

a progressive labor party periodical • Winter 2010

# THE **COMMUNIST**



*INSIDE:* GLOBAL WARMING: **CAPITALIST CRISIS**  
**ROLE OF UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES** UNDER CAPITALISM  
FIGHTING AGAINST **FASCISM** • REPORTS ON THE **ECONOMIC CRISIS**



# WHAT WE FIGHT FOR

- ✦ 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. The Soviet Union and China returned to capitalism because socialism maintained too many aspects of the profit system, like wages and divisions of labor.
- ✦ Capitalism inevitably leads to wars. PLP organizes workers, students and soldiers to turn these wars into a revolution for communism. This fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat 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 profit. Everyone will share society’s benefits and burdens.
- ✦ Communism means the party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers – eventually everyone – must become communist organizers.
- ✦ 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.



## JOIN US!

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# LETTERS

*Dear The Communist,*

I would like to suggest that CHALLENGE/Communist talk more about communism. True, we make it very clear that communism is what we're fighting for, and revolution is how we're going to get it. But we don't have a lot to say about what communism will be like - how people will live and work.

This is a big mistake because the current crisis is forcing people to question capitalism and consider alternatives, alternatives they used to dismiss when it seemed like capitalism (at least in the US) seemed capable of putting food on their tables and a roof over their heads.

However people understandably worry that the cure might be as bad as the disease. In particular, many workers and students fear that communism will end up being the same old same old: capitalism under new management, with a red flag on the White House. This is understandable given the way capitalism has been restored in Russia and (in all but name) in China. The revolutionaries in these countries believed that there had to be a long period of socialism before society was ready for communism. Socialism, however, ended up being capitalism under new management, and in Russia they even got rid of the red flags.

We do make it clear enough that we've rejected socialism and move directly to communism, but that just makes it more urgent to explain what we mean by communism. What is it exactly about socialism/capitalism that we reject, and what alternative do we offer?

Education is a case in point. The crisis has hit the schools hard, especially in the US. Millions of students face deteriorating conditions. Tuition and other costs are rising to the point that many may be unable to get the credentials needed for the few remaining jobs. Teachers and staff face pay cuts, layoffs, even schools closures.

Of course we support and even organize struggles against these attacks. And we link these developments to the decline of the US empire. But if that's all we do, we become conservatives - trying to restore conditions when the schools did no "fail" students (as we now say they do).

We don't pretend that any mere fight for reforms will bring about this restoration. But without further explanation we're still misleading people, because they will conclude that under communism schools will be like they were in the allegedly good old days when they didn't fail their students. In other words, we may lead people to believe that communist schools would be like capitalist schools with all our reform demands met. In other words, nice clean new buildings, small classes, no racist harassment, plenty of books, good food, comfortable chairs, and a red flag over the principal's office.

Do we really believe this? Do we really believe that under communism students will spend a good part of their youth cooped up in classrooms, sitting silent and motionless while teachers ramble on about trigonometry or renaissance poets or spelling or state capitals? Do we really want education to look like a giant game of trivial pursuit? I hope not!

The Bolsheviks didn't think so. In the early 20's the ideas of the American progressive educators. Students learned by studying the real world around them, solving practical problems and doing real work - under the guidance of teachers, who acted like coaches and mentors (not like preachers and prison guards). Students would learn, for example, reading and writing, but practice it in the context of planning an outing or holding a meeting. Subjects included cooking, cleaning, and performing simple repairs. The system is well described in Scott Nearing's inspiring book *Education in Soviet Russia*.

Unfortunately this system was terminated in 1931, replaced with the so-called "academic" model. Academic learning chopped knowledge up into the familiar separate, lifeless, abstract subjects, and divided the students into same-age groups. Students were subject to drills, tests, grading, and interminable lectures. This is the same system we've had in the US since the Carnegies and Rockefellers imported it from Prussia in the early 1900's.

The academic model was imposed in the Soviet Union at exactly the same time that ranks and decorations were restored in the Red Army, and pay scales and piecework were brought into industry. In other words, the academic model was a vital component of socialism; and socialism turned out to be capitalism with a 'proletarian' mask.

The experience in China was even more revealing. In the early years the Chinese communists adopted the whole Soviet socialist approach, including the academic model in education. During the Cultural Revolution (against revisionism) the Left put forth the "revolutionary" model for education - basically the model implemented in the Soviet Union in the 20's. However the revisionists defended the academic model tooth and nail and it was never widely replaced.

So why do the socialists/revisionists/capitalists love the academic model so much? This is something we really

have to understand. The reason (in my opinion) is, first, because it is so pathetically ineffective at teaching anything useful. People learn by doing, not by listening to monologues. True, capitalists need skilled workers, but not that many and not that skilled. Like all exploiters, they prefer their subjects to be as ignorant as possible. Therefore, capitalist society is designed so that most individual workers are educated in depth in only one narrow specialty. Capitalists have no need or desire to give many people a broad education.

In other words, capitalist society is constructed like a machine, by assembling large numbers of mass produced, specialized, interchangeable components. Marx in his day said that capitalist education was “mere training to act as a machine”. Today, it has become training to act as just a component of a machine. In the academic model schools and classrooms are the production lines for the bosses’ specialized worker/components. The main thing they learn is to keep quiet and take orders.

For most youth, school is a tremendous waste of time. That’s fine for the capitalists, because they don’t have jobs for all these youth, who anyway tend to make trouble in the workplace. The bosses are happy to park young people in schools, killing time until they are ripe for exploitation and/or the military.

However, for the bosses (and revisionists) there’s one more huge advantage of the academic model. Mao once complained the schools imposed on students three “separations”: separation from communist ideas, separation from the working class, and separation from work itself. At the time, Mao was talking about schools under socialism, but what he said is just as true of capitalism. Probably the most important role of schools (and colleges) is to enforce these separations. Schools keep youth away from workers, and encourage young people to think of themselves as different and better.

I agree that we have to explain how the current crisis is inflicting great hardships on students and teachers. But we should make it clear that there were never any ‘good old days’ for capitalism’s so-called educational system. And we must explain how communism will smash the separation of youth from workers, and give everyone an education worthy of the name.

-Red Professor



*Thanks for your reply. We agree that giving examples to our friends about what the future would look like is important. We used to run a column in Challenge-Desafio which highlighted the different ways that past communist movements have dealt with issues like education, health care, etc. This was helpful for many people to see the possibilities of a communist future. There are also other books, like Soviet Power by Hewlett Johnson, as well as other examples that you cite in your letter that can give us some direction. We are still limited, though, in what we know about the future because of the limits of the old movement. Even education under these societies had many contradictions, as a result of fighting for socialism rather than communism (among other things). Ours will too, but through collectivity we will work to struggle through them.*

*At the same time there are many friends who still don’t see where the current capitalist institutions stand in terms of the class struggle. An example of this is the current budget fights happening across the country, particularly in California. There are thousands of students organizing and fighting back against the recent cuts. This shows the potential that we have to build the party. However, many of these students are fighting under the slogan “Save our schools” or “Save our education.” What we are hoping to point out in these articles by criticizing the university and college system is that these still belong to the bosses and play a significant role under capitalism. Those that are around PL may see this, but many still do not.*

*Once again, thank you for your letters. We hope that this motivates others to send letters to The Communist with any comments that they may have about different articles. While we try to be as collective as possible with the development of the magazine, your input is always wanted and needed. You can send any comments to thecommunistmagazine@yahoo.com.*

-TheCommunist Magazine Committee

## The Wars, the Banks, the Prisons: California's Financial Crisis

Like other states with a large population, California has been hit hard by the economic crisis. The official unemployment rate is 12%, and 6 of the 10 cities with the highest mortgage foreclosure rates are in California. As happens every recession, California government is in financial crisis, but this crisis is far greater than any since the 1930s. After a bitter fight over the state income shortfall of more than \$26 billion, the legislature closed the gap with \$15 billion in cuts, some money from the federal stimulus program, and a lot of smoke and mirrors. The budget keeps the more than \$2 billion per year in tax cuts for corporations that were passed last September and February. Almost all the benefit from these tax breaks goes to 200 or so corporations that gross more than \$1 billion a year. The financial situation is almost certain to be worse next year, even if the economy begins to pick up. The California Legislative Analyst recently estimated an additional \$21 billion shortfall over the next 18 months. Many of the enormous cuts in education and public services that have been made will probably be permanent.

### Health Care and Welfare Cuts

The 2009-2010 budget that was enacted and then reduced further by Governor Schwarzenegger has large cuts for welfare recipients, child welfare services, Medi-Cal (California's Medicaid), foster parents, community clinics, in-home services for the sick or elderly, supplemental income for the blind and disabled, K-12 schools, public universities, and prisons. There was a huge cut in the Healthy Families program that serves almost a million children from low-income families, which was partially restored by funds from a new tax on Medicaid providers. State workers have been on unpaid furloughs two or three days a month, which represents a 10% to 15% wage cut.

### K-12 Cuts

To close its budget gap, California is reducing school funding and "borrowing" money from county and city governments. The result has been major cuts in local K-12 education funding. In Los Angeles schools, these cuts resulted in 3500 layoff notices. Teacher layoffs have now been reduced to about 2100, who have had to register as substitute teachers. Class sizes are rising and the norm for high schools is now 42.5 students per class.

Teacher layoffs have racist effects, with the biggest impact on schools with black, Latin, and low-income

students, since these schools have more teachers with low seniority. In May, students in a number of Los Angeles schools walked out in protest of the teacher layoffs.

The budget crisis has been an opportunity for capitalist policy makers to make some of the changes they have been trying to push through for a while. In L. A., a big increase in charter schools is underway. Under the newest Board of Ed plan, about a quarter of L. A. schools are eligible to become "charter schools," privately run but funded by public money. The team that heads up this major subcontracting of the schools is paid by capitalists Eli Broad and Carey Wasserman. L. A. mayor Villaraigosa, whose efforts to take over the schools himself failed last year, is also playing a big role in this dismantling of the L. A. public schools. The Charter schools are used as a tool to bring the teacher unions and other school bosses into line with the ruling class' plans to direct education toward things U. S. capitalism needs for its economic and military struggles with rival capitalists. U. S. bosses want more patriotic students who have the technical skills to produce the machinery for World War III. Privatization will help gut an already bad school system, and leave behind students whose only choice is low-paying jobs or the military. The capitalists don't need workers or soldiers to know about history or art. Teachers will be pushed to teach patriotism, training students to obey the government and make sacrifices for "their" country.

### Theme of Obama's 9/8/09 speech to school children? Patriotism!

*"... when you give up on yourself, you give up on your country. The story of America [is] ... about people who kept going, who tried harder, who loved their country too much to do anything less than their best..."*

*What will a President who comes here in 20 or 50 or 100 years say about what all of you did for this country?... Don't let your family down or your country down. Most of all, don't let yourself down. Make us all proud."*

### Higher Ed Cuts

Both California's public university systems, the University of California (UC) and the California State University (CSU), have been handed severe cuts. Faculty and staff at both schools are forced to take unpaid days off, and part-time instructors have been fired or had their hours reduced.

Student admissions have been cut and will be reduced further. About 40,000 qualified students will be denied admission to the CSU this year, and the students who are admitted will pay 32% more in fees than last year. The UC trustees were not deterred by mass protests and recently raised fees by a similar percentage for next year. The higher fees will buy larger classes, and probably faculty who will be taking unpaid days off.

CSU administrators have been told that this year's cutbacks are largely permanent, and that the public universities can expect much less state money than in the past. Adjusted for inflation, California state government support per student for the CSU has been reduced from \$11,075 in 1998/9 to \$4,669 in 2009/10. UC President Yudof told students that "the state has stopped building the highways to higher education, and they've started building toll roads" (Sacramento Bee, 9/17/09). California's bosses have decided that the universities will be smaller and more expensive and more teaching will be done in community colleges, where it is cheaper.

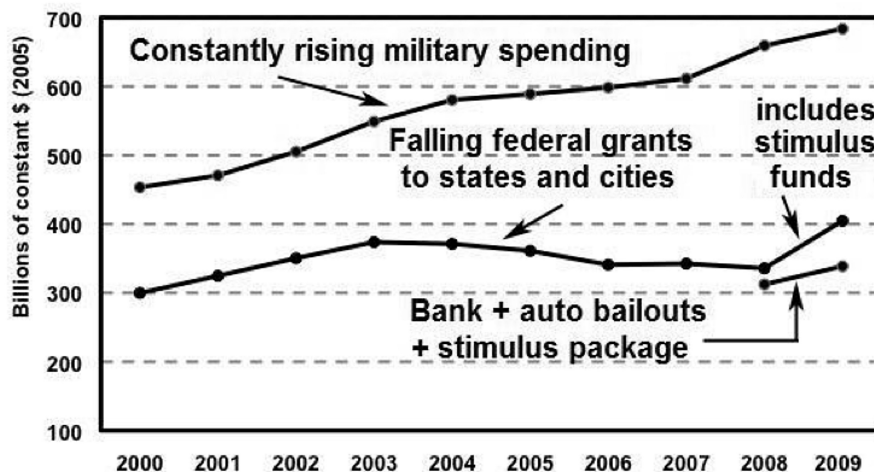
### California's Financial Crisis

California's current financial crisis is part of the crisis of world capitalism started by the U. S. banks. But this crisis is just the largest in a series of state government crises that have been going on for years, and affect many states. Many government programs, especially welfare and health care programs, are administered by state or local governments but paid for partly by grants from the federal government. The largest of these is Medicaid, (called Medi-Cal in California) which is the main source of health care for low-income people. Need for Medicaid coverage is increasing as workers lose their jobs in the crisis, at the same time as state and federal tax revenues are falling. The federal government pays from 50% to 76% of the cost of Medicaid, but only 50% for California.

### Health Care versus War Spending

Because the population is growing and getting older, the need for Medicaid and other federally funded social

**\$ Billions for War and Banks, but Cuts for Health Care and Social Services**



Sources: 2010 Federal budget, Treasury + Commerce Depts., News Reports

services has been steadily growing for years. The result, as a January, 2008, U. S. Government Accountability Office report put it, is that "state and local governments will face an increasing gap between receipts and expenditures in the coming years. The projected rise in health-related expenditures is the root of the fiscal difficulties" that will occur.

While it is true that the rise in health costs is a key factor in state fiscal crises, the bigger cause is the huge federal spending on the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. Since the Iraq war started in 2003, federal grants to the states have fallen steadily (in inflation-adjusted dollars), while money spent on wars has constantly risen. (see graph). This means that the federal government has been sucking money out of the states to pay for its imperialist wars. A number of states would be facing budget crises even if the U.S. economy were not in a big crisis. The federal stimulus package has increased grants to the states in 2009, but not nearly enough to overcome the fall in revenue due to the economic crisis.

### The California Twist

First the wars and then the financial meltdown have produced crises in many states, but a few peculiarities of California's politics and economics make it even worse here. In 1978, Proposition 13 was passed, drastically lowering property tax revenue, which was then about 70% of K-12 school funding. The state government made up the lost funds, but in the process essentially took over K-12 education funding in the state. The result has been that California is in the bottom quarter of the 50 states in spending per pupil (2006 figures).





and February that would together amount to about \$2 billion a year, so they are the cutters, not allies in the fight against cuts. Since this bill is for higher education only, it doesn't address the even more serious cuts in welfare programs like children's health care. The bill cuts higher education off from people who are harmed by the cuts even more than students and teachers. The CFA leaders' have also made an alliance with the CSU administration, the Alliance for the CSU, which unites teachers with the CSU administration and keeps the anti-cutback movement within the limits that CSU administrators will tolerate.

We should fight for a state-wide political strike against these cuts, and includes student walkouts and state employee strikes. We should fight for these proposals in teachers unions, but we should expect strong opposition from pro-capitalist union leaders. Several unions have endorsed taking some action on March 4th, a date proposed at a large meeting in Berkeley on October 24, and we should push for larger, more militant actions than just having rallies. Some others are organizing for a one-day strike on April 15th.

### Capitalist Universities Serve the Capitalists

We must fight the cuts, push the struggle forward, and make the nature of the crisis, as a crisis of U. S. capitalism, clear to the people who participate. The "sanctity of higher education" position that some people are advocating on college campuses misses the point. The California universities are capitalist institutions that aim to provide the skilled workers, soldiers, and ideologists that U. S. capitalism needs in its fight say on top. The



CSU Students Protest Cuts

## Federal Government Military Spending Dwarfs Bailout and Stimulus Funds

YEAR	2008	2009
<b>U. S. Military Spending</b>	<b>\$ 740 Billion</b>	<b>\$ 772 Billion</b>
<b>Bank + Auto Company Bailouts</b>	<b>\$ 350 Billion</b>	<b>\$ 380 Billion</b>
<b>Stimulus Package</b>	<b>none</b>	<b>\$ 150 Billion</b>

system provides capitalist education, with its patriotism, racism, war research, officer training, and anti-worker ideas. The education cuts hurt many working class students, but we must never have the illusion that this has ever been anything but the bosses education system. Only a communist revolution will put the education system in the hands of the working class.

### Make the Anti-Cutback Movement a School for Revolution

The economic crisis, the huge and ever increasing war spending are putting U. S. capitalism on trial, and many can be won to pronounce it guilty, and join the revolutionary movement. To do this we must make a consistent effort to distribute Challenge and other party publications. It is easy to be intimidated by the depth of the crisis and the size of task that stands in front of us, but if we evaluate our efforts by the growth of the fight for communism, the struggle can be a victory for our class no matter what the bosses do.

## Unemployment Work and the Fight for Communist Politics

On January 1, 2009 I was laid off from my job in the construction trades joining the over 200,000 unemployed workers in Washington state receiving unemployment benefits.<sup>1</sup> Without an unemployment office all initial filing has to be done over the phone. It took three days of constant calling in order to get a line so that I could sit on hold for two hours just to make my initial filing. Since then the situation has only deteriorated as the world (following the lead of the United States) has fallen into an economic depression caused by a worldwide crisis of overproduction.

In Washington State there are now over 350,000 people receiving unemployment benefits (as of July 2009) and an official unemployment rate of 9.3% with an estimated broader unemployment rate of 16%.<sup>2</sup> For every job opening in King County (the Seattle metroplex) there are three unemployed people.<sup>3</sup> What that means in practice is that last February for a single job opening reading meters in Tacoma 1,400 people applied. In August 4,000 people lined up to apply for minimum wage temp jobs at the Puyallup Fair, 3,500 more than they had ever received before. In a recent edition of the Everett Herald (Everett is a northern suburb of Seattle) the classified section, entitled "The Good Life," had only 11 job postings, but had 44 home foreclosure notices.<sup>4</sup>

Going through the unemployment wringer is a bureaucratic labyrinth where nobody knows exactly what is going on and every person you talk to gives you a different set of information. This is made all the more complicated by the fact that you can only talk to people over the phone after a long wait on hold (if you can get in at all) and they are basically guaranteed to screw up your paper work at the unemployment office at least once. You are in a constant state of not knowing as the state government lays various traps to kick you off the unemployment rolls.

### **The Solution to Unemployment Boredom: Fight for Communism**

Capitalism places the sole value of a worker on his ability to be exploited daily, his employment. Being unemployed under capitalism is incredibly stressful not just because it is hard to pay your bills on the paltry sums dolled out by the unemployment office, but because your individual worth and value is stripped away as well. Under capitalism being unemployed equals inadequate, useless. The struggle for communist

ideas becomes not just a political end during this time, but a method for maintaining one's sanity, a way to keep from falling into the pit of individualist isolation and depression.

I was laid off at the same time that most of my base was. CHALLENGE readers became a support network as we navigated the rocky shores of unemployment together, each of us looking out for pitfalls and helping each other search for job openings and much coveted side work.<sup>5</sup> The editorials in CHALLENGE regarding the economic crisis, as well as the stories of struggle at the Republic Windows and Doors plant, the Stella D'Oro factory, and at Boeing also helped to show how unemployment was not a personal defect of individual workers but a crisis caused by the inherent contradictions of the capitalist system. The working class is not the creators of this crisis as some have argued, but the victims of it.

The task of maintaining CHALLENGE networks is a difficult one in good times and becomes especially difficult during crises as unemployment has an atomizing effect on the population. As the traditional place for meeting and talking to coworkers, the workplace disappears, thus workers have a tendency to retreat back into their shells. These are the times when the close personal contact you have made with your coworkers really pays off.

Not being what you might call a "people person" in the past, I failed to get involved in people's personal lives, to really get to know them. When layoffs came I was left isolated while all the people I knew on the work site disappeared. Over the last couple of years comrades worked with me to build deeper relationships, or at the very least get people's phone number. They would joke with me, "What's the worse that could happen, you make a friend?"

Becoming better at this, although far from great, over the last couple of years I was able to build a CHALLENGE network that I could follow from job to job. We met regularly outside of work to talk politics and have barbecues. Once we were all laid off, these get together gained a strategic importance. They became planning sessions, political schools, and cautionary meetings all in one. We discussed where to look for work, how to cheat on resumes, what tricks the unemployment office was using to deny us money, what lies the politicians were feeding us now, all within the context of the current crisis.

## Putting Ideas into Practice

It is one thing to discuss politics over fajitas, but quite another to take those ideas past the dinner table and put them into practice. To move people from simple passivity, the bosses' preferred position for us, to open agitation is not an easy task. Frequently it is difficult to make this transition ourselves, much less promote it in others. As the quantity of political discussion amongst my base began to lead to a qualitative shift in their understanding of the world, their level of tolerance for the false promises of capitalism began to shrink.

One of my friends became a regular with me as we went to local Worksource offices.<sup>6</sup> These days, the offices are so packed that you have to wait for people to leave just so you can get into the door. To paint a picture, every Worksource office is basically the same, there is a bank of 5-10 computers and about 50-60 people (more on Mondays) milling around waiting to use them. We would go through their crummy binder of out of date job listings (overflowing with ads for the Army) and snoop around for information. These offices are so useless that the old timers there would actually wax nostalgic for the old unemployment offices. While there we would get into debates about whether or not Obama was going to rescue us with my friend frequently taking the lead in refuting this pipe dream. But more often than not we would talk about why we are in the mess that we are in.

My friend, who was older and had more connections for side work kept himself busy with various small construction jobs. He frequently worked with Latin day laborers. Conversations that we had when we worked on the same job site regarding the nature of racist exploitation and the particular focus on exploiting Latin workers turned anti-racist politics into a material force. When one employer paid my friend \$100/day, my friend demanded equal wages for the day laborers working the site. This apparently shocked the day laborers who had never seen a white worker make such a stand. Despite not being a Spanish speaker my friend began requesting extra copies of the DESAFIO section of the paper. He was giving them out to his coworkers on these various jobs demonstrating an initiative and boldness that we can all learn from.

At some point a friend and I decided that we should go back to school for job training which provided another great avenue for agitation. In order to get funding for school you have to go to the school's Worksource office and wait as the various counselors get your 20 pieces of paperwork in line. These waiting rooms are overflowing with disgruntled workers discussing their situation. After my first meeting with the counselor I came back to the room with a particularly interesting

tidbit. I asked her about the education extension that would extend your unemployment three more months if you took job training courses. She informed me that to get it you had to apply within sixty days of going on unemployment, a stipulation that kept everyone in the room from being eligible for the extension. After revealing this information, my friend chimed in arguing that this was done purposely to keep us from getting the extension and that this was just another example of the false help from the capitalist class. With the room all riled up I could hear each and everyone of them go down the hall and ask about that extension. My friend leaned over to me and said that it was too bad I didn't bring any papers; he was right!

## Back to School

In the spring, I enrolled in a trades course at the community college learning basic machining. Despite the bosses' promises, no new funding ever reached the trades programs in King County. Instead the programs were cut back with only one listing for the summer quarter. Classes have been overflowing with people and tuition assistance, which was also short of what was promised, is nearly impossible to get. With the government unable to provide anything, I received funding from some comrades and enrolled in two night classes. Classes designed for ten students now held over twenty. What was a class designed for machinists to improve their skills and maybe move up a pay grade was now a warehouse for unemployed workers from all trades.

To their credit the instructors did their best to accommodate the overflow, but class days mainly involved a lot of standing around as you waited for one of the eight machines to become available. Encouraged by my club to not waste a minute of this time, I used it to agitate and talk about our current crisis and the only way out, communist revolution.

A young worker from Russia became my shop partner. Initially I was worried as he told me about his family's stories of religious persecution (he was a devout Christian) under the Soviet Union. But quickly those stories faded as he discussed the joys of full employment, home ownership, and farm life before things "fell apart." Speaking of the 1996 ruble crash, he said the fact that his family owned their home and could grow their own food helped them get through it. He asked what would happen here if people could not afford food or a place to live. I told him that if you didn't have family or friends to stay with then you would have to live on the street and if you couldn't afford food then the bosses' would let you starve. He was genuinely

shocked by this. Finally I had to tell him that all those horror stories that he had heard in grade school about unemployment, being homeless, and starvation were all true, even in the wealthiest country in the world.

From there our friendship grew. I tutored him in shop math and he helped me with the machines. Together we discussed everything from the rise of finance capital to the decay of the union movement with our fellow students. After a month, the shop was a more inviting place to spend your evenings. This was the direct result of the political discussions we had on the shop floor where communist politics elevated class unity. In a nice change of pace an older student fond of making racist/sexist jokes became isolated as people felt bold enough to either walk away or tell him to shut the hell up. I received contact info from my new Russian friend and have been trying to make him a part of our active CHALLENGE base.

### The Fight for Communism is Needed Now More Than Ever

As crisis becomes “recovery” in the bosses’ press we continue to see unemployment grow<sup>7</sup> and King County is no exception. With the purchase of the Vought plant

in South Carolina, layoffs at Boeing can only speed up as Boeing management continues to squeeze workers with the help of the IAM’s sell-out leadership. The city and state, facing massive budget shortfalls, have continued layoffs that now threaten hundreds of workers in the Seattle schools. Microsoft continues to hemorrhage jobs while the construction trades have been almost completely annihilated. These days the fight for communism moves beyond political debate to a fight for our very survival.

Workers, discouraged by unemployment and disenchanted with the “glorious victory of capitalism” of 1991, are looking for alternatives to business as usual. Today they can be receptive to communist ideas, but they won’t receive them in a vacuum; we have to boldly bring these ideas to them. This is no simple task. As the pro-fascist forces of the ruling class gather strength,<sup>8</sup> they fight for the political soul of the working class. They try to dazzle us with the false hope of a public option health care system or a “democratizing” of the military through a draft. In response, we have to fight equally hard to win workers to the idea that only they can change this world for the better by turning communist ideas into the material force for communist revolution.

