

This Week:

- Katrina Hitting Cook County Healthcare System — The 'Levees' are Breaking!, page 3
- Somalia: Another Front in U.S. Racist War for Oil, page 5



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BUSH STEPS UP IRAQ SLAUGHTER, BUT LIBERAL BOSSES DEMAND

WIDER WAR



The Bush administration shows signs of increasing obedience to the liberal, imperialist wing of U.S. capitalists. Bush, for example, replaced “cheap hawk” Rumsfeld with Gates, who vows to add 91,000 soldiers and marines. But Bush’s latest attempt to execute the main rulers’ war plans, sending 21,500 more troops to Iraq, is a band-aid that falls far short of a long-range strategy needed by U.S. imperialism.

Liberal spokesmen have pounced on Bush’s plan. Michael O’Hanlon of the Brookings Institution calls it “the right thing to try—as long as we do not count on it succeeding.” (Washington Post, 1/14/07) Zbigniew Brzezinski, advisor to former President Jimmy Carter, condemns it as “a political gimmick of limited tactical significance and of no strategic benefit...insufficient to win the war militarily.” (WP, 1/12/07) Democratic war criminal Wesley Clark says “too little, too late.” (Independent, 1/7/07) Barack Obama chimes in, “you’re going to need one hundred thousand more, one hundred and fifty thousand more.” (New Yorker, 1/15/07) What U.S. imperialism requires of Bush is an Iraq stable enough to pump great

quantities of oil and a U.S. mobilized for ever deadlier wars. He isn’t getting either job done.

TURMOIL STEMS FLOW OF CRUDE OIL

U.S. rulers invaded Iraq with dreams of raising its crude production to six million barrels a day. But fighting keeps the level around two million, well below the pre-war high of 3.5 million. So it’s no accident that Bush’s stabilization surge coincides with the framing of a new Iraqi law that hands the country’s oil wealth on a silver platter to U.S. and British firms that agree to build up wells, pipelines and refineries. “Under a system known as ‘production-sharing agreements’, or PSAs, oil majors such as BP and Shell in Britain, and Exxon and Chevron in the US, would be able to sign deals of up to 30 years to extract Iraq’s oil...companies will be able to recoup 60 to 70 per cent of revenue; 40 per cent is more usual.” (Independent, 1/7/07)

But, with Bush’s scheme doomed to fail, “the majors...won’t start work for

years...because of the disastrous war,” said one oil executive. The liberal New York Times says Bush “needs to concentrate enough forces in Baghdad to bring some security to streets and neighborhoods.” (editorial, 1/9/07) It sweats out the “nightmare” of “millions of Iraq’s people and its oil fields falling under the tightening grip of a more powerful Iran.”

IT’S LIBERALS’, NOT JUST BUSH’S WAR

Amid the surge uproar, some myths deserve busting. One is that the Iraq war sprang solely from the deluded minds of evil “neo-cons,” who cooked up the lie that Hussein had weapons of mass destruction. The push for invasion in fact came from the dominant liberal wing, the chief proponents of the WMD fabrication being the New York Times and the Rockefeller-led Council on Foreign Relations (CFR).

The Times hammered away at Hussein’s supposed cache in editorials and in articles by its then star reporter Judith Miller. The CFR sponsored Richard Butler’s book, “The Greatest Danger,” which claimed that WMD-armed Hussein was worse than Hitler. The CFR published occupation plans months before the invasion. Furthermore, controlling Mid-East oil formed a big part of the rulers’ 1999 Hart-Rudman recommendations for maintaining U.S. supremacy well into the 21st Century. Another illusion portrays Democratic politicians as opposing “Bush’s war.” Ted Kennedy promises he will organize to cut off funding for it. Don’t bet the rent. The last Senate war appropriations vote in November was a 98-0 slam dunk.

RULERS NEED FULL MOBILIZATION SPURRED BY 9/11 REPEAT

Two main factors contribute to the Iraq fiasco. First, Bush opportunistically serves the tax-cutting interests of his voter-donor

continued on page 2

U.S. Gunboat Diplomacy Aims At Iran

The rulers’ quagmire in Iraq is complicated by the surge of Iran’s influence in the Mid-East, which is probably the reason for what the NY Times (1/14) labels “classic gunboat diplomacy” — Bush has appointed an admiral to oversee the U.S. military in the region for the express purpose of using naval power to threaten Iran. A second aircraft carrier group has been shifted to the Persian Gulf, doubling U.S. air and sea power. Each one contains 14,000 military personnel, 85 aircraft, two guided missile cruisers, two destroyers, a frigate, two submarines and a supply ship. “Naval heft meant to intimidate,” says the Times.

Fearing Iran’s reaction to a U.S. attack, involving an Iranian blockage of the narrow Strait of Hormuz through which much of the world’s oil passes, Navy minesweepers are also on call to deal with Iran’s possible use of mines to blow up tankers. But a Council on Foreign Relations Iran specialist thinks this will not cow Iran but rather strengthen its rulers’ anti-U.S. stance within the country. (NYT, 1/14)

A footnote: during the Vietnam War, rebellions by U.S. sailors on six of the seven aircraft carriers in those waters sabotaged the ships, sending them back to San Diego for repairs, effectively putting them out of action and helping to force U.S. rulers to give up their imperialist adventure there. ☛

HUNDREDS MARCH IN OAXACA



OAXACA, MEXICO, Jan. 13 —

Five hundred workers and youth marched from the town of Miahuatán to the nearby jail demanding the release of members of APPO (Organization of the Peoples of Oaxaca) still imprisoned. Local and state cops attacked the marchers, beating and arresting several of the protesters. ☛

See Page 5 for an Analysis of Last Year’s Struggle in Oaxaca

Rulers' Wars Spur Tighter Control of U.S. Schools

A new proposal to redesign the U.S. educational system was recently introduced by the "New Commissions on the Skills of the American Workforce." In order to remain top dog, and prepare the working class for a future of imperialist war, the ruling class recognizes the vital need to overhaul the U.S. educational system and build nationalism.

The plan proposes national board exams in the 10th grade to track students into preparation for selective colleges or direct placement in community or technical colleges. This would give the ruling class tighter control of what is taught and how it is taught, while still allowing principals some on-site control as a facade of local power. This national centralization of the curriculum is crucial for patriotic indoctrination. If students and workers in the U.S. believe that their enemies are foreign workers, then the bosses can more easily convince them to kill and die for U.S. imperialism. Such nationalism is needed to win masses of young people to actively support imperialist wars and make sacrifices at home like lower wages, pensions and health benefits.

Like statewide exams and the SAT's today, these new national board exams

would be racist and anti-working class in nature. They would essentially produce an apartheid system, forcing mainly working-class blacks and Latinos into technical schools, which would inevitably provide free or cheap labor to profit-hungry corporations. Also, many students who did poorly on the exams would blame themselves, and not this racist system, for not making it into college.

As CHALLENGE has pointed out many times, the U.S. ruling class is fighting to remain the world's top imperialist.

panel including some major ruling-class figures like the head of the missile producer Lockheed Martin and members of the Brookings Institution, a major U.S. foreign-policy think-tank, along with members of prestigious universities. The composition of the panel demonstrates that the main goal of this proposal is not to make all students critical thinkers for the students' sake, as it claims. Why would a missile producer be needed for that? Instead this panel reveals the seriousness with which the ruling class views

to the bosses if workers understood that capitalism's basic need to maximize profits always forces them to pay workers less and less. Fear is used to win U.S. workers to ally with the U.S. ruling class to beat the world, winning many soldiers in Iraq to kill their Iraqi brothers and sisters.

Just as the rulers have a plan for us, we also have a plan for them. The rulers will try to maintain their control in the world by causing more death and misery for the international working class. We must deepen our own education about the rulers' capitalist system. We must get involved in class struggle against all their racist, anti-working class plans with the goal of winning our friends to the understanding that only communism, a system run by workers, for workers, can end working-class misery around the world.

