

CHALLENGE



THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

COMMUNISM IS ONLY SOLUTION



One of two events, both disasters for the working class, will occur on November 4. Either Barack Obama, spouting his phony "end-of-racism" message, will prevail (as polls predict), or a sudden upsurge in overt racism (always a possibility in the U.S.) might propel John McCain into office. We in Progressive Labor Party do not believe in voting in the bosses' election system. They completely control this electoral circus and only those who swear allegiance to them are even allowed access to it.

Although important tactical differences exist between Democrats and Republicans, both are committed to capitalism and U.S. "democracy." The rich and powerful who

own and rule the U.S. clearly will never give up their power peacefully. They will also spill the blood of millions of workers and soldiers to protect their imperialist interests overseas from their capitalist rivals, waging wider wars which will lead to another world war.

They offer us the chance to vote for "our representatives" when both parties are actually financed by the richest of the rich, who they serve in all important matters. For instance, in the current financial crisis, polls showed that voters opposed the government bailout plan. But even mere weeks before an "historic" election, the politicians of both parties approved rescuing the banks. The richest bosses feared that panic would undermine their ability to pocket their profits as usual and that imperialist rivals would be able to take advantage of their weakness. After a momentary show of reluctance, the "representatives" fell into line with the rulers' program.

HOW ELECTORAL SYSTEM SERVES RULERS' NEEDS

All politicians work for the ruling class. However, if the parties and politicians were completely alike, the electoral system wouldn't serve all the rulers' needs. First they want workers, students and professionals to believe we can elect someone who represents their "interests." Anti-racists have black and Latin candidates, anti-sexists can vote for women and those concerned about the environment are given candidates who talk about fighting global warming as long as business profits aren't affected.

The presidential primaries had someone for everyone, an attempt to win workers to see the electoral system as the only option for change.

A secondary effect of drawing workers into the election circus is to build the illusion that voters determine government policy. Workers are encouraged to feel they're responsible for the government's actions. If something goes wrong, then just vote for a replacement. But in reality, the candidates and parties will do the opposite of what they campaigned for if important interests of the rulers are involved.

With his broad appeal, probable victor Obama poses the graver danger. Many workers and youth see him as a "solution" to the catastrophe of the Bush years. Obama & Co. seek to lure masses of workers to the rulers' agenda of ever-expanding wars paid for by workers.

THE 'CARROT AND THE STICK'

Rulers also use the electoral system to co-opt mass protests against capitalism and its racism, sexism and wars. When millions took to the streets to protest the Vietnam War, liberal Senator Eugene McCarthy was trotted out to entice them back into the fold of dead-end campaigning and voting that changed nothing.

In the 1960s, millions of students and workers rebelled against the harsh racism and segregation, north and

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TEAM OBAMA: IMPERIALISTS ONE AND ALL

Before Obama was given the resources to campaign for the presidency, he had to meet with, be vetted by and swear his allegiance to the bosses' flag of profits before a committee of Wall Street financial tycoons and then they donated \$7.9 million to Obama's campaign (Reuters, 6/5.08).

Obama's economic advisor is the ruling class's top economic assassin Paul Volcker, who has frequently met with the candidate since the financial crisis broke. As Federal Reserve chief, Volcker "solved" the bankers' inflation crisis of the early 1980s by jacking up interest rates and causing unemployment rates unseen since the Great Depression.

Today, Volcker and Obama push for a fascistic concentration of finance under tightened state control. Volcker was chief economist at Chase Manhattan bank when David Rockefeller ran it. With Rockefeller, he co-founded the imperialist Trilateral Commission.

On October 25, The New York Times published a list of "Possible Presidential Appointments." As Obama's treasury secretary, the Times pointed to Timothy Geithner and Larry Summers. Geithner, head of the New York Federal Reserve Bank, has toiled for Rockefeller's Council On Foreign Relations and Kissinger Associates, which advises Exxon Mobil and other firms that depend on the U.S. war machine. Geithner was a leading engineer of J.P. Morgan Chase's takeover of Bear Stearns and the \$250-billion federal buy-in to major banks.

Summers, who as Clinton's treasury boss helped dismantle Welfare, tried mightily to restore officer training at Harvard when he was its president. The Times says Richard Lugar may run the State Department. In 1997 and 1998, Lugar sponsored a little-known terrorist attack drill that put local police under Pentagon control in cities from coast to coast. ☺

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Boeing Sellout: An Attack on All Workers; Reject It!

As we go to press, the company and the union have hashed out a new sellout offer. This is not just betraying Boeing workers. The International Association of Machinists (IAM) and pro-capitalist AFL-CIO misleaders are helping the bosses attack all workers' wages and conditions.

We need to vote "NO!" and surround the plants with mass picketing to really shut the company down. Today, one worker at our weekly luncheon meeting said, "I'm voting 'No' because it will screw the next generation." All agreed. We must expand our modest Party-led efforts to build striker-subcontractor worker anti-racist, international unity and organize solidarity rallies among our supporters locally and nationally.

Boeing CEO Jim McNerney has attacked our "repeated work stoppages," inviting the pro-capitalist union mis-leaders to help him "change this dynamic." They've obliged in this sellout. It's similar to the one we rejected, which sparked this strike initially — except it's a four-year contract, not the traditional three. (We've struck three of the last four contracts.)

Essentially this means a lower wage in the 4th year: normally the biggest increase is up front in the first year, but now what would have been a bigger increase in the first year of the next 3-year contract becomes a smaller one as the 4th year of this contract. For example, pensions increase a scant 2% in the 4th year, not even enough to keep pace with inflation.

New younger workers are attacked the hardest. Starting wages have been frozen for 15 years. Now the offer of a \$2.28/hr increase is less than the \$3.82/hr advance in the state's minimum wage over the last 15 years! This contract preserves the same wage increase but over four years, not three. New hires will still make an average of \$15/hour in 2012

— if they can get a job at Boeing! The subcontracting regime stays put with a few insignificant face-saving changes in language.

Company-Union Gang-Up Dampens Class Struggle

To win acceptance of this latest contract offer, both the company and the union want to isolate us strikers and wear us down. Both fear any sign we might put our faith in the might of a united working class.

Significantly, the IAM leadership sabotaged any attempt to hold a support rally at Corporate Headquarters in Chicago (see letter page 6). We exposed this treachery to dozens of workers we've visited. Every one responded, "That figures!"

WHAT IS SUCCESS?

Given all this, one crucial measure of success is how many strikers and supporters are won to seeing the revolutionary communist Progressive Labor Party as the indispensable organization of the working class. There are two new Party-led study groups and other CHALLENGE readers who've agreed to attend Party club meetings.

This is a product of having organized numbers of rank-and-filers to build unity with subcontractor workers, to request and receive support letters and to speak at meetings of workers and students for the first time. One worker at a check distribution point, upon hearing about the need for this unity, exclaimed, "So it's not us against them, it's all of us against the company!"

"I'm new to all this," said a striking CHALLENGE reader who traveled to Los Angeles to personally give the "thank you" letter he wrote (and helped gather signatures for) to Boeing union and non-union subcontractor workers who the Party has organized to support our strike. "But it seems to me," he continued, "that you can advance your revolutionary [communist] cause by first educating workers and students like those here about the history and ideas of your movement and through action."

"I can't speak for all the 27,000 Boeing strikers, but I was impressed by the letters of support from subcontractor workers and was inspired by the response of Los Angeles high school students. I've heard how these workers that supported us slave under horrible conditions. The most important thing you can do is advance that struggle here. Pick a factory, any factory! You have enough to fight here to keep you busy for a lifetime!"

