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France: Strikes Mount; Workers and Youth Rebel; Students Shut Schools; 3,000,000 Protest Pension Robbery

PARIS, October 18 — The struggle against government raising of the retirement age continues, with high school students and truck drivers joining the national strikes by railroad and refinery workers. Yesterday, nearly 3,000,000 people protested in 250 cities nationwide. The movement is not running out of steam as the government has been hoping.

Today, the UNL, the largest high school student union, shut 550 high schools, disrupting classes in another 300. There are 4,300 high schools in France. Violence erupted on the margins of the student demonstrations in Nanterre, Lyons and Nantes. Since the beginning of the movement, the attitude of the government and the police sees violence as a welcome opportunity to repress the demonstrators.

Shades of the 1968 General Strike

- Beginning last night, truck drivers joined the struggle with go-slow

convoys on the highways, blocking access to refineries and occupying toll booths, allowing people free use of toll roads.

- More than 2,500 gasoline service stations have run out of gas, while the government continues to lie, saying there's no gasoline shortage;

- In Toulouse in the southwest, electrical component and auto parts workers erected roadblocks to cut off access to their factories;

- In Nantes in western France, sanitation workers voted to strike today, joining those in Marseilles;

- Yesterday, only half the Paris commuter and regional trains were running, and only two-thirds of the high-speed trains, according to the railroad company;

- The Marseilles dock and refinery workers continue a strike idling 40 oil tankers;

- A strike by Belgian railroad workers was set to disrupt rail traffic between Brussels and London and Brussels and Paris.

Tomorrow will be another day of strikes and demonstrations.

On October 12, 3.5 million people demonstrated in 244 cities. The number of public-sector strikers was comparable to the September 7 strike, while at some private-sector companies 80% of the workers struck.



Truck drivers block the road front.

From the beginning, the movement has been slowed by the wait-and-see attitude of the union leaders, who fear both a movement that escapes their control and a "lack of worker support." That's why successive waves of workers — first the port workers, then the railroad workers, then the truckers — have entered the strike, instead of one big strike being organized from the beginning.

Clearly, what is lacking is bold communist leadership to take this strike movement as far as it can go, including unity with African, Arab, and South Asian workers. ✪



Students in Lille, France join strikes.

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Chilean Mine Disaster a Capitalist Crime!

Billions of people cheered the recent rescue of 33 heroic Chilean miners. This outpouring of admiration and sympathy for the workers and their families encourages our revolutionary communist Party. It shows that worldwide class-based solidarity is indeed possible.

But the cheers and tears that filled the world's media for the miners rescued from the San Esteban Primera Company's San Jose copper and gold mine occurred amid an orgy of Chilean patriotic nationalism led by billionaire President Sebastián Piñera. It should not obscure the collaboration of profit-hungry mining bosses with Chile's capitalist government which caused this disaster and many others.

José Rojo, a 20-year veteran miner, charged

that the bosses had "turned a blind eye to the San José mine. They told us it was coming down; every so often there were cave-ins. They knew it was going to happen. At times when I was there with the Jumbo drill, I had to stop because I saw that the roof was coming down on me." (Argentine daily, "Pagina 12") On the day of the cave-in, he was lucky — the machinery he operated was broken, so he was not at work!

Philippe Sanchez, 51, who worked at the mine between 1987 and 1999 and whose nephew was among those trapped, told a reporter, "It is one of the worst mines in the area. It has always been dangerous. There are accidents all the time and when you are hurt, you had better not complain or you will be sacked — there is a culture of silence."

Two factors saved the miners: their own courageous working-class egalitarianism and the capitalists' opportunistic grab at a rare chance to appear benevolent. In the crucial first 17 days, the miners, left for dead by the pit's owners, selflessly rationed scant food supplies. "They had two little spoonfuls of tuna, a sip of milk and a biscuit every 48 hours," said Dr Sergio Aguila, who was part of the rescue team. (London Telegraph, 8/24/10) They took turns at finding water and trying to get messages to the outside. That's when the capitalists decided to cash in and launched their nationalistic orgy.

Just like West Virginia's Massey Coal Company whose illegal unsafe conditions killed almost 30 miners this year and the deaths in the Chinese Wangjialing coal mine earlier this year (an average of seven miners die in China every day; 24 miners die every year in Chile), the capitalists are happy to pay fines rather than paying for more expensive safe working conditions for miners. Less than a week after the drama in Chile, at least 25 miners perished in preventable incidents in China and Ecuador. The yearly worldwide mine death toll numbers in the thousands and doubles with deaths from lung disease.

Under capitalism, we, the working class and its allies, are locked in a death struggle with the bosses that profit-driven mine disasters lay bare. In every case, it's cost-cutting shortcuts on safety procedures that keep killing workers. With capitalism rampant, concern for the bottom line continues to trump workers' well-being.

Why Articles Are Not Signed

The fact that CHALLENGE/PLP articles are not signed grows from PLP's criticism of the cult of the individual in the former socialist Soviet Union and China. We do not want to encourage the possibility of building up a "following" around any particular individual. While an article may be written by one person, the final version is based on collective discussion and criticism. Many times this collective discussion even precedes an individual's writing of an article.

'SAVIOR' CHILE CHIEF PINERA IS U.S. BOSSES' LACKEY

Harvard-educated Pinera's close ties to the U.S. ruling class shaped his self-serving, U.S.-boosting crisis management. He immediately put mining minister Laurence Golborne — a former boss at Exxon Mobil's Chilean subsidiary — in charge. Pinera owes a good part of his fortune to his recent sale of Chilevision TV to Time Warner. Two years ago, Pinera was a keynote speaker at a conference sponsored by Harvard's David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies. (Rockefeller and his daughter serve as its advisors.) Pre-presidential Pinera touted "New Horizons for Opportunities" to potential U.S. imperialist investors.

For safety on the job, workers need the power to make it safe. That can only come with communism, when workers rule society and the capitalists and their profit drive at any cost no longer exist.

This San José mine has had 80 "accidents" since 2004 when a miner died after a cave-in. In 2006, a truck driver was also killed in an "accident." That same year 182 workers were injured, 56 of them seriously. The mine was closed in 2007 after a geologist died in a rock explosion. The owners were charged with involuntary manslaughter, but the case was dropped after they agreed to pay the family \$170,000.