Teachers must teach their students to use a class analysis to understand the world. Understanding that no matter where workers live, our enemies are the capitalists who oppress us, is the only way to combat nationalism. Students must point out patriotic lies whenever they are taught. Teachers and students must help organize protests and walkouts against military recruiters in schools, racist cop murders, metal detectors and any other attacks on our class. We must also develop and increase CHALLENGE networks among our base until it becomes the paper of the masses. This process will provide a real education where we, the working class, will truly benefit. ☪

'Teachers must teach their students to use a class analysis to understand the world.'

Strategic control of Mid-East oil distribution is primary in achieving this goal. The war in Iraq is a failing attempt to secure its position. There will be many more imperialist wars abroad and tightening control at home as the rulers fight desperately to keep their position. The ruling class needs a few more educated workers who can help U.S. companies compete, and many more technicians and soldiers to produce war materials and fight hi-tech wars to keep the U.S. the number-one imperialist.

This new proposal, "Tough Choices or Tough Times," was written by a bipartisan

the creation of an educational system that serves their corporate needs, especially the need for war in a time of growing crisis.

The proposal justifies itself with statistics that will surely be used to scare U.S. workers into believing that their standard of living is declining because of other workers in the world. It compares the U.S. unfavorably to China and India, which can produce lots of educated workers willing to work for low wages. The U.S. ruling class wants its workers to believe that this is why they are making lower wages every day. It would be a huge blow

WHAT WE FIGHT FOR

☪ Progressive Labor Party (PLP)

fighters to smash capitalism — wage slavery. While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions all over the world. Capitalism returned to the Soviet Union and China because socialism failed to wipe out many aspects of the profit system, like wages and division of labor.

☪ Capitalism inevitably leads to wars.

PLP organizes workers, students and soldiers to turn these wars into a revolution for communism — the dictatorship of the proletariat. This fight requires a mass Red Army led by the communist PLP.

☪ Communism means working collectively to build a society where sharing is based on need. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. Everyone will share in society's benefits and burdens.

☪ Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of race.

☪ Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women workers.

☪ Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One International working class, one world, one Party.

☪ Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. **Join Us!**

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Report Reveals Genocide vs. Oakland's Black Youth

ALAMEDA COUNTY, CA. — On Dec. 14, the Oakland Tribune ran a startling headline: "Youth's Number #1 killer: Murder," referring to a report issued from Alameda Public Health director Arnold Perkins. It says the homicide rate for County youth, ages 15 to 24, is 21 per 100,000. California's rate is 17 per 100,000.

The report only focuses on Alameda County but the World Health Organization's (WHO) figures reveal U.S. capitalism in a miserable light. WHO says the rate of youth homicide in the world is 9.2 per 100,000. In France, Germany and Britain the rate is .6, .8 and .9 respectively. That means youth in Alameda County get murdered at a rate 35 times higher than these European countries.

However, the most explosive statistic is buried in the middle of the report. Black males between 15 and 24 are murdered at a rate of 186 per 100,000. Genocide, or ethnic cleansing, are the only words that can describe this state of affairs. It means that black males in Alameda County are 310 times more likely to be murdered than youths in France!

Alongside Hurricane Katrina, the latest cop murder in New York City (50 bullets to assassinate Sean Bell, an unarmed black man) and a prison population in which 70% of 2.2 million are black and Latino, this report, in effect, condemns U.S. capitalism as one of the world's most racist nations.

It's not that Oakland is some backwater city forgotten by capitalism. Its

international seaport generates revenue from \$25 to \$50 billion per year. The city itself produces some \$100 billion annually. A decade ago Walter Shorenstein, major kingmaker in the Democratic Party, invested \$100 million in its downtown and ex-California governor Jerry Brown, has just completed two terms as mayor. He has been replaced by another Democratic Party "star," Ron Dellums.

Capitalism has not ignored Oakland. Rather it has created the conditions that cause this genocide against black youth. Decades of racism: double unemployment rates (quadruple among youth), extortionate slum housing, decrepit schools, police terror, imprisonment for non-violent "crimes" (which receive rehab, not jail terms, in most countries), drugs injected into black neighborhoods — all this and more has dumped tens of thousands of black youth onto capitalism's scrap heap and left them with a future of hopelessness. It is to their credit that so many of them have participated in rebellions against the profit system.

PLP urges everyone to expose this genocidal murder rate in their unions, churches, schools and Army units, and direct workers' anger against the racist system in order to build a revolutionary new society where the communist ideas of sharing and collectivity replace the capitalist notions of dog-eat-dog competition. Expanding CHALLENGE distribution and deepening our plans for May Day events could be central to such plans. ☪

Wider War

continued from front page

base instead of getting them to sacrifice for U.S. imperialism. He even passed up 9/11's golden opportunity for militarization in favor of business as usual. And in 2002/2003, when the CFR was urging a long build-up to a massive onslaught against Iraq, Bush pulled off an initially cheap invasion with "off-the-shelf" troops and equipment. A quagmire ensued with costs now reaching into the trillions, infuriating the liberal rulers.

Second, the Vietnam Syndrome has hampered U.S. rulers' military recruiting for decades. That war laid bare to millions the murderous essence of U.S. imperialism. Very few people now join the armed forces willingly. It would probably take another Pearl Harbor- or 9/11-style attack, handled by a president more like Roosevelt than Bush, to change this pervasive anti-military attitude.

Given U.S. rulers' inescapable needs — clashes with Iran soon and China later are clearly in the cards — it would be a mistake to rule out such an event. Gary Hart and Warren Rudman and a host of liberal followers, like Harvard's Graham Allison and the CFR's Stephen Flynn, continue to warn of one every chance they get. Without a galvanizing moment, U.S. rulers will have to resort to a draft or its twin — identical in all but name — national service.

It was encouraging that national service proved so unpopular during John Kerry's 2004 campaign that he was forced to effectively drop it from his platform. Most people, especially the working class, oppose the bosses' war-making. But passive disagreement is not enough. What remains is to build a mass movement with the only workable solution for profit-driven wars — revolutionary communism. ☪

Rulers' Video Spying Builds Fascist War Society in NYC Schools

NEW YORK CITY, Jan. 13 — “I worked in the court system, so I know what cameras are,” said a new teacher at this urban high school campus, shocked at the administration’s plans to install almost 100 cameras in our building and treat students like criminals. In the shell of a previously large school, four mini-schools have become incubators for fascism, enabling the U.S. ruling class to exert ever tighter control on its youth to prepare them for an ever-expanding war economy. Therefore, they need to get teachers to march in step. In our school, this campaign has: (1) increased pressure that manipulates teachers’ dedication to students; (2) harassed teachers who don’t fall in line or fit their plans; and (3) increased surveillance.

Surveillance and Social Control Builds War Society

Increased school security was occurring even before 9/11, but now it’s exploding. Because the great majority of students in big-city schools are black and Latino, and the system’s racism relegates these students to second-



class citizenship who the rulers can use for low-paying jobs and cannon fodder in their imperialist wars, this new technology has started here and will be increasingly used nationwide.

It began with metal detectors in predominantly black and Latino schools, which has spread

to the suburbs. Now it includes iris (eye) scanning and “non-cooperative” (automatic) tracking systems using radio frequency identification (RFID). The bosses have equipped 75% of new public schools with video surveillance systems (NY Times), costing hundreds of millions of dollars. The U.S. “Justice” Department is even doling out grants for these projects, although school crime has been declining for over a decade. In New York City, Mayor Bloomberg trumpets his desire to view — from his headquarters — centralized video data of every school in the city.

Have the bosses suddenly become concerned about students’ well being? Not a chance. If they really cared about students, they’d lower the class sizes from 34 to 20, and lighten the workload of already overburdened teachers. These surveillance measures are part of creating a high-pressure culture where everyone is watched and is a potential suspect.

This culture is decidedly anti-working class and anti-communist. The content of the curriculum teaches loyalty to the bosses’ version of history: patriotism to the bosses’ flag and racism towards “foreigners” against whom the bosses want to go to war; justification for all U.S. rulers’ imperialist wars; pacifism; and omits how workers and oppressed black slaves fought capitalism’s oppression. It also teaches anti-communism with a vengeance. (See a future issue.)