Between the two LA meetings involving 85 union and non-union workers and students, black, Latino and white, and a similar support dinner in Chicago, we collected more than enough to pay for our tickets to the LA solidarity event and the continued distribution of over 1,000 CHALLENGES per issue and tens of thousands of communist flyers. Overall, in the strike in Seattle and among the Boeing subcontractors in LA, we've distributed over 40,000 PLP flyers and 17,000 CHALLENGES since the beginning of our industrial summer projects in July.

Local college students, inspired by the emerging anti-racist, international unity between strikers and subcontractor workers, wrote their own leaflets about this outstanding development. They've organized through their campus groups to bring students to the picket lines. Internationally, we've received more than a dozen support letters (often with donations). Hundreds of rank-and-filers organized by PL'ers have taken the initiative to support us, by-passing the union misleaders.

Our weekly CHALLENGE readers' luncheon group wrote another "thank you" note to these hundreds who've supported us internationally, stressing the need to mobilize the might of a united working class. It advocates mass pickets to shut down the bosses, organizing huge solidarity rallies based on anti-racist unity locally, nationally and worldwide. When we brought this letter to the picket lines for signatures, the overwhelming majority of workers who talked to us signed. We've also sent a support letter to the Bronx, NY Stella D'Oro strikers linking their struggle to the anti-racist, international unity we aim to build between subcontractor workers and ourselves.



PLP members took picket signs, leaflets and CHALLENGES to a Boeing plant of UAW members in Long Beach, California. Some said that while they support the Seattle strikers, the IAM leadership "steals jobs from us!"

We told them that all Boeing workers have the same enemy and the same interests. "We aren't supporting the leadership of the IAM or the UAW. They're trying to divide you. We're communists. We're building unity between Boeing workers in Seattle, Boeing workers in Long Beach, Vought workers, and the subcontractor workers who also work for Boeing." Most workers were then more than willing to get CHALLENGE and our leaflet which stated "Workers Power is our only Security." Our signs supported the Boeing strikers and also said "Warmaker Boeing—stop super-exploiting subcontractor workers!" As the Seattle striker said, Long Beach workers, under the same attacks as workers in Seattle, should strike too!

We also held solidarity dinners with Boeing strikers, raising over \$700. Subcontractor and other workers, students and teachers vowed to increase our support for the Boeing workers and fight to increase CHALLENGE sales to build communist class consciousness.✪

The Revolutionary Communist PLP: Indispensable Organization Of The Working Class

Boeing CEO McNerney says decent wages, benefits and job guarantees are "unsustainable" in this period of intensified inter-imperialist rivalry exacerbated by "global financial turmoil." The pro-capitalist union hacks agree by running to support the bosses' global subcontracting regime. They only want a few "ancillary jobs" to remain unionized (which the new contract offer may not include) so they can stay in business.

Most workers have learned from their own experience not to trust the pro-boss union mis-leadership, condemning them in language we can't print here. Given the worldwide capitalist economic crisis, some are even questioning the viability of trade union reform, particularly around job security. No organization that is dedicated to preserving capitalism can provide viable answers for our class.

We will need many more Boeing CHALLENGE sellers to maintain the mass character of our paper now evident among strikers. As the economic crisis opens the door, we have to rush in with CHALLENGE and our revolutionary alternative to the bosses' plans for war, racism and rapidly accelerating attacks on our livelihoods.

A CHALLENGE reader who is joining our study group declared, "You have to know what's going on in the world and how the world works just to survive these days." He knows that our Party — through his reading and selling CHALLENGE, through the discussions and organizing at the CHALLENGE readers' lunch, and through the anti-racist, international solidarity and class struggle we are attempting to build — gives him the tools to survive. As they say, revolution is the only solution. Now that's worth a lifetime of struggle.✪

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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PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

Stella Strikers Face Phony Pols, Cops, Scabs

BRONX, NY, October 18 — Fighting Stella D’Oro strikers were joined by fellow workers from different locals for a rally in support of their strike. PLP students and teachers were also in attendance with revolutionary greetings and anti-scab anger.

Since elections are approaching, several Bronx politicians showed up at the rally. They spoke one after another and made promises to support the strikers. But in reality they have done virtually nothing.

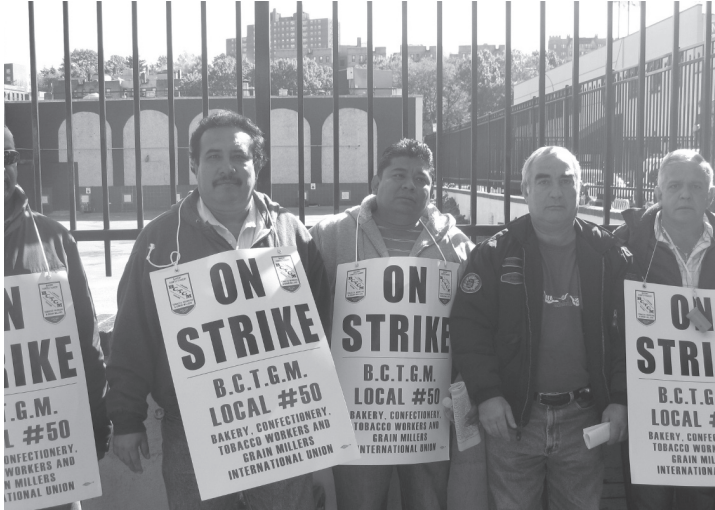
A PL’er exposed the role of scabs, cops and politicians. No matter how badly you need a job, scabbing is never justifiable. When you scab, you are a traitor to your class — the working class. Scabs must be stopped. The politicians have allowed the bakery to remain open even though no quality-control inspector (legally required) is there. The politicians have allowed the cops to remove the shelter and chairs used by the strikers.

The politicians and the cops are on the side of the bosses, whether the Stella D’Oro bosses, the Boeing bosses or any others. The politicians depend on big business for the money to win elections. Their job is to protect the rich rulers of New York City and the country as a whole. As long as the rich run the system, things will always get worse for workers.

Since the rally, the cops have again demonstrated that they are the servants of the bosses. This week, in an attempt to break the strike, the Stella D’Oro bosses and NYC police orchestrated the arrest of one of the strike’s key organizers. One of the bosses falsely claimed to have received a phone threat from this organizer. The organizer was pointed out by the general manager, arrested and held for two days at Bronx central booking on \$20,000 bail. Though charged with only two misdemeanors, this was clearly not only an attempt to remove the organizer from the struggle, but also to deplete the union’s strike fund.

As a result of this and other attacks, the strike fund is rapidly running out. Any contributions will be well-used and greatly appreciated. Since the arrest, PLP comrades have met with the strike leadership to push for immediate demonstrations to call for the dropping of these trumped-up charges against this strike leader.

The only way we will have decent lives is through



working-class revolution. Many workers responded enthusiastically to the Party’s ideas. Counter to our message, the union president pushed the line of following the law, doing whatever the cops say and counting on the politicians. This is a losing strategy. We must count on our fellow workers and ourselves. We must build a united fight-back that takes on the bosses, their politicians, their cops and their scabs.

Howard U. Students Demand Halt to Racist Execution

WASHINGTON, DC, October 24 — During two days of rallying, members of Howard University’s Political Education and Action Committee (PEAC), were joined by members of Malcolm X Grassroots and the American Civil Liberties Union to fight the wrongful execution of Troy Davis.

