

CHALLENGE



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Mexico: CHALLENGE's Exposure of Flood Risk Draws Rulers' Wrath

MEXICO — Around 120 families in the 12 districts to the east of Valle de Mexico are at risk of flooding. The area where we live sinks about half a meter a year, because of the extraction of water from the subsoil through the fourteen wells installed in the area since the 1980s. The ground has sunk 15 meters from its original level and by 2020 may sink up to 19 meters.

The politicians did not want us inhabitants to know about the problem, so they tried to sabotage meetings and to discredit CHALLENGE when it informed us about the risk. They sent agitators to break up the neighbors' meetings. They paid for advertisements on buses warning the population about "an organization that is trying to deceive them and manipulate them." They weren't successful, since it was clear that CHALLENGE serves the interests of the workers.

Because of the constant attack from the bosses against our class, we have to be organized in a party that is not electoral, a party that unites and leads millions of workers to a communist revolution. Electoral parties only look to benefit the bosses that sponsor them and the politicians that lead them. Elections are a fraud for all workers and will never lead us to a change that will benefit us.

The government used another weapon when they realized that its strategy of provocation failed. It brought a group of college researchers to create the idea that something can be done without a

struggle. At first they were successful in creating an atmosphere of passivity, but it was reversed when CHALLENGE was proven right and some of the neighbors spoke about the importance of being organized.

The governing politicians explored two alternatives to "solve" the problem: the first is to evacuate the population located in the area of highest risk, and the second is to conduct hydraulic work to decrease the possibility of flooding. In reality that area should have never been populated, because of its risks. Capitalism

doesn't specify if it will avoid the risk of flooding. For now it only exists on paper.

No one forgets the scenes in 2000 and 2010 when thousands of families lost all of their belongings to sewage flooded from the channel. The government sent police to suppress them when they demanded help. Once again we see the hatred that the bosses and governments feel towards us workers. Capitalism is a racist system, which destroys the lives of all workers, but especially of the poorest.

We also don't forget our class brothers who died or were affected in Tabasco, Chiapas, Oaxaca, Puebla, Veracruz and Tamaulipas. The government says climate change is the reason for the disasters. The reality is that these phenomena become tragedies because of the permanent risk workers live under in this system. Capitalism

is the disaster. Only a society led by the working class can give us safety.

The risk of flooding and the lack of water in the eastern area of the Valle de Mexico show that the capitalist system doesn't work for the working class. The only alternative is to be organized in a communist party, PLP, to destroy killer capitalists and build a society led by the workers. ☺

talism forces workers to live in regions of high risk, like in places where lakes or rivers pass by hills. Capitalism is the problem, and the solution is to organize and fight to destroy it.

While hundreds of thousands of inhabitants in the poorest parts of Mexico City lack water, thousand of liters coming from the Sierra Nevada are sent to the river and end up drained in the city of Pachuca. CONAGUA (Mexico's national water commission) began studies to take advantage of this water, a project costing an estimated one billion pesos. They expect to store the water in a lake in Xico, make it drinkable and channel it to Mexico City. The project

The politicians did not want us to know about the problem...They tried to sabotage meetings, to discredit CHALLENGE... They sent agitators to break up neighbors' meetings...warning about 'an organization trying to deceive and manipulate them.' They weren't successful, since it was clear that CHALLENGE serves the workers.



Obama Asia Trip Flops; Imperialist, Domestic Rivals Add to Trade, Fiscal Woes

Huge deficits in foreign trade and the federal budget are hampering U.S. imperialists' ability to pay for the widening wars they need. The trade gap sucks \$44 billion out of the U.S. every month, as the U.S. imports more than it exports. The federal budget deficit jumped from \$960 billion in

2008 to \$1.42 trillion in 2009. The growing division among U.S. capitalists, evidenced by the Tea Party phenomenon and its proclaimed "anti-tax" and "anti-big government" advocacy, makes it more difficult for the rulers Obama represents to tackle the federal deficit in the U.S.. Meanwhile, the total cost of U.S. military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan (and now Yemen and Pakistan) has topped \$3 trillion.

Obama's recent Asia trip, intended to address the trade problem, was a failure. "Confidence in U.S. global economic leadership continues to wane," was how the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), U.S. imperialism's top think-tank, summed up the G20 summit. (CFR website, 11/12)

Seoul G20 Meeting Showed Imperialist Rivalry Driving Force in World

Open conflict prevailed in Seoul. Chinese and U.S. bosses charged each other with devaluing their currency to boost exports. "A 7.5 percent drop in the dollar over the past four months is making American goods cheaper overseas as demand in emerging economies propels sales for companies like General Electric Co." (Bloomberg, 11/11/10).

The Federal Reserve's printing of 600 billion new dollars, dumping them into circulation — announced during the G20 summit — only intensifies the trade war. It cheapens U.S. currency and lowers prices of U.S. exports, and makes foreign imports more expensive.

Host South Korea flatly rejected increased imports from the U.S., despite Obama's diplomacy and the presence of 30,000 GIs in the country. In general, the heads of the world's wealthiest countries told Obama what he could do with his plan to double U.S. exports: "G20 members rebuffed U.S. efforts to set firm targets for current account imbalances" (CFR).

The glaring lack of cooperation in Seoul proves that nation-states are essentially the instruments of separate, profit-driven ruling classes bent on selling their wares at one another's expense. And, with profit margins slashed by the economic crisis, the competition is becoming more cut-throat. "The fractious Seoul summit suggests that policy divergences are the shape of things to come" (CFR). Divisions within the U.S. also undermined Obama. Following Democrats' election losses, leaders in Seoul doubted his ability to get Congressional backing for the trade deals he promised.

Obama Deficit Plan #1: Attack Workers' Social Security, Medicare

While Obama was in Asia, his commission studying ways to reduce the budget and put the U.S. economy on a fiscally sounder war footing (see below), released its proposals: domestically, cut back Social Security and Medicare, raise the retirement age and raise taxes.

(The kind of thinking that went into this panel is reflected in Obama's appointed co-chairman, Alan Simpson, who referred to the retiree organization AARP as "the greedy geezers of America" and called Social Security "a milk cow with 310 million tits.")

Raising taxes, however, has become political

Support 20 Million Pakistani Flood Victims

The disastrous flooding in Pakistan has left nearly 20 million workers homeless and hungry.

Capitalism is responsible for the scale of the disaster, precipitated by the heavy monsoon rains that began in late July. Poorly-constructed dams, some built with World Bank funding and saturated with corruption, could not contain the mighty Indus River that flows through the full length of Pakistan. As its banks broke, floodwaters swept down from the northwest region through the Punjab and the southern-most Sindh province, destroying thousands of towns and villages and millions of acres of crops and livestock.