Our latest union contract — which attempts to bribe teachers with chump change while doing absolutely nothing to help students — has led to another administration offensive against teachers. Their new buzzword is “empowerment schools,” but they’re all about enslavement. Several teachers in our school have been victims. One veteran teacher was observed three times in a week and given two unsatisfactory observations because he dared tell an administrator that the newest battery of standardized tests was a waste of time. He teaches an advanced math class with 36 students; one-third has failed the state’s basic math exam and another third

speak English as a Second Language.

The teacher knows their skills. The problem is teaching them under these conditions! But rather than improving conditions, the administration pressures us to work even harder, and then makes it appear as our “fault” when students cannot perform on the tests.

This is the same manipulation that recruits young people to join the military to “make a difference,” the same harassment and terror that criminalizes immigrant workers and “disciplines” black and Latin youth with cops jailing them or killing them in the street. Cameras don’t mean the bosses are paranoid; they’re simply protecting their murderous system!

Communist Leadership Is Essential

PLP has been giving leadership in this struggle. We’re publicizing these cases widely, rallying other teachers to publicly support their besieged colleagues, while linking these attacks to the bosses’ drive toward building a society on a permanent war footing. We’ve begun to expose the issue of cameras and are organizing campus-wide meetings to begin to organize support from teachers as well as students and parents.

One obstacle is the lack of class consciousness. Firstly, teachers are caught up in the day-to-day struggle to prepare their classes and tend to their students as best they can. Many also believe the schools can be reformed, that the answer is “better education.” They underestimate the ruthlessness of U.S. imperialism in crisis. Others hope to avoid trouble by keeping their head down and placating the administration. These small schools create more incestuous relationships between teachers and administrators. A group of teachers who read CHALLENGE can be instrumental in struggling with their colleagues over the politics of these school “reforms.”

We need to involve students much more directly in this struggle. Our Party and our friends must resolutely build a base opposing these accelerating attacks, exposing the bosses’ plans, challenging them wherever and whenever we can and, in the process, recruiting more members. Capitalism is providing us with plenty of opportunities to grow. ☺

PL’ers Campaign Vs. Imperialist Wars in NYC Teachers’ Union

NEW YORK CITY, Jan. 10 — Hours before the Bush speech announcing U.S. rulers’ latest 21,500 troop “surge” in Iraq, a resolution opposing the Iraq war as imperialist and the presence of military recruiters in high schools was voted onto the agenda of the next meeting of the thousand-member United Federation of Teachers Delegate Assembly here. The delegates also voted overwhelmingly to fund UFT buses to take teachers and their families to the January 27th national anti-war demonstration in Washington, D.C.

Certainly many years of anti-war activity by PLP and other forces at both local and national union meetings have not gone unnoticed by the union leadership. As the political winds against the war turn into a gale UFT president Weingarten is smart enough to jump on the bandwagon.

But let’s not fool ourselves. This is the same Weingarten who seems to kiss NYC billionaire mayor Bloomberg for the cameras every chance she gets. The affection is more than symbolic. Labor “leaders” today play the role not only of negotiating the terms of our exploitation as workers but of actively mobilizing workers in the interests of U.S. imperialism and its expanding wars across the greater Middle East from Somalia to Afghanistan. (See page 4.)

The rulers are trying to take honest anti-war sentiment among the masses, both in and out of uniform, and re-load it into an analysis that justifies this policy.

PLP’ers in the Delegate Assembly refuse to be used by the rulers and their agent Weingarten in this fashion. We organize to fight current escalation in Iraq and Somalia while our understanding of imperialism points to larger wars looming on the horizon. Our resolution declares that “imperialist war is unjustifiable” and we plan to defend this language on February 7th whether we win or lose the vote against recruiters in schools.

We are winning when a thousand teachers must confront the Iraq war as imperialist and find themselves nodding their heads in agreement with an openly communist speaker.

We are winning when we distribute upwards of 300 CHALLENGES to delegates each month and when we bring red students and their friends to the Delegate Assembly to remind these teachers who they really work for.

Reform “victories” smaller than these are quickly turned into their opposite by rulers bent on getting war in the Mid-East “right” the next time. Our communist victories in the mass movement belong to our class alone and bring workers’ revolution that much nearer than it was before. ☺

Katrina Hitting Cook County Healthcare System — The ‘Levees’ are Breaking!

CHICAGO, IL, Jan. 13 — “When I look at my patients in the waiting room, that’s me sitting out there,” declared an angry black nurse at the Cook County Ambulatory Screening Clinic. She had just given a moving talk to a room full of about 40 health care workers and professionals, community and church organizers, meeting to build a mass fight-back against the deadly racist cuts in the County Public Health Bureau. She described being homeless herself during her 32 years with the County, living in an abandoned building years ago. She was outraged at racist Dr. Robert Simon, the County bosses’ hatchet man. (See box)

Workers came from many worksites and classifications — doctors, nurses, clerks, patient transportation and more. Some long-time employees of 20 plus years related their individual struggles, being homeless and raising children, and their anger and willingness to fight these cuts, for their patients as well as for themselves.

This capped off a very busy week of struggle, confronting the racist bosses and challenging workers’ passivity. On January 11, over 250 patients were told their prescriptions would not be filled because they lacked proper ID! When workers raised holy hell, this policy was at least temporarily dropped.

To make interest payments to the banks, the County wants to close two-thirds of the clinics and slash 6,500 jobs to close a \$100 million hole in federal funding due to the \$2 billion-a-week oil war in Iraq. The Chief Medical Officers of the County Health Bureau first responded to proposed budget cuts saying, “the fiscal crisis...is due to the cancellation of the federal Medicaid Intergovernmental Transfer (IGT) amounting to a loss of \$100 million annually... Without [these] cuts...the Bureau would be within its budget today.” (September 27, 2006)

The union leaders want to be “part of the process.” First they ratified a contract that isn’t worth the paper it’s written on. Then they gave hundreds of thousands of dollars and work-hours to elect black County Board President Todd Stroger and all the other Democrats. They got their contract, raised our dues and got their politicians, while we and our patients face a racist storm more deadly than Katrina, resulting in increases in preventable diseases and deaths.

Not one politician, including Barak Obama, has said one word to stop these cuts. PLP has always said that the Democrats and the liberals will be the main builders of fascism. This is a good example.

Workers are now trying to build momentum and blow past the union leaders. A pledge is being circulated, where County workers vow to serve our patients regardless of cutbacks and fascist policies. We’re planning to attend four budget hearings and build for a mass march on

continued on page 5

Racist Simon Says

“I did not come here to help the bum on the street—the alcoholic or drug addict who comes to the ER 40 times a year just to get a place to sleep. I didn’t come here for ‘the homeless’....Most of the homeless really don’t care about themselves or are psychiatrically impaired....So who the hell cares about them? To me, society wastes enormous energy, money, and resources on them.” (“Dr.” Robert Simon, 1995, “The Reader”)

“Now you know how I feel!” (Racist Simon after being exposed at one of his cutback meetings, January 2007)

Minimum Wage Produces Maximum Profits

The Democrats are making a big deal about their legislative agenda for the “first 100 hours” of the new Congress, and their centerpiece seems to be “raising” the minimum wage. This is one of the biggest hoaxes being perpetrated by the ruling class.

The current minimum wage (\$5.15/hr) in terms of real wages, taking inflation into account, is 33% BELOW what it was in 1968. Since the last “increase,” in 1997, the purchasing power of the minimum wage has FALLEN 20%. If the Democrats’ bill becomes law, the nominal minimum will rise 70¢ an hour, to \$5.85, still below 1968 in real wages. By the time it “rises” to \$7.25 in 2009, inflation will have taken still another bite in this “increase.”

So this legislation will not even match the buying power of the minimum wage in 1968! And that’s an “increase”?

