

# CHALLENGE



THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

**PLENTY OF FOOD . . .**

**BOSSSES**

**PROFIT WHILE**

**WORKERS**

**STARVE**

The litany of horrors faced by workers of the world is staggering: Ten million children under the age of 5 die each year from hunger (The Lancet, a British medical journal). Half of the world's population faces premature death due to lack of nutrition or potable water (Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)); 2.4 billion people have to cook with wood or other biological products (instead of natural gas) and 1.6 billion have no access to electricity.

None of these things need to be true. In a world full of technological wonders, no one should be hungry or have to live in the dark. According to the FAO, there is more than enough food in the world to feed everyone—at least 1.5 times current demand. In fact, over the last 20 years, food production has risen steadily at over 2.0% a year, while the rate of population growth has dropped to 1.14% a year. Furthermore, it is now common and easy to transport food over great distances. This is the essence of capitalism: millions die from starvation every year because it is not profitable to keep them fed.

In fact, the top agriculture firms' profits are increasing BECAUSE of the starvation. Cargill and Monsanto, two of the world's largest agriculture corporations saw their third quarter 2007 profits increase by 86 and 45 percent, respectively. Billionaire Jim Rogers is on TV constantly advising people to "buy agriculture!" The investment blog "Energy and Capital" describes in detail the starvation and misery and ends with the statement: "...enough of the doom and gloom. How can I profit from this? Well, I'm gonna tell you..." Starvation is good for business! Higher food prices mean greater profits.

The contradiction between the ability to feed all of the world's workers and the greed of the bosses has become even starker as the price of food has increased astronomically. From March 2007 to March 2008 average world prices for wheat increased 130%, soy prices were 87% higher, rice had climbed 74%, and maize was up 31%. (BBC News, 4/8/2008).

There are a number of factors that have led to the increase in food prices including droughts in 2005 and 2006 affecting major wheat-producing countries and high oil prices (According to the World Bank, transportation costs for food are up 80% since 2006 and fertilizer prices have risen 150%).

The call by some capitalists for higher biofuel usage has also caused prices to increase dramatically. Not surprisingly, these bosses are heavily invested in technology and factories needed to turn food into fuel. Currently, about 5% of the world's grains are being used to make biofuels, and

the percentage is increasing. If the trend continues, half of the U.S. corn harvest will be diverted to ethanol production by the end of 2008. This has two primary effects: First, as more corn is planted it displaces wheat and soybeans, causing their price to rise. (This process is similar to what has happened in the developing world under pressure from the IMF and World Bank. In order to increase the profitability of the land in these countries, the IMF and World Bank demanded that local farmers grow only export crops like coffee and cotton instead of food. This caused countries to have to import food and ended up increasing poverty and hunger.) Secondly, the U.S. corn industry produces around 40% of the world total, meaning the increased diversion to agrofuels in the U.S. impacts global markets for all food grains. (Earth Policy Institute)

In places like Haiti, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Mexico, Italy, Indonesia and Egypt food prices have skyrocketed, revealing the racist face of the food crisis. Any attack is felt even more so by black, Latin and Asian workers of the world, including in the U.S. where food prices have also risen. There have been many rebellions against this racist genocidal capitalist attack. On April 3 in Les Cayes, the third largest city in Haiti, five thousand people set up barricades made of burning tires and cars and seized trucks carrying rice. Hungry workers and students tried to storm the presidential palace in Port-Au-Prince. The army was sent to smash a mass strike and rebellion led by workers in Egypt against the food price hikes. In the Ivory Coast, 1,500 demonstrated, chanting "We are hungry," and "Life is too expensive." Jean Ziegler, a Swiss professor who studied food issues for the U.N. has made comparisons to the French Revolution, saying "one day starving people could rise up against their persecutors."

But, even though it is good that angry workers respond with armed opposition to the brutality of capitalism, a revolution to end this living hell will require that communists internationally get immersed in these struggles. Communist leadership must turn these struggles into schools for communism: showing that the food crisis, endless imperialist wars, racist and fascist terror can only be ended by building a red-led movement uniting workers internationally to fight for a society without the profit-hungry bosses.

The fight for a communist world will be long and hard, and there will be periods of scarcity for the workers of the world, but the main cause of starvation will be wiped out.

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# 'Barracks' Obama Lays Out Grand War Plans

Barack Obama's June 4 speech to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) shatters his already shaky credibility as a peace candidate. In it, he vowed to do "everything—and I mean everything—to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon....I will always keep the threat of military action on the table to defend our security and our ally Israel." In Obama's view, the talks with Teheran he proposes would actually strengthen a subsequent U.S. military strike:

"Sometimes there are no alternatives to confrontation. But that only makes diplomacy more important. If we must use military force, we are more likely to succeed, and will have far greater support at home and abroad, if we have exhausted our diplomatic efforts."

Obama made it clear to AIPAC that "change" (his favorite slogan) includes rebuilding the U.S. war machine, to which he would immediately add 92,000 troops. "That is the change we need in our foreign policy. Change that restores American power and influence."

## OBAMA AIDE: GIs IN IRAQ TO STAY

Amid cheers from their U.S. boosters, he also promised Israel's fascist rulers \$30 billion in military aid over the next decade. Obama is pursuing the age-old U.S. strategy of arming racist anti-Arab Israel to the teeth to police the U.S.'s Mid-East oil empire. An Obama administration may even persuade well paid ally Israel to do the U.S.'s dirty work

in taking out Iran's nuclear installations and setting the stage for regime change there.

Obama has grand war plans for Iraq, too. U.S. rulers invaded Iraq hoping to raise its oil production — under the control of Exxon Mobil, Chevron and Britain's BP and Shell — to six million barrels a day (mbd), which would trail only Saudi Arabia's in the region. But with output stagnating near 2,000,000 mbd due to Bush's bungling, Obama's "phased withdrawal" platform has become permanent colonial occupation. His top Iraq adviser Colin Kahl just wrote a report for the Center for a New American Security stating that "the U.S. should aim to transition to a sustainable over-watch posture (of per-

***'For the working class and its friends, backing "Barracks" Obama is a grave political error. The solution to the endless misery and war the profit system generates lies beyond its phony electoral process. '***

haps 60,000–80,000 forces) by the end of 2010." (New York Sun, 6/4/08)

## OBAMA FAKES ANTI-WALL STREET STANCE

Having clinched the Democratic nomination, Obama now openly embraces liberal Establishment forces on Wall Street as much as he does U.S. imperialism. The recent resignation of Wall Street/Beltway broker James Johnson as head of Obama's vice-presidential search team represents a feigned attempt to distance the candidate from the big money he has always served.

Right-wing pundits had assailed Johnson's ties to Establishment banker Goldman Sachs and the Rockefeller-led Council on Foreign Relations and Trilateral Commission. But Johnson's chief liabilities for Obama were loans he received from upstart banker Angelo Mozilo, CEO of Countrywide Finan-

cial. The liberals seek to scapegoat Mozilo as the prime mover of the subprime mortgage crisis and its broader economic fallout.

