with a solid communist political line which would definitely have had an even more profound influence than our chants and signs.

We are making gains. Party members are active in several immigrant rights groups and are building strong personal and political ties as we deepen our involvement in this important fight against racist oppression. These struggles bring to life the lessons of the need for communist revolution in Indiana and all over the world.

With strong anti-racist, communist leadership these battles will inevitably expand beyond their current limitations en route to international working-class revolution. ☸

LETTERS

We encourage all CHALLENGE readers to send in concise letters and articles about their experiences fighting the bosses around the world.

'No choice but to be in it for the long haul...'

The struggle for communist revolution is a long-term commitment. This current international crisis of capitalism has brought untold misery to workers around the world from Haiti to Afghanistan and Iraq, from Palestine to right here in the U.S. The courage to fight back against the bosses has been shown under conditions of overwhelming intimidation and violence.

Right now in my workplace the anger and frustration that exists in most workers has been tempered with fear. I have worked in a New York hospital for many years in a busy radiology department.

There have been many struggles during that time but they have grown far fewer during this crisis as mass unemployment has risen and intimidation has increased. Three workers have been fired in my department over the past two years mostly from minor infractions and poor managerial organization of the work-place that led to errors by my co-workers. These firings are really disguised layoffs — cost-cutting schemes to replace higher-paid older workers with lower-paid inexperienced workers.

As the department union delegate and a long-time PLP member, it has been my responsibility to both organize the fight-back and show why capitalism can never meet our needs. Joining the PLP to organize a communist revolution is the way to go.

It has been a difficult road to hoe. I haven't yet recruited a new Party member, but I have built a CHALLENGE readers' network with 11 papers distributed within Radiology and another four to five in other areas in the hospital.

I sent a letter to management critical of its refusal to change the work-place procedures to reduce errors leading to disciplinary action and posted it on the union bulletin board. The department administrator called me into the office and screamed at me, threatening to remove me as union delegate.

I told him the workers elected me and only the workers can remove me. A petition backing up the letter was circulated but only 13 signed, about half of the technical staff. Many who agreed with the petition would not sign out of fear. But cowardice in the face of a bosses' attack only encourages more attacks on us.

When the union VP and I met with management on the issue, the first thing the VP did was apologize to them for my posting the letter on the bulletin board. Of course, with that show of weakness, the managers refused to make any procedural changes to their inane system. Now they are on a path to try to fire a night-shift worker.

After discussing the situation with a senior comrade, I am struggling with the committed workers to build a regular social group to attract and unify the workers in our department. Building a social-political base outside of the workplace has been a difficult task for me due to some limiting objective circumstances. This initiative will hopefully bring us closer together and overcome the fears of those who are upset but not stepping up.

I will rely more on CHALLENGE readers to help this work. We have an uphill fight ahead of us, but all our families' futures are at stake. By collectively building unity and fighting back, we can build an understanding that our class, united with communist ideas, can ultimately wield power. We have no choice but to be in it for the long haul.

Med Red

Capitalism Spreads Racism from France to Israel

In France, there is an extreme right-wing party called Front National. Its ideological leader was Jean Marie Le-Pen. The heir to his throne is his daughter, Anne Marine. Their slogan is "France with no Arabs or Blacks". And what about the Jews? "They love money too much!"

In Israel there are two self-proclaimed racist, far-right parties: KM Michael Ben-Ari's "National Union", and "Yisrael Beytenu" led by the foreign minister Libermann. Their slogan is "Death to Arabs" or "Death to the Arab enemy" or, in other

words, the idea of the "transfer." "Transfer" is part of the political discourse in Israel and is basically a euphemism for ethnic cleansing.

I immigrated to Palestine from France "owing" to a racist law: the Law of Return. This legislation allows only Jews to settle and gain citizenship in Israel.

Supposedly Israel's "democratic" symbols, such as the flag and anthem, contradict its racist laws:

- Law of Return;
- Law forbidding the commemoration of the Nakbah;
- Demolition of houses;
- Non-recognition of villages;
- Robbing refugees of their houses;
- Unfair blockade on Gaza;
- Massacre at the "Dahamash" mosque in Lod in 1948;
- Massacre at Qfar Kassem in 1956;
- The October Massacre in 2000 and so on.