Here’s some comparisons:

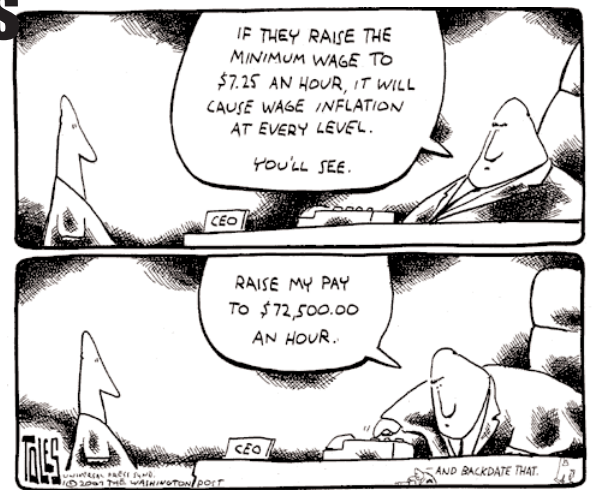
- If the minimum wage had risen at the same rate as gas prices since 1972, it would now be \$13.33 an hour;
- Since 1997, Congress has hiked its own pay EIGHT times, and now stands at \$168,500 per year (not counting health and pension coverage);
- Corporate profits have skyrocketed 244% since 1968, as the minimum wage fell 33%;
- In 2005, the highest CEO was raking in as much

income as 23,288 minimum-wage workers combined. (McClatchy-Tribune News Service, 12/1/06)

Racist exploitation has made things even worse for black and Latino workers, whose poverty rate is 20%; that is, one in five fall below what the government says is the poverty line. A minimum-wage worker earns \$10,712 per year, BELOW that poverty line, which itself is nowhere near what could be called a living wage.

No matter what the minimum wage rate becomes, under capitalism it is impossible for any worker to earn a “fair wage” because that would mean workers would receive the full value of what they produce — leaving NO PROFITS for the bosses. Capitalism functions on the bases of wage slavery: pay workers as little as the bosses can get away with so they can maximize profits. They are driven to this goal by the foundation stone of capitalism: competition. Every boss must strive to outdo his/her competitor or face going out of business. The most exploitative survive. The rest go under. This competition on a global scale leads to imperialist wars as the ruling classes of each country fight their rivals to control the resources and cheap labor necessary to their survival — with U.S. bosses trying to maintain their position as top dog.

It is the workers who suffer the evils created by such



a system — poverty wages, job insecurity and mass unemployment, all intensified by racism for black and Latino workers in the U.S. and other such victims of racism in the rest of the capitalist world. And, of course, it’s the workers who make up the armies and sustain the casualties that result from the rapacious bosses’ battles for the biggest share of profits internationally.

The working class will only gain its “fair share” when we abolish the bosses’ wage system through communist revolution, eliminating the bosses altogether, enabling workers to collectively share what we produce according to our needs. That’s PLP’s goal. Join us. ☺

FRANCE: THE WORM HAS TURNED

“As France sensed and feared, the war in Iraq has triggered upheavals whose effects have not yet ceased to unfold. This adventure has exacerbated the divisions between communities and undermined the very integrity of Iraq. It has compromised the stability of the entire region, where every country is now concerned for its security and its independence. It has given terrorism a new field into which to expand.”

That’s French president Jacques Chirac’s January 5th condemnation of the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq. Is Chirac now a “dove” and friend of the anti-war movement? Don’t bet on it.

Chirac is motivated by (1) his own self-interest, and (2) the interests of the French ruling class. Chirac is accused of corruption and abuse of power from his time as mayor of Paris (1977-1995). Only his presidential immunity (which will end in four months) is keeping him out of court.

Chirac’s arch-rival, interior minister Nicolas Sarkozy, is the conservative candidate for president. Sarkozy needs Chirac’s support and it’s easy to guess that the price of that support will be keeping Chirac out of jail if Sarkozy is elected president. To ensure that Sarkozy agrees to pay that price, Chirac has been demonstrating his capacity to damage Sarkozy’s campaign.

One particularity of France’s government system is that foreign policy is reserved to the president. Since Sarkozy is known for his pro-Bush positions, Chirac can sting Sarkozy by walloping Bush. Thus, staying out of jail — not opposition to imperialist war-making — is a major reason for Chirac’s attack on Bush.

Secondly, the French ruling class is probably reevaluating its position. According to the satirical weekly “Le Canard enchaîné” (1/10/07), French diplomats and spies in the U.S. have been sending alarming messages home for months. A high-ranking officer in the French embassy in Washington writes that, “The Iraqi police and military are unable to hold the country,” necessitating a surge in U.S. troop numbers. Selecting Admiral J. Michael McConnell as Director of National Intelligence and General Michael Hayden to head the CIA appears to be part of the big bosses’ growing militarization of society in preparation for endless future wars. A military, one might add, that is frustrated at pursuing the fantasy of victory in Iraq. Chirac, and presumably the French ruling class, have decided it’s time to distance themselves from the Bush team.

An additional concern of French bosses is the threat to France’s Total Oil Co. which “is ready to join a \$2 billion Iranian energy project...to develop part of the giant Azadegan oilfield,” (London Times, 5/9/06) that could be wiped out by a U.S. attack on Iran. In December 2002, four months before the U.S. invaded Iraq, a French general told the Pentagon that 15,000 French troops and 100 warplanes would be available in the event of war. And on January 7, 2003, speaking at the Ecole Militaire, President Chirac told his troops to prepare for action in Iraq. So what happened? Chirac wanted a piece of Iraqi oil wealth in exchange for his support, but Bush said no. The U.S.-UK occupation of Iraq basically nullified French energy investments previously signed with Saddam Hussein.

As CHALLENGE predicted (8/16/06): “If the French bosses think it’s in their interest, they will again break with U.S. imperialism, and again pose as ‘friends’ of the anti-war movement. No imperialist is truly against spilling workers’ blood in endless wars for control of the oil that fuels their profit machines. Wars can’t be fought by allying with one imperialist gang against another. It can only be done by ending its causes — capitalism and imperialism — and by building a mass revolutionary communist movement.” ☺

N.J. Workers Need More than ‘Pressure’ to Win

TRENTON, NJ, Dec. 11 — Over 25,000 state workers demonstrated at the State capitol building opposing proposed pension and benefit cuts. This is the second time members of the New Jersey Education Association (NJEA), Communication Workers of America (CWA), and other unions united to fight the proposed cutbacks. This large demonstration reflects workers’ determination to fight. But these union misleaders are trying their best to convince the thousands of angry workers that lobbying and voting will change the minds of these government officials, that the government will look out for workers’ interests if given enough pressure.

According to a recent report, New Jersey is approximately \$30 billion in debt. It also has the nation’s highest property taxes, averaging \$6,000 per year, along with a sales tax that Democrat Gov. Jon Corzine increased to 7%. Many lawmakers are blaming State workers’ pensions and health benefits for the high taxes and debt, while ignoring hundreds of billions of dollars being spent on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and on “Homeland Security,” plus the tens of millions in tax cuts over the last decade to various NJ companies, from Alta Pharmaceuticals to Verizon.

Corzine initially told the legislature to “solve” the high property taxes and growing debt, knowing that would include cutting pensions and creating a two-tier system that would force new employees to pay into a retirement fund. After seeing that thousands of workers would descend on Trenton, Corzine then forced the legislature to delete such provisions, insisting that he will “work it out” with the unions at the bargaining table.

This exposes the true relationship between the Democratic Party and the pro-capitalist unions, which many workers believe are defending them. NJEA President Joyce Powell told the thousands of demonstrators that, “We will fight until the Legislature does the right thing.” No doubt, but the “right thing” for them is to help secure and increase their profits and imperialist power worldwide by cutting workers’ pensions and health benefits. And, just like the United Auto Workers (UAW), the NJEA and CWA will be working with the bosses behind closed doors.

PLP distributed leaflets and CHALLENGE at the rally, urging workers to see the class nature of this battle. The leaflet described the shortfalls of reforms, and how, throughout the 20th century, workers have given their lives to improve their

conditions, only to see these reforms taken away later. PL also linked the attack on NJ State workers to the major cuts and layoffs suffered by workers at Boeing, Delphi, Ford and Northwest Airlines.

We also raised the battle in Oaxaca between workers and the state. One teacher, while talking to a crowd of Communication workers, pointed out that the state has always taken the bosses’ side against the workers, and Oaxaca is a perfect example of how they will use violence against the workers to hold onto their power — that only a government run by and for the working class will provide for workers’ needs worldwide.

