

# LA School: Fight Racist Rulers' Attack on Multi-Racial Unity, page 3

# CHALLENGE



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## Nationalism Deadly for Workers

**No Unity with ANY Boss: Workers of the World, Unite!**

Inter-imperialist rivalry is growing. U.S. rulers are still massacring thousands in Iraq as the war enters its fifth year, while many in the U.S. anti-war movement still appeal to their elected rulers to end it. In Iraq the workers' "choices" are either the U.S. puppet regime or nationalist bosses (Shiite, Sunni or Kurdish) who each want a bigger share of the oil profits. For the world's workers these are capitalism's alternatives: bow to the imperialist or to "our" local capitalists. Either way we lose.

Nationalism, like racism, was born with capitalism, initially in France, Britain and the U.S., and is used as another tool to divide the working class internationally. Nationalism means pledging allegiance to the ruling capitalists, based on living in an area they stole and in which they created their state apparatus to legitimize their rule. They push the concept of patriotism, essentially loyalty to "our" particular ruling class within the borders of "our country."

Another form of nationalism stems from a reaction to racism: super-exploited victims of the bosses' racism — black and Latin workers in the U.S. — are appealed to by black and Latin demagogues (Jesse Jackson, Al Sharpton, Barack Obama, LA Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa) to push capitalism: more black and Latin bosses, more black and Latin cops, foremen, etc. as the "solution" to racism, rather than exposing the super-profits that capitalism reaps from racism. This divides the working class from seeing it has one exploiting class enemy, capitalists, no matter their skin color or language.

Nationalism creates false unity between bosses and workers, between the Rockefellers and Farrakhans on the one hand and the working class, black and white, on the other. There's only one international working class with the same class interests, directly contradictory to the interests of all capitalists.

### Smash ALL Borders

Capitalist-created borders have disastrous effects. For 60 years, Israeli and Palestinian workers have been marching behind their rulers to their deaths. "Undocumented workers" moving from North Sub-Saharan Africa to Europe and from Mexico, Central-South America, the Caribbean and Asia to the U.S. face massive repression because they're from "different countries." These bosses' borders divide workers and induce them to pledge allegiance to their local ruling class, maintaining the latter's class rule.

Historically, all countries were born from the slaughter and coercion of workers by ruling classes fighting to gain new

territory for exploitation and profit. The workers' role was to fight and die and kill other workers for "their" bosses.

The bosses also created the concept of "race" (see CHALLENGE. 4/11) to divide us. Scientifically there are no "different races," only the human race. Within that there's only one division: those who own the means of production and those who don't, bosses and workers, exploiters and exploited. While our oppression may differ in kind, we have the same enemy, and the same class interest to destroy that enemy.

### Can't Share Power with Bosses

The final outcome of all forms of nationalism, of the working class fighting under nationalist banners "for our liberation," is dead revolutionaries and a ticket back to capitalism. PLP concluded this from seeing communists uniting with nationalists and the failures of national liberation movements.

In Indonesia communists allied with nationalist forces to expel the Dutch. The Communist Party, with almost two million members, controlled the labor movement and elected representatives to the government. Their leader, Aidit, became its number two official. Abandoning the correct strategy of armed revolution for communist-led workers' power, they took the parliamentary road to "share" power with the nation's bosses. In fact, in a 1961 article, Aidit declared: "[Our] basic principle...is that the class struggle is placed below the national struggle."

But their "legal" status didn't protect them. Controlling the military, Indonesia's ruling class assassinated Aidit and, with CIA assistance, using Islamic fundamentalists, slaughtered well over a million communists and trade unionists in a few weeks. Indonesia's workers still suffer mass poverty and the "joys" of capitalism.

Currently, Maoists in Nepal have repeated the same deadly mistake. On March 31, agreement was reached allowing five Maoist ministers to join the new national capitalist government. These are the same Maoists who led a massive armed rebellion that toppled the monarchy there.

### Nationalism Only Preserves Capitalism

In the post-World War II years, communists in the Soviet Union and China abandoned internationalism for nationalist politics, which helped lay the basis for reverting back to full-scale capitalism.

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## Union Hacks Torpedo Shipyard Strike

**PASCAGOULA, MS, April 4** — "It's clear and obvious they don't even care about us," said one striking ship-fitter in summing up the new three-year agreement with Northrop Grumman (NG). Almost 7,000 black and white workers had shut the racist war-maker and strike-breaker for 28 days, leaving a Navy destroyer and two freighters sitting like unfinished junk. While the workers were not striking against the bloodbath in Iraq, they gave all of us, and themselves, a lesson in the power of industrial workers to bring the imperialist war-makers to a halt.

Dow Jones News reported that the U.S. Navy is pushing shipbuilders to rein in soaring construction costs and adopt commercial practices without hurting military capability. Allison Stiller, the Navy's deputy assistant secretary for shipbuilding said, "If the Navy, shipbuilding industry and ship-repair industry do not change our behaviors, the country will be unable to afford the needed re-capitalization of our fleet." They are trying to keep pace with China, the rising imperialist power which is the number two shipbuilder in the world, and aiming for number one in the next ten years.

The contract was rushed through by the Pascagoula Metal Trades Council, representing 11 of 14 unions, and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW). Less than half, about 3,300 of the 7,000 strikers, were able to vote — and 40% voted "NO!" Many workers were away job-hunting and others couldn't af-

ford the gas money on short notice after being on strike for a month. All these workers were nearly wiped out by Hurricane Katrina in 2005, and despite NG getting over \$3 billion from the Navy and FEMA for post-Katrina clean-up, many strikers still live in FEMA trailers.

Northrop Grumman had cut off the workers' health insurance on April 1, and the union leaders spread the rumor that if the contract wasn't ratified the Ingalls yard here would close and the work moved to Newport News, Virginia. The workers that did vote hardly knew what they were voting on since the union passed out contract "highlights" and quickly called the vote. All these factors, plus 500 strikers crossing the picket lines and scabbing on their co-workers, and a lack of anti-racist, anti-imperialist leadership among the workers to counter the union leadership, let NG off the hook.

The workers won a 15% wage hike over three years, \$1.68 an hour now, and two 55¢-an-hour raises later. The first-year raise is the largest ever won in a NG contract. Meanwhile, the \$144-a-month in health insurance premiums will increase to almost \$200 and still will not cover dental or vision care. In Katrina's aftermath, housing costs have soared and milk is above \$4.00 a gallon.

Many workers voiced their anger at the union and the company. Some felt that with support for the strike being or-

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### Imus Racism, Sexism Mirrors Bosses' Rotten Culture

Don Imus's racist and sexist remarks insulting the Rutgers University women's basketball team have caused a big stir. He's been suspended for two weeks from his radio program which simulcasts on TV by MSNBC. But Imus's insults are no surprise. That's been his trademark for years. Racism and sexism, after all, rot the entire capitalist society.

Imus is not just another shock jock like many who fill the media. His program has been used by top liberal and conservative politicians and media stars. GOP candidates McCain and Romney, and former Democrat candidates John Kerry and Joe Lieberman have been on his show. Liberal and conservative writers use him to promote their books and have "intelligent" discussions. Tim Russert, NBC-TV "Meet the Press" host is an Imus regular. The list goes on. They know his racism and sexism well.

He's also a big money-maker for GE-owned MSNBC and CBS which owns his show. This is "freedom of speech" under capitalism: pro-war racist and sexist crap fills the air waves, and not only from right-wingers like Imus and Bill O'Reilly. Imus, after all, took the sexist insult from Hip Hop culture, much of which constantly degrades black women.

Yes, Imus should be fired, but this won't change the nature of the bosses' media. There's no "free speech" under this profit system. No real pro-working-class ideas blaming capitalism for racism, war, sexism and so on will be aired because the corporations which own and run the media won't go against their own class interests. Only CHALLENGE will give you those ideas. ☺



# Growing Saudi Unrest Threatens Deadlier Oil Wars

At a recent Arab League meeting, Saudi Arabia's king Abdullah labeled the U.S. occupation of Iraq "illegal." But he was hardly signaling a break with his U.S. masters, to whom his oil-soaked dynasty owes its very existence. Abdullah's remarks reflect instead his family's faltering grip on the economic cornerstone of U.S. imperialism. By pretending that Saudi Arabia was no longer accepting Washington's dictates, the king tried to allay mounting opposition — from Saudi workers and capitalists alike — to his clan's corrupt, oppressive rule.

The royal family controls Saudi Aramco, the state oil company. Its long-standing arrangement to provide Exxon Mobil, Chevron, and Shell cut-rate crude has brought the House of Saud fabulous riches, while Saudi workers have become poor and hostile. And Aramco's excluding non-royals antagonized capitalist "commoners" like Osama bin Laden, who demand their slice of the profit pie.

