

CHALLENGE



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Hi-Tech: Weapons of Mass Control

Every holiday season the bosses push their new line of technology commodities onto the working class. iPhones, Blackberries, Wii and X-Box bring in big bucks. At the same time social networking programs like MySpace, Facebook, YouTube and blogs have been praised as the “democratization” of the Web, giving voice to anyone with access to a computer, the bosses use this ability to more tightly control workers as they face increasing rivalry from growing imperialist powers and engage in wars for oil.

NEW TECHNOLOGIES AND FASCISM

The Bush Administration used the 9/11 attacks to institute fascism under the guise of the PATRIOT Act and Homeland Security. The government controls the Internet in the U.S. with measures that can trace what information people are seeking and who they are speaking to. Programs have been created to track certain words and phrases so that they can be filed for future use. In airports, records retrieved by privacy advocates and reported in WIRED magazine (09/20/07) reveal that Homeland Security tracks information and stores it in databases about people, from their “race” to their reading material.

Locally in the schools, we saw police brought in as security guards; and metal detectors and now cameras are becoming the norm in every school. The City of New York now wants to install a closed-circuit camera system similar to London, so they can do facial scans for particular people. New York City hopes to install 3000 cameras by 2010 (Christian Science Monitor, 07/11/07).

FIGHTING FASCISM AND BUILDING A BASE STILL KEY

Last month New York City cab drivers struck, in part because they did not want Global Positioning System (GPS) mechanisms placed in the car. They knew that the bosses would use this technology to track the cab drivers and push to exploit them more.

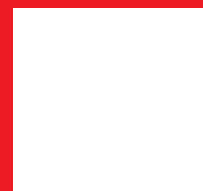
More workers need to follow this example and stand up to the bosses’ tactics. In Nazi Germany, workers did not wake up one morning to full-blown fascism, but they had not fought the gradual addition of more racist laws until too late. U.S. bosses are counting on keeping us passive as they add more and more oppressive technologies and laws.

The ruling class needs to continue to win workers to their fascism. They are using rhetoric (their campaign “See Something, Say Something” for instance) about terrorism, immigrants “stealing jobs,” and crime prevention to convince workers that all these cameras, metal detectors and phone tapping is for our own good. They want us to accept that workers in other countries or of other “races” are our enemy.

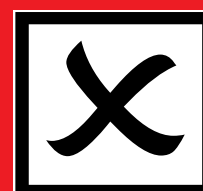
The working class wants technology to make our lives easier. The bosses use technology to make profits, control markets for imperialism and oppress the workers. New technology can speed up production for increased profits and create layoffs, it can improve the bosses’ ability to wage war abroad and it can make life hell for workers. The bosses can use technology to track our every move and they want us to know this, to be afraid and to accept it as a

continued on page 4

LIBERAL RULERS ON IRAN WAR:



NOW



LATER

The recent revelation that Iran has suspended its nuclear weapons program for the last four years marks a step towards, not away from, wider war in the Middle East. Policy-makers representing the liberal, imperialist wing of U.S. rulers dropped the Iran bombshell in order to hamstring the remaining neocons in the lame-duck Bush administration. The liberals want to prevent Cheney & Co., whom they view as inept war makers, from launching an undermanned, unilateral military strike on Iran in their administration’s last year.

With the U.S. war machine bogged down in Iraq, the liberal rulers are buying time. They hope a Democratic president can mobilize the vast forces — both U.S. troops and allies — needed for inevitable clashes not just with Iran but with rivals China and Russia. Toning down the U.S.’s image as a racist torturer (while in no way eliminating actual torture) is crucial to this process. That’s why a “new and improved” liberal-led CIA revealed that the corrupt, incompetent old necon CIA had, back in 2005, destroyed videotapes of torture at Guantanamo.

LIBERALS TRY TO REMAKE DIS- CREDITED CIA FOR WAR EFFORT

The “December Surprise” on Iran comes not from the White House but from a spy apparatus, once discredited for its Iraq weapons-of-mass-destruction fiasco but newly rehabilitated by imperialist liberals. Ray Takeyh, an Iran expert at the Rockefeller-led imperialists’ Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), boasted, “The intelligence community surprised everyone, including the Bush administration” (CFR website, 12/04/07). The liberal NY Times joined the chorus of praise: “The new national intelligence directorate is analyzing information more rigorously” (12/09/07).

Key to this pro-imperialist transformation has been Gen. Michael Hayden, CIA chief since 2006. Hayden serves the liberal wing. Bill Clinton chose him to direct the National Security Agency in 1999. His mentor in the Air Force was Gen. Charles Boyd, formerly executive director of the Hart-Rudman commission, which outlined U.S. capitalism’s plans for world domination for the next 25 years.

Boyd penned a Wall Street Journal op-ed piece, “A Symphony for Hayden” at the time of his protégé’s CIA appointment last year. It was Hayden who blabbed about the Guantanamo torture tapes to pin the blame on Bush die-hards and cast his own crew as “reforming” white knights. Liberal Sen. Jay Rockefeller, while condoning torture, backs Hayden’s whistle-blowing because waterboarding “however well-intentioned, plays into the hands of our enemies” (NYT, 12/08/07). However, the Democrats were

briefed about waterboarding back in 2002 and said nothing.

LIBERALS WANT TO BUY TIME FOR IRAN WAR...

Mobilizing the U.S. militarily and building popular support for its wars are the chief tasks the liberal rulers lay upon the next President. CFR chairman Richard Haass told National Public Radio (12/08/07), “The new president will inherit a tremendously complex world and a U.S. less well-positioned to deal with it because our military is stretched and worn down and because of anti-Americanism.”

The liberals understand that Iran won’t be a quick “hit-and-run” job. Robert Blackwill, counselor at the CFR writes, “If diplomacy fails and the U.S. attacks Iran’s nuclear facilities, the result would likely be a long war, as Tehran isn’t likely to surrender. Such use of force would also further destabilize the Middle East, inflame the Islamic world, strengthen terrorist forces everywhere and would probably produce attacks on the American homeland” (Wall Street Journal 12/6/07). So, to give the rulers time to militarize the U.S., the new intelligence estimate sets the timetable for action beyond the Bush gang’s term, declaring, “Iran will achieve nuclear weapons capabilities somewhere between 2009 and 2015.”

...BUT MAY STRIKE SOON

Robert Gates, the liberals’ replacement for Rumsfeld (Gates has worked for the Baker-Hamilton commission and the CFR), said there was no telling when the pretext for a U.S. invasion would arise. “Iran could restart those efforts at any time.” At a recent conference in Bahrain, Gates urged U.S. Mid-East allies to “develop regional air and missile defense systems” and maritime security to prepare for war against Iran. He promised that the U.S. was hell-bent on expanding its war for control of the region’s oil. “The United States remains committed to defending its vital interests and those of its allies in Iraq and in the wider Middle East” (NY Times, 12/09/07). “Vital interests” has been code for Mid-East oil ever since Jimmy Carter used the term in his Carter Doctrine and began the military build-up to secure it after the 1979 Iranian ayatollahs’ ouster of the Shah, a U.S. puppet.

All the Democratic candidates seek to meet their capitalist masters’ needs in ways that will shed even more workers’ blood. Supporting any of them would be a grave error. The course for our class must be to join and build the revolutionary communist Progressive Labor Party, which has the long-term outlook of destroying the profit system and its ever-deadlier wars. ☸



Mortgage Scam Fuels Bosses' Crisis, Puts Workers in Hock

"Sub-prime mortgage" defaults. A "credit crunch." Wild stock market swings. Swiftly changing economic forecasts. CEOs falling faster than U.S. bridges. All this occurring amid U.S. bosses' imperialist wars in Iraq and Afghanistan (see editorial on front page) costing trillions of dollars — alongside intensifying competition with imperialist rivals — putting even greater pressure on their developing economic crisis and driving them to squeeze workers' living standards even more.

