

CHALLENGE



THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

U.S.-RUSSIA FIGHT SHARPENS . . .

OIL FUELS GEORGIA WAR

Russian and U.S.-backed Georgian forces have killed thousands of civilians as they battle for oil routes and political dominance in the republic of Georgia that was part of the southern region of the former Soviet Union. (Georgia broke away from Russia after 1991.) Fighting began on August 8 when Georgia launched an offensive to regain control of the South Ossetia region from pro-Russian separatists. Moscow responded by sending in troops and tanks and shelling cities.

"War started today," Russian premier Putin boasted to George Bush at the Beijing Olympics (Bloomberg, 8/08/08). Bush, leader of "the world's sole superpower," could only mutter feebly about "supporting Georgia's territorial integrity." A day later, 4,000 Russian troops landed in Abkhazia, another breakaway Georgian province. Russia's Black Sea fleet steamed to the Georgian coast threatening a blockade.

RUSSIA COULD GRAB MAJOR U.S. PIPELINE

Putin's moves in Georgia endanger the centerpiece of U.S. rulers' efforts to counter Russia's expanding energy-based imperialism. The new U.S.- and British-financed Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) oil pipeline, one of the world's largest, runs through Georgia, skirting South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Opened in 2006, operated by British Petroleum, and owned partly by Chevron, it carries more than one million barrels of Caspian crude per day to Western Europe and the U.S. through the Turkish port of Ceyhan on the Mediterranean (see map).

Strategists in the Clinton administration chose the BTC route in order to bypass Russia and Iran. Its Ceyhan terminus sits conveniently close to the U.S. Air Force's vast base at Incirlik, Turkey. But the U.S. has nevertheless proven supremely incapable of protecting its BTC lifeline. Russian troops reportedly fired on it in Georgia. And Kurdish rebels in Turkey had shut it down temporarily a week before by setting it on fire.

GEORGIA'S EMBATTLED PRESIDENT TOOL OF LIBERAL U.S. BOSSES

The fighting in Georgia is one for control of the world's energy resources. U.S. rulers' struggle to control Georgia is aimed at preventing their Russian rivals from replacing the U.S. as the world's main energy controller. But oil and gas are only part — though a very big part — of an even larger conflict between U.S. and Russian rulers over political and military control of the former Soviet nations now outside Russia.

Expanding NATO throughout the former Soviet bloc and installing a shield of nuclear missiles there, aimed at Russia as well as at Iran, are vital U.S. goals. But ever since they boosted the anti-Soviet "Solidarity" movement in Poland in the 1980s, U.S. rulers, lacking a military home field advantage, have focused on buying elections in the region.

Billionaire swindler and Rockefeller ally George Soros has led the charge, bankrolling anti-Russian, pro-U.S. "color revolutions" in the old Soviet sphere. Its aim was to oust pro-Russian governments in Georgia (its banner was Rose) and in the Ukraine (Orange). Soros helped engineer Mikhail



Approx. Oil Pipeline Route

Saakashvili's 2003 defeat of Georgian president and ex-Soviet Politburo member Eduard Shevardnadze. "It's generally accepted public opinion here that Mr. Soros is the person who planned Shevardnadze's overthrow," the Toronto Globe and Mail said at the time (11/26/03). The Kremlin responded to these U.S. "victories" by curtailing gas supplies to Ukraine and Georgia, which hastened the present crisis.

The U.S. liberal establishment molded Saakashvili. He graduated from Columbia Law School and practiced at the prestigious Wall Street firm Patterson Belknap, which counts the Rockefeller Foundation as a top client. Soros personally presented Saakashvili with his Open Society Award. Consequently, Georgia under Saakashvili proved a staunch U.S. ally, until the Russian onslaught. Georgia just recalled 1,000 troops it had aiding the U.S. in Iraq back to its new home fronts.

NEXT PRESIDENT WILL HAVE TO RESTORE DRAFT

U.S. rulers understand that two-bit proxies like Georgia can't ultimately prevail in global conflicts with rising powers like Russia (or China). And with the shortcomings of their present "volunteer" military — who enlisted mostly because of economic hardship — U.S. rulers won't be able to intervene to protect their interests. Therefore, they will need a draft, which will likely begin in the form of a "National Service," part of which will lead especially working-class youth into the military.

A May 5 report issued jointly by the liberal Brookings Institution and the Army War College concluded that the "impact of fighting long wars using an all-volunteer force needs to be looked at more closely." Both Obama and McCain will restore a "National Service" draft because, if they don't, they will be as powerless against emerging imperialist rivals as is Bush.

Desperate for wider wars, U.S. rulers bombard the youth they will soon draft with dead-end, pro-capitalist patriotism. Russian bosses use Nazi-like nationalism, while Georgian misleaders count on meaningless racism and "ethnicity." It's all a trap. The only way out of the profit system's endless wars is a mass communist-led revolution of the working class. This is Progressive Labor Party's goal. ☼

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LA Summer Project Builds Communist Leadership for Future

Over 100 international workers, soldiers and students participated in our Summer Project here with the goal of strengthening our organizing efforts amongst industrial workers and soldiers. We have distributed over 8,000 CHALLENGES and over 15,000 leaflets in the past three weeks at factories, transit divisions, hospitals, schools and military bases. Our communist message was enthusiastically welcomed and over 50 people gave us their contact information to get involved.

The Project specifically focused on the opportunity that exists to organize workers in the concentration of subcontracted aerospace shops found in southern California. These non-union, mainly immigrant, workers play an important role in war production and for this reason must play an important role in the long-term struggle for workers' state power. Industrial workers and soldiers are central both to capitalism and to the fight to destroy it and build communism, workers' rule.

Summer Project volunteers met workers from a garment shop where the Party has maintained ties for many years. We asked about the conditions in the factory. The workers questioned the volunteers about the kinds of class struggle they organized back home in the places where they worked. The workers eagerly provided specific details about conditions in the plant including a recent work stoppage on the factory floor. The years of friendship, and the distribution of CHALLENGE, with these workers laid the basis for this vigorous discussion.

As a result a communist leaflet was produced and passed out at the factory. As the volunteers distributed the literature an angry boss came out

to snatch it from us. One taller worker, who just received literature, held his CHALLENGE and leaflet high so his boss could not grab them. This young leader inspired us all to distribute more literature. In learning from the working class we are also having a concrete effect on our class brothers and sisters by influencing the class struggle, on a modest but significant level, with communist politics.

