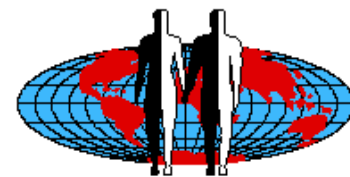


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IMAGINE



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Capitalism -

a slick operation

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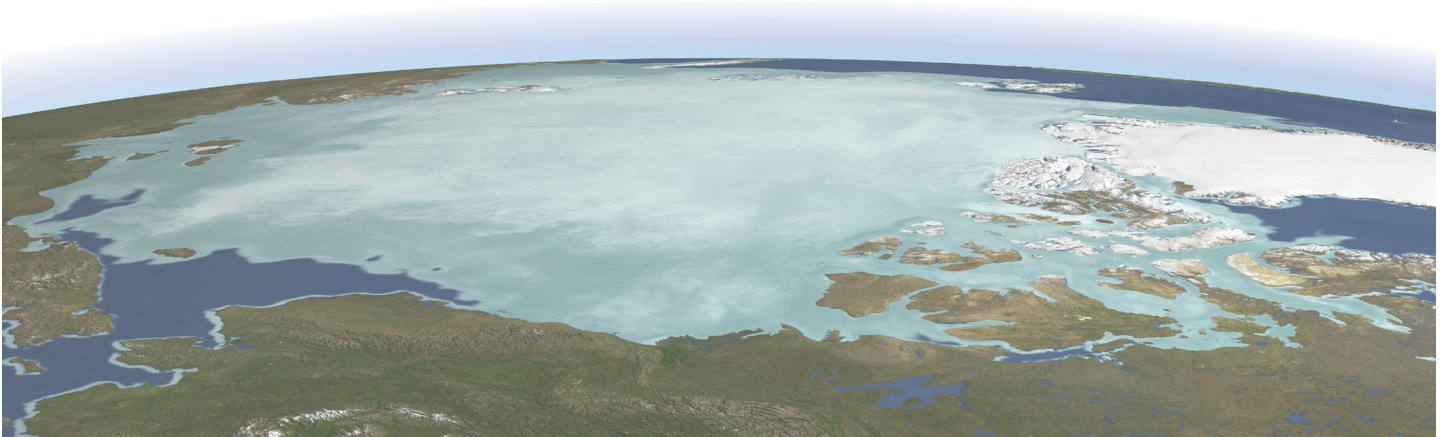
The Arctic Ocean The Final Frontier

As global warming continues to melt the ice pack in the Arctic Ocean, the possibilities of accurately mapping the ocean floor, opening commercial shipping routes such as the Northwest Passage into the Pacific Ocean, and, most importantly, extracting valuable resources such as oil and gas, have appeared on the near horizon. The Arctic Ocean is the least explored ocean but it is estimated that it may contain one quarter of the earth's unexplored oil and gas fields. (National Geographic).

Naturally, this has triggered a frenzy of action and hubris by the nations that surround the ocean as they posture and position themselves to claim their share on behalf of their capitalist class who will be charged with developing the fields and reaping the profits. The reaction of the arctic nations – US, Canada, Denmark, Russia, Sweden, and Norway – is reminiscent of the nineteenth century scramble for, and partition of, Africa by the leading colonial powers of the day. It also confirms the socialist case regarding warfare – that it is the result of the competitive nature of the normal operation of the capitalist system where nations, acting on behalf of their capitalist class, seek economic advantages over other capitalist enterprises in the search for, and control of, natural resources, trade routes and alliances, and strategic positions. Will the scramble for the arctic lead to war? Not likely at present, but given the scarcity of oil and gas in the near future, all bets are off.

Each country is striving to locate, and lay claim to, its continental shelf, the submerged extension of its terrestrial land, as this is internationally recognized as part of the country and will determine what part of the pie each one is entitled to. Land claims will be settled by the UN Convention of the Law of the Sea, and countries will have until 2013 to submit data in support of those claims. To that end, Canada has invested \$90 million since 2004, including deploying a world leading technology in the form of a robot submarine deployed at depths of 5,000 metres to amass its data. (Toronto Star, 13/Feb/2010). In addition, coastguard patrols have been stepped up and arctic military exercises have been undertaken.

Although Scandinavian countries are often held up as shining examples of how capitalism could work better, it turns out that they are just like all the others in the race for arctic wealth. Denmark has created an Arctic Command to coordinate military activity and assert its sovereignty in the area. Sweden has undertaken the largest military exercises since WWII, deploying some 12 000 troops, and warships and aircraft in the Arctic. Norway has purchased forty-eight new fighter jets suitable for arctic patrols and participated in NATO war games simulating exercises against an 'imaginary' country's seizure of an oil rig (Russia protested the exercise). The United States arctic policy has shifted from scientific research to sovereignty and security. Recent war games with 9 000 troops were conducted in Alaska. Russia, with a vast coastline in the Arctic Ocean, stands to



gain the most from economic development of the region, has not been slow to stake its claim. In 2007, it planted a Russian flag on the ocean floor beneath the North Pole.

In 2010, a Russian bomber flew towards Canadian air space prompting the expected military and diplomatic responses. Russia also announced plans to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the first parachute drop at the North Pole by dropping a squadron of paratroopers there. Russia has also had submarines firing long-range missiles and has stepped up air and naval patrols over the ocean. Premier Medvedev has stated that the Arctic must serve as Russia's resource base of the future and he considers the North Pole to be the ideal site for launching ballistic missiles because submarines can approach undetected under the ice and because distances from the North Pole (presumably to their arctic competitors) would be shorter.

Already in dispute, apart from the extent of continental shelves, is the Lomonosov Ridge, a vast area encompassing the North Pole (and the Russian flag) that is claimed by Russia, Canada, and Denmark, who all believe their continental shelves are connected to the ridge. Also, Canada and the United States disagree as to whether The Northwest Passage is in inland waters, and therefore Canadian, or part of the high seas and therefore common property. (Toronto Star, 9/Aug/2009) Although a good part of the rhetoric and jingoism is designed for the home audience to sell their policies and military expenditures, there can be no doubt that each nation is out to grab as much of the pie as possible by whatever means may be necessary.

