

CHALLENGE



THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

BOSSSES' NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION: WIN WORKERS TO WAR AND MAKE US PAY

U.S. imperialist wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, a major financial crisis and increasing military rivalry with the rising power of China, Russia and the European Union pose both grave dangers and big opportunities in 2009. U.S. workers — with black and Latino workers hit the hardest because of racism — face massive job losses and pay cuts (as in the Bush/Obama auto “rescue”). All this is worsened by waves of foreclosures, deportations and police terror. The U.S. war machine, with its racist disregard for human life, will expand operations in Afghanistan and continue occupying Iraq.

The entire Middle East, is, in fact, headed for wider conflict as economically-troubled imperialists and regional powers compete more fiercely for its cheap oil. [The low cost of Mid-East oil raises the risk of war. Driven to seek the highest rate of return, capitalists fight fiercely to control the least expensive resources.]

Other, potentially nuclear, tinderboxes range from the Pakistan-India border to Korea to the Taiwan Strait. But our working-class Party can grow by exposing and organizing class struggle against economic misery and imperialist war as inevitable products, goals in fact, of the profit system. (See page 2 on workers’ fight-back in the Great Depression.)

OBAMA'S NEW DEAL HAS SAME AIM AS ROOSEVELT'S: MOBILIZING FOR WORLD WAR...

One focus must be Obama’s deceitful 3-million job, trillion-dollar “stimulus.” Like the bank and auto bailouts (supervised by Obama adviser Volcker), under which the rulers are wielding fascistic state power to discipline finance and industry, Obama’s scheme has a political ulterior motive. He seeks to win the masses who elected him to collaborate more closely with the war-bent rulers.

Obama hopes to copy Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR), who in the Depression put millions to work in rock-bottom-wage federal projects, which proved to be political rather than economic triumphs. After launching the New Deal in 1933, FDR won 46 states in his 1936 re-election. Portraying the government as savior and protector helped FDR boost U.S. troop strength from 400,000 in 1940 to 14,000,000 at the height of World War II.

Today, Obama wants to restore patriotism, especially among the young. The mass movement against U.S. genocide in Vietnam, with advanced political and organizational leadership from PLP, rightfully discredited mindless flag-waving. Bush blew his 9/11 chance to bring it back. Obama thinks his “rebuild-the-nation” scheme can.

...AS U.S. RULERS PLAN THEIR BLOODY 'BIG BAILOUT'

The vast future military undertakings for which Obama must lay ideological groundwork reach far beyond Iraq and Afghanistan. The National Intelligence Council (NIC), the government’s “center for mid-term and long-term strategic thinking,” has just issued a report titled “Global Trends 2025.” Referring to rising powers China, Russia, and India, it says any one of them could invade Middle Eastern oil fields:

“Energy scarcity will drive countries to take actions to assure their future access to energy supplies. In the worst case this could lead to interstate conflicts” prompting U.S. response: “the need for the U.S. to act as regional balancer in the Middle East will increase.”

Another scenario involves a face-off between vast alliances, “Anti-China antagonism in the U.S. and Europe reaches a crescendo; protectionist trade barriers are put in place. Russia and China enter a marriage of convenience; other countries — India and Iran — rally around them. The lack of any stable bloc — whether in the West or the non-Western world — adds to growing instability and disorder.”

Then again say the war planners, it could be that “conflict breaks out between China and India over access to vital resources.” “Global conflagration” could result, according to the NIC. And pointing at Pakistan and perhaps Israel, the NIC warns of minor leaguers sparking a nuclear holocaust before a clash of major powers, “Episodes of low-intensity conflict and terrorism taking place under a nuclear umbrella could lead to an unintended escalation and broader conflict.”

We may not be able immediately to keep the rulers from putting millions into federal “stimulus” workfarms or army barracks. But we can organize in Obama’s coming slave-labor infrastructure projects and in the communities, schools, colleges, and industries that provide the Pentagon cannon-fodder, ideas, and material. Doing so is essential to developing the revolutionary communist force that will some day bury the money-grubbing system that impoverishes and slaughters workers.☺

This is the final issue of 2008. We will return to our bi-weekly schedule on January 14th. We wish all our readers a revolutionary New Year filled with struggle and the promise of a bright future of communism!

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1930s Depression: Red-Led Working Class Fought Like Hell

Politicians, policy-makers and pundits are calling the current economic crisis the most serious since the Great Depression of the 1930s. The similarities between then and now are remarkable: skyrocketing racist unemployment, massive layoffs and evictions, attacks on immigrants and general police terror. Then as now, the government bailed out banks and corporations while leaving workers to starve. Also, while then and now war and fascism threatened the world, one important difference is that in the 1930s the U.S. was a rising economic power; today U.S. imperialism is in decline and fighting two wars. But the difference between the two periods to be dealt with here is the working-class response to these attacks.

In the 1930's working-class militancy boiled over. There were strikes, mass marches and battles with the cops and National Guard at nearly every turn. Now, because of the collapse of the old communist movement, class-consciousness has been greatly diminished. Working-class response is at its lowest ebb — and the bosses would love to keep it that way.

PLP aims to revive class-consciousness and working-class militancy, and simultaneously link them to the need for communist revolution. It is useful, therefore, to review how our class, led by communists, fought back against starvation and death.

Anti-Racist Struggle

The capitalist economy crashed in 1929 and every country worldwide, except the Soviet Union, was engulfed in the Great Depression. Over 17 million U.S. workers were unemployed, one-third of a 50-million labor force. Capitalism has always re-

lied on racist terror; the 1930s were no exception. Black workers suffered higher levels of unemployment and were viciously hunted and murdered by racist groups like the KKK.

The U.S. Communist Party (CP) was at ground zero when this crisis struck, having been building a mass base for a decade. Among its most consistent fights was the one against racism. Whether against evictions, wage-cuts or unemployment, the fight against racism was central because communists understood that capitalism required the super-exploitation of black workers and counted on racism to divide and weaken the working class.

Even in the Deep South, the CP organized the Sharecroppers Union, which, in rural Alabama in 1933, successfully blocked evictions and forced plantation owners to cancel sharecroppers' debts. (1) The CP also famously took on the racist court system in the Scottsboro case (see box).

The CP gained much confidence amongst black workers in these anti-racist battles. Today, PLP also recognizes the central importance of this fight.

Fighting Unemployment, Scabs and Homelessness

During this period, the CP led the way in organizing unemployed workers. The central demand was for unemployment relief and insurance. On March 6, 1930, the CP led an estimated 1,250,000 workers into the streets, from New York to Detroit to Los Angeles, demonstrating against unemployment and for jobs. In NYC, 25,000 cops attacked 110,000 workers in Union Square.

