

CHALLENGE



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Haiti: Students Fight for Working Class

PORT-AU-PRINCE, HAITI, June 29 — Led by Progressive Labor Party and friends, more than two hundred State University of Haiti (UEH) students took to the streets yesterday, turning a demonstration against fee hikes into a fight against imperialism and capitalist inequality.

The immediate struggle was sparked on June 24, when the UEH executive council announced a 200 percent fee hike for college entrance exams. Students quickly organized. Fifty people blocked traffic and broke gates and windows at the administration building. Students marched through UEH's 11 metropolitan campuses, chanting, "The State University of Haiti will not be privatized!" They banged the gates of each campus to announce their arrival and painted slogans on walls as they marched through. U.S. students have much to learn from the militancy of these young fighters, and from their potential to build a communist movement.

At the medical school campus, protesters forced open the gate. Fifteen medical students in white lab coats joined the march in a show of unity against the ruling class. They shouted, "State University is of the working class; this is the result of the mass struggles!" They were referring to the long history of militant fightback at UEH, from an uprising against fascist dictator Francois "Papa Doc" Duvalier to the struggle against the United Nations' "stabilization" troops (MINUSTAH) who brought cholera to Haiti.

Fraud 101

UEH is the main public university for Haiti's working-class students. The entrance fee hike is an attack on rural and city workers and a move to exclude them from higher education. In a country where nearly half of all adults are illiterate, students already face intense competition to get into college. (At the UEH medical school, there are 100 seats for 6,000 applicants.) Those left out are at high risk of joining Haiti's 80 percent unemployed and underemployed.

As they marched toward the administration building, students spray-painted every government vehicle in sight. They tore down the advertisement for the "Darling Mother" fraud, a phantom government program that diverts funding to pay off the bosses' cronies. Students approached tents of street vendors, bus passengers, and passersby with a class-conscious message: "The working class can't send their sons and daughters to college. We already have no work or wage. The government wants us to pay for their debts. Students are demonstrating once again they are aware that a fight against the state is a fight against the bourgeoisie!"

Arriving at the administration building, the students found that the bosses had shut the gates in fear. Protesters denounced the administration, threw stones,



smashed windows, and broke open the gates. The courtyard was empty. The administrators had fled, but not before calling the cops. Students put large stones down the road to slow the police. As the protesters retreated from the cops, they kept chanting.

On their way, they ripped up a street poster of Haitian President Michel Martelly and Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro. Maduro visited the city this week to strengthen Haiti-Venezuela relations through the PetroCaribe fund, an alliance based on the exchange of food for oil. Under the agreement, Haiti has used millions of dollars from PetroCaribe to pay for fuel and repave the airport runway, renaming it after Venezuela's phony-leftist late president, Hugo Chavez. Meanwhile, Martelly skimmed millions of dollars in kickbacks from funding for social programs. Be it Haiti, Venezuela, Bangladesh, or South Africa, the capitalist state can never serve workers' interests. It uses its courts and police thugs to protect capital, legalize theft, pacify workers, and quell rebellions.

When the police caught up with the protesters, they threw tear gas and shot into the crowd, which threw rocks and tear gas canisters back at them. The cowardly cops targeted student leaders by shooting them in the back and neck with rubber bullets, and also kidnapped

two women nearly unconscious from the gas. Protesters alerted the crowd and barricaded the streets, demanding the students' release. After several hours of battle by the police station, they were freed.

Smashing the Bosses' Schools

At a mass assembly the next morning, most students agreed the demonstration was successful. But some believed it was not militant enough, and most agreed the struggle should be expanded to the whole working class. Students made a list of demands, including refunds of exam fees to those not admitted, a more political curriculum, and UEH's return to its bylaws to support "the community in the struggle for progress." Others called for a more global analysis of the struggle against imperialism. A planning leadership committee was created.

So begins a potential long-term struggle. UEH students can be won to understand that all universities, public or private, are ruling-class institutions. No commitment to "progressive" bylaws can fundamentally change these factories for capitalist ideology. They must be destroyed. Our fight is not merely for reform, but to build a world where education is designed by and for the working class.✊

JOIN THE INTERNATIONAL FIGHT FOR COMMUNIST REVOLUTION

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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. While capitalism needs unemployment, communism needs everyone to contribute and 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!

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WHO WRITES FOR CHALLENGE?

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.

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Editorial

Obama Lauds Mandela's New Apartheid



Workers and students in South Africa bash "world's top assassinator" Obama.

Barack Obama's visit to South Africa was a fitting tribute by the top figurehead of U.S. capitalism to the man who helped to end apartheid and create a new "rainbow" alliance of brutal, racist capitalist bosses: Nelson Mandela.

Apartheid was the brutal and legalized segregation enforced by South Africa's white Afrikaner rulers from 1948 to 1994. The system enabled U.S. corporations like General Motors to pay black workers 56 cents an hour to slave away in its auto factories. It netted British and U.S. mining interests billions in profits. It penned workers and their families into townships that were virtual concentration camps.

Apartheid also sparked a mass, militant, worldwide anti-racist movement. In South Africa, workers and students staged massive, often violent protests against the vicious Afrikaner regime. In 1976, in Soweto, tens of thousands of black high school students fought racist cops. Up to 700 of the young protesters were killed.

From Rebellion to Black Bosses

After Mandela became the country's president, the anti-apartheid movement was ultimately co-opted by U.S.-British imperialism with the active collaboration of Mandela's African National Congress (ANC) party, the new local capitalist rulers. Hundreds of millions of workers, in South Africa and across the globe, were steered away from revolution and down the dead-end path of nationalism and electoral politics. One of Mandela's first presidential acts was to attempt to break workers' strikes for higher wages. His argument: the workers' struggle would "discourage foreign investment." By misleading the worldwide anti-apartheid movement, Mandela aided U.S.-led imperialism and sustained the racist super-exploitation of South Africa's working class. The only real difference was that the local bosses were now black as well as white.

As Barack Obama recently celebrated the ailing Mandela in Johannesburg, workers and students engaged in mass protests against the U.S. president's visit and his murderous drone bombings. They hoisted signs comparing Obama to Hitler. As one worker said, "Whether Mandela lives or dies, South Africa is worse now than under apartheid."

Shooting Workers in the Back

Mandela's ANC successors, including current president Jacob Zuma (who's been linked to massive corruption and fraud), are responsible for last August's Marikana Massacre. When platinum workers staged a wildcat strike over low pay at the Marikana mine, owned by London-based Lonmin, the ANC sent in cops, both black and white, and killed 36 miners. Most were shot in the back. Subsequent walkouts of tens of thousands of heroic workers virtually shut down the country's lucrative mining industry.

