



THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

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# CHALLENGE

**Black, Latino, Immigrant Workers  
First to Face:**

## FASCIST CRACKDOWN

As U.S. rulers' butchery in Iraq threatens to spill over into Iran, and a clash with China, Russia or Europe looms, the rulers must impose wartime discipline on the home front. With the liberal, imperialist wing of U.S. capital leading the effort, results so far have proved mixed. For black, Latino and immigrant workers and those of Arab background, a full-blown police state exists. But, while the bosses terrorize large segments, they haven't managed to militarize the general population, and thus will resort to more drastic measures to do so.

As for the economy, the past decade has seen a vast increase in centralized government control and consolidation of capital. Capitalists, however, remain divided in purpose. Many still favor their individual profit margins over the strategic aims of U.S. imperialism. As their military needs mount, the rulers will employ more severe tactics to enforce sacrifice. Jailing Enron and Tyco execs was only the opening act. Fascism is indeed on the rise — unevenly but unquestionably — in the U.S.

When Clinton's air strikes and embargo in the 1990's were softening up Iraq for invasion, he vowed to put 100,000 more cops on U.S. streets. Today, police forces beefed up by liberals are on a racist rampage. Sean Bell's cold-blooded, unpunished murder by the NYPD signals a rapidly intensifying ruling-class crackdown on black and Latin workers. New York cops stopped and frisked 508,540 people, 81% of them black or Hispanic, last year, compared with 97,296 in 2002. (NY Times, 2/3/07). Arrests and summonses nearly quadrupled.

Liberals like Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama back the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS), which funds the "hiring and training [of] law enforcement officers." As a result, 2.2 million people are imprisoned nationwide, 70% of them black or Hispanic. Every twelfth black male between the ages of 25 and 29 languishes behind bars; the figure for whites is one in a hundred. (Bureau of Justice Statistics)

Managing the flow of cheap immigrant labor is crucial to U.S. rulers' worldwide competitiveness. When jobs dry up, their new Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency ruthlessly tracks down and deports foreign-born workers, over 1.2 million annually. Massive raids like the recent Operation Return to Sender in California have created a "reign of terror" in Latino communities that deters workers from leaving their houses and sending their children to school. (KCBS, 2/7/02) Such Gestapo-style round-ups are also a liberal initiative.

The Democratic Leadership Council says "lawmakers should shift the focus of the debate away from the border and to the workplace." (Website, 5/25/06) ICE even has a prison camp for detaining immigrant families in Texas. Arab workers suffer particularly harsh treatment there. A pregnant Palestinian woman with four children was separated from her husband and held for three months simply for overstaying a visa.

But, apart from the cops and federal agents themselves, the rulers have not won large numbers of people to the storm-trooper militarism their widening wars require. Current recruitment can barely sustain their undermanned Iraq adventure. Mass revulsion at the imperialists' Vietnam slaughter wiped out the culture of military service in all but a very few pockets. Texas A & M and the Citadel still churn out officers. Fifty years ago, however, virtually every major college had a thriving ROTC program. The sharpening global rivalry will force U.S. bosses to restore the draft, or as Democrats prefer to call it, "universal national service."

A similar lack of loyalty hampers U.S. imperialists on the business side. Despite recent merger mania, the U.S. economy appears more fragmented than united. The number of banks may have shrunk from 10,000 to 7,500 over the last ten years, but that's still 7,000 separate money centers with distinct interests. The Bush administration reflects

continued on page 2

## YOUTH ROCK TEACHERS' UNION Worker-Student Alliance Opposes Military Recruiters

**NEW YORK CITY, Feb. 7** — A resolution opposing military recruiters in the high schools, fought for by teachers and students together, passed overwhelmingly tonight at the United Federation of Teachers Delegate Assembly (DA). The delegates were delighted at the presence of 15-20 militant, black and Latin sign-carrying high school students, members and friends of PLP. They helped their teacher comrades distribute 900 leaflets and 200 CHALLENGES (we ran out of papers).

The students came to the meeting with signs opposing recruiters in schools and demanding that delegates vote for the resolution. Many years of teachers working collectively set the stage for the success of the resolution, but the real victory for the Party is the new, growing worker-student alliance seen here tonight.

In fact, the presence of the students won the battle to ensure that the resolution got discussed. We struggled with the union hacks to admit the students into the meeting. Finally union president

perialist war party, the Democrats. The "victories" that she describes are nothing more than legal battles helping to define our exploitation. The union does not fight harassment of teachers or for lower class size. But Weingarten wants to be seen as a "friend" of the working class, so she supported anti-war resolutions at the last two meetings.

We have developed a marked influence at these assemblies. While we're always recognized as fighters for our students and our class, we used to struggle to distribute just 25 CHALLENGES. Now we routinely distribute 300 or more. In the end, we're winning a struggle against anti-communism and broadening our base. The union leadership knows this and they work hard to maintain the delegates' allegiance to the Democratic Party, rather than to the Progressive Labor Party.

The strengths of this struggle are our collectivity and patient work over the years, and our building of an anti-racist worker-student alliance at our schools in a continuous fight against racist attacks.

***'The student called for opposition to imperialist war and said the so-called educational benefits promised by recruiters mean nothing if you're dead.'***

Randi Weingarten agreed they could come in while the resolution was being debated and voted on.

Then one student addressed the Assembly and called for opposition to imperialist war, saying the so-called educational benefits promised by recruiters mean nothing if you're dead. She described the students' concerns that the delegates often vote on issues affecting students, without their knowledge or input. She called on the assembly to pass the resolution, describing the issue of recruiters in the schools one of the most important for high school students.

As expected, the description of the war as imperialist was removed. But the final version didn't limit the opposition to recruiters to the current war in Iraq, broadening its scope. Although most of the delegates are bound to vote with the leadership caucus, 90% voted for the resolution. This represents recognition on the part of the union leadership that they cannot afford to deny the growing opposition to the war, despite Weingarten's need to try to control the anti-war anger among the members.

The passage of the resolution doesn't mean Weingarten is a friend of the working class. Not only is she a buddy of the mayor who is attacking students and teachers, but she is diverting workers' anger into the arms of the other im-

Other delegates were excited to see the students, congratulating them and us.

The struggle will sharpen as we bring a demand for union support for May Day to the March meeting, alongside the students who are eager to continue this fight. The debate around May Day will show our friends which side Weingarten and her buddies are on, one small step in our winning them to understand that only a communist revolution can provide the future we want for our students and the working class.







# Don't Dream of Being a Boss, Become a Communist

Hey you! Put down this CHALLENGE because you too can be rich if you only try hard enough. That's a big fat lie that fuels capitalism and the movie "The Pursuit of Happiness."

In the early 1980's in San Francisco, Chris Gardner is a bone-density scanner salesman, and his girlfriend Linda works double shifts at a laundry.

Three months behind in rent, Gardner decides he wants to be happy like rich people and applies for free stockbroker training. Linda mocks Gardner's new plan and soon leaves for a job in New York.

Gardner now must raise his son alone, find a place to stay because they're homeless, pay bills, and still sell the bone scanners while training for the stock brokerage. In the end Gardner succeeds and gets a high-paying job that puts him on the path to being a CEO.

The movie is based on Chris Gardner's real-life rags-to-riches memoir.

The message is that in the U.S. the homeless can become multi-millionaires. But under capitalism, the happiness of a few millionaires and billionaires depends on the misery of billions of workers. The world's richest 2% control 40% of global wealth, and the bottom half of the world's

population — about 3 billion people — own barely 1%. (United Nations University Report, 5 December 2006) All profits, whether inherited or "self-made," are stolen from workers labor. Only by fighting for communism can workers around the world wipe out capitalism's mass misery.

Millionaires make up about one-tenth of one percent of people in the world while billionaires make up only .00001% — one millionth of one percent. Gardner and other rich people the capitalist media focus on, like Oprah, Bill Clinton, Condeleeza Rice or Dikembe Matombo, are rare exceptions. The bosses just want each of us to work hard, not complain, and focus on the exceptions like Gardner.