Then on July 4, 1930, the CP helped organize the National Unemployment Council (UC), which grew to branches in 46 states. The CP and UC organized militant actions against evictions and foreclosures. "Squads of neighbors were organized to bar the way to the dispossessing officers. Whole neighborhoods were frequently mobilized to take



Flint, Michigan 1937: Sit-Down strikers answer bosses' injunction.

part in this mutual assistance..."(2) In New York City alone, the UC moved 77,000 evicted families back into their homes."(3) The same tactic was widely used throughout the urban Midwest.

Even before the Depression, in 1929 CP'ers organized rent strikes in Harlem. In 1933, when New York City cops attempted to evict rent-strike movement leaders, as many as 4,000 people took to the streets in pitched battles with the police.(4)

The government estimated there were 1,000 home foreclosures each day in 1933.(5) In the first eight months of 1932, 185,794 families in New York City were served with eviction notices. Millions nationwide became part of the army of homeless that slept on streets, living in "Hoovervilles" (shantytowns named for Herbert Hoover, president until 1933). Like many liberals blame the current crisis on Bush, Hoover was targeted then. Like the PLP, the CP explained that capitalism creates crises, no matter who is president.

Meanwhile, farm foreclosures and abandonments drove 60% of the population from the Dust Bowl region of the Midwest and Southwest.(6) But

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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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Communists Led Worldwide Fight vs. Scottsboro Legal Lynching



On March 21, 1931, nine black teenagers, the youngest being 13, were jailed in Scottsboro, Alabama, falsely charged with raping two white women on a freight train. Legal lynching has historically been part of the racist Jim Crow system that dominated the U.S. since the Civil War, especially in the South. "The Scottsboro Case," the most infamous case of legal lynching, exposed the U.S. ruling class throughout the world. This charge was later repudiated, especially by one of the women, Ruby Bates. But after a few days, a kangaroo trial still sentenced the Scottsboro 9 to the electric chair.

The Communist Party rallied to their defense, sending the veteran communist lawyer Joseph Brodsky to defend the victims. While it was fought back and forth in the courts, the communists launched a national and international campaign to free the nine young men, organizing demonstrations, marches and rallies in cities across the country and abroad. The case became one of the most famous battles against racist frame-ups in U.S. history.

All this was occurring simultaneously with mass movements of the unemployed and among industrial workers for unionization, led by communists, reflecting the great ferment in the working class battling the effects of capitalism's Great Depression.

Forced by heavy mass pressure, the U.S. Supreme Court ordered a new trial, on the grounds that in the original "trial" the accused had inadequate legal counsel. Only after the communists' campaign had drawn worldwide protests did various reformist organizations — the NAACP, the Urban League and the A.F. of L. — join the international struggle. Great respect for the communists grew among masses of black people.

The fight saved the Scottsboro 9 from the electric chair but the savage Southern courts sentenced them to prison terms up to 99 years. It was only in 1950 that the last of the young men was released.

The case became known around the world, especially among the workers in imperialist colonies. This became a powerful force that somewhat restrained the racist lynchers and exposed U.S. rulers as among the most racist in the world. The Scottsboro fight serves as a telling lesson that anti-racist forces organizing mass militant struggle among all sections of the working class can return blow for blow against the rulers' racist oppression. ☛

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Fight For Working-Class Unity Against Racist Murder

BROOKLYN, December 14 — A multi-racial group of hundreds of workers gathered for a march and vigil in a local park in Bushwick to condemn the racist murder of 31-year-old Latin immigrant, José Sucuzhañay. José and his brother, Ecuadorean immigrants, were brutally attacked with a bottle and bat by a group yelling racist and anti-gay insults (confusing their brotherly embrace as a gay act). This is the second such racist incident in the area in the last month since Marcelo Lucero, another Ecuadorean immigrant, was knifed to death by a racist gang in Suffolk County, Long Island recently.

The multi-racial aspect of the march was an important way of countering the media barrage trying to divide black and Latin workers and youth because supposedly Sucuzhañay's killers were black. Racism, no matter who carries it out, is an attack against the entire working class.

The march and vigil were called by a coalition of groups, including Make the Road NY, the Ecuadorian Alliance and the Anti-Violence Project. The mood of the marchers was both somber and angry. Only the organizers of the event and politicians were allowed to speak at the rally, trying to calm down the anger of the crowd.

One speaker, politician José Rivera, was the only one to show some anger but his aim is still to channel the masses to the dead-end politics of the Democratic Party. The politicians blamed families for teaching hate, a few bad people and the broken immigration system as the roots of hate crimes. They called on the protesters to "trust" them to get "justice" in our "great democratic system."

Hospital Workers Storm Bosses' Office Over Pay Cuts, Layoffs

BROOKLYN, December 18 — Ten days ago, workers throughout a Brooklyn hospital stormed the Human Resources department shouting "No Layoffs!" — refusing to forego their 3% wage increase. This hospital's workers are largely black, Latino and immigrant, who, because of racism, suffer disproportionately from the bosses' economic meltdown, making their fight an anti-racist one as well.

This militant action was answering the hospital bosses' "request" that healthcare workers give up the upcoming 3% increase because Governor Paterson is cutting State funding. This would also lay off healthcare workers statewide, in line with the bosses' financial crisis.

The 1199 SEIU leadership "rejected" this wage-cut "request" because it didn't include hospital CEO and managers also being cut!

Before this action, workers met to discuss a plan of action. Some wanted to forego the 3% increase in order to save jobs. Others felt giving up the wage increase wouldn't prevent layoffs. One worker stated, "In 2007, the union leadership re-opened the contract by foregoing the 4% wage increase due that July. The hospital bosses saved one million dollars and then reduced the workforce the following June."

Then the workers voted overwhelmingly for the "walk-in."

While, the 1199 SEIU leadership is always boasting about being a powerful and effective union, it has no plan of action to fight the threatened attacks by the hospital bosses and Governor Paterson.

The union leadership's close collaboration with the hospital bosses and politicians have encouraged workers to believe that capitalist reform programs can save jobs. But the nature of the capitalist healthcare industry compels the bosses to constantly cut jobs. It drives small institutions to close, creating a huge pool of unemployed workers and reaping greater profits for the bosses.

PLP'ers must bring our communist politics to this battle against-short staffing violations in patient care and to maintain their benefits. In doing that, we can win them to see the real solution to rotten healthcare and racist wage-cuts: communism. ☘

Immediately an organizer of the event warned speakers that this event was organized simply as a call to end violence, hate and anti-immigrant, anti-gay insults. In spite of the attempted restrictions, numerous times militant protesters shouted chants of outrage. Members of PLP sold 200 CHALLENGES.

As the march began protesters ended the "vigil" by chanting loudly, showing how workers understand the importance of fighting back. Marchers were met with chants and appreciation as we made our way to the site of the killing.

