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CHALLENGE



SCRATCH A LIBERAL



FIND AN IMPERIALIST

Millions of people who justifiably hate warmaker George Bush mistakenly think Barack Obama (above) can right Bush's wrongs. Obama, in fact, elected or not, may help lead wars vaster and deadlier than anything the Bush gang could imagine. A look at Obama's backers and background reveals a loyal servant of the U.S.'s biggest capitalists, who are bent on using all violence necessary to maintain their worldwide empire in the face of mounting challenges.

The main wing of U.S. rulers immediately needs to reassert control, forcibly, over the Middle East and its oil, against Iran in particular. In the longer term, they must prepare to confront a rival superpower — China, Russia, Europe or any combination thereof. They hope Obama's broad appeal, based mainly on his anti-Bush stance, will aid mobilization for the wider wars they require. As bad as Bush is, Obama and the other liberals pose the greater danger.

'MAN OF THE PEOPLE' HAS FRIENDS IN HIGH PLACES

Early support for Obama came from billionaire liberal imperialist George Soros, a Rockefeller ally. His main goal in life (other than raking in billions by impoverishing workers through international currency scams) is to prevent Russia's re-emergence as a superpower threat to the U.S. Throughout the old Soviet bloc, Soros's Open Society Institute has bought anti-Russian candidates and pushed U.S.-led NATO's expansion. When Moscow tried to grab pipeline routes through the former Yugoslavia, Soros led the cheer for Clinton's murderous 1999 bombardment of Kosovo. "Kosovo required outside intervention," wrote Soros at the time.

Like that of most liberal leaders, Soros's criticism of Bush's Iraq policy centers on the U.S. shortage of boots on the ground. In 2004, he said, "We should have had more troops available for the occupation." Soros hopes Obama can boost troop availability by creating public enthusiasm for the rulers' agenda. "Senator Obama brings a new energy to the political system and has the potential to be a transformational leader," said Michael Vachon, a spokesman for Soros. (NY Times, 1/21/07)

The Times (2/24/07) identifies four Wall Street-based dyed-in-the-wool imperialists as Obama's top fundraisers. Jeh Johnson, as general counsel for Clinton's Air Force secretary, approved orders that killed and maimed thousands of non-combatants in the former Yugoslavia and in Iraq. He has also worked for Soros's Human Rights Watch and the Rockefeller Foundation. James Rubin runs J.P. Morgan Chase's private equity fund. His father Robert, Treasury secretary under Clinton, led the racist dismantling of Welfare that freed up funds for the Pentagon. Chief of staff in Clinton's Treasury, Joshua L. Steiner, is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), U.S. imperialism's leading think-tank, where he serves on the board of advisors of *Foreign Affairs*.

Another Clinton Treasury appointee, Michael Froman, now chief of a Citigroup unit, directed a CFR task force, "Promoting Sustainable Economies in the Balkans" in 2000 that studied ways the U.S. could profit from Clinton's butchery there. He belongs to both the CFR and the Rockefeller-organized Trilateral Commission. Froman's ties to Obama date back to their days as classmates at Harvard Law School.

CAPITALIST WARMAKERS, RACIST KILLER COPS LOVE OBAMA

With friends like these, it's no accident that Obama espouses mobilizing for broader U.S. military action. Last November, referring to Iraq, he told the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, "it is time to refocus America's efforts on the wider struggle yet to be won." Obama used readily deciphered code words for maintaining permanent U.S. bases

Where is Obama While:

Workers, Patients Battle Racist Cuts

CHICAGO, Feb. 24 — At a "Town Hall Meeting" to divert workers' anger at proposed cutbacks and mass layoffs, militant workers attacked every lie, and every liar, and chased the misleadership from the stage. It was symptomatic of workers' militancy over months of fight-back. But despite such actions, two days ago the Cook County Commissioners voted to endorse the racist war budget of County Board President Todd Stroger and his Health Bureau chief, Nazi "Dr." Robert Simon. Thirteen of the County's 26 health clinics will close, eliminating 2,000 county jobs, 1,200 through layoffs. About 800 will come from public health.

Thousands of uninsured and unemployed workers, children and the elderly will die. The vast majority will be black and Latino, who comprise 82% of the County patient population. Cook County has over one million uninsured, 70% percent of whom are employed.

Given these much larger numbers, tonight 40 workers crowded into a church basement to talk about the next battle. "The capitalist system re-

quires this kind of attack," said a black woman from one union who had become friendly with PLers at Stroger Hospital. "What we need to figure out now is where and how to make our *next* attack." "This is class war," said another health worker.

in an action at Simon's office, led by the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless, along with medical and nursing staff.

"Save The County's Bottom Line — Robert Simon Must Resign," echoed up and down the wide stairways and corridors of the old administration building. The only one arrested was a reporter from the Chicago Sun-Times, who kept yelling, "I'm not with them, I'm a reporter!" The action's main weakness was not including many homeless people, who Simon has viciously attacked for years. Our political organizing among public health workers and professionals must be geared much more towards the uninsured and unemployed workers we serve.

These cuts reveal how racism is the cutting edge of fascism. The attacks are being used to fill a \$100-million budget deficit, caused by a \$100-million cut in federal funding to finance the imperialist bloodbath in Iraq. Racist cutbacks and mass murder are greasing the U.S. war machine.

This struggle also exposed the bosses' class dictatorship. All the rallies and the thousands

'Thousands of uninsured and unemployed workers, children and the elderly will die.'

of nurses, doctors and patients who packed the public hearings, meant nothing to the bosses and their politicians. Every political hack, from Barack Obama to Mayor Daley to Jesse Jackson (Sr. and Jr.) stood silent as this attack was unleashed.

The bosses were so fearful of the mass opposition to the cuts that they did not even put it on the ballot. That's why we need a mass PLP to overthrow the war-makers and budget-cutters and establish a communist society, whose sole purpose is to meet the needs of the international working class. Then everyone will have health care based on need.

This fight helped build some confidence and skill in tactical planning, but showed us we have a long way to go. The importance of boldness, of surprising the enemy, and having confidence in the workers are the recurring themes of these weeks of action. But all this depends entirely on our political base. We must grow, and we can. We had many more and deeper conversations with friends, old and new. This modest increase in political friendships and respect for PLP, though not flashy, are the biggest gains out of the current fight. On to May Day!

We couldn't win enough doctors to play a leading role in demanding the firing of Dr. Simon, or in mobilizing their patients and families into the battle. But again, we made some progress. Some patients were mobilized for mass rallies from the clinics they attend, and we participated



U.S., Chinese Bosses on Collision Course Over Oil

U.S. and Chinese imperialists are engaged in a worldwide dogfight. In January, Chinese President Hu Jintao toured Africa to solidify deals for energy, trade and resources. Immediately the U.S. rulers' New York Times mouthpiece scolded China for heartlessly exploiting Africa's worst-off workers:

"If you run an African country and have some natural resources...you've got a friend in Beijing ready to write big checks with no embarrassing questions. That's nice for governments, but not so nice for their misgoverned people." The Times' editorial (2/19) admitted that "the West" had behaved badly in the past but concluded that China "should not be proud of following the West's sorry historical example."

Behind the Times' supposed "concern" for workers is the U.S. imperialist struggle to continue exploiting the largest possible share of the world's workers and resources while confronting Chinese imperialists' rising challenge. Workers can only win by uniting to build a worldwide communist movement and overthrowing all bosses. No matter which imperialist wins, workers lose.

Escalating Imperialist Rivalry in Africa

Some honest people in the U.S. are echoing U.S. imperialists by calling for sending troops to Darfur and increasing the existing U.S. sanctions on the Sudan. But U.S. bosses are concerned with being frozen out of recently-discovered oil fields, not stopping any genocide.

U.S. oil company Chevron left the Sudan in 1992 and Washington cut off ties to Sudan in 1997. Abda Yahia el-Mahdi, a former Sudanese finance minister, said, "The only people...being hurt by the [U.S.] sanctions are the Americans who are missing out on the [oil] boom." (NY Times 10/24/06)

China National Petroleum Corporation is the biggest player in Sudan's national oil consortium and a band of Chinese companies are building a 930-mile oil pipeline to the Red Sea. (AsiaTimes, 9/6/06) Four thousand Chinese troops are deployed in southern Sudan guarding an oil pipeline to protect China's investments and Chinese bosses "are supposed to be building an armaments factory" in the Sudan. (Financial Times, 12/16/06); Time Magazine, 1/11/07; The Economist, 10/28/06)

This January China invested \$2 billion in oil-rich Nigeria — the largest supplier of African oil to the U.S. — and Chinese companies secured rights to another four oilfields. (The Economist, 10/28/06; Sacramento Bee, 9/18/06)

Nigeria has curbed oil production due to fighting over oil profits in the Niger Delta. China — not the U.S. or France who have the largest outside military presence in Africa — is supplying the government with patrol boats used to combat local rebels. U.S. commitment for securing Nigerian oil has been slow and low.