Mandela's billionaire booster, Patrice Motsepe, is a poster child for nationalism and what it means for our class. Shortly after Mandela's rise to power, billionaire Harry Oppenheimer and his Anglo American mining company began selling mines to black businessmen via favorable loans. Bobby Godsell, chief executive of Anglo's gold and uranium division, said, "I was seeking to create capitalists out of people who

had no capital" (Forbes, 3/6/2008). After buying Anglo's Orkney gold mine, Motsepe promptly cut wages by 25 percent and instituted "profit-sharing," which amounts to a pay cut with speed-up.

As Motsepe has prospered to become the fourth-richest man in South Africa, with a net worth of \$2.9 billion (Forbes), national unemployment is now estimated at 40 percent, higher than before the ANC took power in 1994. According to the United Nations, one of four South Africans lives on less than \$1.25 (U.S.) per day.

That is the real Mandela legacy.

Imperialists Pull Strings, ANC Dances

Obama's visit to Africa reflects a U.S. attempt to counter growing influence by archrival China throughout the continent. The president is seeking deals with Africa's local bosses to expand profits for U.S. investors. Obama's agenda was made plain when he chose to meet Mandela's family at a shrine built by U.S. imperialists and the local rich to promote their capitalist ideology. According to the New York Times (6/30/13), the Nelson Mandela Centre of Memory serves as "ground zero in the effort to maintain and shape the legacy of Nelson Mandela...and to make sure that the narrative of the struggle does not deviate too much from what Mr. Mandela wanted it to be."

On its website, the Centre boasts former U.S. President Bill Clinton, David Rockefeller (longtime chairman of Chase Manhattan Bank, now JP Morgan Chase), and Patrice Motsepe as "Founding Nelson Mandela Legacy Champions." A place devoted to remembering conveniently forgets Rockefeller's steadfast lending to the fascist apartheid regime throughout the 1960s and '70s. Nor does it recall that benefactor Motsepe and honoree Mandela both owe their success to South Africa's fabulously wealthy Oppenheimer family, the same clan that has maimed and murdered countless starvation-wage miners.

For more than a century, imperialist rivalry amid class struggle has driven world history. It explains Mandela's checkered journey from lawyer to prisoner to president to saint. Britain's empire shrank after World War II, especially in Africa. In 1948, South Africa's white, openly racist Afrikaans-speaking plantation owners seized control from weakened London-backed rulers and imposed apartheid to control the black working class. Mandela was by then an attorney in the ANC, which was allied with the pro-Soviet South African Communist Party. He pushed the group in a nationalist, capitalist direction rather than toward multiracial, working-class unity. In 1964, Mandela's anti-government activism landed him in the prison on Robben Island. He spent the next 26 years behind bars.

At the height of the Cold War, when the main imperialist rivalry pit the United States and its NATO allies against the Soviet Union, the U.S. and junior partner Britain tolerated South Africa's rabidly anti-Soviet Afrikaners. Washington and London accepted the regime's embarrassing human rights

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Pakistan May Day

PL'ers Unmask 'Nationalist Democracy' as Capitalist Slavery

The Progressive Labor Party's growing membership in Pakistan was very active organizing for May Day. We struggled hard to bring all the trade union and student organizations to a single political platform and a large and united demonstration, a goal strongly supported by most workers and students. To some extent, we succeeded.

It became obvious that most of the trade union organizations are puppets of the International Labour Organization [the United Nations agency that promotes a false unity between capitalists and workers]. The bosses strongly resisted a unified workers' holiday. So did some anti-communist student leaders who are affiliated with various nationalist parties.

These opportunist student leaders fear that PLP will attack their reactionary ideas of "national democracy." They've been angry since last year's May Day celebrations, when our comrades stressed the need to build an international revolutionary communist party and to create a new political, social, and economic system. This time around these so-called progressive nationalists helped the state identify communists fighting for revolution. As a result, one comrade was attacked by "unknown" people on a busy street of a big city.

PLP participates in reform struggles to educate the masses that this capitalist system cannot be reformed, and that it can only be changed by communist revolution. In the May Day celebrations, comrades criticized the right-wing political parties that use the term "revolution." As our comrades pointed out, these parties are invested in the status quo. They are trying to sow confusion and deter people from real revolution. We must use

the word communism to distinguish ourselves from the misleaders.

We also launched a massive effort to educate Pakistan's poor working class about the bosses' elections. At rallies and big public meetings, we distributed thousands of leaflets and flyers to let people know that these elections are designed to preserve the capitalist system. Capitalist "democracy" frees the bosses to exploit the working class by in part, sucking workers into voting and supporting candidates rather than fighting. The bosses' parliaments are set up to protect the interests of national and international capitalists and to provide legal cover for the murderers and exploiters. Rich people use elections to gain more control over the state apparatus. They get the "right" to use the police and the judiciary against their opponents, and against any workers who seek to challenge their power or exploitation.

Our printed material reminded workers of the false promises made by the bosses in the last elections. The former government vowed to provide electricity and employment and to improve hospitals and schools. It promised to control inflation and to curb the terrorists and fundamentalists. It pledged to strengthen labor laws to protect factory workers and to get rid of contractual labor. It promised free health and education services for workers' families, along with comprehensive health insurance.

But in the inflated economy, prices rose as much as 100 percent. Electricity shortages increased from four hours to 18 hours per day. Hospitals had the same poor equipment and costly medicines. Meanwhile, school enrollment declined because poor workers were forced

to send their children to work. Teachers were selected not on their merit but for their political affiliations. Thousands of schools and colleges did not have water or sanitary facilities.

U.S. and Islamic terrorism is out of control. No place in Pakistan is safe. On an average day, 15 to 20 workers are killed in terrorist attacks. In the city of Karachi alone, 7,500 people have been killed in the last 27 months.

More than 800 workers lost their lives in factories last year alone because of owner negligence, yet nobody was prosecuted. As unemployment went from 8% to 16%, contractual labor and child labor increased and the harassment of women workers worsened. Farm workers are treated like slaves. Over the last five years, about 10 million workers have lost their jobs.

All of this proves that the bosses use elections to ruthlessly exploit the poor masses and create illusions about the system. Their promises are just election slogans to dodge workers' anger. As communists, we must fight to smash the capitalist election system and to build a communist society where leaders serve the working class, not the rich bosses.

Now teachers and clerical, railway, and postal workers are demonstrating to protest price hikes and wage freezes. PLP is organizing more strikes to bring more people into the streets. We are informing the working class that only communist revolution led by a single international communist party can bring prosperity, justice and equality.✪

Legal Services Strike Ends, Militance Signals Future Struggles

NEW YORK CITY, NY June 24 — Today members of UAW Local 2320 the Legal Services Staff Association voted to end their six-week strike and return to work. With the deck stacked against them, and knowing that this offer was "as good as it's going to get" for now, the 270 lawyers, para-legals and clericals accepted a concession contract and resumed representing their poor, mostly black, Latino and immigrant clients. During the strike, PLP was welcomed on the picket lines and dozens of workers were introduced to CHALLENGE.

