

# CHALLENGE



THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

15 August 2007 Volume 40, No. 12  
Suggested Donation U.S. \$.50

## STOCK DIVE WILL SPUR WAR DRIVE, SQUEEZE WORKERS' LIVES

"Don't worry," the media told us, the world's stock markets' recent slump is just "an adjustment." They're probably right — but that's exactly why we should worry, on two counts. First, each market adjustment ends up attacking our class economically. Second, the slump's consequences will intensify the ruling class's need for military victory in the Middle East.

Two problems in the credit market triggered the slump. At one end is a mass of defaults in the home mortgage industry. (Still worse, the racism involved in the sub-prime mortgage robbery — see CHALLENGE, 5/19) — puts black and Latino workers at a further disadvantage, as well as affecting white workers.)

At the other end, there was a failure to raise money to support major takeovers — Chrysler in the U.S. and Alliance-Boots in Britain. Consequently, interest rates are expected to rise.

That would mean more money will be squeezed from the already almost empty pockets of the working class. Families living in homes with variable interest rates will pay more; families using credit cards will pay more; and companies will tend to slash hiring, affecting job growth. One way or another, stock market adjustments hit the working class economically.

Dig deeper, though, and a more disturbing picture of the U.S. economy emerges. Between 1994 and 2004 consumption (what people spend) grew faster than income (what people earn), so we borrowed more. The U.S. economy expanded based on consumer debt.

That borrowing came mainly from home refinancing. Between 2001 and 2004, for example, 45% of first-time homeowners refinanced their homes, buying items with the borrowed money, so the economy grew. As shall be seen, it's very important for the U.S. economy to grow.

This brings us to the war in Iraq. As CHALLENGE has pointed out, that war is not just about oil but also concerns "U.S. global primacy." That primacy rests in part on the ability of the U.S. Dollar to act as a worldwide reserve currency. As a result, the U.S. government and economy gain all sorts of advantages, including the ability to finance its massive military.

Three things prop up this worldwide role of the U.S. Dollar: the strength of the U.S. armed forces; the fact that oil is traded in U.S. dollars (known as petrodollars); and the size and continued expansion of the U.S. consumer market. All three are vitally important because, for the first time since World War II, the U.S. Dollar has a rival — the Euro.

The Euro is more valuable than the Dollar and therefore more attractive to governments worldwide. Because the stock market slump signals a slowing down of the U.S. economy, the Euro will look even more attractive. This undermines the continued role of the U.S. Dollar as the world's premium reserve currency.

In turn, that pressures the U.S. ruling class to at least prevent defeat in Iraq before maneuvering to assert its military dominance over the Greater Middle East. A weakening domestic economy forces a more assertive military policy. While the declared objective might be to "secure Baghdad," the real objective is to secure U.S. primacy relative to its imperialist rivals globally. The forced adjustment of the U.S. stock market should be seen in that light.

We workers, too, could make "an adjustment." The bankers and financiers can raise their interest rates but we had better raise our rate of distributing CHALLENGE. As the seeds of a war for world primacy are being sown, we need to sow seeds that will grow a different crop — communist revolution.

## PLP CONFRONTS ANTI-IMMIGRANT FASCISTS

MORRISTOWN, NJ, July

28 — A multi-racial group of over 200 anti-racists assembled on the streets here to fight back against the growing anti-immigration movement. Pro-America Society organized other racist organizations to rally on the front steps of Town Hall to promote Morristown Mayor Donald Cresitello's plan to utilize Section 287(g) of the Immigration and Nationality Act. This section, passed by Congress in 1996 and signed into law by Clinton, gives local police officers the training and power to deport undocumented workers.



Cresitello's lies and actions have placed him at the head of the anti-immigration movement in New Jersey. Cresitello told the Newark Star-Ledger (5/16), "I am fighting for the protection of the residents not to have drunken and disorderly people in their neighborhoods, raping their women, breaking into their homes, raping and murdering their children. I don't mince words."

These racist lies have won some working-class people to follow this fascist movement, but they have also emboldened many to oppose Cresitello and this movement. Before the rally, PLP members leafleted apartment complexes in the working-class part of town and got many positive responses from its residents, some even remembering us from 2000 and 2001 when we demonstrated against the neo-Nazi Richard Barrett.

At today's event, some residents joined our chants, spoke on the bullhorn and held PLP signs reading, "Workers' Struggles Have No Borders — Las Luchas Obreras No Tienen Fronteras." One person, employed at the supermarket where the rally was held, came outside and got on the mic, equating the Pro-America group with terrorists. Other workers in the supermarket also came outside, held our signs and joined our chants.

Although PLP was forced to hold its demonstration across the street away from the rally, other anti-racists made their way into the rally and were

able to disrupt the speakers. About a minute into the first speaker, two of the anti-racists held up a banner reading, "No Racist Deportations (No Deportaciones Racistas)" and began chanting loudly. Simultaneously, two other committed anti-racists attempted to jump the barricades to get to the sound system. Their bold move motivated others to stand up against racism.

About 15 minutes later, a group from the National Organization for Women (NOW) began holding signs reading "STOP RACISM NOW" while inside the racist rally. Eventually the cops forced them to leave, but not without a fight from this group of multi-racial women. These actions excited the group of anti-racists across the street, causing them to chant even louder.

PLP was able to build relationships with the local Morristown residents as well as with other students and workers from the area. We distributed over 200 CHALLENGES/DESAFIOS and 300 leaflets at the rally. But more importantly, the PLP displayed the leadership that is necessary to lead the working class. Many of the pro-immigrant liberal groups had their rally two miles away, instead of actually confronting the racists. PLP has always fought back against racism. Not only was its presence known, but more significantly, many were exposed to communist ideas and showed a great deal of class consciousness.

During the rally, over \$600 was raised to support the two people arrested after jumping the barricades earlier in the day. This demonstration of working-class unity shows the potential that we as a class have in fighting for a society without racism. But we still must develop, both as a Party and as a class.

Cresitello and the Pro-America Society are just fronts for a wider, and now growing, fascist movement built by the ruling class. They want to scapegoat immigrants for "terrorist" threats and the bosses' growing economic attacks and repression suffered by ALL workers to pay for and

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# Liberal Gore Spins Global Warming for Global War

Without even tossing his hat into the presidential ring (yet), Al Gore is significantly advancing U.S. rulers' ever-expanding war agenda behind a liberal guise. Gore's campaign against global warming is rallying millions of well-meaning people to side with capitalists who seek, not to save the planet, but to control its profit-producing resources by armed force.

As U.S. imperialists, facing strengthening rivals, sorely need more young people in uniform, Gore's movement promotes mass support for drastic government action. U.S. rulers are counting on climate change to cause worldwide crises that require "humanitarian" military intervention. They hope the crowds at last month's Live Earth concerts — Gore organized the Washington, D.C. event — will help furnish the ground troops.

If linking global warming and global warfare seems far-fetched, consider a report entitled, National Security and the Threat of Climate Change, published in April by 11 retired generals and admirals under the auspices of the Center for Naval Analyses. These war-makers long for an environmental pretext for invasions beyond Iraq and Afghanistan: "Climate change will provide the conditions that will extend the war on terror...droughts, violent weather, ruined agricultural lands...more poverty, more forced migrations, higher unemployment. Those conditions are ripe for extremists and terrorists."

For top U.S. brass, a grip on Mid-East oil remains crucial. Amid any future turmoil, it says, "Military planning should view climate change as a threat to the balance of energy access, water supplies and a healthy environment, and it should require a response." Geostrategic considerations are paramount. "Deploying troops affects readiness elsewhere; choosing not to [deploy troops] may affect alliances. And providing aid in the aftermath of a catastrophic event or natural disaster can help retain stability in a nation or region, which in turn could head off U.S. military engagement in that region at a later date." And get ready for World War III. "[T]here is always the

potential for regional fighting to spread to a national or international scale." It's no accident that Gore's bandwagon especially demonizes carbon-spewing China.

## AL GETS RICH FROM BLOOD AND GORE IN MORE WAYS THAN ONE

It is the main, imperialist wing of U.S. capitalists that brings Gore back into the limelight, even as it lines his pockets. The driving force behind his popular movie, "An Inconvenient Truth," was the Natural Resources Defense Council. NRDC trustee Laurie David co-produced the film. NRDC chairman F.A.O. Schwarz, Jr., serves as senior counsel at the Wall Street law firm Cravath, Swain and Moore, which represents imperialist heavyweights J.P.

