

CHALLENGE



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While Billionaires Profit, Racist Democrat Cuomo Cuts Schools: Protestors: STOP THE WAR ON CUNY!

ALBANY, NEW YORK, March 23 — Outside the Albany Capitol offices of Governor Andrew Cuomo, 200 City University of NY faculty, staff, graduate and undergraduate students picketed and loudly chanted "Tax the Rich, Not the Poor, Stop the War on CUNY!" and "Workers and Students Are Under Attack, What Do We Do?, Stand Up, Fight Back!" We were joined by parent and tenant activists.

The Professional Staff Congress (the CUNY faculty and staff union) organized this protest to demonstrate its anger at the Governor for cutting \$95 million from the budget of the four-year colleges, and \$17.5 million of the community colleges, to which NYC Mayor Bloomberg may cut an additional \$35 million in NYC funding. Forty-six percent of community college students at CUNY come from households with incomes of \$20,000 or less. Many of these students hold jobs in order to pay tuition and fees and buy textbooks.

Reducing funding for the community colleges will mean larger class sizes, less guidance, and further hikes in tuition, making it harder to graduate and forcing some to drop out. Slashing the funding of the community colleges is also racist, as 81% of the students are black, Latino, and Asian.

From Egypt to Wisconsin, workers and students are not accepting business-as-usual. This day was no different. Thirty-three of us sat down and blocked access to the Governor's office. With the chants of 170 or so fellow demonstrators reverberating in the Capitol building, we were arrested.

'They Say Cut Back, We Say Fight Back'

The Governor's slashing of billions from education and health care in a state with more billionaires than any other in the U.S. is outright class warfare. In NYC alone, there are 60 billionaires, and the wealthiest 1% of its residents receives an extraordinary 44% of all income. In NY State, there are 44,000 millionaires, who year after year increase their share of total income. Yet they object to extending a relatively small tax surcharge on high income, dubbed the "millionaire's tax."

The Governor claims there is a \$10 billion "budget shortfall" and therefore social programs must be cut. However, this "shortfall" was created by decades of cutting corporate and high-income taxes while doling out billions in interest to the big banks. Without these give-aways, there would now be a budget surplus.

PLP members who organized for and took part in today's protest believe it is necessary but not sufficient to demand that the rich pay higher taxes. When the politicians claim that "hard times" demand concessions and fewer services, we can expose this lie by revealing the tremendous wealth of the corporate owners and CEOs, and demand things like a tax on Wall Street stock transactions.

Taxing the Rich Is Not Enough

However, increased taxes on the rich will never be sufficient because it won't change the reality of capitalism:

- Recessions and depressions are built-in, periodic features of capitalism. When they occur, state revenues decline, budget gaps develop and social programs and public jobs are cut.
- In competition with foreign companies, U.S. capitalists inevitably seek to lower labor costs, both in the private and public sector, by lowering wages and reducing health and pension benefits. This has already



Protestors defy KKKops in order to move.

occurred in the private sector (i.e., lower wages of GM workers), and now the plan is to impose it on public workers, who are far more unionized.

- Since the creation of wealth (surplus value stolen from workers) is controlled by the owners of capital, they are in a position to amass greater and greater fortunes. They use a fraction of their wealth to control the Republican and the Democrat parties, by paying for their expensive election campaigns, by hiring lobbyists to write pro-business legislation, and by dangling high-paying jobs to politicians after they leave office.
- Cuomo is a perfect example: after he left the Clinton administration, he earned millions working for Andrew Farkis, a real estate tycoon. When he later ran for Attorney General and then Governor, he received large sums from real estate magnates and Wall Street investors.
- In order to maintain its supremacy and continue to control global natural resources (particularly oil and gas), markets and investment opportunities, the U.S. ruling class supports a huge network of 700 military bases around the world. A powerful military is necessary to control energy reserves and pipelines in the Middle East, Central Asia and Africa. But this is an expensive operation, and has led to a rising federal deficit. In response, corporate interests and their Democratic and Republican operatives support cuts in social spending, including Medicare and Social Security, so that spending a trillion dollars a year on the military, including wars of occupation, may continue.

Capitalism will always be a system of exploitation, in which workers are paid a fraction of what they contribute to wealth creation. Millions of workers are stuck in jobs that are alienating, that are physically and mentally exhausting, and that stifle their creativity.

We're encouraging our fellow professors and students to think big and to join us as communists. Under the leadership of a communist party, workers can run society for the needs of our class, and kick out the Kochs and Rockefellers of this world. ☺

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If anyone has copies of the 1964 to 1968 issues of CHALLENGE, please send them in.

Foreign oil interests in Libya

Libya's state-owned oil company controls most of its production, but foreign oil companies help sustain its output through joint ventures. Production of top international companies, in thousands of barrels per day:



*Exploration
**Wintershall subsidiary

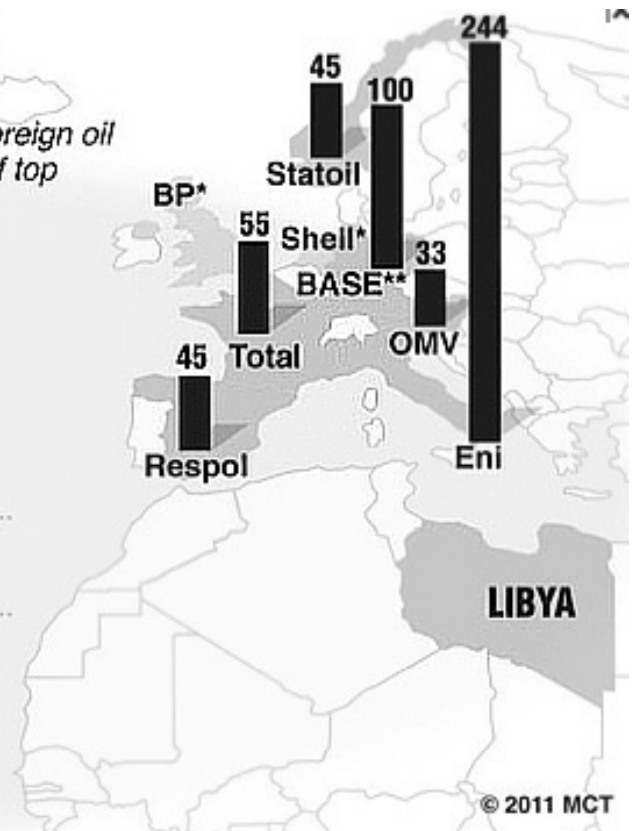
Source: Company reports, U.S. Energy Information Administration, Reuters
Graphic: Pat Carr

Libya's oil industry

Total production, barrels per day (Third largest in Africa) **1.8 million**

Total reserves (Largest in Africa) **44 billion**

Estimated net exports, 1.5 million barrels per day (Most to Europe)



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OUR FIGHT

★ **Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to destroy capitalism and the dictatorship of the capitalist class. We organize workers, soldiers and youth into a revolutionary movement for communism.**

★ **Only the dictatorship of the working class — communism — can provide a lasting solution to the disaster that is today's world for billions of people. This cannot be done through electoral politics, but requires a revolutionary movement and a mass Red Army led by PLP.**

