

# CHALLENGE



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## 'Integration, Yes! Segregation, No! Angry Students, Teachers, Parents Expose Racist School Boss

**BROOKLYN, NEW YORK, January 19** — "Integration, Yes! Segregation, No!" The chant rang out across the auditorium, as students, teachers and parents stood to challenge NYC schools chancellor Cathy Black. The event was the Panel on Educational Policy (PEP) meeting to vote on putting



a new selective school in the John Jay campus building. While the building currently houses four schools serving mainly black and Latino students, the new school is being added to meet the needs of middle-class, mainly white families in the Park Slope neighborhood.

The PEP meeting was the final, formal Department of Education (DOE) step in approving the new school. It was also the first public meeting of new schools chancellor Black. The crowd of about 200 people was angry about attacks on working-class students across the city.

The whole meeting was filled with chanting, singing and speakers interrupting the DOE and demanding the system serve all students. Angry teachers, parents and students represented many schools threatened with closing or with the co-location of other schools in their buildings. About 40 people from the John Jay campus came to continue the fight against the racist conditions students there are facing.

### Challenge Racist Chancellor

The Chancellor — who recently made a racist, genocidal "joke" about "solving" overcrowding by birth control — was continually interrupted during the opening remarks by chants and catcalls denouncing the DOE and Mayor Bloomberg's racism. Students and speakers went to the microphones during the public comments portion of the meeting to expose the racism of inserting the Millennium school in the building and to demand that the DOE provide a decent education for all students. Several students spoke about how the entire system is racist, with one young man telling the crowd that the

liberal racism of the DOE is worse than the KKK because it tries to be slicker.

While the principal of one of the schools in the building was speaking about the racism of a system where 56 years after Brown vs. Board of Education the schools are more segregated and unequal than ever, the DOE shut off her microphone before her allotted time was up. She raised her voice to be heard across the massive auditorium and finished her speech as the crowd rose with her and chanted "Integration, Yes! Racism, No! Integration, Yes! Racism, No!"

The PEP is a sham group appointed by the mayor and the borough presidents to rubber stamp Bloomberg's and the city ruling class's plans for the schools. While everyone knew the vote was a foregone conclusion, attending the meeting was another important step in the fight against the bosses' attacks on working-class students. It will also help more people see the need for communist revolution as the only way to create a society that looks out for the needs of all young people.

One speaker from PLP spoke to the whole audience about how the racism the DOE builds is used to divide the working class and justify the inequality of capitalism. She said that she and her students were not facing closing or co-location, but that they understood that an attack on one group of students and teachers was an attack on all. They shut off her microphone also, but she continued anyway and held up CHALLENGE newspaper and offered it to the crowd as a tool to help defeat the ruling class.

The fight at the John Jay campus has started to spread beyond the

school building. At the PEP meeting our chant from last week's public hearing — "How do we spell racist? D-O-E!" — was started by several speakers. On the blogs and online newspapers, comments have started to more frequently take on the gutter racists and blame the DOE for the horrendous conditions of the school building and the lack of funding for the students in the four schools. Some are saying that the schools already there should be supported, and the Park Slope students should join the working-class students in them.

This struggle has been an opportunity for many people to see both the true nature of the ruling class and the potential of students and teachers to be a force to change society. Each meeting and confrontation with the DOE has seen working-class students stand up to the bosses and skillfully give leadership to the class struggle. Many teachers have come forward and united with their students against the DOE's racism. This has been particularly inspirational.

The communist study groups that have developed out of the struggle in the schools have grown over the last several weeks. Many CHALLENGES are being distributed. This fight has a long way to go.

The PEP decision only moves things on to the next level. PLP is in it for the long haul, as it seems are many of the students, teachers and parents already involved. Whatever else happens through the rest of this year and into next when the new school arrives, there are two things we will guarantee: the battle against DOE racism will continue, and we will keep building PLP and the fight for communism.✪

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# Egypt: Without Red Leadership, Capitalism Remains, Imperialism Wins

Mass uprisings are destabilizing Egypt, an essential ally of war-making U.S. imperialists. Capitalism itself, however, the root cause of imperialist war and of the rebelling workers' miseries, remains unthreatened. Unfortunately, the protesters aim solely at ousting dictator Mubarak. Lacking class consciousness, they do not seek to overthrow the profit system. Most follow either secular nationalist or Islamist politicians. Thus, even if Mubarak is ousted, workers in Egypt will continue to suffer under a new regime of exploiters. Nevertheless, our revolutionary communist Party can learn much from the courageous, though misled, struggles in the streets of Cairo and elsewhere.

The uncertainty over whether Islamist or pro-

U.S. bosses will rule Egypt has Obama & Co. worried sick. In 2006, open elections (which the protesters demand) gave anti-U.S., pro-Iranian Hamas control of the Palestinian Authority.

Today U.S. rulers fear that Muslim Brotherhood (MB) candidates might win in Egypt. MB leader and al Qaeda supporter Mohammed Akef told CBS News (5/22/08), "MB would send fighters to fight the occupation in Iraq and Palestine." Mohamed Atta, ringleader of the 9/11 attacks, received anti-U.S. indoctrination as a member of MB in Egypt.

## U.S. War Machine Armed Dictator Mubarak

Egypt holds vast significance in the sharpening rivalry among waning and rising imperialist powers. Martin Indyk, director of foreign policy at the Brookings Institution and Clinton's ambassador to Israel, spoke of "huge potential consequences for U.S. strategic interests in a vital region." (NY Times, 1/30) The Times explained:

"The United States could not have sustained the wars it fought in Iraq without logistical support from Egypt's government. Oil for Europe comes through the Suez Canal. Egypt is the largest and most militarily powerful Arab country.... Mr. Sadat's peace deal in 1979 with Mr. Begin made it next to impossible for other Arab states to contemplate going to war with Israel."

Next to Israel, Egypt is Washington's second biggest recipient of military aid. Reuters reported (1/29) that Mubarak has been receiving an average of \$2 billion annually from the U.S., "much of it military." Obama asked Congress for a similar amount for 2011, including 1,200 Abrams tanks and 20 advanced F-16 jet fighters for 2013 delivery to add to the 240 already sent.

## Imperialist IMF Impoverished Workers in Egypt

Egypt's poverty, unemployment, and unaffordable food stem directly from U.S. imperialism. In 1991, Bush, Sr., purchased Mubarak's support for Iraq War I by having the U.S.-run International Monetary Fund (IMF) forgive Egypt's debt. The price was IMF control of Egypt's economy. Mass unemployment in Egypt results from IMF demands that Egypt privatize industry that had been widely nationalized in its pro-Soviet 1950s-1960s era. IMF-imposed constraints on interest and subsidies jacked up the cost of necessities.

## U.S. Empire's Grand Prize Saudi Arabia Next Domino?

But U.S. ruling-class mouthpieces like the Times hesitate to mention the far larger geostrategic stake just across the Red Sea — Saudi Arabia. U.S. rulers' worst nightmare envisions Arab anti-government unrest spreading to the oil-rich cornerstone of their empire. Saudi Arabia is Exxon Mobil's biggest oil supplier and Exxon Mobil is the kingdom's biggest buyer.