As soon as Johnson left Obama's side, Establishment protégé Jason Furman joined it as chief economic adviser. Furman, who holds three Harvard degrees, toiled in the Clinton White House with Treasury secretaries Robert Rubin and Larry Summers to dismantle Welfare and secure "free trade" treaties, with disastrous results for U.S. workers. Until Obama tapped him, Furman ran the Hamilton Project that Rubin had started at the liberal Brookings Institution. In addition to selling "free trade" pacts, it studies ways of centralizing control of finance into the Establishment's hands. Furman praised JP Morgan's predatory takeover of subprime-tainted Bear Stearns as a "necessary stop-gap." Furman also touts anti-union Wal-Mart, which depresses workers' wages.

Obama masquerades, and appeals to many people, as an anti-racist agent of change. But the main principle motivating his campaign (like McCain's) is capitalism's relentless search for maximum profit rates. If that means shipping further U.S. workers' jobs to low-wage hellholes globally, Obama & Co. approve. If it means using armed force to secure cheap Iraqi oil at the cost of a million or more Iraqi and GI lives, they say, "so be it." If maximizing profit entails sacrificing masses of working-class lives in wars with Iran or China over energy and influence, Team Obama welcomes the task.

For the working class and its friends, backing "Barracks" Obama is a grave political error. The solution to the endless misery and war the profit system generates lies beyond its phony electoral process. Helping build the revolutionary Progressive Labor Party, with the ultimate goal of overthrowing the capitalists' deadly dictatorship is the only viable answer.☺

## 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 — sexism — and traditional gender roles created by class society.**

★ **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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## Eyeing Future Global Conflict, U.S. Warmakers Torpedo Irish EU Vote

U.S. liberals are hailing the recent vote in Ireland against the European Union's Lisbon treaty as ordinary Irish people's thumb-in-the-eye of the elite bureaucrats in Brussels it would have further empowered. The Boston Globe called it "Getting Their Irish Up." But Libertas, the Irish anti-EU movement that steered the vote with massive publicity, counts two major U.S. war contractors, Declan Ganley and Ulick McEvaddy, as leaders. The former's firm sells communication services to the Pentagon; the latter runs an outfit that refuels CIA planes on "rendition" torture missions.

Ireland holds tremendous geostrategic significance for U.S. rulers. In World War II, the U.S. significantly protected its Atlantic supply routes to Britain and then-ally Russia by prevailing upon Ireland's pro-Nazi nationalist rulers to stay neutral. A pro-European stance by Ireland in a future conflict on the continent would present Washington with a major obstacle. That's why, in addition to fanning anti-Europe feeling in the Republic of Ireland, the U.S. foments sectarian strife in British-ruled Northern Ireland, even as it boasts of "peace accords." In 2001, for instance, FBI agent David Rupert offered to supply weapons to the violent Real IRA. Such threats justify perpetual British military presence in Ireland, preventing the island's full unification with Europe. A less than half-hearted member of the EU, Britain sides with the U.S., by and large, militarily, politically and economically.

## Bosses Get Rich While Workers Starve

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Drought and floods, crop-killing diseases, or other unforeseen calamities are always possible. Based on scientific planning, decisions on where people should live, how infrastructure should be built, how food should be supplied, etc., will be made collectively. Under communism, times of scarcity and plenty will be dealt with collectively, with every member of society involved. No matter the situation, no one will eat caviar while others starve to death.☺

# PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

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# LA Students, Parents, Teachers Unite vs. School Cuts

**LOS ANGELES, CA, June 6, —** “The teachers, parents and students united will never be divided,” “money for schools, not for war” and “no cuts, no more, the cuts are for the war” chanted hundreds of teachers, parents and students protesting in front of local high schools. At one, over one hundred teachers, close to 60 students and a dozen parents marched around the school with placards that read “Budget cuts hurt the kids.” Students carried banners reading “Money for school not for war” and “Black and Brown Unity.” The students were the loudest and most energetic. At many LA schools there was a struggle about whether students should be on the picket line. Some teachers said this was an issue that affected teachers only, but others argued successfully that the budget cuts affect the students the most and they were key in the fight against these attacks. Students did picket at these schools and gave important political and tactical leadership, raising connections between the cuts, the war and racism. The day before the picket, CHALLENGE and PLP leaflets were distributed at several schools.

The United Teachers of Los Angeles (UTLA) organized this job action in which teachers were to protest for one hour at the start of the school day against the budget crisis. About 75% of the union's 48,000 members took part in the citywide protest. The budget crisis threatens to cut 6,500 probationary teachers, educational programs, transportation, counseling services and teachers' pay. The press is trying to pacify anger at the cuts by saying that administrators are being cut, but the administrators will replace other teachers in the class room. The union's purpose was to “send a message to Sacramento” to stop the cuts, not to build working-class unity among masses of teachers, students and parents to fight the cuts and the system that makes war for oil profits and prisons its top priorities.

For now, the LA School Board has decided to cut 507 jobs, make all teachers take 4 furlough days (a wage cut) but also promised that school cops would be protected from the cuts!!

These school budget cuts are part of capitalism's crisis nation-wide. As the U.S. bosses are fac-

ing growing threats from rising imperialist nations such as Russia and China, the U.S. bosses will be forced to make further cutbacks to pay for needed wars. They will depend more on their reformed schools to meet their needs for workers and soldiers who believe in patriotic ideas and have the technological skills needed for serving the army or factories. (see box for more on education, the war machine and fascism) The bosses will continue to use police terror and mass incarceration to try to hold back the revolutionary potential of the working class. One thousand new cops will be patrolling the streets of Los Angeles by next year. A brand new youth detention center is being built just a few blocks away from a high school.

The UTLA leaders blame the governor, but the blame lies with the system he serves. To confront this attack, students, teachers and parents must see ourselves as part of the international working class. We are the ones that labor in the factories, and teach the future workers and soldiers. We make everything possible! The bosses have a dicta-



torship over the working class, but teachers, workers, soldiers and students united can build a mass communist movement and become an unstoppable force against capitalism. Meeting the cultural, political and economic needs of the working class and a committed struggle to end racism and exploitation will be the goal. ☺

Thousands of teachers and school workers are expected to gather in Washington D.C. at the annual convention of the National Education Association (NEA). The leadership of the union, will call on its members to celebrate and lend their votes to the Democratic candidate, Barack Obama, placing their faith in the electoral system to make “a change we can believe in.”

But teachers, parents and students who are counting on this “change” to make the schools work for them will be disappointed. Obama, like any other politician, serves the needs of the ruling class, which is why he says “we should take no options, including the military option, off the table,” in spite of being perceived as the anti-war candidate. Keeping the military option on the table means that the U.S. ruling class is facing threats to its world domination which it cannot stave off without massive oppression and cutbacks at home.

The rulers also need the hearts, minds and skills of the working class to have any hope of competing in the current world situation. They are desperately attempting to reform the educational system so that they can teach working-class youth to love and defend the U.S. against its rivals. Capitalists like Bill Gates pour money into the schools in an attempt to make them more useful to the system, even as budgets are cut in major cities. All politicians have the same agenda: use the schools to keep young people serving the needs of the system for soldiers and workers.

