

CHALLENGE



THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

JOIN THE FIGHT FOR COMMUNISM:

BOSSSES' PROFITS VS. WORKERS' LIVES



From rising gas prices to foreclosures, lower wages and benefits, workers know things are getting worse. Will voting for Obama help? Is communist revolution really the viable alternative? These questions pose a tremendous challenge and opportunity for the PLP. Industrial workers and soldiers are at the center of the contradiction that all workers face: between the bosses' need to squeeze maximum profits out of workers, while at the same time winning them to patriotic sacrifice for the bosses' nation, versus the workers' need to survive. It comes down to their profits or our lives.

An urgent battle is taking place for the allegiance of the working class. Through the election campaign the bosses are trying to mobilize workers' loyalty to U.S. imperialism. The PLP Summer Projects are struggling to win workers to act in their own class interests against the racist, sexist exploiters, and to join the fight for the liberation of our whole class. The stakes are high.

The more war there is, the more crucial manufacturing workers become, because they're the ones running the machines, building the parts and assembling the weapons. An army officer recently went to an aerospace shop to tell the managers that the parts being made were being shipped directly to Iraq and were essential to the success of the U.S. war effort. He said that if the managers couldn't get the workers to produce the parts faster, the army would send someone to guarantee it!

This shows industrial workers' central role in the war effort. These workers barely earn the minimum wage. Some have gladly taken communist leaflets and CHALLENGE. In the past, when faced with growing war and exploitation, Russian and Chinese workers, with communist leadership, took up the fight against their oppressors and led the fight for revolution and workers' rule. Workers here today have great potential to join the fight for workers' power.

Southern California has nearly one million manufacturing workers — many working for subcontractors in the defense industry. The Southeast forms the backbone of the new auto workforce and the soon-to-be-built "southern aerospace" corridor. Most of these jobs are in non-union, low-wage factories run by subcontractors. Like previous industrial areas, the basis of these subcontractors is the super-exploitation of immigrant and black workers. Conditions in these factories are unsafe — speed-up and machines that don't have the needed safety guards make cut fingers and back injuries common. Workers get little or no health care. The bosses are relying on the most exploited workers to produce their weapons and fight their wars.

Due to the decline of the U.S. relative to its competitors in the world (see Editorial p. 2) there's mounting evidence of growing fascism — from unemployment, police terror and immigration raids to unsafe racist and sexist conditions

and speed-up in factories. The U.S. rulers are re-organizing their vital industrial sector on the backs of immigrant, black and other low-paid workers to be prepared for current and larger-scale military conflicts. These workers can become the backbone of a movement to take on the bosses' attacks and lead the fight to turn the bosses' imperialist wars into revolutionary class war.

The bosses' crisis is increasing, and with it the inability of this system to provide workers with even the most basic necessities. Just this week the federal government rescued another bank, Indymac, and pledged billions to support Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, the two largest holders of mortgages in the nation. No boss — not Obama, McCain or local politicians like L.A. Mayor Villaraigosa represents our interests. The only way to secure our interests is to forge unity and confidence among the workers with the clear goal of building a mass revolutionary communist party that can survive and grow under all conditions. Workers forced to work 9- to 12-hour days for low wages in unsafe conditions, while their families are harassed by the immigration police and the cops, are not in the hip pocket of the rulers. In fact, these workers will be won, over time, to the revolutionary alternative of fighting to build a movement that can take on the entire profit system.

Fight for Communism

Communists are committed to building strong ties with our fellow workers and organizing class and ideological struggle. We participate in day-to-day discussions and struggles to build unity and confidence among the workers for the long-term fight for communist revolution. The basis of the capitalist system is production for maximum profit. Through the bosses' control of the means of production, they exploit workers and super-exploit black, Latino and women workers. They also exploit markets and resources.

Political discussions about these principles, combined with solid friendships and class struggle, can lead to more workers joining the Progressive Labor Party as it becomes clearer that capitalism only has more misery to offer workers. In its place we need a communist society where workers will control and organize production, not to make profits for a boss but to meet the needs of the international working class.

Through a fighting communist leadership committed to the working class, workers can come to see that we can rely on our class. We must expand CHALLENGE's readership among industrial workers, soldiers and students. We must win the allegiance of our class to fight for its own future not for U.S. imperialism.✊

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Looming Global War Spawns Rotting Economy

As the U.S. economy brings workers new miseries daily, Obama and McCain are proposing divergent, but equally unworkable pie-in-the sky “solutions.” Skyrocketing prices, job destruction and credit crises result inescapably from capitalism itself and its profit drive (which neither candidate attacks). They are worsened by the U.S.’s sharpening rivalry with imperialist and capitalist rivals.

For example, the free-for-all over control of Mid-East oil among the U.S., China, Russian-backed Iran, India, al Qaeda and the Taliban drives gas costs sky high. [See CHALLENGE, 7/16] Furthermore, to stay top dog, U.S. rulers must spend a large chunk of their capital on making war, which wastes funds that could otherwise go to rebuilding factories and infrastructure.

CURRENT DOWNTURN DATES TO U.S. VIETNAM GENOCIDE

The current wave of manufacturing layoffs reflects a permanent war-caused trend going back to the Vietnam era. At that time, European and Japanese manufacturers — having had their factories destroyed in World War II — invested heavily in the most modern technology, while U.S. bosses stood pat, having to pour huge sums into their imperialist war in Vietnam. Thus, these U.S. rivals leaped ahead in market share.

Meanwhile, U.S. workers’ real income then began an uninterrupted downslide, with rampant inflation sapping their purchasing power. Since Vietnam, with the U.S. unable to gain a military foothold on the Asian mainland, Chinese manufacturers have increasingly dominated the labor market there

and undercut U.S. firms with rock-bottom wages.

Obama and McCain tout various schemes to boost industry, finance and employment, but a beleaguered imperialist power like today’s U.S. must ultimately “solve” its economic woes through world war. It will someday have to unleash its full military might and move in the direction of destroying much of its rivals’ productive capacity and labor force and then try to seize what’s left. This would require occupying vast conquered territories to regain markets and sources of raw materials, which it is attempting to do now, with very limited success, on a local scale in Iraq.

Communist leader V. I. Lenin detailed this unrelenting process in his 1917 “Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism”: “Imperialist wars are absolutely inevitable under such an economic system, as long as private property in the means of production exists.”

In the 20th century’s two world wars, competing imperialists, seeking to win or maintain world dominance, managed to mobilize entire populations to kill hundreds of millions all over the world.

GOOSE-STEPPING MCCAIN STILL DOESN’T ‘GET’ MOBILIZATION

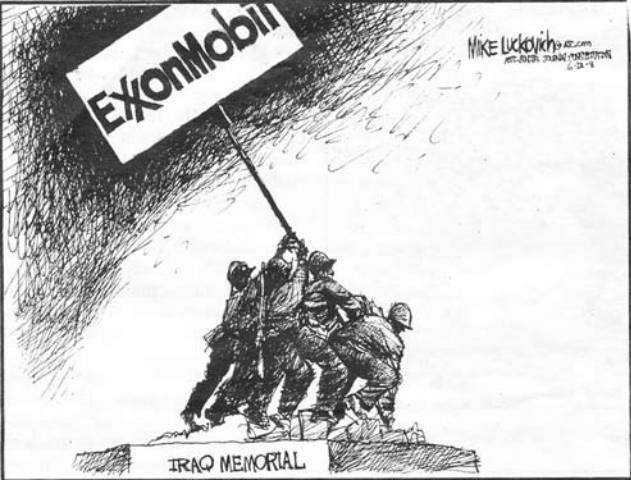
McCain, though an ardent militarist, appears unable to grasp the economic aspects of the rulers’ approaching war needs. He would continue Bush’s tax-cuts-for-the-rich, enabling them to pocket the billions that the main section of the ruling class knows are necessary to preserve the long-range interests of their system.