The workers waged a militant fight. All strikers participated on local strike committees, and the local established a Hardship Fund to cover strikers' rent, utility and other bills in an emergency. Women played a leading role in the strike. The International UAW paid the strikers' health insurance after the millionaire corporate lawyers that run the NYLSC cut them off retroactively and without notice. While this was a great help to those on strike, it also gave the International union tremendous leverage in leading the workers to accept concessions.

The UAW's strategy was to rely on Democratic Party politicians, especially mayoral hopeful Christine Quinn, to win a contract loaded with concessions, although less than what the union-busting bosses had hoped for. Letters of support came from New York City's Congressional delegation and a long list of City Council members. But that "support" was used to get work-

ers to pay more for their health care, and anticipated layoffs in the coming year. "Layoff equity protections" with management (there is one manager for every three staff) almost guarantees layoffs, as long as some managers are laid off too.

With all this "political clout," why wasn't there a no-layoff guarantee? Why are we contributing 1% of our salary to health care premiums? Because these are the same politicians that have overseen a drastic reduction in staff and the closure of several neighborhood offices over the past several years. These cutbacks, while costing our members jobs, are mainly aimed at the unemployed and working poor clients we serve. They are racist to the core. They are part of the destruction of the old social contract, the so-called safety net of social benefits such as unemployment insurance, social security, and medicaid. More cuts are on their way to pay for the bosses' widening imperialist wars.

No strike or contract can stop war and fascism. Only communist revolution can do that.

The contract is retroactive to July 1, 2012, and will expire in July, 2014. More than a few who voted to accept this contract are also talking about walking out again a year from now. But most important, we need to build a mass PLP among legal service workers and clients.✪

Communist Ideas Abound at Unitarian Assembly

LOUISVILLE, KY, June 20 — The Progressive Labor Party brought ideas of revolutionary change and communism to the General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), attended by 3,500 people from across the U.S. The weekend's highlight was an open Party forum that drew several dozen people who'd received a PL leaflet. Their thoughts on the need for communism and a mass party ranged from hostile to curious and receptive. A few thought that real change could come through the capitalists' "democratic" process.

There was a lot of discussion about whether violence was necessary, and how the state apparatus maintained power for the ruling class. Eventually, the talk prompted a young worker to express the need for a violent overthrow of the capitalist system.

We made many contacts through this forum and felt a real expression of interest from many others who were unable to attend. To build on this success, we are planning another forum at next year's General Assembly.

One highlight of the Assembly is the Action of Immediate Witness (AIW) process. This allows attendees to bring a pressing social issue to the body and ask the UUA to organize around it. UU's from New York spearheaded an AIW condemning the racist harassment of black and Latino youth, in particular the stop-and-frisk policy and racist murders by New York City police.

The work to enlist support for this proposal and bring it to the floor was a collective effort among Party members, and others who supported the AIW after hearing it introduced. Discussion ensued about growing fascism in the United States as the ruling class builds for war against its imperialist rivals. We explained how racism hurts all workers, and how we must build a multiracial fight-back against racism. This kind of give-and-take with people among our friends offered a great opportunity to advance the Party's ideas.

Over 200 CHALLENGEs were sold outside the convention center. The issue's back-page article addressed the UUA's core principles and explained that they could be achieved only through communist revolution. The convention delegates' hopes for a fair and equitable society, one that recognizes the inherent dignity and worth of all people, is simply not possible in a system based on profit instead of people's needs. The article sparked conversations about the need for a communist society and a Party to lead the working class.

The weekend made it clearer that activity in such organizations is critical to the growth of PLP. The point is not to build the reform movement but to build principled struggle with working-class people who want a better society. When we share our lives with our class brothers and sisters, we can see more clearly that a revolutionary future is possible.✪

PL'ers Expose Obama's Racist War Regime

BOSTON, June 12 — President Obama campaigned in Roxbury today for liberal Ed Markey, candidate for a seat in the U.S. Senate. The campaign rally was held in Boston's main black neighborhood in order to take advantage of Obama's appeal among black workers. Of the many thousands who lined up to hear Obama speak, more than half were black, Latino and/or immigrant. In a silent vigil, a small group of environmentalists held up signs protesting the Keystone oil pipeline, but it was left to a small but bold group of PL'ers and friends to directly attack Obama as the manager of racist U.S. capitalism.

We held a banner and passed out a leaflet that exposed Obama for maintaining racist unemployment and mass incarceration of black workers and youth; increasing the deportation of immigrants; killing and terrorizing civilians with unmanned drones in Pakistan, Iraq and Afghanistan; continuing to kill for oil and bailing out the bankers while working-class families lose their homes.

Although the people who had come to hear him were not a representative cross-section of the population, there were large numbers willing to read our leaflet and consider the merits of our politics. Most of them, however, continued to defend Obama as having well-meaning intentions. Several dozen reacted with hostility, crumpling the leaflet or returning it to us. One woman was personally offended when we called

Obama a "tool of the U.S. ruling class," a puppet rather than a free agent. Her black nationalism and racial pride prevented her from seeing that Obama is no different from any other president, except that he has a slicker cover. An old friend waiting on the line said that when Obama was elected, she was able to feel proud of being an American for the first time in her life. This revealed the ruling class's real purpose for backing Obama — to win more people (especially black and young people, two of the most potentially revolutionary groups) to actively or passively support U.S. imperialism abroad and vicious anti-working-class attacks at home. The broad acceptance of the fascist lockdown after the Boston Marathon bombing shows that to a large degree the ruling-class strategy has been successful.

What we did today took courage, especially for the two young black women students among us who had voted for Obama. Armed with a class analysis, our multi-racial group was able to penetrate the patriotism and nationalism that fuels the hero worship of a dangerous enemy of the international working class. We introduced many people to the truth about Obama and U.S. capitalism, thereby loosening the grip that the ruling class has over working people. We communists need to seize every opportunity to do this until we can directly challenge the bosses' rule in a working-class revolution.✶

'Smash Racist Deportations, Workers Have No Nations!'

NEW YORK CITY, June 28 — A group of determined protestors, immigrant and citizen workers united and led by PLP, picketed the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Processing Center today. Chanting "Smash racist deportations, working people have no nations" and "Familias, si, deportaciones, no" we blocked the main entrance and distributed 400 leaflets to supportive passersby. We have recently experienced deportations of our students and friends and we are outraged!

Silence has fallen across the United States as people wait for "immigration reform." But all is not quiet! Deportations are on the rise as more and more of our working-class sisters and brothers are handed over to ICE by the criminal justice system. Families are cruelly separated and economic desperation and fear increase. Deportations are racist, mainly targeting immigrants from Latin America, especially from Mexico. There were 400,000 deportations from the U.S. last year. New York State is number five in deportations among all states in the country.

U.S. Border Security Patrol continues to beat and shoot immigrants at the border. Within the last couple months these are some of the attacks that workers faced due to a world with borders. Hernandez-Rojas, father of five, was viciously beaten by numerous border patrol agents at the San Diego border. He later died. Sixteen-year-old Jose Antonio Elena-Rodriguez was shot and killed in

his hometown in Nogales, Mexico by U.S. Border Patrol agents shooting across the border from Arizona into Mexico. These are not isolated incidents. They are crimes committed by these racist cops.