The filmmakers changed major parts of Gardner's real-life story to mislead workers. In the movie Gardner and Linda are struggling to pay bills, Gardner's stockbroker training has no stipend and Linda leaves Gardner alone to look after Chris, Jr. The film Gardner says he had to do in six hours what his competitors in class did in nine because he had to take care of Chris, Jr. No one in the whole movie ever helps him do anything.

In real life, Gardner doubled his income by becoming a salesman. He received a stipend for his training and Linda leaves with Chris, Jr.

Gardner was actually the first one to come in the office and the last one to leave. Months later when Linda returns to leave Jr. with Gardner, a reverend allows Gardner and his son to stay in a shelter that's only for women with children. With the reverend's help, Gardner saves money for a rental house. The reverend also introduced him to local bosses in San Francisco (sfgate.com 10 Oct 2005 and chrisgardnermedia.com).

The film adds impossible hardships to Gardner's real-life experiences to dis-

tract viewers from their own personal struggle and to reinforce the false idea that if you didn't make it it's because you didn't try. We're encouraged to pursue happiness by becoming a boss — after all Gardner had no help and he made it!

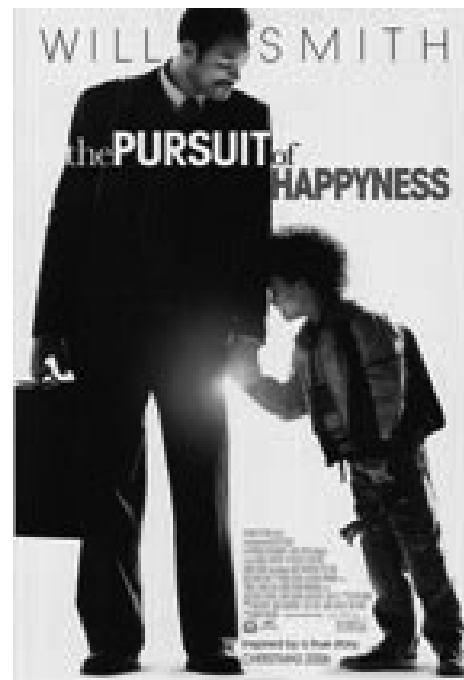
The very few workers who do become rich make it by exploiting other workers. Once Gardner started working he grew rich by investing money from workers' pensions.

U.S. bosses want to demonstrate that racism is over and anyone can make it, with no rebellions necessary. In one scene a racist instructor asks Gardner to move the instructor's car instead of going to a meeting with a CEO. Gardner chooses to move the car before going to his meeting but ends up getting a ticket and missing the CEO. Later, Gardner finds his way to meet with the CEO on his own time and pays the parking ticket out of his own pocket. The message is: don't challenge racism, work harder.

But the reality is that capitalism still super-exploits and under-employs black workers while a few are promoted to help exploit other workers. Capitalism, not laziness or weak will, keeps workers — especially black, Latino and women workers — impoverished and in misery. If all homeless or impoverished people suddenly decided to do everything they could to be stockbrokers and CEOs, would there be jobs for them? Who would actually work for them? The CEOs?

In some ways Gardner is a sympathetic person who endures hardship in part to make a better life for his child. But the movie doesn't praise workers for compassion — it blames them for not exploiting each other to the top.

When communist led the USSR and



China, workers did away with unemployment and drastically reduced homelessness by violently rising against the capitalist rulers and building a workers' state. But the bosses want us to compete for jobs, housing, and resources and they release films like "The Pursuit of Happiness" to fool us into individually pursuing dreams of getting rich instead of uniting together to end poverty. Really pursuing happiness for all workers means working hard with our class over many generations to build communism and end capitalism's miserable conditions — not adopting a "me-first" attitude with dreams of exploiting and creating miserable conditions for others. ☺

## WHAT WE FIGHT FOR:

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

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

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

☆Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of race.

Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women 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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## Fascist Crackdown

continued from front page

this disjointedness. On one hand it launched two invasions for the imperialists' benefit; on the other, it panders to bottom-liners and refuses to impose war taxes.

New York's new governor, Eliot Spitzer, who helped tighten the rulers' grip by enforcing regulations on Wall Street, just suffered a setback in Albany. The lobbyist-ridden legislature rejected his choice for comptroller, the state's chief financial post. This disarray has parallels with Italy in the build-up for World War II. British historian MacGregor Knox noted "a crippling parochialism of outlook" and a regime "without the conviction or power to force upon Italian society the financial sacrifices demanded [by war]." ("Hitler's Italian Allies," Cambridge, 2000)

But there are important differences. U.S. bosses have a far larger empire at stake and will fight all the more viciously to keep it. We should not expect "fascism lite." The sharpening attacks on black, Latino and immigrant workers show the true shape of things to come. The bosses may lack a broad military culture, but they have deep-seated, pervasive racism at their disposal.

Another, deadlier 9/11 followed by anti-Arab propaganda, military mobilization, and a crackdown on dissidents seems to be what the rulers now require and may be coming. Don't put it past them. They had warnings of the original attack and did nothing. Clinton's Hart-Rudman Commission rhapsodized about the possibility of such a "galvanizing" event two years before it happened. The main capitalists desperately need to put the nation on a wartime footing. Consequently, we must continue to improve our efforts for the survival of the revolutionary communist movement under a police state. This mainly means building a Progressive Labor Party with deeper and deeper roots in the working class. ☺

## Rulers Using Iraq-type Lies for War on Iran

The war drums are beating louder, now against Iran. The White House is using the same tactics as those which led up to the invasion of Iraq. "Iranian bombs are killing our soldiers in Iraq" is the latest.

Ironically, the bombs that the U.S. government claims Iran is sending to Iraq would be used by Shiite militias, which are supported by the U.S. puppet government in Baghdad. Meanwhile, the Bush administration is not accusing its allies in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Jordan of supporting the Sunni insurgency in Iraq, the force that is probably killing more U.S. troops than all others combined. The Bushites are using these governments in their current

**'[A] huge U.S. naval fleet is in place in the Persian Gulf for any potential attack on Iran. This would lead to an even bloodier and wider war than the one in Iraq.'**

campaign against Iran.

Simultaneously, a huge U.S. naval fleet is in place in the Persian Gulf for any potential attack on Iran. This would lead to an even bloodier and wider war than the one in Iraq.

Meanwhile, the Democrats, while expressing skepticism at the latest White House war plans, will surely fall into place as soon as any shock and awe bombing might begin against Iran, just as they did in Iraq.

Communists since World War I have said imperialism makes war inevitable no matter which set of politicians is running the government. The only way out is for workers and soldiers to unite from Teheran to Baghdad to Washington and fight to destroy the system that causes war. That's what PLP fights for! ☺

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fight back



## Hospital Workers Show How to Talk Back to Fascist Boss

**CHICAGO, ILL February 9** — “How many of our patients will die because they can’t get to the other Clinic after you close Woodlawn?” When that nurse’s angry question was raised, it was time for the Chief of the Cook County Health Bureau to end the meeting before things could start to get out of hand. Even while being surrounded by 500 angry medical center staff in a standing-room-only crowd in County’s Hektoen auditorium, Dr. Robert Simon had kept the lid on it all too well up to that point. A few minutes earlier an internal medicine doctor observed that some staff might refuse to fill out the billing sheets to protect their low-income patients from getting threatening letters from collection agencies. “After all, we are

**‘Every day sees new petitions, letters, demonstrations and meetings at the three hospitals and numerous clinics.’**

the safety net for people who can’t afford medical care.” “Then those doctors will be fired. And I haven’t lost a hearing in eighteen years,” said Simon, the cold voice of fascism. And he was getting away with it — not challenged by the hundreds of doctors in the room — until a clerk and then the nurse from Woodlawn raised their voices to “make it real.”

