

CHALLENGE



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PLP Militance Rolls Over Police Plan

BLOCK THE LONG BEACH PORT



LONG BEACH, CA, December 12 — Seven hundred workers shut down business at the Long Beach Port. This march revealed a split between the Occupy movement's liberal organizers and the rank-and-file occupiers, including Progressive Labor Party comrades who gave key leadership at the protest.

The liberals' plan, orchestrated with the Long Beach Police Department, was to funnel the march along a narrow sidewalk, with the ocean on one side and the cops on the other. But with PL leading a communist chant of "Shut it down, shut it tight, workers of the world unite!" the march quickly turned militant. PL's friends in the movement were evident as we crossed the line of cones and took the streets leading to the port.

The kkkops responded by attempting to use their motorcycles as barricades, splitting the protest into two halves. It was a potentially dangerous situation, with one group facing a wall of cops in riot gear. But we quickly organized ourselves and led the march back and sandwiched the police! At first, the other half of the march was hesitant to walk through the police barrier, but our comrades again led the way and soon the whole march followed.

An hour later, as the Long Beach police tried to push the protesters back onto the sidewalk, they were met

with heavy resistance. The protesters stood their ground in open defiance, linking arms, chanting and singing. The standoff lasted for nearly an hour. It ended only after rank-and-file occupiers discovered that some trucks were getting into the port through a back entrance. After a brief discussion, the protest was moved to a location where we could better block all entrances. Traffic at the port was shut down for five hours before the police could disperse the crowd. Port workers who walked to the gates to watch the protest told us that they didn't believe any work would get done that day.

While our PL leadership was critical in organizing the Occupiers to defy the liberal leadership, we were weak in organizing our own base from the jobs, schools and campuses to participate. We also need to distribute more CHALLENGES.

We do have a small but active base within the Occupy movement, however. After this action, more than 20 young people met with us over breakfast to debrief. While there is a lot of potential to deepen these relationships and build the Party, we must struggle harder to make the Occupy fight more prominent in our workplaces and classrooms. The struggle continues.✪

Youth Lead Fight Against Hospital's Racist Killer Cuts



CHICAGO, December 14 — On an unseasonably warm and rainy day, about twenty PL'ers and friends gathered in front of Stroger hospital, under an overhang, to protest the deadly cuts in the Cook County public hospital system. Stroger Hospital was moving forward with planned layoffs even though the holidays were almost here. We handed out fliers while calmly holding our signs and giant photographs of patients who are losing their healthcare, including one who recently died as a result. CHALLENGES were distributed.

It wasn't long before the kkkops told us to move from "private property."

"What are you talking about? This is a public hospital and I work here!" a protester snapped. Together, we decided to march twenty-five yards away, but still on county property. We marched as a group chanting,

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Obama, Iran Threaten New Mid-East Oil War

U.S. imperialists' face-off with Iran's nuclear-bomb bosses is escalating towards war. At stake is control over the Middle East and its increasingly strategic energy resources. According to CNN, Martin Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, "is quietly leading the ongoing military planning for an attack against Iran's nuclear weapons in the event the president gives the order to do so" (12/20/11).

In the latest round meanwhile, Obama tried to slap tighter financial sanctions on Iran unless it gave up its nuke program. In turn, Iran's naval brass threatened to block the Strait of Hormuz. Virtually all of the oil and gas exports of Iraq and Kuwait and more than half of Saudi Arabia's pass through that waterway sails. All of these resources are dominated by U.S. and British oil giants.

Then Obama sent an aircraft carrier group through the strait while the Iranian navy practiced maneuvers nearby. Obama also pointedly announced a "\$30 billion sale to Saudi Arabia of ad-

vanced-model U.S. F-15 fighter jets and associated weapons systems" amid "recent irrational behavior by the Tehran government" (Voice of America, 12/29/11). In direct response, Iran "test-fired a medium-range surface-to-air missile near the strategic Strait" (VOA, 1/1/12). Iran warned it would not accept return of the aircraft carriers.