<sup>1</sup> The U6 unemployment measure puts the total unemployed and underemployed in Washington at over 530,000

<sup>2</sup> NYT, Broad Unemployment Across the US, 7/15/09

<sup>3</sup> www.indeed.com/jobtrends/unemployment, 7/2009, retrieved 9/5/09

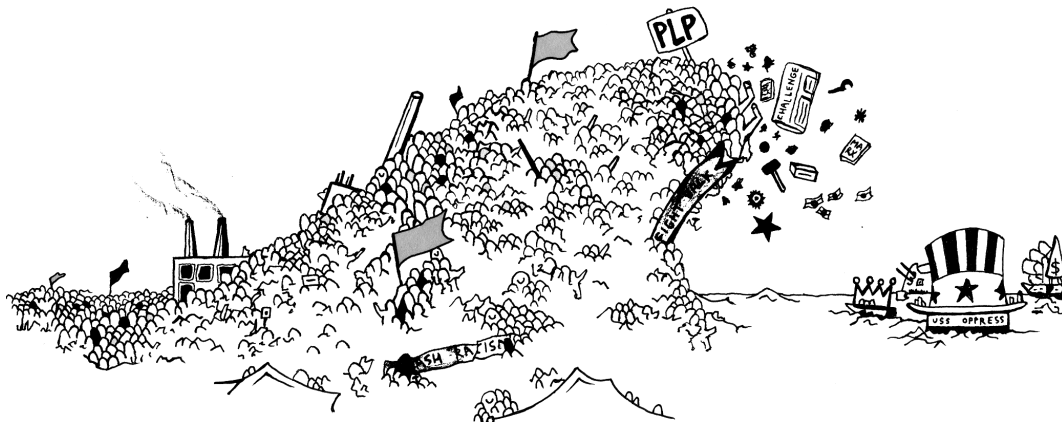
<sup>4</sup> AP, 1,400 Apply for Job of Tacoma Meter Reader, 2/12/09; Puget Sound Business Journal, Puyallup Fair Says Job Applicants Overwhelming, 8/12/09; Everett Herald, The Good Life, D6-D12, 9/1/09.

<sup>5</sup> Side work is work that you do under the table for cash.

<sup>6</sup> Worksource offices are job centers that were created when they got rid of the unemployment offices. Outside of their free computer banks they are useless.

<sup>7</sup> The press has been celebrating a much anticipated decline in unemployment numbers caused not by people going back to work, but by people running out of unemployment benefits. Much to their chagrin however, unemployment rolls continue to grow faster than they can kick people off.

<sup>8</sup> “Pro-Fascist” is not to mean that there is a part of the capitalist class that is anti-fascist, rather that there are still some in the ruling class, a dwindling number, who think that they can still do business as usual. The “pro-fascist” forces are those that most actively argue for fascism.



## How The Depression Affects New York State

The unemployment rate within NYC as a whole nearly doubled between Sept. 08 and 09 as it grew from a rate of 5.9% to 10.2%.<sup>1</sup> This rate of growth was actually higher in the Bronx, as it grew from 8.0% to 13.3%, this rate of growth was echoed in Brooklyn that grew from 6.4% to 11.0%. The Bronx was already high, but the devastation done to Brooklyn as jobs dried up is a real attack on the black and latino workers in this area that depended upon sales jobs, office jobs, construction work, and other employment. This rate of unemployment in Brooklyn must also be seen in the context of the gentrification of the area, as large amounts of already employed people have moved into the area.

The effect of this doubling rate of unemployment must also be understood within the context of the fact that this is what the state admits to. The real rate of unemployment is actually much higher if you take into account the underemployed, those who work part-time but seek full time and those who have ceased to seek for a job. In New York State, the “Real unemployment rate hits 14.1 percent statewide”<sup>2</sup> while the “Real unemployment for Black Men (is) 27 percent”.<sup>3</sup>

Yet, this rate of unemployment isn’t keeping up with the rate of productivity that the bosses are glowing about – a 6.6 increase in the second quarter of 2009 (Apr. - June)<sup>4</sup> This increase mirrors the effects of unemployment on the psychology of the workers as they feel that their job is now precious and that they

need to do whatever it takes to keep their job. The drive to do more and more with less and less is the necessary speed up that increases the profits of the bosses as they must constantly deal with the falling rate of profit. The crisis is going to help them to pad their pockets, but the inherently unstable production of capitalism will definitely mean more crisis after crisis. Comparing the productivity rate with the fact that “Unit labor costs in nonfarm businesses fell 5.9 percent in the second quarter of 2009, with the decline due entirely to the increase in productivity;”<sup>5</sup> clearly illustrates that the bosses are making money hand over fist through the suffering the depression is causing the working class. They are using the terror of their system to help themselves increase the profit that the system gives them.

“Productivity increased 6.5 percent in the business sector in the second quarter of 2009.”<sup>6</sup> As “Unit labor costs decreased 6.0 percent during the second quarter of 2009” there doesn’t seem to be anything that the bosses want but for the labor costs to hit an even higher decrease in 2010, and even higher for 2011. For the higher the costs decrease, the more profit that they can make. Just because the labor cost decrease is the destruction of lives, families, and communities that are devastated by this economic terrorism enacted upon us by the ruling class, it doesn’t mean that the bosses want it to stop.

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<sup>1</sup> “Employed, Unemployed, And Rate of Unemployment By Place of Residence for New York State and Major Labor Areas, September 2009”

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.labor.state.ny.us/workforceindustrydata/Pressreleases/prtbur.txt>

<sup>3</sup> State of Working New York 2009 <http://www.fiscalpolicy.org/SOWNY2009.html>

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics News Release Sept. 2, 2009 <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/prod2.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

## Getting It: The 2009 Seattle Summer Project

“I don’t get it!” complained a Boeing union activist who hails from Detroit at a post-work meeting with PLP summer project volunteers. “Five hundred stores have been shuttered [in downtown Detroit]. How can they let a whole city collapse?” He’s equally frustrated by the “no-strike regime” the Boeing bosses and the national and state politicians are demanding. “Getting it” requires revolutionary communist politics. The point of “getting it” is to mobilize leaders like him, Boeing workers and our class in general to smash a system that brings the working class more exploitation and oppression now and worse later on.

This year’s July project was held in the shadow of last fall’s 8-week strike. A two-day rebellion against the union misleadership (who had to flee the union stage under a hail of water bottles and chicken bones), the Governor, and the company.

Unlike previous strikes, which were followed by pious vows to let bygones be bygones, this strike produced a drumbeat of demands to eliminate strikes altogether. Union officials responded with a plea to “change the tone.” They want to go back to the “good old days.” They argue that relying on Puget Sound’s skilled union workforce is the best way for Boeing to make profits. Let bygones be bygones once again.

Of course, changing the tone doesn’t mean the union won’t entertain the idea of a no-strike regime. “The union’s ears are always open. Talk to us about it,” said International president Tom Buffenbarger (Seattle Times, 7/8).

Going back to the “good old days” is impossible. That’s the first step in “getting it.”

### Learning to Struggle Against Fascist Threats

This year’s summer project was “right on time.” We not only exposed the union’s passivity in the face of the no-strike demand, but also managed to beat the “news cycle.” Every morning and afternoon our volunteers greeted thousands at the plant gates with our party leaflets, signs and Challenges calling on workers to organize struggle against this latest attack.

Often local media would confirm our predictions in the hours that followed. For weeks, the local papers demanded we renounce strikes. Since then, company agents have organized AstroTurf conferences to promote the no-strike deal.

Every evening we dined with CHALLENGE readers from various plants. There we learned how this latest attack sparked sharp political struggle among the rank-and-file. We’d try to answer the questions of our friends in daily revised leaflets and dozens of small plant meetings.

The union consistently claimed we had nothing to learn from the racist attacks in Auto. Our Party was able to get on top of this issue precisely because we understood that the racist decimation in Detroit was a harbinger of the fascist reorganization of industry.

One union official went as far as to claim “auto workers got ‘fat and lazy’ when they were on top.” Our strikes, they claimed, were different because “we only struck because the company was unreasonably greedy.”

Nor did the government takeover and trashing of auto workers standard of living have any relevance to us. Tell that to the government officials that are now demanding the no-strikes!

Each day we argued that the current capitalist crisis of overproduction has sharpened the inter-imperialist rivalry. U.S. imperialism’s competitors are advancing, meaning no more business as usual. The U.S. ruling class, through its government, must save basic industry for war: increasingly becoming the only option available to save the empire. The good old days are over (not that they were ever so good): fascism to prepare for war is on the horizon.

The relative decline of U.S. imperialism not only drove the government takeover in Auto, but also dictated the escalating attack on auto workers. When the government talks about stimulus, they don’t mean stimulating the paychecks of workers, but rather guaranteeing war production on our backs.

Boeing CEO McNerney put it candidly. He “see[s] tremendous pressure coming from ” competitors like Airbus and emerging aerospace powers like Russia, Japan, Canada, Brazil and, in particular, China. He then attacked our “track record of repeated [strikes]”, vowing to “change this dynamic.”

Although there were some immediate localized struggles against the no-strike threat (walkouts at various crew meetings for example), we have not yet been able to organize mass rebellion. The question of legality still held us back.

“As much as I want to, you can’t have rolling thunder, marches or wildcats because that’s illegal,” said one honest

worker. "Look, that's how we started these things around contract time," answered another friend. "It was all illegal when the Party helped organize the first marches in '95. In fact, they're still illegal! The company and the union just allow them now because they can control them."

"Whether Republican or Democrat, they all turn against the working class when they get in office," said another reader and seller at yet another dinner with volunteers. "Maybe, we would stand a chance if we outlawed lobbyists and corporate campaign contributions, while limiting individual contributions to a \$1,000."

The very politicians that our union spent millions getting elected are the ones demanding we submit to this "no-strike regime." "Do you really believe the bosses would ever let the government represent anything but their interests?" asked another Boeing worker. "It's the bosses' State; they built it to force their will on us. It must be smashed and replaced with communist workers' power."

### **Industrial Workers Need Allies in the Military**

As you could well imagine, shop floor discussion were getting pretty heavy by now. An older tool and die maker with lots of experience broke the tension. "Hell, we might as well wildcat. The national guard is busy in Afghanistan," he half joked, half hoped we would.

We rounded out our short summer project by visiting soldiers at nearby Ft. Lewis. When our in-plant readers heard from volunteers about the great reception to our communist literature they were duly impressed. The union activist who had a hard time "getting it" commented that the multi-racial group of young people he meet with

and the soldiers they visited were "the kind of groups we need." He gets it more than he realizes!

### **We Don't Need the Good Old Days; We Need a Plan for Communist Revolution**

We have to face the world as it is. As fascism solidifies its grip and world war looms closer, our tactics and strategy must answer the burning questions of the day. There is but one answer to this nightmare: communist revolution.

Our communist forces are too small to stop the bosses' fascism and war. They will start their carnage, but we can end it. The political preparation we do today will lay the foundation for the long, hard fight for revolution.

We must start by expanding our CHALLENGE networks. Scores of regular readers must turn into hundreds and then thousands over time. Readers must become sellers. We can assure this with regular CHALLENGE readers study/action groups. We need more writers for the paper that will help us "get it."

We are advancing the political struggle with regular "Depression Potlucks" bringing workers together from around the city over good food. Today they are modest events. Each discusses an aspect of the capitalist crisis and our communist solution. A plan is made at each to advance the class struggle in some area of the work. Such work can make these events more significant.

Somebody already wrote a letter to CHALLENGE about how the project motivated him or her to join the PLP. "I went to the Seattle project with doubts, but left wanting to join PLP, with no doubt in my mind," said our new comrade. We can ask more.

### **Top Union Leaders Become Part Of Bosses' State**

*Top union mis-leaders are not only increasingly defending the very companies their member's struggle against, but now are being recruited to defend U.S. imperialism as a whole.*

*The UAW officials on the GM board sit on the board of a company run by the Federal Government.*

*Dennis Rivera was once the head of a union of 300,000 New York health care workers. Now he's a central player in Obama's health care drive. Health care "reform" is all about rationing to prepare for war. "The amount we spend on health care is unsustainable," he declares, showing he'll put the needs U.S. imperialism above even the jobs of the workers he once "represented."*

*If there are still any doubts, Dennis Hughes, president of the New York State AFL-CIO, has been named head of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, the most important of the regional Feds. In this capacity, he'll be meeting with the head of JPMorgan Chase and Goldman Sachs, the government dictated winners in the recent financial turmoil.*


*Mussolini's corporate fascism in Italy during WWII was marked by the presence of union "leaders" in the fascist State. No wonder they called these traitors to our class "social fascists."*

What is needed now is more militant actions from the workers who are attending these potlucks and study groups. While CHALLENGE distribution and study groups are necessary in fighting the bosses' ideas, sharpening the class struggle is essential as we work to build the party and move closer to Communist Revolution.

In a time where the bosses are giving us more and more opportunities to build the party, the workers are looking for leadership. Trying to push our limits in what we can do in fighting back against the boss is necessary. Through the class struggle, the trust and confidence between the working class and the party will strengthen.

All this will be used to advance our struggle on the shop floor and in the union. Our political networks will provide the leadership to fight tooth and nail against each and every fascist attack. We will bring everything from wildcats, to marches, to rolling thunder back on the agenda. As the struggle intensifies, all of these ideas that we discuss and write in CHALLENGE will become clearer to these workers.

These ideas are but the tip of the iceberg. Marx's grave bears the inscription "Hitherto; philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways. The point however is to change it." We get it! Let's get started!



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# The Role of Universities and Colleges Under Capitalism

Forty years ago, Progressive Labor Party pointed out that: “The role of the university in any society is to serve it by providing the technicians, ideologues, bureaucrats, and apologists. In our society these officials are created to serve imperialism (domestic and international). However to advance that the university can be severed from the imperialist state creates the illusion that imperialism has invaded and taken over the educational system, where in fact the two go hand in glove. As long as imperialism runs the show, education will serve it.”<sup>1</sup>

The militarizing of the university in the service of imperialism began between World War I and World War II, and expanded dramatically during the Cold War, especially after the passing in 1958 of the National Defense Education Act. Since WWII, most major American colleges and universities have become linked with the military. The militarizing of universities suffered a setback during the Vietnam War due to student protests, some which were led by Progressive Labor Party. However, today, universities and colleges are being further transformed to serve the interests of U.S. imperialism. As the United States finds itself falling deeper and deeper into economic crisis the university system is being asked to develop the ideology and technical prowess that can turn inter-imperialist rivalry into World War.

Many students are concerned about their university or college’s role in perpetuating suffering and oppression. Together, students, professors, and activists are growing more aware of the intimate relationship between universities and colleges and industry, the military, and intelligence agencies. Students are encouraged to attend colleges and universities in order to learn something new and expand their horizons. They are told colleges and universities are neutral places of higher learning and the free exchange of ideas. However, universities and colleges do not operate in a vacuum, disconnected from capitalism and class society. While some describe the presence of corporations, military recruiters, and government agencies on campus as a “takeover” of the university by forces that naturally belong outside its walls, this “takeover” is anything but recent, and actually reflects a long-standing relationship that has been present since the birth of the research university in the U.S. In fact, the modern American university was the product of a partnership between business and government formed after the Civil War.

Under capitalism, the primary purpose of all education (K-College) is to recreate classes in the next generation and

to teach youth a justification for inequality, oppression, and exploitation. Capitalist schools train and socialize the working class. They exist primarily because the ruling class needs them. The ruling class has a great need to indoctrinate the working class with capitalist ideology. Universities also train engineers, scientists, and political scientists to accept and devise capitalist explanations for the problems of capitalism. The capitalist class cannot maintain class rule and insure the viability of the capitalist system without universities and colleges.

Identity politics, multiculturalism, nationalism and feminism are major ideological problems for building international working class unity as part of a revolutionary communist movement. These ideas are taught openly in classes and make-up a large part of extra-curricular life offered on college campuses. These ideologies lead to the absolute destruction of class-consciousness in students and workers. Many progressive students and student groups accept these ideas as positive and progressive.

These ideas were pushed vigorously in the late 1960’s partly in response to the anti-imperialist, anti-racist student movement of that time. The core concept to these ideologies is that some defining characteristic (e.g., gender, skin color, ethnic, and sexual orientation) is what students (and workers) should see as primary and be the basis for their social and political ties with other students (and workers). Thus, students are taught to see that race and gender are more important than uniting with all workers and students in the fight against sexism, racism, oppression and exploitation. These liberal ideas are very dangerous because they build the illusion that oppression can be eliminated without the complete destruction of capitalism with communist revolution.

Some ideology produced at universities is subtly produced, including individualism and elitism. Other ideology produced at universities is more explicit, such as anti-communism, racism, and sexism. For example, anti-communism is taught openly in most if not all history classes (and in many other classes). A lot of anti-communist scholarship is produced at universities (e.g., Harvard University).

Much of the scholarship is nothing more than outright lies: for example, Stalin is a barbaric monster who murdered millions and millions or Cultural Revolution in China in 1960s was about Mao’s plan to destroy all forms of culture (rather than a struggle between those who wanted to return to capitalism and those who wanted to move forward to a communist society). These lies do more than

## **SOME LEADERS OF ACADEMIC RACISM SINCE THE 1960S**

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- *Harvard professor Samuel P. Huntington, creator of the racist "Clash of Civilizations" theory, which claims Muslim and Arab people belong to "alien civilizations".*
- *Harvard professor Edward Banfield, whose policy recommendations paved the way for the Clinton White House's welfare reform, known as workfare, a racist, fascist policy that forces former welfare recipients, disproportionately black and Latin, to work for slave labor wages.*
- *Harvard professor E.O. Wilson, whose theories of sociobiology claim that racism, sexism, and war are not inevitable features of capitalism, but universal traits of our genetically-evolved human nature. Wilson's theories are based on his observance of ant, not human, behavior.*
- *UCLA professor James Q. Wilson, whose argument that crime is genetic reinforces the racist stereotype the black and Latin men are born criminals.*
- *Former Harvard Psychology chair Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray who coauthored *The Bell Curve*, which argues the racist lie that black people are genetically less intelligent than whites.*

simply vilify historical figures they disparage the entire working class and the communist movement as a whole.

One of the primary roles of the university is to promote and create racist theories. Academic experts produce the books and articles that proclaim the biological or cultural inferiority of people of color in the U.S. and people living in much of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. This racism is used to divide the working class and as the U.S. faces further decline and crisis we will see this racism intensify in all levels of education.

Since the early 1970s, U.S. capitalism has faced a relative decline in economic and political power, and today U.S. bosses are challenged by rival imperialist powers in every part of the world. Today, the economic crises of capitalism in the U.S. and the world are only sharpening the conflict with imperialist rivals. Imperialist competition for resources and markets is sharpening, and world war looms on the horizon. The U.S. ruling class knows it must prepare for wider wars in order to defend its dwindling empire against challenges from imperialist rivals, particularly China and Russia. The U.S. ruling class needs to dominate the oil-rich Middle East and Central Asia, politically and militarily.

In 2006, the Association of American Universities (AAU), which includes 62 of the most prominent

research universities in the country, put out a report arguing that universities must do all that they can "to fill security-related positions in the defense industry, the military, the national laboratories, the Department of Defense and Homeland Security, the intelligence agencies, and other federal agencies."<sup>2</sup>

The architects of U.S. imperialist policy and strategy all have close ties to the research university system. Some examples are: 1) Henry Kissinger, who was a professor at Harvard University's Department of Government and at the Center for International Affairs; 2) Zbigniew Brzezinski (advisor to President Barack Obama) taught at Harvard, Columbia, and now is at John Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies; 3) Madeleine Albright (Secretary of State in the Bill Clinton administration) came to politics from Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service; and 4) Condoleezza Rice (current Secretary of State in George Bush administration) was a Political Science professor and Provost at Stanford University and the list goes on. Harvard, in particular, has a long history of advising both Democratic and Republican presidents and 25% of Presidential Cabinet members over the past three decades have been from Harvard (7). In addition, to Harvard University, Georgetown University trains many who serve U.S. imperialism in the State Department.

Members of Harvard's board of directors are also on the boards of two key U.S. ruling class think tanks: Council on Foreign Relations and the Brookings Institution. The U.S. ruling class uses the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), the single most influential think-tank, to formulate U.S. foreign policy. Often working jointly with Harvard, the CFR has helped guide U.S. imperialism from World War II to the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

More than 300 universities and colleges conduct DOD-funded research and development. In 2007, the DOD announced that it was awarding \$19.4 million that year and \$207 million over the next five years in research funding to 62 universities as part of its Multidisciplinary University Research Initiative (MURI) Program. In 2005, 57% of university research funded by the federal government was for the DOD (see table for allocation of 2003 DOD research dollars).

Now, more than ever the U.S. ruling class needs workers and professionals to sacrifice for the needs of U.S. imperialism and win large sections of the U.S. working class to support imperialism and fascism, including a mass mobilization of the population for future wars. Recruiting working-class and middle-class youth, as well as intellectuals and professionals, in the name of patriotism, public service, and national duty is a precursor to a more wide-ranging National Service program and expanding the military (vigorously supported by President Barack Obama and both Democratic and Republican politicians). The rebuilding of U.S. industry and manufacturing is

critical for the U.S. ruling class. However, the educational system that will “produce” the wage labor for the factories, the soldiers for imperialist war, and the police agents for fascism is also crucial to U.S. imperialism.

“Global competitiveness” against imperialist rivals is what worries the ruling class. This means increasing the quality of education for the average U.S. university student. A study by the government in 2006 called “Mortgaging Our Future: How Financial Barriers to College Undercut America’s Global Competitiveness” pointed out that “1.4 million to 2.4 million bachelor’s degrees will be lost this decade as financial concerns prevent academically qualified students from the lowest income bracket from attending college”. However, the U.S. bosses do not want all—or most, for that matter—working-class youth in universities, although they claim more education for all is the goal.

About 1250 community colleges in the U.S. enroll over 12 million working class students each year, including almost half of all undergraduates—the fastest-growing sector of higher education. Racist tuition fee hikes and cuts in financial aid continue to keep working-class students, primarily Black, Latin and immigrant, out of universities. Only about 10% of these students transfer to a four-year university. The remaining 90% of these students are expected to join the military, which the U.S. ruling class plans to expand dramatically in the coming years, or acquire the “basic skills” and vocational training necessary for jobs in the re-emerging U.S. manufacturing industry. Community colleges, which like K-12 education are being reshaped to meet these “basic skills” and training needs, will play an important role in the plans of U.S. imperialism.

Community college reform monies are flowing into teaching “fundamentals” or “basic skills.” The most significant component of community college reform is the plan to build more degree and especially certificate programs designed specifically to meet the needs of local industries. The new buzzword in community college education is “Career Technical Education”. These new programs are not only about training the working class to work in industry, but also building patriotism (through so-called “civic engagement”) among the alienated youth of inner city and immigrant communities, by pushing the lie that the bosses’ educational system will bring them the “good life.”

In order to wage war, the U.S. ruling class needs fascism at home. Trying to win “hearts and minds” for imperialism, universities and colleges are now working more openly and closely than ever before with intelligence agencies, building patriotism and recruiting for fascism. The President of Penn State Graham B. Spanier, who chairs the National Security Higher Education Advisory Board, acknowledged “higher education can play an increasingly prominent role in national priorities.” In

the name of “national security” and the “war on terror”, the Department of Homeland Security and research universities and colleges across the country are revamping or creating new certificate and degree programs, and, creating centers for learning and research in areas critical to Homeland Security (e.g., improved surveillance). The centers will help federal, state, and local agencies to fulfill homeland security missions (e.g., enhanced policing).

The Department of Homeland Security currently manages a \$70 million dollar scholarship and research budget. The first Homeland Security Center of Excellence was established at the University of Southern California with a \$12 million grant. This new center facilitates research by professors at UC-Berkeley, NYU, and the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Syracuse University has the Institute for National Security and Counterterrorism and Ohio State University offers the International and Homeland Security Program. Also, Ohio State University heads the new National Academic Consortium for Homeland Security, which includes more than 200 universities and colleges. At CSU-Los Angeles, a predominantly Latin and Black campus, a new state-of-the-art Criminology Laboratory was opened last year.

Universities and colleges hide the reality of capitalism: war and fascism. Higher education does its best to make students think they can escape capitalism’s worst effects. Many students attend college to “escape” the drudgery of a life of low wage, working class jobs. For some students, college has helped them escape the worst effects of capitalism. However, fewer people today can escape the brutal reality of capitalism by attending college. Even if they could, we should not turn our backs on the rest of humanity. Capitalism continues to fail for more and more workers. As it lurches from one crisis to the next and leads to more war and fascism, we have an obligation to fight the role our universities and colleges play in supporting fascism and imperialist war. We all must recognize that individualism, elitism, and anti-communism hold back the growth of a militant, anti-imperialist, anti-racist, anti-capitalist movement among college students. Moreover, a mass movement led by PLP to smash capitalism with communist revolution is not possible without sharpening up class struggle on the campus.

In the 1960’s, from France to China to the U.S., students led the way in the fight against academic racism, imperialist war, and even capitalism. Student protests often led to more serious, widespread working class action including general strikes and rebellions. Even since the 1960’s, we can still see how important students are in the fight against oppression and war. In Indonesia, South Korea, Mexico, Iran, France, Canada and the U.S., students initiate and often give leadership to, sometimes, sharp struggle against exploitation, racist/fascist oppression and war.

The PLP has a long history of leading militant struggle

at universities. For example, at Harvard University, in the 1960s, we played a key role in organizing actions and campaigns against aspects of the university's support for U.S. imperialism's war in Vietnam. PLP led the 1969 University Hall sit-in against Harvard's racist expansion into Cambridge and support for ROTC, an action that culminated in a campus-wide strike that closed Harvard for the spring term. In the 1970s, PLP members actively organized against Herrnstein and other Harvard academic racists. At several campuses, we also developed militant campaigns to unite students and campus workers. In the 1960s, PLP organized workers and students to protest General Electric's pro-war policies and attacks on its workers. We organized students to support striking General Motors workers.

The victory of these struggles was in winning students and workers to communism and the Party. These actions demonstrate that even students at elite universities, such as Harvard, can unite with workers in opposing the pro-imperialist and racist policies of these capitalist run universities. But without workers and soldiers, student anti-war struggles can only go so far. A worker/student/soldier alliance must be built to fight exploitation, sexism, racism, and imperialist war. It is critical that the student movement combat racism and see their connection to the

### **2003 DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT FUNDING**

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#### **Massachusetts Institute of Technology/John Hopkins**

*\$842.4 million*

#### **Penn State**

*\$149 million*

#### **University of Texas**

*\$86.6 million*

#### **Carnegie Mellon**

*\$59.8 million*

#### **University of Southern California**

*\$35 million*

#### **University of California system**

*\$29.8 million*

working class and CHALLENGE can prove to be a valuable organizing tool for doing this.

The most important battle for the student movement is the one against their own universities and colleges and the role they play in building racism and imperialist war. The U.S. ruling class wants all colleges and universities to become recruiting grounds for soldiers and centers for fascism and war. As students, we need to drive ROTC and military recruiters off campus, oppose military research on campus and stop academics that develop and propagate racist and fascist ideas.

