

CHALLENGE



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Bosses Rob Students, Teachers in Chicago School Scam

CHICAGO, September 3 — J.C. Brizard, the new Chicago schools CEO by way of the Broad Superintendents Academy, is pushing a racist attack on this city's predominantly black and Latino student body as well as an assault on teachers' wages. He wants to add 90 minutes to the school day and two weeks to the school year in "exchange" for a 2% raise. That's 29% more work for 2% more money.

More time in school may or may not be a good thing for students, depending on how the time is used. But contrary to the lies of Brizard and his boss, Mayor Rahm Emanuel, this move has nothing to do with improving conditions for students and everything to do with lowering costs to educate working-class children. This cost-cutting means that fewer students will learn to read and develop basic skills. They will be primed to fall victim to minimum-wage jobs — if any at all, given today's massive unemployment. Many will be driven to join the military out of economic desperation.

Capitalism uses public education primarily to justify the profit system and to exploit the working class. It "educates" students to believe in the system while setting them up to accept mass racist unemployment as "natural" and to "do their patriotic duty" to fight in the bosses' oil wars.

Brizard is doing the work he was trained to do by the Broad Academy. Its website's home page reveals its purpose: "Wanted: the nation's most talented executives to run the business of education." It goes on to say, "Without dramatic changes, the U.S. economy will continue to suffer.... Our standard of living will decline, our democracy will be at risk and we will continue to fall behind as other countries far surpass us."

U.S. rulers have not suddenly developed a soft spot in their hearts for jobless and other working-class families. Their use of words such as "our" and "we" and "us" hides the fact that it's *their* economy. Their concern about economic "suffering" has nothing to do with the high unemployment and low wages that disproportionately affect black and Latino

workers. Rather, they're concerned with the falling rate of profit faced by U.S. corporations. This is due to the nature of capitalism in general and to the low wages paid to workers in Asia, Africa, and Latin America in particular.

Teachers are tired of being maligned by the bosses' media and getting blamed for the educational ills that stem from capitalism's inequities. Strike talk is widespread in many city schools. Class consciousness is uneven, as it is everywhere today, and much work remains to be done before a strike can occur. The Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) contract expires next June 30.

PLP is helping to build for a strike. While some union leaders regard striking as a last resort if contract negotiations break down, PLP views strikes as empowering; they give workers a taste of running society in their interests instead of those of the capitalists. They're a heightened form of class struggle. They're potentially schools for communism.

In general, capitalists generate higher profits by paying lower wages, getting more work per hour from each worker, and moving more of the money workers pay in taxes into the pockets of the rich. In education, this can mean paying teachers less, raising class size, and using tax money for corporate welfare instead of for students.

Schemes like the New Markets Tax Credits and Tax Increment Financing allow charter school operators and their financial backers to steal millions in tax money while governments at all levels keep shrinking school budgets.

The longer school day and year proposed by Brizard and Emanuel will force teachers to work longer hours for essentially the same pay. A 2% raise for working 90 minutes a day and two weeks more per year amounts to \$4.31 an hour for the additional labor. Chicago school bosses are pushing this plan in the media and directly to teachers through school principals. They have bypassed negotiations with the CTU on this issue because they want to divide and conquer teachers and to weaken the union. At the same time, the bosses aim to portray teachers as greedy and uncaring, an effort to divide them from their natural allies: students and parents.

Brizard won staff members at three schools (out of more than 600) to sign waivers to the CTU contract and agree to work 40 minutes longer every day. These schools are receiving \$150,000 bonuses. Since the ruling class is stealing money from the education budget, this bonus could not possibly be given to every school. It's a wedge used to get a small number of schools to agree to a longer day with virtually no pay increase, a dangerous precedent.

The teachers' immediate answer to these attacks must be a citywide strike. But a strike also offers workers longer-range gains. During a strike, workers can see more clearly that governmental institutions — courts, cops, politicians — serve the interests of the capitalists. It can create an opportunity for them to rely on each other, bond as a fighting unit, and begin thinking about a world without bosses, a communist world. Chicago PLP school workers will strive to make that potential a reality. ☪

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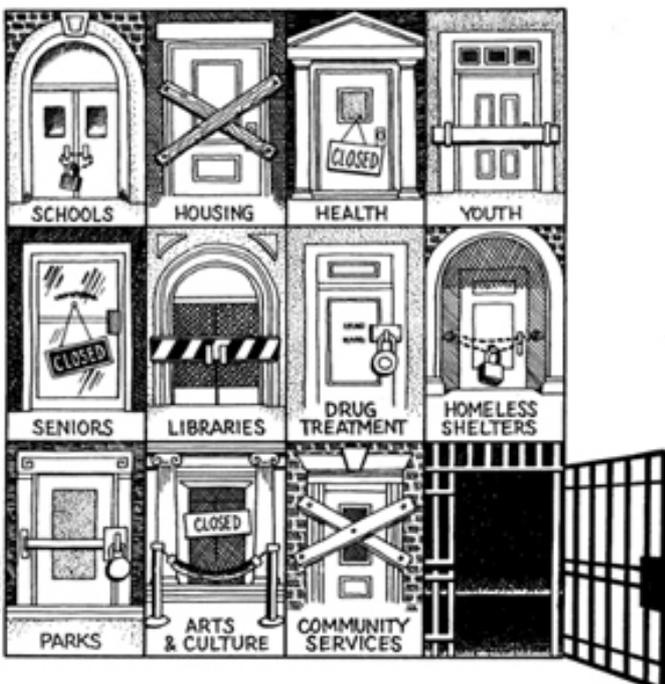
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While Workers Lack Leadership and 50,000 Die: Battle for Libya's Oil Heats Up Inter-Imperialist Rivalry

The Libyan civil war has heated up the rivalry among the world's imperialists, as U.S., British, French, Italian, Russian, and Chinese rulers jockey for access to the country's oil and gas riches. What Obama hails as Libya's "liberation" from dictator Muammar Qaddafi is in fact a bid to recolonize it into a Western protectorate. And if Libya unravels, U.S. rulers are preparing for an invasion.

Rebel Racism Rampant

Obama called Libya's NATO-backed rebels "courageous." For our class, however, there are no heroes in this civil war. Nobody is fighting for workers. All sides represent oil-thirsty capitalists and stand guilty of atrocities.

Both Qaddafi's forces and the rebels have executed handcuffed prisoners. Racist rebels massacred scores of black migrant workers and recently

jailed hundreds more as alleged Qaddafi mercenaries from sub-Saharan Africa. NATO bombers under overall U.S. command wiped out 85 civilians in one August raid. "An estimated 50,000 people have been killed in Libya since the start of the uprising, according to the rebels' military leadership" (Independent, London, 8/31).

Libya's Den-of-Thieves 'Saviors' Include Anti-U.S. al Qaeda Allies

But while the triumphant U.S., British, and French imperialists vie for Libya's energy riches, they're having trouble patching together a viable local government. Tribes and regions within Libya are also competing for their own shares of the oil profits, thus weakening the new, supposedly ruling National Transitional Council (NTC). "Already council members have fallen into dispute over the \$65 billion Libyan Investment Authority sovereign wealth fund" (Bloomberg News, 9/1).