Immediately after the attack PLP and friends began to talk about the attack in our classes and community organizations. In two classes the students and the teacher talked about the relationship between the racist attacks on immigrants and the growth of the immigrant community in Bushwick, and the division between largely Latin and black workers here.

They spoke about the absolute need to build working-class consciousness and unity as we fight back against skyrocketing rents and gentrification. Bushwick has one of the highest rates of foreclosure in NYC. Our schools and Adult-Ed classes are already feeling the effects of the budget cuts and thousands of workers are losing their jobs. The working class cannot allow racist crimes and divisions to stop us from fighting back.



With our friends and co-workers, we began to call for mass action. Our daily work in our classes and organizations, an expanding network of 50 CHALLENGE readers and a new study group helped us motivate people. However, the community leaders quickly mobilized behind closed doors to limit anger, rank-and-file initiative and working-class consciousness, manipulating protesters to be obedient to the capitalist system.

As PLP continues to organize in Bushwick we are making progress as our friends more fully understand how capitalism works and why communist revolution is necessary. ☘

10,000 Hit LA Racist School Cuts, Call for Strike

LOS ANGELES, December 10 — Over 10,000 teachers and students held a city-wide demonstration protesting cuts in teachers' health benefits, increase in class size, a hiring freeze and other possible cuts. At one rally in front of the Los Angeles district office over 800 teachers and students heard a Latina high school student speaker ask: "What kind of a system bails out banks but not schools, and puts profits over human life?"

In a school district that has 74% Latino and 11% black students, these cuts are un-deniably racist and we must make fighting racism the central issue in fighting these cuts while uniting teachers, students and parents.

Prelude to a Demonstration

A few weeks before the demonstration high school students produced and distributed over 800 PL flyers for their fellow students, along with over 500 CHALLENGES. While calling for a united strike, the leaflet emphasized the fight against capitalism and racism, pointing out that the crisis wasn't just the fault of a few greedy speculators, but was the inevitable result of a system based on competition for maximum profit.

In making signs for the demonstration, a student said we should take the word capitalism out of the leaflet, but another student declared, "No, we have to say 'fight capitalism' because that's what we are really fighting against." This led to a deeper discussion of the nature of the cutbacks. "The capitalist system is in crisis and they want us to pay for it — I say no way," a student added. Another said, "This is part of a longer and bigger fight."

Days before the rally several teams of students went to classrooms with flyers and a petition, which stated, "We do not want to pay for the current financial problems of the city, state or county....Why are major banks being bailed out, and not schools?" Students collected about 600 signatures.

On the day of the demonstration students held a banner reading, "Black Brown Unity Fight the Cutbacks" in front of their school. They then marched with teachers to the local district office. High school students led chants and helped dis-

tribute over 600 PLP leaflets and CHALLENGES calling for a strike against the cuts and for building PLP. Many people at the demonstration agreed that a system that bails out the banks but not the workers has to go. During the demonstration, a student delegation tried to present the petition to the local school bosses. But the local representative allowed only one student in, together with a teacher.

Meanwhile, several dozen teachers and students stood outside directly in front of the glass door shoving picket signs against the doors and windows. The frightened representative said that students had to evacuate the walkway before he would receive the petition. The protesters moved and the student representative presented the petition.

Support for Strike Grows

In union meetings, PL members and supporters fought for a strike against the cuts and the bailout. We received a lot of support for a strike as rank-and-file anger grew. In the union's House of Representatives, the "fake lefty" vice-president attacked a call for a strike in a motion against statewide cuts. A PL'er responded that a strike would give the workers a taste of what a united working class can do in the face of the bosses' crisis. He said that we must not accept attacks on other school workers in exchange for less cuts for teachers.

At the demonstration, union members and students chanted, "Racist budget cuts mean...A war budget means...Capitalism means...fight back!" A union hack yelled "Stop saying those chants and stick to the union chants." Everyone continued with our chants, isolating the union sellout.

No trade union reform or any other kind of reform will help solve the problems of the working class; therefore, we are fighting to turn our CHALLENGE readers into leaders of the class struggle in the fight for communist revolution — the only path to security for our class. ☘

Report from Greece:

Millions of Youth, Workers Rebel Against Killer Kops



It's HELL over here in Greece! Students and workers have all been putting up a lot with this government, and this dead system. Officially, unemployment is listed as 11%, but more than one in four people are below the "poverty line." The police kick and hit practically every young person they see, especially immigrants, who comprise over 20% of the country's population. This police shooting

Someone sent a video of the incident with the cop (recorded on their cell phone) showing there was never any "warning" shot fired into the air. He aimed all three times at the boys. Actually there were about 15 people who witnessed the crime; he just didn't hit any with the first two shots. When he finally hit the boy, the cop just turned his back and

in Greece has been world news.

Recently, on one of our holidays a group of 15-year-old young people were celebrating their friends' birthday at an apartment in downtown Athens. That night, as they were heading home, they encountered two cops. Behind these boys, there was another group of youth who had been throwing empty plastic soda bottles at the police. One cop became angry and pulled his gun.

walked away from the innocent 15 year-old child, named Alexander. Murder in cold blood. Without a reason!

Now EVERYONE got angry, especially the students, and immediately shut down every school and university and went to the streets demonstrating against the murderous death of Alex.

But the anger didn't stop there. The workers called a general strike and came out onto the streets with us by the millions, not just here in Athens but throughout the whole country and then spread all over Europe. Everyone is frustrated with this murder!

Three lawyers quit their jobs because they didn't want to defend the cop. They say he was lying and even blamed Alex for his own death. Now there is one particular cop-loving lawyer who's defending the cop. He has always been defending these criminals.

We aren't making many demands right now. Mostly we're just pissed off. Our whole system needs to go down! The police sucks, the government sucks...and here we go again! Everything here needs to be changed

Airport Worker from Greece

Sit-in'ers Win Back Pay, Lose Jobs; Dems, Sellouts Claim 'Victory'

CHICAGO, December 15 — "Isn't it great when the workers win?" yelled a local Teamster President as Democratic Party politicians and local union reformists staged a "Victory Party," celebrating the end of the 6-day occupation of Republic Windows and Doors. The 240 Latino and black workers, members of the United Electrical Workers union (UE), took over the plant after the owners and Bank of America (BoA) tried to close it on three days notice and beat the workers out of 60 days pay, medical care and vacation pay owed to them. The bosses are building a new non-union plant in Iowa, and BoA just raked in a \$25 billion bailout.