U.S. global supremacy depends on this relationship, which helps enable it to dictate the conditions of the supply of capitalism's lifeblood to most of the rest of the world, including (for now) China. The Saudi-based, Exxon-led chokehold, of course, involves other U.S. and allied oil giants and requires continued U.S. occupation of Iraq, which may have crude reserves as great as its Saudi neighbor. So, in gross understatement, the

Associated Press reported (1/30) "Obama phoned the [Saudi] king in Morocco....both leaders were not happy with the chaotic situation."

Just how U.S. rivals Iran, China and Russia will capitalize on the chaos remains to be seen. Keeping their Saudi contingency plans close to the vest, U.S. military planners openly fixate on wiping out Iran. The influential, Rockefeller-funded Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), in a January 2011 report, dreams of massive U.S. nuclear retaliation against "high-value population centers" like Teheran. The CSIS's justification is that Iran's developing A-bombs could "inflict 2,000,000 to 8,000,000" deaths in a 21-day period.

## Worker-Soldier Alliance Crucial

Despite bad politics on all sides, lessons for revolutionaries emerge from Egypt and environs. One dispels the growing myth that electronic social media have become the only way to organize. The rulers, in fact, own and run them. Actually, workers in Cairo had forged sufficient personal, non-electronic networks to be able to organize days after Mubarak pulled the plug on the Internet and mobile phones.

Another crucial point is that ill-armed workers can successfully face down the fascist police apparatus. Put simply, there are far more of us than there are of them. And soldiers, however, are mainly poor, working-class youth, rather than pro-government die-hards. The fact that some have already sided with the masses points up the crucial necessity for communists to advance revolutionary politics within the army to move soldiers against the bosses.

We are not witnessing, as fake leftists proclaim, the "liberation" of Egypt's workers. That will take painstaking class-based organization for communist revolution against capitalists of all kinds, religious, nationalist and imperialist. ☸

## 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!**

### PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

P.O. Box 808 Brooklyn NY 11202

• [www.plp.org](http://www.plp.org)

• email: [desafio.challenge@gmail.com](mailto:desafio.challenge@gmail.com)

• blog: [challengenewspaper.wordpress.com](http://challengenewspaper.wordpress.com)

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## U.S. War-Makers Build 'Opposition' Groups to Maintain Control

While U.S. imperialists may control the leadership of fascist countries such as Egypt's, the working class is often anti-U.S. Therefore, U.S. bosses — knowing their support of Mubarak-type dictators is on shaky ground over the long term — try to build alternative movements under their control.

The NY Post reported that, "In a December 2008 cable obtained by the Wikileaks website [U.S. ambassador to Egypt Margaret] Scoby.... cited talks with an unnamed activist leader of an opposition group called 'April 6'...which wants the Mubarak regime replaced....April 6 has 70,000 members...and is now at the forefront of Egypt protests...."

"Despite strong U.S. ties with Mubarak, there's evidence U.S. officials quietly supported... activists seeking to remove him...."

"In 2008, the State Department co-sponsored a youth activist conference that helped organizations use social media to spread opposition across the globe — and helped one of April 6's leaders attend without the knowledge of Egypt's secret police.

"The April 6 leader was among the delegates from around the world at the Alliance of Youth Movements gathered at Columbia Law School.... At the three-day confab, participants swapped best practices for taking their activism 'to the streets' and guidance on 'planning events, marches and protests.'

"There was also a panel devoted to 'Egypt's pro-democracy youth movement' and how to advance them with social media." ☸

## Why Articles Are Not Signed

The fact that CHALLENGE/PLP articles are not signed grows from PLP's criticism of the cult of the individual in the former socialist Soviet Union and China. We do not want to encourage the possibility of building up a "following" around any particular individual. While an article may be written by one person, the final version is based on collective discussion and criticism. Many times this collective discussion even precedes an individual's writing of an article.

# Building PLP Means Choosing Life

## Racist Healthcare Murdering Kids

"Medical conditions like this just happen and that's God's plan. My sister had Lupus and she just died two days ago. It happened so fast. I dreamed about her last night. Why did God take her? That's not for me to know...It's a spiritual thing," said a patient as she lay in bed.

Because of diabetes she had both legs amputated below the knees, and she suffered from hypertension and HIV. But in the housing project where she lives, her story is not unique. Recently another child died of cardiac arrest following a severe asthma attack, the third in a month for one Emergency Medical Service (EMS) crew. There's nothing spiritual about heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, HIV and asthma murdering black workers and youth. It's called racism and it's the plague of capitalism.

On January 14, the U.S. Center for Disease Control (CDC) released its "Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report" (MMWR), focusing on racial disparities in U.S. health care. Among the findings:

- Babies born to black women are up to three times as likely to die in infancy;
- High blood pressure is twice as common among blacks as whites;
- Blacks die of strokes and heart disease much more commonly than whites, and die younger;
- Blacks, Latinos and Native Americans, whether gay or straight, all have higher rates of new infection with the AIDS virus than whites, and the situation is worsening.

In 2007, the CDC reported that between 1979 and 2004, "Diabetes death rates for black youths were consistently higher than those for white youths. Additionally, whereas diabetes mortal-

ity did not change substantially for white youths during 1994-2004, death rates for black youths increased significantly."

The U.S. Health and Human Services Agency for Healthcare and Research Quality website reports that among pre-school children hospitalized for asthma, only 7% of black and 2% of Latino children are prescribed routine medications to prevent future asthma-related hospitalizations, compared with 21% of white children. The inequality in access to asthma medication is racist murder, considering that a routine asthma attack untreated with prescribed medication ends in death.

The increased deaths from diabetes and asthma are the racist results of mass poverty. The bosses tell us we need to make "better choices." Michelle Obama exercises with poor kids and billionaire mayor Bloomberg wants to ban soda purchases from food stamps. Meanwhile, they offer mass racist unemployment, police terror, cutbacks and war. If they are so concerned, then we should have free medical clinics and decent supermarkets with fresh fruits and vegetables in every housing project and school. We're not killing our children — they are!

The situation for workers in NY State grows even more desperate. The NY Post reported (1/22) that Governor Cuomo's billion-dollar Medicaid cuts will force 10-12 more hospitals to close. Stephen Berger, a Cuomo advisor overseeing the cuts, cynically asked, "How many [hospitals] are really necessary?" Two paragraphs later the article reports: "Many of the hospitals teetering on the brink of financial collapse are located in the city's poorer neighborhoods."

PLP public health care workers are fighting

for life. Our PL club is developing ties with, and spreading CHALLENGE to health care workers and those we serve, building anti-racist unity against murderous cutbacks and layoffs. Communist leadership is the antidote to the racist poison killing our children and destroying our jobs. In the course of this struggle we can build a Party organization in our community, at the nearby community clinic and hospital. The day the Post article appeared, hospital workers photocopied, posted and distributed 200 copies throughout the hospital's Emergency Department, held informal meetings and made contacts to expand the fight-back.

As one veteran paramedic put it after reading the Post article: "This is war. Every worker in this city should respond to this attack by going for broke and shutting it down, so not a single thing moves. Nurses, bus drivers, teachers, everything. Everyone united. That's how it used to be done and that's how it should be done."