U.S. bosses may be slow but they're not out. Calls to "Save Darfur" by George Clooney, Mia Farrow and Barack Obama coincide with the creation of a U.S. African Command.

Defense & Foreign Affairs' Strategic

Policy Magazine (9/06) reports that the White House is pushing this African Command for "strategic reasons... Nigeria alone provides almost as much oil to the U.S....as does Saudi Arabia, and by 2015 will provide more than 25% of U.S. energy supplies" — adding that the U.S. sees African Energy and sea lanes as "vital" to the U.S.

China's Africa strategy is "aid-for-oil." Chinese bosses are pouring millions into constructing refineries, dams, roads, hospitals, railways, bridges, telecommunication networks and shopping malls — not to benefit workers but for oil deals and commercial ties.

Presently the U.S.-China rivalry remains a war of commercial exploitation but imperialism's trade wars inevitably lead to shooting wars.

U.S.-China War?

On Feb. 9, U.S. Secretary of Defense Gates told the Senate Armed Services Committee that the U.S. needs more troops with an infantry capable of fighting regular armies because, "We don't know what changes can take place in such countries" [China, Russia, North Korea, Iran] "and others." (Pravda, 2/9/07)

U.S. bosses count on naval control of the sea lanes on which China depends to export goods and import raw materials (including oil). But in January Chinese bosses successfully tested an anti-satellite missile, signaling their capability of targeting U.S. Navy communication and navigation satellites.

The Ultimate Imperialist Prize

Scratch a Liberal . . .

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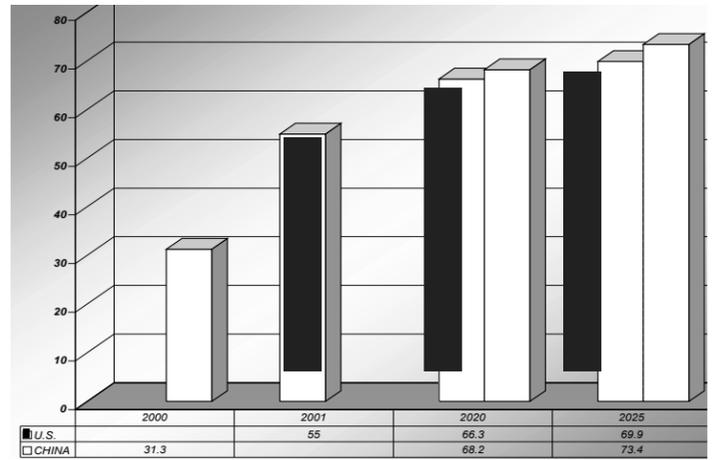
in Iraq, citing a need "to manage our exit in a responsible way — with the hope of leaving a stable foundation for the future." He was pushing an open door at that gathering. The Council, an offshoot of the CFR, has representatives of JP Morgan Chase, Citigroup, Boeing and Goldman Sachs, as directors. Obama's wife Michelle also sits on the Council's board.

Having received the ruling class's blessing for it, Obama repeated the "wider struggle" line twice on the Senate floor in January. Obama may oppose Bush, but he in no way opposes imperialist war. He recently campaigned for the re-election of Joe Lieberman, an openly pro-war Senator.

Obama understands that a crackdown at home must accompany any military build-up. An advocate of "more cops on the street," Obama won the endorsement of the Illinois Fraternal

HOLLYWOOD HOPS ON OBAMA'S WAR WAGON

The media play a key role in shaping the militaristic ideology U.S. rulers now require. That's why Hollywood mogul David Geffen's funding shift from Hillary Clinton to Obama made front pages. Geffen's Dreamworks specializes in pictures that glorify the "Greatest Generation's" sacrifice in World War II. Its flag wavers include "Saving Private Ryan" and "Flags of Our Fathers" and on TV, "Band of Brothers" and "The Pacific War." Geffen's latest project is "Lincoln," a movie due out in mid-2008 and designed to influence the presidential election. It, of course, depicts one of U.S. capitalism's most effective wartime leaders. ☺



Between the years 2000-2001, the U.S. was clearly far ahead of China in its import of oil for consumption. In twenty years, China will surpass and become more reliant than the U.S.

Ultimately, the greatest potential for U.S.-Chinese armed rivalry lies in the Middle East. U.S. bosses are bogged down in Iraq while Iran's oil supplies still remain a coveted imperialist treasure. Iran, Saudi Arabia and Iraq control 65% of the world's cheap-to-pump oil reserves and the U.S. and China will soon be the world's two largest oil importers.

To secure its interests, China recently signed oil deals with Iran worth billions and China is the leading supplier of conventional arms to Iran. The U.S. Army War College's 2006 Strategic Challenges document means that China's intervention in Iran "destabilizes the region and actually threatens the continued supply of cheap oil."

In the dogfight between the U.S. and China, stakes are high and neither country's rulers will hesitate to shed workers' blood to protect and expand their profits worldwide. PLP learned from the revolutionary communist workers and youth who fought the "Red bourgeoisie" in China during the mid-1960s' Cultural Revolution. Today PLP is building an international movement to turn the imperialist war into a mass revolutionary struggle for communism, for a world without any bosses. ☺

systematically terrorize, torture, and murder Chicago's black workers. (See CHALLENGE, 1/17) Obama also seeks tighter immigration controls. In the Senate last May, he lamented that, "the number of workplace arrests of illegal immigrants fell from 17,552 in 1997 to 451 in 2002, even as illegal immigration grew." Obama wants a return to Clinton-era massive workplace raids that target immigrants at the point of profit, not just at the border. "The only way to effectively deter overstays is to reduce access to employment," he said.

Obama is not the answer to Bush. Every politician represents one faction or another of exploiters. Backing Obama lends support to the major U.S. capitalists' pursuit of wider wars. The real alternative, thus, lies outside the electoral system in building a party — PLP — that serves only the working class and has a revolutionary communist outlook. ☺

(Next: Obama's Early Years: A Ruling-Class Apprenticeship)

Corrections:

CHALLENGE readers were undoubtedly amazed to read in our Feb. 28 issue that the French Socialist Party's boss was working on New Year's Day, 2006. Rest assured — it was a misprint. The meeting in Angers at which she proposed doubling teachers' working hours was actually held on Jan. 21, 2006.

Also, the picture on page 7 of the same issue had a caption about New Orleans tenants re-occupying their apartments, but the picture actually depicted LAPD cops harassing residents of the East Los Angeles Ramona Gardens housing project after the cops had murdered one of their residents. Sorry about that. ☺

WHAT WE FIGHT FOR:

☆Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to smash capitalism — wage slavery. While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead:" capitalism is the real failure for billions all over the world. Capitalism returned to the Soviet Union and China because socialism failed to wipe out many aspects of the profit system, like wages and division of labor.

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

☆Communism means working collectively to build a society where sharing is based on need. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. Everyone will share in society's benefits and burdens.

☆Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of race.

Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women workers.

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

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

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fight back



ANTI-RACISTS GREET PL'ERS AT MARCH VS. KILLER KKKOPS

LOS ANGELES, CA, Feb 17 — Two weeks ago the police savagely beat 31-year-old Mauricio Cornejo, while handcuffed, at the public housing community Ramona Gardens. He died 45 minutes later in his cell. The police's racist "explanation" for beating him to death was that he was a gang member. Our plan was to visit Ramona Gardens and distribute flyers and CHALLENGES while making contacts.

We went door to door and had great conversations. We noticed a posted flyer announcing a "March for Peace" — "against violence and against police brutality" — to the Hollenbeck Police Station. We walked eagerly to the march assembly point and were greeted with open arms. (We'd been there before for protests against police terror).

Leadership was needed. "I have some posters; what should I write on them?" asked a young man. "Cops are the real terrorists," one of us suggested and then added, "Stop racist police brutality." Youth there wrote both on the posters. A "community representative," seemingly on the payroll of City Councilman Jose Huizar, appeared and tried to convince everybody to go straight to the police station, not march through the community, because the "television cameras would be there."

We helped transport many of the angry residents to a

nearby corner where the marchers congregated, discussing how the politician was only here to advance himself and Jose Huizar. Once there we helped organize the march to the police station. Residents made three paper banners: "LAPD ASESINOS A SUELDO"; "CORRUPT COPS"; and "QUEREMOS JUSTICIA Y PAZ." We pulled out a red flag from our car. A group of Aztec dancers led the march, but we led the chants, without a bullhorn, saying: "Policía, cochina, racista y asesina"; "Qué queremos..."; and "Policía, corrupta, estamos en la lucha." We failed to win the marchers to chant "Obreros, unidos, jamas seran vencidos." We led chants linking police terror to the war, and also "LAPD you can't hide — we charge you with genocide."

The march was very energetic as it moved through the streets to the police station. Throughout the march our only red flag was waved proudly. We distributed all our flyers plus nearly 200 CHALLENGES. Those who marched as well as those watching from their cars and houses eagerly asked for the leaflets and the paper.