★ **Worldwide capitalism, in its relentless drive for profit, inevitably leads to war, fascism, poverty, disease, starvation and environmental destruction. The capitalist class, through its state power — governments, armies, police, schools and culture — maintains a dictatorship over the world's workers. The capitalist dictatorship supports, and is supported by, the anti-working-class ideologies of racism, sexism, nationalism, individualism and religion.**

★ **While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions worldwide. Capitalism returned to Russia and China because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system, like wages and privileges. Russia and China did not establish communism.**

★ **Communism means working collectively to build a worker-run society. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. Everyone will share in society's benefits and burdens.**

★ **Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of "race." Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit black, Latino, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working class.**

★ **Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women — sexism — and divisive gender roles created by the class society.**

★ **Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.**

★ **Communism means that the minds of millions of workers must become free from religion's false promises, unscientific thinking and poisonous ideology. Communism will triumph when the masses of workers can use the science of dialectical materialism to understand, analyze and change the world to meet their needs and aspirations.**

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

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Murderers Without Borders Imperialists Cloak Libyan Oil Grab with Phony 'Humanitarianism'

Obama's invasion of oil-rich Libya marks U.S. imperialists' first major use of their phony "Responsibility To Protect" (RTP) excuse for waging wider wars. The RTP doctrine, adopted at a 2005 UN summit, despite China's and Russia's objections, eliminates capitalist national borders as obstacles to imperialist intervention. The invaders have only to assert that they're "rescuing the locals."

Bombing and missile raids by the U.S. (with junior partner Britain and temporary ally France) supposedly aim at saving Libya's citizens from dictator Qaddafi, under RTP. But the wave of Mideast rebellions made U.S. rulers and their imperialist allies shaky over maintaining the oil deals they've made with each other and Qaddafi over past years.

Obama was very ready to allot hundreds of millions for this latest war while cutting billions

from education and social service budgets, causing massive layoffs of teachers and other government workers. The initial U.S. Navy attack with 110 Tomahawk cruise missiles alone cost nearly \$100 million. As of March 29, the Pentagon had spent \$550 million in the first ten days.

The upsurge that spread from Tunisia to Algeria to Egypt, where thousands of workers struck for higher wages and against mass unemployment as they did in Iraq — and continues to spread throughout the region — made the oil-thirsty imperialists nervous. Therefore, the U.S.-led campaign focused on protecting the Libyan assets of oil giants Exxon Mobil, Marathon, and Occidental (U.S.); BP (U.K.); and Total (French). At this writing, NATO air strikes were helping pro-U.S. rebels seize two oil refineries and a strategic export terminal. On March 27, they captured two oil-export ports.

Of course, the U.S. chose not to "rescue" protestors in Bahrain, the base of the U.S. Navy's 5th Fleet, and allowed its government and invading Saudi troops to kill hundreds to ward off any rebellion that might eventually threaten Saudi's oil fields, the world's largest.

In a March 24 article, the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), U.S. imperialism's top think-tank — bankrolled by Exxon Mobil-JP Morgan Chase — trumpets U.S.-led killing in Libya as "A New Lease on Life for Humanitarianism." Its author, war criminal Stewart Patrick, who helped shape Afghan strategy in Bush, Jr.'s State Department, called RTP, as executed in Libya, the "biggest challenge to state sovereignty in three and a half centuries."

Patrick was referring to Obama's effective trashing of the long-lived 17th century Treaties of Westphalia. Those Treaties had enshrined the existence of capitalist nation states and defined invasion — the rulers' ultimate means of sorting out differences — as war.

But today, after the demise of the old communist movement, U.S. bosses, though in decline, temporarily enjoy unequaled ability to project military force anywhere on earth. So Obama & Co. claim the RTP right to selectively invade any country, cloaked as "saviors" rather than aggressors. Patrick writes, "it [RTP] makes a state's presumed right of non-intervention contingent on its ability and willingness to protect its citizens and threatens collective, timely, and decisive action if it does not."

continued on next page

'Rebels'? or Racists?

"Libyan Rebels Accused of Targeting Blacks, reads the headline in the March 4 Los Angeles Times. The article reports that, "Many innocent Africans and black Libyans have faced detention, beatings or intimidation while being accused of accepting money to fight for Qaddafi." They "are actually black Libyans or Africans who have been living in Libya for years...."

"Africans recently interviewed in Benghazi said they had been threatened, beaten and driven from their homes by gunmen calling them mercenaries."

"A spokesman for the rebels' 'military council' said about 150 men were being held at several locations in and around Benghazi."

Another LA Times article (3/24) headlined "Libyan Rebels Appear to Take A Leaf from Qaddafi's Playbook" reported that, "For a month gangs of...gunmen have roamed the city, rousting Libyan blacks and immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa from their homes and holding them for interrogation as 'suspected' mercenaries or 'government spies...."

"The prisoners and detainees were... [imprisoned in] dank cells that stank of urine and rot — the same cells that once housed some of the dissidents now aligned with the rebel movement..."

Not too much "democracy" here.

Slam Bosses' Scheme to Fund Rich, Soak Workers

CHICAGO, March 19 — For years, capitalists here have been using a scheme called Tax Increment Financing (TIFs) to fund the rulers' pet projects. The tourist attraction Millennium Park is one example. The TIFs are supposed to pay for projects in "blighted areas" but neighborhoods such as Chicago's "Gold Coast" can hardly be called blighted. Half the money going to TIF would otherwise go to schools.

This is why over 200 people, members of the Chicago Teachers Union, Unite-HERE (school cafeteria workers) and local community groups rallied and marched to Grossinger Cadillac, recipient of \$8.5 million in TIF funds. Their signs listed 160 schools without libraries (see CHALLENGE 10/6/10) on Whittier parents' library fight), calling for "TIF \$\$\$ for students" and to "Stop the Billionaires."

They chanted: "Hey hey, ho ho, corporate TIFs have got to go"; and (call and response) "Give me a T; Give me an I; Give me an F; What's that spell? — TIF! What do we want? Give it back; Give it back!"

At Grossinger Cadillac the marchers entered the dealership demanding the company give back the \$8.5 million. When the cops came, the crowd left, but they arrested two people anyway (they were released that afternoon).

In an era when most unions are negotiating the size of

give-backs rather than making demands on the bosses, it's encouraging to see some unions still fighting. As the fascist grip of capitalism tightens, arrests of those who challenge the ruling class will increase.

History shows that fascism cannot be stopped by unions, no matter how militant. Defeating fascism requires communist revolution. The capitalist system inevitably leads to more wars, more attacks on the working class and, during crises: fascism. Communist revolution ends these horrors by creating a new system based on the needs of the working class.