PEAC speakers declared that Davis’ execution, scheduled for October 27, is one more example of the entrenched racism of the U.S. system. Davis, a black man, has been in prison almost 20 years for supposedly killing 27-year-old Savannah police officer Mark Allen MacPhail in 1989.

The District Attorney and police intimidated and coerced witnesses to get a conviction of then 19-year-old Davis. Now decades later, seven of the nine key witnesses have recanted, and other witnesses have identified a person they believe to be the actual killer — but innocence is not a defense, according to the U.S. Supreme Court and the State of Georgia!

Campus police were sent to stop the PEAC rally, and a leader was detained when he refused to stop speaking on a bullhorn. Students continued their bullhorn rally despite the attack. The University administration’s effort to harass and suppress student activism — using the pretense that the students were “disrupting classes” — stands in stark contrast to the University’s endorsement of ear-splitting concerts and fraternity celebrations on the main campus at the same time of day.

This confrontation demonstrated that the so-called “legacy” of Howard University in civil rights struggle and progressive action is in reality a legacy of student and worker movements in opposition to the University. The University is a corporation dominated by big businessmen and the bosses’ politicians. We have no unity with the University administration which parades behind a fig leaf of liberalism while trying to blunt the revolutionary spirit of its students!

On the second day of the rally, Davis’s lawyer announced he had received a 30-day stay of execution, but this is only a temporary respite while the government figures out how to move forward with the execution of an innocent black man.

The racist (in)justice system is critical to the U.S. ruling class’s strategy of intimidating superexploited black workers and dividing them from other workers. But repression breeds resistance, and racism must give rise to anti-racist revolutionary unity.

Today’s financial crises and wars will give rise to ever-greater racist offensives against the working class as the rulers become increasingly desperate to build their profits and power. It is urgent that struggles like the Troy Davis case be linked to the battles of workers throughout the world. We must turn these into a fight for communist revolution to destroy the capitalist roots of racist oppression.

PL’ers Foil Mis-Leaders, Win UFT Backing for Stella D’Oro Strikers

NEW YORK CITY, October 15 — Four Stella D’Oro strikers brought by PLP members to the teachers union Delegate Assembly (DA) here won a rousing standing ovation from the approximately 1,000 delegates as well as a solidarity endorsement and a “sizeable contribution” to their strike fund. The PLP’ers’ effort overcame the union leadership’s attempt to stop the strikers from speaking, worried that the workers’ militant actions would expose the misleaders’ pacifist response to the growing economic crisis and \$700 billion bailout to the banks. The latter was the reason for the emergency meeting.

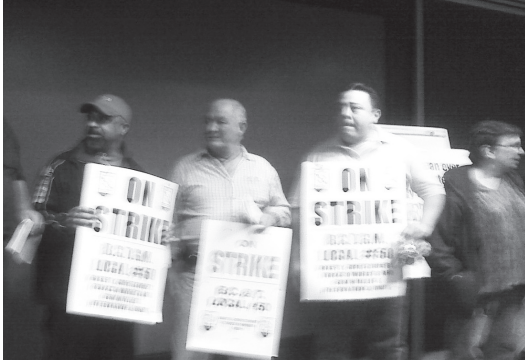
The UFT (United Federation of Teachers) leadership showed more allegiance to the interests of the bosses than to the workers they allegedly represent.

In the debate on the resolutions, the leadership’s position on escalating cutbacks and mass racist unemployment was to react with our “head and not our hearts.” This in a school system with 85% black, Latino and Asian students whose budget has been cut by \$500 million and that sets them up for either poverty-wage jobs or as cannon fodder in the U.S. bosses’ imperialist wars. Although members and friends of PLP could not defeat resolutions supporting pacifism and the bosses’ elections, we did mobilize a different message.

Along with bringing the four strikers, over 200 copies of CHALLENGE were distributed as well as hundreds of leaflets entitled, “Support the Boeing, Morelos and Stella D’Oro strikers; Bosses’ Bailout only Bails Out Bosses: Workers’ Revolution Will THROW Them Out!” The well-received leaflet contained a resolution calling on the UFT to endorse all three strikes and provide financial aid for the Stella D’Oro strikers.

One PLP delegate was expecting to get the floor to present our resolution. But in attempting to divert the strikers from speaking, the misleadership claimed we were “acting hastily” and should follow protocol and wait for the workers’ local President to receive a “proper endorsement.”

One PLP delegate declared there’s no “protocol” when it comes to a strike.



“These workers have been on strike since August 13, just saw the cops remove their picket-line tarp and chairs and traveled all the way from the Bronx to get our support and all you have to talk about is protocol. Put them on stage and let them speak!” Knowing our history of boldly raising revolutionary politics at the DA, the union hacks quickly backtracked, saying they’d allow the strikers to speak.

To guarantee this, another PLP delegate escorted the four strikers on stage amid a roaring, standing ovation. UFT President Randi Weingarten sanctioned a unanimous resolution containing a general endorsement of the strike and a “sizeable contribution” to their strike fund. It encouraged members to attend the October 18th strike rally.

The strikers were congratulated with dozens of handshakes and words of encouragement. PLP members emphasized that they represent a working-class response to this economic crisis, which is why the leadership tried to ignore our resolution.

They did succeed in watering down our original motion. In supporting the Stella D’Oro strikers, Weingarten’s resolution omitted the other two much larger strikes and still hasn’t mentioned either of them — no accident.

We will return to the November DA with an even stronger push. Several delegates are reporting these struggles to their local schools. A few have published reports calling for support for all three strikes and openly criticizing the UFT’s pacifist misleadership during this vicious period of giveaways to the bosses and cutbacks for the working class. ✪

Cops Trample Iraq Vets; Pacifism Won't Work



IVAW Member Nick Morgan after being trampled by mounted cops

HEMPSTEAD, NY October 18 — The final presidential debate was hosted here today but the most important message of the day unfolded outside.

Several days before the debate, Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW) demanded that members be allowed to address questions to the candidates on war resisters and funding for the Veterans Administration (VA). The vets received no response, so an hour before the debate a march was organized in order to enter the debate and ask the candidates the questions.

Over a hundred anti-war protestors followed the vets and chanted, "Let them in!" Several vets were arrested as planned but then mounted riot police charged the crowd, injuring several demonstrators including IVAW member, Nick Morgan,

who was knocked to the ground and trampled. Morgan suffered a gashing wound to his face and a displaced cheekbone from the horses' hooves.

An IVAW member and former army National Guard sergeant, Jabbar Magruder, angrily responded, "How can you treat veterans like that in America?...It is not what I gave eight years of my life [in the military] for. It is not what I served in Iraq for. This is not the America I believe in." Many patriotic vets and protestors shared Magruder's rage and disbelief; however the attacks showed the real truth about America.

The police attacks are a systemic problem, and not caused by a few bad cops. Civil disobedience is a failure as a tactic to stop the war; and the media and politicians' silence on the incident equals their consent for the police attacks.

What the police, media, and politicians don't want is for people to conclude that pacifist strategies don't work, the candidates don't care, and police brutality is systemic to capitalism. However, facts prove otherwise. The Winter Soldier hearings, eyewitness accounts of the occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan, paint a brutal picture of what capitalist competition does to both working-class occupied and working-class occupying troops.