Workers in the community and the hospital have been beaten and abused in every way by some aspect of this system. We are forced to sit and watch as our children are killed before our eyes by treatable diseases like asthma. In New York City, Port au-Prince or Gaza, building PLP means choosing life.✪



## Chicago Rulers' School 'Reform' Attacks Students, Teachers, Bans Strikes

**CHICAGO, IL** — A frontal assault on students, teachers and unions is underway here. The Illinois Business Roundtable, Chicago's Commercial Club (the city's ruling class), "Stand for Children" (a.k.a. Stand for Billionaires) and a similar group, Advance Illinois, have joined to promote "education reform" legislation. Their proposed law would make teaching in capitalist schools even harder and teachers' unions even weaker, as part of the attack on all workers and their unions.

The "Performance Counts" agenda was brought to the Illinois legislature by politicians bought and paid for by "Stand for Children." The bill would tie teachers' jobs and pay to "evaluation." It would also make striking virtually illegal and make a sham out of contract bargaining.

Efforts of Illinois teachers' unions, including hard work by many rank-and-file members, prevented the legislation from passing in the January "veto session," but it will come up again in the regular session. The Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) organized members to attend hearings, lobby legislators and petition in neighborhoods. They worked with parent, student and community organizations and other unions to write and promote alternative legislation.

In previous periods, the bosses aimed to use the unions for their own purposes. In this period, with U.S. imperialism fighting for its economic life, the capitalists can tolerate only the most passive unions. These capitalists have nothing to offer the working class and want to spend as little as possible on working class students. They cannot afford to have 38% of education workers unionized, especially if the unions show any sign of fighting back as the CTU has done.

CTU and allies may or may not be able to stop this particular piece of legislation. The bottom line is that the problems in education are not going to be solved by changing the laws. The inequities in education are due to the inequities in the capitalist system, which are inherently racist, as they affect blacks and Latinos the most. This won't change until a communist system takes its place, through violent revolution led by PLP. The revolution will not be led by unions, no matter

how militant.

Capitalist competition forces bosses worldwide to lower wages and make the schools more efficient propaganda machines for their system and their imperialist wars. Legislation like "Performance Counts" is just the beginning. The capitalists want to pay teachers much less and "standardize" the lack of education for working-class students. Bill Gates recently called for larger classes and video cameras in every classroom.

Teacher evaluations, the heart of the "Performance Counts" proposal, are at the discretion of the principal and tied to student test scores. Therefore, this legislation would turn many working-class schools into test preparation factories. Students would learn what the bosses need them to know, but not how to think for themselves, analyze situations or come up with creative solutions to problems.

Teachers who are afraid to teach anything other than what the tests mandate will become willing or unwilling cogs in the bosses' propaganda machine. The ruling class will also continue to maintain different kinds of schools for their own children and for others they groom for "professional" work at the upper tiers of their empire.

Only 12% of all workers are unionized, down from 20% in 1983, and the biggest unions are in the public sector. Although these unions are not comparable to those led by communists in the 1930s, they can sometimes be a thorn in the bosses' side. The CTU recently elected a militant leadership that has already caused problems for the Chicago rulers. Their fear that the CTU might call a strike when the contract expires in 2012 motivates this part of the legislation.

As communists, we struggle alongside those who think the most important fight is to convince politicians to see things a certain way. As communists, we help expose the realities of capitalism, throughout the course of struggle, proving that workers need communism instead. In time, this process will move more co-workers and friends to join and expand the fight for a society and the working class will win out over the profit-driven capitalists. ✪

## Fight County Hospital Killers

**CHICAGO, IL, January 28** — "THEY SAY CUT BACK, WE SAY FIGHT BACK!"; "THE WORKERS UNITED WILL NEVER BE DEFEATED!"; "WE NEED OUR JOBS!"; These chants shook the halls outside a budget hearing as militant black women workers from Cook County and Provident Hospitals could not get into the packed hearing room. The commissioners were deciding how much money will be cut from each department, including hospital services and jobs. Our voices were heard loud and clear, inside and outside the hearing.

Driven by the war budget and the Great Recession, the bosses plan to sub-contract the jobs of hundreds of housekeeping, dietary and other workers. These mostly black and Latino workers have historically been the mass base for PLP here. The bosses and bankers are also closing Provident and Oak Forest Hospitals, and have not restored the hundreds of jobs cut in 2007. The County health system is already more closed than open and more patients will die, all run by Democrats and in Obama's backyard.

One doctor, a veteran anti-racist fighter, told the board that closing these hospitals was racist murder, comparing these cuts to what happened in Nazi Germany's medical system prior to WW II. Someone also exposed short-staffing. It's a scientific fact that complications — including death — increase sharply when the nurse:patient ratio exceeds 1-to-5 on medical-surgical units. At Stroger Hospital, nurses on these wards are routinely assigned 7 or 8 uninsured patients. Across the street at the University of Illinois Hospital, which only takes insured patients, proper staffing ratios are used.

The board did not respond and tried to carry on with their agenda

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# PL'ers Press Ahead with Red Ideas MLA's Move to Right Is Wrong Road for Students, Profs

The MLA (Modern Language Association) is moving to the right.

Members and friends of PLP who have long been active in the Radical Caucus (RC) of the MLA — the professional association of university-level teachers of language and literature — noted a distinct difference between this year's convention and previous ones. In recent years many of our resolutions and motions opposing racism, imperialism, cutbacks, and the super-exploitation of non-tenure track academic labor have been sympathetically received in the Delegate Assembly (DA) and ratified by membership ballot.

In January 2011, however, the Delegate Assembly Organizing Committee refused to bring to the floor our Emergency Resolution relating to the dire cutbacks in funding for public higher education. And it struck out those portions of our Emergency Resolution that addressed the elimination of Chicano Ethnic Studies in the Arizona schools.

Another indication of this rightward trend was the DA's vote to change the MLA Constitution, so 10% approval of a resolution would be required to bring it before the MLA membership (even though fewer than 10% of the members ever vote on anything, including electing the MLA president!). This proposed constitutional amendment is a blatant attack on the RC.

A further manifestation of growing conservatism in the MLA is the increasing popularity of neo-formalism. Recalling the anticommunist "New Criticism" of the 1950s and 1960s, this critical trend celebrates the "surface" meaning of texts and opposes "in-depth" approaches. It excludes a Marxist analysis of literary works in the context of

the daily racist and sexist reality of capitalism. The ruling class distorts and excludes Marxist analysis in the Humanities in order to maintain the patriotism of students.

In addition to a racist curriculum, the bosses attack the students through racist tuition hikes and budget cuts. This disproportionately affects blacks and Latinos more, whose lower-incomes cannot meet increasing demands. These future workers are being prepared to pay more for less services and to eventually work harder for less pay.

## Education functions to perpetuate the ruling class's ideology

These attacks demonstrate how education functions to perpetuate the ruling class's racist and sexist ideology. The huge budget cuts and ever-increasing reliance upon super-exploited non-tenured labor in the humanities led some liberal activists within the MLA to sponsor a one-day "Counter-MLA" during the Convention. The Counter-MLA was, however, purely informational and non-activist. Its close association with the AAUP (American Association of University Professors) and the leadership of the California college teachers' union puts stringent limits on its ability to critique capitalism as the source of the woes currently afflicting higher education.

Oppression breeds resistance, however. Noteworthy elements of the fight-back include:

- The presence of a strong contingent of Party-affiliated forces both outside and inside the Counter-MLA, where comrades from LA distributed CHALLENGE and a PLP leaflet and raised an anti-capitalist analysis of the current crisis.

- Sharp and bold presentations by PLP members and friends at two RC-led sessions focusing on anti-cutback/anti-racist class struggle on various campuses.