U.S. rulers (along with their British junior partners) can't afford to lose the Saudi oil racket, either to local bosses like bin Laden or imperialist rivals like China and Russia which are making deals with the Saudi rulers. Saudi oil represents the most lucrative and strategically crucial business deal in the history of imperialism, helping the U.S. exert political and economic pressure throughout the world. Exxon Mobil CEO Rex Tillerson boasted, "We're the largest purchaser of Saudi crude oil exports...making Saudi Arabia the largest single supplier of raw materials to Exxon Mobil's worldwide refinery system." (Speech, 4/27/04) U.S. rulers have killed over a million Iraqis and 3,300 GIs for an oil treasure half the size of Saudi Arabia's. Should the U.S. decide to prop up or replace a tottering Abdullah by force, even greater bloodshed could follow.

## POPULATION TIME BOMB UNDER SAUDI RULERS' THRONE

Saudi Arabia has one-fourth of the world's oil reserves. But it also has a demographic time bomb. The Saudi population has quadrupled since 1974, from 7 million to nearly 28 million. It may hit 43 million by 2025. As oil production and other economic growth have failed to keep pace, gross domestic product per person has plum-

meted, from \$16,006 in 1980 to \$8,974 in 2004. Real wages have declined 24% over the last decade. While Saudi princes indulge in obscene luxury, unemployment hovers around 25%. Many angry young Saudis correctly identify the love match between the royal family and the U.S. as the source of their troubles. But, without a communist outlook, they fall into the trap of allying with capitalists who oppose the royals and the U.S. under the guise of religion. Al Qaeda, the terrorist group that committed the 9/11 attacks, attracts many disaffected Saudis. Its leader, Osama bin Laden, is a onetime billionaire Saudi contractor, who turned against the king and his U.S. backers when they excluded him from sharing in the spoils of the first Iraq war. [See box.] Saudis comprise a significant portion of foreign anti-U.S. fighters in Iraq.

## Forced Out, Pentagon Surrounds Saudi Gold Mine for Possible Invasion

Back at home, the Saudi oil infrastructure stands vulnerable. A year ago, al Qaeda launched a suicide truck bomb assault on the world's largest oil processing facility at Abqaiq. The Sunni-Shiite split further destabilizes Sunni Abdullah's realm, which has a local Shiite majority in its main oil-producing eastern region. But, to counter Persian Gulf domination by Iranian Shiites, Saudi rulers have vowed to side with Sunni insurgents in Iraq, if the U.S. withdraws. Such a move would threaten uprisings in Saudi oilfields.

The military situation reveals Saudi weakness on many other fronts. The Saudis deliberately keep their army small, 73,000, compared to Iran's 350,000. The reason, says London-based journalist Said K. Aburish, is that "the House of Saud wants to maintain itself, but it does not want a strong army capable of overthrowing it." ("The Rise, Corruption, and Coming Fall of the House of Saud"; St. Martin's Press, 1996). A Saudi National Guard exists, but its mission is "to protect the royal family from internal rebellion and the other Saudi army." (Globalsecurity) The Saudi Air Force trusts only princes to pilot its jet fighters.

Despite record-setting arms purchases (mainly from the U.S.), undermanned Saudi forces are ill-equipped to repel an invader. The U.S. put thousands of troops on

Saudi soil during the first Iraq war. But today, vehement anti-U.S. sentiment makes the stationing of large numbers of GIs there politically impossible. Only 500 remain. So a major part of the Pentagon's "wider wars" strategy in Gulf Slaughter II has been to create — or beef up — bases that encircle the Arabian Peninsula. U.S. naval facilities in Bahrain and the air base in Qatar have undergone a massive build-up. The U.S. installation in Djibouti will soon expand from 88 to 500 acres. The Pentagon's permanent bases in Iraq, including the colossal Green Zone fortress, play a role in securing Saudi crude. And the U.S. Navy's carrier battle groups menacing Iran are actually closer to Saudi oil fields than to Teheran.

## Liberals to Next President: Prepare for Saudi 'Catastrophe'

U.S. rulers understand that the House of Saud is as "solid as a house of cards" and that the strategic stakes are even higher than in Iraq. The liberal Brookings Institution advised "the next president" to prepare for an all-out oil war embroiling the entire Middle East,

"More strife in Iraq will further suppress oil production there and could spark conflicts in Kuwait or Saudi Arabia, where a globally catastrophic loss of oil production could result. And, strife in Iraq could adversely affect Iranian oil production and transit." (Brookings, "Independent Ideas for Our Next President")

Capitalism is inherently unstable. Bosses must continually compete; self-interest and the need to pursue maximum profit make all their alliances temporary. As the Mid-East's current plight shows, war after war results. But capitalism also suffers from another kind of instability. A handful of bosses must try to control millions of workers through killing and oppression. Ultimately, this situation is as untenable as the U.S.-Saudi operation.

As May Day 2007 approaches, the key task of revolutionary-minded workers and their allies in the Middle East and worldwide is organizing for communist revolution as the only way out of the inter-imperialist rivalry driving the inferno of endless profit wars. ☪

## 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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## MID-EAST MONSTERS CREATED BY U.S. IMPERIALISM

(Partial List)

### HOUSE OF SAUD

Placed in power in 1920's by British and U.S. agents. Has guaranteed super-profits to U.S. Big Oil for over 75 years. Treats women, and Indian and Filipino "guest workers" worse than dirt. Favorites: private jets, yachts, debauchery (latest scandal involves British arms dealer BAE, a Saudi prince, and two female "entertainers" from England), and beheadings.

### ISRAEL

Created in 1947 by U.S. and Britain, with some Nazi-collaborators in top offices. Skilled war machine polices U.S. oil empire but threatens blow-ups by invading Lebanon and terrorizing Palestinian citizens. Has significant pro-Russian Netanyahu faction. Aims nukes at Iran.

### SHAH OF IRAN

Installed in CIA coup in 1953. Opened door to Ex-

on Mobil and BP. His U.S.-trained SAVAK secret police pioneered the torture tactics used at Guantanamo and Abu Ghraib. Led to Islamic Republic of Iran in 1979 in response to hated pro-U.S. regime. Held U.S. hostages 444 days after David Rockefeller welcomed deposed Shah to New York. Now led by Holocaust-denier Ahmadinejad. Forging alliances with China, Russia and Europe that threaten World War III.

### SADDAM HUSSEIN

Guided by CIA, became president, took Pentagon funds and arms in war against Soviet-leaning Iran in 1980's. Shook Rumsfeld's hand. Became U.S. enemy by making oil deals with Russians and French. Suckered by U.S. into invading Kuwait in 1990. Hanged, but anti-U.S. force lives on in form of Sunni insurgents.

### OSAMA BIN LADEN

Funded by CIA, led Islamic fanatics against Soviet and pro-Soviet troops in Afghanistan in 1980s. Seeking share of oil wealth, tried to lead own army into Iraqi-occupied Kuwait in 1990-01. Swatted down by U.S. and Saudi rulers, founded al Qaeda, launched 9/11 attacks. Still at large. ☪

## Nationalism Deadly for Workers

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This period also witnessed nationalists and victims of racism in many oppressed countries gaining "independence" from the yoke of colonialism. While some paid lip-service to socialism, today all these countries maintain capitalist exploitation, including every country in Africa. The masses are still destitute and lack political power. Unity with the "lesser-evil" bosses dooms liberation from the start. Even the more militant fighters ended up negotiating for a bigger piece of the pie from the former rulers.

For instance, when Mandela's forces took power in South Africa, and the workers, now assuming they were liberated, struck for their demands, Mandela told them they couldn't strike because this would damage the rulers' chances of getting foreign capital. So now South Africa is ruled by a combination of black and (much richer) white capitalists and poverty is even worse than before "liberation."

Nationalist leaders are profit-making bosses! They use the masses' anti-imperialist and anti-racist sentiment to enlist them in a drive for bigger local capitalism. Given the sharpening inter-imperialist rivalry world-wide, nationalist forces try to build themselves by playing one imperialist against another. Similarly, the imperialist powers make deals with nationalists to better exploit the latter's country. Whoever wins a bigger piece of the economic pie, the nationalists still intensify the exploitation of their own workers.

All bosses represent their own class interests. They will kill and kill some more to maintain their profits. Cast off illusions about these bosses; instead organize against their dictatorship to wipe them out with workers' power. Unity with the enemy has never led to victory. Only communism, not nationalism, can lead to workers' revolution. Uniting around working-class internationalism is our road to communist revolution. One Class, One Flag, One Party. ☪

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fight back



# Fight Racist LA Rulers' Attempt to Break Multi-Racial Unity

**LOS ANGELES, CA, April 9** — Students, teachers and staff at a high school here have done much to build multi-racial unity. Teachers have organized clubs around this unity. A slide presentation to staff members provided historical background on how many Mexican and African people share ancestors, and gave critical support to the other, such as for Mexican Independence, the Mexican Revolution and the abolition of slavery among others.