**'It is the main, imperialist wing of U.S. capitalists that brings Gore back into the limelight, even as it lines his pockets.'**

Morgan Chase, Citigroup, Goldman Sachs, and Chevron. Larry Rockefeller is an NRDC trustee. And, with the big boys' help, Gore has become a financier in his own right. He has teamed with ex-Goldman Sachs Asset Management CEO David Blood to form Generation Investment Management, which focuses on strategic, long-term investing, consistent with the rulers' war aims. Its nickname, "Blood and Gore," is particularly appropriate.

## "EARTH-FRIENDLY" POLS LEAD BOSSES TO RICHES, WORKERS TO BARRACKS

Major capitalists have long used "Save the Earth" movements to tighten their grasp on natural resources. Teddy Roosevelt pushed "Conservation," which restricted rival upstarts' access to timber and minerals. To this day, the Nature Conservancy and the Conservation Fund, outfits run by top bankers and industrialists, limit access to their multi-million-acre woodlands to "approved" gi-

ants like International Paper and Weyerhaeuser. President Franklin D. Roosevelt raised the game to a new level, by creating the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), a vast quasi-military organization that put Depression-era youth to work improving parks and forests. The CCC aided mobilization for World War II. Though in a different economic and political climate, FDR had the same goal as Gore: to foster the false image of government as "savior" and "protector."

The liberal rulers may yet launch candidate Gore. Feeble Democratic frontrunners Obama and Clinton have serious electability problems, due partly to U.S. capitalism's persistent oppression of black people and women and partly to the candidates themselves. Electoral politics is to a great extent a popularity contest. Remember Gore did get more votes than Bush in 2000. Furthermore, if Iraq remains a big issue, as is likely, confessed imperialist hawks Obama and Clinton will be on shaky ground with an increasingly war-weary public. Gore has greater credibility here. He could dust off his pre-war 2002 speech which warned Bush not to go in as he did. It, in fact, distilled the liberal Council on Foreign Relations' recommendations for a massive, allied invasion and occupation force. But Gore could use it to pass himself off as a war opponent.

We can't predict whether or not Gore will run. But we can say for sure that global warming and global war are both products of the profit system. At the company level, industries burn environmentally destructive coal because it rakes in more profits. For U.S. bosses to remain competitive on the international level, they must wage regional oil wars and prepare for global conflict. Voting for this or that candidate won't change either reality because they all serve capitalism. But it would be wrong to dismiss the well-intentioned people in the movement Gore claims to lead. Communists in the PLP must work among honest people who might follow Gore and expose his real goal: restoration of the draft for wider imperialist 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!**

CHALLENGE/DESAFIO (ISSN 0009-1049) published bi-weekly by Challenge Periodicals. 1 issue \$.50. One Year: \$15. Six months: \$10. Send address changes to CHALLENGE Periodicals, GPO 808 Brooklyn, NY 11202. August 15, 2007 Volume 40, No. 12

## Bosses Use Wage Slavery to LOWER Minimum Wage

The Democrats are making a hullabaloo about the "big" 70¢ increase in the federal minimum wage, from \$5.15 an hour (where it's been for ten years) to \$5.85. But, believe it or not, the purchasing power of this latest "increased" rate is BELOW what the minimum wage provided 50 years ago!

According to the U.S. Dept. of Labor, the 1956 \$1.00-an-hour minimum wage was worth \$5.77 in 1996's purchasing power. In 2006, the purchasing power of the current \$5.15-an-hour rate had fallen to \$4.04, or 30% BELOW what the minimum wage was worth in 1956!

So this is the scam that the Democrats are trying to put over on the working class, that raising the rate to \$5.85 an hour is "increasing" the minimum wage when it actually will still be far below what that minimum was worth in 1956. To gain a true increase, the rate would probably have to be somewhere around \$20 an hour, taking into account inflation over the last half century.

But the new minimum wage rate is nowhere near what a working family needs to provide for the necessities of life. Right now, the new \$5.85 rate would mean an annual income of \$12,168 (if one worked the entire 52 weeks). That is \$5,000 BELOW the federal poverty level for a family of three (\$17,170)!

The millions of workers who earn these minimums (and below) are among the super-exploited from whom the rul-

## Morristown Continued

justify the endless oil profit wars. So just singling out these racists is not enough. The media that promotes these ideas, the cops that protect these speakers, the courts that give them the permits and then go after those that try to stop them and the government that passes laws like Section 287(g) are all part of a wider system that has promoted racism since its inception.

It's important to disrupt these racists' rallies to prevent them from spreading their anti-working class ideology, but fundamentally we need to understand that capitalism—the system that promotes it — must be destroyed. Towards that goal, we must organize millions to fight for communist revolution. Join us! ☸

ing class rakes in super-profits. A great proportion of these workers are black, Latino and immigrants, due to the racism that puts these workers at the bottom of the wage heap. No wonder the rulers are trying to present the military as an option to get out of this super-exploitation and mass unemployment that hits them when they graduate (or drop out of) high school. And no wonder some liberal politicians and the Pentagon are pushing the DREAM Act to get the most exploited group, undocumented immigrant youth, to join the army as a seeming "way out" of this capitalist morass, only to die (and kill other workers) in the bosses' imperialist war in Iraq for control of oil

Capitalism's wage system, further fueled by racism, can never provide security for the working class. The bosses' drive for maximum profits will always drive down wages. The "fair day's wage for a fair day's work" is a myth. The only way for workers to gain fairness for our labors is to get rid of the profit system that, by its very nature, must rob workers of most of the value we produce. It is that surplus value which provides the profits the bosses reap.

With communism, without bosses and profits, the wage system will be abolished altogether. Workers will share in a system based on real fairness: from each according to their commitment, to each according to need. That's what PLP fights for. ☸



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# Workers Eager to Talk Communism with Summer Project PL'ers

**LOS ANGELES, July 29** — A group of workers outside a subcontractor factory who read our leaflet titled, "Industrial Workers Hold the Key to Ending Racist Exploitation," wanted to talk after work. "We only make the minimum wage! Is this a union?" asked one of the group of Asian immigrant workers. We answered, "No. This is bigger than a union — it's an international revolutionary communist party, with the goal of ending all racist exploitation for good with revolution for workers' power."

"Great!" exclaimed a worker. "How can we be in touch with you?"

After reading the top of the leaflet (about workers being able to produce without the bosses), sellers heard a worker headed into work say, "This is about us."

"Here's \$5 for the paper," said another worker who returned to buy it after hearing others at work talking about it. Workers have eagerly taken hundreds of CHALLENGES and thousands of leaflets during our PLP Summer Project here. At one site, workers inside opened factory windows to get the communist literature.

A close friend who leafleted for the first time at a garment factory said, "I couldn't believe seeing parents and children walking into the factories together. It was difficult hearing about speed-up and unsafe working conditions." She plans to keep leafleting.

We've begun to spread communist ideas to industrial workers, who are essential to the fight against capitalism and imperialism, who have the power to win the fight to destroy capitalism with communist revolution, workers' power.

Some young comrades sold their first CHALLENGE/

DESAFIOS. At one sale, we handed newspapers through car windows and still felt a sense of unity and a strong connection with the workers. We felt their disgust with the system and their interest in our politics as they grabbed the paper from our hands once we said "DESAFIO, periódico Comunista."

"For the first time I felt part of our effort to empower workers and students, including ourselves. I can honestly see industrial workers leading the struggle to overthrow capitalism; for the first time I saw their true potential," said a volunteer.

Our activities have also succeeded in involving many new people, with students and workers discussing communism. Throughout the week students and others distributed leaflets and CHALLENGES in schools, at factories and on the streets. At a neighborhood sale, black, white, Latino and Asian workers enthusiastically bought CHALLENGE, reading about the fight against racism and capitalism on the shop floor.

Many new faces were present at a kick-off Project BBQ. Participants cooked together and socialized, while discussing upcoming activities. One comrade introduced the Summer Project. "With the U.S. ruling class preparing for more oil-profit wars and wider wars against capitalist rivals, rebuilding domestic industrial production is crucial to their plans. Southern California has seen a surge in industrial subcontracting factories; the number of industrial workers locally has swollen to one million. A strong worker-student-soldier alliance around PLP's politics can begin to lay the groundwork for working-class revolution and communism. Our summer activities can be a first step in the direction of building communist leadership among

industrial workers and students."