Upon arriving at the police station, we formed a picket line directly in front. The sellout politician who tried to call off the march asked a youth to fold up the "F@# the police" sign he was carrying. But when the same person asked us to put away our red flag, many defended it. He didn't get his way and the flag was carried throughout the protest.

The marchers, while not won to our ideas, saw that the politician was only out for himself while we were there to work with them over the long pull. On the way back we discussed the significance of the red flag with the community members



and explained why the working class needed a long-term strategy relying on the workers to fight racism and destroy it with revolution and communism.

This march was a great experience, demonstrating that when we organize the work we need to do, opportunities arise; that we must always be prepared. The experience became even better when five of the marchers went to an immigrants' rights coalition meeting to discuss the struggle against police terror in Ramona Gardens and to ask for support to organize more action. When a phony "leftist" leader claimed the fight for better immigration bills was not related to police terror, his position was attacked and defeated.

These five women marchers were bold at the meeting and plan to continue coming to the coalition to fight for more action against police terror. All took CHALLENGES. One woman took five to distribute.

We're also trying to aid their plans for a future action. As part of the struggle to build multi-racial unity and ally students with workers, we'll bring more friends to upcoming protests against the racist murder of Mauricio Cornejo and police terror in Ramona Gardens. ☪

LAPD Racist 'Surge' Hits LA Workers

The ruling class is using its racist cops to terrorize working-class communities in the U.S. as they use their imperialist army to wage a racist war in Iraq, killing hundreds of thousands of Iraqis and thousands of GI's. A month ago, Connie Rice, liberal police reformer and director of the "Advancement Project" here, produced a plan designed to address gangs in LA, gangs the police have helped build. The plan identified 12 "hot zones" throughout the city, proposing gang intervention and job programs, as well as community oversight groups. But she also compared the situation in LA to the war in Iraq. "The LAPD knows how to surge and purge," Rice said. "But after the LAPD clears out a neighborhood, we don't know how to hold and build." (LA Times, 2/11) Rice sees our working-class communities as a war zone and our black and Latino youth as the enemy, having no problem with regular beatings, tortures and killings suffered at the hands of the racist cops, as long as they fall in line with the ruling class' racist war plans. ☪

Bosses Push Racism and Nationalism but

WORKERS AND YOUTH WANT MULTI-RACIAL UNITY

INGLEWOOD, CA, Feb. 10 — "Ethnic and racial tension comes to Los Angeles as regularly as the Santa Ana winds," proclaimed the New York Times (1/17/07). But racism is not a "force of nature." It is the bosses' deliberate policy, trying to use segregation, super-exploitation, and racist ideology to divide and exploit the working class.

Racist Police Chief Bratton seizes on every black-Latin incident as a "gang-related crime" and therefore as another excuse to escalate police terror against black AND Latin workers and youth. The rulers' media help him along by building fear in workers and youth of "other races" and promoting trust in the killer kkkops.

But workers are not so easily fooled. In a recent episode, three Latina high school students were attacked by black youths shouting racist insults. Rejecting the bosses' racism, they agreed to lead a "Unity Walk Against Racial Violence" together with a black woman whose son was killed by Latino gang-bangers. The Unity Walk was promoted by two DJs (one black, one Latin) and several black and Latino community groups.

About fifty people took part, a mix of black and Latino workers and youth, though only a few white people (not counting the media). Spirits were high as the marchers took their message to the streets of Inglewood, a working-class city near LA's airport with a median household income of only \$34,000, fairly evenly divided between black and Latin residents. Many were disappointed that the march was so short. They stayed around talking long after the organizers declared the event over. We distributed 30 CHALLENGES and engaged in serious conversations with many, including the crime victims' relatives who led the march.

The "community leaders" involved in this Walk organize based on nationalism, so they can only build "unity" through short-term, top-down coalitions. They offered only vague prayers and calls for "peace." In contrast, PLP came to the Walk as a multi-racial organization with a sharp working-class line on fighting racism. At times we were able to change the leaders' chant, "The People United Will Never Be Divided" to "The Workers United Will Never Be Defeated." However, we should have brought more friends to the event and taken more leadership "on the spot."

If workers and youth are not won to understand that fighting racism means fighting capitalism, they'll believe the bosses' lie that fighting racism means fighting for capitalism under nationalist and/or patriotic banners. In situations like this one, we have both a tremendous responsibility and opportunity to advance the fight for communism. ☪

High School Students Lead PLP Volunteers Aiding Katrina Victims

NEW ORLEANS, Feb. 25 — This past week twenty students and teachers from New York came here to help gut houses, build homes and witness firsthand the racist nature of capitalism in this city. Many students had never been here and were shocked by the miles of destruction. Volunteers who had come last summer were sickened by the minimal level of reconstruction that has happened since then and in the year and a half since the storm. The same rulers who spend hundreds of billions in their oil war in Iraq neglect the mostly black workers of New Orleans.

This was probably the first time CHALLENGE ever appeared at a Mardi Gras. The paper was very warmly received, as well as in the Lower 9th Ward and at several local shopping centers. All told several hundred papers were sold. One worker told us, "We need revolution now, not tomorrow!"

High school students led the evening meetings, analyzing events in New Orleans and sharing their feelings about their experiences. They worked collectively in both gutting homes and construction. Both young men and women learned new skills and were persistent in getting things right, even if they had to be done a few times. A tour with a local historian helped us learn more about the region's history.

One of the most moving parts of the trip was a tour of the devastated St. Bernard's parish outside the city. Here, hundreds of workers who fished for a living saw their lives wrecked by hurricane Katrina. Since capitalists had depleted the nearby wetlands and left workers on the lowest lying land in inadequate housing, there was no protection from the storm surge that swept this area like a tsunami. A tour guide told students that many of his friends who had survived the storm had committed suicide when they lost everything. One older volunteer responded to the destruction of the mostly white working-class community by noting how "important it was to see that the whole working class is suffering."

Still, the worst devastation was in the mostly black Lower 9th Ward where the industrial canal levee broke, releasing a tidal wave that leveled blocks. In this neighborhood, the city government

has repeatedly announced plans to confiscate land from homeowners unable to return. One group of volunteers helped a resident gut a home that was still standing closest to the levee breach. Although the house was structurally sound and ready to be gutted and rebuilt, the resident explained how the Army Corps of Engineers claimed the house should be bulldozed. The militancy of residents and volunteers, however, has beaten back such racist attacks.

Residents of the various public housing projects took similarly militant stances by forcefully moving back into their homes regardless of government plans to close all the city's units. On February 22, politicians testifying at a Congressional housing committee were repeatedly booed and heckled by the crowd for continuing to oppose public housing.

It's not surprising that much of the rebuilding is mandated to fall within what the ruling class of New Orleans and the U.S. deems acceptable. Habitat For Humanity's requirements — that residents pay \$75,000 and contribute 300 hours of unpaid labor in order to buy homes in the Upper 9th Ward — will be impossible for most residents who already lived there. The volunteers from this group (and others that are even far more geared towards removing obstacles inhibiting workers from moving back) have only scratched the surface of the reconstruction needed. Capitalism will never meet the needs of the entire working class, since it profits from driving down workers' living conditions wherever possible.

Volunteers received a positive response from workers who know from personal experience the desperate need to fight capitalism. Our group wants very much to return this summer and bring even more teachers and students. We agreed that New Orleans is an experiment in fascism and it's our duty to be on such front lines. Though we were unable to involve all the students and teachers in every activity, everyone has returned with a greater understanding of capitalism's failings, and our friends are more open to the idea of communism as an alternative. ☪



workers unite!

Global Rivalry Up, Auto Jobs, Wages Down

DETROIT, MI, February 14 — Three million factory jobs have been lost in the U.S. since the end of 2000, with a big chunk in the auto industry. DaimlerChrysler will now cut 13,000 more jobs in North America, 16% of its work force, and shut all or part of four plants by 2009. Daimler is also seeking potential buyers for the struggling Chrysler Group they bought nine years ago, though at the time it was called “a merger.”

Ford is cutting 38,000 jobs, GM another 35,000 and Delphi 10,000 more. Delphi, which is under U.S. bankruptcy protection, may still go to court and void their union contract and gut workers’ pensions. The UAW and Delphi are on a collision course for a September strike when the major auto contracts expire. The loss of almost 100,000 production jobs is staggering for the UAW.

Chrysler lost \$1.48 billion last year and Ford lost \$12.7 billion, the most in more than a century, while Toyota reported record profits and sales.

Contrary to UAW leaders’ story, U.S. factories are not being gutted by foreign competition, just U.S.-owned factories. Fierce global competition (inter-imperialist rivalry), has U.S. auto bosses retreating. But the U.S. manufacturing base remains relatively strong despite dozens of U.S. plant closings. According to the United Nations, the U.S. has maintained more than 21% of world manufacturing between 2000 and 2005, when U.S. factories produced a record \$1.5 trillion in goods.

