

CHALLENGE



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Workers Of The World Unite: MAY DAY 2010: SMASH ALL BORDERS!



On this May Day, International Workers' Day, the international working class is under sharpening fascist attack while the drums of global war beat louder and slaughter millions. World capitalism pushes its economic crisis onto workers' backs with mass racist unemployment, wage-cuts, soaring food prices and resulting starvation.

Yet masses of workers are fighting back, from immigrant workers striking in France and rebellions in Greece to workers and youth across the U.S. fighting against racist budget cuts. This May Day we must stand as one class, with one interest: to destroy the capitalist murderers with communist revolution and build a communist world based on production to fulfill the needs of our class.

International workers' solidarity must meet the bosses' assault head-on, especially as they use the attacks on the world's 200 million immigrants to attack ALL workers. Immigrant workers are victims of racist super-exploitation, which impoverishes the whole working class by creating a "reserve army of the unemployed," which the bosses use as a club over the heads of all workers, including white workers.

Capitalism has spawned this migration across all borders. We say smash all boss-created borders. We are one class, internationally.

Capitalism created the working class, a class with nothing but its labor power to sell in order to survive.

Early on, the capitalists moved millions of Africans as slaves from that continent to wherever they could produce the most profit. With capitalism's global expansion, immigration is now a worldwide phenomenon. Capitalism's unrelenting drive for maximum profits has uprooted hundreds of millions of workers, forcing them into the squalor of sprawling mega slums, from Haiti to Venezuela to Brazil to Nigeria to China, where 80 million Chinese-born migrant workers are branded as "illegal."

Many die crossing deserts and oceans from Africa to Latin America trying to reach jobs in the U.S. and Europe, as well as from starvation, malnutrition and curable diseases. Those migrating to the more industrialized countries are not only super-exploited but are used as scapegoats, blamed for capitalism-created problems like unemployment, and are treated as slaves or modern indentured servants.

In the past, immigrant workers were on the front lines of class struggle. Global capitalism has created its own gravediggers — the working class — and internationalized it even more. This provides the opportunity for a communist-led working class to

forge the unity necessary for communist revolution. Immigrant workers are now positioned geographically and socially to help lead this fight worldwide.

Their role will become even more crucial as the imperialists' rivalry for world domination intensifies, particularly in the U.S., a declining power fighting desperately to hold its position as top imperialist. Meanwhile it gears up for wider Middle Eastern wars and eventually world war versus the rising

powers in China, Russia and the European Union.

The U.S. rulers' fight over immigration reform involves the tactics and strategies on how and when to wage these wars. One sector wants to do it cheaply with a small, technologically-superior military. These bosses opposing immigration reform just want to terrorize immigrant workers with de-

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History of May Day

May Day is the working class's international holiday celebrated by tens of millions of workers worldwide. It was born out of — and honors — the Chicago workers' historic struggle for the 8-hour day on May 1, 1886, launching a general strike that spread to 350,000 workers across the country. It's a day when workers around the globe march for their common demands, signifying international working-class solidarity.

In 1884, the AFL passed a resolution to make eight hours "a legal day's labor from and after May 1, 1886." Workers were forced to labor "from sun-up to sundown," up to 14 hours a day. The Chicago Central Labor Council then called for a general strike on May 1, 1886, to demand the 8-hour day.

On that day, Chicago stood still as "Tens of thousands downed their tools and moved into the streets. No smoke curled from the tall chimneys of the factories and mills," reported one paper.

On May 3, the cops murdered six strikers at the McCormick Reaper Works. The next day thousands marched in protest into Chicago's Haymarket Square. A bomb was thrown by a police agent. Four workers were killed, seven cops died and 200 workers were wounded in what became known as the Haymarket Massacre.

Nine demonstration leaders were framed for "instigating a riot." Four were hung. A mass protest movement forced the Governor to free those still alive after the government admitted the frame-up.

The tens of thousands who won the 8-hour day saw it eroded, so another general strike was called

for May 1, 1890. At the July 1889 meeting of the International Workers Association, organized and led by Karl Marx, the U.S. delegate reported on the struggle. The Association decided "to organize a great international demonstration, so that... on one appointed day the [world's] toiling masses shall demand..." the 8-hour day. "Since a similar demonstration has already been decided upon by the American Federation of Labor...this day is adopted for the international demonstration." [This kind of international solidarity is vitally needed today.]

As it progressed, the international communist movement took up the struggle and organized May 1st celebrations every year. In the U.S., it was championed for many years by the old Communist Party, with 250,000 marching in New York City in the 1940's. But when that party abandoned its principles, May Day was resurrected by the Progressive Labor Party in 1971 which advanced more revolutionary ideas. May Day marches have been organized by the PLP for the past 35 years, in many cities — Washington, D.C., New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Boston, Philadelphia, Detroit, Houston, Delano, California and others, as well as PLP contingents in Latin America.

While the bosses try to smear May Day as being "imported from Soviet Russia," it remains as a signal contribution of the world's workers born in the actions of those Chicago strikers over a century ago. Today we march for the universal demands of all workers, regardless of capitalist-created borders: against imperialist war, against racism and sexism, for unity of immigrant and citizen workers, against wage slavery, against fascist police terror and for the communist solution to all these attacks facing the international working class.

How prophetic were the last words of Haymarket martyr August Spies as the hangman's noose was tied around his neck and he declared, "There will come a time when our silence will be more powerful than the voices you strangle today!" ☘

It's All About Oil, Profits: Widening Wars Prelude to Nuke Showdown

Wars over access to resources, markets and workers' labor result inevitably from capitalism's dog-eat-dog competition and kill workers by the millions. Attacking this mass murder for profit is essential to the long struggle towards communist revolution our Party marks on May Day. May Day 2010 finds U.S. capitalists, led by Obama, shedding workers' blood openly in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan as they try to shore up a faltering worldwide empire largely based on control of energy. U.S. rul-

ers, meanwhile, must soon confront Iran and have longer-term plans for facing off against China and Russia.

For Exxon's Bottom Line, Obama Keeps GIs in Iraq Despite 'Withdrawal' Pledge

The U.S. invasion of Iraq has slaughtered over one million civilians (Opinion Research Business poll, 2007) and 4,300 GIs in pursuit of a promised 12 million barrels of oil per day (mbd). Obama's phony "withdrawal" plan (which helped elect him) has become a 50,000-soldier "residual" force that will continue the carnage. U.S. combat boots on Iraq's soil, needed to protect Exxon Mobil's, BP's and Shell's new oil stakes there, incite violence from local bosses seeking a piece of the elusive 12-mbd bonanza for themselves.

