

CHALLENGE



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Egypt's Workers Expose 'Non-Violent' Lies with:

MASSIVE STRIKE WAVE!

Needs Mass Communist Leadership

What the rulers portrayed as a non-violent "revolution" in Egypt was far from the truth.

"It's happening people....It's happening....The working class has entered the arena with full force today."

That's how one blogger described the strike of Cairo's transit workers as they shut six garages: Nasr Station, Fateh Station, Ter'a Station, Amiriya Station, Mezzalat Station, Sawwah Station, just days before Mubarak's fall. That was the end of public bus service in Cairo under the hated torturer's regime.

The strike-wave that eventually sent Mubarak packing did not fall from the sky. Since 2004, more than 2,000,000 Egyptian workers have gone on strike and protested for higher pay, especially to fight privatization.

In Mubarak's final days, tens of thousands of workers from Cairo to Alexandria to the Suez Canal were on strike. More than 6,000 workers for the Suez Canal Authority staged a sit-down strike at the international waterway. Al Jazeera reported more than 20,000 factory workers on strike.

In Mahallah, 24,000 textile workers walked out demanding raises and in solidarity with the protesters in Tahrir Square. Striking telecommunication workers attended mass protests in Cairo's Ramses Square. Workers struck some military equipment factories, owned by the army. Subway, postal and Egypt Airline workers walked out. Laid-off workers at the Alexandria Library demanded their jobs back. Hospital workers at the Al Azhar University hospitals



Protesters set fire to government building.

walked out. Temporary and contract workers demanded permanent jobs.

These were all wildcat, "illegal" strikes, as much against the leaders of the official government-controlled Egyptian Trade Union Federation as against the bosses and Mubarak himself.

The NY Times (2/9) reported, "In Helwan, 6,000 workers at the Misr Helwan Spinning and Weaving Company went on strike....More than 2,000 workers from the Sigma pharmaceutical company in Quesna began a strike while about 5,000 unemployed youths

stormed a government building in Aswan, demanding the dismissal of the governor. Postal workers protested in shifts. In Cairo, sanitation workers demonstrated outside their headquarters."

Riot police killed five people and wounded more than 100 during protests in El Kharga, 375 miles south of Cairo. Protesters responded by burning police stations and other government buildings. In Asyut, protesters blocked a railway line. Protesters in Port Said, a city of 600,000 at the mouth of the Suez Canal, set fire to a government building when local officials ignored demands for better housing.

There are many lessons to be learned from the fall of Mubarak. One is the power of the workers to cast the deciding vote as to the direction and success or failure of any uprising or rebellion. We work among many of these same groups of workers. We are building a mass base for communist revolution.

Egypt shows that things can change very fast. It should encourage us to work harder in these very difficult times so when our opportunity comes, we will be able to fight for the leadership of the movement and lead the working class to power with communist revolution. That will not happen this time around in Egypt as Mubarak is replaced by the same butchers and torturers who have surrounded him for 30 years.☺



Workers and youth repelled pro-Mubarak forces.

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Obama, U.S. Rulers Push Pacifism to Derail Workers' Rebellion

U.S. rulers are pushing two big lies about dictator Mubarak's ouster and the mass protests that forced it. First, Obama and the bosses' media try to mislead workers into thinking that large numbers of unarmed protesters demanding elections can produce a "revolution" against fascist oppression. But an election installing another group of pro-capitalist politicians is not a revolution, which only results from a fundamental change in class rule. It occurs when the oppressed working class overthrows the oppressor capitalist class and its state.

Secondly, elite analysts offer capitalist audiences groundless reassurances of Egyptian "stability." The pundits say — while ignoring

workers' fight-backs — that continuing military control there means business as usual in the greater Middle East, the oil-rich cornerstone of U.S. imperialism. Both falsehoods hold grave consequences for workers.

Mass Murderer Obama, Rulers' Media Praise Peaceful Protest, Steer Workers Down Political Dead-End

Just after Mubarak fled, hypocrite-in-chief Obama, dripping with the blood of workers from Iraq to Afghanistan to Pakistan, compared protesters in Egypt to Ghandi's and Martin Luther King's movements. "In Egypt," said Obama, "it was the moral force of non-violence, not terrorism, not mindless killing, but nonviolence, moral force that bent the arc of history toward justice once more." News broadcasts depicted crowds in Tahir Square exulting in "newfound freedom" and then dutifully tidying up afterwards.

There was almost a total blackout on strikes and mass violence against the police and government (see *front-page article*). Many of these strikes are continuing.

But Obama & Co. deliberately distort history. Whenever workers have significantly "bent the arc" of capitalist misery, it's been through mass strikes and violent rebellions, not pacifism. King's "turn-the-other-cheek" stance didn't rid the U.S. of racism. Black rebellions in scores of cities across the U.S. that fought the military, not non-violence, won jobs for black workers in the basic industries. The "illegal" strike and rebellion of black Memphis sanitation workers, not King's pacifism (he fled the city when workers marched) was the crucial factor in whatever was won. The communist-led sit-down strikes and mass movement of the unemployed in the U.S. that also fought the military in the Great Depression are what won the 8-hour day and unemployment insurance.

In India today, the working-class grandchildren of Gandhi's pacifist followers are among the most exploited, poverty-stricken workers on the planet. Progress for the working class comes only with militant strikes and violent rebellions.

Lasting Change Requires Armed Revolution

But as long as capitalism is in control, even these advances are ground down by the inherent workings of the profit system. Only armed revolution of millions of workers led by a communist party can bring lasting change. It is just such a party that is missing in Egypt and Tunisia today.

The greatest working-class triumphs of the 20th Century were the revolutions in Russia and China. In the name of communism, armies of workers overthrew their capitalist exploiters. In both countries, our class made huge strides in every conceivable living standard and became the main force in smashing the Nazis and Japanese fascists.

Why Articles Are Not Signed

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

Unfortunately, however, the Russian and Chinese parties practiced socialism which retained toxic capitalist elements, like nationalism — "sharing" power (in China) with local bosses — and a wage system (in both countries) which produced differentials among workers and an elite class of managers and cultural professionals. All this led eventually to complete restoration of the profit system in both countries.

