

# CHALLENGE



THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

## Financial Crisis Puts SCHOOLS ON BOSSES' CHOPPING BLOCK

When we think schools, we think children, and when we think children our minds turn to the future. CHALLENGE readers know Progressive Labor Party's view of the rulers' plans for our class and our children: more fascism and more imperialist war.

Within this context we must examine the budget-cut attack launched against New York City's schoolchildren. These cuts are racist, plain and simple, following the already existing fundamentally racist patterns in the city's failing schools. Immediate cuts include "extras" — after-school, summer school and tutoring programs. It is precisely black and Latino youth — comprising 72% of the student popula-

*The main political content of public education is the myth that "we all get a chance to make it in America" and "if you don't make it, you only have yourself to blame."*

tion — who are most in need of such "extra" services. Their "future" is expendable.

These cuts are universal and across the board: \$504 million over the next two fiscal years (NY Times, 2/1) — the worst in NYC in the last dozen years. Perhaps due to New York's position as the capital of U.S. finance capital, this city may not have been reduced to Detroit's school system, the most massively slashed in the country. But the sub-prime mortgage crisis combined with the economic downturn and the hundreds of billions poured into military expenditures put the Big Apple on the chopping block.

However, a broad-based movement opposing these cuts can emerge in the coming period. Several PLP'ers

made a call at the last Delegate Assembly for a February 14th demonstration against the cuts. Despite local union leader Randi Weingarten doing all she could to torpedo it, networks and mass organizations across the system have taken up that call. This could be an important first response to "Kleingarten's" cuts (Chancellor Klein + union president Weingarten).

PLP members will be active in any movements opposing these cuts. Where no movement exists, communists must spark one, within which we can advance our revolutionary ideas front and center.

These movements hold many dangers. The present status quo has been a school system filled with racist patterns of underachievement and widespread indoctrination, especially of anti-communism. The main political content of public education is the myth that "we all get a chance to make it in America" and "if you don't make it, you only have yourself to blame." This message is central to the ruling class's use of public education.

The bosses need teachers and schools to produce future soldiers, future workers and — when that fails — future prisoners. But above all else, the rulers need passive ones in their pursuit of fascism at home and imperialist war abroad. The passivity engendered by this "blame-the-victim" mentality is even more important to the ruling class than the shallow patriotic platitudes history courses push on youngsters, many of whom tune out, and rightly so.

Communists must raise this general critique of education among the broad masses through our literature and among our close friends in long-term political struggle. This necessitates a discussion of communism as the only solution.

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## Obama Checks Out While Chicago Workers Die

CHICAGO, IL February 8 — "My patients are dying! My patients are dying because of your racist cutbacks," declared a Latino health care worker who treats TB patients. "You're a murderer and I charge you with genocide!" was her "greeting" to fascist Dr. Robert Simon, interim health chief of the Cook County Bureau of Health Services (CCBHS). She stormed out as he, a guest of SEIU Local 20, began to speak at their Town Hall meeting.

Simon said, "I'm not a politician," but another worker shouted from the floor, "You're a racist murderer." Simon, who once said, "To me, society wastes enormous energy, money and resources on [the homeless]," announced that the County health system was "on the verge of collapse if any further cuts are made." He was supporting SEIU's push for a tax increase.

The commissioners who approved over \$100 million in racist cutbacks during last year's budget crisis sat on SEIU's stage then and now. With Simon wielding the knife, they closed half of the 26 neighborhood clinics and laid off 1,000 doctors, nurses and other healthcare workers.

Meanwhile, as Barack Obama tours the country with hypocritical calls for "change" and "healthcare for all," he has done nothing against the racist cutbacks that are killing patients and closing public hospitals in his own neighborhood.

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# Imperialists' Wars Worsen Rulers' Financial Woes

Imperialist war takes a serious toll on the domestic economy. In fact, as U.S. imperialism enters a period of "persistent" and escalating conflict a chief task of the next president will be forcing economic sacrifices from workers (as usual) but also from capitalists.

Bad "subprime" loans based on the bursting housing bubble only partly explain the current U.S. economic crisis (see CHALLENGE, 2/13). True, the unfolding mortgage fiasco drastically curtails lending and spending. But even while a handful of corporations like Haliburton grab enormous profits, the skyrocketing costs of U.S. rulers' ever-widening wars act as a brake on profits. Government bonds to pay for the war machine — production for destruction — draw investors away from investing in production for consumption since the government bonds are more secure. That makes it harder for consumer-goods capitalists to find money to invest in their industries, out of which they reap profits from their workers' labor. Thus, it limits their ability to increase, or even maintain, profits.

The New York Times (2/4/08) reported that the Pentagon's proposed 2009 budget of \$515.4 billion "when adjusted for inflation, will have reached its highest level since World War II....Yet those demands for money do not even include the price of refocusing the military's attention beyond the current wars to prepare for other challenges." Nor does it include the \$200+ billion spent in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Not a penny of this colossal waste finances pro-

ductive investment. The rulers' war spending only destroys. U.S. bosses, meanwhile, seek to make workers pay for both recession and war through massive cuts in jobs, wages, health, education and other vital services.

## Rivals Took Advantage of A U.S. Weakened by the Vietnam War

While U.S. capitalists were devoting 9% of gross domestic product (GDP) to genocide in Vietnam in the 1960s and 1970s, their Asian and European rivals were modernizing factories and consolidating financial structures, putting the U.S. at a competitive disadvantage. U.S. bosses lost global dominance in auto, electronics and other key sectors and began a permanent, one-way trend of mass destruction of manufacturing jobs. German and Japanese banks became the world's largest.

Trade and war-related budget deficits ballooned. This, combined with pressure in the early 1970s from French banks that demanded payment in gold rather than paper money (which was losing its value because of war-caused inflation), officially ended the dollar's "good-as-gold" status. The U.S. had to abandon gold payments because of insufficient stockpiles, so French capitalists and others demanded even more paper money payments to compensate for devalued dollars. This further weakened U.S. economic prestige.

"Stagflation" (negligible growth combined with inflation) took hold. Working families' incomes, which had more than doubled between 1946 and 1973, now grew less than one percent per year against inflation. Today, the income of a young man in his thirties is 12% below what it was for a worker at that same age 30 years ago, working two weeks more annually and "putting in 350 more hours per year than the average European." (Robt. Reich, Financial Times, 1/29)

## Democrat Carter Began U.S. Build-Up For Mid-East Wars

The military component in today's money crunch stems directly from the U.S. defeat in Vietnam. Emboldened by the 1975 fall of Saigon, foreign rivals started assailing the cornerstone of U.S. imperialism's economic empire, its Middle East oil racket. When Islamists (who later befriended Russia and China) seized Iran in 1979, Democrat Jimmy Carter threatened war against any nation with designs on United States' "vital interests." Having lost both a major source of crude and a military ally in Iran, Carter vowed that the U.S. would deploy its own armed forces in the region.