Another key aspect of the Project was to start building the worker-student-soldier alliance. At LA colleges and high schools we passed out a leaflet that linked police brutality to the nature of capitalist exploitation in the factories. At one high school, a parent approached and asked what we were distributing. The comrade gave the parent a leaflet and a CHALLENGE. They discussed the problems of elections, then the police, and how they are systematically used to terrorize black and Latino youth. The parent was enthusiastic about our presence and encouraged us to return. At the same high school, a student who got the paper then asked for five more to distribute to his friends and gave us his contact information.

Students Discuss Communist Revolution with U.S. Marines

Our visit to a Marine base in California was preceded by political discussion within the Project about the true nature of the lives of soldiers in the bosses' military. More experienced comrades shared their experiences in working on military bases in order for the younger comrades to feel confident when distributing CHALLENGE to soldiers and marines. Engaging marines in conversations about the role they can play in turning the guns around on the capitalist system, not workers of other nations, and fighting for working-class power instead of imperialism, was a valuable learning experience.

Project volunteers found that many marines do not agree with the U.S. imperialist agenda in the Middle East. The majority of these young marines come from the working class and joined the Marine Corps because they needed a job. Despite the

bosses' intense ideological effort throughout their military training to win these working-class youth to racist, fascist ideas, many soldiers we met were not only open but eager to discuss communist revolution. Five of them gave us their contact information and want to keep in touch. Many thanked us for being there. One young marine came to have lunch with us. We got a better response to CHALLENGE and to GI Notes than we've gotten here before. The response shows that we need to do this much more often.

Investing in a Communist Future

Young comrades provided communist leadership in all aspects of this Summer Project. Bridging language barriers, students and workers discussed that students come from the working class and unity between students and workers is important to building the communist movement. A group of new comrades described their participation in a community organization that focuses on education. Collectively we discussed the contradiction between reform and revolution and how they can fight to strengthen the revolutionary communist side of that contradiction in the community organization.

The Summer Project has shown the potential and openness of workers to communist politics in the face of the bosses' proclaiming it dead. Whether Obama or McCain is elected the intensifying rivalry between imperialists and widening wars means more attacks on workers in the form of an increase of police terror and exploitation at the workplace. These sharpening conditions make workers, students, and soldiers open to talking about alternatives to capitalism. The Project inspired all who participated to return home committed to increase their own organizing of class struggle on the job. Our goal is to turn our Summer Project experiences into a lifetime commitment to serving our class.✱

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!**

CHALLENGE/DESAFIO (ISSN 0009-1049) published bi-weekly by Challenge Periodicals. 1 issue \$.50. One Year: \$15. Six months: \$10. Send address changes to CHALLENGE Periodicals, GPO Box 808 Brooklyn, NY 11202, September 3, 2008. Volume 40, No. 38

Veteran PL Farmworker's Inspiring Stories of Battles in the Fields

LOS ANGELES, CA, August 9 — After another day of CHALLENGE sales, house visits, and study groups, L.A. Summer Project volunteers took a trip through history when one of the main PL organizers of the migrant worker struggles, Epifanio Camacho, hosted a “carne asada” (BBQ). With the smell of collectively-prepared barbeque in the background and under a large shade tree, PLP volunteers squeezed into Camacho's yard, many unsure of what to expect.

Camacho began speaking of the political work in Delano of organizing workers, comparing it to birds spreading seeds. In Delano, often workers from Mexico would learn communist politics and then return home where the lessons and politics they learned could one day bear fruit. This is one way that communism spreads around the world. Camacho fielded questions from PL youth and former Delano Project participants alike, opening up discussions that are still echoing through the Summer Project

Camacho spoke about his experiences working with Cesar Chavez, the misleader of the United Farm Workers Union. When asked if he thought Chavez, who would regularly turn workers over to immigration officers and make deals with bosses behind the workers backs, should be given a holiday, he instantly said, “Hell no!” He told stories of how Chavez went on a hunger strike to stop violence against scabs (the bosses canonized him in the media). Later Camacho told how he and the workers of his town organized a demonstration against the fascist police who were terrorizing and killing workers. The militant demonstration was



held in the police station were the workers threatened to burn the station down if they did not stop the fascist attacks. This action chased out the cops — almost 20 years ago — and they never came back. His stories were inspirational to everyone.

Just like the work in Delano sent seeds of communist thought through Mexico, so will the L.A. and Seattle Summer Project participants spread the lessons we're learning and the excitement we're building through CHALLENGE sales, study groups, and collective living across the country when we return to our home cities.✱

This is three-week issue. We will return to a bi-weekly schedule with the September 17th issue.

PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

P.O. Box 808 Brooklyn NY 11202 • www.plp.org • email: desafio.challenge@gmail.com • blog: challengenewspaper.wordpress.com • 718 - 630 9440

Aerospace Workers Need United Strike vs. Warmakers

WICHITA, KANSAS, Aug. 4 — Over 100 striking Machinists closed down the Hawker-Beechcraft plant here today with mass pickets. Earlier, 4,700 workers in IAM (International Association of Machinists) Local Lodge 733 (Wichita) and 500 in IAM Local Lodge 2328 (Salina, Ks.) voted 90% to reject the new contract and 89% to strike the same day — the first strike since 1984.

Everyone’s wondering how this relates to a possible strike early next month at Boeing because the issues are so similar. Even IAM International President Buffenbarger had to acknowledge the obvious: “It looks like workers are not going to take

cuts in two job codes that will affect new hires and hidden costs in medical benefits for new hires. A veteran machinist Terri Holloway said: “If we don’t fight for the new people, they’re going to get the old people next.”

None of this should come as a surprise as Hawker was recently taken over — with the union’s blessing — by Onyx (in partnership with Wall Street Investment bankers Goldman Sacks). Onyx is the same outfit that grabbed Boeing’s Wichita plant and immediately cut wages.

To add insult to injury, Hawker leaked a secret plan to develop a final assembly plant in Chihuahua, Mexico. The threat (and fact) of moving more work to low-wage areas in the U.S. and Mexico has changed the face of aerospace. Narrow trade unionism has become a sick joke.

Aerospace is crucial to the bosses’ imperialist ambitions. As challenges to U.S. rulers’ dominance mount daily (witness Russia’s incursion into Georgia and China’s emergence during the Olympics), the bosses are determined to reindustrialize on our backs. War becomes the more likely option



‘It looks like workers are not going to take it anymore . . . ’

it anymore,” he admitted. The “rolling thunder” — the militant deafening banging every hour, on the hour — that has already started in the Boeing plants indicates he may have got it right.

Like Boeing, Hawker wants to separate new hires from veterans with cuts in earned time off,

and we’re going to fund that war machine with our lives and livelihoods. In 2001, the Pentagon called for “competitive outsourcing” (Aerospace Daily, 2/3/2001). Now they want to build a “southern aerospace corridor” — taking advantage of low wages in Florida, Georgia, Mississippi and Alabama caused by years of racist super-exploitation.