However, Cairo's demonstrators, lacking working-class consciousness, did not aim to overthrow the system that leaves half the working class jobless amid skyrocketing food

Exxon Man Gives Mubarak His Marching Orders

Frank Wisner, Jr., Obama's emissary-extraordinary to Cairo in the Mubarak mess, sports sterling imperialist credentials. Retired as a lifelong diplomat, Wisner now works for the Washington law firm Patton Boggs, which counts Exxon Mobil as its biggest client. Patton Boggs, by dragging out the Exxon Valdez case for decades, has made a mockery of legal judgments against the company.

Wisner's father, a founding spook of the CIA, helped engineer the 1952 CIA coup that installed the murderous pro-U.S. shah as Iran's dictator.

The recent official White House version says Wisner urged Mubarak to stay on. But facts are more stubborn than press releases. Actually, reports the Washington Post (2/1/11), Wisner visited Mubarak in late January, "When it was time to give Egypt's embattled leader a gentle nudge... Within 24 hours of Wisner's private chat with the Egyptian president, Mubarak had announced on state television that he would step down at the end of his current term." Mubarak held out for a week or so, threw a last-ditch tantrum, but then did the Exxon-CIA man's bidding and resigned.

prices and resulting profits. Stratfor, an outfit that "provides strategic intelligence on global business, economic, security and geopolitical affairs," noted (2/11/2011) that, "The end of President Hosni Mubarak's reign over Egypt is more of a military succession than a popular revolution." The military has just announced a ban on all union meetings and strikes.

As of this writing, power rests with General Omar Suleiman. "Head of the country's feared security agency, Suleiman, was nicknamed the CIA's man in Cairo," reports the Brisbane, Australia Times (2/13/2011), "because of his close relationship with the U.S. on its so-called extraordinary rendition program — kidnapping suspected terrorists and taking them to a third country for interrogation and torture."

The Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), U.S. rulers' top Rockefeller-funded foreign policy factory, comforted its business-class readers with an article titled, "Mubarakism Without Mubarak." It said events in Egypt were "the culmination of the slow-motion coup and the return of the somewhat austere military authoritarianism of decades past." (CFR website, 2/11/2011).

On one hand, the CFR warned of potential future uprisings in Egypt. But its main thrust

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OUR FIGHT

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

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Protest Bosses' Back-Breaking Response to NY Blizzard

NEW YORK CITY, February — I work in a medical center in the New York City area. Two years ago the maintenance and cleaning workers, were given unsatisfactory evaluations. We organized three demonstrations in the entrances and protested at the human resources office, without the help of the union which disagreed with the struggle. Although it was a small struggle, we showed strength and unity. The bosses changed the evaluations to "satisfactory."

When the Blizzard of 2010 hit in December, the workers who do outside maintenance worked day and night for three days straight to clean the snow. We had told the bosses that the snow removal machines needed to be fixed. When the storm came we had only a small snow plow that barely worked, and soon broke down completely. From then on the work had to be completed manually, which was a backbreaking and exhausting job. There were only five workers and they were overwhelmed removing all the snow from blocks of sidewalks, entrances, driveways, and parking lots.

The bosses blamed the workers for not having removed the snow before Monday morning's work day began. The truth is that the only ones to blame were the bosses for not having the needed machinery and for the cuts in personnel (many have been fired and others have retired without being replaced).

After the snowstorm, all the workers had to take days off because they were sick, with pain in their arms and legs. The salt used to

clean off the snow burned our hands since we weren't given adequate gloves for this work. The little sleep we did get during those three days was taken sitting in hard-backed chairs. The bosses want robots that never tire and never complain.

This is no different from what happened to the sanitation workers in NYC. Mayor Bloomberg tried to blame them for the disastrously slow clean-up when in reality the only ones to blame were the bosses who have cut more than 400 sanitation workers.

When the vice-president from our section was complaining about the "inefficiency," a worker with 20 years service said that if he wanted to blame someone he needed to blame the director of the department because he hadn't done what was needed to bring in more workers and to fix the snow plows.

Because of this he was sent to human relations where he was obligated by the union and the bosses to sign an "agreement" where he promises not to show this kind of "disrespect" to the bosses, or his contract will be terminated. He will not be able to complain or speak up for a year because of what he said in front of the other workers which the boss called "insubordinate."

This is how capitalists discipline workers, creating a climate of fear and putting us in a position of extreme submission. This is part of how fascism develops in the workplace. The sanctioning of this worker is an attack on all of us.

The bosses act as if this center is their own private plantation. They constantly violate the union contract. They do all of this with the help of the union hacks who are constantly telling us that workers are getting fired so it is best to be careful and stay quiet.

Though the bosses are only small-time administrators, they want us to believe the contrary. They carry out the cuts demanded by the major capitalists who want to place the economic crisis they created on the workers' shoulders. They cry that they have no money, while spending trillions on their wars for world domination.

We workers must learn from our past struggles. We see how the cuts in personnel affect us. There are already rumors that there won't be a contract settlement this year and therefore there won't be a salary increase. We have to organize more protests because the problems in this department will surely get worse. We have to link up with those fighting against school closures and against threatened closings of 10 more hospitals in New York City (eight have closed in the city since 2007).

We must link up with struggles of workers around the country and the world. This will expand our outlook and give us enormous strength. The capitalist system is not able to solve the problems we workers have. The only solution is a communist revolution to create our own system, where workers' needs, not bosses' profits, are put first.✪

Racist Boss Defeated

Airport Workers' Militancy Retains Sick Pay

The cleaners at a major Midwest airport scored a very important reform victory in the class struggle. They regained an important part of their SEIU union contract which had been temporarily taken away by racist bosses: their right to paid sick days.

For over a month workers who used their sick days because of illness were written up and denied pay for the days they were ill when they returned to work. The managers told the workers "you can schedule two weeks in advance to use your sick days."

That is nonsense and a way to avoid paying for sick days. In these tough times, some workers even showed up for work ill because they knew they would lose pay because of this anti-worker policy. This was a clear violation of the union contract which cleaning workers at the airport and the metro area fought hard to get, even threatening to strike in January 2010.