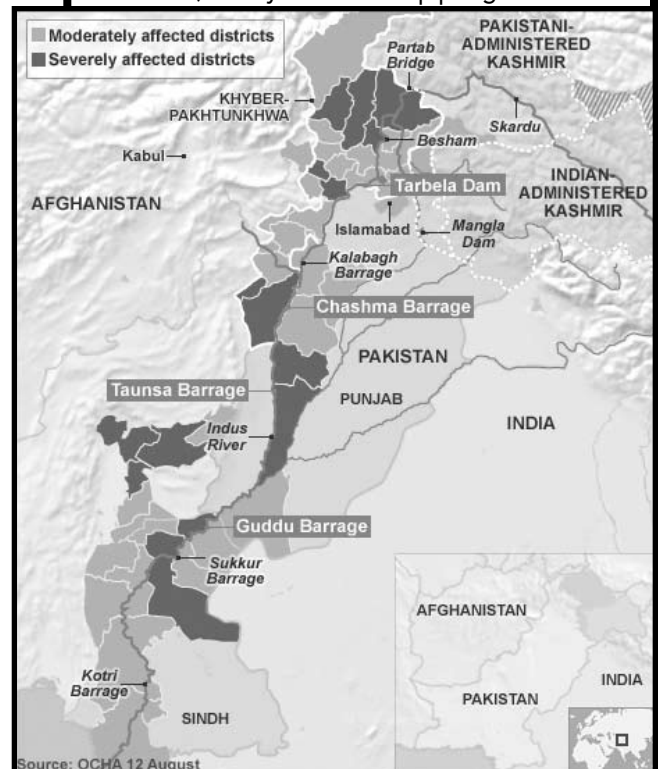
Massive flooding submerged roughly one-fifth of the country. Barriers built to divert the river and irrigate the huge landholdings of the wealthy were swept away. As the river rose, some landowners deliberately destroyed the barriers to protect their homes, releasing water that inundated the homes of the local peasants who invariably live on lower grounds.

Relief is slow. Too much of the international aid being distributed through local and international NGO's and government agencies goes into the hands of officials and staff, not into providing shelter and food for the working class who are the floods' major victims.

Friends in Pakistan are organizing to bring pressure on the government, the UN and charity groups to provide the necessities of shelter, food and clothing for the millions displaced. They are organizing efforts to feed and clothe those desperately in need.

But the working class cannot rely on ruling-class organizations to solve the inequalities of capitalism. We must build ties with workers worldwide and take responsibility for our working-class brothers and sisters whenever they are in need. We can do our part here by collecting money and writing letters of solidarity at our colleges, schools, religious institutions and workplaces. Money and letters collected will go directly to our friends who will buy clothes, food, medicine and kitchen utensils for those in makeshift shelters.

Checks or money orders should be made payable to Challenge Periodicals ("Flood Relief" on memo line) or PayPal online at plp.org



Source: OCHA 12 August

poison in an increasingly Tea Partying Congress, whose candidates just bought dozens of seats in the recent elections. These capitalists profit far less from the imperialist wars the Rockefeller

continued on p. 6

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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Shades of Old Jim Crow

Pickets Hit Racist School Bosses' 'Separate and Unequal' Scheme

BROOKLYN, NY, Oct. 28 — "The parents united will never be defeated!" This chant greeted parents as they entered school for parent-teacher conferences. About thirty students and teachers picketed at the entrance and passed out flyers inviting parents and neighbors to an upcoming meeting to discuss the Department of Education's (DoE) plans for racist attacks against our schools. PLP members and friends helped organize this event as part of a growing campaign to build multi-racial unity against the destructive plans of the local education bosses.

Our building houses several schools, which were created as part of an earlier reform program. Education officials broke up large comprehensive high schools around the city and created smaller schools which they hoped would be easier to control. In our case, the building is physically located in a mainly white, middle-class neighborhood. However, the students who attend all the schools are black, Latino and Asian working-class youth from surrounding neighborhoods. While teachers have struggled to help these students learn, graduate and go on to college, the DoE has placed every obstacle they can in the students' path. Budgets in the schools have been cut every year, the 100-year-old building has not been renovated and students are scanned through metal detectors every day as if they were criminals.

The newest attacks on our school are the most blatantly racist yet. We have been told the DoE plans to put an additional school into our building because the DoE's formulas say that our space can hold more students. The stated purpose of this school is to "serve the immediate neighborhood," the wealthier, white parents who have historically sent their children to magnet schools in other neighborhoods if they cannot afford, or do not believe in, private schools. This new school

would be screened, meaning students would have to meet high academic standards to get in. The building will get millions of dollars worth of renovation to accommodate the new school, although our schools have been told we would not be renovated, even if we increased our enrollment to match their formula for space usage. The DoE has said they may remove the metal detectors with the addition of the new school, something they have refused to do for years when the school housed mainly black and Latino students. We've even heard rumors that the DoE is consulting with the



custodial staff about the possibility of creating a separate entrance for the new school.

This kind of segregation within the same building is one of the most disgusting manifestations of the racism built into the capitalist system. This new school would create a system of "separate and unequal" within our building. Some of the politicians and DoE functionaries who have addressed the issue have been very direct about it, although others

claimed that the current schools could reap benefits from the additional money coming into the building with the new school.

Students and teachers in our schools are horrified and looking for ways to fight back against this assault. In the past, students from our schools walked out over the cell-phone ban and have protested budget cuts to the schools and mass transit. Last spring, teachers picketed against the budget cuts before school. We know we now need to unite students, teachers and parents in class struggle. The actions on parent-teacher conference night were our first steps this year in fighting these new attacks.

That day, the debate team of our schools organized a debate on the issue during the after-school program attended by about 100 students and teachers. Although the student debaters are all against the DoE's plans, they carefully researched and presented both sides so there could be a full discussion. After the debate, students and teachers were invited to "do something instead of just talking" and join the picket in front of school to publicize the issue to parents. A group of teachers, including Party members and friends, has been meeting after school to plan parent outreach and other tactics. These are good, but they are baby steps.

Many of the students and teachers involved are already CHALLENGE readers. We aim to develop a student study group and many more CHALLENGE readers as more angry students, parents and teachers join the fight-back efforts. If Party members give leadership to the struggle, it has the potential to explode into mass anger. We have a lot of work to do and a lot of lessons to learn. ✪

PL'ers Lead Anti-Sexist Battle

Chicago Moms' 43-day Sit-in Beats Bosses

CHICAGO, November 15 — The mothers of the Whittier elementary school here have given workers of the world another glimpse of our ability to establish a society of, for and by the workers. When Ron Huberman, the racist CEO of the Chicago Public Schools, threatened to raze the Whittier field house to build a soccer field for the nearby private school, the mothers collectively occupied the building for 43 days. "La casita", as the field house came to be known, will remain as a community center and be under the control of a non-profit led by the mothers.