Actions that expose the ruling class and give workers a taste of power are necessary components of the long-term revolutionary struggle. However, revolution will not occur without a Party immersed in these struggles and organizing to make communism a reality. PLP is that Party now, and the beginnings of the revolutionary process are part of the story of the anti-TIF action. The struggle continues! ☺



Libya Oil Grab

continued from pg. 2

Liberal Rulers' 'Responsibility To Protect' = License to Invade and Kill

In addition to the elite, Rockefeller-backed CFR, the lethal, hypocritical "responsibility-to-protect" pretext has a champion in Human Rights Watch. HRW, a mass organization founded and funded by billionaire swindler and Rockefeller ally George Soros, lures well-meaning people to liberal causes that aid U.S. imperialism. In a March 25 web article praising both the Libyan invasion and RTP, Human Rights Watch approved killing civilians:

"Opposing forces may attack a military target that is making use of human shields, but it is still obligated to determine whether the attack is proportionate — that is, that the expected loss of civilian life and property is not greater than the anticipated military advantage of the attack." Oil facilities, presumably, meet the callous cost-benefit test. HRW also urges U.S. "humanitarian intervention" in Ivory Coast's violent presidential dispute in which China and the Western imperialists back opposing sides.

U.S. Bosses in War Policy Disarray: Isolationist Tea Partiers vs. World War III Imperialists

But not all U.S. capitalists embrace Obama's North African foray. In fact, fearing opposition from forces lacking imperialist interests (personified by Tea Partiers), Obama did not consult Congress before raining missiles on Tripoli. More importantly, to some power brokers within the dominant imperialist wing of U.S. rulers, Libya pales beside bigger worries:

"We clearly have much more vital interests to protect in Yemen and Bahrain [neighbors of the U.S. oil empire's cornerstone Saudi Arabia — Ed.]" says Rockefeller Brothers Fund trustee and former State Department planner Nicholas

Burns. (Boston Globe, 3/22/11) But, says Burns. "We have no choice now but to lead in order to save Libya from its dictator and to redeem U.S. power, credibility, and purpose in the Middle East."

Richard Haass, CFR president and advisor to mass murderer of Iraq War I, Colin Powell, looks even farther down the road to his masters' ultimate requirements. On Libya, he expressed doubts (CFR website, 3/21/11) about "committing the United States to another costly foreign intervention at a moment we owe it to ourselves... to get our economic and military houses in order so we can meet our obligations at home and be prepared to meet true wars of necessity (North Korea for one) if and when they arise?" Haass speaks not so indirectly about U.S. imperialists' needs to militarize the nation for all-out war with China (North Korea's enabler).

Supporting oil-thirsty Pentagon-backed Libyan rebel leaders as "freedom fighters" — however courageous the rank and file is — leads down a political dead end. Rather workers must build for the ultimate destruction of the profit system that constantly produces regional resource wars, like Libya, as preludes to global inter-imperialist conflict.

That's why PL'ers and our supporters must expose the racist exploitative profit system and its oppression at every turn, in factories and unions, among GI's and in schools, churches and all mass organizations. More important, we must up the ante of the class struggle in these areas, escalating and leading the anti-racist fights against the ruling class and its lackey politicians.

Consequently, as the class struggle intensifies, the rulers will strike back with their state power (as they're doing in the Mideast and in Wisconsin). This can be used still further to turn the class struggle into a "school for communism." This means winning workers and their allies to see that the system cannot be reformed and to understand that building PLP and it's goal of organizing a communist revolution — that will end the capitalists' deadly dogfights and put the working class in power — is the only road to follow. ☺

Only Communist Revolution Can Free Our Class

Madison: Thousands Pack Capitol to 'Stop War on Workers!'

MADISON, WISCONSIN, March 5 — Arriving at midnight on March 3, I went to the Capitol early the next day. The streets were packed with people carrying picket signs, some from their unions, some homemade. Inside the Capitol rotunda a tremendous spirit of solidarity and joy filled the air. A group of boilermakers and pipefitters wearing hardhats entered to applause.

One of their leaders took over leadership of the chants. "Hey-hey, Ho-ho, Governor Walker has got to go! Union Power; Worker's Rights" reverberated through the hall.

I asked if I could make some remarks. When I said I was from the Bronx, people chanted, "Thank you, thank you!"

I replied, "No, thank you, workers of Wisconsin. All over people are rooting for you who are on the front lines leading the struggle against attacks on working people." I explained that on my campus we had a Support Wisconsin Day and showed them the stickers my local, the Professional Staff Congress, was distributing throughout NYC.

Class War

"Too many people have struggled and died for workers' rights. There's no way we will allow these gains to be erased." Pointing to a Teamsters Local sign saying, "Stop the War on Workers," I declared, "Class war was being waged against the working class. We must organize ourselves to make class war against the bosses. We should live to see the day when there are no more rich over us to exploit us!" The crowd agreed.

The next day, Saturday, tens of thousand encircled the Capitol. Private-sector unionists, non-union workers and even small businessmen were there to support the public-sector workers. People refused to be pitted against each other by the bosses' lies that public-sector workers were "riding a gravy train" at the expense of the taxpayers.

Many in the crowd wore red in solidarity but the leadership's politics was anything but red. The main speaker, Michael Moore, explained correctly that there wouldn't be a "budget deficit" if Walker hadn't granted tax breaks to the wealthy as soon as he was elected. Moore explained that a very small group of rich people was getting richer and that they bribed the politicians.

But, as Moore did in his documentary movies, he upheld the Democratic Party as the savior of the people. He led a chant, "Fab Fourteen, Fab Fourteen!" praising the Democratic State Senators who had left the state to try to prevent Walker and the Republican State Senators from passing a bill denying collective bargaining rights to Wisconsin's public-sector workers.

Dems, G.O.P. Agree on Cuts

But both parties' politicians in Wisconsin and nation-wide agree that workers must take deep cuts. For example, the Democratic Mayor of Providence, Rhode Island, recently terminated the entire teaching staff; and NY Democratic Governor Cuomo has won support from Republican and Conservative politicians with his austerity budget.

So what needs to be done? In Wisconsin, many union leaders are calling for "recalls" to create elections to oust Walker and the Republican State Senators, replacing them with Democratic Party politicians. On the other hand, the South Wisconsin Central Labor Council is considering a general strike against Walker's union-busting and budget-cutting.

Phony "leftist" parties distributed literature calling for a general strike, too. But only the Progressive Labor Party is calling for the building of a revolutionary movement as well as a general strike. General strikes improve class consciousness and are opportunities for the working class to realize its own tremendous strength, but only revolution will eliminate the capitalist class permanently and put the working class in the driver's seat. ☺

Workers, Patients, Youth Unite to Fight: Racist Hospital Cuts — Murder the Nazi Way

CHICAGO, March 21 — Hospital workers on the picket line noticed an older man marching with them shaking his fist as they all yelled, "They say cut back, we say FIGHT BACK!" He was wearing a hospital gown under his coat. The dozens of hospital workers, community members and students protesting in front of Stroger Hospital of Cook County had attracted some patients, too. The protest was sparked by the plans of the County Board to close two of the three hospitals in Chicago's public system, turning the patients out to fend for themselves.

PL'ers at the hospital, meeting with Coalition Against The Cuts in Healthcare (CATCH), had heard the most dramatic aspect of this particular cut-back at a meeting weeks earlier. A nurse from Oak Forest Hospital, one of the hospitals about to be closed, described the plight of patients in the chronic ventilator unit, some of whom had been living there attached to breathing machines for many years. "They're more like family than patients to me," she explained. "We've been together for years." These patients had been given a deadline of the end of the month to find themselves a nursing home to be transferred to. "This unit is closing," they were told.