U.S. politicians and the press shamelessly label undocumented immigrants in the U.S. "criminals" as though they had all committed felony crimes, like the shootings done by Border Agents. Criminalization of immigrants is racist and if tolerated encourages racist attitudes and actions by people in the U.S.

This is the real face of U.S. immigration policy now and in the future, with or without "reform." The new immigration bill gives \$38 billion to defense contractors to build the world's most militarized border with 40,000 soldiers. We cannot allow this situation to continue. We have to unite the whole working class, black, Latin, Asian and white, citizens and all immigrants around the world to fight back!

Working people move from place to place worldwide to escape poverty, to look for work, healthcare and education, to survive and support families. Working people have no nations, but we do have common class interests. We say workers' struggles have no borders. Borders exist to support the rulers, bosses and bankers who profit from exploitation and oppression of the working class worldwide.

Communist revolution will smash all borders — one class, one red flag, one party. Join PLP. ✶

Mandela: Capitalist Agent

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abuses as long as it suppressed pro-Soviet political movements in the region and guarded the crucial shipping route to the Cape of Good Hope. As a result, Mandela and many political prisoners like him rotted in jail.

Black Empowerment Smokescreen

In the 1980s, however, Mandela took on new importance for the U.S. and U.K. The Soviet imperialists' fiasco in Afghanistan signaled the U.S.S.R.'s coming eclipse as a first-tier power. Though Mandela and the South African Communist Party still had mass influence within the ANC, their pro-Soviet stance no longer posed a threat to U.S. imperialist interests. With Moscow in retreat and in reaction to a worldwide resistance movement, liberal capitalists proceeded to pacify the working class's fight against apartheid and racist exploitation. U.S. and British rulers began to exploit the Mandela brand to win back influence in Africa under the smokescreen of black empowerment.

In turn, Mandela and other ANC leaders sold out the heroic struggle of millions of workers. In the 1980s, Helen Suzman, the Oppenheims' liberal bought-and-paid-for member of South Africa's parliament, began visiting Mandela at the Robben prison. Meanwhile, Henry Kissinger, the Rockefeller lieutenant and former Nixon Secretary of State, arranged meetings between patriarch Harry Oppenheimer and embattled Afrikaner rulers. After being promised a cushy post-apartheid existence, the Afrikaners grudgingly agreed to free Mandela. (The imperialist representatives were true to their word. F. W. de Klerk, Mandela's presidential predecessor, today lives in an all-white neighborhood with five black servants.)



In South Africa, workers tell it like it is.

In 1985, acting to impose a deal on the crumbling apartheid regime, the Rockefeller Chase Manhattan Bank stopped lending to the South African government. Mandela was released from prison in 1990. Four years later he became South Africa's first black president.

Roger Phillimore, Harry Oppenheimer's godson and chairman of the bloodstained Lonmin platinum company, has followed Mandela's liberal lead. He recently replaced his white CEO with a black one.

Learning from South Africa

Despite its setbacks, the history of working-class fightback in South Africa — against both the apartheid regime and its ANC successors — has much to teach workers worldwide. Mass anti-racist struggle, whether in South Africa or elsewhere in the world, can squeeze

the capitalist ruling class and disrupt its moneymaking machine. But the international working class must not be fooled into thinking it can be freed while capitalism continues to flourish. We cannot follow the Mandela path to exchange one group of exploiters for another. Only through communist revolution, led by the Progressive Labor Party, can workers liberate themselves and crush the savage profit system for good.

As Mandela nears death and celebrations of his capitalist legacy engulf the world, we must bring our communist message to the workers of the world. The real lesson of the fight against apartheid is: Join and build the PLP!✶

Philly: Bosses Cripple Schools, Murder Workers in Building Collapse

PHILADELPHIA, JUNE 28 — If anyone needs a clearer picture of the murderous attacks by U.S. bosses on workers — and the need for a worker-run communist society — two recent events here highlight them.

This month, school bosses said they're closing 23 public schools (10 percent of the total) and will fire nearly 4,000 teachers and other workers. This assault on workers and students raises the toll of firings since 2011 to more than one-third of the workforce!

This is disastrous for school workers and their families, causing hunger, homelessness and even death in some cases. It's racist as well since black students comprise 81% of those affected. However, \$400 million of the cuts from the state budget will be used to build a 5,000-inmate prison instead. So the bosses do have a plan for black youth.

There have been frequent protest rallies and marches, and a hunger strike aimed at rolling back the cuts and firings, but the school board and state assembly haven't budged.

Secondly, to add criminal neglect to their official terrorism, on June 5 city bosses allowed a small downtown building — in the shadows of glittering office towers and hotels — to collapse, killing six workers and shoppers in an adjacent store and injuring 13 others.

A criminal contractor, using untrained and vulner-

able workers, was demolishing nearby buildings on the cheap. He had declared bankruptcy only weeks before. After the deadly collapse, a city inspector who had been assigned to oversee the demolition, which he had visited only once, was found dead in his truck, shot in the chest with a suicide note nearby. An "investigation" into his death has been ordered.

The owner of the collapsed building is a small-time criminal who has owned a string of adult businesses here and in New York City. The demolition was to have cost him \$10,000 for work that, if done safely, would have cost ten times that.

A vital support was removed from a 4-story wall, causing it to collapse and crush the store and the people inside. The adjacent store should have been closed for safety reasons, but the city had not issued a closure order. It remained open and filled with shoppers, despite warnings of the obvious danger to the store's workers and patrons. No sidewalk protection was provided either, exposing passers-by to serious injury or death.

Though the April collapse of a garment factory in Dhaka, Bangladesh, claimed far more lives (over 1,100 vs. six here), the causes for the Philadelphia deaths are the same: greed for profits at any cost.

Most of the largest U.S. retailers (target, Wal-Mart, Kmart, JC Penney) refuse to force their Asian producers

to adopt labor, building safety and health standards. Bosses' disregard worldwide for workers' lives is murderous.

The International Business Times carried an article (6/19) comparing Philadelphia and Bangladesh:

Both places are scarred by immense poverty, entrenched political corruption...and decaying infrastructure. A...U.S. census..survey...[for]2009-11 revealed that of the ten largest U.S. cities, Philadelphia ranked first in the number of people living in "deep poverty"; more than one-quarter, or 28 percent, of Philadelphia residents are living below the poverty level — up from about 23 percent in 2000...

...People often go hungry, live without running water or electricity — conditions not too dissimilar to those faced by the masses of Bangladeshis...Across the U.S., more than 20 million people live in deep poverty, largely the victims of the collapse of the manufacturing industry and the continuing impact of the financial/mortgage crisis.

