

CHALLENGE



THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

Axle Strikers Put Brake on Auto Bosses

DETROIT, MI, April 6 — As the strike of 3,600 UAW members against American Axle (AAM) moves through its second month, this main labor struggle in the U.S. is emerging as more than one about money. The highly-profitable AAM, which won a two-tier wage system in the 2004 contract, wants to chop wages in half, cut medical benefits, freeze pensions and replace them with a 401(k). AAM also aims to move work to non-union operations in Oxford, MI. (less than \$10-an-hour) and Saltillo, Mexico (70 cents/hr), close two forges covered by the contract and eliminate 1,000 jobs.

As CHALLENGE has reported during the strike, with mass racist unemployment and poverty wages crashing down on cities like Detroit and Buffalo, more and more mouths depend on each auto industry paycheck. That point was underlined when a black woman striker who is six months pregnant told a PLP cultural event (see page 3), "I'm very worried, but I'm going to be strong!"

Over the last two years, there's been a major restructuring of the domestic U.S. auto industry, wiping out more than 100,000 jobs at GM, Ford, Chrysler and Delphi, and cutting starting wages to about \$14/hr. In addition there was a major shakeout of parts suppliers, with Delphi, Tower, Lear and others going bankrupt. The bosses and the UAW leadership carried out these devastating attacks with little organized resistance.

The bosses here are under siege from European and Asian auto billionaires, while more and more production is shifting to China and India, creating even more downward pressure on wages and living conditions for auto workers



worldwide.

The endless struggle among the world's bosses for markets, resources and cheap labor will ultimately be resolved through world war. The bosses bomb their rivals' factories and kill the workers. The U.S. industrial unions are already beating the anti-China war drums for the bosses. Iraq is a warm-up. Today the bosses eliminate jobs. In the future, as in Iraq, they will eliminate workers.

The strike has put a chokehold on GM, canceling production of 100,000 vehicles and forcing the closing of 30 plants affecting over 20,000 workers. It has also rippled through many parts suppliers, affecting another 5,000 workers. Standard & Poor's is considering cutting the credit ratings of AAM, GM, Lear and Tenneco because of the strike.

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Iraqi Desertions Show Bribes Won't Win U.S. Oil War

"More than 1,000 Iraqi soldiers and policemen either refused to fight or simply abandoned their posts during the inconclusive assault against Shiite militias in Basra last week." (NY Times, 4/4/08) These included dozens of officers and two senior field commanders.

The mass desertion at Basra, Iraq's oil hub, shows that U.S. rulers can't depend on hired colonial armies. Even with unemployment near 60%, military paychecks can't motivate Iraqis to risk their lives for Exxon Mobil. The Pentagon clearly must deploy more and more U.S. troops to secure the Mid-East and its energy supplies for U.S. capitalists in their fight with their imperialist rivals. The next president's number one job will be vastly expanding U.S. armed forces, with either a draft or some militaristic "national service" scheme.

In addition to exposing the Iraqi army's fundamental unreliability, Basra widens the Iranian front in the war. In U.S. rulers' fight for Iraqi oil — one they can't afford to lose — they now must confront Teheran head on. Washington's plan for Basra was to have its puppet prime minister Maliki wage an "historic and decisive" battle against the Iran-influenced anti-U.S. Sadr militias controlling the city. But when Maliki's men deserted, U.S. and British forces began strafing and shelling, slaughtering 300 people, many civilians.

"When the going got tough, top Iraqi Shiite officials rushed to the holy city of Qom in Iran to get help mediating a Basra cease-fire with Sadr." (Philadelphia Inquirer, 4/6/08) They beseeched the head of Iran's Revolutionary Guard. "Iran now holds the key to stability in Iraq." (Inquirer article) According to retired Indian diplomat M.K. Bhadrakumar:

"What has happened is essentially that Iran has frustrated the joint U.S.-British objective of gaining control of Basra, without which the strategy of establishing control over the fabulous oil fields of southern Iraq will not work. Control of Basra is a pre-requisite before American oil majors make their multi-billion dollar investments to kick start large-scale oil production in Iraq. Iraq's Southern Oil Company is headquartered in Basra. Highly strategic installations are concentrated in the region, such as pipeline networks, pumping stations, refineries and loading terminals." (Global Research, 4/4/08)

Thus, Iran's oil barons, cloaked in ayatollahs' robes, join a host of Iraqi factions preventing Exxon Mobil, Chevron, Shell, and BP from realizing the six-million-barrel a day bonanza for which U.S. rulers invaded in the first place. Current production stagnates around 2,000,000 barrels.

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MARCH ON MAY DAY>>

**DON'T VOTE
MARCH ON MAY DAY!**
TO REVOLT AGAINST
IMPERIALIST WARS
RACISM, SEXISM,
FASCIST POLICE STATE
★FIGHT FOR★
COMMUNISM
MAY 1st in LOS ANGELES & MAY 3RD in NYC, CHICAGO
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Reap Million\$,
Workers 'Reap'
Unemployment**

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March on May Day with Millions of Workers Worldwide



May Day (May 1st) 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, 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 institute the 8-hour day.

WHAT WE FIGHT FOR:

★ **Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to smash capitalism — wage slavery. While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions all over the world.**

★ **Capitalism returned to the Soviet Union and China because socialism failed to wipe out many aspects of the profit system, like wages and division of labor.**

★ **Capitalism inevitably leads to wars. PLP organizes workers, students and soldiers to turn these wars into a revolution for communism — the dictatorship of the proletariat. This fight requires a mass Red Army led by the communist PLP.**

★ **Communism means working collectively to build a society where sharing is based on need. 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.**

★ **Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women workers.**

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

★ **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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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 police agent threw a bomb, and four workers were killed, seven cops died and 200 workers 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 when 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.

May 1st was adopted as the day when the world's working class "holds a review of its forces, mobilized for the first time as One army, [under] One flag...[to] make the capitalists and landowners of all lands realize that today the proletarians of all lands are, in very truth, united."

Ever since, with communist leadership, it has symbolized workers' demands and class interests, united in the fight against capitalism. But by the 1950's, most "communist" parties had abandoned these principles. Union leaders became lieutenants of the bosses, and either renounced May Day or stripped it of its revolutionary character.

The Progressive Labor Party, formed in the 1960's, picked up the red banners of May Day in 1971 in the U.S. It has organized May Day marches

and activities in many areas of the world for over 35 years, to unite workers around the universal demands of all workers, regardless of capitalist-created borders. These include: against imperialist war, against racism and the special oppression of women, for unity of immigrant and citizen workers, against wage slavery, against fascist police terror and for the only solution to all these attacks facing the international working class — communist revolution.