I'm ashamed of the state of Israel, its laws, its government and most of its parliament (Knesset) members such as Libermann and Ben-Ari — all of these are racists and capitalists.

Housekeeping Worker from Tel-Aviv

Workers from Mali Take Aim at Racist Police Brutality

"I've been thinking about what's happening in the Middle East and Wisconsin, and with this war in Libya. We need to make a demonstration about more than just police brutality, it has to be international also," said Manu, opening our meeting.

On March 19, members of our PLP club met workers at a demonstration against the Senegalese government in Harlem (see page 1), and one of them, Manu, originally from Mali, wanted the Party's help in organizing a demonstration against police brutality. We then had a follow-up meeting with Manu.

Among the topics discussed was the vital role that multi-racial leadership plays in the Progressive Labor Party, and we shared some articles in the most recent CHALLENGE. We also explained that unlike reformist political parties, the PLP believes in ultimately smashing capitalism through armed communist revolution, and that we seek to unite the international working class around this position.

Manu stated he wished there was a movement powerful enough to confront the wars raging across the planet right now; we told him with his leadership, we could begin to become that movement! We resolved we would contact the PLP members in that area, and schedule a date for a larger meeting where we could bring the Party, Manu and his friends together and decide on a plan.

After eating some French-style cheeseburgers popular at this Harlem spot, the worker invited us to come meet some of his friends and family nearby. We met about eight and distributed CHALLENGEs to each.

Manu addressed his friends, and explained in a language indigenous to Mali, Bambara, that we were from the Progressive Labor Party and want to help them fight against racist police brutality.

A lively discussion followed. A worker who had worked through harsh conditions on a fishing boat told us, "I've seen racism. I was the first black man to work on the deck [of the fishing boat]. On shows like Deadliest Catch they don't show there are blacks working below the deck."

The other white fishermen "didn't understand me or my culture. But I never got seasick and this really impressed some of them." We learned that fishing is dangerous enough, but racism makes it potentially deadly.

Later we explained the Party's growing work in Haiti, and the CHALLENGE article detailing the strike wave in France. "Citizen," "documented" or not, workers in France and everywhere must unite on a class basis. We in the PLP are building multi-racial, international unity as the key to revolution. "Unity is the key," summed up one worker.

When we departed, the workers said they would discuss further what we had said, and thanked us

for coming. After exchanging contact information with our new friends, we invited them to participate in the upcoming meeting with Manu and his other friends who were victims of police brutality, and to other upcoming Party events here. There are many struggles and promising opportunities ahead, and we are continuing our work to serve the workers in Harlem through building PLP's presence here, expanding the fight-back against racism and fighting for internationalism and revolution.

Comrades In Action

From Haiti to Brooklyn and Beyond: Students and Staff Unite!

"We need a whole new system, based on the needs of the working class, not the elites."

This was the closing comment by a high school student who attended our forum and roundtable on the struggle in Haiti, sponsored by PLP members and friends. Over 50 people — students, teachers and paraprofessionals — came to hear staff members exchange ideas about that struggle and were excited to attend. They were all equal participants in the forum, raising the level of unity among us.

A lively exchange focused on several issues, with students directing questions to staff members. A student from Haiti gave a rousing speech outlining Haiti's revolutionary history and the impact of that Revolution on Latin America. The student speaker called for solidarity with students and workers in Haiti, noting that the bosses' media always tells us "Haiti is a poor country" but never tells us why — centuries of imperialist exploitation, especially by U.S. bosses.

The forum touched on the Haitian Revolution, the history of U.S. occupation, the legacy of the U.S.-backed Duvalier dictatorship, the role of NGO's, the failures of Aristide, and most importantly, which way forward for the Haiti's working class. This activity generated a buzz throughout the school; many students and staff were discussing it.

The forum reflected a certain level of planning and preparation and students rose to the occasion. It was a small but an important step forward in deepening our awareness of the struggle of our brothers and sisters in Haiti. It became clear that the struggle there is part of a worldwide struggle by the working class.