Only communist revolution in Philly, the U.S., Bangladesh, and the world will eliminate the bosses and their profit system, the cause of such racist exploitation, hunger, death and hazardous working conditions.☸

Liberal Rulers Sharpen Racist Attacks; PL Summer Project Hits Back

NEW YORK CITY, JUNE 28 — The working class in this city has endured 11 years of Mayor Michael Bloomberg's racist, anti-student education reform. These policies have accompanied a massive escalation of brutal police tactics against black and Latino youth, notably stop-and-frisk, and a wholesale assault on the mainly black and Latino unionized city work force. (For the first time in history, every municipal union is without a contract.)

Bloomberg's Wall Street buddies weathered a brief period of scrutiny at the height of Occupy Wall Street. Since then, they have resumed drawing huge bonuses, free from criticism. Meanwhile, the mayor brags that his greatest legacy is his denial of years of raises to city workers — and that the main problem with stop-and-frisk is that it fails to harass more black and Latino workers and youth. Racism is getting worse, not only in New York City but nationwide. That is the context of education reform.

The Progressive Labor Party is responding with a two-pronged Summer Project. In New York, we are continuing the struggle for justice for Shantel Davis, the 23-year-old woman who was executed by a cop in Brooklyn last year. In Atlanta, we will take the struggle against racism to the annual convention of the National Education Association (NEA). Like the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), the NEA leadership refuses to confront the intensifying racism in our schools. To do so would expose the limits of capitalism. Instead, union leaders are tripping over themselves to cooperate in the latest education reform schemes.

AFT President Randi Weingarten issues joint-authored articles with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in American Teacher, the AFT's own publication. The NEA plans to honor Jerry Brown, the rabidly anti-union governor of California, at their convention. Our union leaders are too tied to capitalism to imagine, organize, or demand meaningful change.

With the cooperation of the United Federation of Teachers, New York City's affiliate of the AFT, Bloomberg has implemented familiar features of the education reform playbook: performance pay for teachers, elimination of tenure,

more high-stakes testing. As tests have been made harder, then easier and now harder again with the Common Core curriculum, college readiness scores remain dismal. The on-time graduation gap between black and Latino students and their white counterparts remained unchanged in 2012, ranging from 20 to 22 percentage points. These numbers have been stuck at these levels for five years.

We Need Communism

Public education, like all institutions under capitalism, is designed for most to fail. Those who can afford private schooling get small classes, one-to-one tutoring, and excellent facilities. Under such privileged conditions, the bankrupt lessons of individualism, elitism, and patriotism sink in all the more deeply. Meanwhile, public schools provide these high-cost amenities only for the few students being groomed to help the ruling class manage its capitalist system.

The schools we work in have two purposes: to develop workers for the massive low-wage sector of the 21st-century economy, and to produce the foot soldiers for the bosses' 21st-century wars.

When students fail in the bosses' schools, they need communist leadership to learn to hold the system accountable. They need to reject the capitalist ideology that those who don't succeed aren't smart enough or didn't work hard enough. When teachers face the latest attack upon students in the guise of education reform, we need to redirect the debate toward the racist social conditions that set up most of us to fail. Through our Summer Project and communist school, PLP will equip a new generation of fighters with the practice and theory that are essential for a communist revolution.☸

Detroit's Bankers, Bosses Got Billions, Workers Get Mass Poverty

DETROIT, MI — On June 22, more than 50,000 workers and youth marched here to begin celebrating the 50th anniversary of the 1963 March on Washington, where Martin Luther King Jr. gave his famous "I Have A Dream" speech. The speech was written at UAW headquarters and first delivered in June 1963, at a march in Detroit to begin building for the August march. Likewise, today's march kicked off a mass mobilization for Washington, DC on Saturday, August 24. While thousands of marchers came from outside of Michigan, the vast majority were from the Detroit area, brought by the UAW, NAACP and many churches and community organizations.

But more than celebrating the past, workers and youth were protesting the ever increasing attacks of the racist profit system. Like many cities in Michigan and the Midwest, Detroit was sucked dry by the auto bosses, who left behind mass poverty, over-crowded jails and empty shells of cities. In response to the near economic collapse of 2007, Obama bailed out the bankers and auto bosses. After the bosses got their billions, they continued the assault on the workers: cutting wages in half, closed plants, traded guaranteed pensions for stock market-driven 401ks, cut healthcare benefits and got five-year no-strike contracts. The racist character of these attacks was evident to the largely black workforce.

In sum, the bankers and bosses got billions, the workers and the cities got nothing! Detroit is facing bankruptcy, massive school closings and cuts in all essential city services. The racist Governor placed Detroit under an Emergency Manager, who has the power to open or break every city contract, sell off any city asset and cut pensions of retired city workers, leaving the elected mayor and city council powerless. Detroit is just the latest as Flint, Pontiac, St. Joseph and every majority black city in Michigan except Jackson, has been placed under an Emergency Manager, basically disenfranchising millions of mostly black workers. This has since been compounded by the recent gutting of the 1965 Voting Rights Act by the Supreme Court. While these decisions are racist, voting in the bosses electoral system will not end racist oppression.

The preachers, politicians and union leaders will use the racist Supreme Court ruling to mobilize all out for the August 24 March on Washington, with their sights set on the Congressional elections of 2014. Here in Michigan, the UAW & Co. are also aiming at the Governor's election, in hopes of overturning the state Right to Work law. This poses a great challenge for the revolutionary communist movement. On the one hand, we will have to fight alongside workers and youth who will try to overturn the racist Supreme Court decision. At the same time, we will have to expose the dead-end nature of voting and win people to the need for mass violence and building a mass PLP to overthrow the racist billionaires. It is in struggles like these that we will earn the right to lead the working class to power.☸

LETTERS

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

Army Brass Lets War Criminal Off the Hook

The U.S. Army brass is helping Staff Sgt. Robert Bales, who confessed to murdering 16 Afghan civilians in the middle of the night, escape the death penalty by delaying his trial endlessly. They are allowing him to plead guilty and providing him with a top defense team that will whine that he's not really responsible because of post-traumatic stress resulting from his fourth combat deployment.

Compare that with their treatment of another soldier, Bradley Manning, whose crime was exposing the Army's war crimes instead of carrying them out. Manning, whose trial just got under way after three years in prison, mostly in solitary, faces life imprisonment.

The Army delayed Bales' trial as long as possible. He's being tried by a U.S. army court, so Afghan citizens will have no say in his punishment. Relatives of the victims, such as Mohammed Wazir, who had 11 family members killed, including his mother and two-year-old daughter, are vowing revenge. Wazir's reaction is representative of other victims' feelings. He told reporters, "For this one thing, we would kill 100 American soldiers (HuffPost World, May 31)."

Bales' top civilian lawyer, John Henry Browne, who is leading the "it's-not-his-fault" defense said he was disappointed the case has not done more to focus public opinion on the war. We have to conclude that public opinion has not been aroused because of the relentless U.S. ruling-class propaganda pushing imperialist war and maintaining a giant military arsenal that threatens workers everywhere. The Bales case is one more example of the trend toward full-blown fascism in the U.S. Other war crimes continue to be committed in Afghanistan, with very little publicity given to them.