In addition, Obama & Co.'s opportunistic reliance on radical Islamists to do their dirty work poses still worse threats to the U.S. ruling class. The London Independent noted (8/28): "The rebel military commander behind the successful assault on Tripoli had fought in Afghanistan alongside the Taliban and was an Islamist terror suspect interrogated by the CIA. Abdelhakim Belhadj, the newly appointed commander of the Tripoli Military Council, is a former emir of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) — banned by Britain and the U.S. as a terrorist organization after the 9/11 attacks." In power, radical Islamists could steer Libya closer to an anti-U.S. Iran or help destabilize Saudi Arabia (the cornerstone of oil-based U.S. imperialism), a long-time goal of Osama bin Laden's al Qaeda.

Stratfor, a Texas think-tank named for the "strategic forecasting" it sells to U.S. businesses, thinks Libya could soon tear wide open. "This jihadist element of the rebel coalition appears to have reared its head recently with the assassination of former NTC military head Abdel Fattah Younis in late July....Between the seizure of former Qaddafi arms depots and the arms provided to the rebels by outside powers, Libya is awash with weapons. If the NTC fractures like past rebel coalitions, it could set the stage for a long and bloody civil war — and provide an excellent opportunity to jihadist elements" (Stratfor, 8/24).

With Eyes on Libya's Oil Prize, U.S. Rulers Have Invasion Plan

Richard Haass, president of the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), the U.S. rulers' leading foreign policy factory, foresees GIs in Libya: "Obama may need to reconsider his assertion that there would not be any American boots on the ground" (London Financial Times, 8/22). The CFR's "Contingency Planning Memorandum No.12: Post-Qaddafi Instability in Libya," released in August and bankrolled by the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, gave more specifics:

"If initial efforts to avert violent instability in Libya fail, the international community would have three broad response options: humanitarian relief...limited military intervention...full-scale occupation. Various operational configurations for armed intervention are conceivable — including unilateral U.S. action (our emphasis, Ed.) a coalition of the willing without UN mandate, and a fully sanctioned international force led by NATO."

Obama, French President Nicolas Sarkozy and British Prime Minister David Cameron bombarded Libya and sent in special forces assassins, invoking a "responsibility to protect" Libyan citizens.

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.

But the civilian casualties resulting from 8,000 NATO airstrikes and the disgusting scramble for war spoils prove the humanitarian motive false.

On September 1, Sarkozy and Cameron chaired a 60-nation "Friends of Libya" gathering in Paris. Hillary Clinton stood in for Obama. Everyone knew the agenda. "The glittering prize is Libya's 1.6 million barrels per day output of high quality crude.... Projecting into the future, analysts believe that has reserves to sustain its previous level of production for 80 years" (OilPrice.com, 8/24).

Obama's 'Coalition of the Drilling'

"Who will eventually control this asset, with oil prices currently at roughly \$84 a barrel, generating an income of more than \$12.6 million per day? Italy's ENI? France's Total? Britain's BP? U.S. companies?" (OilPrice.com). That's the 4.6-billion-dollar-a-year question.

Obama and his murderous coalition of the drilling imagine that they've scored a major coup against imperialist rivals China and Russia. Abdeljalil Mayouf, information manager at Libya's "rebel" Arabian Gulf Oil Company, proclaimed in gratitude for NATO's slaughter: "We don't have a problem with Western countries like the Italians, French and U.K. companies. But we may have some political issues with Russia, China and Brazil [which took no military or diplomatic action against Qaddafi]" (Asia Times, 8/25). And Business Week (8/24) predicts triple profits for Western firms under Libya's new management, "a split of 70 percent of revenue for the government and 30 percent for oil companies, as opposed to the current 90-10 ratio."

But meanwhile, rising imperialists are joining together to challenge the traditional capitalist powers centered in NATO: the U.S., Britain, France and Germany. BRIC — Brazil, Russia, India and China — represents a coalition seeking a larger portion of the world capitalist pie, which can only come from taking resources and exploitable workers away from the more established powers. This growing inter-imperialist rivalry will inevitably lead to regional and eventually world war.

China's Bosses May Trump Obama's Bombing Coalition in Libya Oil Grab

"But it is too early to count China out from the race....The crystal ball is murky indeed, but when the uprising against Qaddafi began six months ago, about 36,000 Chinese were in Libya working on 50 projects" (OilPrice.com). And Chinese rulers have "deeper pockets than all their competitors."

Suppose China does win energy concessions in Libya. The range of its potential military confrontations with its chief imperialist rival, the U.S., will then stretch from the Mediterranean through Suez to the Persian Gulf, the Indian Ocean, the Strait of Malacca, the South China Sea and Taiwan, all the way to the mid-Pacific. The U.S. Navy is pointedly expanding its already massive base on Guam.

China's rulers, who already field the world's largest land army, have been building up their blue water navy and their stockpile of non-nuclear ballistic missiles, threatening U.S. domination of the Pacific and Indian oceans (see article, page 5). China recently launched its first aircraft carrier, with more to come. The New York Times Op-Ed page (9/5) warned that planned Pentagon spending cuts — a reflection of divisions in the U.S. ruling class — could give China the ability to deal "a knockout blow to [U.S.] forward forces" and to erode U.S. security guarantees to China's neighbors.

Many working-class Libyans sincerely believed they were combatting Qaddafi's tyranny. But because they lacked communist leadership and goals, the struggle long ago became a classic inter-imperialist battle for territory and resources. Instead of Qaddafi's brutal reign, Libya's workers will be suffering the so-called Western "democracy" which exploits their labor and rains bombs down on them to guarantee ruling-class profits.

The end of oil wars like Libya's can come only after the working class seizes power in a revolution that destroys the profit system. This will be a true, lasting, fundamental change in class rule. It constitutes the Progressive Labor Party's ultimate aim.✶

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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Fight Over Hospital Closing Signals Need for City-wide Strike

AVERNE, NEW YORK, August 13 — Over 350 Peninsula General Hospital workers and community residents of this predominantly black and Latino area rallied today to fight the closing of their hospital. Workers had enthusiastically organized door-to-door to bring their fight-back message to the Rockaway and Broad Channel neighborhoods. Their hospital had been slated to close due to



Medicaid/Medicare cuts and through theft by the MEDSYS management. MEDSYS, which also runs Brooklyn's Brookdale Hospital (and others), uses hospital revenues like its own piggy bank (see *CHALLENGE*, 8/3).

A Brooklyn PL hospital worker spoke at this rally, exposing the fact that this is not an isolated event. Hospital bosses, along with city, state and federal politicians, are planning to close many more healthcare facilities. This is part of the strategic plan to cut workers' living standards in order to maintain profits as well as pay for imperialist oil conflicts worldwide. He called for uniting all our brothers and sisters in a city-wide strike of all the hospitals to stop all the layoffs and closings. He also urged an occupation of Governor Cuomo's NYC offices to publicize this struggle.

Union Misleaders Play the Bosses' Game

In sharp contrast to the rank-and-file's actions, the leadership of SEIU-1199 tried to mute the workers' anger with their worn-out message of "call your local politicians," the



very same politicians who have voted for these cuts. The union misleaders did nothing to mobilize 1199's 300,000 members, many of whom face similar layoff threats.