All three shifts signed petitions which the union shop stewards sent to the union leadership. Many of these workers who signed are regular CHALLENGE readers. On second shift there were some who were afraid to sign, but the union steward and other fellow workers told these scared friends that "not honoring the union contract is a racist attack on all of us, and we must fight back!" We struggled

with these holdouts who eventually did the right thing.

The union leaders asked one union steward to go with them to meet with the big bosses of the company at the metro office in the city. The union delegation was told by the bosses: "We did not authorize any of the changes in the existing contract." The delegation was surprised! It turned out that a manager had taken it upon himself to create and enforce a new policy because he was upset that airport cleaners had complained about his racist mistreatment of black and Latino immigrant workers to the union which had done something about it. So now the cleaners who lost pay and were written up will have everything corrected!

From this, we can learn that because we live under capitalism, bosses have power over us; they can play with workers' lives as a whim. A hard-fought reform can be taken away or changed

by the bosses because they have power and workers don't.

Even though this was an unauthorized policy change corrected by the bigger bosses, they are still bosses and we are still under them. That is why we need a communist revolution and society to put the needs of the international working class first! "To each according to need!" Communist revolution from Paris to Cairo!✪



MADISON, WISCONSIN, February 15 — Over ten thousand government workers, including teachers and students, marched to the capitol to protest the governor's budget cuts.

Auto Workers Act vs. Bosses' Racist, Sexist Attack

Dozens of workers on all shifts of a major truck assembly plant in the South fought changes to the paid-time-off (PTO) policy the bosses suddenly imposed. The changes set up hundreds for possible firing for calling in sick too often. The most threatened workers were Latino single parents with children who need to use more sick time. This means the change is both racist and sexist and sets up all workers for attack.

Under the old policy, all write-ups for absences were cleared every 90 days, but if you had four write-ups you could be fired. Under the new policy only one write-up is cleared every 90 days.

The bosses need these changes because each country's auto companies — Toyota, Ford, GM, in Korea, Europe, Russia and China — are desperate to squeeze high enough profits from their workers in order to survive against their competitors in their inter-imperialist rivalry. The stakes are high and will ultimately lead to larger wars.

When the new PTO policy was announced, word spread that the bosses were requiring all workers to sign a form acknowledging the changes. Workers were given no notice. The bosses demanded that workers sign the new policy without reading it.

Many workers realized the problem. PLP members and friends analyzed the small print, calling on all workers to refuse to sign. Dozens of workers, separately and in groups, confronted supervisors who demanded signatures. Several workers faced down supervisors who threatened firing for not signing. These supervisors feared getting in trouble if they couldn't make the workers sign.

Talk began among groups of workers about having meetings, shutting down the line, walking out or petitioning against the new policy. However they're working 10-hour shifts, six days a week and

workers couldn't meet to co-ordinate any planning. The bosses were showing their increasing weakness in the world-wide battle for auto profits by imposing overtime alongside this new policy, enabling them to fire more workers whenever necessary. But the working class is not organized to understand, and take advantage of, the bosses' desperation.

After worker confrontations with "Human Resources" management, the bosses quietly backed off a notch by clearing all existing absences before the new policy took effect — or so they claimed. "If it's true," said one worker, "where's the proof? We should see it and sign something." Nonetheless, it's a small victory, because currently no one is on the brink of being fired for their next absence. But the bosses are also making it much harder to get time off approved.

PL'ers and others couldn't pull off any action beyond individual confrontations and shouting matches with supervisors. These confrontations were good, but bigger action will be necessary. Workers must see these reform struggles as training exercises on the road to revolution, workers' power and control of the entire world by the working class.

Even strikes and major battles against the capitalist rulers, whether in the U.S., Japan, Egypt or other countries, can at best win temporary gains in this period of rapidly-increasing inter-imperialist rivalry and world economic crisis.

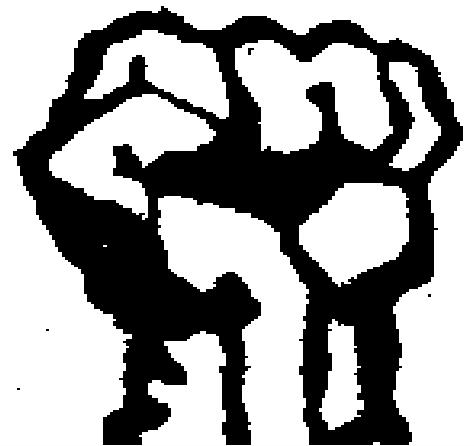
The desperation of bosses locked in this rivalry means they and their capitalist system are weaker, not stronger, because when each company squeezes its workers harder, workers can learn that the bosses' system of profit, greed and war doesn't work and need not be ever-lasting. The workers can learn that the capitalist class and its governments can be taken by a working class organized

to go all the way, and turn the struggle into a working-class revolution to establish communism — a world without money, racism or exploitative wage systems — all provided if PLP points the way.

The key is consistently building political struggle and personal relationships, day in and day out. There's no way workers can protect their jobs in this plant, no less prepare for revolution, without PLP and its friends organizing secret workers' meetings to analyze the constant attacks, identify the most important issues and recognize the limits of reform actions. Attacks and firings should be expected. Workers' meetings should plan actions necessary to save those jobs as larger struggles unfold.

All this is risky, but the alternative is riskier, to surrender to every bosses' attack instead of recognizing and exploiting the capitalists' increasing weaknesses. Giving in is no answer at all, because factory work in the South is already at slave-labor levels.

Meet! Unite! Organize to fight for communist revolution! ☪



Employed and Unemployed:

Unite to Fight Racist Healthcare Cuts

BROOKLYN, NY February 14 — Long Island College Hospital (LICH) is at risk of closing. LICH employs about 2,500 workers and serves the Red Hook Houses, the largest public housing project in Brooklyn, with over 10,000 black and Latino workers and youth. LICH is a 300-bed hospital that delivers more than 2,500 babies and sees more than 55,000 patients in its emergency room every year.