Carter launched the Rapid Deployment Force which soon expanded into the Pentagon's Central Command that has now invaded Iraq twice at enormous expense. The U.S. effort to oust the Soviets from strategic Afghanistan in the 1980s has backfired into an open-ended, cash-burning war against the U.S.'s former Taliban allies and their al Qaeda

protégés. Even with only 55,000 troops in Iraq by 2013, U.S. rulers admit they will have thrown away \$3.5 trillion in Iraq and Afghanistan by 2017. ("War at Any Price?" a Congressional Democrats' report, November 2007)

For the foreseeable future, U.S. rulers' need to control the Mid-East will saddle them with costly, protracted, Iraq-style wars of occupation. The Army's newly-revised operations manual "describes the United States as facing an era of 'persistent conflict' in which the American military will often operate among civilians in countries where local institutions are fragile and efforts to win over a wary population are vital." (NY Times, 2/8/08) The report on the manual is filled with phrases such as "long, grueling struggles"; "blueprint to operate over the next 10 or 15 years"; "how to prepare for future conflicts."

Eyeing a laundry list of potential hot spots, the liberal Brookings Institution calls for vast expansion of U.S. armed forces. "Even greater increases in the size of the ground forces [than the 65,000 added soldiers and Marines already approved] may be prudent. Highly plausible scenarios involving Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran, Korea, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and other large countries (such as Indonesia, Congo, and Nigeria) illustrate the need to provide the next President with the capacity to muster large new forces without delay" (Brookings, Independent Ideas for Our Next President).

Growing threats to U.S. rulers from China and Russia, however, stand to push Pentagon expenditures way beyond their current 4% of GDP levels. During the budget debate, phony "anti-war" Congressman John Murtha declared, "We [need]... a military that can deploy to stop China or Russia or any other country that challenges us. I want to be prepared in case there's a confrontation about energy." (Reuters, 2/5/08) Such a clash would eat up trillions.

## Clinton, Obama, McCain: All War Hawks

Make no mistake. Clinton and Obama aren't calling for higher taxes on the rich to pay for social programs. Both promise to expand U.S. ground forces, Obama by 92,000 troops. Staunch defenders of the profit system, Clinton and Obama are every bit as militaristic as war-hawk McCain. Voting for any one of them will only select the next warmaker. While we have focused on the dollars wiped out by the war machine that all the candidates serve, the cost in workers' lives has been horrific and will intensify.

Capitalism, which ceaselessly creates economic panics and imperialist wars, will always squeeze and destroy workers' lives. Don't vote. Join and build the Progressive Labor Party to achieve the long-term goal of communist revolution, the only answer to the horrors of the profit system.✊

## 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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## CHICAGO WORKERS CONFRONT RACIST BUDGET-CUTTERS AND SEIU LEADERS

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week war in Iraq.

While we can't stop the current slaughter in Iraq or Chicago with reforms, by fighting back we can expand the base for CHALLENGE, strengthen our ties to workers and patients and build a fighting PLP that will eventually lead the working class from fascist terror and war to communist revolution.

Charity Hospital in New Orleans and King Hospital in Los Angeles are CLOSED! Grady Hospital in Atlanta is in critical condition. The CCBHS is already more than half closed, and Bush's Medicare and Medicaid cuts will mean another \$60 million cut on July 1! We're in a fight for our lives. Build PLP and a mass May Day! ✊

## RACIST BUDGET CUTS MURDER BLACK AND LATIN WOMEN

Because of budget cuts and staff reductions, almost 1,000 women with abnormal Pap smears, unusual bleeding, pelvic masses and other symptoms are waiting months to see gynecologists in the Cook County health system. The longer they're forced to wait, the greater the risk of severe pain, cancers and life-threatening emergencies. A May 2007 report from the Chicago Foundation for Women reports more than 450,000 women in this area are uninsured, and many depend on county hospitals and

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# INDUSTRIAL WORKERS STRIKE BACK IN THE SOUTH

On February 1, about 2,500 members of United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 2069 struck the Volvo Trucks North America plant in Dublin, Virginia, after failing to reach a new contract. Workers had voted by a 95% margin to walk out. The plant builds all Volvo trucks sold in North America.

Volvo is seeking wage and benefit concessions, and trying to roll back many health and safety protections in the current contract. Layoffs have reduced the workforce by 300 while the strike has put another 650-job cut on hold. A Volvo spokesman told the Roanoke Times, "We're considering...keep[ing] the plant running as close to full production as soon as possible," but gave no strike-breaking details.

This battle reflects a reaction to a 20-year movement of U.S. auto production to the South, impelled by a massive investment of European and Asian auto billionaires in the highly profitable U.S. market. Historically intense racism, going back to slavery, has created a huge low-wage region in the South. No wonder that, while Ford, GM and Chrysler plants close in Michigan, Missouri and Ohio, Mercedes, Hyundai and Toyota plants are opening in Alabama, Mississippi and Texas. Since 2000, 15,000 parts-supplier plants have opened in Southern states, according to the UAW National Organizing Department.

This example of the inter-imperialist rivalry rages from China to the U.S. as the world's auto bosses fight for markets, resources and cheap labor. Imperialism inevitably leads to war, and as this rivalry sharpens, wars are spreading globally. Only communist revolution can end imperialism and its wars for good.

As industry increasingly heads south to exploit cheaper, unorganized labor, attacks will intensify and sharpening class battles will be waged by the region's industrial workers. Just recently six workers were killed and many injured in a sugar factory explosion in Georgia.

Another fight involves the jobs of the Freightliner Five — Glenna Swinford, Franklin Torrence, Robert Whiteside, Allen Bradley and David Crisco, mem-

bers of UAW Local 3520 — who were fired at the Freightliner truck plant in Cleveland, North Carolina on April 3, 2007. They had led a strike of 3,000 workers. Four were members of the Voluntary Organizing Committee (VOC) that organized the plant in 2003, the country's largest manufacturer of the big Class 8 heavy trucks. They're asking for, and getting support from workers worldwide.

The five were on the 11-member union bargaining committee fired by Freightliner. Six got their jobs back, but had to sign agreements requiring them to be "model employees." The other five were not offered their jobs on any terms.

In 2002, Freightliner and its parent company DaimlerChrysler, cut wages an average of \$1.15/hr and imposed healthcare cutbacks. Between 2003 and 2006, over 6,000 workers joined the UAW at Freightliner plants in North Carolina, Georgia and Tennessee. Robert Whiteside, a black worker, was elected shop chair, the union leader on the shop floor. He also headed the Local's bargaining committee.

The bosses refused to meet with him. Daimler and Freightliner demanded give-backs, despite Daimler's truck group record \$2.6 billion profit in 2006. The bosses broke off negotiations, announced layoffs and voided the union contract and healthcare coverage. The workers followed the bargaining committee's lead and walked out.

The strike was quickly called off by the Local President, claiming it had not been sanctioned by the UAW International. Workers rejected a tentative agreement that excluded the health and safety gains sought by the bargaining committee. But soon afterwards a similar contract was ratified in a vote held on company property, from which the five fired workers were banned.

The Freightliner Five continue to fight for their jobs. Their unemployment benefits are exhausted and they need help to support their families and to continue the fight.