In large part, this is because foreign-owned companies have invested billions in building U.S. factories. According to the Democratic Party research organization, the Progressive Policy Institute, foreign manufacturers invest billions more in the U.S. than U.S. manufacturers invest abroad. There are currently over 29,000 Toyota production jobs in the U.S. By the end of the current GM and Ford buyouts and plant closings, there will be more Toyota workers in the U.S. than either Ford or GM workers.

According to the UAW, more than 15,000 auto-related factories have sprouted up across the south since 2000. These include major assembly plants for Mercedes SUV’s and Toyota trucks in Alabama and Texas that pay over \$20/hour, and mostly small-parts suppliers from Kentucky to South Carolina that pay far less. The new Mercedes plant in Vance, Alabama pays about \$25/hour, while a small supplier plant just down the road pays about \$6/hour. While cities like Detroit, Flint and Toledo have been battered, eliminating jobs for many black workers, these southern-supplier plants also employ thousands of low-wage black workers. Every investment, “foreign” or “domestic,” means more robots and computers that allow the bosses to get more production than ever out of far fewer workers.

These industrial workers’ wages are becoming comparable with rates paid in Mexico, as the vast majority make between \$6 and \$12-an-hour with few benefits, if any. High productivity and plummeting wages spells industrial fascism. The auto and steel unions have become so much an arm of the domestic bosses that they must share their fate. The UAW has failed to organize one foreign-owned auto plant or parts supplier. How could they? What Toyota or Honda worker is going to join a union that is giving away 100,000 jobs and billions in wages and benefits to bail out their bosses?

The anarchy of capitalism (mergers in the 1990’s and dismantling them a decade later), plus the massive displacement and attacks caused by global restructuring, create many opportunities to build a mass, international PLP among auto workers. They are learning the hard lesson that union-won “reforms” which leave the bosses in power are only temporary under this system. Through the coming contract battles we must bring PLP to more workers, and win them to fight for communism.✪

VW Bosses Reap Billions, Workers ‘Reap’ Layoffs

BRUSSELS, BELGIUM, Feb. 27

—Thousands of Volkswagen workers struck for one day yesterday to protest a management ultimatum threatening to dump all 5,300



workers at the Forest plant near here unless the union agreed to a layoff of 1,800 and the remaining 3,500 work three more hours with no pay addition. Today, 76% voted for the only choice: “Do you agree or disagree?” The ultimatum was to produce Audis with longer hours and less pay or lose their jobs.

The company has taken the classic capitalist road. It has cut some 20,000 jobs overall (AP, 2/21) and introduced longer shifts in its German plants, all of which has produced a doubling of its profits in 2006. VW raked in \$3.6 billion last year, compared to \$1.45 billion in 2005. No wonder its stock rose 8%, to \$123 a share.

Amid fierce international competition in the auto industry, every company is fighting to maintain profits on the workers’ backs. Worldwide worker unity is needed to meet these attacks.✪

Racist UFT Hacks Attack Militant PLP Youth

NEW YORK CITY, Feb. 22 — At the February United Federation of Teachers’ (UFT) Delegate Assembly, PLP youth led a group of students with signs and a communist leaflet to address and influence a thousand teachers to overwhelmingly vote in opposition to military recruiters in high schools. In the aftermath of this groundbreaking action, a bit of confusion reigns among anti-war teachers as to whether President Weingarten, who invited the youth to address the crowd, is on the side of anti-war teachers. Recent events should clear up any illusions.

We expect to be harassed by management when we engage in this kind of struggle alongside students, and at least one principal began investigating the “unauthorized trip” with the help of a snitch delegate. But years of struggle at that school set the stage for teachers to fight back. The chapter chair, influenced by the fighting spirit of teachers and students there, stood up to the principal, declaring that what happens at the Delegate Assembly is “union business.”

If we buy the union leadership’s line, we might expect them to be on the side of the teachers and students against such principals. However, Weingarten and her cronies are conducting an investigation into whether the students who attended the trip had parent permission. Union leaders are calling local chapter chairs asking who invited the students and what their contact with PL is. One union representative insisted that the black and Latin students couldn’t have known “what imperialism is” without PL’s influence, a disgustingly racist assumption, especially considering that imperialism is discussed in the history curriculum.

One comrade filling in for a del-

egate at his school was contacted by his district representative, who asked why he voted. At that school the chapter chair commented that the union leadership should be as attentive when the staff has a complaint against the administration. Instead of defending teachers and students against management attacks, the union leadership is acting to enforce management’s regulations for them. The fact that these attacks against our forces are being made across district and borough lines indicates that this fascist “investigation” is being directed from the highest levels of the union bureaucracy.

For years PLP has observed that Weingarten is a leading character in a nationwide and long-standing trend where well-paid union bosses cooperate with management to set conditions for ever-intensifying exploitation of labor. We say the unions and the bosses are on the same side. This episode, where militant and educated youth were slurred in the most racist way possible, where the union hacks are more eager to crack down on students than even principals and deans are, reveals the truth of our analysis on union hacks perfectly. When we sharpen struggle, we force the liberals to reveal the fascist essence of their program. Now the task remains to spread news of Weingarten’s treachery broadly and deeply across the union as we build for May Day 2007, the place to be for all UFT anti-war teachers. ✪



Anti-Racism, Internationalism Big Victors in Airport Struggle

More than 2,000 metro area janitors, from downtown office buildings and a major Mid-West international airport, all members of SEIU, won some important gains in our new contract struggle, but our biggest victory was the anti-racist, internationalist nature of the struggle.

Ever since our contract expired December 31, workers have been preparing for a strike. Mass meetings and rallies culminated with more than 2,000 workers marching downtown on January 29.

The airport has the largest cleaning contract, making it a center of the struggle. The bosses pulled out all the stops to try to head off a strike there, including scare tactics against a largely immigrant workforce. They made sure we knew we could be fired and replaced if we struck. It is an international workforce, with workers from El Salvador, Ethiopia, Laos, Mexico, Nicaragua, Somalia and the U.S.

CHALLENGE readers and distributors led the way, having many struggles with our co-workers, favoring striking and opposing all scabs. We struggled for the need to fight the racist bosses. At an emergency union meeting, workers discussed an intimidating letter from the bosses. One worker said that if we don’t take on these racist bosses they will only oppress us even more. He said we are part of a long tradition of anti-racist fighters, from the civil rights movement in the U.S. to the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa. This struggle is not mainly about money, but mainly an anti-racist fight. CHALLENGE readers and distributors were able to link our struggle to similar fights of immigrant workers in France, and at DeGaulle Airport in Paris.

One of the biggest struggles occurred with a pocket of African workers who, fearful of losing their jobs, were threatening to cross the picket lines. African workers have been restricted to part-time status. The new contract will make them

all full-time workers, the culmination of a three year multi-racial, international struggle for full-time status.

More than 300 full-time jobs will be created and family coverage health care payments by workers will drop from \$500-\$1,800 a month to \$140 this July and to \$75-a-month in January 2009. Only 14 workers had family coverage under the old contract.

As it became clear the janitors were ready to strike, the Teamsters voted to honor our picket lines. The Teamsters and SEIU are partners in the new Change to Win coalition that left the AFL-CIO. Both unions have targeted the lowest-paid, mostly immigrant workers for organizing drives, boosting their numbers and dues check-offs without raising the living standards of their new members. A similar struggle had been “won” among janitors in Houston a few months ago.

Once the big downtown landlords and the airport commissioners started having visions of picket lines and no cleaning supplies, they pressured the cleaning contractors to settle.

However, one thing we know for sure. As long as the bosses hold power, they will take back every advance we make and we will never get off the treadmill of reform. We see the nearby Ford plant being boarded up and all those workers losing everything it took more than 70 years to win. We need to turn every anti-racist struggle into a school for communism around the revolutionary ideas of PLP, to abolish wage slavery. This fight has made this more possible. If we don’t solidify the internationalism and consolidate some of the political advances we made, by recruiting to PLP, they will be reduced to “thin economic gruel” and fade away.✪

fight for communism!



Oppression and Struggle Still Mark International Women's Day

EL SALVADOR — March 8 is International Women's Day (IWD), a day to mark the oppression, exploitation and struggles of women worldwide. But since the Triangle Shirt factory fire that killed 146 women garment workers in NYC on March 5, 1911 — which gave birth to IWD — capitalism and imperialism are still hellish for billions of women from Baghdad to Kabul to Central America. In El Salvador, women workers are not only victims of murder by criminal gangs and men won over by the bosses' anti-women culture, but they're also super-exploited at the maquilas (garment shops), the main source of jobs for women here.

According to an investigation ten years ago by Rosa Virginia Hernández of the Committee of Salvadoran Working Women, the Labor Ministry counted 57,000 women working in the maquilas, 65% of whom had no social insurance benefits, even though the companies deducted the payments from their wages. Things haven't changed much since.