Everything we do now to win more of our class sisters and brothers to our ideas will bear fruit later, when the working class flexes its muscles once again. Imperialism has blanketed the globe and has nowhere left to go, except constant wars to re-divide markets and control super-exploited workers. This is a period of widening war, increasing police-state fascist repression and mounting economic misery. Despite appearances and regardless of obstacles, our class has only its chains to lose.

The long, difficult period ahead must not deter us. Making a commitment to serve the working class for a lifetime of revolutionary struggle remains the best choice one can make this May Day.

Join and build the Progressive Labor Party and help lay the foundation that is putting millions of workers and youth on the road to revolution. In particular this means deepening our influence and bringing communist ideas to the factories, campuses, the military, and the mass movements; sharpening the class struggle and creating a mass base of readers and distributors for CHALLENGE.

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!" Join us on May Day. Fight for Communism! ☼

Iraqi Desertions Show Bribes Won't Win U.S. Oil War

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As Iran's Oil Bosses Gain Clout In Iraq, Scope of U.S. Oil War Widens

Retired general William Odom understands both the ineffectiveness of bribes and U.S. rulers' need for much broader military action in the Persian Gulf. Speaking of shaky pro-U.S. anti-al Qaeda fighters in western Iraq, Odom said:

Let me emphasize that our new Sunni friends insist on being paid for their loyalty. I have heard, for example, a rough estimate that the cost in one area of about 100 square kilometers is \$250,000 per day. And periodically they threaten to defect unless their fees are increased....Remember, we do not own these people. We merely rent them. And they can break the lease at any moment. (Harvard University's Nieman Watchdog, 4/2/08)

As a White House military advisor in 1979, Odom helped formulate the Carter Doctrine, which demanded direct and permanent U.S. military domination of the Mid-East and its oil following the Iranian Revolution. Today he calls for "realignment and reassertion of U.S. forces" in the region (Nieman article).

Obama, Clinton and McCain All Want You (or Your Children) for War

With constantly re-deployed U.S. troops

stretched to the breaking point, reasserting U.S. might in the Mid-East requires the bosses to rally masses of young people to their war machine. Worried about mental health, morale, and rebellion (a word they dare not utter) in the armed forces they currently have, U.S. rulers plan to shorten war-zone deployments from 15 to 12 months. (Arch-imperialist liberal senator Jay Rockefeller led this effort.) For the rulers, the current presidential race revolves around who can most effectively win the fresh recruits for their wars. Obama seems the rulers' favorite, with his lies about "moral obligation" for "humanitarian" action from Darfur to Iraq mobilizing millions of military-age youth to the electoral system and thus to supporting U.S. imperialism. But they could also live with Clinton's "national service" calls and determination to regulate any maverick Wall Street bankers who challenge the Rockefeller Exxon-Mobil forces or even with McCain's more traditional flag-waving patriotism. The liberal New York Times ran a front-page story (4/6/08) praising generations of McCain's selfless, exemplary service to the nation, centered on McCain's relationship with his son, a Marine veteran of Iraq.

Basra re-teaches the important lesson that material incentives will never inspire a will to fight. As the Mid-East war widens and global conflict looms, we must strive harder to make workers aware of their class interests, to expose the futile electoral system, and prove that revolution for a communist, worker-run society is the only goal worth fighting for. ☼

PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

P.O. Box 808 Brooklyn NY 11202

www.plp.org

email:cd188@juno.com

Phone: 718-630-9440

Students Mark War Anniversary with Anti-Imperialist Politics

LOS ANGELES, March 15 — “The coalition showed we can do a lot when we unite against racism and imperialism,” said one student organizer, describing a multi-racial group of campus organizations that planned a week’s events marking the five-year anniversary of the Iraq War.

Many student participants are long-time CHALLENGE readers, agreeing with recent editorials and articles on the presidential elections, seeing that both Republican and Democratic politicians serve the most powerful U.S. bosses. They strongly support PLP’s anti-racist and anti-imperialist internationalist politics. Some now understand how communist revolution can solve the problems facing the international working class. The well-attended events showed that fighting identity politics, patriotism and reformism with PLP’s politics helps build the Party.

The students championed campus events bringing to more students and workers this analysis of capitalism and the war, fighting to expose their imperialist nature. They linked racist cutbacks to the permanent war budget, the electoral fraud and the exploitative role of sexism, nationalism and racism. They also wanted events expressing grassroots worker-student-soldier solidarity — explaining the importance of politicizing soldiers and supporting rebellions within the military — and that advanced multi-racial unity against anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant racism.

With collective struggle, amid such solidarity, various campus groups organized eight events — forums, teach-ins, documentary screenings, campus speak-outs and an election debate including college Republicans and Democrats. Large crowds turned out, surprisingly capturing the attention of the school newspaper (usually very conservative and tight-lipped about anti-war events). Many students were open to PLP’s analysis and to the events’ more general anti-imperialist politics.

In one panel, Iraq vets related their wartime experiences, noting the growing number of soldiers organizing against the war. Answering a question on how students could help, friends advocated building solidarity between students and soldiers, and supporting soldiers’ rebellions in the military. “Visiting military bases and reaching out to veter-

ans on campus can build this unity,” said one panelist.

Agreement about the wars’ imperialist roots was strong overall, but many students still see the Democrats — especially Obama — as a step forward. The debate exposed media lies about Obama and the Democratic Party. The College Democrats’ president agreed with the Republican club on nearly everything but admitted that all politicians have “blood on their hands.”

Agreeing, a student warned that politicians only defend ruling-class interests — more wars and racist cutbacks, higher tuition and eventually a “national service” draft. Students were surprised about Obama’s overall pro-war stance, despite his criticisms of Bush and the Iraq War. We must work harder to expose the ruling class’s electoral circus, and to link the communist future the working class will build to the local, concrete anti-imperialist organizing needed to guarantee that future.

Most important, though, was the political leadership taken by PLP’s friends and the confidence they showed in communist ideas. Because of these political struggles, over 15 students joined PL’ers from other campuses at the city-wide anti-war march in Hollywood.

Student groups are now planning campus May Day events, organizing a multi-racial worker-stu-



Thousands Fight Egyptian Cops’ Attack on Striking Textile Workers

MAHALLAN-AL-KUBRA, EGYPT, April 8 — The Mubarak regime, one of U.S. rulers’ closest allies in the Mid-East, brutally attacked a textile workers’ strike here against low wages and rising food prices. Tens of thousands of strike supporters confronted the guns and clubs of anti-riot cops and paramilitary thugs. Some demonstrators were killed, including a 9-year-old girl, as protests spread to many other cities.

dent-alliance contingent to join other workers in the immigrants’ rights march May 1. Liberal groups backing Obama and Clinton, pushing patriotism, loyalty to imperialism and the Dream Act are organizing that demonstration, making it crucial to fight for anti-imperialist and communist politics at the march!

