

The next issue of CHALLENGE will appear in three weeks, after which we will follow our regular bi-weekly schedule.

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CHALLENGE



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ORGANIZE CLASS WAR

Occupiers Blockade West Coast Ports

OAKLAND, CA., December 13 — Thousands of Occupiers, confronted by police in riot gear, shut or disrupted ports from Anchorage, Alaska, to Southern Ca., highlighting economic inequality and high unemployment.

Thousands of pickets chanting "Whose ports? Our Ports!" forced the closing of four shipping terminals here. Hundreds shut two of Portland's four main terminals. Seattle cops used "flash-bang" percussion grenades against protesters blocking the port entrance, arresting 11.

Pickets in Longview, Wash., demonstrated in solidarity with longshoremen fighting EGT Investment over the latter's takeover of their jobs. They were also protesting Goldman-Sachs which owns a stake in the largest cargo terminal operator, SSA Marine. Other demonstrations occurred as far south as Long Beach, CA. and as far north as Vancouver, Canada and Anchorage, Alaska.

Although the longshore union refused to support the actions, an Oakland docker said "the rank and file have spoken today by not crossing the lines."

Reuters reported (12/13) that in Oakland, "Two longshoremen outside the gate said they would refuse to cross the picket lines to get to their jobs and assumed others would follow suit" (Sacramento Bee 12/13).

Doug Seaman, a 35-year-old unemployed construction worker, told the San Francisco Chronicle (12/12), "We need to make the public aware that Wall Street's tentacles have infiltrated every facet of our lives." ☺



PLers Lead Hundreds to Defy Cops



LOS ANGELES, November 30 — Over 2,000 workers converged on LA's City Hall on November 27, anticipating the police raid to remove the Occupy encampment. PLP mobilized a group of about 20 students and workers to show solidarity and help organize a defense of the camp. In the hours leading up to the midnight deadline, the PL group distributed 100 CHALLENGES and organized a picket line chanting, "The workers united will never be defeated" and "Whose streets? Our streets."

As midnight neared, PL led the picket into the streets, defying the police who told the PL'er on the bullhorn leading the march to get back on the sidewalk. Eventually, what was a relatively small picket turned into several hundred protestors, taking over a street intersection next to the main Occupy encampment on the south lawn of City Hall.

Many expected a confrontation with the LAPD that night. However, it was not until the following night that the kkkops raided the camp, overwhelming the couple of hundred occupiers with a force of 1,400 cops. Under orders from the "progressive" LA Mayor, Antonio Villaraigosa, the cops utilized their best "community policing" techniques to avoid an all-out confrontation with the occupiers.

Part of the plan included pre-selecting which media outlets would be allowed to participate. This was important for the LAPD and the Mayor since they were keen on not letting the media cover the brutality of the police in their violent arrests of occupiers who refused to leave the encampment. The media also made no mention of the skirmishes between racist cops and protestors in the streets near City Hall when the occupiers were trying to disrupt the police operation.

The media did, however, glorify the LAPD's military-style attack to clear the encampment. Besides mobilizing over 1,000 cops, the LAPD established a police command and processing center at Dodger Stadium for potential arrestees. They also turned dozens of MTA buses into police buses in which they transported close to 300 arrested occupiers. The following day Mayor Villaraigosa celebrated the efficiency of this fascist operation, lauding the "restrained" police behavior.

Despite the clearing of the Occupy encampment, PL's participation in the nights of the police operation showed the potential leading role a disciplined organization can play in militant struggle. The next step is to transform this militancy into class struggle in our workplaces and campuses around our vision of revolutionary communism. ☺

In Teddy Roosevelt's Footsteps

Obama's 'Populist' Fascism

"Infusing his speech with the type of populist language that has emerged in the Occupy protests around the nation, Mr. Obama warned that growing income inequality meant that the United States was undermining its middle class" (NY Times, 12/6/11).

On December 6, the 101st anniversary of arch-imperialist president Teddy Roosevelt's (TR) famous speech in Osawatimie, Kansas, Barack Obama returned to the town in an attempt to steer the momentum of Occupy Wall Street (OWS) to serve U.S. capitalists' war needs.

TR supposedly had come to Osawatimie to commemorate John Brown's heroic 1856 anti-slavery battle there (see box). But in reality, like Obama and other politicians now trying to mislead OWS, Roosevelt sought to channel workers' demands for equality into all-class unity to support imperialist wars. With U.S. rulers seeking to expand beyond their 1898 conquests of former Spanish territories

(including Cuba, Puerto Rico, Guam and the Philippines), he called for a "New Nationalism," the patriotic ideology that would help push the U.S. into World War I five years later. At the same time, he created a template for Italy's Fascists and Germany's Nazis: a highly centralized and regulatory capitalist government that can control all classes, and the propaganda that service to such a state is for the greatest good.

TR aimed to reform capitalism. He ran for president on the so-called Progressive Party" ticket, and became known as a "trustbuster" for wanting to discipline the ruling class and save the system from its own excesses. Meanwhile, he popularized his case for imperialist aggression with a famous saying: "Speak softly and carry a big stick."

A century later, Obama is working overtime to revive TR's deadly pronouncements. Here are some Rooseveltian sound bites that Obama has embraced:

Equality of opportunity means that the commonwealth will get from every citizen the highest [read "military"—ed.] service of which he is capable.

I believe in an efficient army and a navy large enough to secure for us abroad that respect which is the surest guaranty of peace.

[I] ask that we work in a spirit of broad and far-reaching nationalism when we work for what concerns our people as a whole.

By championing the "national interest," Roosevelt was hiding the fact that the government's job is to protect the interests of those who control society, namely the capitalist bosses, both in the U.S. and abroad. Throughout the world, local bosses in Africa, Asia, and Latin America have used nationalism to spur workers to oust imperialist powers and "liberate" former colonial countries. Then the local capitalists take their turn in exploiting workers for profit, a common thread in this year's "Arab Spring."

The Patriotic 'Middle Class'

Obama is straining to preserve the concept of a patriotic "middle class," which serves to deaden class conflict and as a buffer between rulers and most workers. In imperialist economies thriving off colonial mega-profits, bosses can be forced to respond to class struggle by conceding a higher standard of living for the home country's working class. The bosses then cite these workers as a new "middle" class (see box below).

But this phenomenon, described by Karl Marx 150 years ago, can last only as long as the imperialist nation's ability to dominate less-developed countries and super-exploit their workers. In the U.S., huge sections of workers in auto, steel, railroads, manufacturing and mines have lost the jobs and living standards that they'd won through militant, communist-led class struggle. U.S. bosses, no longer in a position to afford these extra

Myth of the 'Middle Class'

Obama, alongside his political buddies and the bosses' media, constantly invoke the mythological "middle class" while never mentioning the working class. They are trying to convince workers who earn — or who aspire to earn — \$50,000 or \$75,000 a year that they are not workers. They want to hide the reality of a working class with its antagonistic relationship with an opposing, parasitic ruling class. The latter controls the means of production and reaps profits from exploiting worker's labor power, the source of all value. Capitalists own; workers create.