China-Russia-Iran Axis Speeds Ayatollahs' A-Bomb

Iran's rulers have since eased off shutting Hormuz, since its closure would also deprive themselves of oil export revenue and cut off their main customer, China. But aided by the anti-U.S. coalition, they remain determined to build a bomb. The Washington Post (11/7/11) reported:

Intelligence provided to U.N. nuclear officials shows that Iran's government has mastered the critical steps needed to build a nuclear weapon, receiving assistance from foreign scientists to overcome key technical hurdles... Documents and other records provide new details on the role played by a former Soviet weapons scientist who allegedly tutored Iranians over several years on building high-precision detonators of the kind used to trigger a nuclear chain reaction...Crucial technology linked to experts in Pakistan and North Korea [both heavily influenced by China — ed.] also helped propel Iran to the threshold of nuclear capability.

Rockefeller Ruling-Class Wing Chanting 'Bomb Iran'

Consequently, calls in the U.S. for blasting Iran's nuke plants have recently expanded from the Israel lobby to the highest capitalist circles. The imperialist, Rockefeller-led Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) speaks for its funders: Exxon Mobil, Chevron, and banks like JP Morgan Chase and Citigroup. A CFR headline in the latest issue of Foreign Affairs says it all: "Time to Attack Iran."

The article's author, Matthew Kroenig, has Obama's ear. From July 2010 to July 2011, he was a special adviser in the Office of the U.S. Secretary of Defense, "responsible for defense strategy and policy on Iran." A nuked-up Iran, Kroenig warns, could hamstring future U.S. invasions of energy goldmines Saudi Arabia and Iraq: "With atomic power behind it, Iran could threaten any U.S. political or military initiative in the Middle East with nuclear war, forcing Washington to think twice before acting in the region."

U.S. 'Surgical' Strike Could Go Global

Ruling-class mouthpiece Kroenig absurdly proposes a moderately deadly "hit and run." He

Mobilize NOW Against War Peril!

While the Iranian military has momentarily backed off its threat to close the Strait of Hormuz, sharpening imperialist rivalries could set off military confrontation and a major oil war at any time. Seeing such a threat, we need to alert our co-workers and urge them to action, especially in the main concentrations where PLP is organizing.

Through CHALLENGE networks and PLP study groups, union committees and caucuses, church and community groups, or simply talking with workers over lunch, we and our friends should cite the example of the Oakland and Seattle longshore workers and, where possible, lead walkouts and job actions. Short of that, we can bring workers to Occupy movement rallies or PL forums, and organize for May Day. This work will be more effective where we have a regular CHALLENGE readership. As our co-workers help to distribute the paper, they'll gain valuable experience in fighting for PL's outlook.

In short, as the threat of war increases, our political activity on the job must increase in kind. More CHALLENGES, more discussions at work and in our coworkers' homes, more leaflets explaining the immediate threat and calling for action. The bloodthirsty imperialists will give us plenty of opportunities to get it right. We shouldn't waste a single one.

ignores the realities of the sharpening imperialist rivalry and the related and growing importance of oil, the lifeblood of capitalism, especially in its cheap and highly profitable Middle East form:

Iran's rapid nuclear development will ultimately force the United States to choose between a conventional conflict and a possible nuclear war. Faced with that decision, the United States should conduct a surgical strike on Iran's nuclear facilities, absorb an inevitable round of retaliation, and then seek to quickly de-escalate the crisis. Addressing the threat now will spare the United States from confronting a far more dangerous situation in the future.

U.S. bosses, however, face problems in their attempts to avoid a more widespread armed conflict. First, the U.S. military is already stretched thin. It must defend more than seven hundred bases worldwide, and is especially dependent on an all-volunteer army. Second, Iranian retaliation might be more drastic than Kroenig thinks. "Iran said Monday it had successfully test-fired a long-range missile during its naval exercise in the Gulf, flexing its military muscle to show it could hit Israel and U.S. bases in the region if attacked" (MSNBC, 1/2/12).