Several Peninsula workers gave their contact information to keep them in touch with other hospital workers who are fighting back. The protests against these racist closings continues. At present, Peninsula remains open, and the friends we have met in this battle have been introduced to PL's revolutionary ideas. They can become future leaders of our Party and the struggle for communism, a society without bosses and profits in which the health of all workers will be guaranteed. ☺

Angry Strikers Storm Hearing on City's \$100 Million Verizon Rip-off

NEW YORK, August 17 — Thousands of striking Verizon workers, wearing red shirts and full of working-class rage, descended on Murray Bergtraum High School to protest a new \$120 million contract for phone and Internet services between Verizon and New York City's Department of Education. The deal was up for approval by the Panel for Education Policy (PEP), the rubber stamp for Mayor Michael Bloomberg's anti-student policies.

A little earlier and a few blocks away, the leadership of the strikers' unions, the Communication Workers of America and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, had tried to make this protest as symbolic as possible. They began their rally with the Pledge of Allegiance and a big "thank you" to the New York Police Department for allowing the protest. But the servile union leadership could not contain the workers, who marched to the PEP meeting and filled the chairs. After schools Chancellor Dennis Walcott directed his cronies to pass the massive budget cuts coming to the city's schools, they approved the Verizon contract by an 8-4 vote. Since Bloomberg appoints a majority of the PEP's members, this was hardly a surprise.

Still, the striking workers dominated that meeting. They showed no fear for the thugs in blue and in suits that were protecting the stage. The workers' chanting and shouting down the PEP shook the room with a palpable energy. They were pissed off because the DOE was helping to strengthen



Verizon and therefore attacking the striking workers.

The state (the police and the courts) is the organized force by which the ruling class dominates the working class. When fear fully gives way to rage, the working class will rise up and destroy the state. The uprising by youth in England, after the cops killed a young black man, clearly illustrates this. But only communist leadership can lead the workers' rage into an egalitarian society that will provide for their needs.

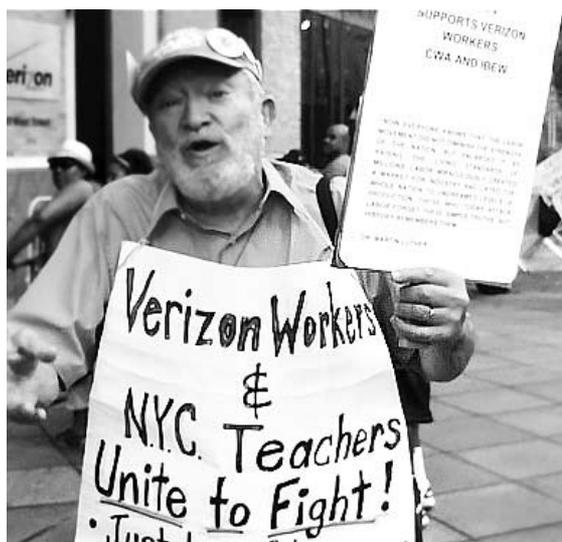
The militant speeches and loud chanting drowned out at least two votes that the PEP tried to take. Over a dozen unions were represented by their rank and file, as none of the union misleaders were present. The workers present — teachers, janitors, college professors, electricians — all expressed solidarity with the striking workers. This display of anti-racist, anti-sexist unity amongst workers shows us that the bosses' racist and sexist ideology can be broken when workers realize their enemy is not each other, but the rulers and union sellouts who oppress us all.

A worker who discussed the meeting with a PL'er was correct when he said that what they witnessed was not a democracy. The PEP had already made up their minds to pass the contract and nothing that was said or done there would have made a difference. The U.S. ruling class has to abandon the veneer of democracy as the economic crisis

sharpens and they continue to lose political power as the top imperialist. To keep itself disciplined and the workers fearful, it builds fascism at home. The worker went on to point out that the cops were threatening the workers who rushed the stage to get back. The state rules through direct and indirect force. If warnings don't work, then they have no problem arresting or shooting workers. Because of the racist nature of this system, that is twice as true for black and Latino workers.

It is no surprise that one day after this militant action, Verizon agreed to get back to negotiating with the union and preserve some façade of democracy. For the company's workers, this is a losing tactic. (Since then, they have gone back to work under the old contract.) Even so, their militancy represented an important step forward. The PEP meeting got significant media coverage, and many thousands of viewers saw that the workers were unafraid to challenge the bosses.

In another stage of history, communists led by PLP, will lead thousands of striking workers to occupy the factories and the schools. With a bigger force, we could have easily overwhelmed the few cops protecting their social order and routed the PEP. Instead, the workers watched the bosses pass a vote to attack them. One day, workers worldwide will lead a communist revolution where we will make all the decisions based only on our needs. ☺



Mexico PLP Project: Turn Workers' Anger into Red Revolutionary Force

MEXICO CITY, August 23 — In Mexico City the majority of workers live in miserable neighborhoods that surround the city. The PLP's Summer Project was based in two of these neighborhoods, and included the participation of teachers and comrades from several countries. We distributed flyers, but mostly focused on visiting CHALLENGE readers and their families. Building a base in the working class is essential for a communist revolution.

During the first week we concentrated our efforts in a neighborhood close to the most important industrial zone in the center of the country. We visited some twenty people at work and at home. We had meetings with about half of them.

These conversations made it clear that industrial workers are the key to the revolution. They have the power to stop all production and the knowledge to run the factories for the working class. In time of crisis, fascism crushes their lives and that of their families. But with PLP there to lead them, frustration and anger will become a revolutionary force. We were told that a worker has to try to make it on 600 pesos (about \$48) a week, has to put up with abusive bosses, insults and often even physical abuse. Work-related injuries are common and the bosses leave workers unprotected.

One of our friends described the injury of a worker who had his ankle crushed at a bridge construction site. It was difficult for the injured worker to make ends meet on 400 pesos (\$32) a week, which is the amount the boss registered for him at the social security office. His co-workers, our PLP friend included, offered their solidarity. A comrade also explained the limits of not fighting back: "what are we going to do when there is another accident? This doesn't solve anything; we have to get organized."

Another worker, with a simple question, underscored the challenge we face: "Do you believe the Party is ready now to lead a new society?" We are confident our political line is right and our Party is strong, and as our ties to workers strengthen and we gain more organizing experience, we will lead a communist revolution.

During the second week we visited a community to the west of the city. PLP has been organizing the neighbors to fight against government negligence related to the imminent danger of flooding of the whole community, and against the high cost of utilities, such as electric services to the homes. We visited 10 people, distributed 1,200 CHALLENGE pamphlets, and 2,000 flyers calling for a neighborhood meeting.



Close to 100 people came, including a group of the Mexican Electricians Union (SME) who advised the neighbors on the best ways to deal with the unreasonably high electric bills. We also discussed the ways governments at all levels ignore workers' problems.

In one of our meetings, a comrade criticized us for the lack of articles about Mexico in CHALLENGE and offered to help increase their production. This Project helped us to increase the struggle against our own weaknesses, such as the low distribution of our newspaper and to understand its importance in the lives of the workers.

