

# CHALLENGE



THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

volume 42 no. 14

july 7, 2010

suggested donation \$.50

## PLP Serves Notice on Aryan Racists:

# 'Death to the Fascists!'



**GETTYSBURG, PA, June 19** — "We brought these gutter racists our message — there will be no free passes for them! We will stomp on them like roaches!" So spoke a comrade after our inspiring and militant demonstration here against the Aryan Nation fascists.

It was an exciting day as our group — a multi-racial, multi-generational group of teachers, students and workers — travelled to the site of the National Park museum dedicated to the history of the Civil War battle at Gettysburg. Not surprisingly, over the years this museum has become less anti-racist in character and more of an "objective" museum that shows "both sides" of the Civil War, exemplified by the displays of the Confederate flag, the hated symbol of racism and slavery.

The Aryan Nation picked this day to hold an anti-immigrant rally and to protest Juneteenth. Juneteenth is the anti-racist celebration of the day that Texas slaves were freed, two years after other states (although now the rulers are using that holiday to divert workers from the real source of racism — capitalism — see CHALLENGE anti-racism supplement, 6/23). PL'ers decided to show up to teach these fascists a lesson.

Our group led a militant and spirited march through the park, red flags high, stopping a few times to organize a picket line and give speeches. Chants such as "Power to the workers! Death to the fascists!" and "Hitler rose, Hitler fell, Nazi scum go to hell!" were led enthusiastically by high school and college students. Inspiring speeches were given about the historical significance of the fight against

slavery, the need to smash fascism and why PLP wants to lead the fight for an egalitarian society and communism. It was pointed out that enslaved people changed the character of the Civil War, making the issue of slavery front and center and that we, the working class, must make workers' power the issue in the bosses' wars for oil and profit!

When our march got to the Aryan Nation rally, they were few in number, just a handful. They were cordoned off away from everyone and protected by National Parks police, local cops and state cops. In order to get closer, we would have had to be searched and leave behind our flags, literature, and any other possessions and enter a small holding pen. We rallied on the outside, attracting the attention of visitors to the park.

The highlight of our day was chasing Nazis who were hanging around waiting for the supposed rally to begin. When we saw three people together, one wearing a shirt that said "deport all immigrants" we began chanting and chased them. Of course, they disappeared as the kkkops protected them, while two of our members were threatened with arrest. Any fascist sympathizers in the area could feel safe that they would be protected by the cops.

As long as racists and fascists rear their ugly heads, PLP plans to be there, along with our friends, coworkers and the groups we work with to teach them a lesson — Power to the workers! Death to the Fascists! ☘



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# War, Police State Agenda At Stake: Rulers Fear Obama Slips on Oil Spill

The Gulf oil spill comes at a bad time for Obama and the Rockefeller-led imperialist wing of U.S. capitalists he serves. Just when economic calamity and sharpening global rivalry force U.S. war-makers to centralize control over industry and finance, the disaster exposes White House weaknesses and growing disunity among the bosses.

Frank Rich, an Obama watcher at the liberal imperialists' New York Times whines (6/20), "What's also being tarred daily by the gushing oil is the very notion that government can accomplish anything." The Times' columnist specifically fears that the oil mess may impair Obama's ability to lead the U.S. war machine:

"[Obama] must rebuild confidence in his government for that inevitable day when the next crisis hits the fan. That would be Afghanistan, and the day is

rapidly arriving."

Adding to U.S. imperialists' woes in the spill's wake, Rich warns that, "The Tea Party is at the barricades." "Tea Party" encompasses a loose collection of capitalist-led anti-Obama phony populist movements. These forces are funded and led by bosses unconcerned with the Rockefeller wing's long-range strategy to maintain U.S. world domination and preserve its global empire.

Bosses who oppose varying aspects of this imperialist agenda for widening wars and top-down, federal control of business are successfully backing Tea Party candidates in mid-term elections. Some want lower taxes; some want less government interference; some object to the cost of imperialist wars that don't benefit them directly; others seek trade with U.S. imperialists' strategic foes such as China and Iran.

## Muck Muddles Rulers' Wartime Oil Reserve Plans

In response, U.S. imperialists, as their Times' mouthpiece Rich reflects, demand militaristic fascism. His op-ed harangue bears the title, "Clean the Gulf, Clean House, Clean Their Clock." Cleaning the Gulf means far more than stopping the BP gusher so that profitable exploitation can proceed at other wells there. Oil drilling in U.S.-controlled waters — a major strategic initiative Obama endorsed in an April speech but on hold since the blowout — is crucial to U.S. global war plans.

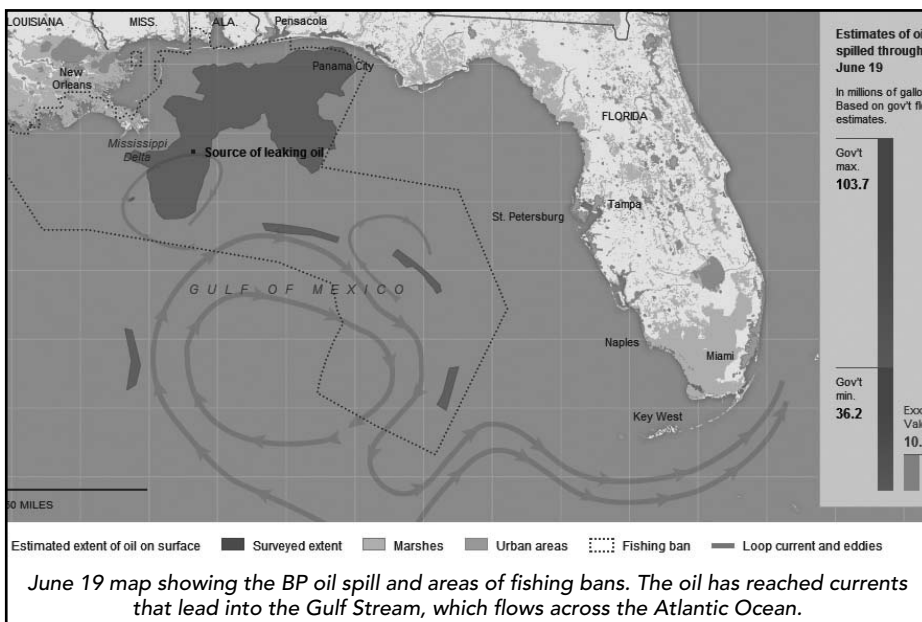
"Energy Security," a May 2010 "working paper" by U.S. imperialists' leading Rockefeller-led Council on Foreign Relations think-tank proposed further discussion of "security benefits from domestic oil production during a protracted military conflict." In such a case, "global oil markets might cease to function in a way that is close to normal."