In the four weeks since Dr. Simon held his first meetings with staff in Hektoen auditorium, the murderous cuts have continued to grind forward through the budget process. The fight-back has been inspiring and huge at times. Normally quiet and boring budget hearings have attracted thousands of angry patients and workers and the county commissioners have appeared to distance themselves from Simon and the County President Todd Stroger who together had demanded 17% across-the-board cuts. But no serious plan has been advanced by any politician, liberal or conservative, Democrat or Republican, that would prevent most of the planned destruction of the public health system of Cook County, the second largest in the country. No politician has made the obvious charge of racism against Stroger’s plan, even though over 80% of the people who will die from the cuts are black or Latin. Is it because Stroger is black? And of course, no politician or news outlet has drawn the obvious link between the loss of federal money for public hospitals and the war budget. The entire \$500-million deficit in the County budget could be paid with the money spent in Iraq in 42 hours!

Resistance continues to grow. Comrades in PLP along with dozens of CHALLENGE readers have been very active in the struggle through our unions and professional associations. Comrades fight shoulder to shoulder with other workers who teach us by their example of energy and courage. Every day sees new petitions, letters, demonstrations and meetings at the three hospitals and numerous clinics. One comrade was collecting signatures on a petition calling for firing Dr. Simon and a worker asked



County health bosses deserve Nazi-of-the-year award.

angrily, “Why isn’t Todd Stroger’s name on there? We need to fire him first!” Comments like that one, coming from a black ward clerk, make it clear that the bosses’ cynical attempt to hide their racist attack behind a black face can be defeated. Workers learn and teach in the midst of class struggle, the best “school for communism.”

The struggle has had a good effect on the comrades involved, too, but we need to do much more. We have met dozens of new people who are open to a communist critique of the system, but our distribution of the paper has only increased modestly. This crisis is rich in lessons. Capitalism is killing people both by the war and the impact of the war budget. Thousands — potentially millions — of people can see the connection in situations like this one if we act boldly and tirelessly. ☺

## Workers, Students Unite to Confront Racist Minutemen



**HOLLYWOOD, CA, Feb. 10** — Chanting “La lucha obrera no tiene frontera” (“The workers’ struggle has no borders”), a group of about 70 students, activists, workers, and PLP’ers confronted the gutter-racist Minutemen and Save Our State scum here today. The racists were out in full force (nearly 100) to support two Texas border patrol agents convicted for firing 14 rounds at an unarmed “suspect” that was running away, wounding him and then covering up the incident. Counter-protesters held up signs exposing the murderous racism of the MinuteKlan and calling for solidarity among all workers, citizen and immigrant. The majority of the anti-racist protesters eagerly grabbed CHALLENGES.

The cops openly encouraged the Minutemen to attack the anti-racists, as well as attacking us themselves. They stayed back as the Minutemen rushed and tried to provoke the anti-racists. But when we fought back, the cops rushed the crowd several times, picking off at least four protesters for arrest. At other demonstrations, when the anti-racists vastly outnumber the racists, the cops stand between the two groups.

Trying to put a multi-cultural face on their openly racist and murderous activities, the Minutemen paraded a number of Latino and black speakers calling for patriotism, “defense of the homeland” and the securing of “our” borders. Not completely unlike the liberals who wave the flag and call for a “comprehensive immigration reform” (that is, a neo-Bracero program for the

factories, fields and military), these gutter racists try to use patriotism and nationalism to divide workers and students and win them to imperialism and fascism.

In fact, the MinuteKlan and the liberals are only two ends of the same racist spectrum — both using patriotic rhetoric to disguise their racist attacks on the working class as a whole. We must expose this fascist patriotism and anti-immigrant, anti-Arab and anti-black racism that props up the bosses’ imperialist war machine.

At one point, Ted Hayes — an African-American Minuteman — rushed the crowd of counter-protesters and challenged an activist leading chants. Immediately, he was confronted physically by a group of protesters, but was saved by the cops. Over-riding chants of “down with the Minutemen” and “Minutemen go home,” the demonstrators began chanting, “Death, death, death to the MinuteKlan — Power, power, power to the workers!” and “Black, brown, Asian, white, workers of the world unite!”

With fists in the air, the crowd of workers and students showed the potential unity and power that will help build and spread PLP’s multi-racial communist fight to smash racism and the capitalist system that breeds it. Although we heard about this demonstration late in the week, we should have fought for more anti-racists to protest against what appears to be a growing fascist movement. Next time, we’ll be bigger and better prepared. ☺

## Anger Grows Over Another LAPD Racist Murder

**LOS ANGELES, CA Feb. 8** — Mauricio Cornejo, 31, was pronounced dead Saturday evening, Feb. 3, only 45 minutes after the cops stopped him for a broken taillight near Ramona Gardens, an East LA housing project. When he left the car, he tried to run away. The cops chased and beat him, then arrested him.

Witnesses saw the cops beating Cornejo in the head with batons even after he was handcuffed. “They hit him in the parking lot...and then they took him to a bridge where they all started hitting him when he was already on the floor. He was crying ‘Help!’” said Norma Picasso.

Another witness said she saw the cops kick Cornejo in the head and ribs and hit him with their batons. Still another witness saw the cops kick Cornejo in his jail cell. The cops had stopped him at 6:45 pm. (LA Times, 2/8) He died in his jail cell at 7:30 pm, murdered by the racist LAPD.

The following Tuesday evening, about 40 people gathered with Cornejo’s family at the housing project’s community center for a car wash to raise money for Cornejo’s funeral. As police helicopters circled overhead, 40 LA cops in riot gear came to try to intimidate Cornejo’s angry family and friends. Despite being ordered to disperse by the cops with shot guns, the crowd stood their ground, protesting Cornejo’s racist murder and the continuing racist police harassment of project residents.

In the face of growing community anger at the racist cops, Police Chief Bratton’s assistants have said “the officers acted appropri-

ately” — meaning they were doing their job, terrorizing workers, especially Latino and black workers, trying to whip workers into line while the bosses lower wages and cut benefits for all. They justified their racist murder by saying Cornejo was allegedly a gang member. This is part of their master plan to “take and hold” entire neighborhoods. Such police terror is needed to enforce racist super-exploitation necessary for a profit system hellbent on wider wars.

PLP calls on workers and youth to protest and avenge this murder. It is part of a growing nationwide attack on the working class, including the racist police murders of black workers like Sean Bell in NYC, and the recent deportations of immigrant workers from LA, including LA jails. All this terror is aimed at intimidating and dividing our class. But it could be turned into its opposite — a united working class determined to destroy the racist system.

The best way to avenge these attacks is by joining and building the PLP to fight over the long term for communist revolution. The bosses’ system based on racist terror, division and imperialist war must be destroyed by a united working class which knows that all workers have the same enemy, capitalism, and the same interests, to fight for a communist world where racism and exploitation will be buried in the garbage heap of history. ☺





workers unite!

# VW Betrayal — The Other Shoe Drops

**BRUSSELS, BELGIUM, Feb. 10** — The other shoe has dropped at the VW factory here. After forcing the workers to accept restructuring, 3,100 layoffs and early retirements, management is demanding they work three more hours a week at the same pay.

"Thirty-eight hours or nothing!" Günter Koch, Audi-VW's human resources boss told the works council, blatantly threatening to lay off the remaining 2,200 workers. VW wants to cut labor costs 20% and have a final restructuring agreement by mid-February. VW's carrot? A "vast training program" to "upgrade workers' skills."

The unions are ready to cave in to company demands. FGTB metalworkers leader Jan Vanderpoorten told the Belgian newspaper *Le Soir* they have little choice, although they will suggest "alternative ways" of cutting labor costs — doing the bosses' work for them!

This attack follows union acceptance of 7,800 layoffs and longer hours in VW's German factories — 34 hours a week instead of 28.8. Who's next? VW has 44 production plants in Europe and beyond. The profit system inevitably means VW will continue the cycle of ratcheting down wages and working conditions, playing off workers in different countries against each other.

All this is part of fierce worldwide competition among automakers in Europe, Asia, Latin America and the U.S., each fighting for a bigger piece of the profit pie, with Ford and GM losing out to Japan and others. Now they're shipping production to low-wage Eastern Europe and China.

VW also says it will close the Brussels factory if nearby subcontractors do not "optimize the whole supply chain

and ensure competitive employment opportunities." The logic is for the remaining VW workers to save their own jobs by pressuring subcontractors' workers to accept lower wages and worse conditions.