Then a week before Spring break a tragedy occurred. A black student stabbed a Latino student on school grounds. He died on the way to the hospital. The stabbing occurred during a fight between different gangs. Immediately, the bosses' media propagandized that violence between blacks and Latinos caused the death.

The next day school board and union officials descended on school grounds en masse (most hadn't set foot there before). All spoke of "securing the campus."

## 'Let's make the bosses' worst nightmare a reality fighting for multi-racial and international unity of the entire working class.'

They feared escalating racial violence and retaliation. Cops flooded the campus. The following day a power outage darkened the entire school and all of those school officials scattered like quail!

After the death, Progressive Labor Party responded with a flyer at the school entitled, "Blacks and Latinos unite; Don't fight each other, fight the system!" which was eagerly and enthusiastically received. Many students passed them out hand to hand inside the school. Black and Latino parents, teachers and students thanked those

distributing it outside and asked for extras.

The flyer outlined how the cops and FBI created the gangs in order to provoke violence and disunity in the two communities. It also exposed how the same government fears the unity of the most oppressed sections of the working class because of the potential to organize, make revolution and overthrow the racist capitalist system. The flyer emphasized that the bosses use racism to divide the working class at the time we most need to unite against their wars abroad and racist attacks here.

Workers from Latin America have long experience waging armed struggle against U.S. imperialism. Black workers in the U.S. have led militant rebellions against racism in major cities and massive rebellions of black, white and Latino soldiers in the military during the Vietnam War. United with white, Asian workers and soldiers, black and Latino workers can be invincible!

We said, "Let's make the bosses' worst nightmare a reality fighting for multi-racial and international unity of the entire working class." This message was eagerly received by black and Latino students and parents.

The bosses are using this death to emphasize racial and gang violence, to promote increasing the LAPD to 10,000 cops. Racist incidents make big news; multi-racial unity does not. One writer pointed out that last year in LA's "highest murder districts" of 236 homicides 22



crossed racial lines. (LA Times, 3/25).

The same paper also reported (3/30), "Los Angeles — the nation's second-largest city — has [an]... officer-to-resident ratios of ...one officer for every 436 residents. New York has one for every 228 residents." . The bosses are callously taking advantage of this tragedy to push the ratio closer to New York's.

More cops mean more racist terror, especially against both black and Latino workers. Mayor Villaraigosa and Police Chief Bratton are also aiming for more surveillance and control programs for the youth. But they also worry about winning these same youth to a patriotic and nationalist outlook, to get them to join the military and die and kill in defending U.S. imperialism.

U.S. rulers have a big dilemma: they need thousands upon thousands of new soldiers to defend their empire while they simultaneously build racist police terror to keep these potential soldiers in line. The bosses' existence depends on their own gravediggers. Let's accelerate the grave-digging by uniting against racism and building a massive Progressive Labor Party. We have nothing to lose but our chains!☺

## From Washington to LA, PLP Backs Striking Shipbuilders



**WASHINGTON, D.C., March 29** — A group of PLP'ers and friends rallied near Northrop Grumman's corporate headquarters in Arlington, Virginia to gain support for striking shipyard workers in Mississippi. We distributed over 600 flyers about the strike and 40 CHALLENGES, while collecting donations for the strikers. Our speeches about racism, war and the power of the industrial workers to shut down the capitalist war machine reached thousands of workers.

Several workers we talked to worked for Northrop Grumman. Many more knew the company as part of the war machine. But almost no one had heard of the Mississippi strike until our rally, which made us more enthusiastic about spreading the word about the strike and the need for solidarity be-

tween workers at Northrop Grumman and other workers and GIs. One young soldier brought up the military-industrial complex and the need to fight it.

After this rally, we took the issue to our unions and the D.C. Central Labor Council to gain further support through fund-raising and letter-writing campaigns for the battle in Mississippi.

We are proud of our Party's ability to quickly mobilize internationally to support for such critical struggles. It demonstrates even more why friends of PLP must join us to multiply our revolutionary impact on the class struggle worldwide.☺

**EL SEGUNDO, CA, April 4** — Today PLP organized a group of youth and others to support the strike of Northrop Grumman workers in Pascagoula, Mississippi and Europe's Airbus strikers. We went to a large Northrop Grumman facility here with leaflets, CHALLENGES and signs to back the strikes. We carried posters with pictures of the multi-racial march of strikers and their families in Mississippi.

Despite security guards and cops trying to kick us out, and limit our access to the

workers, we distributed many leaflets and CHALLENGES. Security guards directed traffic away from us, fearing workers would read about the strikers' unity. Most workers knew nothing about the strike and were glad to hear about it, thanking us for the literature, which emphasized multi-racial, international workers' solidarity against the war-makers. Leaflets about the strike also received a good reception on several campuses where students discussed the potential power of the working class to oppose imperialist wars.☺

## D.C. Bus Drivers Rally vs. Racist Bosses' Attacks

**WASHINGTON, D.C. March 30** — Over 40 bus drivers rallied today outside the Northern Garage to protest Metro transit management's unsafe workplace practices. The bosses and their media have waged a vicious campaign against the drivers, blaming them for three recent fatal pedestrian accidents. But it is the bosses' unrealistic scheduling of routes and inadequate recovery time between routes that creates the conditions for tragic accidents. This racist scapegoating of the predominantly black workforce is an attempt to deflect the public's anger away from management.

Meanwhile, no manager has been held accountable for the deaths of three track workers, all killed in recent months because management refused to adopt the safety measures workers have long advocated. While the management is planning a memorial for them, Metro's utter disregard for workers' safety will kill more workers.

The newly-elected union leaders showed their true boss-loving colors by skipping the safety rally and, instead, calling for more cooperation with man-

agement. Drivers from Northern Garage are now working to rule (following the rules to slow things down) with management scrambling to enforce their insane schedule. Northern has been one of the strongest and longest supporters of PLP and has a core of CHALLENGE readers.

Management has promised many changes to create a safer and less stressful work environment, but with a \$100 million budget deficit any changes will be limited to window dressing. This situation is the trickle-down effect of the war budget and the skyrocketing price of oil-based fuels. One day's cost of the war budget for Iraq would probably cover the cost of solving most of the safety problems. But the bosses' priority is imperialism, not safety for workers and riders.

The next step is to spread the work-to-rule campaign to other garages. Meanwhile, we're trying to recruit more drivers to PLP, win more to read and distribute CHALLENGE, and participate in our upcoming May Day activities. Stay tuned for future developments! ☺

## Mississippi Strike

*continued from front page*

organized locally and internationally, they could have held out longer. Some of that support was organized by PLP, from union and non-union aerospace workers on the West Coast to transit workers in Washington, D.C. and more (see left) A friend in France won his local to send solidarity greetings of support as well.

This strike did not sit well with the racist war-makers. It also gave PLP the opportunity to build the revolutionary communist movement. It inspired us to organize strike support by explaining to

our co-workers, on the campuses and high schools, and in the barracks, that this fight — like the Airbus and auto strikes across Europe, and the destructions of 100,000 auto jobs in the U.S. — is the result of the sharpening battle among the world's bosses. These racist attacks on the world's workers are paving the way to bigger wars. And the only way to smash imperialism is with communist revolution. Now we can have these discussions with the Ingalls strikers as well. ☺



workers unite!

# Los Angeles PLP Preparing for May Day

**LOS ANGELES, April 8** — “This dinner is to prepare us for the upcoming May Day March,” one speaker announced as everyone enjoyed a delicious dinner that they themselves had brought to share. Everyone emphasized that May Day represents an opportunity to be upfront with its real history, to show that this capitalist system based on racism, widening war and exploitation must be smashed. PLP offers a communist alternative for the international working class.

Last year liberals and phony leftists alike organized and led huge marches demanding a “comprehensive immigration reform” bill, a bosses’ plan to guarantee war production and more soldiers to defend their declining empire. Still without “reform,” new marches are scheduled for this May 1. PLP will participate with a multi-racial contingent of youth and workers emphasizing multi-racial unity, internationalism and a communist movement to not only answer the bosses’ attacks but also end their racist, exploitative system once and for all.

After presenting the history of May Day we discussed the bosses’ great fear of the potentially explosive unity of the most exploited — African-American and immigrant workers— against the same bosses’ system which is now pushing more racist divisions here (see page 3, and letter page 6).