Earlier that day our union chapter organized a staff picket line in front of the school, part of a city-wide effort to mobilize members to support the struggle in Wisconsin and to fight the racist budget cuts. We need more actions as well as more forums. We need to turn these schools into ones for communist fight-back — from Haiti to Brooklyn... and beyond.

Red Teacher



Need Mass Fight vs. Racist Unemployment 'Recovery'? Millions Jobless until Capitalism Is Destroyed

The Obama administration and all the bosses' media pundits lie that the continuing massive unemployment — the greatest since the Depression of the 1930s — is dropping. But according to Shadowstats.com the figures coming out of the government's Bureau of Labor Statistics are "openly misleading." ("March Employment and Unemployment")

The headlines scream a miniscule "decline" in March from 8.92% to 8.83%. But the real world, says Shadowstats, shows 22% unemployed and underemployed when adding the 8.4 million working part-time because they can't get full-time work and the 6.4 million short-term "discouraged" workers — those who've stopped looking for non-existent jobs for the last six months.

Yet even this 22% doesn't include the millions of long-term "discouraged" workers — those out of work longer than six months and up to a year or more — nor workers on welfare who would want a job if they could afford daycare for their children. Actually, 125,000 jobs per month are needed just to keep up with population growth.

Furthermore, at least a million youth joined the military because they couldn't find a job. And at least 1.4 million imprisoned on non-violent drug possession charges (put in rehab programs, not jails, in most industrialized countries) would add even more to the jobless rolls, given their meager chance of being hired as "ex-felons." Finally millions of laid-off undocumented immigrant workers are never counted at all.

Thus, the total jobless rate exceeds 30%. And as for youth, "Teenage unemployment remains off the charts." (NY Times, 4/2)

How long will these millions remain jobless? "If the economy adds 200,000 jobs a month, [the latest "reported" number] it will be 2019 before it reaches the employment rate that preceded this recession." (NY Times, 4/2) That's what capitalist economists call the "normal" rate — 6%. Yes,

under capitalism it's "normal" in the current labor force for possibly 10 million workers to be unemployed!

However, because of racist discrimination — "last hired, first fired" — unemployment for black and Latino workers are double the overall rates. In Detroit 50% of black males are jobless.

So this is what Obama and the economists call "an improving economy." This is the state of capitalism for the U.S. working class entering the second decade of the 21st century.

It's drastically worse for our sisters and brothers abroad. In Spain, a so-called "industrialized" country, it's "officially" 20%. In the Middle-Eastern countries "in rebellion," and in Latin-America the rates reach 40% to 50% or more. South Africa's "official rate" is 25% but more realistically 40% to 50% overall and 80% to 90% in the former Apartheid "townships." (NPR, 4/7) In Haiti it's 80%!

Meanwhile, in the U.S., "Hourly wages are falling because with unemployment so high, most people...will take whatever they can get." (Robert Reich Blog, 4/1) Yet there's only one job opening for every five jobless workers (NY Times, 4/1).

Obama's 'Shared Sacrifice' — Trillions for Imperialist War

In true capitalist fashion, Wall Street profits rose to \$426 BILLION in the last quarter of 2010 alone. (U.S. Commerce Dept.) The financiers' bonuses in 2010 cleared \$150 billion. Yet states have begun to cut the maximum weeks the jobless can collect unemployment benefits from 26 to 20.

"State and local governments are slashing their budgets by roughly \$110 billion this year" (Reich Blog, 4/1) but Obama sends 30,000 more troops to Afghanistan and each one costs \$1 million per year to maintain. His war on Libya cost \$550 million in the first ten days.

As millions walk the streets and lose their homes, U.S. bosses use the money stolen from

the working class to carry on their wars in their rivalry with other imperialists for control of markets, cheap labor abroad and resources, especially oil and gas, the lifeline of capitalism. In turn, these wars enforce poverty wages in the wake of these invasions, adding still more to their profits.

This entire capitalist Great Recession — a Depression for the 35 million jobless, especially for black, Latino and Asian workers — was propelled by the system's drive for maximum profits. Wall Street bankers manipulated the home loan market to reap trillions, and, when this "bubble" exploded, tens of millions were driven from their jobs and more millions from their homes. Then Obama turned around and appointed the very same bosses who profited from the crisis to run the economy!