All the ingredients are in place for potential future conflict – an area of untapped resources, groups of competing capitalists represented by their governments, areas of disputes, and military build-up. The competition is on! The irony is, a large part of the profits made will end up paying for the increased military spending to secure the profit-making system, and so on, in a never ending cycle of waste. That's the natural way of capitalism.

Let's imagine for a moment a different system. One where a world body, elected and democratic, using scientific and expert input and governed by decisions of people's representatives, would manage resources for the benefit of all; where human knowledge and skills would be brought together in cooperation, not competition, to solve the problem of safe and environmentally responsible development, or, perhaps, it would be decided against doing anything at all in the Arctic and reorganizing society to cope with diminishing oil reserves and use alternative technologies and life styles; where making profit did not dominate all aspects of life, restricting what needs to be done for the benefit of all because a huge portion of the wealth created had to go into the pockets of the few who owned the means of producing and distributing wealth; where common ownership of those means is used to provide all the necessities – food, water, housing, health care, education, for every human being. If you can imagine that, then you can imagine socialism, the system that is the next big step forward for human progress. **SPC**

PUT AN END TO THE NEVER ENDING EXPANSION OF CAPITAL

The very survival of capitalism depends on production on an ever-expanding scale. Even a drop in the rate of expansion is a crisis for the system. Capital accumulation is one of its major features and must proceed ad infinitum. Here's why – if you have \$10 million dollars invested at a return of ten per cent per annum, you will get back \$11 million. As you don't want that extra million stagnating in a corner, you invest the \$11 million and receive \$12.1 million, and so on. Capitalists, of course, do not always invest all their money. They may, for example, decide the prospects for profit are too low and hoard it for a while, or buy gold. That decision, if taken by enough capi-

talists, will mean many workers will lose their jobs because our livelihoods under capitalism depend on the capricious will of capital. So, expansion through investment of larger and larger pools of capital is the general rule for our current economic system. Many accumulate so much they have no hope of ever spending their fortunes but are compelled to keep on investing and increasing their wealth anyway, or see their money piles stagnate, or worse, lose value due to inflation. Take Microsoft's Bill Gates, for example. If he invests his \$50 billion or so at 10%, he "earns" \$5 billion for the year. Let's say half goes to taxes, although with that kind of clout, he can **CONTINUED ON PAGE 12...**



THE GULF OIL SPILL

litres, 1 000 kilometres off the coast of Texas that took one month to reach the coast there.

British Petroleum Inc. is the world's third largest energy company with 2009 revenues of \$246 billion. In 2 000 it re-branded itself as the industry's most sensitive company with an ad campaign of \$200 million entitled 'Beyond Petroleum', sporting a new green logo similar to that of our Green Party. It committed to alternative energy systems and did succeed in reducing its CO2 emissions by ten per cent and becoming the third largest maker of solar panels. Yet its revenues continued to come ninety per cent from oil, and its record tells a very different story from its new brand.

In 2001, BP was forced to pay a \$10 million penalty and spend \$500 million in upgrades for violating federal clean air laws at eight US refineries; In 2005, a Texas refinery explosion killed fifteen workers and the company was penalized \$87 million by the US Occupational Safety and Health Administration, the biggest fine in the agency's history; In 2006, BP's Alaska operations were found to have leaked one million litres of crude oil from eroded pipelines and was forced to replace twenty-six kilometers of pipeline; In April 2010, the Deepwater Horizon oil rig exploded and sank killing eleven workers, due to the failure of a blow-out-protector to activate. BP's initial response was to downplay the damage, to refuse to let scientists have access to the site to determine the flow from the well, and reporters from informing the public, and to blame the Swiss-based company from which BP leased the equipment. CEO Hayward said, "This was not our accident" (Toronto Star, 13/06/2010). BP did act quickly to buy top Google and Yahoo! search results so that the first result for phrases such as 'oil spill' would yield 'Learn more about how BP is helping'.

The above is not just a list of deadly accidents, but more a result of planned cost cutting. Former CEO John Browne (who became Lord Browne of Madingley) balked at the choice between economic growth and more careful

At the time of writing, the ruptured pipe has been capped, for now, after 85 days of spewing oil into the Gulf of Mexico. Although estimates have varied wildly, BP originally claimed 'almost nothing has escaped' (Toronto Star, 13/06/2010), it is now estimated that the total is around seven hundred million litres, or seventeen times the Exxon Valdez spill in Prince William Sound, Alaska. It is the biggest oil disaster ever and could get worse as it is not clear how much stress the cap can take before blowing again, and relief wells needed to complete the job have yet to be finished.

In addition, Hugh Kaufman, of the Environmental Protection Agency, criticizes BP for its use of the dispersant, Corexit, and describes it as 'the Agent Orange of the Gulf' (Toronto Star, 17/07/2010). Seven million litres of the dispersant have transformed the oil into droplets that cannot be burned or skimmed, and thus will impact the environment for many years to come. The use of Corexit, Kaufman says, is short term gain for long term pain. Friends of the Earth's count so far of the dead is 1 387 sea birds, 444 sea turtles, and 53 mammals.

The Exxon Valdez spill accounted for 36 000 dead birds, but the Gulf spill may have more economic impact given the amount of sea-based industry on that coast and longer lasting environmental effects because whereas Alaska has a rocky shoreline that does not absorb oil easily, the Gulf coast of sand and sediment will act like a sponge.

The spill is causing widespread failure in an already weak ecosystem. In this sense, the current spill could be more accurately compared to the 1979 Ixtoc spill of 450 million

environmental stewardship, contrary to its own advertising campaign. He stated, "If you say to people, 'Do you want to develop the world and have a good living standard, or do you want a safer environment?' people are terrified by the choice" (Toronto Star, 9/05/2010).