- The building of strong ties among the core of RC organizers, PLP and non-PLP, including a tour of working-class Los Angeles history led by a dedicated RC member.

- PL-led sponsorship of an RC session on proletarian literature, where anti-racist and anti-sexist literary works about working-class life were analyzed from varying Marxist perspectives.

Much work remains to be done. The RC needs to submit its resolutions and motions in a more timely way. It must develop a younger core of leadership more reflective of the increasingly non-tenure track nature of college faculties.

Above all, PL'ers in the MLA need to fight for needed reforms — such as free public higher education — without falling into the trap of social democracy and promoting illusions about higher education under capitalism.

The main aspect of higher education is the spread of pro-boss ideas to convince students and workers that capitalist exploitation is both fair and eternal. We need to be revolutionary communists, seizing every possible "teaching moment" to demonstrate the need to abolish capitalism so that the working people can finally meet their needs.✪

## 'That's how capitalism works — it starves people...'

### HS Students, Workers Dissect Profit System at Communist School

**CALIFORNIA, January 17** — This last weekend forty students and workers went to central California to a communist school on Political Economy. Five high school students came from one city, traveling six hours there and six hours back just to study with us. We discussed what creates value, how the wage system works, and what creates capitalism's crises. Here are some things that the high school students had to say about the school:

"My experience was fun. I learned about why certain jobs get a certain amount of money, but I don't understand why they don't take money from the rich people. Instead they take it from the people that can barely get by with the money they do have."

"My experience today was quite interesting. I learned many new things as well. I learned how the system works more in depth, and where the value of certain things comes from. Everything was explained very well, which is a good thing because it gives me a better understanding of what's going on. I heard many personal stories that involved the system and how they do things to profit off of their employees. Ultimately, the experience was very beneficial towards my understanding of political economy."

"My experience was amazing. I learned the difference between socialism, capitalism, and communism. It was nice. I don't understand why the government takes more taxes from us and

less from the rich."

"Something I learned from the cadre school is that the people that work for the fast-food places just throw away the leftovers and sometimes pour bleach on them so that no one can eat it. I was interested to know if it was the bosses' fault, or if the bosses were just okay with the employees doing that. I learned that the bosses tell the employees that they have to do that because they are selling food, not giving it away. That's the way capitalism works; it starves people."

Participants all agreed that the bosses pay the workers a low wage and steal most of the value they produce in order to continue maximizing profit to compete against other bosses. Many linked the exploitation of workers' labor by the bosses during the housing and dot.com crises to the continued enslavement of workers through tricks and the treachery of below-prime loans and stock market speculations.

Most people at the school agreed that crises will continue under capitalism and that the only alternative is communist revolution that will end both exploitation and money/wages. Only through communism can the working class organize and work for better conditions based on its own needs. This was the third communist school of a series planned on the West Coast, one each month. The next communist school will be in southern California, on democratic centralism. ✪

## Fight County Hospital Killers

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when someone interrupted and said, "Start talking about patient care and these murderous cuts!" The stunned directors actually did! They asked the nursing supervisor to speak about the staffing ratios. She admitted they were unacceptable and unsafe. They asked the human resources lackey what could be done to fix it. Not much it seemed. They didn't discuss the hospital closings, but eventually ordered security to remove the worker who had interrupted them.

### Furious and Fearful

Workers are furious over these deadly racist cuts. But that fury is dampened by cynicism and fear. For the past four years we've been subjected to mass layoffs, ward and clinic closings and reduced services when there is a growing medical need for more than one million uninsured workers in Cook County. Through it all, the unions have assisted the bosses in their dirty work and most workers don't see a way out.

A nurse from Oak Forest Hospital said that the long-term care patients, some on ventilators and many who are paralyzed, were told they had to find a new nursing home by the end of January. Some of these patients have been living at the long-term care unit for decades! She also said that the 38,000 patients who use the emergency room every year will

be forced to go elsewhere when the hospital closes. Many will likely try to go to Stroger Hospital which has seen an increase in its ER visits from 350 to over 500 patients every day. Many others, who can't make it to Stroger, will surely die.

Our PLP County club is searching for ways for workers and patients to break the grip of fear and cynicism. The key is developing a mass base for CHALLENGE while always trying to up the ante against the racist rulers and their union misleaders. Fighting these murderous racist attacks on patients and workers can help build the revolutionary movement. ✪



# One Year After Quake: Bosses' 'Aid' Only Aids U.S., Haitian Bosses

"This is what the earthquake is today — an opportunity, a huge opportunity." — Reginald Boulos, leading member of Haiti's ruling class.

**PORT-AU-PRINCE, January 12** — Within a few months of the devastating earthquake in Haiti a year ago, many nations, organizations and individuals pledged over \$10 billion<sup>1</sup> to help with the immediate needs of the people and the longer-term effort to rebuild the affected areas. And now many people, one year later, are asking: "Where is the money?"

As of December 31, less than 10% of these funds have been allocated to Haiti. Why have all or most of the pledged funds not reached Haiti? Here are some reasons:

The pervasive political, economic, and military control of Haiti by U.S. imperialism. Like the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico and other islands, Haiti forms part of a U.S. cordon sanitaire or military barrier in the Eastern Caribbean Basin to protect the southern U.S. and U.S. economic interests in Central America, in particular the Panama Canal. These islands play a critically important strategic role in protecting U.S. imperialism in this hemisphere; "rebuilding" Haiti has mostly a military meaning.

The Haitian elite (the Six Families) has political, economic, and military control of Haiti. This tiny group of exploiters is fully integrated with and supported by the U.S. and its imperialist allies.<sup>2</sup>

## Funds Go to Corporations, Not Workers

Under the Commission, funds are to be held for capitalist investment in Haiti. Almost all recovery and reconstruction funds would be distributed to U.S. corporations, NGOs, and the local business elite. Basic social and governmental services would continue to be neglected or ignored.

For example, the Haitian NGO NABATEC and the World Vision Organization plan to build a new 300,000-person city nine miles north of Port-au-Prince, at Corial Cesselesse. The land is owned by NABATEC. The Haitian government has given this NGO almost \$7million in foreign aid for this project. NABATEC is run by Abby Brun, a member of the Haitian elite. Brun is making deals with South Korean garment firms to bring more, very low-wage sweatshops to Haiti.<sup>3</sup>

There does not exist a national government large and competent enough to plan and carry out the desperately-needed repairs and changes required by the people in Haiti. The national government suffered many casualties in the earthquake after decades of gradual decay.

Widespread Haitian government corruption has scared away several donor nations. Sixty-five nations pledged money early, only to withdraw their offer in part or in whole. Less than \$1.5 billion (about 10% of the original pledges) from 20 nations has been giv-

en to the Haitian Reconstruction Fund. About 2% of this amount has been disbursed since the earthquake.<sup>4</sup>

The Haiti Interim Reconstruction Commission, headed by former U.S. President Bill Clinton and Haitian Prime Minister Jean Max Bellerive, control the collection and disbursement of aid money to Haiti. They chose the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, not the Haitian government, to dole out relief funds.

## Repression Ensures Oppression

There is systematic, violent repression of all political and economic forces identified as threats to the interests of those listed above. This repression ensures the safe formation of capitalist investment to steal a huge amount of profit from workers at starvation wages.