The cops treatment of protestors at Hofstra — similar to cops day-to-day racist treatment of black, Latin, and immigrant workers as well as the racism inherent in U.S. troops attacks on the Iraqi's and Afghans — show that the bosses will widen fascist

brutality as they see fit in order to achieve their goals of making U.S. workers accept more war, higher prices, and less government services.

Many in IVAW honestly believe in their power to build a non-violent movement of resisting troops to force the Iraq war to end, full funding for the VA, and reparations for the Iraqi people (some in IVAW are even pushing the organization to formally address Afghanistan). However the root of the problem remains capitalism's pursuit of maximum profit and no capitalist has ever peacefully stopped profit wars.

Vietnamese fighting and U.S. troops' rebellions — including physically fighting racists and the killing of higher-ups — led to the withdrawal of US ground forces in the U.S. war on Vietnam. And a generation after the anti-Vietnam war struggle, the international working class faces even longer and deadlier wars and the same attacks by police because the root of the problem remains: Capitalist's grip on state power. Only the communist-led revolutions in Russia in 1917 and China in 1949 have smashed the bosses grip on state power. Those revolutionaries made many mistakes that led to their demise but the fight for workers' power remains the important correct lesson that we still must fight for.

East Coast PLP Youth Back Strikers, Expose Bosses' Elections

NEW YORK CITY, NY, October 18, -About twenty-five black and Latin high school and college students spent today engaged in building a communist alternative to the bosses' electoral circus. Instead of settling for a choice of which candidate will lead us into a future of more war and more fascism, a new generation of young leaders planned and executed a day of activity that solidified our determination to build the only movement that represents a true choice for workers, the movement for workers power. Our recent experiences at the Summer Project in Los Angeles reminded us all how inspirational and necessary it is

between students and workers.

At the CUNY Social Forum, young comrades led a workshop on the elections where fake leftists once again revealed themselves to be far more interested in arguing with other leftists than in fighting the bosses. Finally we headed down to Brooklyn for our evening forum at a local church entitled "Elections in the Shadow of Imperialist War."

An aspiring young teacher gave a clear and sharp overview of the current economic crisis, followed by a high school comrade whose presentation on the candidates exposed how this elec-

'A young Baltimore comrade moved the crowd when she spoke about the need for unity between students and workers.'

tion really is about who the bosses think can best lead the U.S. working class into a future of more fascism and more war. In this light, our line that Obama is the main danger was driven home.

Then comrades from Baltimore put on a powerful show, including a short movie, about their struggle against budget cuts in Maryland and the need for revolution, not reform. The program was rounded out by other young leaders who spoke on how striking workers represent the real leadership we need, not politicians, and a group from a local high school who recounted past class struggles in their school against budget cuts and how more struggle will be needed in the future as the answer to economic crisis and war. The future of the working class is in good hands, with these motivated and dedicated young people learning to lead the way to a revolution. ☺

for us to bring our forces together, and so we held a day of activity for East Coast comrades and friends.

Due to ongoing and deepening relationships party members have built among striking workers at the Stella D'Oro cookie plant in the Bronx, we were invited to begin our day at a rally outside the factory gates. The time for the rally was pushed back by cops from twelve to ten on Saturday, but our young people understood the importance of strike support and all who committed to show up at twelve made the effort to meet up earlier, including our young out-of-town comrades who had arrived late the night before.

Communist consciousness ("we need to be at the workers' rally") beat out capitalist individualism ("let me sleep") so our day got off to a splendid start! A young Baltimore comrade moved the crowd when she spoke about the need for unity

Do-Nothing 'Leaders,' Scabs Undercut Vought Strikers

NASHVILLE, TN — Nearly 1,000 Machinists (IAM 735) have been on strike since September 27 against Vought Aircraft Industries, a huge aerospace subcontractor. Vought wants to freeze the pension plan for employees with less than 16 years seniority and replace it with a 401(k) plan. Meanwhile, Vought's net income so far this year is over \$108 million, more than double last year.

Since the strike began, the capitalist financial meltdown has made it crystal-clear what the economic impact of the pension freeze would be on the workers. The political impact would be to weaken class solidarity by dividing younger and older workers. A striker commented, "Fortunately the older employees recognize this and are not willing to accept this offer at the expense of their younger union brothers and sisters."

Dallas-based Vought has brought in managers and other scabs to run the Nashville plant, which assembles wing and tail structures for commercial and military aircraft. Strikers are warning these scabs that "You're being told how they need you [but] in the end they won't care about you, and your fellow employees will despise you. You will end up in your own private hell."

Rumor has it that when one scab told the boss he'd gotten a couple of flat tires, he was told that the company "wasn't buying tires." Company officials admit that the strike is hurting productivity, but with the plant open, time is on their side. Workers need to shut it down! Instead of organizing mass picketing, IAM 735 leaders are encouraging workers to find temporary jobs elsewhere.

Vought is the largest subcontractor to Boeing on the C-17 program and builds the aft fuselage sections for Boeing's 787 Dreamliner. The website of IAM 735 in Nashville features video clips from the Boeing strike, but IAM leaders are doing NOTHING to build rank-and-file solidarity among Boeing and Vought strikers, let alone broader support.

Vought facilities producing Boeing commercial airplane products and most impacted by the Boeing IAM strike include Stuart, Fla.; Grand Prairie, Texas; Milledgeville, Ga., and North Charleston, S.C. Vought is trying to use workers from these plants to break the strike in Tennessee. Clearly, aerospace workers across the board need to fight the racism and drive for maximum profit that has slashed wages of workers all over. Workers with communist leadership need to make this part of the long-term fight to destroy the profit system.

"It just seems like we are going backwards rather than forward," commented a Vought striker. And that's in aerospace, an industry that will continue to grow as the U.S. imperialist ruling class steps up its preparation for wider war. But in this period of capitalist crisis and increasing attacks on the working class we can move forward by taking on the bosses attacks with increased fight-back, spreading the communist ideas of CHALLENGE, and building PLP.☺

Mass Strikes Hit EU Bosses' Bailout Attacks on Workers

Ever since European bosses formed the European Union (EU) in 1993, workers' demands for any improvements in their lives and working conditions have been rejected because the EU guidelines "wouldn't allow it." When working-class voters massively rejected the unified European Constitution in referendums in France and Holland in 2005, the rulers simply had the national parliaments adopt the Treaty of Lisbon in 2007, allowing privatizations, cutbacks and other attacks on workers throughout Europe.

But when the current economic tsunami hit Europe's bosses, their EU guidelines were the first thing to go as each national group of bosses nationalized and bailed out banks and cut each others' throats. Britain threatened Iceland because the latter's banking crisis affected billions invested by British bankers there. European "unity" went out the window as each capitalist country's ruling class tried to save its own bankers and bosses.

But the crisis has also sharpened workers' militancy, involving mass protests and strikes, including a general strike in Belgium on October 6 (see CHALLENGE, 10/29).

GREECE PARALYZED

On October 21, a massive general strike paralyzed Greece, the ninth one against the conservative Karamanlis government since 2004. There were huge protests nationwide, two in Athens organized by different union groups. The strike shut down airlines, heavy industries, transportation, health services and schools. It also opposed the 2009 draft budget, headed for parliamentary debate.

The Greek budget would "reform" the pension system, adversely affecting millions of workers. They are also angry at the recent \$37 billion bailout of failed banks, the privatization of companies such as Olympic Airlines, the ports, utilities and education. This would attack even more public-sector workers.

Workers were even more irate because while billions of euros of public money are being used to bail out banks, huge financial scandals are erupting,

involving many government cabinet members and the "holy rollers" of a Greek Orthodox Church monastery.