Many workers' struggles may have won incomes that enable them to afford a home, a car and a college education for their children, but they have no security under capitalism. Come the next crisis of overproduction and the next wave of mass unemployment, these higher-earning workers promptly get laid off and made homeless. Their "middle-class" life goes up in smoke. One's class is not determined by income, but rather by the source of that income.

Opportunist-in-Chief 'Forgets' Anti-Racist Hero John Brown

Barack Obama spat on our class's militant, anti-racist history by excluding John Brown from his December 6 speech in Osawatimie, Kansas. It was there, in 1856, that the great abolitionist led thirty-eight fighters, black and white, to counterattack 250 pro-slavery troops and kill twenty of them. Brown's boldness at Osawatimie, Harpers Ferry and elsewhere helped encourage millions to take up arms against human bondage.

At Osawatimie, Brown wrote, "There will be no more peace in this land until slavery is done for." But the United States' first black president, whose own wife has slave ancestors, omitted John Brown because Obama understands that he's on the other side. Far from fighting against oppression, the president wages war to heighten capitalist exploitation of workers around the globe.

Just before Virginia's pro-slavery forces hanged him in 1859, after years of guerilla warfare, Brown acknowledged, "I, John Brown am now quite certain that the crimes of this guilty land will never be purged away but with blood." Brown was right. The main scourge attacking the working class today is imperialist war and its racist, fascist preparations. To rid ourselves of capitalism's endless profit wars, we will need to transform the demonstrated anger of OWS into militant action and a long-term plan toward communist revolution.

crumbs for a "middle class," due to imperialist competition, have neutralized the unions and now pay a newly hired auto worker half of what the old contracts called for.

Racism is a big part of this ruling class offensive. After centuries of super-exploitation of black workers, from slavery through post-war Jim Crow, the rulers now offer middle-class benefits to some black bosses and professionals, while extorting super-profits from the overwhelming majority of black workers, along with Latinos and immigrants. At the same time, the capitalists have used the Great Recession to steal back benefits from black workers and others that were won through long struggle. The black workers themselves, whose '60s rebellions won those higher-paying jobs, began to be laid off in the recession of the early 1980s. As proof that racism hurts all workers, now white auto workers are suffering the same fate. (See page 4 on unemployment.)

Franklin D. Roosevelt, a distant cousin who greatly admired TR, held out the promise of potential prosperity — later supported by full employment in war plants — to mobilize workers for World War II. But the social contract over which FDR, Truman, Eisenhower, and Kennedy presided, the so-called "American way of life," has crashed..

Obama acknowledged as much in Kansas: "At stake is whether this will be a country where working people can earn enough to raise a family, build a modest savings, own a home and secure their retirement." The president's myth-spinning about an improving economy flies in the face of economists' warnings that today's mass joblessness will last for years — and that many of these unemployed may never get another job.

Populist Fascism

To deal with these domestic crises, Obama has pounced on the working class by sustaining many of Bush's policies. Obama's administration has detained and deported record numbers of undocumented immigrant workers, while pushing for a "Dream Act" that would send tens of thousands of immigrant youth into imperialist wars. The Obama Justice Department has endorsed military tribunals and enforces the most oppressive provisions of the Patriot Act, which Obama extended earlier this year. He bailed out the big banks with

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OUR FIGHT

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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March vs. Columbia U.'s Ravaging of W. Harlem, Fake Jobs 'Pledge'

NEW YORK CITY, December 9 — Today, there was a breakthrough in the long struggle to force Columbia University to live up to its commitments to the West Harlem area that it has destroyed in order to build a new campus. Columbia promised to create 7,000 new jobs, but no one from the community has been trained or hired yet by the fake "Employment Information Office" just south of 125 Street.

At our past actions at this center to demand these jobs, we involved a few Columbia students and a small number of community residents and local church members. This time we had a very spirited demonstration, complete with drums and noisemakers, with a group of about 60, including 30 students, some supporters from Occupy Wall St, more church activists and members of the Coalition to Preserve Community, which has fought the expansion for years.

The marchers' energy and militancy was exciting to the participants and passersby alike. We started at the gates of the Columbia campus where the NYC police and University security had previously tried to stop us from marching to the middle of campus; this time they didn't even try.

Inside the main quadrangle, we gave speeches in the "human mike" Occupy style. Community members unaccustomed to public speaking gave rousing talks about their experiences with unemployment and housing displacement. A comrade exposed Columbia's ties to imperialist war, how the School of International Affairs supported the architects of genocide in Iraq and Afghanistan, President Carter's National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski and Clinton's Secy. of State Madeline Albright, and how the University trains the future leaders of U.S. capitalism.

After our campus demonstration, we marched up Broadway towards the "jobs"

office. On the way we encountered teachers in the Precollege Division of the Manhattan School of Music who were picketing to demand union recognition and a living wage. We joined them for a short while, causing the administrators to look out their windows in horror. After getting some contact names, we continued to our destination.

The cops were ready with their barricades to pen us in, but we didn't oblige and left them standing in the pen instead. Inspired by our unity and spirit, we proceeded to the church where hot soup awaited us.

After getting to know one another, a comrade and church leader told the students about its long history of anti-racist struggle uniting students and workers. The students were so interested that they requested an ongoing series of discussions after winter break. Nearly all of them eagerly took CHALLENGE with its articles analyzing the Occupy movements.

Certainly Occupy has inspired many, who were angry but cynical, with the spirit of activism and fighting back. As CHALLENGE pointed out, the movement's weaknesses have been its lack of a class analysis and revolutionary perspective, and failure to emphasize multiracial and worker-student unity.

We certainly saw an emphasis on unity and working-class leadership on our march. Now we'll continue our struggle with the students to build ties with campus workers. One student from the City University of New York also attended, and building unity with this more working-class school is also important. As we continue this campaign, it's surely possible to win many students and workers to see the need to overthrow capitalism. ☺

Students' Sit-in Breaks Rules, Blasts Racist Bosses

CHICAGO, November 23 — The Occupy Wall Street movement came to Chicago State University (CSU) today as the Independent Student Union (ISU) led 75 students and faculty to occupy the president's office for two hours.

An ISU leader listed local campus issues and explained that Illinois owes CSU \$15 million, including \$3 million in state grants. During the following speak-out, many students, tired of being disrespected and given the run-around, detailed the university's failure to facilitate registration; to properly process withdrawals from a class (leading to Fs on the transcript); to repair crumbling infrastructure; to treat students with respect; to raise funds; and to improve communications with students.

A married couple, both CSU students, brought their children, showing them by their example that we need to unite and fight back. The father told President Watson that his administration was damaging CSU's reputation by not providing a student-friendly environment. A student brought her mother, a CSU alumna, who remembered that students had the same complaints when she was attending.

