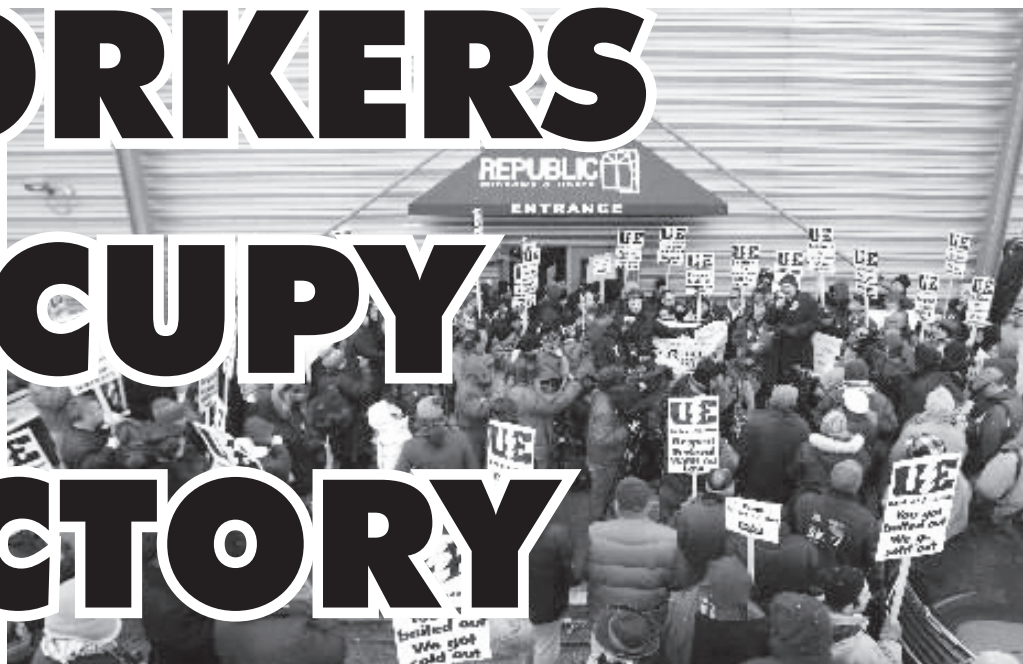


CHALLENGE



THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

WORKERS OCCUPY FACTORY



POLITICIANS RUN TO BOSSES' RESCUE

CHICAGO, IL December 6 – "We are not going anywhere!" That's what one worker said, speaking for his brothers and sisters who are occupying the Republic Windows & Doors factory. He was speaking to more than 200 workers, youth, union activists and local union officials who rallied in support of the occupation that turned the bone-chilling cold, wind and snow into a breath of fresh air.

On December 2, Republic gave about 250 black and Latino workers, members of the United Electrical Workers union (UE), three days notice that it was closing for good. Bank of America (BoA), their main creditor, cut off a line of credit to Republic causing the plant closing and canceling workers' health benefits. According to the federal WARN Act, workers must get 60 days notice, and in Illinois they must get 75 days notice. Workers are demanding their 75 days pay and health benefits, plus vacation pay owed to them.

The total bill of about \$1.5 million is a drop in BoA's \$25 billion bailout bucket. Bank of America received \$15 billion as part of the federal government's Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP), raised \$9 billion in government guaranteed loans and will get another \$10 billion in TARP funds in the next two weeks. (As we go to press Bank of America has tentatively agreed to loan Republic some funds. But it is not clear how much if any will eventually be given to workers.)

Workers picketed BoA on December 3, and the bankers agreed to meet with Republic and the UE on December 5. The meeting was arranged by Democratic Congressman Luis Gutierrez, but Republic failed to show up. They are busy trying to sneak away to a new plant in Iowa with a non-union workforce. Some workers think Republic is planning to move out of state because the union rejected major concessions in the last contract and "won" pay increases. But as we've seen in the auto industry, when the bosses are in crisis our contracts aren't worth anything.

The Democratic Party has taken over the struggle of the Republic workers. Obama publicly supports them. Jesse Jackson delivered a truckload of turkeys. Congressman Gutierrez has become their main advocate, the City Council has called for an end to doing business with BoA, the Governor has called for the factory to stay open, and the Attorney General is investigating Republic's closing and possible move to Iowa. Workers come and go on 8-hour shifts, about 50 to a shift, without a racist cop in sight.

The Democrats know what's in store for workers with

many more plant closings and layoffs, especially affecting black and Latino workers. These politicians who have bailed out the bankers and industry bosses, as well as sending us to war and building fascism, want to mis-lead the workers' struggle. They are fearful that with massive layoffs looming there could be more plant takeovers. The opportunists, reformers and union full-timers who spoke at the rally are thrilled with the politicians trying to take over the strike and eager to be their foot soldiers.

By fighting back, Republic workers are setting an example to all workers facing layoffs and plant closures. PLP is mobilizing on our jobs and our campuses to collect food and money and to bring groups of people to the plant. Even more important, we will bring our revolutionary communist politics to show the Republic workers and those supporting them that the only way we can secure a future for the international working class is to build a mass PLP and fight for communist revolution.

One comrade went to the plant with coffee and donuts and ran into a friend and his wife coming out. His friend has worked there for about 10 years. They all went onto the occupied shop floor, where no guests are allowed, and the worker and his wife took our comrade on a tour of the plant. He dropped off the coffee and donuts at the lunch tables and got introduced to a group of Republic workers. He told the couple, "Fighting for what they owe you is good, but it won't find you another job or give your son a secure future. It's the whole system that's no good and we have to get rid of it." He showed the couple CHALLENGE and told them we wanted to do an article about their struggle.

As they toured the plant the comrade pointed out, "See all these windows piled up here? It doesn't make sense. People need these windows to stay warm. The workers build them, but people can't get them because the bosses can't sell them." He explained that we want a world where people get what we need because we need it, not because some factory owner or banker will profit off of it. We hope to have many more of these experiences in the coming days, and deepen the base of PLP among those fighting back, and those who support them.

Republic workers need your support. Send checks to UE Local 1110 Solidarity Fund, 37 S. Ashland, Chicago, IL 60607. Send messages of support to leahfried@gmail.com ☺

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NATIONAL SERVICE: OBAMA'S SCHEME TO DRAFT YOUTH FOR BOSSES' WARS

Last June at Columbia University, President-Elect Barack Obama said that he would make plans for the American people to recognize an "obligation" for military service. "If we are going into war, then all of us go, not just some." The ruling class has never forgiven the Bush administration's failure to successfully use the 9/11 attacks to recruit more young workers, especially black and Latin, to be patriotic Americans willing to fight in its military.

The Obama administration has promised not to make the same mistake. With wars in Afghanistan and Iraq burning, the economic meltdown and rising unemployment and the rise of new imperialist rivals, time is running out for the U.S. ruling class to try to maintain its position as top imperialist power. As future White House Chief of Staff, Rahm Emmanuel has stated: "Rule one: Never allow a crisis to go to waste . . . They are opportunities to do big things." (Boston Globe, 11.30.08)

One "big thing" they're attempting is to recruit young workers and students to National Service. This includes plans to expand AmeriCorps to 250,000 and double the size of the Peace Corps. These programs under the guise of promoting community service domestically and internationally have been used as a way to stop rebellions and support U.S. imperialist attacks on workers around the world.

They are also proposing that all middle and high school students do at least 50 hours of community service a year, giving a tax incentive of up \$4,000 a year in "exchange for 100 hours of public service." College students would do 100 hours of public service in exchange for tuition decreases, making "a college education affordable." (Obama's website).