Under Browne's term in office, an expense-paring regime figured prominently in maintenance reductions that allowed the Alaskan pipeline erosions and lax safety standards that contributed to the Texas explosion. His successor, Tony Hayward, continued with the cost cutting by slashing \$4 billion from operating costs which, obviously, impacted safety even further. Internal documents show that BP itself had concerns before the blow-out occurred. In March, 2010, after several weeks of problems on the rig, BP was struggling with a loss of well control and in June 2009, company engineers had warned that the metal well casing might collapse under pressures at that depth, and concluded that the cement job to seal the pipe was unlikely to be successful. (Ina Urbina of the New York Times, reported in the Toronto Star, 30/05/2010). In other words, BP officials knew the casing violated its own safety standards. The blow-out preventer that was supposed to slice through the pipe and cut off the oil flow, failed. It had never been tested at that depth. In fact, BP's performance has been so bad that confidence in the company has plunged and investment in the company is considered dead money as stocks have been stagnant since 2000 which compares badly with Conoco Phillips (up 145% in the same time), Chevron (78%), and Exxon Mobil (71%).

What are governments doing to protect the environment and ensure the safety of the workers? The answer is plenty, for the capitalist class, that is. The World Socialist Movement holds that the modern nation state, with clearly defined and defended

borders, with a strong central government backed by well equipped armies and police forces, and a legal system that is their own creation, are crucial to the operation of the capitalist mode of production.

Government is the executive arm of the capitalist system and forms the basis of capitalism with the enactment of private property laws. It is its job to maintain and revise those laws to ensure the private ownership of the means creating and distributing wealth in the interests of the owning capitalist class. The government's collaboration with the capitalist enterprises encompasses protection of the latter's national and international rights to operate as freely as possible through diplomacy, bribes, and even war, if necessary, and create a not-so-level playing field of economic activity, tipped, naturally, in favour of their capitalists. Sure, they are elected every few years in a quasi-democratic exercise where the largest voting block is usually the 'did not vote' group, but we have no choice in that the major parties with the money, organization, and clout to get elected, all vie to run capitalism in the interests of the capitalists. The Gulf oil spill provides several insights into this process of governmental collaboration.

Thomas Walkom (Toronto Star, 29/05/2010) writes that the American regulation of the offshore oil industry has been revealed to be a sham. After all that has come out regarding BP's record, they are still in charge and have used their authority to refuse access to scientists and reporters to the site to determine and report on the magnitude of the oil spill, as noted above.

Canada's regulations for drilling in the harsher arctic conditions are even weaker.

Paul Martin's Liberal government relaxed the rules for arctic drilling and



the current Harper Conservative government has eased the rules even further. The Newfoundland government strongly supports Chevron's drilling in the stormy Orphan Basin, 450 kilometres into the North Atlantic where a spill would be impossible to contain. Tax revenues for the province and profits for the investors must take preference over any environmental considerations. Even the Nunavut government, dominated by the supposedly eco-friendly Inuit, supports seismic testing in the Eastern Arctic. The BP oil spill has revealed the immense clout of the large economic sectors and enterprises.

Obama's moratorium on arctic oil exploration is due to be lifted next year. Despite the hopes of Marcie Keever, spokesperson for Friends of the Earth, that this latest oil spill will trigger a public demand for an end to the era where the oil industry writes its own regulations, and will spawn a sea change in the need to get off fossil fuels altogether, the US climate bill now passing through Congress gets weakened every day with amendments, and will do little to fulfill Keever's hopes. Some Non-Governmental Organizations estimate that Nigeria has suffered oil spills equivalent to the Exxon Valdez every year since 1969 but a compliant and corrupt government has done nothing to solve the problem over four decades (Toronto Star, 06/06/2010)

At the present time, companies operating in US territory risk a maximum fine of \$75 million for oil spills which would equal less than two days' profit for BP. The oil industry is only following a pattern that is discernable in all major sectors of the economy – pharmaceutical, food, mining, tobacco, etc. Their financial clout is used to support donations to politicians' election funds, to produce mass propaganda to sway public opinion, to fund thousands of lobbyists whose job it is to remind politicians of their loyalties, and to refute scientific evidence that is detrimental to their industry. The top civil service jobs, particularly in the industrial regulatory bodies, and those of top executives in an economic sector are frequently swapped back and forth, creating an old boys' club whose members inhabit the same social circles creating a smooth ride around government rules and regulations.

Many left wing and one-issue groups

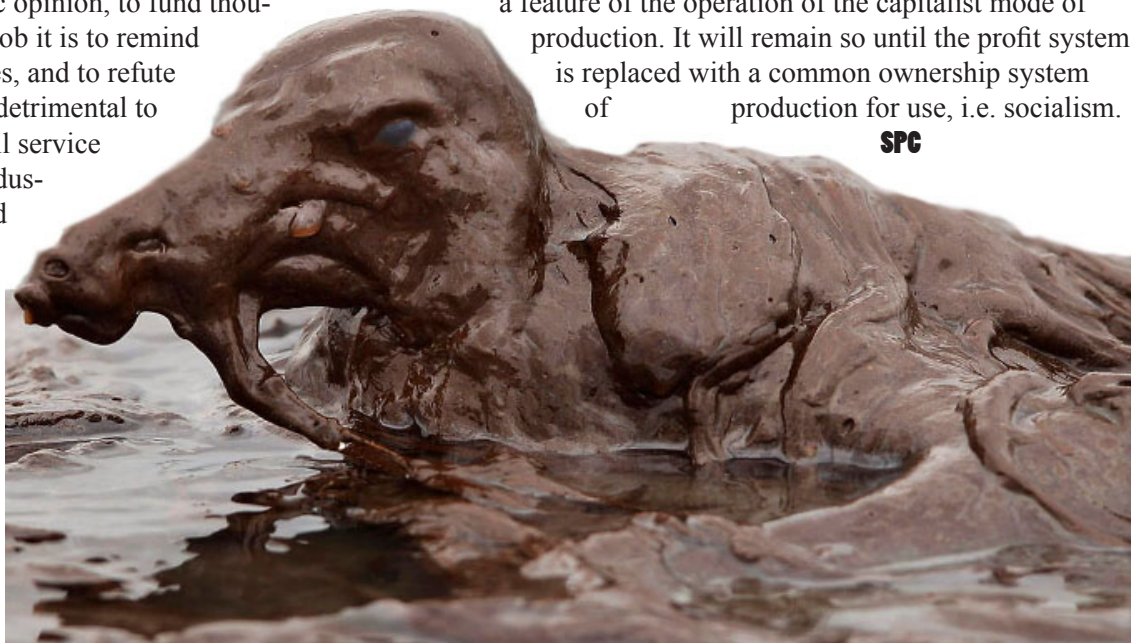
complain that this state of affairs came about with globalization and ascendancy of greedy multi-national corporations. To socialists, this state of affairs is simply the normal operation of the capitalist system. It has been going on since philanthropists and governments tried to alleviate the appalling conditions in factories and mines in the early nineteenth century.