Long-term consistent struggle around these ideas, especially increasing CHALLENGE readers and networks, have created a modest but strong base supporting PLP’s fight for revolution. The battle for such ideas within mass organizations may be slow and difficult, but it’s crucial to developing communist consciousness among students, workers and soldiers. ☸

AXLE STRIKE Walkout Rages On

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This is the power of the working class. That’s why a mass revolutionary communist PLP leading millions of workers is needed to ultimately put the final chokehold on the whole racist profit system of wage slavery.

The strike exposes the hoax behind the UAW’s strategy of using its “leverage” with GM, Ford and Chrysler to pressure the parts suppliers. In theory, by “partnering” with the major auto bosses, the union could count on them to pressure the suppliers to agree to contracts and/or card checks for organizing.

But GM, the UAW and AAM all agree wages should be cut in half, as negotiated for the major auto makers this past September. Now they’re discussing only how much money to throw at AAM workers in buy-outs and buy-downs (lump-sum payments in return for permanent pay-cuts) to get them to cut their own pay.

As for GM, they have little interest in pressuring AAM. They started March with a 129-day supply of Silverado pick-ups and expect sales to drop 15% from a year ago. So far, they’ve

been able to ride it out, without plans to make up the lost production.

With the recent shut-down of the Detroit-Hamtramck plant, the strike will begin affecting passenger-car production. In addition, AAM strikers have inspired other workers. Ten-day strike notification has been given at five GM plants over local contract issues.

PLP members and friends have joined hundreds, even thousands, of other workers picketing with the strikers. Workers from GM and Chrysler, AAM’s main two customers, as well as Ford, Delphi, Detroit teachers, various churches and many more have brought food and money to the strikers. Cars honk in support as they pass the 12 picket lines around the 7-plant complex in Detroit. Visiting workers often bring BBQ pits and cook for the strikers. The very integrated picket lines are staffed 24 hours a day.

Some strikers are reading CHALLENGE and many more will be introduced to it at the big April 18 Solidarity rally. We’ll make our presence felt that day, and follow it with a group of AAM workers at May Day. ☸

Striker Vows: ‘We’ll help spread the Progressive Labor Party’

CHICAGO, IL, April 5 — “We won’t give up. We can’t. I’m six months pregnant, and I’m worried, very worried about how I’m going to be able to take care of my baby. Life is very hard in Detroit, you just don’t know,” declared one of three striking American Axle workers who attended our evening of international anti-racist culture tonight. “But I’m going to be strong and we’re not going to give up. You all do what you can to support us, and we’ll bring as many people as we can to May Day!”

Her husband followed, inviting the 90 workers and youth to Detroit for an April 18 strike-support rally. “We will help you spread the Progressive Labor Party,” he said. We passed the hat for the striking workers and sent them back to the struggle with almost \$900!

The crowd was already in the mood, having heard a series of poems and a PLP leader inviting them to march on May Day, take May Day Dinner tickets and join the campaign to increase the circulation of CHALLENGE newspaper. These strikers captured that revolutionary communist, anti-racist mood.

Then came the main event, a performance by Echoes of Southern Africa, a group of singers and dancers from numerous African countries. We met them through a Ford worker who was active in the Jena 6 struggle, sparking his UAW Local 551 to send a delegation and \$500 check for that case, while involving hundreds of Ford workers in a plant-gate collection. He told the crowd he was honored to be here with his striking brothers and sisters from Detroit, in a room “full of revolutionary workers.”

The singers and dancers performed for over an hour. Their high energy, wonderful voices and graceful movements held the crowd’s attention from beginning to end. Overall it was a successful evening, but should have been much larger. That’s our challenge as we head into May Day. We hope to hold these cultural events every three months. As we become organizers, they will get bigger. ☸

Black, Caribbean, White Hospital Workers Fight Racism

On the surface it looked very ordinary: two hospital custodial workers were cleaning a patient's room. But the conversation between the two workers was anything but ordinary. "I need to learn more from you about fighting the bosses," said John. "Well," said Bill, "the main guidance I get comes from being a communist." "Tell me again," said John, "what is communism?"

Later, three custodial workers were debating the tactics used in a union fight against a racist boss. Al and Ed believed that some of Bill's ideas were too incendiary, harsh and confrontational. Al, a union delegate, said that he tries to handle his differences with the bosses in a "professional" manner. Bill, also a union delegate, explained that he was trying to think beyond the fight against the bosses. "We have to energize the union members for the contract fight this summer," argued Bill. "You guys know I'm a communist," Bill continued, "we're always trying to think about the big picture." But Ed, a newer union member interrupted, "You're a communist! What exactly does that mean?"

The PLP organizing at this hospital should include more experiences like these. We've been active in the union here for quite some time. We're viewed as part of the union leadership for the entire hospital. We are asked to join, lead, or contribute to a constant flood of reform fights, big and small, as well as assist many workers with personal problems.

At this stage of the game, it's very easy for us to get into high gear with the union reform activity. But it's still a constant struggle to shift the communist organizing into high gear at the same time. Too often we still make reform primary over revolution. This error does *not* mean that communists shouldn't work in mass organizations like unions. This error does mean that inner Party ideological struggle is crucial.

A number of the workers understand the merry-go-round of reform fights all too well. "It's corporate America," argued James, a supply worker.

"We are struggling with the workers quoted in this article as well as the others in our base to join us on May Day."

"Even if we strike in July and win the fight to protect our pension, in 10 years we'll be fighting the same fight." PLP's participation in the union helps introduce us to workers like James. But making communist revolution primary means that we get CHALLENGE to James, follow up with him and invite him to a Party study-action group.

Marie, a worker from the Caribbean, was just suspended. In our union, there are deep divisions between the black workers from the Caribbean and

the black workers born in the U.S. Nonetheless, several U.S.-born black workers told Bill, a union delegate, that they wanted to support Marie. "That could be any one of us," they declared. At lunch time a group of black and white workers, including black workers from both the U.S. and the Caribbean, hammered out a petition that blames the bosses for the short-staffing and the dirty patient rooms and demanded that Marie get her money back. A few days later, at a union solidarity event organized by the rank and file to build our contact fight in July, workers from all over the hospital lined up to sign Marie's petition.

But of all the activity around fighting Marie's suspension, the most important was the struggle with the workers, and an old Party friend from the Caribbean in particular, to understand that the racism against the Caribbean workers comes from capitalism, not the workers who may express it. We may or may not win the fight against Marie's suspension, but our main fight is to overthrow capitalism and its racism.