As expected the bosses’ servants in the union mis-leadership wave the American flag. We, on the other hand, wave the red flag of communist class-consciousness. Same enemy, same fight, workers of the world unite!✊

Angry Homecare Workers Must Sack Union Hacks, Bosses’ Politicians

NEW YORK, NY, Aug. 7th — Eleven thousand members of Local 1199 Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Healthcare Workers East attended a rally at Madison Square Garden to support 30,000 homecare worker members in their struggle for upgrading pay and against the growing threat to their medical benefits. Their contract expires December 31. As PL’ers distributed all the CHALLENGE newspapers we had to eager and angry workers, it was clear that the workers were ready to fight.

The reasons for their anger were clear. Many of the agencies that employ them are run for profit. They typically skim off half of their state- and city-funded budgets for “administrative expenses.” The average homecare worker, almost exclusively minority and immigrant women, gets about \$8/hour while providing lifesaving services. (As CHALLENGE has pointed out before, these workers receive no extra pay for overtime hours and less than their hourly pay when they stay overnight.)

The system under which tens of thousands of the elderly and infirm are cared for in this city makes it clear why we must smash capitalism. The bosses’ system places little value on the lives of those who no longer produce profits for them and therefore spends as little as possible on their care.

Homecare workers have suffered racist exploitation from their bosses and less than full support from the SEIU 1199 leadership. The union leaders refuse to unify them and prepare for a massive strike. On the contrary, this rally was dominated by speech after speech from politicians like Governor Patterson who is planning a \$1 billion cut in the state budget. Also featured were Senator Schumer and Congressman Weiner who are busy urging war on Iran. Each of these politicians promote cutting workers’ living standards to pay for U.S. imperialism’s economic and war needs. SEIU leaders are lulling healthcare workers into believing we have no power other than in our union’s political endorsements. In the face of capitalism’s growing economic crisis and war in the oil-rich Middle East and Caspian regions, this is deadly poison for the working class.

Progressive Labor Party and its paper, CHALLENGE, must organize the working class to make a communist revolution. How do we get there? By stepping up the struggle with bosses every day, not allying with them, by getting involved in the daily problems faced by our friends and co-workers, by reading and circulating CHALLENGE participating in discussion groups, and joining the PLP to make egalitarian communism the main issue of the day! ✊

From California to Seattle:

Volunteers Help Connect Boeing Workers

LOS ANGELES — “I have the paper,” said a Boeing worker as he drove from the parking lot, “but I just wanted to stop and thank you for being here.”

During shift change at this plant that builds military planes, students and teachers from the PLP Summer Project here distributed 120 copies of CHALLENGE and 500 leaflets, a reprint of the CHALLENGE article, “Bosses’ Imperialist Dogfight Sets Stage for Boeing Contract Fight.”

Men and women, younger and older, black, Latin, Asian and white workers took the literature. They were especially interested in the article since it was written by Boeing workers in Seattle.

Another worker exited his car to tell us that the bosses in his section had called a meeting earlier today “to get out misinformation about the contract fight.” He thought they were trying to use SoCal Boeing workers as pawns to pressure Boeing workers “up north” to settle on the bosses’ terms.

One guy took a bunch of leaflets to distribute in the plant — “I’m on the inside!” he said. Later he came out to say, “I’ve hooked you up!”

A Summer Project volunteer introduced CHALLENGE to another worker as “a communist paper” and he took it eagerly. This led to a long conversation about racism, exploitation and fighting back. The volunteer then asked, “Do you have a friend who thinks like you do, who might also like a paper?” When the worker said he had, the volunteer asked, “How many friends like



Summer Project demonstration against police terror.

that do you have?” The worker took five papers and gave her contact information to stay in touch with the Party.

Conversations were difficult because many workers were in cars and also because — as one volunteer noted — “these people looked more tired than anyone I’ve ever seen come out of work.” Almost nobody was hostile or even unfriendly. A student leafleting for the first time at such a plant, felt it was “good practice” but also said a discussion of the leaflet before-hand would have better prepared us for conversations.

This was a modest, very inspiring example of how PLP can unite workers around our newspaper and our Party. Through the leaflet and the work of the Summer Project, SoCal Boeing workers now have a connection to Boeing workers in Seattle.

We’ll try to strengthen this connection by continuing to come to Boeing, following up our contacts, making more contacts and building ties with the anti-capitalist workers who are reading our literature. We’ll try to win some to join PLP and build it “on the inside.” ✊

Attack Hacks’ ‘Anti-War’ Hypocrisy at AFT Convention

CHICAGO, July 15 — A growing anti-war sentiment filled the ranks of the 3,000 delegates to the biennial American Federation of Teachers (AFT) Convention here. However, the union mis-leadership, which pretends to be “anti-war” and has backed anti-war resolutions, undermines any member attempts to organize against the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, much less the capitalist system which causes them.

The AFT Executive Council presented a resolution to make the “spread of democracy and human rights in the world a major tenet of American foreign policy.” It urges the AFT to “increase funding for programs to assist pro-democracy organizations, political parties and workers organizations that are struggling in opposition to repressive regimes.”

A delegate countered that the U.S. has a sordid history of promoting U.S. corporate interests in the name of “democracy and human rights” while supporting repression of workers and student movements in countries allied to the U.S. A second delegate explained how the U.S. CIA had overthrown the Mossadegh government in Iran when it nationalized its oil, and in the 1980’s had encouraged and assisted Saddam Hussein to attack Iran resulting in a seven-year war where over one million died.

A major goal of outgoing AFT Pres. McElhenny

and incoming Pres. Weingarten is continuing to lead union members into the arms of the Democratic Party.

Hillary Clinton was an invited speaker and Barack Obama spoke later via a satellite hook-up. PLP’ers distributed hundreds of CHALLENGES and issued three Party leaflets. We explained that both the Democrats and Republicans represented parties of capitalism and imperialist war. Another leaflet analyzed the role of the public schools under capitalism and exposed the so-called school reform plans that various sections of the ruling class are advocating.

Our literature was well-received by the delegates. We had many productive discussions with members of our delegations as well as with new contacts from other locals. These kinds of ties are important and we’ll make a serious plan to follow them up.

One of the convention’s bright spots was the development of the AFT Peace and Justice Caucus. The Caucus broadened its discussions to include school-based issues as well as anti-war issues. In four programs rank-and-filers gave presentations about the problems in their schools and the fight-backs over them. Anti-racist and internationalist sentiments were strongly expressed.