At one study group, 20 comrades and friends discussed the role of immigrant workers. A comrade replied to high school student's question, saying: "Bill Carr, deputy under-secretary of military personnel policy at the Pentagon, has said that the DREAM Act is a 'very appealing' way to get new recruits. The DREAM Act, in other words, sends undocumented youth, most of whom don't have the resources for higher education, into the military where every day more soldiers are needed to fight for Mid-East oil."

A forum on the relationship of industrial workers and soldiers to communist revolution explained the growing importance of industrial production to the U.S. ruling class as inter-imperialist rivalries sharpen. We saw how industrial workers and soldiers are vital to the struggle to turn the bosses' wars into a revolution for communism. Others spoke of the need to win industrial workers in their own families to join this fight. Finally, we discussed the necessity of a party, the PLP, and the need to build it internationally. ☺



## Oaxaca: Militant Workers Lose Participating in Rulers' Electoral Dogfight



**OAXACA, MEXICO, July 16** — Teachers, farm workers, residents and students, members of APPO (Popular Assembly of the People of Oaxaca), violently confronted the police, the military and the goons of the capitalist class represented by the killer Ulises Ruiz Ortiz, Oaxaca's governor. This year, APPO planned a traditional celebration of the "Popular Guelaguetza" (Mutual Aid) in the auditorium of the "Cerro de Fortin," which is where the confrontation occurred. Over 40 workers and youth were either detained, injured or disappeared. A 60-year-old person is near death.

A week later, the bosses tried to celebrate the "Official Guelaguetza" with several thousand attending, including many members of the State's ruling PRI party, and police dressed as civilians, but thousands of angry workers and youth didn't give them a moment's peace.

Since this struggle began in May 2006, there have been 19 assassinations of activists and hundreds of arrests and disappearances. The mass movement has not only survived but has been strengthened in the face of the fascist attacks and the movement's own internal weaknesses.

In every action thousands have been mobilized to fight back, showing tremendous hatred of the oppressors. The mass struggle is like a laboratory, gauging the strengths and weaknesses of the movement that has dared to challenge the capitalist class in Oaxaca and Mexico City. This struggle has crossed borders, becoming an inspiration for millions of workers worldwide. We're fighting to transform these experiences into a school for communism.

### Vote to Repudiate — Gift for the Capitalists

The leadership of Section 22 of the SNTE (teachers' union) and the other organizations are organizing "a vote to repudiate" the policies

of the PRI and the PAN (see box for definitions). This reformist effort aims to follow up the PRI's local electoral losses to weaken Ruiz Ortiz and eventually vote him out, which would benefit the PRD candidates. This supposedly would make bourgeois democracy supposedly function for the working class, building dangerous illusions in the system and trying to set back the revolutionary ideological advance of the masses.

The irony of all this is that the same hated Ruiz Ortiz has placed some of his supporters as PRD candidates, while other PRD candidates are ex-leaders of the PRI who fell out with them, like Juan Diaz Pimentel (Ex-Secretary of Governing) who aspires to be Oaxaca City President of the City of Oaxaca.

For their part, the revisionists (phony leftists) and opportunists of the Popular Revolutionary Front (FPR) and members of the Communist Party of Mexico have joined the bosses' electoral circus as candidates to become deputies, thus betraying the movement. They justify it by saying they're taking advantage of the electoral process as "one more legitimate form of struggle."

Workers shouldn't be fooled. Bosses control all these parties. Capitalist elections won't change the nature of racist, imperialist exploitation of the working class. Bosses use elections to fight among each other to determine which faction will control state power to better serve their particular interests. They use workers in this bosses' dogfight to make us believe that changing one ruler for another will serve us.

PLP's important role is to help sharpen the class struggle, developing understanding of the need to destroy the entire capitalist system; expose those who would lead workers down the bosses' path of capitalist elections; and build a base and recruit for communist revolution, making use of CHALLENGE and communist study-action groups. ☺

### PRI, PRD, PAN: All Short for Racist Bosses

**PRI** is the Institutional Revolutionary Party, which ruled Mexico for over 70 years, exploiting millions.

**PAN** is the National Action Party, in power now, the most right-wing sector of Mexican politics.

**PRD** is the Revolutionary Democratic Party, basically the liberals, most deadly because they try to win workers to believe capitalism can work for them.

## GARMENT WORKERS TEACH RACIST BOSSES A LESSON!

"To teach all of you who didn't do it right, I'm deducting a half hour's wages for every day you didn't punch in and out," barked the arrogant, high-handed secretary.

This hit the workers in the garment factory like a bucket of cold water. The bosses hadn't paid us double time for working Saturday or Sunday, as they had promised. We worked July 4th, a paid holiday for other workers, but not for us. And to top it off, now this!

Workers' indignation exploded. Word got around that something had to be done. Immediately, six of us went to the office to protest. The supervisor made believe he hadn't heard anything about it. We told him, "We're not animals and no 'mistake' on our part justifies this treatment. Besides, it's our labor that gets the production done."

"To teach all the lackeys and their masters that we workers have to be respected," we told ourselves, "We're going home!" It was a small demonstration of the fact that the bosses need us, but we don't need them. If we don't work, there's no production and without production there's no profit.

The following day, my co-worker, his wife and I stayed home in protest. When we returned, the supervisor was furious. "I can't put up with this any longer. You're fired!" he told me. My friend's wife told him that if they fired me, the two of them would quit. "I have nothing against you or your husband," the supervisor told her, "but this guy talks too much about politics and I don't like it." "If you fire him," the woman insisted, "we're leaving too."

The supervisor was baffled. With production backed up, he couldn't afford to do without the couple. Since there had been a history of struggle in the factory, he also feared others might strike to support us — and he was right!

He called the owner who, not wanting to risk a work stoppage, decided no one would be fired and that she would raise the pay of the two workers by a few cents per operation.

Later that day, a co-worker in another section said, "I just wanted you to know that our section agreed to stop work to support you if they fired you."

This modest example shows what workers can do when they're united and bold. The unity, decision to fight, and support of our co-workers resulted from my spending a lot of time with the couple who so firmly supported me, joining them in social activities and having political discussions on the way to work and at their home over dinner. This was crucial in creating indestructible political and social ties combined with communist ideas that are necessary for the long-term fight for communist revolution.

The workers' solidarity in this struggle is central to workers' mobilizing not only against this attack, but, in the long run against the whole profit system that forces workers into wage slavery. Workers' unity is key to this fight and to replacing this bosses' system with workers' power, communism.

Several participants in the struggle read CHALLENGE, some regularly, others irregularly. My next step is to build a CHALLENGE network by asking the regular readers to help distribute the paper to others. In this way we can convert these little struggles into real schools for communism for all workers.



workers unite!

# Schedules, Bathrooms and Communism

**SAN FRANCISCO**—"On Thursday during the morning commute, the trains from all the rail lines were pulling into the Embarcadero every 30 seconds...And then, without notice, a driver briefly parked his train at the platform and took a bathroom break. Three streetcars behind him had to wait."...The schedule didn't recover for hours... "Not that I begrudge him," said MUNI Director Ford..., "but at this time, during the morning commute? It's not good." (SF Chronicle 4/13/07)

According to the bosses, basic human need is "not good" because it disrupts the orderly delivery of workers to the downtown financial district. They blame workers for their own failure to provide enough relief to maintain the schedule!

Bay Area mass transit drivers are demanding meal and rest breaks, a demand won by most workers about 70 years ago. With service cuts and speed up, drivers can go all day with no real breaks. By union contract, drivers pick 12 to 14-hour schedules with an unpaid break in the middle, some working 10 straight hours. Management requires these long days so one driver can cover two rush hours. Drivers sign up for a long day to meet their bills. Drivers may live better than non-union workers but they still are wage slaves.

"We are losing our humanity to become '7 day rollers,'" remarked a driver during a meeting to organize against these killer schedules. Another said, "It's like that bad dream where you keep running, but just can't get anywhere. It seems endless! You feel POWERLESS!" Another

commented: "Sometimes passengers insult me... line supervisors put me down, like I'm late on purpose! All I want to do is a good job...to feel like a human being, not a machine herding cattle."

A PLP member said, "This has always been a fight because transit managers set our schedules within the limits of a budget. A small, parasitic class of rulers profits off the majority and wages international wars for control of resources. Their priorities don't include enough money for services, like transit and have nothing to do with

**'A PLP member said, "This has always been a fight because transit managers set our schedules within the limits of a budget. A small, parasitic class of rulers profits off the majority and wages international wars for control of resources.'**

the needs of drivers or riders. Capitalism encourages a 'blame the victim' mentality, so schedules often result in conflict between workers. Capitalism cannot meet the basic needs of working people. You win something here; they take it away there! Changing the Mayor or the General Manager won't solve this. Only a revolution can end this nightmare."