Establishment mouthpiece, The New York Times (7/12), chastised McCain’s shortsightedness, “Following in those footsteps does not, however, make a good case for his candidacy. Americans face hardship in the years to come. The tanking of the economy, coming on top of years of unmet needs — for health care, infrastructure repair and alternative energy [not to mention rebuilding the military — Ed.] will require the next president to spend more and to raise taxes to support that spending.” So the Times wants all of us to “pull our weight.”

McCain would reverse the job slide with tax breaks for “entrepreneurs...at the heart of American innovation, growth and prosperity. They create the ultimate job security — a new, better opportunity if your current job goes away.” (McCain website) In other words, “open up a small business.” Such fairy-tale promises will never provide a decent income for millions of jobless auto, aerospace, airline and steel workers, nor reduce the racist double unemployment rate for black and Latino workers. (GM has gone from the world’s top automaker to the verge of bankruptcy, shedding tens of thousands of jobs from Detroit to Oshawa, Ontario to Toluca, Mexico.)

LIBERAL OBAMA’S ‘HIGH-WAGE’ MILITARISTIC REBUILDING LACKS CASH

Obama better understands the rulers’ agenda



and hopes his own version of the New Deal will mimic Roosevelt’s success in rallying a Depression-ridden nation for World War II. Obama’s campaign calls for jacking up taxes on corporations and the rich to fund “five million new jobs” at good wages in a centralized technology and infrastructure rebuilding effort. But U.S. bosses, beset by foreign competition, simply don’t have the cash to willingly forgo short-term profits for such a program. Unlike Roosevelt, who entered office when federal outlays, including military, made up only 7% of U.S. gross domestic product, the next president will inherit a state apparatus that eats up more than 20%.

A more likely scenario for “economic recovery” than Obama’s phony high-wage, voluntary-mobilization proposal involves restoring the draft and forcing workers into poorly-paid industries. Obama buried his call for mandatory national service, reaching into high schools, in a July 4 press release: “Obama will make it a presidential imperative to restore...public service to the agenda of today’s youth, whether it be serving their local communities...as teachers or first responders, or serving in the military and reserve forces or diplomatic corps that keep our nation free and safe.” (Obama website)

Soon after winning nomination, Obama picked Jason Furman, a champion of anti-union Wal-Mart as his top economic advisor. Furman is a protégé of Robert Rubin, CEO of Rockefeller’s Citibank and was Clinton’s Treasury-Secretary who led the racist dismantling of welfare.

The rulers have their work cut out for them in this period of economic decline and intensifying war. So do we. More than 400,000 U.S. workers have lost their jobs since December. Many of those still employed are spending one-fifth of their pay just on gas. But organized working-class fight-back is at a low level. PLP must expose the connection between these economic assaults and the rulers’ broader war agenda, initiate class struggle and build a party that can ultimately overthrow their deadly profit system.☸

OUR FIGHT

★ **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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PLP’s Ideas Spread at International Youth Conference

ATHENS, GREECE, July11-13 — Seven young PLP comrades from New York City are attending Resistance 2008, a youth conference here. We are bringing our line of communist revolution to establish the dictatorship of the working class — where workers, through their revolutionary mass party, lead society — to a thousand young workers from all over Europe who are attending the Conference.

PLP’ers are the most vocal group here and so far PL’s literature has been well-received. These

young comrades met some young workers who are already translating our literature into Greek. They’ve invited us to visit them on the job and talk to their fellow workers.

On Sunday afternoon the group spoke at the Conference and their speeches were applauded, especially PL’s ideas on the need to fight nationalism and destroy racism and sexism.

A complete report next issue. ☸

PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

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Seattle Summer Project

GI's, Boeing Workers Debate Communist Politics

SEATTLE, WA, July 13 — “Man, this leaflet is an eye-opener,” exclaimed a Boeing machinist after reading the PLP’s flyer. “It’s a reality check.”

Two thousand of those leaflets entitled, “Boeing’s Imperialist Dogfight Sets Stage For Boeing Contract Fight” based on the CHALLENGE editorial were distributed by young volunteers at three Boeing plants during the first week of the Seattle Summer Project. Workers grabbed 900 CHALLENGES. Troops at nearby Ft. Lewis took an additional 100 plus 200 “GI Notes,” the Party’s soldier’s newsletter, with a supplement by an Iraq veteran (see page 4). Communist politics were debated in the factories and the barracks throughout the week.

The implications of this “reality check” took shape when a multi-racial group of young volunteers was invited to dinner with two older white Boeing workers in mid-week. One veteran machinist, a friend of the Party, willingly acknowledged the increased oppression, racism and sexism brought on by the sharpening imperialist dogfight. He feared, however, that we didn’t have the “fortitude” to answer these attacks that workers had in the 1930s and ‘40s. We then examined what led to that fortitude, how did we lose it and how can we get it back. We had been trying to answer this question all week.

Boeing Union Workers Chime In

A toolmaker made a point of how much better was our leaflet’s slogan — “This Time, This Contract: We Must Fight For Our Class, The Working Class” — than the union’s “It’s Our Time, This Time.” Class-consciousness is a must he said. Narrow trade unionism won’t work when the capitalists outsource work to low-wage, non-union subcontractors. Long discussions followed about how — and if it was possible — to build international unity between, black, Latin and white workers.

The toolmaker didn’t just talk. He helped circulate throughout the plant an open letter written by Boeing machinists for workers to sign that answered

the bosses’ claim that our wages were “above the market rate.” It explained how the bosses used racist super-exploitation to lower the “market rate” for all workers and called for international solidarity.

Another machine operator commented how pleased he was that the young volunteers visited him. He hoped they felt welcome. He did, however, note they talked a lot about the plight of workers, but not too much about the evils of capitalism and the virtues of communism.

The vision of communism was one of the reasons workers in the 1930s had fortitude. They saw the Soviet Union as a beacon. Unfortunately, the old communist movement had the strategy of building socialism, which maintained the capitalist wage system. They thought socialism would be a halfway house to communism. Just the opposite happened. Socialism, with all its concessions to capitalism, eventually undermined the revolution, leading back to capitalism. This demoralized the left and, in good part, led us to lose that fortitude.

Non-Union Subcontractor Workers Say Build A Life Around Your Co-Workers

We continued this discussion in study groups (see page 4) and meetings with young industrial workers, mostly non-union, who came here from around the country. These newer, young comrades set themselves the long, hard task of rebuilding this communist vision among their co-workers. The first job was to increase their CHALLENGE sales and networks. But how do we answer our friend’s fears and doubts?

An auto subcontractor worker related his difficulty in getting a religious CHALLENGE reader to Party events. He realized that to win his friend to act on CHALLENGE’S ideas he would have to reciprocate. So he read a little of the Bible and with his wife went to their friend’s baby shower. His friend hasn’t joined the Party yet, but she did say that our comrade was a model she wanted her children to

‘The vision of communism was one of the reasons workers in the 1930s had fortitude.’



emulate.

A new recruit from a California aerospace subcontractor told an amusing story at a BBQ about how she came around. Her friend, who had read a CHALLENGE, invited her to a social event. “These people are communists,” our new recruit told her friend. “Oh, no,” her friend assured her. Then they attended another meeting where revolution was openly discussed. “You see, I told you so!” she said to her friend. Her friend got scared, but stuck around, joined and now sells CHALLENGE in a key plant. So it pays to know not only your co-worker, but their friends and family too!