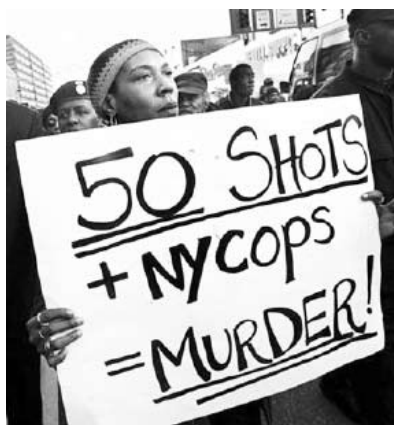
Teachers need to ignore the union leadership's call to vote and instead unite with students and parents, as some Los Angeles teachers did during recent protests (see above.) When we have enough workers, students and above soldiers won to communist ideas and prepared for revolution, only then can we hope to build schools that truly serve our needs rather than imperialism's. ☺

## Sean Bell Forum: H.S. Students Debate Racism, Capitalism, Communism

**BROOKLYN, NY —** It was standing room only as over a hundred students from high schools met to debate whether the racist murder of Sean Bell last November was systemic or an exception to the rule. PLP members and friends who are involved in various debate leagues organized this forum to make the point that while it's great to debate, we must also organize and fight back! These students, who often compete against each other in tournaments, came together to exchange ideas and experiences.

After the panel, members presented their ideas about the Sean Bell case, the history of police brutality in NYC, the impact of the NYPD takeover of school security, the criminalization of students and the impact of racism and profiling in various communities. Questions were raised to the panelists: Were we all Sean Bell? What is the link between the Sean Bell case and the racist treatment of our students in the NYC public schools? Why are many students facing this criminalization? Is there fascism growing in the U.S.? Why is more money spent on security instead of academics? Why is there racial profiling?

When an audience member raised the idea that to speak of fighting inequality usually leads to being “labeled” a communist or socialist, the forum shifted to a real debate over which system is better. Some students argued that communism would be better since workers would have a better life and we would be equal. Other students argued that there will always be competition and that people who work hard should be rewarded. This was answered by a student who stood up and said, “What about workers in Africa, Latin America or Asia?



They work hard and will never be paid what they're worth!” When the point was made that under capitalism, doctors study hard and sacrifice, a panel member answered-in a communist society, we would all help that person to become a doctor.

Complex issues about capitalism and communism were debated, at times heated, but respectful between the students. It was inspiring to see how thoughtful the students were and how, despite it being close to exams, proms and closing school activities, many students want to organize and fight back. The closing speaker called on the students to continue organizing and to make sure that we not allow police murders to continue!

This forum showed us many things, but mainly that there is great hope for the youth to move forward, take political leadership and fight for communist politics in a mass way! ☺

## Bosses Cut Jobs, Wreck Pensions; Stock Market Won't Save Them

**PHILADELPHIA, PA —** In whirlwind negotiation sessions, 1199 hospital union leaders rammed through contracts at two major hospitals in Philadelphia. Usually, negotiations run for months and in the past union militants organized job actions and marches against the bosses. This year however, the union itself called in a federal negotiator and a tentative contract was reached in only one session. Ratification meetings were then quickly arranged with little time for discussion. At one hospital, less than half of the union membership attended. Nonetheless, the workers present overwhelmingly approved the contracts. The union leaders hailed the new contract as a victory for resolving the main issue to most union members: securing money for the pension fund. However the real issue is whether union negotiations can truly resolve the problems capitalism causes for workers. PLP calls for class struggle and organizes for communist revolution to destroy capitalism.

Hospital bosses may have agreed to extend their pension obligations another four years because they priced their penalty for leaving the pension fund at \$6 million and they didn't want their many construction projects interrupted by a strike. But whatever their reasons, we can expect them to come at us hard when this contract ends.

At one meeting a speaker from the audience argued against the union members' passivity and their faith that contract negotiations could help us in today's world. He urged workers to grasp the intensifying contradictions among the rival capitalist bosses. “What are we looking at next?” he asked. “A shooting war with Iran? Increasing trade wars with China and Russia? Do any of you really think the bosses will ever stop attacking our jobs and benefits?”

The night before, at a city-wide meeting of the union delegates, the union president had just finished his monthly litany of how bad things are when a union delegate known to many as a PLP member rose to speak. Addressing the union president he said, “At one of the last ratification meetings you tried to mock me for ‘believing in the revolution no one else does.’ After all the bad news in your report, now tell me we don't need that revolution more than ever!”

Some saw the rushed negotiations and ratification as a travesty against “union democracy”. Others believe that union leaders and

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# Workers, Students Build Alliance Against Racist Wage Cuts and Tuition Hikes

**CALIFORNIA, June 6** — “Same Enemy, Same Fight, Workers and Students Must Unite!” chanted over fifty campus workers and students at a rally against budget cuts, tuition hikes and especially in support of the University of California (UC) workers’ contract fight for higher wages and safeguarded benefits and pensions. Everyone received CHALLENGE/DESAFIO and a leaflet explaining the importance of turning labor actions and strikes into schools for communism. Many were excited by these ideas. One worker asked, “Where have you guys been!” and took extra leaflets to give to other workers. Another, who helped lead the chant “Workers United Will Never Be Defeated!” also took extra leaflets. Students were inspired by the militancy and energy of the workers and were open to PLP’s communist ideas.

The rally occurred a week after 20,000 workers from the ten UC campuses and five hospitals voted overwhelmingly to strike if administrators refused their contract demands. The workers demand a modest wage increase of 9% for the first year of the contract and 6.5% for each of the next two years. Taking inflation into account the raise comes to 10% or even less. And, if the university once again increases workers’ fees for parking and health insurance, the “raise” turns into a wage cut. One demand is to prohibit these fee increases. A strike seems likely in the coming weeks, which will give PLP and friends even more opportunity to build support for the workers and to fight for communist politics among these workers and students.

The successful action grew from over three years of struggle on campus to build worker-student solidarity against racist labor-outsourcing practices, cutbacks and fee hikes, and anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant racism being used to create support for U.S. imperialism. The continuing effort to build a CHALLENGE readership and networks, modest in size, has helped spread PLP’s revolutionary ideas among campus workers and students and show students that workers are open to communism. We have struggled to win students to see a worker-student alliance as vital to any revolutionary movement, for only the working class, organized around communist politics and multiracial internationalism, can destroy the racist profit system and its imperialist wars.

Some of the workers and students involved have been won to anti-racist, anti-capitalist solidarity. At the rally, they enthusiastically chanted “Luchas Obreras No Tienen Fronteras” (Workers’ Struggles Have No Borders) and “Working People Have No Nations, Smash Racist Exploitation!” 20 students and 3 workers from this campus had attended this year’s May Day march in Los Angeles and were impressed and inspired by PLP’s red flags and shirts.

These students and campus workers see the connection between the U.S.’s imperialist oil-profit wars and the racist attacks on workers’ wages and benefits. They see that student registration fees continue to go up while workers’ poverty-level wages keep getting further slashed. They see the links between the racist budget cuts and the grow-



ing permanent war budget supported by both Democratic and Republican politicians.