In 1865, Marx wrote, concerning the attempts of the factory acts of the time to introduce safety legislation to stem the large number of industrial deaths and accidents,

“The factory owners of the time formed a “trade union” to resist the factory legislation, the so-called ‘National Association for the Amendment of Factory Laws’, based in Manchester, which collected a sum of 50 000 pounds in March 1855...to meet the legal costs of members prosecuted by the factory inspectors and conduct their cases on behalf of the Association...The factory owners promptly formed their Association, its most prominent members including many who themselves were J.P.s, (Justices of the Peace) and in this capacity had actually to apply the act...The head of the Factory Inspectorate, Leonard Horner, was persecuted and slandered by the factory-owners in every conceivable way.” (Capital, Vol. III, pp184/185, Penguin classics edition).

Rather than this type of evasion of spending for safety and environmental concerns being a modern phenomenon of globalization, then, it is, and has always been, a feature of the operation of the capitalist mode of production. It will remain so until the profit system is replaced with a common ownership system of production for use, i.e. socialism.

SPC



MUDDYING THE WATERS

We of the Socialist Party of Canada and our companion parties of the World Socialist Movement have always emphasized that the words communism and socialism have identical meanings – the common ownership of the means of producing and distributing wealth in the interests of all.. Furthermore, we argue that all other parties stand for the administration of capitalism in one form or another. Insofar as the Communist Party of Canada is concerned, this becomes plainly obvious when one reads their latest propaganda gem, “Unite to Demand a People’s Recovery”, which was handed to an SPC member during the May Day rally in Toronto.

The sub-headings give a pretty clear indication where they are headed –

“Tax the Corporations” and “Slash Military Spending”

Others crowed,

“Expand Employment Insurance to cover workers for the full duration of unemployment with benefits at 90% of earnings.”

“Stop Evictions, Mortgage Foreclosures, and Utility cut-offs due to Unemployment”.(What if one was employed but couldn’t afford the mortgage payments? Does the CP imply that person should be evicted?

“Raise the minimum wage to \$16/hour and raise social assistance rates; increase pensions through the Canada Pension Plan to ensure a living pension for all retired workers.”

“Shift the tax burden from working people onto the corporations and the wealthy.”

“Restore the Federal corporate income tax to 28% which would bring in over \$30billion annually in revenue.”

“Immediately withdraw from the disastrous

war of occupation in Afghanistan and cut

military spending by 50% saving another \$10 billion every year.”

“Nationalize the big banks, insurance, and other financial institutions and place them under public, democratic control.”

“Immediately withdraw from NAFTA and adopt a diversified multilateral trade policy based on mutual benefit.”

“Introduce a livable, guaranteed annual income (GAI) and a shorter work week with no loss in take-home pay.”

Other reforms are advocated, but the above should give the reader a clear idea of where the CP stands. They also claim that they led crucial working class struggles, that won unemployment insurance and other gains, that, if true, make their stance all the more obvious.

The history of capitalism has clearly shown that it can be administered, both politically and economically, in a variety of ways. There have been democratically elected governments and dictatorships. There have been government attempts to control the economy that have been correctly labeled, “State Capitalism” (e.g. the Soviet Union, China, Cuba) as well as private enterprise and mixed economies. Some Prime Ministers/Presidents have been very honest, some corrupt. Some have been smart, some stupid. Some well-meaning, others not so well-intentioned.

In all the above, two matters have been abundantly clear. The first is that the fundamental aspects of capitalism remain no matter what a government may call itself, including the term, communist. These are the ownership of the world’s resources and of the tools of production by a tiny minority, whether they are individual capitalists, corporations,

or the so-called communist party hierarchy in control of the state with the power of coercion it gives them. The others are the consequent need for the majority of the population, the working class, to sell their various abilities to the capitalists of whatever kind for wages or salaries in order to survive; and that all production be with a view to profit. If a product cannot be sold for profit, it won't be sold at all. Consequently, there will be lay-offs, hence unemployment. This applies to capitalist life under any government.

The second matter that is clear is that no government in the history of capitalism has been able to provide a full and secure life for its citizens and nor will it ever. Today, many people are understandably tired and disillusioned with the three main parties. Some have given up voting, some look elsewhere. For the latter, the so-called Communist Party does a grave disservice by providing them with a false idea of what communism really is.

We of the Socialist Party of Canada urge you to study the case for socialism and work to capture political power so that demo-

cratically elected socialist deputies, with a mandate from the majority, can dismantle the whole apparatus of the capitalist system and replace it with an administration controlled and responsive to a socialist society. In such a society, production would be to satisfy need, not profit, the premise being, 'from each according to their ability, to each according to their need.' Therefore, money would cease to exist, people would take what they needed from a common store of wealth and work at what they enjoy doing without the supervised, mandatory drudgery we have today.

In a world of common ownership, there will be no corporations, no military to 'slash spending from', and no unemployment benefits. In fact, employment in the sense we know it today, will have ceased to exist. There will be no mortgages, evictions, minimum wage, pensions, social assistance, taxation, wars, banks, insurance and other financial institutions, NAFTA or GAI. It will be a world where all will have all they need for a full and happy life. Oh, and just one more thing – there will be no communist or other political party. **SPC**

PROFIT BEFORE PEOPLE

When means were found to extract oil from the tar sands of Alberta, it was like another gold rush. Investors rushed in to reap the rewards of the bonanza to come. Workers rushed to Fort McMurray, Alberta, where jobs were to be had for triple the pay they would make elsewhere. Now, there seems to be trouble in paradise. The Beaver Lake Cree nation has gone to court for an injunction to stop more than 16 000 permits issued by the Alberta government. The Cree claim that tar sands extraction is destroying their hunting and fishing grounds. Beaver Lake chief, Al Lameman, said evidence began to emerge showing that caribou, elk, moose, deer, and other animals, were disappearing or infected with diseases. Fish stocks have been damaged by pollution in the water, and

plants, used for traditional medicinal purposes, were threatened.