Students, workers, and soldiers who target the facilities, materials, and institutions used to make war can stop the war machine at the point of production. Ultimately, we cannot permanently stop war and fascism until we eliminate capitalism with communist revolution. Capitalism generates racism, poverty and imperialist war. A system that murders workers by the millions in Iraq and Afghanistan, but cannot feed the hungry, shelter the homeless or provide decent jobs for all, does not deserve to exist. Equally, institutions that apologize for and perpetuate that system do not deserve to exist. The only long-range answer is to build an international communist movement of workers, students and soldiers to defeat capitalism with communist revolution.

<sup>1</sup> PL Magazine (Progressive Labor Party, Nov-Dec 1967).

<sup>2</sup> "National Defense Education and Innovation Initiative:

Meeting America's Economic and Security Challenges in the 21st Century", (Association of American Universities (AAU), January 2006), <http://www.aau.edu/education/NDEAOP.pdf>.

# Global Warming Driven by the Profit System...

## ONLY COMMUNISM CAN CREATE A SUSTAINABLE WORLD

### I. Introduction

#### The political context – the state of the world

Imperialist war threatens to spread from Iraq and Afghanistan to Pakistan, Iran, and eventually China. This process is leading to World War III, which will most likely involve the use of nuclear weapons, particularly by whichever side is on the brink of defeat, and possibly before that stage.

The U.S. capitalists emerged from World War II as the top imperialist power, but their rivals are fast overtaking them economically. Out-of-control U.S. military expenditures since World War II have the goal of preserving past power over imperialist rivals, but they are now an obstacle to spending on infrastructure and industry, thereby contributing to the loss of U.S. economic supremacy.

Stepping back a little farther, capitalism has been developing as the world's economic system over the last several centuries and has gone through different stages. Conquest and slavery built the initial accumulation of fortunes in the hands of a small class of exploiters and murderers, with the rise of racism first in the U.S. to justify slavery and then in Europe in the 1700s and 1800s to justify the slave trade, racism grew to justify the seizure of colonies and the enslavement of people from the Western Hemisphere, India, Asia, Australia, and Africa, and to justify the wanton murder of millions of colonial subjects who refused to submit. Racism is still the chief method through which capitalist ruling classes around the world maintain their power over the much larger working masses. Racism has two major benefits for the capitalists, even as it kills millions of workers – it divides in order to conquer, and it greatly enlarges profits through superexploitation at home and abroad.

As the entire world was taken up by colonies in the late 1800s, capitalism reached the age of imperialism, with sometimes local but increasingly world-wide wars to add to colonial holdings at the expense of rival imperialists. World Wars I and II in the twentieth century involved increasing numbers of competing nations, jockeying for alliances and killing tens of millions of workers in the process, with greater and more horrific weaponry. By this time, large accumulations of capital gave rise to concentration in the hands of banks that could lend and thereby shift capital wherever it was most profitable, with the bankers taking their increasingly massive rake-offs. Big industrialists like J.P. Morgan (railroads and

electrical power) and John D. Rockefeller (oil to run rail and electricity), among many other 19<sup>th</sup> century robber barons, became the U.S.'s top bankers.

In more recent decades the inability of U.S. and other capitalists to find profitable manufacturing outlets for their massive capital has resulted in the financial sector's current use of more complex and inscrutable forms of speculation to concentrate profits, at the same time producing less and less material wealth. The financialization of capital has led to the current worldwide economic crisis in which millions of workers have lost their jobs and homes, and millions more are starving to death – all because of the irrational inability of capitalism to benefit any but a shrinking minority class of billionaires. It has led to increased fascism in the form of gutting of the working class' standard of living, nationalizing the U.S. auto and other major industries, and the building of nationalism and racism.

Now the U.S. owes much of the rest of the capitalists in the world vast amounts of money, as it has decreased its exports and increased its imports, requiring increasing amounts of borrowing from abroad thereby increasing the U.S. debt. Meanwhile a larger and larger proportion of the spending by the U.S. government is being devoted to the military to maintain the political power of the capitalists over their rivals abroad, even as they lose their economic power. The U.S. has close to 800 military bases spread around the world (Johnson 2000, 2004, 2006 – all references and bibliography at the end). This not only overextends the U.S. empire economically but brings about the intense hatred of the U.S. imperialists by workers all over the globe. Its rival imperialists are waiting in the wings for renewed opportunities to enhance their power as well through such wars, as they have done in the past.

#### The ecological context – the state of the earth

Stepping back still farther, the ecological context of the state of the world is becoming more and more critical. Ecology concerns the many interactions among the millions of plant and animal species on the earth and the rest of the environment, i.e., all of nature. Besides discussing the interaction between classes, we will also look at the interaction *between* capitalism and the rest of nature (shortened for simplicity to "nature"), an artificial division made only for purposes of analysis. In reality, however, capitalist society is as much a part of nature as

anything else on earth.

This interaction consists of two major categories:

- 1) that which humans take from nature: natural resources, and
- 2) that which humans put back into nature: waste products, as well as labor and materials that may be beneficial to nature and humans. (The latter we will leave aside in this statement, but understanding of them could be critical following communist revolution.)

The processes that take up resources and put out waste products are similar to our own bodily metabolism, but on a social level. On a personal level, metabolism involves taking in food and water to produce energy, and ejecting the waste products once we have used the energy and converted the intake to forms that are no longer useful to the body. Metabolism on a social level also involves taking in raw materials and ejecting the waste products, but in addition it involves the application of human labor to the production process. Social metabolism is central to economics.

Some, though by no means all, pre-class societies – for example certain groups of North American Indians – had great respect for nature as their source of food, water, shelter, and clothing. They treated it with great care, preserving and taking only what was needed and being careful that waste products did not destroy nature's bounty. Other pre-class societies unwittingly destroyed forests and drove many species to extinction as they introduced new diseases and cleared land for farming, sometimes resulting in migrations and clashes with neighboring societies.

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, but rather by profit. Profit-making requires efficiency only within the individual business, but the competition inherent in profit-making requires that all businesses maximize profits continually, and particularly over the short term, or go belly up.

Worst of all, capitalism prevents the world's working class from acting in accord with our need to preserve nature for ourselves and for future generations. Furthermore capitalism, for all practical purposes, prevents us from obtaining food, water, shelter, clothing, and other needs, unless we work for the capitalists and produce more than we are paid – with the excess taking the form of surplus value, or profit. By withholding our access to the necessities of life, the capitalists force us to do their bidding. The world's working class today is just as enslaved by capitalism's withholding these necessities as if we were forced to live and work in collars and chains. Black and Latin workers in the U.S. and superexploited workers throughout Asia, Africa, and Latin America are held in particular bondage. The superexploitation is

enforced by naked military repression and maintained through racist ideology. Marxists call this global form of bondage wage slavery.

On the resource side: capitalists appropriate 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 overfishing 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. Paraphrasing one author, capitalism turns land into real estate, forests into lumber, and oceans into fisheries (Foster, 2002). And, we would add, turns the world's working class into profit-producing commodities as appendages to capitalist machines.

Under chattel slavery, workers' bodies and minds were consumed in backbreaking labor with death coming at an early age. Under wage slavery, dehumanizing exploitation grinds down our bodies (if we survive work-related accidents and illness).

On the waste product side: capitalists dump toxic or radioactive waste into soil, rivers, oceans, and the atmosphere, with numerous deaths resulting but 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, as we discuss in detail below, so-called greenhouse gases (GHGs). The most important of these include chiefly carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), then water vapor (H<sub>2</sub>O), nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O), and methane (CH<sub>4</sub>), among many others.

Preservation of resources for industry and life itself is vital for humanity but simply not profitable in the short term for capitalism, and short term is the only level on which capital can possibly function. A lapse in profitability means the death of a business, just as a lapse in food and water means the death of a living thing. As a consequence of the necessarily short-term outlook (in effect, blindness) of capitalism, we find ourselves in the new millennium nearing the practical exhaustion of resources that until recently have been regarded as effectively infinite.

Much has been written recently about so-called peak

oil, i.e., the stage at which large oil discoveries are coming to an end and the remaining known oil reserves are becoming more and more expensive to extract, leading eventually to unprofitability and therefore to slowing of, and eventually an end to, its extraction. The peak is defined as the point where daily production actually starts to decrease, a point which has already been reached in many oil-producing countries, including the U.S. in 1970. Even before this point there will be a failure of still rising global production to keep up with growing global demand. When these cross, such that daily global demand actually begins to exceed daily global production, prices will skyrocket. Even before this day arrives, in an attempt to keep up their profitability, oil companies will begin to jack up their prices faster and faster in anticipation of its arrival.

But the oil companies are not quite down to that yet. Five of the 2009 top seven Fortune 500 companies (in terms of gross income) are either oil companies (ExxonMobil, Chevron, ConocoPhillips) or auto companies (GM, which nevertheless just declared bankruptcy, and Ford), along with GE, that requires oil to run its electrical products. The only other company in the top 7 is WalMart, just displaced by ExxonMobil for first place. Clearly oil profits have not begun to suffer yet, but are on the brink, and the oil companies are fighting a losing battle to maintain their supremacy – both to prevent any competing source of energy, such as nuclear, from displacing oil and to deny that their product is causing global warming. This is similar to the cigarette companies, which for years denied that their product causes lung cancer. Capitalist profit, when it comes into conflict with truth, is the usual winner, at least until truth can no longer plausibly be denied.

While the dynamic of interimperialist rivalry causes continual wars, regardless of the remaining abundance of resources, the imminent approach of peak oil, if it has not already arrived, and the approaching end of U.S. economic supremacy only tend to make these wars more desperate and deadly. All imperialists have a life-and-death need to secure sources of oil for three interrelated reasons: 1) to run their economies and their military machines, 2) for its profitability, and 3) to control their rivals' access to this vital resource. These clearly feed on each other, with military power necessary to maintain the other two, particularly concentrated today in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the rest of the Middle East and Central Asia, with West Africa, the Horn of Africa in the east, Venezuela, Colombia, and other Latin American oil reserves not far behind. This means that as the world's profitably extractable oil reserves reach their peak and start to run out, each imperialist power will be forced to step up their drive toward war against rivals and to step up fascism at home, first to mobilize their respective sections of the world's working class into their armies and, second, to override multiple conflicting priorities

among their various national capitalists. The current world capitalist financial crisis only intensifies the rival imperialists' desperation, even as it throws obstacles into their paths. Even under the lengthening shadow of impending climate change, war and fascism in the 21<sup>st</sup> century threaten to dwarf all of the 20<sup>th</sup> century world wars, resulting in as yet unimaginable levels of working class death and misery.

And even as the earth is rapidly being depleted of profitably extractable oil, and sooner or later coal and natural gas, GHGs are being emitted at faster and faster rates from electrical energy generation, industrial, and transportation processes, as capitalist economies expand around the world. The current global financial crisis may be temporarily slowing this process, but the trend continues. GHGs are causing a rapid warming of the atmosphere, glaciers, soil, and oceans that threatens to change the earth's climate radically and to push that change into an irreversible phase with catastrophic results – irreversible, that is, in less than tens of thousands of years, if not forever.

While the depletion of oil will be a major problem for capitalists who depend, either directly or indirectly on oil for their profits, it will also be a disaster for the working class because of the way capitalism has structured our entire way of life. Capitalism has centered its economic activity around the use of fossil fuels for energy for over a century, at the same time preventing the systematic construction of public transportation in favor of the automobile economy, beginning in the U.S., with its roads, service stations, and auto factories, involving as well the entire relationship of cities to suburbs. As oil becomes unprofitable to extract and the cost skyrockets, workers will have great difficulty in most cities and certainly in rural areas getting to our jobs, to buy food, and to access all other necessities of life.

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. There is no lack of water in general on the earth, since almost 70% of the earth's surface is ocean, but fresh water that is suitable for drinking, hygiene, and agriculture is fast being depleted by conversion to salt water. This depletion is partly due to the way capitalist agriculture is performed, without an eye toward conservation of this vital resource, but the main cause is global warming (explained below). Furthermore wars are being fought over fresh water sources. For example, Israel's determination to hold on to the West Bank, seized by war from Jordan in 1967, is based on the fact that the Jordan River and the adjacent underground aquifers are a major source of Israel's fresh water, even though drought is now depleting both sources. Under these conditions all other considerations take a back seat, including the international condemnation (often hypocritically from other capitalist governments) that the Israeli ruling class receives for its brutal suppression of

its Arabic working class neighbors and inhabitants.

But, without trivializing the disastrous effects of oil and water depletion and the coming fascism and wars to secure their control, the impact of their depletion can be repaired once communist-led revolution puts the world under the control of the world's working class, through clean sources of energy and through desalinization of sea water. What will not be so quickly reparable is the climate.

### The purpose of this statement

Our statements in this paper are based on very well established science and happen to be in line with the outlook of virtually all climate scientists. The casual observer might not realize that the vast majority of them have proven that global warming is happening and is caused by capitalist (what they call "human" or "anthropogenic") activity. The confusion on this point is due to past media reports designed to create doubt. PLP does not automatically believe that scientists, even a majority of scientists in any particular field, are necessarily correct, but our in-depth analysis, guided as always by our use of the scientific method of dialectical materialism, tells us that when it comes to the capitalist causes of global warming the majority are indeed correct.

Virtually no one in the world doubts that today's times are desperate because of the current world economic crisis with its devastating effects on hundreds of millions of workers and our class allies, and because of the spreading murderous imperialist oil and mineral wars in the Middle East, Central Asia, Africa, and elsewhere. But not everyone recognizes that the accelerating exhaustion of extractable oil and fresh water and particularly the ongoing global warming threaten future generations of humanity, and will continue to do so for some time even after "the international working class becomes the human race."

All of these problems, both economic (the interaction between social classes, i.e., bosses and workers) and ecological (the interaction between humans and the rest of nature), are interrelated in complex ways and, as we show below, are not the result of the industrial revolution or out-of-control consumerism, as the media, various authors, and even many climate scientists claim, but rather of the inherent laws of development of insatiable capitalism, as imperialist rivals all seek to accumulate infinite capital in a finite world.

The capitalists, as we show below, are systemically incapable of seriously addressing the problem. The pitifully ineffective gestures at addressing global warming by the Obama administration suggest that the U.S. ruling class is also using the global warming issue for other purposes than trying to solve the crisis. In particular, they are trying to rally workers and others around the globe to

attack the rapidly developing rival capitalist powers of India and China, who are increasingly using fossil fuels, particularly coal (the dirtiest fossil fuel of all), to catch up with and surpass the U.S. economic powerhouse.

## II. The science of global warming and its impact on the world's workers

### Fossil fuels, greenhouse gases, and their harmful effects

The main fossil fuels are coal, oil, and natural gas. They are called fossil fuels because they are the result of animal and plant matter that died and decayed thousands to millions of years ago. Fossils are preserved specimens of dead organisms and therefore contain large amounts of carbon, a universal constituent of all living matter, both plant and animal.

As a constituent of fuel, when carbon is burned to generate energy it combines with oxygen to form the molecule  $\text{CO}_2$  (carbon dioxide), and  $\text{CO}_2$  is one of the so-called "greenhouse gases" (GHGs). GHGs act like the glass panes in a greenhouse to keep things warm. Indeed, next to water vapor,  $\text{CO}_2$  is the most abundant GHG in the atmosphere and is becoming even more abundant since the onset of capitalism's industrial revolution 200 years ago.<sup>1</sup>

GHGs as a whole comprise a growing component of the earth's atmosphere. They cause warming by allowing sunlight to pass through from outer space to the ground or oceans, thereby warming them. As land and water heat up they radiate this heat away more and more in the form of infrared radiation. Some of the infrared radiation goes back into space, except for that part that is absorbed by the GHGs in the air. So GHGs allow visible light from the sun to pass from outer space to ground level but trap the infrared that is produced by the heating of the ground and oceans. Just think how a car gets hot in the summer when the windows are closed, from sunlight's entering the car through the windows with the heat being unable to escape because glass, like GHGs, traps infrared radiation. That, after all, is what the glass in a greenhouse is intended to do for the purpose of growing plants. The more GHGs in the atmosphere, the more heat is retained on the surface of the earth and in the air.

For hundreds of millions of years this trapped heat was one of the necessary conditions that permitted life to arise. Without the trapping of some heat, the earth would be far too cold for large organic molecules (i.e., ones containing carbon) to form, and without them life could not exist. So GHGs, until recently, have been good for us. But as with virtually all things that are good for us, this is true only in moderate amounts.



However, in recent decades the GHGs – mostly CO<sub>2</sub> and secondarily the increased atmospheric water vapor – have dramatically increased heat trapping, and, as a result, the average temperature of the earth is rising at such a rate that it is about to exceed any previously recorded level. The new feature, in addition to the natural sources of CO<sub>2</sub> that have been around for millions of years and the natural places where CO<sub>2</sub> is absorbed (mainly oceans, soil, and forests – so called carbon sinks), is the GHG emissions from capitalist use of fossil fuels – what most writers, the media, and the government refer to as human-caused, or anthropogenic, thereby shielding the capitalists from blame and shifting responsibility mainly to the most numerous part of humanity – the world’s working class. While the capitalist sources of CO<sub>2</sub> are much smaller than the natural sources, the latter have been balanced by the natural carbon sinks. Now the added CO<sub>2</sub> exceeds the capacity of the sinks to take it back out of the atmosphere at the same rate it is being added. Furthermore the sinks are being destroyed so that even the natural sources of CO<sub>2</sub> are exceeding the capacity of the sinks to offset them. The result is a steady rise in CO<sub>2</sub> concentration in the atmosphere.

While oil is the most used fossil fuel in the U.S., the Chinese and Indian ruling classes mainly use coal to fuel their industries and produce electricity. These two countries alone account for more than one third of humanity, and their economies are expanding rapidly, with China about to overtake the U.S. as the largest economy in the world. The coal burning throughout south Asia is producing a brown haze that is causing vast amounts of respiratory illness and is spreading beyond the borders of these two countries. Recall the 2008 summer Olympics, before which Beijing had to clean its air as best it could so that athletes wouldn’t suffocate, an embarrassing situation for the Chinese ruling class.<sup>2</sup>

Pollution of this extent is not some future disaster, but a real effect even today of burning fossil fuels, and has been for almost two centuries. A visitor to Los Angeles, for example, is struck on many days by the invisibility of the San Gabriel Mountains to the north.

### **The earth is warming to a degree never previously seen**

The current average global temperature is already just 3 to 4°F below the highest temperatures recorded over the last 400,000 years, and has recently been rising at a rate of approximately half a degree over 30 years. This is a rate of rise never before seen except when the earth is coming out of an ice age (more on this below).

To begin with, how do we know what the earth’s average temperatures have been over the last several hundred thousand years? A record of past surface temperatures over that span of time is found by drilling miles down into

deep ice in Greenland or Antarctica or by drilling into ocean or lake beds or into rock and bringing up cores of ice or sediment. The overlying layers are ones that were laid down later than the deeper layers, so the greater the depth the farther back in time we can go to measure such things as the composition and temperature of the atmosphere. There are various indicators of temperature in these layers, including such things as the relative amounts of two isotopes of oxygen (O<sup>16</sup> versus O<sup>18</sup>) trapped in fossil marine animal shells. This permits us to draw a graph of temperatures over hundreds of thousands of years and allows us to see that, while average temperatures have varied significantly, we are soon about to exceed any past temperature for the measured period.

And this despite the fact that the earth’s climate has varied over tens to hundreds of thousands of years by significant amounts. It has gone through alternating periods of severe cold and comfortable warmth (comfortable, that is, for life), called ice ages and interglacial or warm periods, respectively. The most recent ice age lasted about 120,000 years and ended about 10,000 years ago. Geologists find evidence in the layers of rock that during this ice age glaciers covered much of the earth, extending down into what are now low-latitude temperate regions, particularly in the northern hemisphere where most of the earth’s land mass is located and where most civilizations have arisen.

It was not long before this last ice age began that human beings first arose on the earth more than a hundred thousand years ago. Since the last ice age ended 10,000 years ago, we have been living in a period called the Holocene, more recently dubbed the Anthropocene (“Anthro,” again, refers to human beings) because of capitalism’s effect on climate. Societies in many parts of the world independently developed agriculture during this period of relative warmth.

The ice ages and warm periods have switched back and forth with relatively sudden and rapid change from one to the other. This alternating cycle has been found to be synchronized with another set of natural cycles. In the mid-1800s an amateur scientist in Scotland named James Croll discovered that ice ages were correlated with changes in the shape of the earth’s orbit around the sun and the tilt of its axis. Then in 1920 a Serbian scientist named Milutin Milankovitch published extensive mathematical calculations to chart several periodic variations in the shape of the earth’s orbit and hence the distance to the sun, and in the angle that its axis makes with the direction of the sun’s rays. It is the latter that gives rise to the four seasons of the year, which is well known to involve differences in average temperatures over the year in various parts of the world away from the equator.

There are three of these cycles, now named after their discoverer, and each of them takes tens of thousands of years — one about 20,000 years (precession, like

a top whose spin axis describes a cone in space as it is slowing down), the second about 40,000 years (nutations, a variation in the amount of tilt of the earth's axis to the plane of its orbit around the sun just as a dying top describes wider and wider cones), and the third about 100,000 years (orbital eccentricity, changes in the degree of elongation of the earth's slightly elliptical orbit). These cycles are caused in part by the gravitational interaction of the earth and other planets in the solar system (the planets surrounding the sun). The timing of the ice ages and warm periods is in near perfect coincidence with the lesser and greater amounts of average heat received by the earth from the sun due to these variations.

Other scientists have noted cycles of sun surface activity involving so-called solar flares, with cycles of approximately 11 years, very much shorter than Milankovitch cycles, and which also cause variations in the amount of light and heat reaching the earth from the sun. But, while solar flare cycles seem to be correlated with a small amount of climate fluctuation over very long time intervals, they do not correlate with the steady warming of the last few decades. Indeed there has been no steady upward trend in solar activity over this recent period.

Jim Hansen, the Director of the Goddard Institute for Space Studies of NASA, has shown that the greatest change in global average temperature that the solar activity cycle could force is equal to that of about 7 years worth of current CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. In other words, over time the effect of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions overwhelms the effect of solar activity on global average temperature (Hansen).

The recent acceleration of global warming coincides with the onset of the capitalist industrial revolution about two centuries ago, with its machinery that runs mainly on fossil fuels. And in the last 50 or 60 years this warming has accelerated dramatically as industrialization and oil-consuming modes of transportation have rapidly spread over most of the earth since World War II. A graph of average earth temperature over the last many decades, with the recent sudden rise, resembles a hockey stick lying on its back with the part that strikes the puck representing a sudden rise over the rest of the shaft. The graph is even referred to by that name. It demonstrates that whatever natural cycles have caused climate changes in the past, and continue to do so in the present, only the addition of capitalism-caused GHG emissions can explain the recent upward trend in average global temperature.

By way of preparing for the section to come on "tipping," it should be noted that between ice ages and warm periods the overall range of average world temperatures, as opposed to local weather variations, has been only about 20°F. Furthermore we are in the fifth warm period that has occurred between ice ages during the last 400,000 years, and we are currently experiencing an average world temperature that is only about 3 to 4°F below the

highest temperatures recorded during the previous four warm periods. A temperature variation of 20°F is smaller than that between the time when we leave for work in the morning and we get home in the evening. And yet, for reasons that we discuss below, the effects of such seemingly small temperature variations can be extreme, as indicated by the qualitative difference between ice ages, in which much of the earth has been covered by glaciers, and warm periods such as we've enjoyed for the last 10,000 years and in which glaciers are mostly found in regions farther from the equator and at higher altitudes.

### **How current global warming was discovered**

Over a century ago a Nobel Prize-winning Swedish chemist named Svante Arrhenius realized that CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere, along with other GHGs, trapped heat. But in those days the amount of GHGs was not sufficient to overcome the natural phenomena that affect climate, from forests, soil, and oceans, all of which absorb GHGs, to solar flares and variations in the earth's orbit and axis, all of which affect the amount of solar radiation hitting the earth and therefore the rate of heat coming from outer space. Only in the last couple of decades has it gradually come to be realized by a growing number of scientists that the magnitude of GHG increase from electrical power generation, industrial, and transportation activity was beginning to shift the balance of all the natural effects. Today the vast majority of climate scientists agree that global warming is happening faster and faster.

### **How scientists know that the earth's temperature is currently threatening to rise higher than ever, with predictable catastrophic effects for the world's working class**

The temperatures recorded in ice and sediment cores, when compared with recent direct temperature recordings, tell us that this warming is taking place and about to rise above previously recorded levels. Furthermore many of the side effects of global warming in the modern era are observable to virtually everyone in the world, so there is no way to hide them.

Consider the following:

- a) **Hurricanes:** Increasingly violent and destructive hurricanes are occurring in recent years. The best known of these may be Katrina in August 2005, but in the same season Wilma was the strongest Atlantic hurricane ever recorded, and the total number of hurricanes that year had not been seen for 72 years. In that same year the first hurricane ever to hit Europe landed in Spain, and the first hurricane ever seen in the south Atlantic hit Brazil in 2004. While

no single weather event can be attributed to global warming with certainty, the increase in frequency of previously unusual events can be.

The frequency of more violent hurricanes will continue to increase, because warmer ocean surface temperatures create low pressures that cause such storms in the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian Oceans. Like the Bhola cyclone in 1970 that killed 500,000 workers in Bangladesh and India (more than twice the number of Asian workers who were killed by the 2004 tsunami), increasingly violent hurricanes promise to kill or dislocate millions and millions of people.

b) Heat waves: Heat waves are now occurring of a magnitude never before seen in certain places. In 2003 a summer heat wave killed 35,000 Europeans, mainly workers, and many thousands in India. The European death toll alone was 12 times the number of people who died at the World Trade Center on 9/11.

More and more devastating heat waves will result in tens of thousands of deaths. The dwindling energy sources will make it even harder, without a significant rise in the use of alternative energy sources, to compensate for the heat with fans, coolers, and air conditioning. And those destined to suffer the greatest effects are always the working class.

c) Droughts and wildfires: Droughts are regional dry periods lasting months to years, involving less than average rainfall or river flow. Their frequency is increasing and results from the ability of warmer air to retain more moisture, thereby limiting, in regions not too near the poles, the amount of both rain and mountain snow that is now the source of most of the world's fresh water supply.

The lack of rain is already resulting in greater numbers of increasingly destructive wildfires and hastening the drying up of rivers and underground water tables all over the world. Water is one of the most vital components of all life, and its increasing disappearance will not only cause millions and millions of deaths directly from dehydration and lack of sanitation, but agriculture and food supplies will also suffer, with widespread deaths from starvation. Already, as Pakistan's Indus River, fed by dwindling Himalayan snow melt, dries up and India's underground water table sinks below the level accessible by wells, agriculture is becoming more and more difficult, promising sooner or later to cause actual famines (Pearce 2006).