Support from Purdue

A transfer student, about to graduate, was incensed over the lack of recognition for maintaining a 4.0 average. Students who came from Purdue U. Calumet to support the occupation described their cam-

paign against a racist professor on their campus (see page 4).

In reply, a dean scolded students for blocking the doorways, thus displaying the patronizing, racist attitude about which students were complaining. When Watson was asked who was recording the meeting, he looked around in vain for his staff to step forward. At other times administrators were visibly agitated and aggressive, furious that black students would have the nerve to challenge their authority. The black administrators were failing at their main job — enforcing racism and keeping black students "in line."

Watson, who is black, serves the CSU trustees, who serve the capitalist class. Their system is in crisis. The bosses' profits are in danger. Tax revenues are falling because workers can't get jobs. Meanwhile, Gov. Quinn, supported by Democrats and Republicans, plans to give a \$250 million tax break to Sears, the Board of Trade and The Mercantile Exchange while keeping \$15 million slated for CSU.

This is a racist attack on black and Latino students (the vast majority at CSU). In capitalist society bosses only fund education when it is profitable. In a communist society, workers and students will work together to educate all of us so that we can better serve the working class.

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Act Against School Privatization

'Fired up, won't take it no more!'



CHICAGO, December 3 — More than 500 black, Latino, and white parents, students, education workers and other working-class Chicagoans, including PL'ers, assembled today at a local school to say, "We're fired up; we won't take it no more!" Earlier in the week, Chicago Public School (CPS) officials had announced the racist closing or restructuring of 21 schools. Since 2001, CPS has already closed 44 schools, "turned around" 17 more, and opened 80 charter schools in their place.

The overwhelming majority of the closed or reorganized schools are predominantly black or Latino. These attacks disrupt the lives of students, especially the disproportionate numbers of homeless children who attend them. The immediate aim of today's conference, representing thousands, is to stop these proposals.

As many declared, the responsibility for these actions lay with the politicians at City Hall, the capitalists on the Board of Education, and the bank and corporation directors. They expressed their disgust with the CPS spokespeople who claim that the changes will help prepare every student for college. In reality, students who move from one school to another generally do no better academically, and sometimes do worse.

The real motive for these actions is the money that comes from privatization. The ruling class has decided to spend less on educating poor black and Latino working-class students, in order to boost profits in the developing education business sector. Their plan for our children consists of unemployment, war, prison, and at best a low-wage, dead-end job, not college.

Students Aren't Just Test Scores

Turnaround and charter schools are also models for the teaching of capitalist ideology. As conference speakers pointed out, many education workers at community-based schools, those targeted by CPS, take pride in serving the children and their families. They aim to provide support when loved ones die or become ill, or unemployed or lose their house. They nurture the emotional, artistic, and physical aspects of the child, as well as the intellectual. This is not what the capitalists want for our children.

The speakers declared that students are not just a test score. The ruling class has always used schools to promote capitalist ideology: patriotism, individualism, and racism. Now more than ever, as the U.S. faces unparalleled competition worldwide, the rulers need future soldiers and workers who support their exploitative profit system.

Many charter schools, along with the Academy of Urban School Leadership schools that manage most turnarounds, take an authoritarian approach to education — just what the capitalists ordered. They will use the common core standards to consolidate the approved ideology and fire teachers whose students fail to absorb it. This approach prizes discipline, parroting the teacher, and the mastery of capitalist lies. Creativity and critical thinking, learning about the world in order to change it are out. The rulers want a cheaper, more profitable, more managed education for workers' children.

Many conference attendees realized that stopping this round of closings and turnarounds is no long-term solution; the capitalist system will find other ways to attack us. It was clear that attendees shared a strong desire to build a militant, anti-racist, anti-capitalist movement. But there is not yet much agreement around rejecting electoral politics and building a movement for the violent overthrow of capitalism. A worker-run communist society is appealing to many, but many still hold the illusion that we can get there peacefully.

Progressive Labor Party members are patiently building support for our ideas, though with uneven effort and uneven results. By spending more time with fellow education workers, struggling together against CPS, working together in activist groups, and supporting each other personally and politically, we will make small breakthroughs that lead to bigger ones. The world our children need and deserve is ours to win. ☺

L.A. Times Praises Karl Marx! Capitalism's Savage Disease: Mass Unemployment

"The real number of unemployed or underemployed people in the U.S. is a stunning 26.9 million," (LAT, 11/30), although figures below indicate it's closer to 35 million.

"The term 'reserve army of labor' is vintage Karl Marx" admits the LA Times. "But," it continues, "let's not hold that against it if it's on the mark. These workers are on reserve; they are standing ready to work. And their sheer numbers make them an army."

The '8.6%' Scam

The bosses' media spouts a "drop" in the U.S. unemployment rate to 8.6% (from the previous month's 9%). Obama hails this as a sign of economic recovery. But this spurious figure results from the fact that 300,000+ workers who gave up looking for non-existent jobs are no longer included in the labor force and therefore are not counted as unemployed. According to such fraudulent figuring, if a few million more workers give up looking for these non-existent jobs, the jobless rate might "drop" to 6%!

Shadowstats.com reports that this "drop" in the jobless rate "actually signaled ongoing economic collapse...not the ongoing recovery heralded by the Administration and...Wall Street," given the "swelling ranks of 'discouraged' workers."

Not only does the government's 8.6% jobless rate not include part-time workers who want but can't find full-time jobs, nor "discouraged" workers who've given up looking for work after 26 weeks (which would raise the rate to 22.6% — Shadowstats.com), but it also excludes:

- Part of the massive prison population of 2.4 million being released from jail but also can't find jobs amid the bosses' economic crisis;
- GI's recently returning from the rulers' imperialist wars whose jobless rate is over 20%;
- Students "holing up in colleges and waiting for the economic storm to pass" (LAT);
- First-time job-seekers among high school and college graduates for whom there are no jobs;
- "Discouraged" workers who have been jobless for more than a year and who the Clinton administration re-defined in 1994 as "no longer discouraged": the long-term unemployed;
- Workers on welfare who cannot seek jobs, lacking day-care for their children;
- Hundreds of thousands of youth who joined the military as the only "job" they could find.

Add all that up and the LAT's "stunning 26.9 million" is closer to 35 million.

Unemployment's Racist Factor

Within this massive misery is the fact that black and Latino workers have double the jobless rate of the working class as a whole. The government admits that even the low-ball figure of 8.6% rises to 15.5% for black workers (NY Times, 12/5), a rate that actually lies somewhere between 30% and 50% depending on the city, when considering the other factors outlined above. Growing out of centuries of racist discrimination, these workers became the last hired and first fired.

The mass hiring of black workers in the auto industry resulting from the black rebellions of the 1960s got wiped out in the 1980s recession when the pro-boss auto union "leaders" agreed to mass layoffs to "save the industry" — again the last hired and the first fired. This set white workers up for the kill when Obama became the savior in bailing out GM and Chrysler, leading to the layoff of thousands of long-time workers. This enables these companies to net profits during the Great Recession. Under capitalism, the bosses' government exists to enforce the profit system. (See box below.)