The Caucus has good potential but contains major contradictions. At organizational meetings some felt the AFT leadership can be “worked with” and even “pushed to the left” by progressive rank-and-file forces. But opponents of that view, including PLP’ers, see AFT “leaders” like Weingarten as firmly in the bosses’ camp. These “leaders” are staunch anti-communists and supporters of U.S. imperialism. In fact, in her inaugural address Weingarten said that sometimes when she doesn’t know what to do, she thinks, “What would Al say,” referring to Albert Shanker, former long-time president of the UFT and AFT.

PLP’ers remember well Shanker’s support of the U.S. rulers’ imperialist invasion of Vietnam and his organizing racist boycotts against parent involvement in NYC public schools.

(Next issue: From Shanker to Weingarten — Supporting U.S. imperialism.) ☸



In Opposing Imperialist War:

GI’s Must Fight Racism, Sexism



NEW YORK CITY, NY, Aug 8th —Marchers honor the one-year anniversary of the death of GI Juan Alcantara, a local immigrant killed in Iraq. The mother blames Bush and the U.S. government for the murder of “her son in this oil war.”

In late August, Veterans for Peace (VFP) and Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW) will have their national conventions with military families participating. These groups’ leaders put their hopes on politicians to end the war in Iraq. But all politicians represent the interests of capitalism — profit wars, racism, and sexism. The Progressive Labor Party is organizing to fight the ruler’s agenda, not with false hopes of change from elections, but by building an international communist movement to smash imperialism and its racist, sexist warmakers.

While some activists honestly feel fighting racism is a distraction to the goal of ending the war, anti-racist unity helped anti-war troops contribute to the collapse of U.S. ground forces in Vietnam. A majority of Vietnam-era GI rebellions centered on fighting the racism against black and Latin soldiers along with fighting against the war. Fighting the military’s anti-Asian racism was also vital to building solidarity with “the enemy” which led to US troops fragging — killing — gung ho patriotic officers, rather than killing and dying for U.S. imperialism.

Today, fighting racism is still crucial to fighting imperialism. Limiting the argument to the Iraqi War being bad because U.S. troops are being killed supports U.S. rulers’ racist agenda of having troops see Asian, Arab, and Muslim workers as subhuman. The wars, in both Afghanistan and Iraq, are wrong because they’re killing our class brothers and sisters, not just U.S. troops. Liberal “anti-war” politicians, like the 13 congressional democrats who wrote a support statement to anti-Iraq war troops, condone the racist anti-Muslim lies and support the

U.S. war in Afghanistan.

Even though many in the U.S. military honestly believe in the ideas of national honor and pride in the US constitution, the history of US ruler’s racist terror — from slavery and the Indian wars to recent police murders, raids against immigrant workers, and the murder of millions in Iraq and many thousands in Afghanistan—contradicts these “patriotic” ideals and proves they are a lie. But instead of winning and developing anti-racist activists through education and action, some IVAW leaders want to appeal to a patriotism that makes unity with the ruler’s politicians more important than unity with workers worldwide.

Many anti-racists aren’t duped. Black youth are resisting enlistment and black troops are opting for support jobs in part because of the memory of Vietnam-era racism, which led to disproportionate higher casualties among black and Latin soldiers.

Within IVAW, members have raised and led fights against the racist nature of imperialism. But some IVAW leaders say they don’t want to alienate “middle America” by talking about racism. The leadership dropped a planned panel on “racism within the military” during the group’s Winter Soldier testimonies. IVAW’s active membership, like other military peace groups, remains mostly white. This poses no problems, however, if you want to capture the spotlight of the racist media and reach racist politicians, instead of building a multi-racial movement to fight imperialism.

Like racism, sexism aids imperialism. Capitalists win male troops to kill and die for profits using a sexist macho warrior role. The U.S. military’s tolerance of sexism within the ranks leads male troops to direct anger and lack of control over deployments into seeing female troops as “walking mattresses” or sexually attacking fellow troops instead of the bosses. Sexism within IVAW led, in part, to the formation of the Service Women’s Action Network, a liberal feminist veterans organization. Uniting working-class men and women to fight sexism is among PLP goals.

The unity of multi-racial male and female working-class troops against the military’s racism and sexism will lead to a stronger movement that can land a powerful blow to imperialism and recruit to PLP. ☸

All Workers Must Oppose Anti-Immigrant Racism

NEWARK, NJ, August 3 — A multi-racial and international group of 32 people met here today to discuss the fight against anti-immigrant racism. The unity of black and white citizens and immigrant workers (from Ecuador, Peru, Guatemala and El Salvador) is the best way to confront this growing form of racism which affects the entire working class.

An immigrant described the police harassment of day laborers waiting for jobs in an area of Orange, NJ, as “muy malo” (very bad). Elsewhere in New Jersey, homes have been raided and immigrants dropping off their children at school have been issued multiple traffic tickets up to \$5,000! This summer two town councils proposed that landlords rent only to people with documentation.

One town, Bound Brook, has since dropped the resolution. The other, Middletown, has tabled it. But with hundreds arrested at factories lately and the racist murder of Luis Ramirez in Shenandoah, PA, by six white youth, we felt the urgency to meet and decide on action.

We noted that criminal bosses aren’t arrested for paying dirt wages and physically abusing workers. Because capitalism is based on exploitation of workers, this kind of racist super-exploitation is “legal.” The racist media tries to divide us by blaming the victims — undocumented immigrants — for the bosses’ attacks through the subprime crisis, mass wage and service cuts, and endless wars. Immigrants have historically been the targets of this ruling-class strategy. One woman recalled that her Italian father, who had no documents, suffered similar racist attacks.

In the early stage of the bosses’ “War on Terror” in Dec. 2001, when Middletown teachers struck, the media labeled them “the enemy of children and parents” because “educators’ benefits must be sacrificed” for the bosses’ war efforts; 228 strikers were arrested.

A woman speaker asked us to picture a world without borders based on a society without social inequalities: communism. During the discussion, one man reading CHALLENGE commented, “This paper is very important.”

A social worker from a family-help center said we need to reach out to communities. Members from three churches spoke, too. One Unitarian related what she learned at her June General Assembly: that Boston and Connecticut churches have e-mail chains ready to respond to attacks.

If the tabled anti-immigrant proposal isn’t rejected in Middletown, we plan to go door to door to relate what long-time residents have in common with immigrants and look to demonstrate wherever a resolution is passed.