A study funded by the US based Natural Resources Defense Council estimated that more than one hundred and sixty million birds would die prematurely over the next thirty to fifty years because of disturbance of their migratory routes and because of pollution. There have also been claims of a rise in human health problems. A census recorded that 922 Beaver Lake Cree people, half of whom live on the reserve and all fish and hunt regularly for winter food supplies and gather medicinal plants, are affected.

The case rests on a treaty signed in 1876 under which the Beaver Lake Cree gave up their ownership of vast areas of land in return for a guarantee that, "As long as

the sun shines, the rivers flow, and the grass grows, you can continue your traditional way of life.” This includes rights to hunt, fish, trap, and gather food. Naturally the capitalists would have a loophole to use, another clause that excluded, “Land that may be required or taken up for settlement, mining, lumbering or other purposes.” In other words, we will take all your land.

A spokesperson for the Alberta government said, “The intent is to rigorously oppose this law suit.” He extolled the economic benefit of the Tar Sands exploitation, saying that in 2006/2008, an estimated \$87 billion was invested in oil sands projects in Alberta, and every dollar invested created six dollars’ worth of economic activity in the province and another three dollars elsewhere.

It is not just the First Nations people who are upset. A year ago the price of oil dropped, the credit crunch has made it difficult for the oil companies to raise capital, and the sinking global economy has decreased demand. Analysts at Merrill-Lynch have questioned whether oil from the Tar Sands is actually needed. During the boom times, builders, engineers, electricians could earn six-figure salaries, but for them the downturn of the past year or so has been swift and brutal. “They’ve slashed jobs, slashed projects, slashed budgets and everything else,” said Barry Gillis, a pipeline insulator for oil company, Suncor. “They’re playing a game with my life, my livelihood, and my ancestry,” said Pete Larocque, a Suncor worker who grew up in Alberta. That’s the law of capital - no profit, no production, no jobs.

With the economic slowdown, forty thousand construction jobs are at risk. The worst is yet to come,” warns Gil McGowan, president of the Alberta Federation of Labour, “There are a lot of communities in the hinterland of Canada that have been kept afloat by money brought home by men and women taking jobs on the oil sands”, he added.

The good people of Greenpeace are not ecstatic, either. Much of the oil is well below ground in a thick mixture of clay, water, and bitumen. Extracting it involved pumping thousands of tons of steam through pipes under the surface, then using high-tech filtration to purify the crude.

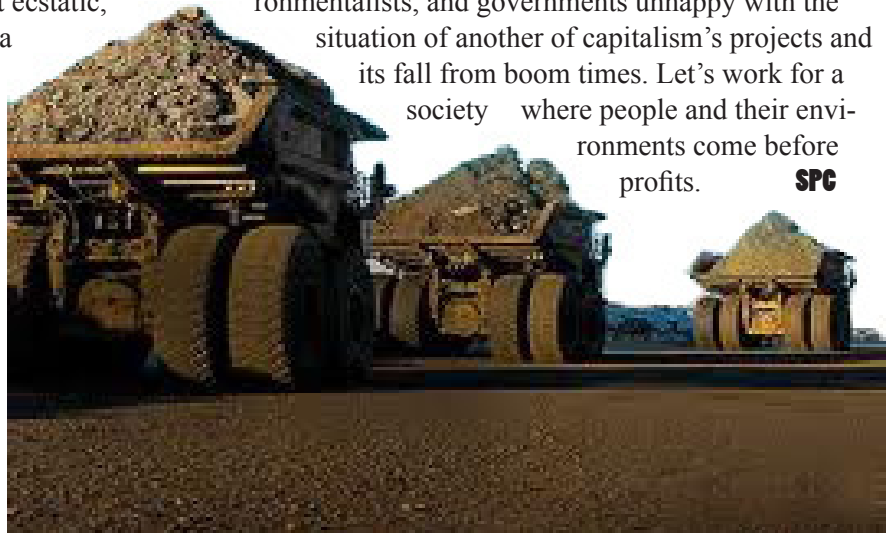
What bothers Greenpeace is that upgraded bitumen, using vast quantities of natural gas, will emit four to five times more greenhouse gases than conventional production. To put it bluntly, the oil sands have a terrible environmental reputation. They cause deforestation, require vast amounts of water siphoned off from local rivers, equal-

ing Toronto’s entire water consumption, emit carbon dioxide, and produce a murky waste of bitumen that is dumped in ponds in the countryside. One may wonder if the Alberta government will introduce legislation to decrease pollution.

Though this is possible, it’s also possible that if they do, the oil companies could pack up and leave. Money is a powerful force in the profit system. Both the federal and provincial governments are anxious to keep the US as its biggest customer and will certainly present themselves as a friendlier supplier than Venezuela or the Middle East. Companies that have invested heavily in the Tar Sands such as BP, Shell, Suncor, and Total of France, are being heavily attacked by the environmentalists who refer to the project as ‘the biggest environmental crime in history’.

According to Terry MacAllister in the “Observer”, February 28, “British companies spearheading the drive to exploit the Canadian Tar Sands will come under renewed assault this week from an increasingly vocal group of shareholders who are planning to turn the forthcoming BP, Shell, and Royal Bank of Scotland annual meetings into a referendum on these controversial operations.” MacAllister also mentions, “Fair Pensions last week announced the establishment of a new web tool allowing individual pension holders to lobby their fund managers who are big investors in the oil companies. More than 1 200 people have taken advantage on “www.countingthelost.org.uk”.