Masquerading as religious leaders, billionaire Osama Bin Laden (through al Qaeda in Iraq) and would-be pro-Iranian oil baron Muqtada al Sadr have been battling both the U.S. and each other to overturn the Exxon-led deals. Just after a U.S. raid wiped out two al Qaeda bigwigs, al Qaeda bombs killed 72 people near Sadr-affiliated mosques around Baghdad on April 23.

To Rulers, Mid-East Oil, Gas Mean Everything, Workers' Lives Nothing

U.S. capitalists' main goals for their murderous Afghan campaign are: securing the path of the proposed Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline and establishing a military presence that physically separates U.S. foes Iran and China. "Shoot-first" orders from top U.S. brass cause a civilian massacre every week in Afghanistan.

NPR reported (4/23): "Earlier this week, NATO troops opened fire on a vehicle in Khost province, killing four unarmed civilians, including three teenagers. Last week, a military convoy shot up a large passenger bus in the southern city of Kandahar, killing at least five civilians and wounding 18 others."

The U.S. war machine is now gearing up for a June offensive to take Kandahar, which lies directly on TAPI's route. But even if gas never flows, U.S. installations in Afghanistan, like the Bagram mega-base, will have driven a geographic wedge between U.S. rival China and its protégé Iran.

Obama has enlarged U.S. rulers' Afghan effort into Pakistan, with similar disregard for working-class lives. An April 24 Predator drone strike directed from a bunker in Nevada incinerated seven people in northwest Pakistan. But the Pentagon-Pakistani death squad couldn't care less who they were. "We don't know yet if any high-value target was present in the area at the time of attack," said a Pakistani official. (Agence France Presse, 4/24)

A nuclear-armed Iran — pro-Chinese and pro-Russian — presents an immediate threat to U.S. imperialism's precarious leverage over oil-rich Iraq and even richer Saudi Arabia. In response, U.S. bosses plan two basic options, both loaded with

danger for our class. One involves a U.S. (or U.S.-aided Israeli) attack on Iran's nuclear facilities. If that happens, Teheran's oil-soaked ayatollahs vow they will close the Straits of Hormuz, shutting off U.S.-controlled crude exports from Iraq, Kuwait and eastern Saudi Arabia. A massive U.S.-led invasion would soon follow.

The other option, now moving through Congress and seemingly "more peaceful," is for sanctions, including an embargo on gasoline to Iran. The Christian Science Monitor (4/24) warned: "The only way to really enforce such a crippling sanction against the Iranian economy would be through an American-led naval blockade which, by international law, is an act of war...It was a U.S. ban on the export of oil to Imperial Japan for its invasion of China that triggered the 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor. And a U.S. naval blockade of Cuba in 1962 almost led to nuclear war with the Soviet Union." [Despite some off-the-wall religious views, Christian Science is actually a Wall Street/Rockefeller Republican outfit. Goldman Sachs ex-CEO Henry Paulson belongs, as does Nelson Rockefeller ally and Jay Rockefeller father-in-law ex-senator Charles Percy.]

China's Bosses' Growing Navy Challenging U.S. Rulers' Control of Oil

China's capitalists are the U.S.'s biggest rival for Mid-East energy. The NY Times (4/24) reported China's "military is seeking to project naval power well beyond the Chinese coast, from the oil ports of the Middle East to the shipping lanes of the Pacific, where the United States Navy has long reigned as the dominant force."

Meanwhile, neo-czar Putin is using Russia's enormous gas supplies as both carrot and stick to create a vast anti-U.S. Eurasian bloc of nations dependent on, or loyal to, Moscow. With U.S. conventional forces tied up elsewhere, Obama's response has been to flaunt Washington's nuclear trump card. At his recent 47-nation "weapons reduction" summit, Obama in fact retained 1,500 strategic warheads and unlimited smaller, battlefield ones; maintained U.S. nukes based in Europe; and implicitly threatened Iran with a nuclear strike.

Conventional wars are widening and nuclear conflicts are looming, with dire consequences for workers. But on this working-class May Day holiday, while widespread anti-war sentiment exists, the rulers have managed to channel a great deal of it down the dead-end road of electoral politics that put their stooge Obama in the White House.

We must rebuild an anti-imperialist anti-war movement with a pro-worker, communist outlook. Stepping up our organizing efforts on the job, at school and in the neighborhood will help. So will the bosses' intensifying war-making, which will lay bare capitalism's wartime horrors to millions who still feel unaffected. Since the "economic draft," which pushes jobless youth into the military, has proven insufficient to fill the war-makers' military needs, U.S. rulers will someday soon have to draft the so-called middle class as well as the working class into its killing machine.

While it was the cauldron of capitalists' global conflict that provided the conditions for the Soviet and Chinese workers' revolutions, political errors brought capitalism back to both places. But an inevitable World War III, driven by the world's competing capitalists, can result in the bosses' digging their own graves, provided there is a mass revolutionary movement led by PLP to build a true communist world. What we do now surely will count greatly. ☸

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!**

PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

P.O. Box 808 Brooklyn NY 11202

• www.plp.org

• email: desafio.challenge@gmail.com

• blog: challengenewspaper.wordpress.com

• 718-630-9440

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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.

SF Bay Area's Multi-Racial May Day Celebration

SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA, April 26 — On April 24, this area had a very successful May Day celebration, especially because PLP's future is growing from our hands-on activities. We have long-term ties with young adults, family groups and on-the-job fight-backs. This provides the potential for Party growth from a growing circle of people influenced by PLP's activities and ideas.

This is particularly significant as capitalism intensifies its devastation of the international working class. May Day gives new leadership the opportunity to develop, younger and older Party members working together.

A very integrated group of around 60 people of all ages participated, plus 20 younger children. In a world in which people are divided, isolated and filled with the bosses' individualism, this was a great accomplishment. Some who attended for the first time remarked about the mix of Latino, black, Asian and white. The speeches were bi-lingual. Friends and comrades collectively prepared the food, set up and cleaned up.