The struggle for "La casita" (our "little Stella d'Oro") was within the confines of the bosses' reform struggle, but by participating in the occupation, bringing food, spending the night at the field house, doing the "grunt" work necessary, we gained the confidence of the community and were able to raise communist ideas.

One important struggle occurred around the politician hacks who wanted to use the brave mothers as a photo opportunity. While Alderman Danny Solis and Mayor Daley were vilified for the racist crooks that they are, others, like City Clerk and mayoral hopeful Miguel Del Valle were heralded. Some Whittier moms supported a local community group bearing a "Del Valle for Mayor" pin.

We brought up the bankruptcy of capitalism and ALL of its politician-protectors and wondered aloud why we needed politicians at all. We organized la casita for 43 days while under threat of

attack from the government and cops; surely we can organize the rest of society. Even though we did not convince everyone, we did not despair because it is struggles like these that give life to our ideas and allow us to grow in the process.

The necessity for communists to lead the battle against sexist ideas that run rampant in the working class was also evident. Latina mothers, who typically are disempowered not only on the job but at home with their husbands, smashed the sexist stereotype by acting as leaders and fighters. However, this empowerment has created tensions with male counterparts and it has spilled over into the struggle itself. One husband accused his wife, one of the key leaders in the struggle, of having an affair with one of the organizers. Despite struggle from other moms, she has since removed herself from the struggle, a sign that much more work is necessary. In the process, other moms have been going through similar problems. One of the mothers close to the Party was extremely emotional about the accusations because she was accused of something similar. She wisely pointed out that the solution to this struggle "is by involving the dads in the process from the very beginning."

Of course we can't change the dynamics of sexist relationships overnight but in the context of the class struggle, as in the fight for la casita, men can learn to accept leadership from the women and struggle side-by-side. In the process of fighting capitalism, we can smash the gender roles that it requires, men and women as competing commodities to be exploited, and instead create new roles as comrades-in-arms. This struggle at la casita and with the Whittier mothers is in its infancy. We will continue to fight and struggle. ✪



'Enough with promises, we want action!'

Baltimore Teachers Defy Bosses, Union, Obama Plan; Reject Contract

BALTIMORE, MD, October 16 — In the largest turnout of teachers in memory for a contract ratification vote, Baltimore teachers voted 1,540 to 1,107, on Wednesday and Thursday last week, to reject the proposed union contract.

These teachers in Baltimore handed a small but significant defeat to the education plans of the ruling class, which includes Obama and his secretary of Education Duncan, the national leadership of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), the leadership of the Baltimore Teachers' Union, Alonso (CEO of public schools in Baltimore), the local school board and the main Baltimore newspaper, *The Sun*. They had all hailed the proposed contract as a ground-breaking, progressive step forward.

On the morning before the main voting, a comrade was able to get an article published in *The Sun*. That Op-Ed piece criticized the anti-working class aspects of the contract. In particular, the contract includes a merit pay system which pits teachers against each other, encouraging them not to work collectively since only a small percentage can receive the rewards built into the contract.

The contract includes provisions which would lead to larger class sizes and a greater focus on test scores, which harm students' ability to learn. The article also pointed out that the new contract gives principals a lot of power to fire teachers, reduces the union's ability to protect teachers and, most importantly, helps the ruling class control what ideas are taught in the schools. The article seems to have played a helpful role — along with lots of other grassroots opposition — in contributing to a widespread understanding of the con-

tract's true nature.

But editors at *The Sun* newspaper decided to cut out nearly all of the main political points concerning ramifications of a national curriculum from the original Op-Ed piece. Here is some of that section:

Two wars are currently raging because of this, and more war is on the horizon, including the threat of a world war. . .ExxonMobil, along with the other major oil and gas giants — and the big banks who provide them with financing — are key players, behind the scenes, in running the United States. The continued and expanding profits of these institutions require war. They need millions of young people who are willing to fight and die for them. To accomplish this, the ruling class needs public schools to teach a particular set of beliefs and "facts."

The new high-stakes tests are likely to require — for students to score well — that particular answers favorable to the world-view of ExxonMobil be given. And any teacher whose students haven't been duly habituated to giving those responses will be evaluated poorly, and denied raises, because his or her students didn't make the appropriate "progress." This sort of scenario is where Obama's Race-to-the-Top is headed. And this is another reason why we should not support the proposed contract which is inextricably tied up with Race-to-the-Top.

However, a significant portion of the opposition to the contract was based not on this political disagreement or even on reformist disagreements with the substance of the contract, but on the fact

that it is quite vague, leaving many new details to be worked out by new union/management committees, after its adoption. The CEO, school board, and local union leaders are now taking advantage of this, planning a second vote soon, with few if any changes to the proposed contract. Instead, they are focusing on efforts to just "clarify" the proposed contract to teachers.

About a dozen AFT staffers were brought to Baltimore for several weeks, traveling from school to school to help sell the contract. In opposition to both versions, activist teachers have organized meetings, distributed flyers, hosted a city-wide spaghetti dinner and created a button: "DEFEND STUDENTS — VOTE NO."

During this and future struggles, PLP members need to do much better at distributing CHALLENGE as widely as possible. And a strong effort must also be made to expand the opposition movement within the union so that it's truly inclusive. In the past, teacher groups that have politically challenged the union leadership here have been predominately white. In a city where the vast majority of students and teachers are black, this must change!

The bosses use racism in the schools to divide teachers, parents and students. Communists reject the racist ideas built into capitalism, so teachers must build multi-racial unity as we fight to make the world better for our students, the future workers of the world. No matter what the outcome of the second vote on November 17th, the victory for the Party and the working class will be that multi-racial unity. ☼

Locked-out Workers Keep Up Fight vs. Nursing Home Bosses

HARTFORD, CT, November 3 — The struggle continues against nursing home owner Spectrum Health Care (see CHALLENGE, 10/20). Several weeks ago, supporters of locked-out workers at four nursing homes rallied at the Park Place Health Center in Hartford, marking six months of the workers' fight.

It began with a strike in April and, in effect, became a lockout in late August. At that time the union, District 1199, agreed to end the strike with no conditions attached, hoping the company would recall workers or would have to give back pay to those not recalled. Then Spectrum offered jobs to a few workers, but the vast majority remain out on the street.

The workers originally struck after having worked without a contract for 13 months, during which time Spectrum had tried to break the union by:

- Penalizing workers for signing in one minute late;
- Assigning injured workers to "light duty" and then cutting their pay to \$10 an hour;
- Demanding workers forego any wage increase until July 2011, a period of over 2½ years;
- Intimidating and firing active union members;
- Hiring scabs with the intent of replacing the strikers permanently.

New developments are creating greater challenges for the workers.

Firstly, the company has not followed seniority when recalling workers, ignoring those with over 20 years service, while recalling people with under a year. Furthermore, if workers do not accept the jobs offered, they're let go, even if the job offered is part-time (32 hours/month), while one's former job was virtually full-time (32 hours/week). This is a direct attack on the workers' living conditions.