Of course, capitalism's reserve army of unemployed is mounting worldwide, from Britain to Mexico to France to Spain to South Africa to India to Italy to Bangladesh to Pakistan and on and on. The "Arab Spring" was a rebellion by workers demanding jobs. This international crisis is intensifying the rivalry of the imperialist powers as they compete for cheap labor and resources, especially oil and gas — an economic war whose "solution" inevitably leads to world war as it did in 1914 and 1939.

Marx's "reserve army of the unemployed" is part of a working-class army that, when led by communist ideas, can overwhelm and overthrow the tiny number of billionaires who now run the world in their drive for maximum profits. This is the ruling class's greatest fear.

Progressive Labor Party is fighting to marshal our class into a mighty force that will drive the money-changers out of their Wall Street temples and bury them with communist revolution. This can produce a society without bosses and profits, run by and for workers who produce all value, and who will distribute the fruits of our labor according to the needs of our class.

Joining and leading this PLP-led army can truly change the world.☺

Government Layoffs Huge Factor in Racist Unemployment

"Public Sector Sheds Jobs; Blacks Are Hit Hardest" was the headline in the November 20 NY Times article reporting that the "more than 500,000 [jobs lost] since the start of the recession...have been singularly harmful to...blacks.... [since] "About one in five black workers have public sector jobs....The foreclosure crisis also wiped out a large part of a generation of black homeowners."

It relates the plight of "Don Buckley [who] lost his job driving a Chicago Transit Authority bus almost two years ago and has been looking for work every since...."

"At 34, Mr. Buckley, his two daughters and his fiancé have moved into the basement of his mother's house. He has had to delay his marriage and his entire savings, \$27,000, is gone. 'I...put away for a rainy day....It's flooding now."

"The layoffs are not expected to end soon," says the Times. "The U.S. Postal Service, where about 25% of employees are black, is considering eliminating 220,000 positions."

Racism: Foundation Stone of Capitalism

Since the first slaves arrived in Virginia in

1607, the U.S. bosses' economy has built its foundation on the exploitation of black workers, first as outright slaves and since then by paying blacks lower wages than whites and restricting them to sub-standard housing, schools and healthcare. All this has netted the capitalists hundreds of billions in super-profits, without which their capitalist system would be in even bigger trouble, especially because racism divides and weakens the entire working class, limiting its ability to fight back.

In the teeth of this racism, black workers have not only rebelled — under slavery and in the rebellions of the 1960s and '70s — but also have led multi-racial strikes as happened in the 1970 postal and Newport News shipbuilding walkouts, among many others. But whatever gains these struggles produce, the bosses use their state power to reverse them.

As brother Buckley said about his \$23.76-an-hour job, "I was living...my version of the American dream. Then it crumbled. They get you used to having things and then they take them away..."

Only workers' communist power can change that.

Purdue U: Actions Mount to Fire Racist Prof

HAMMOND, IN, November 27 — Demonstrations at Purdue U. Calumet (PUC) against racist Professor Maurice Eisenstein show no signs of dying down. Students have been campaigning without let-up to force the administration to fire Eisenstein.

The students' actions include circulating petitions, urging victims of Eisenstein's racist and sexist attacks to file formal complaints, and organizing public demonstrations and a campus-wide forum. Despite right-wing opposition and institutional apathy, students are demanding nothing less than immediate termination of Eisenstein's professorship at PUC, and won't back down until that goal is achieved.

Eisenstein has used his classes to disseminate his extreme Zionist and imperialist rhetoric — advocating extermination of Arabs, and the colonization of their lands by Israelis and Americans. He has stepped far beyond the usual pro-imperialist stance on current events, propagating into hateful dehumanization of Arabs, blacks, Latinos, migrant workers, and women. His extremism has culminated in direct personal attacks on students and faculty.

Despite much evidence to show his complete unsuitability as a professor, the university has been apathetic to the point of complacency for almost two decades. Only after the impassioned protests from a multi-racial coalition of angry students has the university begun to take the issue seriously. Meanwhile, both Eisenstein and a small group of his supporters are hiding behind a right-wing excuse of "free speech" while turning a blind eye to his abuse of power as a professor and the potential consequences of racist indoctrination.

PL'ers have been active in this fight since its onset, working with fellow class-conscious demonstrators to inject a much-needed energy and radicalism to the struggle. While some demonstrators want to fight within the restrictive confines of university policy, PL'ers and friends have been ensuring that the struggle won't be diluted to fit a weaker liberal agenda.

We in PLP don't see Eisenstein as just one "bad apple," whose dismissal will automatically cure the university system of racism and bigotry. Even if Eisenstein is fired, PL'ers intend to keep the militant fire burning in our fellow students, many of whom have faced the brunt of racism their whole lives from imperialist propaganda. It is our goal to build solidarity with fellow students fighting bigotry and help them see that racism will be eradicated only with the destruction of the capitalist system that needs the extra profits from racist wage differentials to survive.

We will continue working with students and workers who face similar racist intolerance and intimidation. With solid communist leadership, these small struggles can harness the energy and commitment to destroy racism and capitalism once and for all.☺



Brazil: Cops Occupy Workers' 'Favelas,' Kill Youth

The working class in Brazil continues to pay a high price for having a pseudo-“leftist” government. These rulers work only to benefit the international capitalist class, spending the country’s international reserves to save Europe’s bosses from their financial crisis. Meanwhile, they continue to exploit Brazil’s workers.

During the first five days of November, 1,800 workers went on strike against LG Electronics, the Korean multinational, demanding the rehiring of ten workers fired for fighting to improve their miserable working conditions. In the state of Ceará, university professors and students have been on strike since November 11 against budget cuts.

Meanwhile, as pseudo-leftist president Dilma Rousseff talks of “democracy,” police in Rio de Janeiro occupied the favelas (slum neighborhoods) of Rocinha (which alone has 70,000 residents), Vidigal and Chácara do Chapéu. The action was justified as part of the Police Pacification Unit (UPP). The occupation began on November 13, to continue indefinitely.

The UPP, initiated by Governor Sergio Cabral in 2008 in the Santa Marta favela, is supposedly designed to expel drug-trafficking gangs from the favelas while installing community security systems. According to Rio de Janeiro’s town council, 29 of the city’s 605 favelas are already controlled by the UPP. Most are in the southern part of the city, where is also home to some of the richest neighborhoods. A good example is Rocinha, sandwiched between such luxurious neighborhoods as São Conrado and Leblon. Unlike most big cities, where the poor population is isolated on the periphery of the city, Rio’s poor occupy the hills throughout the city. The social inequalities are more obvious and transparent here.

Does it fight drug trafficking?