This fight resembles the struggle of the Charleston 5, members of the International Longshore-



## Support the Southern Fighters

Saturday, Feb 23, 2008 3:00 PM; At: ILWU Local 34, 801-2nd St., at embarcadero next to the ballpark, San Francisco. There will also be visits by these workers on February 26, Los Angeles, at the UTLA offices; February 27, Seattle, Washington; February 28, Portland, Oregon. To support these fired workers, you can also send checks payable to: Justice 4 Five Solidarity Fund, P.O. Box 5144, Statesville, N.C. 28687. <http://www.justice4five.com/>

man's Association Local 1422 in Charleston, S.C., who were fired and arrested after police attacked their picket line several years ago. Next month marks the one-year anniversary of the strike of over 7,000 shipbuilders in Pascagoula, MS, against Northrop-Grumman, a major war contractor.

Slowly but surely, the red flag of communist revolution is being planted in the South by the PLP. With patience and a long-term outlook, by building ties

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## Students, Farmworkers, Vets Get PLP Exposé of Hillary's War Plans

Ten thousand people lined up around our college campuses to try to hear Hillary Clinton speak at a campaign rally. While they stood in a long single file line we were there with CHALLENGE and a leaflet exposing Clinton's support for war and exposing the DREAM Act as a preparation for war. The flier quoted her website: "The DREAM Act would also strengthen our nation's military readiness, allowing these well-qualified young men and women to serve their country with honor." A teacher-comrade explained as she handed out the leaflet: "I know the rulers' plans for my students — war." Nearly everyone took our literature from her including both the flier and CHALLENGE. We also explained that it wasn't just about Clinton, but that all the candidates, Clinton, Obama, and McCain, support wider war in the Middle East and war with China in the future. We tried to show that no matter the candidate, it is the system of capitalism that causes and requires war.

At the rally Clinton pushed race and racism as she played up the support she received from the United Farm Workers (UFW) and attacked Barack Obama. She tried to use the UFW to lie that she supports working-class struggles, invoking the name of another union sell-out: Cesar Chavez (he attacked militancy and undocumented workers as the head of the UFW). We made sure to talk with the farmworkers and give them CHALLENGE/DESAFIO as they left. We also had a good conversation with some Iraq war veterans who were there to protest against Clinton and the continued war in Iraq. One vet agreed that it was imperialism that caused war and that we would have to completely change the economic system. He got a CHALLENGE and we got contact information as well.

One important lesson we learned is that appearances can be deceiving. Many seemingly die-hard Clinton supporters or Democrats were just looking for a change and were interested when we argued that change could not come about through elections. We saw that people with Clinton or Obama buttons liked the idea that only communist revolution could create change. This showed many of us the importance of talking to people about our line of communist revolution no matter their T-shirt or button. ☛

## Airline Bosses Attack So Workers Shut Terminal

**NEW YORK, NY** — Airport workers recently stopped work in response to bosses' attacks. An understaffed crew of ramp workers, who direct plane movement and load luggage, was given a third flight, above the usual two, within two hours, without any break time. The workers decided to show the bosses who really had the power to move the planes. When the third flight approached the gate before the second had even been finished, one worker called on another to stop the third plane.

"If they're going to give us this many flights, somebody is gonna have to wait," he told his coworkers.

The second worker signaled to hold the plane in the middle of the taxiway. Soon another plane began to push out, causing a gridlock. The ramp workers brought terminal operations to a halt and demonstrated the power workers acting collectively can seize.

Because of their strategic importance to the domestic economy and the movement of troops for imperialist wars, the airline can't afford to allow many such angry actions. The airline bosses strategically use racism, sexism and ageism to pay employees less and keep them from fighting back more often.

Workers have different pay scales depending on their job category. Ramp workers start at \$10/hour and only reach \$18/hour after an exhausting 10-year wage progression. This system is designed to promote high turnover so that the bosses can continually hire new employees at the lowest wage possible. More than half the ramp workers have been on the job for less than 5 years. The seniority system promotes racism and ageism by forcing the younger, mostly black and Latino, workers into undesirable late shifts. The bosses

use "part-time," 30-hour-a-week workers for the last shift so that they will not have to pay time-and-a-half if workers stay late due to delays. Most workers on the late shift have another job and must put in 12- and 14-hour days to survive.

For cabin service workers, mainly women, conditions are even worse: \$8.50/hour, with no progression and no benefits. The airlines get away with this theft by using a sub-contractor. Bus drivers make slightly better pay but still get screwed by being overworked with no time-and-a-half pay even for 18-hour days to cover for sick coworkers when the airline bosses refuse to increase hiring.

The latest attacks spurred one worker to say to a PLP member that "this is why we need to strike, so they'll respect us." As long as capitalism exists, workers will never get the wealth they produce. Even if all airport workers obtained better wages, they would still pale in comparison to the thousands in profit generated for the bosses with each flight.

Resistance like this teaches workers valuable lessons about their place in the system: the bosses need workers to produce anything, but the workers don't need bosses. When workers grasp this idea it is a victory on the road to a new world. For workers to win more than reforms that the bosses will reverse, they need more than anger and spontaneity; they need the communist analysis found in CHALLENGE. More readers of CHALLENGE and more members of PL could take even more meaningful action at this airport. Workers united with soldiers and students under the banner of the communist PLP can smash capitalism to establish a society for all workers. ☛

# 'Small Schools' Ploy Part of Bosses' 'Creeping' Fascism

**NEW YORK CITY** — In discussions with friends, I've often mentioned that the working class is living under growing fascist conditions, but some disagree. They ask, "Are storm troopers kicking down the door to your house? If not, then we don't have fascism."

But the ruling class doesn't want to control the working class by kicking down doors all the time (although sometimes it does. see *Shades of Hitler*, p.7). Some control is more subtle, slowly adding more and more fascist conditions over time so we're deep in the middle of it before we know what hit us. For communists, it's important to fight such trends.

Throughout the country there is a rush toward replacing larger schools with smaller ones. Among my friends with whom I work in our school I've raised the idea that this move is really "creeping" fascism. In New York City, the Chancellor has mandated the closing of large comprehensive high schools to be replaced by smaller ones, as is happening in my school.

They tell us the large schools are "not meeting students' educational needs." Although our school was improving somewhat, the bosses say it "wasn't improving fast enough."

The attack has a distinctly racist character since the majority of the school closings are in predominately black and Latino working-class neighborhoods. Currently the bosses feel they don't have enough support or soldiers for their wars and think that one way to change this is to win these youth in the schools, and in the classroom, to patriotic support of their imperialist adventures.

I told my colleagues the rulers are closing the large schools to maintain more control, especially in the classroom. The students are their main targets.

### Fascism in Schools Has Many Forms

This strategy is fascist for several reasons. These small schools have fewer students (although the same large class size) and so needed staff is also smaller, which is much easier to watch and control than a larger one.

Few veteran teachers are hired at the small schools. Mostly younger, newer teachers staff them. The latter aren't tenured and usually are on proba-

tion, blunting their ability to fight-back against attacks on students and staff. A "55/25" proposal — allowing a teacher with 25 years of service to retire at 55 without penalty — is being dangled before more experienced teachers.