What's behind it all? What does it mean for the working class, students and soldiers? And how does it affect the outlook for communist revolution?

The capitalist economic system requires the extraction of surplus value from the working class (see box), particularly in basic industries — steel, auto, oil refining, aerospace, chemicals, machine tools, etc. U.S. bosses have stolen literally trillions of dollars from the labor power of the working class over the last 150 years, especially through the use of racism and sexism to extract super-profits by even further lowering wages and working conditions for black, Latino and Asian workers.

But capitalism has limitations and laws. Competition forces more and more capitalists to invest greater amounts of their capital in machinery and technology, needing fewer workers, the very source of their surplus value.

As profits shrink, bosses cut costs, through laying off workers and moving operations from higher-wage areas (the U.S., Europe, Japan) to successively lower-wage areas (first Mexico, then China, then Vietnam). But no matter where they move, two obstacles confront them — working-class struggle for better conditions, and continued competition from other bosses. The former puts upward pressure on

How Bosses Profit Off Our Labor

In the article on page 6 entitled "The Bosses Keep their Profits Safe, Not the Workers," an industrial worker reports, "We get paid under \$10 an hour and each day we produce 800 vehicles that sell for \$40,000 each." Therein lies the secret of capitalist exploitation, discovered by Karl Marx.

For example, during an 8-hour shift, a worker produces a certain amount of value, but out of that value comes the bosses' profits, the cost of buying the machinery, the interest paid to the banks for the bosses' loans, the bosses' other costs for utilities, transpor-

tation, as well as the worker's wages.

So, while the worker might produce \$80 value in an hour, he or she is paid \$10 an hour, or one-eighth of the value that worker produces. The difference between the value that wage represents and the total value produced is what Marx called the "surplus value," out of which comes the bosses' profits.

The less the boss can spend on the cost of labor, the greater the bosses' profits. And the bosses use racism to cut wages still further, reaping super-profits. The workers noted above, paid less than \$10 an hour, are producing \$32 million worth of vehicles per day!

Only when workers produce solely for the collective needs of our class — not for the bosses' or bankers' profits — will workers reap the full value of what we create. That's communism.✪

wages; the latter forces more consolidation, automation and layoffs.

Consequently, the capitalist class, including rich investors (who front money for company stock and bonds) and the banks (which make huge loans to businesses), has no productive place to invest. Because capitalists are always competing against similar groups of thieves, they're never satisfied with less than the maximum return on investment. Cut-throat competition is the only way to remain in the game. As Karl Marx said, "One capitalist kills many."

So these rich thugs turn to unproductive, speculative, increasingly bizarre investments. The latest is "collateralized debt obligations" (CDOs). These are groups of mortgages, sold as a package by a mortgage broker or company, usually first to a commercial bank, and from there to pension funds, hedge funds, or insurance companies.

The Federal Reserve was part of this game. To get out of the 1999-2000 recession, borrowing rates were cut to historic lows. Former Fed. Chief Alan Greenspan encouraged the development of new and "unconventional" ways of financing home purchases. So the market was flooded with low-rate, "sub-prime" mortgages, with wildly adjustable rates and other gimmicks. Unsuspecting home buyers were caught in a trap: "High-interest loans [were] foisted on borrowers who qualified for lower rates.... The Wall Street Journal found 55% of subprimes 'went to people with credit scores high enough to often qualify for conventional loans with far better terms.'" (NY Times, 12/10)

CDO advocates used mathematical models to "prove" they were "risk-free." Then security-rating firms gave them high ratings ("safe investments"). They were further guaranteed by credit guarantee insurance companies. A buyer stampede led to huge numbers of CDOs.

For banks this scheme did not tie up their capital. Instead of waiting 30 years to reap full profits from a long-term mortgage, bankers got immediate returns from selling packages of mortgages to CDO buyers. They then re-lent the money to reap even more interest/profit (including back to these same CDO buyers!). As CDOs became touted as great investments, real estate prices skyrocketed. This, in turn, led to further loans, made by the banks based on the inflated property values. At the height of the CDO mania, a single dollar of "real" capital was supporting \$20 to \$30 of loans (see <http://articles.moneycentral.msn.com/Investing/SuperModel.s?AreWeHeadedForAnEpicBearMarket>).

Now the capitalist media is "protesting" — "What were they smoking?" asks Fortune Magazine. Speculative investment is an attempt to escape the fundamental laws of capitalism. But such con games only increase the economic instability inherent in the profit system.

We have no crystal ball. But several things are clear. The bosses are now desperately trying to fix things on the backs of the working class. Currently, 2.5 million mortgages are delinquent; 800,000 of

those are in foreclosure. This has hit black and Latino home-buyers especially hard as the racist bankers enticed them into loans with even more exorbitant interest rates.

The rulers' legislative scheme to "help" distressed home buyers is still one more scam: "Only a small fraction of subprime borrowers will qualify for relief and many...will eventually face foreclosure anyway. [Treasury Secretary] Paulson's plan entirely focuses on reducing investor losses....It does nothing for the victims of predatory lending." (NY Times, 12/10)

The Fed. Chairman and Paulson are now admitting the economy isn't quite so rosy. In reality, none of the bosses' pundits know fully the extent of the corporate losses — how long it will take for the effects of this reckoning to ripple through the economy, and how big the waves will be.

Capitalists will attack workers as long as we let them. That's why revolutionaries must expose these swindlers and mobilize workers to fight these capitalist attacks. As the rulers move toward wider wars, we can better show the connection between imperialism and this war on workers at home.

We must destroy a system that's always looking for some new way to screw us for their profits. A capitalist future requires ever more workers thrown on the street; war-weary soldiers returning home to more insecurity and cuts in veterans' benefits; and students seeing education costs soar.

In a communist world wage slavery will be abolished, workers will be free of these periodic capitalist crises. Cooperation, not competition, will be a hallmark of our culture. We will socially "invest" our productive labor into meeting the collective needs of the international working class. Our "rate of return" will be measured only by how much better we are doing at satisfying those needs.✪

THREE-WEEK ISSUE!

This CHALLENGE is a three-week issue.

On January 2 we'll return to our bi-weekly schedule.

We wish our comrades and friends a happy new year full of struggle for a communist world

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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CHALLENGE Networks Unite Workers vs. Bosses’/Hacks’ Attacks

Recently PLP organizers in our city were able to bring together rank-and-file workers from two of the city’s major hospitals to discuss building a movement to fight the bosses and their labor lieutenants in Local 1199-SEIU. This meeting was an important step forward in the Party’s work here. We discussed the recent attacks on the pension fund, firings for refusal to work mandatory overtime and unfair hiring practices.

The hospital workers’ pension fund is in trouble because of the crisis of capitalism. The strategy of the union leaders at this point is to convince the hospital bosses to allow some of the funds allocated to the benefit fund to go to the pension fund. Of course we shouldn’t be surprised if the union leaders again bring up getting the members to agree to giving up one percent of their scheduled pay raise to help bail out the pension fund.

These misleaders are always asking the workers to give something up rather than leading them to fight for more. This is because their true role is not to fight against capitalism but to control the workers for the capitalists. We communists hope to win rank-and-file workers to fighting for a strong pension fund while we also struggle with them to realize that in fact there is no real security for workers under the capitalist system.

We discussed the union leadership’s refusal to fight effectively against firings. Several women at

one of the two hospitals have been suspended and fired for refusing to accept mandatory overtime when they needed to get home to their children. Union delegates have repeatedly filed grievances against these firings but the union leaders have blocked these grievances in their arbitration committee. In a recent PLP newsletter we condemned this as an attack on women workers.