As usual, the capitalist-controlled media considers UPP’s military operation in Rocinha a “success,” praising the police and the residents’ acceptance of them inside the favela. Tomás Ramos, an advisor to State Deputy Marcelo Freixo (the human rights activist who recently fled to Europe after receiving seven death threats), says that many residents actually have mixed feelings about the UPP: “What they approve of is the end of frequent shooting between the drug-trafficking gangs and the cops, but they don’t necessarily approve of how the police manage the territory in which they live.”

In reality, the UPP’s mission is not to fight against trafficking or to reduce crime, but to control the favelas in economically strategic areas. Even Governor Cabral publicly acknowledges that the UPP cannot solve the drug problem. As he noted just before the first UPP occupation, “The [objective] is not

to end trafficking; no one has been able to do that....The objective is to reach a civilized level of crime.”

Pacification for Sports

This UPP project was never designed to make the entire city safer. The pacification units are concentrated in wealthy areas of the city that are frequented by tourists, to protect revenues from the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Olympics. They also occupy the favelas bordering these areas, like those around Maracanã, the scheduled site for the World Cup final. As Luiz Antônio Machado, a sociology professor at the State University of Rio de Janeiro, noted, “The big [sports] events were decisive for the creation of UPP.” Brazil needed to guarantee security in these neighborhoods to be awarded these games. “The objective,” Machado said, is to criminalize poverty and impose public order with a military occupation.

Meanwhile, little is done to develop social programs in these communities. While the police have sponsored some school sports and sweet-sixteen parties to gain acceptance by favela residents, no one is addressing the needs of poor workers. The government demonizes young people as criminals instead of pointing to the root of crime in Brazil and elsewhere: capitalist unemployment.

Cops Defend Property of the Rich

History shows that the police are in place to defend the capitalist state and the rich. The cops have yet to arrest a boss for stealing workers’ labor each day, but they are always ready to arrest striking workers for the “crime” of fighting for raises. The police in Rio are considered the most violent in Brazil. According to data from the security secretaries in each province, the Rio police killed three times as many people as the cops in Sao Pablo (who are also considered extremely violent) during the first half of 2011. In 2010, the Rio police officially killed 885 people in the province, half of them in the capital. Many were the poor children of the working class.

As CHALLENGE has pointed out (6/8/11), Brazil’s government has trained its forces within the United Nations’ MINUSTAH army in Haiti to prepare them to pacify its favelas at home. Brazilian bosses are using the UPP to evict and silence the poor and show a “friendly face” to the World Cup, excusing the murder of workers with stories about drug trafficking or terrorism. But workers’ potential power was evident as they rose up and organized the favelas to resist these evictions. Workers in Brazil and around the world need to join the PLP to build a society of true social equality, and to destroy this putrid system of exploitation and profit. ☺

Cops' Attacks Can't Stop Protest of Racist Tuition Hike



NEW YORK CITY, November 28 — Today the City University of New York (CUNY) trustees outdid themselves in fascist absurdity. They locked all Baruch College students, faculty, and other workers out of their own school so that they — bankers and ruling-class stooges appointed by the mayor and governor — could impose a racist 33% tuition hike on the mostly black and Latino and immigrant students.

The events of the previous Monday triggered the lock-down. On November 21, a militant group of 500 students arrived at the “public” meeting where the CEOs and other bosses that make up the Board of Trustees (BoT) supposedly listen to testimonies from the community. This is another capitalist lie. The decision had already been made.

Nevertheless, students and workers gathered, ready to make the BoT listen to them. CUNY respond-

ed with baton-wielding “public safety officers” and NYPD cops. Students were sitting in the lobby chanting, “Occupy the Lobby!” The cops attacked, swinging their batons wildly. In discussion during and after the event, PL’ers stressed that this was, and is always, the role of the kkkops: to terrorize workers, especially black, Latino and women workers, into submission.

We were not intimidated, and returned today for the BoT to officially vote on their racist plan. So angry were students and workers over last week’s cop-attack that CUNY bosses had to shut down the entire college to hold this meeting! Like slave-owners whose greatest fear was the slave revolt, the bosses today acted out of fear for they could not trust anyone at Baruch. More than 15 students were arrested, including one student whom the cops sexually harassed.

With their state power on full display, they could lock us out. One professor got into the meeting and disrupted it with a protest against police brutality. Though he was thrown out of the room, they could not drown out the more than 1,000 protesters outside, chanting “Get up! Get down! There’s revolution in this town!” and “Education is a right! Fight! Fight! Fight!” The multiracial crowd was a mix of older, more organized union workers and the younger, less organized, angry students taking the streets and challenging the cops.

The union workers deferred to the students’ leadership and stopped their moving picket line. The students then led the whole crowd in a march around the neighborhood and back to the front doors, in time to yell “Shame!” at a few last trustees scuttling out of the building. The last speech given using the human-mike was a student thank-you to their worker-allies for being there to the end.

Where does this leave us, in a town that is some-

continued on page 6

Obama's 'Populist' Fascism

continued from page 2

workers’ money while allowing millions of foreclosures. His federally backed bankruptcy plan forced workers at GM and Chrysler to accept a ban on strikes. And even as he spouted empty phrases about “democracy” and “freedom” for workers abroad, Obama imposed a wage freeze on hundreds of thousands of federal workers in the U.S.

We should make no mistake. Obama’s goal, like TR’s, is not to better the lot of workers, but to lead them to support an imperialist solution to a capitalist crisis. One such solution from the influential Center for Strategic and International Studies involves “major U.S. attacks on military and civilian targets” in Iran, specifically up to 2,500 cruise missiles and strike sorties that “hit all suspect facilities for nuclear...targets including universities” (CSIS, 11/28/11).

For the U.S. rulers whom Obama serves, this aggression could lead to a mobilization for a larger invasion in the Middle East as the U.S. military expands its presence in the region, adding tens of thousands of troops in countries surrounding Iran. Another would be an intensifying conflict with Iran’s primary enabler: China, the U.S. capitalists’ main strategic foe.

For the international working class, the only real solution to the misery wrought by the profit system is to get rid of it altogether with communist revolution. This is PLP’s goal in immersing ourselves in workers’ class struggles. Our goal is to win our class to the communist ideas that will free us from the hell of capitalism. ☺

See full version on plp.org

LETTERS

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

Airport Cleaners Sweep Out Racist Bosses

For three months there has been some sharp class struggle against racist airport cleaning bosses at a Mid-West airport by a multiracial group of airport workers over the frame-up firing of a shop steward and serious allegations of racist extortion of money from immigrant cleaners.

Cleaning supervisors and managers were trying to instill fear in the workers by targeting and firing their coworker and union steward on fabricated misconduct charges. Shortly after he was fired it became apparent these bogus charges grew out of his leading workers in fighting these racist bosses.