The maquilas were first created in the 1970's in the free trade zone of San Bartolo, but only grew in the '90s after the end of the civil war here. Basically they offer no real chance for a decent life for their workers.

Despite many attempts by human rights and women's groups and some trade unions to improve conditions in the maquilas, not much has been accomplished. Now maquilas are actually hiring more male workers, raising unemployment among women even more. Today only 60-70% of all maquila workers are women compared to 80-90% a decade ago. Women working many years in

a plant don't get skilled training; the bosses prefer men, alleging "they take less days off."

Some plants have closed, with workers denied severance pay. In 2006, there was a reduction of 11-12% among textile maquilas, reducing jobs for women.

The ARENA government (virulently pro-U.S., the only Latin American government with troops in Iraq and one of the few remaining members of the "Coalition of the Willing") is resisting any pressure to alleviate this problem, saying it's the employers' responsibility. Meanwhile, a discussion in the National Assembly to change the Labor and Social Security laws (dating from 1971) is going nowhere.

The end of the civil war has brought no social peace to workers here; violent criminal gangs are rampant (many formed in the U.S.). Conditions for workers in general are horrendous. Meanwhile the FMLN (the former guerrilla group now turned into the second largest electoral party) talks and talks, just offering a "reformed-capital-



Workers march during the funeral of the victims of the Triangle Fire in New York City.

ism" "solution" — actually no solution at all.

We in PLP must redouble our efforts here to build a mass base among women and all workers, offering them the only way out of this capitalist inferno: communism. DESAFIO-CHALLENGE must become our ideological weapon in this battle. ☸

Inhuman Capitalism Fosters Myth of 'Human Nature'

New York Times' conservative columnist David Brooks (2/18) praises the false wing of biological science that claims humans are naturally and innately ready to "slit each other's throats." Only current "conventions and institutions," says Brooks, stop us. Of course, current "conventions and institutions" are capitalist, even though Brooks doesn't name them. He claims that attempts to rid the world of what is really capitalism will only worsen it, or, as he puts it, it's only to be "altered at great peril."

The pseudo-scientific writers whom Brooks praises include economist Thomas Sowell, linguist/psychologist Steven Pinker and insect biologist E. O. Wilson of *Sociobiology* infamy. They all contend — contrary to the claim by 18th century Swiss philosopher Rousseau that humans are born naturally good — that humans have evolved biologically, through natural selection, into naturally bad animals who need social rules to keep us from killing each other.

Both ideas are idealist and wrong. A materialist approach holds that humans are not naturally good or bad, but rather are shaped by our societies and by our specific roles in society. In particular, class-divided societies like capitalism shape us mainly by our social class. The capitalist class needs wars, genocide, racism, sexism, patriotism and religion to maintain its power and profits. It's not that capitalists are born naturally bad. It's that their class position forces them to be vicious thieves and killers.

Nor is it that the working class is naturally good. It's that our class position as victims of capitalist exploitation forces us to struggle to survive and in general to cooperate with each other in order to achieve that end — men and women, black, white, Latin, Native American, Arab and workers of all nations. Our subordinate class position also makes it both possible and necessary for us to struggle for a new social order — communism — to end all forms of capitalist oppression. But that end doesn't come naturally; it requires a revolutionary communist leadership to carry it out.

Brooks claims that science disproved Rousseau's assumption of innate human goodness. But he falsely raises to honorary scientific status researchers who never question the genetic basis of complex human behavior, even though scientifically provable alternative explanations are all around us. (See coming Summer 2007 issue of PLP's THE COMMUNIST MAGAZINE for related book reviews.)

When Brooks fears that attempts to change capitalist institutions would put us all "in great peril," he really fears that it would put the capitalist ruling class and its supporters, like Brooks and his phony scientists, at great peril. He calls instead for a "strong order-imposing state." So did Mussolini, Hitler, Franco and all fascists of the past and present, including the Democrats and Republicans of today.

Indeed, the very concept of an unchangeable human nature justifies the resort to fascism, the most open and violent form of capitalist oppression of the working class. For if workers' struggles to change the "conventions and institutions" of capitalism are certain to make everyone's life worse, then those who engage in struggles for liberation from these life-destroying "conventions and institutions" are the enemy of all humanity, justifying any and all methods used to prevent such struggles. The Bush administration uses a similar hideous excuse to justify the horrendous torture of Muslim captives, namely "to protect all of us from terrorism."

Brooks says that most people today agree with Sowell, Pinker and Wilson, but unfortunately for Brooks and his ilk, the international working class has the potential power to change the world, and to change our natures in the process. ☸

FBI Organized Nazi March

ORLANDO, FLORIDA, Feb. 15 — If there were any doubts that U.S. bosses are sponsoring blatant fascists, look no further than a march in February 2006 of 22 neo-Nazis through the black community here organized by an FBI informant, David Gletty. It triggered a major police mobilization to ward off 500 counter-protesters. The FBI has paid Gletty \$20,000 the past two years as he helped guide the Nazi group.

The Orlando Sentinel reported (2/15) that Gletty obtained the police parade permit on which he was listed as the "on-scene manager" and addressed the marchers while wearing the hated Hitlerite swastika armband. He later hosted a "victory party."

On a Nazi website, Gletty boasted that, "I got the permits and started the ball rolling....My crew and I got it done." He said, "I...had over-all authority for the event."

Bill White, head of another Nazi group, said in an e-mail that Gletty "did a lot for the cause.... If he was being sponsored by the FBI, then [we]...have a lot to thank the FBI for."

Gletty's FBI status was inadvertently exposed in a federal court hearing involving two white supremacists charged with conspiracy to distribute crack cocaine.

The episode raises the question of how many other KKK and Nazi rallies have been organized and led by FBI or other police agents. The fact that 300 cops were ordered out to protect the Nazis marching through a black community gives substance to the description of the police as the "Klan in blue."

While the main aspect of growing fascism exists in the bosses' assault on workers at the workplace, including the fascist Minutemen's anti-immigrant forays, the rulers use these tinhorn fascists to spread racism and disunity in the working class to act as a brake on workers' fight-back against the bosses' attacks. That's why PLP mobilizes multi-racial forces against these fascist scum wherever they rear their heads. ☸

Kids, Parents Back Day-Laborers, Oppose Anti-Immigrant Racists

Bergenfield, NJ, February 17 — Unitarian/Universalist Church members and their children demonstrated in the bitter cold in support of 35 day-workers. These workers have been facing the United Patriots who, like the Minutemen, try to stop hiring of immigrants, harassing bosses not to give them jobs. The enthusiasm of the Church members followed a Sunday School lesson on the terror the U.S. government is raining on immigrants from, Cactus, Texas to Freehold, NJ.

The children learned that at the Texas Swift & Co. slaughterhouses, 250 workers from Guatemala were recently deported. Families and thousands of others fled the town out of fear. Swift packaging plant has a history of firings and deportations, first against local workers, then Vietnamese, next Mexican and finally those from Guatemala. The children also learned that 80% of the renting families in Freehold will be forced onto the street, based on a new law that says renting to undocumented workers is illegal.

The bosses and their racist goons use the term "illegal" at their convenience. First they super-exploit these workers, making super-profits while using their youth as cannon fodder in their imperialist wars — just as they use racism against black workers. Second, they blame immigrant workers for the rotten conditions caused by the bosses themselves, in order to divide the entire working class and weaken our ability to fight for a better system. And thirdly, the bosses practice their fascist tactics (raids, terror) to be used eventually against any worker who dares to fight back.

To spread this communist analysis, we distributed CHALLENGE to the workers, one of whom asked, "How can I get more of these?"

We explained to them how the Minutemen in Long Island struck day-laborers in the face with bottles after pretending to offer work, while the assailants were protected by the police. We described how the cops attacked our protests which led to several PLP friends being arrested, beginning a year-long court battle. We won that fight, demonstrating our determination in our efforts to fight racism and fascism.

We plan more visits to Bergenfield and/or Freehold to show solidarity and support for these workers against the racist attacks by the United Patriots and the Minutemen. ☸

< letters >

Deserters Can Be Organized

"Deserter's Book Exposes Brutal Racist U.S. War Makers But Misleads Anti-War Soldiers" (CHALLENGE, 1/17/07) was an excellent book review that presented PLP's analysis of some very important issues. However, I think the review misses another aspect of this deserter question in expecting the deserter, Joshua Key, to have spontaneously acquired PL's political understanding of the root cause of the war and to have stayed in the army to organize rebellions.

The review later paints Joshua as a conscious enemy of the working class for making the wrong decision and letting the ruling class use his story to mislead soldiers and the working class in general.

The review correctly indicates that desertion has never stopped imperialist wars. Yet, desertion can become a mass phenomenon when the political understanding of soldiers and the working-class movement is low. Russia's communists faced this situation during World War I. They sent organizers inside the Czar's army to get soldiers to rebel but couldn't stop all the soldiers who wanted to desert.