This service would help meet dire needs of the

ruling class:

1. In order to rebuild a rapidly disintegrating infrastructure, it will create low-wage jobs — many of them non-union — thereby lowering the wages of the entire working class
2. More bodies in military uniform. (See CHALLENGE, 12/10)
3. Win workers and youth to U.S. nationalism
4. Clean up the image of the U.S. around the world as the country that spreads "democracy."

RULERS TURN WORKERS' COLLECTIVITY ON ITS HEAD FOR THEIR NEEDS

In the absence of a mass communist movement capable of winning thousands of workers to revolutionary ideas, the bosses can twist working-class collectivity into support for capitalism. Many people volunteered during events like 9/11, the Asian tsunami and Hurricane Katrina, proving that workers have a willingness to help others and oppose, at some level, the "everyone-for-themselves" mentality of capitalism. A 2006 UCLA study found that 86% of incoming college freshmen — most of whom are now presumably college juniors thinking about post-college employment — volunteered at least occasionally during high school and 70% did so at least once a week (Washington Post, 11/24/08). The communist PLP aims to take this collective feeling and use it as part of organizing a society based on production for the good of the whole of society.

On the other hand, the bosses' intentions with community and national service is similar to the Nazis' call for National Socialism by recruiting young and old to "do what they can" for the sake of the country (i.e., the ruling class). The Obama administration wants to acclimate the U.S. population to the idea of "service" and "sacrifice." These ideas will be used to convince workers and students to make the deadly error of allying with their class enemies and fighting for U.S. imperialism.

Work Within, Not on the Outside

We can turn Obama and the Democrats' idea of community and national service on its head by building communist ideas within their various "Corps." That means distributing CHALLENGE and always fighting for service for the working class — organizing against the bosses and for the real interests of the workers. We need to fight against workers getting laid off from their jobs, getting their pensions and homes ripped away from them by the greed of capitalism. We need to fight every attack against immigrant workers, like the murder of Marcelo Lucero in Long Island, by capitalist-inspired racism. We need to fight for communism to get rid of racism, sexism, nationalism and imperialist war. These are our working-class' calls to service.

The mass unemployment hitting the U.S. and the world will draw many workers to the option of national service. Sooner rather than later this option will become mandatory as inter-imperialist rivalry sharpens and the eventuality of war is clearer. Mem-

600 March vs. Racist Cross-Burning



HARDWICK, NJ., November 15 — Over 600 anti-racists marched here protesting the November 5th burning of a KKK-like cross on the lawn of a local family who had erected an Obama-for-President banner in front of their house. The protest was attacking racism, not necessarily supporting Obama. The multi-racial demonstrators came from towns throughout Warren County and the adjacent Pennsylvania area.

After Gary and Alina Grewal and their 8-year-old daughter Arianna realized the banner was missing, the next morning they discovered it had been tied to a 4 X 6 foot wooden cross and had been set afire during the night. The Grewal family spread the word of this racist act and today hundreds of local supporters met at the Town Hall here to begin a half-mile-long "Unity March" ending at the Grewal home. Mr. Grewal is of Native American descent and Mrs. Grewal is Cuban.

Their neighbors were determined to spread the message that racism will not be tolerated in their midst. Mr. Grewal said, "The Grewal family will not be intimidated by this racist act." (North Warren News, 11/19) The multi-racial marchers were of all ages, with an especially large youth turnout.

The demonstration was particularly noteworthy because this rural area of New Jersey has a strong right-wing reputation. It showed that rank-and-file people can organize against the racism being spread nation-wide, such as the anti-immigrant provocations of Suffolk County Long Island Executive Steve Levy over the murder of an Ecuadoran worker in Patchogue, L.I. and the murder of a Mexican worker by a racist gang in Shenandoah, Pa., as well as this Klan-type cross-burning.☺

bers and friends of the communist Progressive Labor Party must organize with workers to build class struggle against the bosses — taking the lead in strikes, marches and rallies. We need to build a base of rank-and-file workers to recruit for communist revolution.☺

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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NO MELTDOWN FOR CHALLENGE-DESAFIO!

We want to thank all those readers, supporters and members who responded to our call for funds in our last issue. They recognize that our paper is not financed by Exxon or Citibank.

Many of our most generous contributors have been forced to cut down on their donations because of the bosses' financial crisis. We, too, are cutting costs, but because of the above situation, we are falling behind in paying our bills. So we are calling on all of you to help sustain the only revo-

lutionary communist newspaper we have.

Where else can you get the reports on workers, soldiers and students fighting back? The kind of international reporting from Africa, Asia and Latin America that appears in our pages? The latest news straight from the picket lines, from the campuses and from the war fronts? The exposés of the traitorous union misleaders, and the bosses' politicians, from Clinton to Bush, from McCain to Obama?

CHALLENGE-DESAFIO is a lifeline for the working class. We need your financial support. Give what you can to maintain this fighting newspaper. Make checks or money orders payable to CHALLENGE Periodicals, and mail to:

PLP, Box 808, GPO, Brooklyn, NY 11202 ☺

PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

D.C. Rally Blasts Pols Over Housing for AIDS Victims

WASHINGTON, D.C., December 1, — Progressive Labor Party members celebrated World AIDS Day today at a rally demanding housing for people living with AIDS. Our central objective was to help our friends understand that capitalist politicians cannot give us what we need, that racism like that of the AIDS epidemic is inherent in capitalism, and that only developing a revolutionary party to destroy capitalism and racism can get us off the treadmill of begging our rulers for crumbs as our friends die.

We joined with 60 people from DC Fights Back, the Metropolitan Washington Public Health Association, American Medical Students Association, Student Global Aids, Empower DC (a D.C. housing advocacy NGO) and the National AIDS Housing Coalition. We demanded immediate housing for the 278 people on the D.C. waiting list for the Housing Opportunities for People With AIDS (HOPWA) Program. This program is pitifully under-funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

The noon rally outside the field office of HUD included a picket line around tents and cardboard houses with brightly-painted signs calling AIDS housing a life-or-death issue. We demanded that the HUD director speak to us. We chanted "Racism means, FIGHT BACK" and "AIDS housing is the name of the game, HUD and HOPWA, Shame, Shame, Shame." One speaker declared that stable

housing for people living with AIDS is an absolute necessity so that complex AIDS medical treatments can actually be implemented and maintained. After initially refusing to meet, housing officials finally responded by offering to schedule a meeting on the issue.

The strength of this event was its multiracial composition and its confrontational nature. The coalition challenged the power structure by demanding housing, the critical missing link in AIDS treatment, going beyond education and outreach efforts in the community. As supposedly "progressive" D.C. Mayor Adrian Fenty cozies up to developers and closes homeless shelters like the downtown Franklin Shelter, the battle for housing will become fiercer. In fact, when real estate developers threw Fenty a lavish birthday party on December 6, over 100 furious housing advocates and union members confronted Fenty and his billionaire buddies, carrying a big angry sign saying, "Kill the Homeless—Vote Fenty".

Recruiting our friends to the PLP's revolutionary strategy remains challenging. PLPers working in the community and with students brought a contingent of 15 people to the World AIDS Day protest and its four planning meetings, but many still harbor illusions about pressuring politicians and hoping for good results. One friend told us, "I really felt more comfortable with this rally than at May Day. May



Day was good but this is my struggle." We have to win him and others to seeing that the real struggle is against the capitalist system even as we fight day to day for the working class.