"I've known many patients from here who left for nursing homes," said Michael Yanul, an Oak Forest ventilator patient with muscular dystrophy who tells his story on YouTube. "They all died. And that's what frightens me."



their story here. Closing this unit is tantamount to murder!" When she finished speaking the hundreds of people in the jammed meeting room stood up and applauded. When she came to work the next day, she was sent home on "administrative leave" for "violating the patients' confidentiality."

Others who had heard this nurse at the CATCH meeting were furious and started circulating a petition defending her. They also went to support her at her disciplinary hearing, but her union, wishing to avoid "interference by radicals," arranged with management to move the hearing 30 miles away to another venue at the last minute.

Solidarity Backs Nurse

Three other hospital workers came up with another way to show their solidarity. They went to Oak Forest Hospital during visiting hours and talked with staff and patients on the long-term vent unit. Both staff and patients wanted to help the nurse who was wrongly accused of "violating patient confidentiality." The ventilator patients gladly agreed to sign consent forms to be photographed again for the purposes of getting their story out at an upcoming CATCH demonstration in front of Stroger Hospital. One man, David Moreno, paralyzed from the neck down, held the ballpoint pen in his teeth to make an "X" on the consent form.

The afternoon of the picket line, teachers brought along their high school students to learn first-hand about the nature of health care in Chicago. Once a hospital worker explained the story behind the huge faces (the patient photos had been made into 3-foot posters) he said, "They're doing that?! Putting those people out, when they are on breathing machines? Give me that poster!" This youth had one of the strongest voices leading the chants. (Hear and see the demo at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PLtcDyJ5x4>.) The demonstration involved a number of our friends and long-time CHALLENGE readers. One doctor who

participated was later called into his boss's office for questioning but once he showed the signed consent forms, the matter was dropped.

On March 21st the Illinois Health Facilities Board held their meeting to decide whether or not to grant a permit for the closing of Oak Forest Hospital of the Cook County Health System. Two busloads of hospital workers and community members sat and stood all around the large meeting room holding protest signs with pictures of the long-term patients. The protesters were silent at first but then, the same nurse ("They're more like family") stepped out and asked for permission to address the Board.

'Are you going to kill these people?'

When she was denied, the number of voices protesting increased. "Are you just going to kill these people?" "How come you can find money to give the administrators raises but you can't afford to care for patients?" The Chairman had to recess the meeting to restore order. In the end, the Facilities Board decided to deny Cook County permission to close Oak Forest Hospital, telling them to return in six months with a clear plan that would avoid harm to uninsured patients in Cook County. The protesters cheered.

We all know this is not the end, but it gives us time to organize a bigger fight-back for the next round. From the perspective of communists involved in this fight, it has energized our collective, activated some who have been passive and helped develop several less-experienced comrades. One friend, a health worker who has met with our PLP club, said, "What I like about you guys is that you actually do stuff."

Recruiting new Party members in the struggle is our best strategy against the fascism that is taking shape in health care as it is throughout the U.S. in this run-up to the next World War. We've got our work cut out for us, but there are lots of workers out there who, like that nurse, will show their hidden leadership qualities as events unfold. ☺



'Administrative Euthanasia'

Hospital workers showed up at board meetings, calling the planned hospital closures murder and pointing out the racist nature of this attack on facilities serving mostly black and immigrant patients. One doctor pointed out the similarity of these deadly cuts to the way the Germans freed up hospital beds in preparation for World War II by gassing the chronic patients in public hospitals in a program they called "euthanasia." The doctor suggested the label "administrative euthanasia" to describe the County's cut-back plan.

The nurse from the CATCH meeting testified before the County Board Finance Committee and held up pictures of patients slated for eviction from the ventilator unit. "These people can't be here to speak for themselves and so I told them I could tell



Japan Quake: Rail Union Raps Bosses' System of Profits First, Workers Last

JAPAN, March 24 — The reaction of Japan's capitalist government to the disaster unfolding in that country reflects the horrors of a system that puts profits before workers, a fact that has spurred Japan's rail union into mass protests.

While the ensuing controversy over the possibility of a nuclear disaster continues to unfold, the Japanese Broadcasting Corporation (NHK) has confirmed that 27,000 people are dead or missing following the recent earthquake and tsunami that hit Northeast Japan on March 11. The situation has become dire for over 200,000 living in temporary shelters (mostly in school gymnasiums) with limited access to hot meals, fresh water, adequate hygienic utilities or medicine, amid outbreaks of influenza and other contagious diseases. All this particularly affects the elderly who comprise a large percentage of the evacuee population.

NHK reports that many hospitals have had to move patients into shelters, which has also increased the risk of disease and death to those already housed there.

The most immediate threat is the continual decline of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant, which the Japanese government and the operators of the plant, Tokyo Electric Power Corporation, (TEPCO) have been unable to control. A significant amount of radioactive material has leaked from the plant and into soil and drinking water within a large radius which has forced restrictions on local produce. NHK website reports, "Efforts to cool the plants are being hampered by the leakage of highly radioactive materials" which have forced rescue operators to abandon some of the reactors.

Shell Game Downplays Profit System's Role

As local officials, the Japanese government and TEPCO play the blame shell game among each other about the possibility of a nuclear disaster little has been said about the system which has produced the problem in the first place: capitalism.

The Wall Street Journal (3/21) said the management of a nuclear meltdown was delayed to preserve "long-term investment" interests in the plants, a decision that clearly reveals the sickness of the profit-making system in which business interest is always put first, despite the possibility of mass destruction and loss of human life.

The parallel between the Japanese governments' delayed response and capital interests is

reiterated in statements by Yonekura Hiromasa, chairman of Nippon-Keidanren (Japan Business Federation). He praised the Japanese nuclear authorities, saying, "Japanese nuclear plants are tough enough to resist the greatest earthquake in a thousand years. It's wonderful. Japanese nuclear agencies should be proud of it....The accident is going to be overcome. I'm not of the opinion that Japanese nuclear policy is coming to a corner."

Additionally, Japan's big banks have diverted billions of Yen to the re-financing of TEPCO, a decision sanctified by the Japanese government. The latter has also provided billions for rebuilding capitalist institutions most affected by the earthquake, rather than allotting them for building sufficient temporary housing and hospital facilities and sending adequate food, water and medicine to affected areas and shelters. This exactly mirrors the aftermath of hurricane Katrina, the Haiti earthquake, the Pakistan floods and basically anywhere profit is put far ahead of workers' needs.

'A man-made tragedy'

The Japanese Railway Workers' union, Doro-Chiba, which has been the most critical of capitalism's role in the current crisis, sharply condemned Yonekura's statement and the insufficiency of the government's response: "The reality before us is by no means a natural disaster but [is a] man-made tragedy, caused by a neo-liberal offensive on the basis of a capitalist market economy. Its real essence is nakedly exposed day by day."

The Doro-Chiba also led a March 20 protest in Tokyo "to denounce the deceitful policy of the government and to demand disclosure of the facts on the whole development concerning the disaster." This was to be followed by a national day of mobilization against war on March 27.