One need not be an economist to realize what caused this. Whatever research was done prior to the commencement of drilling, they did not realize fully the cost to extract the oil. This and the current economic situation meant that returns do not justify the investment. Perhaps nobody said it better than Deutsche Bank, “The value of Canadian heavy oil sands could be much lower than the market expects.” (Observer, February 28). So we have First Nations people, workers in the oil industry, environmentalists, and governments unhappy with the situation of another of capitalism’s projects and its fall from boom times. Let’s work for a society where people and their environments come before profits. **SPC**



Poisonous BPA



Photo Dennis MacDonald/Alamy

Smokestacks in Sarnia Ontario

A study recently released by Statistics Canada discovered that 91 percent of Canadians were found to have alarming levels of the toxic chemical bisphenol A in their urine. Bisphenol A is a synthetic chemical used in the manufacture of polycarbonate plastic. It is found in everything from baby and water bottles, food container linings, CDs and DVDs, electronic equipment, automobiles, sports equipment, and thermal paper used for airline tickets and paper receipts, to name just a few items (Borell, B. 2010, *Nature*, vol. 464). It has been linked to various reproductive and nervous system dysfunctions, and is believed to play a role in the development of certain cancers (*The Toronto Star*, 16/08/2010)

In the 1930s scientists discovered that BPA acted as artificial estrogen. Originally manufactured as a synthetic estrogen pharmaceutical, it wasn't until the 1950s that it began to be used in plastics. Right from the beginning of its use in consumer products, scientists were aware of the potential side effects. That a chemical known to significantly alter hormones was adapted for use in plastics, especially baby products and food containers, is shocking. Unfortunately, this type of blatant disregard for the health and well being of people is all too common under capitalism. The fact that little consideration was given to the possible negative repercussions of using the chemical in consumer products is not surprising. After all, capitalism is notorious for putting profit before people.

BPA acts as a hormone disrupter, disabling the

body's ability to naturally produce testosterone. Without sufficient levels of this hormone, male reproductive organs cannot develop properly in utero; leading to genital defects, and adult males are unable to produce healthy and efficient sperm. The CBC reports that the rate of males being born with genital defects has increased 200% over the past two decades (cbc.ca). Furthermore, the chemical is believed to significantly interfere with the physiological development of males during puberty, as well as reducing sperm mobility and motility. A recent study conducted at the University of Michigan found just this. John Meeker, head of the team researching the effects of BPA on male infertility analyzed the association between semen quality, DNA damage and BPA. The results found that men with the highest concentrations of the chemical, had sperm counts 23% lower

than men who had minimal exposure (Creassey, D. Aug 2010, *Nature*). In addition, research has shown that the average sperm count of a college age male in north America is less than half of what it was 50 years ago, and that 85% of it is DNA-damaged (*The Disappearing Male*, CBC).

One example of the dangerous effects of BPA and other synthetic chemicals can be seen in Aamjiwnaang, a First Nation community near Sarnia, Ontario. This community is situated under the smoke stacks of some of Canada's largest petrochemical, polymer, and chemical industrial plants. Residents of Aamjiwnaang have seen their male population significantly shrink in recent decades. Since the early 1990s, the percentage of live male births in this community has fallen drastically from a stable ratio of 50% to only 35% today (*The Disappearing Male*, CBC). Residents began to ask questions in 2003 when they realized there were three all girls soft-ball teams to one boys team. (cbc.ca). For the residents of this town, the situation is not likely to improve any time soon. Many of the town's residence work in the chemical factories, exposing themselves daily to the harmful chemicals, while the rest continue to breath the pollutants released into the air.

Despite all these serious health implications, the chemical industry will continue to produce these chemicals, so long as there is a profit to be made. Indeed, the production of synthetic chemicals is a multi-billion dollar a year industry, with the sale of

BPA alone topping \$6 billion in 2009 (Borell, B. 2010, *Nature*, vol. 464). As a result, any attempt to increase regulations or to outlaw the use of BPA is going to be strongly resisted by industry owners. In fact, the chemical industry currently spends millions of dollars a year on lobby groups and research teams in order to promote the safety of their chemicals to government policy makers. However, scientists on the payroll of chemical manufacturers have been criticized by many for their unscientific methods of research, and their selectiveness in the data and information they present in their findings. Unfortunately, independent research teams do not receive the kind of funding that industry sponsored scientists do, and as such have a much smaller ability to conduct the scientific research needed to have legislation against the use of BPA enacted.

Time and time again, capitalism demonstrates its complete inability to operate for any other purpose other than the creation of profit. Dangerous chemicals may be slowly poisoning us, but so long as it remains cheap to produce things with them, it is unlikely manufacturers will stop using them. Not even the poisoning of our society's young is enough to cause those in positions of power to stop and think twice about the dangers of such chemicals. This article focused only on the ill effects of BPA. Consider the horrifying reality that there are over 90,000 man made chemicals in use today, 85 percent of which have never been tested for their effect on the human body (cbc.com). Manufacturers are all too ready to use any chemical that will decrease their cost of production and increase the bottom line; profit, after all is what capitalism is all about. Under a society where the means and instruments of production are privately owned and controlled, the majority has little say over what is produced, and how it is done.

Only in a society where wealth is owned and controlled democratically can irresponsible methods of production such as this be permanently eliminated. In a society where production is directed by democracy, as opposed to profit, it is unimaginable to think that people would knowingly vote in favour of exposing themselves to such danger. It is only because we are dispossessed from control and ownership of the means of producing wealth that we have no say in how it is done. To that end the Socialist Party argues that a revolution must occur, and that the current capitalist system must be replaced by a system of common ownership; socialism.

The World Cup of Profit

A viewing audience of most of the world's population watched the World Cup of Soccer final in which Spain had a well-deserved 1-0 win over the Netherlands in a foul-filled game. Soccer is a fine game, that, when played for fun, is immensely enjoyable. However, once big money enters the picture, it's not so much fun as business opportunity. In other words, capitalism fouls (no pun intended) all it touches, including sport. It almost seems a pity that soccer didn't begin and end at a schoolboy level.