THOUSANDS MARCH IN ITALY

On October 17, a mass strike took place in Italy against the anti-working-class policies of Prime Minister Berlusconi. A governmental education "reform" threatens 87,000 teaching jobs, huge cuts in health services and allows temporary contracts in many industries, leading to wage cuts.

Workers marched in many cities, including 300,000 in Rome, where the cops had to guard the education ministry to protect it from angry college and H.S. student protestors. In Milan, students and cops clashed when students tried to take over the Polytechnic college.

The attacks against workers and students are occurring amid a huge racist campaign against immigrant workers and youth which has led to murders and pogroms of Roma people and violent attacks against immigrants from Africa and Asia.

Teachers, Parents Protest in France

In France, the teachers' unions and the main parent organization called a national demonstration in Paris on October 19. It had tepid demands — "to defend the public education service, to demand a halt to the budgetary policy of austerity and that necessary reforms be made in a different manner," according to the leader of the Christian teachers' union. The "church bazaar" atmosphere only mobilized 40,000 protesters, although the union misleaders are claiming twice that number. Some analysts believe workers in France are "disoriented" by the



economic crisis, not surprising since no organization is putting forward revolutionary politics.

The mass strikes in Greece and Italy are good but are not enough. Union leaders and opponents of conservative governments in Italy and Greece are using them as an electoral tool to bring back "pro-worker" bourgeois governments. In Italy, such a government preceded Berlusconi's return to power last year. It was supported by Refondazione (the remnants of the old "Communist" Party). That government also attacked immigrants and workers, and sent troops to fight in the imperialist war in Afghanistan.

In the current situation of sharpening dogfights among imperialists to save their own skins during the global economic meltdown, any bourgeois government must attack workers more sharply.

A big victory workers and their allies could gain from these struggles is the building of a new revolutionary communist leadership, breaking with all the capitalist collaborators calling themselves "leftists." Only then could the working class construct a truly united society without any bankers or capitalists. ☸

Auto Workers Must Strike Against Racist Unemployment

The current global economic crisis places auto workers at the beginning of a worldwide depression. Ground zero may be on Wall Street, but all workers will feel the effects. There will be no billion-dollar bailouts for us, no matter who wins the bosses' White House. We need communist revolution.

Already, more than \$25 TRILLION has been destroyed, much of it workers' pensions, 401(k)s and IRAs. But the storm is just starting, and the bosses may have to amputate more of the domestic auto industry than they save. Before the crash, more than 140,000 auto jobs had been wiped out with the collaboration of the UAW International leadership.

Janesville, Wisconsin GM and Minneapolis Ford — where over 80% of the workers are Temporary Part-Timers (TPTs) — which already set to close, will close sooner. The Chicago Ford Assembly plant — almost half the workforce being TPTs — was losing a shift. This workforce also includes workers on parole or recently released from jail in the "Second Chance" program and is overwhelmingly black. That's why racist Ford can get away with paying them about \$7/hr!

Over the last year, GM stock dropped more than 80%, and Ford over 75%. With the crash, GM shares fell to \$4.00 and Ford to \$2.00. Billionaire Kirk Kerkorian started selling his \$1 billion investment in Ford as it shrank to \$300 million. Cerberus tried to sell Chrysler to GM (after buying it for \$7.4

billion a year ago), but no group of panicked bankers will finance the deal. Such a deal would cost over 30,000 jobs.

"Conditions in the industry are so perilous they are scaring away even the most fearless investors," said a partner in a major automotive consulting firm. "It's reaching a point where we'll have to decide if we're willing to let the U.S. auto industry fail," said David Cole, chairman of the Center for Automotive Research in Ann Arbor,

also moving more rapidly to full-blown Nazi-style fascism, with racist terror the cutting edge of the bosses' attacks. Capitalism doesn't work. The bosses' future for us is expanding war, racist unemployment, poverty wages and police terror.

UAW President Gittlefinger and Ford CEO Alan Mulally (formerly of Boeing), can hold hands and go over a cliff but we don't have to join them. Instead, we should follow the lead of 27,000 striking Boeing workers and strike for jobs.

In Chicago, we should keep our laid-off brothers and sisters active in our local unions and reach out to unemployed workers and youth in the region. Employed and unemployed Ford workers can unite with full and part-time CTA bus operators, working and laid-off hospital and city workers, immigrant workers and unemployed youth, and demand jobs on election night in downtown Chicago, not celebrate the bosses' election.

Amid this struggle against racist unemployment, we must win workers to fight for communist revolution. More Ford workers are reading CHALLENGE newspaper, and are learning how the world works and how to change it. Our union contracts aren't worth the paper they are written on in the face of fascism, depression and war. The bosses will survive this and all crises until we destroy them. By patiently building a mass PLP, this current depression can open the door to communist revolution. ☸

'There are still more than 200,000 "Big 3" auto workers and more than a million retirees. But the emerging depression could cut these numbers in half.'

Mich. (NY Times, 10/22).

There are still more than 200,000 "Big 3" auto workers and more than a million retirees. But the emerging depression could cut these numbers in half. GM and Ford have lost more than \$28 billion in the first six months of this year and are burning through more than \$1 billion in cash each month. Despite massive cutbacks they can't stop the bleeding.

This depression is pushing the bosses closer to another world war. They ultimately resolve their crises by destroying the factories, and factory workers, of their competitors. The U.S. is

LETTERS



Colombia Fascists Can’t Stop Raging Class Struggle

Class struggles rage on amid more fascist repression here in Colombia. On August 15, a heavily-armed death squad called Los Rastrojos entered the house of Pablo Bolaños, a poor peasant, in a rural area of the State of Cauca. Several days later his mangled dead body was found with his nails pulled out and his tongue and the soles of his feet cut off.

He was murdered in the Argelia municipality, totally militarized by an Army Infantry Battalion. Cops covered the area. Clearly the death squads operate freely, backed by the Army and police.

In the municipality of Soacha, 20 youth were found buried in a common grave. People there say they saw soldiers and civilians jointly recruiting youth to work in another region with higher wages. The bosses’ media said these young people were all “guerrillas killed in combat.” But their relatives and friends labeled this a blatant lie. There have been up to 200 youths murdered recently throughout Colombia under similar circumstances.

Hundreds of youth have been slain to try to crush any kind of organizing against the bosses and their death squads. Some victims were involved in fighting in the neighborhoods and towns. One was a revolutionary-minded worker who was offered a well-paying job as an electrician in another town. He was brutally killed, along with another worker, and their bodies dumped in a town near Bogotá.

Guillermo Rivera, while taking his daughter to school, was one of 42 union activists killed so far this year. A video camera showed Rivera being forced into a police car and taken away. His dead body was found four months later.

But these fascist murders have not halted the class struggle. Indigenous people have been blocking highways during several days of mass anti-racist protests in the State of Cauca and other rural areas, demanding an end to the repression, and that land seized by the landlords’ hired death squads be returned. They have not fallen for the government’s slander of being “infiltrated by guerrillas.” An Army attack failed to stop their nationwide mass march on October 21.

On October 23, 500,000 workers, mostly state employees and teachers, went out on a 24-hour general strike called by the CUT union federation to protest the state of emergency declared by the government to smash a long strike by judicial system workers. Some 56,000 marched in Bogotá as well as thousands in other cities.