The State University of New York (SUNY) Downstate Medical Center had been poised to take over LICH, which would have been bad enough, threatening the entire emergency services department. But last Wednesday, Democratic Governor Cuomo put that on hold when he announced a \$2.84 billion cut in Medicaid, freezing the \$62 million for the Downstate take-over and threatening to close LICH. As we go to press, a deal may be in the works to release some or all of the take-over money. Either way, there will be less health care for the workers and youth who need it.

Whether LICH closes or not, capitalism can never meet the needs of the working class because it puts profits over healthcare. Goldman Sachs gave out executive bonuses totaling \$15.3 billion in 2010 and Mayor Bloomberg's personal fortune hit \$18 billion, while 30 million are unemployed and over \$1 trillion goes to the occupations

of Iraq and Afghanistan. The fact that closing LICH is even being considered illustrates capitalism's inherent racism.

Ten other hospitals are also on the chopping block in the city's poorest neighborhoods. In Brooklyn alone 16,000 hospital jobs are at risk at five hospitals that treated over 250,000 patients in 2010 and serve nearly a million. Eight hospitals

In Brooklyn alone 16,000 hospital jobs are at risk at five hospitals that treated over 250,000 patients in 2010 and serve nearly a million.

have closed since 2007, including St. Vincent's in lower Manhattan and North General in Harlem last year.

PLP supports the growing unity of workers and patients to fight these attacks at both LICH and SUNY Downstate. Last week, some LICH EMS

workers went to the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) over the lack of visible addresses in the Red Hook Houses. Ambulances respond to 911 calls there, but due to the lack of visible building numbers, Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) are often forced to jump out of the ambulance and run to the building to find the address. No doubt, some patients have died before the ambulance could locate them.

The EMTs brought written statements from coworkers and photos of the buildings and asked to speak to a NYCHA official. They were not allowed to speak to anyone about this easily correctable health hazard, so the EMTs and Red Hook residents will paint the addresses themselves!

We don't have the hundreds of thousands demonstrating like in Cairo's Tahrir Square...yet. But Egypt shows that things can change quickly. Fighting against racist health cuts and building unity between workers and patients; expanding the circulation of CHALLENGE; deepening our personal/political relationships is the only way to guarantee that when things do change, we will be able to determine the direction and outcome of that struggle with a mass revolutionary communist PLP. ☪

Pakistan's Flood: Organize vs. Rulers' Crimes Engulfing Workers, Farmers

The devastation from last year's floods in Pakistan — 2,300 mostly poor, working-class farmers dead, 24 million displaced and 2.3 million houses and 4,655 villages destroyed — was blamed on unprecedented monsoon rains, but the real cause was the ruling class's refusal to protect the working class.

Six months after the floods, large areas, especially in the South, are still underwater, and over 7,000,000 people lack adequate shelter. Millions of flood survivors with immune systems weakened by stress, lack of food and cold weather are at risk of pneumonia and other respiratory and water-borne diseases.

Friends of PLP have been playing a key role in organizing nation-wide protest demonstrations which began last year over the government's failed flood relief. (Pakistan is a federation of four provinces, Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab and Sindh, and four federal territories, altogether totaling over 170 million people.)

Our friends pointed out that while the floods were a natural event, the homelessness of millions and the massive destruction were a disaster produced by Pakistan's capitalist class and U.S. imperialism, placing profits before workers' lives. As our friends join in grass-roots struggles to provide basic necessities for flood victims, communist ideas are being spread promoting a society based on the interests of the working class where careful planning would prevent such devastation.

This included exposure of the corruption of national and local officials, and their tactic of citing "security issues" to keep relief agencies away from poor areas while taking food and supplies in-

tended for flood victims for themselves. Big landowners, many also being members of Parliament, fled before the waters rose, using state resources to divert the water's path in order to save their homes and crops. They often re-routed it to poor areas, thereby destroying millions of homes.

Even though the government had known since last June that flash floodings would occur from July to September, the government had no evacuation plan. Poor workers, who could not pay the high cost of transportation away from the floods, watched as rising waters destroyed their homes and livelihoods.

Many breaches were made to intentionally divert floodwaters away from military garrisons, (including the Shahbaz Airbase in Sindh), which flooded Baluchistan, displacing 800,000 Baluchis. The airbase, under U.S. Air Force control since the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, is the source of continued lethal raids into Afghanistan and drone attacks on Taliban insurgents, while refusing to help in desperately-needed relief work.

Although the Pakistani Supreme Court is examining cases of floodwater diversion — seeking reports from provincial officials who turned a blind eye to it — they will likely shift blame onto other exploiters and whip up national-ethnic rivalries to hide their crimes against the working class.

The destruction of crops by the floods, and farmers' inability to plant in still water-logged fields, means another 500,000 people will need food this year. In Sindh province, home base to some of the country's largest landowners, including the notorious Bhutto clan — the current president, Asif Ali Zardar, is the husband of ex-president Benazir

Bhutto, assassinated in 2009) — an estimated 25% of children under five are malnourished and 6% severely underfed. But such figures result not only from the devastation caused by the floods but also from the long-time inequality inherent in capitalist society. (A 2002 study found a national malnutrition rate of 13.2%, and rates of 23.1% in northern Sindh and 21.2% in its southern part.)

Pakistan's economy has been severely harmed by extensive damage to crops and infrastructure intensifying a profound economic crisis. The total impact from the floods approaches \$US45 billion. The ruling class and international capitalists are determined to place the cost of this crisis on the backs of Pakistan's working class.

Brutal austerity measures imposed by the International Monetary Fund and World Bank have led to sharper increases in food and energy prices and more cuts in social spending. The government intends to rebuild the infrastructure through public and private "partnerships," meaning more corruption, as big business is given state funds for reconstruction.

There are daily protests and strikes over the lack of flood relief, rising prices and unemployment. More than two million energy-industry workers have been laid off, as well as massive job losses in the agricultural sector.