To re-open the mine, the government required that San Esteban construct an emergency ladder that would lead to the surface from the very shelter where the 33 trapped miners huddled together. The miners got only one-third of the way up before discovering that the mine owners had never bothered to finish the ladder to the top! Moreover, one of the trapped miners said that when they reached the shelter itself, "The energy was cut off and there was no ventilation," forcing them to sleep in the shafts.

Continuing their arrogance, the mine bosses did not pay the miners' families while their breadwinners were trapped, forcing their families to rely on charity. When a court ruled that the company freeze \$1.8 million for future compensation to the miners, the bosses threatened to declare bankruptcy. Meanwhile, San Esteban is poised to open another mine in the Atacama Desert! The union leadership has proven ineffective in rallying workers to fight these bosses because they're defenders of the capitalist system and therefore did virtually nothing to fight for the workers during

the previous 80 "accidents."

Chile's politicians are partners in these capitalist crimes. President Piñera, who has milked this rescue mission for every ounce of patriotic fervor he could mount, ran for president on a platform of privatizing Chile's copper mines, provoking miners' strikes against his proposal.

Piñera, a billionaire businessman, is a political descendant of the military dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet, under whose regime his brother Jose served as minister of labor and of mining. Under Pinochet, Jose Pinera pushed through a Constitutional Mining Law in 1981 that privatized much of Chilean mining, leading to more severe declines in safety conditions.

The right-wing president has tried to claim ownership of the rescue effort, appearing at the mine site and attempting to turn the entire operation into an exercise in patriotism. He furthered capitalism's classless myth that "we're all in this together" as a nation. Nothing could be further

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OUR FIGHT

- ★ **Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to destroy capitalism and the dictatorship of the capitalist class. We organize workers, soldiers and youth into a revolutionary movement for communism.**
- ★ **Only the dictatorship of the working class — communism — can provide a lasting solution to the disaster that is today's world for billions of people. This cannot be done through electoral politics, but requires a revolutionary movement and a mass Red Army led by PLP.**
- ★ **Worldwide capitalism, in its relentless drive for profit, inevitably leads to war, fascism, poverty, disease, starvation and environmental destruction. The capitalist class, through its state power — governments, armies, police, schools and culture — maintains a dictatorship over the world's workers. The capitalist dictatorship supports, and is supported by, the anti-working-class ideologies of racism, sexism, nationalism, individualism and religion.**
- ★ **While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions worldwide. Capitalism returned to Russia and China because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system, like wages and privileges. Russia and China did not establish communism.**
- ★ **Communism means working collectively to build a worker-run society. 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." Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit black, Latino, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working class.**
- ★ **Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women — sexism — and divisive gender roles created by the class society.**
- ★ **Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.**
- ★ **Communism means that the minds of millions of workers must become free from religion's false promises, unscientific thinking and poisonous ideology. Communism will triumph when the masses of workers can use the science of dialectical materialism to understand, analyze and change the world to meet their needs and aspirations.**
- ★ **Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!**

PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

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Students, Parents and Staff Know We Must: Probe School Bosses, Not Students and Teachers

BROOKLYN, NY, October 12 — “What’s the purpose of these schools? Is it for you to get educated OR to keep you under control?” This is what one PLP member asked his class last week in response to this schools’ administration harassing students about their participation in the October 2 March for Jobs in Washington, D.C. Many students attended this event, sponsored by the United Federation of Teachers, with family and friends, as well as staff members.

The administration has pursued campaigns of intimidation before when students and staff members have attended various events together, such as when teachers and students worked alongside each other in helping to rebuild New Orleans. This effort to create a climate of fear and hysteria has backfired on them before and will again. The Washington rally was attended by politicians as well as thousands of students from all over the East Coast.

This witchhunt is another racist attack by the administration. Who is investigating the students from mostly white specialized schools who attended the rally? Nobody. Is anyone investigating the private school students who attended? Why investigate the black and Latino students and their teachers who went? Who is investigating the New York City Comptroller, who brought a busload of students as well?

Better yet, let’s investigate the administration. Year after year they program Haitian students to take history classes with uncertified teachers from other departments. Then these students face the State Regents Test with no preparation.

Parents plan to take this to the Parent-Teacher Association. As one parent said, “These students

should be in D.C. fighting for jobs — this is exactly what the young generation should be doing!” When teachers passed out fliers announcing the rally at the last parent meeting, all the parents were supportive. Because of growing unemployment (in one community near the school the unemployment rate is 20%) many parents encouraged their students to attend the protest. Some even attended it themselves.

This attack on students and teachers is part of a citywide attack on public education. While the Mayor continues to scapegoat both the union and teachers, it is increasingly crucial that we fight back. Students are the main targets of these attacks — whether it’s overcrowded classes, lack of textbooks or rising transit fares. The school administration, while failing miserably to provide a decent education, gets an A+ for harassment and intimidation. Communists have always led and must continue to lead the fight-back.

Students are plenty angry about being interrogated about what they do on their own time. They are getting a real education in fight-back as they take leadership

in planning a mass campaign against the administration. This will include everything from petitions to demonstrations. The school bosses want to frighten teachers and students with their investigations.

We must take the offensive, put the administration on trial and be bold in our defense of the October 2 marchers. Capitalist education teaches all of us to be docile and passive, but with the leadership and support of communists in the PLP, we have confidence that young people will conduct “investigations” of their own and come to the right conclusion about the need for a communist society based on egalitarianism and dignity! ☸



In France, High School students rebelled.

Transit Workers, Riders Blast Racist Bankers; Union Backs Politicians

NEW YORK CITY, October 16 — TWU (Transport Workers Union) Local 100 representing most of NYC’s transit workers sent 20 buses to the October 2 “one nation” rally in Washington, D.C. However, many buses were largely empty. The international TWU “contingent” of mass transit, airline and railroad workers was nothing more than a distribution point for lunch, T-shirts and temporary tattoos. Many Local 100 members, including recently laid-off transit workers, were motivated to go to fight for jobs and against MTA bosses. But the rally was nothing more than a big pre-election photo-op for Democrats.