International solidarity is the only answer to this self-defeating strategy. Workers must organize this solidarity themselves, not rely on union misleaders. Auto workers need to reach out to workers in other countries to fight the attacks resulting from the bosses' international auto wars or submit to continual sellouts and worsening conditions. Ultimately, PLP must re-build the international communist movement to turn these workers' fight-backs into a school for revolution.

Relying on the union bureaucrats led to Brussels' VW workers ending their seven-week strike against the restructuring on Jan. 5. The vote was a set-up: (1) workers who accepted voluntary separation were excluded from voting; (2) A two-thirds majority was required to maintain the strike, meaning a minority of workers could end it; and (3) management and the bosses' media browbeat the workers, warning that VW would close the plant if the strike continued.

Despite all this, 45.4% of the workers voted to stay out. And Pascal Van Cauwenberge, leader of the CSC (Christian) trade union, dared to say he was "disappointed that there is not a bigger difference between the number of people who want to go back to work and those who don't."

The "lesser-evil" union, the FTGB, organized a three-



day strike beginning Jan. 24. After 15 hours of negotiations and Belgian government mediation, the FGTB's magazine "Syndicats" crowed that the FGTB had obtained written guarantees on "a long-term industrial project for the 2,300 workers at VW and for all the workers employed by the subcontractors."

But the ink wasn't even dry when VW bosses tore the "written guarantees" to shreds, threatening to scrap the "project" if they don't get their 20% cut in labor costs. It's obvious that only an internationalist working-class leadership has the power to fight the world's auto bosses even in these immediate struggles — and strengthen our class in its battle for communism. ✪

## Rivera Defends '1199' Sellout: 'We're all capitalists'!

**NEW YORK CITY, NY Feb. 12** — The Dennis Rivera leadership of SEIU Local 1199 jammed through an early contract renewal for 100,000 hospital and nursing home workers that allows 25% of its members to be laid off at any institution without any protection and limits wage "increases" to 3% annually (a wage cut, given inflation).

Hailing this as a "great step forward for job security," Rivera used the recent closings of several hospitals, with more threatened, as a club over the heads of the delegates and membership to win contract approval. "We are all capitalists," he declared! Speak for yourself, Dennis. Local 1199 members, overwhelmingly black and Latino, as are many of their patients, are victims of the racist capitalist system defended by Rivera, (a big shot in the state Democratic Party machine).

Rivera insisted we had to reopen the contract a year early before disastrous Medicaid cuts are enacted. Many delegates pointed out that the cost of living was running significantly higher than the meager wage demands put on the table.

New York's health care industry is in dire straits due to federal and state funding cutbacks of both Medicaid and Medicare. These cuts are dwarfed by the huge expenditures for the imperialist oil grab in Iraq, running at \$2 billion a week. What looms ahead is the downsizing and merger of more institutions with mass layoffs and significantly reduced access to healthcare for working-class families.

It's imperative that members and friends of Progressive Labor Party step up the process of bringing communist ideas to Local 1199 members. We must build a strong nucleus of revolutionary leadership among the delegates and rank and file. A decent life and guaranteed healthcare won't come out of electoral politics, but as a result of organizing for working-class communist politics. Increased CHALLENGE circulation is a major step in this process. ✪

## Anti-War GIs Need Anti-Imperialist Strategy

Dear CHALLENGE,

I proudly marched with the active duty and Iraq veteran contingent at the anti-war march in Washington, D.C., January 27. The active duty GIs marched behind the anti-war banner "Appeal for Redress." After the march, I joined these GIs and some civilian supporters for a meal and made sure all of the GIs had a copy of CHALLENGE.

We discussed strategic issues including the case of Lt. Watada, how to deal with harassment and repression, how to relate to the [soldiervoices.net](http://soldiervoices.net) website which is operated by a GI in Iraq, how to relate to the (bourgeois) press, what to do about the phony congressional debate on the war. GIs thinking through methods to organize grass-roots, enlisted, active-duty groups at bases where many GIs had signed the Appeal for Redress made a bold statement. Without a more substantial base of organized forces, they realized they might then end up relying on liberal politicians, the media, and lawyers, a losing strategy.

I was impressed with the seriousness and openness of the GIs. These GIs do not suffer greatly from the disease of patriotism! In fact, several were quite interested in the revolutionary communist ideas in our paper.

One GI, on returning to her base, was locked out of her job site by her commander for her open opposition to the war (she was quoted in AP and the New York Times saying that the war had been based on lies and should be ended immediately). Even though her JAG (military) lawyer has proved that her actions were legal according to military regulations, she is still barred from her job site two weeks after the demonstration. Her commander has ap-



parently passed the case up to a general for his decision, which amounts to even more harassment. Many of her fellow GIs have rallied to her side, including two GIs who said they disagreed with her viewpoint but were furious with the brass for treating her badly. The PLP also supports her all the way!

We will surely see increasing numbers of cases like this as opposition to the war grows inside the military and an organized GI movement develops. Our job is to show this emerging GI movement that the logic of imperialism means that only a multi-racial workers' revolution against the entire system of racism and capitalism will halt the bosses' wars for profit, resources, and geopolitical power, an even bigger battle than ending today's U.S. aggression in the Middle East.

## Working Class — The Bosses' Cannon Fodder

Dear CHALLENGE,

Recently there were three KIA (Killed In Action) and a few casualties in my unit, killed and maimed by an IED (improvised explosive device), along with scores of Iraqi workers.

This was not merely a case of a convoy rolling over an IED. These soldiers were ordered on a suicide mission by the commander! He told this particular group of soldiers to dismount their armored vehicle and proceed on foot ahead of the convoy to find the IED and call it in.

They dismounted, traveled on foot wearing just the normal battle rattle consisting of their rifles, a first-aid kit, their Kevlar helmet and an ATVC vest with plates to stop some shrapnel. There was nothing to protect them from the initial percussion of a blast. As they found the IED, it exploded, killing some soldiers instantly while also killing and maiming the Iraqi workers.

These soldiers and Iraqi workers were killed to protect the bosses' profits and vehicles. As long as soldiers continue to obey the commanders (who never fight themselves) and fight for the bosses, countless soldiers and working-class people will die and be the cannon fodder in imperialist wars.

Red Soldier



fight for communism!



## French Pols, Union Hacks Divert General Strike to Ballot Box

**PARIS, Feb. 8** — “The tail is wagging the dog!” remarked one striker as the politicians and trade unions tried to make political hay out of the one-day strike for jobs and wages by almost 500,000 state workers. Some 80,000 state and railroad workers demonstrated here, and thousands more did so in large provincial cities like Marseilles, Bordeaux and Lyons.

Even before the strike, Eric Fritsch of the CFDT trade union admitted that its main purpose was to “give notice to the future government.” And today the CGT trade union emphasized that “many of the demands that were put forward, both by the strikers and by the marchers, echo a certain number of themes in the electoral campaign.”

Those statements reveal the strike’s real purpose as viewed by labor bureaucrats and fake leftist politicians. These hacks mobilized the workers to increase their own bargaining power. “Communist” Party leader Marie-George Buffet and Green Party leader Cécile Duflot backed the strike and joined the Paris march to persuade workers to vote for their respective parties in the first round of the presidential elections on April 22. They’re preparing for some horse-trading: they’ll throw their

electorate behind the Socialist Party (SP) in the second round on May 6, in exchange for “safe” legislative seats in the June 10 National Assembly elections. The more votes they get on April 22, the more seats they can wangle for May 6.

SP Senator Jean-Luc Mélenchon and SP national secretary Christian Martin also marched “in solidarity,” but only to get workers to vote Socialist. A Feb. 4 poll shows right-wing candidate Nicolas Sarkozy enjoying a 6% lead over SP candidate Ségolène Royal, who has blurted out one stupid statement after another (praising the speed with which the bosses’ judicial system in China executes sentences, for example).

Royal stated she would give state workers “respect” to butter them up for reforms in public services, and she shed crocodile tears over the 20% fall in real wages since 1981. But she carefully avoided promising higher wages if she’s elected, or spelling out her reforms.