Other stories described how these new comrades were trying to center their lives around those of their co-workers. We vowed to double and triple our efforts. It is these kinds of personal/political relationships that will expand the limits of class struggle and revolutionary potential. The first Boeing worker we ever met, now 82, said he thought this strategy was “an excellent idea.”✚

Rally vs. Lynching in Prince George’s County Jail



PRINCE GEORGE’S COUNTY, MD., July 4 — Today 30 residents of this Washington, D.C. suburb rallied under the leadership of the People’s Coalition for Police Accountability at the jail where Ronnie White, a 19-year-old African American youth, was strangled to death in his cell by either a cop or a prison guard. White was accused of killing a police officer by running him over with a car during an arrest. Apparently some cops and/or guards decided to be cop, prosecutor, judge, jury and executioner!

Dorothy Elliott, whose son was murdered by County cops over a decade ago, decried the murder and called for justice. A second speaker linked this murder to others by County police as well as to the killing and torture by the U.S. government at Abu Ghraib. A third speaker charged that this murder was a lynching, which showed the need to unite working people and students in a mass movement to fight racism. The speaker linked the present struggle to the fight against slavery by reading part of the famous July 4, 1852 speech of Frederick Douglass (see box).

The rally had three demands: suspend all guards who had access to White’s cell until the murderers are caught; install video cameras on all iso-

lation cells; and establish full and timely communication with the public about the investigation. These demands, even if met, cannot solve the problem of police terror against the working class.

The state (the government) has demonstrated its determination to use racist police brutality and now lynchings to terrorize workers, deepen racism and maintain its power at all costs, both at home and abroad. No reform of capitalism will change that basic need of the bosses’ state.

That’s why PLP’ers, deeply involved in this struggle, are building a revolutionary Party to destroy the bosses’ state and replace it with a workers’ state that will have no interest in promoting racism and terrorism against the working class. The latter will eliminate the bosses and their profit system, the source of racism which divides our class and drags down the lives of all workers. ✚

Abolitionist’s 1852 Independence Day Remarks By Frederick Douglass

What To the Slave Is the Fourth of July?

[To defeat slavery] . . . it is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder. We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake. The feeling of the nation must be quickened; the conscience of the nation must be roused; the propriety of the nation must be startled; the hypocrisy of the nation must be exposed; and its

continued on page 7

Strikers Fight U. of Cal’s Poverty Wages

LOS ANGELES, July 14 — Over 8,500 service workers at the state-wide University of California (UC) Medical System struck today, supported by many of the 11,500 university healthcare workers also represented by AFSCME Local 3299. Their wages are so low that 96% are financially eligible for some kind of public assistance!



One worker on the picket line told us, “We’re striking for dignity. Without us [the workers], the empire wouldn’t exist. We’re the cement that the empire is based on.”

He and many other workers eagerly took a PLP leaflet and CHALLENGES and gave them to their friends. He said he liked communism and that real communism was different from the socialism of the past. We agreed and said workers could run society without wages — to produce and share what we need. He and his friends asked that CHALLENGE write about their struggle.

These workers struck after 11 months of negotiations in which the UC bosses refused to grant any real wage increase. While food and gas prices are skyrocketing, their latest “offer” would raise the starting minimum hourly wage from \$9.67 to \$11.50, in a three-year contract but would not increase wages for workers making more than the new minimum.

The strikers and those honoring the picket lines are Latino, black, Asian and white. The majority are Latino immigrants facing poverty wages and fighting back against this attack on our class.

The UC bosses are trying to break the strike with an injunction. We advised the workers not to rely on the bosses’ legal system but rather to build unity to defy any injunction.

We are calling on workers and students to come to the picket lines and build support for the walkout. However, we’re also raising the need with these angry strikers for the long-term struggle for communism and workers’ rule. We intend to continue joining the picket lines and to spread the defiant attitude of these strikers to other workers being attacked by the same bosses’ crisis. ✚

☆ summer of communism 2008 ☆

Study and Practice Forge A School for Communism

SEATTLE, WA, July 10 — Throughout the 2008 Summer Project here, we had intense struggles in study groups about the Party’s ideas on “race,” the military and industrial work, and dialectics. This was my first summer project. I was very excited about immersing myself in such schools for communism and in selling CHALLENGE. Some comrades were veterans and lifelong fighters against racism and imperialism, while some were very new to the Party and for the first time met with Party members outside their local collective. We came from across the U.S., united in our fight for a PLP-led working-class struggle against imperialism and capitalism.

Military Work Study Group

Led by a comrade who is an Iraq war veteran and current reservist, we engaged in role-playing exercises of possible scenarios we would encounter while leafleting on the Ft. Lewis base. Everyone had some anxiety about this. We discussed topics to be highlighted in discussions with soldiers: their role in ending the war; the history of soldier resistance in Seattle during the Vietnam Era; and their own anger at U.S. imperialism’s drive for profits at the cost of international working-class lives. The veteran said we should be careful in raising perceived accusations of soldiers being murderers and active

supporters of imperialism by their participation in the war. We distinguished between being “anti-war” and being for class war against the bosses. (See article below on selling CHALLENGE to GI’s.)

The study group successfully emphasized the importance of continuing and expanding involvement with our working-class brothers and sisters in the military. Rebellng against the brass and uniting with the international working class is a big step to-

‘Many [workers] know that the union hacks are in bed with the bosses, have sold them out and will again to save their own skin.’

wards communist revolution.

Industrial Work Study Group

Industrial work was the other focus of the Summer Project. We leafleted the Boeing plant several times and visited some current workers and retirees

who had a good relationship with Party members working in the plant. (See page 3) We stressed how invaluable it was to win industrial workers — who make the bosses’ weapons of war — to building PLP and fighting for a communist revolution. Many workers are painfully aware of the exploitation they face on a daily basis under capitalism. Many know that the union hacks are in bed with the bosses, have sold them out and will again to save their own skin. They’re aware of the bosses’ insatiable pursuit of profit and that they’re only cogs in the machine, disposable and replaceable at the whim of the capitalists.

We must increase PLP’s presence in factories. As a veteran Boeing worker lamented, much of the solidarity the working class had in the 1930s and ‘40s — like swift, militant reaction to scabbing, and allegiance to each other — is sorely missing from the ranks of younger workers who have a more individualistic attitude. We need to lead these workers in class struggle, consistently distribute CHALLENGE and form study groups in winning these workers to join the Party. — *A Project Participant* ☸

(Next issue: Study groups on Racism, Immigration and Class, and Dialectics.)

Soldiers Welcome PLP’s Politics

As a PLP Seattle Summer Project volunteer approached a soldier in uniform, the soldier quickly asked, “Are you anti-war?” “No I’m not anti war,” responded the volunteer, “I’m pro-war, I’m for class war, and I’m not a pacifist. I’m for a war to overthrow capitalism”. These remarks threw the soldier off guard and he asked, “What do you mean by “class”? This started an extended conversation and at the end the soldier took all the literature the volunteer handed to him. Finally the soldier asked, “What do you want me to do?” “We want you to read and discuss these ideas with your buddies”.

This and many other positive conversations occurred when 15 or so PLP volunteers descended on the military town near Fort Lewis where hundreds of soldiers from the base go for lunch. As they approached soldiers, the volunteers were armed with G.I Notes, the military newsletter of the PLP, “Soldiers Unite Against Imperialist War,” a leaflet written by an Iraqi veteran participating in the Summer Project, CHALLENGE-DESAFIO, and “Red-Led GIs Blast Racist Brass,” a pamphlet documenting soldiers rebelling during the Vietnam era. Over 100 G.I.s received one of these pieces of literature and at times all four items.