## BUT THERE IS ANOTHER SIDE TO WORK

Within these complaints lies a kernel of potential collectivity. These battles, waged along side long-time friends, give PLP drivers the opportunity to discuss "human nature and communism." Some co-workers argue that people are naturally selfish so communism can never work. We point out another side to work that they, themselves, experience. Many transit workers try hard to serve the people; stopping for someone on a cane, waiting for a "regular" running late or helping another operator. These personal interactions fly in the face of management's schedule. They give the job meaning. This tendency would be much stronger in a communist society where all culture supported it and schedules will not make drivers choose between waiting to pick up older people and getting a break. The current campaign is a way for drivers to reclaim some sense of humanity.

These tendencies towards collectivity will help lay the basis for a new society. We have to destroy capitalism to realize this potential. A communist world is possible based on organizing every aspect of society to fulfill the needs of the working class.

Part II of this series: *Political Economy of Transit; USA and International.*

## Only Workers' Power Can Challenge War-maker Teledyne

Teledyne Reynolds in Los Angeles has been making parts for military airplanes since 1948. Today it supplies specialty wires and cables to companies like Boeing and Lockheed Martin. Its parent company, Teledyne Technologies, Inc, did over \$35 million in no-bid contracts directly with the Army, Navy, Air Force, and the Department of Energy last year. Current wars have driven Teledyne's sales up by 22.9 percent, to \$248.3 million in the first quarter of 2007, with an average of nearly \$7 million in profit per month.

"My mother worked in that factory for years, until she was injured," commented a college student. "So did my aunts and most of my female relatives. There were hundreds of workers, most of them Latina immigrants. They didn't have a union, and the pay was pretty bad." No wonder the profits are so high!

This working-class student is enthusiastically reading CHALLENGE-DESAFIO "I've read that paper over and over," he said, "and each time I learn something new." He has agreed to take extra papers for his friends and relatives, and to help to bring communist ideas to industrial workers. We will all learn something new from these workers through this important effort.

### Who Rules Teledyne - and the U.S.

Teledyne is linked through its ten-member Board of Directors to many other defense manufacturers: Hughes Electronics, Raytheon, General Dynamics, Alliant Techsystems, Allegheny Technologies and BEI Technology. Several members also hold influential offices with the Aerospace Industries Association and the National Defense Industrial Association.

The members of the board also have strong ties to the major banking interests which control industrial capitalists' ability to maneuver financially to maintain their profits. Frank V. Cahouet is the retired chairman and CEO of the Mellon Bank Corporation. Others are currently officers for Millenium Partners hedge fund (which is tied to Citigroup through Solomon Smith Barney), Mellon Financial Corporation and AEGIS Insurance Corporation.

These same imperialists play an important role in making sure that cultural and educational institutions serve the needs of their class. Michael T. Smith, Teledyne's co-director, is also a director of the Los Angeles World Affairs Council. Roxanne Austin ran DirecTV for Hughes. One board member is the former president of Carnegie Mellon University, and other directors are trustees for Carnegie Mellon, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Providence College and one of the Claremont Colleges.

### Industrial Workers: Key Revolutionary Force

All companies make profits by exploiting workers' labor: without the workers, the factories could not produce any products, but the workers make far less wages than the price for which those same products are sold. Defense industry companies like Teledyne Reynolds also make it possible for U.S. imperialists to keep themselves in power and to try to fight off imperialist rivals in Europe and China. That puts industrial workers, like the immigrant women at the Los Angeles Reynolds plant, in a key position both economically and politically. Their power to shut down production threatens not only the bosses' profits, but the bosses' ability to wage war and maintain their empire.

At the same time, the imperialist rulers are relying on the sons and daughters of immigrant industrial workers — to join the military and fight their bloody racist profit wars in the Middle East and elsewhere. To turn the potential into a real force, these workers and soldiers from L.A. to Tehran to Beijing have to lead the international working class in the battles to end their oppression as wage slaves or cannon fodder for the bosses' profit wars. We in PLP have to win them to become revolutionary communist activists. We are planting today the seeds of communism.☺

## Angry Workers Must Organize vs. Bankers' NYC Fare Hike

**NEW YORK CITY, July 27** — "Keep the fare down, bastards!" shouted a subway rider at the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) CEO Elliot Sander as he handed out flyers aiming to justify still another hike in transit fares and bridge tolls. When Sander whined to rider Jean Callahan about MTA "deficits," she shot back, "I'm angry.... What are we supposed to do? How are we going to survive?"

Anger is mounting among workers here who may be facing a \$2.50 fare in the near future. Having suffered an increase to the current \$2.00 not even two years ago, now we're expected to look back on that as a "bargain."

This anger must be organized. Workers should be raising the demand for no fare hike in their unions and mass organizations, even calling for a fare rollback to be paid for by the bondholders who profit in billions off the transit system. Transit workers should support this demand and together with the working-class riders organize mass demonstrations and protests against the MTA, exposing the whole fare scam (see below). In Sao Paulo, Brazil, a few years ago angry riders burned buses and trains, fed up with lousy service and ever-rising fares.

The "deficit" Sander complains about is created by the billions being paid to rich bondholders who've been sucking the transit system dry for decades. The interest on these bonds are the profits reaped off the backs of the transit workers' labors and the working-class riders who are expected to keep these bankers' coffers overflowing. Meanwhile, the alleged "deficit-ridden" MTA had a SURPLUS of \$940 million last year. The Authority is always crying "wolf" while it keeps piling up these surpluses.

Before 1948, when the fare was a nickel, transit system expenses were paid from the general city treasury, so at least the costs were spread around. But then the Authority was established which mandated that all operating expenses be covered by fares. Immediately the fare was doubled and continued to rise periodically until it reached its current \$2.00, an increase since '48 of 4,000%!

This new gimmick has been used by all Mayors — Republicans and Democrats, liberals and conservatives — to pit transit

workers against riders so that whenever the workers who keep the city running 24 hours a day, 365 days a year asked for a much-needed raise, the city bosses would blame the increase on the workers, using their divide-and-conquer technique. The crucial importance of the transit workers was demonstrated even in their short-lived 3-day strike in December 2005, an action that was supported by a majority of the city's working class.

The rulers never ask the big department stores, shopping malls, the bankers, the real estate interests or the bosses of every company in the city to pay for any rising costs. None of these profiteers could function if the transit workers didn't bring all their employees and customers to these destinations.

Hundreds of thousands of workers earning poverty wages (see article on minimum wage, page 2), will now be asked to shell out even more money to get to their low-wage jobs. These workers are overwhelmingly black and Latino, as are the transit workers, so the bosses figure that the racism which permeates capitalism will enable them to get away with this highway robbery.

The fact is the ruling class is spending \$12 billion of our tax money every month to carry out their imperialist wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, for the greater glory of the likes of Big Oil and Haliburton. That money is used to kill our sons and daughters and 650,000 Iraqi workers while workers here must ante up for a transit system that shoots billions into the bank accounts of the wealthy Wall Street investment houses.

And the sorry fact is the workers' "leaders" in the Transport Workers Union do nothing to expose this tie-in between the bankers, the MTA and the tens of billion spent on the bosses' wars. Only communist leadership can do this job, because we fight for a system in which there would be no fares, no "deficits," no bankers' profits from interest. Workers who produce all value would use part of that value to enable everyone to ride a free transit system. The "bastards" who profit from transit fares would wind up six feet under.☺



# Demonstrators Hit VA's Criminal Medical Care

**SEATTLE, WA., July 28** — "We'll be able to defeat imperialism when soldiers turn the guns in the other direction," said the moderator, leader of the Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW), at a forum of 150. Two hundred and fifty demonstrators had just marched around the nearby Veterans Administration (VA) Hospital demanding, "Fund the Wounded, Not the War!"

VA workers and doctors, Vietnam and Iraq veterans, students, teachers and supporters from throughout the city marched in this multi-racial, working-class area chanting, "Black, Latin, Asian, White: Workers and Soldiers Must Unite!"; "What the Hell is Congress for, Fund the Wounded Not the War!"; and, "We Don't Want Your Racist War!"

The IVAW leader, himself injured by a rocket-propelled grenade in Ramadi, invited all to join him and his fellow vets, members of Military Families Speak Out (MFSO) and comrades to visit Ft. Lewis to recruit soldiers to fight imperialism.