Small-school principals have greater power over the staff. At one Brooklyn school a principal rated 10 of 40 teachers "unsatisfactory." At another school, union meetings are practically forbidden. When some staff did call one, they were ordered into the principal's office to explain their action. The administration more easily knows everything occurring at these schools, making organizing more difficult.

The greatest fascist danger at these schools is



the change in the relationship between the working class and the ruling class. Communists believe that the class interests of teachers, students and parents are opposed to the administration's (bosses') interests. These small schools spread a "we" philosophy, the "we" uniting the staff and administration. If one doesn't follow the principal's goal for student achievement, that teacher is ostracized from the rest of the staff.

For example, many teachers in these small schools work hours on their own time, without being paid overtime. If teachers refuse, they're labeled "slackers." Teachers go along with this anti-work-

ing-class thinking unwittingly, furthering fascism's talons in the backs of the workers.

The majority of these small schools are housed — up to three or four — in a structure that used to contain one large school. The building is carved up into different sections to fit each school, often leading to a fight for space. Students who happen to wander down the "wrong" hallway may be considered "trespassers," subjecting them to disciplinary action.

The fight over space forces students to share the little existing space. Gymnasiums and cafeterias that once served one school must now accommodate up to four schools. This not only pits staff members against each other, but also student against student.

### School Closing Is Attack on Working Class

The news that our school was closing devastated most of my colleagues. Many have been there 20 years or more. For some, this was the only school at which they've taught. The immediate response was depression, then anger (usually toward the principal or other administrators) and then fear — from not knowing where they'll teach next year, not knowing what will happen next.

Many might not recognize this as growing fascism, but this is how it "creeps" into our lives, with workers concentrating on where to go next rather than on organizing. As workers "adjust" and get used to this level of attack by the bosses, it only enables the rulers to go further. This move to smaller schools is an attack on the working class, not "just another change in the schools."

As we fight it, we must win teachers, students and parents not only to see it as growing fascism, but also to understand why the rulers are resorting to such attacks — the better to control us and win the youth, in preparation for unending wars against imperialist rivals. Ultimately, only communist revolution can defeat fascism because its source: capitalism. ♡ Red Teacher

(Series continues next issue)

# Electro-Circus Stirs Intense Debate in Church Group

My church youth group has talked a lot about the elections lately. These young adults used to be reluctant to talk about politics, but now there is lots of enthusiasm, especially among the first-time voters. Several waited for hours to see Clinton and reported happily that they had seen CHALLENGE sellers there, too. Many are enthralled by Obama.

This is the savvy "YouTube generation," but their reasons were incredibly superficial: "I just like him" or "She won the debate." Nobody seemed to know the candidates' positions, other than "she's for health care, he's for change," or whether they differ on anything substantial. One older adult was the most enthusiastic, saying that "Obama is inspiring a whole generation of youth to get involved in the electoral process." About half of the young people just listened, and one said later that she "wasn't really into the elections."

Another adult, known as a radical, was pressed to say who she really wanted to be president. She replied, "We're on an out-of-control runaway train with no brakes, headed toward a cliff, and you are asking who I want to drive it. I think we should all get off the train, as quickly as we can!" Several young CHALLENGE readers said, "yeah, but communism didn't work." But they agreed to invite a student comrade to talk with the group later.

One of the sharper exchanges came when someone offered to bet on the return of a military draft within the first term of any Democratic administration. "Why do you think Obama would do that?" someone asked. "Because the main message of his campaign is to get young people to feel that 'we're all in this together, part of a liberal multi-racial, anti-sexist America' and the logical conclusion is 'everybody should do National Service' which would turn into a draft" she said. Most looked unhappy with this idea, but nobody argued against it.

In an anti-racism class at the church on election night, almost everyone self-identified as a Democrat and seemed to agree when the minister said whichever Democrat won would be wonderful. But nobody actually claimed that the Democrats would improve things. Instead they talked about how a black or female president would be a "symbol" of change for the better. Several were excited that Internet developments have "democratized American politics." On the other hand, several people pointed out that the constant media talk about the "black vote" and "Latin vote" and the "female vote" builds even more racism.


I was a little surprised when some CHALLENGE readers shared the general hopefulness about the elections, because these good friends are open to the ideas that capitalism can't be reformed and that we can't end racism without ending capitalism. But their idea of having a "long-term perspective" is that incremental "gains" made through electoral politics will lead eventually to revolutionary developments.

Now a long-term perspective depends on understanding that small changes can create conditions for a revolution. But what kind of changes? Not winning small reforms but winning people - by ones and twos and in larger groups - little by little, closer to the communist movement PLP is building.

Most of my friends don't yet fully agree that it's meaningless to talk about "democracy" when we live under a capitalist dictatorship. And we need to talk more about what real mass participation will be like under a revolutionary dictatorship of the working class.

These conversations have led to a new regular CHALLENGE reader, with plans to show the paper to four more people. Being deeply involved in this

### Teacher Salutes PL's Solidarity with Strike



I'm a teacher in one of the biggest schools in Puerto Rico. I can assure you that this strike by teachers here (see CHALLENGE, Feb. 13) is not going to be an easy one. The government has been calling out for the breaking of the strike both by the police and retired teachers. We hope the blood doesn't reach the river as we like to say here in Puerto Rico.

Thanks for the solidarity. A great majority of the teachers support the strike, our demands and understand that privatization is not the way to go for public schools. ♡

A Teacher, Puerto Rico

church has created wonderful opportunities for sharp, friendly, long-term political struggle over racism, the bosses' electoral circus and for communism. ♡



# Oil, Uranium Sparking Imperialist War Over Chad

Chad is the latest tinderbox to explode in Africa, and the world. Just in recent weeks, bloody conflict has erupted in “stable” Kenya, more war in Congo and continuous armed clashes in Nigeria’s oil-rich Delta region, among others. These fights have something in common: they’re caused by imperialism and local capitalists who have intensified all the contradictions in the region, while the working masses pay with their lives.

After the Chad government and four rebel groups signed a cease-fire last October, fighting broke out again in early February. Rebel forces attacked N’Dajema, Chad’s capital, trying to oust strongman Idriss Deby. Chad is one of Africa’s poorest countries, but only for the people, not for its rulers and the imperialist corporations raking in big bucks here.

In 2003, after completion of a \$3.7 billion pipeline linking its oilfields to Atlantic coast terminals, landlocked Chad became an oil exporter.

The Doba pipeline — operated by Exxon Mobil with partners Chevron and Malaysia’s state-run Petronas — pumps 160,000 barrels a day through Cameroon to the Gulf of Guinea.

Last September, Chad’s national oil refiner signed a joint venture deal with China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC), parent of PetroChina and China’s largest oil and gas producer. PetroChina says it has discovered at least 100 million tons of oil at a new project in Chad. (Reuters Factbox, 2/3)

Despite the oil revenues, there’s been no real improvement in most Chadians’ standard of living. Chad remains one of the world’s poorest countries,



ranked 171 out of 177 in the UN development index, which uses criteria such as average income, life expectancy and literacy.