What’s her idea of reforms? A videotape that was later



leaked shows her telling SP activists behind closed doors on Jan. 1, 2006 that “We’re going to have to be rather revolutionary in our proposals. I’m not going to shout it from the rooftops because I don’t want to take flak from the teachers’ unions.... One of the revolutions is to have them working 35 hours a week in junior high.”

Most teachers teach 18 class hours a week, but many studies have shown that when class preparation and grading are included, they work over 40 hours a week. Royal wants to double their teaching hours and work them over 80 hours a week!

The tail truly is wagging the dog when workers allow their just demands for higher wages and more jobs to be high-jacked by these self-serving politicians and union bureaucrats. Our class produces all the wealth and could exercise all power. But for that to happen, workers need to realize that, as Lenin said, the bosses’ “promises are cheap. Promises cost nothing.” We need to stop listening to “lesser-evil” politicians’ promises, and organize for communist revolution so that we run society in the interest of our class. ☺

### HEARD ON THE STREETS OF PARIS

(from *Le Monde*, 2/9)

Sanitation worker Olivier Asdrubal, 39, doesn’t believe the promises any longer: “The ones who’ve got the bucks are the bosses, not the government. No candidate is worth anything.”

Teaching assistant Laure Varrey, not yet 30, proclaims her choice: “Abstention!” In her Paris junior high school, “It’s hell: a temporary one-year contract at 560 euros a month for a job from 7:45 a.m. to 5:45 p.m., with a 20-minute break, mealtime included, and no right to leave the school [during the work day].”

(From *Le Figaro*, 2/8)

Michel Tauvry: “I’m a skilled worker...in charge of the maintenance of a high school. From...heating to...plumbing... [to] roofing — I’m always being asked to do more different jobs.... I’ve worked for the ministry of education for 27 years and I’m still making 1200 euros a month.”

Marie Karaquillo: “We want to maintain quality teaching.... [But] axing nationally 27,000 jobs, they’re moving in the opposite direction. They keep saying...we have to help the children who have problems, but they won’t give us the means.”

Francis Dukan (junior high school teacher): “I’m 28...[and] protesting against the fall in our purchasing power.... I was looking for an apartment, and on five different occasions I was asked if I had a second job, because my wages were felt to be insufficient [to cover the rent and security deposit].” ☺

## Thousands March While NATO Splits Over Afghanistan

**SEVILLE, SPAIN** — On Feb. 4, 10,000 people marched against the war policies of the NATO defense ministers meeting here, demanding the closing of NATO bases in Spain.

At the NATO meeting itself, the growing contradictions among the imperialist powers again emerged. The London Financial Times reported (2/8): “NATO ministers clashed over Afghanistan on Thursday when continental European governments refused follow the US and the UK and send troops to battle the Taliban.”

“I do not think it is right to talk about more and more military means,” said Franz-Josef Jung, German defense minister. “When the Russians were in Afghanistan they had 100,000 and didn’t win. We are liberators, not occupiers.” Since August, NATO has taken responsibility for the entire country, including the conflict zones with the Taliban, and has expanded its troop force from 8,500 to 35,000, but most of the additional soldiers are U.S. and British.

Robert Gates, U.S. defense secretary, encouraged the meeting’s “allies to do as much as soon as [they] can.” But Germany, France, Italy and Spain argue that Washington is still placing too much emphasis on combat with the Taliban rather than reconstruction.

The fact is the war in Afghanistan is becoming as much a failure as the war in Iraq, and European bosses refuse to sink along with the Bush-Blair duo.

At the anti-NATO march itself, the opportunism of union hacks and the phony “left” was revealed again. While the IU (Left Unity coalition) led by the “Communist” Party and its youth front marched, it had voted in parliament to send Spanish troops to Lebanon, basically supporting Israeli/U.S./Turkish interests and their access to new oil resources. And while the CCOO union federation also marched, its hacks refused to support a call for a general strike against the occupation of Iraq when Spanish troops were there.

The struggle against imperialist war needs a revolutionary leadership that breaks with all imperialists and the opportunists who build illusions about lesser-evil warmakers. ☺



## Obrador, Hacks No Answer to Workers’ Anger

**MEXICO CITY, MX Feb. 1** — Some 75,000 people marched yesterday demanding the government grant a “new social pact,” modify its economic policy, guarantee jobs and food, ban privatization of state-owned enterprises and end repression. The protest united 150 unions representing, among others, electrical, telephone, social security and transit workers and airline pilots, along with organizations of peasants and others, as well as the opposition PRD (Party of Democratic Revolution) and the Labor Party. The angry demonstrators vowed to no longer tolerate the government’s sacrificing generations of people, characterizing the rulers’ only response to their demands as “repression.”

Amid this anger of the workers, peasants and youth, the march organizers have no real answer to the problems caused not only by the new President Felipe Calderón and his ruling party (PAN), but also by capitalism and imperialism. López Obrador, the PRD candidate who claims he was a victim of a PAN’s fraud in the July presidential election, was present in force with his supporters. He represents a section of Mexico’s bourgeoisie which don’t want to sell all the publicly-owned enterprises (mainly the oil monopoly PEMEX) to imperialist companies, mainly from the U.S. He’s not opposed to privatizing parts of PEMEX and other state-owned enterprises, but mainly to local capitalists like zillionaire Carlos Slim.

The rulers have been increasingly claiming that PEMEX change to compete internationally. La Jornada (2/8) reported that Jesús Reyes Heróles, PEMEX director, said private participation will have to follow current laws. He complained that the \$79 billion PEMEX sales contributed to the government — some 40% of the state budget income — is “too much,” not allowing for investment in modernization. Various sections of the ruling class are fighting over PEMEX’s profits.

Meanwhile, workers here are very angry over the price increase for tortillas, a staple here, and for corn flour, jumping from 40% to 100%. This, plus the ris-



ing cost of milk and other basic food, has affected most of the population. The increasing use in the U.S. of ethanol fuel, drawn from corn, and speculation by international agribusiness like Archer Daniels Midland, Corn Products International, Cargill and local partners like Maseca and Minsa, are behind the hike in corn and flour prices. Since NAFTA opened Mexico’s market to multi-national enterprises, corn prices have skyrocketed 738%. Two million farm jobs were wiped out, leading many to emigrate from the poorest states with big indigenous populations (Oaxaca, Chiapas and Puebla) to the U.S. In the late 1980’s, one kilo of tortilla cost 1% of most workers’ wages; now it’s 20%, in a country where 20 million people earn \$2 a day and use \$1 to eat plain tortillas.

Meanwhile, President Calderón is using the “war against the narco cartels” to militarize the country. But rather than ending the drug problem, this militarization will attack any mass fight-backs by workers.

Workers and their allies need more than a “social pact” or the “reformed capitalism” proposed by union hacks and López Obrador, who wants to use workers’ anger to revive his sagging movement. They must fight for a new society without any bosses: communism. We in PLP must do much more to bring that message to these angry workers and youth. ☺



# < Letters >

## Could Obama Be Racist?

I thought the picture of Barack Obama in a Klan suit a few issues ago was wrong. I understand that Obama is in line to lead people to support the capitalist system and willingly fight for it in current and future wars. I know that even before he got elected senator, he started softening his anti-war position and now is justifying (along with most other Democratic senators and representatives) authorization of \$150,000,000 more for the war by claiming he doesn't want to hurt the troops on the ground. I know that there is a reason that the ruling-class press has done so much to promote Obama, and that the Democratic Party gave him a national presence as their keynote speaker in 2004. In a day when people are cynical about politicians and the political process, for good reason, Obama deceptively presents himself as different from the rest, as having more integrity, as having the interests of the people at heart.

Putting Obama in a Klan suit does not expose any of this. The accompanying article did nothing to explain why we had chosen that picture. Most people will look at that picture and, at best, think we are trying to be provocative for the sake of being provocative. At worst, they will think we are racist. The Klan has a particularly brutal history of terrorizing blacks and anti-racists. While Obama may turn out to be someone who gets many black people and others killed in wars fighting for capitalism, so far he is just talk. I think it minimizes the horrors of the Klan to put their suit on a picture of Obama. Further, it does not help anyone understand the dangers posed by Obama, and it probably turns some people off to our Party unnecessarily.