Under capitalism, the profit motive is supreme and all other considerations merely subsidiary. Revenue from the World Cup brought the International Soccer Federation (F.I.F.A.) a revenue of \$3.2 billion US dollars. The sale of broadcast rights alone brought in \$2.15 billion. At the time of writing, figures for the sale of marketing rights to F.I.F.A.'s six official partners, including Visa and Sony, are not available, but in 2006 they were \$715 million. Adidas forked out \$350 million for its seven-year partnership, which will end in 2014. Nike, which isn't a partner, set an internet record with 7.8 million views in the debut week of its three-minute advertisement, "Write the Future".

All this is taking place in a country that has an official unemployment rate of 25%, and unofficially at 40%, and where 75% live below the poverty line. According to "MacLeans' Magazine" (June, 2010), "The global recession has washed away the initial optimistic talk of \$13 billion in spin-off revenue for South Africa. So, whoever does well out of the Cup, it won't be the ordinary people of South Africa, most of whom lack electricity and water.

As always, the apologists for capitalism have their brilliant and insightful arguments, a typical one being that a boy may come from an impover-

ished home and, if he has the skills, can become a soccer superstar making millions of dollars. This is a variation of the old argument that capitalism is the best of all economic systems. If you have got what it takes, you'll make a fortune, but if you haven't, don't blame capitalism for your personal inadequacy. Such an argument, of course, cannot justify a system that creates such diabolical and widespread poverty, even if a few do manage to 'make it'.

It is from this same poverty that many soccer fans come. These can be roughly grouped into three main types. The hooligans, of whom we have seen and heard plenty, the non-violent fanatics, of whom the fortunes of their teams comprise a major part of their lives, and, the more well-balanced kind, very much in the minority.

One of the greatest British soccer players of the 1950s, Danny Blanchflower, said of the fans, "The team's success is the fans' success, its failures are the fans' failures." Blanchflower was somewhat of a philosopher as any who read his weekly articles in the "Sunday Express" will attest. If we accept Blanchflower's analysis, it shows what empty lives people live under capitalism, and empty to such an extent that fanatically following a soccer team gives it some meaning.

In a socialist society, soccer will surely continue to be played, but for the sake of enjoyment as money will be out of the mix. There will be no 'win at all costs' attitudes that we see today when there is so much riding on that successful result. Nor will the fans live for their teams and be elated or devastated at their results. The love of soccer, and sport in general, is another of the many reasons to work for socialism.



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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3...

afford to hire a whole bank of tax lawyers who must save him more tax than their fees will amount to or lose Gates' account. That would mean Gates would receive about \$50 million per week or \$7 million a day (and all for doing nothing!). This begs the obvious question of why millions must starve and /or do without the essentials of life at the same time, but that's the way the system works.

There's another systemic reason for capital's constant expansion – the declining rate of profit. Invested capital can be divided into constant capital, used for purchasing the means of production (machines, raw materials, ancillaries, etc.) and variable capital (used to purchase labour-power. Constant capital is transferred directly to the cost of the commodity, untouched (depreciation value in the case of machinery), but labour-power has the unique ability to add value to the commodity over and above its cost, i.e. workers reproduce the value of their wages in a fraction of the day, and the rest of the day is worked for free to create surplus-value – the sole source of profit. So it would be more profitable to make the variable capital share higher as a percentage of the total capital invested and expect a higher profit. Unfortunately, the opposite usually happens as the persistent striving to produce cheaper goods to beat competitors in the market means more investment in machinery and technology to reduce the amount of labour, and thus the variable portion of capital. This is referred to as the declining rate of profit.

It must be pointed out that Marx showed that this problem is only a tendency and is mitigated by several other factors. But one of those factors which is commonly used is the expansion of production. As noted above, if you invest \$10 million at 10% for one year, you will get \$11 million, but what is to be done if the rate of profit falls to 8%? Simply expand production, invest \$20 million and realize a return of \$1.6 million and get \$21.6 million back – lower rate but higher overall profit. Multiply this by millions of investment funds all over the world doing the same thing and you can see the problems – gobbling up

more and more farmland for development, rampant destruction of the environment to access more and more resources to feed the expanding machine, greater numbers of people employed for the socially useless purpose of cramming more and more consumer goods down our throats. Ever notice the growing number of ads in newspapers and magazines? It's often hard to find the articles, or on TV where the ads last longer than the programs and the most used phrase is "We'll be right back, don't go away"? This continual expansion of production wastes resources, causes massive and unnecessary pollution, employs more and more people in unproductive work and yet still manages to leave half the world's population without the necessities of life. Capitalism is truly a system that can produce the goods but will never be able to deliver.

Socialism, at the beginning, would have to increase production of the necessities – food, clean water, housing, health care, education, etc. – that are currently denied in whole or part to at least half the world under capitalism. Also, the extra means of production – machines, technology, raw materials – would have to be provided for this purpose until something close to self-sufficiency, a goal of socialism, was obtained by currently deprived regions. This increase in output, however, would probably be more than offset by the elimination of the military-industrial complex; the elimination of the massive duplication of products by competing enterprises; the end of the practice of sending goods thousands of miles from cheap labour regions to market; the elimination of outsourcing parts of a product to then bringing them back to have the product assembled somewhere else – estimated to be 50% of world trade; the production of quality goods built to last, not fail quickly and need replacements. Production would then settle to a level consistent with people's needs, considering the environment and resource availability. It would be the end of constant expansion and planetary destruction simply for the sake of profit, the beginning of man's real history and the next great leap forward in human progress.

SO YOU THINK YOU KNOW YOUR RIGHTS?