Only a communist society, where all contribute according to commitment and receive according to need, will put an end to the racism, exploitation, poverty and genocidal wars created by capitalism. This is the indispensable lesson that our friends can learn from the growing fight against the bosses’ cutbacks and from the fight to build a worker-student alliance. Only communism will eliminate profits, wage-slavery, borders, nationalism, sexism, racism and imperialist wars. By fighting for worker-soldier-student alliances and for more workers and students to join PLP and to help distribute CHALLENGE, we’ll politically prepare our class for the long-term struggle for communist revolution. We are urging students and workers to participate in the Summer Projects to strengthen this crucial alliance.

## Canada GM Workers Must Reject Nationalist Union Hacks



**OSHAWA, ONTARIO, June 12** — Today thousands of workers marched to protest the scheduled closing of the GM truck assembly plant here next year. Speakers from the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW), other unions and the New Democratic Party (NDP) pushed the same nationalist snake oil as their counterparts in the U.S. and Europe: “Buy Canadian” and keep jobs in Canada by cutting them in the U.S. and Mexico.

All auto workers should reject this nationalist poison that is leading us to greater poverty and more wars. Another GM truck plant closing is in Toluca, Mexico, where workers earn about \$6/hr. A union leader at that plant said the union would offer to work for less to keep the plant alive. Mexico’s minimum wage is about \$5 per day. GM announced plans to close four truck assembly plants in North America just two weeks after the CAW ratified a new three-year contract that included many concessions and the closing of the Windsor Transmission plant, in exchange for “job guarantees” that would keep the Oshawa plant running through 2011. But then GM double-crossed the workers, announcing it would close the Oshawa plant two years earlier as they scaled back production of up to 350,000 vehicles for the rest of 2008. This reflects the worsening U.S. economy and GM’s continued loss of market share.

Angry GM workers started demanding a strike to keep the plant open. Instead, CAW officials steered them into a symbolic “blockade” of GM headquarters here, which has lasted over a week. Meanwhile, GM went to court and won \$1.5 million in damages from the union, claiming a slow-moving union motorcade slowed production lines for 45 minutes. The local union President testified that he personally tried to clear any congestion around the plant gates and apologized to GM for any “inconvenience.” The court gave the union until June 16 to end the blockade.

As the international auto bosses sharpen their struggle for markets, resources and cheap labor, and more production shifts to China and India, the international working class finds itself in a race to the bottom. The Associated Press (AP) reported (6/5) that Mexican auto unions are offering “two-tier hiring systems and salary cuts that bring already low wages down to near-Chinese levels.” AP reported that a two-tier system cutting wages from \$4.50/hr. to \$2.50/hr. would get Ford to hire 4,500 new workers at its Cuautitlan assembly plant to build Ford Fiestas for the U.S. market. This makes auto wages in “Mexico competitive with China, where an average worker at a foreign-owned factory or joint venture can make \$2 to \$6 per hour.”

A Ford spokeswoman said, “It makes business sense...” So does mass poverty, racist terror, mass deportations and world war. But auto workers have the ability to reach around the world like few others and stop the bosses in their tracks by building an international movement for communist revolution. Conscious workers must reject the nationalist union hacks and unite, from Oshawa to Detroit to Toluca. Join the PLP to make that happen. ☸

## Bosses’ Cut Jobs, Wreck Pensions; Stock Market Won’t Save Them

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the bosses feared the militants organizing the union members to the highest level yet. With the presidential election coming, the union leaders certainly didn’t want some “nasty” strike spoiling their plan to channel worker’s anger at capitalism into voting for the boss’s politicians. To the majority of union members, however, this contract appeared to answer their prayers: the pension crisis was resolved for the time being and they didn’t have to think about a strike for another four years.

But the world’s bosses are marching toward wider wars, deepening racism and fascism, and further attacks on workers’ living and working conditions. Communism remains the only path for workers to build a society that serves our needs because the root of the pension funding crisis is capitalism, a system based on wage slavery, profits and money. For example, the Federal “Pension Reform Act” of 2006 demands that every pension meet certain funding levels supposedly to protect worker’s pensions. Sounds good, right?

But the bosses won’t continue to fork over more of their profits. Ultimately this law establishes legal avenues for driving workers to pay more into pension plans by encouraging bosses to reduce or leave the plans. Because the capitalists control the state, the government, they can pass ‘legal’ attacks that will protect profits and literally take food out of the mouths of older workers.

Over the years Democratic and Republican administrations dramatically reduced government spending for health care—closing hospitals and nursing homes, cutting hundreds of jobs, and draining the amount workers and bosses fed into the plans. Billions of government dollars funded the bosses’ imperialist wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Pension fund money is also invested in the stock market and the current decline of stocks means that workers are worrying a lot! But whether the market goes up or down, investing pension fund money in the market only helps corporations exploit workers labor and pension fund managers further their own financial schemes.

Sooner rather than later however, the bosses will make such philosophical concerns irrelevant. With increased global competition and wider wars to pay for, the bosses must eliminate the few remaining pension plans. Every day it becomes clearer that the only security workers have is communist revolution. ☸

# France: Immigrant Workers Strike vs. Racist Attacks

**PARIS, June 13** — Some 700 undocumented workers have been on strike at about 40 locations in the Paris area for the past two months. Their political strike to obtain legalization has inspired workers across France.

The action has now entered its third phase, in which anti-racist working-class support for the mostly black African strikers will be critical. Such support needs to be based on revolutionary class consciousness, highlighting the limits of a purely trade union perspective.

The unprecedented strike is rooted in three previous successful walkouts at a laundry and two restaurants which won undocumented workers 45 legalizations. Those strikes encouraged undocumented workers, but the workers were also spurred by increased firings — due to a July 1, 2007 decree saying bosses must have the prefectures (an administration of the Ministry of Interior) check foreign workers' documents before hiring them — and increased immigration police raids and deportations. Meanwhile, French unions and immigrant rights associations were organizing among the undocumented workers, notably with a flyer detailing workers' rights.

This led to the strike's first phase when hundreds of undocumented workers walked out on April 15. They won 85 legalizations but Immigration Minister Brice Hortefeux was clearly playing for time, hoping that weariness and vague promises would end the action. On May 20, additional hundreds of strikers joined the first wave. Some 350 workers have now been legalized, but still only one-third of those

who've filed applications.

Moreover, although racism is always the bosses' number one tool to divide and rule, the Sarkozy government clearly needs to whip up anti-immigrant racism now to regain popularity with right-wing voters. The French government is one trillion euros in debt (\$1.6 trillion). Interest payments on the debt are the second-biggest budget item. The European Union, fearing inflation, is pressuring the French government to balance the budget and reduce debt. But the government is applying Reaganite trickle-down economics and has given the wealthy fat tax cuts. Consequently, only an austerity program — cutting services and laying off public workers — can balance the budget.

Some of those cuts, like closing many county courthouses, are alienating sections of Sarkozy's electorate. Therefore, the government is trying to make the cuts on the sly so as not to arouse public protest. The result is a wavering policy of government advances and retreats. Some sections of the ruling class worry that the image of a disunited government is weakening French imperialism.