This anti-capitalist stance of Doro-Chiba needs to reverberate across Japan and the world. The international working class must fight the sickness of the profit system revamping itself in the wake of the disasters in Japan, Haiti, Southeast Asia, New Orleans — the list goes on. We need to organize workers everywhere to destroy capitalism and run the world for the benefit of all, not the select few! ☺

U.S. Rulers' War Machine Outdoes Any Quake

On March 9, 1945, "100,000 to 200,000 men, women and children died...when the U.S. Air Force doused Tokyo with jellied gasoline; all told, in the months before Hiroshima, [conventional] bombs killed up to 500,000...Japanese...and left 13 million homeless." (U.S. News & World Report, 7/13/95)

By June 1945, U.S. Air Force General Curtis LeMay complained there was nothing left to bomb in Japanese cities except "garbage can targets."

Afterwards, the U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey noted, "Certainly...Japan would have surrendered even if the atomic bomb had not been dropped." ("Japan's Struggle to End the War")

The L.A. Times agreed: "The hard truth is that the atomic bombings were unnecessary." (8/5/05) President Harry Truman's diary referred to a decoded Japanese cable indicating Japan was about to surrender unconditionally, as the "Japanese Emperor [was] asking for peace."

Generals Eisenhower and MacArthur also agreed, the former later writing that "Japan was already defeated and that dropping the bomb was completely unnecessary" ("Mandate for Change") and MacArthur also believed that A-bombing Japan was "completely unnecessary from a military point of view." (James Clayton, "The Years of MacArthur, 1941-1945, Vol. II")

Yet, as most historians agree, Truman went ahead and dropped the A-bomb on Hiroshima killing upwards of 150,000 civilians — three days before the Soviet Union had pledged to enter the war against Japan — as a "warning" to the Soviets that the U.S. had this hugely destructive weapon. And, to emphasize the "warning," dropped still another one on Nagasaki three days later, killing perhaps another 100,000, as the Soviets entered Manchuria.

Secy. of State James Byrnes told A-Bomb Project scientist Leo Szilard, "Our...demonstrating the bomb would make Russia more manageable in Europe." (Leo Szilard; "A Personal History of the Atomic Bomb") So the U.S. "warning" to the Soviets killed a quarter million Japanese civilians.

Any doubt that U.S. rulers are the world's most vicious terrorists? ☺

Amid Colombia's Super-Exploitation: Winning Construction Workers to Red Ideas

A CHALLENGE reader told me that he has been working in construction for over 25 years; often receiving commendations for early arrival and efficiency in his work. Like millions of working people who create all the wealth, he does not own his own home. Banks refused to give him credit because of his low salary and job instability that can get in the way of his paying the monthly fees.

During the last year this comrade worked for five different bosses, in all cases without a work contract. They all exploited him and he was forced to work close to 55 hours a week. Sixty-nine percent of all work-related accidents affect this industry and 48% of construction workers don't have social security or any benefits. They don't have the right to bonuses, unemployment benefits, vacations, transportation subsidies or other funds.

Thousands of these indigenous workers are violently evicted from their native communities, therefore increasing the army of the unemployed. Forty-five percent of them barely finish elementary school which contributes to their belief that they are to blame for their own economic condition. When they get sick or injured they are immediately fired from their jobs, while sellout politicians like

Morales Russi, Olano Samuel and Ivan Moreno, and slave drivers like the Nule Group, steal millions of pesos generated by their labor. This racist capitalist system is disastrous for our class worldwide. It only offers unemployment, hunger, misery and bullets.

PLP is our revolutionary party. It works under the principles of proletarian internationalism, the dictatorship of the working class and communism. In many countries we are working with the masses, joining their struggles and their organizations.

For over a year I have been participating in the meetings of the construction workers' union in Bogotá. Nearly 100 workers joined a union in an attempt to improve their living conditions. Currently, we have five regular CHALLENGE readers with whom we have political discussions. We are struggling with four more to create an educational committee in spite of the anger and opposition of the union leadership, who are more interested in protecting their personal privileges.

Here we have tremendous opportunities, and through this reformist organization we can connect with hundreds of workers to politicize these economic struggles and build a base for our com-

munist ideas. Only through a massive revolution of urban and farm workers, students and soldiers, can we destroy this racist and sexist wage-slave system that can't provide employment. Over the ashes of this system we will build a truly egalitarian society, a communist society. ☺

Revolutionary Fighter in Colombia



LETTERS

We encourage all **CHALLENGE** readers to send in concise letters and articles about their experiences fighting the bosses around the world.

Of Terminology and Colonialism

I've noticed that, from time to time, CHALLENGE uses "Israel" and "Israel-Palestine" rather than "Palestine." I believe that the correct name is "Palestine." By this name we only mean the geographical region between the river Jordan and the Mediterranean Sea, not any nationalist entity. Note that this region was called "Palestine" as early as 450 BC and up until 1948 AD. The Kingdom of Israel was razed by the Assyrian Empire in 720 BC, and the later Jewish kingdom in part of that area was called Judea until 135 AD. After that the region was called "Palestine" by the Roman Empire.

The modern "Israel," on the other hand, is a colonial fortress of imperialism forced on the region by the Zionists and their imperialist backers, at the expense of both Arab and Jewish workers. As a communist, internationalist and anti-Zionist, I prefer to use the historically correct geographical term "Palestine," and this should not be viewed as Palestinian nationalism. Using the term "Israel" in a modern context, however, should only be done when referring to the Israeli state, the Israeli bosses, the Israeli police and military and so on, and not to the geographic region it occupies.

Some would say that using the term "Palestine" is nationalist. But I ask: isn't using the term "Israel" nationalist in the same way, and doesn't it also grant legitimacy to the Zionist colonial project? And can country names be separated from some degree of national context as long as capitalism — the source of nationalism — reigns?

A Red in Palestine

Patient Organizing Produces Teachers' Fight-back

The schools have been facing massive cuts for the last three years. This year custodial staff was cut to the point that there are never more than two custodians at any school at any time. On top of this, clerical staff has been cut, at least at my school, to a single office worker. By March 15th the Los Angeles School district put out 5,000 lay-off notices to teachers, counselors and all the librarians, about 1/7th of union members. This means that class sizes will skyrocket, especially in elementary grades.

At my school, nine out of 66 certified staff members got pink slips. Recently we had been pretty complacent or depressed in the face of the cuts. Teachers never leave their rooms and the staff is far from united. With the help of struggle from my PLP club I have been attempting recently to counteract this and build some fight-back here.

I learned how much work organizing takes when no one attended the first meeting I announced without follow-up. The next Tuesday teachers were leafleting in front of schools for the union, which gave me an opportunity to try again. I talked to teachers individually at the leafleting about having a strategy meeting on Thursday. The day of the meeting, I put a note in the boxes of those teachers I had talked to or knew would be interested.

About twelve teachers came to the meeting where we discussed the nature of the cutbacks and possible responses. The discussion ranged

from LA's school budget to the ruling class' plans for charters/ed-reform to parent-student-teacher unity. We agreed to meet a week later and to try to find out more about our situation and how to involve parents.