Although most soldiers welcomed us, some were clearly threatened by our ideas and wondered how receptive soldiers could be to PLP literature. At the local Taco Bell, the GIs streaming in for lunch were accepting our literature. All of a sudden the restaurant’s manager came out to the parking lot after a sergeant complained about the literature distribution. Volunteers continued with the distribution and again the manager came out to ask them to leave. At this point, the same sergeant came out and yelled, “Hey, stop doing that” to the volunteers. One of the volunteers yelled back “Hey, is this freedom of speech”? The sergeant had no response, quickly got in his truck, slammed his door and left. “Listen I know that guy over there does not want you to read this but here is G.I. Notes, written by soldiers for soldiers.” “Don’t worry about it, give it here,” said a young G.I. walking across the parking lot who heard the yelling.

Volunteers also went door to door in the housing around the base. “I’m not in the military but my husband is,” said a young woman as she came to the door. She called for her husband to join her. A long time was spent with this couple who listened to us describe the nature of imperialist war. Even though the soldier did not say much he was listening intently and in the end he took all of the literature. A different conversation led another volunteer into saying to a different soldier “in some cases it will become necessary to frag some officers, every single soldier knows of a sergeant they want to frag.” The soldier nodded in agreement. Another soldier told us, “I am going to photocopy this stuff.”

It was an inspiring day for the volunteers who engaged in important conversations with so many soldiers about revolutionary ideas. Continuing these visits is a significant part of the plan for this Summer Project since we recognize that soldiers are indispensable for the revolution.☸

Test Boycott Teaches Real Lesson

(In part 1, a PL teacher learned that a new standardized test was being tried out in his school which would allow administration to further oppress students and track them and their teachers. After discussions with CHALLENGE-reading staff and students, young members and friends of the Party planned to boycott the test.)

NEW YORK, NY — On the day of the test the students said that they were not going to take it, even though their PL teacher was forced to administer it to keep his job. The students understood this contradiction and although they respected their teacher they also recognized the test was against their interests.

The speech they were expected to take notes on and write about in the test was an apology for the rise in oil prices and blamed the working class and winter for the rise in heating oil prices. Many students disrupted the speech, wrote notes about oil and imperialism on their answer sheets and exclaimed that this test was trying to justify the price of oil and shift blame away from the oil wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

A student then said, “I’ve had enough. Let’s go!” After a moment of silence half the class rose up and followed her. When told to return to their desks, the students raised their fists, shouting “Hell no! We won’t go!” The security guard shrugged his shoulders and walked off. The PL teacher returned to his room.

During the PL teacher’s prep period, several student comrades discussed politics and the test. They decided to disrupt the test. One had a class with five other CHALLENGE readers. She was charged with the more militant act of defiance. The other was in a less supportive situation. She chose to use a silent resistance against the test by refusing to take it. This showed PL’s ability to adapt tactics based upon available forces, and maintain struggle and advance under fire.

One of the members described how her 5th-grade cousin had led a walk-out against the test in her elementary school. Her cousin was sent home from school and her mother had told her that she was

proud of her for standing up for what she believed in. The brave act of a 5th-grader inspired her cousin to provide militant communist leadership against the test.

Two other teachers resisted the test. One has met with PLP, reads and distributes CHALLENGE and is a close friend of the PL teacher. The other acted out of conscience after a conversation with the PL teacher about the necessity for resistance. He told all of his students that they could take the test as homework, invalidating the test.

The student PL’er loudly declared that the test would be used for a future draft because students who fail out of school have less options and many join the military (more to come in part 3), and that resistance was necessary. When the teacher tried to silence her in front of the supervisor, another five students stood up and declared that they would not take the test. That teacher became quite angry and took the political attack personally.

It turned out that a fourth English teacher, acting independently, told his students the test was garbage. His classes also refused to take the test. All in all, over half a dozen classes in two grades refused to take the test, over half of which occurred through direct PL leadership.

The testing coordinator told the PL teacher not to worry because the test was a joke and supported the struggle as well!

Acts such as this illustrate that every little thing we do counts as patient, slow work can pave the way to direct resistance. These acts alone will not stop capitalism, let alone the “test craze,” but they do help teach students how to fight, deepen the commitment of PL members and help spread CHALLENGE. This struggle won 10 new CHALLENGE readers. The future for revolution looks bright — bright red! ☸



Bring Red Ideas to Oaxaca Workers' Mass March

OAXACA, MEXICO — Thousands marched in Oaxaca City on June 14 during the second anniversary of the failed attempt by fascist governor Ulises Ruiz Ortiz, local authorities and the cops to bust the 2006 teachers' strike. The strike led to the mass occupation of Oaxaca for several weeks by teachers and other workers and students. The march today included teachers from Section 22 of the SNTE (National Teachers' Union), farmworkers, members of neighborhood associations, students and activists in APPO (the Popular Assembly of the People of Oaxaca).

This march came at the end of over 27 days of intense activities to pressure Elba Esther Gordillo Morales, the government agent who runs the national leadership of the SNTE, to meet many section 22 demands. Because of these actions to pressure the government, the movement advocated recalling the leadership of Section 22 and to get compensation through a trust of 5 million pesos (US\$ 500,000) for the immediate family members of the 14 activists of APPO who were assassinated in the social-political conflict, among them U.S. Indy media cameraman Bradley Roland Will. The government rejected demands to free four APPO members and return control of the schools to the original strikers.

During the march, members of PLP passed out 4,000 leaflets denouncing the reforms to the Social Security Law (ISSSTE) which reduce social security and weaken the right to a pension upon retirement, sickness and other services. We attacked the great

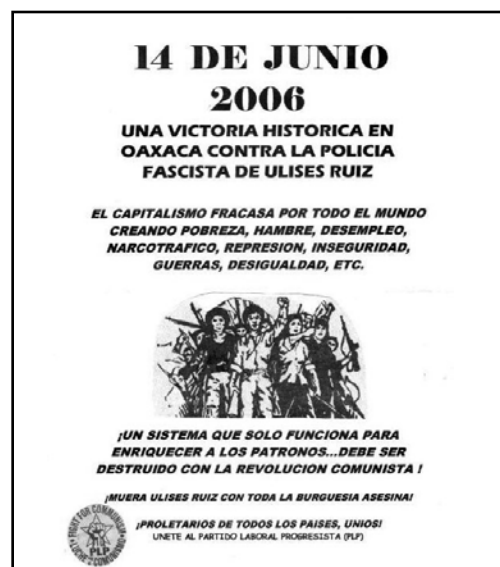
robbery where the banks and other financial institutions will consume the workers' savings, the food crisis which will affect the farm workers and the whole population of the poor and also the privatization of PEMEX (the state-owned oil company, the electricity company) etc. which will generate greater poverty for the working class and enormous wealth for the capitalist class.

We also put up posters on the walls which applauded the victory of the teachers against the bosses' fascist police on June 14, 2006 and called for the fight for communism (see poster attached). Our leaflets were well-received, encouraging us to continue our work to expand the fight for communism and invite activists of these movements to join the Progressive Labor Party to achieve this vital goal.

From the Streets to the Houses — The Ideological Struggle

That night we saw and discussed the PLP movie "Road to Revolution." The discussions afterward on how maintaining the wage system, along with other concessions to capitalist ideas, caused the historical failure of socialism encouraged many to decide to work closer with our organization which fights directly for communism. We will continue our work inside APPO to build the Party and the international revolutionary communist movement.