As in the recent earthquake in Haiti, the floods in Pakistan demonstrate that capitalism cannot provide for the needs of the working class. We call on all workers to unite across borders and fight for a communist society.☺

U.S. Rulers Push Pacifism to Derail Workers' Rebellion

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was that Egyptian fascists, who have served U.S. imperialism so well since the 1979 Egypt-Israel treaty, remain in power and should continue to get their yearly \$1.5-\$2 billion in U.S. aid.

No Egypt Victory for U.S. Imperialism; Pressure for Wider Wars Intensifies

But, while U.S. rulers' media congratulate Obama for skillful bullet-dodging in the Mubarak affair, there are still plenty of loaded guns aimed at U.S. imperialism. A big one may very

well be in Egypt itself, which (presumably) must now hold elections. The nation's best organized political group is the pro-Iran, anti-U.S. Muslim Brotherhood. (Such elections produced anti-U.S. exploiter-leaders in Gaza and Lebanon.)

Washington's best hope in Egypt is probable candidate Mohamed ElBaradei, who, though born in Egypt, hasn't lived there for years, and thus has scant popular backing. His service to the U.S. empire as the UN's nuclear watchdog lies in exposing Iran's weapon program while stalling an Israeli attack on it, for which the U.S. is presently ill-prepared.

For this, ElBaradei won a Nobel "Peace" Prize from a Norwegian government committee, dominated by a major oil company (Statoil) active worldwide and a highly-modern military allied staunchly to the U.S.

However, as Anthony Cordesman, a major strategist for the U.S. war machine at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, writes:

"Whatever new government comes to power has less than a 50 percent chance of surviving for two years.... This...poses a long-term challenge for the U.S. that goes far

beyond who in the military has power in the first phase of change following Mubarak's departure. Egypt controls a critical global trade route in the Suez Canal. The security of the Canal and its pipeline has a major impact on energy prices and the world economy. Egypt is key to the Arab-Israeli peace and stability in the region, U.S. military overflights and staging, and the struggle against extremism. In short, Egypt is a vital U.S. national security interest — in fact, a far more vital interest than Afghanistan or Pakistan."

Capitalism Cannot Solve Workers' Problems

Coming from Cordesman — who, as General McChrystal's advisor, got Obama to vastly increase Afghanistan-Pakistan death squads and drone terror attacks — this last sentence declares Egypt a U.S. war zone. But an even larger danger of war, which the rulers hesitate to mention, lies just across the Red Sea. "A revolt in Saudi Arabia...is looking increasingly possible given the recent events in Tunisia and Egypt." (Boston Globe, 2/13/2011)

Capitalism cannot solve the problems of the workers in Egypt, of mass unemployment (intrinsic to the profit system) and raging price increases. Only a movement like our Party's can lead to a real revolution that smashes the capitalist state and system and puts the working class in power. The kind of anti-racist, pro-working-class struggles reported in CHALLENGE of U.S. students, parents and teachers, of transit and hospital workers, of rebels in Haiti, of garment workers in Pakistan and Bangladesh, of teachers in Mexico — in which the PLP is being built — is the path to follow.☺



Egypt: Protesters set police cars on fire.

LETTERS

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

U.S. Rulers Pulled Strings of Puppet Egyptian Regime

There is one more lesson that we can learn from the rebellion in Egypt. The role of the U.S. ruling class in Egypt reveals that the U.S. remains the most reactionary, oppressive force on the planet.

The U.S. military at the JFK Special Warfare School and Center at Fort Bragg trained Hosni Mubarak and his planned successor Omar Suleiman. The Egyptian secret police, who for decades have tortured and murdered dissidents, were trained by the FBI at their facility in Quantico, VA. The weapons that were used by police forces to kill 300 Egyptian protesters and injure thousands more were manufactured in the U.S. And Boeing subsidiary Narus was kind enough to sell the Mubarak regime software that monitors Internet and cell phone communications and singles out dissidents for retaliation.

The people in Egypt have forced Mubarak to step down. As the U.S. ruling class tries to install a new puppet government under the false guise of democracy, they are going to try to spin their role in the Mubarak dictatorship. Obama & Co. are pretending to be innocent bystanders in this whole affair who just "wish the best for the Egyptian people." Workers in the U.S. should stand in solidarity with workers in Egypt and oppose the racist U.S. imperialists who torment workers all over the world.

Red Beard

The Bosses' State: A Machine Oppressing the Working Class

With all the media focus on democracy in the Egyptian mass movement, we should keep clear what the state is. In 1919 Lenin gave a lecture to workers which is one of the best short treatments of the state (V.I. Lenin, "The State," in Marx, Engels, Marxism, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1951). What he wrote about the state in slave societies helps us grasp that the form of the capitalist state is not the key thing; the key thing is the essence of the capitalist state:

"The state is a machine for the oppression of one class by another, a machine for holding in obedience to one class other, subordinated classes. There are various forms of this machine. In the slave-owning state we had a monarchy, an aristocratic republic or even a democratic republic. In fact the forms of government varied extremely, but their essence was always the same: the slaves enjoyed no rights and constituted an oppressed class; they were not regarded as human beings."

Similarly, if the form of the state in Egypt changes from a semi-monarchical, fascistic, rigged democracy to an open democracy like Denmark's, what has changed? The form of the state. But you would still have the essence of a capitalist state, as you do in Denmark: "a machine for the oppression of one class by another," guaranteeing capitalists the freedom to exploit workers and coercing workers to accept their exploitation.

But that's not the way the bourgeoisie writes history. Lenin again: "In every course on the history of ancient times...you will hear about the struggle which was waged between the monarchical and republican states...But whether a monarchy was instituted or a republic, it was a monarchy of the slaveowners or a republic of the slaveowners." Similarly, if capitalist Egypt were to be run as the most free and open democratic republic ever, it would still be a democracy of the capitalist class.

The media follow bourgeois historians in emphasizing the struggle over the form of the state in Egypt. It's the role of Marxists and especially revolutionary communists to point out that the essence of every political struggle of our day is over capitalist exploitation of the working class, in Egypt as everywhere else. That struggle means smashing the capitalist state as a "machine for the oppression of one class by another" and instituting the state-form called the dictatorship of the proletariat, a machine for violently uprooting capitalism and suppressing the capitalist class out of existence.