Recent national and presidential elections still remain largely undecided, further slowing the delivery of aid.

The minuscule amount of aid actually put to some use has been portioned out to private companies to provide a service. For example, a company was hired by an NGO to remove rubble and debris caused by the earthquake. After removing about 290,000 cubic yards, the funding was exhausted, leaving the clean-up job barely started.<sup>5</sup> Worse, since no environmentally safe refuse sites exist in Haiti for this or any debris, more environmental damage is being done to the Haitian land, water and air.

A second example shows the corruption and incompetency of the Haitian government. Two U.S. debris-removal companies tried for three months after the earthquake to obtain the necessary papers to begin rubble removal and demolition of condemned structures in Port-au-Prince. Once again, the removal did take place, but the dumping of the material was not monitored by the government and remains in locations polluting the environment.<sup>6</sup>

But no supporter of radical change and equality in Haiti should give up the struggle. However bleak the situation is for the working class in Haiti today, the objective conditions are grounds to unite the working class and obtain the desperately-needed changes the workers need... NOW! We cannot place our trust in a U.S. imperialist-controlled government, nor in the Haitian elite or their front organizations. So, know your enemies, get angry and get UNITED TO FIGHT! WE CAN WIN!✪

(Endnotes)

- 1 Haitian Information Network
- 2 Daily Kos, 9/22/10
- 3 Daily Kos, 9/22/10
- 4 Haitian Truth Organization, The World's Broken Promises to Haiti
- 5 Washington Times, 9/21/10
- 6 Associated Press, 7/11/10

# Palestine: Racist Israeli Government Guts Village Again and Again and Again

(The following is an online petition.)

We the undersigned stand in solidarity with the Bedouin-Palestinian residents of the village of Al-Arakib, in southern Palestine (within the so-called "green line" and under Israeli sovereignty.) We stand by the rights of the Bedouin-Palestinian people to live on their ancestral lands, in the houses built by their own hands, free from repression and violence. We also stand by the right of these villagers to receive a full modern infrastructure and amenities.

During the past six months, this village, which was initially destroyed in 1948 and rebuilt in the 1990's, was repeatedly demolished by the Israeli authorities. The Israeli state used heavy equipment and massive numbers of heavily-armed cops to crush the locals' resistance and wreck the village. Even before its demolition, Al-Arakib was not recognized by the state authorities, and therefore was not provided with modern sewage facilities, proper roads, regular water supply or electricity.

But the worst attack — the eighth since July 2010 — occurred on January 16th, 2011. Massive Israeli Police forces descended on Al-Arakib attacking the locals with rubber bullets and clubs. They demolished the meager houses of the

village and leveled the land, leaving the villagers without a roof over their heads in the middle of the desert, exposed to the elements.

The racist Israeli government plans to plant a forest over Al-Arakib's lands in the short term, but in the long term, the state-machine plans to build an elite gated community. Hiran, funded by the U.S. millionaire Ronald Lauder, will be an expensive real-estate project where residence will be restricted to religious Jews only. This is nothing but an act of fascist, racist, religious violence against impoverished workers and peasants.

We in the Progressive Labor Party are fighting for a communist border-free world, where all workers will be able to have equal access to land, resources and infrastructure and will be free from repression. ✪

Please sign the online petition; every signature counts!

<http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/al-arakib/>



# 'Inside Job' Really Doesn't Get Inside

continued from p. 7

Regulation did not solve the Great Depression. The worldwide destruction of productive capacity through massive WWII bombings "removed" competition, and the war's outcome established new top dogs. The U.S., the main rising capitalist power, oversaw a short period of relative stability. (For workers of the world, capitalist "stability" is a poison nonetheless. This period, approximately 1950-1995, was one of racist wars in Africa, Central and South America where millions of workers died so capitalists could control their markets and resources.) Today, as in the 1930s, the fight between imperialists is leading to world war. This time, an alliance between China, Russia, and other imperialists is challenging the declining U.S.

## Why Would Bosses present an 'Exposé?'

The ruling class has a motive for shamelessly broadcasting their assaults on workers. By presenting the "exposés," they also feed the audience the "reform solution." They use this as a hook to fool the workers into believing that "transparency" will fix the system. The bosses

don't point out that it is capitalism's inherent function that mandates exploitation and corruption.

Tellingly, IJ ends with a view of the Statue of Liberty, a symbol of false promises to generations of immigrant workers. Matt Damon calls on us to stand up and fight for "freedom." In this case, freedom is a euphemism for reforming the banking system. But the working class is in a period of growing crisis; there is no "safety" or "freedom" to be found. The basic volatility of capitalism — its massive crises which cause hundreds of millions to be unemployed worldwide, its wars to re-divide the world's resources, markets, and labor, and its racism which super-exploits millions of black, Latino and Asian workers. All of these require a revolutionary communist solution that IJ's backers and pundits will never support. ✪



# LETTERS

## Duvalier 'Return' Part of Latest Subjugation of Haiti

The return of the fascist dictator Jean-Claude Duvalier provoked these comments from friends in Haiti:

1. Hello comrades: This bizarre apparition is not just a surprise but also a trap set for most Haitians. It's not a "return," as they pretend, but rather a ruse to create a political diversion. In all the tap-taps [informal taxis] since his return, it's the only subject of conversation. Why this injection of a troubling factor into the worsening crisis? What does the future hold for the people? These are questions to ask and to answer. We might say that it's a bit of theater, directed by the international community and the government in power, to further confuse the political situation

2. Duvalier's return is certainly put in place by president René Préal, with an eye to distracting Haitians' attention from the electoral crisis. He wants to put the brakes on mobilization by the organizations and political parties aiming at chasing Préal from power. The French government and MINUSTAH [UN Mission to Stabilize Haiti] have participated in setting up this return. Even before his arrival in court, everyone knew that the government was going to install him in a luxurious mansion in Port-au-Prince. Yesterday, the Minister of Justice saw to everything: air conditioning, furnishings, a generator, etc. We should expect nothing positive to come out of this business.

3. When the old dictator Jean Claude Duvalier surprised us by returning after twenty years of exile in France, he was applauded by a crowd chanting slogans like "If Jean Claude had been here things would not be like they are."

The political crisis that Haiti is experiencing goes back a long way before Préal. A look at the current administration reveals the fingerprints of Duvalier all over it: what we are living through now is merely the sequel of the project of dictatorship of the Duvaliers, under the auspices of the U.S. for the massive destruction of the living sap of Haitian life. Or, better put, for the re-colonization of Haiti by the U.S.

After having been slaves of the French we became slaves of the U.S., and paid a lot of money to show our gratitude. Some of our Haitian brothers were sold into slavery to other countries by our governments, including those of the Duvaliers.

We must be aware that the Duvaliers were fine servants of the U.S., as they were of France. After twenty-five years of political babbling, this return of the ancient Dictator of Haiti may be just more groping around by the international community to see if it can still count on its old watchdog in Haiti.

*Friends in Haiti*

## Cancer Kills Comrade Who Fought Rulers' Sick System

A very good friend and comrade who was once active with PLP died from brain cancer on January 20. He was in his early 60s and leaves a wife and two adult children. Ironically his professional work was research into both the many causes of cancer and methods of prevention. However, he knew that the primary underlying cause of all cancer is the miserably unhealthy environment that capitalism produces, as well as its horrible stress-inducing working and living conditions. Stress, among many other harmful effects, interferes with our immune systems' abilities to defend us against cancer and other illnesses.