Iran's nuclear-arming oil barons' threat to shut off Saudi, Iraqi and its own crude exports via the Straits of Hormuz led to Obama's green light for drilling in the Gulf of Mexico. (It is through these Straits that tankers move perhaps one-third of the world's oil to Western Europe, the U.S. and the Far East.)

U.S. imperialists' want a "clean," that is, functioning, oil-pumping, Gulf as a more reliable wartime backstop to their existing Strategic Petroleum Reserve, which would last barely two months.

## Rulers Tell Obama: End Bushite Policies, Follow Rockefeller Road

The Times' demand to "Clean House," refers directly to purging the White House of strategically clueless officials and indirectly to far more stringent policing of business in general. The Hart-Rudman report (see [www.plp.org](http://www.plp.org)), prior to 9/11, demanded more centralized government control to both install



a more fascist police state to quell potential working-class rebellion as well as to discipline rogue capitalists who care little about long-range strategies to preserve U.S. domination internationally.

Pro-ruling-class pundit Rich complains that Obama interior secretary Ken Salazar, "left too many long-serving lackeys of the oil industry in charge at Minerals Management Service (MMS), even as he added to their responsibilities by raising offshore drilling to record levels." Salazar's sin, which Obama will surely punish, lies in letting Bush-Cheney holdovers, focused only on the next quarter's profits, be allowed to ineptly steer a crucial build-up of the U.S.'s long-term war-making capability. MMS officials rubber-stamped BP's risky but potentially lucrative failed Gulf well.

U.S. imperialists also call for a re-regulation of Wall Street. Topping their "to-do" list for Obama is enacting anti-speculation limitations aimed at ensuring U.S. banks' long-term survivability.

The vaunted Volcker Rule, as dictated by Paul Volcker (David Rockefeller's chief economist at Chase Manhattan) "would curb proprietary trading by banks for their own accounts unrelated to customers' needs; [and] bar them from sponsoring hedge funds and private equity funds." (Reuters, 6/8)

## Rulers Want to Wipe Out Tea Party Bosses Blocking U.S. Imperialism

"Clean their Clock" targets BP apologist Tea Partyites ranging from Rand Paul to Sarah Palin. The Times' Rich, pushing for broader state power in the hands of the biggest, imperialist bosses, throws down the gauntlet: "These tribunes of the anti-government right and their Tea Party auxiliaries are clamoring for a new revolution to 'take back America'....Let Deepwater Horizon be ground zero for a 9/11 showdown over the role of government."

The "showdown" follows Hart-Rudman's post-9/11 drive to streamline the federal government in the service of the main capitalist Rockefeller forces and shove the anti-government phony "populist" types down the drain.

But the only anti-Tea Party move Obama made after the spill was to appoint a liberal-environmentalist "national commission" to "investigate" it. Appointee Frances Beinecke, president of the Rockefeller-funded National Resources Defense Council, typifies the panel. It boasts well-heeled and (for the bigger bosses) supportive members but lacks teeth.

However ineffectively, Obama is striving as best he can to fulfill the imperialists' needs. Displaying the true class allegiance of all electoral politicians, he began betraying his anti-war, pro-jobs campaign promises as soon as setting foot in Washington.

Urging Obama to "do a better" job, or voting in "better" people in November, serves only the capitalist ruling class. What's needed is spreading PLP's ideas among the masses in the shops, unions, schools, churches, the military and in the communities to build a mass communist party. Our long-term outlook is eradication of the billionaire war-makers through communist revolution for workers' power. That's the only way the needs of the working class can be served. ☛

(Coming: *Bosses Behind the Tea Party: Dogfights old and new rage among U.S. capitalists.*)

## 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!**

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CHALLENGE/DESAFIO (ISSN 0009-1049) published bi-weekly by Challenge Periodicals. 1 issue \$5.00. One Year: \$15. Six months: \$10. Send address changes to CHALLENGE Periodicals, GPO Box 808 Brooklyn, NY 11202, July 7 2010, Volume 42, No. 14

## 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.

# As PL'ers Point Out Communist Road: Rank and File Dump Sellouts, Fight School Bosses' Attacks

**CHICAGO, June 14** — At 6 am on a Tuesday morning hundreds of teachers and supporters picketed the downtown offices of Chicago Public Schools (CPS) before work. Later that day, the Board of Education passed a resolution allowing schools CEO Ron Huberman to increase class size and fire teachers. The demonstrators were sending a message that they intended to fight any increase in class size. As one sign put it: "When you cut teachers, students bleed."

The demonstration came on the heels of a hotly-contested election for union officers that resulted in a victory for the reform Caucus of Rank and File Educators (CORE). CORE has a history of fighting the Board on behalf of school workers and students.

The current fight against increased class size is one fraught with both danger and opportunity, as are all reform struggles. The danger is in thinking that the working class has the power to stop the ruling class from implementing their plan to further destroy the education received by the predominantly black and Latino students who attend Chicago schools.

The ruling class runs the show, with their legal system, their media and their power to both hire and fire workers. Any working-class victories will be limited and short-lived.

The opportunity, on the other hand, is that class

struggle, as Lenin said, can be a "school for communism." It appears that these struggles may be increasing. Four thousand teachers and supporters took over the streets on May 25. Three hundred came to the June 15 early morning picket on only one day's notice (the Board meeting was an "emergency" meeting called at the last minute). Twelve thousand out of 20,000 Chicago Teachers Union members voted for an activist, militant caucus to lead the union. If communists in the struggle do their job, many of these workers can learn the truth of our analysis from the reform struggle.

PLP members have been active in all of these struggles. At the May 25 demonstration, we urged participants to consider the extreme racism of the CPS system and to realize that racism and capitalism are tied together and must be fought together. More than 50 years past Brown vs. Board of Education (to "integrate" the schools), Chicago schools are still segregated, with African-American schools bearing the brunt of attacks from CPS. Without marshalling our working-class forces together with the aim of overthrowing the profit system, any gains we make in the struggle will be temporary.

PLP members have been active in the CORE caucus since its beginning two years ago. The caucus is filled with young and old, black, Latino and white activist education workers who want to fight for a better world, particularly in the educational

sphere. During the election campaign, hundreds of CORE members went to other schools to speak to fellow unionists, not just about voting for CORE, but also about educational issues facing us such as: fighting the proposed layoffs, school closings and turnarounds, high stakes tests and issues at the local school level.

The incumbents in the election ran a nasty campaign based on lies and red-baiting. One campaign flier threatened that the "militant idealist socialist" CORE would go on strike immediately and the union would be destroyed. Because CORE has organized alliances with parents, students, and community groups, the incumbents claimed that if CORE won, they would turn the union into a community organization.

Interestingly, the red-baiting was countered by many members who thought the union would be better off if led by militants. This is not to say that a sophisticated red-baiting campaign could not be successful, but it does indicate a potential openness to communist ideas.