A reader

Capitalism Destroys Health; Racism Pulls Trigger

In the excellent Feb. 16 CHALLENGE article "Building PLP Means Choosing Life – Racist Healthcare Murdering Kids," the next-to-last sentence correctly says: "We are forced to sit and watch as our children are killed before our eyes by treatable diseases like asthma."

It should be added, with perhaps more force, that "...our children are killed before our eyes by preventable diseases like asthma." Asthma is certainly easily treatable if one has access to medical care. But we should never forget that medical care is mainly for the purpose of patching people up after damage is already done. It's the initial damage that is the problem, and capitalism, not nature, is the cause.

Medical care, as the article suggests, is kept at the minimum level necessary to keep workers healthy enough to produce profits for the bosses. Its purpose is not keeping us healthy enough to enjoy a long and productive life for the benefit of our own class, as it would be under a communist, working-class-run system.

Children and their parents who live in fear of the next asthma attack do not deserve this life-distorting outrage. Asthma is mainly caused by polluted air. Pollution comes from both public and private sources, and even the private sources, such as cigarette smoke, are ultimately public under capitalism. Parents who smoke around their children are unwittingly contributing to their children's development of asthma. But it's the cigarette company executives who smile all the way to the bank.

Indeed, a recent international study estimated that cigarettes cause an extra 600,000 deaths a year from second-hand smoke. There is good reason to believe that this is a gross underestimate.

Added to this scourge, and more than doubling it, are the tons of poisons that smokestacks from fossil fuel-based industry and power plants spew every second of every day. It is estimated that coal emissions alone cause two million unnecessary deaths around the world annually from asthma and other respiratory and heart disease, and up to 50,000 per year in the U.S. alone. That's mass murder with a vengeance. And the people who are forced to live the closest to such deadly fumes are more often black, Latino, or Native American, making it racist mass murder.

And still worse, particularly for our children and grandchildren, is the global warming that fossil-fuel emissions cause. The increasingly deadly weather extremes emerging this winter in Europe and the Northeast U.S. are only one of the results. (See the Winter 2010 article in The Communist magazine on global warming for a more complete discussion,

available on the PLP website.) As the healthcare article said, building PLP for working-class communist revolution means choosing life over capitalism's mass murder.

Saguaro Rojo

Fascist Afghan Gov't Ravages Women

The Afghan government just announced plans to bring shelters for women running away from family violence and forced marriages — now operated by international and local NGO's — under control of the Women's Affairs Ministry.

Two years in the making, the new rules have been initiated by fundamentalists in the Karzai administration, who view the dozen or so shelters for abused women (opened in the past eight years), as encouraging women and girls to abandon their traditional roles and "dishonor their families." At worst the shelters are said to operate as brothels.

If passed into law, runaways would go before an eight-person panel to decide their fate: jail, be returned to their family, or allowed to live in a government-controlled shelter. They would undergo a physical exam for virginity.

Shelter supporters claim domestic violence is cultural (not criminal!) and their struggle is to change the culture and the laws that support it. During this admittedly slow process they need to provide victims with a safe place. But corruption is a fact of life today in Afghanistan and laws are meaningless when government officials arbitrarily make decisions based on bribes or family connections.

Friends of PLP in Afghanistan know that the fight has to be for more than a change of law or so called "traditional customs." Culture masks the source of the oppression of women: the capitalist system and the patriarchy that is its mainstay. Women's role is as the lowest-paid (often unpaid) laborers in that hierarchy.

Control of women by husbands and brothers mirrors the control over the whole society by the wealthy few and hides the fact that the capitalists who control Afghan society use the subjugation of women to divide men and women, whose class interests are the same.

The struggle for emancipation of women is inseparably bound up in the entire struggle of all workers, men and women, against capitalist exploitation and for a communist society. In the 1980's, when "culture" included equal rights for women, and a Marxist government with communist ideas was in power (with all the faults and errors of its leaders), Afghan women — and men — made tremendous steps forward along that road.

A reader



Rebellions in Tunisia and Egypt sparked more protests in Middle East against fascist conditions and mass unemployment.

Pickets Unite Haiti's Quake Victims with Egypt's Masses

NEW YORK CITY, Feb. 4 — "Haiti, Egypt, USA: Workers' Power Will Win the Day!" At the moment Haiti marked the anniversary of its earthquake with hardly anything yet "reconstructed" for ordinary people, the working class in Egypt — youth and women workers joined by students and professionals — were taking a stand against the fascist regime of Hosni Mubarak in Cairo. Fifty picketers at the Haitian consulate in Manhattan took note of this moment, both condemning the Haitian ruling class and its imperialist overlords for their neglect, and cheering the power and resolve shown by the Egyptian demonstrators.

Among our pickets were high school students embroiled in the struggles against school closings, against racist preferential treatment for charter and special middle-class schools, and against administration harassment of militant teachers who organize together with their students. They vowed to join their own struggles internationally with those of other young people: "Haitian students are under attack: what do we do? Stand up, fight back!"

One Brooklyn student led a chant for various demands for workers in Haiti, teaching us how to respond to each one in Haitian Kreyòl "Mwen dakò!" ("I agree!"). We also taught ourselves Kreyòl versions of the great chants "The workers,

united, will never be defeated!" ("Ouvriye ini pa pral jamè venki!") and "Workers' struggles have no borders!" ("Lit ouvriye pa gen fwontyè!")

A recent CUNY graduate said it was the most spirited and powerful rally he'd been to in a while. A worker who has spent much of the year in Haiti spoke about her experiences working with friends there, teaching classes and organizing a conference together. She drew inspiration from the understanding and solidarity with U.S. struggles shown by students, teachers, and other union workers in Haiti.

Another speaker outlined some answers to the question "Who rules Haiti?" He said that in addition to the Haitian consulate, we should picket Bill Clinton's office in Harlem, since Clinton is at the heart of U.S. imperialist rule in Haiti.