Unionized government workers in general, and transit workers and teachers in particular, are under intense, racist attack here, representing capitalism's institutional racism. The impact of cuts in transit and education is greatest on black, Latino and immigrant families who depend on these services. This is predominantly true in the make-up of the transit work-force with a concentration of black workers since the 1960s. These are areas where PLP members have been very active in class struggle for years.

The celebration reflected this base of support for PLP; a significant number of those attending were transit workers. Many made a real effort to attend, given rotating shifts, days off and commutes. Party members from AC Transit, East Bay and MUNI-San Francisco described how they're organizing with coworkers to fight the bosses' attacks on transit workers and riders, along with their desire to win workers to build a PLP that can destroy capitalism and establish communism.

Another Party member addressed the world situation, stressing that May Day reflects the significance of our movement. He emphasized the intensifying attack on immigrant workers in the U.S. His speech presented both analysis and action. One Party member reported on the support for the physical attack on the Nazis in Los Angeles the previous weekend. The Nazi-style law recently enacted in Arizona is one example of what the ruling class has in store for us. We must develop the tangible anger against this law into a class-conscious one to build PLP.

Immigrants Rage Against Nazi Arizona Law

Immigrant workers who attended expressed rage and concern about the law while also appreciating the unity of citizens and immigrants at our celebration. After singing the Internationale in English and Spanish, a woman from Central America commented: "This is a very emotional song for us." She and other families who attended lost relatives in the revolutionary struggles there in the 1970's and know first-hand the problems facing immigrant workers in capitalism's failing economy.

Many families brought their children for whom younger comrades organized activities and a playground. This careful planning made the event family-oriented, enabling parents and grandparents to actively participate.

Class struggle continues in the Bay Area. An Oakland teacher called for solidarity for a one-day strike on April 29. A MUNI operator invited all to attend a solidarity march with passengers on May 5 and to support a planned safety "work-to-rule" campaign in opposition to service cuts.

This organizing prompted one retired transit worker to declare: "This gives me a great sense of optimism. The working class is in motion and communists are in the middle of it. We have a world to win!" The words of The Internationale rang true: "We have been naught, we shall be all!" ☺

Red Politics Lead Fight vs. N.J. School Cuts

NEWARK, NJ, April 17 — Around 250 teachers and students protested the new wave of capitalist attacks on the working class today. This time the attacks are taking the form of extreme cuts in education. The New Jersey governor has announced that he will cut \$1.09 billion from schools across the state. As usual, these cuts are inherently racist because the schools which suffer the largest cuts serve primarily black, Latino and immigrant students. The results of these cuts will be larger class sizes due to teacher layoffs, a diminishing of after-school programs and extra-curricular activities, wage freezes and healthcare give-backs, to name a few.

When we arrived at the protest, most chants and signs pointed to Governor Christie as the problem. The chant "Hey hey, ho ho, Governor Christie's got to go" could be heard for blocks along with the honks of support from every car that passed. While Christie is an easy person to hate, this is not enough. We must struggle with workers and students to understand that capitalism and its inevitable economic crises and ever-expanding imperialist wars are the source of these cuts, not individual politicians. In attempts to bring this message to the workers, we led chants linking the cuts to the war, gave a speech connecting the cuts in educa-

tion to all the other capitalist attacks on the working class and distributed CHALLENGE.

While we were able to play a role in leading the demonstration, our consistent work in mass organizations is what made the difference. For over a year now, we have been active in, or connected with, a couple of mass organizations in the area. That commitment is what has put us in a position for our communist politics to lead some of this struggle.

The day after the protest, we brought students and teachers from the demonstration to a May Day fundraiser. We discussed communism as the only solution to the cuts in education that are used to fund bank and corporation bailouts and oil wars. Within that discussion, we made plans for how to bring communist politics to the May Day march in New York City. We will continue to work within the movement against the budget cuts, to fight to win more workers and students to understand that capitalism will never fulfill the needs of the working class. ☺

April 27 — *As we go to press thousands of students across the state walkout against the budget cuts. Full story, next issue of CHALLENGE.*

Racist School Board Shows Capitalist Education's True Colors

Hundreds of angry parents, teachers, and students gathered at last month's Hammond City School Board meeting to confront the gross racism at one of their schools. Before the meeting had officially started, parents whispered their stories to one another, and the palpable energy and anger grew. Fathers and mothers shook their heads in disgust as they listened to account after account of students being made to eat their lunch on the floor for speaking Spanish, being addressed with racial slurs in class and similar racist practices.

Parents' whispers were quickly hushed when, with no small ceremony, the School Board of Directors took their places at the head of the room, and requested that all stand for the pledge of allegiance. The irony was not lost on some residents and our friends who commented, "This is no country of ours," when they noticed PLP members remained seated. Our members must now struggle to make it clear that no nation or nationalism can meet the needs of the workers. The red flag is the only flag of the international working class.

The dismissive attitude toward parents' concerns was evident from the very beginning of the meeting. The Board made a brief announcement in Spanish that it was aware of the problem and was considering implementing civil rights and cultural sensitivity training. This "solution" had been decided before they'd even heard the parents' complaints.

The Board then proceeded with information on what doctors' offices would be invited to immunize Hammond students and how poorly parents are keeping up with vaccine schedules. While 90% of the parents present were Spanish-speaking only, there was no translation offered. Party members asked for translation and were denied, being told, "This isn't a public Board meeting, it's a Board meeting in public."

The disrespect continued as Board members dragged out unbearably long reports on building codes with jokes about vacation spots and sports teams, delaying as long as possible the "public forum."

Over ninety minutes later, the first parent was able to speak. Although the Board was well aware that hundreds of Spanish-speaking parents were present, they failed to arrange for translation, even of the parents' testimonies. This further reinforced the unmistakable impression that the claims were not being taken seriously.

A Party member took it upon herself to act as translator. Stories went from bad to worse, as generations worth of racism were exposed. A young boy shared his story of being patted down in the boys' washroom because "he looked like a Mexican drug dealer." A young girl's face burned red as she told how her teacher said she needn't be in an Advanced Placement class, "since a cute Mexican girl like her should be looking for a job at Hooters." A mom said she cried when she saw her daughter had the same teachers she had over a decade before and would suffer the same racism.

Parent after parent, student after student, passionately denounced the blatant racist harassment they experienced at school. The Board did nothing more than allow them to vent.

