

# facts for working people

A Publication of Labors Militant Voice

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*Building a Democratic Socialist Alternative to the Dictatorship of Capitalism*

## Community College Students Win Free Bus Passes

### 40,000 LA students to benefit

#### FFWP Si Se Puede Series

LA Mayor Villaraigosa berated the crowd of protesting City College students. He told them he wasn't supporting the reinstatement of free bus passes simply "because you talk loud!" Only a few weeks later, the students not only won the reinstatement of bus passes for fulltime students, but got it extended to part time students and an additional 20,000 students at other LA regional public colleges. Si se puede!

Within days of the end of the spring semester, LA's Metropolitan Transit Authority decided to axe their one year-old I-Pass scheme, which allowed fulltime LA City College students free travel. Timed to coincide with an empty campus, the authorities did not expect much resistance. Students grouped around Students for Education Reform organized immediately. Some members had direct action experience.

The students descended on MTA meetings, city council offices and their own school's administration.

#### There's No Money!

Every politician and administrator tried to convince them that there was no money for free student travel. The students countered that they themselves were the ones with little money and that LA was a vastly rich city. Democrat Mayor Villaraigosa claimed to be a man of the people, yet opposed a textbook ballot initiative to help working class students survive school. Everywhere he went, the city college students were there, and increasingly students from other public colleges who were affected by the bus pass cut.

At no point did the students accept the legitimacy of axing student passes, instead they argued that the passes must be widened to bring in other students and part-time students.

Eventually the students showed up at a secret meeting of the MTA, city officials and the president of their



college, undermining a back room deal at the students' expense. Under pressure from the students, the LACC President pressed for the passes and the Mayor announced that the bus passes would stay! While eligibility for the passes was widened to enable access to possibly tens of thousands more students, a \$30 annual fee was introduced. LA City College softened the deal by allowing students to deduct the \$30 from textbook purchases.

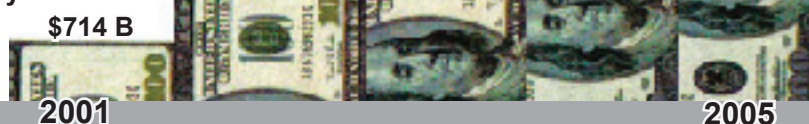
Direct action, an unwillingness to accept the Democrats and Republican's cutback agenda, combined with courage, determination and flexibility, defeated an attempt to rob up to 40,000 students of several hundred dollars a-piece. Fight to Win with Direct Action!

*Post Script:* in November when students descended on the LA City College Sheriff's Office to protest an openly sexist Officer, it was veterans of the I-Pass victory who led the sit-down occupation, most of whom had no previous direct action experience before the bus pass campaign. *see page 3*

## America's Dirty Secret

### Corporate Profits Rocket

Between 2001 and 2005 Corporate profits grew by 123%, the fastest pace in recorded history



## \$28,049

Last year's \$1,595 Billion corporate profits divided between the total number of US families

# What the Elections Mean to Us

November's election marked the beginning of the end of the Bush-Cheney era. The Bush administration exploited the attacks of 9-11 to push their right-wing agenda at home and abroad, but their credit is now exhausted. It has been worn out by the Iraq war, political corruption and the stagnating living standards of working people. The administration's arrogance has finally been curbed and even the war criminal Rumsfeld has now been cast aside.

The firing of the chief architect of the Iraq war signals that the Bush administration is now considering that a military victory may not be possible. The Iraqi government itself estimates over 150,000 people have been killed in the war, a figure that includes the 3,000 US troops. The hundreds of billions of dollars being sunk into the war in Iraq has created a massive federal deficit and a less than stable regime in Baghdad. The Republican's loss of Senate and House control was overwhelmingly a product of this disastrous war.