Preparing for the rally, in September PLP protested at two of five MTA (Metropolitan Transit Authority) public hearings on fare hikes, confronting the MTA Board face to face. Along with a few spirited transit riders and workers, PLP pointed out that layoffs, service cuts and fare hikes hit the city’s mainly black, Latino and immigrant workers the hardest.

PLP’s goal on October 2 and in confronting the MTA Board was to build mass, anti-racist class struggle for communism among students, workers and soldiers internationally. We knew that the rally was a scam to persuade U.S. workers to vote for

agents of super-rich Wall Street capitalists and that the MTA board’s mind was made up on fare hikes. But PLP struggles to influence workers and riders towards uniting for international communist revolution.

Speakers confronting the Board enabled more and more workers and riders to learn about the role of Wall Street banks in causing the budget gap, service cuts, layoffs and fare hikes.

At the hearings crowds chanted, “Fire the MTA”; “Cut the banks, not the buses”; “No cuts, no war, the cuts are for the war”; “They got bailed out, we got sold out. Make the bosses, take the losses.” Speakers defied the three-minute time limit. The crowd demanded more time for speakers who attacked the MTA Board. The unions had none of that energy in D.C. on October 2.

At the Bronx MTA hearing on fare hikes, PLP distributed transit supplements tying U.S. mass transit cuts to the bosses’ need to finance their wars against other imperialists, the richest most powerful capitalist ruling classes. Blind and wheelchair-bound speakers cited the Board’s disgusting disregard of disabled passengers.

One wheelchair-bound woman testified she had to call the fire department to get carried out of the station in the middle of the night because laid-off station agents were not there to assist her.

Nearly every speaker exposed the hearings as an MTA scam to pretend the MTA

“listens to the people.” One pointed out that although some local politicians spoke against the hikes, capitalist money backs both the MTA Board and the politicians.

Another speaker, a one-time real estate lawyer and urban studies expert, admitted that real estate developers calculate exactly how much property values rise from being close to mass transit. He proposed that instead of hiking fares the government tax landlords based on their proximity to mass transit.

In both hearings and at the October 2 rally PLP made contacts with transit workers. While we failed to organize as many workers as we wanted to attend the hearings or the October 2 rally, we did not sit out the struggle.

The working class may not win reform struggles for jobs, higher wages or lower fares, even with militant fight-backs. But the recent battles against these transit layoffs show that unions organize only lawyers and politicians, not workers. The recent MTA lawsuit to overturn Local 100’s legally-binding 2009 arbitration award reveals that when bosses break their own law, they get away with it because they, not workers, hold the dictatorship of state power.

Only a May 4 break-away rally that surprised both Local 100 leaders and cops delayed station-agent layoffs. It was a short-lived victory but only mass class struggle achieved anything at all. On May 4, only hours after the break-away demonstration, a judge placed a temporary injunction against layoffs until the MTA held public hearings on station-booth closings.

PLP struggles consistently to use all these struggles as schools for communist ideas and actions. ☸



Billionaire's Payoff: More Capitalist Control of NJ Schools

NEWARK, NJ, October 15 — So what do you get when you put Oprah Winfrey, Newark Mayor Corey Booker, New Jersey Governor Chris Christie, and Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg on a stage to talk about how to reform the Newark public schools? Another attempt by the U.S. ruling class to make schools more efficient warehouses, producing capitalist ideas and maintaining class inequality and racist divisions of the working class. Especially in a place like Newark, where the “official” unemployment rate is well over 14%, and over 70% of students can’t pass state tests, the bosses need to cover up their racism with a U.S. nationalist “We are all in this together” mentality. This is where Zuckerberg comes in.

On September 24, Zuckerberg announced that he is setting up a foundation, like fellow billionaire Bill Gates, to focus on the improvement of education in the U.S., and particularly Newark.

Along with his \$100 million “matching grant,” Zuckerberg also gave suggestions on how to reform schools: “So we should close schools down that are failing, get a lot of good charter schools and figure out new contracts for teachers so that better teachers can get paid more money,” he said during an interview on the techcrunch website¹. After the Oprah show, that comment was deleted from the site.

All the hoopla on Oprah couldn’t cover up the backroom deal between Christie, Booker and Zuckerberg that would leave Newark parents out in the cold. Although it seems dishonest, this is how education under capitalism has been operating since

Black and Latino Mayors Help Enforce Racism

In the wake of widespread urban rebellions in the 1960s, U.S. rulers supported the election of black and Latino mayors in major U.S. cities. These mayors, in turn, to consolidate their working class base of support, supported the expansion of black and Latino employment in education and other social service fields. This was partly to buy off workers victimized by the rapid decline of manufacturing in U.S. urban areas that started in the 1950s and accelerated thereafter. It also helped push the false idea that higher education could change the lives of millions.

By and large, the bosses’ strategy has changed. They are now dumping many of these mayors, and putting in their place “fresh faces” like Booker, who are more openly pro-corporate and willing to push racist “reforms.” Their targets? Both urban school workers, many of whom are black and Latino, and their working-class students. Nationwide, elementary and secondary school teachers average over \$54,000 salary per year plus benefits. Mass layoffs can save the bosses billions that can go towards their wars and bailouts. Of course, we in PLP must point out how the cuts will only increase the already huge levels of urban unemployment. These racist attacks are just one more reason why we need to smash capitalism.

even if not as fast as we would like. Last week around 100 students from Barringer High School, one of the most neglected schools in Newark, staged a walkout to protest the terrible conditions there. In the first month of school, there were many students still without a schedule, one young girl was sexually assaulted in a classroom and there were fights every day. This symbolizes what many black and Latino students go through — the worst of the worst from the bosses’ racist system.

In the teachers’ union, a study group has formed where teachers and parents from all over the city will read about the history of the union (including the past role of communists), study the role that racism has played in keeping parents, teachers, and students from uniting and analyze the results of the cutbacks and corporate-backed “turn-around schools.”