In addition to the work in those two neighborhoods, we held a meeting for a couple of CHALLENGE readers, and on another occasion visited two comrades who live to the east of the city, where we support a reforestation campaign.

Every person we visited received a copy of the PLP document "Road to Revolution IV," an invitation to join a communist school, and was asked to support or join PLP. The majority indicated interest in attending meetings and distributing the paper.

We organized two communist schools for around 60 people; 10 of them were participating for the first time. We discussed political economy, fascism, and the need for a communist party.

Comrades' skills and participants' generosity allowed us to meet our goals. We thank our comrades for their criticisms and patience.

All the participants in the Project developed a strong sense of comradeship, and at the closing we were moved by the singing of the Internationale. The international unity that our Party promotes is key to the success of communism. Death to capitalism! Long Live Communism!✪

Greet PL'ers' Red Ideas Park Boathouse Strikers Defy Racist, Sexist Boss-Government Attack

NEW YORK CITY, September 3 — Outside a popular tourist boathouse restaurant at Manhattan's Central Park, 150 workers have been picketing and beating their drums for three weeks against their racist and sexist working conditions. They are urging all passer-bys to boycott the restaurant.

Dean Poll, the restaurant owner, won a lucrative city contract to operate the restaurant in 2000. He is under federal, state and local investigations for fraud and illegal practices. Fifteen workers were fired for trying to organize a union, while others were spied on, threatened and harassed. Thirty-two workers sued the management in 2008 for stealing their tips. Seven women workers filed sexual harassment complaints in June. For most restaurant workers, these abuses are "part of the job." Last January, the workers filed for a union election with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), but all union supporters were then fired.

Restaurant workers are among the most exploited, as they are neglected under the already-deficient labor regulations. Mostly immigrants and female, young workers are coerced into these low-

wage, long-hours jobs without benefits. These conditions are inherently racist and sexist, for they disproportionately attack immigrant and female workers. In an economic crisis, bosses further harass these workers into passivity in order to squeeze out more profits. This is not an isolated situation, but the standard under capitalism.

Three weeks ago, the workers had had enough and walked out. All of them were fired. About 30 were afraid to join the struggle and have remained inside, but others have remained strong. The workers are supported by Local 6, the Hotel and Restaurant Workers Union. They are leafleting around the park and passing out pro-strike tee shirts. The workers are steadily beating drums and keeping up loud chants to promote their successful boycott.



about Stella D'oro and all were eager to learn about it. Many of the strikers are young workers from Mexico who were glad to see CHALLENGE articles about Mexico and the Verizon strike. We talked about the need to transform the whole system. Workers deserve more than just a compromise with their exploiters. The unions cannot be counted on to carry the struggle to the finish, let alone challenge capitalism.

This was demonstrated by the Verizon strike, where the union bade the militant workers to return to work before any concessions had been won. The government investigations — which steer workers' fight-backs into compliance with the bosses' laws — will not bring justice for workers. This is the same state that bails out banks and cuts education and healthcare. Capitalism, which breeds division among workers, cannot meet the needs of the working class.

We have made contacts, and must return to this militant picket line and discuss PLP's anti-racist, anti-sexist, and international politics with these workers.✪

While the union's victory lies in bringing racist sexist Dean Poll to negotiate the workers' scraps, PLP aims to destroy the capitalist system that exploits these workers in the first place. Two PL'ers brought CHALLENGE and some reprinted articles about the Stella D'oro strike.

Some workers knew



'Dean Poll: we are not afraid of you.'

Racist Israeli Rulers Freak Out At United Arab-Jewish Protest

AL-WALAJA, EAST JERUSALEM, PAL-ESTINE, August 10 — The racist Israeli rulers showed how much they hate and fear Arab-Jewish unity when they launched a pogrom (a fascist attack) and ordered soldiers to violently attack demonstrators attempting to protest the racist apartheid directed towards villagers in Palestine.

We arrived at the village of al-Walesa, located at the southern entrance to Jerusalem (between the Malha mall, Beit Jallah and the settlement of Har Giloh which are included in the municipal jurisdiction of Jerusalem). The village's status is "present absentee"; its land belongs to Jerusalem's municipal jurisdiction while its residents are classified as residents of the West Bank and have no civil rights (they have orange ID cards).

When we arrived we suspected something bad was about to happen. When we took the main road to the village, the IDF (Israeli "Defense" Force) soldiers at the checkpoint stopped us to check our IDs and possibly photograph them. These soldiers gave us the feeling of "what do these Jews have to look for in this Arab area." This just emphasized the racism of these soldiers. We then continued uninterrupted.

Approximately 20 villagers and 15 activists participated in the demonstration. We walked to where the apartheid wall was being built through the steep mountain terraces. The land was very curved and descended into shallow creeks. In the background we could hear the bulldozer.

When we reached about 200 meters (600 feet) from the construction zone, we encountered several dozen soldiers and three Border Guard officers. The soldiers

— members of the Dukhifat battalion — aggressively blocked our access to the site. One officer announced this was a "closed military zone" and gave us five minutes to leave. This was ridiculous since the rough terrain would take much more time to traverse.

Very soon they started arresting protesters, launching tear gas and shock grenades. Since there were far more soldiers than demonstrators, we quickly retreated and tried to take shelter in the village's houses. The soldiers violently drove us away from the construction site, surrounding us and shooting at us with tear gas grenades. The military arrested up to 12 activists, beating them as they were enraged to see Arab and Jewish workers united and standing up against apartheid.

Other demonstrators began driving away, and, being outnumbered, we joined them. The soldiers began raiding the village's houses and arresting villagers, mostly children, entering houses with full body armor and guns at the ready.

When one grandmother tried to shelter her grandson and prevent his arrest, soldiers pushed her, and when she refused to give up, one soldier threw a shock grenade at her. This also happened to other villagers, especially parents who crowded around the soldiers in order to defend their children.

Our attack on this Israeli rulers' apartheid is another example of PLP's determination to fight racism whenever and wherever it rears its head. The fascist treatment of these workers is a threat and an attack on the international working class. ☸

PLP Leads Opposition to Neo-Nazi, Tea Party Racists

WORCESTER, MASS., July 23 — On July 16, the North East White Pride (NEWP), a fascist, pro-Nazi group, tried to use the Worcester Library to spread its racist ideas. Progressive Labor Party organized the community to stand up to these Nazis, who had put out a video on YouTube inviting fascists to come to their meeting and bring weapons. When the Library Board saw the video, it cancelled NEWP's meeting.

Many people then thought NEWP would not come. We in PLP immediately said that an anti-fascist demonstration would be held regardless of whether NEWP came or not. NEWP called the library and threatened violence. The city then called PLP and asked us to postpone our demonstration. We said we would not allow the fascists to go unopposed.

About 50 people came to the July 16th anti-fascist rally. PLP's message of multi-racial unity, jobs for everyone and a communist society was made known and we are now recognized in Worcester for our principled stand against racism and fascism. About five fascists came to the library but were refused use of the meeting rooms. Anti-racists kept an eye on them and followed them around the library until they left the city.