The only "solution" offered was the possibility of cultural sensitivity training for the teachers. Party members called for termination of teachers with racist histories, but apart from some nods throughout the audience, it was never considered as a real possibility. Party members are trying to work with students and parents outside Board meetings, in order to escalate the struggle and strengthen our personal and political ties with them.

Sadly missing from the discussion were black parents and students, even though they experience racism in school as well. During a lecture one teacher reportedly told his class, "if we didn't have blacks, we wouldn't have violence." Party members are trying to bring more black parents and students to the next meeting to avoid it being portrayed as simply a "Latino" issue.

It is likely that the racist teachers will get no more than a slap on the wrist. The School Board will probably draw out the struggle for as long as possible to wear parents down, making empty promises and calling endless meetings. The Party's presence, however, can work to integrate the struggle and expose education under capitalism as a failure for the working class, and racism as a necessary part of capitalism. Building ties with both students and parents, bringing forward the very relevant aspects of the Party's line and escalating class struggle as much as possible can teach us a lot about building communism. ☺

PL'er Champions May Day: 'The conscience of the union...'



"Why can't we set up a May Day Committee in the union? We can then start to hold May Day, the international working class holiday each year. Our union has designated May as Labor Month. That's because of the struggle for the 8-hour day that led to May Day."

The question hung in the air.... It was not answered, so the PL'er continued. "After all, we just sang the song Solidarity Forever for the union's fiftieth anniversary, today being that day. And it finishes with the lines: "greater than the might of armies magnified a thousand fold." He then sang out, "We can bring to birth a new world from the ashes of the old, for the union makes us strong."

There were about 400-500 workers in attendance at the union's retiree meeting. The two PL'ers present wanted to bring the message of the May Day March and its importance. The meeting was long and much of it praised five previous union figures who had helped organize the union and win benefits that are important to union members. But there was little mention of the great mass of the membership who stood up strong to win those battles, even though the new President of the union, who spoke first, said this should be for the broad membership.

We had got out a few CHALLENGES at the beginning of the meeting and looked forward to discussing the militant mass struggle that May Day represents, but the meeting went on and on and on. When we were ten minutes from the scheduled end

there was suddenly a little bit of question time allowed based on a report given by a local Assistant District Attorney discussing elder abuse. With just ten minutes to go it was clear that it was unlikely we would get the opportunity to raise the idea of May Day, even as a general question.

One of the PL'ers quickly put his hand up. "Is this period one in which we will only discuss questions dealing with elder abuse?" he asked. The chairman (knowing the PL'er uses diverse tactics to get the floor) said, "Nice try." And then he tried to go on with the elder-abuse questions. But there was a stirring on the floor. Even though the elder-abuse discussion was interesting for most of the attendees, their curiosity was raised, especially since three quarters of the meeting had been spent on self-praise. The chairman, being sensitive to the feeling in the hall, conceded and said, "We'll have one question. It will be yours."

After the question (and song) at the top of this account there was some applause, and a great deal of energetic support, if only for the diversion. The chair would not answer the question, and the meeting was ended. Afterwards a number of people came over to praise the two PL'ers. "That was great. We need some more militancy in this union."

A politically conservative woman who had been sitting next to one of the PL'ers said, "You always raise very interesting points. Even though we don't see eye-to-eye, I think they're very good and important for the union." Another person said, "You speak for the conscience of the union." There were a number of other positive remarks.

We are still lacking in setting up a study group or another way to engage retirees on a deeper, individual level. One of us started working to join a retiree group that always puts out literature not tied directly to the union. Also, we need to become active in the union committees where we offered to work and have more social meetings with the workers there we know very well.

With deeper personal and political ties we can struggle to change the focus of the retiree meetings away from just praising the limited reform gains that were won by trade union struggles that

Smash All Borders

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portations to continue super-exploiting them.

The liberal imperialist sector, however, needs an immigration policy that builds patriotism among immigrants through a 12-year-long path to citizenship. This is in exchange for recruiting millions of young soldiers as cannon fodder in their imperialist wars and to maintain a workforce of millions of super-exploited workers for their war industries.

The vitriolic anti-immigrant stance of their opponents also serves the liberal bosses. This creates the terror and despair that drives immigrant workers into the arms of their "lesser-evil" liberal politicians, churches and unions, with their pacifism and dead-end electoral politics.

Their immigration reform and DREAM Act, aim at forcing undocumented youth into the military under the farce of "helping them go to college," which they can't afford. This "Green Card army" will eventually become the army of all, via the draft or some militaristic "national service" scheme. The slave-like conditions and low wages of indentured immigrant workers will be used to depress conditions for all workers.

The needs of the ruling class are forcing them to bring together two of the most oppressed, potentially militant and rebellious sectors of the working class: black workers and youth, crucial in industry and the military — possessing a rich history of fighting the U.S. bosses' racism — and immigrant workers with a long history of fighting U.S. imperialism.

With PLP building international unity and a base for rebellion and revolutionary communism among industrial workers, soldiers, and students — black, Latino, white, Asian and Arab, immigrant and citizen, men and women — we can fight the bosses' racism, nationalism and patriotism, and unite the world's workers to destroy the scourge of capitalism forever.

The fire of May Day burns brightly in a vibrant and growing internationalist PLP! Workers of the World Unite! Fight to end racism and wars for profit. Smash all bosses' borders! Spread CHALLENGE, the internationalist, revolutionary communist newspaper! Fight for communism! Join us! ☘

didn't identify capitalism as the real problem. These limited victories have been drowned under the mass unemployment and union-busting wage-cuts of the current economic crisis. We can then put the revolutionary anti-capitalist ideas of May Day front and center. ☘

'Get Out Now!' Wins the Day, Exposing Obama's Wars

LOS ANGELES — "There is no 'we' that includes the U.S. government and working people." A member of the political action committee of our organization spoke in favor of a resolution for the U.S. to withdraw all troops from Iraq and Afghanistan immediately. She continued:

"The politicians who make decisions represent U.S. corporations who are fighting to control the resources, markets, and investment opportunities necessary to make profits. Workers in the U.S. are losing their homes, their medical insurance, their jobs, their civil liberties. Do you really believe the same corporate interests that are screwing us will bring peace and prosperity to Iraq and Afghanistan? They haven't brought it to New Orleans."

The resolution stated that the U.S. is in the Middle East and Central Asia to compete with other capitalist powers for control of oil, gas, and pipeline routes, and not to build infrastructure, establish human rights or build schools for girls.