On October 13, over 200 Newark parents, teachers and students held a community forum

to talk about how we can build an alliance to ensure that our students benefit from any increase in funds. While many parents still believe that public schools can solve students’ problems, PLP was there to get to know more of these fighting parents and spread our ideas: that even if these schools had all the technology and good teachers around, they would still be controlled by the ideology of the ruling class. Even the “best” schools reproduce unequal class relations and win young people to patriotic ideas. Some of the parents agreed and took CHALLENGE, but many believe that “community control” of the schools is still the answer.

We in PLP both have a lot to learn and a lot to give to this movement. Only through our consistent base-building and involvement in the struggle will we win thousands of workers in the city to our revolutionary communist ideas. The bosses are giving us plenty of opportunities; let’s run with them. ☘

1. <http://techcrunch.com/2010/09/24/tech-crunch-interview-with-mark-zuckerberg-on-100-million-education-donation/>
2. Turque, Bill Washington Post, April 28, 2010



NJ students marching on May Day 2010.

the founding of this country. Public education has always been controlled by the ruling class: from early factory owners, who built the movement for mass public education as a means to control immigrant workers, to today’s corporations giving millions to school systems to run things their way. Only a communist revolution could put workers in command of the policy and practice of education.

One example of capitalist control of the schools is in Washington, D.C., where private groups like the Walton Family (owners of Wal Mart) Foundation have the right to take back \$64.5 million if the D.C. political leadership changes². Zuckerberg’s latest “donation” with strings attached comes at a time when the Newark public schools face devastating cutbacks from Christie totaling \$56 million and eliminating around 200 positions. Meanwhile, the U.S. spends over \$1.5 billion per month to secure gas pipelines and key minerals in Afghanistan and gives the bankers billions in interest on government debt.

While it seems that the billionaires are in a much stronger position than the workers, things are changing,

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from the truth.

Even more shamefully, Socialist Party Senator María Isabel Allende Bussi, the daughter of former president Salvador Allende (who Pinochet had assassinated with CIA help), embraced Piñera at the mine, responding to Piñera’s call for “national unity.” The revolutionary left of the 1970s that fought the fascists, conservatives and liberals, virtually disappeared during Pinochet’s murderous regime. Now it’s necessary to build the Progressive Labor Party in Chile to take on the Piñera-phony leftist gang-up.

Chile is sharply divided between rich and poor. Chile’s bosses subject the indigenous Mapuche people to vicious racist attacks, driving them off their ancestral land. Currently, 34 Mapuche fighters, jailed under the Pinochet era’s “anti-terror” laws, are continuing a two-month hunger strike, demanding an end to those laws. There has been no media circus around the efforts of these anti-racists.

Chile’s modest 4.1% annual per-capita growth rate over the past two decades has been accompanied by widening social and economic inequality. Fourteen percent of Chile’s population — 2.3 million people — live in poverty, with millions more barely making it above the poverty line.

Lucrative book and movie deals with U.S. media giants, absolving the guilty pit operators, await the traumatized miners. That’s their next form of exploitation under capitalism in this age of weak class consciousness. Not so long ago, however, mine cave-ins helped spur communist organizing. It is our Party’s task today to rekindle that revolutionary working-class spirit.

Communist revolution is the path towards freeing the working class from racism and exploitation, and establishing workers’ power. ☘



Haiti: Workers Protest Assassination Attempt on Student Leader

PORT-AU-PRINCE, HAITI, October 4 — At 8:00 PM on September 30 more than ten bullets were fired at Haitian student leader Georges Gregore Exantus and a friend as they walked near his home (near a police station). The two are hospitalized with multiple gunshot wounds but not in danger of death.

The shootings had no apparent criminal motive of theft or kidnapping but rather all the earmarks of an assassination attempt, like the gunning down of a left-wing professor last January 12. Exantus has been targeted previously: once by his own professor in a classroom, once by a soldier from MINUSTAH (UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti) and once at the university gates.

Fascist gunmen shooting from the shadows are an effort to crush the radical student movement here by force. The National Police and the UN "peacekeepers" in MINUSTAH lurk behind these vigilante attacks, central parts of capitalist state violence.

Exantus belongs to the student group GREPS (Group for Reflection on Social Problems) at the School of Ethnology, part of the Haitian national university. GREPS has been leading student activism. The weak Haitian ruling class, totally dependent on imperialist aid and military occupation to stay in power, fears students whose rebellion could spark mass uprisings of the homeless and jobless workers in the capital.

Their imperialist patrons in the U.S., French and Canadian embassies share this fear of mass workers' revolt, like the general strike which rocked Guadeloupe last year. That's why U.S. rulers dispatched 22,000 troops to Haiti after the earthquake. It's a systematic campaign of repression, not an isolated incident.

Nevertheless, students and workers in Port-au-Prince won't be deterred by violent repression, an old story in Haiti. (Students

speak of the "macoutization" of the university, referring to Duvalier's fascist militia, the Tontons Macoutes.)

Today, a confederation of militant trade unions, the CTSP (Confederation of Public and Private Sector Workers), and other groups in solidarity with the embattled students are organizing a demonstration at the Ministry of Education to protest the assassination attempt. They're demanding an inquiry into the crime; the prosecution of the criminals; and the return to the School of Ethnology of three GREPS students (including Exantus) who've been expelled for their activism. GREPS has led a student strike against these expulsions, and 60 students came to support them in a lawsuit they filed against the professor who assaulted Exantus.

CHALLENGE readers should e-mail messages of support to GREPS, the CTSP, and the teachers' union UNNOH at GRES200@yahoo.fr; ctsphaiti@yahoo.fr; and unnonhaiti@yahoo.fr. Professors and students at CUNY (City University of New York) en route to the October 2 Washington, D.C. rally for jobs gathered 93 signatures on a protest letter, which was much appreciated by their fellow students and workers in Haiti.

International solidarity is the true road to "reconstruction" in Haiti — not reconstructing a bankrupt capitalism, but constructing a new world of communist workers' power without borders. PLP believes that student anti-capitalist revolt, allied with workers, has a crucial role to play in that gigantic task. But student revolt must take on the task of building our international revolutionary PLP, the key weapon we need to place in workers' hands everywhere. ☸



Workers Have No Country Mexico: Bosses Glorify Their Nationalist 'Revolution'

MEXICO, September 16 — September 15 and 16 is a national holiday here, celebrating the Mexican Revolution. Close to a million people celebrated in the center of the city, as another couple million celebrated in their homes. The media, through radio and TV, did their job of manipulating people, daring to say that the Mexican Revolution is more important than May Day.