Friends in Haiti asked us to include in our picket the demand for justice for the thousands of victims of the fascist Jean-Claude (Baby Doc) Duvalier, who had the gall to return to Haiti last month, apparently in a bid to clear his position with the Haitian courts so as to access millions in a blocked Swiss bank account. We added his name to the chant "Clinton, Préval, Duvalier, you can't hide: we charge you with genocide!"

Members of PLP on the picket line stressed that "workers' power" meant turning the guns around,

winning soldiers in Haiti, Egypt, and the imperialist armies to join in a communist working-class revolution to smash capitalism everywhere.

This picket was one small step in a long march. Like the demonstrators in Cairo we know that, in the words of a nineteenth-century Illinois coal miners' anthem, "Step by step the longest march/Can be won, can be won," in Haiti, in Egypt, in the USA. As we were leaving we crossed paths with the tail end of a march of more than a thousand people targeting the Egyptian Mission to the UN. Something is stirring in the international working class and revolutionary communists are in the mix.✪



RED EYE ON THE NEWS

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

U.S. backs dictators — at least 36

NYT — A Washington-friendly dictator, propped up for decades by lavish American aid as he oversees a regime noted for brutality, corruption and stagnation, finally faces the wrath of his people....The embrace of dictators has been so frequent over the last half-century that it obviously results from hardheaded calculation....

Supporting Egypt's military-led regime over four decades, first under Anwar el-Sadat and then Mr. Mubarak, offered strategic benefits to seven American presidents. They got a staunch ally against Soviet expansionism, a critical peace with Israel, a bulwark against Islamic radicalism, and a trade- and tourist-friendly Egypt...

History is rich with precedents. In 1959, there was Fulgencio Batista of Cuba, darling of American corporations and organized crime....In 1979, it was Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, the shah of Iran, abandoning the throne in the face of a revolt two years after President Jimmy Carter toasted his country as "an island of stability."

In 1986, the turn came for Ferdinand Marcos, ousted by the Philippines' People Power movement five years after Vice President George H. W. Bush told him at a luncheon: "We love your adherence to democratic principles and to the democratic process."

The list could be extended. Since World War II, the White House, under the managements of both parties, has smiled on at least a couple of dozen despots. ("Friendly Dictators Trading Cards" marketed by a California publisher in the 1990s, featured "36 of America's most embarrassing allies.")

Youth sparked revolt, but it's broader

GW, 2/6 — Most of the people in the Arab world are aged 25 or younger. They have known no other leaders than those dictators who grew older and richer as the young saw their opportunities — political and economic — dwindle. The Internet didn't invent courage; activists in Egypt have exposed Mubarak's police state of torture and jailings for years. And we've seen that even when the

dictator shuts the Internet down protesters can still organize...Youth kickstarted the revolt, but they've been joined by old and young.

Dark side to Internet 'freedom'

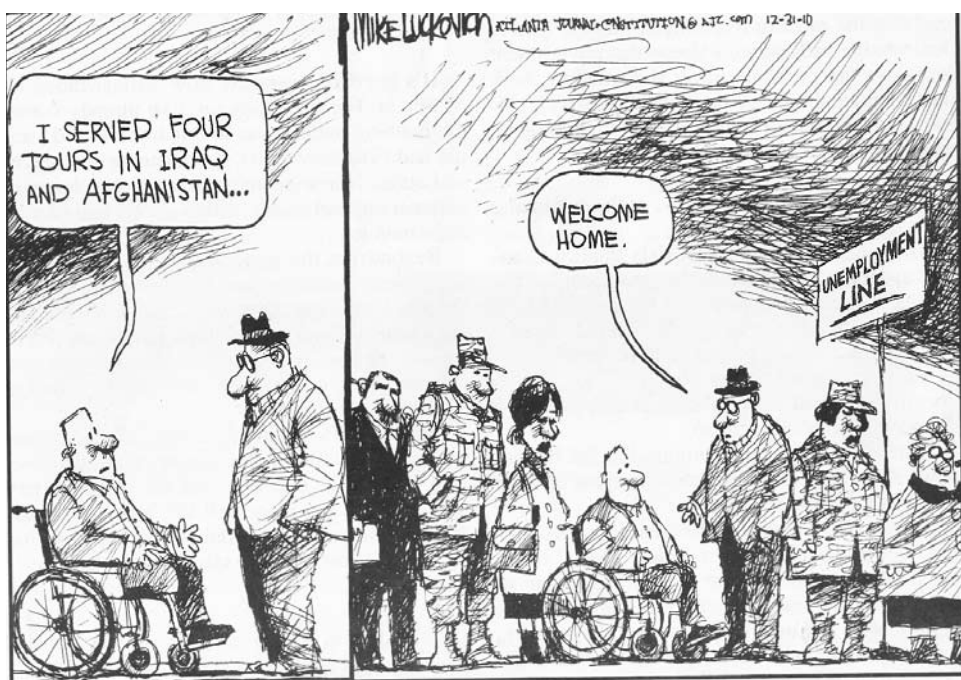
NYT, 2/6 — As Evgeny Morozov demonstrates in "The Net Delusion," the Internet's contradictions and confusions are just becoming visible through the fading mist of Internet euphoria. Morozov is interested in the Internet's political ramifications. "What if the liberating potential of the Internet also contains the seeds of depoliticization and thus democratization?"...Morozov convincingly argues that, in freedom's name, the Internet more often than not constricts or even abolishes freedom.

The Iranian regime used the web to identify photographs of protesters; to find out their personal information and whereabouts...;To distribute propagandistic videos; and to text the population into counterrevolutionary paranoia....This sort of backlash of Internet "freedom" is routine. Polygamy may be illegal in Turkey, but that doesn't stop Turkish villagers from using the Internet to find multiple wives. Mexican crime gangs use social networking sites to gather information about their victims. Russian neofascists employ the Internet to fix the positions of minorities in order to organize pogroms....Don't expect corporations like Google to liberate anyone anytime soon. Morozov urges the cyberutopians to open their eyes to the fact that the asocial pursuit of profit is what drives social media.

Job data: Reports block vital facts

NYT, 2/5 — You won't hear policy makers acknowledging that the unemployment numbers would be much worse if not for the millions of people who have left the work force over the past few years. What happened to those folks? How are they and their families faring?