The rebels, which include some former high-ranking members of the Deby government, have support from Sudan, which sees Deby as backing anti-Sudanese government forces in Darfur. There are actually 300,000 refugees from Sudan and the Central African Republic living in UN camps in Chad. Thousands of Chadian refugees are fleeing the latest fighting.

France is still a leading trading partner of Chad, a former French colony. President Sarkozy claims he’s trying to break with old French policies of using military force to prop up corrupt regimes in Africa’s former French colonies, choosing diplomacy instead. But the military option is still open.

France’s 1,500 troops lead the biggest European Union “peacekeeping” force that’s ever been here, as part of MINURCAT (UN Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad), supposedly to protect refugees from these two neighboring countries in the Chad camps. Small COS (French commando) groups are also operating in the border of Sudan and Central Africa, spying on rebel groups fighting the Chad government. And then Chad’s western neighbor Niger is France’s main source of uranium to fuel its nuclear reactors on which France is totally dependent to produce its electricity.

Thus, the fighting in Chad is becoming another regional war, involving Sudan and the Central African Republic, French and European troops, Exxon, Chevron, Malaysia’s Petronas and China’s CNPC (the main oil company in Sudan). Even Libya’s ruler, Col. Khaddafi, now a darling of Paris, is allowing French military planes operating in Chad to refuel in Libya airfields (Le Canard Enchaîné, 2/6). The rivalry among the various imperialists and their oil companies to control the energy supplies of Africa and the world is intensifying the conflict.

All this is a recipe for endless imperialist wars, mass poverty and massacres. Indeed, for Africa’s toiling masses the choice is increasingly between imperialist-capitalist barbarism or uniting to smash these bloodsucking exploiters. It won’t be easy to break the many barriers the imperialists and local rulers use to divide the continent’s workers and peasants, and build a revolutionary communist movement, but it is the only viable solution to this hell. ☸

## Control of Oil Routes, Military Bases Spurs U.S. Destabilization of Pakistan

“The Pakistani working class widely believes that the country’s military and ISI (its secret service) is supporting terrorist groups. They see how freely terrorists move about the country with heavy equipment, even rocket launchers,” said a community organizer. “Suicide bombers usually attack in crowded working-class neighborhoods. The police and army don’t protect the people living there, they only protect the rich and government officials.”

According to a January 15 NY Times report, a former Pakistani official acknowledged that dozens of ISI officers support the jihadis even as others in the ISI and army fight them.

The chaos and terrorism may very well be leading to a U.S.-driven destabilization and break-up of the country, accompanied by U.S. militarization, as happened in Yugoslavia. A 2005 report by the U.S. National Intelligence Council and the CIA forecast a “Yugoslav-like fate” for Pakistan.

U.S. rulers can hardly support Pakistani president Musharref given his lack of support in the country. With his imposition of a state of emergency and the assassination of U.S.-backed Benazir Bhutto — which precipitated the current crisis — his government has lost even the fig-leaf of a “democratic” state, which could speed the break-up process.

Evidence points to the U.S. destabilizing the country, taking advantage of its history — a Muslim nation carved out artificially by British imperialism. For the Pakistani working class, “Balkanization” means more exploitation and repression and more deaths.

The U.S. is fomenting social, ethnic and religious strife. In Balochistan (one of the country’s four provinces), the U.S. and Britain have been covertly supporting the BLA — the Balochistan Liberation Army — which closely resembles the Kosovo Liberation Army in Yugoslavia. The split-up of — and U.S. military intervention in — Yugoslavia, enabled the U.S. to build one of the world’s largest military bases there.

Militarization of Balochistan to control its potential wealth from other imperialists is critical. Balochistan is strategically important, bordering on the Arabian Sea near the Straits of Hormuz through which passes 30% of the world’s oil. The province also has untapped oil and gas, while pipelines are slated to pass through it from Iran to India. U.S.-

backed terrorists are already scaring off Chinese capitalists and workers. Engineers building a deep seaport at Gwadar on the Arabian Sea have returned to China. The U.S. military is already using the area for commando forays into Iran.

The U.S. also has several military bases in Pakistan; controls the country’s airspace; and is carrying out bombings from the Afghan side of the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. Those attacks, plus Pakistani Army helicopter gunship bombings, suicide bombers and fighting between Islamic radicals and soldiers all have killed thousands of civilians. Meanwhile, since 2003 the U.S. military has more than doubled its troop strength in Afghanistan, from 9,000 to 22,500.

Another part of the U.S. “Balkanization” plan is to send U.S. troops into Pakistan. Washington is pressuring the Pakistani government — in the name of the “war on terrorism” — to allow U.S. Special Forces to pursue the Taliban from Afghanistan into Pakistan — a move, incidentally, backed publicly by presidential aspirant Barack Obama. So far Pakistan’s army has agreed to a small number of Special Forces to work alongside the 100,000 Pakistani soldiers deployed in the border regions. A deal is underway for the U.S. to train 60,000 additional Pakistani soldiers in the “war on terror.”

“Don’t underestimate the Pakistani masses,” declared the community organizer. “The Pakistani army, 60% from the Punjab ethnic group and 40% Pathan, has lost more soldiers since 2001 than the U.S. has lost in Iraq and Afghanistan combined. Already some soldiers are refusing to fight. In both ethnic groups soldiers see that they are killing other working-class families and may very well come to understand they must turn the guns on their own commanders and on the imperialists.

There are Pakistani workers who agree with PLP that nationalism is not the solution. That is only a fight for a different boss — a Balochistani boss will replace a Punjabi or a Pathan. Workers have no borders. “The answer to “Balkanization,” concluded the community organizer, “is for all workers in all the provinces as well as those in neighboring India, Iran and Nepal to build one single party that takes them successfully on the road to communist revolution.” ☸

## SCHOOLS ON BOSSES’ CHOPPING BLOCK

*continued from front page*

Phony leftists and reformists will come out of the woodwork and attempt to lead mobilized masses of students, teachers and parents into the waiting arms of the Democratic Party, swallowing up an anti-budget-cut movement into Barack Obama’s contribution to the rulers’ politics — mobilizing a new generation of (mainly young) folks to “believe in America” once again. They want millions in motion for “justice” while marching behind Democratic war-makers like Hillary Clinton. Throw in a terrorist “emergency” and we have a mass base for fascism. This is the grave danger we face.

Yet the opportunities are even greater. The bosses need budget cuts in their current crisis. Tens of thousands can be introduced to our communist ideas in liberal-led movements against these cuts. Amid a passive period, the simple act of organizing a contingent of students, parents and/or teachers to attend a rally can be an important political step forward, but only if communists, fighting side-by-side with these masses, seize the opportunity to make communist politics primary. We can expose the misleaders and train new communist leaders.

Confronting police goons and administration apologists, we can expose the naked force and racist neglect that saturates the schools and the capitalist system itself. We can point out the need for revolution when we show how the bosses will grant reforms when forced to, but take them away as long as they hold state power.