Secondly, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) postponed the hearing on Spectrum's unfair labor practices (ULPs) from November 2 to January 25, saying it "needed more time" to deal with the load of ULP complaints the union kept filing.

In reality, this is another attack on the workers, forcing them to picket through the cold winter months, probably past January, since it will take several weeks after the hearing to reach a decision. This is still another example of the NLRB's "neutrality" — it could have expedited the hearing instead of postponing it.

As workers on the picket line have expressed repeatedly, there's no way that bosses — whose main goal is making a buck — should be in charge of a nursing home that serves people who need constant health care. The workers themselves would do a far better job.

We need a communist society in which the workers run everything, instead of a capitalist society controlled by the bosses for their own interests. ☼

'Movie Night' Links School Cuts to Capitalist Crisis

LOS ANGELES, CA, November 6 — Our PLP college club hosted a movie night to watch the film "A Grain of Sand." This film documents the struggle that began in the late 1970s of high school teachers in Mexico around public education. Over twenty students from various campuses in Southern California attended the event and discussed the significance of local and international fights against budget cuts to public education. Through this discussion we reached a better understanding of how these cuts reflect the crisis of U.S. capitalism, and how neo-liberal policies aiming to privatize education in Latin America are really just a form of imperialism.

The movie night resulted from our participation in the student coalitions that have been protesting fee hikes and cuts to state universities and community colleges in Southern California. This year many students have begun to question more deeply the nature of the cuts and whether it is enough to attack the university administration or state politicians for mismanaging the budget. We've struggled to connect the cuts to the global crisis of capitalism, pointing to the student and worker fight in Europe around austerity measures.

Adding to this international perspective, we've also pointed out the expanded spending on imperialist war in Afghanistan. Providing this international perspective has enabled us to explain the systemic

nature of the budget cuts and to argue for the need to build working-class consciousness and unity. By looking at historical struggles such as the one portrayed in "A Grain of Sand," we've also been better able to point out the limits of reform struggle and the need to fight for a revolutionary communist movement.

There was much disagreement on what lessons to draw from historical examples such as the Mexican teachers' struggle against budget cuts, but many agreed it's necessary to continue these discussions to better understand how capitalism works and to build a movement to destroy it. Most importantly, through these types of events we've slowly but steadily built a stronger communist presence within the student movement against the budget cuts to public education in Southern California.

At the end of the night, students from UCLA asked to borrow the film so that they can show it on their campus. We are now working with those students to organize a film showing. In this manner, we're struggling to popularize the Party's revolutionary communist politics within the struggle against cuts to schools and universities in the region. ☼



Work Stoppage Rips Racist Slur Mass Rank-and-File Action Needed vs. Racist Transit Bosses

NEW YORK CITY, November 15 — The recent annual mass meeting of TWU (Transport Workers Union) Local 100, representing most, but not all, MTA (Metropolitan Transit Authority) workers, painted a grim future for the union. However, angry rank-and-file workers who want mass confrontation against MTA bosses over racism, unemployment, pay, service and fares have the potential to spark a bright beacon of mass anti-racist class struggle for the entire international working class.

Transit workers move New York and they can stop New York in fighting the racist MTA bosses, who focus cuts on mainly black, Latino and immigrant riders and workers. Bus Operators in an MTA Queens Village depot, represented by ATU (Amalgamated Transit Union) Local 1056, demonstrated some of this power on November 12 when they refused to take assignments from a racist dispatcher who called a Bus Operator a n-----. Their protest halted more than 20 buses for two hours and defied New York's Taylor Law that bans job actions by government workers.

Such struggles can provide fertile ground to build a mass, fighting Progressive Labor Party that unites workers, the unemployed, students and soldiers in a revolutionary communist movement against the entire racist worldwide system of capitalism.

Racist U.S. Bosses Target Mass Transit

A liberal New York Daily News writer and the ATU International President detailed U.S. rulers' nation-wide cuts to mass transit. Huge layoffs, union-busting and contracts with 0% raises or cuts

have become the norm in just a few years. TWU Local 100 President John Samuelsen warned of pension cuts for both new and current MTA workers, possibly raising years of service and the retirement age needed to collect a pension to 30/62 from 25/55.

In the 1960s and '70s, anti-racist rebellions in black inner cities, wildcat strikes and the civil rights movement opened up relatively stable and well-paying transit jobs to black, Latino and immigrant workers. But today rivalry between imperialists — the world's richest and most powerful capitalist classes — is forcing bosses worldwide to exploit "their" workers more than their competitors'. U.S. bosses' "recovery" is built directly on mass racist unemployment that forces double unemployment rates on black workers and attacks all workers.

Rank-and-File Must Push Union Hacks Out of the Way

Several workers at the November 5 mass meeting told CHALLENGE they've organized job slowdowns over safety. These efforts were mainly individual, with varying support from co-workers. Many of these angry workers want backing and leadership from top union officials. But only rank-and-file workers themselves can lead militant fight-back.

The Local 100 leadership effectively accepted layoffs in return for maintaining the current contract. Local 100 heads spent most of their time and energy on lobbying for transit-funding bills and negotiating the re-hiring of laid-off workers in various titles. Once they even floated a scheme to create a Local 100-operated dollar-van company to

re-hire laid-off bus operators. These efforts didn't challenge the layoffs in the first place and failed to win even small gains. Most anti-layoff protests or job actions were small, scattered and organized separately in Local divisions.

Looking towards the next contract, Samuelsen said neither Republicans nor Democrats are our friends. But then almost in the same breath he bragged about helping save NY Democratic Congressional seats and insisted he would lead a massive lobbying campaign to revive two transit funding bills that died in Congress. Lobby and give money to our enemies says Samuelsen!

Workers Need Mass Class Struggle

Both the leading faction of Local 100 hacks and their "opposition" focus on corruption and in-fighting instead of opposing more layoffs and organizing support for laid-off transit workers. Hoping for their help is a dead end. The recent anti-racist mini-strike of rank-and-file ATU Local 1056 members, and major strikes of transit workers in Europe, show that rank-and-file workers can organize a mass fight-back against the MTA and unite transit workers, employed and unemployed.

The bosses can use courts, banks and the rest of their racist class dictatorship to reverse temporary gains won through worker's militant struggle. But with communist leadership, strikes, job actions and rebellions can build the forces needed to win a lasting, anti-racist, communist working-class dictatorship that smashes the bosses in revolution. ☛

Need Red Politics

Ireland: 40,000 Students Protest Tuition Hike, Battle Cops

"The sleeping giant that is the student movement has been awoken," said the president of the Union of Students in Ireland as 40,000 students poured into Dublin to protest the government's plan to double tuition.

Some students occupied the Department of Finance, supported by hundreds of others outside. Mounted police charged the crowds, clubbing demonstrators, who refused to be cowed and fought back.