Thus, what started as a trickle in early 1915 soon became an enormous river as hundreds of thousands of soldiers abandoned the front and flooded the cities. The Bolsheviks organized them into the Soviet of Soldiers and inspired them to play an important role in the 1917 revolution. However, the crucial role was played by active-duty soldiers and sailors who turned their guns against the bosses, having been won over by the Bolsheviks' organizers.

We shouldn't gratuitously make enemies of all deserters. We should correctly explain that deserting is not the solution and that the bosses' media will always use their stories to support the position of one set of capitalists or another. We should also make it clear that the revolutionary movement is always open for deserters, who, once struggled with, can accept some aspects of the Party's more advanced political ideas and become willing to contribute, according to their understanding and commitment, to the working-class struggle for communism.

But, if we want to harvest what the Bolsheviks did, we need to send organizers into the bosses' military. Only if soldiers have received PLP's full political analysis and have been struggled with and still consciously decide to oppose us and side with the ruling class — only then can they be considered enemies of the working class.

A Comrade

Bosses Re-use Stressed GIs to Fight Their Wars

The lack of workers' willingness to fight for the bosses forces the Army to send mentally ill GIs back into battle. The majority of soldiers returning from Iraq suffer from some type of illness, ranging from anger management issues to PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) to alcoholism. They're caused by what they did or saw while being in Iraq. Many fellow soldiers have told me stories about this.

One said what he remembers most is seeing Iraqi people tossing dead body parts into dump trucks. He recalls seeing dogs tearing at human flesh off dead bodies. He says that every night when he goes to sleep, he sees these scenes vividly, repeatedly. Only passing out after heavy drinking blots out these images. So now he drinks every night to fall asleep. And he just returned to Iraq for another tour!

Another soldier told me that once on a convoy his unit heard a popping sound and so began spraying the corner they

Youth Angered By New Orleans Oppression

Going to New Orleans was a bittersweet experience. It is full of grandeur and culture but this ended abruptly. Seeing the Lower 9th Ward and St. Bernard's Parish neighborhoods was heart-wrenching and bone-chilling. You realized that the government acts in a very inhumane manner. The levees in the Lower 9th are so frail and close to the houses that logically they cannot hold up against a hurricane. It was also amazing to see the oil refineries so close to the homes. The workers are constantly exposed to fumes and pollution. To see that after a year and a half, nothing, absolutely nothing, has been done was infuriating. The streets of New Orleans seem like a ghost town. To think that many families lost everything and to put oneself in the family's shoes is very emotional. No first-hand account can compare to actually experiencing the destruction.

Nevertheless, New Orleans rebuilds little by little. The Mardi Gras Zulu Parade was fun. The people have been through so much and yet still have hope. As you drive down certain streets you can see some rebuilding and feel the optimism.

Visiting New Orleans was an eye-

were passing with gunfire until they saw a body fall dead. When they stopped they realized they'd killed a kid; their commander ordered them to leave immediately. He said on another convoy, they missed a turn so had to do a U-turn on a busy street. As they turned, a machine gunner sprayed rounds at civilian vehicles that were not moving fast enough to get out of their way.

Still another soldier told me that his commander was "sick and tired of arresting people" and taking them to the F.O.B. (Forward Operating Base) for processing, so he ordered the troops to just kill them instead.

Soldiers continue to return with such experiences, mentally messed up. Then a year later they're back in Iraq.

Most soldiers who enlist for four years have two or three rotations. When they re-enter civilian society, they usually end up homeless or in jail. Additionally, soldiers returning home are increasingly involved in marital and child abuse.

The majority of soldiers I know hate the Army life. When they're in garrison they start drinking as soon as they're off until P.T. (physical training) formation the next morning. Alcoholism is the way of life here. Then when they're called back on tour, they don't really want to go (except some of the new soldiers).

However so far, the second-timers see it as something they must do and that soon they'll finish serving their time. They either see no alternative to this, or are too patriotic, racist and anti-communist to see that the real solution is to rebel against the commanders and smash the bosses.

Right now they try to get chaptered out of the Army for being mentally ill but the therapists are in the Army's pockets



opening experience. Not only did I learn about another state of the union, but also the reality of things and the certain discrimination in this "free" and "equal" country.

Student Volunteer 1

Eighteen months ago the people of New Orleans were victims of a hurricane that only the rich survived. Is that the way it's supposed to be?

I had the chance recently to go see what was going on in New Orleans. It was depressing and raised a lot of questions in my mind about the capitalist system we are living in. I realized that the government is not afraid to do whatever it takes to keep themselves rich and powerful while forgetting about those who are trying to live their lives with the little they have left.

It's even clearer to me that the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer. It has to stop because we live under one sun. Therefore, there should be equality for all.

Student Volunteer 2

and so deny their requests, give them pills and send them back to Iraq. It's a vicious cycle that will continue so long as the soldiers continue to fight the bosses' wars. The only true alternative is for rank-and-file PLP'ers to join and organize in the Army to show GIs that there is an alternative to the bosses' imperialist bloodbath — communist revolution.

Red Soldier

Colombia Workers March Against Fascism

Hundreds of thousands of workers marched in Bogotá, Colombia against the massive attacks by the narco-death squad capitalist government of President Alvaro Uribe (Bush's most loyal ally in South America). Pensioners, unemployed and social security (ISS) workers chanted "Down with Uribe, Up with the ISS," denouncing the plan to restructure social security and basically do away with its health plan and pensions, leaving hundreds of thousands of workers and their families essentially homeless and helpless. The privatization plan will make some bosses rich.

Meanwhile, the union leaders have not fought these attacks. In fact, they've helped the bosses by refusing to fight for new contracts for three years, accepting layoffs of 2,500 ISS workers. They've gone along with the rulers' plans under the guise of making the ISS "more viable," when exactly the opposite is taking place.

PLP'ers distributed a leaflet titled, "Capitalism is Harmful to Your Health," also exposing the opportunist union hacks. We sold DESAFIO-CHALLENGE while explaining to marchers that no matter if Uribe or some other goon is president, workers' interests will never be sat-

isfied under the profit system. Capitalism means war, corruption, death squads and massive attacks against workers. Joining PLP leads to a way out of this hellhole.

Red Worker, Colombia

GI 'Appeal' Signing Stirs Political Discussion

Recently Anthony, an Army National Guard soldier in my anti-war organization, and six other soldiers signed the Appeal for Redress from the war in Iraq.

Anthony had been asking people in his unit to sign the Appeal online, but he never got to talk about it at length and had little success. Then I gave him paper copies of the Appeal and Anthony talked to Jason, a mutual friend of ours and a fellow soldier in his unit.

At first Jason protested that appealing to Congress won't work and that the statement was too patriotic. Anthony called me up during drill and asked what I thought. Later that night I told him I agreed with Jason but still thought they should sign it and get their friends to sign it also.

I explained that the Appeal can be used to raise the idea of class solidarity with the troops who already signed it and we'd see who would stick their necks out and do something about the war instead of just talking. I also said they could struggle over the Appeal's reformism and nationalism.

Anthony agreed, but thought relying on military law to protect the signers wouldn't work. He thought he and the other signers should form a defense committee to back each other if the command harassed them.

The next day Anthony and Jason talked it over and Jason agreed that making the issue class solidarity — not pressuring Congress — was a good idea. Jason also insisted they needed to form a defense committee before Anthony even brought it up.

One soldier glanced at the Appeal and said flatly, "This isn't gonna work." Anthony and Jason said everybody else pretty much felt the same but they added, "We need to show that troops did something about the war and were part of a bigger movement, not that we expect the government to listen to us." Two different groups signed the Appeal together, all soldiers Anthony or Jason had known for years.

In one group the Appeal sparked a conversation about class interests and the draft. Most, but not all, believed that the Democrats wouldn't change anything. But one soldier felt that if Bush and Congress had children serving or had been in combat themselves, they wouldn't have started the Iraq war. Most in the group like Charles Rangel's idea of a draft because everyone would have to serve, even the politicians and upper-class kids.

"I said that even though some upper-class people would be in harm's way, most would be drafted as officers, not enlisted," Anthony recalls. He noted that some in the Bush administration have served in combat and that it wouldn't make any difference if the upper class served or not — workers would still be fighting for the bosses' benefit.

Jason said some agreed, some didn't, but all gave it serious thought. The conversation turned to whether hard work or exploitation actually brought success, but political debate was temporarily interrupted when they had to get back to work.

Anthony says the Appeal helped bring the signers closer to each other. "Each of us knows we can look to each other if the command decides to harass us," he told me. Raising the issue of the Appeal also led us to put anti-imperialist and class politics up front. The next step is to show

< letters continued >

CHALLENGE to more soldiers, build stronger social ties in between drills, and bring the signers to PLP events.