One reason these fascists (who live in New Hampshire) came to Worcester is because one or two of the City Councilors are sympathetic to the Tea Party and the Tea Party has connections to NEWP. Its webmaster is also the webmaster for the Tea Party. These City Councilors have proposed a city ordinance enforcing the racist so-called Secure Communities. We're now organizing people to oppose this fascist Tea Party law. We make the point that when workers control society racist laws will end and laws to help all working people will be enacted.

CHALLENGES were sold and residents marched with our signs on the picket line. Our chants included: "The Cops, the Courts, the Nazis and the Klan, all a part of the bosses' plan"; "Asian, Latin, black and white, against fascism we must unite"; "Hitler Rose, Hitler Fell, Racist Nazis go to Hell!"

Worcester PLP is now hosting a study group on fascism. We're planning for the next time the fascists try to return. ☸

Street Battles with Cops Chile: Massive Student, Miner Strikes Need Red Anti-Nationalist Ideas

CHILE — Showing the fighting spirit of the working class, students and workers have united in a massive reform struggle for access to education and better wages. They organized a strike against the right-wing president Sebastian Pinera. Well over a half a million workers and students took to the streets and fought pitched battles with the cops, who killed one young teen.

Sick of the fact that education is becoming increasingly privatized and priced out of reach, many young people have been protesting for months to have access to education. The mass number of student struggles entered a new stage as it merged with the current miners' struggle. This unity has worried the Chilean ruling class.

The students and workers in Chile are an inspiration to the international working class. Their spirit is a necessary ingredient in the struggle to lift us from the hell of capitalism. Unfortunately, a key ingredient — revolutionary communist leadership — is missing. The reformism and revisionism (fake leftists) that currently dominate place absolute limits on the struggle. Hundreds of thousands of workers and students chanting, "The people united will never be defeated" is a testament to how politically misled the movement is. There are fewer more bankrupt and dangerously misleading phrases than "the people" (including the bosses) as it hides class content and make one wonder, which people? Communist leadership will transform this chant into "The workers united will never be defeated."

The false ideologies of nationalism and reformism are misleading the massive display of workers' power into a dead-end struggle against a figurehead, instead of placing the blame solely upon the capitalist system.

These struggles are exciting to watch and will hopefully inspire future student struggle from South Africa's young people to the Europe and the U.S. But, the workers and students of Chile need to build the revolutionary Progressive Labor Party because capitalism can never meet the needs of the working class. ☸

Chinese Military Expansion Ups Ante vs. U.S., Portends Global War

CHINA, August 28 — A report released by the U.S. Defense Department warned that China's current military build-up is "potentially destabilizing" in the Pacific (NYT, 8/24). The report points to China's growing naval capabilities as a potential challenge to U.S. dominance in the region. For the last decade U.S. plans to contain Chinese growth and influence have relied on unchallenged access to the vital waterways that serve as China's link to Middle Eastern oil reserves. In 1999 the Hart-Rudman Report stated that should a conflict arise between the U.S. and China that "the parade of supertankers streaming to Chinese ports would be vulnerable to interdiction" (Phase I, p 73).

China has apparently heeded Washington's threats and is now making moves to secure these vital waterways. In 2010 China announced its Far Sea Defense strategy causing the New York Times to write in a panic, "The Chinese military is seeking to project naval power well beyond the Chinese coast, from the oil ports of the Middle East to the shipping lanes of the Pacific, where the U.S. has long reigned as the dominant force" (NYT, 4/23/10).

China's naval build-up is moving forward with astonishing speed. In 2009 China revealed to international observers its new nuclear submarines (NYT, 4/21/09). In January 2011 China held the first test flight of its brand new stealth jet fighter during a visit to Beijing by then-Defense Secretary Robert Gates (Reuters, 8/18). The building of a stealth fighter is particularly interesting because it is not only useless against anybody other than other imperialists like the U.S., but it was also apparently designed

with the help of Russian engineers.

In July, China held the first open-seas trial of a refitted Soviet-era aircraft carrier purchased from the Ukraine. It is the first of three Chinese aircraft carriers currently under development (Reuters, 7/28). Now the Pentagon is claiming that China is developing an anti-ship ballistic missile that is capable of striking American aircraft carriers (NYT, 8/24).

The growing inter-imperialist rivalry between the U.S. and China almost led to a proxy war on the Venezuela-Colombia border in 2008, leading the U.S. to deploy more troops to Colombia (NYT, 7/23/09). Chinese plans to build the Gwadar Deep Sea Port in Pakistan have led to sharpening tensions in the area and coincide with increased U.S. air strikes into Pakistan. The recent uprising in Libya has implications for this growing inter-imperialist rivalry as well. Recently, the spokesman for the rebel Libyan oil company Agoco announced that while they had no problem with European and American companies they do "have some political issues with Russia, China, and Brazil" (NYT, 8/22). Under Qaddafi China imported 3% of its oil from Libya — it would seem that this may change.

Some liberals have commented that the Pentagon's concern over China is just a cover to secure more funding. They argue that the U.S. still spends six times more money on its military than China does (Common-Dreams, 8/26). This is an important point, but it misses the essence of the situation. The competition between imperialists inexorably moves toward broader, eventu-

continued on page 7

LETTERS

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

Vets Indict Obama for War Crimes but Lack Class Outlook

The Vets for Peace (VFP) Convention in Portland, Oregon was held at Portland State University recently. Having been to a number of VFP conventions, I want to share some observations.

VFP was founded in 1985 by mostly Vietnam-era vets and some from the Korean War and even World War II. Its emphasis was on healing, pacifism, and not forgetting the holocaust that was Vietnam.

In 2005-06, VFP sponsored/assisted the Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW). Thus, there was some optimism that a veteran-led movement could influence active-duty military personnel and even inspire revolts in the ranks. Sadly, within a year or two, that moment was lost.

The civilian anti-war movement subsequently was undermined by Obama's electoral campaign in 2007-08. IVAW purged its leadership ranks of the most left people (often black and Latino). The Winter Soldier testimonials in Washington D.C. (2008) saw some vibrant anti-capitalist moments.

But there was much censorship of words like "genocide" and "imperialism." Some Iraq vets in Los Angeles were so incensed, they boycotted LA's Winter Soldier. Military Families Speak Out (MFSO) allied itself with VFP/IVAW. Now a new organization, Afghanistan Veterans Against the War (AVAW), is being formed.

All these anti-war groups represent mass organizations that are led by liberal careerists with anti-left credentials. They have potential among their members.

This year, there was talk about Wisconsin, Arab Spring, and the Palestinian/Zionist conflicts. In the workshop on support of the Palestinians against Israeli fascism, two resolutions were rejected: one called for a two-state solution and one for a Palestinian state that failed to rule out a Muslim state.

The resolution that passed emphasized "self-determination," the nationalist line that ignores class politics. It was clear that sponsoring authors understood that Palestinian militancy would be necessary. However, they neglected to include Arab/Israeli worker solidarity.

Generally, imperialism was widely noted, even more than in past VFP conventions, but they didn't connect imperialism to capitalism. The resolution to impeach Obama based on war crimes emphasized him as a war criminal. However, it did not link his wars to class conflict or inter-imperialist rivalries.