The workers — immigrants and citizens — and the steward presented a signed petition to union officers on their fired coworker's behalf, charging racist abuse by these bosses and demanding his re-hiring. Their outpouring of political and personal support has been inspiring. Many are CHALLENGE readers. Some immigrant women have shown great leadership in this struggle. No matter what the outcome their fight will not be forgotten.

To expose the extortion of immigrant workers' money, the workers and the union set up a "sting" operation, filming these bosses taking money (with marked bills). The union pressed the higher-up cleaning bosses with this evidence and the managers and supervisors were fired! One manager was demoted. There may be more firings of other bosses involved in extortion.

Capitalism is legalized thievery. These racist cleaning bosses just took it to its "logical" conclusion. Based on this evidence workers are fighting to get the Steward's job back. Another CHALLENGE article will report this ongoing struggle.

Capitalism is a system of outright robbery of the value created by workers' labor. Its managers and supervisors are no better than street robbers. The international working class needs a communist revolution to get rid of all bosses and profits and ensure the working class reaps all the value it creates. The fight for a communist world continues through the Occupy workers at this airport.

Airport Red

Racist Tuition Hike

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what rebellious but far from revolution? We need a deeper understanding of the class system to really "get up, get down" with revolution. The capitalist university is not, as one sign wished, "a free speech zone," but an ideological apparatus carefully tailored to reproduce the system. Inequality is not caused by unfair taxation but by the exploitation of labor. Capitalism is not an "economic" system fixable by a "political" electoral process or the protest of a militant crowd. It is a political economic system where the exploitation of labor is guaranteed by an armed, vicious, racist dictatorship of capitalists. The ruling class not only owns the means of production but also owns the cops, the army, the laws, the courts, the judges, the politicians and parties, the media, the schools, and the churches.

There will be a communist revolution in this town and every town. But when there is, the prophetic, anarchic feelings of youthful revolt now surging in the Occupy movement will have had to become the cold rage of a conscious and fully organized working class. Led by PLP, we must be ready to smash the capitalist system and take state power. Self-critically, although the Party, CHALLENGE and revolutionary politics were present today, it was not nearly enough. We too have a tough transformation to make to become the Party that our class needs and our history demands. And we will. ☺

Minnesota OWS'ers: 'Reform capitalism'; PL'er: 'Can't be done'

After a demonstration of over 200 multiracial occupiers, Occupy Minnesota defied the county order and had a sleep-in. This winter will be a major test of the Occupiers' political will, for Minnesota is known for its harsh weather. A PLP comrade has donated some winter wear, books, and CHALLENGES to the Occupiers' Peoples' Library. Self-critically a better effort must be made to present PLP's communist ideas. Although the Occupy Movement is good in showing workers' will to fight back, it must also shed the illusions that reforms can make capitalism better.

Occupy Minnesota has had a PL'er participating in teach-ins and marches, trying to present PLP's ideas. In a teach-in called "Reforming Democracy" I said that what the bosses call "democracy" is capitalism. It can't be reformed because it has too many built-in contradictions like class, racism, and sexism.

The "Reforming Democracy" teach-in was reformist nonsense about how "voting can get the right people in office to end Wall Street greed." I explained that you can't reform democracy. History shows democracy depends on your class position. If you were a slave in the early 1800s there was no democracy in U.S. society. It was a fascist dictatorship oppressing black slaves.

This teach-in had no class analysis as to why past reform struggles ultimately failed in the long term. One occupier thought just getting the "right people" in office to police Wall Street would help. I told him that you can have all the "right people," but competition and the drive for maximum profits in capitalism will economically ruin society no matter which Democrat or Republican is in office. This young guy did take a CHALLENGE as did a few others.

Even if working-class people win a reform, the bosses can take it away when it suits them because they have state power — the police, courts, military. There are some good people involved in Occupy Minnesota at the County Government Plaza in Minneapolis. The county board told the occupiers "when 25 degrees hits they can't sleep in the outdoor Plaza areas." They use the temperature drop as an excuse to try to oust the occupiers.

The bosses will only tolerate so much of the Occupiers, who need to stop believing the "cops are a part of the 99%." This is a political mistake. Working-class history like in Chile in the 1973 fascist counter revolution, shows that this illusion about cops is dangerous. The cops rounded up and executed thousands of Chilean communists, with the help of the CIA. Only PL's communist class analysis can point out to honest workers that cops are the fascist bosses' thugs. Workers from Occupy Minnesota to Tahir Square, Egypt need communism and revolution to end racist, sexist, capitalism and for a communist world led by the workers' party, PLP!

Minnesota Red

PL Youth Organize Teach-in at Occupy DC

Young PL'ers in DC and Baltimore held a communist school that focused on nationalism as an obstacle to communist revolution. We followed it up with a teach-in at Occupy DC in McPherson Square on the intersection of capitalism, nationalism and racism. Young leaders described how the ruling class profits from these divisions in the working class. They demonstrated the need for increased international class consciousness to fight the oppression and exploitation of the working class worldwide. About 30 to 40 Occupiers attended the teach-in and about 15 CHALLENGES were distributed. Contacts were made and plans to follow up.

At the morning discussion, young leaders presented a historical perspective on the development of nationalism, showing its origin in capitalism and how today there is a direct relationship among imperialism, capitalism and the spread of nationalist ideas. We discussed how nationalist movements are a frequent response of oppressed groups to imperialist powers.

But nationalist movements don't liberate the masses, who often shed blood fighting for all-class cooperation. Instead, it leads to the creation of a

Students' Sit-in

continued from page 3

'Don't Follow the Rules'

When administrators tried to take over the occupation and make excuses, faculty members and students insisted the administrators step back and listen, just as the faculty was doing. Later a student representative to the Illinois Board of Higher Education and the dean of student affairs attacked ISU for failing to work through "proper channels." A communist teacher replied that the best thing about the occupation was that it did not follow the channels that keep students under the thumb of the administration. He said that the occupation and the students' anger about being disrespected was an assertion of power and of self-respect, the essence of working-class democracy.

We in PLP congratulate CSU students for breaking the rules. We encourage students to resist any efforts of the racist black administrators to use nationalism to try to win students' support — "don't mess up our black thing." We urge ISU to continue to break rules and empower other students and to adopt a broader social justice perspective, progressing from airing grievances to striking at racism and other injustices at the core of capitalism. ☺

local group of bosses usually linked to the original or to alternative imperialists. Nationalist movements lack true working-class consciousness and ignore the divisions inherent in nationalism.

Capitalism is a global system against which the working class, on the basis of proletarian internationalism, must act as a global class to defeat it. International solidarity based on class interest is a necessity to end the global exploitation of the working class. Nationalism and patriotism serve to obscure the common working-class interests that would otherwise threaten ruling-class power.

At the later teach-in, one Occupier asked us, "Can workers overcome nationalist ideas?" A comrade responded, saying "ideas that dominate any period are the ideas of the ruling class, and these can change as class power changes. For example, under feudalism, many peasants accepted the idea of kings by divine right. But bourgeois revolution changed those ideas. The struggle for communist revolution will similarly change workers' ideas about nationalism."