While the sit-in drew mass support from workers and youth, the Democratic Party hijacked the struggle. Jesse Jackson delivered a truckload of turkeys. Congressman Luis Gutierrez became their main advocate and the City Council called for an end to doing business with BoA. Even the Governor stopped by on his way to the federal lockup. There was not a racist cop in sight. After six days, the workers won their demands, but lost their jobs. With friends like these, who needs enemies?

The Democrats know there will be many more plant closings and layoffs, especially affecting black and Latino workers. They're trying to rush to the head of the long line of angry workers so they can mislead our struggles.

Of about 250 who showed up to celebrate, less than a third of the Republic workers were there. Many are mad about losing their jobs and have nowhere to go in this failing economy. One who spoke said he felt guilty during the occupation because those inside the plant were eating better than their families at home. Meanwhile, the stage was filled with full-time union leaders and politicians, who haven't lost a dime, patting themselves on the back.

During the event we distributed 125 CHALLENGES that featured the sit-in on the front page. Comrades who know Republic workers came with them and planned a post-holiday meeting. We'll fight the politicians and union leaders for the political leadership of the workers, and slowly but surely make communist ideas mass ideas.✪

TWU Hacks Attack Rank-&-File, Silent on Coming Layoffs

NEW YORK CITY, December 13 — Racist fare increases, service cuts, and pending layoffs are hitting New York City transit riders and workers hard. Meanwhile, Roger Toussaint, President of Transport Worker Union (TWU) Local 100 — New York City's 30,000 municipal transit workers — is trying to get the workers, who have the power to shut the system down, to rely on the politicians to settle the upcoming contract.

Without mentioning the coming layoffs and job cuts, Toussaint pledged to work on getting the 1.5% worker contribution to medical costs — a concession he helped negotiate during the 2005 strike — reduced or eliminated. Toussaint also mentioned, almost in passing, a possible fifth pension tier. Current fourth-tier workers can collect a pension after 25 years of work and 55 years of age. A fifth tier would mean an increase in years of work or age or both.

Toussaint's strategy to settle the contract as soon as possible and to lobby politicians to get the best deal, does nothing for the millions of working-class riders, mainly black, Latino, and immigrant, who are looking at a 25% fare increase and reduced service. The main speakers spent three-quarters of the mass meeting talking about Obama and the Democrats, trying to get us to rely on politicians and give up on fighting back.

But transit workers should not be fooled into dumping class struggle and thinking that we should accept anything we get because of tough economic times.

James Little, President of the TWU international, gloated that he is on Obama's transition team and proclaimed that now workers "have a seat at the table." Somehow both Little and Toussaint forgot to mention that the Democrats voted for the national bailout for banks, NY State bailout of AIG, and now the auto industry bailout. A lot of good that elections and having a seat at the table did!

The real problem is capitalism, not lack of lobbying. Over the past 30 years, competition for maximum profit has led to massive overproduction in the auto industry, the

bank's financial schemes, and more debt for U.S. workers. Both Democrats and Republicans have responded with oil wars and cuts to government services because they serve their capitalist ruling-class interests, not workers.

Thousands at the meeting were cynically led to attack their fellow transit workers by Ed Watt, Local 100's Treasurer chanting "No Amnesty!" a reference to suggested plans to bring members into "good standing" immediately after paying normal dues and a catch-up amount. The courts took away Local 100's automatic dues check-off after the 60-hour strike in December of 2005. Currently about half the union is not fully paid up and 5,000 to 6,000 paid no dues without the check-off. Given that the union leadership spent so much time talking about Democrats they're probably also upset that there wasn't more money to give to politicians!

At other times the union has collected it's own dues and workers fought hard to keep the union together. In several incidents during the early 1940's union members stopped work when a worker dropped out of the union or didn't pay their dues. Today the story is different. The sellouts by the leadership have demoralized many of the workers, and they question where their dues are going.

Toussaint called members in "bad" standing "traitors and collaborators" but he praises collaboration with politicians that are screwing the workers, both transit and riders!

In these times of widening war and cutbacks, a transit strike like that in 2005 could be the spark all workers need to resist the massive racist attacks by the bosses. But, the only way this can be done is dumping the union sellouts and their politicians and rebuilding a class-conscious leadership among the working class. It won't be easy but it is the only road out of a system that only takes us on the road to more wars and economic meltdowns. Join us in the communist PLP to take the express train to a world without racist bosses: communism!✪

Warm Welcome for PLP at Int'l Conference in Haiti

PORT-AU-PRINCE, HAITI, December 20 — An audience of 150 at a recent State University international conference here cheered a PLP speaker who declared, "The 19th century anti-slavery Haitian revolution against French colonialism taught the world how to fight back. In Haiti today I see so many intelligent and powerful people willing to reconstruct society, but jobless, with no opportunity to find work."

The PLP'er added that workers and youth today must learn from the achievements as well as the errors of the old communist movement, and rebuild it internationally. He said its basis must be one worldwide working class requiring one unified communist party whose aim is to destroy, not reform, a rotten capitalism system. The audience was very receptive to this message and to CHALLENGE and other PL literature.

Professors and students organized the conference to examine why the State University had not implemented any of the three principles under which it was to be reformed. The 30 days allotted for developing such a plan has become 11 years. For example, the principle of "research adapted to the needs of the population" has no budget whatsoever.

But in reality it's an illusion to believe that edu-

cation under capitalism can serve the masses, particularly in a country ravaged by imperialism like Haiti where the state barely functions. Forty percent of the children never attend school. Most who graduate from high school cannot go to universities because the places are lacking. Most university graduates cannot find jobs.

Most Haitians have no jobs, no potable water and not enough food. Infrastructure — roads, electricity, sewage systems — are in disrepair. Many

During the mass uprising in the Spring, when tens of thousands rebelled against the high cost of food, students joined with angry protestors from the shantytown in trying to storm the Presidential Palace. This is the road to follow.

foreign-owned factories have closed. Local farming has been underpriced by global agribusiness, and millions have moved from rural villages to Port-Au-Prince and the neighboring Dominican Republic seeking work.

Since the 2004 coup — supported by the U.S., France and Canada — which deposed President Aristide, a U.N. military force led by the Brazilian

army has occupied Haiti. Significantly, Obama, who made a statement in September on hurricane relief to Haiti, has said nothing about the coup, nor about the racist U.S. immigration policies against Haitian boat people. This contrasts with the favorable treatment for Cuban refugees. Few at the conference had any illusions about Obama.

Haitian students and professors must try to build an alliance with the urban and rural workers here. During the mass uprising in the Spring, when tens of thousands rebelled against the high cost of food, students joined with angry protestors from the shantytown in trying to storm the Presidential Palace. This is the road to follow.