Still, it was amusing that at the closing Saturday evening dinner, VFP leadership openly criticized the passed resolution as a mistake. That is, VFP rank and file is to the left of VFP leadership. Another observation was that VFP leadership stressed pacifism more than usual. They fear the potential militancy in the air.

Much criticism of democracy was heard, but elections were still viewed as viable. A few years ago, Dennis Kucinich was the favored politician; now the liberal consensus is more with Cynthia McKinney.

Bradley Manning's case spearheaded by Courage to Resist, located in Oakland, has energetic leadership and a successful fund-raising effort. While defense committee activism has political limits, the fact that Manning faces many years in prison (potentially the death penalty) for being a whistleblower of war atrocities, strikes a chord among people. When videos of these horrors are shown to audiences, as they have been on college campuses, in communities, and in churches, it stuns people and brings the war into sharper focus.

With the economy leaving millions jobless and homeless, we could expect a growing number of active-duty soldiers to question their mission.

Finally, as I was leaving Portland I stopped at a local restaurant. I mentioned the VFP convention, and a middle-aged waitress stated emphatically, "They should bring them all home immediately. My son is on his fifth tour." When will the break come? When will a massive rejection of the imperialist slaughter among the ranks of soldiers and marines erupt? When will the wars and the economy be linked to develop a full-fledged anti-capitalist

movement? Much needs to be done. And it is up to us.

Red Vet

Article on Japan's Nuclear Disaster Errs on Dangers

The 9/7 article, "Japan's Nuclear Disaster," is good politically, but it uncritically accepts the media's anti-nuclear position. It's capitalism that kills the world's working class, not nuclear energy.

The Fukushima meltdowns are a "disaster" for TEPCO [Japan's electric company] but the supposed dangers to workers in and around the plant are highly exaggerated. Also the linkage of nuclear energy with nuclear weapons is no more valid than a linkage of steel with tanks.

One cannot base an attitude toward nuclear energy on who stands to profit, because all energy sources produce profit, the greatest coming from fossil fuels (oil, coal, and natural gas). The two authors of this letter (including a physicist and radiation worker) have been studying, giving talks, and writing about energy sources for over three years (with no energy investments).

Humans have evolved in a sea of natural radiation, from ground and sky. Low levels of radiation actually have been found to reduce cancer rates and prolong life, called "hormesis," due to defenses, including our immune systems and cell repair. Hormesis is little known due to a decades-long denial by nuclear regulatory agencies, as well as by the media, who ignore or ridicule the concept. Coal/oil profits no doubt pay for this ridicule, but the point is whether or not it's true.

The government, admitting there is no evidence for it, relies on the linear-no-threshold (LNT) approach, which denies a threshold below which radiation is protective of health, though above which it sickens and kills. They ignore more than 2,000 studies in the world scientific literature, compiled over decades, by hundreds of laboratory workers and epidemiologists that prove that LNT is false at low levels and that radiation hormesis is real.

Given the actual exposures, it is unlikely that any Fukushima workers or local inhabitants, let alone in other countries, will be harmed by the radiation. But tens or hundreds of thousands were either killed or still suffer immensely from the April 6 quake and tsunami.

In contrast, coal and oil kill an estimated two million people annually around the world (about 50,000 in the U.S.) from toxic exhaust, waste, and mining "accidents." Wind and solar, pushed by venture capitalists and most environmentalist organizations as the solutions to global warming, are so intermittent and so spread out that they are entirely dependent on another energy source for baseload (the 24/7 provision of energy). And the only choices for that baseload are either deadly coal and natural gas or nuclear. Interruptions in baseload electricity guarantee huge loss of life, whether from loss of air conditioning, loss of air controller communication, or absence of hurricane warnings, or hundreds of other scenarios.

CHALLENGE mentions a million deaths from the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear accident. This invented figure comes from the Ukraine that is now suing Russia for compensation. Even the World Health Organization projects a total of 4,000 deaths, but they rely on the LNT falsehood. Today's reactor designs make a repeat of Chernobyl impossible. Chernobyl's main damage was from FEAR that fostered an estimated 100,000-200,000 voluntary abortions and over 1,000 suicides in Europe. Exaggeration of danger is deadly.

No energy source controlled by capitalists mainly serves the working class, but nuclear has been the cleanest and safest source, and continues to improve through the efforts of nuclear workers. When revolution rids us of capitalism, nuclear energy, in our opinion, will prove to be the only way to safely and sustainably



Many members and friends have asked what we are doing to remember Milt Rosen, founding chairperson of PLP. Progressive Labor Party has established a fund to honor Milt and Harriet Rosen. The International Solidarity Fund will be used to continue our work training young leaders in the 25 countries where we have members and to spread PLP ideas all over the globe. This will help turn the idea of one worldwide communist party into reality.

Memorial Service:

Los Angeles on September 25, 2011
213-359-1733

Brooklyn, New York on Sunday, October 9, 2011 at 2 PM

Old First Church, Corner of 7th Avenue and Carroll Street

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satisfy all our energy needs for food, shelter, and other necessities of life, and at the same time reverse the developing climate disasters due to global warming from fossil fuels.

The authors will provide an article on energy in general, in far more depth, for THE COMMUNIST magazine in the near future.

Two long-time comrades

Illinois Workers Attacked; Union Leaders Role? Mislead

Union-busting is not only happening in Republican Wisconsin, but also in Democratic Illinois. The Governor here called off the raises of many government workers. The American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) union contributed thousands of dollars to the campaign of this Governor.

The Chicago Mayor also plans to cut the benefits of the workers. The labor unions had acceded to furlough days for employees. This has not satisfied the bosses' politicians.

The Chicago school board reneged on the contract it made with the teachers union. These union leaders responded by asking to "have talks" with the board members.

In the Cook County hospital, the government workers and patients are under attack. This hospital serves the indigent working class.

Court actions, political campaigns and half-hearted demonstrations will not achieve much for the working class. We must have militant actions. PL correctly tells us that it is not only the Republicans that are to blame; all politicians are instruments of the bosses.

The time of union misleadership has passed. We need Progressive Labour Party leadership. Forward to workers power!

Red senior



Need to Shut Down U. of Maryland Workers, Students, Profs Unite vs. Bosses' Abuse

COLLEGE PARK, MD., September 3 — Workers and students at the University of Maryland College Park (UMCP) continue to push their demands to end the abuses against campus facilities workers. The Black Faculty and Staff Association, along with the union and students, held a press conference on August 18th to promote solidarity and expose the Administration's treatment of workers.

Workers spoke out about supervisors denying them leave to visit dying parents or take care of sick children, prohibiting Latina housekeepers from speaking Spanish on the job, isolating workers who speak out, and refusing to allow computer training to enhance promotions. A worker reported years of sexual abuse and harassment, including physical contact and "flashing" by a student in front of a housekeeper. No supervisor received disciplinary actions. While the Chancellor makes \$700,000 a year, the housekeepers earn \$27,000. Managers receive pay increases while they furlough workers in all departments.

This struggle is part of a wider movement of workers around the globe. At the same time, 45,000 Verizon workers were striking, students were demonstrating in Chile and Haiti for educational reforms, Washington, D.C. unemployed residents were demanding jobs, and thousands of people in Egypt and Syria were fighting to end dictatorships. They all share a common goal of creating a better life for workers and students. Yet they also share a common mistake.