CHALLENGE was distributed at the rally and several participants in this work read it regularly. As the battle with the city and federal government heats up, and as the economic crisis intensifies, the need for revolutionary action will become clearer to our readers. Today's study groups and regular reading of CHALLENGE will help many see and join the road to revolution. ☸

Red Ideas, Worker-Student Unity Can Boost Contract Fight

LOS ANGELES, CA, Nov. 26 — "Whatever the changes are, they're not going to benefit workers like us," said a long-time CHALLENGE reader at my school. "Obama represents the rich in this country, just like the other guys [Bush and McCain]," he told his co-worker. I went to distribute CHALLENGE to this group of campus workers who are in the middle of a union contract fight for higher wages and to safeguard pensions. Many are now regular CHALLENGE readers, which has helped show the connections between their contract fight, the budget cuts, and the wars for oil profits in Iraq and Afghanistan. Looking at the post-election headline in CHALLENGE ("Obama to Workers: Sacrifice to Save Racist Capitalism") a group of us began to talk about Obama's victory.

One worker echoed a very common idea on campus that, at least now with Obama, we could expect some things to change for the better. Another worker who has been reading CHALLENGE for a year pointed out we could expect "change," but it wouldn't benefit the working class. Some others agreed, saying that Obama's policy on immigration, for example, isn't any better than Bush's. (Obama supports further militarizing of the border, a slave-labor guest worker program, and fascist control of the immigrant workforce known as "Comprehensive Immigration Reform.") I asked the worker, "Do you think Obama is going to change the fact that you and others have to work two or three jobs to survive?" The worker agreed that the problems most important to him probably wouldn't "change for the better" because of Obama's win. He decided to take CHALLENGE, and we agreed to talk more after he'd read the paper.

Some workers are sharing CHALLENGE with co workers. One reads CHALLENGE articles out loud during lunch and the workers then discuss what they mean. This has helped strengthen the worker student alliance around PLP's politics.

Student CHALLENGE readers on campus led the struggle to expose Obama's pro-war, pro-Wall Street stance before and after the election. They organized a post-election panel of differ-

ent student groups to discuss what the election really means for workers and students, with the Muslim, Republican, African-American, and Labor Rights student organizations participating on the panel. The turn-out was modest, but the discussion was sharp. One long-time CHALLENGE reader on the panel argued that the financial crisis and the Iraq war are the products of imperialism, a system rooted in racism, war and exploitation. The speaker also showed all the ways that Obama supports the agenda of the U.S. capitalist class, from national service to expanding the military to more wars in Pakistan and possibly with Iran.

Surprisingly the Republican speaker argued that now "the nation" needed to unite behind Obama. "The U.S. is fighting it out right now with other countries...We need to make sure we stay on top in the world, because if China or Russia get the top spot, then we all lose. But if the U.S. stays the main power in the world, then we all benefit," said the young Republican.

Obama and the ruling class want to win students and workers to believe that if the U.S. is strong, then all "Americans" will be better off, to get the working class to sacrifice for "our nation." One PLP member pointed out that all workers always stay at the bottom under capitalism, no matter which group of bosses is on top. So, workers and students should fight for internationalism and solidarity across borders. We should fight against the racist nationalism and patriotism that Obama, McCain, and other politicians are promoting. Others on the panel and in the audience agreed.

By building CHALLENGE networks and fighting for a worker-soldier-student alliance, we can expose these fascist lies that promote patriotic sacrifice and racism among workers and students. This will help in creating a base for our ideas and for the struggles in the future. As the capitalist crisis deepens, the struggle to expand CHALLENGE networks will politically prepare our members and friends to take greater leadership with PLP in the fight for revolution. ☸

PL Youth Activity Spurs Exposé of Obama, Builds PLP

NEWARK, NJ, November 29 — "I really need to know how I can become a member of this group," exclaimed a young high school student at a recent study group organized by a high school PLP club. We have recently seen an upsurge of interest among students and parents.

Many students who attended the study group later joined PL members at the polls on election night to distribute our election pamphlet to workers going in to vote. Afterwards they returned to a teacher's house to watch the returns and further debate whether or not to support Obama.

Later, three of those students joined us in Brooklyn to demonstrate against the racist bosses at Agriprocessors (see CHALLENGE, 12/10). Those who couldn't come eagerly asked how it went.

These responses were born in the club's bi-weekly study groups, analyzing PLP's election pamphlet. High school students, teachers and interested parents — Asian, Latin, black and white — discussed the then upcoming election and its meaning for the working class. We've had over 15 participants, the most since the club was formed. We covered many topics — from who holds the real power to what life would be like under a communist world led by PLP.

Obama's "Change" was without a doubt the hottest topic. Many students and parents are convinced Obama will create the change workers need. One teacher responded by saying, "Yes, there will be change, there will always be change, but who will it benefit? Wall Street doesn't put millions of dollars behind a candidate so he can turn around and give power to the working class. The only change that we need will come from the workers who run this world."

One parent, a NJ Transit bus driver, agreed, but also said Obama is what we need right now because the working class isn't organized well enough. While he disagreed with our position not to vote, he still remains friends with, and continues to support, PLP.

We still meet regularly with these students. Many are still excited and want to know more about communism. The newest club member now leads the sessions, currently reading "Marx for Beginners" by Rius.

We're trying to use the momentum gained from our activity during the bosses' election to build the Party among students and parents in our area. Although many people around us have dangerous illusions about the Obama presidency, that he will solve workers' problems, we know our lives will worsen. Capitalism's contradictions are becoming clearer to workers everywhere. This offers opportunities for PLP'ers to expose him and his capitalist system, particularly as imperialist wars and fascist exploitation come down even harder on our class.

While the rulers may win workers to believe in their representative, this honeymoon can't last forever. That's why it's more important than ever to maintain personal as well as political ties to those around us. Through consistent struggle, we can expose Obama and other misleaders for what they really represent — ruling-class interests.

While many of our friends are planning to attend Obama's inauguration, we are struggling with them to begin building for our most important event — May Day. Although nearly five months away, we're planning events from now until then for students, parents, and teachers to help organize for, and participate in, May Day, to enable them to see themselves not only as Party friends and member, but eventually as leaders. ☸

AUTO BAILOUT MEANS MORE RACIST ATTACKS



Rosario, Argentina — GM workers have struck against layoffs of contract workers.

DETROIT, MI, December 8 — It appears GM, Ford and Chrysler will get about half the \$34 billion bailout they went begging for, enough to ensure they don't collapse over the next 90 days. They presented their "business plans" to Congress on the same day the Labor Dept. reported a loss of 533,000 jobs in November, the largest monthly loss in 34 years.

The money may come attached to a new federal "Car Czar" who will oversee the industry's restructuring. This would be another step in the development of fascism as the bankers use their state power to protect their investments.

It also appears that the full weight of the crisis will be placed on the backs of auto workers. GM will eliminate up to 30,000 white and blue collar jobs in North America and close 11 more factories by 2012. GM will start 2009 with layoffs at three

plants in Michigan, Ohio and Ontario. They will be idled throughout January and will resume production each with one less shift and a total of 4,400 fewer workers.

The "new General Motors" will have sold or closed Hummer, Saab or Saturn. Pontiac will be greatly reduced. GM CEO Wagoner should have no trouble getting by on his \$1 salary for 2009. He stole \$24 million in 2006 and again in 2007, and squeezed by with \$2.2 million in 2008.

Auto workers won't be so lucky. Our contracts will be reopened and gutted. We will face severe wage and benefit cuts, and many workers could lose homes as a result. No one will be spared, including retirees.