I know that in the past CHALLENGE has used the swastika effectively in pictures to make the point that a particular leader is a fascist. This was appropriate and supported by evidence in accompanying articles in the case of Golda Meir, the Israeli Prime Minister who led fascist attacks against Palestinians and Pope Benedict, who was a Nazi Party member as a youth. I know that those usages were controversial, but I do not believe the case of Obama is parallel. That picture was an error.

Sincerely,  
Long-time Reader

**CHALLENGE COMMENT: Could Obama Be Racist?** This is the question we wanted to provoke when we printed the picture of Barack Obama in a KKK robe. It is true that we should have explained the relevance of the picture in the article we printed. But we must question the ideas that there are some *good* politicians and some *bad* (Bush for instance).

Obama has been trained since his Harvard Law School days to appear to be a "man of the people" while really maintaining all the horrors of the capitalism. That is what makes him so deadly. Just last year he united with Republican senators (and other Democrats) around a Senate Immigration Reform Bill that would build a 700-mile wall across the border to stop Mexican workers from crossing the border. In a letter to justify his sponsorship of the bill, Obama says: "The legislation is not per-

fect, but it will secure our borders by providing border control agencies with more resources and improved technologies, reduce the incentive to enter the country illegally by increasing fines for employers who hire illegal aliens, and bring people out of the shadows by providing a pathway to citizenship for undocumented workers who pass a background check, pay fines and back taxes, and agree to learn English."(!]

In their increasing state of crisis, the bosses are blaming immigrant workers for the problems caused by capitalism — which affect the entire working class — aiming to pit black and immigrant workers against one another. The bosses cannot afford for workers to unite against the system, so they use politicians like Obama to win workers to nationalism and patriotism — and to fight and die for the system in wars for profit. Obama, Bush, Hillary Clinton, Biden, McCain, and all politicians have sent more workers to die than the KKK murdered, using equally racist ideology, all the while trying to convince workers that they are the good guys.

Obama's book, "The Audacity of Hope," approves of the Bush Doctrine of endless preemptive wars and calls for boosting U.S. military spending to support the big bosses' geo-political interests against their rivals. He also supports "humanitarian imperialism" in Africa, such as the recent U.S.-backed Ethiopian invasion of Somalia. Communists cannot afford to be deceived by wolves in sheep's clothing like Barack Obama, but must expose his lethal plans for our class.☛

### Distorting Obama's Message?

In the front-page editorial (CHALLENGE, 1/31) Obama is quoted as saying, "You're going to need one hundred thousand more, one hundred and fifty thousand more." In the context of the headline and the article it seems to imply that Obama is calling for more troops. But the full quote is, "I don't know any military expert who says that a modest increase in troop levels is going to make a big difference. Even if you pursue the logic of increased troop levels, you're going to need one hundred thousand more, one hundred and fifty thousand more, orders of magnitude that we don't possess."

The last phrase seems to imply he's not advocating increased troop levels. This quote seems to reverse what Obama intended. It's clear that Obama is an enemy of the working class. But we shouldn't distort his scummy duplicity to attack him. We just have to be more careful in our attacks on our enemies. This helps to win our friends and build confidence in our Party.

A Mid-West Comrade

**EDITOR'S REPLY:** The comrade has a point. We should have used the entire quotation. It shows Obama lamenting "the orders of magnitude we don't possess." He indeed calls for more troops, perhaps not for Bush's Iraq mess, but surely for wider imperialist wars.☛

### Growing Multi-Racial, Interfaith Unity

Their voices filled the large church, echoing off the walls. The woman cantor led the interfaith, inter-racial children's choir as the harmonies rose. School children from the ages of 6 to 15 — black, brown, Asian and white, Christian, Jewish and Moslem honored the memory of what Martin Luther King fought for. They sang to the piano accompaniment of a young woman from the audience who answered the call for a volunteer. The song proclaimed the unity of all peoples. The audience was an ethnic, racial, and religious echo of the choir.

This moment set the tone for a program that spoke, not of Dr. King as an icon, but of the masses of people who fought against the Vietnam War, and for the rights of working people. The many speakers, mostly clergy, gave hard talks about today's war in the Middle East and working-class oppression. This event was a gathering of forces against the war, a call for the federal monies that have been removed from our area to be returned, and for the unity of people in that struggle.

The program was organized by a new and growing multi-racial, interfaith group training working people to fight back. Fourteen different faith groups participated. The interfaith group is reaching out to bring in even more churches, synagogues, Islamic organizations into the movement. Their very active leadership is becoming steeled and trained in the organization.

Currently increasing amounts of our money are used to slaughter people in Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia and elsewhere. Less and less is used to alleviate poverty and suffering at home and to reverse the criminal neglect of New Orleans. The growing organization is a microcosm of how the world should look: helping one another, moving forward to defend labor, marching against the war, exposing racist murders by the police and how the rulers are removing services from poor and inner-city neighborhoods.

This growing fight-back allows Party members to raise ideas among people who want to fight back, and teaches others that fight-back is necessary and possible. Capitalism is antagonistic to human growth. It's a burden upon the masses. It separates and isolates us, making us feel weak and powerless. This unity movement is the opposite, and wishes to unchain itself from the bankers, businessmen and dominant political interests. Though reformist, it opens the door so that our political role turns many of its members into part of a wave towards a bright future for the working class, and helps teach us how strong we can be when we work together. We must always participate in such forums and struggle within them to define the future.

One of the "meek" who is getting ready....

### Individual GI Resistance Won't Cut It

In your February 14 issue, you wrote in reference to the GI protest that,

"One Marine declared that he had opposed the war from the day it began, but nevertheless served in Iraq with his unit. This contradiction must be resolved by bolder GI actions against U.S. imperialism..."

This seems to imply that he should

not have gone to Iraq with his unit. In fact, GIs should not individually refuse orders to go to Iraq but should go with their units and sharpen the fight against U.S. imperialism in Iraq by building ties with their fellow GIs, ties to Iraqi workers on the basis of workers' internationalism, struggle within their unit against conducting aggression, and generally build a base for resistance and revolution.

Of course, a refusal by a military unit to deploy would also be a powerful part of the anti-war movement. But individual resistance, however brave, generally won't build the movement we need to defeat U.S. imperialism.

Red GI

### Multi-Racial Fight Key to Defeat Nationalism

The weekend before Martin Luther King Day our Southwest city held several "multi-cultural" events that were open to the public. Our student/teacher PLP club decided to participate and contribute to the discussion on politics, "race," and eventually on class and revolution. Two of us went to an event at a local college dealing with how to break into and succeed in the rap industry. While a seemingly innocuous event with possibly little potential for serious politics, we figured it would still be worth some attention. Our club could not have been more wrong. The Nation of Islam (NOI), having seen the event's potential, arrived in force. They sent their National Youth Minister to speak, and were able to co-opt the event from the relatively inept staff holding it.

The event's basic premise, as designed by the misleaders heading it, was to portray the rap industry as the "savior" for poor black youth everywhere. The imagery put forward by mainstream rap artists that promotes violence, drug use and sexism was exalted. There was no aim to discuss why the bosses love promoting such garbage rather than something that might empower people. Without a strong PL contingent to help steer the discussion, the NOI forces were able to effectively push their pro-capitalist, anti-Semitic line.

The crowd was responsive to such a political conversation once one was offered to them. It was just unfortunate that due to our lack of strength and preparedness (understanding the NOI's line and how to counter it) we were unable to give leadership to this debate.

All this enabled us to understand another limitation in our group: a lack of black youth who would have been part of a multi-racial contingent instrumental in helping to win people away from the NOI's line. As the only two white youth there, we had a serious problem trying to compete with the NOI members in a discussion on racism against black people in the U.S. While our club had long acknowledged this weakness, this event really hammered it home and gives us reason to redouble our efforts to recruit more black youth.

Not to say that this encounter was all bad. Two of us now have new experience in dealing with the NOI to use in improving our recruiting efforts. We also gained important information about their recruiting tactics on our campus and made some good contacts to follow up.