## Corruption

Corruption scandals have tainted both big business parties. The Republicans, however, as the party that controlled all Congressional committees, had a greater access to the looting. The Republicans paid for this in the election. As both parties have moved to the right, corporate America gained firmer control over the political process. Where legislation was once written by Congressional committees, it is now written by corporate lobbyists. Appropriation earmarks have increased 10-fold over the last 25 years to \$29 billion of pork annually, with the lion's share going to the party in power. A 2005 Harris Poll found 90% of people believe big business has too much influence on Capitol Hill. House Leader DeLay, Congressman Foley and lobbyist Abramoff were merely the guys that went a little too far.

## Immigration

The Bush regime has potentially been on the ropes for over a year. After Bush's initial dismissal of the importance of Hurricane Katrina, which forced half a million people from their homes, the President's approval ratings dove as low as 31%. At the same time the administration's arrogant attempt to overhaul and privatize Social Security was withdrawn because of the backlash it stirred. Sensing the walls closing in on them, House Republicans, with some Democrats in tow, went on the offensive against immigrants, passing in December 2005 their reactionary law to charge undocumented immigrants and those who harbor them as felons. This unleashed one of the biggest movements in American history, with up to 3 million workers refusing to go to work on May 1st, 2006. While the wall is quietly built on the Mexican border, Republicans have lost substantial support from Latino voters. Another attempt at fear and scape-goating backfired on them.

## The Economy

In Bush's address to the nation on the day after the elections he denied that the economy could be a factor in the results. From capitalism's perspective things are very rosy: unemployment is relatively low, GNP is up and profits are at record levels, but because Bush is so out of touch with workers, he does not realize that they are working harder and longer for less. Laid off workers are finding new jobs but averaging

17% less pay. Real median family income fell every year from 2000 to 2004.(1) CEO pay has risen to 755 times the average worker's pay. (2) Worker's disposable income has been eaten away by increased housing costs, high gas prices, increased health care costs and rising college tuition. It is no surprise that in 6 states minimum wage hike propositions passed. The federal minimum wage of \$5.15 an hour is so incredibly low that many employers cannot find anyone to work for it.

## The Democrats

The election heralded a demand for change. Under the Democrats, capitalism's offensive against working class people is likely to be slightly more restrained but it will continue. Barney Frank, the Democratic congressman from Massachusetts says he wants to "puncture the myth that if you're a liberal you're an anti-capitalist."(3) We want to work "in partnership" with the Republicans, the new Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi says, "not in partisanship."(4) Pelosi is a millionaire 25 times over.

While there is no doubt the new Congress will not support the oil and energy sector as closely, but the banking and hi-tech capitalists will gain prominence under the Democrats. Speaker Pelosi says meetings are already planned with Citigroup boss Robert Rubin and other big capitalists. And while there will be differences over trade, with a more protectionist Congress, the corporate plunder will continue; increased wealth disparity and attacks on workers will continue.

## A Party For Working Class People

The mood shows that a real political alternative is desired. For November's election, organized labor provided 205,000 volunteers; knocked on 8.25 million doors; made 30 million phone calls to Union households and distributed 14 million workplace fliers. While the Democrats talk of a minimum wage hike and a reduction in student loan interest rates, a Labor Party fighting for the interests of workers, could be fighting for a \$15 an hour minimum wage, free college education and a free health care system. The failure of the labor leadership to use its resources to provide an independent fighting political alternative to challenge capitalism is criminal.

The mood for change is positive but the Democrats will not provide the goods at home, nor in Iraq. Labor's Militant Voice and FFWP and all anti-capitalists can build on this mood, can help build a movement that will begin to drive back the capitalist offensive as our comrades have done from Oaxaca to Nigeria. A democratic Socialist alternative will gain strength globally as capitalism continues its war of exploitation against working class people and the planet itself. If you want to be part of that movement, contact us.

What the Wall Street Journal, written for the capitalist class, called the Democrats' agenda: *modest*.

What the San Francisco Chronicle, written for working class consumption, called the Democrats' agenda: *radical*.