The next three years (CORE's term of office) promise to be interesting and exciting times for union members, parents and students to learn firsthand about fighting back, the brutality of the ruling class, the limits of reform, and the possibility for a new communist world. ☺

## 'Money for Books, Not for Crooks! Angry Teachers Turn Bosses' 'Small Schools' into Big Anti-Racist Struggle



**BROOKLYN, NY, June 11** — The unified, spirited voices of about 50 staff members and students rang through the streets as they rallied in front of their school against the latest rounds of racist budget cuts to all NYC schools.

"They say cut back, we say fight back" and "Money for books, not for crooks" were just a few of the chants used during the half hour rally. This action reflects an effort by PLP members in two of the three schools housed in this one building, to unite the students and the staff in some struggle.

The effort began when a union meeting was called for all three schools to hear the district representative defend the United Federation of Teachers' (UFT) agreement to allow teachers' ratings to be based partially on students' standardized test results. It quickly became clear that the UFT bosses work hand-in-hand with the education bosses to attack students, parents and teachers.

The district rep claimed the union was fighting for teachers' rights by not allowing 100% of our rating to be based on students' scores. He argued that a partial link between the two was a victory because

since the Department of Education (DOE) was going to pass it anyway, this compromise makes it "less bad."

A PL teacher responded by attacking the union. She argued that the role of unions should be to fight the boss, not to give in to what the boss wanted. She also said that if the UFT really wanted to fight this they could have organized teachers, students and parents across the country to strike. Lastly she stated that the threatened budget cuts and the linking of teacher ratings to student test scores were primarily a racist attack against students.

More teaching to the test will develop in the schools that are already struggling with low budgets — and these schools primarily serve black and Latino students. Many other teachers at the meeting were angered and spoke out against the district rep's arrogant and combative attitude and by the anti-worker message he was bringing.

After the meeting teachers got together to plan a building-wide union meeting without the presence of any union hack. At the following meeting teachers decided it was time to take action. A debate ensued about whether to make the focus of our action the attacks against teachers or students.

A PL teacher put these latest attacks in the context of the bigger capitalist crisis. He explained that the bosses were mainly concerned with their imperialist wars in the Middle East so workers were being forced to pay for this latest capitalist crisis with layoffs, lowering of wages, attacks on our healthcare and pensions. He then argued that in schools the budget cuts were racist attacks on our students who are paying the price with less supplies, overcrowded classrooms, fewer electives and afterschool programs. Most teachers, many of whom read CHALLENGE, quickly agreed to make our students the focus.

Two letters were drafted by two different teacher committees. One was a letter sent to newspapers countering the lies in all of the bosses' media made about "lazy" workers in the UFT and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority. The other letter was for parents. It outlined the budget cuts, put them in the context of the bigger economic crisis

and called on all parents to unite with their children and teachers to fight back.

Along with these letters, rallies were planned for every Friday morning till the end of the year, the union rally at City Hall on June 16th and one final rally the last day of school. In an act of solidarity, teachers from two of the schools agreed to rally even earlier in the morning than they would have had to because the third school starts on an earlier schedule. This small action shows the potential workers and students in this school building have to create the deep ties needed to develop a real movement against this racist system.

After six years of PL members working with students, parents and teachers, these rallies and meetings with members from all three schools are a huge step forward. Uniting our class brothers and sisters is not an easy or fast process since the bosses use every strategy they can to divide workers. They are splitting up larger schools and creating smaller ones in one school building to divide the student body and the teacher union chapters. But workers in this building are defying them. This is the only way to prepare for the on-going class struggles we need to organize to eventually destroy the system that denies us an education, jobs and our humanity! ☺

**NEW YORK CITY, June 16** — PL'ers and friends attended a mass rally of city workers at City Hall. The rally was well-attended by workers from all over the city. Unfortunately workers were subjected to speeches from numerous union hacks and politicians who were all saying the same thing — not much. PL'ers attempted to start a picket within the rally, to no avail. However, PLP chants of, "No cuts, no more, no money for the war" did spur some discussion with workers at the rally. All in all it was exciting to see workers from all over the city regardless of occupation together in one place. It was a reminder of the power of a united working class. It was also clear that workers were not satisfied with the empty "leadership" being offered by city unions. The leadership of the Progressive Labor Party is what workers need and want. ☺



# UAW Convention: The 'Good Times' Roll Over Racist Poverty and Terror

**DETROIT, MI, June 17** — If there is a crisis in the U.S. auto industry and within the United Auto Workers Union (UAW), you wouldn't know it by looking at the 35th Constitutional Convention that just ended. The Hospitality Suites, Officers Receptions and Directors' Dinners were in full swing as 1,200 delegates were wined and dined in a city where more than half the population, mostly black, former-UAW members and their families, live in poverty. We also were served a 10-course "meal" of politicians and government officials.

Since the last convention four years ago, UAW membership dropped another 35 percent to about 355,000 members, with the largest segment, 155,000, belonging to the Technical, Office, and Professional (TOP) division. The UAW helped GM, Ford and Chrysler impose a two-tier wage system that cut starting wages in half as well as cutting retiree health care.

After the UAW helped defeat their 2008 strike, the American Axle strikers had their wages slashed and then lost their jobs. As part of Obama's bailout of the industry, the UAW agreed to a no-strike clause until 2015. Outgoing president Gettlefinger and incoming president Bob

King (who tried and failed to force more concessions on Ford workers, while the company made a \$2 billion profit) both referred to this as "saving the auto industry and the UAW," to the cheers of the vast majority of delegates.

If there was anything worse than the well-orchestrated convention, it was the very loyal opposition of reformers and Trotskyites. The day before the convention opened they held a rally of less than 50 people. This in a city that is 90 percent black, facing poverty and police terror, and made up of tens of thousands of current, retired and former UAW members. On opening day they had less than 10 people picketing Cobo Hall. These "reformers" are current and retired UAW stewards, local officers and delegates, totally isolated from the workers.

In 2009, Solidarity House (UAW international headquarters) paid out almost \$100 million in salaries to just over 550 vice-presidents, regional directors, international reps, organizers, attorneys, and more. This is only part of the union apparatus. This week, in the name of "sacrifice," they gave up their Cost of Living Allowance while voting themselves a healthy raise to make up the difference. In contrast, new-hires at GM,

Ford and Chrysler will earn a paltry \$28,000 (if they work a full year).

The convention ended with a march from Cobo Hall to the Comerica Bank building, where the UAW, NAACP, Teamsters and state AFL-CIO all endorsed a mass march on Washington, October 2, for Jobs and Justice. What they really want is to rally the troops for the November elections.