To me personally, his dying is very, very sad. It only goes to show yet again what a killer capitalism really is. The vast majority of cancers are preventable with healthy working and living conditions and environment. The horrors of capitalist health care are nothing compared with the horrors of capitalist health.

When another comrade was in her dying days from breast cancer over a decade ago, her husband commented on what a plague this cancer was. I think we still don't comprehend just how much of it is caused by capitalism, and tend to assume — without meaning to and hoping to escape the pitfall — that since cancer preceded capitalism it is just a natural part of life. That just isn't so. Before capitalism, science simply hadn't yet discovered much about how the environment and conditions

of life contribute to ill health. Of course, everyone has to die some time, but, under different circumstances, life expectancy can easily well exceed 100. Under the best of conditions in today's world it is at least 20 years less than that, and under the worst it is at least half a century less.

As all of us age, more and more of our friends, family, and comrades are leaving us. Life and death keep evolving. I can only take some comfort in knowing that in PLP we are working toward those circumstances that will not only extend all human life but make it worthwhile and fulfilling. This indeed was the comfort that sustained our comrade through his illness.

*Saguaro Rojo*

## Inspired to Fight Exploitation in Haiti

On December 7, violence, rioting, and police and UN terror in response to election fraud caused my trip to be rescheduled. So we ended up being there during a very historic time, on the anniversary of the earthquake. To be in Port-au-Prince on Wednesday, January 12th was a profound experience on many levels.

Profound was the connection I felt with the Haitian community and myself. It discounted my belief that I could never relate with people from much poorer communities. I had assumed that so-called Third World communities, having been through much more hardship and devastation than I would ever see, would not respect my own plight. It could not have been further from the truth, as we were both from working-class communities and had lots more in common than not. It was a pleasure to collaborate with the Haitian student and union activists.

Profound was the devastation that still lingers from the earthquake. The UN and NGOs maximized their efforts not to reconstruct. Instead, they established 40 free trade zones so that multinational entities can exploit Haitian labor. With the state having very little power, Haiti has been left in the hands of international business interests.

Profound was the disgrace of how these business interests have left the condition of Haiti even one year later. Throughout the towns and cities, piles of rubble and trash remain, along unpaved roads. The tents that "house" over 1 million people are packed in tightly and resemble concentration camps.

The trip was nothing short of inspiring and I am excited to prepare for future projects in Haiti.

*Student comrade*

## Red Ideas on Religion Moves Teenagers to Materialism

I recently had a conversation with two Muslim teenage students who were inspired by the recent article on materialism, religion and idealism. One was very interested in understanding the mind of an atheist, to which I replied I'm not just an atheist — I'm a communist. I don't just define myself as a non-believer of god, but by the understanding that there can be a society free of class, racism and sexism.

We discussed the fact that religion is prescientific thinking — early humans' attempt to understand the world. We discussed how religion forces people to be subservient since only a few prophets or priests have access to the "truth." I wondered if they saw the relationship of god to man as a reflection of the boss-worker relationship under capitalism.

Just as the state seeks to monopolize the legitimate use of violence, so to does all religion and spirituality seek to monopolize morality, whereas true morality comes from the collective understanding of necessity.

We discussed how Marx described god as a reflection of man's best qualities removed from mankind and worshiped apart from humanity; how god was like the simple fetish mask or carving — our own creation that we worship; how Marx made two seemingly disparate and contradictory quotes that illustrated the two sides of why religion exists — it is the drug of the masses and the only hope in a hopeless world. Drugs provide warmth and hope for those addicts who live a painful existence on the edge of oblivion; the god-drug is just as powerful of an escapist drug as it numbs the alienating

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

pain of life under capitalism.

CHALLENGE helped this conversation to happen, moving several young Islamic students closer to the working class, a materialist philosophy, and revolution. Someday we will have a society free from the chains of religion, but for that to happen the PLP must lead a communist revolution.

*Materialist, and proud of it!*

## Rebellion Against Capitalist Exploitation

During the last two weeks, the continuing failure of capitalism worldwide resulted in many deaths in:

- Albania — 20,000 march, protest corrupt rulers;
- Jordan — Thousands march against economic hardships;
- Tunisia — Nationwide revolt to overthrow corrupt government;
- Yemen and Algeria — Thousands protest corrupt rulers;
- Egypt — Hundreds of thousands demonstrate in many cities against 30 years of Mubarak corruption.

Despite ornate palaces, imposing capitol buildings and gigantic pyramids to show off the capitalist rulers' power, they have been forced by the rules of the system to open their countries to exploitation of land, resources and labor for the profits of foreign and domestic bosses. Starvation, malnutrition and disease are the causes of the holocaust images of people we see on the news, wandering over devastated lands that used to produce food in those countries but are now sucked dry for capitalist and imperialist profits.

Past protests against this misery have been met with thousands of police. They were equipped with the latest riot-control weapons and backed by an army with guns, tanks, helicopters and warplanes supplied mostly by the U.S., the largest exporter of arms worldwide. The U.S. calls this "foreign aid"; i.e., weapons to suppress people in exchange for the right to steal countries' wealth.

The recent increasing volume of protests, rebellions, and revolts are starting to feed off each other and workers are sensing their growing power. As communists, wherever possible, we must give every support to this movement stretching across countries. We must stress to workers at every opportunity that it is capitalism that is destroying their lives and threatening their very existence and that putting different people in power without wiping out that murderous system is suicide.

The lesson to be learned from this suffering is that only by fighting for communism and workers' power can we provide for our class's needs.

*Unemployed comrade*

## Not all Violence is Bad

I thought last issue's editorial [Feb. 2, 2011] did a good job exposing the hypocrisy of politicians in general and Obama in particular. Out of one side of their mouth, they wail and moan about Jared Loughner killing six people in Arizona. On the other side, they give orders for Reaper drones to incinerate and dismember children.

However, I thought the article missed an important point: revolutionary violence is necessary. Capitalist violence, whether the work of an individual madman or an imperialist government, is wrong. Revolutionary violence, wielded by the working class against the bosses, is the only path to a communist world. The bosses can neither be voted out of control nor can they be reasoned with. Every day, we witness the forms of violence the bosses use to secure their profits: racist police terror, dangerous working conditions, and poverty. These attacks will be sharpened as workers gain class-consciousness and realize that we can run society for ourselves without the blood-sucking bosses.

Workers must be prepared to fight for our society and to defend our revolution. We will use mass, revolutionary violence, not individual terrorism, to wipe capitalism from the planet and secure a better way of life for all workers.

*A comrade*

# Reform Can't Fix Capitalist Crises, Wars

## 'Inside Job' Really Doesn't Get Inside

"Inside Job" (IJ), directed by Charles Ferguson and narrated by Matt Damon, chronicles the 2007-2008 collapse of the capitalist economy through an examination of major U.S. banks and business schools. The film got a lot of play at various film festivals, and is showing now in many major cities, mainly to rave reviews. It is essential for communists and anyone else searching for the root causes of the current crisis of capitalism to take a hard look at IJ's analysis and claims.