Within four consecutive days in January 2009 the press reported on drought conditions in Texas causing spreading wildfires in the winter and in Argentina and California's central valley where farmers are seeing their fields dry up, and the dying off of old-growth forests in the western U.S., not only due to a lack of water directly, but also due to insects and

diseases that spread with the dryness. And in early February, wildfires in Australia were outdoing past years.<sup>3</sup>

Of even greater importance is the fact that a long term drought in the vast Sahel region of northern Africa beginning in the late 1960s and lasting into the mid 1970s caused widespread famine. In recent years, however, as part of the general shifting of rainfall from one geographical region to another that is part of the global warming effect (see next paragraph), rain has begun to return to this region that stretches 2400 miles across the continent and extends over 600 miles in the north-south direction.

d) Floods: Along with droughts in some areas is an increase in floods in other areas that destroy lives, agriculture, and homes. As the earth warms, the cooler air that is necessary for rain to form is concentrated farther and farther from the equator, leaving more temperate and tropical zones dryer, and causing flooding in more northern regions, and even in southern regions that are not used to such extensive rains. The reason floods occur is that warmer air holds more moisture and saves it up as air masses travel until cooler conditions that cause condensation give rise to rain. Then the rain falls in much greater volumes much quicker, such that the ground is unable to absorb it all and the runoff gathers in low-lying areas, resulting in flooding. Thus the very same phenomenon (i.e., warmer air holds more water) accounts for the increase in frequency of both low and high extremes of rainfall, namely both droughts and floods, and a decrease in moderate rainfalls.

The effects of flooding are well known to millions who have experienced it, and to those who have not experienced them if only from watching Katrina's effect on New Orleans and the rest of the Gulf Coast in the U.S. and Mexico. Other catastrophic floods in Asia have been reported on TV news. These floods will become more frequent and will cause mass migrations of desperate workers away from these areas.

And, as usual and because of world-wide racism produced by capitalist ruling classes to divide the working class and make superprofits where possible, the people most severely affected will be the impoverished and superexploited black, latin and Asian workers, whether in the U.S. or abroad. It was black workers who suffered the most by far in New Orleans from Katrina, though white workers suffered extreme losses also, with only the richer ruling sections of the city, with their larger and stronger levees, suffering less devastation.

Lesser publicized effects of global warming, however, are even more serious, if that is possible. These include:

e) Large rise in sea level: The rise in sea level results from melting glaciers and ice shelves, particularly in

Greenland and Antarctica that together hold more than 90% of the earth's ice, with Antarctica holding about 10 times that of Greenland. Evidence strongly suggests that sea levels will rise as much as a few feet in several decades. To get an idea of scale, if all the ice in these two islands were to melt, the rise of sea level would be about 220 feet, which could take more than a century. However, if sea level were to rise just 3 feet, given today's geographic population distribution over 100 million people would be displaced, the vast majority in Asia (see [www.realclimate.org](http://www.realclimate.org)).

In addition there are entire island nations in the Pacific that will be forced to move as well. It is estimated that 10% of the world's 6.8 billion people live in the endangered cities. The hundreds of millions of people who will be displaced by this rise in sea level will have to go somewhere, abandoning their homes. The dislocations that this alone will cause are unimaginable, in addition to the social upheavals that will result, including loss of jobs and income, with lost access to food, shelter and transportation. The capitalist response to mass migrations of workers around the world will be martial law and a further intensification of the growing fascism in the U.S. and globally.

The time scale of this sea level rise contains significant uncertainties, mainly because of the uncertainties in how fast the melting of Greenland and Antarctica will proceed. However, there are possibilities of massive acceleration of this melting, which we address in the next section. What is not uncertain is that if things continue as they are today, or change by only token amounts, it is inevitable.

f) Interruption of the normal ocean circulation: There has been progressively more extreme melting of the north polar floating ice cap from one year to the next.<sup>4</sup> But it is not just killing polar bears. The addition of fresh water to the North Atlantic from the melting sea ice, as well as from the melting Greenland glaciers which are also made of fresh water, threatens to dilute the salt concentration in the ocean and interfere with the normal circulation that depends in part on the salt concentration. This circulation of ocean currents is called the thermohaline (thermo means heat and haline refers to salt) circulation, and keeps the water moving from the Atlantic to the Pacific and back, over about a 1600-year period (Pearce 2007).

The progressive melting of the polar ice cap is bringing the possibility of interruption of the thermohaline circulation closer every year. Already the number of vortices in the waters between Greenland and Europe, that take the colder, saltier surface water down to the bottom of the ocean, as a critical part of the normal circulation, have decreased in recent years from an estimated twelve to two, with one of the remaining

two already losing its force (Pearce 2007).

If this circulation is interrupted it will have a direct effect on climate in places such as Europe that depend on the normal circulation, particularly in the form of the warm waters from the equator that ride the Gulf Stream northeastward. It is the Gulf Stream that keeps Europe temperate at relatively high latitudes. If the normal circulation of currents in the North Atlantic were to cease, Europe would be plunged into much colder temperatures, even as the warmer water remaining instead in the Gulf of Mexico would spawn even more violent hurricanes. For this reason, the thermohaline circulation is called the climate's conveyor belt.

g) Dying coral reefs: Coral reefs that support a wide variety of fish are dying, and the dying fish constitute a disappearing supply of food for humans. This is a consequence of the ocean's absorbing increasing amounts of CO<sub>2</sub>, which in turn causes acidification of the oceans and acts as an obstacle to the forming of shells and skeletons in the many sea creatures that make up coral reefs. The threat to many fish species, and to an important part of the food supply, is exacerbated by the anarchistic relations of capitalism in which giant fishing corporations use large nets to pick up everything in range.

h) Disappearing forests: Destruction of the world's forests is accelerating through lack of rain and consequent increasing wildfire activity. Forests absorb large amounts of CO<sub>2</sub>, so greater emissions of GHGs results in less absorption, further increasing the GHG concentrations in the atmosphere. Disappearance of forests will accelerate, destroying the shelter for many of the world's animal species as well as human inhabitants of, for example, the Amazon region in South America.

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*Both dying coral reefs and disappearing forests also mean accelerated extinction of tens to hundreds of thousands of species of plants and animals. In fact, as a result of rampant resource depletion and waste product pollution by capitalism, we are in the midst of the sixth great extinction. There have been five such massive extinctions of species over the last 600 million years, with the worst of them – the end-Permian 250 million years ago – causing a loss of 80-95% of all then existing species. All five of these mass extinctions have been traced most likely to major natural events such as super volcanoes, covering vast areas of land or ocean, or meteorite impacts, such as caused the extinction of the dinosaurs 65 million years ago (Benton). We are now again encountering a rapid rate of species extinctions, due not to natural events this time, but rather to capitalism's structural requirement for maximum profits without regard to the consequences.*

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i) Melting of permafrost: The permafrost (frozen ground water) in the arctic regions, particularly in Siberia and Alaska, is melting and releasing huge amounts of stored methane (also a fossil product). Methane is an even more effective GHG than CO<sub>2</sub> by a factor of 25. However, methane is currently far less abundant in the atmosphere than CO<sub>2</sub> by a factor of 200 in terms of concentration. This leaves CO<sub>2</sub> as the dominant GHG for the time being. But as the permafrost continues to melt, it can only be a matter of time before methane catches up and starts to cause even faster global warming.

Another source of methane lies beneath the ocean floor in the form of so-called clathrates, which are ice particles that will melt as ocean temperatures rise, thus releasing large bubbles of methane into the air.

j) Tropical and other diseases: Another likely effect of global warming is the spread of tropical diseases to new geographical locations (Speth). The introduction of new diseases to populations of people or animals that have not seen them before and have not developed immunities can have disastrous effects. Consider, for example, the deliberate use of smallpox by European settlers in the U.S. to decimate the Native American populations and steal their land, or the unintended epidemics of the great influenza of 1918-9 or AIDS, each responsible for an estimated 25 million deaths worldwide, with the AIDS epidemic still decimating the world's working class. Even the unintentional epidemics caused, or are still causing, far more deaths than they otherwise would have, due to amplification by capitalist-caused poverty and war. (More on amplification in the next section.)

Diseases that are on the rise due to a warmer climate include allergies and asthma, both epidemic even in the imperialist nations. The higher temperatures bring earlier and longer pollen seasons, and ragweed is produced in higher quantities and a more potent form due to both higher temperatures and to higher concentrations of CO<sub>2</sub> (*Scientific American Earth* 3.0, June 2009).

Diseases and insects that kill trees are spreading farther from the equator in North America due to milder winters – for example, mountain pine beetles are increasing by orders of magnitude, killing millions of very old trees in Wyoming, Colorado, and British Columbia, and threatening to wipe out entire forests.

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*There are other types of natural disasters that do not result from global warming or energy depletion, such as tsunamis, volcanoes, and earthquakes. But even the widespread destruction of human life from these events are not merely a result of nature's violence, but rather of world capitalism's disregard for warning systems and safer structures, at root a complete disregard for the wellbeing of the working classes beyond the*

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*minimum that it takes to maintain an adequate number of workers to produce the capitalists' profits.*

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### **Tipping: How climate can undergo rapid change in extreme ways from one condition to another, lasting for thousands of years**

Climate differs from local weather by covering much larger areas. It is well known that weather is unstable and can change drastically, violently, and quickly from one condition to another. Ask anyone who has lived through a hurricane (cyclone, typhoon – all names for the same thing in different parts of the world), tornado, flood, ice storm, or heat wave, if you haven't had the pleasure yourself. What is not well recognized is that climate (as opposed to weather) can change in extreme ways as well, over longer time intervals. People who lived in Oklahoma in the 1930s and saw the central part of the U.S. turn to a dust bowl (described, e.g., in Steinbeck's novel *The Grapes of Wrath*) know this, and dwellers in the Sahel region of northern Africa are experiencing the same thing today.

The earth has been enjoying a relatively warm period for the last 10,000 years in much of the world, hospitable for the development of agriculture, animal domestication, and the civilizations that have been built on those foundations. Because of this experience and history, many scientists have taken it for granted that there must always be forces that act to stabilize the climate. There are in fact stabilizing forces, but destabilizing forces exist as well.<sup>5</sup>

Capitalism has had a profound impact on the planet. One third to one half of the earth's land surface has been transformed by human action; CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere has increased by 30% in the last 200 years of industrial capitalism; more than half of freshwater sources are now in use by human beings; over 20% of ocean fisheries have been depleted or are on the brink of being so; 25% of all bird species have already been driven into extinction by human activity; and the rates of species extinctions are now 100 to 1000 times that of eras prior to human domination of the earth (Foster 2002). It is estimated that 5 to 25 thousand species go extinct each year – that's about 14 to 70 per day – out of some 20 to 100 million animal species total (Benton).

However, the interrelationships among various phenomena involving climate are very complex. For example, air-borne aerosols such as CFCs also have a cooling effect on the earth by reflecting sunlight away. In fact, Crutzen has pointed out that in the complete absence of any aerosols (not just CFCs), global average temperatures would be rising much faster from the increase in GHGs. Indeed there have been suggestions that aerosols might be able to reverse the trend toward runaway global warming, but that will only mask the

disease by affecting the symptoms and will fail in the long run if GHGs continue to multiply. Besides, precisely because the interrelationships are so complex, the side effects of such a project might be difficult to predict.

Contrary to the illusion that climate is always stabilized by natural forces, the very existence of numerous past ice ages lasting tens of thousands of years, suddenly alternating with warm periods lasting thousands of years, is demonstration enough that rapid extreme climate changes have occurred and certainly can and will occur again. We pointed out that the difference between average world temperature during a warm period and during an ice age is only about 20°F. We further mentioned that we are now within 3 or 4°F of the highest temperatures recorded during the last 650,000 years. Since the onset of capitalism's industrial revolution with the accelerating rise in GHG emissions, that difference is rapidly decreasing toward zero and average world temperatures can be expected to go several degrees beyond within 20 to 30 years.

Such seemingly small variations in average global temperature can give rise to dramatic changes in climate. Consider for example the freezing/melting point of ice. If the air temperature around a glacier is just below the freezing/melting point, the ice stays frozen, but if it is just above it, the ice melts. This change can happen with only a fraction of a degree of temperature difference. When the average global temperature goes up, say, 1°F, there will be regions at the edges of glaciers where the temperature is on the borderline between freezing and melting that will now see melting temperatures, causing the glaciers to shrink. These regions continue to move farther away from the equator as the average global temperature continues to rise, so that the glaciers shrink more. The opposite occurs in times of cooling, and the edges of the glaciers move closer to the equator. This example all boils down (to use an inappropriate phrase) to the sudden change between water and ice at a particular critical temperature. So it isn't the size of the temperature range that matters so much as the place of that range in the overall temperature scale. A range of 20°F centered around 50°F, for example, would not make nearly as much difference as a range of 2°F centered around 32°F (water's freezing/melting point).

Destabilizing phenomena involve feedback mechanisms that cause a change to accelerate once it starts. When self-reinforcing, or amplifying, feedbacks set in and reach a certain stage, events can become irreversible for long periods of time, in climate phenomena tens to hundreds of thousands of years. This is commonly called a "tipping" point.

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*Tipping is one example of a well-known and quite general phenomenon in Marxist, or dialectical, understanding of all aspects of reality, often referred to as one of the laws of dialectics. This law observes that quality and*

*quantity are inseparably linked and in particular that, in all phenomena, sufficient quantitative change leads to qualitative change. This is often referred to simply as "quantity into quality." However, the prevalence of "quantity into quality" in both nature and human affairs includes both easily reversible and practically irreversible effects. For example, a melting ice cube in your kitchen can be frozen again by putting it back in the freezer, but melting glaciers cannot be so easily refrozen.*

*It seems that those qualitative changes that are practically irreversible are precisely those that involve amplifying feedback. It is such changes that climate scientists refer to as tipping.*

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While both stabilizing and destabilizing forces are all around us, there are different levels at which one or the other type becomes dominant. With regard to global climate, for example, even as the earth has repeatedly tipped back and forth between ice ages and warm periods, it has not gone beyond those limits for billions of years, because, beyond the destabilizing effects, stabilizing forces eventually have kicked in again to limit the range of variation.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, the current trend toward the highest temperatures ever recorded represents a clear and present danger, particularly for the world's working class.

### **Understanding tipping is the key to understanding the climate crisis, as well as communist revolution and countless other phenomena**

Examples of tipping include the following (some of which have been introduced above in a different context):

- a) The initial warming of the North Polar region causes melting of the polar floating sea ice, which makes the region darker (ocean is darker than ice) and therefore better able to absorb the sun's heat and less able to reflect it away, resulting in further warming and further melting and so on. In the past this has also happened in reverse, with initial cooling causing increase in size of the ice cap, in turn increasing the reflection of sunlight with still further cooling.
- b) The initial warming of the arctic results in melting of the permafrost that has been frozen in the ground for thousands of years, mainly in Siberia and Alaska, releasing tons of trapped methane from decomposing animal and plant matter. Methane is one of the most effective GHGs, leading to further heat trapping and warming, leading to further melting, etc.
- c) Warming of the air results in less rain, with the dryness giving rise to wildfires that destroy more of the forests, which are then less able to absorb CO<sub>2</sub>, leading to more CO<sub>2</sub> in the air and more heat trapping and less rain, and so on. The edges of the Amazon

jungle (the largest rainforest in the world) are fast contracting. In the past, initial cooling has increased the rainfall and snowfall, in turn producing growth of the forests which absorb more CO<sub>2</sub>, giving rise to still further cooling.

d) The ice on Greenland and Antarctica is melting faster and faster, which, among other things, causes that portion of the ice that extends out over the edge of the land and rests on either the ocean's surface or its floor to give way. When this occurs the inland ice sheets, previously retained by the edge ice, slide faster and faster into the ocean. Meanwhile because the land part of Antarctica is partly below sea level, the warming ocean is sliding in under the ice sheet, further hastening this process. While there is compensation by snowfall, it is not enough to keep up with melting in Greenland and it is not clear which will be dominant in Antarctica in coming years. As stated above, the speed with which this melting will proceed is uncertain, but this kind of uncertainty is characteristic of all processes that involve amplifying feedback. It is very difficult to anticipate all sources of such feedback, so that processes can speed up tremendously and make yesterday's predictions of time scale obsolete.

e) Warming soil absorbs less CO<sub>2</sub> resulting in more heat trapping and therefore more warming of the soil and still less CO<sub>2</sub> absorption. This has also happened in reverse in the past.

f) The warming ocean causes the CO<sub>2</sub>-trapping plankton on the surface to sink to lower depths, becoming less available to trap CO<sub>2</sub>, etc.

The main point is that tipping is everywhere around us and is reaching irreversible levels in all of the above climate examples. Once these processes take off by themselves, human beings may not be able to halt these runaway processes before all their catastrophic results come about – even under communism. Of course, the past history of alternating ice ages and warm periods suggests that eventually a new ice age may well develop, though given the new situation on the earth's surface with accelerating capitalism-caused emissions of GHGs this is not assured. But in any case, it would be hundreds or thousands of years away.

The reason we cannot be assured that a new ice age will develop in the distant future is that current GHG emissions from capitalist electric power plants, industries, and transportation modes, in addition to the ongoing but changing natural processes, could very well introduce a qualitatively new situation on the earth. This new situation could possibly have an effect at the level of alternations between ice ages and warm periods.

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*To understand that this is possible, consider, for example, another irreversible change that occurred*

*hundreds of millions of years ago on the earth's surface. The atmosphere once contained very little oxygen (O<sub>2</sub>). Only after the development of the earliest life forms that began producing O<sub>2</sub> as one of their "waste" products during photosynthesis,<sup>8</sup> was it possible for oxygen-requiring species to develop. These include virtually all currently existing plants and animals. The resulting proliferation of self-replicating plants and animals changed the very conditions under which life initially arose out of simple molecules. Conditions on earth are now such that it is no longer possible for new life to arise from anything other than existing life. Thus new qualitative developments can lead to still other developments that prevent a return to former conditions.<sup>9</sup>*

*A quite different, but more immediate, example of practically irreversible change was the development of capitalism out of feudalism, a process that took a few hundred years from the 1300-1400s to the 1600-1800s. Once the capitalist market, money, and competitive profit-making took hold, feudal landowning was irreversibly wiped out, but the struggle required countless political and military battles before that war was finally won.*

*Similarly, the growth of communism out of capitalism will require time and mass violent struggle between the world's working class and the capitalists, but happen it will. The earliest attempts at organizing communist societies in the Soviet Union and China in the 1900s did not yet reach the stage of irreversibility, and capitalism was eventually restored over several decades in both these countries.*

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### **How scientists know that capitalist-produced CO<sub>2</sub> is the main cause of the recent warming trend**

This is the most critical issue in the entire scientific investigation of global warming, because it determines whether or not it is possible for the world's working class to do anything to prevent, reverse, or at least blunt the predictable catastrophic results. While past warming trends, prior to the development of capitalism a few hundred years ago, were indeed due to natural cycles, if the current global warming is due to natural cycles independent of GHG emissions from capitalist industrial and transportation activity, then there is not likely anything we can do to prevent it. But fortunately the evidence indicates that this is not the case. So let's look at it.

Coinciding with the increase of average earth temperature over the last several decades is a dramatic and steady rise in the concentration of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere. For almost 50 years, from 1958 to 2006, a scientist named Charles Keeling made daily measurements of CO<sub>2</sub> concentration in the atmosphere

from near the top of the world's largest (in volume, though not in height above sea level) active volcano, Mauna Loa in Hawaii (over 13,000 feet high above sea level, but 56,000 feet high relative to its base below the ocean floor). He found that, in addition to the annual fluctuation due to seasonal effects, consisting mainly of the spring/fall cycle of leaves in forests, there has been a steady rise in the concentration of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere from around 315 parts per million (ppm) to around 380 ppm in 2006. By 2009 it had risen to 388 ppm (a difference of 73 ppm over 51 years), a very significant and rapid rise of atmospheric concentration of a very effective GHG.

In order to compare the measured CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations over the last 51 years or so with the concentrations prior to 1958, there has to be a way to measure those earlier concentrations. Just as drilling into ice cores permits scientists to measure global temperatures in the near and distant past, it permits the measurement of atmospheric concentrations of CO<sub>2</sub>, since small bubbles of air become trapped in the ice and the CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations can be measured in them directly. This is how we know that just before the beginning of capitalism's industrial revolution 200 years ago, the atmospheric concentration of CO<sub>2</sub> was around 280 ppm, for a rise of 35 ppm from 280 to 315 ppm up to about 51 years ago when Keeling began his measurements. So in the last 51 years or so there has been a rise in atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> concentration more than twice the size of that of the previous 150 years (73 ppm versus 35 ppm), and this rise is continuing to accelerate (a rise of 8 ppm between 2006 and 2009, or 2.67 ppm per year, versus a rise of 65 ppm between 1958 and 2006, or 1.35 ppm per year). One thing that lends particular urgency to the need to end the emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> immediately is that today's emissions stay in the atmosphere for a century or more. This has been likened to a car with an accelerator but no brakes (Kolbert).

So in summary,

- At least since the work of Arrhenius in the late 1800s, there has been no question that CO<sub>2</sub> does indeed cause heat trapping.
- There is no proposed mechanism, *supported by evidence*, for the recent rise in average earth temperature other than the recent rapid rise in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and the accelerating atmospheric concentrations that result.
- The rise in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions is definitely correlated with the two-century growth of capitalist manufacturing industries and oil-based energy plants and transportation.

### III. Past attempts to deny global warming or its capitalist cause, and the more recent emphasis on greenwashing tokenism

#### Who is behind the denials of global warming and its capitalist causes?

#### What are some of their arguments?

The Party's publications have often pointed out the anti-working class nature of the environmental movement – a movement dominated by the petit bourgeois and professional classes and begun in the 1940s with the Rockefeller and Ford Foundation-backed movement to transform agriculture in the superexploited nations (the so-called “third world” or “developing nations” or “lesser developed countries [LDCs]”) toward a U.S. agribusiness model and subsequently developed as a general theoretical ecological movement mainly in the 1960s.

The recent climate scientist e-mail battle is part of a larger capitalist dogfight going on in the ruling class. Oklahoma's Senator James Inhofe, the highest paid U.S. politician by the small oil companies (almost 2/3 of a \$1 million this decade), using hacked e-mail messages from a few climatologists in the U.S. and U.K. created a furor by falsely claiming that the climatologists have lied when they state that the earth is warming.

Like the inter-imperialist fights, this battle within the U.S. ruling class reflects disputes between different sets of capitalists. Global warming denials are similar to the tobacco companies, who denied that smoking causes cancer. They represent the smaller capitalists from the south and southwest that are held in check by the main imperialist butchers from Wall Street.

Today Al Gore is the main flag bearer of the the ruling class “environmentalists,” whose targets have expanded to include not just their local rivals, but also China, India, Russia, and other rising powers. The big guys Gore represents have killed millions in their wars for oil and their penchant for murder makes Inhofe look like a street punk.

That being said, street punks still need to be exposed. A handful of scientists and other writers have been paid handsomely to continue to deny, with no evidence at all or with made-up lies, that neither resource depletion, or global warming is a problem. Still other of these paid scientists or their misled followers admit that global warming is occurring but deny that capitalist activity has any significant effect, maintaining instead that it is part of a natural cycle, nothing can be done to reverse it.

Various foundations have been set up and funded to mask the capitalists behind the denial movement, including the Cato Institute, the Marshall Institute, the Competitive Enterprise Institute, the Hoover Institute, the Hudson Institute, the Tech Central Science Foundation, and the Center for the Study of Carbon



Dioxide and Global Change (Romm, p. 142).

Among these possibly misled writers are columnists George Will and Charles Krauthammer (*Washington Post*), John Tierney (*New York Times*), and the late writer Michael Crichton, whose novel *State of Fear* has perhaps caused more popular confusion than any other piece of writing. It matters little whether the denialists know they are lying or are just misled, since greed and gullibility in this case lead to the same outcome. The denialists have in the past generally been given equal time by the media, which in turn are controlled by the big moneyed interests, including the oil and coal companies and their financial backers. Those media articles or programs that in the past gave sole airing to the fact of global warming, without raising doubts, were in a very small minority.

The big capitalists both fight and use the denialists. Even while they hawk for the small time domestic oil bosses, the denialists serve the needs of the Rockefeller capitalists as a useful foil to build fear among people in the environmental movement about demanding too much, and keep the liberals in the picture as the lesser evil. Much the way in which the Tea Party movement was useful in giving Obama an excuse to serve the big bosses needs on health care, the auto industry and everything else.

A good illustration of the extent of this control can be found in a comparison survey published in *Science* about 5 years ago and covering the 10 years from 1993 to 2003. The authors reported how scientific journals have handled the issue of global warming versus the way it is handled in the mass media. Of a total of approximately 10,000 journal articles on global warming in that 10 year period, close to 1,000 articles were randomly chosen, and, of the 700 or so that discussed the cause of global warming, not a single one, without exception, opposed the view that GHG emissions from human (read capitalist) activity were contributing to, if not mainly responsible for, global warming — for a score of ~700 for human (capitalist) causation to 0 *against*. In other words, climate scientists find no more controversy in the concept that global warming is caused by capitalist activity (though many would hesitate to publicly use that word) than they do that the sun, and not the earth, is the center of the solar system (Kolbert p. 164).

Meanwhile over the previous 12 years, out of more than 3500 articles in four of the U.S.'s main newspapers (*New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *LA Times*, and *Wall Street Journal*), only 6% of a large random sample supported this conclusion without equivocation (Gore p. 262, Romm p. 216).

Denialists have granted that variations in atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations and temperatures over past millennia are indeed correlated, i.e., when one goes up the other also goes up, and vice versa. But they have argued that the cause and effect is the reverse of that claimed by

climatologists. That is, they argue that the warming of the earth is in turn causing a rise in CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations in the atmosphere, rather than the other way around. The evidence they provide for this contention is that comparisons of past temperatures with CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations demonstrate that the onset of rises in temperature have preceded rather than followed rises in CO<sub>2</sub> concentration. Therefore, they argue, it cannot be true that rising CO<sub>2</sub> causes rising temperature.

However, initial rises in temperature in the past may indeed have begun before and caused CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations to rise, but amplifying feedback of rising CO<sub>2</sub> in turn causes a continued rise in temperature. Amplifying feedback has been ignored by the denialists. Furthermore with the onset of capitalism's industrial revolution, there is now a new and added source of CO<sub>2</sub> on the scene that was not present until two centuries ago.

It turns out that it is not just denialists who fail to take amplifying feedbacks into account. Many of the climate predictions by scientists fail as well to include the effects of amplifying feedback, which often results in gross understatement of the severity and imminence of the expected catastrophic outcomes — one example of the limitations of capitalist science. Indeed, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has rightly been accused of minimizing the effects of global warming in order to achieve consensus, but at the price of sorely underestimating what needs to be done to avert catastrophe and therefore all but guaranteeing that it will come to precisely that.