More than 30 people participated in a lively discussion of the resolution. Some of it went like this:

Against: Obama has so many opponents, we need to support him.

For: Why should we support Obama when he is doing what we attacked Bush for doing? Obama

has given hundreds of billions of dollars to Wall St. banks and little or nothing to working people. Obama's Secretary of Defense is Robert Gates, who was Bush's Secretary of Defense.

Against: If the U.S. withdraws without defeating the Taliban, it will encourage terrorists all over the world. And other countries, such as Iran and China, will move in.

For: We are equally opposed to all imperialists, but as working people living in the U.S. we have a special responsibility to fight against "our own" imperialists. U.S. bosses try to suck us into blaming Iran and China for our problems. We should do everything we can to encourage our fellow workers in those countries to attack "their own" imperialists. As for terrorists, the biggest terrorist in the world is the U.S. military, which kills, wounds, and terrorizes Iraqi and Afghan civilians every day.

The resolution passed by a large majority, and the committee also decided to start a weekly protest against the wars. Those who voted for the resolution have compassion for the ordinary Iraqis and Afghans who are suffering and dying under U.S. occupation, and they want the men and women in the U.S. military to return to their families and a better future.

France: 6,000 Undocumented Strikers Press Ahead

PARIS, April 17 — Striking undocumented workers and their supporters rallied outside city hall here today as their strike entered its seventh month. Most of the 6,000 strikers are from Africa and work in construction, the restaurant trade and as guards.

They're demanding general "legalization" according to "improved and simplified criteria that are the same everywhere in France." Presently, "legalization" is decided arbitrarily and on a case-by-case basis by the 100 French prefectures. Estimates of the number of undocumented workers in France run from 200,000 to 400,000.

On April 1, Immigration Minister Eric Besson said he had no intention of easing "legalization" criteria: five years in France, one year of steady employment at a company promising to employ the worker for an additional year, and in a sector where there is "a shortage of native-born workers."

Ruling Party's Electoral Defeat Leads to More Repression

The ruling UMP party and the government were defeated in the March 21 regional elections when the fascist National Front reappeared as a political force. It seems neither the debate on "national identity" nor the immigration minister's inflexible anti-immigrant and anti-undocumented worker policy was enough to persuade the far right to vote for the UMP party.

Now it appears President Sarkozy's regime has reacted by veering to the right, hardening its position and increasing repression of immigrants.

On March 24, the workers at the oldest Paris sit-down strike were evicted. Following the March 31 Council of Ministers [Cabinet] meeting, the occupants of the FAF-SAB premises were evicted the next day, and simultaneously the immigration minister announced no change in the anti-immigrant policy.

Strikers' Victories

Nevertheless, the undocumented workers' movement has been able to score victories. On March 8, 60 CGT trade unionists accompanied undocumented workers to the STN cleaning company in Aulnay-sous-Bois and forced the boss to promise hiring 28 striking undocumented workers. (This

"promise-to-hire" is one precondition for "legalization.")

On March 17, the Bagatelle restaurant was forced to issue eight promises-to-hire to its striking workers. On March 25, one of the Bouygues construction company's renovation sites was occupied by undocumented workers and CGT union activists.

On April 1, hundreds of activists opposed the eviction of the undocumented strikers from the FAF-SAB premises for the whole day. Ultimately, the workers were evicted, but the struggle showed the strength of workers' support for the strikers.

An April 6 editorial in *Le Monde*, the French "newspaper of record," called on the government to abandon its policy as "sad and sordid."

On April 12, a Paris appeals court recognized the right to strike and the right to sit in of the striking undocumented workers employed by Synergie, a temporary work agency.

Trade Union United Front Is Broken

On April 6, the Solidaires trade union confederation announced that it would encourage undocumented strikers to file "individual legalization" requests at the prefecture, without waiting for a new ministerial circular. This was the first break in the united front of 11 associations and trade union organizations supporting the strike.

On April 7 the organizations of the striking undocumented workers discussed the decision and remained unconvinced of its wisdom.

The government can react in two ways to this disunity:

(1) It can "legalize" a certain number of undocumented strikers on a case-by-case basis, the better to refuse all further demands, no new ministerial circular having been issued; or,

(2) It can refuse the requests for "legalization" and deport the undocumented strikers who filed the requests.

In either case, the six-month strike will have been in vain, since the undocumented workers will remain insecure.



The April 9 meeting of the committees of support for the undocumented strikers failed to re-establish unity and asked the 11 trade union organizations and associations for more material help, more means of communication and more initiatives in the struggle, all of which would help win across-the-board, not case-by-case "legalization."

Presently, the undocumented strikers are torn between uncertainty and the possibility of victory. The strike has gone on too long for some, and some are discouraged. Many strikers have lost their jobs and their housing, unable to pay their rent. They expected a tough fight, but thought they would win mass "legalization" by the end of 2009.

Need for Communist Class Consciousness

Another important factor in this strike is the development of revolutionary class consciousness. This means winning the strikers and their supporters to see the big picture, that the strike — as historic as it certainly is — is only one battle in a much greater fight: the struggle of the working class to overthrow capitalism and establish communism, a system in which the workers run society by and for themselves. Winning workers to this perspective guarantees that, however many battles we may lose, we will be on the road to winning the class war. ☺

Greece: Workers Battle Bosses' Bailout



ATHENS, GREECE — Protestors battle cops at demonstration opposing rulers' aim to use the International Monetary Fund to make workers pay for the bankers' financial crisis.

Sit-downers Win A Little; Only Communism Can Win It All



SEYNE-SUR-MER, FRANCE, April 19 — The 120 Poly Implant Prothèse (PIP) workers won a victory of sorts today in their struggle for a separation bonus (see *CHALLENGE*, 4/28).

The workers were demanding a 15,000-euro separation bonus (a total of 1,800,000

euros — \$2,250,000) and a fund to tide them over until unemployment benefits kick in.

On April 17, a majority of the workers' general assembly voted to end the one-week sit-down strike and lift the threat to burn down the factory after the prefect in Toulon promised to free up 450,000 euros for job training and to speed up the payment of unemployment benefits. Those measures were finalized today at a round-table meeting with the trade unions.

This, of course, is far less than what the workers were demanding, but they would have got nothing if they had not taken militant action. Only organizing for communist revolution can

get workers off the treadmill of fighting for — and accepting — crumbs from the bosses' table.