Women from the Ramona Gardens community denounced the racist police for murdering Mauricio Paris Cornejo. They committed themselves to helping organize for the May Day March. Latino and black students presented anti-racist, pro-working class and revolutionary poems in Spanish and English.

Committees were established — banners, flags, posters, CHALLENGE-DESAFIO sales, chants and security — to guarantee a successful march. We closed the dinner by enthusiastically singing the Internationale and Bella Ciao. We urge all those who attended to join PLP to fight for a communist world without racism, borders or imperialist war. ☺



## FBI the New Librarians?

**NYC, NY, March 30**—Be careful about borrowing The Communist Manifesto from your local public library. A recent forum at Pratt Institute School of Library and Information Science exposed the fascist nature of the Democrat/Republican-endorsed Patriot Act.

The forum explained how three Connecticut librarians (“the John Does”) were issued a National Security Letter (NSL). It demanded the library hand over its records of subscriber and billing information, and access logs of any person that had used a library computer, all in the name of “national security and fighting terrorism.” The FBI uses this information to collect all e-mails, browsed websites, books borrowed and users’ identification, storing it in databases for federal and state agencies’ harassment of people opposing the government.

The librarians refused to give the FBI the information because they believe users of libraries have “privacy rights and are protected under freedom of information laws.” This refusal placed the librarians under investigation for “withholding information,” proving that we only have those “rights” the capitalists decide to give us.

Such letters are even more fascist because people who receive them cannot tell anyone, including their spouses (!), that they even received a letter. Informing anyone could mean jail time. The FBI now issues about “30,000 national security letters a year.” (Washington Post. 11/6/05). The letters don’t even require issuance by a judge (like that would matter) but can be submitted by an FBI field supervisor.

The librarians filed a suit in court against the FBI to fight the demand for information. The individual librarians could not even contact their union to defend themselves. The agency threatened arrest if they went public. Their lawyers found a way of notifying the union which alerted the public about this attack. They fought until the FBI backed down and withdrew the case because a judge decided many of the demands were vague.

During the forum many students questioned whether the librarians should have just revealed themselves and tested the government’s willingness to arrest them. One refused, saying they really feared being arrested. The librarians’ union, the Connecticut Library Association (CLA), backed down also because they didn’t think fighting would accomplish much.

“But haven’t people in the past fought for their beliefs and went to jail?” asked one student. The CLA representative who led the meeting said they didn’t want to push it that far. After the case was dismissed, the FBI fought for a mandatory 5-year prison sentence if one reveals receiving a letter. So much for not fighting.

With PLP’s communist leadership, workers need to fight hard against fascism. We cannot take pleas and dismissals just because it suits us not to face attacks, including jail. The bosses know that complacency and fear hold many workers back from fighting fascist outrages. We need to work with all workers to fight fascism step by step, to expose the nature of the bosses’ dictatorship.

## Military Families Need to Expose Democrats, Back Rebel GI’s

Amid the current U.S. troop “surge” in Baghdad, members of an anti-war military family’s organization are considering what action to organize. Although they’ve been involved in mass demonstrations and picket lines, before the November 2006 election more time was spent attacking the Republican candidates, and encouraging people to vote Democratic. Since then it’s been mostly lobbying Democratic Party politicians to bring all troops home immediately.

Congressional Democrats have refused to vote to de-fund the war to force a withdrawal. At least one attacked anti-war protestors as “idiots.” They won’t even vote for a symbolic de-funding. MoveOn.org, a key pro-Democrat group funded by George Soros and others, is advocating a different kind of “moving on.” They’re pushing “clean energy,” national health care and “restoration of democracy” as their national agenda, excluding the war completely. The latest Democratic Party scheme attaches the minimum-wage bill onto Bush’s request for more war money. As one politician said recently, “If we’re going to vote to fund the war, he’s going to give us something in return.” The Democrats use “pro-worker” rhetoric to hide their actual support for U.S. imperialism in the oil-rich Mid-East.

The Military Commissions Act was passed before the 2006 election. This fascist law gives the President the right to designate any non-citizen an “unlawful enemy combatant,” and lock that person up until their trial by a panel of commissioned officers. It abolishes the right to challenge that detention. Many Democratic Senators, including two from our area, voted for it.

Leading up to the election, we took the offensive, linking these laws and the rulers’ need to mobilize the U.S. population to support wars for control of re-

sources under the guise of the “war on terror.” Several military family group members, and friends in anti-war groups, responded favorably to these politics. Now a statement advocating these points is being circulated. Our first step will be to call on military family chapters to endorse it.

Meanwhile, the collusion of the Democrats with Bush & Co. has upped the ante within anti-war groups. The national “Occupation Project” has undertaken sit-ins against key Congressional Democrats who have voted to fund the war. Thirteen sit-in’ers were arrested protesting the vote. Demonstrations in support of those arrested also demanded hands off Iran. The cops have invented the novel charge of “failing to disperse from a riot” against the protestors, many of whom are pacifists.

PLP is calling on friends in our military families group and others to expose the imperialist politicians, and back soldiers who resist and rebel. This call has drawn some favorable response. More in-depth discussion with our friends is needed about the key role of soldiers in the fight to overthrow the bosses and their profit wars.

An alliance of workers, students, soldiers and sailors who are revolutionary and class-conscious can defeat the bosses. Our small steps to develop this unity today can lay the basis for bigger advances as larger wars to control oil erupt. Day by day, in these small fights, we’re learning how to create those more significant changes. ☺

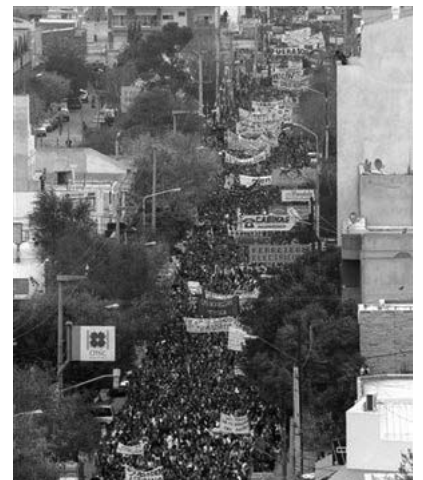
## National Teachers Strike in Argentina

**BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA, April 9** — Workers and students participated in strikes and marches nationwide protesting the murder of professor Carlos Fuentealba. A cop hit him in the face with a tear gas canister during a striking teachers’ road-blocking march demanding higher wages in Neuquén province.

In today’s action, bus and subway workers here are stopping work for several hours while teachers strike nationally for higher wages and against police brutality. They’re demanding the resignation of the province’s governor, Sobisch, political opponent of Peronist President Kichner.

Police brutality is not unique to Neuquén. Since “democracy” returned to Argentina, following the brutal military dictatorship of the mid-1970’s and early 1980’s, the number of victims of police murder has been sky-high. Under Kichner’s Presidency, from May 2003, the cops have killed 662 people.

Teachers are paid a miserable wage, particularly insulting in gas- and-oil rich areas like Neuquén, Salta and Santa Cruz, where teachers have struck. In Santa Cruz, Kichner ordered the militarization of the



schools.

Capitalist politicians, be they Peronists like Kichner — a friend of Chávez and union hacks — or open right-wingers like Sobisch, are all enemies of the working class. ☺

fight for communism!



## Reds Must Win Workers Away from Chávez's pro-Capitalist Socialism

While Bush toured Latin America, heavily protected and isolated from mass angry protests throughout, Hugo Chávez also toured the region, warmly welcomed by masses of workers and youth. In Buenos Aires, Chavez was cheered by 30,000 people at the Ferro soccer stadium, organized by Argentina's President Kichner, union hacks and some fake-leftist groups. Millions saw him on TV there. Chávez has become the "anti-Bush," the most admired leader in Latin America since Fidel Castro and Ché Guevara.

But Chávez is not even as radical as Fidel and Ché were during the early stages of the Cuban revolution. While in the early 1960's the Cuban workers pressured the government to seize imperialist companies like Esso, Shell and IT&T without any compensation, recently Chávez "nationalized" Verizon and a U.S.-owned electrical utility company, paying them the market price of \$1.5 billion. These companies and Wall Street welcomed these "nationalizations." Chávez "21st Century Socialism" is not even close to the bourgeois nationalists of the last century like Mexico's President Cárdenas, who in 1938 nationalized Standard Oil and Shell with minimum compensation.

Chávez's plan for the oil industry is mixed ownership with such as Shell, Chevron-Texaco and Exxon. These imperialist oil companies now will own 49% of the oil and installations of the fields and wells they were already operating under deals with PDVSA, the Venezuelan state-owned company. Even though Exxon is not happy with the new deal, "Chevron is expected to accept Mr. Chávez's terms, since it is also negotiating access to a large natural gas project ..." (NY Times, 4/10). Sean Rooney, Shell's Venezuelan manager, showed his approval of this deal, saying: "Being a partner is very different from just providing services." And of course, this deal will dole out a few crumbs to Venezuela's working class.