Another of the arguments used by the denialists that the current global warming is not due to GHG emissions since the industrial revolution is that from about 800 to 1300 AD, there was a warm period in Europe called the Medieval Warm Period (MWP). They argue that since this occurred before the industrial revolution, fossil fuel burning could not be the cause of global warming. It is true that the MWP was not caused by the subsequent industrial revolution, but it is not true that this warm period covered the entire earth. Indeed the IPCC has shown that during those centuries the average temperature of the earth was slightly cooler than it is now, even though the local temperatures in Europe were admittedly warmer.

Indeed a common distortion by the denialists is to focus on one region of the earth and ignore the earth as a whole, or describe one short period of time and ignore the longer term trends. This lends itself to the willful misuse of the truth to twist the truth, since climates in different parts of the world almost always behave differently from each other and short term changes may not reflect longer term trends. It is only by considering the earth as a whole, and focusing on change over sufficiently long periods of time, that an accurate scientific assessment of climate change can be made. But even if it were true that the MWP involved the entire earth and was due to discoverable

natural causes, that would not have any bearing on the capitalist causation of the current upsurge in warming.

Still another argument has used invalid data to try to show that it is solar cycles rather than GHGs that are causing the current global warming (see Damon and Laut concerning one such attempt by Danish authors). These claims have been picked up by the press and continue to be defended by the authors even after the errors have been exposed in the scientific literature.

At one level the denialists have been well aware of the power of doubt. “Conservative” *New York Times* columnist David Brooks has admitted as much, saying in 2005, “Global warming is real (conservatives secretly know this).” According to Joseph Romm (physicist and past Assistant Secretary of Energy under Clinton), Frank Luntz is a corporate and political consultant who makes his living by teaching how to lie in order to create doubt and to cover the lies in minor admissions of truth. He has been extremely active in proposing phrasing for politicians and scientists who choose to deny global warming and its human causes. For example, he has proposed use of the term “climate change” instead of “global warming,” since the former is less frightening, and that denialists use the three words “safer,” “cleaner,” and “healthier” as often as possible to convince the listener that they care about the environment. Luntz’s 2002 memo to Bush, entitled *The Environment: A Cleaner Safer, Healthier America*, is available in multiple locations on the web since it was leaked, and has been exposed by a number of environmentalists (Romm, Luntz).

In summary, denialists have either offered *no scientific evidence* for any alternative hypothesis and have merely denied and denied, or they have offered “evidence” that, on closer examination, proves to be false. They have also *ignored the effects of amplifying feedback* and have generally *highlighted isolated local events* to the exclusion of global phenomena examined over time. Unfortunately the doubt they have planted in the past has, at least until recently, been enough to have a paralyzing effect on public awareness and on the potential insistence that something be done about the emissions, even by environmental groups.

### **Instead of only denials, the U.S. ruling class has started to use “greenwashing” as pressure against China and India**

Particularly beginning with the Obama campaign, there has been a shift in the U.S. media and government from denial to “greenwashing” (a play on whitewashing and green, the symbol of nature). Greenwashing involves the admission that the earth is warming but with a distorted anti-working class content that generally lays the blame on an overconsuming and overpopulated working class, without recognition that capitalism determines what

people consume and overpopulation is a relative term concerning what portion of the working class capitalism can employ. Furthermore greenwashing substitutes proposed solutions that appear effective but are at best mere tokenism for ones that could actually stop global warming.

The tokenism includes such things as lowering GHG emissions by such small amounts, and over such long time frames, that they are wholly inadequate and would not be in time to prevent irreversible and catastrophic climate change. 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. Indeed the reasons given publicly for the meagerness of these proposals center around economic feasibility.

The underlying motivations for this shift in emphasis from denial to greenwashing involve the attempt to make it look like the politicians are getting serious about the issue, and, even more importantly, to put pressure on the rising economic powers, particularly in India and China.

The U.S. rulers 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, as we mentioned above. The U.S. rulers have the illusion that they will be able to force a cap on carbon emissions in both India and China in order to slow their economic growth, and at the very least to isolate their governments from the rest of the world. The U.S. ruling class is aware of the way that Bush’s complete denial of global warming and its fossil fuel basis, along with the major contribution of the U.S. to climate change, helped to isolate the U.S.

A trip by U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to India in July 2009 ended in her being taken to task by the Indian government for even suggesting that India slow its economic growth in order to slow GHG emissions. They pointed out that the U.S. had been spewing vast amounts of CO<sub>2</sub> into the atmosphere over the entire 20<sup>th</sup> century and even before, and had no right to point to India as the guilty party.

Nevertheless 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 steps that appear to address global warming. However, as we show below, these steps, whether by design or by negligence, are wholly inadequate to prevent catastrophic climate change. We also show that world capitalism is incapable of stopping climate change, for structural reasons that go beyond the will of individual capitalists and their politicians.

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*Supporting the switch from denial to greenwashing, the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize was awarded “for their efforts to build up and disseminate greater knowledge about man-made climate change, and to lay the foundations for the measures that are needed to counteract such change” to the U.N.’s IPCC and to former U.S. Vice President Al Gore.*

*Gore watched industry spew out more and more earth-warming emissions without any effective objection while he was Vice President under Clinton in the 1990s. Later we will return to Gore’s complicity in the Clinton administration’s squelching of a clean form of nuclear energy.*

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Before we leave this subject, a caution is in order concerning the ruling class switch in emphasis from denial to greenwashing: Like the ability of CO<sub>2</sub> to remain in the atmosphere for a very long time (a century or more) and continue to heat up the earth, the ability of global warming denials to remain in the political atmosphere for a very long time and continue to confuse should not be underestimated.

Indeed there are still significant sources of denial around. For example, there was a full page ad in the *Washington Post* on 6/18/09 from The Heartland Institute, a rightwing free-market think tank, claiming that politicians and the media are silencing (unnamed) experts who deny that global warming is a crisis. We will still find ourselves having to fight both denials and greenwashing in order to convince millions of workers of the truth of our position. The continuing fountain of global warming denialism serves not only to lessen the pressure on the U.S. capitalists to make any real changes in GHG emissions, but also strengthens the intentional illusion that Obama is the planet’s savior and that his efforts are heroic.

#### IV. Capitalism’s contribution to global warming

As we have tried to make clear above, global warming is not simply “man-made,” as the Nobel committee put it, or “anthropogenic,” the term used most by scientists and meaning simply human-caused, but is in fact capitalist-made. Capitalism, and not humanity, is the cause of global warming, which already suggests that a necessary part of the solution is to destroy capitalism before it destroys the earth.

Ever since the industrial revolution began, as capitalism was spreading to incorporate all of humanity, factories and means of transportation, and over the last century electrical power plants, have required ever increasing sources of coal, oil, and gas to run them. To this day, 85% of all energy use in the U.S. comes from coal, oil, and natural gas (*Scientific American Earth 3.0*, Volume 19,

Number 2, Summer 2009). Capitalism, with its absolute need to expand continually and with profits as the dominating and often sole motivation, has almost used up all the profitably extractable sources of these fossil fuels. Capitalism is a planless system in which each capitalist corporation acts without regard to cooperation but instead competes with other corporations in order to stay alive and in business. In order to stay alive, each must grow and thus must try to expand its profits without limit, so that further investment can maintain its share of the market. If market share shrinks enough the corporation is doomed. Grow or die is the law of capitalism. Witness all the carmakers that have gone under in the U.S. over the 20<sup>th</sup> century, leaving not the Big Three, but the *Only* Three: GM, Ford, and Chrysler, and even their continued existence is in doubt in the face of foreign competition.

Yet when corporations go under, they don’t simply disappear from the face of the earth. Rather their assets are acquired for ten cents, or so, on the dollar by surviving corporations that thereby become much bigger in terms of real estate and equipment, even as they make do with fewer workers, throwing large numbers of us out of our jobs. Thus what begins as many smaller corporations ends up as a few much bigger corporations, and monopolies develop that can set their own prices higher, within the limits of supply and demand.

The overall effect of this single-minded capitalist focus on profits is continual crisis, war and world war followed by renewed economic expansion. The neglect of the devastation that this vicious business cycle causes in the lives of workers – through layoffs, increasing deaths, recessions, depressions, homelessness, starvation, drugs, filling of prisons, and use of working-class youth as cannon fodder in wars. Additionally the pollution and methods of waste disposal caused by capitalism not only destroy the lives of workers in various localities, especially in black and Latino neighborhoods, but threaten now to ravage the earth and imperil the future existence of humanity.

The main way the capitalists get away with this criminal activity is through their control of state power and their ever-present use of racism and nationalism, as well as sexism and sectarian religious wars, intended mainly to divide the working class and render us too weak to fight for political power.

The capitalists, of course, would also suffer major destruction in the process of global warming-caused catastrophes, but unwittingly they share at least one characteristic of suicide bombers in taking down as many innocent victims with them as they can, though their own death is unintended. Herman Melville’s popular 19<sup>th</sup> century novel *Moby Dick* told how whaling Captain Ahab, in his single-minded determination to seek vengeance against the huge whale who cost him his leg, was willing to take his entire crew down with him. Modern capitalists have become Captain Ahab, and vengeance against the

whale has become the single-minded drive for profits. They may not be mentally unbalanced like Ahab, but they are structurally incapable of consistent system-wide actions to save themselves or to save the earth from the GHG-driven consequences of global warming.

Many authors, including Al Gore, claim that there are ways to induce capitalism to save itself and the earth, through the profitability of alternative sources of energy that neither pollute nor cause GHG emissions. Note that they all accept the need for profitability, recognizing that this is what motivates capitalism. We discuss below why the internal contradictions of capitalism make it impossible to stop irreversible climate change, including the fact that profitability will accrue at least temporarily only to a small number of old and new corporations but not to the system as a whole. This will make it impossible for capitalism to make all the necessary changes to end GHG emissions. This in turn is one reason why it is an absolute necessity that the world's working class, led by its communist party PLP, remove the capitalists from their throne as soon as possible, seize political power, and thus rid ourselves of the main obstacle to our attempts to save the planet for our class around the world and for our descendants.

## V. Ineffective proposals to stop global warming and why capitalism cannot solve the problem of catastrophic climate change

### Approaches to stop global warming

Various international meetings among capitalist governments have produced schemes to reduce GHG emissions such as "cap and trade" or "carbon tax." Cap and trade on an international basis means that, according to an agreed on formula, each government would set a limit or cap on the total GHG emissions permitted to its own industries. Within that overall cap then each industry is allotted a certain proportion of allowed GHG emissions. Any corporation that finds it can actually continue to make profit while emitting less than its allotment is permitted to "trade" (or, more appropriately, sell) the unused portion of their allotment to corporations that emit more than their allotment. The latter then buy the right to exceed their allotment from those who can profitably stay under their allotment.

Cap and trade has several problems even if it were possible for international agreement to be reached. First, the proposed caps are still much too high to prevent disastrous climate change. Second, the competing ruling classes differ on the method for distributing the GHG allowances. Third, there is no global enforcement for any nation that exceeds even its allotted cap. In the U.S. the rulers have discussed auctioning the allotments or

simply having them given away by the government, with the latter being proposed in the Waxman-Markey bill, but this is still in dispute. Furthermore, the Waxman-Markey bill allows planting of trees to absorb CO<sub>2</sub> instead of cutting GHG emissions without any way to confirm any trees will even be planted in the U.S.

Even more significantly, the bill calls for reducing *emissions* (not atmospheric *concentration*, which will continue to increase) by a mere 17% below 1990 levels by 2020, during which time the climate change problem will continue to worsen. As of this writing the bill has passed the House. If it also passes the Senate, where further compromise and watering down is likely, Obama will surely sign it. The publicity will largely present it as a major step toward saving the planet. But the working class and the rest of humanity will be left with nothing but a load of greenwash.

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*.

A carbon tax, the main alternative proposal, would be a straightforward tax on all products using carbon inputs. Put aside, for the moment, the incredible difficulty of assessing the carbon content of each product within a country since each capitalist will lobby vigorously for low assessments. Such taxation would have to be international, since otherwise countries that taxed carbon would force up the price of most of their goods and make them uncompetitive internationally. That would not last. But international pricing agreements would also be extraordinarily difficult to enforce in a competitive world given the fact that most products include some level of carbon. Any modest decrease in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, let alone CO<sub>2</sub> concentration in the atmosphere, due to the tax would be insufficient to reverse global warming. And whatever taxes are in fact collected will only be passed on to the working class as in increased price, thereby adding further burdens to workers trying to obtain all the many carbon-containing necessities of life.

### Alternative sources of energy and problems with most of them

Along with such caps, alternative sources of energy have to be found. There are a number of such sources that have been touted, including solar, wind, hydroelectric, wave, tide, agriculture, geothermal, and finally nuclear.

Each of these alternatives, with the possible exception of one form of nuclear (more below), has apparently insurmountable problems that prevent them from satisfying any but a token proportion of energy production. Solar cells and wind farms are being set up by various profit-seeking companies, but they are unable

to replace any but a small amount of capitalism's energy requirements. For example, in order to have a major impact, enough solar cells would have to be set up to cover much of the U.S. southwest, and delivering it by the construction of vast stretches of new power lines to widespread areas would be prohibitively expensive. In addition, the weather is not always sunny and the cells would have to be freed of desert dust continually. Wind has similar problems of large land requirements and intermittency, though parts of Europe are looking toward locating windmills offshore.

Hydroelectric has already been exploited in the U.S. to a very large degree, for example on the Colorado River, but global warming is decreasing the amount of snow melt and consequently of river flows. Lake Powell behind the Glen Canyon Dam above the Grand Canyon and Lake Mead behind the Hoover Dam below the Grand Canyon are drying up. Their current levels are already tens of feet below their past levels.

There are other 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.

Agriculture offers a source of alternative fuel, such as ethanol, but a move by farmers to switch from growing corn for food to growing it for fuel has resulted in an increasing scarcity of food and rise in food prices internationally, leading to an increase in the already devastating amount of starvation around the world. It is not merely the switch in crop use that causes this devastation but rather the planlessness and competition inherent in capitalism. Moreover, according to some studies, it actually takes more energy – in the form of transportation, fertilizer production, and oil-powered farm equipment – to produce ethanol than it can yield, but at best the gain in energy is minimal, while the loss in food is monumental. This is just one illustration of the way that the capitalist market cannot satisfy the most basic daily needs of the working class over the short or long term.

### **Why current proposals cannot solve the problem of global warming**

To the small degree that any capitalist governments are beginning to clean up their industrial pollution, it is because of the immediate effects on water and air which cuts into profits by making it more expensive to obtain these components in usable form for manufacturing purposes. The fact that it is the working class who bears the overwhelming burden of death and disease from this pollution does not motivate the capitalists one bit.

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*According to an article in the 8/8/09 issue of the New York Times, another motivating force is now the Pentagon and some U.S. intelligence agencies, who are beginning to realize that the effects of global warming will have an impact on the use of the U.S. military to intervene in social disruptions that threaten capitalist stability in various parts of the world. In addition, they realize that many military installations around the world will be directly threatened by sea level rise and other climate events, as happened in 1992 when Hurricane Andrew destroyed Homestead Air Force Base and in 2004 when Hurricane Ivan badly damaged Naval Air Station Pensacola, both in Florida. They are already studying ways to protect major naval stations from such events in Norfolk, Va. and in San Diego. As a result, some of the military ideologists are beginning to call for the U.S. to take initiative around cutting GHG emissions. But these military interests are going to come into contradiction with other ruling class interests, as we show below, and will necessarily be downplayed in favor of profit maximization and protection of capital installations.*

*In addition, the Pentagon's warning that the military might have to intervene to prevent instability is laughable. The military thrives on instability and often provokes it, as they have with the two invasions of Iraq, the invasion of Afghanistan, the propping up of Israel in the midst of competing Arabic oil nations, the creation of two separate countries out of one in both Korea and Vietnam after World War II, and the list is endless. We interpret what the Pentagon is saying to mean that they only like instabilities that they think they can control, though they are almost always wrong about that.*

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On the level of individual businesses, there are a growing number of new green businesses in the world, particularly in Europe and the U.S. Many of these may be profitable in the short run, but in order to end GHG emissions all other capitalists, including many of the largest corporations, would have to tear down and replace any old equipment that pollutes and emits GHGs, and take tremendous losses in massive long-term investments. Auto companies would have to start producing vehicles that run on a different fuel from gasoline, when it takes years to introduce such minor changes as airbags. Governments at all levels would have to make a general switch from private to public transportation, when it takes years to repave a beltway or build a subway. Cities and suburbs would have to be rearranged to make this possible, when it takes years to build a housing development. Home and building heating and electricity would have to be powered by clean energy. And all the plastics and other materials that rely on oil as a critical ingredient would have to be replaced by other materials either not yet invented or not profitable to produce.

Some capitalists pundits use the real dangers of global warming to build support for a more openly fascist ruling

class. Tom Friedman wrote glowingly about the Chinese ruling class' efforts to clean up the skies over Beijing for the Olympics by ordering the temporary closing of thousands of factories in the area. The liberal ruling class, who Friedman represents, need more fascism to compete with their Chinese, Russian and many other competitors would love to use global warming as a way to win support for more fascist methods to discipline the various sectors of the ruling class. But more centralized capitalism would never put the needs of the world's working class first, and any solutions they come up with would be centered on the preservation of their profit making needs.

Various capitalist defenders propose technological solutions such as trapping emissions from factory smoke stacks and dumping them into the ocean or putting them back underground after extracting the coal and oil. Aside from the extreme expense of this process, what this would do to the oceans and what leakage from these underground sites would do to the atmosphere and soil are unknown. Ideas such as these are not seriously being investigated but rather are thrown up as a smokescreen to mask the inability of a profit system to reverse the destruction of the environment – a smokescreen that itself adds to global warming both metaphorically and in fact.

In addition to technological solutions, there are numerous proposals for increasing energy efficiency, i.e., decreasing the amount of energy used per amount of product or amount of use. But in the 1800s a British economist named William Jevons discovered what was erroneously called a paradox that is named after him, that whenever the amount of energy used per unit of production is decreased and hence the drop in demand for energy lowers its price, then the amount of production, and hence the use of energy, will increase to offset the decrease. In fact, the increase generally overtakes the decrease, resulting in a net increase in energy usage (Monbiot).

This has also been seen recently in consumption patterns as well as production patterns, with the rise and fall of oil prices. When gasoline became very expensive in 2008 the amount of driving decreased in the U.S., and when the price of gas dropped again the miles driven increased again, so that there has been a tendency to keep the amount of money spent on gas the same. But this isn't really a paradox, which means a logical contradiction. Rather it is the normal way that supply and demand works in commodity markets in capitalist economies. And that is part of the way that the structural planlessness of capitalism works to prevent preservation of the environment.

Those corporations like ExxonMobil, whose profits are based purely on producing the GHG-causing fossil fuels, are, as we mentioned above, among the largest and most profitable businesses in the world, and they are not about to see their businesses die. Nor are the Wall

Street financiers, who control these corporations, about to interfere with their primary cut of the take. Through their control of the government by way of bought-and-paid-for politicians and intellectuals they can delay any changes and continue to cause massive confusion about global warming, among other methods.

Capitalist corporations, in order to survive competition, resist having a long-range outlook for their return on investment. So do the stockholders, or they will put their money into other corporations that do bring in quick returns. The corporations must make back their initial investment in plant and equipment quickly, so that their future profits become pure gravy. Concern for the environment, on the other hand, is a long term process that requires giving up the concept of profit in favor of satisfying human needs. Capitalism does not operate to satisfy human needs.

Competition to create new markets calls for a continual stream of new products that have little to no use value to the consumer. After all, how many different products can we actually need? Up to the time of any new product's introduction we have always gotten along fine without it. Through massive and inescapable advertising, we are attracted to products like iPods, plasma TVs, cosmetics, clothes fashions, or giant SUVs. The continual introduction of useless or harmful products produces increased useless consumption of resources and increased harmful dumping of waste, with accelerating destruction of the environment at both ends of the process – natural resource inputs and waste product outputs (Foster 2002). As one of the original founders of the PLP once put it, "In order to continue to expand its profits, capitalism creates wants instead of satisfying needs."

Furthermore, on a global scale, because of inter-imperialist rivalry, the race of each imperialist nation to beat out its competitors results, not only in devastating wars, but also in the overexploitation of natural resources such as oil and important industrial minerals. This race for control takes place in those parts of the world where the resources can be extracted the most cheaply, such as in Africa, the Middle East, and Central Asia, and there is no way that the imperialists can develop a stable agreement to share these resources, since competition rather than cooperation is inherent in the profit system. Under these circumstances money, resources, and human labor are exploited to the exclusion of any consideration of the production and dumping of waste.

There have been published studies of various business efforts in many countries toward sustainable energy and clean waste management, i.e., toward greening the economy or at least their own businesses. These include both businesses cleaning up their act and others starting up to provide the materials necessary for such clean-up, such as the manufacture of windmills or solar panels. The studies conclude that these moves are necessarily

extremely limited in scope and grossly inadequate to make any real difference (Speth).

**No capitalist government or politician in the world is even mentioning the need to put an immediate and complete stop to CO<sub>2</sub> emissions**

The main discussion at international government meetings about climate change – such as the UN-sponsored Earth Summit in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, or in 1997 in Kyoto, Japan, that produced the Kyoto Protocol – is not about *ending* GHG emissions but rather is only about *decreasing* the annual rate of global GHG emissions. Even if the rate of global emissions were to decrease each year, there would still be annual emissions (just less than the year before). A mere decrease in the rate of GHG *emissions* would still involve a continued increase in the GHG *concentration* in the atmosphere, as we pointed out above. The only way to prevent a continued increase in GHG *concentration* is to drop the rate of emissions *completely to zero*. GHG *emissions* are not the direct cause of global warming; the direct cause is GHG atmospheric *concentrations*.

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*The difference between rate of emissions and atmospheric concentration is like the difference between income and wealth. Income is the amount of money you take home each year, while wealth is the amount of money (or assets) you have been able to accumulate over the years. Of course, if you barely scrape through, you are unable to accumulate any wealth, which characterizes the vast majority of our class around the world. Still another way to understand the difference is to think of GHG emissions like the water coming out of the faucet in a bathtub, with the height of the water in the tub like the GHG concentration in the atmosphere, and the drain like the carbon sinks (soil, forests, and oceans). If the drain can't let out water as fast as the faucet lets it in, the height of the water will rise, until it reaches the analogy to a tipping point and overflows. Of course, like all analogies, these have their limits of applicability. For example, there is no equivalent to the top of a tub with regard to the atmosphere, and the planet can continue to get warmer without practical limit.*

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In other words, in order to halt global warming and stabilize the average temperature around the world, it would require not just a decrease in the amount of GHG emissions per year, but rather a complete cessation of *all* emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> – zero, none, no more use of any fossil fuels at all, or at least the complete capture and successful disposal of the waste products (a technologically difficult and very expensive process at best for stationary industry, and practically unfeasible for vehicles, ships, and planes). Energy production everywhere in the world would have to be mainly through means other than oil, coal, and natural gas.

Even more importantly, attempts would have to be found to reverse the effects of the CO<sub>2</sub> already poured into the atmosphere, since CO<sub>2</sub> stays around in the air for a century or more and continues to do its work. Even if all GHG emissions were to cease tomorrow, without ways of reversing its effects, such as through the planting of massive new forests, we would still see a warmer and warmer earth for decades because of self-sustaining processes already set in motion – e.g., melting glaciers and permafrost – and because such methods as new forests would take decades to grow and catch up.

To give an idea of the consequences of these completely inadequate targets, the 2007 IPCC report estimates, as their best scenario, that if global GHG emissions were to be lower in 2050 by 50-85% below those of 2000 (rather than 1990), there would still be a rise in global temperature by 2.0-2.4°C (3.6-4.3°F), and a rise in sea level by 0.4-1.4 meters (1.3-4.6 feet). But their estimates of the sea level rise take into account only the thermal expansion of the oceans (i.e., the expansion of the volume of sea water in the world due to the higher temperatures – all materials expand with temperature). They take absolutely no account of the contribution from such amplifying feedback mechanisms as the melting of the Greenland and Antarctica ice shelves or any other glaciers in the world, which would make the sea level rise that much greater.

In addition to all these obstacles to preventing catastrophic climate change under capitalism, in conditions of world-wide depression it becomes even more unlikely that any significant portion of financial investment will be directed toward ending GHG emissions, particularly since it would require the destruction of trillions of dollars worth of existing plant and equipment, with massive losses to the businesses involved.

**Oil, gas, and coal profits stymie the discovery and development of alternative energy sources, particularly nuclear**

Major capitalist interests hold back any serious competing effort to solve the global warming crisis. Take the case of a method of nuclear energy production called the Experimental Breeder Reactor or the Integral Fast Reactor (IFR) (Blees, Koch, Hannum, et al.). The IFR and its breeder reactor<sup>10</sup> predecessors were developed beginning during World War II and, in particular, during the Manhattan Project that built the atomic bombs that destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki. They were further developed by scientists at the federal Argonne National Labs, located in Idaho and near Chicago. The Argonne scientists claim to have shown that IFRs can be made safe from accidents, with successive stages of the process using by-products of the previous stage so that by the end of the process almost 100% of the energy inherent in the

uranium is captured, and safe and easily manageable waste is produced in the process. In current nuclear plants no more than 1% percent of the energy in the uranium is captured, which not only makes them tremendously inefficient but also requires far more uranium as fuel to produce an equivalent amount of electrical energy. Furthermore no weapons-grade material is available in the IFR process, since the plutonium needed for weaponization is both produced and then consumed by IFRs, without its ever being enriched to the level required for bombs.

Are IFRs a promising alternative to fossil fuel and other forms of nuclear energy production? Maybe. But we won't know for certain now, since under the Clinton/Gore administration funding for the project was completely terminated, and the Argonne scientists were warned to be quiet about it. The lame excuse used was that the project would threaten non-proliferation efforts, but that excuse is transparently phony when the U.S. continues to sell all sorts of weaponry to allied governments of the moment, such as Israel and India. No further government funding has been made available, at least in the U.S., but several other countries have built such reactors, including France, Russia, and Japan, so that more information should be forthcoming in the next few years.

One problem with any form of nuclear energy is the fear that it engenders in the public, aided by the media that exaggerate the dangers. This fear rose significantly as a result of the publicity surrounding the accident at the Three Mile Island Nuclear Generating Station at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, in 1979. However, the reactor was soon brought under control, and there were no known deaths or cancers resulting from the accident, a point that would be easy to miss from the media reports.