(1) Financial Times 11-2-06; (2) AFL-CIO (3) Business Week 11-13-06  
(4) AP 11-8-06

# Women and Capitalism

Last month two high profile school killings shocked the US. The particularly shocking element was how, in both cases, older male attackers separated the female students from the male students with the intent to sexually assault and kill them.

These events are horrifying to read about, however, children are still far more likely to be sexually assaulted by a family member or friend. Media sensationalism around the school killings encourages parents towards paranoid and claustrophobic micromanaging of their children's lives.

At the same time, we live in an economic system where women and their sexuality are used to sell every kind of product from television shows to beer. Women become objects for the sexual gratification of men instead of equal human beings. The increased sexualization of girls initiates them into this object class at younger and younger ages. Fashion for girls encourages them to dress more and more like small women in "sexy" clothing and there is no detail of a girl's wardrobe left unfeminized.

Capitalism encourages relationships based on inequality and encourages the exploitation of power within these relationships. Sexism and misogyny, the actual hatred of women, are encouraged, and even fostered through many aspects of the culture that capitalism has created from advertising, television, films, and print media. The effect on both men and women is profound.

In this environment, it is no wonder that some individuals are viewing very young girls as sex objects and using them as victims in the distorted abuse of power relationships that capitalism encourages.

We are all concerned about the safety of children, but if we truly hope to end their victimization, the only reasonable course is to fight for the end of capitalism.

**CONTACT US**  
**erin@bringdownbush.org**  
**(510) 595-4676 (Oakland, CA)**  
**LMVChicago@yahoo.com**  
**(773) 913-8060 (Chicago, IL)**

## Former Defense Secretary Rumsfeld, on "knowledge"

Facts for Working People says good bye to Donald Rumsfeld with this timeless quote. "Reports that say that something hasn't happened are always interesting to me, because as we know, there are known knowns; there are things we know we know. We also know there are known unknowns; that



**Dick and Don**, Donald Rumsfeld as Chief of Staff to Gerald Ford in 1975 with his assistant Dick Cheney.

is to say we know there are some things we do not know. But there are also unknown unknowns - the ones we don't know we don't know."

*-From a November 2003 press conference*

2008 Democratic Primary

**Hillary vs. Barack**  
**Who's backing who?**

Goldman Sachs \$168,290	Goldman Sachs \$61,000
Time Warner \$104,960	General Dynamics/ Henry Crown \$80,000
Citibank \$141,000	Exelon Nuclear Power \$74,300

## Police Blame Women for Reporting Rapes

On Wednesday, November 1st, LA police Detective Spelatz mentioned to me and three other students on campus at Los Angeles City College that "70-80% of rape reports are illegitimate" and that most women who report rape have a "morning after sight". As chief rape Investigator, Detective Spelatz is the friendly face rape victims first see if they are reporting a crime.

Within an hour, 40 students occupied the Sheriff's office to demand the Detective's firing, an apology from the LA Sheriff's Department and a compulsory training course for police on rape.

No sooner did we sit down in the office then we spotted Detective Spelatz himself, along with Sargeant Parra, his boss. We walked out and I made a complaint along with another witness. I am also a victim of sexual assault.

In a followup meeting, the Sheriff's department complained that they had been treated rudely and were intimidated by the student presence at their office!!!

For more info on this battle, please contact Julia at (310) 404-6729.

### THE FACTS

According to the FBI, in 2003, 5.5% of sexual assaults were determined to be unfounded. "Unfounded" includes cases when there is insufficient evidence, the victim decides not to follow through with prosecution, the victim repeatedly changes the account of rape, the victim recants and police are unable to locate the victim as well as when the allegation is found to be false.

# Going Postal: a Day in the Life

After loading bags on planes for 25 years at United Airlines, my dad figured he'd done his time in the workforce and was looking forward to his pension, going to the horse track and playing a little golf. Two years after he retired, things changed when United defaulted on their pension fund and a federally-backed organization took over, at a loss for my father of almost \$500/month in his retirement check. After several months of job-hunting in an area with very few decent jobs, my dad jumped at the chance to get hired as a substitute mail carrier for rural delivery routes.