Why would they compare a national event with an international one? The national holiday is individualist, regionalist and nationalist. Capitalism keeps the working class full of these ideas to divide workers and limit their struggles. This way the problems of workers in one region or a country are THEIR problems that don't belong to the rest of the world.

May Day is global, universal; it is the workers' holiday. It is a day of struggle and class-consciousness and this truly affects capitalism's interests. The risk of oppressed workers with hunger and inequality uniting means capitalism must use their weapons that have worked so well: sexism, nationalism, individualism, class differences and the destruction of class-consciousness.

Nothing stopped the celebration of the Revolution's centennial and the 200 years of independence (200 years of exploitation of the country's working class by national bosses). Twenty-five thousand deaths in the fight against drug-trafficking, 45,000 unemployed from the former Company of Light and Energy, the tragedy of 45 dead children in a fire, 76 dead undocumented workers in Tamaulipas, the risk of the workers from Mexicana Aviation losing their jobs, the economic crisis and the gap that each day grows larger between the rich and the poor; none of these things stopped the capitalists from celebrating their victory.

We the workers have a hard chapter ahead. We have to fight an ideological battle to rebuild political consciousness. We have to show our class brothers and sisters that this system only works for a small number of people. The 52 million people undernourished in Latin America and over one million people unemployed globally are problems for the international working class, not individual nations. Workers are forced to pay for and suffer the global economic crisis created by capitalism. By building a class-conscious working class fighting for a communist revolution, we will make the bosses pay. Join PLP! ☸

France: Undocumented Workers Demand 'Legal' Rights

PARIS, October 14 — Today, Immigration Minister Eric Besson said the French government will issue temporary "legalization" documents to 6,804 undocumented strikers, 500 of whom are occupying a museum here. But the workers and the unions backing them are holding out for written confirmation.

Some undocumented workers in the occupied

museum applauded upon hearing the minister's words, but Cheikh-Tourad Sissoko rightly asked: "And how are they going to send us the receipts? Are they going to mail them?"

On October 7, the workers occupied the "Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration," a museum dedicated to the history of immigration. They are demanding that the Immigration Ministry "legalize" them

in accordance with the June 18 agreement ending their eight-month strike.

Almost all the 6,804 strikers — most of whom are of African or Chinese origin — are still awaiting government receipts certifying that they've filed for "legalization." The receipts will allow them to work legally until the definitive "legalization" document is is-

sued. Only 58 have received receipts so far.

The Immigration Ministry claims the hold-up is due to "incomplete paperwork" from the strikers. "That's a joke," said the union official who's organizing undocumented workers. "We're at a crossroads. Either the government applies the text, or else we begin the struggle anew."

The text that was won by the eight-month strike defines clear conditions for "legalization" and should end arbitrary decision-making by prefects, the local officials who represent the central government. Enforcement of the text would clear the way for the "legalization" of France's 300,000 to 400,000 undocumented workers.

Of course, the very fact that workers have to go through all these hocus-pocus bosses' rules is one more example of how the capitalist state enforces its will on — and divides — the working class around borders they create. We must win workers to unite and fight behind PLP's slogan: Smash All Borders!

Luc Gruson, the museum's director-general, stated that, "Everything has gone off very quietly. There hasn't been any vandalism and the undocumented workers help clean the public areas." The museum has remained open to the public throughout the occupation.

The government's racist foot-dragging is yet another example proving that every reform won under capitalism can and will be taken away by the bosses as soon as pressure on them lets up. A lasting victory can only be won by destroying capitalism through communist revolution. ☸



Undocumented workers occupying the ground floor of the "Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration" museum in Paris.

LETTERS



Salvadoran Red Schools Re-affirm Anti-Capitalist Struggle

Together with comrades visiting from the U.S., 30 comrades met here today as part of a national communist school, despite a hurricane. As the wind gusted and the rain poured, we analyzed the international situation, heard a report from the convention in New York and studied Dialectical Materialism. Everyone also participated in a discussion on the national situation. We asked the comrades from the U.S. to clarify what happened when some members left our party. They gave different opinions with respect to this question but we expressed to them that they have our total support. We don't believe in this capitalist system and we truly want to end exploitation, racism, and social inequality.

When we were talking about the national situation, there were also different opinions expressed by the comrades. Some talked about how people were disillusioned by the FMLN's promises for changes that never came. On the contrary, with the FMLN in power, everything is worse. Some public employees informed us that the changes they are seeing right now include the loss of all the benefits that cost us so much to gain. But we see in this more of an opportunity for our Party, now that the people are confirming that everything that we said before about the FMLN was right. We said that the situation in El Salvador was not going to get better with the FMLN in power. We need to redouble our efforts to continue our struggle against capitalism and all of its cronies, including the FMLN.

We would like to congratulate all of the attendees and organizers because we all learned a lot. We all left more motivated and we look forward to having another school with comrades from other parts of the world soon.

Comrades in EL Salvador

CUNY Rally Hits School Cuts, 'Lesser-Evil' Dems

Over 120 people rallied and marched through Harlem today against school budget cuts and closures, charter schools and tuition hikes for CUNY (City University of New York) students. Rather than turning public schools into charter schools under the control of hedge fund managers and investment bankers, protesters demanded improved learning conditions, including smaller class size and a focus on critical thinking rather than drilling for standardized tests.

Students came from various campuses around the city — Hostos, Bronx Community College, Hunter, Queens, City College — because they're fed up with rising tuition, which has increased 44% since 2003. In the 1990's, NY State taxes were reduced for the very wealthy and big businesses which led to a sharp decline in state funding for each CUNY student. Many full-time students have jobs and work many hours to pay for rising tuition costs, student fees and expensive textbooks.