Amid the current global capitalist meltdown, the rulers’ attacks are bound to sharpen since Uribe has tied Colombia’s economy much closer to that of the U.S. Building for the general strike, on October 16 tens of thousands of public school teachers in the State of Sucre demonstrated against recent layoffs and a government plan to downgrade their health plan. It was part of a national day of protest by teachers against government attacks on their jobs.

Some 9,000 sugar cane cutters have been on a month-long strike in Cauca, affecting the ethanol and paper production industries. The strikers are demanding better pay and working conditions. So it’s clear that the capitalist rulers’ fascist attacks, using their hired killers in and out of uniform, cannot stop the class struggle. The anger and militancy of workers and youth here offer our PLP group great opportunities if we redouble our efforts in bringing them our communist politics, exposing the reformists, union sellouts and others who say Uribe is the problem instead of the entire capitalist system. Using DESAFIO as our revolutionary ideological weapon is crucial for our Party to make serious inroads among workers and youth in the near future.

A Comrade, Colombia

Union Leaders Show How Not To Organize Support for Boeing Strikers

A friend of mine is a local union officer and wanted to organize a picket of various unions at the

Boeing World Headquarters in Chicago. He told me the following story:

A local president told him to call Jobs With Justice, an AFL-CIO strike support group. The guy at JWW told my friend that they couldn’t do anything until they were asked by the striking union, the IAM.

So my friend called the local IAM. The IAM guy said it was a great idea and said they represented Boeing workers in St. Louis. My friend asked him if he could bring a busload of workers from St. Louis to picket the world headquarters. He said, “of course we can do that.”

He said he had to “check with the boss,” and he’d get back to him after the weekend. He never did, and when my friend called him, the IAM guy said that negotiations had just resumed, and “the boss” didn’t want to do anything to upset the talks. My friend asked, “A few hundred workers picketing the world headquarters will hurt your chances?” The IAM guy said we’ll just have to wait.

Another guy in my friend’s local called the IAM spokesperson in Seattle and asked her to call JWW so we could have the strike support picket line at Boeing world headquarters. She said, “We don’t want to bypass the local union in your area, you better go through them.” “But they’re not the ones on strike,” he replied.

Without a mass base for PLP that is constantly challenging the union leaders, we are at their mercy. If we can’t move people into battle, we are left with the demoralizing union hacks, who don’t want to fight or up the ante. Workers have to take control of these battles, and having a mass base for PLP is the only way to do that. From organizing mass picket lines at the Boeing strike to mass demonstrations at the Chicago world headquarters, we have to challenge the union leaders and move workers into battle.

A Reader

CHALLENGE Binds Striker and Red Transit Worker

I work for the NYC transit system and during my lunch break I visited the picket line of the Stella D’Oro factory workers. After speaking to some strikers one gave me a CHALLENGE. One striker told me that some teachers, professors and students had been there in support and they gave the picketers this paper that explained their struggle. We exchanged contact info and I returned to the picket line days later for a strike rally with several comrades and friends.

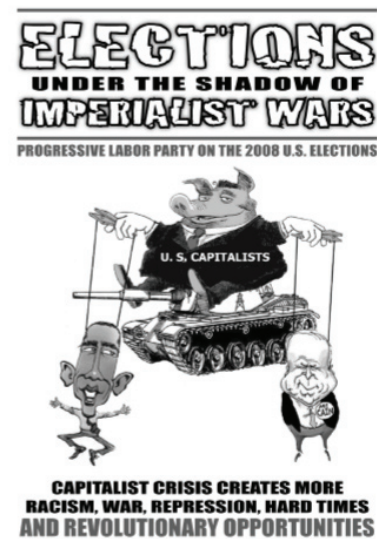
The rally, and PLP’s participation in it, allowed us to raise good conversations about the Party’s ideas with my friends on the car ride home. A comrade, who is a teacher, plans to return to the picket lines with her students and I’ve raised the strike with my co-workers.

I plan to stay in touch with the worker who gave me CHALLENGE and invite him to participate in PL activities. While he likes the paper and told me the strike is important for all workers — not just the strikers — in this economic crisis, he spent most of the rally talking to local politicians and doesn’t see building a revolutionary communist movement as the most important aspect of the struggle. Hopefully, we’ll make long-term ties with him and transform his superficial agreement on the Party’s support for their strike into active participation in future Party actions.

Red Transit Worker

Retirees Back Boeing Strikers; Hacks Balk

At the September meeting of my union retiree association, the attendees agreed to send a resolution of support to the Boeing strikers. The response from my fellow retirees was so enthusiastic that I brought a similar resolution to the retirees Association of AFSCME’s DC 37. This group represents 50,000 retired city workers. These workers’ response to supporting the Boeing strikers was overwhelming also. Both organizations quickly sent



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letters of support.

I was asked by a leader of the DC 37 retirees, “Why hadn’t Kourpais called for support of the strike?” George Kourpais, the head of the AFL-CIO retiree nationwide network, was the former President of the International Association of Machinists (the union which represents the striking Boeing workers).

After such favorable responses from retiree organizations, I brought the same resolution to the active members of AFSCME’s 125,000 strong DC 37 at a meeting of its delegate assembly. Although initially ruled out of order when I tried to raise Boeing strike support, I persisted and was able to again bring a resolution to the floor. The President of DC 37 again tried to block the motion, saying that a retiree could not present resolutions to this assembly. Another delegate, however, was willing to move my resolution that passed overwhelmingly. After the vote I asked to receive a copy of the support letter.

A week later I checked, there was no letter. Three weeks later, no letter. I called the secretary of DC 37. He said no letter had been sent yet.

Fighting for these support statements revealed that rank-and-file members are willing to support building solidarity and working-class unity, while at the same time the upper level and national leadership actively try to hold back such efforts.

Brooklyn Retiree

Unemployment continued from page 7

sioned. These jobs will either be civilian ones, the “National Service-type,” with low wages and no benefits or contain the military “option” to carry on U.S. rulers’ oil wars worldwide.

We must be involved with these working-class youth in their mass organizations and win them to see that, under capitalism, their desire for “decent jobs, healthcare, education and housing” is a mirage. We must be part of their daily fights in order to transform them into intensified class struggle between the two classes and use this opportunity to build the Progressive Labor Party. Our goal must be communist revolution to abolish capitalism, its system of wage slavery and racist super-exploitation.

While capitalist crises in and of themselves will not topple the system, they do open the door to building a movement and Party that can lead to the destruction of that system. This is the working class’s only way out of the insufferable horrors of the profit system. ★

Capitalism's Mass Unemployment Spreading Worldwide

Both bosses' candidates, Obama and McCain, build false consciousness among many U.S. workers. McCain jabbars about Joe the Plumber, a non-union, right-wing plumber who has illusions about owning a plumbing business. Obama babbles on about how the "middle class" is hurting. But the working class, the overwhelming majority, did not benefit from the "boom" years of the '90s and is now hurting even more from the current capitalist economic tsunami.

For millions of workers, capitalism in the U.S. and worldwide in the last three decades has meant lower wages, union-busting, racist and fascist ethnic cleansing from the Balkans to Iraq to Rwanda to the U.S. (with 2.4 million in jail, mainly black and Latin males). Endless wars, racist-fascist terror and mass unemployment are the main aspects of global capitalism. In fact, the director of the UN's International Labor Organization estimates that the current capitalist crisis will increase unemployment by 20 million worldwide.

According to the AFL-CIO (and it ought to know), over 45 million U.S. workers earn \$10.20 an hour or less. One of four earns \$9.60/hour, the official poverty rate for a family of three. And 15 million workers earn the minimum wage, \$6.70/hour. Among black workers, one of three earns the poverty wage or less.