While capitalists' profits are booming from the rising price of oil, 40% of Venezuelans still live under the poverty line, as does the rest of Latin America. Unemployment is 10.5% (23% among youth). While in 2002, workers' wages were 33% of the national income, by 2005 they had sunk to 25%. So in spite of some crumbs to workers, under

Chávez the gap between workers and bosses has risen.

So why do workers and youth consider Chávez a hero? Partly because of his anti-imperialist rhetoric (mainly against Bush and U.S. bosses; U.S. imperialists also hate his deals with China and other U.S. rivals); and partly because of illusions many have in his "21st Century Socialism" plan, basically the fantasy of "capitalism with a human face."

So how can revolutionary communists show workers that following Chávez and others like him (Bolivia's Morales and Ecuador's Correa) won't liberate them from all forms of capitalism? It's not easy, but it can be done. In the 1940's and '50s, millions of workers in Argentina thought General Juan Perón was their savior. The leading wing of the Argentine bourgeoisie did not like the crumbs he gave to workers and U.S. imperialism also disliked him because he flirted with the Nazis during World War II. After a 1955 military coup overthrew Peron, 'union leaders' main demand was for his return to power. But rank-and-file workers fought for their own class interests. Mass uprising erupted nation-wide, particularly in industrial cities like Cordoba, center of Argentina's auto industry. So in 1973, the bosses brought him back to try to cool down the class struggle.

Perón immediately attacked the workers who had fought for his return. When he died, his widow Isabel became President and formed the AAA (Argentinian Anti-Communist Alliance) which organized death squads against militant workers and youth. This opened the doors for the 1975 military coup, which led to the "dirty war," slaughtering 30,000 workers and youth.

Communists must be involved in the workers' mass movement, even those supporting Chávez and others like him. But our involvement is not to cheer his fake anti-capitalism, but to expose him, while participating in the workers' daily struggles against their bosses (as is happening in Venezuela and elsewhere). That's how we can forge real red leadership to fight for a worker-led society with no bosses: communism.☺

## Black-Latino Unity Can Thwart Racist Immigration Reformers

**LOS ANGELES, April 7** — A multi-racial group from PLP joined the immigrants' rights march here today putting forward our communist ideas in this large coalition event. While March leaders said immigrants "should love the U.S.," marchers eagerly took 300 CHALLENGES and 2,000 leaflets calling for unity of black, Latino and all workers against the bosses' racist attacks and widening imperialist war. Some people joined our contingent with its red flags and class-conscious chants like, "La clase obrera no tiene fronteras" ("The working class has no borders").

This event followed a March 25 pro-immigration reform activity at the Sports Arena by a coalition of various churches and the Democratic Party. A group of workers chanting "Workers' Struggles have no borders!" while marching to the Arena were greeted at the entrance, along with hundreds of other workers and students, by PLP members distributing leaflets and CHALLENGES exposing the racist, patriotic and pro-war nature of the bosses' immigration "reform." That same day PLP leaflets, CHALLENGES and chants for multi-racial unity flooded an immigrants' rights demonstration at the Federal Building and a demonstration against the Minutemen who were trying to spread their racist filth on Broadway.

The Arena meeting was opened with prayers and religious songs led by rabbis, pastors, imams and Catholic priests. Then came the "heavy artillery" of politicians like U.S. Representative Luis Gutierrez, co-author of the Gutierrez-Flake proposition; LA Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa; Fabian Nuñez, majority leader of the California Assembly; and countless other state senators (black, white, Latin and Asian) who, after congratulating one another, put forward "patriotism and American values" as the "American dream" of millions of immigrant workers.

They ignored the war in Iraq and the U.S. bosses' need to control Middle-Eastern oil and the stiff competition these bosses face from their imperialist rivals in China, Russia and the European Union. All this will require millions of workers slaving in the bosses' war industries and millions of soldiers fighting and dying in ever-widening wars.

All their hypocritical embracing of immigrants aimed to make them feel grateful and patriotic, to



**We need to win workers away from the racist, imperialist flag of the U.S. to the red flag of Communist workers' power!**

be willing to fill the bosses' imperialist needs. Grateful? The bosses' capitalist system created the horrific conditions of hunger, oppression and death that forced them to leave their families in order to survive.

As desperate immigrants flooded the U.S., the bosses closed factories, cut union jobs for many black and white workers and then hired immigrant workers in low-paying jobs in the economy's industrial and service sectors. They then pushed racist lies, telling black workers immigrants "stole their jobs," while telling immigrant workers that black workers are "too lazy" to work, pitting slave against slave.

The rulers also flooded black neighborhoods with drugs and the gangs and violence the drug traffic requires, giving the rulers the excuse to imprison masses of black workers and youth. The bosses push this poison because they fear the explosive unity of two of the most oppressed and exploited sections of the working class.

Although the forces leading the immigration "reform" movement serve U.S. imperialists' needs, PLP'ers enter these organizations to advocate anti-racism, internationalism and communist ideas as the basis of unity of workers, students and soldiers of all ethnic groups. This will enable PLP to lead millions in a communist revolution that will forever smash capitalism, its wars, borders, racism and wage slavery.☺

## PLP Helped Blast Fascist Minutemen



**NEW YORK, NY, April 9** — Over a hundred people protested the racist Chris Simcox, co-founder and leader of the anti-immigrant Minutemen, today in front of NYU's Kimmel Center. While the demonstration was originally contained by police barricades off to the side of the building, things changed when the PLP contingent arrived. Chanting "Smash racist deportations, working people have no nation!" we began to picket in front of the main entrance. The police were unprepared for this level of militancy and we were able to partially block the entrance for over an hour. This meant that the Minutemen's event started over half-an-hour late. Inside, students from NYU booed and heckled Simcox, inhibiting him from starting his speech for over 15 minutes. ☺

## Church Forum Stresses United Immigrant-Citizen Struggle

**BROOKLYN, NY** — "The U.S. is a country of immigrants." How many times have we all heard that phrase? The bosses' need for immigrants and why immigrants have always been under attack was the topic at a recent forum sponsored by a social action group of a local church here.

The chapel was full. Members and friends of PL in this church are spreading pro-working class, anti-racist and communist ideas.

The first speaker laid out some of the history of immigration in the U.S. and how immigrants have always been used as cheap labor and as soldiers to fight in their wars. He discussed the struggles of immigrants and "citizens" in the 1870's and 1880's, and how they built unions and fights against the attacks by the industrial barons. Although these labor struggles had a limited focus and did not call for revolution, there were always socialists and revolutionaries fighting for anti-racist ideas and a better world run by the working class.

Another speaker described how people are fighting back all over the U.S. against the attacks on undocumented immigrants and how even churches were beginning to understand the need for struggle. She also talked of a growing call within churches for a sanctuary movement for undocumented immigrants, and the idea that people from the U.S. and Mexico should have a demonstration across the border to embrace and shake hands because the working class of both sides are the same.

After the speakers, one teacher wanted to know if there are any actions or events he could invite his students to attend. A number of people talked about the campaigns to create even more racism against immigrants. One case in point: a talk radio station in New Jersey has a host who calls undocumented immigrants cockroaches and pushes the idea of people turning in their neighbors. Several people suggested holding a picket line outside this station and boycotting the sponsors of the programs.

To communists, organizing a mass fight-back against these racist attacks is vital. More importantly, we must fight to win workers to communism. Some people in the hall wore a button that read "workers have no borders". We need to smash the borders created by the bosses. It's important that we point out how much the wealth and power of the rulers of the U.S. (or any industrialized nation) is based on constant sources of cheap labor and how they try to keep up the illusion that workers across borders should be divided. Only a working class armed with communist ideas can end the plight of immigrants and all workers around the world.☺



# Letters

'These experiences have just strengthened my desire to fight for a world without bosses, to fight for PLP's communist politics. It won't be easy, but with patience and perseverance we are building our international party to fight for political power and defeat the bosses' fascist dictatorship with the dictatorship of the working class.'

A PLP'er, Colombia

## PL'er Carries Red Politics Job to Job

I'm an industrial worker who has participated in many class struggles, including two very militant strikes at the Croydon plant here in Colombia. The reformist hacks betrayed our struggles, enabling the bosses to shut the plant without paying workers any severance.

Alter two years being unemployed, I started working at Empacor, a paper processing export company with 400 workers. The plant operates seven days a week, eight to twelve hours a day. Workers are totally alienated and oppressed by the bosses.