In the 2007 contract, the auto companies and the UAW set up the Voluntary Employee Benefit Association (VEBA) that was supposed to "guarantee" retirees' healthcare, even if the industry went bankrupt. The Big Three were to contribute the bulk of the \$60 billion fund. Also, a 3% wage increase for current UAW workers is being deferred to VEBA. But the global credit and financial crises plunged domestic auto sales to their lowest rate in 25 years. GM already failed to make a \$1.7 billion payment in July, and canceled healthcare for all white-collar GM retirees. This may be the beginning of the end for retiree health care.

These layoffs and plant closings have a deadly racist character. According to a report from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Center for Economic Development, black males, ages 16 to 64, have an

unemployment rate over 50% in the industrial cities of Buffalo (51.4%), Milwaukee (51.1%) and Detroit (50.6%). Marc Levine, the Center's founding director, said, "And given perilous economic conditions on the horizon, we have every reason to fear that conditions may get even worse." The bailout of the auto bosses will only mean more racist poverty, terror and homelessness for the working class.

Currently, the entire working class is taking it on the chin. The attacks are coming so fast that the situation appears to be overwhelming. We must do everything possible where we are to launch a fight-back that ultimately can challenge the bosses for power. We should try to set up unemployment committees in our factories and unions to ensure those laid off remain part of the struggle. In local unions, we should fight all-out to strike against any more concessions to current, future or retired workers. We can take the fight against racist unemployment to our community and immigrant organizations, schools and churches, uniting black, Latin and white workers.

Where there is a mass base of CHALLENGE readers and distributors, we should move them into action and into PLP, and work to establish more such bases. This economic crisis and auto bailout plays a big part in the inter-imperialist rivalry that is pushing the bosses towards world war. A PLP-led fight back can lead us towards communist revolution. ☸

Bankers Hold the Bonds; Workers, Riders Left Holding the Bag

SAN FRANCISCO, CA — In mass transit, the issue of schedules is where "the rubber hits the road" for workers. This is a life-and-death issue for transit drivers. The long-term effects of speed-up, more riders with less equipment, tighter schedules and no rest breaks are stress-related illnesses such as high blood pressure and bodily injury. Transit agencies are all talking about more cuts in service and higher fares to pay loans and deal with the financial crisis.

The mass transit budget is where the biggest conflict comes up between the needs of Big Finance Capital and the needs of both drivers and working-class riders. Maximization of profit in the financial sector is the root of killer schedules and service cuts. In addition, the "Oil-War Budget" has cut federal transit funds. Better and more inclusive transit schedules would require more transit workers, more equipment and more money in the budget. That won't happen without the organized power of the drivers and riders.

Deficit Financing: Working Conditions Worsen and Passengers Lose Service

In the '90s, San Francisco MUNI sold \$467.9 million worth of equipment (such as trains) to investors and banks under "Sell & Lease-Back Agreements" — then leased this equipment back. MUNI got a lump sum up-front from the sale (to meet deficit budgets), bought insurance from AIG and guaranteed the life of the equipment so the investors got the depreciation. Thirty-one transit agencies in the U.S. sold equipment, a total value of \$9.3 trillion.

This debt financing is a sour deal for transit workers who continue to lose "real wages" due to part-timing, increasing health expenses, etc. but have longer hours and more passenger boardings per shift to increase "productivity."

Where's the Money?

When Willie Sutton (a famous bank robber) was asked "why do you rob banks?" he replied, "that's where the money is." This makes perfect sense to most working-class people. Let the banks and finance institutions pay all those "lump sum payments" back into the transit system. Make them pay higher transit

assessment fees which reflect the enormous value that transit infrastructure adds to their business (brings the workers to work) and their property (increases property values).

But that won't happen — like the current eviction/foreclosure crisis and tax bailout, the working-class will pay. It's the inevitable working-out of finance capitals' control of taxes, credit, markets, and the political process. The working class's needs are in direct conflict with "free" markets, profits and wars for control of resources. Transit workers and passengers need safe, decent and free transit. This requires the development of a mass revolutionary movement to overthrow capitalism.

Like the bailout, Obama's plan for rebuilding infrastructure, including transit, and 2.5 million jobs, will make millions for the banks and investors who control the "Infrastructure Fund." Obama's advisors and cabinet members set up similar deals under Clinton and Bush. Millions of working-class people are opposed to this, many who support Obama believing they can "hold his feet to the fire." But working-class people are the source of such change, not union leadership or the president.

Mass Transit is the life-blood of big cities, which puts tremendous power in our hands if we are organized to use it. At MUNI, at AC Transit and around the country, we must work on uniting community groups who are hurt by the Transit Effectiveness Project (TEP), riders whose service is being cut back, and transit workers who are hurt with nightmare schedules. We have plenty of and powerful allies if we get out there and organize them.

Societal change and revolution may sound overwhelming and far-off. PLP presents the alternative of a communist society to our coworkers and friends with every struggle for improvement in our lives. As these battles continue, many will see a relationship between "schedules," capitalism, and the need for revolution. ☸

Calif. Dems Pass Budget Cuts; Workers, Students Must Hit Back

The longest budget stalemate in California history ended in September with a budget "balanced" on the backs of workers and students. The budget, which stands to be cut further, is a racist attack on the working class that:

- Cut \$3.3 billion from base K-12 funding and from community colleges, libraries and adult education
- Cut billions more from low-income seniors and people with disabilities, from the CalWorks job training program, and other social services.
- Cut MediCal benefits, public health, the discount drug program, and payments to MediCal providers
- Will make mid-year cuts to the University of California (UC) and the California State University (CSU) systems, but not to "debt service" (interest flowing from workers' taxes to banks)
- Diverted money for public transit to fund \$1 billion in transit-related debt service
- Kicked in \$250 million extra for COPS, Sheriffs, and more fascist law-enforcement

California's Racist Cuts

Democratic politicians took advantage of the huge Obama turnout to pass an initiative raising LA County's sales tax to 8.75%. Now they're planning more racist mid-year budget cuts which will hurt all workers. For example, the bosses closed King Hospital in South LA, patients were shunted to public health clinics; now the County Board of Supervisors threatens to cut the clinics.

Like 18 other states, California is running out of unemployment insurance funds. The official unemployment is over 7.7%, up from 5.5% last year. The San Francisco Chronicle reported (9/11/08) that California hoped to borrow from the Federal Government for the first time since the 1930s.

Meanwhile, workers here are losing their homes at 2½ times the rate a year ago. Tuition is likely to increase in the UC system, and in the CSU system with proportionally more black and latin students. At community colleges (with even more black and Latin students) fees could rise by 30% or 50%. These fees don't go to the colleges, but into the general fund where they help pay for bond interest and prisons.

Our Fight

College students protested budget cuts last spring, and are planning statewide rallies for the coming weeks. Students and workers still have illusions about capitalism, but as discussion leads to action, opportunities for communist work expand. CHALLENGE sales on campuses are increasing, more students are looking to the Progressive Labor Party for leadership. It will be up to us to take this opportunity to show that capitalism is not a viable system for the working class. Join Us. ☸

Mumbai Massacre Heats Up India-Pakistan Dogfight

The Mumbai terrorist attack is being played as a religious holy war between Moslem and Hindu fundamentalism. But behind that lies what is killing millions of workers worldwide today: the dogfight among the world's imperialists and their lackeys for control of the energy resources, pipelines (see below article) and the right to super-exploit workers.