Yet the masses will only draw these conclusions if communists are active. As the communist leader Lenin asserted, communist ideas come to the working class from the outside. PLP dares to follow this road today. There is much work to do and a world to win. Join us! ☸

# LETTERS



## Ideological Struggle In Our Own Families

Recently, a reporter on TV talked about workers in Haiti who are forced by poverty to eat cookies made from mud and sugar. He said that Haiti is very poor and that we don't have to go as far as Africa to see such horrendous conditions.

I talked with some family members who heard the reporter; one said that we have to pray for god to help these workers resolve their situation; another person said that we should eat less to feel their pain; another said that this was their problem and that we shouldn't give too much importance to the situation, adding that we can't change things and things will always be like this. At this moment it was hard to carry out the ideological struggle since people were starting to get mad and from experience, I knew a conversation now would be unproductive.

I waited until later and then spoke to my brother about it, saying that none of these statements were correct, explaining the world situation, wars for oil profits, racism, exploitation, the situation with immigrants, and the U.S. debt, which is forcing many people into the streets even in the U.S. itself. He started to ask me about society's problems and the origin of the bosses' wealth, asking how we could get rid of all that. I replied that only a revolution can get rid of all the bosses and worldwide poverty, a revolution that must be communist. I've given him three editions of CHALLENGE and we've discussed some articles.

I understand that all this is a process, and that it's not only in the classroom that we can carry out the ideological struggle and win more people to join the Party. We can find revolutionary potential in our own families. For communist revolution, let's unite workers and their families of the world!

*Red Sister in Mexico*

## Mexico: Patience and Political Struggle with Students

In our university when we question our friends' concept of reality the ideological struggle begins to intensify. Some choose to change the subject in order to keep things friendly. But, others become more interested and continue to question the status quo more deeply. The minute the conversation

becomes more political, the most important thing for us is how to bring these people closer to the Party.

Sometimes, the obstacles set up by capitalism make us feel disappointed, thinking that our friends won't ever join the Party. We have made the mistake of not making a plan to recruit the people close to us. This happened with a couple, who regularly gets CHALLENGE-DESAFIO but the woman ended joining another group while her boyfriend remained on the margin of our political work.

We're growing modestly; three new friends are attending study groups and we are talking to our friends about the Party and inviting many more to our study group. We understand that it's a long-term struggle, which requires patience and urgency, ideological struggle and organization. Even though we're youth, we know that for revolution there's no age. Youth of the world, let's join the revolutionary struggle for communism!

*Red Students, Mexico*

## Obama's Real Program Angers Teenagers

A high school student told us about his discussions in a Government class focusing on the election. Over time, we have talked about how capitalism works for profit, not to make things better for everyone, who really rules by controlling the government, and U.S. competition with other capitalists causing attacks on workers domestically and wars around the world for control of oil.

This student said that listening to Obama's speeches "I hear a lot of vague things about health care and hope, no specific plans or reforms. Most people at my school see Obama as the anti-Bush... this amazing orator who promises great things and an end to the war...he has something in common with us...he's black...I've noticed that my friends don't have an alternative to looking just at the individuals, not at the system."

He took a copy of Foreign Affairs to his Government class in which a featured article described Obama's foreign policy: redeployment to "protect American facilities and personnel, . . . refocus on Afghanistan and Pakistan... so that we are confronting terrorists. . . revitalize the military, 92,000 expansion. . . I will not take the military option off the

## CORRECTION ON POVERTY RATE

A reader pointed out to us that in last issue's front-page CHALLENGE editorial (2/13), the poverty rate for white workers was incorrect. The correct percentage, according to Census Bureau statistics, is 10.3% (not 3.5%), as compared to the poverty rate for black workers at 24.3%.

table." (July/August '07)

The student told us that when Obama's supporters looked at the article, "they got pissed off...felt he let them down...Some were just surprised when they read the specifics."

The teacher had taken students to hear Obama but had not read the article or promoted discussion of this information in the class! He did tell the class that he would be happy to sponsor a young Democrats or young Republicans club on campus. At this, our friend told us "my friend and I joked to ourselves, why don't we have a "young revolutionaries club?"

This is certainly a jumping off place for the observation that the ruling elite needs elections to limit thinking on what "ending the war" means. Or questions: Why do the rulers need Obama to give young people who want change some hope in the existing system? What is the likelihood that Obama will fundamentally change the system? Whether they vote or not, a clearer understanding of class rule is one step towards considering armed revolution as a needed alternative for making change. Youth who are joking around about a young revolutionaries club are already looking beyond elections!

*Red Transit Worker*



## RACIST BUDGET CUTS MURDER BLACK AND LATIN WOMEN

continued from page 2

clinics. The vast majority are black and Latino. A young West Side black woman had a Pap smear performed at a clinic last April; learned in June it was positive, suggesting possible cervical cancer; and has been unable to get an appointment at Stroger Hospital for follow-up tests and evaluation. Another patient had a positive Pap smear in September and just got word she could see a Stroger gynecologist in April.

Last year, half of the community and urgent-care clinics were closed, leading to even longer waits, patients being harassed by bill-collection agencies and rumored threats of immigration raids. As a result, there were 100,000 fewer patient visits last year than in 2006, when there were 101 doctors, nurses and physician's assistants providing basic medical services at the clinics. Today there are only 44 medical providers working longer hours, to serve hundreds of thousands of patients. ☸

### Industrial Workers

continued from page 3

based on struggle and spreading CHALLENGE, industrial workers will lead the way in building a mass PLP. ☸

For more information about the Freightliner Five, including how to make donations, go to <http://justice4five.com>.

## PL College Forum Links Anti-Racism To Anti-War Movement

**New York, NY, Feb. 5** — Recently, some 30 professors, teachers and students attended a PLP forum on racism. In preparation each person was asked to read a packet of articles reprinted from CHALLENGE on the Jena 6 case and the PL History series about the 1975 struggle against the racist ROAR organization in Boston.

The first speaker gave an extensive explanation of the Party's position that the concept of "race" and racist ideology were created by the capitalist system to divide the working class and maintain power. It was also pointed out that profits capitalists gain from super-exploiting black and Latin workers are essential for survival of their system.

The next presenter led us in discussion about the bosses' need to win workers to racism in order to get workers to fight in their endless imperialist wars. The student presenter explained that when soldiers enter the U.S. military they are bombarded with racist ideas: "Those people are different from us. They have no respect for human life. They are inferior." Without this racist brainwashing, workers would balk at orders to massacre non-combatants and torture prisoners.

One of our friends remarked that if racism had a brother it would be nationalism. He said that racism, nationalism and religion were all divisive and that our task was to unite the international working class.

A lively discussion followed about many of

the manifestations of racism in education and on the campuses. Not only must we confront military and CIA recruiters when they come to campus, but we must investigate and expose how the university is involved with research that helps the military and promotes racism.

In addition we must increase our efforts to bring the anti-racist struggle into the anti-war movement. Campus anti-war committees should discuss racist issues such as the Jena 6. In our unions we must address racism as well as opposing the war.