It is the task of communists in Ireland and around the world to arm this giant, and others like it, with revolutionary ideas. This giant, composed of students and workers seething at the absolute degradation that capitalism heaps on us, are fighting for lower tuition, higher wages and better living conditions.

These are vital needs for workers and students around the world and they should be supported in whatever way possible (letters of solidarity and simultaneous demonstrations are two great ways). But let us not be fooled:

capitalists will concede to these demands only if workers' anger threatens to boil over into a direct challenge to their rule. Especially in this time of economic crisis, their main concern is profits, not the lives of workers. History has shown that giants armed only with demands that make capitalism a bit more tolerable for workers are giants that can be pacified, co-opted or corrupted. The giant that

REALLY scares the bosses is the one armed with revolutionary ideas and ready to fight for a worldwide communist society.

This struggle is part of a larger class war in which the government has spent billions of dollars bailing out Ireland's banks, while at the same time reducing social spending, including increasing class size in primary and secondary schools, cutting the budget for higher education, and raising tuition. The song remains the same: the working class bears the burden of solving the bosses' crisis. This is a fundamental aspect of capitalism and only its destruction of will permanently end this brutality.

The awakening giant in Ireland should inspire students and workers around the world. At the City University in New York City, for instance, the Board of Trustees is planning to raise tuition again, despite it having climbed 44% since 2003. Similar attacks are happening all over. Let us raise up our own giants wherever we are and fight back! ☛



Mexico's Miners' 2-Year Strike Bucks Boss-Cop-Army Attacks

MEXICO — After almost two years in strike, the miners in Cananea, Sonora keep strong in their movement. They continue to reject any scraps the owners or authorities try to throw at them. They have withstood attacks by the army, federal police and clash groups.

"We didn't begin the strike to sell our Collective Agreement. We are not intimidated by the boastful bosses from the company or the government," pointed out a miner leader of Local 65, the Cananean branch of the Mexican Mine Workers' Union. These miners are fighting against the most powerful and repressive mining corporation in the country, Grupo Mexico.

Cananea has a traditional history of workers' struggle. It has extended to both sides of the border and, in many occasions, gained international workers' solidarity. The strikes in Cananea at the beginning of the 20th century began the armed Mexican Revolution of 1910.

Cananea continues to be a focus of workers' resistance. Support miners in order to create international working-class solidarity. Help transform a struggle, which is to maintain employment, into a struggle to destroy the putrid capitalist system. ☛



LETTERS



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

March vs. ICE-NYC Prisons' Anti-Immigrant Gang-up

On Tuesday, October 19, we joined a group of over 1,000 workers and students from Brooklyn and Queens belonging to the reformist community organization "Make the Road New York" and marched over the Brooklyn Bridge to demonstrate at the mayor's office in Manhattan.

We protested the collaboration of the ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) and New York City Department of Corrections (DOC) in the city jails. The DOC has been sharing the information of each and every person incarcerated with ICE, including name and place of birth. They can deport an undocumented worker no matter the charge or accusation, whether they were found guilty or innocent, and no matter how much time they've been incarcerated. The DOC voluntarily turns over up to 4,000 undocumented workers to ICE every year despite no legal obligation to do so.

Make the Road New York made a legal challenge to stop the collaboration between city prisons and ICE, and these Arizona-style deportations. One participant following the event stated that Make the Road New York's solution doesn't give them much hope, and will only serve as a smoke-screen for opportunistic politicians.

This struggle must be directed against capitalism, and we're planning to lead that struggle as we make contacts and expose the dead-end of reformism. Currently we are expanding our CHALLENGE readership, and are pushing for another demonstration in front of one of the prisons themselves.

Worker from Manhattan

U.S. Airport Workers Back Chicago Moms, French Strikers

Some of the airport workers who get CHALLENGE helped with two Party-led efforts to aid workers here and internationally. They collected a small donation to send to Chicago to contribute to the support of the Whittier rebels who are trying to save their community center from the racist Chicago bosses who want the land (see page 3).

A solidarity letter written in French was e-mailed to trade union workers of CGT, one of France's largest trade unions, which is the rough equivalent to the SEIU. They were also sent a shipment of CHALLENGES.

Party members have emphasized to the airport workers how these two class struggles on a larger scale are similar to our smaller airport fights against our racist bosses: we are all victimized by racist, sexist, and anti-working-class capitalism which can't meet workers' needs. Only a communist society led by PLP and workers can. Here is a translation of the letter to the workers in France:

"Revolutionary Greetings to our French, African, and Arab brother and sister workers. We know of your struggles in France against anti-worker and racist Sarkozy. We stand in solidarity with you! We work at a large airport in North America. We are citizens and immigrants. Your class struggle is ours too! Against this racist, sexist, and anti-worker system we call on the international working class to support you! 1968! Liberty! Equality! Fraternity!"

Airport Red

Jon Stewart to D.C. Rally: 'Sit Down, Shut Up!'

The October 30th Rally to Restore Sanity put on by Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert had a clear message to those on the Left: "sit down and shut up." The 250,000 people who attended (dwarfing the numbers of Glenn Beck's rally and the unions' rally) were treated to what was largely a commercial for various Viacom products (Viacom owns Comedy Central) occasionally interrupted by anti-communist attacks and nationalist pandering.

The stage was surrounded by U.S. flags, the hosts wore U.S. flag suits, and soldiers and musicians were brought out to reverently sing the national anthem and other patriotic songs. Both in the lead-up to, and during, the rally Stewart attacked those that loudly and vocally opposed the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan as "unreasonable extremists." He chided as ridiculous those that have

called the Tea Party racist and those that criticized Juan Williams' racist statements about Muslims. During the rally he called these critics "Stalinists" (the indefinably evil boogeyman of capitalist propaganda) and "Marxists actively subverting our Constitution."

As much as the working class needs Marxists to actively subvert the capitalists' Constitution (and yes, also celebrate the legacy of Stalin), one wonders where this mass party is other than in the minds of John Birchers and Jon Stewart? The reality is that this rally, whose audience was not the Tea Party or the Fox News set, but liberals and Leftists, was held to ridicule and mock the Left into not questioning U.S. imperialism or racist ruling-class power.

Stewart and Colbert mocked the idea that we live in a society of class struggle and in so doing undermined workers' ability to fight back in that struggle. Stewart closed by saying that we are in "hard times but not end times" so we should cool it with the outrage and the demands for change. This is an easy statement for him to make from his penthouse in Manhattan. But for the millions whose unemployment benefits are running out, or the millions more who are being kicked out of their houses and thrown into the streets this is the end times. Likewise, for those in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Sudan, and now Yemen who have to worry about U.S. troops killing them in the night, it most certainly must feel like the end times.

He will excuse us if some of us are outraged and refuse to be polite about a system that has murdered more people through slavery, poverty, starvation, neglect, imperialism, and war than any other in human history.