In South Asia, this deadly mixture has brought two regional nuclear powers, India and Pakistan, to the brink of another war, and exposed the weaknesses of U.S. imperialism's policy towards Afghanistan-Pakistan. "The crisis...fallout may... [expand] to include the United States, NATO, Afghanistan and Iran," reports the NY Times (Week In Review, 12/7)

The U.S.-NATO Afghan war has had a devastating destabilizing effect on Pakistan (see CHALLENGE, 12/10). A fractured Pakistani ruling class is so divided that it cannot help U.S. imperialism's design for the region. "A collapsing Pakistan, and with it the loss of any real border separating India from Pakistan, is India's worst nightmare," says Robert Kaplan, senior fellow at the Center for a New American Security. "Making matters worse, every time the United States launches an air attack into Pakistan from Afghanistan, it further destabilizes the Pakistani state." NY Times, 12/8)

Any of the many factions of the Pakistani ruling class could have been behind the Mumbai massacre — which killed 192 people and injured hundreds more — as well as the recent bombing of the Indian embassy in Kabul, the Afghan capital. Many in the ISI (Pakistan's powerful military intelligence service)

'Both India and Russia are derailing the U.S.-Saudi plan to make a deal with some Taliban leaders at the expense of the former's interests in energy-rich Central Asia.'

see India as the main enemy of Pakistan. Killing innocent people is business as usual for imperialism's big bosses and their goons.

The Mumbai massacre has shaken India's growing alliance with the U.S., enabling India's old ally, Russia, to re-emerge. Following the Mumbai massacre, Russian president Medvedev visited India and not only made a deal to sell India 80 M1-17 helicopters but also got an extra \$2.2 billion from India for an aircraft carrier.

Mumbai has not only led to Russian weapons' sales to India but has now brought India's bosses closer to the Russian position in Afghanistan.

During Medvedev's visit, in a Joint Declaration, India and Russia shared their concern over the "deteriorating security situation" in Afghanistan and called for a "coherent and a united international commitment" to deal with the threats emanating from that country.

The implied criticism of the U.S.-led war is obvious as is the rejection of the U.S. strategy to retain the war as its exclusive domain. The Joint Declaration then says, "Both sides welcome Russia's initiative to organize an international conference in the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, involving its Member states and Observers."

Both India and Russia are derailing the U.S.-Saudi plan to make a deal with some Taliban leaders at the expense of the former's interests in energy-rich Central Asia.

This mixture of imperialist-capitalist rivalries and their use of religious fundamentalism is deadly for the region's workers and their allies. The urban and rural workers and youth, from Kabul to Karachi to Mumbai, have a long history of fighting capitalism and imperialism. What's needed is a revolutionary communist outlook to unite and destroy all the bosses and their various ideologies.✊

Imperialists' Battle Over Oil Pipelines Will Widen War

The Mumbai massacre (see above) highlights the rapid, blood-letting pace of the sharpening inter-imperialist rivalry for control of the Caspian region's vast oil and gas resources and its strategic pipeline routes to world markets. This rivalry, intensified by the worldwide, deepening capitalist economic crisis, is leading eventually to World War III.

U.S. imperialism's seven years of indescribable carnage in Afghanistan was originally intended as a quick military operation to secure pipeline routes for transporting Caspian region resources to the Indian Ocean Gwadar port in Pakistan's Balochistan province, by-passing Russia and Iran.

Now, with the U.S. bosses bogged down in two wars — and major ones with Iran, Russia and/or China looming — while facing one of the worst economic crises in their history, they're desperately trying to stem their rapid decline and remain the number one imperialist power. Oil, despite its sharply lower price, is still crucial to this endeavor, as it is to Russia's and China's rise as rival superpowers.

IF YOU CAN'T BEAT THEM, HAVE THEM JOIN YOU

With the Russian victory in Georgia making it unfeasible to build new U.S. trans-Caspian pipelines, Afghanistan is again (short of invading Iran) the most realistic, practical route to transport Caspian energy to market, by-passing Russia and Iran. That's why the "U.S. is actively considering [peace] talks with elements of the Taliban....in a major policy shift that would have been unthinkable a few months ago." (Wall Street Journal, 10/28/08)

The objective is to "pacify and stabilize" Afghanistan enough to guarantee safe transport of these resources, while occupying the country indefinitely. At a recent NATO meeting, "the alliance visualized a long haul in Afghanistan." (Asia Times on-Line, 10/15/08)

U.S. bosses hope to have everything in place by 2013 when Kazakhstan oil, being developed by U.S. oil companies, will start flowing. With this outlet, U.S. imperialists hope to reverse Russia's gains in the energy-rich ex-Soviet republics.

RUSSIA, CHINA, IRAN AND THE NORTHERN ALLIANCE

These plans directly threaten the geopoliti-

cal interests of Russia, China and Iran, so they're pushing back. This fight will only lead to wider, and eventually global war.

Russian President Medvedev criticized the U.S. for creating chaos in Afghanistan. He called for a new pan-European security pact, saying NATO can't ensure the continent's security. He said the "United States' desire to consolidate its global role" is unrealizable in a multi-polar world.

Defying Russia's warning, U.S. imperialists arrogantly think they can unilaterally expel Russia and Iran from Afghanistan. But the Northern Alliance, Afghan President Karzai's main base of support, is very dependent economically and militarily on Russia and China.

Iran also has close ties with former Afghan president Burhanuddin Rabbani, leader of the anti-Taliban coalition (Northern Alliance) in the 1990s. Kabul is courting Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, a holy warrior who fought for the CIA against the Soviet army in Afghanistan. He leads the fastest-growing insurgent group in Afghanistan.

China, a major player in the region, opposes the U.S.-NATO permanent military presence in the area. Afghanistan is being courted by the SCO to become a member. The SCO is a regional organization created by Russia and China to stop U.S.-NATO expansion in the Caucasus-Caspian regions. Since 2004, Karzai has been a guest of honor at all the SCO's summit meetings.

U.S. bosses are also supporting the Balochistan secessionist movement, which could eventually break up Pakistan if it degenerates into a failed state or becomes too independent. This would both deny China access to alternative energy resources and transport routes, and provide U.S. bases to further encircle Russia and China militarily.

PLP condemns the terrorists behind the Mumbai attack, along with all the capitalists-imperialists and their religious fanatics terrorizing workers worldwide. Workers need the ideas in CHALLENGE to fight all the bosses and build a mass international revolutionary PLP to fight for a communist world, without any bosses and their mass terror.

Pakistan and China in U.S. Bosses' Sights

U.S. actions in Afghanistan and the region are also aimed at preventing China from importing 80% of its oil by skirting the Strait of Malacca, a narrow passage-way which the U.S. can block in case of war.

For China, the closest and safest sources of energy are Iran and the Caspian region, by-passing the Malacca Strait. Thus, China has signed mega energy contracts with Turkmenistan and Iran, a country the U.S. strives to isolate.

China's other alternate routes are Pakistan's Gwadar port in Balochistan with prospective pipelines from there to China's remote western regions; and the Myanmar's Sittwe port from which it will build two 900-mile pipelines to its Yunnan province.

Other possible routes for China to bypass the Malacca Strait are in the Indian Ocean. Thus, the U.S., using pirates in the area as pretext, has sent warships to "patrol" it. The U.S. is also negotiating bases there to gain full control of the Indian Ocean and adjacent seas, and temporarily thwart all Chinese solutions to their Malacca dilemma.



LETTERS



Republic workers occupying factory in Chicago

Fighting Memories of Republic Window Workers

I want to thank the workers at Republic Windows for sitting in. I worked there for a short time about ten years ago.

Many of the jobs there involve cutting plastic pieces. This produces large amounts of plastic dust. We had several confrontations both with the union (at the time the mobbed-up Novelty workers union) and the company over getting ventilator masks, as opposed to the cheap paper masks the company gave out. People had coughing bouts from the dust. I would get so pissed off about the coughing, look over at my friend who was welding the pieces I cut, and we would both slow down.