"CHINATOWN: Ten hours' work for just \$25 a day", blared the headline of a Toronto Star article, July 23, 2010. The article by Nicholas Keung, is a terrible but familiar story of immigrant workers being intensively exploited in a country where the labour movement has won some rights

A Chinese woman paid \$400 deposit to work at a nail salon and received \$25 a day for ten hours' work, seven days a week. "I don't know any English and I had no idea what my rights were. Workers do not have a lot of rights where I come from", she said. This was one of many stories of abuse discovered on a survey conducted by the Chinese Interagency Network of Greater Toronto, an umbrella group of thirty-three social and health agencies serving the Chinese community. The survey found that one in five know what the maximum hours of work are in Ontario and sixty-six per cent of those interviewed were unaware of overtime and holiday pay. Forty per cent did not know the minimum wage or that they were protected by labour laws if they do not have an employment contract. More than five hundred people were approached for the survey but most declined to respond for fear of their employer finding out and firing them. This would render Ontario's proposed legislation, Bill 68, which would give workers the right to confront their employers with concerns before filing a complaint with the Ministry of Labour virtually useless. It also makes a mockery of the Ontario Workers' Rights Act, which stipulates the minimum hourly wage at \$10.25; maximum hours at 48; eligibility for overtime pay after 44 hours; overtime pay rates at 1.5 times the base pay; yearly paid holiday of two weeks at 4% of the annual salary. Many migrant workers, coming from countries where workers have no rights, are ignorant of Ontario's legislation, and many who do know are intimidated into not taking any action for fear of dismissal. It's all about survival.

Hui-min Li, who did respond to the survey, said he worked in a Chinese-owned auto parts factory for eight years before the company laid off its workers and moved to Mexico. The Shanghai immigrant was owed \$8 000 in severance pay. According to Li, "It was not unusual for us to work seventy hours a week. We worked from 8am to 1am. The boss wouldn't let you go until you finished your work."

That some workers in major industrialized countries are exploited as intensely as the working class during the

industrial revolution should surprise no one. If capitalism can take advantage of a worker's ignorance and fear thereby extracting more profit, they will. In the final analysis, under capitalism, profit rules. What should surprise us, though, is any attempt to solve the problem within capitalism. The survey calls for stronger workplace audits and an outreach program to educate newcomers about their rights, including enrollment in English classes. This is commendable as far as it goes. The working class must

protect their rights re working conditions, but it doesn't go nearly far enough. Many workers do know their rights and insist on them in Canada, and elsewhere, and still they are exploited, though perhaps not so intensely, and still have fears and insecurities. It would, then, be better to advocate a society where exploitation, profits, ignorance, or fear in the workplace, do not exist at all.

OBSCENE & HEARD

How Crazy Does it Get?

On July 17th, it was widely reported in the media that a team of Iroquois Lacrosse players were prevented from playing in the World Lacrosse Championships. They were unable to travel to Manchester, UK, because British officialdom refused to recognize their Iroquois Nation passports, which they had used for international travel previously. This may not be a world-shaking event, but it does illustrate how insane life becomes under capitalism.

The existence of countries, borders, and everything that illogically flows from it, including passports, is only necessary for a private property-based society. One may like certain things about the country one lives in, but shouldn't confuse that with the country as a political entity, which is merely a means whereby one small part of the population, those who own the means of creating wealth, live well at the expense of the majority. A member of the working class has more in common, socially and economically, with another worker ten thousand kilometers away than a capitalist living one kilometre away. Socialism will be a seamless world without borders where the world will belong to everyone.

A Little Snakey

Let's admit it, snakes aren't the most lovable pets. Not everyone wants to cuddle and stroke them and chase them around the room. So some may not feel any dismay in hearing that their numbers are declining. According to biologist, Jason Head of The University of Toronto (Toronto Star, 12/06/2010), "We have documented evidence of the disappearance of up to ninety per cent of snake colonies in five disparate spots on the globe. A recently published study in the journal, "Biology Letters", states, "Research in England, Nigeria, Australia, Italy, and France, discovered eight species in seventeen snake populations that had declined drastically." Head states, "Venomous snakes are taking the biggest hit in the findings, which has serious consequences for medicine."

Some may hear this and feel more comfortable taking a stroll in the country without 'them murderous little critters' waiting in ambush, though the long term effects are not nearly as comforting. This decline makes it more difficult to acquire snake venom for medicine. Snakes feed on rodents that are known to carry disease. With fewer snakes around, we can expect more rodents. The significant aspect of this research is that the areas where it was conducted have different climates, varying from temperate to tropical. According to Dr. Head, this suggests, "One ultimate driving mechanism with climate change as the clearest culprit." If Dr. Head is correct in his summation, we have another excellent reason to campaign against climate change and there is only one campaign to solve this social ill worth working for – the campaign to establish socialism.

Crapitalism Anonymous

Pop diva, Belinda Carlisle, was recently interviewed for the “Toronto Star” newspaper about her recent autobiography, “Lips Unsealed”. The most significant question was, “At one point, you were reportedly going to ‘Overeaters Anonymous’, ‘Narcotics Anonymous’, and ‘Alcoholics Anonymous’ meetings back-to-back. Did all that group therapy help?” Her answer was, “At that time, I was desperate to like myself, so I was trying everything. I’ve always struggled with addictions all my life – eating was always the worst of them. I don’t remember being helped at that time by any of those meetings because I wasn’t really listening; it was hard enough to find my way out of my own troubles, let alone listen to anybody else’s. I didn’t have a good sense of myself back then, but I do now. I can definitely say that the 12-step program saved my life.”

It’s pathetic that Ms. Carlisle’s life, or anybody else’s, should need saving. The pressures brought to bear on people under capitalism and the things people do to survive, make it difficult for us to like ourselves – a reason why so many go into show business. When entertainers reach the top, the demands imposed on them are so great they have little recourse but to search for forms of escape like drugs. This author once saw a Rolling Stones concert schedule in which they played forty-seven cities in fifty days. Naturally, they took drugs to get the energy needed for constant traveling, rehearsing, and performing. It’s pointless blaming money-mad rock promoters, the stars, their managers, or the public who condone it. The effects of capitalism corrupt all they touch and it’s no use trying to change the effects without changing the root cause.

Thought About Joining The Socialist Party?

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Declaration of Principles

Object

The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of society as a whole.

Declaration of Principles

1. That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labour alone wealth is produced.
2. That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.
3. That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.
4. That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind, without distinction of race or sex.
5. That this emancipation must be the work of the working-class itself.
6. That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organize consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into an agent of emancipation and the overthrow of plutocratic privilege.
7. That as political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interest of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.
8. The Socialist Party of Canada, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to support these principles to the end that a termination may be brought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

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