The best lesson to learn from these struggles is the need to rebuild a revolutionary communist movement here to unite with workers and youth worldwide. Some at the conference actually saw how capitalism — especially during this financial meltdown — cannot be reformed to serve workers and youth. It's up to PLP'ers to follow up with our new friends here, to learn from them and simultaneously provide them with our red politics as a path out of the capitalist hellhole entrapping all of us.

Cops, Politicians, Priest Behind Racist Immigration Raid

EAST CHICAGO, IN, December 15 — Mariachi music filled the air and youth dressed in traditional Aztec costume danced down church aisles. It was supposed to be a day of celebration. But more telling than the warm greetings and hugs were the smiles that never quite reached the eyes. The eyes betrayed the fear, outrage and tremendous suffering that dampened the festivities. As people celebrated the day of Our Lady of Guadalupe, their minds and hearts were worried about their friends who had been arrested in an immigration raid the day before at the nearby BP Amoco refinery.

Cleaning workers for a BP subcontractor were called into a meeting "about parking" early Wednesday morning. A manager waited while the workers trickled in. When all were present, she locked the door and made a call. In a flash, immigration police stormed into the room, throwing workers against the wall to handcuff them, yelling that BP had asked them to "take out the garbage." The agents applauded and laughed as 15 immigrant workers, four men and eleven women, were herded into the van.

Some were mothers, forced to sign documents they didn't understand, with the threat of losing their children. Some were released with ankle bracelets to monitor their location while they await a court hearing. Others remain in custody. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents have visited high school students to threaten them with being next.

PLP is working in community groups and churches to obtain legal aid, food and Christmas gifts for workers and their families. More important, we're trying to organize action against the ICE terror against immigrant families.

At a meeting held at the church, the priest said that "our" main concern should be "being at peace with the Lord." He said the Bible says, "Blessed are they who weep and mourn." From within our local community group we have worked hard to offer workers an alternative to

remaining on their knees. A meeting at a community center discussed the needs of the workers and taking action against BP and the ICE raids.

Workers complained of rude treatment by Congressman Luis Gutierrez's secretary, who suggested they pack their bags and move back to Mexico. This is the same Congressman who made himself the lead negotiator for the Republic workers during their 6-day factory occupation (see page 4). PLP members reminded them that all politicians and government officials, regardless of "race" or nationality, were tools of the bosses and the savage cruelty of the racist profit system. We said that only the workers had the power to transform society and build a new world.

While they are grateful for whatever help we can offer them, they are painfully aware that the capitalist laws are against them. Without a mass movement, there's little hope for a happy ending.

We must work patiently and diligently to counter the church's lies that would keep workers helpless victims, offering their suffering to the heavens. It will take time and dedication to convince them their "kingdom" can, in fact, be here on earth — a world without borders and bosses, run by and for the workers. We must show them that the nightmare they're now living — the prospect of being torn from their children — is as much a part of the profit system as the dollar bill.

Racist super-exploitation of workers is needed for the bosses to reap super profits, and will only increase as the rulers scramble to protect a failing economy. We must drive the message home that the equality for which they pray can only be achieved by building a mass international PLP and fighting for communism. ☸

Stop Torture: Destroy Capitalism

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perfecting new forms of torture long before the CIA even existed. ...The modern repertoire of torture is mainly a 'democratic' innovation."

Making the campaign sharply anti-racist (by bringing up connections with torture in U.S. prisons, for example) will help our friends see that while cosmetic reforms are likely (for example, closing Guantanamo), partial temporary reforms will not lead to lasting, systemic change. As historian H Bruce Franklin put it, "our (sic) prison system has helped make torture a normal, legitimate, even routine part of American culture."

CHALLENGE readers have noted that the UN Convention on Torture says torture includes official acts of inflicting physical or mental suffering on someone for the purpose of "intimidating or coercing him or a third person." The whole racist U.S. system emerged from the massive use of torture to intimidate and coerce slaves and Native Americans.

Wage-slavery (capitalism) relies on torture and the threat of torture inflicted by its army, police and prison system to intimidate workers. Racist unemployment leads to illness and death. Torture is built into the whole system of exploitation and only communist revolution to eliminate capitalism and imperialism can abolish these evils. ☸

LETTERS



Hospital Workers Back Republic Sit-in

A PLP healthcare worker from Brooklyn called for fight backs against the banks and bosses at the December delegate assembly of 1199 SEIU Healthcare Workers East. The PLP delegate introduced a resolution to support the Republic strikers (see p. 4) by taking actions at Bank of America (BOA) branches close to our work locations and by sending a \$1,000 donation from the local to the strikers. It was seconded by at least a half dozen other delegates and unanimously adopted by the delegate body.

The action by the delegates and the Republic workers stands in stark contrast to the 1199 SEIU leadership. New York State is facing a \$15 billion deficit for the coming fiscal year. These sellouts are proposing \$5 billion in budget cuts, \$5 billion in tax hikes on the well-to-do, and \$5 billion in federal aid to meet the deficit. Since half the state budget is used for Medicaid, over \$2 billion in cuts to nursing homes, hospitals, and healthcare workers will mean closing some institutions and huge layoffs in others.

This is the bosses' plan being imposed on the workers. We should be inspired by the example of the Republic workers' sit-in — the largely Latino immigrant workforce, victims of blatant racism — and organize to join workers in militant struggle against all the bosses' attempts to make us pay for their financial crisis. Healthcare workers need the communist leadership of Progressive Labor Party as found in CHALLENGE. This means not only reading our paper, donating to sustain it, but joining study-action groups to learn and practice the science of communism and joining the PLP.

A Hospital Comrade

Recipe for Red Ideas: DESAFIO and Fish Soup

Every day, social and political activities are occurring here in Morazan, El Salvador. As PLP members dedicated to spreading communist education to the masses of workers, we do it through DESAFIO.

One day, we made fish soup, from fresh fish from our community. As a group of ten comrades — including some who've been Party members for many years — we invited and gave three DESAFIOS to two teachers for the first time. One teacher said, "We have to be consistent with the workers' political line so that people don't get confused by the electoral parties." The other teacher made the soup. As he was cooking, he said, "I feel happy being close to you comrades. I feel I'm doing political work united with students, teachers and farmworkers."

This activity lasted over four hours in an open field where we served the delicious fish soup with piñicos, a local vegetable. Such activities help us learn the workers' ideas and the experiences of each one and how we can unite the working class.

The farmworkers' club affirmed that PLP is the maximum expression of communist education for our class.

A Salvadoran PL'er

Capitalist Crisis: The Worst Tsunami

Capitalist crises are real tsunamis, as destructive and murderous as natural cataclysms. It would be too simplistic to hold responsible only speculators guilty of an ordinary slip-up in the system. The capitalist system today is in complete collapse, neither



manageable nor reformable. Its anarchy stems from the fact that capitalists never produce to satisfy the needs of populations but to realize a profit.