This struggle in NJ is part of the global attack on workers, stemming from the sharpening contradictions between the imperialist powers. Believing that any capitalist government will give in to peaceful protests blinds workers to the nature of state power and who currently holds it. Through patience and perseverance, workers can be won to communist ideas and the true nature of the bosses’ politicians and unions will become clearer to our class worldwide. ☺

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Lesson Learned from Oaxaca Struggle

OAXACA, MEXICO — In the final six months of 2006, the Oaxacan workers' and youth's struggle inspired the international working class. Yet, the main lesson for PLP'ers and workers in general is the need to build a mass revolutionary communist party whose goal is the long-range fight for communist revolution. We must sharpen the ideological struggle with fellow workers and their allies who have illusions about "lesser-evil" politicians and a "reformed capitalism" that could somehow serve workers. CHALLENGE must be used massively in waging that political struggle to forever break the capitalist chains of racist super-exploitation, police repression, imperialist rivalry, wars and fascist bosses/politicians.

In any reform battle — even monumental ones like Oaxaca — workers and their allies must measure winning or losing in terms of building a mass PLP and creating communist class consciousness among the masses.

In the heat of the street battles, and taking advantage of the great discontent of the masses and their lack of revolutionary leadership, the bosses' liberal press, electoral parties and opportunists of all political stripes built as leaders opportunists like Flavio Sosa, leader of APPO (Popular Assembly of the People of Oaxaca), Rueda Pacheco, head of Local 22 of the Teachers' Union, and many others in APPO's leadership.

Sosa was the founder of the PRD, (Partido de la Revolucion Democratica). He worked on the electoral campaign of ex-President Fox and received financial aid from the PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party, which was the Party that ruled for 60 years) Governors of Oaxaca, including the fascist Ulises Ruiz. He recently allied with the capitalists of the PRD, led by ex-PRI member Lopez Obrador. Opportunists like Sosa and populist politicians like Obrador inject their poisonous capitalist political line into the mass movement to prevent workers from breaking the capitalists' chains.

Popular Power and Commune?

Some aspects of the struggle — like expelling the cops from the city, seizing public buildings, erecting barricades and electing new public officials in some towns — were seen as proof of popular power. But the truth is capitalism kept operating as usual, with very minor interruptions. Businesses, banks and factories continued their exploitation. APPO pushed respect for the bosses' constitution, while begging the federal government (Fox and his gang) to intervene in Oaxaca to restore social peace.

Many pseudo-revolutionaries called it the Oaxaca Commune. But the Commune that Marx speaks of in his book, "The Civil War in France," was completely different. The Paris Commune destroyed the French bosses' state apparatus in the city and built their own government.

From the experience of the Parisian proletariat, Marx concluded that the working class needs its own party to lead it: the Communist Party. Today that lesson is more valid than ever. The experiences of the spontaneous struggles of workers, no matter how massive or heroic, show that without the leadership of a revolutionary communist party our class cannot liberate itself from its racist oppressors.

Therefore, winning for the working class means joining and building its Party, increasing its network of CHALLENGE readers, multiplying the Party's study groups and massively spreading its communist ideas. Only this can guarantee a truly massive communist leadership — composed of workers, teachers, farm workers and students — capable of leading the exploited and oppressed masses to the seizure of power and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

But PLP understands that the political line to which the



masses are won is crucial to attaining this goal. Therefore, the Party has the very important and essential role of exposing and defeating the ideas of the class enemy within the mass movements and of guaranteeing that revolutionary communist ideas will be primary.

We need a Party that will hoist the Red Flag of the proletariat, not the bosses' nationalist rags. Such a Party will need to be politically active to win members and sympathizers among all the oppressed and exploited sectors of society, especially within the working class, among farm workers, and in the military (composed of working-class youth). Building such a Party, the PLP, should be the number one priority. It is also the best answer to the bosses' fascist attacks.

The lessons of the struggle of our Oaxaca class brothers and sisters will help the international working class to better fight to defeat capitalism. Communism, not socialism, is our goal because we are confident that the world's workers can learn from the past and fight directly for a society without wages, exploitation, borders or bosses. ☛

Cops' Murder of Salvadoran Youth Exposes FMLN 'Peace' Pact

SAN SALVADOR — This month there was a celebration of "15 years of the peace agreement" between the government and the FMLN, following 12 years of civil war and more than 150,000 deaths. Apart from supposedly creating jobs and well-being, one of the main achievements was allegedly to create professionalism in the PNC (National Civil Police), composed of ex-soldiers and ex-guerrillas.

Today, 15 years later, we have unemployment rates, criminality and poverty never before seen. ARENA (the Party in power) and the FMLN agree the police must be an apparatus of repression against the working class so they want to expand the PNC budget, to buy more weapons and equipment for the police to carry out their job — oppressing the working class. Recently the police from the Tenancingo station, in the department of Cuscatlán, beat up 22-year-old mason Oscar Vanegas, who died days later. This police station has been accused of more than 82 acts of mistreatment and abuse. These killer cops were cleared of any charges, since, said the judge, it wasn't possible to determine whether all or some of the killer cops had administered the blows that killed young Vanegas!

PNC police chief Rodrigo Avila said, "It could be that the person didn't die from the blows, but the fact that they mistreated him has been shown in evidence." This declaration only caused more indignation and anger among many workers. The family and many friends confronted the cops, yelling "Killers! Murderous dogs!" against the Tactical Unity Police (UTO) who guarded their partners in crime. The UTO fascists were armed with UZI submachine guns and M-16 assault rifles and threatened the family of the youth, telling them, "He deserved it and if you don't be quiet, you'll be next."

The young Vanegas is one more in the long list of these cop murders. But the working class won't forget. Both these jackals (PNC) and their superiors, the big bosses, will get the justice of the international working class. This is capitalist "democracy" and its "peace" in full view. We can't wait for justice from the same hangman who beats us. The bosses and their social fascist government (ARENA-FMLN) cannot create decent jobs or improve workers' living conditions. Therefore, they keep the masses oppressed through police terror and death squads.

This murderous capitalist exploitative system cannot be reformed. It must be destroyed. But that can't happen through elections or reforms, but with a real communist revolution. CHALLENGE must be spread to more workers and create communist consciousness among thousands of urban workers, farmworkers and students to build a mass revolutionary movement that will end this capitalist hell once and for all. ☛

Somalia Another Front in U.S. Racist War for Oil

Somalia has become still another U.S. bosses' imperialist and racist war operation. U.S. rulers are now at war against Sunni Muslims in Iraq, Pushtan Muslims in Afghanistan, black Muslims in Somalia and soon possibly against Persian Muslims in Iran.

An AC-130 U.S. plane flew from the Pentagon Central Command base in Djibouti south to the Somali town of Ras Kamboni, near the Kenya border to attack alleged Al Qaeda targets. First it was reported the "terrorist leading the bombing" of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998" had been killed. Later, it appeared the dead were all Somali civilians, including children.

So 14 years after 18 U.S. Army Rangers were killed in Mogadishu when their two Black Hawk choppers were shot down, the U.S. is back at war in Somalia. U.S. and British Special Forces were actively helping the Ethiopian troops which invaded Somalia to topple the Union of Islamic Courts government.

Somalia is not only a key country because oil tankers pass its coastline (see CHALLENGE, 1/17), but Somalia itself has a huge oil potential. Before Bush, Sr.'s "humanitarian invasion" of Somalia in the early 1990's, four major U.S. oil companies (Conoco, Amoco, Chevron and Phillips) were allocated an area comprising nearly two-thirds of the country for oil explo-

ration. This occurred just before Somalia's pro-U.S. President Mohamed Siad Barre was overthrown and the nation plunged into chaos in January, 1991. Industry sources said the companies holding the rights to the most promising concessions were hoping that the Bush, Sr. Administration's decision to send U.S. troops to safeguard aid shipments to Somalia would also protect their multimillion-dollar investments there. (See [raceandhistory.com](http://raceandhistory.com/forum) forum, Dec. 2001)

Besides serving the U.S. bosses' interests, Ethiopian rulers also need a seaport since Ethiopia became a landlocked country after Eritrea won its independence from Ethiopia in 1991. Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi is a vicious ruler; his troops slaughtered hundreds protesting electoral fraud in 2005. But the White House is not calling him "the butcher of Addis Ababa." No, now he's an "ally in the war against terror."