Seven years later a much more serious accident occurred in 1986 at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant in the Ukraine, part of the former Soviet Union. While statements vary as to the number of people killed, they range from about 30 to 60, mostly firemen putting out the fire who suffered radiation sickness plus 10 children from thyroid cancer (out of 2000 children who were successfully treated for thyroid cancer and who lived). Other estimates of the number of deaths due to cancer over the next couple of decades (ranging up to as many as 4,000) have an unproven relationship to Chernobyl and are disputed by most scientific studies of the aftermath (Cohen, Morris). But because a third of a million people were relocated to places distant from the remaining radioactive plant, nuclear energy became an even greater source of fear, which has slowed tremendously the development of this alternative source of energy.<sup>11</sup> Given capitalism's disregard for the safety of workers and neighboring inhabitants, this fear seems far from irrational. But a steadfast refusal of many environmental organizations and members even to investigate IFRs is indeed irrational. However, in a communist world

controlled by, and run for the needs of, the working class rather than for capitalist profits, it should be possible for nuclear energy to be safely developed and used along with other energy technologies such as solar, geothermal, and wind to provide for the needs of the world's workers.<sup>12</sup>

Interestingly, a plant that burns coal to produce electrical power creates *more radioactive waste products* (uranium and thorium) than any nuclear plant, a fact that is kept well hidden by the coal companies and their subservient media. In fact, people living close to coal power plants are exposed to more radiation than those living close to nuclear power plants (MacKay, Bles), but even that amount is far less than the amount of radiation that people receive from natural sources, such as cosmic rays or radon from the ground, plus that from medical applications. China relies almost exclusively on coal for energy, while other countries use varying mixes of coal, natural gas, and oil, as well as nuclear. Nevertheless coal is a very popular source of energy around the world, producing right around 50% of electricity in the U.S. In addition to the radioactive waste produced by coal plants, coal is far more polluting and creates about one third more CO<sub>2</sub> per unit of energy produced than power plants that use oil and almost twice that produced per unit of energy by natural gas. It is estimated that pollution from coal plants (including sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides) kills 2 million people a year throughout the world and 50,000 a year in the U.S. (Cohen, Morris).

The fears of nuclear energy are fanned by the coal and oil companies, for whom nuclear energy represents serious competition. But consider that the 1984 leakage of the chemical methyl isocyanate from Union Carbide's (now owned by Dow Chemical) plant in Bhopal in central India is conservatively estimated to have killed almost 35,000 workers, including both employees and those who lived in the vicinity of the plant – 10,000 of whom died immediately and up to 25,000 who have died from its long term effects since. (An Indian judge, in response to continuing mass protests by workers, has recently – a quarter century after this mass murder – ordered the arrest of Warren Anderson, who was the CEO of Union Carbide at the time of the disaster.) The Bhopal murder dwarfs the effect of Chernobyl two years later and indicates just how little regard the capitalists have for the lives of workers. It also indicates how successful the oil companies have been in generating fear of nuclear power, when it would make much more sense for people's fear to be focused on the chemical industry, particularly the oil companies themselves.

### **Why capitalism will never be able to solve the problem of global warming**

But the obstacles inherent in capitalism to preventing irreversible climate change are, first, that qualitative issues may influence but never determine the decisions



that individual capitalists make. Only profit maximization is their goal. Second, even if the dominant wing of any national ruling class seeks to discipline the rest within their nation, the world-wide anarchy and competition prevents such enforcement through any other means than war. Interimperialist rivalry would prevent any national bourgeoisie, whose position in the world economic market is threatened, from complying with any agreement or treaty.

Ending GHG emissions, as we pointed out above, would require that each national government and private capitalist interest spend enough to reconstruct all of electrical power generation, industry, and transportation so that they would accept as input alternatives to fossil fuels. One of the greatest, if not *the* greatest, obstacles to expenditure of this magnitude is the absolute need of each imperialist power, driven by international competition, to maintain and continually enlarge their military. The U.S. military costs almost as much as all the others in the world put together.

But equally important, the military essentially runs on oil. According to the Energy Bulletin, the U.S. military is the single largest purchaser of oil in the world. “The Army calculated that it would burn 40 million gallons of fuel in three weeks of combat in Iraq, an amount equivalent to the gasoline consumed by all Allied armies combined during the four years of World War I.” This amounts to about 2 million gallons a day (or 50,000 barrels a day – a barrel is 40 gallons), which amounts to about 13 gallons a day per soldier (<http://www.energybulletin.net/node/13199>). Retrofitting all the tanks, other land vehicles, ships, and planes to run on alternative fuels is simply prohibitive to the U.S. ruling class. U.S. rulers would force global temperatures through the roof before they would see their empire lost to rival imperialists. And this is just as true of all the other imperialist powers in the world, compounding the obstacle to the point of insurmountability.

Worse yet, as profitably extractable oil supplies peak, the use of military force by all competing imperialists to secure their sources of fuel is already increasing dramatically, heading us inexorably toward World War III. So peak oil produces its own amplifying feedback to increase the very use of the oil that is becoming harder and harder to obtain. Meanwhile the atmosphere becomes overwhelmed by GHG emissions, heading us inexorably toward irreversible and devastating climate change. Neither World War III nor climate change can possibly be escaped so long as capitalism rules the world.

In addition to continuing GHG emissions with its irreversible climate change and continuing wars for control of oil, so long as capitalism exists the world’s working class will continue to suffer from wars also for control of water and minerals, from exploitation, from racism, from sexism, and from poverty and disease. Misguided attempts to cure one of the symptoms while failing to remove the cause will not bring benefit to our class. So while the vital need by

the world’s working class for communist revolution is ever present and immediate, the imminence of catastrophic climate change, and its incurability under capitalism, add to that vital need immensely.

## VI. Other ineffective proposals to stop global warming

### A. The role of the state

The capitalist class holds state power, and actions that interfere with profits are forbidden by the government, regardless of who is elected. Therefore since a world free of GHGs, with clean and adequate energy sources for the needs of the working class, would interfere with the profits of the vast majority of capitalists, we cannot look to capitalism to solve the problems. Capitalism, after all, is the cause of all these problems, and not because it hasn’t been pointed out or has never occurred to the ruling class.

A few non-Marxist writers have pointed out that capitalism, because of its concentration on growth, stands in absolute contradiction to preserving the environment for future generations. But these writers generally believe that growth is merely a “fetish” among capitalists, as though overall economic growth were something over which the capitalists have control and could be convinced to give up (Speth). However, capitalists only have control over their own corporations, and competition drives each to maximize profits and grow, in order to survive. The growth of all is an unintended consequence of the growth of each. So, while it may also be a fetish, there is nothing that capitalism can do about it. Competition, profit maximization, and wage slavery drive economic life under capitalism. Only replacing it with communism will meet our needs around the world and permit us to stop global warming.

Many authors argue that green businesses can be profitable. Certainly new installations may very well become profitable, even within a few years after start-up. The problem is the trillions of dollars, euros, yen, rubles, yuan, rupees, etc. worth of existing plants, buildings, houses, mines, and vehicles. A system that runs on exchange value or money will not willingly destroy its own massive investments in these forms of physical capital. Indeed only through wars is capital ever deliberately destroyed, and then it is always that which belongs to rivals – elevated at such times to the status of “enemies” in order to win the working class to fight our class sisters and brothers and die for capitalist profits.

Only a system in which *use* value, rather than *exchange* value, is the basis of society can even contemplate removing GHG-producing physical capital from its productive base. But a system that the working class controls for its own collective needs (communism), rather than a system that a

relatively small class controls for its own individual profit (capitalism) can in fact act in this way. The capitalists' refusal to destroy their own profit-producing capital holds even when that profit is destructive of much of the rest of the world.

When environmentally oriented authors call for the government to regulate the capitalists they are merely subscribing to the myth that the government (or in Marxist terms, the state) stands above society and mediates among the various classes. This myth was exploded a century and a half ago by Marx and Engels and elaborated on ever since by Marxists, most famously perhaps by Lenin in his book *State and Revolution*. The misunderstanding of political power and the nature of the state is the central flaw in all calls for the state to intervene to save the environment. It's like calling on a tiger's tail to protect you from its fangs.

### **Individual actions like conserving electricity are hopelessly inadequate**

Another form of illusion promoted by these well-meaning authors is that if each of us individually changes our habits we can prevent tipping into irreversible climate change. Suggestions abound, such as switching to hybrid cars, insulating our houses better, getting fluorescent bulbs, and instituting other energy-conserving changes (Gore, Monbiot). All these are things that are good to do for those of us who can afford it, if only to save ourselves money in the long run, but the overall effect, even if all of us who could afford it made these changes, would be like a mosquito on an elephant's bottom. As one author puts it, "If everyone does a little, we'll achieve only a little" (MacKay).

Indeed the Associated Press just reported (8/5/09) that Obama's "cash for clunkers" program, which has already spent over \$1 billion paying people to trade in their gas guzzlers for newer vehicles with better gas mileage, has saved no more gasoline (or GHG emissions) than would be saved if everyone drove one hour less a year. This is a stunning example of greenwashing tokenism as far as saving GHG emissions is concerned, though clearly the quarter of a million new cars that have already been sold as a result of the program have helped the auto companies through the recession. But this is most likely temporary, since these sales come at the expense of future sales, perhaps leading to a later plunge back into crisis. The amount of governmental hot air, concerning the slowing of global warming, outweighs the reality by such a dazzling amount that despite Obama's posturing it becomes clear that merely appearing to attack the climate crisis is his underlying motive.

Still another example of a particularly misleading movement that is growing (again) among the petit bourgeoisie is the call for people to band together in communes, apart from capitalist society, to grow their own

food and escape the starvation that threatens to result from global warming. This escapism cannot possibly sustain itself in the midst of drought, wildfires, flooding, peak oil, and fascist martial law, and it is simply a way of opting out of the necessary struggle against capitalism's GHG emissions.

The illusion that individual or small scale actions can solve the crisis, even if many people participate, amounts to blaming the working class along with the capitalists for the destruction of the environment. That is, if any workers refuse to go along with the charade, they can be blamed for hastening the destruction of the earth's atmosphere. And even if we do go along, the claim that we could save the earth by decreasing our personal use of GHG-producing technology, implies that our personal patterns of consumption and usage are, at least in part, the source of the problem. But the working class does not control the patterns of consumption; the capitalists do.

When the capitalists build suburbs and destroy or prevent construction of public transportation, we are forced to buy cars. When they raise rents and lower taxes on mortgage interest and lower the initial interest rates on ARMs (adjustable-rate mortgages), we are pressured to buy houses. Then after a couple of years when the interest rates on the ARMs go up and we are laid off and our homes are foreclosed, the media and politicians add insult to injury by blaming us for our irresponsibility in buying the house in the first place. When they increase the work week and lower real wages to the point that both spouses have to work, thereby decreasing the time available to feed our families, we are pressured to buy fast foods. The working class is not to blame for struggling to survive in the only ways that this system permits – at least the only way for us to survive as individual families. The alternative is to struggle to survive as a united class, about which more below.

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*In the language of dialectical materialism, this illusion – that if enough people act individually we could save the earth from global warming – demonstrates that not all quantitative changes lead to qualitative change. Only when the level of organization is appropriate to the job – in this case at a social level and throughout the world – and the effort is sufficient to reach the boundary of a qualitative transition, does quantitative change give rise to qualitative change.*

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### **Why charging capitalists a price for their resource depletion and pollution cannot work**

A third form of illusion is common among pro-capitalist economists and holds that the only thing needed for capitalism to be able to preserve the environment is for the dual damage, caused by depletion of resources and by pollution from waste products, to be incorporated into the pricing system of the capitalist market economy.

They claim that if a way can be found to assign a price to the harmful effects on the environment, then if, say, emission of GHGs has the correct price put on it and the government imposes that price on each corporation in the form of a tax, the corporations will then hold down on resource depletion and cut their emissions. There are several things that guarantee that these proposals will fail to preserve the environment for future generations, but the main one concerns the failure of the pro-capitalist economists to understand the difference between exchange value and use value.

As Marx explains near the beginning of his masterwork *Capital*, use value is a qualitative, rather than quantitative, concept and varies from one thing to another and from one person to another. For example, the use value of a pair of shoes concerns things such as the way a person uses it and how many shoes the person already has. The exchange value of a pair of shoes, on the other hand, is a quantitative concept and is loosely measured by its price in the market place. Price derives from the process of production, rather than from consumption and use. In particular, price is determined in the first instance by the amount of labor time that goes into producing the product. But this holds only in a capitalist economy where things are produced for the purpose of selling them and making a profit for the owner of the factory, rather than for the purpose of satisfying a need of a consumer, though some products do also satisfy some needs. In this context, a pair of shoes and everything else produced in a capitalist economy become commodities, items to be traded for money.

In order to prove that the price of a commodity is determined in the first instance by the labor time involved in its production, Marx shows that the classical economists' claim that price is determined by supply and demand is only a partial answer and not a complete one. He shows that it is true that if supply exceeds demand, i.e., if there is more of a particular product produced than can be sold, its price drops. And that if demand exceeds supply then its price rises. With either shift the amount produced in the next period of time also changes, so that if there is oversupply then less is produced in the next round which causes the price to go back up, and if there is undersupply then more is produced in the next round which causes the price to go back down. Either way the price tends to return to that amount that it would be when supply and demand are in balance.

The question left unanswered by many bourgeois economists, then and now, in their zeal to explain price changes, is what determines the price when supply and demand are in balance? And that's where he shows that only the amount of labor time that goes into the production process can begin to determine that price. Price, after all, is nothing more than the measure of how many of one product are worth how many of another. And this can only be determined by the relative amount of time it

takes to produce each one. For example, a pair of shoes is worth less than a car primarily because it takes a lot fewer person-hours to produce a pair of shoes.<sup>13</sup>

With regard to the environment, things like mountains, oceans, forests, glaciers, fish, wild animals, and air have only use value. They cannot possibly have *exchange* value, since there has been no human labor time involved in their production. Therefore there is no unambiguous way to determine a price for the various aspects of the environment, and any way that the economists devise to do so is completely arbitrary.

Indeed, the only reasonable price that we can assign to nature, under circumstances of imminent irreversible destruction and the resulting catastrophic effects on humanity and the rest of the animal and plant kingdoms, is \$(infinity). Let the capitalists pay that price for the right to devastate our environment.

Of course, if the government were to put a sufficiently high price on anything, even short of \$(infinity), it could certainly exert some influence in one direction or another, but again, the government belongs to the capitalists and will not harm profits in favor of the needs of the working class. True, on September 2, 2009, the U.S. government slapped a huge \$2.3 billion fine on Pfizer, the drug company, for winning and dining doctors in order to get them to prescribe more of its drugs. This is the largest fine against a drug company, and the largest punishment in a criminal case, ever. However, contrary to superficial appearances, this is not a case of the government siding with the working class against a drug company that gouges the public. Rather it is an example of infighting among capitalists, with the drug companies having gained for years at the expense of other major corporations, like the auto companies, who have had to pay toward health care coverage for their workers.

Similarly, the government, obeying its influential masters in the fossil fuel and related industries – like ExxonMobil, GM, and Ford – already uses all kinds of direct and hidden subsidies to pump up fossil fuel profits – from using trillions of dollars of our tax money, to build the interstate highway system to accelerated depreciation, to tax write-offs for offshore drilling, to (most important of all) fighting wars for oil in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and elsewhere. Meanwhile there are meager, if any, subsidies for alternative energy sources, such as solar, wind, and nuclear plants. How then can we imagine that the government would ever reverse the direction of these subsidies to oppose the interests of the fossil fuel and related industries, which is what it would have to do to reverse the emissions of GHGs?

### **Capitalism even puts a price on human life**

The following is an example of the way economists and medical statisticians confound exchange value for use

value that may help clarify this issue. When calculating whether a particular medical screening study is worth doing – what they call “cost-effective” – the statisticians choose a measure of the value of a human life that might be saved by the screening test. They want to see how much it would cost to do the screening compared to what saving a person’s life is worth, or more precisely to what the added number of years to a person’s life are worth.

Leaving out many of the complexities and cutting to the core idea, they assign a value to each added year of a person’s life due to the screening test. They base this value on an estimate of the average expected annual earnings of the person, given their particular line of work. In other words, each added year of a person’s life is worth what she/he would be expected to be paid. By this measure, each year of a worker’s life is worth only about 1/300 of that of a CEO of some large corporation, and that’s if you are employed.

But the use value of a person’s life is not a quantitative item. Rather it is a qualitative thing that is valued differently by each other person with whom the individual comes into contact – spouse, children, parents, siblings, neighbors, fellow workers, and friends. There is no such thing as the exchange value of a person’s life.

Not only is this confounding of use value with exchange value a logical error, but in the case of human life it leads to fascist conclusions. The Nazis assigned exchange value to human life and called people with disabilities who were unable to work “useless eaters” and exterminated them to save the Reich money.

More recently, a memo along these lines was issued by Larry Summers. Summers is the past chief economist for the World Bank, past Secretary of the Treasury under Clinton, and past president of Harvard. He became infamous and was forced to resign as president of Harvard for his moronic and harmful comment that women lack the aptitude for science and math. Summers issued a memo while at the World Bank (printed in the UK magazine *The Economist* in 1992 and in Foster 2002) that said in part:

Just between you and me, shouldn’t the World Bank be encouraging more migration of the dirty industries to the LDCs (Less Developed Countries)?... The measurement of the costs of health-impairing pollution depends on the foregone earnings from increased morbidity and mortality. From this point of view a given amount of health-impairing pollution should be done in the country with the lowest cost, which will be the country of the lowest wages. I think the economic logic behind dumping a load of toxic waste in the lowest-wage country is impeccable and we should face up to that.

But rather than these expressions of sheer contempt for the well-being of the world’s working class ending his career, Summers is now Obama’s director of the National Economic Council.

## **Racism is central to capitalism’s handling of the environment**

Summers’s targeting LDCs, as a dump for toxic waste, is code for workers with darker skin and is an example of the extreme racism that characterizes capitalism – in this case with Obama’s full approval. What has come to be called “environmental racism” is rampant within the U.S., as well. Examples include Hurricane Katrina, which exhibited for all the world to see the genocidal neglect first of the levees in the black working class sections of New Orleans, and after the storm surge broke the levees and flooded those sections of town along with white working class sections as well, the horror stories began in earnest. The superexploited black workers who were unable to afford private transportation were told to fend for themselves, were then accused of thievery when locked stores with spoiling food became their only source of survival, were given toxic trailers to live in by FEMA, and were actually blocked by the sheriff department from taking even the footbridge out of town. Thousands of white workers suffered the same fate as they were trapped along with their black brothers and sisters. Homes and jobs were lost permanently, in most cases.

Other examples of environmental racism include the following facts: Three fifths of the largest hazard material landfills in the U.S. are in black or Latin working-class neighborhoods. These represent 40% of the total toxic landfill in the U.S. The percentage of black and Latin workers in communities with toxic waste facilities is twice that percentage in communities without such facilities. Sixty percent of black and Latin workers live in communities with uncontrolled toxic waste sites and 50% of Asian, Pacific Island, and Indian workers live in such communities. Fines paid by polluting companies for cleanup of toxic waste were six times higher in communities with a majority of white workers (Jones). The corridor from Baton Rouge to New Orleans, occupied by a disproportionate number of black working-class families, is known as Louisiana’s Cancer Alley because of all the toxic waste and measurably higher rates of cancer. These few examples can be multiplied many fold in the U.S. alone. But workers with darker skin all over the world are the victims of disproportionate disease, injuries, and deaths from capitalism’s neglect of the environment and the so-called “natural disasters” that result from global warming.

## **The problem at this time is not overpopulation – it’s capitalism (imperialism)**

One of the most fascist ideas subscribed to unwittingly by many honest authors and other people, but pushed deliberately by capitalist ideologists, is that overpopulation in the world is the main cause of both global warming and resource depletion. It takes the racist form of blaming all those “poor people” with darker skin, particularly

in the “lesser developed countries.” Or, as *New York Times* liberal columnist Thomas Friedman puts it in his book *Hot, Flat, and Crowded*, the main cause of global warming and resource depletion is the increasing number of “middle class” people who have the money to buy all the junk that capitalism imposes on the world. While he makes some gestures to deny that he is blaming them for wanting what “middle class” Americans have had all along, the effect is still to provoke anger against workers in India, China, and the Middle East oil states (Friedman).

Many of these authors claim that the earth’s carrying capacity has been exceeded by the 6.8 billion people. But they cannot identify what that maximum carrying capacity may be. In today’s world the problem is not too many people, but rather capitalism’s enforced poverty, racism, and exploitation and their uncontrolled spread by imperialism. In addition, as we have indicated above, it is the capitalists, in their imperative drive to sell commodities in order to realize profits, who completely determine the consumption practices of the world’s working class, or at least that section who can afford to buy things beyond the basics needed to sustain life. Friedman, however, blames these consumption practices on the workers themselves.

Long ago Marx showed how capitalism produces a reserve army of labor, i.e., unemployed workers, no matter how big the population may be. The 6.8 billion people could be reduced by half or more and there would still be unemployment, poverty, disease, and all the other horrors of capitalism. Indeed when the world’s population was half its present size in the early 1960s (less than 50 years ago) these scourges were just as prevalent. There is no solution to resource depletion and global warming – nor to poverty, racism, exploitation, and war – outside of world-wide communism, as we show below.

## VII. Communism, and only communism, can solve the problems of resource depletion and global warming

### The key to solving the climate crisis, and all other crises caused by capitalism, is class struggle rather than competition

Communism is the only form of organization in which the world’s working class will be capable of solving all these problems and restoring a sustainable relationship between humanity and the rest of nature. Competitive forms of social organization, such as capitalism, are not capable of taking any actions along these lines, other than token ones. Because of its inherent necessity of expansion, the history of capitalism has gone from primitive forms of accumulation, involving theft on a

grand scale, enslavement, and genocide, beginning a few centuries ago, to cover the entire world a little over one century ago, such that different nation states could no longer expand without clashing with each other. This began the age of interimperialist war (World Wars I and II, Korea, Vietnam, Gulf Wars I and II, Afghanistan, and hundreds of smaller local wars). Through such wars, each imperialist state tries to destroy its competitors’ factories, oil fields, farms, mines, and even entire cities, or to capture and hold them.

At the end of World War II, the U.S. was the only advanced capitalist country whose industry remained intact, which made the U.S. ruling class king of the world for more than six decades – a situation that is fast coming to an end. So while imperialist rivals try to destroy each others’ capital, they fight to the death of millions of workers to preserve their own. Yet to lower CO<sub>2</sub> emissions to the extent required to save the planet from climate tipping would require destroying much of their own capital, something that will not be done as long as they are in control.

As long as capitalism exists, with its expansionist tendencies, we will be incapable of solving the problems of humanity’s interaction with nature, in which nature is used up in the drive for profits and the waste products choke and starve us. Only communism will permit us to halt our accelerating advance toward the edge of a proverbial cliff.

### How communism will allow the world’s working class to solve the problems of resource depletion and global warming

With an end to the class of competitive profit-seekers, the world’s working class, under the leadership of its communist party (PLP) will be able to make plans and to carry out those plans. In particular, PLP will organize everywhere in the world a process that engages all workers in collective discussions, debates, and planning at every level, from the smallest community and workplace to the largest centers of production and living. Then these ideas will be consolidated into globally unified action to meet the working class’ needs.

Examples of this type of detailed planning involving all workers have been demonstrated, for example, in Chinese factories in the early years of the revolution where, with the leadership of communist workers, all the workers took time out every day to meet and discuss the production process. Out of these meetings by those who actually work the means of production came improvements, for example, in industrial production of steel. Another example in China was in the hospitals where, with the leadership of communist hospital workers, doctors met with nurses, orderlies, patients, and their families to plan how to take care of patients’ sicknesses and injuries. And everyone,

including doctors, shared in the hospital housekeeping tasks. As a result of this collective cooperation on every level, many improvements in surgical techniques and medical treatments were produced, some of them the best in the world.

Until their defeat – caused by errors that were perhaps inevitable in the earliest attempts at blazing new social trails – the Soviet and Chinese revolutions showed that coordinated planning by the collective working class under the leadership of its communist parties can achieve monumental and unimagined feats of overcoming poverty, starvation, and disease. The list of “impossible” feats include, among others,

- the transformation in 10 short years of primitive Soviet industry into an industrial giant capable of defeating the massive Nazi war machine,
- the dismantling of a major portion of this industry and its transportation and reconstruction in a safe position east of the Ural Mountains, safe from Nazi bombs,
- the development of the Chinese Communist Party into a force capable of defeating the Japanese imperialist invaders during and after World War II,
- the mobilization of the Chinese masses to wipe out diseases such as schistosomiasis and TB that continue to plague workers even in today’s capitalist world.

The main cause of the defeat of these working class revolutions was a failure to eradicate all traces of capitalism. In particular, the major errors included retention of a wage system that forced workers to consider their own income before their contribution to the welfare of the entire working class, cooperation with certain capitalists who were erroneously thought to share interests with the working class, retention of a division of labor that kept many workers from being able to contribute to their class’s welfare to the maximum of their commitment, and the lack of one single communist party to lead workers everywhere in the world.

These errors played the role of negative feedback that led to the restoration of capitalism. What was lacking in the qualitative changes, brought about by armed communist-led working-class revolution, were sufficient forms of amplifying feedback that could have led to consolidation and retention of working-class state power. Such forms of amplifying feedback will, in future communist revolutions, include first and foremost correction of the errors listed in the previous paragraph. These corrections will take the form of abolition of the wage system, destruction of the entire capitalist class and its competitive ideology, sharing of all forms of labor from manufacturing to scrubbing floors to raising children to garbage disposal, and the building of one single mass communist party throughout the world, including billions of workers. Many other forms will certainly emerge as the process of

revolutionary change proceeds. Amplifying feedback will occur as cooperation among workers around the world to satisfy human needs inspires each to contribute to the welfare of our entire class and to do so to the maximum of her/his ability. Furthermore, motivated by the shared struggles to wipe out all vestiges of capitalist ideology and practices and by the visible benefits that our entire class will gain from these struggles, the world’s working class will learn to develop these abilities to heights that are unimaginable today.

The hazards of continuing capitalist exploitation of the working class are now clear. In order to save ourselves, our class has to remove this obstacle to cooperative action and establish workers’ power everywhere in the world through communist revolution and reconstruction. Only then will we be able to rebuild the world. This revolution will come by building PLP among millions of workers, soldiers, students and many others to create a communist movement that will turn the bosses crisis and wars into a fight for workers power.

When the world’s working class is able to rationally plan the production only of things we really need – whether materially, psychologically, or esthetically – coordinated and cooperative planning by a communist society, without the interference of the profit motive, will permit us to act according to our needs.

The deaths of hundreds of thousands of our brothers and sisters in Haiti are only the latest example of the destitution, danger, devastation, and disease that affects the majority of our class today. Crisis and war are growing every day. Just imagine a world in which no one can escape catastrophes such as that now faced by our Inuit brothers and sisters, who have to move farther inland, or by our cousins in the South Pacific who have to move from their island homes to mainlands, both because of the current sea level rise, or, to take an earlier example, by 500,000 of our impoverished fellow workers in Bangladesh and India who died in the Bhola cyclone in 1970 (even more than the number of our classmates who were killed by the 2004 tsunami in Asia), or the millions of us who have died in the wars in the Congo, Iraq, Afghanistan and so many other places; or the thousands of us during Hurricane Katrina in 2005 in New Orleans, who lost our homes if not our own lives or those of our relatives, friends, and neighbors. These catastrophic events have happened first to those of us who are most victimized by the racism that capitalism spawns and that poisons the entire planet.