Crises Built into Profit System

Such crises are embedded in the profit system. This current one follows a long line of many which occur every six to ten years, going back to the 1800s.

Only the overthrow of capitalism, eliminating the exploitation of the working class by eliminating the bosses who do the exploiting, can end these crises of racist unemployment. This requires a working class led by the revolutionary Progressive Labor Party. This Party must be built to be able to lead such a revolution, whose goal is a communist society in which workers control the means of production and run everything on behalf of our class.

An important way to build PLP would be to organize workers in every realm of society to fight this jobless crisis — one expected to last this entire decade — with organizations of the unemployed, with demonstrations, mass marches and strikes. In such an intensified class struggle, we can expose the source of our oppression and win millions of workers worldwide to understand the necessity for communist revolution, truly a "school for communism." ☸

RED EYE ON THE NEWS

Below are excerpts from mainstream newspapers that may be of use for our readers. Abbreviations: NYT=New York Times, GW=Guardian Weekly, LAT=Los Angeles Times

Multinationals financed Qaddafi

NYT, 3/20 — To the editor: In his March 25 column...to do with Colonel Qaddafi's staying power...Brooks does not mention the...decisive influence of the American military-industrial complex.

As reported in "Shady Dealings Helped Qaddafi Amass Fortune" (front page NYT, March 24), Colonel Qaddafi's continued domination over Libya has a lot to do with the willingness of multinationals like Boeing, Raytheon, ConocoPhillips, Occidental, Caterpillar and Halliburton to contribute to his "kleptocracy" and thereby reap for themselves enormous economic gain.

Ruling-class sociology

LAT, 3/26 — "A zillionaire, an immigrant, and a [jobless] union member" confront a plate of 12 cookies: "the zillionaire takes 11 of the cookies, and says to the other two, 'That guy is trying to steal your cookie.'"

Liberal blog sees creeping fascism

Otherwords.org, 3/18 — ...Fascism isn't dead. Its basic tenet is what Mussolini called "supercapitalism," a system where governments and corporations work hand-in-glove. In Mussolini's day, that meant governments needed to take over companies. Today, the companies just take over the government.

Old-time fascism called for war and violence to control useful foreign resources and intimidate dissidents at home. Our country has taken up war, partly for that very same purpose....

Besides physically controlling the populace, fascism was prone to letting folks stew in their own economic juice. Unions were destroyed. Workers, despite their increasing poverty, were expected to be loyal to the unified national expansion campaign, as was everybody else. These days, you can hear similar echoes in congressional...debates....Many people accept this inhumane sacrifice because of their nationalist zeal....But it's disturbing to hear our two political parties speak so often with a single voice on wars, drugs, deficits, homeland security, foreign bases, taxes, and other issues....Most...don't even know what fascism was about. We rarely hear the term now. Nonetheless, it's chilling to see some of its tenets quietly creep into contemporary public policy.

Imperialists invaded tribal Africa

NYT, 3/23 — Is the battle for Libya the clash of a brutal dictator against a democratic opposition, or is it fundamentally a tribal civil war?....

Artificial states with boundaries drawn in sharp straight lines by pens of colonial powers have trapped inside their borders tribes and sects who...never volunteered to live together...Libya, Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Bahrain, Yemen, Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates: The tribes and sects that make up these more artificial states have long been held together by the iron fist of colonial powers, kings [and] military dictators. They have no real "citizens"....

It becomes difficult to discern where the [rebellion] stops and the desire that "my tribe take over



from your tribe" begins.

No proof computer can = teacher

NYT, 4/6 — ...[An] English student...was asked a question about the meaning of social Darwinism. He pasted the question into Google and read a summary of a Wikipedia entry. He copied the language, spell-checked it and e-mailed it to his teacher....

Expanding ranks of students in kindergarten through grade 12 — more than one million in the United States, by one estimate — [are] taking online courses.

Advocates of such courses say they allow schools to offer...a richer menu of electives and Advanced Placement classes where there are not enough students to fill a classroom.

But critics say online education is really driven by a desire to spend less on teachers and buildings, especially as state and local budget crises bring deep cuts to education. They note that there is no sound research showing that online courses...are comparable to face-to-face learning.