The military is not the only place where the bosses' armed forces commit crimes against working-class civilians, of course. Here in the U.S., working-class youth face intimidation and attacks by cops, stop-and-frisk, and murders by police, who get off scot free — without even being charged with a crime. Bales is another murderous thug for imperialism, just like the police murderers of Shantel Davis, Ramarley Graham, Kiki Gray and a line of others stretching into the past. We need more than to put them on trial; we need to overthrow the bosses who employ them and build a communist society.

Anti-imperialist

Nationalism is Workers' Enemy

The many letters in CHALLENGE (6/5/13) about the black nationalism debate shows that our comrades are engaging politically with other students and friends, which is a good trend. While it is important to participate and listen at these events, it is vital to workers that our Party's political line on nationalism as the workers' enemy be presented, even if it's unpopular. Capitalist dictatorship supports, and it supported by, the anti-working-class ideologies of racism and nationalism, among others. Nationalism is the capitalists' main weapon to divide workers and get them to kill each other in their profit wars.

One letter said many young people were receptive to CHALLENGE, which contains articles about nationalism. In the same edition as the letters, an article described how the nationalists restored Apartheid after it had been defeated by the boycotts and massive resistance by the international working class. There are many ways to engage our friends in discussion about this ruling-class ideology which is responsible for the war deaths of hundreds of millions of workers, and the defeat of working-class movements through installment of national capitalists as "our" leaders. Our Party has the opportunities — now we must take them.

A comrade

Turkey: Workers Are Battling Cops' Brutality

We are back in Istanbul. As you may know the police brutality in Turkey has reached another level. Many demonstrators have lost their eyes. So far there are five deaths. The police officer that shot and killed a demonstrator was not charged. The incident was recorded and played on TV many times. I am pleasantly surprised with the public mood in Turkey. People are not afraid of the police brutality and they organize and continue fighting back.

A friend

Supreme Court Continues to Enforce Racism

In our PLP club meeting we discussed the recent Supreme Court rulings that struck down the heart of the 1965 Voting Rights Act and legalized equality for gay marriages. These two rulings are in stark contrast to each other. Are things getting better or worse?

Everyone felt the ruling on marriage equality will benefit many gay workers, making it possible for gay couples to share the same benefits that straight couples do. And we discussed that, as a Party, we fight for egalitarianism and a world where all the fruits of society are distributed based on need. These rulings clearly show how the ruling class tries to divide the working class through identity politics which we oppose. Identity politics

emphasize all class unity with the bosses based on race and sex characteristics instead of working-class unity against the rulers.

Since the ruling class dubbed Gay Rights, "the new civil rights," two decades of advances on that front have been accompanied by racist budget cuts and increased police terror to force black and Latino youth into accepting a future of poverty and war. By every measurable category, racism in the U.S., especially against black people, is worse than before the 1963 March on Washington, 50 years ago. The back-to-back rulings which threaten to disenfranchise millions of black voters while establishing marriage equality, epitomize this trend.

Anti-racist



Mass Protests in Brazil — hospitals and schools, not soccer stadiums. See page 8.

Syria: Nationalism Masked as Religion Spells Death for Workers

Nationalism is a key weapon that the ruling class uses against the working class in order to keep us divided and fighting each other in the interests of those parasites who rule us. Nationalism is used to create the illusion that there can be all-class unity between local bosses and workers. This unity is a death sentence for our class. A major tragedy in Syria is the way that nationalism, in the form of religion, is being used to divide the working class and get workers to kill themselves in the interests of the imperialists. The major imperialists are in a proxy conflict: Russia and China, with Iran, against the U.S., U.K., France, Saudi Arabia and Qatar for control of Syria.

The old Communist Movement did not have confidence that the working class would fight directly for communism. It believed that nationalism could be a progressive element in the fight against the capitalist class. Every national liberation movement and alliance with religious organizations has been doomed to be chained to capitalism and has never led, nor will lead, to communism.

The Progressive Labor Party does not agree with nationalism, nor will we align with "lesser-evil" national bosses. Though Russia is on a roll right now by supplying weapons systems to Syria with impunity, it is still a repressive fascist state with designs on dominating the world's resources like any imperialist. A victory for Syria's president Assad is still a defeat for the working class.

A victory for the rebels would also be a defeat for workers. The rebels are aligned on two ideological foundations — one is a secular liberal nationalism and the other is an autocratic Islamism that is concretely tied to Al Qaeda. The recent "victory" of U.S. imperialism in Libya has shown what misery is in store for the working class as thousands of armed militia and the thugs in government in Benghazi both terrorize our class.

This future is a probability for the working class of Syria should the rebels come out victors in that civil war. The resolution of a rebel victory would most likely be a second civil war between the Islamists and

the nationalist Free Syrian Army. The nationalists are already losing ground to the better-trained and tenacious Islamists.

The recent victories by Syria and its Hezbollah allies have intensified the contradiction between different sects of Islam. In a part of the world where Druze, Christian, Alawite, et al, have lived together fairly peacefully, the regional Hegemons of Qatar and Saudi Arabia, most likely acting as a front for the U.S. and its puppet arch-imperialist Obama, are frantically inciting animosity between the sects. They are arming the rebels with weapons that can be used against working-class civilians. Religion, the bosses' ideological weapon, is now being used to divide the working class and cause potential civil wars in Jordan and Lebanon and is also a factor in the unrest in Turkey.

The U.S. is desperate to force Russia out of the Middle East and Russia is just as tenaciously guarding its port in Tartus, Syria. Russia has countered the U.S. build-up of Patriot missiles, fighter jets, and troops in Jordan by sending aircraft carriers, submarines, and other weapons to its base in Syria. Iran has contributed Hezbollah guerillas and military planning. Assad is now in the process of mopping up the rebels in Aleppo and, most likely, once they have severed their supply lines, will then smash them piecemeal in the countryside.