We are struggling with the workers quoted in this article as well as the others in our base to join us on May Day. If we bring more workers, increase our CHALLENGE distribution and recruit to Party study-action groups, then we've scored a modest victory to make communist revolution primary over reform. ☸

Dinners Serve Much Food for Red Thought

LOS ANGELES — A number of CHALLENGE dinners, with over 160 people in all took place recently. Industrial workers and youth pledged to raise the readership of the newspaper by taking more to their jobs and schools. At one dinner, with high school and college students we raised over \$150 in subscription money. Several people joined the Party from our events.

Each dinner discussed the current state of world capitalism: sharpening inter-imperialist rivalry leading to World War III, increasing attacks on the working class, and the current expensive election campaign to try to win workers, soldiers and youth to loyalty to the ruthless racist U.S. rulers. CHALLENGE shows the source of these attacks is capitalist competition for maximum profit and the solution is fighting to turn the coming imperialist wars into communist revolution.

One dinner was combined with a retirement party for a comrade. A fellow worker and comrade in the same company talked about the good communist leadership the retiring comrade has given. He called on the others to step up to increase the readership of the paper and the revolutionary movement, especially as workers face growing attacks. Then other workers spoke about how much the comrade had helped to build unity among all the workers. One black worker said that our comrade had helped him a lot in confrontations with management. "Then he started bringing me CHALLENGE," he said. "At first I thought it was a little 'out there' but CHALLENGE has opened my eyes to how to see the world."

These dinners show there's great potential to build CHALLENGE networks and PLP. While the collapse of the old communist movement presents our class with serious challenges, PLP squarely faces the errors by calling for fighting directly for communism rather than the "halfway house" of socialism with its concessions to the capitalist system of wage slavery. It's up to communists today to take those lessons to the heart of the working class. As our class faces crisis, cutbacks, layoffs, foreclosures and war, we'll increase the circulation of CHALLENGE, reader by reader. ☸

'Reducating' Chicago Campuses

Campus activity in Chicago is heating up as we build for this year's May Day activities. In recent weeks, PLP members have organized or participated in four campus forums involving over 150 people. Topics ranged from the elections to Martin Luther King to black-white-Latino relations to the struggle against racist cutbacks in health care. Members and friends put forward communist ideas, pointing out that McCain, Obama and Clinton are supported by many of the same rich corporations. Also we said that budget cutbacks are an inevitable part of capitalist processes and that the working class needs the revolutionary destruction of capitalism to guarantee good health care. Other points included the role of revolutionary violence in the 1960's, the reality that life for the whole working class, especially black workers, has gotten worse even with the Civil Rights legislation because capitalism, with or without its regular crisis, needs racism to make superprofits. We advocated the need for members of all so-called "racial-ethnic groups" to support our common struggles against all forms of anti-working-class oppression.

Equally important with the comments made at the forums is the fact that these activities were organized by PLP members together with many non-party friends. The discussions, debates and struggles that we have with those who do not agree with us lay the basis for involving many more people in future activities. We are making a strong effort to bring young people to the May 1 immigration march and PLP May Day activities. A few more young people have joined PLP. We live in a very unstable world that is getting more dangerous every day. By working in the class struggle with those who don't agree with all our ideas and struggling to win them to communist revolution, the possibilities for building a stronger, larger revolutionary communist movement are real and growing.

Chicago comrade

AMTRAK Derails Immigrant Workers

NYC, April 9 — Protest in front of Penn Station attacking Greyhound buses and Amtrak for allowing racist raids by agents of ICE (the anti-immigrant Gestapo).



Cal Pols Impose Racist Cuts, Liberal LA Mayor Wants More Cops

LOS ANGELES —The proposed California state budget — with massive education cutbacks — reflects capitalism’s crisis. State revenues have plummeted from the sub-prime mortgage fiasco. Rising unemployment and the decline in workers’ real wages reduces state tax revenues. Federal funds to states shrink as war costs soar.

The bosses are making workers pay for this crisis. Our children are being mis-educated under worse conditions than ever. California businesses, including aerospace subcontracting and health care, can’t find enough workers with the skills they need. They want workers’ taxes to pay for “workforce development” so they can compete effectively and meet the imperialists’ need for war production. Right now, students don’t even get the education the bosses need for them.

Of all 50 states, California ranks third from the bottom in spending per student, 22% less than 40 years ago. The proposed budget cuts another \$750 per student, forcing school districts to lay off teachers, librarians and counselors while increasing class size and slashing special programs. Meanwhile, 170,000 people are behind bars — disproportionately black and Latino young men — costing nearly \$4 billion annually.

Now they want to increase the highly regressive sales tax and vehicle license fees. The latter could suck \$6 billion more from California workers who need cars to get to work.

LA Mayor’s Plan: Sack Workers, Hire Racist Cops

In Los Angeles itself, Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, Democratic Party darling, ordered layoffs and cutbacks beginning July 1, for all city departments, while hiring more cops (LA Times, 3/13). Amid a

budget crisis, he needs more racist cops to repress potential rebellions against these cutbacks.

He also wants to lift a restriction on dismissals for the current fiscal year. It’s been over 15 years since LA laid off and demoted workers because of a budget crisis. Waves of hiring freezes followed that.

Local officials, nearly all Democrats, support the Mayor. They even agreed with his absurd rationale for firing workers in order to hire more cops: it’s “absolutely necessary for LA’s economic development”!

Union leaders are backing the Mayor in two ways. The SEIU and AFSCME leadership — hardcore Democrats — are helping the Mayor’s staff achieve cost savings and new revenue sources, such as unpaid furloughs and a garbage-collection fee to help pay for new cops. Meanwhile, other unions tell their members “not to worry” because Civil Service rules are “too complicated” to implement layoffs. Plus, the City will simply offer a buyout program to older workers to save jobs for new hires.

Obviously City workers need the truth, not trained-dog “leadership.” We don’t need more racist anti-worker cops to harass those who fight cutbacks. Meanwhile, conditions in schools and for roads, electricity and water supply deteriorate.

These layoffs are a part of similar layoffs and cutbacks hitting counties, school districts, state agencies and other cities.

LA’s budget crunch is not merely a by-product of the real estate slump. It results from enormous tax breaks City, state and federal government have given businesses and investors, plus enormous expenses for California prisons and for the Iraq and Afghan Wars.



California rulers may make the capitalists themselves pay higher corporate property taxes to discipline the ruling class to pay for coming wider wars, which would tie in with politicians’ pleas that “we’re all in this together.” We must not ally with our class enemies but rather with students and parents and the growth of a revolutionary movement that will break the chains that tie us to them.