The next week I again put a note in mailboxes, but because of struggle the teachers had with me I put it in everyone's box. This time thirteen teachers came. Some from the previous meeting couldn't make it but asked to be included in the discussion. We continued to discuss the issues and came up with two concrete plans: march as a contingent at the CountyFed's rally in support of Wisconsin workers that Saturday and have a public meeting in the quad to include students this coming Thursday.

On Saturday we met at a teacher's house and took the train into the march, meeting other coworkers along the way. A group of thirteen of us marched together, chanting, talking and making plans. Afterwards a group of us agreed to meet on Tuesday to organize the Thursday public meeting.

Our ability at my school fight-back is growing, in no small part because of the leadership of my coworkers, many of whom read CHALLENGE. Building personal relationships with these teachers has helped me organize these meetings with confidence in my coworkers. I have gotten to know some militant teachers and hope that this can help me expand my CHALLENGE network and the struggle here.

A comrade

Capitalism Survives By Destroying Workers' and Soldiers' Lives

Recently we had a forum on political economy and the current crisis. At this forum there seemed to be some confusion about three concepts: how the bosses realize their profits, the crisis of overproduction and the tendency for the rate of profit to fall. These three important ideas deserve to be understood individually and in their dialectical connections.

The realization question is an important basic concept in Marxist political economy. Marx posited that while economic value is created in the production process by human labor, this does not put money in the hands of the boss. That is, the boss has to actually sell products in the market to translate into the money form the surplus value (profits) produced by workers being paid less than the value their labor adds in the production process.

A major problem is that workers are not paid enough to purchase everything that they make. This is the realization question. There are numerous ways that the bosses deal with this issue. The bosses can buy up a lot of goods themselves. They can extend credit to the working class, which forces the workers to work off their debt in a kind of credit-card-slavery. Most important, though, the bosses answer the realization question through competition and expansion. The bosses look to find new "markets" by trying to undercut their competitors or by selling their goods to new people who have never had access to them before. This is part of the initial drive toward imperial expansion.

Crises of Overproduction

Crises of overproduction are a periodic but consistent part of the capitalist system. They are seemingly easy to understand: the bosses produce too much stuff, can't sell it all and then many go out of business. In order to survive, bosses compete to maximize their profits by expanding production to steal market share from their competitors. All capitalists are doing the same thing — making more than their "fair share" of goods — leading to way too many goods being produced.

These goods are now devalued as they sit unsold. Companies collapse, workers are laid off and factories are shuttered. These types of crises can begin industry specific, but they often (as now) ex-

pand into nationwide recessions and sometimes (as in the 1930s) to worldwide depression.

The tendency for the rate of profit to fall is a much more difficult concept to understand. As argued above, the capitalists' profit comes only from paying workers less than the value that their labor power produces in value. The capitalists' rate of profit is the amount of that "surplus value" they pocket as a percentage of their total investment (in machinery, raw materials and labor). If the amount of the total investment increases and the number and degree of exploitation of workers remains constant, the rate of profit falls.

The dog-eat-dog nature of capitalist competition makes increased investment in machinery as against labor inevitable. Bosses must make their production more efficient and less costly or their competitors will be able to undersell them. Mechanization and automation can give one boss at least a temporary edge and allow him to sell more of his products and increase his own profits. Others will soon imitate the more "efficient" boss, though, and soon the playing field will be leveled. However, now all the capitalists' total investment has increased and their profit percentage has decreased. This process goes on over and over again as long as capitalism exists.

If the capitalists' rate of profit must fall and fall, it is fair to ask why (in the face of this "self strangulation") capitalism doesn't just collapse of its own weight. The answer lies partly in the actions bosses take to increase the level of exploitation of the working class and partly in the periodic destruction of capital (in depressions and war). But in reality, capitalism can never end unless a revolutionary party exists to lead the working class to overthrow it.

If workers can be paid a smaller percentage of the value they produce, then that extra surplus (profit) can offset increased investment in machinery. Moving auto workers \$30+/hour jobs from Detroit to the \$8 wage levels in the South and Southwest is one capitalist answer to their falling profits. Attacks on government workers and cutbacks in education, health care and pensions also allow capitalists to increase how much they can profit off the working class by reducing how much they have to pay in the taxes and fringe benefits that keep their rotten system running. All this has

increased the level of racist and sexist exploitation — yet another bosses' strategy to prop up profits (and keep workers divided).

An even more important strategy of the bosses is to transfer and expand production in imperialist ventures around the world. Wages race to the bottom of a few-dollars-a-day-starvation level, making workers misery the price to be paid for the capitalists' drive to survive. Overthrowing this system with communist revolution is indeed the only answer.

The capitalists find, though, that even these desperate measures to squeeze every dollar possible out of the world's working class isn't enough to keep the profit levels high enough for their system to function. Even fascist measures can force wages down only so much until workers can no longer survive and reproduce. Eventually imperialism has expanded into all corners of the world and there are no more new workers to be exploited at lower and lower wage levels (a situation, for the most part, that capitalists increasingly face today).

Imperialists Resort to War

When this happens, rival imperialist powers resort to the deadly destruction of world war to expand their areas of potential workers to be exploited and reverse their falling profit rates. A secondary result of these wars is the destruction of vast amounts of machinery and capital investment (and millions of workers' lives). The surviving bosses are then able to re-establish high enough rates of profit to again jump-start capitalist production. Capitalism can only survive by destroying worker-soldier lives so that other workers can be forced into a dead end system of exploitation.

As Marxists we strive to understand the world. When we reach a better understanding of economics we can explain why the problem for workers is not a bad boss or a rotten politician. The competitive nature of capitalist competition forces all bosses to sharpen the oppression of the working class. Gaining a greater understanding of the real political economy of capitalism can put the working class one step closer to realizing that reforming capitalism into a "fair" system just isn't possible. Only an egalitarian communist world can put an end to the poverty, wars, racism and sexism of the bosses' rule. ☘

'Low-Wage Capitalism': Workers' Revolutions Scare Bosses Worldwide

Capitalism inevitably suffers systemic crises from which the bosses must scramble to recover. In every era, they attempt to recover by exercising their control of the state apparatus (laws, police, military, culture) to attack workers. Through increased racist attacks, the lowering of wages and general living conditions, or their ultimate tool, imperialist war, the capitalist class makes the working class pay.

The PLP's position is that the collapse of the Soviet Union and the return of capitalism to China have dealt a serious (though not fatal) blow to the working class's ability to fight back against these attacks. Worldwide, confidence in a communist future and class-consciousness are at a relatively low level. In *Low Wage Capitalism*, Fred Goldstein argues that in addition to these political setbacks, the reversals in the Soviet Union and China have given the ruling class tremendous economic flexibility to solve the current crisis on the backs of workers.

First the political: As Goldstein writes, during Lenin's time certain sections of the working class could be bribed with a better standard of living. This was primarily the result of the fear that a socialist USSR and China struck in the hearts of the ruling class. The workers of the world witnessed the establishment of a workers' state in two of the most populous places in the world and it inspired

militancy and confidence.

Western and Japanese capitalism were on the defensive for much of the mid-20th Century and forced reform concessions. Goldstein quotes Richard Freeman, a bourgeois labor economist at Harvard: "You had a different attitude toward your employees when you thought communism was still out there as an alternative." The principle task of communists now is to rebuild that confidence through class struggle.