But we also understand that APPO is a reformist movement with opportunist, fake leftist leaders from groups and organizations like the Communist



Party of Mexico, Marxist Leninist and its branch, the Popular Revolutionary Front. Their main leader, Zenén Bravo, joined the leadership of APPO in the movement of 2006, and negotiated to become a delegate with the bourgeois party Convergence and with the assassin Governor Ulises Ruiz Ortiz. Now cynically, and without caring that the people have rejected him, he has dubbed himself "representative deputy of APPO in the Congress, defender of the people and firm fighter for socialism."

We concluded that our newspaper CHALLENGE plays an important role helping workers understand that while the struggles over the reform demands of Section 22 help unite workers and advance our struggle, only the fight for communism holds the promise of freeing our class from capitalist economic and political dictatorship. CHALLENGE must be our indispensable and permanent tool. ☸

Pentagon Behind Colombian 'Rescue' Circus

BOGOTA, July 13 — The Colombian army's "rescue" of Ingrid Betancourt, the former Presidential candidate, along with three U.S. mercenaries working as contractors for the Pentagon, and several Colombian soldiers held prisoner by the FARC was praised by the bosses' media as "perfect." (The FARC is the largest and oldest guerrilla group here and in Latin America.)

But more and more reports have revealed what really happened, including a \$20 million payoff to free the hostages. A FARC communiqué accused the two guerrilla leaders guarding the hostages of selling out to the government to free their prisoners (El Tiempo, Bogotá, 7/11). The whole episode looks increasingly like a Jessica Lynch-type media-Hollywood invention. (Lynch's "heroic rescue" from her Iraqi captors turned out to be a complete Pentagon fabrication.)

While initial reports said it was a strictly Colombian operation, the NY Times (7/13) revealed that, "The U.S. played [an] elaborate role...including the deployment of more than 900 American military personnel...earlier this year...to locate the hostages." This also included "Hundreds of American support personnel...on the ground in Colombia,...a frenzied intelligence-gathering operation located in the U.S. Embassy here....intercepts of the rebel group's radio systems, human intelligence, satellite imaging" and piloted surveillance aircraft. U.S. "military and intelligence personnel [were] alongside Colombian officials planning the operation" — all part of the \$600 million per year "aid" U.S. rulers give to Colombia.

Mrs. Betancourt, the three Pentagon mercenaries and the Colombian soldiers looked pretty healthy and in good shape after these many years of captivity in the jungle. Some time ago, the media said Mrs. Betancourt was on the verge of death because of mistreatment. Mrs. Betancourt herself, supposedly a "humanitarian" liberal, went on to embrace the two death-squad heads here: President Uribe and General Montayano (army chief), and racist anti-working class Presidents Sarkozy and Bush in France.

Compare this treatment Betancourt and the others got to the thousands of workers and youth brutally killed by the Colombian

army and its paramilitary death-squad thugs. Or to the thousands held captive and tortured by the CIA and the Pentagon in Gitmo and other "secret jails" worldwide.

While the evil Empire (the U.S. bosses and their allies) is striking back in South America, the so-called "Bolivarian socialist" movement led by Hugo Chávez and Evo Morales is compromising more and more with the forces led by U.S. imperialism. Chávez has even attacked the movement in Venezuela for protesting today's visit here of Colombia President Uribe.

Chávez has called on the FARC to give up its weapons because its guerrilla war gives U.S. imperialism "an excuse" to act in a pro-war manner. Even Fidel Castro has criticized the FARC, telling it to free all the war prisoners it holds. FARC is being pressured to join the "political" struggle, meaning become an electoral party. But when it tried that a decade or so ago, forming the Patriotic Union and participating in the electoral process, the Army and the death squads murdered thousands of its supporters.

Chávez has toned down his rhetoric, even asking Venezuelan capitalists opposed to his "Bolivarian socialism" to join with his government to increase production. Chávez wants to look "moderate" to gain a better deal from an Obama-led White House. After all, Chávez, despite all his anti-imperialist rhetoric, has not stopped selling oil to the U.S. while seeking deals with other imperialists like China, India and Russia.

Republican candidate McCain was actually in Colombia during the "rescue" operation, probably tipped off beforehand, and tried to use it to score political points.

While Chávez and Fidel opportunistically criticize the FARC, FARC's politics are not that great either. Long ago FARC gave up any claim to Marxism. Its aim is to make a deal with a section of the Colombian bourgeoisie.

Meanwhile, Colombia's working class and its allies lack any real revolutionary alternative. The liberal-social democratic "Democratic Pole" opposition to Uribe is just another face of capitalism. The small PLP group here has a hard and long task ahead: to build the kind of leadership workers need to free themselves from this hellhole. That means fighting for our communist politics harder than ever. ☸

General Strikers Battle Peru's Cops in Anti-Gov't Protests



LIMA, PERU July 12 — Militant marches and violent protests erupted during and after a July 9th general strike opposing the economic and political policies of President Alan García, a loyal ally of U.S. imperialism in the region.

Today in Pataz province, 300 miles north of Lima, hundreds of cops protecting the mines shot at miners, on strike since June 30, killing one and injuring five.

In the Amazon city of Puerto Maldonado, angry indigenous people burnt government buildings and hurled stones and arrows at 200 cops sent from Lima to attack them after government officials refused to meet with them.

The miners have been striking the Marsa gold mine company, owned by Peruvian capitalists. They're demanding bonus payments for 2007 from Marsa's contractors, given that the high world market price of gold has netted the bosses huge profits.

While the economy is growing 9% annually, benefiting mainly local and imperialist bosses, over 50% of the population still lives below the poverty line. Life is much harder for most city workers, as higher prices decrease their buying power on meager wages. Strikers are also opposing the government's heavy repression against a growing number of nation-wide protests.

While the strike in Lima was not as successful as elsewhere, still 20,000 marched, including construction workers, teachers and students. The strike made Wednesday, July 9, resemble a Sunday in this huge city.

In Puerto Maldonado, the local population opposes the plans to privatize extensive chunks of land in the area which would benefit local and international companies. This is part of García's scheme to sign a Free Trade deal with Washington.

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LETTERS



Communist Paper Acts to Unify A Party

Last week seven LA students and a teacher spent an evening meeting with workers and their families to help prepare for the Summer Project.

Our team of three spent a very enjoyable hour visiting the family of a worker who is a long-time CHALLENGE reader. Many of the family members have joined us for May Day for over ten years. We were there mainly to talk to the young-adult son about joining the Summer Project. At first he was reluctant because he works days. But then we started talking about CHALLENGE and he got more interested. He said that he often reads the paper and feels that he's already working toward the same goals. When we suggested that it was good to be part of a collective, he said that he talks politics with a circle of friends who share similar views. So we told him a little about Lenin and how he saw the communist newspaper as a way of pulling isolated revolutionary circles into a unified party that would eventually be able to lead a revolution. This idea was new to him and he thought it made sense. He took extra papers to show his friends, and agreed to talk with them about meeting with Summer Project volunteers. He also agreed to try to help find more places for volunteers to stay.

This conversation never really got around to whatever disagreements family members have with the Party. The next time we meet with them, or with the son's friends, we'll try to draw these out. But our visit showed, in a small but exciting way, the potential of the Summer Project to develop more young-adult leaders for the working-class and it's Progressive Labor Party.

Project Volunteer

Nationalism, Racism Splits Caribbean Workers

Racism and capitalism's worldwide crisis affect every corner of the world. The plan by the 15 rulers of CARICOM — the English-speaking Caribbean nations community — to build a single regional economy involving the free movement of skills, labor, goods and services, is now in danger of not meeting its 2015 deadline. For example, leaders agreed last year to grant an automatic six-month stay to nationals entering a member country, provided there are no security concerns. But only a handful of countries have bothered to comply with their own rule.