[**Correction** — PIP is owned by the U.S. company Heritage Worldwide, Inc., not Falic Fashion Group, as previously reported. *CHALLENGE* regrets the error.] ☺

LETTERS



Miners' Death Rate: 75 Times General Population!

The April 28 issue of CHALLENGE reported on the recent deaths of 29 miners in West Virginia's Massey Energy coal mine. One article mentioned that since 1900 over 100,000 miners have died in U.S. mining "accidents." It also said that every day three miners die slower more painful deaths from black lung disease, just from breathing the air in the mines.

While the number of sudden violent deaths from U.S. mining "accidents" has decreased to a rate of about 30 a year (with an even higher death rate among Chinese miners), the average number over the last century has been close to three per day. That's three per day from "accidents" plus a similar number from black lung disease, or close to six coal miners dying per day in the U.S.

Now the estimates of deaths among the entire U.S. population from a variety of lung diseases (including emphysema, asthma and lung cancer) range as high as 100,000 per year, or almost 300 per day, from the smog and general pollution caused by the burning of coal and oil (fossil fuels).

The death rate then from coal mining (and other fossil fuels) is six per day per 80,000 coal miners, or about 75 per million miner-days. Yet in the general population the death rate from coal and oil burning is 300 per day per 300 million people, or about 1 per million person-days. In other words, while the death rate among the general population is outrageously high, and absolutely avoidable with the ending of the use of fossil fuels for electricity and transportation, the rate among coal miners is 75 times higher!

And while pollution from fossil-fuel burning causes hundreds of thousands of U.S. deaths per year, with a couple of million such deaths worldwide, a more long-term and potentially more serious problem for the world's working class is the production of global warming from fossil fuels. (See article on global warming on back page and www.plp.org).

The only explanation for this "weapon of mass death and destruction" is the demands of the profit system. The only solution is to destroy the profit system and create a communist system ruled by the working class, one based on workers' needs, not bosses' profits.

Saguaro Rojo

Working-Class Solidarity Makes Cops Back Off

The last issue (CHALLENGE, 4/28/10) had very informative coverage of struggles in the mining industry. On vacation recently, we stopped for lunch in the small town of Boron, California where another important battle is raging.

Boron is where Rio Tinto, an English and Australian multi-national mining conglomerate, operates California's largest open pit mine. This mine contains the largest concentration of borax in the world. Borax is used in the manufacture of many products such as soap, glass and automobiles.

The profits of Rio Tinto are enormous. (In 2009, net earnings of almost \$5 billion on revenues of \$44 billion). In order to compete in the global economy, Rio Tinto tried to "modernize" its work practices. They are imposing slave labor and poverty wages on the 600-member workforce, organized in the ILWU (International Longshoremen and Warehouse Union).

According to one ILWU member, Rio Tinto wants to turn all workers into "day laborers" by ending benefits and part-timing the work. The ILWU and the workers rejected this cruel offer, which is just one more effort to destroy a section of unionized workers who have fought for and won a little extra out of the profit margins of the employers. In January 2010, Rio Tinto immediately hired scabs and locked out the union members. They have used the full force of the government — police blockades, arrests and the courts — to keep production going. They

claim that the unions are "out of touch."

Workers from South Africa, Australia, Turkey, New Zealand, Canada, Europe and Papua New Guinea have expressed solidarity with action and support for the locked-out Boron miners. The battle rages.

While there, we ate in a small Mexican restaurant. A sign in the window, from the ILWU, stated that the restaurant supported the locked-out families of the Rio Tinto mine. The atmosphere was very friendly with people greeting each other as they came in. There was a low murmur of conversation going on and the normal sounds of people eating their meal.

This background noise was suddenly interrupted when three big cops came into the restaurant appearing to be searching for someone. A silence fell over the restaurant and all the customers were glaring at the cops. The tension in the place was palpable. It was class-consciousness becoming a material force. The three cops, almost in military fashion, made an about-face and scurried out the door. The low murmur resumed.

One day this working-class solidarity will be led by the revolutionary communist PLP. The workers will do a little "modernizing" of their own and we will find out who is "out of touch."

Rio Tinto, or any other capitalist venture, will not be needed in the production of the needs of the international working class.

We felt very proud to witness this show of working-class solidarity.

Retired-but-still-active Red

Healthcare 'Reform': Big Bosses' Bailout

Our community-based advocacy group has been watching the health reform process with hope and increasing dismay. The group's Newsletter carried the following article as a piece written by a member. It reflects efforts to introduce a communist analysis of the reform. That is, to move the conversation beyond single-payer and the insurance companies, to healthcare profits, to profits in general, and to what it would take to eliminate profits.

"Most of us are angry, and whipsawed back and forth between pessimism and optimism. The health bill is a gigantic bailout for insurance, drug, hospital, and doctor industries, forcing us onto private insurance, while at the same time forcing down the value of that insurance and making us pay more out-of-pocket, and taking five hundred billion dollars from Medicare over the next ten years.

"Our optimistic side says maybe 30 of the 50 million uninsured will get insured in four years, though many won't be able to afford it and will choose to pay extra taxes instead.

Many of us have children barely able to keep a roof over their heads; maybe they'll qualify for Medicaid, though Obama wants to cut Medicaid costs. And what if this awful health bill had failed? These thoughts drive us nuts."

"It has been a very bitter pill to see how marginalized we are. Deep down, we hoped or expected that once business realized the cost of insurance-based healthcare was unsustainable, our day would come, and our plan of removing insurance companies would be taken seriously. We were wrong."

"The truth is we do not have a movement that's capable of mounting a serious threat to the functioning of the economy or government. We do not have the General Strikes that forced the bosses to cough up Social Security. Nor sit-ins and marches against Jim Crow racism that forced them to create Medicare and Medicaid. We cannot expect different results until we have the kind of movement that can, and will, stop the gears for long enough to inflict serious pain."

"We need to stop asking for our needs to be on the table. We need to kick the table over."

In our group, many people thought that third parties like electoral groups or NGOs (non-governmental organizations, like Red Cross, UNICEF, Doctors Without Borders, etc.) could "kick the table over." This generated discussions on how elections lead people into voting booths as individuals instead of collective action. Since we are not based in a particular industry, the possibility of stopping some part of capitalist production as a way to fight for health care seemed remote.