His class-conscious stand against imperialism inspired people much more than calls to pressure liberal politicians. The forum panel reflected this struggle of ideas. A VA doctor spelled out the medical crimes against soldiers, including the hundreds of thousands of unresolved claims as well as the destruction of the Iraqi medical system. He praised the recent recommendations of an "expert" panel to fix the VA system and asked everyone to write their elected representatives to enact these reforms.

The Vietnam era veteran followed with his experience fighting racist medical care at Madigan Hospital at Ft. Lewis some 35 years ago. Suffering similar racist medical attacks, he described how active-duty soldiers united with other medical workers in Seattle. He documented company-wide and post-wide rebellions led by a multi-racial chapter of the Vietnam Veterans Against the War

(VVAW). He described Army attempts to crush this resistance with a court-martial that itself erupted into a rebellion. Within a year a Congressional hearing concluded all of VVAW's charges against the Army's medical system were correct, made reform recommendations and promised action. Nothing changed.

"Fast forward 35 years," he concluded. "Same racism; same imperialism! More reports on bad medical care; more commissions; more recommendations and more promises from liberal politicians. We can expect the same result: nothing of importance."

"If I've learned anything in the last 35 years it's that a profit-driven system — let's call it by its proper name, capitalism — can't survive without racism and imperialism!"

That's what most of the young people wanted to hear. Discussions continued for an hour after the forum. A black counselor said inadequate medical care was even worse for black and Latin soldiers. Points raised in the panel about soldiers rejecting patriotism and nationalism in favor of anti-imperialist working-class solidarity were debated relative to today's movement. Many students involved in kicking recruiters out of local schools said they agreed that the prime aim now is to get anti-imperialist students in the Army, to organize soldiers from within to fight against imperialist war and to rebel against the brass.

They also agreed that anti-racist struggle uniting



black, Latin, Asian and white, men and women in the same organization could lead to the sharpest, most militant fights against imperialism. Indeed, the prime value of those Ft. Lewis rebellions was winning soldiers to a revolutionary outlook.

Many of these young people were interested in communist revolution. Dozens of CHALLENGES were sold. Every copy of the PLP pamphlet "Red-led GIs Blast Racist Brass" was given out. Many asked to have it mailed to them. A number of students from other states wanted copies to show local IVAW chapters back home. The local chapter plans to discuss "chapter building," using this same pamphlet as an aid.

The struggle to take anti-war activists to Ft. Lewis will continue. Some of these same vets and supporters will attend the upcoming Veterans for Peace conference in August. This will be a great opportunity to reach out to veterans and their families with a revolutionary communist strategy for active-duty soldiers. ☺

## Russian GM Workers Prepare to Strike

**TOGLIATTI, RUSSIA July 30** — Workers at the giant AvtoVAZ (GM) auto plant got fed up with their meager wages and wrote management demanding a weekly raise to 25,000 rubles (nearly \$1,000). Currently an average assembly line worker makes about \$300/week. If their demands aren't paid attention to, workers threaten an August 1st strike.

This unrest is not formally led by either of the two unions at the plant, (ASM is the official union and Edinstvo — Unity — is independent). The ASM union already accepted a 4.6% "raise," actually a cut since the July inflation rate in the region was 4.8%, and says workers should be "happy." But many disagree. They want to stick to their threat to shut the line down August 1, to force the company to treat workers with respect and pay attention to their problems.

Workers are not just up against GM and the auto bosses, but AvtoVAZ management comes from Russia's arms-exporting monopoly, with close ties to the Kremlin. They are the war-makers and arms merchants that are trying to blast Russian imperialism to the top of the heap. A strike against them would have profound political implications.

The bosses have already figured that out and at a recent plant managers' meeting, General Director Artiakov said he wouldn't tolerate a strike even if it meant sacking half the workforce. Then AvtoVAZ had the police arrest one of the strike committee leaders, a young leftist worker Anton Vechkunin. He was detained and taken by police right from the locker room after second shift. Two days later his mother was told over the phone that Anton was arrested "for resisting a police officer." This arrest of a trade union activist shows how the state police serve the factory owners, and the Russian workers need to form a mass communist party and prepare for a second Russian revolution.

A strike remains a real possibility since workers are sick and tired of their worsening situation and eroding wages while the Russian car market is booming.

We call on all trade union, community, workers' and left-wing organizations to show international solidarity and demand Anton's release! E-mail Governor Titov of the Samara region at: governor@samara.ru ☺

## Workers' Suffering Becomes 'A Tourist Attraction'

Most people would be shocked at what I saw in New Orleans. The huge difference between the rich and poor neighborhoods was disgusting. The rich ones had cookie-cutter mansions with manicured lawns, huge fountains and beautiful gardens. In the Ninth Ward and other working-class neighborhoods, the houses are rotten-looking and broken down. Nothing has been cleaned or fixed for two years.

In addition, people are making money off the devastation. A radio station was advertising that they were "rebuilding New Orleans one hit [song] at a time." Then, while looking at the levees in the Ninth Ward, we saw tourists in taxis and buses taking pictures of broken houses. One bus was labeled "Celebration Tours." Instead of repairing the damage, the bosses have made this a tourist attraction and are raking in over \$35 a person.

Local business obviously cares more about making money than about workers' needs. We saw lots of outrageous phrases and signs written around town. One on a wall said, "Looters will be shot." Another on a truck said, "U loot, we shoot." They obviously want to terrorize working-class people and show who's boss.

One might think everyone in New Orleans would be united because the disaster happened to everyone, but the rich only care about themselves and leaving the working class to rot.

*Slap-your-boss Volunteer*

## Katrina Victims Welcome Red Ideas

Seeing New Orleans for the second time, little has changed since last year. The house I gutted last summer in the Ninth Ward was empty; it still hasn't been rebuilt. Across the street, an elementary school was still empty and boarded up. It seemed like the only building open in the whole neighborhood was another school which has become a police station. Obviously the city government wants to build a larger police presence here but doesn't care about workers' houses or education.

Selling CHALLENGE was one of the most important things we did. Many of us had never sold door-to-door before; we learned a lot. We saw workers separated by "race" and racism, but all are being exploited.

Most workers agreed that the government had helped the rich while neglecting and abusing workers. This made them more open to a society based on need, not profit.

Although the mistreatment might make it seem workers would accept communist ideas, I was *still* really surprised at the workers' positive response to our politics. This reinforced my commitment to PLP and my belief that communist revolution is possible.

*Slap-your-liberal Volunteer*

## Industrial Workers, Soldiers Crucial For Revolution

During PLP's New Orleans Summer Project about 40 edu-

cators, students, a military veteran, and a transportation worker participated in a study group on the Party's industrial and military work.

We discussed the importance of soldiers, defense industry workers, auto workers, healthcare, transportation, communication and sanitation workers to making communist revolution and running a communist society. During the revolution, communist-led workers need to cripple the bosses' ability to make profits and then turn the guns on the bosses. After the armed struggle for power workers will need their work experience to organize production based on need.

The group debated whether we in the U.S. are living in a revolutionary period. Some thought yes but most concluded that while revolution is possible eventually and we in PLP are in a revolutionary organization, masses of workers need to unite to fight racist divisions and the lack of class and communist consciousness in preparation for fighting an armed struggle against the bosses for state power.

We discussed how the Party must be involved in industrial and military work in a non-revolutionary period. While workers aren't in armed revolt, there is still a need to fight the bosses' attacks against our working and living conditions and to recruit and in the middle of many such struggles, to build ties with thousand of workers now in order to forge a mass PLP of millions in the future.

Lastly, we asked everyone whether they'd considered organizing in industry or the military work now or eventually. Many of the youth gave serious thought to this Party focus. About nine students and young workers committed to consider doing it themselves.

Both students and young educators had reservations about dying and killing for the ruling class. A red veteran explained that our Party's struggle is to raise communist ideas with soldiers and to win them to join PLP. (A successful revolution needs to win soldiers to turn against the war-makers). He compared it to workers in factories having to participate in making profits in order to win their fellow workers to communism. Abstaining from the military or individually refusing orders isolates us from the other soldiers and leaves non-communist soldiers no alternative but spontaneous rebellion or fascism.

One young participant of the study group, a junior in high school, said soldiers are the bosses' eyes, hands and backs. "We do everything. They only tell us what to do. We do it. If we [communists] have the guns, we'll have the whole world."

One weakness was not discussing the importance of educators in recruiting Party youth to industrial and military work, but overall the study group was a success.