It is clear that for the foreseeable future, PLP and other revolutionary-minded and anti-racist workers will have to function within the enemy's camp, mixing patience and urgency in winning workers to our revolutionary communist outlook. The coming march on Washington is an opportunity to organize a growing number of workers to march and fight for communist revolution. Coming efforts to organize Toyota and the other trans-nationals can provide more openings for our Party. (We will have more to say in coming issues.) ☛

## Queens College Students Demonstrate Against 'Longest War'

**QUEENS, NY, June 15** — Twenty students and faculty at Queens College held a protest today against the longest war in U.S. history. The war in Afghanistan, which began with a U.S. invasion in late 2001, continues today with a deadly occupation that has killed tens of thousands of Afghans, has spilled over to Pakistan, and shows no sign of ending.

The demonstrators held up anti-war signs and chanted "Occupation Is A Crime, From Iraq to Palestine!" and "Exxon-Mobil, BP, Shell, Take Your War and Go to Hell!" as they marched across campus, giving out flyers and talking to students. The rally was the idea of one student, who thought the occasion of Afghanistan becoming the longest war had to be marked by protest, not silence. He gave a speech decrying the many U.S. war crimes — the repeated killing of innocent civilians by U.S. drone and helicopter attacks along with nighttime raids by U.S. Special Forces.

Although it is now summer session, this demonstration drew almost as many students as an anti-war protest during the regular school year, and we got a good response from other students. Our multi-racial group of protestors was spirited and determined. Party comrades who participated and distributed CHALLENGE were proud to take part.

Our chants and speeches connected various aspects of capitalist oppression — unemployment, budget cuts and a racist prison system at home, along with brutal wars of occupation for economic gain. Working people and the poor pay for these wars, either with their lives or through cuts in services. It is the big-business owners who profit handsomely from the control of raw materials, markets, cheap labor, investment opportunities and fat military contracts — that's imperialist profits.

One speaker pointed out that there are now another trillion reasons why Obama will not withdraw U.S. troops next summer, as he promised. The Obama administration has just announced what has been known for decades: Afghanistan

possesses a trillion dollars worth of valuable mineral deposits, "including huge veins of iron, copper, cobalt, gold and critical industrial metals like lithium." In fact, the deposits are so large that "Afghanistan could eventually be transformed into one of the most important mining centers in the world, the United States officials believe." (NY Times, 6/14/10)

Nearly 100,000 U.S. soldiers will remain to guarantee that U.S. companies, rather than China or another rival, get the lion's share of these mineral concessions. These troops will be stationed on permanent bases that the U.S. had built for a possible war against Iran, which possesses the world's second largest reserves of oil and gas. Iran is a rival to the U.S. for dominance in the energy-rich Persian Gulf.

In addition, these troops will guard the building of a gas pipeline from Turkmenistan through Afghanistan to Pakistan and India (the TAPI pipeline), part of an overall U.S. plan to control world oil and gas spigots in the likely event of a future military conflict with China.

U.S. wars of occupation have been going on for more than two centuries — against the indigenous people of North America, against dozens of Latin American countries, in Vietnam, in Iraq and throughout Africa and Asia. Millions have demonstrated against these wars. But they won't end for good until the profit system that causes them — capitalism — is terminated, and the working class has smashed all borders and won a communist world. ☛



## D.C. Transit Workers Launch Drive vs. Fare Hikes

**WASHINGTON, D.C., June 21** — Even though D.C. Metro recently raised bus fares to \$1.45, many riders, with drivers looking the other way in solidarity, have decided to "just pay a buck." They are not only attacking the bosses where it hurts them the most — the pocketbook — they are also displaying a level of class consciousness that should be an inspiration. Any and every instance of workers looking out for other workers is a reason for optimism. This consciousness, and a revolutionary party to organize our class, are crucial ingredients in the recipe for communist revolution.

Now, despite angry protests and testimony against fare increases by workers and students, the transit board here is hiking fares again, to \$1.70. These represent the biggest increases in Metro's history and is part of the bosses' response to the crisis of capitalism — put the burden on the backs of workers — a burden borne disproportionately by the mostly black and Latino Metro employees and riders.

As we have seen worldwide, the racism inherent in capitalism has intensified during the economic crisis. Furthermore, disabled workers, victims of capitalism's disregard for the health and well-being of workers, will face big increases in the cost of their transportation services. In response, workers are mobilizing to broaden the "Just Pay a Dollar" campaign, with Metro drivers being asked to continue supporting it by accepting the lower fares.

This resistance is a positive sign. Solidarity can be built among workers through such a campaign. But we should have no illusions that such a movement will significantly alter the bosses' exploitation of workers and riders. Only with a communist revolution could we actually solve the problem: workers would run Metro in the interests of workers so they could get to work easily and make their contribution to society.

Under communism, transit would be free and available, since we would all be working collectively with one another, to create a better world, not help some exploiting boss make profit from our labor. As the "Just Pay a Dollar" campaign grows, we will work to bring this idea to more workers at Metro and in the community! ☛

# End Nears for Undocumented Immigrants' Anti-Racist Strike

**PARIS, June 18** — The eight-month strike by over 6,000 undocumented workers appeared to be ending today — resulting in their winning some of their goals — but the workers are maintaining their occupation of various work-sites and government buildings all strikers have received their temporary residence and work permits. They are remaining vigilant regarding the application of the new measures.

We congratulate the workers on carrying on such a long, militant, anti-racist struggle against the racist French government.

The very fact that they struck as undocumented workers is in itself a huge victory. It shows the international working class that immigrant workers worldwide can make such a fight and should be supported by all workers. A crucial factor essential to conducting the strike was the forging of multi-racial unity, notably between workers of African and Chinese origin, which gave the workers the fighting spirit needed for the "illegal" occupations of work sites, and more recently of Bastille Square.

PLP has consistently pointed out that as long as the bosses can divide workers by defining some as "illegal" because they have crossed capitalist-created borders — and enables the bosses to super-exploit them and use them against native-born workers — it will weaken the entire working class. That's why PLP says workers should "Smash All Borders!" — which can only be accomplished through a communist revolution that eliminates all bosses and all borders.

While the strikers did force the government to adopt uniform conditions for their "legalization," the continued existence of "conditions" still differentiates these immigrants from France's native-born workers. Like the outcome of many workers' reform struggles under capitalism, this one is a compromise. However, with communist leadership it can become a springboard for a continued fight towards the goal of smashing capitalist borders.

The strikers — mainly immigrants from Africa

but also from China — have forced the government to admit that France's 250 prefects abuse their arbitrary powers. The "prefects" are direct agents of the national government at the local level and have lots of police powers which they use to favor bosses who kowtowed to them. Undocumented workers could only be "legalized" if they were on "good terms" with their boss and if their boss was on good terms with the prefect. That's why the strikers fought for uniform conditions for "legalization." The agreement provides for uniform application of the following:

- "Legalization" of all undocumented workers who can show they've worked 12 of the preceding 18 months, and six of the preceding 12 months; work for different employers counts;
- "Legalization" of all undocumented temporary workers who can show they've worked 310 hours for the same temporary agency, plus a promise from the agency to employ them during 12 of the coming 18 months;
- "Legalization" of all personal care providers, most of whom are women, under a temporary residence permit while they seek a "promise-to-employ" from an employer;
- Recognition of all strike days as days of employment;
- Recognition that all 30 crafts and trades in which the strikers are employed are trades where there are not enough native-born workers; and,
- Issuance of three-month temporary work permits to all strikers.