The Miami Herald (7/12) reported that earlier this year, Guyana requested an investigation after immigration officers in oil-rich Trinidad and Tobago refused to allow 15 Guyanese to enter the twin-island nation. In the Bahamas, where tensions against Haitian migrants have constantly run high, government officials decided against joining the free-movement arrangement, citing a concern that Haitians will "flood the archipelago" seeking to improve their lives.

The situation has reached such ridiculous levels that in Barbados, female immigration officials have been accused of turning back Guyanese women out of concern that they will "lure away" the men on the island.

We hear the usual racist anti-immigrant slanders rampant in the U.S. and Europe, like blaming Guyanese and Jamaicans for a spike in crime "caused by" Guyanese and Jamaicans in some of the better-off islands. "They blast 'foreigners' flooding their schools and hospitals." (Miami Herald).

Again, racism — born with capitalism — is an international attack against all workers, exacerbated nowadays by the climate of endless wars and capitalism's crises. "Pan-Caribbean" unity cannot be achieved under capitalism.

A Caribbean comrade

Media Used Floods to Fill Agribusiness Pockets

The devastation and human suffering caused by the flooding of the Mississippi River was accurately described in the article, "Mid-West Floods: Another Disaster Created by Capitalism" (CD, July 16). In addition to the neglect of the levees by the

government described in the article, the story is an example of how cynically the bosses manipulate the suffering of workers to advance their own interests.

While the country was watching 24-hour news coverage of crops destroyed and fields flooded along the Mississippi, Congress was finally pushing through a \$307 billion Farm Bill that it has been trying to pass since May. Congress is made up of politicians who represent different groups of capitalists. They sometimes argue over how to spend taxpayers' money. This Farm Bill stirred up one such conflict. So it was stalled. Then the floods began.

It looked like Congress was responding to the plight of the small farmer. That's exactly how it was meant to look!In fact, there are very few small farms left in this country. The main "farmers" in the U.S. are giant agribusiness corporations like Cargill and Archer Daniels Midland, which made \$44 billion in 2007. The Farm "aid" is nothing but corporate welfare. Meanwhile, not one town in Iowa along the path of the flooding has a population over 1,000 people. These are very small communities. Yes, there were suffering workers but the Farm Bill will do nothing for them while the media exploitation of their images assured it's passage.

This maneuver particularly helped Senator Obama who represents the state of Illinois and is closely tied to big agribusiness. He was able to make his vote appear to be part of his concern for suffering Americans while doing his buddies at Archer Daniels Midland a big favor. Part of the bill provides \$10 billion to subsidize "biofuels" which means using corn to make ethanol rather than to feed people. Switching from gasoline to biofuel is a major part of Obama's energy program.

So once again, the media shows us the suffering that directs voter sentiment in their favor while ignoring coverage of suffering like the thousands of Iraqi civilians murdered by the ongoing U.S. imperialist war for oil.

Brooklyn Red

Rulers Want to Turn Our Minds to Mush

In the recent issue of CHALLENGE, there was a letter from a person who claimed that anti-intellectualism existed in California and stated that he\she wanted to join the PLP. I think that anti-intellectualism exists all across this country, and it exists for a reason. The ruling class wants our minds to turn to mush, and the pop culture works overtime to make sure this happens.

Recently, I read a newspaper article that pointed out that many school students did not know when the U.S. Civil War took place, and also pointed out that many people were ignorant about the history of this country. Certainly it is the duty of communists to work to enlighten the workers about the real history of U.S. capitalism. I think that the newspaper does a good job, and I especially like the recent debate in CHALLENGE about the U.S. Civil War and the class forces involved in this war. Keep up the good work.

Red Coal

U.S. Civil War Shows Profits Drive Starvation

The article on the front page of the July 2 issue shows that there are diametrically opposed interests between gigantic agricultural businesses versus consumers, i.e., mainly the working class. The profits to be made in converting corn from food to fuel, in the face of climbing oil prices, lead many agricultural businesses to convert their food production into fuel production. This is causing food prices to skyrocket along with oil prices, and the working class world-wide is finding it more difficult not only to fuel our cars but to buy food. Starvation is resulting for many of the world's workers and our families. The free market system, with the drive of profits for the few, leads directly to starvation for the many.

Two related historical events come to mind. First, the capitalists hypocritically blame the Soviet government for a famine that took place in the early 1930s and that killed, according to them, ten

million Soviet citizens — a figure they exaggerate to fool the working class. [The July 2 article showed that ten million children die each year in the world from capitalism.] In the same breath they condemn the Soviets for their attempt to stem the results of the famine by expropriating the kulaks, the rich farmers, who were holding the working class for ransom by withholding food if their exorbitant prices weren't met. The only way to feed the working class was to take away the land from the kulaks and guarantee adequate food production by and for the workers.

Second, the Southern slave-owning planters did the same thing during the U.S. Civil War from 1861-1865. A book reviewed in the June 4 issue of CHALLENGE, "A People's History of the Civil War" by David Williams, shows how planters abandoned production of food for the families of Confederate soldiers, starving them out by replanting their land with higher profit-making crops, such as tobacco and cotton. This drove food prices out of sight for most working-class families. Ironically while slaves were fed the bare minimum necessary to keep them able to work these crops, working-class white Southerners and free black men and women suffered from starvation.

The slave-owners' government forced working-class Southerners into the Confederate army and wouldn't let them resign, but planter-class officers were free to leave any time they wished, and they left the army in droves. Huge numbers of enlisted Confederate soldiers also deserted. This desertion rate as against deeper commitment on the Union side was part of what eventually forced the Confederate government to surrender — a situation echoed 100 years later when troop rebellion was part of the U.S.'s forced exodus from Vietnam.

Indeed, this book is full of stories about how the class interests of the slave-owners (the 25% of the population of the South who began the war with their decision to secede from the Union in order to protect and spread slavery) clashed with the interests of all non-slave-owning Southerners (75%). There was tremendous opposition to the slavocracy from both slave and non-slave-owning Southerners, but the slave-owners controlled the state through their occupation of political offices and their control over generally fraudulent and violent elections.

We face a similar problem today with the rich agricultural business owners protected by the capitalist state against the interests of starving workers. Communism is the only system where the world's workers can be defended against the twin capitalist atrocities of war and starvation.

Saguaro Rojo

Film Builds Wave of Anti-Communism

The much-publicized movie "Indiana Jones" premiered in San Salvador. We communist youth decided to see it.

We found the film painted a miserable caricature of the Soviets, lying that they did not know what they were doing and were insecure and idolized Americans. The main thing this movie does is make fun of the glorious Red Army.

In 1957 (the year when this film supposedly takes place), the Soviets did not send terrorists to the U.S., which they try to show in the movie. In fact, they launched Sputnik, the first artificial satellite, which inspired admiration worldwide.

We feel the goal of this film is to muddy the image of communists, and to continue creating a wave of anti-communism. Youth have another conception of what the USSR really was. We, the youth and adults of Progressive Labor Party denounce such decadent films that constitute the daily attacks capitalism launches anytime it can. Youth must work with their friends in the universities and schools to counter these attacks against our proletarian ideology, and let it be known that communism is the only salvation for the international working class.

Salvadoran comrade

MORE LETTERS

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Applying Historical Materialism to the US Civil War (1861-1865)

Recent articles in CHALLENGE have given new information on the dynamics of the Civil War, which once and for all ended feudalism as a form of political economy. We must be careful, though, not to mechanically evaluate the political movements of the 1860s outside of their historical context.