Workers must see that LA Democrats charging ahead with cutbacks to hire more cops are no different than their Washington buddies. The real reason for the police hiring spree is “homeland security,” not business promotion. Fifteen years ago LA had one of the country’s largest urban rebellions since the Civil War. It could happen again. With U.S. troops — including the National Guard — spread thin worldwide, the burden of repression will fall to the cops. A militarized economy that gouges wages, benefits, public services and overall living conditions, needs cops to quell rebellions.

California’s workers need CHALLENGE and its communist analysis. They need to fight these cuts, the tip of the iceberg in a system set up to make workers pay for the problems caused by the bankers, speculators and imperialist war-makers. Ultimately, the solution to these attacks lies in the growth of CHALLENGE and of the PLP to build a movement to destroy the profit system, which is increasingly incapable of meeting workers’ needs as it organizes a police state and widening wars for profit. ⚡

‘If communism was good, why was the USSR destroyed?’

SPAIN — In a meeting with friends, we took up very important topics including communism, and the capitalist crisis of over-production, but especially the fight against revisionism (capitalist ideas disguised as communist ideas). A comrade mentioned that, “In Peru you hear communist ideas a lot in the communities (for example, in the city of Ayacucho).” She mentioned that “in years past the group Sendero Luminoso organized university students and farm workers against the exploiters.” She had been a member of the group.

But the following question arose, “Why, if communism is good, was the USSR destroyed? Is it because people can’t have higher political understanding?” I answered, “At this time, capitalism has many weapons to divide the working class and to push the lie that communism was a disaster, but that’s not true and we communists in the PLP know it. Socialism failed in the USSR, not communism.” I explained that when a group fights for reforms (like Sendero Luminoso, the FMLN, FSLN, and other revisionist groups in Latin America that fight for national liberation and socialism) they’ll never achieve communism because they keep capitalist ideas and practices. So she responded, “but then you want to tell me that in order for there to be communism, we need an armed revolution?” “Exactly,” I said.

In the study of dialectical materialism we know that the way to solve a contradiction is to intensify it. “So that water can become steam, the temperature has to rise high enough to a certain point, at which water is converted into something else — steam,” I explained to my friends. “It’s the same with the struggle to destroy capitalism in order to build communism.”

I explained that we have to understand the law of the unity and struggle of opposites.

I showed them that if we have one pencil, we can break it easily, but that if we put 20 pencils together, it’s much harder to break them. In the same way, we have to build the Party to unite the working class with communist ideas. She said I was right and that we needed to continue the discussion.

Another youth who is influenced by capitalist ideas continued to insist that communism is in the past and was simply a failure. I talked about the many good things that happened in the Soviet Union in education, health care, housing, etc. The workers lived better than they ever did under capitalism! And they united to defeat Hitler’s fascism.

At the end, my Peruvian friend was very emotional because the discussion cleared up many questions and she wanted to keep talking. The other youth said he didn’t understand how any society could exist without money. I limited my remarks to the fact that a capitalist economy and a communist economy were completely different, opposites, and that to be able to understand this he first had to understand dialectical materialism and put it into practice. All of this was very useful, because we were able to show that we can fight for and build a communist system even though we’re contaminated with all these capitalist ideas.

Now I need more Party material to study and to distribute among friends in this part of the world. Now I see that there are many people interested in the communist ideas of the Progressive Labor Party and, in addition to the interesting articles in CHALLENGE, I need to give them material to use to study dialectical materialism. We must massively spread these ideas to establish a real communist system in which workers hold the reins of society. ⚡

Rising Food Prices Trigger Haiti Rebellion



HAITI, April 8 — Rising food prices worldwide have triggered rebellions in many countries. Southern Haiti is the latest. Five people have been killed and many injured after several days of protests by thousands, including attacks against local cops, businesses and the MINUSTAH (the U.N. multi-national occupation force here led by the Brazilian army). Over the weekend protesters looted the MINUSTAH office in Cayes, taking weapons and other materials.

Today, UN forces shot rubber bullets and tear gas at thousands of workers and university students marching on the national palace in Port-au-Prince, the capital city, backing the rebellion and shouting, “We’re hungry!”

The U.N. occupation, which began after the U.S., France and Canada invaded the country several years ago and sent President Jean Bertrand Aristide into forced exile, has only brought more misery, drug gangs and hunger to the Haitian masses. One of every four children here is malnourished. People have resorted to eating “dirt cookies,” made from salt, oil and clay and baked in the sun. A system that has brought billions worldwide to such extremes must be destroyed. ⚡

LETTERS



Minister Praises Capitalism, Church Members Disagree

A minister's recent service bemoaned the Iraq war, saying "we" should focus on what's happening "at home," that it is "more patriotic" to take care of Americans. This is nationalist selfishness, not anti-imperialism!

The minister admitted to knowing little about economics but went on to say that many are sick of the "old economy," focused on maximizing profit and accumulating stuff. They want a "new economy." That sounded good, until she declared that corporations are "not the problem." She said that "corporate executives are good people, just like us" and to achieve a "new economy" we all just have to be less greedy. She didn't mention the tens of millions in the U.S., and billions around the world, who don't even have the basic necessities of life.

Afterward I said to a friend that maximizing profits by exploiting workers was a law of capitalism. She agreed: "It's like saying that a poisonous snake wouldn't be dangerous if you could just keep it from biting." This new CHALLENGE reader said, "a lot of the ideas we need are in that paper."

I asked her opinion of the articles about Obama. She is enthusiastically for Obama even though he "has to say things that will get him elected." I reminded her that top advisors of all three candidates are meeting with the Brookings Institute to develop a foreign policy to present to the next president. I summarized the unfolding inter-imperialist rivalries that are leading U.S. capitalists to wider war. I said Obama is the candidate best able to win the U.S. working class to sacrifice our standard of living and our youth to that war. Because she has been reading the paper, she was already familiar with this argument.

"When you put it like that," she said, "it's really very clear. I wish I hadn't spoken to you today," she added half-seriously, "because this really upsets me." She doesn't want her daughter and son to be drafted. I pointed out that CHALLENGE also shows the positive side: how we can win workers and soldiers to a revolutionary movement fighting for a truly new communist economy.

As we left church she said again, "You make it all so clear, like a lens that focuses everything." I replied that the "lens" is the collective insight of our Party. Then she asked when she could stop by to get the new CHALLENGE.

While the minister was preaching, I felt like walking out of church for good, but the conversation afterward reminded me why I stay. It's not mainly to unite with others in the congregation to go on anti-war marches or fight budget cuts, but to build relationships based on sharp struggle on this ideological "front-line."