Red National Guard Soldier

COUNTY STRUGGLE NEEDS VISION OF THE FUTURE

The recent struggle against clinic cutbacks at Cook County Hospital in Chicago — a testament to the many years of hard work and dedication on the part of communist and anti-racist fighters there — is a tremendous opportunity for building the Party.

But the recent CHALLENGE articles (1/31 and 2/14) don't fully reflect this opportunity. They're very clear on how racism and imperialism are really responsible for these deadly attacks, and contain a call to build PLP and for communist revolution.

But there's virtually nothing in these articles about our communist politics on health care. For example, in a communist world:

- Health care will be free, not in any sense a part of wages. No nonsense about co-pays and deductibles. No workers turned away or discouraged from going to the doctor because they don't have insurance or can't pay.

- The Party will guarantee that the fruits of workers' labor are directed — as one of the highest priorities — to providing effective, safe health care for all workers and their children. No health care cutbacks to line the bosses' pockets or finance imperialist wars.

- Many millions of health workers will be trained to provide (at no cost!) information on, and care for, high blood pressure, obesity and diabetes, AIDS prevention and so on. The barefoot doctors in China are an early example of what can be done.

- Mass prevention campaigns, based in schools, workplaces and neighborhoods will be mounted against AIDS, cancer, heart disease, diabetes and substance abuse. Again, the Chinese communist successful mass campaign against schistosomiasis is something to learn from.

- Older workers and those with chronic illnesses, as well as alcohol and drug abuse problems, will receive the care they need and deserve. They won't be left to die by the likes of racist "Dr." Robert Simon.

These are just a few examples, a broad outline, of what health care will be like in a communist society. We should not lose sight of the many years of struggle that will be necessary to achieve communism. The exact form of communist health care, born out of the crucible of these many years of struggle, is yet to be determined.

Meanwhile, when we're locked in battle with the bosses over even the most basic health care, as at Cook County, these ideas could be directly linked with the struggle — in leaflets, speeches, conversations and CHALLENGE articles (which could include website links to earlier articles about health care in China or from other articles in CHALLENGE or the COMMUNIST magazine).

Hopefully, this is of some value to our Cook County comrades engaged in the difficult but all-important task of resolving the contradiction between reform and revolution.

Red Doc

Active-Duty GIs Support Anti-War Soldiers

It's no secret that a great many U.S. military personnel — especially enlisted people — want the U.S. out of Iraq now. Increasingly, the anti-war movement here is organizing to support war resisters. This includes pacifists who, not long ago, shuddered at the thought of talking to active-duty GIs.

However, pacifist politics celebrate individual soldiers who declare themselves "conscientious objectors" (COs), and use those grounds to "opt out" of the war.

Instead of encouraging effective collective struggle against imperialism, pacifism fosters personal self-righteousness, which does not impede the warmakers. If workers follow pacifism, it leaves them defenseless in the face of capitalism's incessant attacks, and completely contradicts the working class's eventual need for armed insurrection through which it can take power to run society in their own class interest.

This contradiction is evident in the support campaign for Agustin Aguayo, who joined the Army as a medic shortly before the U.S. invaded Iraq. A year later, he changed; he is now a CO. He was sent to Iraq anyway. After talking with GIs in his company, Aguayo and his best buddy refused to load their weapons. Their whole unit knew they opposed the war. At the end of their tour, everyone in the unit got a medal, except Aguayo and his buddy.

But strikingly, the other guys gave their medals to these two anti-war soldiers! Clearly they respected the pair's stand. The main lesson of the Aguayo case is the *potential* for organizing active-duty military people to rebel *collectively*.

Last September, with the unit about to redeploy from Germany to Iraq, Aguayo's CO application was under federal appeal. He went AWOL, then turned himself in to face court-martial. Instead, he was told he'd be sent to Iraq in chains! Aguayo went AWOL again, held a press conference in Los Angeles, and then went with a caravan of supporters to turn himself in again. He is now in pre-trial confinement in Germany, where

the German pacifist movement is planning demonstrations outside his court-martial in March.

Instead of focusing on the potential for *collective* anti-war resistance and rebellion *inside* the military, the pacifists are building up Aguayo as an *individual* hero because he wants out. They have seized hold of his legal defense to make a test case about official CO status. They're silent about what might have happened if Aguayo had returned to Iraq with his unit and tried to organize them into a collective protest (although we don't know exactly what Aguayo's relation was with his fellow GIs).

PLP's communist strategy stands in sharp contrast. Whether we're fighting ROTC or supporting resisters, we can't simply echo the liberal idea that "recruiters lie, you might die" or the pacifist view that people of faith must "say no to war and violence." We need to inform our friends that GI revolts played a large part in defeating U.S. imperialism in Vietnam, and that these revolts often involved violent acts of sabotage and "fragging." Further we need to talk about the important role of soldiers in the 1917 Russian revolution. (What might Aguayo have done had he been presented with these ideas?)

We need to encourage reliance on working-class youth, especially the many young black and Latin soldiers who've been victims of racism inside and outside the military, even while the bosses indoctrinate them with anti-Arab racism. Whether or not PLP's ideas are popular — and our experiences both among soldiers and within pacifist organizations suggest that they may be more popular than we think — we must explain that building an anti-imperialist, revolutionary movement inside the military is a crucial step, not only toward ending the U.S. occupation of Iraq, but toward ending the bloody capitalist system and its wars forever.

A Comrade



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

74 little wars now — big ones due

Some say that "little" brushfire wars — there are 74 in progress around the world — are the only wars there will be in future — and that the age of great wars has passed. I am not one of those people. There is too much tinder lying around and there are far too many firebrands, Competition between states...is not diminishing, it is increasing.... (GW, 3/1)

US aims guns at Africa's oil

This week's US decision to create a new Pentagon command covering Africa, known as Africom has a certain unlovely military logic...

With Gulf of Guinea countries, including Nigeria and Angola, projected to provide a quarter of US oil imports within a decade, with Islamist terrorism worries in the Sahel and Horn of Africa, and with China prowling for resources and markets, the US plainly feels a second wind of change is blowing, necessitating increased leverage....

The U.S. is becoming, de facto, the self-appointed global policeman it said it never wanted to be . . .

Africom marks the official arrival of America's "global war on terror" on the African continent. It is a wonder it took so long. (GW, 2/22)

US plans a weak, obedient Iraq

The Iraqi Air Force once boasted more than 500 combat aircraft. Now it has around 20 helicopters and planes and has barely figured in discussions on rebuilding the Iraqi security forces.

There are no fighter planes in the current fleet and

none are expected in the next few years at least, indicating that the United States will be responsible for air defenses here for some time to come.

"In that part of the world, what you call a territory without a couple hundred fighter planes is a protectorate".... (NYT, 2/5)

War profiteers don't fear Dems

...The Iraq attack has been awfully good for one group: Pentagon contractors. For the makers of weapons, profits are up, stock prices are soaring, taxpayer dollars are gushing their way, and there is no end in sight for the "good times" that they are enjoying....

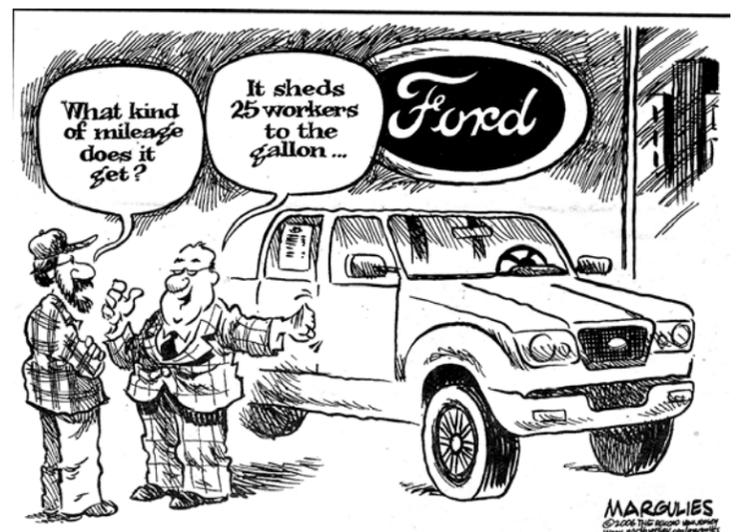
But what about those pesky Democrats...threatening to investigate war profiteering? No problem—corporate lobbyists note that Democrats, like Republicans, take campaign funds from these same contractors.... As one industry analyst smugly puts it: "I think Democrats will be on good behavior as long as the war continues." (Jim Hightower, 2/8)

Plan for Iran is a wormy can...