So Sarkozy and Hortefeux are counting on anti-immigrant racism to strengthen right-wing support for the government. The result is a case like that of "Mr. G." In January he went to the prefecture in Melun to file for legalization. The clerk handed him a form to fill out and within five minutes the cops put him in a detention center on a just-issued deportation order! Another case is that of Baba Traore from Mali, who leaped into the Marne River on April 4 to escape the immigration police. He died of im-



Striking restaurant workers in Paris

.....  
mersion in the 43°F water causing cardiac arrest. Clearly, smashing the undocumented workers' strike is a top priority for this government.

Now comes the third phase of the strike, broadening the struggle to the whole working class in the Paris region and beyond. Solidarity committees are being established at each striking location. They organize picket lines, protest marches, the leaflet distributions and the collection of funds. But mobilizing the necessary solidarity implies winning workers to an understanding of how the capitalists and their government use racism against "foreigners" to maintain their system of exploitation. That understanding involves the need for communist revolution. ☛

## Italy: Anti-Immigrant Pogroms Echo Nazi-Mussolini Era

**ROME, ITALY, June 11** — "Fascist aggression against immigrant and young leftists is taking place with increasing frequency," says a leaflet issued by PLP friends in Italy. "This racist system (whether the government is center-left or center-right) will produce more and more racist aggressions. The new Berlusconi government has enacted two laws, one shifting the status of 'illegal' to the 'criminal' code, and another transforming the CPT (Temporary Detention Centers or 'lagers' as they've been called) into centers to identify and expel undocumented immigrants. Immigrant and citizen workers need to unite and form anti-racist self-defense committees."

As in other European countries and in the U.S., anti-immigrant racism has turned more violent, given the increase in the bosses' economic turmoil and endless wars. On June 8, thousands of Roma people (Gypsies) marched in the heart of Rome protesting this racist violence instigated by the new government. The pogrom against Gypsies resembles a medieval horror story. A false rumor spread in Naples — ravaged by a garbage crisis with rats the size of cats — that a Gypsy woman had stolen a local baby. On May 10, a mob surrounded a Gypsy camp and burnt everything. Fortunately most residents had gone, but the mob beat those few who remained.

Carlo Mosca, Rome's new police chief, did not need to appeal to that medieval anti-Gypsy racist lie going right to the point: "We need a hard line because one can only answer the beast [his label for undocumented immigrants, particularly Gypsies] with maximum severity."

Rome's mayor Alemmano, a "former" fascist showed he still follows Il Duce Mussolini's racism. He ordered a police raid on Gypsy camps, arresting hundreds. In another sign of the old Nazi-Mussolini era, a "special police commissar" has been named in several cities to be responsible for immigrants (particularly Gypsies).

Humberto Bossi, chief of the Lega Nord (the Northern League party), and a member of Berlusconi's new coalition government, went further: "We are not afraid of taking on the streets [referring to leftists and anti-racists]....We are ready if they want a fight and I have 300,000 men ready...The guns are always hot."

In the Veneto region, a Lega Nord representative told the Treviso city council even more precisely: "We must use against immigrants the same system

used by the [Nazi] SS: punish ten for each one of our citizens they hurt." This is the same Lega Nord Berlusconi has put in charge of the Ministry of Interior (Italy's Homeland Security).

But how did the Cavaliere (Berlusconi) come to power after his previous government was hated so intensely and kicked out by the masses of workers? The fault lies with the so-called center-left government of Romano Prodi and his unconditional supporters among the fake left (particularly the PRC or Refounded CP).

The Prodi government expanded the same kind of free market, anti-working-class politics as previous right-wing governments. While workers fought back with militant strikes, including general strikes, their sellout union and the PRC supported all government measures. Despite massive protests against Italy's troops in Afghanistan, the Prodi-PRC government refused to recall them. The economic crisis is so bad that many workers can't even afford their daily pasta (the national staple).

The open fascists took advantage of this sellout by blaming the "criminal" immigrants for everything. (The Prodi government has also attacked immigrants.) For the first time since World War II, no party calling itself communist will have representatives in Parliament. So the Lega Nord won the support of a good number of workers in the April elections, moving its leader Humberto Bossi to boast, "We are the new party of the working class."

But the Berlusconi-Lega Nord party coalition won't just attack immigrants. Berlusconi has already said that's only the beginning of his new "Conservative Revolution." Italian capitalism is the sick man of the European Union. Its economic crisis is even more profound than on the rest of the continent. It needs to super-exploit citizen and immigrant workers even more to make them pay for the crisis.

Berlusconi will also accelerate the Italian bosses' role in the endless imperialist wars. On June 12, he told Bush on his visit to Italy that Italian troops in Afghanistan will be sent to the area where heavy fighting is taking place.

The only solution, as the leaflet issued by PLP's friends says, is for immigrant and citizen workers to unite and rebuild a new revolutionary communist movement based on fighting racism and all the bosses. Join the PLP! ☛

## Masses Fight Bolivian Bosses' Slavery, Gov't Sellout

**LA PAZ, BOLIVIA, June 15** — Racism has become the main tool of the Eastern Plains capitalists in their dogfight against the government of Evo Morales, the first indigenous President here, who's aiming to build "Andean capitalism." The OAS's (Organization of American States) Inter-American Human Rights Commission just reported that in the country's Chaco region a cow has more rights than a "Guarani farmworker."

The Buenos Aires daily "Pagina12" reported (6/15): "Thousands of indigenous families are locked up in farms where — night after night and for more than a century — they are subjected to 'servitude similar to slavery.' In dozens of farms in Santa Cruz, Tarija and Chuquisaca the norm is to get up at 3 AM and work till 10 PM basically for free."

The farm bosses refuse to let the workers leave the farms, keeping them in permanent debt by charging them outrageous prices at company stores. When a father of a family in servitude dies, the children inherit the debt.

Almost simultaneously, the People's Ombudsman reported that 800,000 children between 7 and 18 work 8 to 12 hours a day under severe exploitation in sugar fields, mines and elsewhere.

Bolivia's urban and rural workers and their allies have been fighting this racist super-exploitation since the Spanish colonialists' days. On June 9, tens of thousands demonstrated at the U.S. embassy here chanting "U.S. gives asylum to murderers." They were protesting that Sanchez Berzain, the former President Lozada's main advisor, was responsible for ordering the army and police to repress a mass rebellion in 2003 against the privatization of the country's rich gas deposits, killing 80 people.

The protestors demanded that the U.S. ambassador explain why this killer got asylum. Instead, they were attacked by the cops. One of Sanchez Berzain's lawyers was an adviser to Barack Obama.

This protest occurred several days after a racist mob forced some 30 Quechua farmworkers to march naked on their knees in the city of Sucre.