Workers and youth from Addis Ababa to Mogadishu to Nairobi need to unite and break with their local bosses, warlords and the imperialists, and build a mass revolutionary fight to end the hell of wars and hunger. The communist ideas of PLP must be brought to these workers. ☛

County Cuts

continued from page 3

the County bosses on January 29 called by the nurses' union.

We'll organize our patients to fight back, targeting the clinics that are on the chopping block. The County serves tens of thousands of uninsured workers, 85% of

them black and Latino. This struggle holds great potential for building the Party and the movement for communist revolution, which will guarantee that no worker goes without medical care. ☛

LETTERS

Send Letters to CHALLENGE PERIODICALS, PO 808, Brooklyn NY 11202 or email, cd188@juno.com

'Be a Communist, today and tomorrow ...'

A young friend visited me recently and we talked about things in general. He listened attentively and learned about my sad view of life. I believe we carry a garbage dump on our backs because of the insensitivity and hunger for power of the big international capitalist monopolies. My friend was wise enough to give me a copy of CHALLENGE. Later he introduced me to his father, "an old member of PLP."

Through his constant political activity and the many long hours we spent in ideological debate, plus the literature he gave me, I began to acquire class consciousness. Now I have the responsibility of fighting alongside my brothers and sisters to destroy this damn capitalist-imperialist society.

Today, I am a PLP member. I hope many of you CHALLENGE readers who are not do the same, so we can finally win a bright future for our entire human race. Be a communist today and tomorrow.

We live in a very depressed and poor area near Bogotá, Colombia, where unemployment and poverty are part of daily life for thousands of families displaced by violence of the state. Year after year, the bosses' government and its goons — paramilitaries, stoolpigeons and military death squads — murder hundreds of workers and youth, accusing them of being "subversives."

Despite all this repression, our groups distribute CHALLENGE hand to hand here. We struggle with some readers to consolidate a study group, helping to build our revolutionary party in this area.

A PLP'ER, COLOMBIA

Link Immigrant Raids to Black Slavery

Recently I was teaching "The Narrative of Frederick Douglass" to my freshman high school literature class and discussing the abolitionist movement. When the climax of the Narrative occurs and Douglass escapes, he's ecstatic about how free he is. He also says he had to do a lot of hard work that nobody else wanted to do — shoveling coal, rolling oil barrels and chimney-sweeping.

I remarked that these were dirty jobs and required a large amount of labor, but that escaped slaves had no recourse; they were in constant danger of being "deported" back to the Southern slave-masters. The escaped slaves had to work at whatever jobs they could get and be "happy" to get that job. I reminded my students that the federal government protected private property, and that slaves were private property.

Many students had the misconception that the U.S. government was anti-slavery, when in fact — according to the recent NY Historical Society slavery exhibition — 38 cents on every dollar from the cotton industry flowed through New York City banks. I said that Karl Marx showed how cotton fueled the industrial revolution by feeding the textile mills of England

with raw resources as part of the primitive acquisition of capital. I explained that the abolitionist movement was composed of working-class people who risked harm in order to fight a system they knew to be unjust.

Several students connected this to undocumented workers having to work at whatever jobs that they can get while constantly fearing immigration raids, much like the slaves had to fear the slave-catcher. The class began to understand the link between the exploitation of undocumented workers and the need of the ruling class to use fear and terror to force workers to do undesirable jobs, but more importantly, to drive down the wages of the entire working class.

I concluded with a discussion of how the bosses use racism to get the workers to blame "immigrants for taking their jobs" instead of blaming the bosses or the systemic racism necessary to capitalism. Several students said we need "a new abolitionist movement." I'll be making sure they get CHALLENGE.

RED TEACHER

Halloween Graffiti Gets Anti-War Treatment

My nephew and his friends organized a Halloween graffiti painting, reading "STOP THE WAR." I supported them but cautioned them to be careful.

Our brothers and sisters are confronting the cops and fascist goons worldwide, just as our youth face them here in the U.S. They're learning that this fascist capitalist system leads to more oil profit wars. The bosses don't care if soldiers on both sides and civilians are dying.

The anti-war painting was a great step forward for my nephew and his friends since they now understand what war is and about the aims of the bosses who are killing youth like them. They know we must stop the war by organizing ourselves to fight for a communist system. We'll soon invite them to meetings to talk more about politics and to get them to help us organize and celebrate May Day, 2007.

A RED UNCLE

Work in 'Appeal' Movement to Win GI's to PLP's Politics

The letter entitled "Sharpen Political Struggle in GI Appeal Movement" (CHALLENGE, 1/17) makes some good points about the pro-capitalist politics of David Cortright, the person who the writer says is behind the GI Appeal for Redress movement. We definitely must sharpen the struggle against the patriotic, pro-imperialist politics of the GI Appeal and other reformist movements, all of which are led by the ruling class, and/or its agents.

But the writer then adds, "... it would be wrong to conclude that the main, or only, way to work with GI's or to build an alliance between GI's, students and workers, is by using Cortright's appeal for redress or tailing his politics." None of the recent letters in CHALLENGE about this movement have been uncritical of it.

Secondly, right now this Appeal movement seems to be the largest one involving active-duty soldiers opposing the war

(albeit with bad politics). NY Times columnist Bob Herbert wrote (1/4): "In a devastating critique of the war, the newsweekly Army Times led its current edition with the headline: 'About-Face on the War — After 3 years of support, troops sour on Iraq.' The article detailed a Military Times poll that found, for the first time, "more troops disapprove of the president's handling of the war than approve of it."

A sign of this growing movement was seen on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (Jan. 15), in Norfolk, Va., where several dozen service members joined anti-war activists to call for an end to the war in Iraq, part of the nationwide appeal movement that links group of active-duty protesters to the anti-war movement. Similar actions took place in many other areas of the country.

These show that the "all-volunteer military" has not totally gotten past the Vietnam Syndrome: there's still lots of anti-war feeling among soldiers. It also shows that the main voice of the U.S. ruling class (the Times) is trying to turn the growing number of anti-war GI's into a weapon to fight for the rulers' own endless war agenda. We'd be making a major mistake if we didn't concentrate our modest forces on working in what seems to be the biggest anti-war movement involving active-duty soldiers, even if it is led by imperialists who disagree with Bush's conduct of the war. Not to concentrate on this one just leaves thousands of GI's without any real anti-imperialist alternative to liberal patriotism. And that would be a major political error on our part.

AN UNPATRIOTIC RED

Fight to Unite Black, Latino, Arab Workers

On November 11, over 250 students, educators and members of the South Side community participated in a Conference Against Racism and War at Chicago State University. PLP members participated in this conference to help make clear the connections between imperialist war, racism and the need for communist revolution.

The keynote speaker addressed the need to win black and Latin workers and youth to take the lead in any anti-war movement by fighting racism and linking the two struggles. He pointed out that immigrant workers and youth who participated in the mass immigration rights movement, and the mostly black striking teachers in the Detroit and Gary public schools, and their students, overwhelmingly oppose the war.

An Iraqi speaker described the devastation that has resulted from the U.S. invasion. There was also a panel of male and female, black, white, and Latino military vets against the war. Workshops ranged from racism in the public schools, the racist prison system, Oaxaca, and racism and healthcare disparities.

Students who had never before been involved in political activity, took leading roles in organizing these events. There was a great deal of participation between students and faculty both in the planning of the conference and during the actual event. Others who were not able to



attend donated money for food. One of the best things to develop out of the conference is that more faculty members want to heighten the political consciousness of the students. Even students who came mainly for extra credit said they would like to participate in future actions.

At the end of the conference, an Arab participant commented on the racism he has experienced since the 9/11 attacks. A black man commented, "Now you know how we feel." A PLP member talked about the difficulty that she and others had in organizing residents in her mostly black neighborhood to fight against attacks on Muslim businesses and residents in the area in recent years. This reflects the contradiction faced throughout the conference: nationalism vs. internationalism and multi-racial unity to combat racism.

A comrade passionately reminded the group that we must not allow ourselves to be divided by the racist and nationalist ideas that only serve the ruling class.