This military disaster for the U.S. proxy forces in Syria is just another blemish on the ineffectual leadership of Obama. It's part of the Vietnam Syndrome (the rulers' fear of mass GI rebellions) that still haunts the U.S. bosses and inhibits them from entering wars that they need to preserve their empire. But the Vietnam Syndrome will not be enough to keep the U.S. from other wars of aggression against the world's working class. That aggression will only cease when the U.S. and all of the world's capitalists are destroyed by a communist revolution led by the PLP.☛

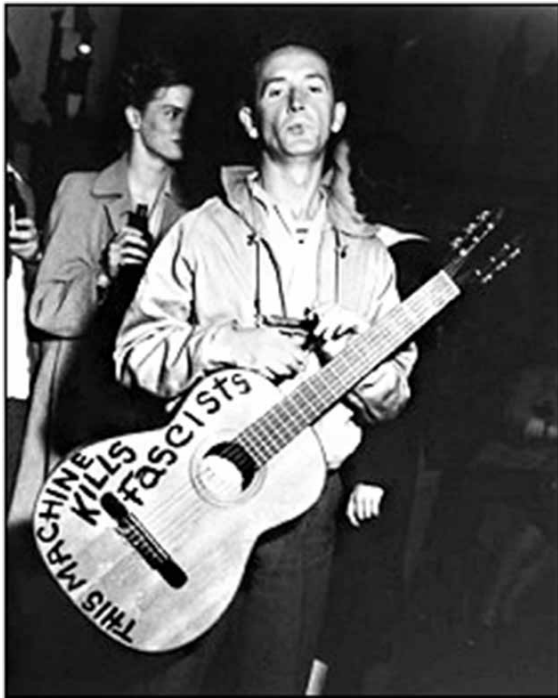
Woody Guthrie Novel: The Struggle to Survive under Capitalism

One year. And what is a year? A year is something that can be added on, but can never be taken away... A year is that nervous craving to do your good job and to draw down your good pay, and to join your good union... And a year of work is three hundred and sixty-four, or -five, or -six days of the run, the hurry, the walking, the bouncing, and the jumping up and down, the arguments, fights, the liquor brawls, hangovers, headaches, and all.

Such is the beautifully evocative earthy prose of *House of Earth*, Woody Guthrie's only novel. Written in 1947 by the radical organizer, poet, singer, and songwriter, just published now. Guthrie writes of one young hardworking family — Tike and Ella Mae Hamlin — during the Depression and their struggle to make a living off the land, keep body and soul together and have a child in a shack that can barely stand up to the beating of the Texas Panhandle. He paints a sympathetic but clear-eyed and honest portrayal of working people — real people, not the noble, but often one-dimensional, portrayals of workers that can be found in some other works, or the sneering condescension George Orwell shows toward the simplistic “proles” in 1984.

The Hamlins rent a rickety house on decent farmland, but it's an endless struggle to keep the crops coming up and food on the table, especially with their first child on the way and the bank breathing down their necks. Tike's dream is an adobe house. Not the cheap wooden houses built by the tight-fisted landowners that leak and creak and rattle in the wind, but a mud brick house literally made of earth that stands up to the climate and can't be blown down, burned down, or repossessed by the bank. Tike sends away for a pamphlet from the government on how to build one, and he keeps it in his pocket at all times, almost like a latter-day bible, drawing an almost religious hope from his goal of living in an earthen house.

It's a book about struggle, but not a book about



Woody Guthrie and his guitar

strikes and picket lines. This is the day-to-day struggle to raise kids, stay fed, clothed, housed and sane with only the barest of tools to make it happen. But most workers, even in the 1930s, didn't spend the majority of their time organizing, however heroic the efforts of the Communist Party and other organizers in fighting the ravages of capitalism. It was mostly a constant struggle just to hold on, even with faith in a dream like an adobe house. It's hard to know if Guthrie really thought that was a solution, or was just using the vision to show that even something as basic as a solid roof is unattainable under capitalism, because if it doesn't generate profits,

it doesn't get built.

As the son of hardscrabble Oklahoma farmers, Guthrie wasn't at all afraid to show both the strengths and flaws in his characters, from the diligent workers to their sometimes not-so-diligent neighbors, their tenderness and their less admirable traits, like Tike's occasional sexism. They need each other to survive. Ella Mae works every bit as hard, if not harder, than Tike, acting as the real anchor to the family. It's to Guthrie's credit, incredibly for a book written over 65 years ago, that he doesn't shy away from straightforward dealings of relationships and sexual relations between a working-class man and wife as a real part of their life on the plains.

Aside from their conversations, sex, occasional interactions with the neighbors, and a very faulty radio, there's not a lot to distract from the constant work. But the lyrical and honest descriptions of life on the farm during the Depression, of life in general, the nuances of the characters and the tense, desperate scenes of childbirth on the open plains in the midst of a blizzard are gripping. They take the place of the more elaborate stories and plots in other fiction. For the most part, Tike and Ella Mae don't succumb to defeatism. But that, too, is a constant effort, with the ever-present threat of foreclosure a dark cloud over them and thousands of others, no matter how bright the real sky might be.

For communists and anyone who opposes the profit system, this is an important book, and well worth reading and discussing. It's a great read, but that's not the point — it's best used to discuss the depictions of working-class people and life, their strengths and weaknesses, and the choices — however limited — people without money make under capitalism. As so graphically portrayed in *House of Earth*, the dream of something as basic as a house of earth will remain just that, a dream, as long as the bankers own the land, until we take it away and return it to the people who work it.🇺🇸



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

They serve imperialism but learn

GW, 6/21 — When Darrell Anderson, 22, joined the US military, he knew there was going to be a war, and he wanted to fight it. “I thought I was going to free Iraqi people,” he told me. “I thought I was going to do a good thing.”

Until, that is, he realized what he had to do. While on patrol in Baghdad, he thought: “What are we doing here? Are we looking for weapons of mass destruction? No. Are we helping the people? No, they hate us. What are we working towards, apart from just staying alive? If this was my neighborhood and foreign soldiers were doing this, then what would I be doing?” Within a few months, he says, “I was cocking my weapon at innocent civilians without any sympathy or humanity.” While home on leave, he recalled he was not going to be able to lead a normal life if he went back. His mum drove him to Canada, where I met him in 2006 at a picnic for war resisters in Fort Erie.

Anderson's trajectory, from uncritical patriotism to conscious disaffection and finally to conscientious dissent, is a familiar one among a generation of Americans who came of political age after 9/11. Over time, efforts to balance the myth of American freedom on which they were raised, with the reality of American power that they have been called on to operate, cause a profound dislocation in their world view....They are forced to confront the brutality of the world they are implicated in and recoil at their role in it — occasionally in dramatic fashion.

....US pollster John Zogby....described young Americans aged 18-29 as “the most outward-looking... generation in American history”....

In 2007, 63% disagreed with the statement “I support my country, right or wrong.”

Brazil's angry mass = global trend

NYT, 6/21 — The mass protests thundering across Brazil have swept up an impassioned array of grievances — costly stadiums, corrupt politicians, high taxes and

shoddy schools — and spread to more than 100 cities... with increasing ferocity.

All of a sudden, a country that was viewed as a stellar... democratic power finds itself upended by a... popular uprising with one unifying theme: and angry, and sometimes violent rejection of politics as usual.

[It is] much like the Occupy movement in the United States, the anticorruption protests that shook India..., the demonstrations over living standards in Israel or the fury in European nations.

When Ali refused Vietnam draft

NYT, 6/21 — I woke up...and heard a familiar voice that I thought was part of a dream: Muhammad Ali was discussing why he had refused to be inducted into the Army.

This was no dream, but the commemoration of an unforgettable moment...being replayed on the radio....