*A Comrade*



# < Letters >

## Japanese Teachers Confront Fascism

At the National Education Association convention, PL teachers found evidence of rising international fascism. Fifteen-hundred teachers from across Japan face dismissal for refusing to stand and face the flag during the playing of the Japanese national anthem. A 1999 law designated Hinomaru and Kimigayo the official national flag and anthem, respectively, of Japan. Hinomaru represents Japanese fascist imperialism and its war crimes of WW II and is used by current right-wing thugs in Japan in the same way that the swastika and the Confederate flag are used by Nazis and the Ku Klux Klan.

Fifteen-hundred dissident members of the Japanese Teachers Union (JTU) have repeatedly violated an October 23, 2003 directive of the Tokyo Metropolitan Board of Education, which requires that all teachers rise, face Hinomaru and sing Kimigayo at ceremonies. They have faced increasingly repressive discipline for refusing, including 6-month suspensions.

These teachers direct their struggle against their government's attempts to militarize society and against their own union's collaboration with Prime Minister Abe who has referred to Japan as the 51st state of the U.S. The directive of Oct. 23rd coincided with the decision to send Japanese troops to the battlefield for the first time since 1945 to support the U.S. invasion of Iraq. The teachers say it "was meant to make patriotism the core of education and to bust the JTU."

The JTU dissidents want to return to the JTU's founding slogan: "Never send our students to the battlefields again." These JTU rebels see a parallel between the Oct. 23rd directive and the No Child Left Behind legislation in the U.S., which seeks to direct students into the military. They accuse the JTU of forsaking class consciousness and again collaborating with the government's plans to militarize Japanese society for wars of aggression in Asia. They believe that teachers are workers and can fight state power. They call for unity between U.S. and Japanese unions.

We salute our brothers and sisters in Japan for their sharp struggle against the state. However, unions are reform organizations, which ultimately must compromise with the state. We need PLP, an international communist party dedicated to leading workers and soldiers to state power through revolution. We believe that soldiers and industrial workers are in the best position to fight for state power. Teachers are in a position to develop the class consciousness of their students and educate them to the need for a communist society. Then, when the ruling class puts rifles into the hands of class-conscious soldiers and puts the means of war production into the hands of class-conscious workers, they will be sowing the seeds of their own destruction.

A Teacher

## Iraq Gi's 'Worry about getting home alive'

*(The following is an excerpt from a letter a GI wrote to a family member from the front lines.)*

How are you doing? My handwriting will be sloppy. My index finger is broken. It's pretty rough over here. Every month we lose about 12 guys in our battalion.

The first weekend here I was shot at, RPGed (Rocket-Propelled Grenade) and mortared, all in a single firefight. Right now they've got me driving a tank. At least if I get blown up it will knock me out instead of killing me. I'm never coming back here again....I cannot wait to see you guys again....

The Forward Operating Base (FOB) is small. We have one chow hall, one Post Exchange, or store and one phone center. There's really nothing to do in my off time except watch movies and read. They got me rolling out every day and we get contact [with the insurgents] every day. I haven't killed anybody yet.

Being the driver, I finally got to see Iraq. The U.S. blew the whole city to hell. What they haven't destroyed is slowly being destroyed day by day. Everybody except Iraq Army (I.A.) hates us. The only reason the I.A. likes us is because we support the Shia. The majority of them are part of Shiite militia. But we're in a Sunni majority city, so pretty much all the civilians hate the U.S.

The insurgents pretty much control the city. There are parts where U.S. personnel can't go; people have died going there. It's no longer under U.S. control. When you raid a house, two others will be abandoned. The third would be filled with elderly women and children. Military-age males are nowhere to be found, a classic example of urban guerrilla warfare.

The majority of combat soldiers worry about getting

home and staying alive. That's all you care and think about. Fobits [an insult for soldiers and civilians who don't leave the base] don't care because they know they are coming home and they don't see the sharp contradictions outside the wire. They only worry about long phone lines or if they can use the internet or is the FOB on blackout. The combat soldier who goes outside the wire all the time has the mindset of, "it's either me or them and fuck them." I'm not saying all soldiers share this either-or mentality. But all soldiers suffer some form of alienation here, especially myself. It's been a sharp contradiction of what I thought I would be doing and what I am doing.

*(That's the first letter. I wrote my cousin explaining that if all that soldiers cared about was surviving, they'd rebel and go home. I told him I think people are more fearful of being punished and losing rank and pay for rebelling than they are of surviving. My cousin responded with another letter....To be continued next issue.)*

## Fulfilling Potential As An Industrial Worker

I think our party is trying, with moderate success, to deal with the coming of world war and the development of fascism. The understanding of the necessity for a concentration in the military and industrial workers in our political work has proven hard to accept in practice. In fact, it was hard to accept for me too, as a student.

I think my main internal contradictions that made me nervous about doing industrial work were between my idealist ideas of what it meant to be an industrial worker and my materialist ones, and between my individualism and my communist collectivity in concern to what was politically needed.

For instance, like all working-class students, I knew that my choice to become an industrial worker would significantly alter my lifestyle. I knew I wouldn't have as much free time, and I'd likely make less money. I'd be subjected to the direct pressure of the bosses in an openly racist and sexist environment. So I felt hesitant since my individualist side was keeping me focused on some illusion that I was "sacrificing" myself to this. Also, I had false fears that my training as a college student would make me fundamentally incompatible with the life of a manufacturing worker. Other Party members had similar fears, that implied that students were "middle class" and therefore likely "couldn't handle it". These dangerous ideas did nothing but cause me unnecessary fear. They made me feel like if I did the work, I'd drown.

These two contradictions could have kept me from doing the work. However, the struggle put forward by comrades helped me understand the life of an industrial worker. These comrades helped me pick out classes at a trade school where I interacted with many workers. Also, they encouraged me and some others to organize a cadre school where our ideas were discussed with some factory workers, and where we had a BBQ that allowed us to get to know one another a little. These comrades prepared me for interviews and helped me find a job so I could get my feet wet.

These activities helped me see the potential of our class more clearly. They combated my bad ideas. They really demystified what being an industrial worker was like. That I wasn't that different, and as a working-class student, I could in fact do the work – and that I'd actually enjoy doing it – politically, that is. No one loves being a wage-slave!

The potential is definitely right in front of me. I've spent time with some fellow workers outside of work. One worker even defended me against some other young workers' racist ideas. With all of these possibilities the ruling class is definitely in danger, but only if we do the work.

A young worker

## Anti-Immigrant Racists Mirror Nazis

I was at the rally in Morristown on July 28. While I was on your side of the barricades most of the day, I was able to walk around and talk to the people who attended the Pro-America Rally. This was the first time that I actually spoke to them, and since they thought I was sym-



Workers, youth confront fascists in Morristown, NJ

pathetic, they spoke rather truthfully. Listening to them speak really did make me think about how the Nazi party first organized among the "middle class." The people at the rally spoke about two main things: 1) Corporate greed and how major corporations have taken over the schools as well as the government and that all they care about is profit. 2) How "illegals" aka Latin workers, are sneaking into the country and sucking up all of the resources and taking away jobs from honest, hard working "Americans."

The Nazis used the same methods when they were first organizing. The 26 points of the Nazi platform were very similar to a lot of what these people were saying. Hitler and the Nazis in their 26 points claimed to give the death penalty to "usurers and profiteers" and the "establishment of a sound middle class" just to name a few of these points. The comparisons between Latin workers now and Jewish workers then are also very striking.

While there may seem to be differences among their appearances, in essence they are the same. The anti-immigrant movement is a fascist movement and I am glad that CHALLENGE says that. While there are times that fascism may be used too liberally, I think we are in a period where it is more dangerous not to say it than to overstate it. Many people don't think that what happened in Germany and Italy can happen here. While they may not have soldiers goose-stepping down the streets, the ideas and structures are beginning to be put in place, and I think most of the time CHALLENGE has correctly identified them. Keep up the good work.

Anti-Fascist Reader

## Editorial Short on Specifics, Long on Assertions

A CHALLENGE front-page article (8/1) correctly emphasized the crucial role industrial workers must have in building for communist revolution. Many very important political points were made, but overall the article needed to communicate those points better for workers reading the paper.

The article covers many issues, but mostly in abbreviated fashion. Unexplained references to "Delphi, New Orleans, citizen vs. immigrant workers" are used to describe how bosses maximize their profits leading to the statement the "capitalist wage system requires inequality." Inter-imperialist rivalry and fascist slave-labor conditions are leading to World War III. Workers produce all the value, but bosses steal most of it; bosses need workers to fight wars, but workers need to survive and that "contradiction" can only be resolved by communist revolution. Later the article (with no specific references) warns not to "rely on liberal politicians, all of whom represent bosses' interests."