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'The Great American Stick-up' 'Regulation' Can't Work; Crises Inherent in Profit System

Robert Scheer's "The Great American Stickup: How Reagan Republicans and Clinton Democrats Enriched Wall Street While Mugging Main Street" exposes how the current global financial crisis of capitalism that has thrown millions of workers into unemployment and homelessness was no accident. Scheer, a life-long pseudo-leftist, uses his book to attack the complicity of financiers and politicians, both Republican and Democratic. His facts are very useful, but his differentiation between business and government is false; they, together, form the ruling class as united in think-tanks like the Council on Foreign Relations.

His book importantly documents the creation of the recession by the capitalists. The economy was turned into a casino with the emergence of financial derivatives and the pimping of sub-prime loans to force the working class to pay for economic growth.

Scheer opens by informing the reader that the culprits are "the captains of finance, their lobbyists, and allies among leading politicians of both parties" that fiercely fought to eliminate all government financial regulation. This strategy accelerated the massive deregulation process that ended in the current economic collapse.

His facts detail how the ruling class pulled itself together in an attempt to ensure their financial dominance and how that attempt crashed. Scheer asserts "This was a giant hustle that served the richest of the rich and left the rest of us holding the bag...Worst of all, legislators from both political parties we elect . . . assaulted us, instead chang[ing] our laws to enable them."

Scheer analyzes how Ronald Reagan's push to establish unfettered financial markets was enacted by the Clinton administration. Both parties agreed to pass the Financial Services Modernization Act of 1999 (FSMA) which repealed the biggest legislative barrier to banking, the Glass-Steagall Act of 1933. That Act, passed amid the Great Depression, erected walls between the commercial and investment banks.

The passage of FSMA was presaged by the mother of all mergers on April 7, 1998, the formation of Citigroup. This merged the giant bank Citicorp with the giant Travelers insurance company, together worth over \$140 billion. This merger forced the ruling class's plan to grow the economy by increasing paper wealth rather than profits stolen through production. Scheer discloses a conversation between President Clinton and the new partners of Travelers and Citibank that occurred just before the merger's announcement. Clinton never questioned or raised any concerns about what effects the unprecedented merger could create; he was a tool of the ruling class. The biggest economic disaster in 75 years soon followed.

Scheer dedicates a whole chapter to Brooksley Born, a regulator who the bosses ignored, driving home the false conclusion that regulation can fix capitalism. His analysis of the unity of finance capital and "government" shows this to be untrue.

Scheer's book is critical of the Democrats and Obama; it is an essential read to understand how the current murderous recession was created by the capitalist class.

In July 2008, Obama's selected economic policy director was Jason Furman, who had produced a paper praising Wal-Mart's low-prices, noting their underpaid workers could survive on government aid. Obama appointed Lawrence Summers as his National Economic Council and Tim Geithner, former chair of the New York Federal Reserve, as the new Treasury secretary. Both are deeply connected to the forces which caused the crisis in the first place.

What Scheer's analysis significantly ignores is that the dreadful logic of capitalism itself really creates crisis and ensures the daily crime of the exploitation of workers. Capitalism encounters barriers periodically because of its internal contradictions, making economic crisis inevitable. Scheer describes the American regulatory system since the Great Depression as functioning "splendidly," but ignores the fact that every decade since then has experienced economic crisis and recessions. Furthermore, as the ruling class deals with falling rates of profit by consolidating corporate power and super-exploiting workers with speed-up, two-tiered wages and outsourcing, the working class suffers more unemployment and falling wages.

Unlike Scheer, we in Progressive Labor Party hold no false hope in politicians or regulations. In the struggle between regulation and profits, profits will always come out on top. We realize that crisis is inherent in capitalism and fight for its destruction. Only communism can create a better system for the working-class by eliminating money, speculation and exploitation.✪

'Wall Street Money Never Sleeps'; It's Exploiting Workers 24/7

In his latest film, about the gargantuan September 2008 global stock market crash, director Oliver Stone should gain points for his ability to convincingly recreate and portray the circumstances that initiated the financial meltdown — and loses points for his inability to direct his audience's anger and blame towards the appropriate sources of the crisis, capitalism.