We described above how workers in the Soviet Union and China, with communist leadership, were able to achieve the “impossible.” This time the world’s working class will do the “impossible” and defeat resource depletion and global warming, as well as put an end to imperialist war and the other miseries of capitalist rule.

<sup>1</sup> Furthermore the amount of water vapor is highly variable and mainly dependent on air temperature, which in turn is mainly driven currently by concentrations of CO<sub>2</sub>, so CO<sub>2</sub> is the one to watch, though the warming-caused release of methane may eventually overtake CO<sub>2</sub>.

<sup>2</sup> Secondly contributing to the Asian brown haze is the burning of firewood, for warmth and cooking, by the impoverished working class, who can't afford other forms of fuel. However, this particular contributing source to the Asian haze has an unclear impact on global warming. While burning of wood definitely adds choking pollution to the air, its net contribution to climate change has two contradictory aspects. The reason is that the carbon that it adds to the atmosphere has only recently been incorporated into the wood out of the air as forests grow; it does not come from fossil fuels that took up the carbon millions of years ago. So burning of wood is only recycling back to the atmosphere carbon that the wood has more recently absorbed from it. Additionally some aerosols, such as white smoke, end up reflecting a certain amount of sunlight back into outer space and therefore actually have a cooling effect on the ground, while black soot does add to global warming as it absorbs at least as much heat from the ground and oceans below as it reflects into space and therefore traps the heat.

<sup>3</sup> It is now proposed by an increasing number of investigators that the cause of the collapse of the Mayan (in Mexico), Akkadian (ancient Mesopotamian, in present day Syria and Iraq), Anasazi (in the U.S. southwest) and other great civilizations was not war but rather years of drought-produced dehydration and starvation. Global warming will only make such droughts more commonplace.

<sup>4</sup> This, however, will not raise sea level, since the ice is already floating in the ocean and not resting on land like glaciers and ice sheets.

<sup>5</sup> Examples of stabilizing forces include oceans (through plankton on the relatively cool surface), soils, and forests (through their photosynthesis) each of which absorb much of the CO<sub>2</sub> emitted by factories and vehicles, as well as by natural sources, thus blunting the warming effects of this major GHG.

<sup>6</sup> The illusion that humanity cannot affect the climate is as wrong as the mistaken notion, shared even by many workers, that our class is incapable of overturning capitalism and organizing a communist system throughout the world to serve the interests of the working class and our allies. Big changes

in social organization have been, and can and will again be, brought about by a determined working class led and organized by communists using dialectical materialism as a scientific guide to theory and action, just as we workers will be able to use our communist system to repair the planet once we have power.

<sup>7</sup> But even these stabilizing forces have their limits, because in a few more billion years the sun's core will run out of hydrogen, and, as other similar stars have done, the sun will then grow explosively in size into a so-called red giant, engulfing the earth's orbit and those of other planets. That will be the destabilizing event to literally end all destabilizing events as far as the planet earth and humanity are concerned.

<sup>8</sup> Photosynthesis is a chemical process in green plants, in which sunlight is used to convert CO<sub>2</sub> to O<sub>2</sub>.

<sup>9</sup> It is of significance to the working class that the discovery of the general process under which life initially arose out of non-living simple molecules was made principally by two Marxist scientists in the 1930s, working independently – A.I. Oparin in the Soviet Union and J.B.S. Haldane in England. Even staunch anti-communists credit these two communist scientists with this earthshaking discovery.

<sup>10</sup> A breeder reactor is a nuclear reactor that breeds further radioactive fuel as a by-product of using the initial uranium to produce energy. Breeder reactors are not yet used in U.S. nuclear plants, but are being evaluated in Japan and some European countries.

<sup>11</sup> The fear runs so high that in the early 1980s, even before the Chernobyl accident, the name of the then new medical imaging modality, originally called Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR), was changed to Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) in order to remove the word "nuclear" from the name.

<sup>12</sup> In 1986 the Argonne scientists deliberately set in motion the start of a Chernobyl-type accident with an IFR, and the reactor passively shut itself down before any danger arose, an inherent aspect of the very design of the reactor.

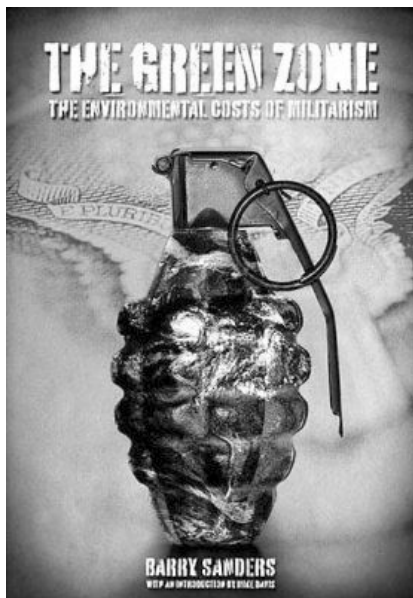
<sup>13</sup> Luxury items, like 40 karat diamonds or newly found Van Gogh paintings, are something of a special case and do not affect the general truth of Marx's argument.

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## Review of The Green Zone

Barry Sanders's new book *The Green Zone: the Environmental costs of militarism* should have been subtitled "The environmental costs of US Imperialism" or, even more simply put, "the Environmental costs of capitalism". This book does a great job

of exposing exactly how much of a farce the whole "green capitalism" movement is and how the US military is destroying the Earth itself. The struggle to preserve the environment is the struggle against capitalism. The two are directly interrelated as the resources of the Earth are being used to fuel a war machine for profit – humanity be damned! The weakness of the book is that, though Sanders does mention capitalism and imperialism, he does not call for a revolution to smash capitalism by building a communist world that will rebuild the world so that it can meet the needs of the working class.

Though Sanders makes some good observations such as "war is deeply embedded in the democratic system – in fact in many ways it is the system...", he never actually explicitly identifies the system as capitalism. He is drenched in a liberal world view where rich and poor can put aside their problems and work out how to save the earth. In light of the rest of the text, this liberal humanism comes across as disingenuous, pathetic, and fully inadequate. There's no way that you can read this book and believe that he believes his own solutions. His anti-communism is masked by two attacks on the USSR in order to separate himself from the errors of the past and place himself safely within the liberal camp. He uses the word "Communitarian" and calls for a world wide movement for this world that is designed to meet the needs of the whole community, yeah, we know this world is a Communist world, and neither boycotting the military through not paying taxes or non-violence will bring this about.

The ironic aspect of Sanders' liberalism is that this helps us to use the text within the classroom and with our liberal base. This is a book that must be read by every person in the Party, our base, and our base's friends. It takes an unflinching view of the environment and obliterates the arguments of the environmentalist movement or the

green movement as "the absurdity of a green military ... of pollution-free decimation. So what if the military switch to millions and millions of low-energy light bulbs? The united states military remains in the business of the wholesale destruction of life on this planet... but the price of imperialism demands an unbridled military, one that we [sic] must allow to decimate whatever it wishes on its way to total control, even over the earth itself." He finishes off the liberal/green argument when he points out that "James Woolsey, the former director of the CIA and a devout Iraqi Hawk, has learned to look like an environmentalist" to make the racist geopolitical point: "let us not be so dependent on the Muslim theocracies for our oil."

Sanders discusses the fact that "US troops or Iraqis breathing in no more than a gram (of depleted uranium) is equivalent to receiving an x-ray every few minutes over the course of their shortened lives." He goes on to discuss the fact that 320 tons of depleted uranium were dumped in the heavily populated city of Baghdad and Iraq in just the first two days of the war. Further dispelling the lies of the US military pedo-recruiters is his discussion that employers don't want to hire returning soldiers, and that when "they do find jobs, GI's get paid less than their civilian counterparts .. because of employer concerns about their mental health and overall skills." Sanders illustrates how the capitalists use their military to suck the life out of working class youth, murder workers all over the world, and then try to paint their military green so that there is an appearance of "environmentalism".

"We need to start telling a new story, one that describes the overwhelming majority of the Earth's population, not at odds with each other, but moving ever closer and closer together. Climate change is a global issue" caused by capitalism "and thus only a truly vast communitarian spirit [sic] can confront the vastness of its dreaded fallout." The five gallons of fuel per Abrams battle tank dwarfs whatever numbers of light-bulbs and organic food that is bought to assuage the liberal conscience. That five gallons per mile is a drop in the bucket compared to what a battleship or battle helicopter use, let alone the massive bombers and the even more massive planes that refuel them. Only a world that cares about meeting the needs of all can effectively fight the climate change that has caused millions and millions to be displaced and/or die. Even though there are weaknesses in the text, this text is a valuable weapon in the Party's arsenal to help dispel the lies of the green movement, challenge capitalism, and help us build a communist world.

## Young People in the Fight Against Fascism

There are many lies taught within history classes all over the world. The most damaging and insidious of these lies is that the United States defeated the Nazis with help from the Russian Winter. These rotten capitalist textbooks leave the role of the International Communist movement completely out of their portrayal of the monumental struggle against fascism. They misrepresent the role of the United States as the primary hero, and do not show that the US waited for years to see if the Nazis could crush the Red Army. It was only when the Nazis were defeated and in retreat, that they entered the war in Europe to make sure that they could ensure that the Red Army did not liberate all of Europe from the Nazi scourge. Another thing that is left out of history classes is the role of young people and women in the fight against fascism. Not only did young people fight fascism, but they played an integral part in its eventual defeat.

The old Communist movement (OCM) did not fight directly for Communism, but instead fought for Socialism. Socialism is basically the use of all of the elements of capitalist production in the interests of the working class and under the leadership of the working class' Communist Party. Socialism did not struggle to negate all of the elements of class society, as the OCM thought that class collaboration, the wage system, and nationalism were all needed to build socialism as the first step on the road to Communism. Even though it had its weaknesses, it must never be forgotten that the International Communist struggle for socialism was the primary historical movement violently and militantly opposed to fascism.

Fascism is the use of all of the elements of capitalist society organized to defend the bosses from the working class and other bosses. The bosses use every ideology of capitalism – nationalism, religion, sexism, and racism – to further their cause of drenching the world with the blood of workers in order to maximize their profits. Fascism has the appearance of progress, but its essence is determined to get the workers to militantly sacrifice themselves in the interests of the bosses. The catch phrase for fascist movements is always “Shared Sacrifice”, as they want the workers to sacrifice their blood and children so they can protect their profits. The bosses use fascism’s best friend patriotism to get workers in one nation to kill workers in another nation.

Socialist theory reasoned that since the masses were too backward for advanced communist ideas, concessions to capitalist ideology and organization therefore were

necessary. The OCM saw it as progressive to organize based on culture and nation. They did not go far enough in their struggle against capitalism. They did not root out all of the capitalist system’s rotten ideology because of their concessions and class collaboration.

It is never enough to just struggle against fascism, as capitalism has already proved that it can survive the defeat of fascism. Capitalism can not survive a Communist revolution that negates the whole social, economic, and political relationship of capitalism. Reformist anti-fascist struggles are not, in and of themselves, revolutionary. They may mow down the fascist grass, but they leave the capitalist root to regrow in a new form. It is one of history’s greatest tragedies that the victory against fascism did not defeat capitalism, but instead gave it new life. This rotten system that we are brutally oppressed under should have been flushed down the toilet of history long ago, but the reformist errors of the old movement prohibited that from happening.

### History by the Bosses: lies on top of lies

The Progressive Labor Party (PLP) has learned from the experiences of the OCM. The only reason why the Nazis weren’t able to continue their slaughter of Jews is due to many brave Communists actively struggling to organize, arm, and fight alongside Jewish workers against the Nazi’s war machine. The capitalists spend a lot of money in order to teach the horrible lie that the worker’s state of the USSR was just as bad as the Nazis. Whereas, the USSR was a nightmare for the bosses who were living under the threat of revolution and having their profits damaged by angry workers, it was a beacon of hope for the worlds’ workers. And, it was definitely not as bad for the hundreds of thousands of Jewish and other non-“Aryan” workers that were saved by Communists because they were marked for death by the genocidal Nazi war machine.

The Communist Party organized internationally, in prisons, forests, homes, farmhouses, schools, and factories. It set up sports clubs for youth, schools to teach skills, universities to teach science, and weapons training classes for the future armed struggle. For years before WWII, the Soviet government had armed, trained, and organized the entire population for total war in the future. The main government organization carrying out this task was the Osoaviakhim (“Voluntary Society for Assistance to the Air Force and Chemical Defense”). Its membership

numbered fifteen million. It carried out military training among all sections of the Soviet population, particularly among youth. Instruction was provided by army reserve officers and included marksmanship, horse cavalry skills, aviation, parachuting, skiing, and other military sports. Millions of youth won riflery badges. The skills of communist led partisans in all aspects of guerrilla warfare were due in large part to this training.

### **History by the Bosses: What the bosses want us to believe about WWII**

The image of WWII that the bosses shove down students' throats is of an Anne Frank cowering in an attic with her family as the Nazis prowled about looking for Jews. What the history books try to hide are young people like Halina Mazanik who placed a bomb underneath the bed of a Nazi officer. This particular officer had watched from his limousine while his orders were carried out to push the children from the orphanage into a trench, toss quicklime over them in order to burn their skin, and then bury them alive. As their screams reached their highest point, the Nazi officer started to toss candy to the children as they choked to death. The mostly Communist led underground decided that he had to die, and young Halina risked everything to place the bomb under his bed.

The bosses constantly want to teach passivity and dependence to young people. They want them to not rely upon their own power but to rely upon a power existing outside of themselves. Mao Zedong, another Communist leader villainized by capitalist textbooks, wrote that the primary task of capitalists is to get workers to constantly place their hope in external forces outside of themselves. These things can be cults of personality like Obama, Castro, and Chavez or sell-out leadership in unions, politicians, voting, boycotts and anything else that makes workers rely on a force other than their own power as workers. Communists know that the internal is primary, and that relying upon any force other than ourselves organized within the PLP to seize state power is going to doom us workers into being led by other bosses.

The bosses' lies pile on as The Edelweisse Pirates are left out of history classes, and until just a few decades ago were considered criminals and gang-members since they broke the Nazi's laws. The Edelweisse Pirates were working class members of the Hitler Youth who rebelled against the Nazi state, organized themselves, and would then go roving in packs beating up Hitler Youth. They hid Jews in basements, wrote revolutionary slogans on walls, carried out acts of sabotage and, in some cases, armed resistance against the Nazi soldiers themselves. They did not rely upon anyone else but themselves as the children of workers who realized that they did not have a stake in the Volkenstaadt<sup>1</sup> that the Nazis were pushing. Many of the Edelweisse Pirates were influenced by Communist

ideas, had parents that were Communists, and risked their lives to fight against fascism.

The reinforcing of a dependency upon a force outside of the working class is the reason that the resistance to fascism is taught as a waiting and stockpiling against the Nazis until that one great moment called D-day when the invincible US forces stormed the beaches. It is doubtful that D-day would have been a success without Communists engaging the fascist's forces. The Communist led partisan and guerilla forces created a front within Greater Germania (what the Nazi's called the territories that they conquered) that forced the fascists to concentrate many forces there that would have been used to drive the US and UK forces back into the ocean. The bosses' textbooks do not spend too much time discussing how revolutionaries from Spain, undocumented workers in France, and Jews in Eastern Europe had been fighting the fascists in Europe during the time that the US was sitting on their hands in England.

Why is it that the bosses' history books show Jews complicit in their doom and passively walking to the slaughter? The answer is simple. The capitalists don't want working class youth to know that they can fight back and win against their armies. They don't want the working class' response to Nazis and KKK marches to be militant actions like when they tried marching in Cincinnati in 2006, and the working class youth fought them off and burned down the house and business associated with that fascist scum. Or when the fascist KKK tried to march in NYC and we, the Communist PLP, infiltrated them, beat them bloody on national television, and led masses of angry workers to fight them. Young people should know that they can go toe to toe with fascists and win, and PLP will continue to organize youth to violently confront the forces of fascism with the organized force of the working class.

The capitalist class wants a compliant workforce that waits peacefully for some superhero to do something while the workers just keep on producing commodities, wealth, and profit for them. The capitalists want the working class to put their hope in the Obama of the moment. The PLP wants the exact opposite. In antithesis to the capitalist's desire for a workforce alienated from deciding what society should do, the PLP wants a Communist society where everybody can take part in the decisions that affect all of us, a society where the needs of all are met by all, and the development of each depends upon the development of all. Communism is a society where people don't rely on other people to make their decisions for them, but actually collectively participate in all of the important decisions that society needs to make. Capitalism is a society whose expressed purpose is the brutal murder and enslavement of nearly 80% of the world's population. Workers all over the world need to join the PLP so that the bosses will be met with the full fury, force, and, especially, violence that their murderous aims deserve.

## History By The Bosses: Anti-Communist lies

The bosses' history books use outright lies to say that the Communist leader Stalin was worse than Hitler.<sup>2</sup> They use tired old lies that have been debunked over and over again to prove that the socialist Soviet Union did not defeat the Germans, but that a really cold Russian winter defeated the most powerful army that capitalist society has ever been able to field.

The standard myth popularized by the bosses' textbooks credits the Soviet victory to the availability of limitless human hordes used as cannon-fodder, as well as vast stocks of U.S. donated arms. The lie says that massive suicide charges eventually exhausted the enemy. The Russian winter plays the hero in these fairy tales – as if the weather had been warmer for the communists than for Nazis.

The opposite of this racist “horde” lie is the case, as the Nazi invasion represented far more than an onslaught of an “outnumbered” seventy million Germans against one hundred ninety million Russians. The reality of the situation was that virtually all of Europe, a total of 310 million people, assaulted the USSR in June 1941. The Germans had been on a war footing for a full year and a half, and had easily overrun the rest of Europe before turning on the Soviet Union. The fascists had one hundred eighty million Germans and active German allies as well as one hundred thirty million conquered and enslaved people whose labor power, albeit unwillingly, aided their racist war effort. With his vast labor reserves, Hitler could mobilize an army numbering between fifteen and eighteen million troops.

The Soviets could mobilize about ten million troops. A million of these were needed in the Soviet Far East and on the Afghan, Iranian, and Turkish borders, more than offsetting the Nazis' need for troops to occupy Western Europe. Nazi manpower superiority at the time of the invasion can therefore be reckoned as three to two.

As the men went off to the front, women replaced them in every conceivable job. Women engineers constructed the defense works; women became police, locomotive drivers, miners, and steel workers. Youth rapidly matured under these conditions, and most sixteen-year-olds could perform any task. Children between the ages of twelve and fifteen did one-third an adult's work share. Other than the infirm and very old, non-producers were unknown during the war. Women and children participated in the fighting, on the front, as well as among the partisans in the occupied territories. Even Imperialist toadies like Harrison Salisbury had to marvel at the skill and commitment with which thirteen-year-old Soviet Jewish boys took up guns to kill Nazis when they became guerrillas.

The Communist concept of anti-fascist struggle was Zen-like in its simplicity. Communist leaders like Stalin and Tito regarded the entire country as the theater of war and every worker as a soldier. Non-combatants

worked feverishly to guarantee production. The fighting forces themselves were divided into three distinct but complementary groups: the Red Army, fighting in the front zone; the guerrilla army, spreading havoc throughout the Nazi rear; and the armed population, organized as partisans, denying the fascists access to the Soviet rear. The concept of the Soviet people in arms is not well-known in the West and merits mention, as the magnitude of the Soviet war effort cannot be comprehended otherwise.

The Wehrmacht, the fascist German army, that invaded the USSR was deeply committed to purging the Earth of all non-white peoples. This commitment to genocide had sustained these murderers during the days of easy victory over capitalist opponents. But the Wehrmacht was defeated largely because the Communist led forces, guerrillas, and partisans enjoyed overwhelming ideological superiority. Hitler's troops fought to conquer “living space” for the “master race.” The Communists, though saturated with nationalism, fought for the glimpse of communism that a generation of socialist life had given them.

The bosses pile on more lies as they say that the Communist movement was not the primary force that defeated the fascists, when not only did the Communist movement defeat fascism, it also defeated colonialism, struggled to liberate women from traditional gender roles, helped to organize and eventually defeat segregation, actually made racism illegal in socialist countries, and, during the 1970's, defeated a resurgent KKK and Nazi movement in the United States.

Yet, the history books say that pacifistic speeches and marches helped end the war in Vietnam, and not the heroic struggle of workers in Vietnam and working class soldiers in the US Armed forces fragging their officers while refusing to fight. The history books say nothing at all about the resurgent fascist movements of the 1970's where ROAR<sup>3</sup> and its thugs were free to terrorize the Black workers of Boston with the full license of the local Democrat party. Contemporary books about the left during the 1960's and 70's leave out the heroic fight waged by the PLP against the fascists.

The role of the Communist led struggle to organize against the fascist state in Franco's prisons after the defeat of the Left during The Spanish Revolution and of Communists entering into the Jewish ghettos of Warsaw and Minsk knowing that they were going to die, but knowing that resistance to stir the spirit of revolt against the Nazi war machine was much more important, is completely left out of the history books. Instead, we are taught that the Stalinists killed the revolution, sold out the struggle, and were murderers and killers.

Yes, there were many huge mistakes due to the OCM's dedication to fighting for socialism and their opportunist errors, but the defeat of fascism would not have happened without the collective participation of hundreds of millions in the struggle against it.

## What did the Communists have to do with the struggle?

Why is it that Tito's male and female partisan army is completely left out of history books? An army of peasants that had male and female fighters that was able to move all throughout the Slovene part of Carinthia since "90% of that population was in sympathy with the partisans, supporting them, feeding them, and hiding them in their homes."<sup>4</sup> The Communist Party of Yugoslavia (CPY) had carried out massive literacy campaigns, political campaigns, and struggled to organize within both the cities and countryside of Yugoslavia. The CPY had over 100,000 dedicated female anti-fascist fighters alone engaging the murderers who had invaded and enslaved them. 68,000 of these brave women were killed, wounded, or incapacitated because of the war. The brave anti-fascist fighters of both sexes were peasants and workers who picked up guns, engaged in the class struggle, and envisioned the possibility of a social transformation taking place. They were politically committed to fighting for a world where the working class ran the means of production. Unfortunately, they were fighting for Socialism and not Communism, but without the CPY organizing and arming the working class to fight in their own interests, how many much workers' blood would have fueled the fascist war machine?

The Communist Party of France organized immigrant workers from Paris to Lyons and from Marseilles to Nice to fight the Nazi murderers. This organization was known as the *Main d'Oeuvre Immigrée-Franc Tireurs et Partisans (MOI-FTP)* and was made up of undocumented workers that had migrated from all over Europe. They were working together under Communist leadership to attack the Nazis. "The militant women and men of the MOI were the first to embark upon armed resistance, and the last to receive any credit for their war record in postwar France." We have celebrated the MOI-FTP several times in the pages of *Challenge* (insert issues here). The weakness of the OCM can be seen here, as there is a deliberate "veil of forgetting" "The MOI was not made up of "authentic" French people, but of foreigners, immigrant workers, most of them Jews. These fighters carried a triple stigma: they were foreigners, they were Jews, and they were Communists. Theirs was a particularly difficult situation. Regarded as Communists and perpetrators of atrocities, they were regarded by the (US and) London-backed Gaullist resistance with little sympathy."

They were also in antagonism with the patriotic line that the Communist Party of France (CPF) had been peddling since they allied themselves with DeGaulle and had a hard time accepting the very non-French names of its most active and daring fighters. As immigrants and children of immigrants, and thus very internationalist, they were at odds with the nationalist line pushed by the OCM. The Red Army would organize its units based upon

nationality, (find the quote about the particular national divisions of the Red Army). The Vichy (French fascist government) and Polish governments had no problem killing off the Jews. The *Armia Krajowa (AK)* waged a "partisan war" of waiting to be liberated while actively attacking and killing any Jews or Communists that they came into contact with. They literally hacked over 30 Communists and friends to death with axes. They spared their bullets for the moment of liberation when the call from the Polish government in exile would come and they would help with the liberation of their nation. Numerous examples of the Polish, Lithuanian, French, and other police forces helping the Nazis to murder Jews and Communists abound. Nationalism is always a dead end for the working class, and that's why the PLP organizes to destroy nationalism on an internationalist basis.

## What Does this Mean for Young Communists today?

Young people today have an important role in the fight against fascism. Students at colleges within the US have begun to occupy buildings in order to fight back against racist budget cuts and skyrocketing tuition. Students have refused to take standardized tests that siphon off much needed funds from the classrooms and new teachers into tools that can help to fire teachers and reduce students to impersonal data. Students have attended PTA meetings and asked parents to meet them at protests. Students have walked out of school, have helped lead attacks against the fascist Minute Men, and they burned down police stations while setting cops on fire in Greece.

It is the students who make up the schools and the future producers of tomorrow as they are future workers. Students should be challenging the anti-communist lies that their teachers push in the classroom, they should be distributing *Challenge*, and bringing friends to Party study groups so that they can raise the collective conscious of themselves and others. When an undocumented worker was murdered in Long Island, it was discovered that the group of teenage thugs that had carried out the murder had been carrying out attacks for a while. Students in the high school that those thugs attended knew who they were. Communist youth should militantly and violently confront fascists that are organizing racist attacks in their school. If Communists had been able to attack those thugs, then maybe a life would have been spared.

The bosses want to continue to build their false consciousness through video games, decadent stars, music that inspires selfishness and capitalist ideology, and to keep them running from test, to after school program, to class, to after school classes, on a hamster wheel of activity to keep them busy and not organizing.

Students must work to drive ROTC and Armed Forces Recruiters off of their campuses. Students that

are committed to the Party need to consider joining the Armed forces in order to build the Party within them. Communist Students should be joining the bosses' mass organizations such as National Service. National Service is a great opportunity for us to build within the bosses' organizations and use them to build the Party. The bosses are going to be using their organizations to help build for massive wars in order to secure their empire, and they will spare a single drop of our blood in their quest. Other Communist youth should consider getting jobs in industry so that we can build the Party at the point of production.

The potential for the PLP to organize among undocumented immigrant workers, while at the same time organizing in the military, the schools, the factories, and public transportation will allow us to be able to confront the bosses on an even stronger basis than the old Communist movement was able to. Just as the MOI was able to directly confront the Nazis and struck deep rooted fear into their hearts, so too will we be able to one day directly confront ICE and the other fascist arms of the capitalist's state. We will not make the old Communist movement's mistake of organizing on cultural, racial, or nationalist lines. We want one world based on one working class working and producing together within one Party – the PLP.



<sup>1</sup>This directly translates as “folk’s state” and is what the Nazis called Germany. They constantly pushed the idea that the German people were all to be united as one powerful “Spartan” state.

<sup>2</sup> For a more thorough analysis, read “Stalin’s Successes, Humanity’s Gains” The Communist 1990

<sup>3</sup> For a more detailed description of PLP defeating the Democrat led racist organization of ROAR, read “Boston ‘75”.