Some workers raised that the bosses have been

‘One thing that moved these workers toward us is their anger at the union leaders’ refusal to organize fights against the bosses’ attacks.’

unfairly hiring immigrant workers from Eastern Europe and bypassing black workers who had applied for jobs. We saw that there was resentment of these immigrant workers because of this. This gave us an opportunity to struggle around the Party’s line that the working class has no borders. We must fight against the unfair hiring but never attack immigrant workers since this would lead us into a bosses’ trap of dividing workers — particularly

blacks and immigrants — who are victims of the bosses’ racism.

The basis for bringing together these two groups of workers is our CHALLENGE distribution and networks at both hospitals. All the workers involved read the paper and some have networks of their own. We plan to involve these workers in future writing for CHALLENGE.

While this is a significant step forward for us, we do understand that the ideological struggles with our friends must intensify. Many questions face our growing base and us: How do communists and our friends work within the union? How do we communists keep PLP’s politics primary while we are in the midst of reform fights — sometimes several at the same time? Should we rely upon the capitalist legal system? How do we work with workers and union delegates who have differences with us? How do we handle the struggle with friends who want us to focus on reform battles and “leave that communist agenda alone?”

One thing that moved these workers toward us is their anger at the union leaders’ refusal to organize fights against the bosses’ attacks. We have been involved in organizing and leading many of these reform fights and we will continue to do so. But we can never lose sight that the main victory in all this activity is the development of more communists in PLP.✱

Students Unite Against Anti-Muslim Racist

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA, Nov. 28 — Right-wing groups invited the infamous racist and anti-Muslim demagogue Daniel Pipes to our campus. Pipes and these conservative and Zionist student groups are promoting a fascist agenda and distorting Middle East history, painting it as a “backward,” “fanatical” and terrorist-producing region because it doesn’t support U.S. imperialism’s plans there.

Pipes is a mouthpiece for U.S. and Israeli imperialism. Funded by conservative sections of the ruling class, Pipes tries to convince workers and students that “radical Muslims” are inherently violent, irrational “enemies of freedom.” For Pipes, the Middle East needs U.S. leadership to “modernize,” meaning intensive bombing campaigns, racist occupation, massive slaughter, mass detentions and torture in the interests of “U.S. national security.” Pipes wants U.S. workers to join the military and defend the U.S. empire by killing their Middle-Eastern and Muslim working-class brothers and sisters.

A united multi-racial coalition of Muslim, Black, Latina/o, white and Arab students protested Pipes, his racist ideas and support for U.S. and Israeli fascism. The students interrupted Pipes’ talk, staging a silent walkout of about 60 protestors. They held signs reading, “Israeli and Palestinian Workers Unite!” and “From Gaza to Jena: Fight Racism with Multi-racial Solidarity.” Afterwards, students held a teach-in outside about class solidarity, anti-racism and imperialist war.

One speaker described Jewish and Arab working-class solidarity and the many labor strikes (1917-1948) against their common enemies, the local capitalists and British colonialism to fight the racist bosses and misleaders who sought to divide them. They would chant slogans like, “Long Live Unity Between Jewish and Arab Workers!” The Israel-Palestine conflict was discussed in class terms, one over resources, land, cheap labor and profits. Workers have struck in Basra, Iraq and Tel Aviv, Israel against the effects of U.S. imperialism. The student speaker declared that all workers share common interests as members of the working class and must unite to smash racism, exploitation and imperialist profit wars.

Students’ flyers exposed Pipes’ racism and ties to the Middle East Forum, a conservative, pro-imperialist think-tank. The flyers also revealed the liberal politicians’ support for U.S. imperialism and our university’s connection to the war machine through military funding, research and hosting of racist speakers. Liberals like Obama and Clinton are more dangerous than the Pipes’ conservatives, covering up their imperialist goals by deceiving workers into believing that the equally racist DREAM Act and Comprehensive Immigration Reform are “solutions” to capitalism’s racism.

Communists must expose the racism and nationalism of all these bosses, explaining how the ruling class uses both to divide workers and prevent the international working class from recognizing our common interests in overthrowing capitalism, exploitation and racism.

Later students discussed the day’s events. Many said the actions

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Harlem March Fights Columbia U. Expansion, Demands Clinic Re-opening

NEW YORK CITY, Dec. 1 — Today, about 30 people held a militant march in Harlem demanding that the Manhattanville Clinic, once a NYC Dept of Health Child Health Clinic, be re-opened. The city closed it in 1999, supposedly for renovations, and then spent \$5 million redoing the façade while leaving the inside untouched. Meanwhile, the health and access to health care of the black and Latino residents of Harlem remain dismal.

The demonstration was an important breakthrough. It was initiated by parishioners at a nearby church, who began the effort under CHALLENGE readers’ leadership, and was led by Sunday School youth carrying a banner linking the issue to expanding war and racism. It was co-sponsored by the Coalition to Preserve Community (CPC), the group which has been fighting Columbia University’s expansion into Harlem.

Also present were Columbia students, who had just completed a 9-day hunger strike against racism in the curriculum and the expansion, and other students from the City University of New York. These combined forces, involving workers and students of all ages, ethnic backgrounds and occupations, have great potential to build a militant anti-racist movement in Harlem.

The demonstration’s size was limited because the same groups had been busy all week protesting at City Planning Board hearings, where the Columbia plan was being voted on. Although the hearing room had only about 75 seats, mostly filled by Columbia, dozens of opponents were standing around the edges.

As soon as the cops tried to evict the standees, they began chanting and making continuous speeches. One pointed out the conflict of interest on the Board, with one member being an ex-Columbia dean and another having University construction contracts. Many of the others, especially the chairwoman, are the su-



per-rich, which one protester illustrated by displaying a picture of her in a gown in her gilded apartment. The cops gave up trying to evict the protesters.

Of course, the Board voted almost unanimously to support Columbia, as the whole plan was agreed to long ago by the mayor and City Council President. In this age of endless imperialist wars and huge racist cutbacks, only a massive militant student and community opposition could really have a chance of blocking the expansion and begin to fight for the jobs, health care and housing needed in Harlem.

But this movement cannot rely on any politicians and must understand the nature of the present period. While we in PLP fight for larger-scale actions involving rank-and-file workers and students in Harlem, this is why we also build CHALLENGE networks that fight for our communist politics.

Already we have expanded CHALLENGE circulation in the community around the church, but we must involve this base in more actions like this demonstration. In the anti-Columbia expansion movement, we will continue to build ties with members of all groups while we discuss the need to dump this whole rotten society and build a communist world. ✱



workers unite!

Rulers’ Rivalries A Killer for Workers

While working for a building subcontractor operating on site for a major aerospace company, we were again reminded that workers are expendable in the name of speed-up and profit. Last week, a young laborer was seriously shocked while removing a water heater from a bathroom wall, requiring hospital treatment.

The foreman told the young laborer to remove the box rather than follow the proper safety procedure and wait for an electrician. In order to reap

ing when the laborer pulled on the box. Since the laborer had both hands on the casing, his body made a circuit. The current held him onto the casing for five seconds before kicking him off.

When the laborer told the foreman what happened and that he didn’t feel good, the foreman laughed. “So you are telling me that you’re a dumbass and that you shocked yourself,” he said. He refused to let the laborer seek medical treatment. Finally, an hour later, a carpenter demanded the

bottom of this. At first they acted as if people were going to be fired. As it became clear that the foreman was at fault, they decided to be lenient this time and not fire anyone. It came out later that the foreman had suggested a meeting involving only management and that the laborer should be fired for “incompetence.” In the end, the contractor and the aerospace company set up a safety liaison. The person chosen to fill that position was none other than the foreman who had almost gotten the laborer killed.