In addition to politically inspiring millions of workers, the revolutions in the USSR and China caused a contraction in resources available to world capitalists. Millions of workers no longer felt the full brunt of capitalist oppression. During the Great Depression, for example, the Soviet Union had full employment while millions of workers all over the world were idled. Access of capitalists to natural resources (oil, minerals, etc.) was also severely curtailed.

Now, this brake on the increasing exploitation of workers and resources has been decisively removed. China and Russia are ghosts of their former socialist selves, and poverty, disease, racism and exploitation have returned with a vengeance. The return of capitalism in Eastern Europe, Russia and China was a world defeat for the international working class because millions more workers were available for super-exploitation by

U.S., British, French, and German imperialists, as well as national bosses. When the USSR broke up, the world bosses, led by the U.S., started dismantling labor and political reforms. This trend has reached a frenzied pace as seen in the attacks on unions and benefits in the U.S. and Europe. As PLP has long pointed out, capitalist bosses hold state power meaning — in the absence of a militant, organized working class, — they can take away reforms at any time.

Importantly, Goldstein also discusses racism's vital role in maintaining capitalist rule. Both as an ideological tool for dividing the working class and as an economic windfall in the form of super-profits from black, Latino and immigrant labor, racism is the foundation upon which capitalist rule is based. This is the political basis for multiracial unity.

Goldstein's book's primary flaw is his advocating socialism which PLP has correctly analyzed as a form of warmed-over capitalism in such documents like "Road to Revolution IV." Nevertheless, this book is an excellent scientific work of Marxist political economy which PLP members and friends should read and study. ☺

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

U.S. plans online fake opinion chats

GW, 3/25 — The U.S. military is developing software to manipulate social media sites secretly, using fake online personas (known as sock puppets) to influence net conversations and spread pro-U.S. propaganda.

Ntrepid, a newly formed corporation registered in Los Angeles, has been awarded a \$2.76m contract with U.S. Central Command (Centcom), which oversees U.S. armed operations in the Middle East and central Asia, to develop an "online persona managements service" that will allow a single U.S. serviceman or woman to control 10 identities based all over the world.

The project has been likened to China's attempts to control free speech on the internet. It might enable the U.S. military to create a false consensus, crowd out unwelcome opinions and smother reports that do not correspond with its objectives....The languages to be used will include Arabic, Farsi, Urdu and Pashto.

Mexico-U.S. fence serves only as killer

GW, 3/25 — ...Border mayors came to the view that the fence was built...to provide middle America with an illusion. "This fence is a placebo. It gives somebody in mid-America a fluffy warm feeling. It really provides no real deterrent...They're backing up vehicles and climbing over. It's a very expensive joke."....

But the fence has not been without impact... Some now cross deeper into the desert, and pay with their lives. They take to back trails....Their corpses are increasingly found...and the bodies are little more than skin on bone. Some immigrants, lost and knowing what awaits them, have hanged themselves from trees.

Last year, the bodies of more than 400...immigrants were found in the desert....Charley Bruce, former sheriff [said] the hypocrisy of his fellow Americans...vilify immigrants and then hire them to clean their houses, tend their gardens and build their swimming pools...

Boss loans make Afghans slaves

NYT, 3/16

...The young man had twice escaped to join the Afghan Army, but when his father needed another loan from Mr. Bacha, the boss told him: "No. You must bring your son back here. Or else bring me the money you owe me and leave the house I have provided you."

...Like tens of thousands of Afghans, the Muhammads are trapped in a seemingly endless cycle of poverty that keeps them indebted to their employers....They borrow from their employers, who generally pay them pennies an hour for their grueling labor — barely enough to survive and too little to pay off debts that only grow with each passing year....There is no escape for them or for their children, who are bound by their parents' contracts....[They] are worn down, exhausted by 12-hour days that start before dawn....

The workers say the loans...are a blessing and curse, keeping them alive but eternally bound to the kilns and the difficult, low-paying jobs.

"We are slaves here because when you owe... money, then of course you're a slave."

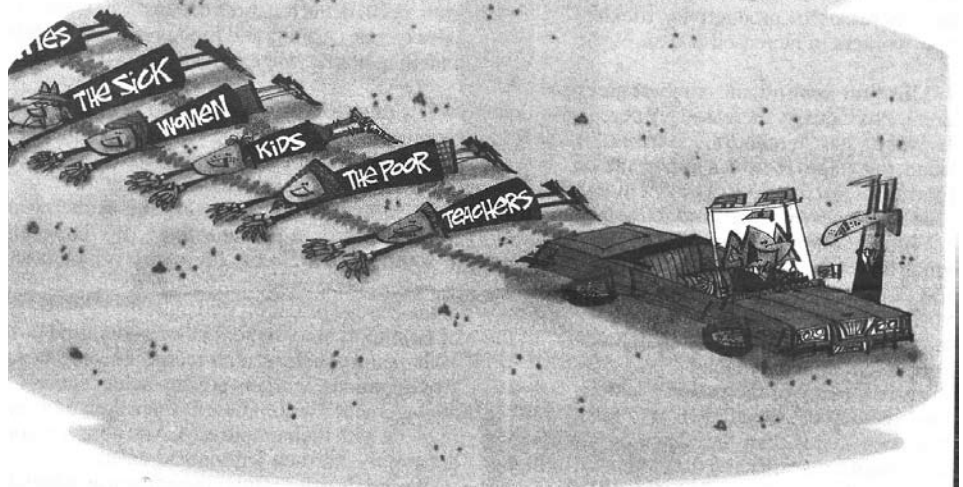
Uprisings could spark world youth

NYT, 3/21 — About one-fourth of Egyptian workers under 25 are unemployed, a statistic that is often cited as a reason for the revolution there. The U.S....[has] an official unemployment rate of 21 percent for workers ages 16 to 24.

My generation was taught that all we needed to succeed was an education and hard work. Tell that to my friend from high school who studied Chinese and international relations at a top-tier college. He had the misfortune to graduate in the class of 2009....After more than a year he moved back in with his parents...The true unemployment rate for young graduates is most likely even higher....

Millions of young people...are...losing their faith in the future....All that matters is finding rent money....

As governments across the developed world balance their budgets...the young will bear the brunt of the pain: taxes on workers will be raised



CONGRATULATE ME, I'M AVOIDING TAX HIKES AND WAR COSTS!

and spending on education will be cut....

Uprisings...are a warning for the developed world....Indeed, the "desperate generation" in Portugal got tens of thousands of people to participate in nationwide protests on March 12. How much longer until the rest of the rich world follows their lead?

No U.S.-U.N. move vs. oily Saudis

GW, 3/25 — Did you hear it? The clamour from western governments for democracy in Saudi Arabia? The howls of outrage from the White House... about this month's shootings, suppression of protests and the arrival of Saudi troops in Bahrain? No? Nor did I.

Did we miss it, or do they believe that change is less necessary in Saudi Arabia than it is in Libya? If so, on what grounds?....

Saudi Arabia's foreign minister...recently promised to "cut off the fingers of those who try to interfere in our internal matters." In other parts of the world this threat would have been figurative; he probably meant it. If mass protests have not yet happened in Saudi Arabia, it's because the monarchy maintains a regime of terror, enforced with the help of torture, mutilation and execution....