As living proof of the power of internationalism, our day was capped off by a dinner and forum that evening with a comrade from South Asia who shared stories of struggle, perseverance and solidarity. Efforts at building PL among women in that region and the development of younger leadership were highlighted.

Our comrade from South Asia had previously spoken to 45 students, staff, and faculty at a local university, and observed with pleasure an anti-racist demonstration organized by Occupy DC at a local bank against their financing of the prison-industrial complex.

Problems and difficulties for the working class are similar worldwide as a direct result of capitalism. As we continue to develop new leadership, we remain committed to our Party's politics and work toward the only solution to the working class's oppression — communist revolution!

DC Comrades



2011: Class Struggle Alive and Well

continued from page 8

over rampant unemployment and the price of food. Strikes at Egypt's textile mills, pharmaceutical plants, chemical industries, the Cairo airport, the transportation sector, banks, ports and the Suez Canal are the primary source of revolutionary optimism.

Workers throughout the world cheered on scenes from Tunisia and Tahrir Square, which makes the outcome of these battles all the more painful. In Egypt, ruthless dictator Hosni Mubarak was first replaced by a ruthless military and now in addition by the even more ruthless Muslim Brotherhood and Salafists (see CHALLENGE, 10/19). In Tunisia, President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali was ousted and elections were held in October, but unemployment still crushes the youth there. This is the essence of reform struggles. However militant it may be, any struggle that fails to attack the entire capitalist system will simply replace one set of bosses with another. For workers, the promise of a new society has been met with the reality of continued joblessness and misery.

Nonetheless, the international working class proudly looked on as workers in Tahrir Square held up signs reading, "We are all Wisconsin," a reference to the 100,000-strong protest against the attack on public sector workers in that state. Months before anyone occupied a park near Wall Street, thousands of workers occupied the state capitol building in Madison, Wisconsin.



Red Ideas Take Root in West Africa

Just as in Cairo, however, the brave workers of Wisconsin have been misled, this time into backing electoral politics and the Democratic Party. In the midst of this struggle, the Party brought forward the idea that both the fascist Governor Scott Walker and the supposedly "heroic" Democrats were all defenders of capitalism — and were all therefore enemies of the working class. This communist idea attracted many workers in Wisconsin and around the world.

In September, the Occupy Wall Street (OWS) movement began in New York City before spreading to more than 1,500 cities worldwide. OWS captured the attention of workers who were tired of seeing banks get trillions of dollars in bailouts while education, transportation, health care, wages and jobs are slashed. One chant especially reflected this anger: "Banks got bailed out; We got sold out!" Throughout 2011, the Party participated in many of these occupations, picket lines, schools, churches and job sites, armed with leaflets and CHALLENGE.

PLP continues to strive to replace the dead-end reform tactics of the old communist movement with the fight for revolutionary communism for billions of workers in the world.

May Day

This past year was the 140th anniversary of the Paris Commune, the first time workers took control of the state. In this spirit, we celebrated May Day with marches, dinners and songs. From Colombia to El Salvador, in Los Angeles and New York, in Haiti and Palestine, we raised the red flag honoring our revolutionary ancestors. This year our May Day celebrations grew in size and better reflected the international character



of the working class.

Turning Fascist Oppression into Communist Organizing

The working class continues to suffer from the racist exploitation and oppression that capitalism requires. In their increasingly desperate competition for dominance, the various national ruling classes outdo one another in making workers homeless, sick, maimed or killed in pursuit of profit. Frantic about "sovereign debt," collapsing banks, currency disasters (notably the euro) and the industrial crisis of overproduction, the world's bosses are peeling back their thin masks of "democracy" to reveal the bloody maw of a fascist monster. Meanwhile, the fight over Central Asian and Middle Eastern oil and natural gas appears to be careening toward broader military conflicts.

As we move into 2012, the battles against our capitalist enemies will continue to rage. The workers of the world will continue to fight back, in ways large and small. Everything we do as workers and communists counts: every march or picket line or discussion strengthened by communist ideas, every time we help another worker and demonstrate how we can build a society without the parasitic bosses. By doing these things and more, the Party will help the working class move closer to ushering in a classless society that produces for need, not profit. Communist ideas are essential for this crucial advance. A mass, international, revolutionary party is necessary to lead the way. PL is that party. Now is the time to join!✊

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

Arabs Get Military Dictators Again

NYT, 11/24 — No one expected the Arab revolts to be a simple march ahead, but rarely have things seemed so much in flux, with more potential for fragmentation, bloodshed and disarray. While many analysts describe the disturbances as an inevitable reckoning with the legacy of dictatorship, others worry the region may face years of unrest before systems emerge to replace the stagnant, American-backed order that held sway. ...The forces of reaction—namely the military—seem more determined than ever to hold on. In Egypt, "The ruling military council is corrupt and not that much different than Mubarak." It has deployed the same tools of its predecessor, appealing to the old mantra of security and stability. "The word 'stability' is but a righteous word used for wrongful ends."

'Development' Super-exploits Indigenous Tribes

GW, 12/2 — What should development mean for those who are mostly self-sufficient, raising their own food and building their dwellings where the water is still clean—like many of the world's 150 million tribal people? In some of the world's most "developed" countries (Australia, Canada, and US), development has turned most of the tribal survivors into dispossessed paupers. Take any measure of what development ought to mean: high income, longevity, employment, health; low rates of addiction, suicide, imprisonment and domestic violence, and you find that indigenous peo-

ple in the US, Canada and Australia are by far the worst off on every count.

Colonialism set out to take away their self-sufficiency on their own territory, and lead them to glorious productivity, as menials, on someone else's. There's little point in calling for retroactive apologies for this, because it's not confined to the past: most development schemes foisted on tribal peoples today go in exactly the same direction.

So what about modern education? In Australia, mixed race children were forced into distant boarding schools to "breed out" their "Aboriginalness" and turn them into an "underclass." From frozen Siberia to sunlit Botswana, boarding schools remain the main plank in integrationist policies, which destroy more than educate. It's no hidden conspiracy: it's openly designed to be about turning people into workers, scornful of their own heritage.

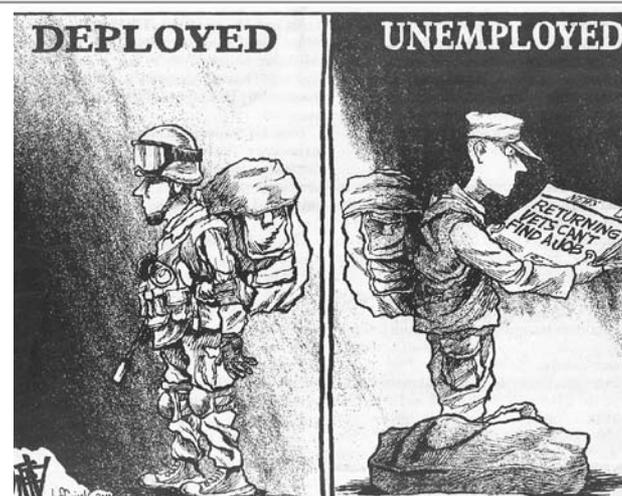
As a Botswana Bushman told me: "First they make us destitute by taking away our land, our hunting and our way of life. Then they say we are nothing because we are destitute."