These are all admirable ideas, but presenting them in "shopping-list" form is mostly useful in communicating them to those who already agree. To build a mass party, CHALLENGE should reflect that broadening goal. Articles should stay on point and have well-explained concrete examples. Arguments need to be built step by step in explaining PLP's political analysis, rather than presenting take-it-or-leave-it assertions of political conclusions.

A better example is the recent article on hospital organizing in Philadelphia [CHALLENGE, 7/18] that described ideological interaction between PL'ers and other workers in a down-to-earth manner that made PLP's poli-

continued on next page

## &lt;More Letters&gt;

tics more relevant to workers' life experiences.

It doesn't matter how good PL's political analysis is if it isn't successfully communicated to industrial workers (and others).

A Comrade

**'White Flight' No Myth**

The article about segregation in public schools has a factual error. It was a 1948 Supreme Court decision [not after 1954 as the article stated] that ruled restrictive covenants were unconstitutional. However, the Supreme Court neglected to provide for any enforcement of its ruling. States and cities kept using them. They were institutionalized by the banks and the FHA, but were defined as a "private" agreement. So the practice, as described in the article, was effectively the same.

In addition, the article uses the term "myth of white flight." This requires some explanation. It seems the author means that the "myth" is that white workers fled cities from the end of World War II through the end of the 1960s because of their own, inherent racism. That is, workers spontaneously chose to live in segregated communities. That is a myth, as the article shows how government policies, and banking interests, created the conditions for the movement of workers from city to suburb.

But it would be incorrect to deny that masses of white workers left the city in that period. The actual shift in population is not a myth and a significant motivation for the move was racism. Workers came to see the city as dangerous, overcrowded, dirty – all euphemisms for the fact that black, Latin and immigrant workers were concentrated there.

Once again, the bosses were successful in creating and fostering racist divisions that continue to divide and hurt the working class.

It would be useful to see more articles on the complex ways in which segregation continues to be fostered in this country. Many people still believe that the problem is primarily white racism and do not understand the role the ruling class plays.

A reader

# Jamaica's Deadly Election Circus

It is election time in Jamaica, and green and orange flags tell you which neighborhood "belongs" to which of the two leading ruling parties here (the Jamaica Labor Party and the People's National Party). In the poorest neighborhoods of Kingston, you have to be careful what color shirt you put on in the morning. Almost every day, there is a news report of at least one person being murdered in political violence, mostly the poorest of the poor.

The politicians go on TV every night calling for peace. However, many workers believe that behind the scenes, these same politicians supply the flags and the guns for the political warfare.

As one worker put it, "The rich big shots aren't killing each other. They are setting the poor sufferers to fight and die...When will the sufferers wake up and see they are being used to kill each other while the rich get richer?"

Unemployment is rampant. The IMF and World Bank have destroyed agriculture to the point that it is cheaper to buy imported U.S. farm products than locally grown ones. United Fruit wasn't satisfied with owning almost all the banana production in the world, so with the help of Bill Clinton, they changed international trade policies to destroy the Jamaican banana industry, which used to employ thousands of workers. By dumping powdered milk on the Jamaican market, subsidized by the U.S. government, the bosses also destroyed the local dairy industry. And the list goes on.

The government doesn't spend any money to maintain basic human necessities, from medical care to education, roads and bridges, even water. A few weeks ago, nurses at Kingston Public Hospital went on strike because the hospital had no supplies—not even Panadol (pain reliever)! Schools are so overcrowded they are on two shifts, and the buildings are crumbling. In the weeks before the election, the government rushes to do a little patchwork on the roads, to give a few people a few weeks of work in exchange for their vote.

Elections here, like in all capitalist countries, are a big circus where the bosses decide who will control the

government for their own particular interests and those of the imperialists they serve. They try to fool us into believing that things will get better if we change which politician is oppressing us. Workers and youth are very mad here. So the politicians get us to turn that anger against each other. A revolutionary communist party is needed here, in the rest of the Caribbean and around the world, to turn our anger into working class unity to get rid of capitalism.

When we workers run society, we will run it for the benefit of all our brothers and sisters, on the communist principle; "From each according to their ability and commitment; to each according to their need." There will be no rich and poor, no money, and no inequality. Blacks will not be on the bottom of the heap like they have since slavery. Racism will be crushed, women and men will be equals, and the most oppressed will be the leaders.

## Chile's Striking Miners Block Roads, Derail Trains



## RED EYE ON THE NEWS

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

**Dems Strut, but doubletalk on war**

The Democrats, delighted by the wounded Bush presidency, believe this is their time. Like an ostentation of peacocks, an extraordinary crowd of excited candidates is gathering in hopes of succeeding Mr. Bush.

But such a timid crowd!

Ask a potential Democratic president what he or she would do about the war, and you'll get a doctoral dissertation about the importance of diplomacy, the possibility of a phased withdrawal (but not too quick), the need for Iraqis to help themselves and figure out a way to divvy up the oil, and so on and so forth.

A straight answer? Surely you jest. (NYT)

**'None of the above' to the Oval Office?**

More good news for the Republican Party: A new AP poll reveals that its most popular presidential candidate is "none of the above...."

Indeed, the AP poll raises the further question of what would happen if the GOP declined to nominate anyone. It's not clear...that an empty chair in the Oval Office could do any worse a job of governing.... (NY Post, 7/19)

**Media saw Va. Tech, not inner city**

....An agonizing issue...has been largely overlooked by the national media — the murder of dozens of [Chicago] ...public school students since last September....

You've probably heard more than you wanted to about David Beckham and Posh Spice in recent days, but not a lot about the deaths of these children and teenagers in Chicago. Black, Latino and poor, they are America's invisible children....

...There was tremendous grief across the country when the massacre at Virginia Tech happened last April.... But with 34 schoolkids dead in Chicago since the beginning of the last school year,..."for the most part, there has been silence." (Bob Herbert, NYT)

**In US 1890s Chinese fought ID law**

In "Driven Out: The Forgotten War Against Chinese Americans," [Jean Pfaeizer] tells the story of the "thousands of Chinese people who were violently herded onto railroad cars, steamers or logging rafts, marched out of town or killed," from the Pacific Coast to the Rocky Mountains...."

...Confronted with the requirement, in the Geary Act of 1892, that Chinese immigrants carry an identity card proving they were in the country legally or else face deportation, thousands refused to submit to what they called the "Dog Tag Law," thus undertaking what Pfaeizer says was "perhaps the largest organized act of civil disobedience in the United States."

....Pfaeizer....also notes that [today] thousands of immigrants, thousands of people born in the United States to parents born abroad, and thousands of others are marching through the streets of Los Angeles, Houston and New York, refusing to be temporary people, transients, braceros, guests or sojourners." (NYT, 7/29)

**Gov't spies infest US Muslim areas**

It is no secret to the Muslim immigrants of Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, that spies live among them.

Almost anyone can rattle off what they regard as the telltale signs of police informers. They like to talk politics. They have plenty of free time. They live in the neighborhood, but they have no local relatives.

"They think we don't know, but know who they are," said Linda Sarsour, 26, a community activist....

Many see the police tactic...as proof that the authorities — both in New York and around the nation — have been aggressive, even underhanded in their approach to Muslims. (NYT, 5/27)

**Stressed Iraq vets become suicidal**

To the Editor:...

My daughter runs a hotline for returning veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan. These are the soldiers with no physical wounds but who suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, and for the most part have returned home to find no work, broken marriages and very little available care or counseling...90 percent of these men and women are suicidal. (NYT, 7/28)

**US no help to Afghan school-agers**

In Afghanistan 7 million children do not attend school.... "It's a continuous battle. The situation for children here is worse than is ever reported. Schools are being burned, water sources poisoned, there are no teachers for those schools that are open. The idea of universal education for every child in Afghanistan is just that, an idea. We are so far away from this becoming a reality...."

...35% of schools are nothing more than tents.

In a country where more than half the population of 32 million is under 16, 60% of children don't go to school; 80-85% of these are girls. (GW, 7/27)

**SICKO avoids race and class issues**

Moore says up front in ["SICKO"] ...that he is not focusing on the nearly 50 million people who have no access to care at all....Unfortunately, by giving cursory treatment to race and class, he avoided tackling the most intractable problems in this country's health care system....