Why? Future weapons sales doubtless play a role. But there's an even stronger imperative. This month the French Bank Societe Generale warned that unrest in Saudi Arabia could push the price of oil to \$200 a barrel...

As a result, political disruption there is threatening to...western governments....Few governments of nominal democracies are likely to survive the economic dislocation that a sustained price of \$200 would deliver.

Oil dependency means dependency on Saudi Arabia. Dependency on Saudi Arabia means empowerment of its despotic monarchy.

MORE ITEMS AVAILABLE AT WWW.PLP.ORG

140th Anniversary of the Paris Commune Workers' State Ran Paris; First Model for the World

In late 1870 and early 1871, the French and German bosses fought each other over profits. The French army, poorly-trained and poorly-equipped, was outmatched by the massive Prussian war machine and was thoroughly defeated. The war brought about unemployment and famine for the workers but vast war profits for the capitalists.

In January 1871, the French bosses signed a treaty with the victorious Germans, surrendering Paris to them. The workers of Paris, however, did not want the German bosses to pillage their city, and decided to fight back. On March 18th, 1871, they formed a "National Guard" — an armed workers' militia — and took over Paris, declaring it an independent Commune under workers' rule.

The bosses and the French government troops fled the city once the working class was in power. Lacking a determined revolutionary leadership, however, the Communards did not really try to win over the government troops — many of them were working-class conscripts — or to arrest the bosses who were making millions out of the devastating war while the workers were starving. Nonetheless, the workers held state power in most of Paris.

The Commune was a true workers' state and a workers' democracy. The city was organized into autonomous Arrondissements (neighborhoods), each headed by an elected workers' council. All leaders were elected, subject to immediate recall by the workers if they deemed it necessary, and were paid only a skilled workers' wage (without any special privileges). Church was separated from state, rent was abolished, children were given free clothes and food, women were granted full equality with men, and factories were given over to the workers to run for their own benefit.

The French and German bosses, of course, did not like this one bit; the last thing they wanted was their power and loot taken back from them by the working class. Beginning from April 2nd, 1871, the government's troops began assaulting the Commune. The Communards fought back heroically, taking guns into their hands against the bosses' army and building barricades in the streets. However, they lacked a determined leadership (of the kind provided by a communist party), and this weakness allowed the bourgeoisie attackers to defeat the commune at the end of May 1871.

The bosses' reprisal was brutal and barbaric; 50,000 workers — men, women and children — were slaughtered outright by the triumphant capitalists; 20,000 more faced show trials and were executed, and 7,500 were deported to French overseas colonies. The Commune was drowned in blood; but its ideas still march on!

While eventually defeated by the bosses, the Paris Commune — the first dictatorship of the



proletariat in history — still serves as an inspiring example for communists worldwide. Marx, Lenin, Stalin and Mao drew inspiration from the Communards' heroism when they continued the fight for working-class rule.

During the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China in the 1960's, left-wing workers fought against the revisionists and "red" bosses who took over the Chinese Communist Party and called for a true workers' democracy following the lines of the Paris Commune. Unfortunately, these leftists were blinded by their reliance on Mao and his cult of personality, leaving them unprepared when Mao ordered the army to smash the Shanghai commune as China turned to the capitalist road.

We in the Progressive Labor Party recognize and admire the heroism of the Communards. We want to follow their example on a world scale, overthrowing the bosses and putting the working class in power in a worldwide communist society. We also learn from the fact that the commune was unable to expand the struggle beyond Paris and did not have a, coherent, determined communist leadership to lead the working class in an offensive to destroy all aspects of capitalist rule.✪

France: Striking Sailors Win Partial Victory

MARSEILLES, March 19 — The SNCM ferry workers voted unanimously yesterday to end their seven-week strike which had shut the port here (see CHALLENGE, 3/30). They won a promise that the shareholders would not dismantle the company. However they failed to prevent a reduction in the number of Nice-Corsica ferry voyages, the company decision that triggered the strike. The 40 ferry workers affected by the reduced sailing schedule have obtained financial compensation. Only with communism — when workers run the economy for themselves — will hard-fought strikes ending in partial victories become a thing of the past.

Anti-Communism Still in Fashion in Hollywood

The Way Back, based on a 1956 memoir of Polish immigrant Slavomir Rawicz, is a thrilling tale of escape and superhuman endurance. It is the story of a man wrongfully accused of defaming Stalin and thrown into a hellish Soviet gulag. During a snowstorm he and some friends, including a mysterious American named only "Mr. Smith" escaped and trekked 4,000 miles, through Mongolia, across the Gobi Desert, and over the Himalayas eventually winding up in British-occupied India. There is only one problem with this inspiring tale of survival: it is a complete fabrication.

From its first publication the legitimacy of the memoir was widely questioned. The British Ambassador to Tibet (Rawicz's original planned destination) cited dozens of factual errors in the book and questioned whether it was a "muddled and hazy retelling of an actual occurrence, or mere fiction." Rawicz himself has never been able to produce a single shred of evidence to corroborate his story and nobody has ever been able to discover the whereabouts of his supposed companions.

Recent investigations of the Soviet archives have proven without a doubt that the story is entirely invented, an anti-communist lie. Rawicz was sent to a Soviet prison, though not the one he claimed. And he was sent, not for the false accusation of "defaming Stalin," but for murdering an NKVD officer (the forerunner to the KGB) while he was in the army. Rather than making a daring escape he was freed from prison in 1942 as part of a general amnesty granted for Polish soldiers. Several years later he received travel papers to immigrate to British Iran and eventually Palestine.

Rawicz's story is so full of holes that director Peter Weir even opted to change the name of the movie and the title character lest association with

Rawicz lead people to doubt its authenticity. Weir made the decision after a BBC report revealed Rawicz to be a fraud. By further fictionalizing an already fictional book (by changing names and removing the laughable Yeti encounter) he hoped to reveal the "essential truth" (by which he means accuracy) of the tale. Only in Hollywood!

This blind anti-communism is a constant feature of Hollywood films. The 2001 film "Enemy at the Gates," about the battle of Stalingrad, was considered laughable by many historians for its historical inaccuracies. The 2008 movie "Defiance," which depicted a group of guerrillas, fabricated a conflict between the "pacifist" guerrillas and the "anti-Semitic" Red Army. Both claims flew in the face of all the available facts (See movie review in latest issue of "The Communist"). Openly fictional films like the latest Indiana Jones (2008) produce even more ridiculous caricatures of the Soviet Union.

These leaves one to wonder why the capitalist class, nearly two decades after the collapse of the

Soviet Union, is still so obsessed with burying the USSR? The Soviet Union challenged every aspect of capitalist ideology. It proved that racism was a capitalist ideology and that it could be successfully defeated. It proved that the working class could run a state better than the capitalists. It proved that the capitalist state was not invincible. And it proved that the workers could form a unified force against their capitalist masters. This is why they insist on continuing to attack the Soviet Union in the movies, on TV (see Glen Beck) in the press and in books. Capitalists do not want to ever be challenged like that again; it is our job to ensure that they are.✪

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