The policy makers don't tell us that most of the



new jobs being created in such meager numbers are, in fact, poor ones, with lousy pay and few or no benefits. What we hear is...that businesses are sitting on mountains of cash. So all must be right with the world.

Jobs? Well, the less said the better.

What's really happening, of course, is the same thing that's been happening in this country for the longest time — the folks at the top are doing fabulously well and they are not interested in the least in spreading the wealth around...Both the Obama administration and the Republican Party are down on their knees slavishly kissing the rings of the financial and corporate kingpins.

Best investment: Buy politicians

MinutemanMedia.org, 12/21 — Perhaps Wall Street's most profitable investment ever has been to pay off politicians. Candidate campaign treasuries swell with contributions from bankers.... These doggie treats for the Watchdogs had paid a handsome return. No regulator moved to pull the plug on the subprime mortgage scam; no regulator is overseeing derivatives; and no regulator is yet putting the clamps on the latest life-insurance packaging scheme.

Nor, in this era of "anything goes," when the public is clamoring for action, has President Barack Obama shown any fervor for such a course...In fact, all of Obama's financial appointees have been good old boys. The "Change You Can Believe In" turned out to be mostly fairies and leprechauns.

MORE ITEMS AVAILABLE AT WWW.PLP.ORG

PO Box 808, Brooklyn, NY 11202

Workers' Power the Answer: Imperialists Who Rule Haiti Rule the World

(Editor's note: PLP members protested at the Haitian Consulate in NYC. A speech there led to the following article.)

NEW YORK CITY, February 4 — Workers joined together in front of the Haitian consulate to support working brothers and sisters in Haiti, who are also out in the streets organizing. Their demands are for food, clean water, jobs, housing, schools, health care in the middle of a UN-caused cholera epidemic, the end of police brutality, and the withdrawal of MINUSTAH (the UN Mission) from their country. Workers in the U.S. raised a crucial question: Does government, represented by the consulate they stood in front of, actually rule Haiti?

Who Rules Haiti?

- The major imperialists like the U.S., France and Canada, also known as "donors";
- The International Financial Institutions (IFI) like the World Bank, the IMF, and the Inter-American Development Bank;
- The Interim Haiti Recovery Commission (IHRC), co-chaired by Bill Clinton and Prime Minister Jean Max Bellerive and dominated by bankers, who direct reconstruction policies and funding for Haiti;
- The notorious NGOs, the "non-governmental institutions" who supply services the state cannot supply and who therefore are the state in its social service function.

The big imperialists, the IFIs, the IHRC, and the NGOs rule Haiti together with the complicity of the small but vicious Haitian capitalist ruling class — the "Six Families." This political reality mirrors the age-old economic exploitation of Haitian workers and farmers by the same combination of imperialists and their lackey rulers.

Who Rules Education?

Education is a great example of how these imperialist and "local" bosses rule. In Haiti, 10% of the schools are public and more than a million children (in a total population of about 10 million) are shunned from schools completely. PLP's friends in Haiti, among left-wing trade unionists and students, have made free universal public schools their main mass campaign. IHRC's plan is to turn education reconstruction policy over to the Inter-American Development Bank, who turned to the "recovery" superintendent of schools in New Orleans, Paul Vallas, to run the program.

Just like the U.S. bosses in New Orleans tried to smash the teachers' union by converting public schools into charter schools after hurricane Katrina, Haiti's rulers plan "public/private partnership" schools. This will amount to donor-fund subsidies to the private managers who run 90% of Haiti's existing schools.

If one reduces the question "who rules Haiti" down to "who runs education policy" in this time of genocidal social crisis, it is easy to trace the network of power from the New Orleans schools superintendent to the international bankers. Following right along, the leading candidate for Haitian president, Madame Manigat, has made this "reconstruction" of education her big campaign issue, after a big boost to the national police.

Who Rules the World?

Who rules Haiti, Egypt, Tunisia, Israel, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan...the world? It's apparent who sits for the moment, and who will likely follow them, in the offices of Préval, Mubarak, Ben Ali, Netanyahu, Maliki, Karzai, and Zardari. Sometimes these local stewards of capitalist power show their teeth to the imperialists; the U.S. is having serious trouble imposing its will on most of them. But it is imperialism — one rival imperialist power or the other, as they face each other armed to the teeth for their next war — that prevails in the world today. That is the systematic power network we, the working class, are up against.

What can we hope to do against those who rule the world today for the profit system? There



Students join with workers to support sisters and brothers in Haiti.

is a potential network of power in the unused power of the world's working class, in an organized anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist mass movement in the world which has been at a very low ebb, but whose soldiers have fought on in Haiti, in Egypt, in Tunisia, in Israel, in Iraq, in Afghanistan, in Pakistan. Mass popular uprisings in Egypt capture headlines today and show us a very tiny measure of the power of an aroused working class, but they don't take aim at the profit system.

Our hope lies in a more deeply-organized movement led by PLP to smash the rulers, a global movement of proletarian internationalism, with a vision of reconstruction in which workers' power can unleash workers' creativity to make a society that is actually a human society, as opposed to the history of class societies that our species has had to endure up to now.

Smash Imperialism, Power to the Workers!

The heroic fighters of Tahrir Square in Cairo fought off two days of armed attacks by Mubarak's

thugs while the army looked on. Their focus only on Mubarak is a huge weakness because capitalism never has and never will bring real democracy to workers. But let us join with them and all rebels against the anti-human capitalist system, and try to work with them to solve together the burning problem of power in the imperialist era.

Let us join with our friends organizing in Haiti, in Israel, in Pakistan. Let us learn from each other answers to the key political question, the question of who holds power and how; how it is much more than a Mubarak or a Préval, even a Bush or an Obama. Let us challenge capitalist power with workers' power. We can only do it internationally in the age of imperialism, we can only do it together across all the bosses' borders and turf wars in one united, organized, international movement. We will fight on, for the vision of workers meeting their needs without the existence of bosses. The workers are many, the capitalists are few. ☺



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