This was not the first problem we have had with this foreman. He was involved in the racist firing of a black worker just one month prior.

I’ve had a lot of great conversations with my fellow workers about the nature of management and how workplace safety is a joke. When a product can be potentially damaged safety is important, but when a lowly worker is at risk safety is ignored.

Aerospace is important if the bosses want to get serious about competing with the Chinese and Russian war machines. As the push for the “re-industrialization” of America grows stronger, increased fascism at work and in working-class neighborhoods once again reminds us that the bosses need us a lot more than we need them. Hopefully, this incident will help me turn my present-day CHALLENGE sales into a bigger network.☺

‘Aerospace is important if the bosses’ want to get serious about competing with the Chinese and Russian war machines.’

maximum profits the bosses cut corners.

The laborer had only worked in construction three weeks. When he asked how to remove the box, the foreman simply said “Take the screws out and pull it off the wall.” He didn’t mention the possible electrical hazard a twenty-year old water heater posed. The 220-volt circuit that fed the water heater had been stripped bare over time. The stripped wiring made contact with the metal cas-

laborer be sent to the factory medical center. Factory medical sent him to the local hospital. The project superintendent ran down to the hospital, assuring the injured worker that it was a “freak accident” and “nobody’s fault.”

After the incident, we were forced to attend mandatory safety meetings. The general contractor and representatives from the aerospace company assured us they were going to get to the

Navistar: Warmaker/Strike-breaker

CHICAGO, IL, December 11 — As we go to press, 4,000 Navistar workers are in the 7th week of their strike. Formerly International Harvester, Navistar is the world’s fourth largest truck builder, and the biggest supplier to the Pentagon of the MaxxPro engines for the blast-resistant trucks used in Iraq. In past years, it has closed unionized plants and moved to non-union plants in the South and Mexico. Navistar also entered a joint venture with India’s Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd. to build medium- and heavy-duty diesel engines, further driving down wages for all workers.

Not only has the UAW leadership failed to defend its members, it’s also failed to make organizing these non-union plants a strike demand. As is now true in auto, aerospace, steel and coal mining, most of Navistar’s plants are non-union.

The 500 workers at the Melrose Park engine plant, just outside Chicago, build MaxxPro engines. The MaxxPro chassis is built in Garland, Texas, and the trucks are assembled in West Point, Mississippi, both non-union plants. The union and the company are guaranteeing that Melrose Park continues to operate with scabbing supervisors and engineers, ensuring that the racist rulers can continue their imperialist bloodbath in Iraq.

A big solidarity rally planned for December 5 was hastily cancelled the night before, partly because the UAW leadership feared it would make it possible for PLP and others to expose Navistar as a war-maker and strike-breaker, and show that U.S. and Iraqi workers face the same enemy and the same fight.

PLP is slowly but surely organizing support for the strike and attempting to build ties with some Navistar workers. Over the past week, groups of workers and students have walked the picket lines, talked to the strikers and distributed dozens of CHALLENGES. While it’s not a strike against the war, it’s still significant that workers have struck a war profiteer amidst a war. (Last March, 7,000 shipbuilders in Pascagula, MS struck Northrop Grumman for one month.) Workers have given us a very warm welcome. We’ve learned a lot from them, but are just scratching the surface. We’ll do better at raising the strike at our workplaces, schools, unions and churches, not just to build support for striking workers, but to show how the working class has the power to end this war, and all wars, by uniting across all borders and fighting for communist revolution.☺

(Send statements of solidarity to: UAW Local 6, 3520 W. North Ave., Stone Park, IL 60165-1042)

\$10/hr = 800 Vehicles X \$40,000

I am an industrial worker in a sub-contracting company. We get paid under \$10 per hour, and each day we produce 800 vehicles that sell for \$40,000 each. In my factory and in all other industrial factories there is a huge contradiction between the safety of workers and the drive for profits.

For example a friend reported a safety issue to the company’s “safety officer.” The problem concerned a large bolt sticking out of the shop floor. The bolt gets in the way of workers doing repetitious sub-assembly work. My friend pointed out, “A worker is probably going to trip over the bolt and hit their face on one of the surrounding metal racks.” The “safety officer” replied, “If you don’t like the conditions here then you can go find another job.”

Two days later that same friend tripped over the bolt he had complained about. He hit his face on a metal rack, splitting his lip open and knocking out his four front teeth. His lip needed ten stitches and he will also need four tooth implants. The company is paying for all of his medical bills, which have cost thousands so far.

The bosses will attempt to care for workers only when it benefits their profits — in this case it’s cheaper to pay for these bills than to reconfigure the shop or slow down production. This compensation will not bring back knocked out teeth, lost appendages or family members that have died all in the name of profit.

As a result my friends and I have written a flyer, which we plan to circulate at an upcoming barbeque. This injury is a terrible thing, but it’s helping us expose the contradictions between the bosses and the workers in our factory. Great conversations have arisen from this incident. Many workers that I have spoken to hate the way they are treated but feel there is nothing that they can do. I told them, “As workers we have the power to change the world because we create and run everything in society. But we must be organized.”

The only way to resolve the contradiction between worker’s needs and the bosses drive for profits is to eliminate profits and wages — capitalism. As workers we must unite and organize for our class interests, for a communist society, where production is based on the needs of workers not profits.☺

Hi-tech

continued from front page

normal part of our lives. Technology is one of the ideological tools they use to win workers into racist movements at home and into the military to wage imperialist wars.

New technologies can be used to the working class’ advantage to distribute information about class struggle, communist politics and Marxist-Leninist ideology more broadly around the world through the Internet. We must not have any romantic liberal notions about it either. It will be shut down when the bosses feel it necessary. The bosses do not want information that can harm them to get out. A perfect example of this was in the current struggle in Myanmar when the rebelling monks were relaying informa-

tion to journalists and the world at large through the Internet, the generals in the end shut it down (NYTimes, 10/04/07).

For communism and working-class revolution we still need “boots on the ground,” to use the military term. A revolutionary movement can’t exist in a “virtual” environment because we need to organize workers at our jobs, in our schools and in the streets. We need active communists sharpening the class struggle, distributing CHALLENGE through many networks and recruiting new members. Only by fighting racism and fascism can we show the working class that the Progressive Labor Party can lead a revolution and a communist society. Then and only then can we use and make technology for the good of all workers and not just to make a profit.☺



S. Africa Miners' Strike Exposes Nationalist/Capitalist Rulers

JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA, Dec. 4 — Over 40,000 striking South African miners marched here today against hazardous working conditions, adding to pressures on the industry in a country where a miner dies nearly every day. The world's leading producers of gold and platinum are among mines hit by the one-day walkout called by the 270,000-member National Union of Mineworkers (NUM). The workers marched on the Chamber of Mines, the industry employers' organization that includes the leading companies — AngloGold Ashanti, Gold Fields, Harmony Gold, Anglo Platinum, Impala Platinum and Lonmin.

In October, around 3,000 miners at Elandsrand were trapped almost a mile underground for more than 24 hours when the lift cage's power cable was damaged. They were eventually rescued unharmed. Agence France-Presse quoted Thembisile Marrent, a miner at the Kloof goldmine in Mpumalanga province, saying, "We're dying in mines but get nothing. We want change, we want to work safe. When you get accidents the boss [says] it was 'bad luck.' If the mistake is yours, they charge you [with disciplinary offenses] even though you're in the hospital." The miners carried placards with slogans including, "Mine safety is a human right," and "Blood-dripped profit is the bosses' luxury."