Then there are the inevitable entangling inter-

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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!**

PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

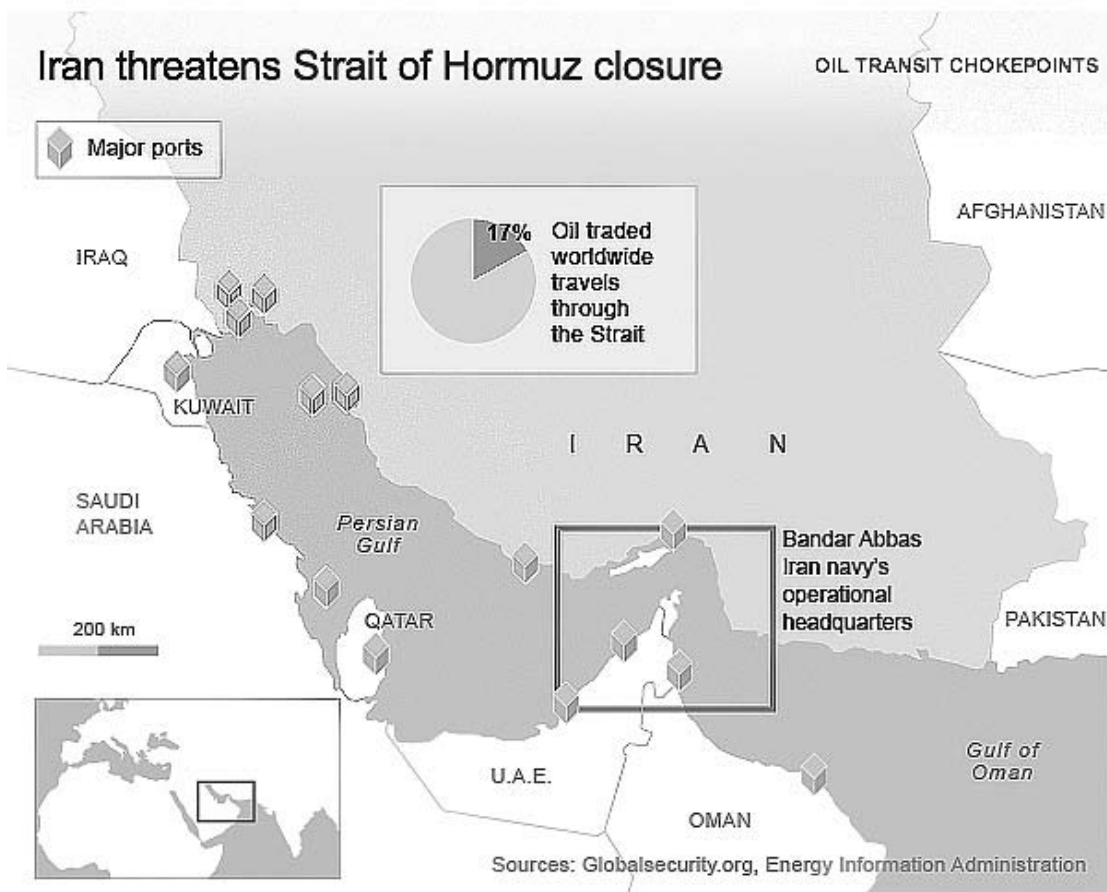
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Using CHALLENGE to Battle Growing Fascism in Chicago Schools

Recent CHALLENGE articles about fascism's growth in Haiti (see issue 12/14/11) and its attacks on the Occupy movements worldwide inspired me to report recent efforts to build PLP amid growing fascism in Chicago.

I am a laid-off black schoolteacher here, among the disproportionate number of laid-off black teachers. These racist layoffs and those of all groups reflect the economic and political crises of capitalism.