The occasional union meetings were sometimes raucous. I remember one ending with a couple of workers standing on chairs screaming at the business agent. The room erupted and people walked out. It made a big impression on me.

I gave 10 or 12 coworkers CHALLENGE each issue. We formed a May Day committee — a study group that tried to build for the march in Washing-

ton. We also organized around issues in the plant. We had discussions about communism, which some people liked. On the Saturday of the May Day march the bosses offered overtime, which some people took. Still, a couple of people went to D.C.

We did force a meeting with the owner. He told us how much the machines cost him, and how much extra we had to produce before he could see a return on the investment. This was a millionaire explaining his “problems” to people starting at minimum wage.

One day the supervisor on the line next to mine yelled at a worker. People got mad and stopped working. I went over there, but when they told people to go back, that line didn’t go, so I stayed. Four of us were fired. Our spirits were pretty good, considering. We stuck together fighting until people got other jobs. I eventually moved, but I have good memories from there. Don’t let the politicians fool you.

Ex-Republic Worker

‘So, What’s the Plan?’

“I just want to see a world based on equality,” my friend said as we discussed a CHALLENGE article on Obama’s new Chief of Staff, Rahm Emanuel. Every Thursday afternoon my friend and I participate in the Stockton, California’s Peace and Justice Center’s demonstration against the Iraq-Afghanistan Wars.

Emanuel has written a book called, “The Plan.” In the book, Emanuel puts forth a plan of “social fascism,” similar to what led to fascism in Nazi Germany. One of his suggestions for the U.S. capitalists is “all-class unity” with national service for all youth.

My friend said, “Yes, the bosses have their plan, so, what’s our plan?” I replied, “Workers need a

revolution and then a society based on communist equality.”

“So, how do we get there?” my friend asked.

“Discussing the plans of Lenin and Stalin — and Mao — could be a step in the right direction,” I said.

“Let’s talk more about this next week,” my friend replied.

“See you then!” I said.

California Comrade

Government is FOR the Bosses

In the U.S., private household debt stands at \$12 trillion. Some 850 million people around the world go to bed hungry every night. Neither situation is considered a crisis by the world’s rulers. Lehman International goes belly up, and it’s nothing but crisis. The government immediately offered to bail out the banks. A \$700 billion loan, but the world’s 850 million who are haunted by hunger and the millions who carry the \$12 trillion private household debt will see none of it.

In just one week it could be seen that capitalist government (Democrat or Republican) is for the capitalists. Profits are privatized (meaning they are the private property of the millionaires) but losses are socialized (working-class taxpayers will pay them). Government is not a neutral arbitrator that rules on the conflicting needs of capitalist and worker, but a biased and ruthless defender of capitalist wealth and power.

Capitalism serves the needs of the ruling class, keeping workers in debt and unemployed. It will take a revolution for workers’ power and communism to end hunger, debt and exploitation. It is that revolution that PLP and CHALLENGE is building. Join us!

A Comrade

Mass Uprisings of Jobless Shake Up China



Unemployment is an integral part of capitalism. The current global financial meltdown has hit the so-called emerging, job-creating economies like China’s where millions of workers have been laid off, forcing many to return to their rural villages where jobs and resources are scarce. The Wall Street Journal (12/2) reports on one such worker: “Fan Junchao is among hundreds of thousands of China’s 130 million migrant workers — known as the ‘floating population’ — being cast out of urban jobs in factories and at construction sites.

“China’s roaring industrial economy has been abruptly quieted by...the global financial crisis. Rural provinces that supplied much of China’s factory manpower are watching the beginnings of a wave of reverse migration that has the potential to shake the stability of the world’s most populous nation.”

But many workers are fighting back. The WSJ reports: “Fast-rising unemployment has led to an unusual series of strikes and protests. Normally cautious government officials have offered quick concessions and talk openly of their worries about social unrest. Laid-off factory workers in Dongguan overturned patrol cars and clashed with police... and hundreds of taxis parked in front of a government office in nearby Chaozhou..., one of a series of driver protests....Workers let go from a liquor factory in northern China mounted a protest in Beijing, at the parent company’s headquarters.”

The class struggle and capitalism’s global crisis

are causing a big crack in the “harmonious” society the Chinese ruling class is trying to build. Chinese rulers call themselves “communists” (which they themselves don’t believe), but their scheme to develop capitalism free of the profit system’s problems has failed.

These migrant workers are returning to a rural China where conditions are even worse than in the cities. Despite its growing industrialization, China still has some 730 million rural residents — nearly 2½ times the entire U.S. population. Up to 100 million rural residents are either completely landless or have no access to enough land for subsistence, estimates Joshua Muldavin, professor of geography and Asian studies at Sarah Lawrence College. “The increases right now with the large-scale return of peasants could add tens of millions to that,” he says. “Its importance can’t be exaggerated in China and internationally.”

And the development of agri-business is bound to worsen things. Migrant workers like Mr. Fan have rented their land to new agribusiness in a government-supported bid to supposedly “modernize” rural China. But the payment Mr. Fan receives from renting his land is only 1/7 of his earnings as a construction worker.

China’s rapid capitalist growth began after the defeat of the Cultural Revolution in the late 1960s, after millions of workers and youth had tried to reverse the collapse of the old international communist movement. This heroic struggle failed mainly because the movement’s leadership (Mao and the Gang of Four) compromised with the capitalist-roaders led by Deng Xiaoping, opening the doors to rampant capitalism.

The world’s bosses used this to claim the “superiority” of capitalism (much as they used the collapse of the state-capitalist Soviet Union). But even though the return of open capitalism to China and the old Soviet bloc gave world capitalism some breathing room, it also sharpened the contradictions among imperialists worldwide. China and Rus-

sia are now back as imperialist contenders. However, they’re also affected by the deepening global capitalist crisis. Workers and their allies face a period of more instability, massive economic attacks and wars.

The class struggle will sharpen. as in China, but without a re-built revolutionary communist movement, learning from past errors and achievements, workers will lack the political leadership capable of turning the bosses’ crisis and wider imperialist wars into a mass revolutionary storm for communism.

Rebellion, Strikes Across Greece

continued from page 7

scandal had further tarnished the government’s political standing. Even recent wildfires have been linked to speculators who want to build hotels in protected forest land.

The opposition Panhellenic Socialist Movement (Pasok) and the reformist “Communist” Party, both with lots of influence in the union movement, are using the rebellions — the biggest since World War II here — to push for an electoral defeat of the right-wing New Democracy government, but without changing the capitalist essence of Greek society.

Amid the growing capitalist economic crisis and sharpening inter-imperialist rivalry leading to wider wars, reformist electoral politics won’t extricate workers and youth from the hole into which capitalism has driven us. The lesson from these rebellions and strikes is to fight for a revolutionary communist leadership, capable of uniting workers Europe-wide and globally, to transform society into a world without any bosses, police terror or economic crises in which workers pay for the bankers’ bailouts.

Student Strikes Sweep Europe; Bosses' Bailout Bills Workers

Students and working class youth are not only fighting back in Greece. Students in Germany and Italy took to the streets, took over schools and universities and demonstrated against the bosses' "reforms." These reforms will mean more cutbacks for students and teachers, to make them pay for the bosses' economic crisis.

Over 100,000 German high school students struck on November 13 against standardized tests and a teacher shortage resulting in overcrowded classrooms. The next day over 300,000 workers, professors, college, high school and middle school students in Italy protested the bosses' paying to rescue banks while cutting funding for education and research. They chanted the slogan "We will not pay for this crisis!"