South Africa's mines are among the world's deepest and most labor-intensive. But since the end of the apartheid regime working conditions still haven't improved too much under African National Congress (ANC) rule. Mining produces 7% of the country's gross domestic product and is the highest foreign exchange source here. The high price of precious metals has seen mine company profits soar through the roof, but the workers see little of it. As a matter of fact, the mine bosses are demanding even more productivity from the miners.

Unfortunately, the NUM leadership won't challenge the ANC government. In fact, the NUM is a leading union in the COSATU union federation, which is part of the ANC coalition government currently led by President Mbeki. The South African "Communist" Party is also a key member of the government and a leading force in the trade union movement. But these sellouts have joined the side of the class enemy. Instead of breaking with all these capitalists, the "C" P and union hacks helped millionaire boss Jacob Zuma — then the country's deputy president — survive a 2005 corruption scandal. Zuma is now in a dogfight with President Mbeki for control of the ANC and of the government.



In the 1990's, when the imperialists and big capitalists (like the Anglo-American Mining Corp.) felt they needed to derail the growing revolutionary anti-apartheid anger of workers and youth, they decided to dump the old apartheid racist rulers and allow Nelson Mandela and the ANC to take power while continuing the oppression of capitalism and maintaining their profits.

South Africa's militant working class, the continent's most powerful proletariat, needs new leadership, one based on revolutionary communist politics and no alliance with any capitalist or nationalist politician. That's the only real road to liberation from the yoke of capitalism and racism. ☸

Italy Strike Shows Workers Can Shut Down Any Capitalist Country

ROME, ITALY — The massive transportation strike that shut down most of this country on Nov. 30 again shows the power of the working class. It was the first strike in 25 years uniting all transportation workers. Ninety percent of public transport was closed in Rome, Turin, Bologna and other cities. Flights were cancelled in the main airports. No trains were running anywhere. Even funeral hearses were halted. Sea transport between Sicily, Sardinia and the rest of Italy was blocked. These actions occurred amid mass strikes by railroad machinists in Germany and rail workers throughout France, including Paris bus and Metro workers. Unfortunately, the nationalism and reformism of the union leaderships in all three countries prevented a united internationalist strike.

Conservative rulers like Sarkozy (France), Merkel (Germany) and "center-left" Prodi in Italy are enacting massive cutbacks in workers' wages and pension benefits and privatizing the transport systems.

In Italy itself, the law bars transport strikes during rush hours and limits these walkouts to eight hours, and they can't strike for weeks after any previous 8-hour strike.

But the hacks of the leading transport unions are too tied to capitalism to break that ban. These misleaders fear workers might wildcat, as rank-and-filers did in the winter of 2003-04. The union hacks in all industries here are trying to divert the anger of the workers with these limited walkouts, while simultaneously signing on to the government's social reform and budget law instituting major cutbacks in services and jobs.

Workers must break with the union leadership and link their struggles to other actions, like the massive Dec. 15 protest scheduled for Vicenza. It will oppose the plan to enlarge the U.S. military base there, used for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Workers must also join the fight against racism suffered by immigrant workers through the Security Law, which is being used to deport 5,000 immigrants for "crimes" like begging and washing car windows. The 150,000-strong Nov. 24 march in Rome saying no to violence against women rejected this racist law. It is being justified by the recent murder of an Italian woman by a Rumanian immigrant, but as the marchers pointed out, Italian men influenced by capitalist ideas perpetrate most of the violence against women.

The massive transport strikes throughout Europe belie the post-modernist dream that "there is no more working class." Workers are demonstrating that they still have the power to shut down any capitalist country. They now need to turn those struggles into schools for communism, to forge a red leadership that can unite all workers against their common enemy: capitalism. ☸

Revolutionary Struggle, Not Chavez's 'Business Socialism,' Will Win Workers' Power

"Without a revolutionary Party, there can be no revolution." - V.I. Lenin

The narrow December 2 loss for the Constitutional Reform referendum in Venezuela is a clear example of the above idea. The Chávez government's plan to impose its "21st Century Bolivarian Socialism" in a bureaucratic top-to-bottom manner suffered a major political setback even though it lost by only 50.3% to 49.7%. The right-wing anti-Chávez forces only gained some 200,000 votes over the 2006 presidential election total. In 2006, 7.3 million voted to re-elect Chávez; this time approximately 4.3 million voted for his constitutional reform.

The Empire Strikes Back

There are many reasons for this decreased support for Chávez's program. The right-wing waged a very aggressive campaign, financed by big money from both local anti-Chávez bosses as well as from the U.S. The Washington Post (12/3) reported that the anti-Reform movement was funded in no small part by the U.S. government. The Post cited U.S. documents obtained by National Security Archive researcher Jeremy Bigwood that revealed at least \$216,000 was funneled through the Office of Transition Initiatives, a secret branch of the U.S. Agency for International Development, erected in Caracas in the wake of the failed April 2002 anti-Chávez coup.

As CHALLENGE has stated many times, Chávez represents a nationalist populist trend in Latin America which, under the guise of anti-imperialism, seeks a better deal from U.S. imperialism's rivals, like China, Russia and even India. The U.S. bosses and their local allies have been fighting for their interests, using blatant anti-communism (they claim the constitutional reform would turn Chávez into a "red dictator" who would take babies away from their parents, and other lies). Coincidentally, Chávez proved to be a better "bourgeois democrat" than the right-wing opposition in accepting the December 2 loss. If the right-wing had lost, they would have raised hell. Of course, U.S. apologists never mention the many U.S.-backed overthrows of elected leaders in Chile, Guatemala and elsewhere.

But the biggest cause of the loss was the Chavista movement's internal weaknesses. Firstly, it isn't really a revolutionary movement. The Chávez government attacked workers who actually fought their bosses like at Maracay (bathroom appliances) who tried to stop the closing

of their plant. Chávez's "land reform" has been limited to some unused land, without really touching big landowners. In the last few years, some 200 farmworkers have been killed fighting these landlords.

Chávez's "anti-imperialism" has exploited Venezuela's new oil supplies via "mixed enterprises" incorporating big foreign oil companies. While talking about "revolution" and "socialism," his government limited itself to a few small reforms for poor workers, including medical services using some 20,000 Cuban doctors. But meanwhile poverty overall has risen. Chavista bureaucrats and bosses have enriched themselves and big companies have increased prices, squeezing any wage hikes for workers. The government did little to counter the lack of milk and other basic staples caused by hoarding bosses.

Former guerrilla leader Douglas Bravo, a left-wing critic of Chávez, exclaimed: "How can you pretend to build a 21st century socialism enriching a bourgeoisie that came about with this government through oil income...or not taking into consideration workers, poor people in the countryside, indigenous people and giving power to agro-business and rich Chavistas?" (El Mundo, Caracas, 12/3)

That's why so many workers and their allies abstained from voting December 2. Meanwhile, the pro-U.S. right-wing forces will try to take advantage of their victory in continuing to try to topple the Chávez government through a military coup. (General Baduel, who until recently was Chávez's Minister of Defense, and who joined the anti-Chávez forces just before the referendum, is their man for this.)

But the right-wing is not united. It represents many different bourgeois forces, included disenchanted former Chavistas. The Chávez camp will also try to regroup, building its bureaucratic Unified Socialist Party to push for its "businessmen's socialism," using workers and their allies as cannon fodder.