Church-going Red

Racist Education and Racist Professors

Recently, fellow students and I went to a "practical-experience" school activity in Southern Mexico to "analyze" how low-income people "can make their projects work and compete in the market to improve their lives." Those of us from small towns and of indigenous background experienced blatant racism.

The professors heading the trip always told others along the way to "excuse them because they're indigenous students." One professor kept telling those in charge in the places we visited that we "couldn't communicate or express ourselves correctly because of our ethnic origin." In Oaxaca, some women in our group complained about being bitten by ants. Our own teacher, who claimed she wasn't racist, later told us not to complain about this since we're from small towns and "girls from well-to-do families never complain so much about some little ants."

The racism became even worse. Our teachers said, "You should all be grateful for this opportunity to do this high-level research in places you won't be

able to ever visit again — they charge 1,000 pesos (about \$100) a day). Only students from the 'best colleges' can afford them without scholarships."

These attitudes reflect the racism of the rich bosses who run this capitalist society, reminding us poor working-class people: "You're poor and don't even aspire to come back to these fancy places."

PLP members and some students concluded how, in a communist society, there won't be "different kind of opportunities" since there won't be class differences. We will all share society's benefits and responsibilities. Since racism is a universal aspect of capitalism, from Oaxaca to Los Angeles to Madrid, PLP organizes an international party to fight for this communist goal.

A Red Militant Student

ID Cards Become New Report-to-Gov't Cards

My school recently instituted a program in the computer science department that researches how to track people using ID cards. These barcode-like tracking devices are already being used in new U.S. passports. The study uses radio frequency ID patches which are worn on clothing and can be tracked by computers within the computer science building. The program is supposed to study how the government can track people while still protecting their privacy, a seemingly oxymoronic goal. The professors in charge of the research claim that they want to protect people's privacy, but if this were truly the case, why are they actively perfecting such invasive measures as the ID card tracker?

Such programs as these are not only a sign of fascist control of the working class and an attempt to put a friendly face on it, but academia's willingness to spread it. In Nazi Germany, it was college professors who were the first to acquiesce to fascism and it was college students who created the Hitler Youth. Universities are no bastion of left politics and to see it as such is idealism at its worst. The university can only be a place of communist politics if we make it so.

We must join mass organizations, as I recently did, and we must build CHALLENGE networks amongst our base in these groups. We must expose the fascist agenda of U.S. imperialism and the universities' role in it. We must build strong friendships with our base, something I am trying to do now. As communists, we must give our base alternatives to the dead-end liberalism of the university by inviting them to May Day and the summer projects. Through discussion and action we can show them that true leftist politics come from only one place, the working class, and that in order to make real change we must put our faith in the working class and fight for communism.

Red College Student

Veteran of El Salvador War Joins PLP

(This is a letter from a new member of Progressive Labor Party written at a communist school in El Salvador, a sign of the political/ideological development of our members and also the deepening of the internal struggle to fight the reformism taught by the revisionist, the phoney leftist, groups, and the fight for Communist Revolution.)

I want to give you a small fragment of the history of the past revolutionary process in which I participated in the organizations that formed the FMLN in the eastern part of the country, that were called the ERP (Revolutionary Peoples' Army).

I was 12 years old when the El Salvadoran government's army carried out one of its bloodiest attacks against the civil population. In all these years there were big operations by the armed forces that left many people massacred. This happened in different places like El Mozote, in the mountains of Morazán, where more than a thousand people were killed. It was here that four members of my family were tortured and killed: my mother, my Grandmother, and my two aunts, leaving me alone at a young age.

Days after this vile massacre by the Salvadoran government against my family, friends and neighbors in the community, and in the face of these huge injustices, thinking that we needed to change everything, I joined the armed struggle. I asked a friend to go with me to walk outside of town with the idea of looking for my father who was already in the guerilla army. As I neared the campsite where he was, I told my friend that I would not return to town.

I spent the whole war fighting against our class enemies, thinking that I was doing the right thing, but 16 years after the peace accords were signed and the FMLN has turned into an electoral party, I see that there weren't any changes for the Salvadoran working class.

One day a comrade gave me CHALLENGE and since then I have been a reader. Later, they invited me to an international communist school in another country where I learned how we can fight for and build a better world for all workers. This can be accomplished through building the Progressive Labor Party and the direct fight for Communism. For the moment, I have four CHALLENGE readers in a Party club and I hope that we continue growing as well as throughout the whole world.

To all the members and sympathizers of the Progressive Labor Party internationally, to the workers organized in different countries, from El Salvador, also known as the little finger of America, I send revolutionary greetings and at the same time invite you to continue to strengthen the Party's work even more

New Fighter for Communism

'Winter Soldier': Vietnam to Iraq to Afghanistan

The Winter Soldier Hearings in Maryland were amazing! In preparation, our PLP club showed the original Winter Soldier (see CHALLENGE, 4/9). Friends, including an army reservist, said that although the testimony was depressing and a bit vivid, it was a great learning experience. All felt that many comparisons could be made between the war in Vietnam and those in Iraq and Afghanistan.

After attending the Winter Soldier this past week, it was obvious that the same pattern of racism and imperialist domination was being used, only in a different part of the world. Many told stories about how the racist term "hadji" was used, but that it came from the top down, not from the bottom up. This goes to show that racism doesn't begin with the working class, but is fomented by the ruling class. They use this racism to divide workers and soldiers, as well as the workers in the country to be conquered. One soldier had a particularly sharp analysis of the whole situation. Instead of giving a testimony to the acts he was forced to commit, he spoke of imperialism, racism and how the rich never went to war, only the poor working class.

At the Winter Soldier hearings one really got a great sense of what was going on in Iraq and Afghanistan. Although the accounts were heartbreaking, it was refreshing to hear the truth, as opposed to the propaganda we workers are so accustomed to being bombarded with by the ruling-class media. After listening to the testimony I felt even more energized and angry. This energy and anger must be used to work even harder to build the Party and struggle for communism. Hopefully more workers can view and hear the testimony of these brave soldiers.

D.C. Comrade

Candidates Reap Million\$, Workers ‘Reap’ Unemployment

The two lead stories on the April 5 NY Times front page present a clear picture of capitalism as an exploitative class system. One says, “80,000 JOBS LOST” (in March). Adjoining that is, “Clintons made \$109 million In Last 8 Years.”

A single Clinton speaking engagement rakes in “upwards of \$250,000,” (NYT) more than the median family yearly income of five working-class families, in just one “lecture”! Seems talk is not exactly cheap, especially in the top one-hundredth of one percent of U.S. incomes.