It is obvious that within each of these changes, the bosses retain the ability to limit such reforms and the power to reverse them with their hold on the state apparatus. The workers are still subject to having to "prove" certain past work records, dependent on agencies' "promises" to employ them, and provide proof of five years residence in France,



among other conditions.

The strikers opposed the combination of proof of work and proof of residence. Conditions for the "legalization" of Algerian and Tunisian workers, who are subject to special laws, and of undocumented workers in the underground economy, also remain unclear.

While some of the provisions give the workers a leg up on becoming "legal," they still are far from being on an equal plane with native-born workers. And enforcement of the agreement will be "monitored" in quarterly meetings of representatives of the trade unions and of the Ministries of Immigration and Labor.

Struggle on these issues continues. The strikers were scheduled to hold a June 20 meeting to decide on how to continue their movement.

Once the agreement ended the strike, 1,000 strikers concluded their three-week occupation of Bastille Square chanting, "We work here, we live here, we're staying here!" Xiaoqi Zheng, a 52-year-old seamstress, explained that, "In China, I had seen very few Africans. Here [in Bastille Square], we spend a lot of time together. We have become like brothers and sisters."

Of course, the very idea that workers can be "illegal" is a bosses' ploy. The "illegal" label makes possible the super-exploitation of immigrants. The bosses want their racism and nationalism to divide the working class into antagonistic groups. It's only when the workers' internationalism destroys the bosses' state power through communist revolution that categories such as "legal" and "illegal" will be abolished. ☛

## Strikes Spread, Players Scab While: World Cup Showcases Imperialism and Nationalism

On June 11, the World Cup of Soccer began in South Africa. It is the world's largest sporting event, watched by billions around the globe. Ideologically, the World Cup is fueled by the deadly nationalism of the imperialist epoch. Imperialism has left its mark all over the event. The biggest imperialist powers' soccer teams are overwhelmingly filled with players from their former colonies and the African teams are all coached by Europeans.

In South Africa one-third of all workers are unemployed and nearly 70 percent of South African children live in poverty but yet the ANC government found \$107 billion to host the event. After construction workers building the stadiums went on strike, the ANC moved to ban strikes during the World Cup.

But as soon as the games started the security guards that work the stadiums struck over low wages at Durban's Moses Mabhida Stadium — and were met by police firing teargas and rubber bullets. The security guards said their take-home pay was just R135 (\$17.68) per match — working 12-16 hour days on average — and they had to fork over R1,200 (\$157.62) for uniforms. The players have continued to play, effectively scabbing on the workers.

Thousands of people marched in Durban on June 16th, the 34th anniversary of the Soweto uprising against apartheid (see page 8) — in solidarity with Stallon Security workers. Demonstrators also highlighted the treatment of traders who have been forcibly removed from the FIFA exclusion zones in which only licensed traders were allowed to operate. Chants of "Get out FIFA mafia" echoed through the streets.

Other workers complained of being forced away from their normal fishing grounds near lux-

ury hotels and the Durban seafront. Rajeen Inderjeeth held a handwritten sign saying, "We will fish against your rules."

Sections of Johannesburg's bus drivers held a wildcat strike at the start of the week over unilateral route changes.

Hundreds of people marched on the United States consulate in Johannesburg protesting cuts in international funding to prevent HIV/Aids in Africa. Activists wearing green T-shirts and carrying placards took part. Several organizations, including the Treatment Action Campaign and Cosatu, are leading the protest over cuts in HIV/Aids funding.

Workers worldwide should shoot down the bosses' nationalism with internationalism — the idea that workers everywhere have the same class interest in opposing the world's bosses, no matter what their origin. Capitalism caused the poverty — now exacerbated by the World Cup — that has wrecked South Africa. The nationalism promoted in part by the World Cup fuels capitalism's imperialist adventures all around the world and exploitation at home. The workers' real goal worth shooting for isn't a World Cup victory, but communism. ☛



## France: Strikers Hold Boss Hostage, Demand Severance Pay for Co-Workers

**PONTCHATEAU, FRANCE, June 18** — Striking factory workers here held the Bobcat France chairman, four other Directors and a court bailiff hostage all day until management agreed to an extraordinary meeting of the works council.

The 297 workers are fighting for higher layoff compensation for 130 co-workers scheduled for layoff this month. The workers are demanding \$76,740 for each worker plus \$3,960 for each year of seniority; the company is offering one-fourth of that. These workers, who make telescoping forklifts, have already suffered 19 months of short time.

Bobcat France is a subsidiary of the Bobcat Company, a U.S.-based subsidiary of the South Korean conglomerate Doosan Infracore International. Doosan's annual report boasted having "recently acquired Bobcat, which enjoys the world's highest competitiveness in compact construction equipment." But Doosan reported a \$245.8 million net loss in fiscal 2009 so it plans to make its workers pay.

Doosan claims its "business philosophy" is to do "our part to care for communities [and] protect life." But it seems that such "care" and "protection" doesn't extend to its workers. Indeed, Doosan's strategy for Bobcat is to raise competitiveness "by constantly reducing fixed costs, raising operational efficiency, maximizing productivity, and improving business fundamentals."

Consequently, Bobcat France plans relocating its research and development department to the Czech Republic, where average annual income in 2004 was roughly one-third of that in France.

The militancy and solidarity that leads workers to break the bosses' laws and take them hostage is positive, but it takes communist leadership to break the bonds of reformism and aim for workers' power and communist revolution — the only goal that will eliminate the bosses and these attacks for good. ☛



# LETTERS



## Capitalism Produces Food for Profit, Not for Health

I was happy to read the article on health care "reform" in the last issue of CHALLENGE. It explained why health care can't be guaranteed for all people in a capitalist system. (See 6/09/10 issue) We also need to understand that what makes us healthy isn't just being seen by a doctor. Our whole lifestyle — including stress at our jobs, satisfaction with our relationships, exercise and diet — determines how healthy we are. Capitalism doesn't allow workers to choose a life that will be happiest and healthiest.

We don't have to wait for a communist revolution to start living better. I would like to see my friends and comrades look into the scientific evidence about the benefits of a plant-based, vegan diet. I became a vegan over ten years ago for ethical reasons. Since then, I've learned a lot about nutrition and how to eat healthfully.