The budget cuts are affecting working class students all over the world. The bosses are offering tests instead of teachers, and the bosses will not trade their profits for our well being. They are more concerned with preserving their precious capital so that they can go on maximizing their profit than they are with preserving our lives as they cut into healthcare, education, scientific research, and all of the needs of the working class.

Students everywhere can be inspired by the anger and militancy of the student strikers in Greece, Germany and Italy as well as from their unity with workers. Students do not have to accept the poor conditions they face in schools or the second-rate education they receive in the bosses' schools. The bosses need students to become the workers and soldiers of the future. The mass fightback of students today is the best lesson they can learn, which will never be taught in the capitalist schools.

When students take to the streets or take over their schools, when students refuse to take their exams, show up to teachers' union meetings to protest budget cuts, create mass petitions about school conditions, walk out or sit in, protest against imperialist war or fight the racist cops like in Greece, they are beginning to fight back against the system. It is the role of communist youth and teachers to turn these mass struggles into school for communism and build a massive worker-student alliance to smash capitalism. ☸

Killer Cops Spark Youth Rebellion, Strikes Across Greece

ATHENS, GREECE, December 9 — For three consecutive days, police and protesters have clashed nationwide following a Special Forces cop's fatal shooting of 15-year-old Alexandros Grigoropoulos on December 6 in this city's central district. The cops claimed Alexandros and other youths were throwing rocks at police cars. But the youth were just shouting anti-police slogans.

The arrest of two cops for this murder has not calmed the masses' anger. Hundreds of students battled police in Thessaloniki, while protests also turned violent in Trikala, the port of Piraeus, and on the island of Corfu. Major mass marches were planned for today.

The rebellion and mass anger against this police murder reflect the hatred of many workers and youth for the cops. During the "colonels' dictatorship" of 1967-74, cops were particularly brutal against those opposing the military junta. And in recent years under the right-wing government, police brutality has intensified. The cops have especially brutalized immigrant workers, particularly in Athens' police stations. The national government has been trying to divert the anger of workers and youth by attacking immigrant workers and refugees here.

The protests are not just the actions of a "few hothead vandals" as right-wing Prime Minister Costas Karamanlis said on national television. After the killing, students have occupied a majority of schools nationwide. The High School Teachers' Un-



The anti-police rebellion has led to a general strike on Dec. 10 to protest the anti-working class policies of the Greek government

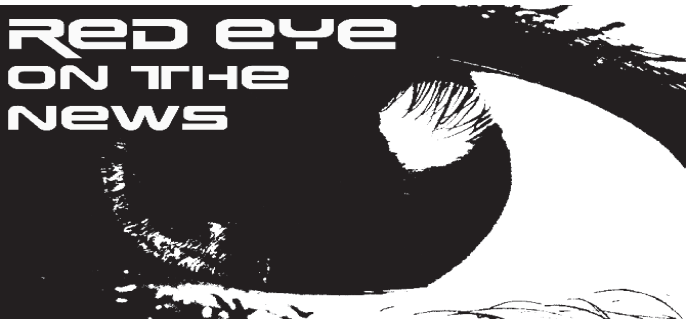
ion has already called a 3-day strike and the Primary School teachers were set to walk out tomorrow.

Meanwhile, in Germany a dozen demonstrators occupied the Greek consulate in Berlin, replacing the Greek flag with a banner proclaiming Greece "a murderer state."

There have been recent mass strikes opposing the government plan attacking pensions and job security, under orders from the European Union to cut the budget deficit. The government also gave billions in bailouts to local banks growing out of the current worldwide financial meltdown.

While workers were being attacked, a scandal erupted involving a land swap between an Orthodox monastery and government officials in Prime Minister Costas Karamanlis' New Democracy Party. A land

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

Money pulls their food away

GW, 11/28

Rich governments and corporations are triggering alarm for the poor as they buy up the rights to millions of hectares of agricultural land in developing countries in an effort to secure their own long-term food supplies.... Land deals could create a form of "neo-colonialism," with poor states producing food for the rich at the expense of their own hungry people.

They use us for war, but then...

LAT, 11/20

Neglect of the Gulf War vets [is]... all of a piece with this country's historic maltreatment of its returning service men and women....

Shay's Rebellion, the new American nation's first exercise in popular unrest... involved unpaid Revolutionary War conscripts who returned home to find their farms seized for back taxes. Some were thrown into debtors' prisons.

Some 75 years later... Irish immigrants [were] lured into New York's famous "Fighting 69th" during the Civil War, then left disabled and without their promised pensions....

In 1932, the use of federal troops to attack and disperse the so-called Bonus Marchers — 17,000 World War 1 veterans and their families who con-

verged on Washington to demand early payment of promised federal benefits — remains a national disgrace.

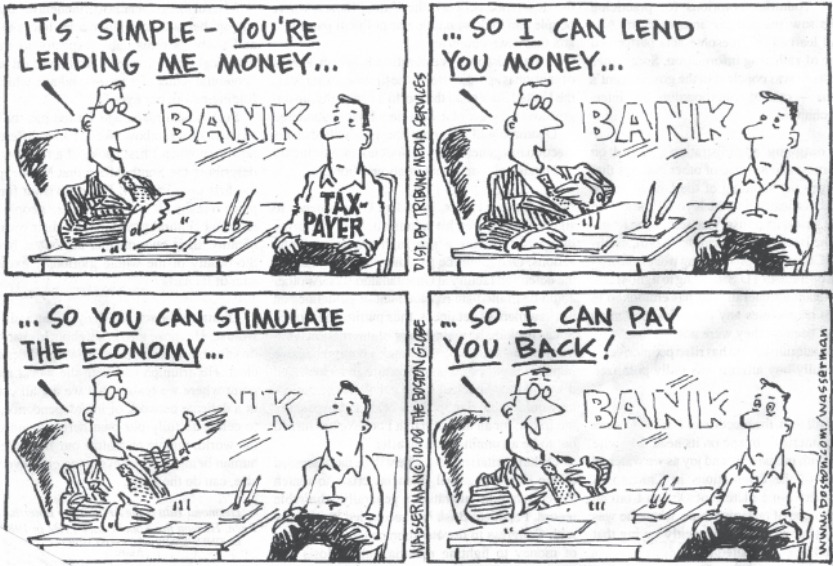
The protracted struggle of many Vietnam vets to win decent treatment for both post-traumatic stress disorder and exposure to the herbicide Agent Orange remains a fresh and painful memory.

Katrina kids' health 'alarming'

NYT, 12/5

After more than three years of nomadic uncertainty, many of the children of Hurricane Katrina are behind in school, acting out and suffering from extraordinarily high rates of illness and mental health problems. Their parents, many still anxious or depressed themselves, are struggling to keep the lights on and the refrigerator stocked....

Forty-one percent under age 4 had iron-deficiency anemia — twice the rate for children in New York City's homeless shelters. Anemia, often attributable to poor nutrition, is associated with developmental problems and academic underachievement....



More than half of those ages 6 to 11 had a behavior or learning problem.... "Not only has their health not improved since the storm," the study said, "over time it has declined to an alarming level."

Russian regard for Stalin rising

NYT, 11/30

And how should Russians today regard the darkest chapters of Soviet history? Russian bloggers debated those questions....

"The feeling of Stalinism and its perception in Russia is much different from the artificial, absolutely negative image created by journalists in the West. The problem is that former Soviet citizens cannot clearly identify themselves as supporters or as enemies of Stalinism.... On the other hand the number of people who are grateful to Stalin for what he did for the country increases by many times [more than] the number of opponents."