IJ does present useful information about how the collapse took place. This includes the enormous increase in the sale of mortgage-backed securities (investment products tied to sub-prime mortgages which were disproportionately foisted on black and Latino homebuyers — even when they qualified for traditional mortgages!); the related doubling of home prices over a ten-year period; the resurgence of highly "leveraged" buyouts (sales where almost all the price is borrowed money); and how banks like Goldman Sachs developed incredibly complex investments like "credit default swaps" to guarantee they made money whether others' gambles succeeded or failed, regardless of the broader consequences.

One of the best aspects of the film is its relentless and well-documented depiction of how Wall Street determines economic policy in the White House and Congress, during periods of both Republican and Democratic control. This power is so important that firms like Goldman Sachs and JP Morgan Chase send their executives and high-ranking operatives into the White House inner circle (Henry Paulson, Robert Rubin, Larry Summers, and Timothy Geithner). Wall Street also buys politicians on key congressional committees with lavish campaign contributions, employs thousands of lobbyists and corporate lawyers to write legis-

lation, and rewards friendly lawmakers with high-paying executive jobs.

### Academic Whores

Major business schools (Harvard, Columbia, NYU) also are attacked. The incestuous movement of key players from business school professorships to government economic positions and back again is exposed. IJ shows that U.S. business schools are major promoters of "free market" ideology. Their graduates who worked on Wall Street put these capitalist theories into practice, with disastrous results for the working class.

People like Martin Feldstein, Frederic Mishkin, and Glenn Hubbard are part of a group of big-name economists with close ties to big business, who serve in government positions and then enter academia where they continue to publish articles and books friendly to their wealthy patrons. It's great fun seeing these academic whores squirm as Ferguson asks them how they could have written that all was well just months before the financial crisis struck. (In one memorable scene, the title of an academic paper on the "stability" of the Icelandic economy was changed to "instability" after the collapse!)

Although it attacks the big bankers and Federal Reserve officials who represent them, IJ's weaknesses outweigh its strengths. Given Charles Ferguson's ruling-class connections, this should come as no surprise. He is definitely not an "outsider." By 1989, Ferguson had gained significant consulting experience with the Defense Department and White House while doing research at M.I.T. He became a capitalist when he founded Vermeer Technologies, one of the earliest Internet software companies. Ferguson sold Vermeer to Microsoft in 1996, making \$133 million on the deal. Afterwards,

he became a senior fellow at Brookings Institution, and is now a life member of the Council on Foreign Relations, both key think-tanks for the capitalist class.

IJ says that the 2008 crash did not have to happen. Ferguson never considers that, far from being an exception to the rule, the crash proves the Marxist idea that capitalism is prone to periodic crises. He does not ask why the bankers are even now creating the next "bubble" for invested capital. In order to answer that question, he would have to look at economic laws fundamental to capitalism itself. He clearly does not want to do that.

### Refuses to Indict Capitalism

Because Ferguson does not wish to uncover the inner workings of the capitalist system itself, he has to fall back on phony solutions to its built-in instability. IJ maintains that for decades the U.S. financial system was "stable" as a result of prior government controls, enacted in the wake of the Great Depression and that the collapse was the result of deregulation. This is clearly endorsed in the movie by billionaire George Soros and other ruling-class figures. You can hear Ferguson saying, "If only Reagan hadn't deregulated the public utilities and Clinton hadn't repealed the Glass-Steagall Act (which acted as a brake on the profit-making ability of large banks), then all would be well." In the end, Ferguson wants to convince us that government doesn't have to serve the Wall Street bosses. This is perhaps the most useful lie to liberal capitalists who want to protect their system from workers' anger. But it ignores basic tenets of class society. Government (the state) was, is, and always will be the servant of the ruling class.

*continued on p. 5*

## 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

### Microcredit: no miracle cure

**NYT, 1/6** — Microcredit is losing its halo in many developing countries. Microcredit was once extolled by world leaders like Bill Clinton and Tony Blair as a powerful tool that could help eliminate poverty, through loans as small as \$50 to cowherds, basket weavers and other poor people for starting or expanding businesses. But now microloans have prompted political hostility in Bangladesh, India, Nicaragua and other developing countries.

In December, the prime minister of Bangladesh...turned her back on them. She said microlenders were "sucking blood from the poor in the name of poverty alleviation."...In Nicaragua, Pakistan and Bolivia, activists and politicians have urged borrowers not to repay their loans.

The hostility toward microfinance is a sharp reversal....Most borrowers do not appear to be climbing out of poverty, and a sizable minority is getting trapped in a spiral of debt....Some lenders have minted profits that might make Wall Street bankers envious.

### Palestinian leaders seek sellout

**GW, 1/28** — The 1,600 or so documents in the Palestine papers were obtained by al-Jazeera and shared in advance of publication with the Guardian...The overwhelming impression that emerges from the confidential records of a decade of Middle East peace talks is of the weakness and desperation of Palestinian leaders, the unyielding... of Israeli negotiators and the often contemptuous attitude towards the Palestinian side shown by U.S. politicians and officials....

During 2009-10, Palestinian negotiators are shown adopting an increasingly injured and despairing tone with U.S. officials.

In an emotional outburst to Barack Obama's

Middle East envoy...the senior Palestinian negotiator...complained that the Ramallah-based Palestinian leadership wasn't even being offered "a fig leaf...."

The scale of concessions offered by...Palestinian Authority negotiations — far beyond what the majority of Palestinians would be likely to accept — was insufficient for Israeli leaders....PLO leaders accepted Israel's demand to define itself as an explicitly Jewish state, in sharp contrast to their public position.

### School cheats on class-size law.

**NYT, 1/18** — At North Miami Beach Senior High School, Naomi Baptiste expected to be greeted by her teacher when she walked into her precalculus class.

"All there were were computers in the class," said Naomi, who walked into a room of confused students...

Naomi is one of over 7,000 students in Miami-Dade.... virtual classrooms, called e-learning labs... put in place last August as a result of Florida's Class Size Reduction Amendment.... The amendment limits the number of students allowed inside classrooms, but not in virtual labs.

School administrators said that they had to find a way to meet class-size limits....The virtual labs were necessary because "there's no way to beat the class-size mandate without it."...

"The way our state is dealing with class size is nearly criminal," said...an English teacher...in Miami.

### Israeli democracy on a witch-hunt

**GW, 1/14** — The funding of Israeli human and civil rights groups is to be investigated amid claims they are acting against the country's interests, members of the Israeli parliament decided last week — a move described by opponents as "Mc-



Carthyite."...

The supporters of the bill claimed the groups' work was "delegitimizing" Israel and was funded by anti-Israel international bodies....Rights organizations... claimed the bill was part of a larger campaign to intimidate groups and individuals who speak out against the actions of the Israeli state.

### The real Obama is bosses' man

**NYT, 1/24** — Meet the new buzzword, same as the old buzzword. In advance of the State of the Union, President Obama has telegraphed his main theme: competitiveness....But let's not kid ourselves: talking about "competitiveness" as a goal is fundamentally misleading....It could lead to policies based on the false idea that what's good for corporations is good for America.

Consider....employment is way down, but profits are hitting new records. Who, exactly, considers this economic success?....The ideology that brought the economic disaster in 2008 is back on top — and seems likely to stay there until it brings disaster again.

MORE ITEMS AVAILABLE AT WWW.PLP.ORG

PO Box 808, Brooklyn, NY 11202

# Potential Power of Workers 'On Full Display': Kicking Out Capitalism Creates a REAL Revolution

Open violent struggle has erupted in several North African and Middle Eastern Arab nations, inspired largely by the massive uprising of workers and students in Tunisia. That revolt has driven out President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali who has fled to Saudi Arabia, reportedly with over a ton of stolen gold.