Throughout the entire history of the profit system, the only time "full employment" has ever existed is during world war — and then only in the more advanced capitalist countries which are the main antagonists of such wars.

Many compare the present crisis to the Great Depression of the 1930s when one-third of the working class in the leading capitalist nations was jobless. It was only when a military draft was enacted and during World War II when countries' industries became completely devoted to war production that anything approaching "full employment" materialized.

Of course, that presumes that tens of millions in WWII uniforms could be labeled "employed" (at least 14 million in the U.S.). Meanwhile, the main warring capitalists in Germany, Japan, the U.S. and Britain geared total production for the weapons of war. It was only then that capitalism could claim the unemployment problem had been "solved." The German and Japanese fascists used millions of slave laborers for their war production. The war wiped out 100 million people permanently, including tens

of millions of workers. A similar capitalist "solution" to the current crisis is not far-fetched.

The only country without any unemployment before WWII was the Soviet Union which had no private profit system; the source of unemployment, racism and war. It lost 25 million people in the war while its Red Army defeated the bulk of the Axis fascist armies.

Capitalism is based on the accumulation of maximum profits. The only source of profit is the value created by workers in the course of production. However, workers' wages do not equal the full value they create. If that were true, there would be no profit for the boss. So the bosses try to keep workers' wages at the lowest level possible, turning as much of the value workers create into profits for the bosses.

But each individual capitalist is competing against all his/her rivals for the maximum share of the market, and produces as much as they think they can sell. However, nothing is planned. So overproduction results, exceeding what the market can buy. Those capitalists who can produce at the lowest possible cost push aside many of their rivals. The latter, seeking to reduce costs to stay in business, feel compelled to achieve that by cutting labor costs, leading to either wage-cuts or mass layoffs, or both. Thus, unemployment is intrinsic to capitalism.

Racism is one of the main weapons capitalists use to reduce their costs. Historically, they relegate various sections of the working class to "second-class" status — the lowest wages, the hardest jobs, the last hired and first fired, and the worst-off in other aspects of life: housing, healthcare, education, etc. In the U.S., this super-exploitation has fallen on black workers, going back to slavery, and in the last two centuries also on Latino and Asian workers. (This does not include the genocide perpetrated against Native Americans who suffer the highest rate of joblessness, 90%.)

The capitalist class reaps super-profits from this racism, partly from the difference in family income between white workers and that of black, Latino and Asian, and partly because the bosses use the lower wages of super-exploited workers to drag down the wages of the entire working class. In the U.S., this difference amounted to \$250 billion annually a decade ago, and is probably much higher when figuring in capitalist competition using racism on a world scale, not just within each capitalist

country.

Since China has become a full-blown capitalist country, the imperialists have used its huge cheap labor to shift production away from relatively higher-paying areas. Others — India, Latin America, Vietnam and the former Soviet-bloc countries in Eastern Europe — have been used to "outsource" jobs. This "globalization," in turn, has also been used to lower workers' wages in the imperialist countries, and even to subcontract key industrial jobs in auto, steel, aerospace, etc., to low-paying non-union areas all across the southern U.S. and California. Racism against immigrant and black workers has been crucial in this process. The pro-capitalist policies of the union leadership have helped the bosses carry out this massive attack.

This competition for profits, and for resources such as oil, gas and minerals needed for modern capitalist production, as well as to equip modern armies, is what leads to military confrontation: war. And not limited to wars between two countries, but to world war. This "solution" to inter-imperialist competition plus the mass unemployment produced by the general competition among bosses in one country and between corporations internationally is part and parcel of capitalism. This is what produces the cycles of "boom" and "bust," of recessions and depressions. This is the history of capitalism.

Obama and McCain constantly prattle about concern for "the middle class." They rarely, if ever, use the term "working class." But classes are defined by their relation to the means of production. U.S. workers who might earn \$50,000 a year and manage to hang on to their houses and cars are labeled "middle class" and are even portrayed as "future owners of small businesses."

But auto or aerospace workers (or plumbers) can be laid off tomorrow, victims of the bosses' drive to cut costs to maintain profits, and their homes and cars go up in smoke. Currently millions of U.S. workers are losing their houses because of the capitalists' scams to make paper profits from subprime mortgages, because profit rates from these swindles exceed those that can be reaped from industrial production.

Workers and youth who think a President Obama will "create good jobs" will soon be disillusioned.

continued on page 6



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

Let's make up for lost time

GW, 10/17

The markets no longer have any faith that the world financial system they helped create has any future. The model is bust.... This is history's joke: the crisis of capitalism long predicted by communists....

Bush-speak proves Marx right!

NYT, 10/18

Everybody knows that anything our president says is very likely wrong, and certainly won't happen....

So hearts sunk throughout the nation when Bush appeared at a Chamber of Commerce gathering to say that the economy would recover.

"America is the most attractive destination for investors around the globe. America is the home of the most talented and enterprising and creative workers in the world," said the president, who

also insisted that "democratic capitalism remains the greatest system ever devised."

Which translates into: all the money is going to Asia, nobody will ever get a job again and Karl Marx was right after all.

Quick relief, but not for hungry

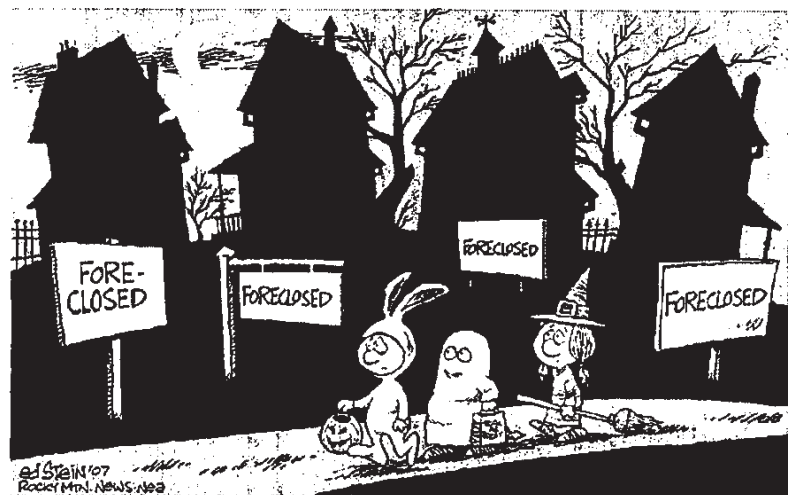
GW, 10/24

"Rich countries are directing their attention to... turmoil in the financial sector, but the number of malnourished people in the world rose by 44 million in 2008. Nearly one billion people are now going hungry. When you consider the speed of the world's response to the credit crisis, the delay in acting is shocking," an Oxfam spokesman said...

Age + foreclosure = catastrophe

NYT, 10/18

Losing a home to foreclosure is a disaster for



anyone. It's a catastrophe for older people....

"I had all these stacks of papers at the closing," she told me, "and they were just passing papers back and forth to me, back and forth, telling me to sign. And I kept saying, 'Wait a minute. Wait a minute.'"

She was assured that nothing untoward was going on.

Ms. Richardson did not have a fixed-rate mortgage. Her monthly payment rose, and rose again, eventually passing \$800, which she could not pay....

"You find yourself gradually climbing down the economic ladder, and you start thinking, 'How am I going to survive, and where am I going to go?... Oh, my god. I'm going to end up sleeping in my car.'"