None of these struggles have the goal to take state power and put the working class in charge. Only a communist system that is run for workers' needs, without profit and wages, can enable workers to contribute their full intellectual and physical worth. We all need to study how to create a new system as we fight to survive this one.

The UMCP speakers demonstrated the potential power of a united working-class movement. A leader from the Black Faculty and Student Association (BFSA) aptly stated that the fight for justice "brought together people on this campus who are kept isolated by different cultures, so-called races, and backgrounds." Another leader urged the group to be bold and promised that "we will not relent — never relent — till the University ends its mistreatment of workers."

A black custodian attacked the Administration for making them invisible, "stripping away our manhood and womanhood." "We are human, not animals," said a housekeeper, describing working without air conditioning or water, while another Latina housekeeper reported her boss telling her to "go back to your country to speak Spanish." "Nowhere have I been treated like this," she said. "One day my supervisor threw her keys at me and told me to pick them up... They give us more work to do if we speak out."

A white worker stood up in solidarity to recount his story of being written up for taking too much sick leave and for being disciplined for collecting money for a family of an employee who died, adding, "As bad as it is for me, that's nothing compared to what happens to the housekeepers." Another white collar worker called on his co-workers to join with more exploited employees.

Students again turned out to demonstrate their solidarity with words and actions. Already, they have begun to patrol the buildings at 4 AM to support housekeepers. On September 5, they will leaflet the opening football game to notify more students and alums about the situation. Press conferences and flyers can publicize the struggle, but what campus workers and students really need is mass action to shut the university down.

A militant struggle around anti-racist and anti-sexist demands could show workers and students the potential of working-class power and make this fight a fertile ground for communist ideas.☸

China's Military Build-up

continued from page 5

ally global war. Furthermore, while the U.S. military budget is enormous, the force and the U.S. economy is overextended and vulnerable, being engaged in three simultaneous wars while maintaining 702 bases in 130 different countries. The Pentagon and the Rockefeller-led main wing of the U.S. ruling class are deeply concerned about the increasing weakness of their imperialist machine.

Workers, whether from China, the U.S., or anywhere, have no stake in this battle. As with all capitalist rivalries, no matter who wins the imperialist shoot-out, we lose. We will be the ones killing and dying. We will be the ones suffering under a war budget. We will be the ones suffering the devastating effects of what will likely be a war fought with nuclear weapons. Capitalists of all stripes will gladly sacrifice millions of workers, even their "own," to secure their profits, so why should we be willing to die for them?

The only path that steers us away from this imperialist nightmare is to turn their wars for profit into communist revolution. The Russians did it during World War I, the Chinese did it during World War II. PLP is building a party that can turn the next imperialist bloodbath into a communist revolution that will free the workers of the world.☸

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

Oil imperialism devastates villagers

GW, 8/12 — Oil giant Shell faces a bill of hundreds of millions of dollars after accepting full liability for two massive oil spills that devastated a Nigerian community of 69,000 people and may take at least 20 years to clean up.

....Many other impoverished communities in the delta are now expected to seek damages for oil pollution against Shell in the British courts. On average, there are three oil spills a day by Shell and other companies...

On the ground the damage is obvious. The air stinks, the water stinks, and even the fish and crabs caught in Bodo creek smell of...light crude oil. The oil has found its way deep into the village wells.... Nearly 80% of people here are fishermen or they depend on the water. They have lost their livelihoods.

In 2006, armed groups began sabotaging pipelines and kidnapping oil company staff...

Voting can't solve capitalist crisis

NYT, 8/24 —What's happening in America today: We're having an economic crisis and the politicians are having an election — and there is almost no overlap between the two....

With no healthcare, he chose jail

Otherwords.org, 8/8 — ...Our president and Congress not only support waging wars of conquest abroad but also shredding our safety net at home....

This helps explain why James Verone recently got into the news. He's the guy from North Carolina who passed a bank teller a note demanding

one dollar...He sat down to await the police. Duly carted away, he explained that he badly needed health care and had to go to jail to get it.

Legal murder of Joe Hill is shown

NYT, 8/27 — Joe Hill, the itinerant miner, songwriter and union activist...was executed by a Utah firing squad in 1915....

...A new biography makes the strongest case yet that Hill was wrongfully convicted...

The book's author, William M. Adler, argues that Hill was a victim of authorities and a jury eager to deal a blow to his radical labor union...

A Salt Lake City jury convicted Hill largely because of one piece of circumstantial evidence: he had suffered a gunshot wound to the chest on the same night — Jan. 10, 1914 — that the grocer and his son were killed....

[Author] Adler uncovered a long-forgotten letter from Hill's sweetheart that said that he had been shot by a rival for her affections, undermining the prosecution's key assertion....

Hill, who bounced around the West as a miner, longshoreman and union organizer, was the leading songwriter for the Industrial Workers of the World, also known as the Wobblies, a prominent union that was widely feared and deplored for its militant tactics. He penned dozens of songs that excoriated bosses and capitalism and wrote the well known lyric "You'll get pie in the sky when you die, "Don't waste time mourning, organize!"....

Brit wants RAF out of U.S. oil war

GW, 8/26 — To the editor: Growing up in London in the 1940s, I vividly remember my admiration for the youthful members of the RAF [Royal Air Force] in their fight and, against all odds, their victory against the overwhelming might of the German war machine...

For the life of me I cannot equate that courage with the behavior of today's RAF fighting under the banner of Nato in its one-sided war against the Libyan people, a war that has nothing to do with justice or morality but everything to do with U.S. strategic interests and the need for oil.



Profit System Makes Mockery of Medical Care

NYT, 9/2 —After an Atlanta's public hospital's negotiations failed with the world's largest dialysis provider, a dozen immigrants suffering from renal failure were refused treatment...and advised to wait until their conditions deteriorated enough to justify life-saving care in an emergency room...

Rape case wrongly dropped

NYT, 8/31 — To the editor:...I cannot disagree more with his [Scott Turow] opinion that the Manhattan district attorney, Cyrus R. Vance Jr., did the right thing in the Dominique Strauss-Kahn case.

Mr. Turow accepted Mr. Vance's standard that he did not believe the hotel maid, Nafissatou Diallo, beyond a reasonable doubt. Mr. Turow and Mr. Vance used the wrong standard. The standard for bringing a criminal case to trial is whether there is a reason to believe that a crime was committed and that the defendant committed the crime....

The prosecutor and Mr. Turow are troubled by the fact that Ms. Diallo has been found to have lied in the past. Both of my grandmothers lied and broke immigration laws to get impoverished and persecuted relatives into this country.

They may have been liars, but I consider them heroes...Even liars can be raped....

MORE ITEMS AVAILABLE AT WWW.PLP.ORG

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Workers, Students Invade LA Supermarket to Back Potential Strikers

EAST LOS ANGELES, September 2 — Recently a group of workers and students marched through a supermarket here to support workers fighting company demands to pay for healthcare costs by cutting wages. Nearly 90% of workers voting rejected the latest contract offered by three supermarkets: Ralphs (Kroger), Albertsons (SuperValu) and Vons (Safeway). For the second time in the last six months, workers authorized the union, the United Food Service Workers (UFCW), to strike.