PL Youths' Red Ideas Greeted At International Festival

ATHENS, GREECE, July 30 — Seven PLP youth representing our international party participated in the Resistance 2008 Festival, a worldwide gathering of thousands of young students and workers, hosted by the fake leftist Communist Organization of Greece (KOE). Our young comrades gained much experience in fighting for PL's revolutionary communist politics internationally — helping develop new political leadership for PLP. We also fulfilled our aim of making many contacts among workers locally and from elsewhere, all seriously interested in our Party. These comrades come from different areas and work backgrounds. Some have been in PLP for a long time while others joined the Party within the last few years.

We distributed hundreds of CHALLENGES and several thousand special supplements, as well as hundreds of PLP's document "Road to Revolution 4" and recent issues of the Communist Magazine. While there were many fake leftist groups present, most of the participants were young Greek students and workers. While unable to speak Greek, we managed to advance our ideas among many of them.

We hit the ground running to spread our ideas. Our tables displaying all our literature and banners was one of the most popular. We worked nonstop talking to new people and always had a group of people hanging out and chatting!

We fought for international working-class unity against nationalism, explaining that nationalism builds false loyalties to capitalists instead of being loyal to the working class across all borders. It is another tool, like racism, to divide the world's workers. We were also the only group to advocate the dictatorship of the proletariat. This put us at odds with the festival, which supported the Maoists in Nepal and their leader "Prachanda" who is fighting for unity with local capitalists. Almost everyone we spoke with was interested in our ideas, even if they disagreed.

At our scheduled panel discussion on the final day, the seats were full; chairs were added three times for the overflow audience. After a KOE mem-

ber spent 20 minutes criticizing our ideas on nationalism, a comrade drew applause with a powerful response that used the history of what nationalism produced in Africa and elsewhere, saying Nepal is currently following that path. We also explained why we fight directly for communism since socialism retained too many remnants of capitalism (like the wage system) and led to the return of open capitalism in the former Soviet bloc and China.

We adapted to the fact that most people didn't speak English and that parts of the festival were dedicated to non-political events like rock concerts. So each night we distributed our literature to the concert-goers. At one point, the hundreds gathered were all reading CHALLENGE, not even paying attention to the band!

We were also fortunate in meeting a young Greek airport worker moments after landing. She took a day off to accompany us to the festival, translated our literature and banners into Greek and helped explain our ideas to those Greeks who didn't speak English. She is very supportive of the Party and is being struggled with to join us and help build PLP in Greece.

Racism was much more prevalent in Greece and Western Europe than we expected. Our non-white comrades were constantly ID'd while whites weren't. One comrade was ID'd three times by three different cops within about three minutes, while they searched for "illegal" immigrants. On the trains the police challenged the comrade's passport for "authenticity."



In one southern Italian city, swastikas and Nazi propaganda were plastered all over the walls. In Paris, we encountered and supported a strike of immigrant workers who were demonstrating right across from the Champs-Élysées, the main tourist drag. We tried speaking for a while in our broken French and bought them all lunch.

Our trip has built confidence in ourselves and in each other, trusting the collective and carrying out decisions in a disciplined way (both personally and politically) as well for each comrade to make decisions consistent with our goals when they were on their own and under various pressures. We internationalized our perspective of the working class. Almost all of us made separate groups of friends with whom we plan to stay in touch and collectively recruit to the Party.

While the U.S. ruling class is making long-term investments in Obama and building new weapons of war, we made a long-term investment in our movement, by solidifying young comrades and laying the groundwork for the growth of PLP. ☸

South Africa General Strike Shows Power of Workers



PRETORIA, SOUTH AFRICA, Aug. 6 — A massive general strike shut down this country's economy today as tens of thousands of workers marched against rising fuel and food prices. Today's nationwide strike, which followed several regional ones, was called by the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), under pressure from nearly two million members.

The Mail and Guardian (8/7) said, "The South African Clothing and Textile Workers' Union...reported that 93% of its members had not gone to work....Gold mining operations...were affected substantially, with AngloGold Ashanti saying no shafts were operating while Harmony and Gold Fields said its operations were limited. Volkswagen's...factory

in Uitenhage...halted production, and Toyota South Africa closed its Durban plant for the day, as did Mercedes-Benz...in East London. Many...schools had been closed..."

Masses marched in many cities. In Pretoria, thousands marched to the Union Buildings, giving a memorandum of grievance against soaring electricity prices to Labor Minister Membathisi Mdladlana. Some 6,000 workers marched in East London, while about 5,000 took to the streets in Mthatha. The closure of Mercedes-Benz's East London plant and other automotive factories in the province had the most obvious impact on the Eastern Cape economy.

This massive strike again showed the power workers have to shut down any modern economy. It is the road workers and their allies worldwide must follow to fight the bosses' growing attacks in this age of economic meltdown and wars. Such an action is also one way to counter the recent racist pogrom fueled by lies blaming immigrant workers from Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and elsewhere for the rise in prices and lack of jobs for all.

But much more is needed. The plight of workers won't be solved by changing one politician or union misleader for another. For many years the COSATU leadership supported the African Nation-

al Congress (ANC) government led by Mbeki and whose IMF-imposed austerity measures worsened workers' lives here. COSATU, along with its allies in the "Communist" Party, which also supported Mbeki, are now backing the presidency of Jacob Zuma, who until 2005 was one of Mbeki's deputy vice-presidents.

Zuma supported the privatization of Eskom, the government-owned electric utility. The recent electricity price rises are supposed to help Eskom, whose failing system has caused blackouts affecting capitalist operations like the gold mines. Privatization didn't go through because investors realized that Eskom's current sad state won't be profitable.

The power struggle between different factions of the ruling ANC for control of state power, and the fruits of their being the main servants of local and international capitalists, again show that workers' fight-back cannot limit itself to backing one set of bosses (such as African nationalists like the ANC) as the past militant anti-apartheid struggle did.

Many workers and youth in South Africa consider themselves pro-communist and revolutionary, but they must realize that the ANC-"C" P-COSATU leaders are far from that. The best lesson to draw from general strikes like today's is to turn them into schools for communism, and rebuild a red-led workers movement. But this time it must break with all capitalists and fight for the only society capable of freeing workers from capitalism and its racism — communism. ☸

LETTERS



More Letters from LA Summer Project

We've participated as students and teachers in the Los Angeles Summer Project, leafleting factories where many workers ask us, "Why are you communists? Why fight for this if you are students?" We answer them by talking about the power they have as a working class to stop the means of production. That sparks workers' interest in our ideas. They say, "Yes, the bosses steal from them, and that we have to eliminate this system of exploitation."

We've also participated in anti-racist demonstrations and others protesting exploitation of workers. Many workers came up to us asking for literature, then read it, triggering conversations.

In study groups we've learned to relate dialectical materialism to our lives, about how to build CHALLENGE networks, and how to win people so that together we can fight for communism. In discussing political economy we've heard comrades' stories about bosses' repression existing in many countries.