Red Beard

Anti-War Vets Defy Fascist Cops

This year's NYC Veterans' Day parade included a cat-and-mouse game between anti-war vets and cops trying to snatch their signs and arrest them. The ruling class invested heavily in patriotism, with 3,000 active-duty military, dozens of marching bands and cadet groups from all parts of the country, war vehicles, thousands of free flags and every politician they could get out of bed.

I joined some Vietnam anti-war vets I knew and a few Iraq and Afghanistan vets who were marching with the peace groups because everyone was notified that only peace groups and banners were permitted; anti-war groups and personal signs were prohibited.

We anti-war vets decided to keep our signs folded until we had marched a few blocks and if that idea failed, we would continue our chants, like "Jobs are what we're fighting for, we don't want your god-damned war!" Our political chanting proved very effective for creating crowd support (like at PLP events).

When we opened our signs, cops started breaking into our formations, threatening arrests if we displayed them (my sign read, "Bring the Troops and the Money Home Now!") We folded our signs until the cops challenged vets in another row and then we re-opened them again.

This went back and forth for a few blocks while ironically the peace groups were chanting, "This is what democracy looks like." I believe they were referring to their right to preach "peace" but with the cops running around like Nazis, the chant took on the meaning of, "This is what fascism looks like!"

I guess the fascist cops realized that we would not yield and they decided against a mass arrest, so we were able to complete 90% of the parade without harassment. Despite the two-hour patriotic fanfare the crowds were exposed to, when our group, which is always placed at the end, got to march, we were received by the majority with such applause and enthusiasm that I began to understand why the ruling class feels so vulnerable and fears our presence

Korea War Vet

Racist Tea Party Brings Back Jim Crow

The mid-term elections (11/2) once again saw the intensification of efforts to intimidate black

and Latino voters. Part of a long tradition of racially-based voter intimidation campaigns in the U.S., such campaigns have been rapidly escalating since 2000.

Tea Party groups across the country formed voter-fraud teams. They patrolled polling sites in "suspicious" communities, all of which "just happened" to be working class and either black or Latino. In Illinois, Congressman Mark Kirk was caught on tape urging the dispatch of intimidation teams to black neighborhoods to discourage voters. Across the country Tea Party poll watchers were encouraged to go to polling places and directly accuse people of fraud. In Phoenix, people were encouraged to attack those who looked "illegal" as fraudulent voters. In Houston, Tea Party thugs directly intimidated people in black neighborhoods to prevent them from voting.

In this case it is immaterial that voter fraud (of the kind they are "fighting") is virtually non-existent or that the whole election circus is a fraud. It exists only to legitimize the capitalist class dictatorship; these acts of intimidation are solely for the purpose of intensifying and perpetuating racism. While useless for changing the system, voting does send clear messages about who is and who is not a legitimate member of society. By actively working to exclude black and Latino workers from voting the message of these peoples' second-class status is reinforced. The fact that the government does nothing to stop these attacks only confirms their legitimacy and that of racism as a whole.

A comrade

Obama's Trade and Fiscal Woes

continued from page 2

forces need to control foreign oil supplies and pipelines on behalf of the likes of ExxonMobil and Chevron.

Obama Deficit Plan #2: Make War Machine Leaner and Meaner

The supposedly bi-partisan Obama budget panel that proposed the deficit plan has sterling imperialist credentials. Co-chairmen are Bill Clinton's old chief of staff Erskine Bowles and conservative ex-senator Simpson, who's ready to impoverish elderly workers. Bowles sits on Morgan Stanley's board (his wife is on J.P. Morgan Chase's board). Simpson served on the 2006 Iraq Study Group that led to Robert Gates replacing Donald Rumsfeld and the consequent deadly U.S. surges in Iraq and Afghanistan.

As for military savings, Bowles-Simpson targets GI health benefits and costly weapons systems that are useless for the wars the Pentagon is actually waging and planning. It also urges the closing of lavish U.S. bases in Europe and Japan in favor of Spartan "forward operating bases" closer to potential flashpoints. Troop strength, however, remains unscathed in the proposed cuts. So much for beating swords into plowshares.

Nowhere do profit-saving Bowles and Simpson mention saving workers' lives by ending U.S.-led genocide in Iraq and Afghanistan. These wars, and far bloodier ones to come, are central to U.S. imperialists' schemes to save themselves in the face of sharpening global rivalry.

What the working class needs is the kind of fight-back PLP is helping to organize among transit workers (p. 5); teachers, parents and students (pp. 3, 4); Mexico (p. 1); and GM (p. 7). PLP is bringing our communist ideas to these class struggles, the basis for growing the Party into the force the working class needs to destroy the profit system and its mass racist unemployment, poverty-producing crises and worker-killing imperialist wars.

Only a communist revolution can create a worker-run society that can eradicate these evils. ☺

GM Rank-and-Filer: 'Union leaders in cahoots with the bosses and government'

In a follow-up of recent Party actions with workers in a GM plant in Indianapolis, another comrade and I recently made another trip to the plant in order to get an update on their situation and increase worker solidarity.

For those who don't know, these GM workers recently rejected a new contract that would facilitate the selling of the metal fabrication plant to another private company, JD Norman Industries, which would then cut their hourly wages in half (to about \$14). The workers vehemently rejected this proposal, implicating their UAW union leaders as being on the side of the bosses (See CHALLENGE 9/22).

Upon first interactions with workers before their shift change, we were told that the plant was no longer in danger of being sold; however, the plant is scheduled for closure by next autumn, forcing the workers to either relocate to another GM plant and potentially lose benefits and wages, or find work elsewhere with another company.

The one worker who provided us with the most information is a GM "migrant:" one of many autoworkers who is forced to move around the country frequently in order to keep up with numerous plant closures and layoffs. She explained to us that she currently "lives out of her van, staying on my brother's couch," due to the uncertainty she faces with her line of work.

She was kind enough to answer a few questions in a short interview we put together (as paraphrased):

How long have you been employed with GM (this plant or others)?

I have been employed with GM for 25 1/2 years, and this is my fourth GM plant. I have spent roughly about one year at this specific plant.

In that time, how have conditions changed (for better or for worse)?

Absolutely for worse! The UAW union leadership is in cahoots with the bosses and the government. Despite the small size of the strike fund that remained after the new (auto industry bailout) contract, that didn't stop them from raiding it.

At this point, how would you describe your UAW leadership?

They're arrogant! They're too male, too pale, and too stale! They're complacent, and they've forgotten where they came from. They came from labor backgrounds, but once they get entrenched in their position among the hierarchy, they completely lose sight of their roots. They're definitely not willing to sacrifice their wealth and luxuries to fight for the common workers.

What would be your ideal solution/conclusion to this current labor conflict?