The real missing ingredient here is a revolutionary communist (not "businessmen's socialist") leadership to fight for the real liberation of workers from capitalism and imperialism. This liberation won't come through electoral referendum, but through revolutionary class struggle. This is a crucial task since the dogfight between the pro-Chávez and pro-U.S. forces will sharpen and workers will wind up losing unless they break with all forms of capitalism, whether the Chavista type or the pro-U.S. type. ☸

<LETTERS>

Capitalism Is Not Organized For Workers

At a November UFT meeting for Teachers in Reserve, teachers spoke about their long years of service and oppression by the administration. A Teacher in Reserve (ATR) is usually someone whose school or department has been closed. If they cannot secure a job during the summer, they are sent to their district headquarters which is supposed to operate like a hiring hall. Sometimes they are assigned to a school basically as a substitute teacher. About 400 people came to this meeting to find out what the United Federation of Teachers plans to do about their status.

I said that the system is in such a terrible state because capitalism is not organized for workers. The meeting leader, a Vice President of the union, told me “Don’t discuss capitalism.” Since I still had the floor and the microphone, I replied that I had the patience and fortitude to listen to the chair’s remarks, so he could now listen to me. The chair became flustered, but apologized and I continued to blame capitalism for the educational crisis and pointed out the U.S. had plenty of money for the war while the children are getting less and less.

I pointed out how many teachers are removed from classrooms simply for being older or fighting back. ATRs are often considered “troublemakers” who know too much and explain to new teachers how the system works.

I went on to ask why this union did not pursue the leaders of the Dept. of Education to their homes. Why should Bloomberg and Klein have a good night’s sleep while our union members cannot? There had been applause for many points, but this point got the most applause. I suggested that the union get the rank-and-file involved in a real way with sit-ins, walk-outs and informational picket lines.

The following day at my ATR job assignment, I bumped into a teacher who said, “That was a great communist speech you made.” I hadn’t realized this person was an ATR or that he’d been to the meeting and asked the man if he liked it. He said that he did and so did everyone else. There was a lot of applause. Now it’s my job to get to know this teacher better and to raise these ideas in the new school.

A Red ATR

Bosses Keep Their Profits Safe, Not Workers

“Hey did you see Gustavo’s finger?” a worker asked me.

“Yeah that thing looked sick; the health and safety rules are a joke around here.” I replied.

“I know, I think they (the Environmental Health and Safety people) are just here so they can keep OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) off the bosses’ backs.”

We were talking about our co-worker who almost lost his finger because the safety guards on our machines had been disabled and the machine turned causing two hydraulic jaws to close on his hand while he was trying to clear a jam. Of course, the bosses tried to blame our co-worker for having his hand in the machine but as machinists we have to do that sometimes. The bosses knew in advance that the guards had been disabled but did nothing to prevent this injury.

The correct solution would have been to turn the machine off and call maintenance to fix the problem but because the competition in the aerospace industry is so fierce, the bosses are cutting costs everywhere while pushing for more production. The result is workers working long hours and not getting adequate rest. This combined with the bosses not keeping an adequate maintenance department creates dangerous conditions for us as workers; conditions that we must confront together.

The bottom line is that the bosses don’t care how many people get hurt or sick because of their long hours and dangerous machines. Their main objective is to out-produce their rivals at the cheapest cost possible. Almost anyone I talk to on the floor understands this but they don’t

Johnstown Workers Expose Fascist ‘ID’

On Nov. 29, a large number of people attended a town hall meeting in Johnstown, Pa., to protest the National ID. The meeting was sponsored by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and the panel consisted of ACLU members, including Dr. Jim Scofield, the group’s local leader. Following the panelists’ presentation, the floor was open for discussion.

One young man said he was put through hell and high water when he renewed his commercial driver’s license recently. “I felt like a criminal going to get it renewed,” he said. “I was fingerprinted. They checked my tattoos.” The government wanted to know all about him and he wondered why.

Dr. Scofield responded that the government of the wealthy wanted to criminalize not only black workers but ALL workers in an attempt to gain control.

The head of the Coal Country Coalition took the mic and explained that “the phony war on terror was really an attempt to regiment and control all workers, for the imperialist oil wars and to save the capitalist imperialist system.” “This is all about fascism,” he said.

One young woman from Somerset, Pa., asked the panel why immigrant workers were applying for driver’s licenses while U.S. citizens were being forced to carry ID cards. A worker pointed out to her that immigrant workers were not the problem, and that, in fact, the government was rounding up these workers.

CHALLENGES were distributed at this interesting meeting.

Red Coal

CHALLENGE comment: It’s good to see many workers questioning this ruling-class move for social control. The “REAL ID” law would bar anyone from using their driver’s license as identification if their home state does not meet Federal standards. And the bosses will make sure that a driver’s license is required for everything. Every cop in the country would, in effect, become a Border Patrol agent, ostensibly to “hunt down” undocumented workers.

Such a system would enable the government to gather information about everyone’s life, especially

see that there is a way to change this rotten profit system. The key will be to win these workers to communist politics and help them understand that the U.S. bosses are competing with other imperialists around the world to maintain their system. The Iraq war is further putting U.S. capitalism in crisis and more wars are on the horizon. The imperialists know this and are pushing more racism and nationalism so workers will pay for these wars with their labor and lives.

CHALLENGE will play an essential role in developing workers’ understanding of capitalism and inter-imperialist rivalry. Within a relatively short period of time I have been able to start a network of CHALLENGE readers who are interested in learning more about how they and the Party can build a movement to end capitalism and build a world based on workers’ interests. One of these friends said that at first he was a bit nervous because he had never seen a group like PLP with so many different “races” having a discussion but that after he saw how we are all equal regardless of color he felt much more comfortable and encouraged to come again.

We understand that it is a long road ahead of us but with the help of students, teachers soldiers and workers inside the factories working towards the same goal, these small networks can grow to be large networks and study-action groups. They can lead struggles against the bosses and recruit more workers committed to ending capitalism, and establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat led by our Party.

Worker from the Southwest United States

if one opposed the rulers’ policies, such as opposition to their endless imperialist wars. It is nothing less than fascist control. (For a detailed explanation of REAL ID, see CHALLENGE, Dec. 12, page 8.)

Industrial Workers Key to Revolution

Recently a flight attendant for a major airline who has been reading CHALLENGE asked me, “These articles you have written for CHALLENGE are good! So why are you not teaching at a university instead of working at the airport?” (I’m a janitor.)

A fair question. I explained that organizing for a successful revolution to defeat the racist oppressors means the Party must reach and recruit workers in key areas — auto, steel, mass transit, airports, hospitals, agriculture, etc.

Equally important, we need comrades in the bosses’ armed forces to politically win soldiers and other service personnel to side with their working-class brothers and sisters, not to protect the oppressors.

I referred to the Soviet film director Sergei Eisenstein’s 1920’s movie “Potemkin” and explained how, in 1905, the battleship Potemkin’s sailors were influenced by Bolshevik sailors to fight against horrific conditions, their officers and Czarist oppression.

My friend, who likes to read about history and politics, said this all seemed strange and different to her. I wanted her to understand it was crucial for millions of industrial workers, not just university workers, to see the need for a communist revolution and for PLP and the working class to destroy racist, sexist capitalism.

I said, “There’s absolutely no shame in being an industrial worker or working with one’s hands. Intelligent workers come from all different backgrounds.” Of course, capitalism teaches us that if you work with your hands for a living, “there’s something wrong with you,” as well as the racist, sexist elitist view that only particular types of workers are “intelligent.”

After the victory of communist revolution, the workplace will be the center of education, with schools and libraries right there; workers will work with brains and hands. Universities, as elitist institutions, will no longer exist. (During the Chinese Cultural Revolution workers in places like hospitals encouraged doctors to not only work with their brains but also their hands. For a good first-hand account, read “Away with All Pests” by the English Marxist surgeon Joshua Horn.)