I've recognized the importance of working in factories and building an alliance among workers, students and soldiers. This Project has motivated me even more to continue fighting for communism together with the international working class.

A youth from El Salvador

I'm an industrial student volunteering for the Summer Project. After job searching that took about a week I got my first job as an assistant forger, which is pressing and heating metal. On my second day of work, I had my first chance to have a political conversation with a co-worker, that went something like this:

"So, how do you feel about making weapons for war?" I asked a young co-worker.

He said, "I don't care, as long as we make some money off of it...Why? Were you in the army?"

"No," I responded, "I just hate the war; we're helping the government kill poor people like us, and for what, oil?"

"Well I'm not for the war either!" he said. "But what can we do?"

"Exactly, what could we do?"

He stayed quiet and we went back to work.

Although he didn't respond to this question, this conversation shows my attempt at figuring out the internal contradictions of my co-workers.

This was just the first conversation of many where I will attempt to figure out how to reveal to my fellow workers the true nature of this racist imperialist system and how to build an urgent and long-term fight against it.

Industrial student

What a great morning! It was our first time — for the six volunteers from my city — at an aerospace factory.

The first worker I spoke with was somewhat hesitant. He refused CHALLENGE and the flyer. He said he likes equality and the goals of communism but feels that it's too risky to stand up against the bosses, that it puts a worker's family into too much danger, and that things didn't turn out well in the Soviet Union. He didn't want anyone to see him with the paper.

Shortly, a bolder worker approached. I offered CHALLENGE, saying that our communist newspaper explains how Obama is no better than McCain, that both really support ongoing war in the Middle East to benefit the oil companies. He agreed and explained that they're just like Bush and Cheney. Then he pointed to the factory, saying, "yeah, just like the bosses here, just out for themselves." After taking CHALLENGE, he said, "Good luck."

When I introduced the paper to a group of three workers, one asked, "Why are you here in particular?" I explained that we want to organize and fight against the low wages in the non-union aerospace factories where work is contracted out

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from the major companies like Boeing. At some point, the aerospace workers have to be prepared to stop work and refuse to make parts for the bosses' wars. I compared the situation in aerospace to something similar during the Civil War.

Prior to the Civil War, cotton from the South was being sent to England to be made into cloth. But many of the English textile workers hated slavery and refused to process cotton from the U.S. They wanted to help weaken the Confederacy and support the fight against slavery, even though some of them would probably end up losing their jobs.

One of the three workers said "Excellent!" He told me that he agrees with communism, and gets mailings from another (supposedly) Marxist organization. With warm comradely enthusiasm, we exchanged phone numbers, so we can get together and talk more about Progressive Labor Party.

At another moment, a boss from the factory came out and shouted, "Stay off the property!" I told him that I had just stepped across the grass for a few workers who wanted the flyer. He responded arrogantly, "No one wants the flyer!" and I shot back, "You can't speak for everyone!" Obviously unable to stop us, and unable to stop workers from understanding reality, he just repeated, "Well, stay off the property," and he walked back in.

All in all, at this one small factory, 70 workers took CHALLENGE this morning.

Facts are stubborn things. The bosses will try their best to keep us ignorant, but millions of workers will master political theory, communist philosophy and revolutionary strategy. Today was a small, but important step in that process. What a great Summer Project!

Original R

Rising Struggle Among Young Workers

I was recently reprimanded at work for using my cell phone next to the vending machine during a break. The head boss, who spends most of his time in an air-conditioned office while us workers sweat away on the job, was the one who screamed at me. Though several of my co-workers assured me that it was nothing to worry about, the words of another worker stuck in my head.

That morning during the carpool to work, when I asked this coworker how he thought we'd be affected by the other layoffs in our industry he reasoned, "Well that's why they're trying to fire people over bullshit and they are using the early buyout program on older workers at the top of the wage-scale." The new workers they're bringing in are supposedly "temporary" and receive no benefits or wage increases like us other workers.

I told another worker that I felt like I had a target on my back ever since I was called into the head boss's office a short time ago for attending an anti-racist demonstration before work. Going to such a rally in uniform was a "fire-able offence [sic]" he said and, "he didn't know what was going to happen to me." While the head boss told me to keep the incident to myself I decided that if I was going to get fired for fighting racism, as many of my coworkers ought to know about it as possible. Lots of workers took my side and several seemed impressed that I, a white worker, would attend a rally against police

brutality. One worker felt it was a clear expression of the racism often present on the job.

I discussed with my coworker who I'd told about the target on my back the possibility of a union making conditions better. He, also a young worker, was quick to point out the corruption and profiteering present in many unions and cited a previous job where the union did nothing to defend low seniority workers. The failures of the reformist trade union movement and the past communist movement make the path ahead a difficult one, but this same worker helped provide some direction.

At the end of our shift we were assigned extra work. This worker went to the main office, complained and sat down refusing to work. Several minutes later he rejoined me and another worker who were carrying out the task, since he felt bad for leaving us to do the work alone. As we walked back to the car afterwards he explained what he had done and I told him that the next time he had better include me in any plans to stop work. "I'm down!" We questioned if any boss could not play favorites and I reasoned, "it's just good cop, bad cop; the whole system is rotten."

I believe firmly in the PLP's objective of organizing industrial workers. We make this society run and we can shut it down. I look forward to expanding my CHALLENGE distribution on this job and the next and struggling towards a new, communist society.

A Young Worker

Strikes Under Communism?

In a discussion with a long-time Party comrade about toleration or repression of dissent in a genuine communist society, the question arose: what is dissent? I would emphasize that fascists, racists, pro-capitalist elements, etc. would not be considered as dissidents and the workers' state would have to act accordingly. But what about a group of workers protesting a certain government policy and want to present a position paper on the question? Assuming that all of the workers are devoted communists and may have a good point, I think they should be allowed to voice their opinion and have the right to publish their views, even if it disagrees with the majority.

What about strikes? Should workers have the right to strike in a communist society? The comrade said strikes would not be legal in this society, and though I can see where he's coming from, I'm not sure that I agree with that position.

If communism is really based upon workers' power, then workers should have the right to voice their views on this question. Otherwise it would seem that this would be imposed from above and would only alienate segments of the workers.

Of course, my view on this stems from the fact that I grew up in the coal fields and that some of my family worked in the mines. The right to strike was and is very important to coal miners. I cannot see them giving up the right to strike when they feel that it is necessary, especially around job safety.