This is the racist, murderous nature of the old

continued on page 7



# LETTERS



## Likes ‘Hard-Hitting Truth Coverage’

Thanks for my first issue of Challenge. I appreciate your hard-hitting, truth-telling coverage. Out here in bliss-ninny California in the State of Anti-Intellectualism, it's hard to raise consciousness in any kind of revolutionary way. A certain segment of the bourgeoisie is in total control and their program is to obliterate consciousness, not to raise it. When everyone's mind is mush, THEY control society. Currently a member of the Green Party, how can I join the Progressive Labor Party without moving to Brooklyn? Otherwise, I WILL move to Brooklyn! I can't stand it out here!!

Sincerely, P----- G-----, PhD

## Anti-Racism, Not Morality Is Workers' Weapon

The poem on the front page of the June 18<sup>th</sup> CD article is on my wall in a church-based immigration clinic, and I use it in political discussions with co-workers. But neither the poem nor the article about the raid at an Iowa meatpacking plant explain how RACISM actually works. Racism — in this case the super-exploitation of undocumented workers in Iowa — is the rulers' main tool to REDUCE the wages and living conditions of citizen and documented workers, as well as the undocumented workers who got arrested and deported. We must understand that racism ALWAYS injures ALL workers. This communist message goes beyond the poem's liberal call for the "majority" to defend the "minority" out of morality and so they might have allies in the future.

The Iowa meatpacking industry is a product of the bosses' racist divide-and-conquer tactics. Until the 1980s, the center of US meatpacking was in Chicago and Omaha, where unionized workers, many of them black, earned decent wages. Then when an agricultural crisis created massive unemployment among white rural workers, meatpackers opened new plants in Iowa and other rural areas. (Agriprocessors, site of the recent raid, moved from Brooklyn to Iowa in 1987.) Wages and benefits were lower than in older unionized plants, but in the face of unemployment any job looked good in Iowa. As production in the low-wage rural plants soared, urban plants with the largest numbers of black and militant workers were shut down completely. The bosses manipulated the isolation, anti-

unionism, and racism of rural white workers to speed up and lower the wages of both black and white workers, in both cities and rural areas.

When white workers in Iowa threatened strikes, the bosses recruited Asian refugees, then Latinos from LA, and now Mexican and Salvadoran immigrants. Racism and nationalism ("Jobs for Americans") injured ALL workers, even before these recent fascist raids began. White, black, Latin, Asian, citizen and non-citizen now work at lower wages, with fewer benefits, and under more intensely dangerous conditions than ever before, and the new fascist wave of mass arrests and deportations will drive wages down even further.

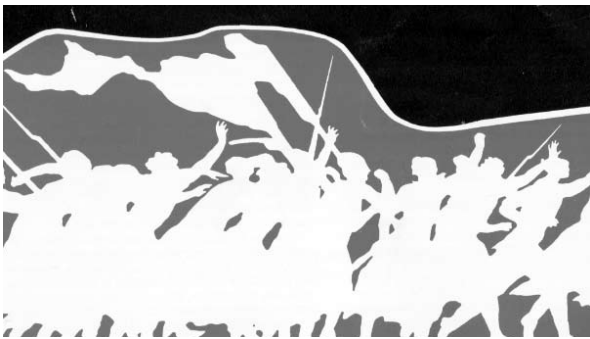
A construction worker friend admits that if immigrant workers had not been kept out of the unions for the last 30 years, there might still be unions around here and average construction wages wouldn't have fallen to a third of what they were in the 1960s. But sometimes he still argues that if immigrants had been kept out of the country altogether, wages wouldn't have fallen. WRONG! WRONG! WRONG! If there hadn't been immigrants from Mexico the bosses would have found a different group to super-exploit. In fact, a friend who works with refugees predicts a new wave of "legal" refugees from places like Burma will replace the deported "illegal" Mexican workers in the near future.

If "legal" workers and citizens are convinced that undocumented workers should not be allowed to work, the meatpacker bosses and the immigration police (ICE) guarantee a brighter future for capitalists and more misery for the entire working class. When the working class understands that the fight against racism is central to the needs and interests of all workers, we will be on the road to overthrowing capitalism, the source of racism and exploitation itself.

Red Advocate

## Civil War: Northern Capitalist vs. Southern Slaveowners

Although it is always inspiring to learn more about the history of working class struggle, the article in the June 4<sup>th</sup> issue, "[Civil War's Hidden History: Women Workers Battled Gov't, Bosses](#)" makes a fundamental mistake in its description of the



main contradiction during the U.S. Civil War. The article states "that class struggle — the consolidation of finance capital vs. the response of working folks — comprises the source of the conflict."

The source of the conflict was the irreconcilable differences between the two U.S. ruling classes of that time. The Northern ruling class was increasingly dominated by industrialists and bankers and the Southern ruling class was completely controlled by the slave-owning plantation class.

The Marxist analysis of the Civil War is that Northern capitalists opposed the extension of slavery to the Western states because, as capitalists, they wanted more wage labor, to produce surplus value, which was not produced by slaves. The main contradiction was between the capitalists' need for wage labor to expand industrialism and the slave-owners' fight to maintain and expand slave labor.

The contradictions between these two classes had been sharpening for a long time. The federal government had been dominated by the Southern class, and its Northern allies, since the writing of the Constitution. By the time of the Civil War, however, that grip by Southern rulers was weakening. Armed conflict was inevitable. Workers were convinced to fight an intra-capitalist war, then, just as they are convinced to fight in the U.S. imperialist war in Iraq today. The rulers spread lies, myths, patriotic emotions and other weapons to confuse workers about what is in their own class interest.

The struggles described in the article reflect examples of workers who were not accepting the ruling class lies. This, however, does not mean that class struggle against the bosses was the main contradiction of the period.

Red teacher

# Is An 'Obesity Epidemic' Believable?

(Part 1 of this series reviewed the statistics about obesity in the U.S. and worldwide.)

According to the statistics in Part 1, there's certainly lots of body fatness out there and it's increasing. It's hitting kids. And it's worldwide, even where people still suffer from starvation!

Can we believe these statistics? Or did the drug companies dream up the obesity "epidemic" to push diet pills and did the book publishers do so to sell their latest diet book?

We need solid information, meaning going out and engaging the world. A correct "theory" about how much obesity depends on "practice."

## Body Size Surveys — Practice to Accompany the 'Obesity Epidemic' Theory

Practice here means coming in contact with — even measuring — real people. And a true picture means more than observing and measuring a few people, like your friends, family and co-workers who might be in better (or maybe worse) shape than the population as a whole. One must consider whole populations in different areas and from many walks of life to determine this "big picture."

In the U.S., as well as other countries, the World Health Organization and government and

university researchers use certain statistical techniques to select a large group of people (known as a "random sample") who somewhat represent this "big picture" — the population as a whole.

In the U.S. Natural Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, thousands of people from all 50 states are interviewed and measured every year, producing the data indicating what proportion of the population is overweight or obese. Overweight and obesity is a big and increasing problem (see [plp.org](#)). Furthermore, a connection between social class and fatness emerges: on average, workers tend to be more overweight than professionals and business people.

But although these figures are based on practice, on engaging with and measuring real human beings, can we be sure the data is really true? After all, it's possible to lie with statistics. (Remember the "weapons of mass destruction" used to justify the war in Iraq? And the misinformation and distortions about "intelligence testing" to justify claims about the "innate" inferiority of ethnic groups and workers?) Are the bosses' governments making things up?