Workers are boldly fighting their bosses. In company after company — airlines, insurance, petrochemical — workers are seizing management headquarters and demanding, with some success, that the bosses be fired. Workers are conducting regional and city-wide strikes nation-wide. In the cities of Sfax and Sidi Bouzid, mass workers' organizations have actually seized political power, running out the mayor and city council and establishing direct organizational control over all city agencies.

These workers' councils could develop a national network and seize power from the decrepit National Unity Government (NUG). But they don't yet advocate expropriating the capitalists' property and building a collectively-run communist society. Without bold communist leadership, they will fall victim to the illusion of "fair-play capitalism." But revolutionary potential remains.

The sustained worker-student struggle continues to confront the remaining ministers from Ben Ali's regime, including prime minister and self-proclaimed leader of a "National Unity" government Mohamed Ghannouchi. Continued protests are demanding that all ministers of the Constitutional Democratic Rally (RDC) party be kicked out as simply being "Ben Ali light" who would maintain the same corrupt capitalist clique in power.

Embarrassed by the sustained mass, militant worker-student opposition to the phony NUG, both Ghannouchi and the interim president; the representatives of the General Union of Tunisian Workers (UGTT) (trying to maintain their mis-leadership of the workers); the minister from the bourgeois Democratic Forum for Labour and Liberty; and the Progressive Democratic Party ministers are all abandoning the National Unity government, leaving it as an isolated rump. But no worker has been fooled by their transparent deception.

## Workers' Example Rapidly Spreads

Reflecting the explosive quality of the Tunisian rebellion, oppressed workers throughout North Africa and the Middle East are emulating these bold actions, with the major demonstrations against corruption, repression, mass unemployment and exploitation in Egypt, Algeria, Yemen, and Jordan. Saudi and Kuwaiti bosses are also quaking with fear.

Kuwait's Mohammad al-Sabah recently told a foreign ministers' meeting, "The Arab world is witnessing...unprecedented political developments and real challenges in...Arab national security.... Countries disintegrate, people conduct uprisings... and the Arab citizen asks: Can the current Arab regime meet these challenges dynamically?"

In response to these workers' rebellions, Egypt's foreign investors are leaving in droves. According to Bloomberg News, "Overseas investors are reducing their positions because of the increased political risk stemming from what we saw in Tunisia," said an executive of Cairo-based Acumen Securities.

## THE TUNISIAN REVOLT

Motivated by massive youth unemployment, as high as 50%, poor prospects for the future, anger about the blatant corruption of the Ben Ali clique (and triggered by the desperate political suicide of a student without hope), a mass worker/student uprising challenged the Tunisian government. Ben-Ali's offer of reforms and compromises were rejected by angry masses of workers.

Demonstrations, regional general strikes, occupations of government offices by angry workers and students continued and grew until Ben Ali could only flee. Ghannouchi, Ben Ali's crony and prime minister over the past 20 years, took over but has also been rejected by the masses. The National Unity government is unlikely to remain.

Desperate to save their skins, many of Tunisia's leading figures, both traditional and reformist, have suddenly become the greatest "critics" of Ben Ali, despite having fed at Ben Ali's family trough for decades. (Over half of Tunisia's economic activity has been tied to Ben Ali's family for years). Workers are having none of this.

Meanwhile, the police and army have become less reliable for the bosses because of rank-and-file soldiers' sympathy for the uprising. Some soldiers were seen saluting demonstrators in a show of support. In the rebellion's earliest days, Ben Ali actually fired the head of the military because he refused to order the troops to shoot down demonstrators.

The military leadership, using its newly-found

credibility, is calling on students and workers not to occupy certain ministries or take "extreme actions." Although rank-and-file soldier insurgency seems to be continuing in some places, the police and the military leadership have begun to clash with the most radical rebels. Youth throughout Tunisia are organizing "Liberation Caravans" to converge on Tunis, the country's largest city and capitol, in order to take power. The police have attacked some caravans.

The forces of reaction are gradually trying to reverse the rebellion. Some reformists are calling for the ouster of the current government, replacing it with "reliable" leaders not implicated in the violence and corruption of the Ben Ali regime. These forces are attempting to mislead workers with the promise of "clean" — but still capitalist — government.

The working class's potential power has been on full display in Tunisia, but the reformists, especially in the union federation, as always are deliberately holding back the struggle. Previously, rank-and-file workers have often occupied the union headquarters to force them to support strikes!

While a general strike to bring down the rump National Unity government and replace it with a workers' government would be logical, that is not in the cards. Initially the UGTT tried to be part of the National Unity government rather than destroy it. Their role is similar to the AFL-CIO leadership in the U.S.: argue weakly for workers' interests while promoting patriotism and "national unity."

## The Role of Phony 'Leftists'

The Communist Party of the Workers of Tunisia (CPWT), whose leader Hamma Hammami was arrested early in the rebellion and subsequently released, has been immersed in the street battles and ministry occupations. The CPWT, however, is squandering this opportunity, calling for "democracy," not workers' power and communism.

Specifically, its January 15th nine-point program states, "The democratic change, with its political, economic, social and cultural dimensions, requires the real end of the repressive regime,...forming a provisional government...[with] executive powers,...organizing free elections for a Constitutional Assembly which would establish the basis of a real democratic republic...[consisting of] freedom, social equality and national dignity."

## Towards Communist Revolution and An International Party

The PLP supports the bold militant actions of Tunisia's workers and students there and will support this rebellion internationally as concretely as possible. The sharp actions of Tunisia's working class and its allies demonstrate conclusively that capitalism, with its exploitation, racism, corruption and wars, must be eliminated everywhere on the basis of workers' internationalism and replaced by a communist society.

We don't need bosses, and we shouldn't be deceived by those who want to maintain a "cleaned-up" version of capitalism, markets, wage labor and money. We call on our brothers and sisters in Tunisia to consider our vision that so perfectly reflects their aspirations in the current struggle and build PLP there as well as worldwide!✊

## U.S. and Tunisia's Rulers: Partners in Terrorism

Ben Ali's Tunisian police state has been an important U.S. ally in its imperialist wars in Afghanistan, Iraq and elsewhere. A UN report lists Tunisia as having secret detention facilities where prisoners are held without International Red Cross access. Tunisian Intelligence Services have cooperated with the U.S. efforts in the "War on Terror" and have participated in interrogating prisoners at Bagram Airbase in Afghanistan and in Tunisia. The U.S. State Department boasts about the active support the Tunisian security forces receive from the U.S. in spite of the Ben Ali's government record of serious human rights violations. According to the Department's website:

"The United States and Tunisia have an active schedule of joint military exercises. U.S. security assistance historically has played an important role in cementing relations. The U.S.-Tunisian Joint Military Commission meets annually to discuss military cooperation, Tunisia's defense modernization program, and other security matters." [Background Note: Tunisia, U.S. State Department, 13 October 2010: <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5439.htm#relations>

The U.S. has signed \$349 million in military sales agreements with Ben Ali's government. Last year the Obama administration asked Congress to approve a \$282 million sale to Tunisia of 12 "excess" Sikorsky military helicopters, with war-maker GE engines.

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