Making friends with whom I had ideological struggles, I made communist politics primary in explaining our exploitation. Workers listened and began reading DE-SAFIO. Some bosses' stooges saw me as a bit different from other workers and squealed. I was fired.

Now I'm a watchman of machinery used to pave and open highways. We work outdoors without any protection from the weather and no place to take care of physical needs. It's very dangerous since any thief can shoot or kill us. There are more and more people like me, working without any real social benefits. Thousands of workers earning miserable wages clean these highways of stuff drivers throw away. But now the government wants to take away even these miserable jobs and contract them out to multi-national cleaning companies.

These experiences have just strengthened my desire to fight for a world without bosses, to fight for PLP's communist politics. It won't be easy, but with patience and perseverance we are building our international party to fight for political power and defeat the bosses' fascist dictatorship with the dictatorship of the working class.

A PLP'er, Colombia

## Seek Multi-Racial Unity Over Stabbing

It's a big challenge to teach at our school, but the students' political potential is great. Little by little we're winning some students to the left.

Almost one year ago to the day, our students had to face riot police at school after walking out against HR 4437 (an anti-immigrant bill). From that struggle, two ex-students are now taking a more active role in the Party. They haven't joined yet, but they've attended every study group since and have stood up for communist ideas in their classes. Another student

and some of his friends are now leading a school club that began last year. Some are interested in joining the study group.

Although there's progress, winning these students to communism means engaging in struggles against the fascist nature of capitalism. For example, recently a student was stabbed to death on our school campus. Needless to say, this was a very tragic incident; students and teachers were horrified. But as usual, the bosses used the tragedy to bring even more fascism down on our heads. The media portrayed it as a "racially motivated" killing. The truth is the two students were from rival gangs (many different gangs exist around this school). Soon afterwards we realized why the bosses' media pushed that idea: the mayor wants more cops on the streets, for a 10,000 total.

Within our school, they want metal detectors, uniforms, more security guards and school police. The administration pushed aside students who wished to create a memorial for the slain student. These bosses' agents feared "violent repercussions." Unfortunately the students then went to some very nationalist teachers who viewed it as a "Latino struggle" as opposed to a multi-racial one against fascism. Others have stood up for multi-racial unity. The school club wants to confront these nationalist ideas in the continuing struggle to show we are all one working class.

Red Teacher

## 'Fair Wage' Impossible Under Profit System

A recent conversation with a fellow worker revolved around society and particularly our salary being very unfavorable to the workers, as well as the horrible conditions faced under capitalism. I explained the need for workers to be organized and to fight for communist revolution.

I told him up front that we must eliminate wages but I failed to note that in a capitalist economy workers' labor is a commodity, like all other products. We workers sell our labor for far less than it's worth. In a society based on profit, there's a price on all commodities. Bosses profit off our labor while paying us a pittance. But we need to get past the idea of fighting for a "fair wage" (what the unions say they want) to get to the point of fighting for a system without money and wages.

It's difficult for many workers to conceive of a society based on distribution according to need, and without money, and it's tough to explain, especially because it's never been put into practice and we can't describe exactly how it would work.

action. It has been holding weekly protests against the war since January 2003, two of them at the office of Rep. John Murtha, who "represents" the district.

The initial activities of the CSR, formed in 1987, protested U.S. aid to the terrorist Contras who were waging war against the nationalist Sandinista regime in Nicaragua; then against the first Gulf War in 1991, as well as demonstrating against Bush and Cheney campaign stops here in 2004 (at which CHALLENGE was distributed).

Professor Jim Scofield, a CSR founder, said the group will continue its weekly protests until U.S. troops are withdrawn from Iraq. Forty residents had demonstrated last year on the war's third anniversary. He said the group had been receiving more support than occurred during Gulf War I. Although the CSR is a reform organization, some of its members are regular CHALLENGE readers and the paper was distributed at today's event.

While the real solution to this imperialist war is to destroy its source, capitalism, through communist revolution, it's a positive development that people in Johnstown — once a thriving steel town, but now an economically depressed area — are out on the streets publicly voicing their opposition to this imperialist war. This opens the door to spreading anti-imperialist and communist ideas by local PLP members.



However, it's an important first step to explain Marx's analysis of surplus value, that workers work only part of the day to produce enough to pay for their subsistence and the rest goes to the boss. That explains why workers can never make a fair wage under the profit system.

It's essential to have such discussions, to win workers away from illusions about capitalism, on the road to winning them to the necessity of fighting for communist revolution and to abolish the wage system once and for all.

Red Ironworker

## Mexico Vies With China For Lowest Wages

Mexico's rulers have found an "answer" to competition from China in the cheap labor-cost field: still lower wages. A report by Huberto Juárez, of the School of Economics of the Autonomous Univ. of Puebla (reported in La Jornada, 4/7) shows auto parts, electronics and home appliances maquiladoras (assembly plants for exports) have returned to Mexico, but away from the traditional border states to even lower-wage areas in Southern Mexico. Huge international corporations like Delphi and Yazaki are profiting from this.

Boss-controlled union hacks, along with cooperative local governments have helped keep wages down. The companies have not only moved south from Ciudad Juárez (across from El Paso) — the center of the maquiladoras — but also from big cities to small towns and rural areas to get cheaper labor. Since 2002, wages have

declined in these industries and are now below the already low national minimum wage.

This again emphasizes the importance of building an international red-led workers' movement. With such a massive movement, workers could fight multi-national companies from Detroit to Cadiz, Spain (Delphi is closing operations in both areas) to anywhere in the world where they move searching for cheaper labor. In the heat of these struggles, we can win workers worldwide to the communist idea of smashing wage slavery, which means fighting for a communist society where production serves the needs of our class instead of a few bosses.

An Internationalist Worker

## Boss 'Abuse' Cry Over 'Sick-out' Spurs Repeat

Recently, at a public institution where I work, the cleaners have been overworked due to severe short-staffing. While the workers complained, this didn't stop management from heaping on the work. Needing a concrete plan to fight the bosses, we decided to collectively call in sick one day. Naturally, the head boss didn't take kindly to this job action and screamed about our "abuse" of sick leave, so we did it again.

The action was truly one of class struggle, but no amount of job actions will change the nature of capitalism! The bosses worldwide are in such fierce competition that they must cut budgets everywhere and stick the burden on the working class, either through increased unemployment or intense speed-up. Our long-term strategy should be to fight for communism, even as we wage daily war on the bosses. While we haven't won yet, we know the future looks red!

A Red Worker

## Mali Worker Pans 'Bamako'

[Here are some quick comments on the Bamako movie from a friend from Mali.]

Yeah, I saw the movie in Bamako. My objection at the time was that the theme was too abstract. I was expecting to see evidence exposing the IMF/World Bank and other donor countries woven into daily live stories of the actors. For example, how does an ordinary person feel the effect of the structural adjustment policy? [privatization and drastic cuts in social projects] Did it result in family dislocation (immigration for example) or poorer nutrition for the kids?

A Washington, D.C. Comrade

# Johnstown, PA Protests the War

**JOHNSTOWN, PA., March 18** — This city is widely known for the 1889 flood, caused by a dam bursting on hunting and fishing club property owned by robber baron Andrew Carnegie, drowning over 2,000 people. But in the last several years it has been the site of a series of anti-war demonstrations by local residents.

On this 4th anniversary of the start of the U.S. imperialist war in Iraq, people held a spirited protest near a Wal-Mart store, carrying signs reading: "Out of Iraq!"; "Stop the War on All Workers!"; "This War Is Wrong!"; "Impeach Bush" and other anti-war sentiments.

The Citizens for Social Responsibility (CSR) organized the

# French Bosses Answer to Youth Rebellion: 'Draft 'em!'

**PARIS, FRANCE, March 16** — Just like some U.S. liberal politicians want to impose "national service" to sneak in a military draft, French bosses are planning to prepare for the wider wars growing from sharpening imperialist rivalry. Both U.S. and French bosses face a big problem — motivating people to make the sacrifices war requires. That's what's behind the "obligatory civic service" issue in the presidential election campaign here.

The Catholic weekly magazine "La Vie" launched this idea in late 2005 in an appeal signed by 500 parliament members, many "personalities" and 30 associations. This initiative's leaders are Max Armanet, former "La Vie" editorial director, and Pierre Morel, former French ambassador to China, and later to the Vatican.

(It should be noted that during the 2005 uprising in the working-class housing projects, French president Jacques Chirac promised voluntary civic service with places for 50,000 young people. However, by December 2006 there were only 6,000 places, and only 2,500 youth had volunteered. The "defense second chance" program, supposedly to "straighten out" errant youth through military service, had only enrolled 1,000. Armanet and Morel have just revived a moribund idea.)