OBAMA DRAFTS WAR AND FASCISM CABINET

Will Barack Obama’s choice of black, Latin, Asian and female cabinet members and advisors finally represent the interests of long-oppressed segments of the U.S. working class? We think not. Class analysis shatters Obama & Co.’s egalitarian facade. Each and every appointee serves the dominant, imperialist wing of U.S. capitalists. Every last one has a bloody record of attacking workers by aiding the rulers’ war machine or their growing police state.

CLASS POLITICS PRIMARY

Identity politics is a dead end. What matters most is class. Warmakers Obama, Eric Holder, and Susan Rice won’t help the black working-class youth they seek as cannon fodder for the rulers’ wars. Family-splitting deportation honcho Janet Napolitano won’t help poor immigrant women. Thinking that the Obama administration signals positive change would be a grave political error. Politicians and their subordinates all serve the capitalist class.

What follows is an incomplete rogues’ gallery of the anti-worker criminals — many Clinton administration veterans — Obama has assembled so far. U.S. imperialism faces sharpening military and economic challenges. The rulers hope Team Obama’s ruling-class diversity will divert workers from our need for mass, multi-racial working-class unity and help them implement the widening wars and domestic crackdown they require to restore their profits.

The communist Progressive Labor Party is the only political movement that has workers’ needs at heart. Functioning outside — and opposed to — the bosses’ electoral system, we stand for mass, multi-racial struggle against racist unemployment amid the deepening Depression; unity of the employed and unemployed; and work towards ultimately destroying the deadly profit system, replacing it with workers’ rule.



ERIC HOLDER, African-American, future attorney-general, is who Obama promises will “clean up” Guantanamo. Don’t count on it. Working as a lawyer at Washington’s Covington and Burling firm in 2004, Holder defended Chiquita Banana’s gun-running to Colombia’s right-wing death squads. “Defending” Chiquita’s plantations, they slaughtered over 4,000 peasants. Now Holder joins the deadliest death squad in history.



ROBERT GATES, returning “defense” chief, constitutes a different facet of Obama’s inclusiveness, revealing the new regime’s main purpose. An author of the “surge” in Iraq and U.S. troop expansion in Afghanistan, Bush alumnus Gates, like Jones (see below), is meant to win over Republican conservatives to the imperialists’ ever-expanding war agenda. Pointing to the next U.S. theaters of operations, Gates’ Pentagon just announced a program to hire translators skilled in “35 languages including Arabic, Hindi [spoken in India], Farsi [spoken in Iran], and Somali.” (Boston Globe, 12/6/08)



Janet Napolitano, Obama’s Homeland Security czar, has a “rational approach” to immigration policy which boils down to Gestapo-style terror. As Arizona governor, she turned state and local cops — through a joint training program — into agents of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency (ICE). Thus, “Arizona led the nation in deportations — comprising about a fifth of the total 349,041 [undocumented] immigrants deported nationwide.” (AP, 11/7/08). Napolitano’s state is home to three major ICE pre-deportation concentration camps. Obama wants this proponent of “immigration reform” as a mask to “federalize” individual states’ attacks on immigrants.



JAMES JONES Retired Marine general and now National Security Advisor, was a major architect of both Iraq genocidal wars and Clinton’s civilian-wide bombing of Serbia. Like Holder, Jones promotes the killing of civilians for corporate profit. He’s a Director of Boeing and Chevron, which make billions off imperialism, one by selling the Pentagon weapons of mass destruction, the other from access to Mid-East oil.



SUSAN RICE, African-American, the next U.S. Ambassador to the UN, strives to cover U.S. war-making with a humanitarian fig leaf. As a Stanford professor and Clinton aide, she has written extensively urging U.S.-led UN military intervention in places like Darfur, citing a “responsibility to protect.” Inevitably, it is resources, such as Sudanese oil, that demand U.S. protection from Chinese control.



BILL RICHARDSON, Obama’s Commerce Secretary, claims “man-of-the-people” status despite a ruling-class pedigree. His father ran Citigroup’s vast imperialist operations in Mexico (which it may have to sell) from the 1930s to the 1950s. Bill and his late distant cousin Elliott Richardson, who held a record four cabinet posts, descend from merchant brothers who settled near Boston in the 1630s.

A young Bill Richardson toiled for arch-imperialist Secretary of State Henry Kissinger. He served as energy secretary to Clinton, whose energy policy amounted to air war against pro-Russian forces in the former Yugoslavia involving Caspian oil routes and preparation (with sanctions and missiles) for the seizure of Iraq’s oil fields.



HILLARY CLINTON, for Secretary of State. Obama deceitfully courted anti-war voters in the primaries. He had attacked Clinton’s 2002 Senate vote for invading Iraq. Firmly under the bosses’ control, president-elect Obama makes warmaker Hillary a major agent of U.S. foreign policy.

Newark Port Jobs Plan Elates Bosses, Exploits Workers

On September 16, 2008, Newark Mayor Cory Booker unveiled a port development program supposedly aimed at “fighting poverty.” “OpportunityNewark” (ON) is an 18 month project led by Harvard business prof Michael Porter (Newark Star Ledger 9/16/08). One of the recommendations in the ON report was to clear land that’s not being used for functions compatible with development of airport and seaport-based industry. “Clear land” means to take the land and give it to the port bosses. The city says the businesses dislocated by the land grab will need help, but is not specific. Like Newark’s 20-year tax abatements to Prudential and others, this amounts to using workers’ tax money to subsidize rich corporations.

Due to “globalization” and rising imports from off-shore manufacturing, the port had already been growing for years before Booker became mayor. Port Newark/Elizabeth is the largest container port in the eastern U.S. and the third largest in the country. Since 1998, the Port has seen a 65% increase in traffic volume. In 2003, the Port moved over \$100 billion in goods. Plans are underway for billions of dollars in improvement — larger cranes, bigger rail facilities, deeper channels, and expanded wharves. Booker’s giveaways are on top of huge profits already made.

Booker’s program is supposed to help workers with prior convictions. In class society, hundreds of thousands of youth, many of them unemployed black and Latin youth, are locked up for drug possession and non-violent offenses. When released from jail, they can’t find jobs because of their records. Most of the port jobs pay between \$12 and \$18 per hour. But many of these jobs will pay below

the median Newark income of \$34,452, which is half the state median! Forty percent of the jobs pay below \$25,000 per year. With little wage progression, these are racist dead-end jobs meant for black and immigrant workers. In other words, one more bosses’ scheme to bring down the wages of the working class in order to meet their needs, not ours.

The biggest capitalists and bankers are now in hot water from the financial mess. They are looking for new ways to exploit workers and make us pay for their crisis, especially now that off-shore manufacturing is about maxed out. They would like to funnel immigrant workers and those with prison records into the lowest-wage jobs, since those groups have fewer options and may be less willing to fight back. This also means those who make a little more at the

port will be in an unstable situation. With no protection, what is to prevent port bosses from replacing the worker who makes \$18 or more an hour with a \$12- per-hour worker just released from jail?

As workers, we need to begin to take responsibility for ourselves as a class. A big step in that direction would be organizing around communist ideas from PLP. This could lead to port workers as a group fighting back against the bosses’ attempts to destroy the wages and benefits of one more group of industrial workers. Organizing in the midst of the port expansion could mean more industrial workers being won to communism, free of exploitation. Communism would put workers first and allow everyone a say in working conditions. The benefits and burdens of society would be shared by all workers.✊

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