The fact that strikes are illegal won't prevent workers from striking if they feel the need to do so.

continued on page 7

'Honest Abe' Lincoln Was Viciously Pro-Slavery

Lerone Bennett, Jr.'s book, "Forced Into Glory" (1999), convincingly documents how most historical accounts have wrongly described Abraham Lincoln as a fighter against slavery. His work also shows that Lincoln was intensely reactionary, making decisions which, contrary to legend, returned many blacks to slavery.

Bennett insists that Lincoln had a life-long commitment to racism. In 1853, as one of 11 managers of the Illinois State Colonization Society, he advocated colonization of all blacks to Central or South America. In 1857 he urged the Illinois legislature to appropriate money for colonization. Three months after signing the Emancipation Proclamation, he sent 450 blacks to an island off the coast of Haiti where 100 died within a year. In April 1865, Lincoln summoned General Benjamin Butler to the White House about the "possibility of sending the Blacks away."

Bennett documents consistency, from Lincoln's 1836 vote against black suffrage to his 1865 support of the Louisiana constitution which gave the vote to Confederate veterans but not to black veterans of the U.S. Army.

In 1847, as an attorney representing a slave-owner, he asked two judges to send a black mother and her four children back into slavery. The white judges rejected Lincoln's plea and freed the family. Lincoln's law partner, William Herndon, took cases of slaves, but Lincoln never did.

Bennett challenges those who excuse Lincoln's attitude, saying the few exceptions in the racist climate of the 19th century are out-spoken abolitionists like Wendell Phillips or the militant John Brown. But men like Lyman Trumbull, a known opponent of the pro-slavery Kansas-Nebraska Act, were elected to the Senate over Lincoln. In 1853, 22 Illinois legislators stood against the Negro Exclusion Law, but not Lincoln. Members of Lincoln's cabinet spoke out for Negro suffrage. Politicians from Mid-West states led the fight against Negro exclusion and black laws. Other politicians took stands for instant emancipation, confiscation of rebels' land and for use of black soldiers.

Bennett critiques the Gettysburg Address for avoiding pressing issues of the day. The lynchings and burnings of blacks in NYC that very year weren't mentioned. Lincoln never uttered the words Confederate, South or slave.

Bennett describes how each of three drafts of Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation reacted to a more progressive Congress. Congressman Daniel Gott called for a ban on the slave trade in the nation's capital. Lincoln then wrote his first draft, a bill for gradual and compensated emancipation in D.C., stating that all persons now within said District lawfully held as slaves should remain such.

In September 1861, Lincoln revoked General Fremont's blanket emancipation of all the slaves in Missouri. Intense criticism caused him to write his second "emancipation" draft, proposing gradual emancipation but total compensation for slave-owners in Delaware, with two timetables for ending slavery: 1893 and 1914!

In 1862, when General Hunter decreed that all slaves in South Carolina, Georgia and Florida should be freed, Lincoln revoked it, re-enslaving one million people! Criticism was again levied at Lincoln, so Congress urgently signed the Second Confiscation Act saying that all rebel property, including slaves even 1,000 miles from a battlefield, could be seized. Lincoln countered on July 22, allowing 60 days warning for the South, and only for gradual, compensated confiscation.

That July, Congress also authorized the use of black soldiers. Lincoln told a delegation of Mid-westerners in August that he would rather resign than use black soldiers to kill white men.

Ultimately, the Proclamation "enslaved and/or continued to enslave over half a million slaves, more than it ever freed," because there was no power to effectively free slaves in rebel states. The border states, with an additional 556,540 slaves, were excluded because they weren't in rebellion. Also excluded were large sections of Tennessee, Louisiana and Virginia controlled by federal troops — 396,863 slaves — some already wage workers. In January,

1863, slaves totaled four million. By February 1865, two months before the war ended, 3,800,000 blacks were still enslaved.

What did Lincoln do on race issues? He volunteered three times for the war to ethnically cleanse Illinois of Indians. He maintained the brutal treatment of black soldiers and their unequal pay. When William Walker, a black soldier, protested, Lincoln condemned him to the firing squad. He made sure 38 Indians hung for rebelling against his administration's genocidal strategy. But when Confederates massacred hundreds of blacks, women and children at Fort Pillow, Lincoln did nothing.

Bennett's work is well-researched and relentlessly exposes Lincoln's reactionary policies. He also directs sharp criticism at modern biographers for perpetuating the racist hypocrisy of Lincoln's heroic image as "the freer of slaves." ✪

LETTERS Continued

Of course, not all strikes are the same; some might be clearly reactionary and would have to be dealt with. But some strikes might be progressive so the workers' state would have to investigate the workers' reasons for striking and make the necessary changes.

A person might argue that in a communist society there will be no need for strikes, but if this is true, then why have laws against them?

I think there should be an attempt by the workers' state to explain to workers why it's not a good idea to strike. The question of communist consciousness will need to be resolved. But I don't think it's a good idea to pass a law banning strikes — this would be an admission that everything is not going well.

Again, I don't like the idea of imposing this position on the workers, as if they were unruly children and would strike every chance they got.

Shouldn't we have more faith in the workers? Shouldn't we have more confidence in the power of our communist ideas?

Red Coal



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



Plenty of big-biz \$ backs Obama

In an effort to cast himself as independent of the influence of money on politics, Senator Barack Obama often highlights the campaign contributions of \$200 or less....But records show that one-third of his record-breaking haul has come from donations of \$1,000 or more: a total of \$112 million, more than Senator John McCain....

Many...come from industries with critical interests in Washington. (NYT, 8/6)

Russia war is payback to US

Even as American and European leaders were demanding, begging and pleading with Russia to halt its advance into Georgia....Many experts in foreign policy say that one reason Russia responded so forcefully to Georgia's attempt to take back South Ossetia is that the United States and Europe had been asserting themselves in Russia's backyard, alienating Moscow by supporting Kosovo's bid for independence.

Beyond that, Russia has also been angry about American plans to put a missile defense system in Poland, and by American moves to encourage Georgia and Ukraine to join NATO....

It's difficult for them not to see us as hostile.... (NYT, 8/12)

Nuke-free area (except Israel)

The security council's offer to Iran claimed...to bring about a Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction. But like every other such document, it made no mention of the principal owner of weapons in the region: Israel. According to a leaked briefing by the US Defence Intelligence Agency, Israel possesses between 60 and 80 nuclear bombs. But none of the countries demanding that Iran scraps the weapons it doesn't yet possess are demanding that Israel destroy the weapons it has....

If Iran builds a bomb, it will do so for one reason: that there is already a nuclear-armed state in the Middle East, by which it feels threatened. (GW, 8/1)

Obama wants you to serve US

....While McCain has made only vague pledges to support AmeriCorps, Obama last week used a speech in Colorado Springs to highlight his pledge to spend \$3.5 billion to bolster AmeriCorps, the Peace Corps, the Foreign Service, and launch an Energy Corps....