Armanet and Morel defended their idea in "Le Monde" (3/15). Political and social crises, they say, have marked the past five years, including the Nov. 2005, uprising and the mass protests against the worsening of working conditions for youth in the proposed "CPE" contract (voiding job protection).

They propose to "solve" this "lack of civic spirit" with obligatory civic service, responding to the widespread feeling that French society is split by a "social fracture" that needs to be healed, as Chirac promised to do during the 2002 presidential election campaign.

Yes, society is divided into two antagonistic classes, the bosses who own and control the means of production, and the workers who own only their labor power. To maintain itself in power, the ruling class nurtures racism and sexism to

divide the working class.

But many don't yet see this. They vaguely feel something's rotten in French society, and bosses' servants like Armanet and Morel have a miraculous snake oil to sell — a mixture of nationalism and mysticism, a call for a "moral revolution." These are exactly the ingredients of fascism in the first half of the 20th century.

In "Le Monde," Armanet and Morel say civic service "is the collective realization of solidarity in a society that is threatening to break up, it is a work of integration that draws not only upon youth but also upon the whole of society in a moral renewal,...taking up the transmission of values that is the duty of each generation."

They cite a March 2006 poll showing that 90% of France generally, and 86% of young people, favor some form of civic service. It's not surprising that people generally, particularly young people, want to help capitalism's outcasts — "the elderly, the isolated, the illiterate, the marginalized, and the handicapped." It's also not surprising that, with a 22% youth unemployment rate (not counting two-thirds of those aged 15-24, who are students), young people want to do something constructive with their lives.

Communists certainly favor working-class solidarity — mutual aid among all workers, who form society's overwhelming majority and produce all value. But Armanet and Morel want to channel this desire into a fascist system to keep the bosses in power.



Airbus workers strike against mass layoffs.

In a March Internet forum, Armanet offered "carrots" to win youth to obligatory civic service: a driver's license, job skills and state payments into a retirement scheme. Government jobs would require previous civic service. Youth would get 350 euros a month pocket money.

When one young person complained this was far below the poverty level, Armanet answered that young people shouldn't demand any pay, that self-sacrifice is necessary to create a spirit of brotherhood and to provide a "rite of passage" to adulthood.

Armanet's and Morel's ideas are dangerous because all the major presidential candidates are committed to implementing civic service. (Next: the candidates' fascist programs.)



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

## Army double-crosses Iraq vets

The individual stories are hard to bear. Soldiers denied disability pay because Army doctors say they're not wounded, they're retarded; soldiers denied benefits because their heart attacks are ruled "pre-existing conditions"; soldiers suffering post-traumatic stress disorder being assessed as merely neurotic.

"They started asking me questions about my mom and my dad getting divorced," one soldier told Salon. "That was the last thing on my mind when I'm thinking about people getting fragged and burned bodies being pulled out of vehicles. They asked me if I missed my wife. Well, (bleep) yeah, I miss my wife. That is not the (beeping) problem here. Did you ever put your foot through a 5-year-old's skull?"

Every last one of these soldiers, remember, volunteered . . . (Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, 3/11)

## Cops do big snoop on activists

Undercover New York police officers spent more than a year spying on would-be protesters ahead of the 2004 Republican national convention, monitoring church groups and street theatre troupes that had no intention of breaking the law, it was reported last week.

The scope of the inquiry, long suspected by activists, saw officers infiltrating groups opposed to George Bush, or monitoring their activities in web chatrooms, and filing daily reports on their activities, the New York Times reported.

....[T]he investigation quickly spiraled into surveillance of environmentalists, anti-war groups and even three local elected officials.(GW, 4/5)

## Afghan Taliban back, and worse

"Nowadays in Helmand Province the Taliban is winning," said Haji Mir Wali, a member of [the Afghan] Parliament from the southern province of Helmand. "Ninety percent of the area is under the control of the Taliban, and they are imposing their strict rule again."

Outside of the provincial capital, he said, shops in Helmand don't dare sell music, men who trim their beards are threatened with death, and schools have closed for boys as well as girls. "It's worse now than it was in the Taliban's time." he said. (NYT, 4/1)

## U.S. pullout? Over CEO dead bodies

What would happen in Iraq if American troops suddenly withdrew tomorrow . . . ?

The real chaos would break out in America. Stocks in Haliburton, Lockheed, General Dynamics, Boeing, Raytheon, and other defense firms would plummet, with layoffs in the millions.

Silicon Valley would panic . . . .

If an Iraqi pullout occurred tomorrow, you'd have to dodge CEOs leaping off tall buildings. . . .

And then there's the oil, you know. (Pythian Press, 3/21)

## Desertions up: Troops 'worn out'

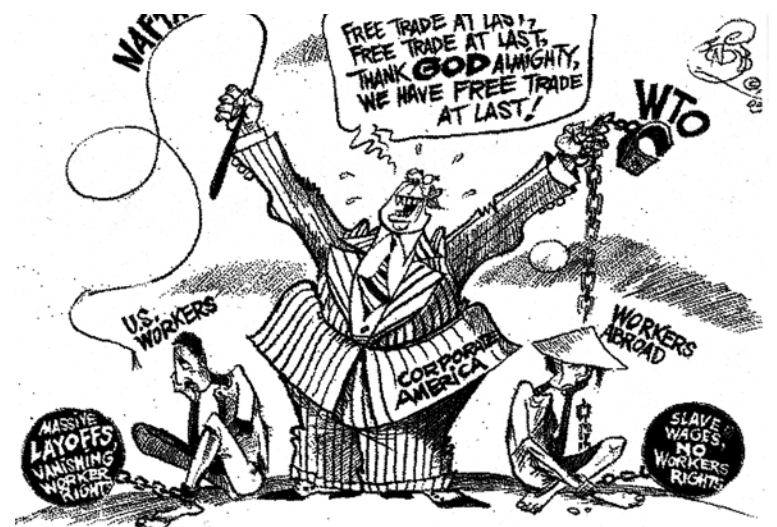
Army prosecutions of desertion and other unauthorized absences have risen sharply in the last four years, resulting in thousands more negative discharges and prison time . . . Using courts-martial for these violations, which before 2002 were treated mostly as unpunished nuisances, is a sign that active-duty forces are being stretched to their limits, military lawyers and mental health experts said.

"They are scraping to get people to go back, and people are worn out . . ." (NYT, 4/9)

## Young Black and Latin men 'pipeline to prison'

"[For] young men of color, American society has created a "pipeline" to prison.

"We expel them from school now at the droop of a



hat through zero tolerance programs . . . When they have substance abuse problems or other types of challenges, from the standpoint of behavior and mental health, they go to jail instead of treatment. We're warehousing our young people in jails where they learn to be criminals."

Minorities' high school graduation and college-going levels are abysmally low. Imprisonment of blacks and Hispanics is a major factor in America's shift from 204,000 prison inmates in 1973 to a world-leading 2.2 million in 2003. (Washington Post, 3/18)

## Did US provoke Iran on Brits?

In January President George Bush sent a second carrier battle group to the Gulf region; over the past few weeks this has been [sic] conducting exercises close to Iranian territorial waters. US Patriot missiles are now also in place close to Iran. Also in January, US-Iraqi forces seized six Iranians, described by Iran as diplomats but by the US as member of the Revolutionary Guards Quds brigade. They still have not been freed....

The capture of the 15 British naval personnel has to be seen in this context. In Britain the capture is widely seen as a provocation. But when it is placed side by side with the US actions against Iran this year, the question is: who is provoking whom? (GW 4/12)

## Is that a threat or a promise?

....The Iraqis are being warned that American patience may run out. They should be so lucky. (NYT, 3/22)

# PLP HISTORY

## PL'ers Helped Defeat Nationalist Splitters in SDS

### SDS — Part V

The PLP and WSA (Worker-Student Alliance) contingent had come to the Convention proposing a multi-pronged fight against racism. Entitled "Less Talk-More Action-Fight Racism!" it called for intensifying the fight against university complicity with the Vietnam War and broadening it to include campaigns against racist courses and racist university expansion into working class-communities. The proposal also called for allying with campus workers.

Key to its practical program was the political analysis that racism is a class question. PLP vigorously argued that workers of all backgrounds and nationalities have common interests and enemies, and that therefore the all-class unity promoted by nationalism undermines anti-racist struggle. These were the principles PLP and the Worker-Student Alliance hoped to debate during workshop time at the 1969 SDS Convention.

As noted previously, the SDS "national collective" had managed to block workshops. The debate about the fight against racism would now move to a plenary session. Revolutionary Youth Movement (RYM) speakers offered no program, defended no practice, proposed no self-criticism. Their main approach, represented by Mike Klonsky, was to bait PLP for "not believing in the self-determination of oppressed peoples." PLP countered with examples of PLP-WSA practice and struggle in anti-racist campaigns on many campuses and by offering points from the "Less Talk-More Action" proposal as suggestions for moving forward.