Most people have some recognition that capitalism cannot deliver decent health care for workers and reject the idea of health as a profit-based system, but this is not the same as fighting for communism. Based on this struggle, we have more boldly brought up questions such as, whether the working class can lead a revolution, what it would take to make a revolution, whether the working class needs a political party like PLP to fight for communism, and whether a society based on workers' need is possible.

Health Care Activist



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Hiding U.S. Imperialism's Carnage in Iraq is the Key to 'The Hurt Locker'

"The Hurt Locker," winner of six academy awards, follows a U.S. Army Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) team during the Iraq War. William James, Owen Eldridge and J.T. Sanborn are members of a U.S. Army "Bravo" EOD unit. They contend not only with defusing bombs but the insurgency of the "enemy." Advertised as a suspenseful picture, which is "near perfect," audiences know in advance that Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) have killed many U.S. soldiers and thousands more Iraqis. Bigelow sets us up in a "perfect" omission of the reason for the U.S. Army being there in the first place. Soldiers are portrayed as life-saving heroes.

A quote that begins the film is from War Is a Force That Gives Us Meaning, by war correspondent Chris Hedges: "The rush of battle is a potent and often lethal addiction, for war is a drug." The final scene, where James begins his new turn of hundreds of days, to leave his son and wife, speaks to irrational reenlistment. But the implied reasons for his returning to this war are much more compelling: the Iraqis are portrayed as the real fanatics and James as a complex character.

James is no stereotypical junkie-addict to violence. He forms a bond of affection with an Iraqi boy. He has a "good marriage" and a child of his own. He comes within inches of sacrificing his own life to save that of an Iraqi man who is unwillingly locked into a suicide bomb jacket.

His only Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome seems to be that of compulsively wanting to return to the thrill of performing a useful, highly-skilled humanitarian mission. His motivation could as well come from the exhilarating feeling of being extremely productive, emphasizing a human element that begs for some meaning or purpose in life.

The film obliterates the real history of imperialist war. The hundreds of thousands of Iraqi workers murdered by the Clinton "sanctions" of the 1990s and the U.S. decade-long war of aggression are nowhere to be found. The imperialist drive to control oil resources is not an Oscar-winning subject.

Two scenes in particular highlight the insidious message of the film. Iraqis, in the very beginning, are shown to be as unpredictable an enemy as the IED's. They watch, portrayed as a potentially dangerously vigil in the wreckage of Baghdad, surrounding the Bravo Unit as it attempts to "secure a safe street." Iraqis become ominous, dismissing the reality that it is that country the soldiers are occupying.

A second more powerful episode occurs when a pitiful, unwilling "suicide bomber" pleads for his life so that he can return to his family. He is literally padlocked into his jacket filled with explosives so that he cannot escape. In one frozen moment, he is the symbol for many suicide bombers who are victims of a terrorist minority

(or a sick Iraqi society) rather than motivated people intent on driving the U.S. invaders out. While terrorism as a political modus operandi serves only to murder the innocent, the terrorist acts of U.S. army officers, pilots of bombers and robot plane technicians upon civilian Iraqi's, Afghanistan and Pakistan people never enter the lens of the director's camera.

The message the media industry wishes to convey is that Oscars make a film worth seeing, and that enlisting in a cause worth fighting for can be satisfying as well as addictive enough for re-upping that enlistment. Hollywood is not interested in the communist motivation that empowered millions in the red armies of the USSR and China to smash fascism during World War II.

The history of working classes with communist leadership who have challenged capitalist wars of profit are left out entirely. Instead, we are encouraged to identify with the individualist acts of one soldier who appears to resolve the problems of war by dismantling one explosive device at a time. Hollywood can only offer mind-numbing defenses of U.S. wars of aggression from Rambo and The Deer Hunter (a racist Oscar-winning movie that portrayed Vietnamese workers as crazy gambling killers of U.S. "innocent" soldiers) to Blackhawk Down and now "The Hurt Locker." ☹

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

Safety 'a distant second' to profit

NYT, 4/11 — "Every place I've ever worked, safety has been a distant second to production," said Billy Brannon, 30, of Harlan, Ky., who has been a miner for nine years. "If you take 30 minutes out of the day doing it right, that takes a lot out of the tonnage of the mine...."

Fines remain so low that they are mere rounding errors on the bottom lines of the big energy companies that own mines....

And once the inspectors arrive, operators can employ a variety of delaying tactics so they can clean up glaring violations....

"It's always been a game of cat and mouse...."

Making routine methane checks, hanging ventilation curtains and shoveling dangerous accumulations of coal dust — all required under federal rules — take time away from production....

Miners say that despite ubiquitous "safety first" slogans, they face relentless pressure to run more coal....

Last Monday morning, a federal inspector visited the Upper Big Branch mine.... took air readings in two locations that showed no methane....

Then he left.... That afternoon the mine blew up.

Jobs kill 170 non-miners daily

NYT, 4/20 — To the editor: You're right that the deaths of 29 miners in West Virginia show the need for stronger oversight... But this is part of a bigger story.

Each day, on average, an estimated 177 workers die from work-related causes — 13 from traumatic injuries, 164 from occupational diseases. Each of these deaths is as heartbreaking and unnecessary as those in West Virginia. But they usually happen one by one, rarely getting much media attention.

The Occupational Safety and Health Adminis-

tration is charged with ensuring that workplaces are safe, healthful and "free of recognized hazards." But like the mine safety agency, OSHA has been understaffed, underfinanced and lacking in enforcement power.

Psychologist's tell-all on priests

NYT, 4/10 — Leslie Lothstein has seen them all: priests sexually active with adult men, others with adult women, others with adolescents, others with children....

"It was a surprise for me to see how many psychopaths I met in the priesthood," Dr. Lothstein said. "Glib, callous, could say anything to you and be charming...."

"I treated priests who had two children. I treated priests who got women pregnant and got them abortions.

"I said to one of them, 'Why didn't you just use a condom?' And he said, 'Because birth control is against the law of the church.'"

Bush or Obama, civilians get shot

GW, 4/16 — ...Recent revelations through WikiLeaks about the killing of civilians by US helicopters in Iraq have highlighted the opportunities for misuse in targeting from the air....

According to Pakistani official statistics... during 2009, of the 44 Predator drone attacks... only five targets were correctly identified; the result was over 700 civilian casualties....