But contrary to the rulers hopes, the working classes are not dead. The left in Haiti is an example. We have been able to resist despite efforts on all sides by open and hidden forces (including some from the international "left," such as Brazil), which have done all in their power to reduce our potential and our resources and indeed to wipe out the left.

Today, the international working class has an enormous responsibility in the face of this global capitalist crisis, an obligation to find solutions to avoid wage-earners becoming its victims yet again. The international left will make proposals to that end [our proposal is to build an international communist party, the PLP, to make an international revolution that ends capitalism once and for all — Ed.]. This crisis must be the last one in the history of an unjust economic and political regime, neither regulable nor reformable, whose death pangs have lasted too long. ☺

Ti Karl, A Haitian Communist

1930s Depression: Red-Led Working Class Fought Like Hell

continued from page 2

here, too, farmers organized. At a bank auction of a foreclosed homestead, area farmers would gather while one farmer would "bid" \$1.00; no one else bid and the farm would be "sold" and handed back to the owner.

FIGHTING FOR JOB SECURITY

"For the first time in history there was virtually no scabbing during a depression, the unemployed instead appearing on the picket line under the banner of the Unemployed Council, helping win the strikes of those still working."(7)

While millions of unemployed workers were fighting for jobs, those still working and in unions were also under attack. Then, as now, the old American Federation of Labor (AFL) union leaders were in bed with the bosses and helped pacify workers, getting them to accept wage-cuts almost without resistance. The communists came up with the answer: organize the unskilled workers in the basic industries — auto, steel, electrical, etc. — into industrial unions (not the old AFL craft type), black and white, men and women.

This sparked a sea change in the U.S. labor movement. The communists led the organization of the CIO (Congress of Industrial Organizations). In the winter of 1936-37, workers led by communists and left-wing militants seized GM plants in Flint, Michigan, and "sat in" for 44 days and nights. Thousands of workers supported them from the outside. When Roosevelt had the National Guard aiming their machine guns at the strikers, 40,000 workers from Illinois, Indiana, Ohio and Michigan arrived to surround the plants. They told GM that any attack would mean the destruction of \$1 billion worth of machinery. GM surrendered. The workers won union bargaining rights, an 8-hour day and a wage increase.

CIO-organized sit-down strikes swept the country, from electrical factories to Woolworth 5&10-cent stores. Within four years, four million workers

were organized into the CIO. Big Steel fell without a fight, the bosses fearing their mills would be held hostage. This was the high-water mark for the U.S. labor movement.

Unfortunately, the militant reformers in the CP omitted one vital ingredient in this struggle: the fight for revolution and state power. So within a decade the ruling class, still holding state power, was able to turn the clock back.

What Went Wrong?

In the U.S. the CP attempted to take up the torch set ablaze by workers in the Soviet Union who had seized state power from the capitalists. While the CP led many heroic battles, it made a critical error avoided by its Soviet counterparts. While leading militant class struggle, the Bolsheviks simultaneously linked it to, and organized for, the final goal — communist revolution. The CPUSA, however, failed to tie the struggles here to the need for a revolution. In essence, the CP became militant reformers.

Indeed, the militancy of U.S. workers so frightened the bosses that it forced them to respond to the upheavals with President Franklin Roosevelt's "New Deal": the right to unionize, unemployment insurance, a minimum wage, the 8-hour day, Social Security, welfare, etc. This was the U.S. ruling class's attempt to prevent potentially revolutionary communist ideas from becoming mass ideas. While all these reforms were credited to Roosevelt, they resulted from mass, communist-led working-class struggle.

Unfortunately, without much CP opposition, the rulers' plan worked. The working-class was disarmed and misled into believing that capitalism could be made to work for them.

In a sense, workers now are reaping what the CP sowed then. As always under capitalism, the reforms were either reversed or slowly eaten away. The 8-hour day has been replaced by workers needing two jobs or overtime to get by. Unionization has shrunk from 35% of the private workforce to 7%, abetted by companies' active union-busting and the

betrayals of today's anti-communist union leaders. States are cutting unemployment insurance, leaving the millions of the newly jobless in dire straits. Less than 40% of the unemployed are even eligible for benefits. The minimum wage is nowhere near enough to support a family.

The PLP applauds the CP's historic role as a leader of militant working-class actions. We are dedicated to reawakening the mass militancy and class-consciousness seen in the 1930's. However, we are also dedicated to NOT repeat the CP's errors. In every strike and soup kitchen, unemployment line and anti-war, and anti-financial crisis demonstration, PLP's message is clear: the working-class doesn't need reforms. What we need is to arm our class with revolutionary communist ideas and our newspaper CHALLENGE is our main tool in doing so. ☺

Footnotes:

1. Winter, Carl, 1969. "Unemployment Struggles of the Thirties", Political Affairs magazine September, as reprinted in Highlights of a Fighting History: 60 Years of the Communist Party USA, Philip Bart, Chief Editor, New York: International Publishers, 1979. Winter, 1969, p. 75
2. Winter, p. 61
3. Boyer & Morais, Labor's Untold Story, p. 260)
4. Lawson, Ronald, with assistance of Mark Naison. 1986. The Tenant Movement in New York City 1904-1984, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press. Lawson, 1986, pp. 104-5)
5. Fish, Gertrude, editor. 1979. The Story of Housing, New York: Macmillan, sponsored by the Federal National Mortgage Association. Fish, 1979, p. 195
6. Foner, Eric and Garraty, John, 1991. Reader's Companion to American History, Boston: Houghton Mifflin. Foner and Garraty, 1991, p. 303
7. Boyer, p. 261

PLP'ers Taking Aim at Racism, War, Cutbacks at MLA Convention

The Modern Language Association of America (MLA) — professional organization of teachers of modern languages and literatures, and the country's largest college teachers' organization — has its annual meeting in San Francisco in late December. PLP professors and our friends have been involved in struggle in the MLA for almost 15 years.

College teaching in the U.S. faces a deepening crisis every year. State and Federal government support for public higher education is cut continuously. Consequently a decreasing percentage of college classes — now below 50% — are taught by full-time professors. Part-time faculty teach most classes. They literally do not receive a living wage; almost none get any benefits.

While fewer college teachers earn decent pay nor have any job security, still conservatives have attacked us for almost 20 years for "not being conservative enough." Professors — mainly part-timers but some full-timers — have been fired for being "too left" (meaning liberal), and the rest have been intimidated.