Many had come to the Convention with no particular ideological commitment, either to RYM or the WSA. They wanted leadership that would advance the fight against the war and racism. By the end of the racism panel, it had become clear that the "national collective" at best provided no leadership at all or, worse yet, acted against workers' interests, as it had at Columbia, by blocking the anti-expansion fight in favor of reactionary "student power" demands.

By the Convention's second day, the "national collective" was getting wobbly; its leaders began squabbling among themselves.

In an ultimate act of racist opportunism, they used the Black Panther Party (BPP) to bail them out. The BPP was a complex phenomenon. PLP supported its militancy and

courage. PLP also unequivocally opposed the racist attacks, including murder, which the bosses, the cops and the FBI had launched against Panthers. But the BPP made two deadly errors, which had to be criticized. They supported nationalism, which had proved deadly to working-class movements. They also engaged in suicidal adventurism, rejecting a base-building approach to mass organizing. PLP made its position clear on these questions, adding that the best way to oppose racist attacks on the Panthers was to organize growing, militant struggles against racism, outlined in its "Less Talk-More Action" proposal.

RYM leaders wanted no frank, honest debate. Instead, they called on Panther officials, who then addressed the Convention again, with an "urgent message." It lasted nearly an hour and attacked PLP, including threats. It also included a disgusting pro-capitalist reference to women, that "their position in the movement is prone," which appalled the Convention. Essentially, Klonsky, Dohrn, & Co. were using the BPP as a shield for their own opportunism and political bankruptcy.

Backed by a well-prepared — and necessary — security squad, the PLP student organizer took the mike to explain PL's position on issues, including "community control" of police, nationalism, imperialism and, most importantly, the way forward for struggle against the rulers. He attacked RYM leaders' gross opportunism, asserting that their politics had been defeated.

Someone suggested resuming the discussion about how to fight racism. Bernadine Dohrn took the podium. Refusing to answer PLP's arguments or discuss the fight against racism, she declared: "It's clear we can't work in the same group as an organization that hates the Black Panthers and opposes self-determination." Amidst a thunderous chant of "NO SPLIT, NO SPLIT" from most of the room, Dohrn, Klonsky, & Co. led about one-third of the plenary into an adjoining room.

While RYM met in closed session, whipping up support for the idea of ousting PLP, the Convention continued, finally holding workshops and discussing "Less Talk-More Action," as well as the war and the fight against male chauvinism.

Finally, RYM returned. Dohrn launched into a lengthy, incoherent diatribe culminating with the announcement that PLP and its supporters were "expelled" from SDS. The absurdity of this performance turned initial intimidation into its opposite. People began laughing at her. No

one class  
one party  
one newspaper



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more than one-third of the room walked out with her. RYM's ploy had fallen flat.

The next day, the Convention continued in the Coliseum, passing resolutions about fighting racism and male chauvinism, as well as a statement on the walkout and a pledge to continue sharpening on-campus struggle. RYM, meeting in a church under tightly-controlled security, passed no on-campus programs at all. Its first major post-walkout achievement was a faction fight that quickly turned the SDS split into yet another split, this time between one group that allied with the Chinese "Communist" Party that was then hopping into bed with racist murderer Nixon, and another, that would soon become the petty terrorist "Weathermen."

Objectively, the splitting of SDS sabotaged the movement against imperialist war and racism. Consciously or otherwise, the RYM factionalists were helping the U.S. ruling class. But the struggle against the war and racism had to continue. The fall term of the 1969-70 school year would challenge PLP, the WSA and the remainder of SDS to advance under increasing political hardship.

(Next: *The November 1969 anti-war demonstration in Washington and the Campus Worker-Student Alliance.*)

## '300' Movie Uses Ancient Past to Promote Future Wars

The distinction between movie fiction and the ugly reality of the War in Iraq blurs in the box-office hit film *300*. While the film may be set in the ancient past, Hollywood has released the film in the year 2007 on purpose. The action scenes have drawn millions to the theaters by employing the latest in computer-generated special effects. Yet the political effects of the film are the ones CHALLENGE readers must be on the lookout for. The ideas that the ruling class hopes the film will teach workers are:

- Loyalty, bravery and honor are best fostered in a fully militarized society.
- White soldiers fighting for the rule of law, order and democracy ought to be proud to slaughter thousands of Middle Eastern fighters.
- War is impossible for a society to win when only a fraction of its citizens support the effort.
- The role of women is to support men in times of war (both men and women are sexually objectified by the film).
- When you are defeated with a smaller number of troops the solution is to send more the next time (this point is particularly useful for the Democrats' war plans).

The main racist theme of the movie is that the evil "Persians" (now Iran) are the enemies of the Greek good guys. With U.S. rulers weighing plans for future wars, it is no wonder the release of *300* was met with protests in Iran. The main Iranian national newspaper ran the headline "300 versus 70 million" in a reference to the population of Iran



today.

While the Iranian newspapers ultimately serve Iranian bosses, U.S. workers could learn from the awareness of Iranian workers in this particular case. We ought to express outrage whenever the bosses produce such racist pro-war culture. Even if the next invasion is five years off, box-office hits like *300* leave a lasting impression as they are recycled through cable TV and on DVD.

It is important to be aware of this film, but this reviewer is hard pressed to suggest that any reader of CHALLENGE actually pay money and sit through it in a theater. The sex is weird, the violence is overdone and that is on top of the horrible politics we can expect from any contemporary Hollywood film on the Middle East.

Readers interested in seeing a heroic battle from the Greco-Roman world would do much better to rent or buy a copy of the classic film *Spartacus*, which tells the story of a massive slave uprising that shook the Roman Empire to its foundations in 100 AD. Ultimately however, the only solution is to create our own movies and culture through workers' power.

## The ABC's of Wages, Poverty and Class Consciousness

The battle to keep an understanding of class society fresh in our minds is constant. Ideas that hide it continually bombard us, with name tags like sexism, racism, nationalism and so on. I teach Economics in an inner-city high school. My students are mainly black; a couple have parents who are Mexican immigrants. There is some shared experience among them, but the trend is to say, "Your Blues ain't like mine." The danger lies in taking the next step: "My Blues are caused by you!"

Recently we looked at the wage system, showing how our idea of a "good" or "bad" wage centered on what it takes to feed, house and clothe a family of four. The Living Wage movement provides us with lots of stats. We also compared the connection between the average factory wage and the official poverty line.

Discovering that most wages (and salaries too) showed a real connection to the poverty line enabled us to show how the wage system actually creates a common interest among wage and salary workers. We are all connected to the official poverty line. We relate our "comfort" or "security" in economic terms to how far above that poverty line our wage or salary places us. In short the poverty line is the benchmark. The wage system unites us as dependent on our wages to survive and simultaneously divides us by making some kinds of work "more worthy" of higher pay. It makes us a class and dulls our awareness of "class."

Next we discussed the U.S. ruling class's decisions in the 1980's to lower the working class's standard of living. If we were running a capitalist state, we asked, how best could we lower the wages of most workers?

Lowering the wage of the lowest-paid worker, it turns out, sets off a chain reaction throughout the whole wage system. We cre-

ated a model. Imagine a group of workers so desperate for any type of work they would work for less than \$7.50 per hour. Over time they would replace the \$7.50-per-hour group who would now find themselves jobless and desperate. Over time they would replace the \$10-an-hour group since (having worked for \$7.50/hr) they would be willing to work for less than \$10/hour, and so on. (Of course, there are counter-vailing forces, like skill level, but in general the chain reaction works.)

Having established how lowering the lowest wage becomes an extremely efficient way of lowering the whole working class's standard of living, we began to catalogue the different policies introduced. "End Welfare as we know it" attacked all workers, white, black and Latino. "Retire retirement," the weakening of pensions and benefits forces more and more retirees to supplement their incomes by flipping burgers. "Mass incarceration" ousts mainly black and Latino young men/fathers from being wage-earners, forcing single mothers into a desperate search for family survival. Prison labor itself directly robs communities of jobs. Finally, mass immigration, workers fleeing imperialist-caused starvation and death squads, adds more desperate workers to the mix.

Then we stood back and again took the ruling class's view. De-valuing the whole wage/salary system is a risky business. It can build class consciousness, an angry one at that. What would they do? Play the race card, we concluded, play the sexist card, play the nationalist card. Citizen against immigrant; black against white; anything to tear down the growth of class consciousness. "We will not be divided by class," George Bush, Sr. said when President and Clinton followed him by "Ending Welfare as we know it."

"They are playing us," one student summed it up when the class ended.