After the discussion we saw a documentary film "Another Brother" which deals with the racism faced by black soldiers in Vietnam and upon their return home. Our next planned forum is entitled "For a World Without Borders: A Communist Perspective on Immigration."

This electoral year, more HS and college youth are being won to vote. Because of the dangerous illusion that Obama and to a lesser extent Hillary represent "change," it is important to demonstrate more openly our revolutionary alternative to these politicians. Their only "change" will be to expand the current wars and make us pay more for the capitalist economic meltdown. Being involved in mass organizations, using CHALLENGE and having frequent party-building events are necessary to make our Party grow. ☸



# JOBLESS: 7.65 MILLION OR 20 MILLION?

While the U.S. government announced a 17,000 job-loss for January, the Bureau of Labor Statistics also said the unemployment rate has actually declined to 4.9% based on 7.65 million jobless. What fraud! The government's definition of an unemployed worker is one who has looked for a job in the last four weeks. This, of course, does not include:

- 4.8 million working part-time who want full-time jobs;
- 5.0 million who haven't sought employment in the last four weeks or longer, including "discouraged" workers, those who've stopped looking for non-existent jobs (above figures from NY Times, 2/2/08);
- 1.6 million in prison (of the total 2.4 million) for non-violent crimes, mostly on drug possession charges — who are not imprisoned in rehabilitation-oriented Western Europe — and being among the least skilled would probably add to the jobless figures.

Add those to the government unemployment figure and the total becomes 19 million, or approximately 2½ times the reported 7.65 million! This still does not include unemployed youth who seek "jobs" as part of the 1.4 million in the military, nor several million still on welfare who would want to work if child-care were available. (Welfare recipients forced into Workfare in New York City replaced 20,000 unionized workers on the municipal workforce, according to a March 2001 report from the Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies.)

So the number of U.S. workers denied full-time civilian jobs has certainly passed 20 million. Because of racist discrimination, the jobless percentage for black workers (9.2%) is more than double that of whites

(4.4%). But even those figures are underestimates since that 9.2% figure excludes the greater percentage of black workers trapped into prison and onto welfare.

There never has been full employment under capitalism, nor can there be. As bosses compete against each other for maximum profits, especially globally, their first cost-cutting measure is laying off workers, constantly searching for the lowest wage-rates. Now, especially during economic crisis, mass layoffs are the order of the day, as the bosses try to shift the burden of that crisis onto the backs of the working class.

But basing profits on non-productive sources only worsens the crisis. Schemes like subprime mortgage fiascos and hedge funds do not produce new value; only manufacturing workers can do that, and U.S. manufacturing is constantly declining. The trillions in credit and trade debts, and the borrowing to pay the \$1.7 trillion cost of their imperialist wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, will deepen the economic crisis still further.

So no matter who becomes the next President, Hillary, Obama or McCain, the bosses will need more of a fascist police state, to make workers pay even more for their wars and crisis and to try to stop any working-class rebellions against this squeeze on their jobs and wages. And this is why workers need a system that is free of all bosses and profits and the stealing of the value we workers produce — a system in which all this value is shared according to need — and need a party, PLP, which fights for that system: communism.☺

## Shades of Hitler: Anti-Immigration Pogroms Rising

**ARIZONA, Feb. 12** — The Giants-Patriots championship game was one of the most exciting Super Bowls in recent history. In the U.S., almost 100 million watched it on TV. But there's another side to this game, almost ignored by everyone. It had a touch of the racism at the 1936 Berlin Olympics when in the middle of another sporting event attracting millions, Hitler put forward his racist "master race" garbage. But the black runner Jesse Owens upset Hitler's appellation by winning four track events.

Somewhat similarly, while millions were enjoying the Super Bowl in Arizona, the same state's politicians who were hosting the championship game were — along with their cops — in the forefront of pogroms against immigrants occurring nationwide. The NY Times (2/12) reports about the situation in Arizona: "The signs of flight among Latino immigrants here are multiple: Families moving out of apartment complexes, schools reporting enrollment drops, business owners complaining about fewer clients."

The Sherrif's Department runs ads asking people to report on undocumented immigrants. Local politicians are behaving like the Minutemen. "It's like a panic here," said Ms. León, a daycare worker. "This is all having an effect on the community, mostly emotional."

But Arizona is not alone with these pogroms. Last week, there were protests in Danbury, Conn., because local cops can now legally behave like immigration agents. On February 7, ICE (Immigration cops) raided a plant near Salt Lake City, Utah, arresting 50 workers. Virtually simultaneously, ICE raided Micro Solutions Enterprises, a Van Nuys, California plant making parts for copier machines, and arrested 120 workers.

The ICE cops arrested over 7,000 immigrant workers last year just raiding workplaces, and they plan to arrest even more this year. It's no coincidence that these fascist-like raids are occurring amid an economy meltdown and rising unemployment. The bosses, their politicians and cops want workers to blame other workers (undocumented immigrants) for the problems caused by capitalism itself.

Undocumented immigrants didn't run scams like subprime mortgages, stealing billions from working-class families, and are not in charge of the endless wars spurring this capitalist meltdown. Workers who fall for these racist pogroms scapegoat undocumented immigrants are cutting their own throats. These Gestapo-type raids will also be used against any workers fighting cutbacks, layoffs, plant closings, etc.

We in PLP believe that a divided working class is the best weapon the bosses have to make ALL workers pay for their crisis and wars. Now more than ever, our slogan must be, "Same enemy, same fight, workers of the world, unite. ☺



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

### Working-class savings near zero

Between 1983 and 2004, the average wealth of the top one percent of households grew by 78 percent, reports Edward Wolff, professor of economics at New York University. The bottom 40 percent lost 59 percent. In 2004, 1 out of every 6 households had zero or negative net worth.... That's before the mortgage crisis hit. (MinutemanMedia.org, 2/16)

### Biofuels profitable, but not green

Almost all biofuels used today cause more greenhouse gas emissions than conventional fuels if the full emissions costs of producing these "green" fuels are taken into account, two studies published Thursday have concluded. (NYT, 2/8)

### Troops to be used against rallies

...At every year's end a media research group at Sonoma State University compiles a list of the most important and least reported stories — you know, the stuff that affects your life....

Not surprisingly, much of what made the new top-25 least reported stories per significance in 2007 had to do with the "war on terror." Basically, those three words mean, "Whatever constraints you placed on your government, they're off."

Story...No. 2 is about the Defense Authoriza-

tion Act.... It lets the president station troops "anywhere in the United States and take control of state-based National Guard units without the consent of the governor or local authorities, in order to 'suppress public disorder.'"

You ask, what amounts to "public disorder," triggering this de facto form of martial law? Don't bother.... In any case, you won't be consulted. (NYT, 1/17)

### Loan racket uses class, race, sex

Testifying about how she targeted her subprime products a former loan officer confessed: "If someone appeared uneducated, inarticulate, was a minority or was particularly old or young, I would try to include all the [additional costs] CitiFinancial offered...."

"We believe this represents the greatest loss of wealth for people of colour in modern US history," the report concludes.

...Among black and Latina women the discrimination was even more amplified....