Gov't Layoffs Hurt Black Families

NYT, 12/5 — Buried in the November jobs report was some very bad news for those who work in the public sector. There were 20,000 government workers laid off last month, by far the largest drop for any sector of the economy, mostly from states, counties and cities.

That continues a troubling trend that's been building for years, one that has had a particularly harsh effect on black workers. More than half a million government positions have been lost since the recession. Those layoffs mean a lower quality of life when there are fewer teachers, pothole repairers and nurses.

Millions of African-Americans — one in five who are employed — have entered the middle class through government employment. Now tens of thousands are leaving their jobs. The effect is severe, destabilizing black neighborhoods and mak-



ing it harder for young people to replicate their parents' climb up the economic ladder.

Bosses Selling More, Hiring Less

NYT, 12/2 — More than two years after the recovery officially began, American employers have reinstated less than a quarter of the jobs lost during the downturn, according to Labor Department figures. Still, factory output grew last month.

But the number of people applying for unemployment benefits is still too high to signal strong hiring. "Manufacturers are trying to meet demand without significantly increasing their work force."

'Sanctions' vs. Iran Can Equal War

NYT, 12/6 — Iranian leaders are increasingly concerned that oil sales, Iran's main source of income, are now at risk in ways that they were able to avoid in earlier rounds of Western sanctions. Those sanctions were imposed to press Iran, so far unsuccessfully, to halt its nuclear program.

"If you cut Iran out of the oil market, this is no longer economic pressure... At some point, sanctions become an act of war," said Vali Nasr, a professor at Tufts University and an expert on Iranian affairs.

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2011: Crisis-driven Bosses Attack, But Class Struggle Alive and Well



The events of 2011 served to remind us of two important aspects of capitalist society. First, the bosses of the world, caught in a sharpening struggle against their rivals and a spreading financial crisis, always have their knives out to assault the working class. Attacks intensified against our jobs, education, health, homes and families. The myths of democracy, fairness and opportunity for workers were exposed by a worldwide reality: we live under the bosses' dictatorship. The past year made clear that regardless of national boundaries, no matter the "race" or gender of the boss, the ruling class will eagerly consign workers to hell on earth for the smallest gain in profit.

The ultimate expression of the boss's callousness to sacrifice the lives of workers is imperialist war, of which there was no shortage in 2011. The U.S., still the main capitalist power in the world, continued its racist massacres in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan in hopes of securing the Middle East's oil and natural gas. Without the growth of a new worldwide communist movement, the prospects for 2012 and beyond are not much better.

While the U.S. remains the dominant power, other rivals, most prominently China, are gaining power — militarily, economically and politically. This challenge does not go unnoticed by the U.S. ruling class. The recent announcement by President Obama (the Nobel Peace Prize winner) that U.S. Marines will be stationed in northern Australia, alongside the recent diplomatic overtures to Myanmar, which borders China, signal a future where direct military conflict between the U.S. and China will be increasingly likely.

But the deadly maneuvering of the ruling class is only one side of the story of 2011. The second lesson, clearly visible from a quick look back through the pages of any of the bosses' newspapers, is that workers are not meekly accepting these attacks. Class struggle is alive and well. The list of places where large-scale rebellion rocked the bosses this past year is a long one: Algeria, Bangladesh, Colombia, Egypt, England, France, Greece, Israel/Palestine, Libya, Mexico, Pakistan, Spain, Syria, the U.S., and more.

To advance the cause of communist revolution, the international Progressive Labor Party has joined and led some of these militant struggles. In the pages of CHALLENGE, these battles and many other reports of class struggle were presented with a communist analysis. If we are ever to defeat the murderous bosses and end their reign of terror, the working class must transform these narrow reform struggles into a fight for the working class to take state power — a fight for communist revolution.

The International PLP Advances

In New York City, the working class took on the racist Department of Education and its plan to impose Jim Crow-style segregation at the John Jay Campus high schools. In Israel/Palestine, a Summer Project participated in the fight against racist

evictions and the housing shortage gripping workers there. In Haiti, we struggled to help rebuild a shattered society with communist principles of international solidarity and equality.

PL's Summer Project in Haiti included a "Freedom School" for the discussion of communist principles. "Serve the working class" became more than a motto; it was put into practice when Party members created a clinic to serve the medical needs for Haitians in tent camps. The racist health care system was also a focus for comrades in the U.S. In New York we fought against the racist closing of Brookdale Hospital. Comrades and friends in Philadelphia fought to prevent the firing of a trusted hospital coworker. In Chicago, where hospital bosses tried to give patients a death sentence by transferring them to a decrepit facility, PL and others fought back.

Chicago was also the battleground for the heroic efforts of students and parents (primarily mothers), supported by the Party, to prevent the racist closing of the Whittier School library. Providing an example for the Occupy movement to follow, the parents (primarily mothers) and students at this majority Latino school, supported by the Party, seized the building and renamed it "La Casita." For nearly a month, they held off the racist dogs of the Chicago Department of Education from carrying out their plan. Our comrades helped in many ways, from medical care to overnight guard duty. All the while they pointed out that whether we won or lost this particular battle, the bosses would still have state power. Our job is to fight not only "our" bosses, but bosses everywhere.

In Pakistan and Bangladesh, communists infused labor struggles in garment factories and universities with a vision of a society based on need rather than profit. In Mexico, where flooding threatened to destroy a community of 200,000 people, the Party explained that if our commu-

nist predecessors in the Soviet Union could move entire factories over the Ural mountains in three months during World War II, we could protect their city — if we had state power.

In these places and others around the world, CHALLENGE was ever-present. It consistently hammered home the point that it is only when we take on capitalism itself — when we transform battles against corrupt dictators, greedy bankers and fascist school boards into a world-wide communist movement — will we achieve workers' liberation.

Arab Spring and Wall Street Occupy Working Class's Imagination

Perhaps the most significant expressions of working-class fight-back were the upheavals in North Africa and the Middle East, collectively dubbed the Arab Spring, and in the Occupy Wall Street movement, a worldwide rage at the inequality of wealth that is the hallmark of capitalism.



Haiti: Picket Lines, Health Clinic, Freedom School

The Arab Spring began with a rebellion in Tunisia that followed the self-immolation of a desperate young worker. But the uprising was fueled by a 13% official unemployment rate (about 30% for youth), skyrocketing prices for food, and political corruption. Similarly, in Egypt, while the bourgeois media focused on Cairo's Tahrir Square and the struggle for "democracy," the real battles were

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