Not that Obama or McCain are exactly poor. The Obama family income exceeded one million bucks in just one year (2006). (NYT) And the McCain family assets, including the fact that his wife is “an heiress to a beer distributorship fortune, are worth tens of millions of dollars.” (NYT)

These are the millionaire politicians who have never helped workers and who defend and enforce their capitalist system which has launched massive attacks on the working class: wage-cuts, huge layoffs, more racist cops to terrorize workers and youth, big talk about healthcare while the uninsured approach 50 million. And yet the union misleaders and reformers tell us the “solution” is to vote for Obama or Clinton, pouring our dues money into their campaigns. What crap!

PLP has always advocated, “Don’t vote, organize!” to answer these attacks.

Meanwhile, the monthly jobless increase was actually 222,000 since “the government added 142, 000 make-believe jobs to the count” (John Crudele,

NYPPost, 4-8), the highest in five years, rising for the third consecutive month. It’s across the board, covering both industry and service areas. But, of course — as CHALLENGE has consistently reported — the 5.1% unemployment rate is a fraud. That figure, representing 7.8 million jobless, excludes “discouraged” workers who’ve given up searching for non-existent jobs and those working part-time because they cannot find full-time jobs. That’s another 9.4 million workers, a total unemployment of 17.2 million — a 12.5% jobless rate.

This still doesn’t include people on welfare who can’t find jobs, nor those youth whose joblessness drove them to join the military. Nor the two-thirds of the 2.4 million in prison for non-violent, mostly drug-possession convictions who could ordinarily be at home or in rehab, also seeking non-existent jobs. All told, U.S. unemployment is probably somewhere around 20 million.

Because of racist discrimination, unemployment for black workers is twice that of whites. The “official” figure is black 9%, white 4.5%. But the true figure for black workers is about 25%, double the actual nationwide rate of 12.5%.

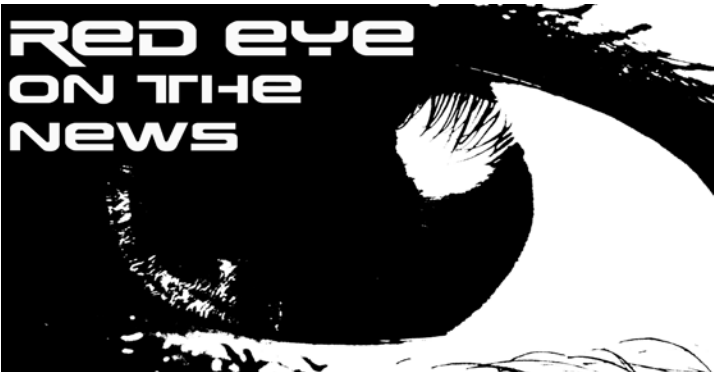
The liberal Democrat’s “solution” is to extend unemployment benefits, a goal rarely reached in this one-class-rules-all “two-party” system. And that excludes more than half of U.S. workers who are ineligible for any benefits (including millions of undocumented immigrants), something Obama and Clinton never mention when shedding crocodile tears for jobless workers. McCain’s hair-brained “solution” is more tax cuts for the rich and less reg-



ulation of the Wall Street investment houses making out like bandits.

Unemployment is an integral feature of the profit system and always will be as long as capitalism exists, driving for maximum profits by stealing the value that workers create and stuffing it into the pockets of the bankers, oil companies and Big Business. They go to war to protect their fortunes over workers’ dead bodies, much as they war on the working class at home. They will continue to do so until workers destroy their system and enable our class to share all the wealth we create among working people, according to need.

One big step towards that goal is to march on May Day, uniting black, Latino, Asian and white, immigrant and native-born, women and men, building PLP as the party to lead the working class against the ravages of capitalism. ✪



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



U.S. helped in Croatia war crime

A popular Croatian general who led a brutal operation that drove the Serbs out...went on trial in The Hague on Tuesday for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

[The] crimes included knowingly shelling civilian targets, allowing their forces to go on violent rampages during and after the campaign, terrorizing civilians, and looting and burning Serbian homes.

United States military advisers, among them retired and active personnel, helped plan the operation, and Americans directed drone aircraft over the battle zone to gain real-time intelligence for Croatian forces. (NYT, 3/12)

Wall St. big for Barack and Hilary

Last week Robert Rubin, the former Treasury secretary...put it clearly: If Wall Street companies can count on being rescued like banks, then they need to be regulated like banks.

But will that logic prevail politically? So far, neither [campaign] has made a clear commitment...

The securities and investment industry is pouring money into both Mr. Obama’s and Mrs. Clinton’s coffers. And these donors surely believe that they’re buying something in return. (NYT, 3/24)

Workplace, killer for prostitutes

“Women engaged in prostitution face the most dangerous occupational environment in the United States...”

The American Journal of Epidemiology published a meticulous study finding that the “workplace homicide rate for prostitutes” is 51 times that of the next most dangerous occupation for women, working in a liquor store. The average age of death of prostitutes in the study was 34. (NYT, 3/16)

Voters said no, but Dems fund it

Since the Democrats took over both houses of Congress, Sen. Kent Conrad, D-N.D., chairman of the budget committee, boasted... “We have the identical amount in our budget for defense and the war as the president had in his budget — identical, not a dime of difference.”

So there you have it... Whether this allocation of scarce resources is actually in the public interest does not enter into it. (Washington Post, 3/13)

It’s the free market, stupid...

To the Editor:

Re “What Created This Monster?” (March 23), which looked at the run-up to the current financial market mess:

Why should we be surprised that a socio-economic system founded on greed, selfishness and competition, and fueled by Pollyannaism and willful blindness, might be less than optimal?

Perhaps when the smoke clears, Americans will no longer worship at the altar of a mythical “free market” that is inherently unfree, skewed and subject to massive abuse. Perhaps Americans will finally choose to stop living in an economic Wild West and at last reject the boom-and-bust cycle of turbocharged hypercapitalism in favor of a more humane, livable society. (NYT, 3/20)

The Web makes spying easy

It’s not paranoia: they really are spying on you.

...Tech companies can keep track of when a particular Internet user looks up Alcoholics Anonymous meetings, visits adult Web sites, buys cancer drugs online or participates in anti-government discussion groups....

There is no need for neighborhood informants and paper dossiers if the government can see citizens’ every Web site visit, e-mail and text message.

Ethanol Hoax ‘Sustains’ Bosses’ Profits, Oil Wars

The push for “sustainable energy” and “alternative fuels” is increasing. Politicians and companies appear united in calling for changes in how society is fueled. It appears that the ruling class is concerned about the environment. Communist analysis, however, reveals the essence of this “green” movement. First, the bosses are creating part of the ideology to support a potential future war against their imperialist rivals. Economic and political threats from China, for example, continue to present problems for U.S. rulers. As the rivalry intensifies, they’re caught in a bind. They must seize control of Mid-East energy reserves in order to cut their rivals’ access to it. They must also win the working class to support future wars against these rivals in order to maintain their world position. The promotion of ethanol as an “alternative fuel” is part of this plan.