We distributed hundreds of CHALLENGES and PLP leaflets and made contacts with those who were interested in fighting against racism and the war, on and off campus. Building a mass PLP among college students and their professors is crucial to moving ever closer to communist revolution.

CSU RED

Red Farmworker Organizing in Projects

Holiday Greetings! The revolutionary political activity from PLP is spurring us to gather many more workers to our side. I'm trying to build the Party in government projects, where the authorities have threatened tenants with eviction if they take our communist newspaper CHALLENGE. These attacks are similar to those in Escondido, CA, where they want to refuse apartments to undocumented workers.

Conditions are clear and brazen under this disgusting profit system. That's why workers of the world must sweep away the rulers' politicians and their racist trash that affects our class. From every struggle should come one more nail in the coffin of each exploiter. Our consciousness must grow with revolutionary ideas.

I'm a farmworker comrade who wants to see more struggles in every corner of the earth where PLP exists, including organizing our brothers and sisters in the armed forces not to die in the wars for the rich oil bosses. I'm sending \$27 for the CHALLENGES I've just received. I continue to make copies of the leaflets to distribute.

A problem with my foot hurts when I walk but soon I hope to be well and continue distributing the latest CHALLENGES. Thank you for the understanding you have brought me.

A COMRADE FARMWORKER, SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY, CALIFORNIA

continued on page 7

LETTERS CONTINUED

continued from page 6

Bosses Speed Up, Injure Homeless Worker

I met a family here in California's San Joaquin Valley in which the daughter injured an arm on a job where she suffered speed-up on long shifts, working for Quebecor World (USA) Inc. in Merced. It's been more than four years that she's been unable to work and she's pursuing her case legally. She's seen several doctors, but there's no hope for recovery.

The Social Security Office told her she had to wait six months just to see if they could help her. The only thing the bosses have for this young woman is harassment. This is capitalism's answer worldwide, because the bosses are driven by their thirst for super-profits, not caring how many workers die of hunger, cold or illnesses the bosses cause, or in wars for oil.

This worker is jobless, homeless and with little food or medicine, still one more reason why workers must unite to fight for a society without racism, without borders, without capitalism, without rich or poor, for a communist society to sweep away once and for all this hell called racist capitalism. Long Live Communism!

Thank you CHALLENGE for your literature which is so realistic, representing the interests of the workers of the world.

A READER

Women: Dead in El Salvador as a result of Capitalism

I read the article in CHALLENGE about the death of women in Latin America. In El Salvador, day after day,

violence increases for the entire working class due to the mounting poverty. Fewer are getting richer, without a thought that some workers are dying of hunger. The deaths rise when the unemployment goes up which adds to more crime and prostitution.

In El Salvador, women, historically, have always been thought of or used as a reproducing machine, and not as a person with the same rights as a man. The Salvadoran woman is in a battle, a very fierce one without guns or tanks.

The fact is that today 90% of the people who work in factories are women and single parents. The Salvadoran woman is tired of living in the shadows; today she is opening her eyes to the evolving world. They are on strike, fighting for higher salaries, but also for their rights, as human beings.

Even most churches and religions prohibit women from participating in any activity of the service. Also, they don't let them have any opinions. They only serve by the orders of men. Meanwhile, some women are killed in domestic confrontations with their male life-companions.

It is clear that for women to get out of this situation where this exploitative and racist system condemns them, it is necessary to fight alongside men for a communist system. To continue to try to reform capitalism, where they are discriminated against and not recognized with the same credibility as a man, neither serves women nor the working-class men of El Salvador.

A COMRADE



Clinton's Racist Welfare 'Reform' Deepens Poverty

The media portray conservative Bush as a Republican Party failure and the liberal Clintons as our saviors, representing the better days when the federal budget was balanced, for example. In truth there is no difference between Democrats and Republicans who both serve the bosses first, last and always. The Clintons "reformed" welfare under the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 which a wealth of statistics ten years later shows to be nothing more than an attack on poor families.

The U.S. ruler's racism against blacks and Latinos (two to three times the unemployment rate, lousy housing and medical care, lower wages all around) have caused them to need public assistance way out of line with their percentage of the U.S. population. The U.S. rulers' sexism has made women (and the children they must care for) the vast majority of those in the direst need. Women are forced into minimum and below minimum wage jobs (in addition to the unpaid labor of raising their children with almost no child care facilities being available) and black and Latino women face the worst of both worlds. Then the rulers' media blames the "welfare crisis" on black, Latino and women workers in order to deflect attention from the capitalist profit-making system which has forced millions of white workers into poverty, needing public assistance to survive. Racism and sexism hurt the whole working class, even as they hurt those directly affected the most.

Under Clinton, automatic eligibility for Medicaid was separated from cash assistance and food stamps. Requiring more paperwork (sometimes exceeding thirty pages) for Welfare employees and recipients has discouraged many from even applying for Medicaid. Families who are denied welfare are often left unaware that they still qualify for Medicaid.

The policy changes have resulted in national declines in all public assistance programs. Children under age 19 make up the majority of people who became uninsured as a result of welfare reform. Of the 1.25 million people who lost Medicaid between 1995 and 1997, almost two-thirds were children (Families USA, 1999).

In New York City, the welfare caseload has achieved a 42-year low. Medicaid enrollment is at its lowest level since the 1970s (Kronebusch, 2001). But, these decreases in welfare and Medicaid enrollment are not the result of increases in decent-paying jobs, as politicians and the media would have us believe. Many people moved from welfare to jobs (often temporary) that don't offer any health benefits. Others are forced into "workfare jobs" that pay less than the minimum wage, replacing workers who then face the same cycle of poverty and lost medical benefits.

With the new Deficit Reduction Act, copayments of up to 20% for the cost of a service or drug can be imposed. States now model Medicaid to look and act as an HMO. There are tighter restrictions for the many elderly who use both Medicaid and Medicare. Lower reimbursements have led many doctors to limit the number of Medicaid recipients they see, or to refuse to take Medicaid at all.

More than half of the people that would have been enrolled in Medicaid had Clinton not "reformed" it, became uninsured in 1997.

Working people pay more and more for their healthcare, while Democrat and Republican politicians lavish \$6 billion a month for imperialist oil war in Iraq. Capitalist rulers will never be satisfied until every dollar possible is squeezed out of the working class. We will only be satisfied when workers take power and squeeze the bosses right out of existence. ☪

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 (UK) FT = Financial Times

Saddam: quick kill hid US treachery

What was the executioners' hurry? Why was Saddam condemned for one of his lesser crimes, ignoring the far larger ones....

...It was...essential to stop him revealing secrets about the West's past enthusiasm in supporting and arming his regime. Hence he was tried on the relatively minor charge of killing 148 people in the village of Dujail after a plot to assassinate him. Far better to put him away safely for that than risk his exposing western hypocrisy, treachery and double-dealing. (GW, 1/18)

The decider decides for Iraqis

To the Editor

Executive summary of President Bush's speech to the nation on Wednesday: we're going to do what Iraq wants, whether the Iraqis want it or not. (NYT, 1/13)

Falsely labeled terrorist? Court no help

The Supreme Court refused on Monday to intervene in the federal prosecution of seven Iranian refugees for providing financial support to an opposition group in Iran that the State Department has designated as a terrorist organization.

...The court said, "it does not matter whether the designation is correct or not." The crime occurs, it explained, when someone gives support to such an organization, whether or not properly designated as a terrorist group. (NYT, 1/9)

Bush: It'll work, because it has to!

"I said to Maliki this has to work or you're out," the president told the Congressional leaders, according to two officials who were in the room. Pressed on why he thought this strategy would succeed where previous efforts had failed, Mr. Bush shot back: "Because it has to."

Somalia another US phony war on terror

Undeterred by the horrors and disasters in Iraq, Afghanistan and Lebanon, the Bush administration has opened another battlefield in the Muslim world. With US backing, Ethiopian troops have invaded Somalia in an illegal war of aggression....

As with Iraq in 2003, the US has cast this as a war to curtail terrorism. The real goal of course is to gain a direct foothold in another highly strategic and oil-rich region by installing a client regime in Somalia....