I look forward to more conversations with my friend. All workers, black, white, Latino, non-immigrant and immigrant, must struggle to make communist revolution and society possible. Marx and Engels said it best: “Philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it.”

Airport Red

Students Unite Against Racism, continued from page 3

were a success and thought that multiracial unity is a powerful weapon against racism. Others agreed but also said that being “silent” in the face of racism is not the best strategy. They argued that our solidarity showed the potential power we have on campus as students and workers, saying that more could have been done against Pipes and that more should be done when racist speakers are invited to campus.

Many of the students read CHALLENGE and are in a study group on communism and revolution. Although there was disagreement about how to deal with racist speakers, the discussion and struggle exposed the role of academics and the university in promoting racism, fascism and imperialism, while creating a strong foundation to build antiracism and communist politics among our friends next semester.★

Spitzer's Licensing 'Gift' Really Nazi 'Yellow Star'

In October, New York's liberal democratic governor, Eliot Spitzer, proposed allowing undocumented immigrants to get drivers' licenses. The "immigrant rights" movement pushed the idea that Spitzer was taking a bold, pro-immigrant stance.

Spitzer's plan was developed not out of concern that undocumented workers need to be able to drive to and from work legally, and to get car insurance, but rather "as a way of bringing a hidden population into the open." This fits with "homeland security" concerns consistently pushed by the Democrats. Some right-wing flunkies of the ruling class favor licensing undocumented workers. Colonel Margaret Stock, an immigration attorney and West Point professor, figures this plan would address the problem of "hundreds of thousands of people run[ning] around the country without any oversight when there's a war going on." (NYT, 10/9/07)

But even that sham was too much for the openly anti-immigrant racists. Many upstate New York county clerks indicated that if the plan was enacted, they would simply disobey it. Within weeks, Spitzer held a meeting and then a joint press conference with Michael Chertoff, the head of the fascist Office of Homeland Security, and announced that New York would agree to a three-tiered driver's license program. That plan would have given undocumented immigrants a license which could not be used to travel across borders or to fly, and would have left them open targets, easily identifiable by cops and immi-

gration agents.

Spitzer's apartheid licensing system would have led undocumented workers into the eagerly waiting arms of immigration agents (ICE) just as surely as the yellow stars on their clothes led Jews to the waiting arms of the Nazis. However, Lou Dobbs, CNN's ranting racist, and his fellow media apologists for the ruling class, continued their vitriolic campaign, viewing even this plan as a "gift" to these workers. Within days, Spitzer announced that he was withdrawing the entire proposal.

Unfortunately, many workers still believe that liberal Democrats will look after their interests and protect them from the ravages of the gutter racists. Each of Spitzer's proposals, however, shows the error of that belief. The liberals simply have a different way of building fascism. They know that the wider wars of the future require winning immigrants to patriotism, while maintaining a level of terror to keep workers in line. That is why they keep Dobbs & the Minuteman racists around, and allow them to build their movement.

Liberal Democrats are no more the friends of the working class than are the gutter racists. Today, we fight against all forms of racism and fascism, and for the international unity of the working class. Once our struggle is won, members of the working class will not have to carry an identification card to prove our entitlement to the fruits of our labor.☺

First Workers' State

continued from page 8

do it right next time and win a communist world!☺

Stalin and the cult

A related error was the "cult of the great man," usually called "cult of personality." As the 1930s progressed both supporters and secret opponents of the Soviet government took every chance to praise Stalin to the skies as basically infallible. Supporters did this because of the undeniable and immense successes of collectivization and industrialization. Opponents did it to cloak their own conspiracies.

Privately as well as publicly Stalin always disapproved of this "cult." But he did not succeed in stopping it. The "cult" made it possible for those who had been won over to the essentially capitalist line evolving within Soviet "socialism" to hide their real disagreements with the goal of communism — a goal Stalin himself never stopped aiming for.

The "cult" also created an atmosphere of blind obedience within devoted communists and working people. If the "great man" has all the answers, why think for yourself? PLP has firmly rejected any "cults" of leaders or anybody else.

Footnotes:

1 The plan was:

- Collectivize agriculture, so the collective farms could give up all their surplus to fund the industrialization drive;
- Build whole cities of industry over night, making the huge investments of industrializing a gigantic country within a few years instead of the decades it had taken the capitalist countries;
- Mechanize the new collective farms with tractors and farm equipment, making them even more productive;
- Build a large modern army with advanced weapons, able to defeat the armies of the capitalist countries that he knew would attack, probably soon;
- delay the attack as long as possible through diplomacy, trying to play off the capitalist countries against one another.

2 For one version of these events see Grover Furr, "Stalin and the Struggle for Democratic Reform (two parts) at <http://clogic.eserver.org/2005/2005.html> ☺



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



Why free pass on Israel nukes?

As the fascinating papers released last year by the National Security Archive show, the US government was aware in 1968 that Israel was developing a nuclear device. The contrast to the efforts being made to prevent Iran from acquiring the bomb could scarcely be starker....

On November 27, 1968, Lyndon Johnson's administration accepted Israel's assurance that "it will not be the first power in the Middle East to introduce nuclear weapons."

As the memos show, US officials knew that this assurance had been broken even before it was made....

[Later] the Israeli prime minister, Golda Meir... and Nixon appear to have agreed that the Israeli programme could go ahead, as long as it was kept secret....

While the International Atomic Energy Agency's inspectors crawl round Iran's factories... they have no legal authority to inspect facilities in Israel. So when the Israeli government complains, as it did recently, that the head of the IAEA is "sticking his head in the sand over Iran's nuclear programme," you can only gape at its chutzpah....

Israel under Olmert is also a dangerous and unpredictable state involved in acts of terror abroad. Two months ago it bombed a site in Syria. Last year, it launched a war of aggression against Lebanon.... Nuclear weapons in Israel's hands are surely just as dangerous as nuclear weapons in Iran's.

So when will the US.... admit that Iran is not starting a nuclear arms race, but joining one? (GW, 11/30)

L.A. forced to cancel Muslim map

The Los Angeles Police Department is scrapping its controversial plan to create a map detailing the Muslim communities in the sprawling metropolitan area, bowing to the outcry among Muslims and others that the project was a thinly disguised form of racial profiling.

"We put it out there, it was rejected, it's dead on arrival," the police chief, William J. Bratton, said at a news conference after a meeting with Muslim residents and civil rights organizations... (NYT, 11/16)

Pope sees why oppressed turn red

VATICAN CITY, Nov. 30 – Atheism may be "understandable" when mankind is confronted with evil and suffering, Pope Benedict XVI wrote in his second encyclical, issued on Friday....

He also said that attraction to Marxism was understandable given the terrible conditions of workers and that atheism could be read as a "type of moralism: a protest against the injustices of the world and of world history." (NYT, 12/1)

Gov't anti-foreclosure plan is a big lie

...the mortgage relief plan unveiled last week.... isn't mainly intended to achieve real results. The point is, instead, to create the appearance of action, thereby undercutting political support for actual attempts to help families in trouble....

As Elizabeth Warren, the Harvard bankruptcy expert, puts it, "The administration's subprime mortgage plan is the bank lobby's dream...."

Hundreds of thousands, and probably millions, of American families will lose their homes.... But [Treasury Secretary] Paulson's plan – or, to use its official name, the Hope Now Alliance plan – is entirely focused on reducing investor losses....

But won't the borrowers gain, too? Not if the planners can help it.... in many, perhaps most, cases those who get debt relief will be borrowers who owe more than their house is worth. These people would be nearly as well off in financial terms if they simply walked away. (NYT, 12/10)

US will back Pakistani military

A small group of US military and intelligence experts met in Washington for a classified war game last year, exploring strategies for securing Pakistan's nuclear arsenal if the country's political institutions and military safeguards began to fall apart....