There was an interesting exchange of views at the rally concerning elections and voting for the Democrats. A couple of speakers implored us to "hold our noses" and vote for Democrats in No-

vember, because a Republican victory would mean even less funding for schools. Other speakers responded that the Democrats had supported Race to the Top (which ties teacher evaluation and salaries to student standardized test scores and promotes more charter schools), and voted in favor of spending hundreds of billions on the military and the occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq.

This is the same debate we're having with many of our friends. They rightly despise the Tea Party and the Republicans for their craven support of big business and their vile racism, sexism (including opposition to a woman's right to control her own body) and homophobia (which has resulted in brutal attacks on gay youth and workers). Yet the Democrats are also under the control of the corporate interests who fund their campaigns and provide them with lucrative jobs upon leaving political office.

We should recognize that neither party is going to save us from the ravages of capitalism — the economic crisis that led to millions losing jobs, the oil wars that have decimated entire countries or global warming that threatens humanity. Neither the Democrats nor the Republicans are going to advocate for the redistribution of wealth that would pay for better schools and health care.

Red Teacher

Israeli 'Fascist Gov't Does Not Represent Me!'

(The following is the translation of a letter to CHALLENGE which was sent to us by R., one of our supporters. R. is not yet in complete agreement with us, especially in regard to elections and the role of the parliament):

"On October 11, an article was published in one of the Israeli newspapers, showing how the racist Knesset members are boycotting Hanin Zoabi. This is due to her participation in the Gaza flotilla during the summer.

"At the end of this article, she is quoted: 'This [Israeli] flag does not represent me.' I wonder and ask: Isn't it below our dignity to boycott a member of the Knesset because of a flotilla? This Knesset, the most right-wing in history, and this fascist administration, do not represent me!

"Those who deserve to be boycotted are not Zoabi but rather the racist Libermann [the Israeli minister of foreign relations], the spineless Barak [the Israeli minister of 'defense'] and the snake's head: Netanyahu [the Israeli prime minister]."

Comrades in Palestine

Black, Latino Airport Workers Won't Let Racism Fly

My fellow airport workers and I are currently in a struggle to stop racist discrimination against African immigrant workers. The bosses have blatantly tried to divide them from the other cleaners who are Latino immigrants.

The racist bosses try to promote new Mexican workers in job positions which should have gone to African workers because of their seniority. The bosses are hoping that a divided working class will not unite against them as we did.

Our class struggle is around a new union contract from earlier this year. If we strike at the next union contract, in two years, the bosses want the Latino workers to scab. The racist oppressors learned from our previous successful contract fight-back that we are united workers.

After work, a black co-worker, who reads CHALLENGE, and I went to see our Latino co-workers. We told them what the bosses are trying to do and we all are not enemies. They agreed. Our Latino co-workers also are CHALLENGE readers.

We're also engaged in a class struggle involving a few misguided white morning-shift cleaners. They had been leaving their unfinished assignments to black second-shift workers. After one particular incident in our work area, away from the main terminal, I informed my co-workers who are African immigrants. We had a political discussion about why the racist bosses allow the white workers to act disrespectfully.

We confronted our supervisor about the prob-

We encourage all CHALLENGE readers to send in letters and articles about their experiences fighting the bosses around the world.

lem. He gave us a nonsensical answer. Now, my co-workers are learning the necessity to resist racism.

Later, I pointed out to my African co-workers how our job issues are not isolated incidents; they're connected with capitalist super-exploitation of workers globally. For example, in Malaysia, immigrant workers are striking against racist attacks.

Capitalism must do this to make profits. The only way out is communist revolution led by PLP. We must win billions of oppressed workers globally to smash racist, sexist, capitalism. I need to organize more CHALLENGE study groups with my fellow workers so they can better understand PLP's politics and dialectical materialism. Then we can mount even stronger fight-backs.

Airport Red

D.C. Rally Stinks of U.S. Fascism; PL CHALLENGES

The recent October 2nd demonstration in Washington was nothing less than a fascist rally. I was reminded of the Nazi rallies in the '30s with their lavish displays of Nazi power and passive, cheering supporters. I saw workers like me carrying other signs that said, "Make It in America," and "Blacks Against Illegal Immigrants." These messages are designed to build the lie that U.S. workers are different from workers in other countries and that we should support the U.S. (imperialist) government because we're "all in this together."

I stood through dramatic performances all designed to entertain the crowd and distract us from building the kind of protest movement we need. They encouraged people to bring lawn chairs to a protest! They want people passive and clueless.

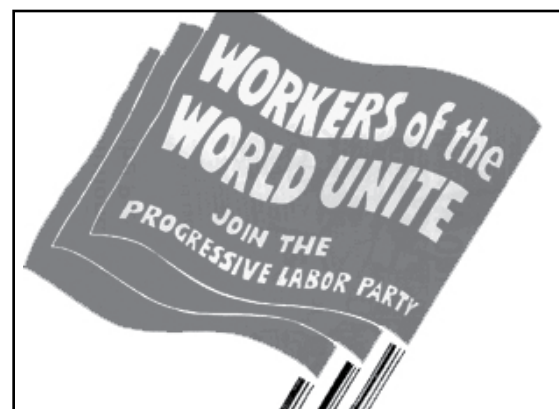
My only consolation was my companions, two teachers who also had difficulty stomaching the lies. We raged together throughout the day, openly discussing the merits and challenges of building a true communist movement.

"But why do you have to call it communism?" they both asked. They argued that people are "turned off" to the word. I countered that we cannot abandon our history just because the ruling class spreads lies about us. We must instead doggedly build a base in the working class and teach workers and youth our true history. These two are working-class warriors who we must get to know better.

Later I went on a "rampage" distributing CHALLENGE to participants. I unleashed all my rage, loudly calling out: "They say one nation working together? Sure, they gave trillions to the bankers and bosses for their profit from our taxes while attacking the working class at every turn. It's one nation, all right, and the working class — we — are their slaves!" I distributed about 100 papers in 45 minutes and collected a modest amount of money. I also spoke to several people at length, including several curious college students who were fascinated with PLP's analysis.

This rally scared me. A veteran in the Party, I hadn't been to something quite like this before. The ruling class is trying to build a passive working class easily manipulated into supporting a fascist U.S. state. It's up to us to build one world without profits, without borders, without sexism and racism, and the time is NOW!