Marx and Engels and the communist movement they represented at the time correctly saw the Civil War battle of the industrial bourgeoisie against the slave labor bourgeoisie as a progressive one. The Draft Riots were neither left wing nor progressive. These racist riots were in opposition to the Emancipation Proclamation and the movement of African Freedmen and women in New York for more freedom (see the movie "The Gangs of New York"). At the same time New York capitalists forced black and Irish workers to compete for the same low-paying jobs. The Draft Riots were an attempt at an anti-abolitionist counter-revolution, in which many racist Irish workers were involved in mass assaults on black people.

By 1864 the Union Army was being filled up with more and more "draftees," now motivated in most instances, thanks to abolitionist organizing, in a fight for Union and black freedom. Motivated by an egalitarian ideal (even if it was in service to a very anti-egalitarian capitalist system) many workers carried out heroic, mass battles at Petersburg, Chattanooga, Atlanta, Savannah, Charleston, etc.

In a well written and well-reasoned essay on Lincoln, which appeared in an issue of "The Communist" magazine, his ruthless dedication to smashing the slavocracy is likened to Stalin's resolve in crushing the White Counterrevolution. Relative to the slave labor capitalist system, the industrial wage labor capitalist system (with the finance capitalist in a subordinate role) was a progressive one. The struggle against the slavocracy had committed, mass support by thousands of black, white, brown, Asian and Native American workers, students, soldiers, men and women, who participated in the fight for what Engels called the democratic republic, symbolized in Lincoln's call for a government of the people, by the people, and for the people.

Armed with another 150 years of knowledge gained through class struggle, the working class can now advance beyond the "democratic republic" and set our goal to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat; a government of the workers, by the workers, and for the workers. Many of the ancient contradictions between bosses and workers will be eliminated by the destruction of capitalism in all its forms; reactionary, reformist, anti-feudal. The abolition of wage-slavery will lead to the egalitarian society that brave workers fought for in the Civil War. The information uncovered by our comrades about the Civil War is definitely helpful when put in the larger context of the historical progression of our march toward communism.

A Red Historian

General Strikers Battle Peru's Cops in Anti-Gov't Protests

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In Cuzco, over 20,000 workers and students marched, not only opposing the government's pro-business economic policies but also demanding departure of a U.S. military contingent in the area. The Pentagon is eyeing Peru as a possible replacement for the air base it now operates in Mantas, Ecuador, given that the government there won't renew the base's lease when it expires next year.

But while workers and youth are very angry, their mis-leadership — the CGTP (Labor Federation of Peruvian Workers) and SUTEP (national teachers' union) which helped lead the strike — is controlled by fake leftists. Some of them are promoting Ollanta Humala, a nationalist-populist politician and former military officer, as the alternative to García. These same fake leftists and union leaders initially backed Fujimori and then Alejandro Toledo as "lesser-evil" politicians, both of whom turned out to be anti-working class agents of U.S. imperialism.

The key ingredient lacking in Peru's working class, as in the rest of the world, is a revolutionary communist leadership. The aim of revolutionary-minded workers is to convert these mass struggles into schools for communism and build that kind of leadership. It won't be an easy task, but it's the only way forward for workers and their allies. ☸

Fredrick Douglas Quote

continued from page 3

crimes against God and man must be denounced.

What to the American slave is your Fourth of July? I answer, a day that reveals to him more than all other days of the year, the gross injustice and cruelty to which he is the constant victim. To him your celebration is a sham; your boasted liberty an unholy license; your national greatness, swelling vanity; your sounds of rejoicing are empty and heartless; your shouts of liberty and equality, hollow mock; your prayers and hymns, your sermons and thanksgivings, with all your religious parade and solemnity, are to him mere bombast, fraud, deception, impiety, and hypocrisy - a thin veil to cover up crimes which would disgrace a nation of savages. There is not a nation of the earth guilty of practices more shocking and bloody than are the people of these United States at this very hour.

Go search where you will, roam through all the monarchies and despotisms of the Old World, travel through South America, search out every abuse and when you have found the last, lay your facts by the side of the everyday practices of this nation, and you will say with me that, for revolting barbarity and shameless hypocrisy, America reigns without a rival.[]



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

Obama: 'withdraw' to Afghanistan

Senator Barack Obama is proposing that the United States deploy about 10,000 more troops to battle resurgent forces in Afghanistan....

He said in a news conference here, "It's very hard for us to bolster our forces in Afghanistan when we have such a heavy presence in Iraq....

"We need a timetable for withdrawal, not only to relieve pressure on our military, but also to deal with the deteriorating situation in Afghanistan." (NYT, 7/14)

Obama and key Dems back wiretaps

...in the end Mr. Bush won...almost all the major elements the White House wanted. The measure gives the executive branch broader latitude in eavesdropping....

Support from key Democrats ensured passage of the measure....

Senator Barack Obama...had long opposed giving legal immunity to the phone companies'...wire-tapping.... But on Wednesday, he ended up voting for what he called "an improved but imperfect bill." (NYT, 7/10)

Drug co. \$ to docs hurts kids

An analysis of Minnesota data by The New York Times last year found that on average, psychiatrists who received at least \$5,000 from makers of newer-generation antipsychotic drugs appear to have written three times as many prescriptions to children for the drugs as psychiatrists who received less money or none. The drugs are not approved for most uses in children, who appear to be especially susceptible to the side effects, including rapid weight gain. (NYT, 7/12)

US let 9/11 go on as jolt for war

Jack Cloonan, a special agent for the F.B.I.'s Osama bin Laden unit until 2002, told Ms. Mayer that Sept. 11 was "all preventable." By March 2000, according to the C.I.A.'s inspector general, "50 or 60 individuals" in the agency knew that two Al Qaeda suspects — soon to be hijackers — were in America. But there was no urgency at the top. Thomas Pickard, the acting F.B.I. director that summer, told Ms. Mayer that when he expressed his fears about the Qaeda threat to Mr. Ashcroft, the attorney general snapped, "I don't want to hear about that anymore!"....

Nonexistent links between Iraq and Al Qaeda were cited by President Bush in his fateful Oct. 7, 2002, Cincinnati speech ginning up the war and by



Mr. Powell in his subsequent United Nations presentation. (NYT, 7/13)

General reports US war crimes

When a distinguished American military commander accuses the United States of committing war crimes in its handling of detainees, you know that we need a new way forward.

"There is no longer any doubt as to whether the current administration has committed war crimes," Antonio Taguba, the retired major general who investigated abuses in Iraq, declares in a powerful new report... (NYT, 7/6)

In ex-colonies, childbirth grim

Pregnancy is now usually a cause for celebration, not an occasion to write a will....

But not so in sub-Saharan Africa, where one in every 16 women dies in childbirth.... Maternal mortality is the most dramatic health inequality on the planet — more stark even than child mortality.

It is the incontrovertible evidence of how little women's lives are valued or their voices heard in many parts of the world. (GW, 7/4)

Bosses Use Black Pols to Promote Capitalism, Racism

The history of racism and racist ideology in the U.S. is replete with ruling-class efforts to invent new forms when the old ones are no longer useful. Slavery gave way to Jim Crow; theories of “cultural inferiority” became favored over eugenics. But the rulers’ ability to fool workers into accepting, and in some cases embracing, these new plans for division have historically been deadly to our class. Their latest plans to use black superstars to resurrect “culture-of-poverty” arguments in order to justify more racism against black workers are no exception. As will be seen below, only a communist revolution that destroys capitalism can abolish the super-exploitation of black, Latino and immigrant workers, and the bosses’ need to divide the working class.