I would prefer to see the unions as we know them be dismantled, and establish a new worldwide union of workers. If everyone quit paying their dues to the big-wigs, eventually their funds would dry out. I would be willing to take a pay cut; that is, if I knew the money would be going to help the workers overall. Hold on to that money, and

instead donate it to a charity or a food bank.

How would you describe the current Obama administration's contributions to "helping" the auto industry? The previous administration?

I feel that the auto bailout was needed, that if it hadn't happened it would have had an overall ripple effect that would have brought down the whole economy (which would have been good for revolution!). We originally saw Obama as the lesser of two evils. Bush and the Republicans hurt us more, but the Democrats definitely take black and Latino workers for granted. I don't intend on voting in the mid-terms; the first time I haven't voted since 1972.

All this shows that there are workers who have begun to see the failures of capitalist politics and consider alternatives. In addition to receiving this friend's contact information, we were able to receive more invitations to keep up with their struggle, including a benefit breakfast on the upcoming weekend. With a continued strong line and dedication, we can definitely sow the seeds of communist politics in this plant and others en route towards worker revolution. ☺



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

Destroy torture tapes, get praise!

NYT, 11/10 — Central Intelligence Agency officials will not face criminal charges for the destruction of dozens of videotapes depicting the brutal interrogation of terrorism suspects, the Justice Department said Tuesday.

...Jose A. Rodriguez, Jr., the former head of the agency's clandestine service..., ordered his staff to destroy tapes of the interrogations.... Mr. Rodriguez told another top C.I.A. official that if the images were disclosed "out of context, they would make us look terrible; it would be 'devastating' to us," an e-mail said. The tapes showed hours of interrogation of...detainees, including the infliction of a technique called waterboarding that simulates drowning....Mr. Bush wrote:

"Our intelligence officers carried out their orders with skill and courage, and they deserve our gratitude for protecting our nation."

Top imperialisms led in torture

NYT, 11/6 — A lawyer for 200 Iraqis demanding a public inquiry into what they have described as brutal mistreatment by British soldiers in a secret detention center near Basra told the High Court in London on Friday that the abuse amounted to "Britain's Abu Ghraib." The assertion was buttressed with video recordings...The former detainees said they had been subjected to beatings, starvation, sleep deprivation, electric shocks, prolonged periods of nakedness and sexual humiliation by female soldiers...Their army training procedures throughout the British military role in Iraq sanctioned interrogation techniques that included threats, sensory deprivation and enforced nakedness, and trainee interrogators were told that they should aim to provoke humiliation, disorientation, exhaustion and fear.

New ways to harass immigrants

NYT, 11/10 — Under the program..., the fingerprints of everyone booked into a local or county jail will automatically be sent to the Department of

Homeland Security and compared with prints in the agency's databases... they might seek to deport him or her....Immigrant advocates contend that the program has caught up a disproportionate number of immigrants charged with low-level offenses, rather than the dangerous criminals it was primarily intended to snag....Janet Napolitano, the Homeland Security Secretary, has declared repeatedly that the program will be mandatory for the entire country by 2013.

Koran and bible both o.k. oppression

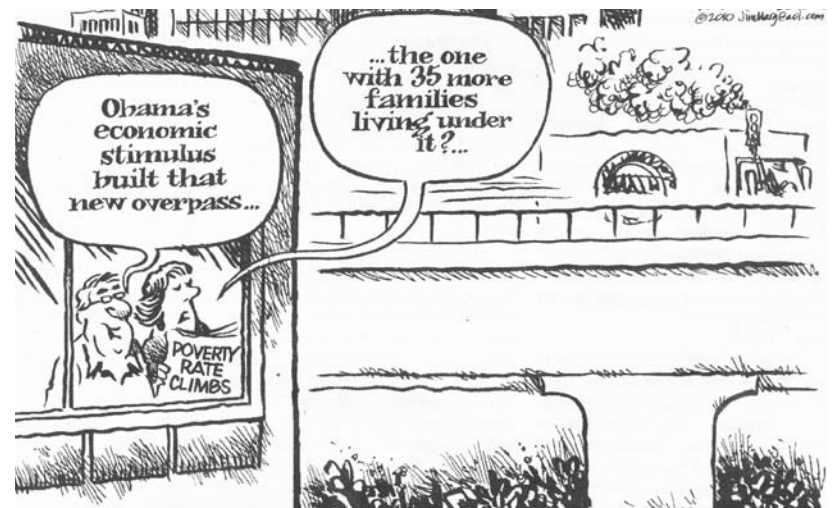
Otherwords.org, 9/28 — Let's be frank. All of the great religions have exploited and oppressed women throughout their histories and, at the extreme orthodox end of the spectrum, still do. Tell me, which religions — again, in their most conservative form — treat women as equals?...There is no moral outrage committed in the name of Christianity that has not found its justification in the Bible, from the Crusades to the Inquisition, from slavery to the persecution of homosexuals and the subjugation of women. They were just doing God's will. It's the same with radical Islam.

Four more war years (half-truth)

NYT, 11/11 — The Obama administration has increasingly emphasized the idea that the United States will have forces in Afghanistan until at least the end of 2014....All cited 2014 this week as the key date for handing over the defense of Afghanistan to the Afghans themselves. Implicit in their message...was that the United States would be fighting the Taliban in Afghanistan for at least four more years....The message shift is effectively a victory for the military, which has long said the July 2011 deadline undermined its mission by making Afghans reluctant to work with troops perceived to be leaving shortly. "They say you'll leave in 2011 and the Taliban will chop their heads off."

Profit system really IS thievery!

NYT, 11/5 — Six oil and gas service companies and a prominent freight-forwarding company



agreed to...penalties in one of the largest corporate bribery cases ever...

The largest penalty...will be paid by Panalpina, which made bribery payments on behalf of customers....Pride International...paid \$800,000 in bribes to government officials in Venezuela, India and Mexico....Royal Dutch Shell...paid \$2 million to subcontractors with the knowledge that some or all of the money would be used for bribes to Nigerian customs officials....Transocean...bribed Nigerian customs officials to import its deepwater oil rigs into Nigerian waters. Tidewater was involved in the payment of bribes to tax inspectors in Azerbaijan...Noble [had] bribery activity, while Global Santa Fe [made] payments to Nigerian customs officials....The companies..."resorted to lucrative arrangements behind the scenes to obtain phony paperwork and special favors."

Killer kop gets tiny sentence

NYT, 11/6 — In Oakland, tensions between the city's sizable black population and its police force are longstanding, even though the city has a black mayor and police chief.

...Protesters vandalized storefronts and clashed with the police here on Friday night after a white former transit police officer was given what they considered to be a light sentence for killing an unarmed black man...

With time already served, Mr. Mehserle could be released from prison as early as next year. He was convicted in July of involuntary manslaughter in the death of Oscar Grant III, who was shot while lying face down on New Year's Day 2009.