Global fascism and its imperialist wars make workers' lives miserable, attacking the working class in many ways. One tactic is forcing government employees (teachers, health workers, among others) to accept lower living standards — reduced wages, skimpier benefits and lousier working conditions. For teachers, this includes layoffs, denied pay raises (or lower pay scales, inducing them to move to a growing number of higher-paying charter schools), more expensive health care coverage and increasingly poor working conditions.

In education, one such condition is overcrowded classrooms. More students per teacher are cheaper for capitalists, whose gain is the working class's loss in schools. Classroom overcrowding reduces the quality of education for students, often implemented in a racist way. Black and Latino students, already enduring racist oppression, are stuffed into learning environments ill designed to meet their needs.

Then there's the increased repression of those who fight these attacks. Because of my activism on the local school Council, the administration took special measures to eliminate my position and lay me off. My co-workers elected me to be a

teacher representative on the Council. I and other community members challenged the principal's hiring of an extra administrator/assistant principal (to terrorize teachers) and an armed off-duty cop (to terrorize students). Standing up to these attacks ensured my trip to the reassigned teacher pool.

The fact that the administrators are black shows that racism is not about the perpetrators' color but rather about the racist conditions they help enforce.

The school is now battling closure. Staff members, food service and custodial workers will lose their jobs. Students will be forced to attend schools miles from home. Some will cross dangerous gang territories and/or attend schools where academic ratings are even lower than their current school. School bosses are funding newer computer technology in the "closing" building, preparing to re-open it as a charter or "selective enrollment" school which won't serve the students of this area.

Community organizations are campaigning to keep this school and several others open. These efforts are well-intentioned, carried out by honest people, knowledgeable about organizing. Parents wanting a good education for their children and grandchildren are joining this effort. Unfortunately, they're organizing around capitalist liberal principles that will fail at best, and at worst will lead workers away from PLP's revolutionary communist principles.

Both before and after my layoff I've distributed CHALLENGE to several school staff members and won some workers to continue distributing the paper in my absence. I still meet with school staff and have remained active in the community organizing efforts. One teacher has attended a Party club meeting and I've had political discussions with others. I've also encouraged a few 8th graders and their parents to read the paper and check the PLP website.

I will continue to build relationships with co-workers and friends and increase distribution of CHALLENGE and other PLP documents. I'll write more for CHALLENGE, enabling my friends to see that our conversations are part of a global movement to free the working class from the bonds of capitalism. We want to win people to see that education under capitalism only serves the system. It can never provide for workers' needs. I'm committed to building my confidence in the workers and the workers' confidence in our Party that is theirs to join and build.☺

Fight Back Against Homelessness Killing AIDS' Victims

WASHINGTON, DC, December 1 — Progressive Labor Party members today joined a bold group of activists rallying in front of the DC Department of Health to demand housing for the city's 922 people with AIDS. They are living in shelters or from couch to couch. In a chant aimed at the federally funded program called Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA), we called out: "Housing yes! Racism no! HOPWA wait list has got to go!"

Demonstrators from DC Fights Back and the Metro Washington Public Health Association held signs shaped like homes and took over the sidewalk and median strip. People with HIV need secure housing to adhere to life-saving medications that reduce the spread of the virus. Homelessness kills!

During World AIDS Day, many organizations hold vigils, educational events, and offer HIV tests and condoms. Meanwhile, liberal politicians make hypocritical pledges they have no intention of fulfilling. All the bosses' politicians care about is the disease's destruction of a labor market that they could exploit for profit, especially in Africa.

PL'ers argue that we should use the day to fight racism and build a movement to overthrow the capitalist system, which has created the conditions that has spread the HIV virus among the most exploited people in the world. Condoms and health education may help prevent the spread of HIV, but communism can eliminate the exploitation and poverty that concentrates HIV in the poorest neighborhoods.

Capitalist media goons stigmatize and marginalize people who live with HIV, especially black and Latino workers, women, the mentally ill, and the poor. The bosses use fear, biases and racism to justify not spending money for jobs, health care, and housing. Workers who fall into the stigma trap weaken working-class unity against the bosses.