While it's impossible to know about, and be prepared for, all events, it's essential to be self-critical so that one can draw lessons from a tactical defeat. While seemingly a failure, this experience has actually helped our club prepare for a stronger recruiting effort in the future. It's important that all misleaders be exposed, especially those like the NOI who use a radical facade to sell people capitalist values, and a truly revolutionary viewpoint be advocated.

continued on page 7

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## &lt; letters continued &gt;

cated — communism.

Red Students

## Was Marx Wrong?

The recent CHALLENGE article (2/14) on Black History Month (BHM) reinforces many ideas I was sharing with my shipmates after the BHM program the Navy presented on-board. I told them I can't support "black history" because it's not about racist oppression but supports fascism and imperialism. The USS Mason was given an all-black crew during World War II but actually served the interests of the racist U.S. ruling class. I joked with one shipmate about Dorie Miller, the black sailor who was a cook but manned a machine gun during the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941. I commented he could have shot a few of the officers *on the ship* while he was at it!

The quote from Marx ("labor in the white skin can never be free while labor in the black skin is in chains") is unbalanced, giving preference to European workers in our struggle. Marx is clearly speaking to "white labor" in the U.S., not "all labor." If his message to white labor is they cannot be free as long as blacks are in chains, then what is his message to black labor? That they cannot be free as long as white workers are not fighting for their freedom?

Marx's line runs counter to the history of resistance among enslaved blacks during that time. They were not simply in chains waiting on benevolent whites to emancipate them. Harriet Tubman escaped slavery at an early age and risked her life numerous times to lead enslaved blacks to freedom via the Underground Railroad. The most notable among them was General Nat Turner who led the most vicious slave revolt recorded in U.S. history, killing hundreds of slave-owners and their families in Southampton County, VA in 1831. This line also runs counter to the history of other back insurrectionists such as Gabriel Prosser and Denmark Vessey.

It certainly runs counter to the history of John Brown. Blacks in Brown's posse, Harriet Tubman being one of the principal leaders, were not in chains waiting on Brown to arrive. They worked side by side, thus providing a model for our struggle today.

Ultimately, to smash capitalism and all forms of oppression, all workers must work together to achieve the goal without any hierarchical preference being given to any segment of the working class.

Red soldier

**CHALLENGE COMMENT:** Marx's exact quote was, "Labor cannot emancipate itself in the white skin where in the black it is branded." This was a very profound concept for that period. It argued that racism was not the product of prejudice by white workers (a blow against the current White Skin Privilege theory). Racism and the racial division of society were born with capitalism. Before that there was really no concept of "race," no oppression because of skin color nor of one group being superior to another because of it. Slavery in pre-capitalist societies (Rome, Greece, Egypt) was not based on skin color (see PL Magazine article, "The Roots of Racism"). Marx's statement was basically saying that modern racism is an attack against all workers and oppressed people and that racism will only be ended when all workers are emancipated from capitalism.

Furthermore, Marx was not "talking to white labor" nor telling black workers they will have to "wait for 'white labor' to liberate them." On the contrary, Marx was saying that white workers can't free themselves of capitalist exploitation except as part of a united working class, black and white together.

Marx's understanding of the role of black workers was clearly revealed in his writings on the U.S. Civil War when he said — during the war — that the North could not defeat the slaveocracy unless black slaves were brought into the Union Army,



**NEW ORLEANS** — The residents of the C. J. Pete housing development re-took their homes after the city's Housing Authority had initially destroyed the contents and barred the residents from returning. These victims of the government's attacks now need support and contributions to maintain their survival.

and that is precisely what happened: 180,000 ex-slaves entered the war and, as the most ferocious fighters, spearheaded Sherman's march through Georgia that split the South and basically won that war.

Thus, Marx saw black workers as the key to emancipation, not waiting for "benevolent" whites to free them.

## Can't Rely on Bosses' Courts, In France or U.S.

On New Year's Eve, 2002, Yücel (30) was on his way from a party to his home in a working-class housing project in Gousainville, a Paris suburb. He saw young people "running in every direction" and started running himself. He was tackled, handcuffed and beaten black and blue by a half-dozen cops, bursting an ear-drum.

An ordinary story of racist police brutality, something common not just in France, but in the U.S., Russia, China, or any other capitalist country.

Ah, but France is a "democratic" country governed by the rule of law! Thanks to a piece of investigative reporting by the "Canard enchaîné," a French weekly

newspaper (1-17-07), we know the outcome of Yücel's battle for justice. The Pontoisy criminal court sentenced each of the six cops to a four months' suspended sentence and to paying Yücel 11,800 euros in damages.

Happy ending? Not quite. The Interior Ministry ordered the police administration to order the cops to pay. Nothing happened. Yücel can't get a writ served on the cops, because they've all been transferred elsewhere and he can't get their new addresses. Yücel tried to force the Interior Ministry to dock the cops' wages by going through the Paris district court, but the court ruled that it does not have jurisdiction. End of story.

CHALLENGE hardly needs to point out to its readers that the bosses' courts don't deliver justice in France, or the U.S., Russia, China, or elsewhere. Our class will only obtain justice when we have replaced capitalism with communism.

A Friend in France



Below are excerpts from mainstream newspapers that may be of use for our readers. Abbreviations: NYT=New York Times, GW=Guardian Weekly, FT=Financial Times

## US pull-back won't be pull-out

The bottom line is that the president, the study group and most Washington policy-makers want to get as many American combat troops as they can out of Iraq by the US presidential elections in 2008. But that doesn't mean pulling out....

Even the Baker-Hamilton Iraq Study Group....wants some 10,000 to 20,000 US troops, mostly officers, to stay, embedded in the Iraqi units down to company level. US forces would also: assist Iraqi-deployed brigades with intelligence, transportation, air support, as well as providing some key equipment," in other words just about everything that makes up a modern army.

As if that weren't enough, the US should leave behind "rapid-reaction and special operations teams." These, presumably, could include covert operations such as assassinations and bombings, thwarting or encouraging coups and squaring up to the Iranians on the border. So much for Iraqi sovereignty....

Iraq is much too important to American interests to be trusted entirely to Iraqis....

(GW, 2/15)

## One-third doubt official 9/11 story

The movement of 9/11 skeptics has had an astonishing success in sowing doubt across the US. Recent polls suggest more than a third of Americans believe that either the official version of events never happened, or that US officials knew the attacks were imminent, but did nothing to stop them. (GW, 2/15)

## Big Africa investment hurts villagers

M. is tearful: "We used to have clean water, but since

oil and pipeline project, the single largest investment in Africa. The multi-billion dollar project came about as a public-private partnership between the World Bank and a consortium led by ExxonMobil....

NGOs have documented what they say are hundreds of cases of poor, rural households becoming more impoverished as a result of the project....

Officials acknowledge that the project has so far taken twice the amount of land initially planned and that the number of families who no longer have sufficient land to ensure their survival has dropped. (GW, 2/8)

## Upper-class grab city after flood

... "I'm told they don't want us poor folk back, that they're making it a city for the well-to-do. That's what I'm hearing."

Sixteen months have passed since the apocalyptic flood that followed Hurricane Katrina. More than 13,000 residents who were displaced are still living in trailers provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Another 100,000 to 200,000 evacuees — most of whom

the oil pipeline was built all we have is pollution." .... Now we all have skin rashes, stomach pains and unknown ailments," says another villager.

The source of the villagers' hardship is the Chad-Cameroon

want to return home — are scattered throughout the United States.

The undeniable neglect of this population fuels the suspicion among the poor and the black, who constitute a majority of the evacuees, that the city is being handed over to the well-to-do and the white. (NYT)

## Desperate Iraqis blame US oil greed

The scene was thick with anger directed at the Iraqi government and American military for letting the people down and allowing such a devastating attack....

Mr. Abdul Jabbar said he rushed to collapsed buildings trying to help the wounded, but found mainly hands, skulls and other body parts....