Links Marxism to Action Supporting Store Strike

LOS ANGELES, August 27 — We are a group of students, educators, workers, and union members who meet weekly to study Marxism and put it into practice by building working-class solidarity with Southern California supermarket workers.

For several months, we have been committed to reading works such as Marx's *Capital* and Lenin's *Imperialism – The Highest Stage of Capitalism*. Through these readings, we understand how the economic collapse of 2008 and subsequent recession and high rate of unemployment are not accidents, but examples of the repeating cycle of boom and bust that characterize capitalism. This system relies on unemployed workers as a reserve army of labor for the ruling class. We also discussed how these crises are exaggerated by the need for growing profits for bankers and big corporations, as well as the need for imperialist powers to initiate wars of aggression.

We committed ourselves to supporting workers of Ralphs, Albertsons, and Vons supermarkets in Southern California. They may be going on strike against a proposed contract that aims to remove affordable health care and pension plans.

We hosted a Forum/Action Planning group. We discussed how each crisis means more give-backs and cutbacks for the working class in order to sustain the bosses' profits. The presentation incorporated many ideas from Marx and Lenin to help put the current situation in the context of the workings of capitalism.

In particular, we focused on the austerity measures recently proposed by the U.S. federal government. These cuts are part of a larger attack on workers that aim to further destroy the strength of unions. They are a tool of the ruling class to make the working class pay for the financial criminality of banks and businesses.

After that, we discussed how we would use this understanding of capitalism to help the community fight back against the bosses' attacks. We will be more involved with the supermarket workers. There was a good discussion on whether or not our goal was to win a strike, or to win the workers and community closer to communist ideas. All benefits won through reforms by previous generations of workers are eventually taken back from future generations. PLP fights for communism, which runs on workers' needs, and is the lasting solution to capitalism, which is based on bosses' profits.

We will continue to have these discussions openly with our comrades and friends to develop more cohesive ideas when we go to the picket lines. We plan on doing house visits and weekly community meetings to discuss how the attack on the grocery workers is part of a bigger attack against the working class as a whole.

As a result of these recent events, we developed our political understanding and created more solidarity among different types of workers here. Many grocery workers and others reacted positively to our efforts to support them. They had been feeling disempowered due to constant attacks from the bosses and the misleadership of the union. But as a result of PLP's leadership, many workers have shown more militancy and enthusiasm to collectively struggle against their bosses. We will struggle with all working people to envision what a communist world will be like.✪

Over the last six weeks, PLP members, working with friends who participate in Community Education for Social Action (CESA) have "adopted" a supermarket here. They've built relationships with workers and members of the surrounding community, including students from the nearby Cal State Los Angeles University and East LA community college. We're aiming to build revolutionary class-consciousness among workers and community residents, as well as among students participating in these actions.

Last Friday, a delegation of 20 students, workers, and community residents entered the store with picket signs and chants, calling for an end to spending on imperialist war instead of on healthcare and jobs, and encouraging worker-student solidarity in the struggle against the supermarkets.

We wanted to disrupt the store's regular operation, to call customers' attention to the supermarket workers' struggle and to show how we're organizing support for their fight. Delegates brought signed petitions from the Cal State LA campus and CESA to present to the store manager.

The delegation had marched halfway through the store when the manager asked us to stop chanting and leave the store or he'd call the cops. A group leader accused the supermarkets of exploiting their workers and asked the manager what he was doing to stop it. He said we should do what the union leaders did a few weeks ago: contact our local council member and organize a "peaceful" press conference for the media.

During this confrontation, store workers thanked us for our support, giving signs of approval. The delegation finished marching across the store and continued to distribute flyers outside.

Twice authorizing a strike, the workers have sent a clear message that they're ready to act. However, the UFCW's leadership has offered no real plan on confronting the supermarkets, only agreeing to once again "sit down with a federal mediator to continue negotiations."

Amid the current crisis of world capitalism, U.S. bosses are attempting to "resolve" it by attacking the working class with continued mass racist unemployment and wage cuts. The UFCW leadership's business-as-usual attitude has proven disastrous for workers (see Verizon strike, CHALLENGE, 9/7), yet another example of union leaders' complicity with the U.S. ruling class.

The rulers' racism is evident in the fact that large numbers of supermarket workers are exploited immigrants. Furthermore, the attack on the workers' healthcare is part of a broad ruling-class assault on healthcare workers (see *Peninsula Hospital*, page 3; *Chicago's Cook County hospital system*, this page).

Prior to our march through the store, we had visited it several times, making contacts with workers who now recognize and welcome us. They tell us the union leadership fails to keep them informed. In fact, a few times they have asked if we knew the status of union-company negotiations.

We've also had a positive response from neighborhood customers. A retired meatpacking worker said he was glad to see us because he remembers when he had dealt with his company's attacks. He learned then the importance of building working-class solidarity in these struggles.

In addition to these actions, we've tried to combine theory and practice by organizing a study group on communist political economy (see article this page) and a forum on the global crisis of capitalism. We invited some of the workers we met who showed interest in participating to attend this forum.

We plan to return to this store, even if a strike does not occur, as well as organize walks in the surrounding community to talk with residents about this struggle. PLP will continue to organize regular forums and study groups. Our goal is to win supermarket workers to participate, developing deeper conversations on the nature of capitalism and the need for revolutionary communism.✪

Wanted for Murder: Cook County Hospital Bosses

OAK FOREST, ILLINOIS, August 12 — Thirty-five workers, students, patients and PLP members protested Cook County's plans to close Oak Forest Hospital. Oak Forest is the public hospital that serves the south suburbs of Chicago, an area home to many working-class, unemployed, and black residents. It is a lifeline for people with no insurance who will not receive adequate services from the private hospitals in the area.

Our protest started out on the campus of Oak Forest in front of the long-term patient ward where many in-house patients have already been moved and subsequently died. We then moved to the emergency room where Cook County police stopped us and demanded that we move off campus. In high spirits, we relocated to the

busy intersection at the hospital entrance, where we passed out hundreds of fliers and copies of CHALLENGE and were met with many honks of support.

The government of Cook County, led by Toni Preckwinkle, want to close the hospital and have uninsured patients travel to Stroger Hospital at least 45 minutes away. This plan will ensure the death of many sick patients who need to travel that far to be stabilized. Our protest called out Preckwinkle for what she is — a murderer.

In a capitalist society where wars and bank profits are a priority over the lives of workers, we should not be surprised by the plan to close Oak Forest Hospital. The racist and sexist disregard for the health of these predominantly poor black, Latino and women workers exposes

the ruling-class plan for a fascist system. It's a plan that means the death of workers who are unnecessary for their profits.

A public health system under capitalism is solely based on the needs of profit. Communism, on the other hand, values the well-being and contributions of all workers. Only communism will provide the health system necessary to make that a reality.

On August 16th, the Illinois Health Review Board will vote whether to grant Cook County permission to officially close the hospital based on the rulers' needs. The battle will continue, no matter the outcome. (See update in next issue.)✪

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