In the book "The China Study," Dr. T. Colin Campbell presents an overwhelming body of comparative studies that show diets high in animal products (meat and dairy) are correlated at 95% or higher with cancer, diabetes, heart disease, obesity, autism and Alzheimer's. Our likelihood of suffering something like breast cancer, which we commonly think is determined by genetics, actually has much more to do with our diet and physical fitness level than genes. But, as Dr. Campbell discusses in the book, if we can master our own health by changing our lifestyle, we don't need expensive surgeries or medicines.

The pharmaceutical and medical industries stand to lose profits, not to mention the meat and dairy producers whose interests are represented by the U.S. Department of Agriculture

and other government bodies. We need to find good science to expose these lies, and show others why capitalism just doesn't work.

*Healthy Red*

## The Capitalist 'Oil Curse' in the Niger Delta Exceeds the Gulf Spill

After Katrina came the murderous BP exploding oil well. Some people in the Gulf region must be mad enough to think about revolution! Meanwhile, because of media racism, few know that the oil spills and degradation in the oil-producing Niger Delta in Nigeria are even larger than this new Gulf spill. Residents there have been living with and protesting them for 50 years. They, too, need the revolutionary PLP.

Some economists speak of the "oil curse," so terrible are the normal effects of capitalist production on oil workers and residents. The media focus on a few disasters that affect U.S. or Europe, ignoring the chronic racist oil curse and making us think the oil industry's pursuit of profit and power is basically fine. Not true! And that's in "peaceful" times. The other curse of oil under capitalism is that it breeds genocidal imperialist wars.

An article by John Vidal in *The Observer*, May 30, 2010, spells it out. More oil has been spilled in the Niger Delta every year than has been leaked in the Gulf of Mexico. On May 1 a ruptured Exxon Mobil pipeline in the state of Akwa Ibom spilled more than a million gallons into the Delta in seven days before it was stopped.

"We are faced with incessant oil spills from rusty pipes, some of which are 40 years old," said a resident. A community leader in Ibeno said: "Oil companies do not value our life, they want us to all die. In the past two years, we have

experienced 10 oil spills and fishermen cannot sustain their families. It is not tolerable."

With 606 oilfields, according to Vidal, the Niger Delta supplies 40% of all the crude the U.S. imports and is the world capital of oil pollution. Life expectancy has fallen to 40 years over the last two generations, and half the population has no access to clean water. Nnimmo Bassey of Friends of the Earth says that oil companies in Nigeria largely ignore their spills and cover them up.

Writer Ben Ikari says: "When I see the efforts being made in the U.S. I feel a great sense of sadness at the double standards." Bassey continues: "The Gulf spill can be seen as a metaphor for what is happening daily in Nigeria and other parts of Africa."

Judith Kimerling, a CUNY professor, writes in her book "Amazon Crude" about similar effects of the oil curse in Ecuador. The Jayne Cortez poem "U.S./Nigerian Relations" sums it up in two lines: "They want the oil/But they don't want the people." In a marching song, Bassey wrote of the "gallows called oil rigs/Drilling our souls," then went on: "We know our dreams/Won't burst like crude pipes." The Delta rebels know our revolutionary dreams mean we've got to fight back.

Community groups, NGOs and rebel bands fight the oil curse daily, ignored by the media, but they can never plug the leak at the bottom of all this: the profit system itself, which, as Bassey says of the oil companies, is indeed "a danger to the planet." Communists everywhere need to join and spark these struggles until our Party builds an international revolutionary movement out of our class's daily battle to survive.

*African Studies Teacher*

## Iron Man II: Building Support for U.S. Imperialism



Within the first five minutes of the movie "Iron Man II," Tony Stark declares that his wonderful suit of iron has guaranteed world peace. In doing so, he pushes one of the foremost lies that form the foundation of capitalist ideology: that true peace for workers can exist alongside the profit motive. In this grotesque film, which is filled with sexism, the glorification of the U.S. military and Cold War anti-communism, this deception is perhaps the worst. Capitalism only offers ceaseless violence, from domestic abuse to nuclear war, for the world's workers. No "Iron Man" can do what communist revolution can: consign capitalism to the dustbin of history and usher in a society based on workers' needs and hopes.

In the first film, Stark is kidnapped and forced to build a super weapon for terrorists, portrayed by Arab-looking actors (thus fulfilling the film industry's role as a source of racist, imperialist ideology). Instead of developing a weapon for his captors, Stark builds a metal

suit that allows him to fly, shoot and generally wreak havoc on the "bad guys."

The film begins with the U.S. government demanding Stark hand over the suit to the military. Defiantly invoking his "right to private property" and declaring that he has "privatized world peace," Stark refuses. In this Libertarian fantasy Tony Stark, the super-capitalist, provides for the needs of the working class (who suffer most from the ceaseless violence of capitalism and would thus benefit most from true peace). Libertarianism is the belief that capitalist markets are completely self-regulating and that there is no need for government.

Accordingly, the state in the movie, rather than being shown as an instrument of the capitalist class, is shown as a bumbling bureaucracy separate from the capitalist class.

Through a montage of magazine covers and a brief self-congratulatory speech from Stark himself, we learn that the invention of the Iron Man suit has led to five years of "peace and prosperity." Stark reveals the nature of this "peace" when he declares himself a modern "nuclear deterrent," a clear allusion to the "peace" of the Cold War era. The U.S. appears to still be an imperialist power and people like Tony Stark still live in utter wealth, meaning that many more have to live in desperate poverty.

The Iron Man is clearly being used not as a weapon of liberation but a weapon of intimidation. The Iron Man has not brought world peace, but rather world domination by U.S. imperialism. By the end of the movie, the reality that the so-called "free market" hero is in serv-

ice to the U.S. war machine is apparent: Tony Stark is fighting alongside his friend and U.S. Army Colonel, James Rhodes. Stark Industries, his company, may be the hot company, but it still needs the might of the U.S. military to allow it access to markets. (Replace Stark Industries with ExxonMobil and you'd have a movie about the invasion of Iraq.)

Along with a U.S. superhero, this film gives us the proto-typical Russian villain, Ivan Vanko or "Whiplash." Vanko's father was a Russian scientist who worked with Stark's father, but was deported by the elder Stark back to the USSR because Vanko was too greedy (which is rich, coming from a Pentagon contractor).

Vanko is a physicist (with a gym membership himself) incapable of comprehending Stark's technological advancements. He can only mimic advancements, not develop his own, thus fulfilling the stereotype of the overly mechanical Russian scientist not privy to the "freedom" of U.S. capitalism.

Of course belief in this myth requires forgetting that in many scientific fields the Soviet Union was far ahead of the "liberated" U.S. The specter of communism still haunts the bosses and their film industry.