Another Red Teacher



'Waiting for Superman'

continued from p. 8

more soldiers and a highly-educated work-force willing to work for much lower wages.

One big obstacle to successful schools is local rather than national control of schools. FALSE!

The Obama administration desperately wants to nationalize education. The U.S. is one of the only countries in the world without a centralized school system. State control of education means complicated funding formulas, but mainly it hogties governors and mayors to local political interests over national interests. The movie even criticizes the national Democratic Party for kowtowing to the teachers' unions in bids for partisan over national political interest.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) is a bi-partisan campaign and Obama is as committed to its call for raising test scores as his Republican and Democratic predecessors. While it's hard to argue with increased standards and accountability, there's no evidence that massive testing requirements or any other provisions of NCLB produce either.

The main obstacle to successful schools today is the teachers union. FALSE!

There's no doubt that quality teaching matters and that many teachers' unions are notorious for defending their narrow self-interest at the expense of their students. Instead of allying with working-class parents and students to expose corruption within departments of education that funnel huge contracts to their cronies while leaving schools in disrepair, these unions blame the students and their parents for the failure of the education system. Other than raises in pay, the only demands that many have fought for are harsher penalties for students who lash out at teachers and for "combat" pay for teachers who work in the "toughest"

schools.

Charter schools are more successful than traditional public schools. FALSE!

Privately-run charter schools do not get better results on average than traditional public schools. A few charter schools and some traditional public schools have managed to beat the odds and raise student achievement and graduation rates.

Could successful schools in every neighborhood across the country wipe out unemployment, poverty, homelessness and poor health care? These plagues are caused by capitalism and they are increasingly claiming the lives of more and more workers as capitalism sinks deeper and deeper into crisis. True, education has always provided a way out of the working class for a fractional percentage of young people. But no school or school system can alter the fundamental need of capitalism to seek maximum profits through the exploitation of the world's working class.

Can schools and a school system under federal control win the political allegiance of black, Latino and white working-class children to patriotically work for lower and lower wages in jobs with fewer benefits and less security? Can a committed cadre of Teachers for America convince their students that sacrifice, all-class-unity and community service are the promise for a better tomorrow? Canada



and the creators of "Waiting for Superman" certainly seem to hope so.

They know what works. FALSE!

The Nazis were the last regime to successfully win the political allegiance of masses of students by calling for all-class unity in the national interest and firing all the teachers it deemed antagonistic to its aims.

You can make a difference. TRUE!

The movie claims that texting the word "possible" is all you need to do. We know better. Schools under capitalism will never serve the working class but that doesn't mean we shouldn't fight now in the interests of our students. We and our students need to learn more history, more math, more science, more languages; and in fighting together we need to become stronger fighters, quicker to combat the bosses' plans and their ideas; more committed to crushing capitalism and closer to building a communist world. ☸

RED EYE ON THE NEWS

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

Jobs fall as corporations get rich

NYT, 10/9 — The economy lost another 95,000 jobs last month, as a modest gain in private-sector jobs was swamped by big losses in government jobs.

Worse, most of the new private sector jobs do not appear to be particularly good ones — bars and restaurants added the most positions of any sector, followed by temporary hiring services. Meanwhile, state and local governments cut good jobs, including 58,000 teachers and other education workers who were not called back for the new school year.

The job market is not stalling, it is regressing. There is no evidence that employment will recover on its own. Corporations now hold an astounding \$1.6 trillion in cash, but they are not hiring.

Capitalism's masks are falling off

GW, 10/8 — ...Until recently, most European countries were dominated by two main parties that addressed the majority of the electorate: a right-of-centre party and a left-of-centre party, with smaller parties addressing a narrower electorate.

Recent electoral results in the west as well as in the east signal the gradual emergence of a different polarity. There is now one predominant centrist party that stands for global capitalism, usually with a liberal cultural agenda. Opposing this party is an increasingly strong anti-immigrant populist party that on its fringes, is accompanied by overtly racist neofascists groups...how did we get here?

After decades of hope held out by the welfare state, when financial cuts were sold as temporary, and sustained by a promise that things would soon return to normal, we are entering a new epoch in which crisis — or, rather, a kind of economic state of emergency, with its attendant need for all sorts of austerity measures, is permanent. Crisis is be-

coming a way of life.

Mandela won nationalist capitalism

NYT, 9/27 — "Why, why?" shouted Nokuthula Masango, 25....

She made just \$36 a week, \$21 less than the minimum wage, but needed the meager pay to help support a large extended family that includes her five unemployed siblings and their children.

The women's spontaneous protest is just one sign how acute South Africa's long-running unemployment crisis has become. With...too few unskilled jobs bring created in South Africa, the women feared being out of work more than getting stuck in poorly paid jobs.

In the 16 years since the end of apartheid, South Africa has followed the prescriptions of the West,...It has won praise for its efforts, and the economy has grown, but nor nearly fast enough to end an intractable unemployment crisis.

For over a decade, the jobless rate has been among the highest in the world, fueling crime, inequality and social unrest in the continent's richest nation.

For-profit schools live up to name

NYT, 10/1 — About 95 percent of students take out loans to enroll at for-profit colleges, the report said, compared with only 16 percent at community colleges. And more than half the students who started at the for-profit schools in the 2008-2009 year had withdrawn by this August.

....A career advisor at Education Management Corporation, a large for-profit company, testified that she had been shown by a colleague how to manufacture fake e-mails from graduates and to falsify earnings data.

...She also testified that part of her job was persuading graduates that their jobs used their training. That meant persuading a graduate who took on \$100,000 in student debt for a bachelor's degree in game art and design, that he had a job in



his field, when he was earning \$8.90 an hour in the video game department at Toys "R" Us.

Richer rob poorer in many ways

GW, 10/8 — ...A brain drain is stripping the poorest nations of their most valuable assets.

....Africa is hampered by an acute shortage of academics...Other countries recruit the most gifted candidates...."Without proper laboratories or centres of excellence, and with salaries 10 or even 20 times lower than those on offer in developed countries[,] it is hardly surprising so many graduates are leaving."