So here's the score: if we bomb Iran, the world will be a more dangerous place. If Iran gets the bomb, the world will be a more dangerous place. Conclusion: the world is likely to be a more dangerous place. (GW, 2/22)

Dems beat Bush to big-Army plan

President Bush...endorsed Defense Secretary Robert



M. Gates' recommendation that 92,000 troops be added to the Army and the Marine Corps.

Some Democratic leaders have expressed support for the idea. Rep. Rahm Emanuel of Illinois, chairman of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, said he was glad the president "has realized the need for increasing the size of the armed forces...but this is where the Democrats have been for two years." (LA Times, 1/27)

Human rights: a lower-half view

We tend to think of human rights in terms of a right to vote, a right to free speech, a right to assembly. But a child should also have a right not to suffer agony because of a worm that is easily preventable, as well as a right not to go blind because of lack of medication that costs a dollar or two, even a right not to die for a lack of a \$5 mosquito net. (NYT, 2/28)

Pacifism won't help the oppressed

Violence is immoral, the argument goes, so by not defending themselves pacifists can claim a moral victory, shaming their opponents into submission. The flaw in this is that it assumes the opponent is capable of experiencing shame at his actions. Often the only dilemma pacifists pose to aggressors is how to dispose of so many corpses. (GW, 3/1)



Global Warning: Capitalism Destroying Our Planet

Many of us were concerned about this past December's abnormal weather—amazingly warm in the north-east and snow in Mexico. Many grumbled about global warming. Some began to worry the Earth was changing and life wouldn't be so good for their grandchildren. What is the truth?

First, let's get it straight that it's not our fault.. Capitalism and capitalist scientists are quick to argue that if we recycle, drive more energy-efficient cars, use mass transit, appeal to our governments to do the "right thing" then all of our environmental problems will be solved. What a lie! A system which is based on the profits of the few has the nerve to blame the billions of struggling workers! We don't decide what to produce, how to generate energy, whether to produce cars or build mass transit, nor do we create all the waste that capitalism produces.

The Earth is warming—an increase of 1°F during the twentieth century. One degree doesn't seem like much, but chunks of ice the size of Rhode Island have broken off ice fields in Antarctica and large chunks of ice are melting in the Arctic. Glaciers present on mountains longer than anyone can remember are starting to melt, and it is projected that they will disappear within the next century. Birds' migration patterns change, flowers bloom sooner than usual, causing problems in agriculture.

Some people claim that we don't know if there is actually a change. They argue that there have always been cycles of hotter climates and then ice ages; mild hurricane seasons and then really bad hurricane seasons. Exxon-Mobil is spending billions "proving" that climate change isn't happening. However, thousands of scientists, working together on the UN-sponsored Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) argue that no honest debate exists: global warming is a fact, the Earth's climate is in danger, and something has to be done. There have been many variations in the earth's temperature in the past, but the temperature range has been relatively narrow (~5c/10f) even when comparing ice ages with periods of warming. The problem is that capitalism's recklessness now threatens to produce a greater climatic

disruption than ever before.

The Earth is the only planet in our solar system which can support life. There are two primary reasons: water is present in three forms, liquid, solid and gas all the time, and we have what we call "the greenhouse effect." The greenhouse effect is positive: as radiation (energy) from the sun strikes the Earth's surface, warming the Earth, some of the radiation bounces off the Earth's surface and heads back into space. If it continued into space the Earth would be a lot cooler (averaging about 0°F) but because it is stopped by greenhouse gas molecules it is returned to Earth, warming it enough to support life (the average temperature on Earth is 59°F).

The problem is the increased amount of the "greenhouse gases", carbon dioxide and methane, in the atmosphere. This unnatural increase in the greenhouse gases is causing more radiation to be held near the Earth, warming it even more. Since pre-industrial times, the atmospheric concentration of carbon dioxide has increased by 31 percent. The amount of methane in the atmosphere has increased 151% in the same period. The increased carbon dioxide comes from increased use of fossil fuels (coal, oil and gas) due to industrialization. The methane comes from rice paddies and from cattle.

The increase in temperature causes a number of serious problems. The ice in the poles and glaciers melts into the oceans, causing the sea levels to rise and flood low lying areas. Most human populations live on the coasts or along rivers; therefore many, many millions of people are threatened. Increasing the temperature on the planet changes the weather. Already we're seeing more serious storms, with flooding, in southern Asia, droughts in many places, Australia is facing a water shortage now, and of course, the changes this winter already mentioned.

Many of the arguments about global warming represent different groups of capitalists. While some companies look to profit from alternative energy sources, most capitalists are unwilling to accept the costs of reducing emissions and production of greenhouse gases. Ever sharpening imperialist competition and capitalism's drive

for maximum profits means that we can only end global warming and other environmental problems by replacing the anarchy of capitalism with social planning organized by the working class—communism—that puts people's needs first. ☺

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Denounce Blair's Troop Scam

LONDON,
February 24

— Tens of thousands protested here and in Glasgow, Scotland



demanding withdrawal of all British troops from Iraq and the scrapping of the planned £76 billion replacement program for Trident nuclear missiles. The marchers viewed Blair's announcement of a British pullout from Basra, Iraq as a ploy, since more UK troops will be sent to the other imperialist war in Afghanistan, where U.S.-UK-NATO forces are also being bogged down.

Two NYC PL'ers visiting relatives in London distributed a leaflet with the CHALLENGE story (2/28) describing the action of students at the NYC teachers Delegate Assembly where the youth won teachers to oppose military recruiters in high schools. Our comrades had great discussions with the marchers (more next issue).☺

PLP HISTORY

PLP Defied Bosses' Nationalism in '68 SF Student Strike

(Part III on PLP's activities within SDS)

The ideological struggle within SDS sharpened after PLP and the Worker-Student Alliance Caucus had defeated the right-wing's attempt to expel PL at the June 1968 national convention.

The debate over the identity and role of the working class became an argument over the issue of nationalism. The right-wing followed the old communist movement's line that nationalism could be progressive or reactionary, depending on the identity of the nationalist. This view says the nationalism of the oppressor (U.S. imperialism, French colonialism, etc.) was obviously reactionary; however, the nationalism of the oppressed (the Vietnamese people, or victims of racism in the U.S.) could serve the cause of revolution.

Until the mid-Sixties, PLP had endorsed this position. However, an analysis of international class struggle and a self-critical examination of our own practice (including the 1966 NYC transit strike and other union struggles) led us to conclude that even the most militant anti-imperialist

fascistic San Francisco Police Department. PLP members were among the courageous strikers and strike leaders during these confrontations.

However, the political content of the strike was fatally flawed. Rather than organize around a program of anti-racist, anti-imperialist demands, which could have clarified the class content of the university and moved the strike leftward, the SFSU Third World Liberation Front and Black Students Union called for an "Ethnic Studies Department."

In a different form, this was the same anti-working class content that the right-wing had pushed in demanding "liberation classes" at Columbia in the spring of 1968. SFSU was and remains a capitalist institution; with or without an ethnic studies department, it would continue to serve the bosses. In fact, such a department could only hurt the movement by promoting illusions about the system's ability to reform itself.

At first, the PLP club at SFSU endorsed the strike's bad demands. The Party's new line on nationalism hadn't yet been fully discussed and understood, and in the heat of battle, the comrades on the front lines thought that they were acting correctly in merely giving bold tactical leadership.

PLP's chairperson in New York, recovering from major surgery, heard about the SFSU struggle and talked to the PLP student organizer, telling him: "This Party's not going to capitulate to nationalism. Go to San Francisco and try to win the club and leadership to a better line." The student organizer did so, and, in the heat of the strike, carried out a successful political struggle within the club.

The SFSU PLP club demonstrated great determination and courage in the face of attempted intimidation, threats and physical violence, some of it from cops and some from ruling-class agents within the strike. The bosses recognized that even the most militant struggle could be tamed and brought under control if it was led by nationalist politics. The only real danger was PLP's line.

'This Party's not going to capitulate to nationalism. Go to San Francisco and try to win the club and leadership to a better line.'

nationalism was a thin disguise for all-class unity behind a boss, and that revolutionaries must therefore reject it.

The struggle was far from purely theoretical. In November 1968, students at San Francisco State University (SFSU) launched a strike that was to last five months, the longest in the history of the U.S. student movement. Thousands participated. In purely tactical terms, it involved some of the most violent struggle of the period, often pitting the strikers in pitched battles against the

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When the Party began opposing both the ethnic studies demand and nationalism in general, the right-wingers and ruling class forces within the movement intensified the anti-PL red-baiting and intimidation.

Nonetheless, the Party stuck to its guns. We didn't win on the issue; the strike ended in March 1969, after the SFSU administration had agreed to create an Ethnic Studies Department, which exists to this day. Two of PLP's main leaders received prison sentences of several months for their strike activity.

But the Worker-Student Alliance and the Party grew both numerically and qualitatively in the wake of this struggle. Student strikers joined PLP. Most importantly, the Party had moved to the left on the crucial question of nationalism and learned to advance under attack. The ideological struggle within SDS was about to sharpen still further, and this political baptism of fire had toughened the Party and would serve it well in the year ahead.☺

(Future articles: PLP publicly criticizes revisionism in Vietnam; the 1969 Harvard strike; the Chicago "split" convention; the Campus Worker-Student Alliance; and key lessons of the SDS period.)