<sup>4</sup> Strobl, I. “Partisanas: Women in the armed struggle against fascism” trans. Sharkey, P. AK Press 2008 (all quotes that follow are from this text unless otherwise stated.)

## Herr Hitler Goes to Hollywood

During the past two years we have been bombarded with films, many critically acclaimed, about Nazis and the Holocaust. Most shed the standard format of telling the story of WWII from the viewpoint of the US and tried to tell the story of the Nazis themselves. The United States' capitalist class has always been enthralled with Nazism and Nazi ideology.<sup>1</sup> The seeming cross class cooperation of Nazi fascism, the efficiency of forced labor, the widespread hysterical anti-communism and the "invincible" military all have a certain appeal to the ruling class. As they are forced more and more to revert to fascist techniques of governance in the face of rising inter-imperialist rivalry and growing economic crises, their fetishization of Nazism intensifies.

The six films chosen for this review were chosen either for their critical success, *The Reader*, *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*, and *Downfall* or their mass audience, *Valkyrie*, *Defiance*, and *Inglorious Basterds*. These films share one or all of the following characteristics critical to the goals of US fascism:

- They present the Nazis as sympathetic and reasonable victims of circumstance
- They praise the heroism of the German military
- They attack and rewrite the role of the Soviet Union in the partisan movement and the war as a whole
- They deny the involvement or knowledge of the German people in the death camps

These four aspects all serve to elevate the "prestige" (in the mindset of the ruling class) of fascism. They praise Nazi efficiency (a myth in itself<sup>2</sup>) while attacking, rewriting, and erasing the role of mass communist politics in defeating European fascism.<sup>3</sup> The capitalist position regarding fascism was made clear by the Chief of the British Imperial General Staff in 1944 when he stated, "Germany is no longer the dominating power of Europe, Russia is. Unfortunately Russia is not entirely European... Therefore foster Germany, gradually build her up, bring her into a federation of Western Europe."<sup>4</sup>

### Those Poor Nazis

One of the main goals of Western Nazi cinema is to rehabilitate Nazis by focusing on the personal. Depicting them as sympathetic characters caught up in the moment implicitly asking the question, "What would you do in their situation?"<sup>5</sup> thus implying the inevitability of fascism. The truth is that millions of people were in that same situation, under the boot of fascism, and chose to

fight back helping to cripple the Nazis ability to fight and providing an invaluable military function for the advancing Red Army. But this story is systematically obscured and ignored making "What would you do?" a false question with a predetermined answer: be a good fascist of course!

*The Reader* (2008) is just such a film. Based on a book that became a bestseller after being put on Oprah's book club, the film garnered much critical acclaim being nominated for five Oscars (including Best Movie) and winning one for Best Actress (Kate Winslet). The movie demonstrates many of the crass techniques filmmakers use to build sympathy for their Nazis.

The film begins with 45 minutes of gratuitous nudity involving Hannah (Kate Winslet) seducing a 16 year old school boy in her post-war apartment. Before being informed of Hannah's Nazi past we are treated to every part of her body in a disingenuous effort to bring you closer to Hannah's character through the use of crass sexuality. The sexism is apparent; as it is, "attractive" Kate Winslet chosen for the role of Hannah to ensure viewers are not turned off by an unattractive Nazi prison camp guard. At no point is the question raised as to the nature of this relationship or its participants (or its illegality for that matter). It is simply a disturbing, prolonged peep show falling into the category of what some social critics have termed "Nazi porn."<sup>6</sup>

About an hour into the film we see the once young boy, now college student Michael is attending law school where his class is witnessing a trial of Nazi prison camp guards.<sup>7</sup> After learning that the six women on trial personally selected people for execution and burned 300 prisoners alive in a barn it is revealed to Michael that Hannah is one of the defendants! At this point the director is afraid that he might be losing audience sympathy for Hannah so he has the law school professor remind the audience that "You are not guilty of anything merely by working at Auschwitz" and "The question was never was it wrong, but was it legal and not by our laws but by the laws of the time." Another young student loses it and chastises the class saying that all six women should be executed. He argues that while West Germans pretend to not know anything about the Holocaust it would have required the complicity and active participation of millions. Despite the correctness of the student's position the director portrays him as an irrational hot head. The audience is "spared" from hearing from him anymore in the film.

Hannah pleads her case to the court, regarding the camp

executions - "There were new ones (prisoners) coming all the time, we had to make room." She then challenges the courtroom (and the viewer) "What would you have done?" The question is met with stunned silence. While watching the film my wife joked with the obvious, "You could have let them go!" At this point in the film you wonder if they are going to convict her or pin a medal on her.

The director feeling that the audience might still be turned off by Hannah's burning of 300 people alive crudely shifts the conversation from one of Hannah's guilt to her victimization. The other five women on trial turn on Hannah and claim that she was the ringleader. The audience is supposed to feel bad for the poor little Nazi, after all, everyone is attacking her. When she is presented with falsified evidence, created by the other five defendants, she can easily dispel the charge, but she would have to reveal a secret. Yes, in the final appeal for audience sympathy, we learn that Hannah harbors a dark secret, she can't read. The very fact that illiteracy could be considered a worse crime or social stigma than murdering hundreds if not thousands of people shows the disgustingly racist/fascist nature of this film. She refuses to reveal her secret and receives a long prison sentence.

Further hammering home the notion that Hannah was wronged at the end of the film Michael who is now an old man visits the witness, the sole survivor of the barn fire, whose testimony helped get Hannah convicted. She is shown as a wealthy Jewish woman who lives in a plush New York high rise (probably in Manhattan). We are to assume that she made this money off of the book that she wrote about her camp experience. She reveals that her mother died some time ago in Israel. Every bit of anti-Semitic venom is thrown at this character who is then juxtaposed with poor Hannah who kills herself in her tiny spartan prison cell. By the end of the film we learn who the "real" victims were of the Holocaust. Director Stephen Daldry has made a great work of pro-Nazi propaganda and for this he was awarded with nominations for Best Director at every major film awards show.

The German film *Downfall* (*Der Untergang*, 2004) was perhaps the first of this new brand of Nazi film shot from the viewpoint of history's most despicable characters. The movie purports to tell the "true" story of Hitler's last days in the bunker... as told by his loyal secretaries.

The film opens with the secretaries being interviewed for the job and getting to meet Hitler himself. They are star-struck as Hitler comes in with a warm smile and behaves as a "true German gentleman." The director seeks to introduce us to Hitler's softer side, just what the world needs. Before we are introduced to the chaos of the final days in the bunker we are to be reminded of the more genteel times in Nazi Germany. At no time, except for some clips at the very end of the film, is what the "gentleman warriors" of Nazi Germany doing to people outside the bunker ever discussed. For the director we are to focus

solely on Hitler and his internal struggles. Much as in *The Reader* it is easier for the director to build sympathy for the German leader if we don't cloud our minds with thoughts of war crimes or systematic genocide.

As the film progresses we move into the bunker and we see Hitler fall deeper into insanity. His senior officers withhold information and plot against him. Our fearless secretaries lament how Hitler's disloyal staff has made him a prisoner in this bunker with their connivance. If only they would leave the Fuehrer alone. In one famous scene Hitler completely breaks down yelling at his top command, outside the secretaries cry on each other's shoulder as their hero falls apart.

By the end of the film we join the secretaries and several of the officers from the bunker as they try to escape the incoming Russian "savages." Much as in *The Reader* director Oliver Hirschbiegel seeks to rehabilitate the Nazis by changing the standard formulation of victims and victimizers in WWII. Through his "nuanced" look at the victimizers we learn that in reality everybody was a victim during WWII. Maybe one person's whole family was wiped out in the death camps, but hey that Auschwitz prison guard can't read. Whole towns were wiped off the map in Eastern Europe, but hey Hitler has people lying to him and treating him badly. Who's to say who the real victim is? That is the message that capitalists want us to take away from these films.

## Those Heroic German Soldiers

Beginning with 1951's *The Desert Fox* Western filmmakers have long tried to tell the story of heroic German soldiers fighting bravely abroad while devious Nazis at home engage in their nefarious deeds. Like many of these things this myth of heroic German soldiers has a political root. After the Second World War the US military hired on Nazi generals and gave them the job of re-writing the history of German involvement in the war against the Soviet Union. The histories were designed to be used as a propaganda weapon against the Soviet Union. Predictably the generals whitewashed their involvement in civilian executions, selection of camp prisoners, and other war crimes. They also began to create a myth that the true source of Soviet victory was not the tactical and political organization undertaken by the communist USSR, but the incompetence of a maniacal Hitler's military leadership. Despite the facts that this myth contradicts all the historical evidence, it has become an enduring part of Western culture.<sup>8</sup>

*Valkyrie* (2008) continues this long tradition of whitewashing the role of the German military in an effort to rehabilitate them. The movie begins with "The Following is Based on a True Story" scrolled across the screen in German so you know its trustworthy. Besides starring Tom Cruise the film commits other common crimes against cinema. Using a time honored trick the



“good” Nazi (as if such a thing could exist) characters are sorted from the bad Nazis by way of accent. Good Nazis get English accents, bad Nazis get German accents, Tom Cruise talks like Tom Cruise.

The film opens with Colonel Claus von Stauffenberg (Tom Cruise) in North Africa writing a letter to a fellow officer. In it he assures the audience that there was “widespread disgust in the officer corps over the murder of civilians, Jews, and the torture/murder of POWs.” This will be the general theme of the film that we will be asked to buy into. The problem of course being that this statement is total and utter non-sense. We are asked to believe that the disgust over what was going on was widespread, but the German officer corps continued to follow orders to the bitter end when the territory of Nazi Germany could only be measured in square feet. We also know from the historical record that involvement in mass executions and the death camps was far more widespread than the SS. Generals idolized by “military buffs” in the US such as Franz Halder and Erich von Mannstein personally picked prisoners to be sent to the camps and gave mass execution orders for civilians that were carried out by regular army soldiers. Regular German police units were used as reserve death squads and were regularly sent into Eastern Europe to cleanse villages of communist influence.<sup>9</sup>

Even if it were true that an opposition to civilian executions existed in the military, (which there wasn’t) wasn’t the Nazi war of aggression that killed tens of millions and destroyed the cities of Europe a crime against humanity by itself? This is the message of the film though. The war against the Soviet Union in the eyes of the capitalist class was heroic and just. Time and time again the capitalist class has shown that no amount of violence should be spared in fighting communism. The war against fascism during WWII was a people’s war that Western capitalists have tried to co-opt, subvert, and destroy for 60 years.<sup>10</sup> All through the 30s, 40s, and even into the 1950s (many ex-Nazis were put in charge of West Germany) the Western capitalists lent material aid and assistance to the fascists who they saw as heroic warriors in the fight against communism.

As the film progresses Stauffenberg is pulled into a world of underground plotters conspiring to kill Hitler. He wants in. Stauffenberg sets up the moral superiority of the plotters, “It only matters that we act now before we lose the war. Otherwise, this will always be Hitler’s Germany. We have to show the world that not all of us were like him.” Proclaiming later, “Once we have control of the government we will shut down all the concentration camps.”

Wow, how heroic; too bad it is also false. The Valkyrie plotters were simply rats trying to desert a sinking ship. Their altruism is demonstrated by their loyalty oath:

*We know that the German has powers by virtue of*

*which he is called to lead the community of Western nations into a more beautiful life... We want a New Order that makes all Germans into bearers of the state and guarantees them law and justice. But we despise the lie of equality and demand the recognition of naturally given ranks.<sup>11</sup>*

The truth being that the plotters had no intention of saving anyone other than themselves. This is why it took them until June of 1944 (Germany surrendered May, 1945) to find their conscience.

Towards the end of the film one of the plotters states, “The point of killing Hitler is to make a truce with the allies” This is basically the only true statement in this film. As one historian notes, “There is no getting around the fact that a considerable number of the persons who actively participated in the July 20th plot ... earlier took part in the war of racial extermination [i.e., on the Eastern front], for periods at least approved of it and in some cases actively promoted it.”<sup>12</sup> These plotters had no problem with Nazi genocide, but as the Red Army advanced and defeat seemed inevitable these cowards sought to save themselves from Soviet retribution.

Many in Germany in 1944 and 45 attempted to broker deals with the US and English in order to either close off the Western front or fight as Allies against the Soviet Union. Seeing how genocide on the Eastern front was a critical part of Nazi race theory and the forced labor of the concentration camps was a necessary element of German arms manufactures, it would be absurd to think that these “good” Germans would do anything other than maintain the status quo in Nazi Germany.

The film was promoted with the tagline, “Many saw evil, they (the Nazi plotters) dared to stop it.” This offensive garbage is an anti-communist lie. The anti-fascist movement saw hundreds of millions of workers rise up around the world to smash fascism in Germany, Italy, and Japan/China. To this day capitalists tremble at the implications of such a movement and use films like *Valkyrie* to obscure the real past in order to disarm workers. When capitalists say “Never Again” they do not mean the genocide of WWII, many such genocides have been repeated since then at the hands of the Western powers, they mean the communist led anti-fascist movement.

## Partisans and Anti-Communism

Quentin Tarantino’s *Inglorious Basterds* (2009) was not meant to be taken seriously. A spaghetti western shot against the backdrop of WWII, the film willfully and purposefully rewrites the war. I must admit that in watching the film there is definite pleasure to be taken in Tarantino’s new ending for the war where Jewish guerrillas gun down Hitler and most of the Nazi high command. Tarantino is not trying to make a historical

piece with *Inglorious Basterds*. As with most of his films he is elevating style over substance. But still the fact that he took a definite historical moment and weaved in a fiction regarding US led partisans leads to much confusion over the facts of the matter. Few, hopefully, in the audience will leave this film thinking that the war ended with Hitler gunned down in a Paris theatre, but the idea of the Basterds will probably have sticking power.

Brad Pitt leads the “Basterds,” an all Jewish US Army guerrilla unit fighting behind enemy lines in occupied France. They hunt down Nazis collecting their scalps and acting as avengers for European Jews. While entertaining to watch this film leaves the viewer with two misconceptions: 1) That the US engaged in/aided partisan warfare and 2) The US cared about what happened to Jews in Nazi Germany.

The actual history is that the partisan movement in WWII took on its special character and influence from its communist leadership. The Soviet Union had called on all the workers of Europe to organize partisan groups and then coordinate with the Red Army against the Nazis with devastating effect.<sup>13</sup> The US and Britain were largely hostile to the partisans due to their communist leadership. Instead of fighting a people’s war as the USSR did, the US and British preferred the large scale terrorizing of civilians through a campaign of carpet bombing cities into dust. After the war, Marshall Plan aid came with the precondition that the communist parties of the Western governments, who enjoyed immense popularity for their role in the resistance, could not participate in politics. By 1953, almost all those who had been arrested for war crimes or wartime collaboration in France and Germany had been given amnesty and released from prison. In West Germany the communist party became an illegal organization in 1956 as the West German government swelled with ex-Nazi bureaucrats. In France, Vichy collaborationists were allowed back into power as the French Communist Party receded into the margins.

The second misconception that this film creates is that the US cared about the plight of Jews in Nazi Germany. In reality anti-Semitism in the US continued and intensified through the Nazi’s worst atrocities. In 1939, Franklin Roosevelt refused to support the Wagner-Rogers Bill which would have allowed 20,000 Jewish refugee children safe haven in the U.S.<sup>14</sup> That same year the US also denied the steamship St. Louis port in New York. The ship, which was full of Jewish refugees, was turned back to Europe and many of its passengers ended up in Nazi death camps.<sup>15</sup> In fact, it was the official policy of the US State Department and the British Foreign Office during WWII to deny the existence of death camps, even after their existence was confirmed in 1942. While Western newspapers took frequent potshots at the Soviet Union, news about the Holocaust was “regularly suppressed, ignored or trivialized throughout the war.”<sup>16</sup> The issue of German war crimes did not even make it

onto the agenda of Allied meetings until November 1943 when Allied ministers met in Moscow.<sup>17</sup> After the war, the displaced persons’ camps, which were filled with prisoners from the death camps, were placed under the control of ex-SS members who now worked for the US intelligence services prolonging these prisoners suffering (and leading to the deaths of thousands more prisoners after the war’s end).<sup>18</sup>

Taking place on the other side of the war on the Eastern Front, the film *Defiance* (2008) looks at the partisan group formed by the Bielski brothers in the woods of Nazi occupied Belarus. The oldest two Bielski brothers fight over whether or not they should simply hide out and try to avoid capture or whether they should join with the Soviet led partisans and fight the Nazis. Tuvia Bielski (Daniel Craig) argues that by fighting the Nazis you become like them and despite many violent scenes in the film seems to advocate a pacifist position. At the end of the film Zus, Tuvia’s “hot headed” brother, vindicates this position by leaving the Soviet partisans and rejoining Tuvia’s group.

While it is true that the Bielski group was not as militarily active as other partisan groups this is almost certainly because of the large numbers of refugees that they cared for, not some pacifist belief. The Bielski group helped Red Army partisans in many military raids throughout the war, as well as provided the Soviet partisans with members and supplies. Far from being conflicted about their fate, the Bielski group fought actively to save those who fled the ghettos and to ensure the success of the Soviet partisans.

The stated purpose of *Defiance* was to show that Jews did fight back, but the filmmakers show their own politics by relentlessly attacking the motivation for partisan resistance in Eastern Europe, communist politics. Early in the film, one of Tuvia’s old school teacher’s shows up, now an old man, providing wise, sage like wisdom whenever Tuvia is in a moral quandry. He argues that “Hitler is a devil with a little moustache and Stalin is a devil with a big moustache.” This man is portrayed as the conscience of the camp, but Tuvia’s closest advisor is the former editor of a socialist pamphlet and the camp itself runs on a policy of ‘everybody works’, points the film tries not to dwell on.

In the few scenes that depict the Red Army partisans they are always either drunk, spewing anti-Semitic remarks, or both. One wonders how guerilla fighters living in huts in the woods got their hands on so much vodka. Adopting the crass anti-Russian racism of Nazi propagandists, the director makes it clear that the Russians are no better than the Nazis. But if the Soviet people were so virulently anti-Semitic then why was the Soviet Union the only country with laws against anti-Semitism, the only country to evacuate Jews (and others who might face special persecution) in the face of the Nazi advance, and the only ones to acknowledge the existence of

death camps during the war? Here, the filmmaker masks the rampant and deadly anti-Semitism of the Western powers by trying to project it onto the Soviet Union.

The capitalist class has worked very hard to erase the role of the Soviet Union and communist politics in the fight against fascism. As stated earlier, fascism was never the enemy of the US and Britain who both dabbled in fascism themselves during the 1930s, communism was. Where they can, capitalists deny Soviet involvement in the war altogether. When that is impossible, they slander and libel the Soviet leadership and Soviet people in order to obscure and de-legitimize their contribution.

### What Holocaust?

Unfortunately for capitalists who fantasize about Nazi “efficiency” as they incorporate more and more fascist politics in the face of crisis, workers have a general distaste for the genocidal policies of fascism’s most infamous incarnation. As part of their effort to portray fascism as a viable alternative, the ruling class has to whitewash the crimes of the Nazi regime, claiming them to be an aberration caused by a few bad apples in the generally good fascist bunch. This requires them to constantly restate the tired old German myth that regular people did not know about the Holocaust.

In *The Reader* the part of the young boy seduced by Hannah was created by the author to take us into the mind of the average German who was “seduced” by fascism and then later had to come to grips with the “revelations” of Nazi war crimes. In *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* (2008) a family is shocked to learn about German mistreatment of Jews when the father is promoted to camp commander of Auschwitz. It takes a couple of months after arriving but they eventually realize that apparently the camps aren’t beach resorts. Their son discovers this with “tragic” consequences.

At the end of *Downfall* we are treated to an interview with the secretary whose testimony the movie is based off of. She assures us repeatedly that she had no idea that the camps existed in a pathetic attempt to rationalize her own devotion to Nazism. In *Valkyrie*, we learn that, well yeah, the German people did know about the Holocaust, but they didn’t approve of it... well at least they stopped approving of it once it became clear they were going to lose the war.

The reality is that the death camps required the participation of millions of people to run. The German railway which was critical to transporting prisoners to the camps and transporting clothes and other valuables away from the camp employed 1.2 million German workers by itself. Germans who (as well as French, Polish, Czech, Belgian, Danish, Austrian, etc) turned in their neighbors seemed to know exactly where they were going. After these “undesirables” were rounded up, the “good” Aryans broke

into their houses looting them, and in many cases moving into them. German soldiers engaging in mass executions and working at the death camps sent home photographs and letters describing their “heroic” deeds. During the war it became a popular past time for Germans to collect and catalogue these photographs which depicted firing squad executions, hangings, and starving prisoners.<sup>19</sup>

### Why Now?

The problem with these movies is that their form hides their content. Each film is well made to create maximum sympathy for the German characters (with the exception of *Defiance* and *Inglorious Basterds*). For capitalists, the lesson they hope to impart is that Nazism was not inherently bad, it just needed better leadership. In the US, the liberal wing of the ruling class hopes to be that leadership.

The culture of fascism in capitalist film has been growing stronger and bolder for the last decade seeping into every genre. 2006’s comic book adaptation *300* is probably the vilest film Hollywood has put out in the last fifty years. Depicting a battle between the freedom loving West (the ancient Spartans) and the evil, androgynous, dark-skinned East (the Persians), the film mimics the 1915 epic about the “heroic” rise of the Ku Klux Klan, *Birth of a Nation*. Once you get past the many historical inaccuracies of the film<sup>20</sup> *300* boils down to a celebration of eugenics and the myth of the white European “superman.” The film stands as a cinematic call for race war against an unfriendly and “dark” world, a perfect justification for increasing US aggression in the Middle East, South Asia, and East Africa. 2008’s *Batman: Dark Knight* would serve a similar purpose as it depicted a conflicted hero who must resort to being the villain and using fascist spying techniques to bring justice and order back to Gotham. Much as Hitler shouldered the full burden of becoming Fuhrer of the German people, Batman must become the Dark Knight and spy, murder, and steal in order to protect us lowly workers. By the end of the film, we learn that sometimes fascism is necessary and in the “right” hands it can benefit all of us.

The US ruling class is under increasing strain as the economic crisis and inter-imperialist rivalries all heat up. The need to make fascism available as a weapon to prepare for and initiate WWII is becoming a pressing concern. In order to win the population to support this, and the increasing levels of violence (euphemistically called “sacrifice”) that come with it the Nazi regime (the most well known and accepted example of fascism) has to be rehabilitated to make room for a new American fascism. As workers we must take our own lessons from WWII and the fight against fascism. The lesson of how communist politics built and rebuilt a Soviet industrial base capable of out-producing Hitler’s millions of slave laborers, how the politics of collective sacrifice and the

protection of the workers' state inspired millions to fight against the largest invading army any capitalist state has ever fielded, despite horrific conditions and unimaginable loss and tragedy. Most of all, we have to remember that

it was workers following a communist political line that ultimately crushed the fascist machinery of the Nazi state, despite the attempts to undermine and sabotage the struggle by the Western capitalists.

<sup>1</sup>A recent editorial in the New York Times urged readers to look at and consider the "good" parts of Nazism. The author was the paper's lead economics reporter. NYT, Stimulus Thinking, and Nuance, 4/1/09

<sup>2</sup>Adam Tooze destroys the notion of the efficient Nazi economy in his book *Wages of Destruction* revealing that the Nazi war effort was designed to save the crumbling economy. This confirmed R Palme Dutt's conclusions regarding fascism in his seminal 1936 work *Fascism and Social Revolution*

<sup>3</sup>The military policy in the Second World War of Britain and the US was created largely in reaction to the success of the Soviet Red Army and the communist led partisan movement. The invasion of Italy was undertaken only after Mussolini's military began to crumble under partisan pressure forcing the German military to occupy large portions of the country. The US invasion was designed to prevent partisan victory not save Italy from fascism. The much praised invasion of France was launched in 1944 in response to Western fears that if the West didn't occupy Europe then the Red Army would soon take Berlin anyways and all of Europe might fall to communism which was the mass line at the time.

<sup>4</sup>David Reynolds, *From World War to Cold War: Churchill, Roosevelt, and the International History of the 1940s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 237.

<sup>5</sup>I remember, with many others I am sure, even being asked this question as part of my public school education on WWII

<sup>6</sup>Sunday Telegraph, Oscar Hopes Fade as Battle Rages Over 'Nazi Porn,' 2/16/09

<sup>7</sup>West Germany began trying war criminals in the mid-late 1960s. This was a result of the pressure put on the West German government by communist East Germany and the German Left who had long pointed out that the West German government was largely an extension of the Nazi government made up largely of ex-Nazis. These trials were mainly for show with most ex-Nazis maintaining their social/political prominence.

<sup>8</sup>For more on the creation of Operational History (German) Section and its influence on Western culture see, *The Myth of the Eastern Front: The Nazi-Soviet War in American Pop Culture* by Ronald Smelser and Edward J. Davies II.

<sup>9</sup>For more see *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* by Christopher Browning or Alexander Werth's still classic *Russia at War*

<sup>10</sup>For more see the PLP special Challenge supplement from 1995 "10 Lies About WWII," [http://www.plp.org/cd\\_sup/cd4.html](http://www.plp.org/cd_sup/cd4.html) and PLP's "Bosses Still Don't Understand Why Red Army Defeated the Nazis," [http://www.plp.org/cd\\_sup/pbsstal3.html](http://www.plp.org/cd_sup/pbsstal3.html)

<sup>11</sup>John Rosenthal, *Valkyrie's Revisionism*, <http://pajamasmedia.com/blog/valkyrie-and-the-myth-of-the-good-german/>

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., Rosenthal cites the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, <http://www.kirchen.ch/pressespiegel/nzz/200009141132.pdf> (German language)

<sup>13</sup>For more info see Alexander Werth's *Russia at War* and A. Fyodorov's *The Underground Revolutionary Committee Carries On*

<sup>14</sup>Debra Kaufman, Gerald Herman, James Ross, and David Phillips, eds., *From the Protocols of the Elders of Zion to Holocaust Denial Trials: Challenging the Media, Law and the Academy* (Portland, OR: Valentine Mitchell, 2007), 73.

<sup>15</sup>Myers, Gustavus. *History of Bigotry in the United States* (New York: Random House, 1943), 387.

<sup>16</sup>Kaufman, 67-68.

<sup>17</sup>Kaufman, 69.

<sup>18</sup>John Loftus, *The Belarus Secret* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1988), 60-61

<sup>19</sup>Judith Levin and Daniel Uziel, *Ordinary Men, Extraordinary Photos*, [http://www1.yadvashem.org/about\\_holocaust/studies/ordinary/levein\\_uziel\\_full.html](http://www1.yadvashem.org/about_holocaust/studies/ordinary/levein_uziel_full.html)

<sup>20</sup>For one the democratic freedom loving Spartans in fact lived in monarchical state where slaves made up 90% of the population. 300's heroes are also intensely homophobic, a curious trait to give a society that considered the common-place sexual relationships between men and young boys to be perfectly acceptable.



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