Economist debunks economists

GW, 10/8 — In his 2008 book, *Bad Samaritans: The Myth of Free Trade and the Secret History of Capitalism*, Chang — an economist himself, a specialist in the political economy of development — mocked one of the orthodoxies of his profession: the belief that global free trade raises living standards everywhere. [His new book] *23 Things They Don't Tell You About Capitalism*, assaults economic orthodoxy on a much larger front. Dip into this witty and uncommonly commonsensical guide to the follies of economics, and among many other things, you will learn that free market policies rarely make poor countries richer;...The US does not have the highest living standards in the world; the washing machine changed the world more than the internet; more education does not of itself make

Elections: Bosses' Charade to Enforce their Dictatorship

The workers of the world are struggling through the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. Jobs are disappearing, wages are falling, and millions of people are being thrown out of their homes and into the streets. In the U.S., over half of the federal budget is going to fight imperialist wars in the Middle East and Central Asia and the rest is being funneled into the hands of the capitalist class through bank bailouts and other giveaways. Naturally, the ruthless greed and relentless attacks provoke anger in workers. This mass anger represents an opportunity for communists, who must strive to transform this unorganized and often misdirected anger into a mass communist movement. To do this, we must expose one of the bosses' primary ideological weapons: elections.

Elections are a Ruling-Class Charade

The controlling forces in society — government (including elections), cops, military, schools, culture, etc. — comprise what we refer to as "the state" and are funded, organized and led by the ruling class. They function solely to reinforce the existing, racist structure: bosses exploiting, workers exploited. Elections, no matter who is elected, can NEVER change this. The 2008 election provides a recent glaring example of this general statement: Millions of workers turned out to cast their vote for Barack Obama, the highest voter turnout in decades. Perhaps more than in any recent election, many who turned out were expressing their anger at imperialist war, racism, environmental degradation, bank bailouts and foreclosures.

Yet, immediately after being elected, Obama proved that he serves the bosses: He intensified the war in Afghanistan, he refused to fight racist police attacks while always defending the racist cops, he intensified the racist attacks against workers by militarizing the southern U.S. border and he continued the economic policies of the Bush Administration.

It's Only a Fair Election if U.S. Bosses Approve

Elections are primarily an ideological weapon to disarm the working class, and do not represent a high ideal of "freedom" or "democracy." When the "free expression of the people" doesn't conform to the interests of U.S. imperialists, they freely ignore their own words.

- Patrice Lumumba, the first "democratically elected" Prime Minister of Congo, was assassinated under orders from the U.S. and Belgian governments.
- Salvador Allende, a socialist elected as president of Chile, was overthrown in a coup orches-

trated by the C.I.A.

- In Guatemala, the C.I.A. organized, funded and equipped the 1954 coup against the elected government of Jacobo Guzmán. The ensuing civil war resulted in more than 200,000 dead.
- Mohammed Mossadegh was the elected Prime Minister of Iran from 1951 to 1953. When he challenged the interests of U.S. and British oil bosses, he was deposed after a C.I.A.-backed coup.

These examples and others make it clear that "democracy" means nothing to the bosses when their imperialist goals are threatened. But when masses of workers view elections as the only route to societal change, the bosses' power is secure.

Only Workers Fighting Back Can Change Things

Just as the hollowness of the bosses' "democratic" ideology is plain when we look at the historical record, so is it equally apparent that only when workers have abandoned the electoral circus and collectively struggled against the bosses have they been able to win any real reforms. The Great Railroad Strike of 1877 where over 200,000 workers went on strike; the 1886 May 1st strike that included over 350,000 workers, and tens of thousands of other strikes led to the eight-hour workday. The police and the army brutalized and murdered the strikers throughout this entire period. The Civil Rights Movement and the push to end segregation was the fruit of the multi-racial struggle against racism. Before the 1960s, they were often led by communists. They organized unions in the South, they held rallies against lynchings and attacked the Klan. For leading the fight against racism they were attacked by the FBI, murdered by police and Klan vigilantes.

Reforms Won't Liberate the Working Class


The reforms that workers fought and died for were granted by the capitalist class as temporary measures designed to pacify the masses so that power ultimately remained with the capitalist class. The decrease in working-class consciousness and militancy has allowed the bosses to roll

back these reforms: The unchallenged devastation of the Detroit auto-industry illustrates the corruption of union leadership. The U.S. ruling class is unleashing racist attacks on the border, on the job, in schools and overseas that the Civil Rights and anti-Vietnam War movement fought valiantly against. If the working class wants true liberation we must recognize the class nature of the state and give up on phony elections and half-hearted reforms.

Workers have to seize state power through violent revolution and establish the dictatorship of the working class. We can't let our fellow workers be pulled in by the elections charade because no matter who gets elected it will be the capitalist class which is in power. If you are sick of the daily exploitation and degradation, don't vote, organize the working class; don't vote, fight racism and sexism; don't vote, build Progressive Labor Party. Don't vote, BUILD REVOLUTION! ✪

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'Waiting for Superman' It's a Bird? It's a Plane? It's Capitalist Bullshit!

The new documentary, "Waiting for Superman" has received much critical acclaim since its appearance at the Sundance film festival. The film, which attacks teachers' unions and promotes charter schools, has been called "powerful" by President Obama. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan called the film's release a "Rosa Parks moment."

The film makes a number of bold claims:

Public education is failing our students. TRUE!

Waiting for Superman exposes how black, Latino and white working-class parents long for decent schools for their children.

Some 50-60 years ago, schools used to work. FALSE and TRUE!

The school system has never met the needs of the working class. The Civil Rights Movement and the subsequent fights for community control exposed the anger at the racist inequities before and after the passage of Brown v. Board of Education. The dilapidated schools portrayed in "Superman" reveal a long history of racism and neglect.

However, the school system is used to meet

the needs of the ruling class to sort and divide the masses of students. The movie clearly portrays a school system that prepared a few students for positions of power, more for white collar jobs supporting management and most for work in the factories and farms. As long as there were people

to fill jobs at all of these levels, the school system worked for the ruling class.

Today the U.S. bosses are no longer unchallenged. China and India out-produce the U.S. in commodities. To compete, the U.S. bosses need

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