This is the reality I see every day as an ER doctor: Large groups of people — mainly those from communities of color, and those who are poor and uninsured — are not receiving basic care that can make all the difference. (Liberal Opinion Week, 7/18)

# Deadly Racism Sparked '67 Detroit Uprising

*"I spent a year in Vietnam and then came home to realize that was not our fight. Our fight was here in Detroit, not trying to help Uncle Sam in Vietnam." — Black Vietnam Veteran, 1967*

*"When they sent troops from the 82nd Airborne into our neighborhood, it was clear that the U.S. government had declared war on our community." — Black resident of Detroit, 1967*

On Saturday night, July 23, 1967, two black Vietnam veterans were welcomed back to Detroit by about 80 of their friends and families at an after-hours club at the corner of 12th Street and Clairmount Avenue, on the city's near west side. Shortly before dawn, the police department's Vice Squad raided the club, having already raided four such clubs that night. But at this one, the club's patrons were not about to go quietly. As they were shoved into police cars, someone in the growing crowd of on-lookers threw an empty bottle at a squad car. Thus began the "most sustained and violent urban rebellion in modern U.S. history." (Babson, p. 167)

Within several hours, the angry crowd had grown to 3,000. They began breaking store windows and looting stores along 12th Street. The rebellion that followed lasted nearly a week and terrified Detroit's ruling class. It took more than 10,000 state and federal troops (including the 82nd Airborne Division, rerouted from Vietnam) to quell the uprising. By the end, 43 people were dead, 347 seriously injured, 7,000 arrested, and at least 1,300 buildings were burned.

What caused this rebellion, what did it lead to, what are its lessons? Clearly the police raid was the immediate spark, but the underlying reasons lay in the conditions existing in this city, the United States and worldwide in the mid-20th century.

Detroit had been the center of the automobile industry since the early 1900's, with tens of thousands of workers toiling in dangerous, back-breaking conditions, earning huge profits for their employers. The city became a magnet for European immigrants and for Southern whites, who flocked there seeking a steady paycheck. Similarly, thousands of blacks migrated to Detroit from the South in the first decades of the century, both to escape its brutal segregation and grinding poverty, and also to land a job in one of the many factories supporting the auto industry. The industry was finally unionized in the 1930's, led by the Communist Party, whose members and allies waged heroic and fierce battles, culminating in the sit-down strikes of the mid-1930's.

But even with the victories of the United Automobile

Workers, racism remained rampant throughout Detroit. Residential segregation was nearly ironclad. When blacks tried to move outside the boundaries of the dangerously overcrowded ghettos called Paradise Valley and Black Bottom, they were physically attacked by frenzied mobs of racist whites. In 1943, one of the worst race riots in U.S. history took place, when 10,000 whites rampaged through the streets of the black community, beating blacks and overturning their cars.

In addition, "until well after World War II, Detroit's major hotels, restaurants, night-clubs and theaters either were closed to blacks or relegated them to separate areas." (Locke, p. 53) Detroit was a Northern stronghold of the KKK.

"Hardly any of the auto plants hired many blacks until the labor shortages of World War II. (The exception was Ford, which had a special policy of using large numbers of blacks as an anti-union ploy.) During the war, blacks were hired by the tens of thousands for the dirtiest, most dangerous, lowest-paid jobs. Many of those jobs were taken away during the recessions of the 1950's." (Georgakas, pp. 27-8) Outside the auto industry, black Detroiters were relegated to the lowest-paying jobs — elevator operators, porters and janitors. In 1966, of the 1,845 apprentices in the Detroit Building Trades Apprenticeship Program, only 26 (barely 1%) were black.

The Detroit police department had a long history of brutality and discrimination against black residents. During the 1920's, many Detroit cops were Klan members. During the 1943 riot, "the police openly sympathized with the white mobs and behaved especially brutally towards blacks." (Sugrue, p. 29). In the early 1960s, the police department's "Tac Squads," each comprising four officers, had a reputation for harassment and brutality in the black community. Cops routinely degraded black youths verbally and arrested and beat them. White cops often killed black residents in cold blood.

When, in 1948, the Supreme Court found the restrictive covenants that enforced residential segregation unconstitutional and blacks began to move from the ghetto, whites began to leave the city altogether, moving to the surrounding suburbs in large numbers. In the decade from 1946 to 1956, the Big Three auto companies spent \$6.6 billion, building 25 new plants in suburbs surrounding Detroit. The city of Detroit lost 134,000 jobs between 1947 and 1963.

By 1966, Detroit had already lost more than 240,000 people and was losing 20,000 per year, as white residents



fled to the suburbs. With the loss of residents, businesses and factories, Detroit's tax base plummeted. The unemployment rate among black men was double that of white men; for black youth, it was 30%. Black schools in the city were severely overcrowded and severely under-funded. In grades 1-8, there was only one textbook for every two children. (Progress Report, p. 46)

So, when the police raided the club on 12th Street on July 23, for many black residents, it was the last straw in a long history of systematic discrimination and abuse. They took to the streets in massive numbers to protest the brutal oppression and exploitation that had always been a way of life in the city.

(Next: the rebellion and its aftermath.)

**Sources/Suggestions for further reading:**

- "Detroit, I Do Mind Dying," by Dan Georgakas and Marvin Surkin
- "Working Detroit," by Steve Babson
- "Arc of Justice," by Kevin Boyle
- "Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Post war Detroit," by Thomas J. Sugrue
- "The 1967 Riot," by Hubert G. Locke
- "People in Motion," by William M. Gilbreth
- "A City on Fire" – HBO documentary
- Report on the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (Kerner Commission Report)
- Progress Report of the New Detroit Committee

## Dinner Marks 40th Anniversary of 1967 Detroit Rebellion

**DETROIT, MI July 21** – "My aunt called my mother and said, 'Stay off of 12th St., there's a riot.' I told my brother, 'Anthony, get up. There's a riot on 12th St.' 'Get outta here,' he said. Anthony went back to sleep. I went to the riot." That's how a black worker opened his remarks to more than 60 workers and youth at a dinner marking the 40th anniversary of the 1967 Detroit Rebellion against racism.

"And let me tell you about hatred," he continued. "We all grew up hating the police. They used to break up our softball games in the alley when we were only 7 years old! They used to harass us, and tell us what streets we could and couldn't walk on. They used to lock us up. We grew up hating them."

He drew a map on the blackboard and described the military tactics used to ambush the police and engage the army. He showed how a 100 block area was never retaken by the army before they withdrew.

The very integrated crowd, that included guests from as far away as Chicago, treated themselves to an afternoon of good food and revolutionary, anti-racist talks and culture. The feeling of unity was so strong that at dinner, before the program even began, one woman looked around the room and asked, "Are there going to be more events like this?"

After everyone enjoyed an international dinner, the program began with a talk about the historic events and racist conditions leading up to the rebellion. That was followed by a poem, written and performed by a woman who was 12 years old and living on 12th St. when the rebellion erupted. She was followed by a young man from Chicago who did two anti-racist poems.

Then a skit was performed, with a newscaster reporting on the events of the rebellion, surrounded by poetry and young people taking the roles of some of the 43 victims killed during the uprising. They spoke about who they were, how they lived and how they died.

A Ford worker, from UAW Local 600, who also lived through the rebellion, spoke about the upcoming auto contracts. He made a commitment to oppose the plans of the bosses and union leaders to cut jobs and slash wages asking, "If these jobs go, what are our children going to do?" He was followed by still another young poet, who gave another example of the vast talent waiting to be tapped by a growing revolutionary movement.

After the program, we had an open discussion from the floor, and that's where things really got good. An airport worker brought revolutionary greetings from his co-workers who endorsed a union resolution honoring the '67 rebellion. A PLP member spoke about how as a youth he was moved by reading about the armed anti-racist self-defense group, Deacons for Defense. He said that the significance of the Detroit Rebellion was that the rebels took on the bosses' state power, cops, National Guard and army, and how that points the way to communist revolution.

A woman who is a leader of the National Welfare Rights Organization lived things up saying that she was in the largest union, the union of the unemployed.

She described the wave of silent and often invisible racist cutbacks resulting in tens of thousands of unemployed families living with no running water or electricity. She said she "would be damned if I walk another picket line" of union workers demanding a raise when they have followed their union leaders and "left the unemployed behind." Her stinging criticism and call for working class unity between employed and unemployed was well received by all, including Ford and Chrysler workers.

Then we heard from the brother mentioned above. After the program ended, old friends and new mingled and talked and everyone left with a copy of CHALLENGE. PLP has shared the fate of Detroit here, suffering some hard times in recent years. But if this dinner is any indication, we may be on the way back.☺

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