BOSSES' ELECTION: CAPITALISM WINS

continued from front page

south, were given black mayors and "anti-poverty" programs that bought off a few and left masses of black workers still facing police brutality and the lower wages of a racist system.

However, while the rulers can use the "carrot" of an "anti-war" Eugene McCarthy or black legislators and "anti-poverty" programs, they simultaneously will use the "stick:" the cops, National Guard and the Army to kill anti-war demonstrators (Kent State and Jackson State); repress black uprisings (sending the 82nd Airborne to put down the 1967 Detroit black rebellion); covert state terror (the FBI's COINTELPRO); and imprison 2.4 million people, 70% black and Latino.

When the rulers worry that our struggles may threaten their profits, they may give us a crumb: a dollar more on the minimum wage, OSHA laws (governmental on-the-job safety regulations) with one inspector for every 10,000 workplaces, laws against discrimination that are rarely enforced. Later, those crumbs are taken away when they see that we've bought into the election shell game instead of militant working-class struggle.

Relying on elections to improve our conditions is a treadmill to oblivion.

Freeing ourselves from the passive pull-the-voting-lever mentality starts with militant struggle like the Boeing machinists' strike in Seattle, or the teachers' strike in Morelos, Mexico. Mass marches, demonstrations and standing up to the boss may help teach us to fight back instead of accepting the "democratic" program. But to really overcome capitalism's exploitation and wars, we also need to struggle for more profound change — a new system where workers will be in control.

U.S. rulers are desperate to maintain their system of wealth and profits. They killed 3,000,000 Vietnamese and 58,000 U.S. soldiers trying to control a small country's workers and resources. They've killed over a million Iraqi workers with eight years of Clinton bombing surrounded by eight years of Bush aggression trying to maintain control of the

world's oil supply.

RAW DEAL FOR WORKERS

But now, to marshal the forces U.S. imperialism requires, Obama may try an end run around blatant militarism and the draft. With the crippled U.S. economy shedding 200,000 jobs a month, he may opt for a Roosevelt New Deal-style employment program to rally workers around the flag. The Times (10/26/08) reports that Obama "proposes increases for education, infrastructure, research, foreign aid, and the military."

For workers, voting for warmaker Obama is no better than backing McCain. Viewing Obama's election as a triumph over racism would be a serious political error. By every measure imaginable — from wages to health to education to imprisonment to jobs and home foreclosures — racist disparity rages in the U.S. Because capitalism breeds racism and

imperialist oil wars, Obama can't and won't end or even alleviate either. Only the working class can.

U.S. rulers claim to be "democratic," but they really preside over a capitalist dictatorship. They own the wealth, control the mass culture and media and use their government and its military and police forces to maintain their power. Communists in PLP believe the working class must overthrow their dictatorship and replace it with a workers' dictatorship where the vast majority will be armed to prevent the capitalists from ever returning to power.

To achieve this, millions of workers must join PLP to embrace communist ideas of sharing the wealth we produce according to everyone's needs, along with anti-racist, anti-sexist and internationalist ideas which are necessary to unite the working class in its struggle for power.☸

BOSSSES USE ELECTIONS TO SETTLE THEIR OWN CONFLICTS

In addition to countering any worker protests against the system, elections are also used to provide a peaceful way to deal with conflicts among different sections of the ruling class. Various capitalists who are united in pursuing profits can sometimes have different economic and political needs. Those who are deeply invested in oil production internationally (tracing back to the Rockefeller and Morgan fortunes) are sometimes in conflict with those whose fortunes are tied to domestic oil production.

The government is used to mediate these differences. For instance, the "liberal" internationalists use environmental regulations to hamstring domestic oil producers. As a side effect, the liberals can appear to be pursuing the environmental goals of their supporters.

Health care "reform" is an issue where mediating conflicts between the rulers is combined

with attempts to con us into believing that the government represents our interests. The older established section of the rulers, whose fortunes are centered in large industrial and financial institutions, provides most of the health care insurance available to U.S. workers. For decades they've been trying to reduce that expense by creating a system where more bosses (and also workers in general) will share that burden by increasing the number of workers who are insured but making the coverage considerably poorer and less expensive than the largest bosses pay now.

Small and medium-sized bosses, who rarely provide insurance coverage, fight these plans by having "their" politicians argue that they will lower the quality of health care available to workers (true). But they downplay the reality that tens of millions of uninsured workers must often choose between paying for food or for medical care.

Resolving this debate may solve problems for some set of bosses, but whether workers support one side or the other, all of us will wind up with the short end of the stick.☸

Seeking Cannon Fodder, Obama Enlists Mass Murderer Powell

War criminal Colin Powell's recent endorsement of Barack Obama speaks volumes about the Obama camp's militaristic intentions. Powell has a long military history of serving U.S. rulers, from Vietnam to Gulf Wars I and II (see below). This endorsement means Obama embraces the "Powell Doctrine," which demands rallying wide popular and international support to unleash overwhelming force against any imperialist rivals threatening U.S. bosses' interests, particularly oil.

As part of this strategy, the Obama-Powell love match aims at reversing the sharp decline — 41% last year — in black enlistment in the armed forces. They especially want to stem the loss — mainly due to the racist nature of the U.S. wars in Iraq and Afghanistan — of black sergeants, who train recruits and thus form the backbone of the Army and Marines. The rulers also count on loyal retired black non commission officers (NCOs) to recruit and spread patriotism in their neighborhoods.

In 1996, Charles Moskos, who later worked on Clinton's Hart-Rudman Commission reports outlining U.S. imperialism's goals for the 21st Century, co-wrote a book called "All That We Can Be: Black Leadership and Racial Integration the Army Way." In it he said, "The beneficial impact of black sergeants extends beyond the Army. Every year 2,000 black NCOs in the Army (4,000 in the military as a whole) retire from service....The impact of this group of men — and now women as well — on the civilian black community will be tangible and positive." Obama hopes having Powell on board will help him get the 91,000 additional soldiers he demands for, among other stated aims, expanding the Afghan war into Pakistan.

With 35 years as a professional soldier, Powell rose to full General. He got his start as a captain and later a major in the U.S. invasion of Vietnam, serving as a South Vietnamese Army advisor and as assistant chief of staff for the Americal 23rd Infan-

try Division. He was assigned to investigate the My Lai Massacre of Vietnamese women and children, which he whitewashed, saying that "relations between American soldiers and the Vietnamese people are excellent." (So "excellent" that 3,000,000 Vietnamese were slaughtered).

In 2004, Powell told TV interviewer Larry King, "I was in a unit that was responsible for My Lai. I got there after My Lai happened. In war, these sorts of horrible things happen every now and again."

Adding to his executioner "laurels," Powell — as senior military assistant to Reagan's Defense Secretary Casper Weinberger — helped carry out the 1983 invasion of Grenada and the 1986 air strike on Libya.

Powell drips with the blood of the millions of Iraqis he helped kill in Desert Genocides I and II to benefit Exxon Mobil's oil empire. Powell personally directed the slaughter in the first war as chairman of the Pentagon's Joint Chiefs. He "justified" the second invasion by lying to the UN about Iraq's weap-

ons programs. Powell currently serves as a director in the Rockefeller-led Council on Foreign Relations, U.S. imperialism's top think-tank.

An Obama presidency would put into practice Powell's strategy for mass murder, while attempting to win working-class youth, especially black youth, to become cannon fodder for U.S. rulers in present and future oil wars.☸



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