"I'm not going to tell you what your role should be....But I am going to ask you to play your part, ask you to stand up; ask you to put your foot firmly into the current of history". (NYT)

Desperate Haitians eating dirt

Haitian women mould clay and water into hundreds of little platters and lay them out to harden in the sun....These platters are not to hold food. They are food....

....The cakes have become a staple for entire families. It is not for the taste and nutrition — salt and margarine do not disguise what is essentially dirt....They are the cheapest and increasingly only way to fill bellies.

It stops the hunger, said Marie-Carmelle Baptiste, 35, a producer....She did not embroider their appeal. You eat them when you have to. (GW, 8/8)

Anti-Latino hate crimes up

FBI figures show a 35% rise in hate crime against Latinos over the past three years.... Post 9/11 we immediately launched into a nativist attitude. Then as the economy began to falter, attitudes have hardened.

The federal government is doing its bit....

The message being propagated by Congress, the White House, local legislators and the more rabid elements of the media seems to be getting through: illegal immigrants are of little value, and should be treated accordingly. (GW, 8/8)

SUMMER OF COMMUNISM

LETTERS FROM LOS ANGELES



For several days I've been immersed in the Los Angeles Summer Project, part of multi-racial teams rising early to distribute thousands of CHALLENGES and leaflets at aerospace plants, garment factories, bus barns, high schools and a trade school. The response has been terrific. We debrief daily on workers' responses to our ideas and our conversations with them. Many contacts have been collected, and follow-up visits are held regularly.

I discussed with one young student at a trade school (which feeds into the aerospace industry) how communism would be completely different from the way things are set up under capitalism. Everyone would work out of commitment to the welfare of the working class, and people would receive according to need. He asked what about someone who wouldn't want to work. I said this wouldn't be much of a problem. Most people want to contribute to society and get the good feeling from helping others (which has motivated about a million people to go to New Orleans as volunteers, helping with reconstruction after Hurricane Katrina). He said he would read CHALLENGE carefully.

This is one of many worthy experiences I've had in building the Party this week. Long live PLP and the fight for communism!

A Comrade

"What you are talking about, communism, I think it sounds good but do you really think it can happen, I mean what makes you think it's possible?" asked a young white Marine after him and his partner were presented with a GI Notes military newsletter and a CHALLENGE.

"I'll tell you what makes me think it's possible," responded one of the volunteers. "It's because of the tremendous potential power that we have. You and military folks just like yourself run things, the brass and other top military officials don't do shit. They can't do anything without us. You are on the ground and you make things happen. Same thing in the factories, the workers run them and make all the production. This is where our tremendous power lies. Imagine soldiers and workers fighting together for a world in which we make revolution against the war-makers and the whole bosses' system.

"This has happened in the past. There was a worldwide crisis of capitalism that eventually led to World War I. During this time period millions of soldiers rebelled, mutinied and organized resistance while workers struck, led mass protests and organized general fight-backs. With Lenin's and other Bolsheviks' communist leadership...in Russia a revolution took place and for the first time in history the working class was running things. The same took place in China, with Mao and other communist leaders during and after World War II.

We think that with the situation in Iraq and the growing imperialist rivalry going on with Russia, China and the U.S. could very well develop into a global conflict that will ultimately start a World War III. This is one more reason why individuals like yourself are very important because once we understand the tremendous power that soldiers and workers have we can once again challenge the world's rulers and finish the job that these great revolutionaries started.

The young Marine had an intent look on his face and with CHALLENGE in his hand said, "Wow, I had never really thought about it that way, I really can see what you are saying, but I think that since we have been children we have been taught different ideas of things. I think it's going to be very difficult," he said. "Difficult yes, but not impossible," I responded. "Yeah, I agree," he said. As we said goodbye, the Marine gave us his contact information and said, in an encouraging and heartfelt manner, "good luck, keep it up and I wish you the best."

Summer Project Volunteer

"You should go across the street and distribute the papers to the workers at that factory too because they are really exploited there," said a worker we talked to today. This took place at one of the many CHALLENGE sales outside of factories as part of the PLP Summer Project. This particular worker is a machinist at a small subcontracted factory of Boeing/Northrop Grumman. Part of his job is making the skeleton for military planes.

This worker had trouble making the connection to his own exploitation because he felt that he was skilled and that he was making enough money. However, he clearly saw how the planes he makes are sold for millions and how these companies profit from his labor. He had heard that the factory across the street was notorious for pushing their workers hard for very low wages. He advised us on the best times to reach the workers during their shift, he was aware of the multitude of workers who have to struggle everyday to survive.

He considers himself lucky to be making \$100,000 a year, but as we continued to talk with him, we were able to show how he was exploited too. He works 65 hours a week, 6 days a week and is constantly under pressure to work faster. In fact, recently his boss held a meeting in which he told the workers that if they didn't produce faster, the bosses would have to let people go. We related this speed up and fear tactics to police brutality, the war and cut backs in healthcare.

We told him about an unarmed Latino man named Christian Portillo who was shot recently by the police, as well as Kevin Wicks who was also killed by them. The worker then told us about how he is constantly profiled. He was even pulled out of his car at gun point while wearing his work uniform. This reveals the racism that many Latino and black workers face. He has gotten used to being pulled over and considers it just a part of life. As we talked more about police brutality it became clearer and clearer to the worker that these scare tactics are not only used by the police but also by his factory bosses as well.

Then we talked about the cutbacks in health care, and he told us a story about his wife.

She was so sick that he had take off from work to take care of her around the clock for a year. This resulted in their losing their home and getting into debt.

He understood on a very personal level that workers are only a few paychecks away from ending up homeless and in debt. This was helpful in revealing the myth that a middle class exists, because there are workers who live more comfortably but they do not own the means of production. They are exploited. We hope to go back to this factory and find this worker and ask what he thought of Challenge.

A project volunteer

Besides the daily political work at the Los Angeles Summer Project, we also laugh, love and even cry. Here is what the international communist PLP family produces.

After a day of political activities, I gave a presentation to a group of local and international volunteers about how I joined PLP and described the Party's work in my area of Mexico. I didn't know many of the volunteers I was speaking to, but I know that despite our different backgrounds we have much more in common. So once we were all together as a communist family, in spite of our superficial differences, my heart was beating faster. "Was this because I was nervous, or happy?"

Happiness is something you want and need. I feel proud and that is happiness.

I feel I love my comrades — but why? Because my heart beats faster for my class, my life and my communist Party. I am PLP, I am a communist.

A Communist Youth from Mexico