The assumption that trust should be extended to a [US] government that has involved itself in many unlawful practices since the start of the war on terror is too much to ask. Whatever goodwill the US government had after 9/11 was destroyed by the way in which it prosecuted its wars. Further, the hope that came with the election of Obama has faded as his policies have indicated nothing more than a reconfiguration of the basic tenet of the Bush Doctrine, that the US's national security interests supersede any consideration of due process or



the rule of law. The only difference — witness the rising civilian body count from drone attacks — is that the Obama doctrine is even more deadly.

Dump lethal junk on Africa, Asia

NYT, 4/15 — Much of the debate over the handling of electronic refuse arises from the metals like lead and mercury that are used to make electronic devices. Most discarded equipment is either ported to landfills or sold into a murky global market, where it often ends up in vast and unregulated harvesting and smelting operations in poor corners of Africa and Asia. In either case, the disposal poses significant environmental and health risks.

Trust in US gov't at all-time low

minutemanmedia.org, 4/2 — A recent CBS News/New York Times poll confirmed what most of us already know: Trust in government is at an all-time low. According to the survey, nearly seven in 10 Americans feel they don't have much say in what government does, and nearly four in five think our government is run by a few powerful interests....

It shouldn't come as any surprise, then, that only one out of five Americans trust government to do what's right most of the time. They don't believe they have any power to affect public policy.

MORE ITEMS AVAILABLE ONLINE

Sustainable World Only Through Communism — Global Warming: It's Profit System that Heats Up Planet

Part 1:

Global warming is not simply “man-made” as the Nobel committee stated — it is in fact capitalist-made. Capitalism, and not humanity, is the cause of global warming.

Grow or die is the law of capitalism. The net effect of this planless competitive system is that as each corporation is driven to expand by the drive to stay alive, the total accumulation of capital grows.

The overall effect of this single-minded capitalist focus on profits is continual crisis, war and world war, followed by periods of renewed economic expansion. The vicious business cycle causes devastation in the lives of workers through layoffs, increasing deaths, recessions, depressions, homelessness, starvation, drugs, filling of prisons, and the use of working-class youth as cannon fodder in wars. Adding to the misery caused by capitalism are the pollution and methods of waste disposal that destroy the lives of workers, especially in black and Latino neighborhoods in the U.S., and globally in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Capitalism Systematically Destroys Nature

Capitalism is a form of social organization that systematically destroys nature. It is a system driven not by need, and particularly not by the need to preserve the natural sources of its bounty. It is driven by profit. Profit-making requires efficiency not only within the individual business, but the competition inherent in profit-making requires that all businesses maximize profits continually, and particularly so over the short term — or go belly up.

Capitalism, for all practical purposes, prevents us from obtaining food, water, shelter, clothing, and other needs, unless we work for the capitalists and produce value worth more than we are paid — with the excess taking the form of surplus value, or profit.

Capitalists invade nature for their own class needs, in effect stealing it from the working class, enforcing their control over us and over the earth through their control of state power. They strip-mine and destroy entire mountains; they force over-fishing of the oceans in the competitive drive for profits; they clear-cut forests for wood products; they drain wetlands for city development without creating replacements elsewhere. Capitalism turns land into real estate, forests into lumber, and oceans into fisheries and turns the world's working class into profit-producing commodities as appendages to capitalist machines.

Planet Becomes a Toxic Dumping Ground

On the waste-product side: capitalists dump toxic or radioactive waste into soil, rivers, oceans, and the atmosphere. Numerous deaths result, without our class being able to do much to stop them, since the state protects only capitalist interests.

In a few local situations, through long major collective campaigns, workers have forced a few temporary concessions, but the overall destruction of lives and the environment accelerates everywhere else. The capitalists thus literally get away with this type of murder, just as they do through police brutality, poverty, racism, and oil wars.

In its single-minded drive for profit, world capitalism is fast exhausting the earth's resources, and what is left is fast being ruined by waste products. The most important resources fast approaching exhaustion are oil

(the lifeblood of capitalist economies) and fresh water (the lifeblood of all plants and animals). The primary waste products include toxic and radioactive substances and most important so-called greenhouse gases (GHGs).

GHGs are causing a rapid warming of the atmosphere — glaciers, soil, and oceans — that threaten to change the earth's climate radically and to push the change into an irreversible phase with catastrophic results — the depletion of fresh water will become a catastrophe as well, both directly for personal use and indirectly through the effect on our food supply.

'Greenwashing'

Particularly beginning with the Obama campaign, there has been a shift in the U.S. media and government from denial to “greenwashing.” Greenwashing involves the admission that the earth is warming and that human activity is indeed the cause, but it generally lays the blame on an over-consuming and overpopulated working class, without recognition that capitalism determines what people consume.

Overpopulation is a relative term concerning what portion of the working class capitalism can employ. Furthermore greenwashing proposes solutions that appear effective but are at best mere tokens, not radical plans that could actually stop global warming.

The U.S. rulers need to guarantee that they don't have to change the infrastructure of capitalism or end their extremely profitable oil-based industries. The U.S. rulers also have an imperative need to try to slow the rapid economic advance of their imperialist rivals, especially China, whose capitalist ruling class promises to take the title of World's Largest Economy away from the U.S. in the next decade or two. China's industries, as well as India's, thrive on coal more than on any other source of energy. Their pollution of the world's atmosphere through the burning of coal is well known.

U.S. Rulers Adopt Tokenism

In order to lessen their own isolation and increase that of India and China, and even more importantly to find other ways to attempt to slow the economic growth of these two challengers, the U.S. rulers are now taking token steps that appear to address global warming. However, these steps are wholly inadequate to prevent catastrophic climate change.

Various international meetings among capitalist governments have produced schemes to reduce GHG emissions, such as “cap and trade” or “carbon tax,” but even the most ambitious target from the European Union, that calls for a reduction of emissions 80-95% below 2000 levels by 2050, allows continued increase in GHG concentrations.

Along with caps, alternative sources of energy have to be found. There are a number of such sources that have been touted, including solar, wind, hydroelectric, ocean wave, tide, agriculture, geothermal, and finally nuclear. There are problems with most of these alternative sources. These include the increasing amount of energy and materials that have to be put into them in order to get energy out of them (Heinberg). Aside from the profit considerations that dominate all capitalist decisions, some of these alternative forms of energy may not be practical even after capitalism becomes history. ☺

(concluded next issue)

CAPITALISM BREEDS SEXISM RACISM & IMPERIALIST WAR



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