The post office seemed like a good fit for my dad: a straightforward job where he wouldn't have to work too many hours at a reasonable wage of \$12/hour. He had to go through two interviews, take a personality test, and a couple of months after he applied, he finally got a day's pay when he shadowed an experienced substitute carrier on a rural route. The supervisor mentioned to my dad that he might want my dad to take the route every Saturday, and warned him that it was rated at 8 hours pay, meaning that no matter how long you took, you got paid for only 8 hours.

My dad got to the post office at 8 and found the other mail carrier already at work since 7:30. They sorted mail without a break until noon, took a minute to go to the bathroom, then jumped in the mail car to deliver the mail. The mail carrier had some snacks that she brought with her to eat in the car, but they made no stops for lunch, or even a bathroom break. They made it back to the post office, exhausted and slightly shell-shocked at 5pm. The mail carrier had at least a half hour's more work processing the outgoing mail she'd picked up. The 8 hour route took an experienced worker 10 hours without a single break to finish. My dad only lasted one day.

Ten or more hours work for 8 hours pay and probably another 4 hours to try to unwind. Go to sleep, get up and do it again.

Another high paced union job brought to you by the TEAM CONCEPT.



## global risings

**Oaxaco, Mexico** – A state wide teachers strike flourished over 6 months into a movement headed by the Popular Assembly of the Peoples of Oaxaca, APPO. The movement to unseat Governor Ulises Ruiz began to take on semi-insurrectionary features and was then brutally crushed by federal troops. This month another demonstration of over 100,000 shows the struggle continues.

**USA & Canada** - 15,000 members of the United Steel Workers at Goodyear Tire and Rubber have been on strike over plant closings. The workers are prepared to fight and the USW leaders appear prepared to surrender.

**Budapest, Hungary** – Hundreds of thousands have been on the streets calling for the resignation of "Socialist" Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsany. The massive movement was unleashed by the release of tapes of a speech where the Prime Minister admitted to Party insiders that he had regularly lied to the electorate.

**China** - Social unrest climbed by more than 6 percent for a total of 87,000 serious incidents of unrest last year. Rapid economic growth has been accompanied by increased rural poverty and a sharp increase in polarization between the rich and the working class.

## THE FACTS

The US Post Office will deliver 203 billion pieces of mail to 138 million homes and businesses this year. The last union contract agreed to increase mail volume by 4.2 billion pieces while reducing mail carrier jobs by 6.3%. United States Postal profits over last 3 years: \$9.3 billion  
What is the Team Concept? See [www.labormilitantvoice.com/](http://www.labormilitantvoice.com/)

# Why we're against Capitalism

We are against capitalism because it does not work. More than half the world's population are in want or outright starving. The United Nations Development Program estimates that everybody in the world could have access to basic social services, clean water, food, housing, health care, education, for \$80 billion per year. The seven richest people in the world have \$1.54 trillion between them. Capitalism cannot transfer the tiny fraction of the wealth of its richest few that would be necessary to provide everybody with the necessities.

But it is not only a question of taking the ill-gotten wealth of the billionaires. It is having a system which allows the working people of the world to have access to ownership and control over capital, machinery, land, water,



energy and power so that we can plan production and plan distribution throughout the world. Capitalism cannot allow this. As the Argentinean worker said last year when he and his fellow workers had occupied and were running their factory: "They are terrified of us because we are showing we can run the factory and because we can run the factory this shows we could run the country".

Capitalism does not work. Capitalism is destroying our planet. We are for a new system where working class people work together and use the resources of the world collectively to create a sustainable economy and where what is produced is equitably distributed. This is a democratic socialist system. This is what we are fighting for. Contact us and we can work together.

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