The sharpening contradictions revealed by the wars and the current economic crisis have caused many more people to question the ability of the system to provide even for those who've supported it until now. Many are ready for more serious discussions of alternatives, especially given the following realities:

- Whatever "liberal" intentions and wishes might be, the economy will speed recruitment to, and implementation of, national service which will feed the war machine (see CHALLENGE, 12/24);

- Obama, perceived initially as "anti-war," has appointed the same old people who promote war to top government positions, and he's now warning that even in Iraq some combat troops will have to be stationed in the cities (i.e., not just on the bases);

- All these policies have an explicitly racist component — not only via the increased attacks on black, Latino and Asian people in the U.S. but also in the targets of U.S. military actions in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere.

Meanwhile, the forces of war, super-exploitation, racism and economic depression create the basis for both economic and ideological attacks on college teaching. Budget cuts force universities to do what corporate sponsors want them to do. Thus, public universities do more and more research for businesses. Tuition rises, making public colleges and universities less and less affordable for the working class that pays for them through taxes. This affects all workers, but especially black and Latino workers.

PLP will work with our friends in the MLA's Radical Caucus to protest attacks on immigrant workers; oppose the MLA's invitation to racists

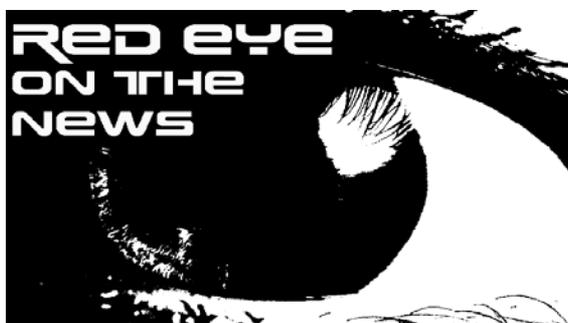
and fascists like David Horowitz.

PLP'ers will also stress that good education — for workers and others — cannot exist in an exploitative capitalist society, and that its profit system cannot be reformed away.

We are determined to explicitly make anti-capitalism and anti-racism the "bottom line" of all our public statements in sessions and meetings.

Most of our friends believe that a "humane" capitalism, without imperialism and war, is possible. They think, and want to believe, that U.S. bosses "can be won" to making the U.S. like what they think Denmark or Switzerland are. This is impossible, but most of our colleagues "want it to be true." Obama and the Democrats, along with "Dump Bush!" revisionists — phony "communists" and "socialists" — are building those illusions, leading our class down the path to world war.

We must win more and more teachers to understanding that capitalism offers no hope, that they need to join PLP, to destroy capitalism with revolution for a communist world. We will circulate CHALLENGE among our friends and others and uphold elements of a communist position as best we can. ☺



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

U.S. 'liberation' brings atrocities

NYT 12/14 — The archive, housed at the University of Michigan, holds documents... that reveal widespread killing and abuse by American troops in Vietnam.... The crimes are similar to those committed at Mai Lai in 1968. Yet ...most Americans still think the violence was the work of "a few rogue units," when in fact "every major division that served in Vietnam was represented,"... When troops fight among a civilian population, in conflicts that extend for years, atrocities are almost bound to happen. ...we rationalize it as isolated acts, as we did in Vietnam and as we're doing with Abu Ghraib.

'Law'= 11-year delay for union

NYT 12/13 — After an expensive and emotinal 15-year organizing battle, workers at the world's largest hog-killing plant, the Smithfield Packing slaughterhouse in Tar Heel, N.C., have voted to unionize....The United Food and Commercial Workers lost the 1997 election because Smithfield broke the law by intimidating and firing union supporters...alter years of litigation,...The court ordered Smithfield to reinstate four union supporters it found were illegally fired....The court also said Smithfield had engaged in other illegal activities.

Foreclosed? Who do we shoot?

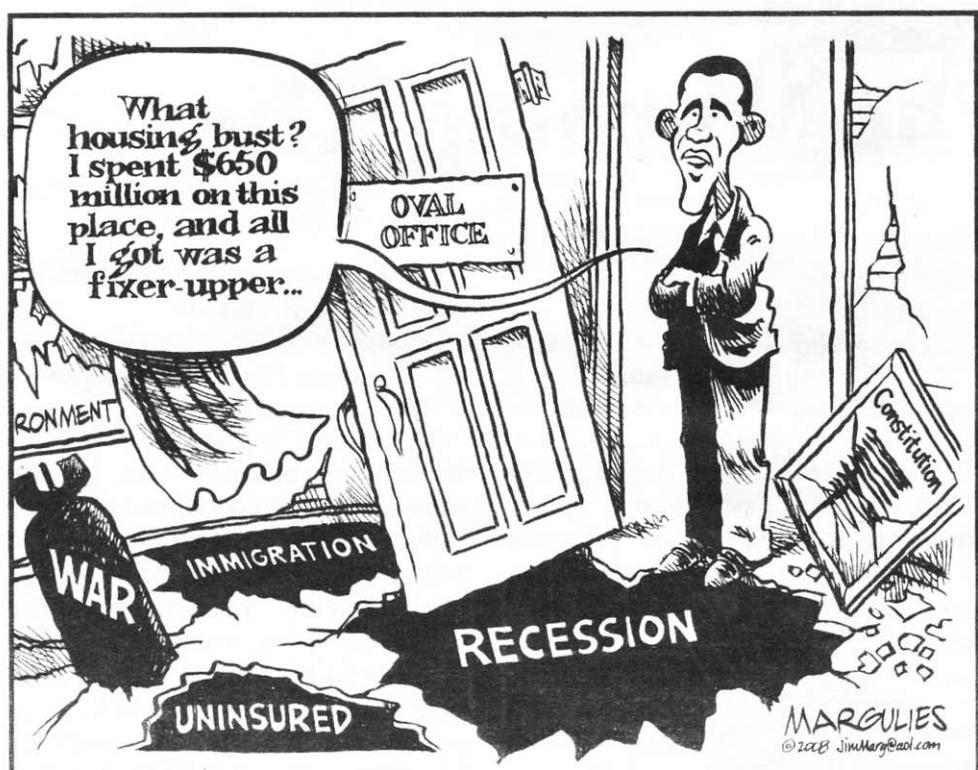
NYT 12/21 — About old movies...I've been

confronted with a disconcerting jolt of reality. Those silvery images don't seem to belong to the past, but to the scary here and now....Consider "The Grapes of Wrath," which I'd come to think of ... as a slightly corny artifact. Early on in the film, a flashback shows Muley Graves, an Oklahoma dirt farmer, being dispossed by a well-fed gentleman with a fine car and a big cigar who disavows any personal responsibility. He's just doing the bidding of the bank and the land company which is doing the bidding of the bank, and on the chain goes — all the way up to the fat cats back East. That no one is to blame puzzles poor Muley. "Well, who do we shoot?" he asks. A similar question may be forming in the minds of more than a few Americans in 2008.

'Free Choice' to sail vs. pirates

NYT 12/21 — One-third of the world's merchant sailors are from the Philippines....