Secondly, and more importantly, they’re winning workers to think that individuals, not capitalism, causes environmental destruction. They say a better environment can only be achieved by buying “green” products and consuming our way to a healthier world. In reality, only by destroying capitalism and replacing it with communism can the conditions that poison the environment be eradicated.

Focus on China and Ethanol Hides Imperialist Plans in Mid-East

Led by liberals like Al Gore, the capitalists are ramping up anti-Chinese rhetoric, namely by pointing to environmental issues such as contaminated products, air pollution and the catastrophe at the Three Gorges Hydroelectric Dam (where 1.4 million workers were displaced, and environmental destruction is occurring upstream from the dam). They need to convince workers that the Chinese are a direct threat to them and to a healthy Earth.

This is blatant hypocrisy, however, because for hundreds of years U.S. bosses have been killing the very workers they’re trying to win by polluting the places in which we live and work, along with the environment. (See box) Suddenly, when imperialism demands it, they’ve become interested in “protecting workers and ‘our’ environment.”

The ethanol campaign is also being used to disguise the absolute necessity for the U.S. ruling class to control Mid-East oil through imperialist war. They say ethanol will “achieve energy security, reduce oil imports, and decrease our dependency on Middle-Eastern oil.” Actually, of the top 15 countries from which the U.S. imports oil for consumption, only three, Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Kuwait are from the Mid-East. Canada is by far the largest exporter of oil to the U.S. (Energy Information Administration,

2/15/08) The oil bosses don’t want control of Mid-East oil to power our SUVs but rather to control their rivals’ access to this life-blood of capitalism. The top oil companies like BP, ExxonMobil-Chevron are even putting hundreds of millions of dollars (a tiny amount compared to their profits) into researching “sustainable energy sources” as a way to mask their deadly designs on Mid-East oil.

Top Agri-business and Al Gore Behind Anti-working-class Ethanol Sham

Because it grows well in many climates, corn is used to make ethanol in the U.S. Currently, the federal government shells out \$8 to \$10 billion annually to Midwest corn growers. These subsidies are often framed as protecting America’s “ma and pa farmers.” In reality, large corporate farmers such as Archer Daniels Midland and Cargill receive about 80% of these subsidies. Also, seed suppliers like Pioneer Hi-Bred (DuPont) and Monsanto are making a killing with the inflated corn markets created by the ethanol craze. Pioneer’s profits increased 13% over the past year. Al Gore, the darling of the liberal environmental movement, has recently joined the board of a venture capitalist firm, Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers, who have more than \$76 million invested in “green” technology. He is also a high-ranking official at Generation Asset Management, which invests in “solutions to climate change.”

Meanwhile, the increased demand for corn for ethanol has led to even greater suffering for the working class. Agreements like NAFTA allow subsidized U.S. corn to under-cut local production in Mexico, causing corn tortilla prices there to soar 60%, triggering workers’ protests nation-wide. Workers are starving, yet the same amount of corn needed to fill an SUV tank with ethanol once would feed a worker for an entire year.

Making fuel from corn makes no sense for the environment either. If all the inputs are calculated (the cost, in energy terms, of getting and planting the seed, growing the corn, harvesting it, transport-

ing it to the ethanol plant, etc.), there is a net energy loss! The environmental damage from this capitalist charade is also clear if the increased conversion of forest into farmland and the increased use of fertilizers (which, incidentally, are made from fossil fuels) and pesticides are considered. This is the reality of this “green consciousness” they want to win us to — business as usual under capitalism where profits come before scientific common sense and the well-being of our class and our environment.

Workers Will Be Stewards of Environment

Finally, there’s one truth the capitalists ignore. Workers have always been, and will always be, the best caretakers of the land and environment. Organic farming, where workers understand the land, respond to its needs, and replenish it for the future, was the norm during early communal agricultural societies. Capitalism, which makes food into a commodity to be bought and sold, replaced this mode with food production for profit. Modern communism, in turn, will discard the commodity nature of food, while retaining any technological advances.

As workers, we have no interest in profit-making disguised as “green living,” nor in preserving the power of the U.S. ruling class (or any ruling class for that matter) through patriotism and war in the name of environmentalism. Our interests lie in maintaining and preserving the environment because we work its land, we breathe its air, and we enjoy its beauty.

Ultimately, only the working class can create a better and healthier world. With scientific reason, dialectical analysis, and revolutionary ideology, the working class must begin the process of building workers’ power. Communism is the embodiment of that power. Together, as a class, we can counteract the damage of capitalism. ☸

Want to ‘live green?’ Join PLP!

The green movement constantly talks about “saving the environment.” Many workers support this movement from an earnest desire to see an end to the the destruction of natural habitats around the world. But the green movement is financed by the ruling class (see editorial) and has no interest in ending the most environmentally destructive force in the world: capitalism. They push a one-sided, individualistic ideology that claims that “the environment” can be saved without ending capitalism and that it is “our” fault for having wasted natural resources. The desire

for greater and greater profit has been the cause of the greatest destruction. In the name of profit 20% of the tropical rain forests were cut down in the last 30 years of the 20th century and 50 million acres of forest (an area equal to the state of Washington) are cut down every year in the U.S.

Industrial bosses dump pollutants and toxins into oceans and rivers. Down the line, these poisons cause disease in workers forced to live near these habitats. This relationship between organisms and their surroundings is called “mutual determination” and is very important for understanding how humans live within the world as part of their environment.

Ending the destruction of our environment not only requires understanding the complex ways in which we relate to our surroundings, but also ending the reason for the destruction: capitalism. The best way to “live green” is to join the PLP and fight for communism. ☸

Who really pollutes the environment?

Companies like Monsanto, Occidental Petroleum, Chevron, and others have created over 40,000 “Superfund” sites. These are “uncontrolled or abandoned places where hazardous waste is located, possibly affecting local ecosystems or people.” Twenty-five million people live within 10 miles of 114 of these sites.

Between 1936 and 1950 Firestone Tire, General Motors, Standard Oil and Phillips Petroleum bought and dismantled over 100 streetcar systems in 45 cities. This forced millions of workers into private automobiles, leading to enormous pollution levels.

In 2004, war-maker DuPont settled a \$340 million lawsuit involving water contamination in Ohio and West Virginia from a chemical used to produce Teflon.

Exelon Corporation, operator of 1/6 of the country’s nuclear power plants, recently tried to cover up a leak at an Illinois plant that released radioactive water into the Kankakee River. ☐

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