In 1965, former NY senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan wrote “The Negro American Family: The Case for National Action.” Moynihan was then assistant Secretary of Labor in the Johnson administration. While admitting that rising black unemployment was even then at “disaster” levels, Moynihan linked poverty not to joblessness, but to higher rates of children born “out of wedlock.” He blamed single-parent, female-headed families, not racism, for educational differences, higher welfare rolls, urban “isolation,” and crime. And he attacked the black family as a “tangle of pathology” caused by centuries-long history of slavery and Jim Crow.

Moynihan’s report was released during the growing anti-racist upsurge against capitalist-inspired exploitation and oppression of the 1960s. Thus, the rulers were forced to temporarily shelve its more brazen conclusions. Moynihan’s arguments introduced the term “benign neglect” which became the ideological basis for attitudes toward low-income workers that shaped Nixon administration welfare policies of the late 1960s. They also helped spawn an academic industry, which invented the concept of “culture of poverty” to explain

racist unemployment and poverty, while covering up continuing discrimination and segregation.

In the 1980s, as urban industrial jobs increasingly vanished and unemployment increased sharply, this push to the right accelerated. Racist ideologue Charles Murray, who later co-wrote “The Bell Curve,” produced “Losing Ground,” which blamed social welfare programs for unwed mothers, unemployment, and crime. Murray and others promoted the racist and sexist imagery of female-headed black and Latino families as symbolic of the urban “underclass”. These Nazi-like myths helped provide the rationale for the increasing welfare cuts of the Reagan years, which in turn laid the groundwork for the Clinton-led bipartisan “welfare reform” of the 1990s.

Today, “culture-of-poverty” ideas, correctly seen by anti-racists in the 1960s as the other side

of “genetic inferiority” garbage, have become “mainstream.” Obama, Clinton, and McCain all embrace some aspect of “getting tough with the ‘underclass.’” Politicians of all stripes trumpet the success of “welfare reform,” even as unemployment shoots up and more workers fall deeper into economic misery. The bosses and their political mouthpieces remain nervous, however, about the possibility of working-class rebellion against layoffs, soaring food and gas prices, more hospital closings, and bigger wars. At the same time that the media is promoting the idea that racism in the U.S. has been overcome, the rulers feel the need to sharpen their racist knives for more vicious attacks on our class.☹

(Part two will discuss how Bill Cosby and Barack Obama are using the bosses “culture of poverty” against the working class to build U.S. imperialism.)

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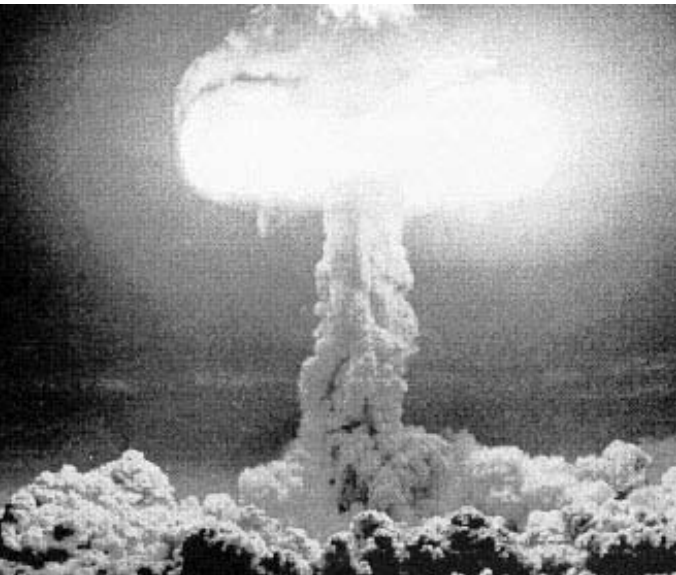
U.S. A-Bombed Japan As Political, Act of Mass Murder

When the U.S. pilot of the plane that dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima died last year a spate of letters and articles appeared reporting that he felt no remorse or guilt about killing 140,000 innocent civilians because “it was necessary to end the war without a land invasion of Japan and therefore actually saved the lives of far more Japanese and Americans.”

This is a monstrous lie that outdoes even the whoppers told by Hitler. The fact is U.S. president Harry Truman ordered the dropping of the bomb on August 6, 1945 — and a second one three days later on Nagasaki killing another 110,000 civilians — not as “the last act of World War II” but rather as the opening shot of the Cold War against the Soviet Union. Truman’s Secretary of State, James Byrnes, told A-bomb scientist Leo Szilard that “demonstrating the bomb would make Russia more manageable in Europe.” (Leo Szilard, “A Personal History of the Atomic Bomb”)

This not only killed 140,000 residents of Hiroshima instantly but, “The number of people killed directly and after exposure to radiation...now reached 231,920,” as of Aug. 6, 2003. (British journalist John Pilger)

Actually in August, 1945, Japan was on its knees, suing for peace, and facing a million Soviet troops sweeping through the Chinese mainland, preparing to invade Japan itself (after having defeated the Nazis in Europe). Truman himself wrote in his diary on July 17, 1945 that when the Soviets entered the Far East war — as they had promised to do by August — “Fini Japs when that comes about.” (Truman, “Off the Record”) Truman already had been given decoded Japanese cables which his diary referred to as the “Jap Emperor asking for peace.”



Dropping the bomb was militarily unnecessary. On March 9, 1945, “100,000 to 200,000 men, women and children died when the U.S. Air Force doused Tokyo with jellied gasoline; all told, in the month before Hiroshima, [conventional] bombs killed up to 500,000 in Japanese cities and left 13 million homeless.” (U.S. News & World Report, 7/13/95) That’s why Air Force General Curtis LeMay complained that there was nothing left to bomb in Japanese cities except “garbage can targets.”

Then General (later President) Dwight Eisenhower told Secretary of State Stimson that, “Japan was already defeated and that dropping the bomb was completely unnecessary....[It was] no longer mandatory as a measure to save American lives.” (Eisenhower, “Mandate for Change”)

So why the rush to use the Bomb? Clearly the lib-

eral Democratic Truman administration didn’t want Japan to surrender before it was used. On June 6, 1945, Stimson told Truman that he was “fearful” that before the Bomb was delivered, the U.S. Air Force would have Japan so “bombed out” that the A-Bomb “would not have a fair background to show its strength.” To whom? Certainly not to Japan which was frantically trying to surrender, itself fearful of facing the Soviets.

If U.S. rulers were so intent on demonstrating the Bomb’s power to the Japanese, why didn’t they pause long enough for Japanese officials to travel to Hiroshima to assess the extent of the damage before dropping a second Bomb on Nagasaki just three days later, killing another 110,000 civilians?

This decision to commit mass murder in the name of anti-communism was clearly political. As Churchill said about the A-Bomb, “We now had something in our hands that would redress the balance with the Russians.”

The U.S. ruling class’s indiscriminate destruction of Iraq is part of a long history of such butchery; Japanese men, women and children are still dying from the inherited genetic effects of the A-Bomb slaughter. It’s ironic that U.S. rulers now “worry” about nuclear weapons getting into the hands of al Qaeda in countries like Pakistan — whose bomb the U.S. helped build (see “Deception” by Adrian Levy and Catherine Scott-Clark); and they “warn” Iran not to build a nuclear bomb (or face U.S. nukes). Yet the U.S. ruling class is the only one to have ever used the A-Bomb, killing more than one-third of a million innocent people. Surely U.S. rulers are the most horrific terrorists in world history. ☹