The film centers around three principal characters: Gordon Gekko, a former Wall Street trader who has been released from federal prison after serving eight years for his "victimless crimes" of insider trading and securities fraud; Gekko's daughter Winnie, a left-leaning idealist who has been estranged from her father for years; and Jake Moore, a young hotshot trader who is dating Winnie. During the seven years since his release, Gordon has re-evaluated his opinions concerning the market economy, penning a best-selling book about such subject matter, and giving guest lectures at universities around the country.

Despite his logical observations about the inherent instability and dangers of the capitalist system, Gekko is nevertheless eager to make his long-awaited return back into trading. He sees his opportunity to do so through Jake, who offers to reunite Gekko with Winnie in exchange for inside information that will help Jake sink a ruthless billionaire trader who is responsible for the collapse of his former firm.

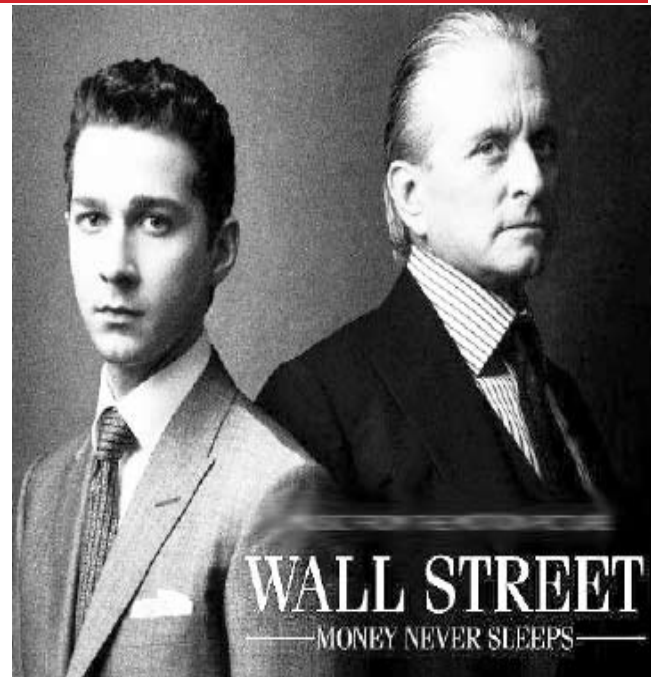
Winnie is cautious and apprehensive of Jake's interest in her father, and justifiably so, because eventually Gekko dupes the two into handing over a large sum of money to him that he then uses to reestablish himself as a powerful broker in London (such is the way of the true capitalist; he or she would jump at any opportunity to accumulate a massive amount of capital, even if it means stabbing their own family members in the back).

Jake and Winnie's relationship suffers because of his deceit, but he, of course, has an ace up his sleeve. By the film's end, he is able to propose a trade to Gekko that will still reunite him with Winnie (despite his treachery), while at the same time providing Jake with the money he needs to help fund an alternative energy company's research

project.

The film is rife with factual information and market jargon that lends an authenticity to the storyline. Where Stone ultimately falls short however, is in his failure to direct audience sympathy concerning the damaging effects of the economic crisis beyond his main three or four characters. With every market crash and firm collapse that is witnessed on screen, the audience is only encouraged to worry about how the "more honorable" capitalists are going to make out, i.e. Jake and Gordon. Never once in the film is there a reference about the working class who truly are the ones who have borne the brunt of Wall Street's failed gambles.

Other absurd ideas presented in the film include the character Jake's assertion that the creation of "bubbles" and their subsequent "bursting" is a natural process, and is necessary for the progression of mankind. In truth, it is only under the system of capitalism that these speculative financial bubbles are allowed to exist and eventually burst spreading their misery. Also, there is the frequent acknowledgement by the main characters, especially by Gekko, that the system is corrupt and flawed, yet they use such knowledge for their own material advantage, not as a means to propose an alternative economy (Communism!).



But whether Oliver Stone, Hollywood, or Wall Street want to admit it, the day is inevitably coming in which an international working class will rise up again and establish a true worker's state, which will put an end to these exploitative leeches and their murderous system once and for all.✪

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