....We were engulfed in the Vietnam War....Here was [Ali]...telling the world that he was not going....

“My conscience won't let me shoot my brother or some darker people,”...And shoot them for what. They never called me n-----.”

....Why should a black man, whose ancestors had been raped and beaten, deprived of human rights in the name of building a democracy, take up arms to fight an immoral war?

FBI kills, then votes FBI innocent!

NYT, 6/19 — “The F.B.I. takes very seriously any



shooting incidents involving our agents, and...we have an effective time-tested process for addressing them,” a bureau spokesman said.

But if such internal investigations are time-tested, their outcomes are also predictable: from 1993...F.B.I. agents shot about 70 “subjects” and wounded about 80 others — and every one of those episodes was deemed justifiable....

In most of the shootings, the F.B.I.'s internal investigation was the only official inquiry....

Voting doesn't give control

NYT, 6/23 — This January, as President Obama began his second term, the Pew Research Center asked Americans to list their policy priorities for 2013. Huge majorities cited jobs and the economy; sizable majorities cited health care costs [and] fighting poverty....

Yet six months later, the public's non-priorities look like the entirety of the White House's second-term agenda....Nobody expects much action on the issues that Americans actually wanted....

MORE ITEMS AVAILABLE AT WWW.PLP.ORG

Masses March vs. Brazilian Rulers' Oppressive 'Democracy'



SAO PAULO, BRAZIL, June 30 — Since mid-June hundreds of thousands of workers have marched in Brazil's main streets, many inspired by the recent rebellions in Turkey and Egypt. The trigger was a bus and metro fare hike of US25¢ but (as in Turkey) the overall causes are the ever-growing worldwide capitalist crisis. A third of the population of this "emergent world power" lives in extreme poverty.

Feeding the flames of the rebellion, the government is wasting more than 12 million dollars on the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Olympic Games. "We don't need the World Cup," reads a banner in a Sao Paulo march. "We need money for hospitals and education."

When the communist movement advances anywhere, when we fight the bosses — transit workers in Washington, Oakland and Los Angeles, or the textile workers in El Salvador, Mexico and Bangladesh, or against racist police brutality murdering our youth in New York — the workers and youth worldwide draw important lessons.

After weeks of protests in Brazil's main cities, thousands of people continue to take to the street demanding better social services. After the new fare hikes were rescinded, new demands have emerged. The main struggle now is against the military and political repression of the working class, especially the evictions of workers because of the construction of the stadiums, sports centers and related infrastructures.

Mass Organization

Workers and students are tired of the pseudo-radical opportunist speeches of the Worker's Party (PT) which claims to represent them. They've taken to the streets against the insufferable exploitation and repression heaped upon them during this last decade by the so-called leftist government led by Lula and now by Dilma Rousseff under which the rich have become richer.

This is the world's eighth largest economic power, produced by increased worker exploitation while in the favelas (slums) poverty grows, children are trained by mafia gangs, opportunities for the unemployed are lacking and there's no access to health services or education. As PLP maintains, the tiny reforms of the Brazilian "left" won't change the real situation for workers.

The creation in 2005 of the Free Fare Movement (MPL) during the World Social Forum of Porto Alegre began as a small group of a few hundred but has grown into the tens of thousands. They are no longer willing to put up with hunger and terrible living conditions but are willing to fight. In many places these battles have been guided by small organizations with specific aims such as obtaining food from big supermarkets that have been looted, disobeying the orders of the politicians.

On June 25, the Homeless Workers and Free Fair Movements marched on the outskirts of Sao Paulo for demilitarization and against police violence; for control over rents; for better healthcare and education services

and free public transportation. The rebelliousness has moved quite rapidly.

Fascist Cops Attack Protests

Brazil's military and police have been trained by MINUSTAH, the UN troops in Haiti, for these kinds of events. CHALLENGE (6/13/2012) reported these troop actions when more than 10,000 people had gone into the streets, at that time the biggest mobilization achieved by the MPL here. The cops jailed 234 protesters, saying it was a crime to carry vinegar, which combats the effects of tear gas. Over 100 people were injured — including many who had nothing to do with the protest — on orders of the "left" to put down the protest.

As always, the media — the TV channel Globo and the newspaper Folha — depicted the protesters as bandits and called on the cops to repress them.

President Rousseff admitted the inferior quality of public services and cynically announced a "national pact" with congressmen, judges, mayors and governors to improve the schools and hospitals. She repeated her plan to bring in foreign doctors and repeated her proposal — already dismissed by Parliament — of investing 100% of the profits of the new oil fields in educa-

tion.

Communism, Yes! 'Democracy' No!

Brazil has been praised as an economic success and a stable democracy, what presidents Lula and Rousseff called socialism. Many in Latin America view them as models. But many youth and workers in Brazil now see they have no freedom, with their job opportunities, education and health continuing to worsen. The capitalist attacks on workers are brutal, no matter who is in power. They're all enemies of our class. Their democracy hides their capitalist dictatorship. By participating in elections, we elect our own executioners. They name the candidates, all of whom represent the bosses.

We need to aggressively organize our working-class youth so they don't become the soldiers of the imperialist armies. We, the workers, don't need a World Cup, new stadiums, "heroes" who reap millions while we starve to death. They are capitalist pawns who help maintain their system. We need to mobilize our Party for a communist revolution, distribute our paper to the masses and use study groups to win all these potential workers. We must direct this anger against the profit system and organize a communist world.✪

Transit Strike Shuts Bay Area's Wall Street

SAN FRANCISCO, July 1 — Bart (Bay Area Rapid Transit) workers struck today and shut the rail system tight. They're demanding a 23 percent wage hike while the bosses want workers to pay more for their healthcare and pensions. Oakland City workers also had a one-day strike, shutting Oakland's downtown (see photo). Bart carries over 400,000 people daily and mainly serves to bring the workforce from outlying areas to Wall Street West — corporations, banks, government offices, retail stores and education buildings concentrated in downtown San Francisco.

Bart is part of eight major unionized transit systems in the Bay Area. Its workers belong to Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 1555. AC transit workers' contract (East Bay bus system, ATU Local 192) expired the same day as Bart. So far the leadership of Local 192 and the ATU International have succeeded in dampening the sentiment of many AC workers to strike in solidarity and for their own issues.

Corporate think tanks let the cat out of the bag when they estimated the strike would cost \$73 million a day in lost worker productivity. PLP members point to this as a real example of the potential of workers' power and the bosses' need of workers' labor for their profits.

PLP members are building transit solidarity, particularly at AC Transit and MUNI (San Francisco public transit), where we have a long history of organizing. We're circulating a solidarity pledge for passengers and workers.

Some workers, have taken matters into their own hands by calling in sick, refusing to do extra service or overtime. In contrast, the union leadership has refused to organize anything, leaving members to their own individual decisions. Some passenger groups and non-profits have come forward to unite with transit workers against fare hikes and service cuts. (More next issue.)✪



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