"Iron Man II" will clearly be one of the biggest blockbusters of the year (in its first two days it made over \$327 million worldwide). And it is not hard to see why: good actors put in strong performances and top-of-the-line special effects highlight an action-packed script. But every aspect of capitalist media is designed to reinforce capitalist ideas and we should be critical of these underlying lessons. "Iron Man II," at its core, is a celebration of capitalist individualism and U.S. nationalism simply wrapped in a sleek, glamorous shell. ☛

# Latin America: Local Bosses, Imperialist Masters Profit Off Workers' Misery

Since their founding by Spain and Portugal the history of Latin American states has been a history of imperialism. Today Russia, China, and the European Union (E.U.) all fight over the abundant natural resources of the region, challenging the traditional dominance of the U.S. ruling class. The opportunist native bosses in Latin America have begun to re-orient their economies and populations to reflect this struggle, choosing their favored imperialist master.

Latin America serves as a major source of raw materials for the imperialist powers. Mexico, Venezuela, Ecuador, and Colombia are all major exporters of oil, with Mexico being the second largest source of U.S. oil. The recent find of fresh oil reserves in Colombia's Cusiana fields guarantees a continued imperialist presence in the region. Large mining operations, like the copper mines in Chile, are vital to U.S., Chinese, and Russian manufacturing.

The Southern Common Market, MERCOSUR, plays an important role in regulating South American trade for the benefit of the imperialist powers. Since its inception in 1991 it has been successful in fixing resource prices so low that producing states cannot even maintain themselves.

The U.S. dominated International Monetary Fund (IMF) uses oppressive conditional loans to regulate Argentina, Venezuela, Bolivia and Ecuador, as the local bosses struggle for autonomy and profits. To escape the U.S. imperialists, Venezuela makes oil deals with Chinese and Russian bosses. As a result, Ecuador and close ally Venezuela are the only Latin American countries that participate in the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), a longtime thorn in the U.S. bosses' side.

In many parts of Latin America, capitalist profits revolve around the growing drug trade. Although U.S. bosses have frequently touted their "war on

drugs," they have orchestrated and encouraged drug trafficking and the armed gangs which run the trade. The U.S. built and funded the Contras in Nicaragua and paramilitary groups in Colombia, Guatemala and El Salvador that form the vital drug pipeline between Colombia and the U.S. These fascist gangs were created in the 1980s to brutalize workers and discourage communist organizing, all the while funded by the largest market of narcotics users in the world, the U.S. After the leftists were killed, the drugs kept flowing.

The imperialist powers do not fight over Latin America because it is poor. Latin America is rich; only the people are poor. More than 500 million live in extreme poverty, while 36 local billionaires (and more imperialist bosses) reap increasing profits from their labor.

Both local capitalists and imperialists have no interest in addressing the deteriorating situation of workers in Latin America. As the extraction of wealth from Latin America becomes more frenzied the people become more impoverished. For example, in garment factories owned by Korean, French and Spanish capitalists in Bolivia, children work 16 hours a day under sweatshop conditions. Whenever workers in Latin America fight back against such oppression, the U.S. and its corporate interests have funded police and military repression to bring workers back in line.

In recent years, leaders have emerged in Latin America who have tried to win workers with claims of "socialism" and false promises to free their countries from the yoke of U.S. imperialism. Some prominent examples include Chavez in Venezuela, Lula Da Silva in Brazil and Correa in Ecuador. These leaders wrest control of their countries from the U.S. by making deals with other imperialist powers like China and Russia. Merely changing the face of their master they

are repositioning their workers to be exploited by a different side of the growing inter-imperialist dog-fight.

Host to nine U.S. military bases, Colombia remains firmly under the control of the U.S. bosses. In addition to its wealth of natural resources Colombia is a vital strategic interest to the U.S. since it is geographically positioned to easily control the rest of the region. The government, hopelessly tied to the drug trade, is known for brutalizing workers and destroying unions by murdering organizers.

The Colombian government also serves as America's pit-bull in the region, using its military to intervene in other parts of Latin America. In 2008 Colombia almost sparked a war with Venezuela and Ecuador when Colombian and U.S. troops crossed into Ecuador to assassinate Raul Reyes, leader of the FARC guerillas.

Despite these horrific conditions bred by imperialism, workers continue to fight back. On May 1st millions of workers all over Latin America marched against capitalism. In some of the marches, the slogan of down with capitalism and long live communism was heard. In Mexico, El Salvador, Guatemala, Cuba and Honduras, the workers remembered the martyrs of Chicago and called for a fight against the imperialists punitive system of control.

PLP was present in many of these marches raising the communist flag, declaring that we have a world to win. Workers have broken barriers by joining the Party of the working class, as they see people suffering the same injustices from Mexico to Afghanistan to Brazil. On May Day they raised the only flag of the international working class, the communist flag, and called for revolution. Only one Party, the PLP, is capable of destroying capitalism and the deadly imperialism it breeds! ☘

## 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

### World ignores big oil Nigeria crimes

**NYT, 6/17** — Nigeria — Big oil spills are no longer news in this vast, tropical land. The Niger Delta, where the wealth underground is out of all proportion with the poverty on the surface, has endured the equivalent of the Exxon Valdez spill every year for 50 years... The oil pours out nearly every week... leaving residents here astonished at the nonstop attention paid to the gusher half a world away in the Gulf of Mexico. It was only a few weeks ago... that a burst pipe belonging to Royal Dutch Shell... was finally shut after flowing for two months: now nothing living moves in a black-and-brown world once teeming with shrimp and crab... The fishermen curse their oil-blackened nets, doubly useless in a barren sea... Soldiers guarding an Exxon Mobil site beat women who were demonstrating last month...

"The pipeline failure rate in Nigeria is many times that found elsewhere in the world"... even Shell acknowledged... On the beach at Ibeno, the fishermen were glum... "We don't have an international media to cover us... Whatever cry we cry is not heard outside of here."

### BP ordered workers: lie, drill

**Otherwords.org, 5/15** — Corporations can get away with murder... and make billions doing it... Those financial penalties are so minor that BP routinely scrimps on safety, says oil worker safety advocate Chuck Hamel. In Prudhoe Bay, Alaska, BP oil workers have told Hamel they are expected to routinely falsify drilling rigs' safety tests.

The reason? Because conducting a safety test... means shutting down the rig. And shutting down means oil doesn't flow for a few minutes. So, says

Hamel, in order to make more money for BP, the world's fourth-biggest corporation, these workers were told to routinely falsify their own safety reports and carry on drilling.

### Hunger is caused by profit system

**GW, 6/4** — The conditions that create hunger and famine around the world have followed a pattern for centuries — and still do today.... During the great hunger around 1 million Irish people died and a further 1 million were forced into emigration for want of food. Yet, throughout the period, 1845-52, Ireland exported large amounts of food to England....

The root cause of hunger and famine is rarely crop failure alone. It is about who controls and benefits from the land and its resources. About 1 billion people, or one in six of the global population, go hungry, even though more food is being produced than ever... We have, in other words, a food system that is failing.... Water... is increasingly scarce, and... soil... is being eroded and degraded....