More than 100 Filipinos are being held by the Somali pirates who have made the Gulf of Aden a terrifying place to sail.... The added dangers did little to faze the men who showed up at the recruitment market...economic considerations almost always trump concerns for personal safety with many families here relying on remittances that émigrés send home, there has been no public outcry about the sailors.



How Cuba's Batista Dictatorship Was Overthrown 50 Years Ago

January 1, 2009, marks the 50th anniversary of the victory of the rebel forces in Cuba, led by the Castro brothers, Che Guevara, Camilo Cienfuegos and others. The fictional movie "Godfather 2" depicts well how dictator Fulgencio Batista went to a New Year's Eve ball filled with rich local and U.S. bosses and Mafiosi and announced he was surrendering power.

The rebel forces had almost been annihilated when they landed in a boat from Mexico in 1956, with only a few making it to the mountains of Sierra Maestra. How could one of the most powerful armies in Latin America be routed by this group of rebels? Actually the small guerrilla army had much active support in all the major cities among workers and peasants who hated the corrupt and repressive Batista regime.

Fidel Castro came from the Orthodox Party, a bourgeois electoral party. The political program of the movement he later founded to fight the Batista regime, the MR26J (July 26 Revolutionary Movement), was basically one of "revolutionary nationalism" to reform capitalism, not replace it with a revolutionary Marxist system. The movement itself had many tendencies — some just wanted to eliminate Batista without changing anything; others, like Fidel, wanted more reforms.

After the small guerrilla band landed from Mexico on November 26, 1956, it was limited to some small clashes with Batista's military. But in cities like Santiago, strikes, marches and even attacks against government installations were common. Frank País, a 22-year-old student leader, led the movement in the city of Santiago. He was also in charge of sup-

plying the guerrillas in the mountains.

Early in May 1957, the Revolutionary Directorate (DR), that worked with the MR26J movement, attacked the presidential palace in Havana trying to assassinate Batista. The attempt failed. It was opposed by MR26J and Castro who wanted to publicly try Batista for his crimes. The DR commander died in the attempt. The other DR leaders joined the guerrillas in the mountains. Several weeks later, the guerrillas became more active and were able to open a second front led by Che Guevara.

On July 30, 1957, the cops killed Frank País, sparking a five-day general strike shutting down Santiago. The strike spread throughout Oriente province, to the city of Camaguey. País's funeral was the biggest protest in Santiago's history.

The MR26J attempted an insurrection, supported by the sailors at the Cayo Loco naval base, who had rebelled against their officers and the regime. On September 5, the sailors, with civilian help, arrested the base commander and handed out weapons to the local population. The mutineers seized the neighboring city of Camaguey. The Batista air force bombed the city for 12 hours, and used tanks and artillery to crush the uprising. The rebellion's leader surrendered and was shot. Dozens of other sailors and civilians were also executed. But the rebellion demonstrated that the military rank and file did not support the dictatorship.

As the Batista dictatorship began to lose the war in the mountains and the cities, it became more repressive. Meanwhile, the U.S. ruling class was look-



ing for a way to dump Batista while relying on the right-wing capitalist opposition to assure U.S. interests in Cuba. But the masses of workers and students were in no mood just to replace Batista with another U.S. lackey. They wanted radical changes. So the struggle within the anti-Batista opposition sharpened, between those who later ended up in Miami and those wanting radical reforms (the Castro brothers, Che and their allies).

(Next: The end of the Batista regime; how the sellout pro-Soviet "C"P — which earlier had supported Batista — later was able to influence the new Castro government, so that the Cuban revolution was born containing all the errors of the old communist movement and therefore never led to the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.)

Stop Torture: Destroy Capitalism

Ford Foundation: Imperialism, Slavery, and Torture

Princeton theologian George Hunsinger started NRCAT in 2005 but it took off in spring 2007 with a grant of \$150,000 from the Ford Foundation.

The openly anti-Jewish Henry and Edsel Ford chartered the Ford Foundation in 1936, shortly before Ford's German subsidiary began racking up enormous profits by manufacturing military vehicles for Hitler using slave labor. After the war, the Ford Foundation switched its allegiance to the CIA, which was already training operatives in torture techniques.

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, the CIA used the Ford Foundation to funnel money into covert propaganda projects. Today the Ford-CIA relationship is more discreet, but the foundation is openly committed to serve the interests of US imperialism.

Ford Foundation trustee Afsaneh M. Beschloss is a former CEO of the Carlyle Group, which profits hugely from Middle-East investments. Previously she was a top executive of the World Bank, JP Morgan, and Shell.

Trustee Thurgood Marshall Jr. (a staffer for Al Gore and Bill Clinton) is a director of Corrections Corporation of America (CCA), the largest private prison operator in the US, which has been charged by Amnesty International with practicing torture in its facilities.

As Hurricane Katrina exposed the vicious racism of U.S. capitalism, the increasingly open practice of torture has exposed its unspeakable racist brutality.

Our Party and others organized modest protests against the 2005 Abu Ghraib revelations. Since then, a broad religious coalition has launched the National Religious Campaign Against Torture (NRCAT) with a large conference at evangelical Mercer College.

NRCAT's first big project was to demand that the next U.S. President issue an executive order banning torture. At the same time, Richard Holbrooke, who's likely to become Obama's special envoy to South Asia or Iraq and Afghanistan, wrote in Foreign Affairs (Oct./Nov. 2008) that the "most compelling" early action that the new president could take "would be issuing a clear official ban on torture and closing the detention facility at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba." Says Holbrooke, "restoring respect for American values and leadership is essential ... because respect is a precondition for ... enduring influence."

This campaign first tapped into widespread disgust, directing it into anger at the Bush administration. Now it's encouraging the hope

many place in Obama, while mainly promoting a new wave of U.S. patriotism. Says NRCAT: "Nothing less is at stake in the torture abuse crisis than the soul of our [sic] nation." U.S. rulers will try to use such nationalism to win us to support "good wars" in Afghanistan, Pakistan and elsewhere leading to a new surge of racist murder and torture.

This contradiction opens the door to sharp political struggle. College teachers have worked the topic of U.S.-sponsored torture into their curriculum. On one campus, a screening of the film "Ghosts of Abu Ghraib" sparked a discussion of why the U.S. military is in Iraq, and of the importance of winning soldiers to an anti-racist and anti-imperialist perspective. We've raised that this is not "our" nation — it belongs to the capitalists.

U.S. foreign policy has systematically relied on torture. In the 1950s the CIA paid Cornell University researchers to develop the torture techniques used on a massive scale in Vietnam (Operation Phoenix) and, forty years later, in Guantánamo. Author Darius Rejali says that "Britain, France, and the United States were

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