## Why Obesity Data Is Believable

Chances are pretty good that the statistics cited above about the body-size characteristics of people here and worldwide are true. Why?

First, there are many public health scientists

personally and professionally committed to doing a decent job and telling the truth. It would not be easy (though not impossible!) for governments to ignore their scientific findings and bamboozle the public.

Second, and perhaps more important, governments worldwide have a stake in measuring the health of workers and other social groups. Health (including fatness) relates to productivity of the working class, healthcare costs, and even the military readiness of potential soldiers. Bosses do want to know if there are particular health problems affecting workers (both blue- and white-collar) that might eat into profits and undermine future war efforts.

Bottom line: there's no good reason to doubt the truth of the worldwide obesity epidemic. There's a lot of obesity out there and it's rising.

(Part 3 will discuss the health consequences of overweight and obesity; Part 4, the causes of the obesity problem; and Part 5, what can be done about it, and its relation to politics.)

# Two Years Later, Oaxaca Workers Need to Break with All Bosses

**OAXACA, MEXICO, June 14** — Hundreds of thousands of teachers, workers and students from section 22 of the Mexican Teachers' Union (SNTE) and APPO (Popular Assembly of the People of Oaxaca) marched militantly in the city of Oaxaca to commemorate the great battles of 2006. The marchers also attacked Governor Ulises Ruiz and the bosses' plans to privatize the social security system ISSTE (Institute of Social Security and Social Services for Public Workers). PLP members and friends passed out thousands of leaflets showing that the only real way to destroy the racist oppressive system of capitalism is to fight for workers' power and communist revolution.

Since May 9th, Section 22 of Oaxaca and the local teachers' unions in several other states, together with other unions and organizations, have been carrying out work stoppages, marches, blockades, and occupations to force the hated bosses' government of President Felipe Calderon to rescind the fascist new social security "reform" law that affects more than 2 million workers.

The capitalist Calderón government, obeying its imperialist backers, continues with its plan to privatize everything. They claim they want to "modernize" the social security system, but it is just another way of robbing what workers have saved over the last 50 years. These billions saved will be given to the imperialists in the U.S. and other countries and to local capitalists and their banks and financial institutions. This is just another way the local and imperialist bosses squeeze maximum profits from the working class to pay for their economic crisis and fascist plans for more imperialist wars. This deadly mass robbery is made possible thanks to the collaboration of all the capitalist parties and politicians, the bosses' legal system and the sellout

union leaders. It is not just Elba Esther Gordillo, the fascist top honcho in the SNTE (national teachers' union), who has direct responsibility for murdering many rank-and-file militant teachers in Oaxaca and other areas. Reformists in the unions and mass organizations are also to be blamed for building the illusions that capitalism can be made to work for workers and their allies if we replace bad politicians with "lesser evil" capitalist ones who only represent another group of bosses.

The privatization of social security is just the beginning for the bosses and their government. The electrical utility (CFE) and PEMEX (the state-owned oil monopoly) are also on the privatization block. The debates among the senators and deputies of different parties are basically over strategies of how to best fool and rob the workers.

Workers here are also being attacked by rising prices of gas and basic necessities. The major supermarket chains (Soriana, Sam's, Chedraui, etc.) speculate storing large quantities of food in their warehouses to raise prices and their capital even more, meanwhile the Calderón government tell workers "there's no food." At the same time they push this lie, they open the borders to big transnational agribusiness to sell beans, rice and corn from Mexico, increasing these companies' profits at the expense of the consumers and thousands of farm workers who are sunk into deeper misery.

PLP must increase its efforts to organize the international working class to build a new society that will respond to our needs and interests. Workers produce everything. We don't need parasitic bosses who rob the product of our labor. In a communist society we won't have sellout unions and hacks who today serve the murderous bosses. Join the PLP to fight for a communist world!🌐

## Masses Fight Bolivian Bosses' Slavery, Gov't Sellout

*continued from page 5*

capitalist gang and their henchmen who basically have divided the country with a dual power situation. This open right-wing neo-fascist opposition — led by descendants of Croatian Nazi collaborators — now controls the gas- and oil-rich Eastern region. Meanwhile, "socialist" President Morales constantly compromises with these fascists. Many think an August referendum will simply consolidate this dual power situation.

Some rank-and-file workers in the unions and mass organizations are beginning to fight back against the fascists and the sellout by the Morales government and the agents of his party ("Movement Towards Socialism"). Teachers and miners have been striking for higher wages and against the right-wing's racist offensive. The COB's (Labor Federation) call for mass strikes and protests is mainly for angry workers to let off steam.

But workers and their allies cannot rely on any politicians to fight our battles, whether they are indigenous or call themselves "socialist." Evo Morales came to power on the back of the 2003-05 mass uprisings. But essentially he hasn't changed the racist nature of capitalism here. He's enabled the openly fascist pro-imperialist forces to reorganize after having retreated because of the masses' fight-back before Morales assumed power.

The open fascists know they can get a better deal for themselves by negotiating directly with Brazil's Petrobras, BP, Spain's and Argentina's Repsol and other energy giants. Workers and their allies must also reorganize and build on their struggles to turn them into schools for communism: to eliminate all forms of capitalism and its fascist-racist goons. 🌐



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



### NAFTA pushed globe to food crisis

During this food crisis, poor countries have had an already difficult situation made worse because they previously followed bad prescriptions given to them by policy experts from Washington. Tortilla-eating Mexico used to be a homeland of corn, but thanks to policies promoted by the IMF, the World Bank and the US government (especially through the Nafta free-trade agreement) it has become a corn importer. The old orthodoxy was.... "The idea that developing countries should feed themselves is an anachronism from a bygone era. They could better ensure their food security by relying on US agricultural products... available in most cases at a lower cost." How wrong both that assumption and conclusion look today. *GW, 6/6*

### Boss pressure distorts TV news

In his new memoir, "What Happened," Scott McClellan... called reporters "complicit enablers" of the Bush administration's push for war.

Surprisingly, some prominent journalists have agreed.... that they had felt pressure from government officials and corporate executives to cast the war in a positive light.

[Katie] Couric said she sensed pressure from "the corporations who own where we work and from the government itself to really squash any kind of dissent or any kind of questioning of it." At the time, Ms. Couric was a host of "Today" on NBC.

Another broadcast journalist.... said that journalists had been "under enormous pressure from

corporate executives, frankly, to make sure that this was a war presented in a way that was consistent with patriotic fever in the nation." *NYT, 5/30*

### Need bigger weapon than lawsuit

Recent high-profile events demonstrate the biased result of malevolent government actions. The response to New Orleans plainly shows racial preference, as does the sub-prime mortgage collapse. Minorities were, and still are, steered to the most vicious loans. And we already know that drug law enactment, enforcement and incarceration are aimed at minorities, as are second-rate medical care and voter identification laws. Further, the average wealth for whites in Connecticut today is \$179,000; for minorities, only \$7,000.