The conclusion of last year's game, said one participant, was that there were no palatable ways to forcibly ensure the security of Pakistan's nuclear weapons....

"Our best bet to secure Pakistan's nuclear forces would be in a cooperative mode with the Pakistani military, not an adversarial one..." (GW, 12/7)

PL History: Red-baiting, ROAR's Rampage Can't Stop Boston's Anti-Racists

(Last issue's article about the anti-racist struggle in Boston during the summer of 1975 recounted the battle of Carson Beach. PLP and the International Committee Against Racism (INCAR) once again successfully battled the segregationist thugs in ROAR and defeated a trap set by Boston's cops, liberal politicians, the NAACP and an unholy alliance of nationalists and Trotskyists.)

The day after Carson Beach, rebellions erupted in several sections of Boston. Black workers and working-class youth, who had had their fill of racism and police terror, fought the cops with every weapon at their disposal. The cops responded by running amok in ghetto projects, breaking indiscriminately into homes and unleashing trained killer dogs on elderly people and children.

The rebellions were somewhat tainted with nationalism. A few black youths stoned cars carrying white passengers or otherwise attacked white people. Given the racist atrocities that had occurred every day in Boston for years, the absence until recently of a mass campaign against them and the rulers' encouragement of nationalism, this mistake was not surprising. The bosses' media portrayed the rebellion as "black mobs out to kill whitey."

Meanwhile, ROAR escalated its fascist violence, conducting ferocious gang assaults against black workers several nights in a row. As usual, no ROAR members were arrested.

Some of the most serious physical and political attacks against BOSTON 75 took place during the week after the Carson Beach fight. The day after the beach incident, a small group of INCAR members were leaving a television studio interview, when about 40 ROAR thugs attacked with clubs

and other weapons, including a machete. The thugs were led by Warren Zaniboni, a "South Boston Marshal," whom Ted Kennedy would later dignify with an invitation to discuss bus-ing. The anti-racists fought back valiantly. They made good their escape onto a city bus with the help of the white driver, who slammed the door in the fascists' face and drove away. The INCAR members went to Boston City Hospital for treatment. While they were in the emergency room, the cops showed up with the ROAR goons and arrested the anti-racists for "assault with a dangerous weapon."

Seeing that the combination of ROAR's terror tactics and their own state power had still not succeeded in crushing the anti-racists, Boston's rulers launched a political red-baiting campaign. Suffolk County District Attorney Byrne claimed that the violence at Carson Beach had been caused by "outside agitators," who had come to Boston to start "racial disorders." He named INCAR and PLP and said that 18 "special prosecutors" would work 24 hours a day to produce indictments in the case. Deputy Police Supt. John Doyle told the newspapers that INCAR members had thrown the first rocks at Carson Beach. The lies went on and on.

However, the red-baiting proved a complete fiasco. The task force of "special prosecutors" vanished as suddenly as it had appeared, without producing a single prosecution. Boston's workers didn't fall for the red-baiting. The organized fascist forces failed to grow during the weeks after Carson Beach. Meanwhile, thousands of people throughout greater Boston continued to sign the INCAR petition.



Anti-fascist members and friends of PLP and C.A.R. tell off ROAR racists in Queens, N.Y.

BOSTON 75's last major action was a demonstration planned for August 18th, when the volunteers intended to present INCAR's petition, signed by 35,000 people, to a regularly-scheduled City Council meeting. CHALLENGE readers will remember that several Boston City Councilors proudly flaunted their ROAR membership.

Weeks earlier, INCAR had obtained a permit to march to City Hall. However, Mayor White and the cops had one more trick up their sleeves. Late on Friday afternoon, August 15th, three cops came to the INCAR office with a letter from the Traffic Commissioner revoking the permit for the Monday march. He offered no reason. The rulers obviously thought that this timing would prevent INCAR from organizing against the ban. The press announced that the march would not take place.

As usual, the bosses and their media mouth-pieces had underestimated the resourcefulness and commitment of INCAR and PLP.☛

(Next: The August 18 march; INCAR and PLP prepare to demonstrate in South Boston on the first day of school.)

USSR, The First Workers' State — How It Was Won, and Lost



Soviet women marching in the 1930s

When the Russian Revolution, and the Civil War that followed it, ended in 1921, the new workers' state was in a state of exhaustion: largely destroyed, several million of its citizens killed, with a raging famine. Millions of homeless people wandered the land, and starvation was rampant. The worldwide typhus epidemic of 1919 had killed tens of thousands.

Seven years of war and invasion by Imperial Germany, then Poland, and all the Allied countries, including the U.S., Britain, France, and Japan, had created a culture of violence. Crime — robbery, murder, gangs — was everywhere. Armed bands from Poland raided border areas, robbed, raped, and killed, then fled back across the border. Industry and agriculture were almost at a standstill.

The Bolsheviks' task was to build socialism/communism with the traumatized people in this devastated country. They had no blueprint, for it had never been done. No communist theorist — neither Marx and Engels, nor Lenin, nor any other — had ever thought the first workers' state would look anything like this.

In the 1920s, the Bolsheviks debated the best course of action to build the new society. All social-ists/communists believed that communism could only come in as an industrialized country. The party leadership knew that the advanced capitalist countries would attack the USSR as soon as possible. Their position — that the USSR could and must quickly industrialize by itself — won over the vast majority of rank-and-file Bolsheviks.¹

Led by Stalin the mainly working-class Bolshevik Party took the country on to a great "leap into the

unknown." By the mid-30s, collectivization was almost complete, and the USSR was becoming a major industrial power. Nothing like this had ever been accomplished before in world history!

During the 1930s Oppositionist leaders conspired to overthrow Stalin and the Party leadership. Some also conspired with German and Japanese fascists. The leadership found out about these plots and tried and executed the guilty. But two successive heads of the political police were involved in these plots too. The second, Nikolai Ezhov, had his men arrest, torture, and murder hundreds of thousands of innocent Soviet citizens and Party members to cover up his own plot, and to sow dissatisfaction. This too was eventually uncovered, but not until huge damage had been done.²

Workers' power was thought guaranteed as long as the communist party was in charge. In fact, capitalist ideas and practices turned the Bolshevik Party into its opposite. At Stalin's death in March 1953 the communist movement appeared stronger than ever. Yet within three years the new head of the USSR, Nikita Khrushchev, had pushed the country towards capitalism, while attacking Stalin as a monstrous murderer and egomaniac. How could this happen?

All other socialists and communists along with the Soviet leadership believed there had to be an intermediate stage called "socialism" between capitalism and real communism. It would preserve

many capitalist features: wage inequalities, in-equalities between countryside and city; between workers and managers, the uneducated and the educated, nationalisms of various kinds, and so on. In industry, science, technology, art and literature, it meant preserving many capitalist ways of doing things, though with pro-worker reforms.

No human undertaking can ever be free of error, and the Bolsheviks made lots of mistakes. The basic reason is: They were the first! Never before had a communist movement seized and held power, then tried to build socialism/communism in any country, much less one that was unindustrialized to begin with and, moreover, hugely destroyed by World War, a Civil War, foreign invasion, epidemic and famine.

The Bolsheviks then led the Soviet Union to victory in World War II. After losing over 20 million lives and the destruction of the country's infrastructure in the war, the USSR rebuilt in record time. The socialist USSR built nuclear weapons through the political commitment of its scientists.

The history of the USSR is an invaluable "text-book" for all workers! We must study the Soviet experience (and that of the other great 20th century communist revolution, the Chinese) to learn essential lessons about what Lenin, Stalin and the Bolsheviks did right, and what they did wrong, so we can

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