And... the value of the food chain has been captured at each point, from seed to field to factory to shop, by powerful transnational corporations.... Meanwhile, all but the most intensive and large-scale farmers are being driven off the land, many of the poorest forced into migration.

### 'Economy up': jobless in despair

**NYT, 6/8** — Unemployment is crushing families and stifling the prospects of young people. Given that reality, President Obama's take on the May numbers seemed oddly out of touch. "This report," he said, "is a sign that our economy is getting stronger by the day."

The economy is sick, and all efforts to revive it that do not directly confront the staggering levels of joblessness are doomed.... Entire communities are going under. A remarkable article in The Times



last week detailed what has happened in Memphis, where a majority of the residents are black. It said the city epitomizes "how rising unemployment and growing foreclosures in the recession have combined to destroy black wealth and income and erase two decades of slow progress.".... Inner-city neighborhoods, where joblessness is off the charts, are becoming islands of despair.

### China working class stirs, strikes

**NYT, 6/15** — Workers who returned to their jobs on Sunday and Monday at a Honda auto parts factory here in southern China were threatening to go back on strike this week if the company did not improve its offer of wage increases.

The threat... suggested that labor unrest at the factory was not over and that workers would not easily yield to pressure.... The threat of another walkout indicated that labor unrest continued to stir in China despite... government efforts to censor reports of strikes and protests....

Honda has had at least three strikes in the last month, at times crippling its production in China. It has responded by offering higher salaries, but those concessions seem to have emboldened workers at other factories.

MORE ITEMS AVAILABLE AT WWW.PLP.ORG



# The Great Soweto Uprising in South Africa

English and Dutch Boers (Afrikaners) colonized South Africa and, in 1948, subjected black Africans to a formal racist system called Apartheid, an Afrikaner word meaning "apart." This system was based on a combination of U.S. slavery and its successor Jim Crow, with no equality politically, economically or culturally.

\* \* \* \* \*

June 16 marked the 34th anniversary of the Soweto uprisings in South Africa. Today it's an official South African holiday, Youth Day. It commemorates the hundreds of young people killed fighting the Apartheid system. June 16, 1976, will live in the memories of South Africans and anti-racist workers worldwide for generations to come.

Black African students received inferior education in overcrowded schools and had to pay the equivalent of half their parents' monthly income to even attend school, while white students received free education.

The Soweto rebellion's immediate spark was a new requirement that math and social studies be taught in Afrikaans, the Apartheid government's official language. However, teachers had always taught in English. Most were unable to teach in Afrikaans, a third language for them besides their native one and English.

## The Rebellion Begins

On June 13, 1976, the students called a meeting; 400 attended. The Soweto Students Representative Council (SSRC) was selected to lead the campaign against this new racist edict. Two delegates per school were elected. They refused to accept the order to be taught in Afrikaans, still another racist burden imposed by the Apartheid government. Students, fearing being stopped, told their parents nothing. They decided to march to Orlando stadium to present their demands. On June 16 at 7 A.M., about 5,000 students, most between 10 and 20 years old, met at various points around Soweto Township and started marching. But before they got inside the stadium, police with vans formed a wall blocking them.

The cops fired tear gas, warning them to disperse. With the students holding their ground, the police started shooting into the crowd. Twelve-year-old Hector Petersen was the first one killed. Then angry students began hurling stones and bottles at the cops, running forward, throwing, then retreating and repeating the action. This continued all day.

## The Battle Rages

Symbols of the hated Apartheid system were burned: administrative offices, government buses and vehicles. Liquor stores and beer halls were looted and then set afire. Battles continued through the night, with police shooting wildly in the dark (Soweto had no street lights).

Thousands of injured students went to the Chris Hani Baragwanath hospital where some died in the hallways and others outside the emergency room. Over 200 students were murdered. Workers arrived home to find cops everywhere in personnel carriers called "hippos," vehicles built to withstand landmines in the guerilla wars in Namibia and Mozambique. The bodies of dead and injured students were littered all over. Clouds of black smoke hung over the Township.

The next day most workers voluntarily stayed away from their jobs. Then the students realized they'd have to talk to their parents to expand their forces to fight Apartheid. In intensive house-to-house visits they explained the issues to their parents. The police banned all political and mass meetings.

## Chrysler Workers Back the Students

On June 22, mass funerals became mass meetings. Townships near Pretoria joined the struggle. Over 1,000 South African Chrysler auto workers struck to support the students, the first time workers had done so. The boycott spread to the Alexandra



Township. By June 18, the Apartheid government closed all schools in Soweto and Alexandra.

SSRC's next major action, set for August 4, was more ambitious — organizing a three-day general strike and a school boycott. This had not happened since 1961. Students cut the key signal box, halting trains from running to Soweto. Students gathered at all the commuting sites, urging workers to stay home. An estimated 20,000 to 40,000 workers struck. It was 60% successful over three days.

By now, the student boycott had spread to the Western and Eastern Cape. The Apartheid government detained hundreds of students indefinitely to stop the demonstrations. Then they used a vicious divide-and-conquer strategy, pitting Zulu workers against the students.

## Fight Racist Divisions

Many Zulu male migrant workers lived in hostels, without their families. The police told them the students would attack them. During the second three-day boycott one hostel was burned, probably by an agent provocateur. Under police protection, the Zulus then attacked the students and residents.

The SSRC, realizing they had to win the Zulu workers politically, explained how the police had misled them. Zulu workers were won to see that the students' and Soweto workers' fight against Apartheid was their fight too.

The third SSRC demonstration, August 23, spread to Witwatersrand and the Transvaal. A solid 75% to 80% participation was sustained over three days. Almost 750,000 workers participated. Zulu migrant workers gave almost total support.

Sporadic protests continued. In April, 1977, the SSRC successfully stopped rent increases in Soweto. In September, when Black Consciousness Movement leader Stephen Biko was murdered in prison, rebellions spread nation-

wide, especially in the Eastern Cape. The following month the last SSRC leader fled into exile. On October 19, the government banned 17 organizations, most connected to the Black Consciousness Movement.

## A Worldwide Movement Erupts

Internationally, the rebellion inspired workers and students to hold anti-apartheid demonstrations supporting the South African rebels. Students at universities throughout the U.S. and Europe launched major divestment campaigns demanding college Boards of Trustees sell off stocks in companies doing business in South Africa, such as Ford, IBM, Eastman Kodak and Hewlett-Packard. Citibank was the largest U.S. lender to Apartheid South Africa.

Pressure was maintained throughout the 1980's. In 1990, the government was forced to lift the ban on resistance movements. That year Nelson Mandela was freed from 29 years in prison.

Today, while "official" Apartheid has ended, it continues unabated through extreme poverty and racism. The workers and youth of South Africa must build on their militant history and move in a revolutionary communist direction so that their amazing struggles in battling Apartheid will not have been in vain. ☺



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