Black women earning double the area median income were nearly five times more likely to receive



sub-prime mortgages than white men with similar incomes. Latinas were four times more likely. (GW, 2/8)

### System produces excess meat

Meat production generates nearly a fifth of the world's greenhouse gases — more than transportation.

To put the energy-using demand of meat production into easy-to-understand terms... if America were to reduce meat consumption by just 20 percent it would be as if we all switched from a standard sedan — a Camry, say — to the ultra-efficient Prius....

Though some 800 million people on the planet now suffer from hunger or malnutrition, the majority of corn and soy grown in the world feeds cattle, pigs and chickens....About two to five times more grain is required to produce the same amount of calories through livestock as through direct grain consumption... (NYT, 1/27)



# Red Immigrant Underground Whipped Nazis in WWII

Throughout the history of capitalism, immigrants around the world have played an important part of the fight against the ruling class. One great example is the Communist-led Francs-Tireurs et Partisans de la Main d'Oeuvre Immigree (FTP-MOI) a group of about 100 fighters from all over Europe who carried out practically all acts of armed resistance against the Nazis in the Paris region between March and November 1943. In one of their most noted actions they killed the SS General Julius von Ritter, one of the main organizers of the Service d travail obligatoire (STO) (forced labor). After this, twenty-three of the group were arrested, tortured, and murdered. The Nazis distributed a famous poster calling them a criminal army rather than an army of liberators – they were responsible for 56 armed actions against the Nazis, 150 Nazis dead, and 600 wounded. This attempt to build anti-Communism backfired on the Nazis; the poster was defaced and flowers placed below it.

The group fought the Germans as part of the French Communist Party's (PCF) pre-war organization for immigrant workers, Main d'Oeuvre Immigree. Their actions at the beginning of the occupation consisted of carrying out sabotage against factories working for the Germans, and aiding in the return of immigrant Communists to their occupied homelands to join the Resistance. By summer 1941 (and the invasion of the Soviet Union), armed struggle became the order of the day. The FTP-MOI was at the heart of it in Paris. Arson at factories producing for the Germans; derailing of trains; attacks on German soldiers, all were carried out by these anti-fascists. Bomb factories were set up, false papers were manufactured; clandestine presses operated in Yiddish, Italian, Spanish, Hungarian, Armenian and Romanian.

The Parisian branch of the FTP-MOI learned a reputation for daring through such large-scale actions as the attempt to kill von Schaumburg, commander of German troops in Paris, and the successful execution of SS General Ritter. An idea of the extent of their activities can be gathered from just one day's activities, those of September 8, 1943 (only weeks before the group's capture): Derailing of a train on the Paris-Reims line; the execution of two Nazi police in Argenteuil; two Nazi soldiers killed at the Porte d'Ivry; a sergeant killed on the rue de la Harpe; two other Nazis shot at an undisclosed location.

But by the summer of 1943 the group was in trouble. The Nazis and their French auxiliaries were hot on their trail. The PCF removed most of the non-immigrant resistance, the FTP, from Paris, but left the FTP-MOI behind. There is some question about why the FTP-MOI was left in Paris while other groups were removed. Some historians have suggested that the PCF knowingly abandoned these fighters to be captured by the Nazis. Another analysis is that the PCF had political reasons to keep them in Paris. It was becoming clear that the Allies would eventually win the war and they needed their most effective fighters in Paris. The FTP-MOI had proven through action that they were a politically and militarily reliable force. As proof, in the last months before their capture, they carried out 40 actions in Paris and its surrounding region.

This great historical example of armed struggle against fascism should give us optimism for our current struggles against the ruling class. Even during one of the darkest periods for communists and the



A memorial to the fighters of the FTP-MOI at the Pere Lachaise cemetery in Paris

working class, these heroic fighters created an internationalist militia that helped to bring down the Nazis and their "Thousand Year Reich." Although they were small, communist dedication and politics gave this meager band a great advantage. Thus, the example of the FTP-MOI should always remind us that when the international working class is organized under the banner of PLP, no force mustered by the ruling class will be able to defeat us. ✪

# Shared Work By All Will Free All Workers

**Book Review: How to Make Opportunity Equal: Race and Contributive Justice, by Paul Gomberg, Blackwell Publishing, Malden, MA, 2007.**

The book "How to Make Opportunity Equal: Race and Contributive Justice" makes a major contribution to the fight against racism and to the Marxist theory of working-class revolution. In it Paul Gomberg, an active member of PLP for 35 years, argues two main points. The first is that in order for all workers to have an equal opportunity to do thought-provoking complex work, everyone must also do some routine work. The second point is that a meaningful definition of justice and equality lies not simply in equal distribution of goods and services (distributive justice), but rather in equal opportunity to contribute to the collective good of humanity (contributive justice).

People need food, shelter, and love. Another need that is rarely discussed is self-esteem and esteem from others (which actually depend upon each other). As long as routine and complex labor are performed by different groups of people, people who do routine work will necessarily suffer — from boredom, wear and tear on bodies, and, most important, lack of esteem from themselves and others. One requirement for a just and egalitarian society is that this work be shared by all. Then no one suffers from lack of esteem from restriction to routine labor, and opportunities to do interesting labor can also be done by all.

Capitalism forces specific groups of workers to do routine work, often using racism. White male workers who find themselves having to do routine labor also suffer a lack of esteem, but a greater proportion of the Black, Latino and women workers are forced into routine jobs. The ruling class favors false theories that undervalued workers are innately incapable of more complex work. However, there is nothing innate about it — capitalist schools both create and reinforce this outcome. Racism intensifies the suffering by disproportionately consigning

particular groups to this hell.

Unfortunately, as Gomberg argues, even if there were no racism or sexism under this system, some workers would still end up in this hell of devalued social contribution. Only by ending competition and opening up unlimited opportunities, can all workers develop complex skills and engage in complex labor, by having everyone do the necessary routine work.

We are taught that some workers simply don't have what it takes to become a doctor or teacher or engineer or physicist. Given the current society in which the search for maximum profit limits the opportunities for most workers to develop those skills, there is no way of proving this. Indeed there is much evidence that esteem from teachers encourages self-esteem in students, which, in turn, encourages them to learn and develop. Positive feedback produces success, while negative feedback produces failure. The schools are designed to provide positive feedback for a chosen few and negative feedback for most, to mirror the capitalist division of labor.

Gomberg discusses why people work, and proposes the communist ideal that each person should work based upon their commitment to society and receive based upon their needs. He then anticipates the question, why would someone work harder for no extra monetary or material gain? He answers that social esteem can be valued far more highly than material gain, and refers to anthropological studies of societies in which this is true. Esteem takes the place of money, with the essential difference that esteem comes in unlimited supply.

As long as capitalist division of labor is permitted to exist racism will thrive. Under capitalism, no amount of struggle by the working class can permanently defeat divisions off which the bosses profit. Only in a society that completely transforms the division of labor — so that all share the routine work and all have unlimited opportunity to develop complex skills — can we end racism and all class oppression. This is the kind of society that PLP fights for and that requires armed working-class revolution. It's called communism. ✪

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