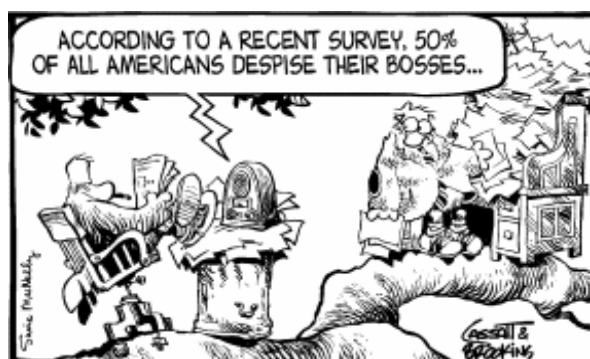
"I wish they would attack us with a nuclear bomb and kill us all," he added, "so we will rest and anybody who wants the oil — which is the core of the problem — can come and get it. We cannot live this way anymore...." (NYT, 2/5)

## Capitalist \$ won't go to our needs

...Nancy Pelosi, the House speaker, said the days when Mr. Bush could expect a blank check for the wars were over but she also insisted the Democrats would not deny troops the money they needed....

The Iraq war has so far cost \$500 bn. [billion]

The New York Times noted that the cost of the war would have paid for universal health care in the US, nursery education for all three- and four-year-olds in the US, immunization for children round the world against a host of diseases, and still leave about half of the money left over. (GW, 2/15)



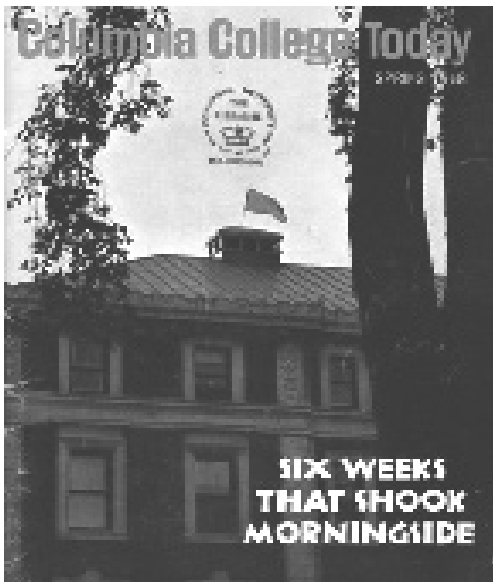


# PLP HISTORY

## PLP, SDS and the 1968 Columbia U. Strike

(Part I reviewed PLP's early participation in SDS [Students for a Democratic Society], its advocacy of a Worker-Student Alliance; how this led it to refuse student deferments, to enter and organize against the Vietnam War inside the army and to support industrial strikes and inner-city rebellions; and organize militant action that reflected this pro-working-class position.)

A key example of this activity was the 1968 Columbia University strike. PLP had argued consistently throughout 1967 and early 1968 for fighting Columbia's racist plan to build a gymnasium in Harlem while ignoring the community's needs, particularly since Columbia owned hundreds of apartments that it preferred to leave vacant rather than rent to Harlem residents. A second key element of PLP's Columbia organizing was the campaign



Communist Red Flag flying over occupied building

against the university's collaboration with the Institute for Defense Analyses, a partnership that flagrantly exposed the university's concrete contribution to U.S. imperialist genocide in Vietnam.

On both fronts, PLP faced an uphill battle. The right-wing leadership of the Columbia SDS chapter found repeated excuses to oppose this militant activity. PLP continued to fight, frequently organizing small, sharp demonstrations, believing the moment for mass upsurge would eventually arrive. This estimate proved correct. In April 1968, several hundred Columbia students launched a sit-in. The administration summoned New York cops, who cracked scores of heads and made hundreds of arrests. The bosses' brutality engendered mass outrage. Thousands of Columbia students and faculty went on strike. The university ground to a halt.

A crucial political debate ensued. The advocates of the "New Working Class" took a strike-breaking "shut-it-down-to-open-it-up" position, arguing that the strike was an opportunity to hold "liberation classes" and reinvent Columbia as a progressive institution. PLP stuck to its class position, arguing that under capitalism, universities could serve only the rulers, who, after all, owned them and controlled state power. Instead of the dead-end "liberation" illusion proposed by the SDS leadership and others, PLP called for maintaining picket lines at Columbia, stopping scabs and spreading the strike. We didn't win tactically but our principled position and insistence on militant struggle won many students at Columbia and elsewhere to join the PLP-led Worker-Student Alliance Caucus of SDS and, eventually, the PLP.

The ideological battle between PLP's communist view of the working class versus the reactionary politics of Marcuse's groupies — that industrial workers were "obsolete" — came to a head in June 1968 at the SDS national convention in East Lansing, Michigan. Three international developments set the tone for the looming internal struggle.

First, the Vietnam War — and the rebelliousness of



Newsweek Magazine front page, October 1968

U.S. GIs and sailors — had reached fever pitch. Second, the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution was raging in China and forcing the question of "revisionism" (capitalist ideas and politics within the communist movement) to the forefront of every honest communist's agenda. Third, in May 1968, the vicious suppression of a protest by university students outside Paris quickly led to uprisings and strikes throughout France. Within days, a general strike had shut down the country.

Students had set the spark, but the real fire bore the unmistakable signature of the working class. In one bold stroke, France's working class had demonstrated the bankruptcy of Marcuse and his ilk. But his disciples within SDS were far from convinced, and at the 1968 convention, they mounted a challenge to PLP's continued existence within the organization.

(Next: The struggle sharpens within SDS while the old international communist movement enters its death throes.)

## Dutch General Strike Under Nazis Fought Persecution of Jews



A poster commemorating the general strike

February 25 marks the 66th anniversary of what was probably the only general strike specifically against racism in Nazi-occupied Europe. On May 9, 1940, German troops invaded the Netherlands. Following the barbaric bombing of Rotterdam, and fearing a similar fate for other Dutch cities, its army capitulated five days later, as did most European armies attacked by the Nazis, except for the Soviet Red Army.

With the help of local fascists, the occupiers began instituting a series of restrictions on Jews, culminating in November 1940 in the removal of all Jews from public functions, including universities, leading directly to student protests in Leiden and elsewhere.

Meanwhile, unrest was spreading among workers in Amsterdam, especially those at the Amsterdam-Noord shipyards, who were threatened with forced labor in Germany. On February 19, the Nazi police stormed into a Jewish-owned small business. In the ensuing fight, several cops were wounded. The Nazis took their revenge. On the weekend of Feb. 22-23, 425 Jewish men, ages 20-35, were arrested and eventually sent to the Buchenwald and Mauthausen concentration camps, where most of them died within ten months.

Responding to these arrests, an open air meeting was held on the Noordermarkt on February 24 to organize a strike protesting the arrests as well as the forced labor threat. The underground Communist Party of the Netherlands mass distributed a leaflet calling for a general strike.

"Strike, strike, strike!" became the workers' motto. The huge general strike began when the city's tram drivers struck. Despite Nazi attempts to suppress it, the walk-

out grew as workers in other city services and schools, along with steel and shipyard workers, followed the tram drivers, as did workers elsewhere, including Zaanstad, Kennemerland and Utrecht.

Nazi cops attacked the strikers, killing several and arresting many. Though the strike ended on Feb. 27, it was enormously significant: it was the first direct action against the Nazis' persecution of Jews. It proved that general strikes can be organized under the most repressive conditions, even under fascist rule.

Over the next few years, the Nazis rounded up 110,000 of Holland's 140,000 Jews. Only 5,000 survived the holocaust. Dutch Nazis aided this mass murder, along with the "efficient" bureaucratic officials left behind by the exiled Dutch government in London, as well as the local Judenrat (Jewish Councils), an organization of traitorous Jews, either created or manipulated by the Nazis.

Today, racism is rampant in the Netherlands and throughout Europe. Muslims and immigrants from Africa, Latin America, Asia and Eastern Europe suffer the brunt of racism, from Amsterdam to London to Paris to Madrid to Berlin. The yearly celebration of the 1941 anti-Nazi strike can become a rallying point to build a massive anti-racist movement, learning from the achievements and errors of the past. The main lesson is that Nazi anti-Semitism, like all forms of racism, is a product of capitalism; the only way to end racism is to destroy its cause.