The Islamists are not angels. But their collective pool of terror acts is dwarfed by the terrorism of the warlords that the US has been supporting... (GW, 1/11)

Cops lie to get warrant, kill woman, 90

A narcotics team that shot and killed an elderly woman



while raiding her home lied to obtain the search warrant, one team member has told federal investigators....

The officers falsely claimed that a confidential informant had bought \$50 worth of crack at the house....

Kathryn Johnson, whose age has been reported as both 88 and 92,....quickly became Exhibit A for complaints of excessive force by the police, prompting packed, angry town-hall-style meetings, accusations of systematic civil rights violations and calls for civilian review of police shootings in Atlanta....

Ms. Johnson's relatives...have maintained that she had nothing to do with illegal drugs....No cocaine was found... (NYT, 1/12)

North African Arabs Saved Jews From Nazis

The ruling classes in Israel and across Arab lands are constantly trying to separate Jewish and Arab workers, spreading the lie that they have nothing in common and “hate each other” — are mortal enemies. For this reason for 60 years these rulers have kept the fact well hidden that at the time in history when millions of Jews faced fascist extermination, Arab workers came to their aid in the middle of the Holocaust.

From the fall of 1940, when Hitler conquered France, to 1943 when North Africa was liberated by Allied forces, the Nazis, Mussolini and the fascist collaborators of Vichy France erected 104 concentration and labor camps in North Africa to which they shipped Jews from Europe as well as the persecuted half million Jewish citizens from the former French and Italian colonies of Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya. (Aside from an off-hand remark about a concentration camp near Casablanca in the famous film of the same name — starring Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman — there’s been virtually no mention of their existence in North Africa, much less about Arab-Jewish unity.)

The Nazis had seized these colonies and put the French fascists in charge, under Marshal Petain. He had made anti-

According to a well-researched book, “Among the Righteous — Lost stories from the Holocaust’s long reach into Arab lands,” by Robert Satloff, in a chapter entitled, “The Arabs Watched Over the Jews,”:

“At every stage of the Nazi, Vichy and Fascist persecution of Jews in Arab lands, and in every place that it occurred, Arabs helped Jews. Some Arabs spoke out against the persecution of Jews and took public stands of unity with them.... Some Arabs shared the fate of Jews and, through that experience, forged a unique bond of comradeship.... They bravely saved Jewish lives, at times risking their own in the process. These Arabs were true heroes.” And further:

“...Unusual expressions of comradeship between Jewish and Arab internees at Vichy labor camps buoyed the spirits of imprisoned Jews. At Cheregas-Meridja, in the Algerian desert, Vichy banished thousands of Jews who had enlisted in the French army to fight Germans.... The camp also housed Arab prisoners, interned for their opposition to French colonial rule. There, a Captain Suchet, the commandant,...tried to incite tensions between Jews and Arabs. He failed, howev-



In one of the largest united Arab-Jewish anti-government demonstrations in Israel’s history, 3,000 Arab and Jewish workers marched across Jerusalem in September 1972 to the office of fascist Prime Minister Golda Meir protesting her refusal to allow residents of two destroyed Arab villages to rebuild their homes. ☺

‘Even “two states” — one ruled by Israeli bosses and one ruled by Palestinian bosses — will not free Jewish and Arab workers from capitalist exploitation.’

Semitism state policy. The Jews became slave laborers, building weapons, roads and airports, working in broiling heat until they dropped. The fascists then employed Arabs as guards at these camps, with French commanders in charge who tried to get the Arabs to torment the prisoners.

er, when the bond of their common Fascist enemy proved stronger....”

When the fascists tried to incite Arab pogroms against the Jews, Muslim religious leaders like Shaykh el-Okbi issued “a formal prohibition on Muslims from attacking

Jews.” When Vichy officials tried to enlist Arabs to become conservators to seize Jewish property, and reap windfall profits, “Despite the economic difficulties faced by Arabs during the war, they refused to take advantage of Jewish suffering for personal gain.... not a single Arab in Algiers...accepted Vichy’s offer.”

The author points out that, “These Arabs never received public recognition for opening their hearts to Jews facing persecution....” His painstaking research into archives and memoirs found the names of “Arabs who helped save Jews from pain, injury and...death.” One farm owner, Si Ali Sakkit, took in 60 Jews who had escaped from a nearby concentration camp during the battle for Tunis and sheltered them until Allied troops captured the area.

There is much more to this story, but it certainly challenges the tales spread in the bosses’ media about the inability for Arabs and Jews to work together. This is the product of the nationalist and religious divisions fostered by the rulers to prevent the working-class unity that ultimately will

overthrow capitalism/imperialism.

The fact that this book, and one by Jimmy Carter attacking Israel’s policy towards the Palestinians, are being publicized in the media may very well represent an effort by a section of the U.S. ruling class to push Israeli bosses to reach a compromise with some Palestinian bosses — especially since the Iraq quagmire has weakened the U.S. position in the region.

Even “two states” — one ruled by Israeli bosses and one ruled by Palestinian bosses — will not free Jewish and Arab workers from capitalist exploitation. Only communist revolution can do that.

One of the achievements of the old international communist movement was to unite Jewish, Sunni, Christian, Shiite and other Middle East-North African workers. Today, a new communist leadership must be forged, learning from that unity and overcoming that movement’s errors. That’s the only road to liberate workers from Baghdad to Tel Aviv to Morocco. ☺

PLP HISTORY

PL’ers Launched Anti-Vietnam War Movement

While you won’t find it in the bosses’ media, it was the Progressive Labor Movement (PLM) — forerunner of the PLP — that initiated the anti-Vietnam War movement as a mass phenomenon. At a conference at Yale University in the spring of 1964, which discussed ways of opposing the war, the PLM’s chairperson called for mass anti-war marches on May 2 of that year. The Conference approved the resolution and on that date, thousands marched against the war in New York City, while smaller gatherings were held in San Francisco, Seattle, Madison, Miami, San Juan, Puerto Rico and other cities.

The outdoor protest rally at 110th Street and Eighth Avenue in Manhattan that kicked off the day was the largest single demonstration against the U.S. invasion held in the U.S. up to that point. Five hundred then marched five miles down to Times Square and over to the UN. Soon May 2nd Committees were springing up on many campuses throughout the country.

Meanwhile, the Student League for Industrial Democracy — the youth section of a right-wing social democratic group, the League for Industrial Democracy — had drawn up a manifesto in Michigan putting forward ideas on “democratizing” capitalism while denouncing the Soviet Union. From this, the SDS (Students for a Democratic Society) was born. Soon it called for a mass

march on Washington opposing the Vietnam War. To everyone’s surprise, on April 17, 1965, 25,000 protesters descended on the nation’s capital. It was the beginning of a series of mass protests that eventually were to reach a million students and workers rallying in Washington.

As PLM and later PLP saw this growing response, it called on its members to leave the May 2nd Movement and join and build SDS, despite the fact that the organization’s leadership was, in effect, pro-capitalist. Some of the leaders of M2M opposed that idea, saying that SDS was not as “pure” as M2M. But PL felt there were thousands of students that could be influenced in a leftward direction over the issue of the war. PL helped organize chapters on scores of campuses across the country and became part of the leadership in many. As the movement grew, hundreds of students joined PL to fight for revolution, not just against this particular war.

While much of the movement advocated slogans like, “Stop the War in Vietnam” and “Bring the Troops Home” — and later, “Stop the Bombing” — PL’ers fought for an anti-racist, anti-imperialist, pro-working class program,



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calling for “U.S. Imperialism to Get Out of Vietnam Now!” Gradually PL’ers began to win over a majority of the SDS membership to a Worker-Student Alliance outlook, based on fighting racism and imperialism. PL’s anti-racist platform enabled it to play a role in many of the black rebellions that occurred in the late 1960’s and 1970’s.

It was out of these activities that PL grew and eventually began recruiting workers as well as students. Very little of this would have occurred had PL’ers stayed within the narrow confines of the May 2nd Movement. (Future articles will discuss PL’s activities in SDS, including organizing a Worker-Student Alliance and opposing student draft deferments in order to work within the military.) ☺