There's got to be another lawsuit in there somewhere. But.... lawsuits have shown that they simply can't do the job.... It's time to try something stronger. *MinutemanMedia.org*

### Bubble no trouble — for the rich

Poring through  
Bernanke's pitch;  
It all seems geared,  
To aid the rich.

Take the ongoing housing bubble collapse. Non-profit economists have been warning about it for years. And do you think it was kept secret from Mr. Bernanke that Bear Stearns and other avicious investment bankers were gathering up fishy mortgages and sugar-coating them as high-yield

investments? Who's kidding whom? The whole administration knew what was going on. It's just that no one wanted to spoil the fun.

Unfortunately... individual citizens.... are simply the bottom of the food chain and should be prepared to sacrifice our financial lives for the welfare of banks, credit card issuers, investment houses and hedge funds. They're the ones who make our country great, providing us with jobs and loans that allow us to buy and lose our homes. *MinutemanMedia.org 5/1*

### Marx, Malthus explain hunger

American [scholars] like Malthus because he takes the blame off us. Malthus says the problem is too many poor people.

Or, to put it in the terms in which the current crisis is usually explained: too many hard-working Chinese and Indians think they should be able to eat pizza, meat and coffee....

Dr. Friedman argues that...the way big agriculture is practiced...degrades...the environment so much that it will eventually reach a tipping point and hunger will spread.

Others vigorously disagree. In their view, the world is almost endlessly bountiful.... But they see the underlying problems in terms more Marxian than Malthusian: the rich grab too much of everything... *NYT 6/15*



# SUMMER OF COMMUNISM!

## BUILD A WORKER-STUDENT ALLIANCE

Wars in the Middle East and growing conflicts worldwide that threaten the U.S. Empire are planting the seeds for World War III. The question isn't whether a world war is coming, but when. The U.S. ruling class understands that in order to remain the top imperialist amongst its competitors it must rebuild and expand its industrial sector and win workers and youth to racism and patriotism so it can to wage wars around the globe.

Currently, the ruling class is attempting to rebuild its industry with low-wage, subcontracted labor — mainly immigrant and black workers — using racism to attack all workers by abolishing higher-paying unionized jobs. Besides racism, the bosses are bleeding workers in the factories through sexism, nationalism, speed-up, overtime, massive temporary jobs, eliminating benefits and pensions and cutting and freezing wages.

Only by robbing more of the value workers produce can the bosses attract the investment necessary to rebuild and expand their industry. Without more war production capacity, the U.S. bosses won't attain the military might necessary to maintain their empire and defeat their rivals.

But to build such capability, the bosses need us — the working class — to build the factories, run the machines, drive the trucks and shoot the guns in battle. They can't make war without winning us ideologically. They are fighting hard to do this with Obama's "vote-for-change" campaign, with Comprehensive Immigration Reform and the lie that U.S. imperialism can be "inclusive" and "humanitarian."

### Lessons From the Past

In 1940, Franklin Roosevelt "arsenal-for-democracy" speech laid the groundwork to transform the U.S. economy to war production. The Roosevelt-led capitalist class mounted an all-out mobilization by: (1) drafting 14 million workers and youth into the armed forces (in a population barely one-third of the present 300 million); (2) instituted gas and food rationing (each family had to present coupons at the store to buy meat — limited to 4 oz. per person daily — sugar, butter, etc.; (3) decreed a government-imposed wage-freeze and price controls; and (4) banned all strikes. Not one new car, washing machine or radio was manufactured in the U.S. for four years — all the factories were producing tanks, bombers and weapons of war. Tax rates topped out at 94%! (It's 35% now.)

The ruling class knew their German and Japanese imperialist rivals had to be defeated in order to maintain their own dominance and they used the workers' anti-fascist sentiment to further their class interests. When men were drafted, women were recruited into the factories and quickly became machinists, welders and assemblers of tanks, guns, bombs and planes. The number of women employed in industry jumped by over 460% between pre-war years and 1944. Black workers, who had been shut out of war industry, increased their numbers in skilled trades by 750,000 during this period. This huge transition was accomplished almost overnight. But the war took an enormous toll on workers in the factories. In fact, injuries and deaths on



the "home front" were 11 times the casualties for soldiers at the battlefield! This was truly a capitalist war on the working class.

The U.S. Communist Party mobilized masses of workers to support the Soviet Union — the first workers' state — against the fascist Nazis, but it made a significant error in not supporting workers' struggles against U.S. bosses (for instance, the strike of 600,000 miners). This disarmed an essential aspect of the struggle for revolution. In supporting the "good bosses," like FDR, against Hitler, the CPUSA obscured the struggle against capitalism, diverting it from a workers' dictatorship and communism.

### Our Fight....

We are slowly rooting ourselves in the industrial working class and among soldiers to build a base for revolution. This means becoming involved in, and leading, class struggle and learning those lessons to be gained through fighting the bosses. However, it also means struggling with the workers to free our class from the bosses' ideology of racism, nationalism, sexism and anti-communism,

Workers in the shops are slowly taking our communist analysis as their own. We invite students, teachers and workers to join PLP's Summer Projects to help in this crucial fight to build PLP among industrial workers and soldiers. ☸

The Progressive Labor Party is organizing summer projects in Seattle and Los Angeles this summer to both learn from workers' experiences and revolutionary ideas and to bring revolutionary ideas to industrial workers. We urge you to join us in going to the factories, visiting with workers, and studying the science of revolution as well as hearing from the experience of revolutionary workers themselves. Volunteers will learn first hand from the workers and share experiences, leading to a lifetime of serving the working class and building for a communist revolution. We will also talk to soldiers about the war and the system that puts them in harm's way for oil profits. Please join us for a great revolutionary experience! Make a donation and support a Summer Project volunteer. ☸

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## International Unity A Must in Upcoming Boeing Contract Fight

SEATTLE, WA—"We can't afford not to care about the international working class," argued a Boeing machinist with a shop steward as they rehearsed over the union meeting the night before at work. A third worker had just walked up to ask what had happened at the meeting. The shop steward thought the most important thing was information about the slave-like conditions of Indian immigrants in the Gulf Coast shipyards. He complained, however, that too many of his fellow workers (who he had informed about the outrage) just didn't care.

International class-consciousness stands in stark contrast to the union misleaders slogan "It's our time, this time" about the upcoming contract battle. But even this honest shop steward inadvertently defended the narrow trade union perspective these hacks were pushing. "Sure you can say all this super-exploitation is eroding the wage 'market,' but if we raise our wages we will pull eve-

rybody up," he countered.

This excuse flies in the face of reality. Twenty years ago, millions were unionized in basic industry. All the key plants had unions. Today, despite a similar number of industrial workers far fewer are unionized and key plants are now non-union, relying on racist super-exploitation. Narrow trade unionism, never a good substitute for anti-racist, communist class-consciousness, is ridiculous in the present climate.

Members met at lunch later that day to plan our campaign around this issue and follow our progress in the pages of this paper. Our victory will be measured in the number of Boeing workers we win to raise the slogan "Same enemy, same fight, workers of the world unite!" during this contract battle as we build the Progressive Labor Party. ☸

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