Bolshevik Revolution: Workers Seized Power; Can Do It Again

Ninety-three years ago, November 7, 1917, marked the 20th Century's single most important event, the Bolshevik revolution, which directly inspired the Chinese Revolution and anti-imperialist struggles worldwide, from Vietnam to Africa to Latin America.

Russia's working class, headed by the Bolshevik Party's revolutionary communists and its leader, Vladimir Lenin, freed one-sixth of the world's surface from capitalism. They proved once and for all the possibility of creating a world without exploitation, where those who produce all value, the working class, can enjoy the fruits of their labor, not have it stolen by a few parasitic bosses and their lackeys.

The Russian revolution was the first serious attempt by workers and peasants to seize, hold and consolidate state power. Although capitalism has returned to the former Soviet Union, workers will not forget that the Soviet working class defeated capitalism in 1917; smashed the imperialist armies of 17 countries (including Japan, the U.S., Britain, France, among others) which invaded Russia in 1918 to try to crush the revolution; freed the masses, especially women, from the yoke of capitalist, feudal and religious oppression; and then in 1945 defeated the mightiest, most barbaric army the capitalists had ever organized: the Nazi Wehrmacht.

The revolution frightened the world's bosses, who immediately sent their armies to try — in Churchill's words — to "strangle it in the cradle." From 1918 to 1923, the Red Army led millions of workers to defeat the imperialists' counter-revolution. Nearly five million died in that fight. Many were the most committed workers the revolution had produced. Lenin himself died because of injuries inflicted by a hired killer.

The masses, led by their revolutionary party, showed great courage and determination to defend and build their revolution. They proved workers' and peasants' revolutionary violence was vital to the seizure of state power.

Internationally, the Bolshevik Revolution inspired the formation of communist parties worldwide. This in turn led to communists organizing industrial unions involving massive class struggles. It spread the communist idea that workers could run society in their own class interest.

THE REVOLUTION'S ACHIEVEMENTS

The Bolshevik Revolution brought Russia to heights of productive development that capitalism — in a similar time period and circumstances — could never have dreamed of. With the working class in power, the Revolution coordinated its social-economic efforts for the production and exchange of the necessities, the comforts and even some luxuries of life, making them available to all. The Soviet system produced for use, not profit. This can only be accomplished by abolishing capitalist profits and the private ownership of property, with its exploitation, poverty, unemployment, racism, fascism and imperialist wars.

In the 1930s, when the entire capitalist world sank into depression, leaving tens of millions worldwide jobless and starving (much like today), the Soviet Union was building a new society without unemployment and hunger. They created some measure of a decent life for workers in an incredibly short time, transforming a 90% illiteracy rate into one in which nearly everyone was literate.

They built the world's most complete healthcare system for the working class, abolished prostitution, erected "palaces of culture" adjoining most large factories, and, as Churchill later noted, went "from the

plow to the atomic bomb" in just 30 years.

Around 1938, the USSR had achieved an era of free bread. One could enter a cafeteria, order little or nothing, and receive all the bread desired. "You needed, you received" — at least to that extent. During the drive for heavy industry, living standards rose strikingly while the rest of the world was mired in the Great Depression.

The Soviet Union not only freed workers but also fought racism and sexism. The battle against racism was particularly significant. As pro-communist Paul Robeson described his trips to the Soviet Union, "I felt like a human being for the first time since I grew up. Here I am not a Negro but a human being. Before I came I could hardly believe that such a thing could be... Here, for the first time in my life, I walk in full human dignity."

HEROIC FIGHT AGAINST THE NAZIS

In 1941, the bosses again tried to destroy the revolution. Hitler, using all of Europe's resources and the largest military machine ever assembled, invaded the Soviet Union with 4,000,000 troops. They discovered the Soviets were no pushover as had occurred in Western Europe. Hitler's prediction — endorsed by Western military "experts" — of "capturing Moscow in six weeks" went up in smoke.

Nazi troops found total destruction and desolation in every captured city or town —



the "scorched earth" policy. Soviet defenders burned everything to the ground that they could not take with them and then organized armed resistance behind enemy lines: the Partisans. They dismantled over 6,000 factories, moving them east of the Ural Mountains, re-assembling them to produce weapons again, a feat requiring total unity and support of Soviet workers, unmatched by any country before or since.

Soviet soldiers and workers fought for Stalingrad block-by-block, house-by-house and room-by-room to halt the "unbeatable" Nazi invaders. Workers in arms factories on 12-hour shifts produced weapons 24 hours a day for the Red Army. When Nazi troops captured factories, heroic Soviet workers and soldiers would re-take them. The USSR lost well over 20,000,000 citizens in WW II, more than all the Western countries combined.

The entire German Sixth Army and 24 of Hitler's generals were surrounded and killed or captured in the battle of Stalingrad. Never again would the Nazis mount a successful offensive against the Red Army. Even Western historians admitted Stalingrad was the turning point of World War II.

Only after the Nazis were on the run following their defeats at Stalingrad and in the week-long Battle of the Kursk — the biggest armored battle in world history, involving millions of soldiers and 6,000 tanks — did the U.S.-U.K. forces invade Western Europe. On a 2,000-mile-long front, it was the communist-led Soviet Union that smashed the Nazis, engaging 80% of Hitler's "finest," the largest and most powerful army ever mounted by a capitalist power.

All this was accomplished under the leadership of Josef Stalin. No wonder the world's bosses re-ville him to this day.

LESSONS TO BE LEARNED

Unfortunately, the Bolsheviks suffered from many political weaknesses, leading to the return of capitalism in the USSR. They believed that to achieve communism, they had to establish socialism first, a belief Karl Marx had advanced. We have learned from that experience that socialism retained capitalism's wage system and therefore failed to wipe out many aspects of the profit system. Socialism put forward material rather than political incentives as the way to win workers to communism. We must win masses of workers to abolish capitalism's wage system and its division of labor and fight directly for communism.

Today no country is led by revolutionary communists, but this is a temporary historical setback. While we live in an era of widening imperialist wars, fascist attacks on the working class, mass unemployment, diseases like AIDS killing millions in Africa and elsewhere, every dark night has its end.

PLP is a product of both the old International Communist Movement and the struggle against its revisionism. Pseudo-leftist groups, not having learned history's lessons, continue to fight for nationalist "sharing of power" with capitalists, a la Venezuela's Chavez, not for the working-class seizure of power and dictatorship of the proletariat.

Our movement is daily fighting to learn from the Soviet Union's great battles and achievements as well as its deadly errors that led to its collapse, mainly that reformism, racism, nationalism and all forms of concessions to capitalism only lead workers to defeat. Give the ruling class an inch and they'll grab a mile.

We honor the workers of the Bolshevik Revolution's bold fight against capitalism, lighting the way toward a working-class communist world. Today, we must organize workers, students and soldiers to build a mass worldwide working-class Party that will turn this era of imperialist wars into a new, international communist revolution. ☪

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