Underlying most stigmas is racism. While most poor people in the U.S. are white, the media projects a black image of poverty, making it easier for white workers to blame poor people for their problems. In fact, it is capitalism that attacks black families with double the general unemployment rate and triple the poverty rate. Fighting racism is crucial in building global working-class solidarity.

Communism offers a society that expects everyone to contribute their energy and talent to each other without exploitation. It promotes collective responsibility and a sense of community for everyone, regardless of race, sexual orientation, or gender. With communism, people can live happier and healthier lives, not resorting to drugs for self-medication or settling for relationships based on economic necessity and inequality. A society based on economic justice and equality can create the stability and security people need to end HIV.

This July, 30,000 people will attend the International AIDS Conference in DC. We invite friends and members to join the "global village" and the mass mobilization on July 24 to call for communist revolution to end AIDS.☺

Racist Hospital Killer Cuts

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"They say cut back, we say fight back!"

After establishing a picket line, we took turns on the bullhorn, denouncing the layoffs and service cuts. A few union hacks tried to talk to the demonstrators to divert our anger, but we kept spreading the word to the hundreds streaming by. We distributed all of our fliers and made a few contacts with patients and their families who were inspired to see workers fighting for their county healthcare system.

Last week the administration laid off eight respiratory therapists. This is a direct result of the closing of Oak Forest Hospital (see CHALLENGE, 11/2/11). Respiratory therapists from Oak Forest with more seniority are being transferred to Stroger Hospital. Rather than increase the staff of respiratory therapists at Stroger to help take care of the flood of new patients, management decided to fire the therapists with less seniority.

New patients are crowding into the ER, setting records for the number seen per day. They are coming from Oak Forest and from dozens of private hospitals, where thousands of patients are no longer welcome since they lost their health insurance.

The day after the layoffs, management asked the remaining respiratory therapists to pick up night shifts and work overtime! The therapists have been actively fighting these layoffs. Most of the night shift went as a unified group to protest to the head of the Intensive Care Unit. A few days later, fifteen workers went to SEIU union headquarters to confront the union president. Workers were invited to a negotiation that morning that resulted in a week's postponement of the layoffs. Respiratory therapy workers have been at every one of the three pickets held in front of the hospital since October.

The lead organizing force for this demonstration was a community group called Chicago Healthcare Justice, which was founded a year ago. Members have been discussing healthcare, racism and capitalism, and also participating in some rallies and demonstrations with the Occupy movement and others.



These young workers felt they were finally ready to try to lead an action. They decided to demonstrate against the attacks on health workers and patients at Stroger Hospital. Two members researched the history of Cook County healthcare as well as current spending and put it together into a fact-filled flier. The flier demonstrated that Cook County has been cutting back on services and staff since long before the Great Recession, which is used to justify current cuts. Our group then spent time at Occupy Chicago events promoting the rally, making contacts and discussing the movement's issues. Although this action was relatively small in size, it was a huge step forward for the Chicago Healthcare Justice group.

One member of the group translated the leaflet into Spanish for distribution by the family of one of the former Oak Forest ventilator patients, who now lives in the Medical ICU at Stroger. Protests at Stroger have maintained attention on this patient, David Moreno, and probably prevented the hospital bosses from sending him to a death-trap nursing home, as they did with some of his fellow Oak Forest patients, now deceased.

Fighting against every attack is essential but is not enough. We know this was a modest step. We also know that the only way workers have ever won anything from the bosses is by fighting back. We plan to take the momentum from this action into the new year and keep learning and fighting back together.

Those of us in Progressive Labor Party will continue pointing out the failures of capitalism and the desperate need for a better, communist world. We will struggle to win these workers to join PLP.☺

Eurocrisis Could Trigger Global Crash and World War III

The "Eurocrisis" is first and foremost about the failure of capitalist over-production as well as about inter-imperialist rivalry. French and German bosses are fighting to make sure their own bankers are not stuck with losses coming from the inability of other European governments to pay their debts. Chinese bosses are looking for opportunities to gain greater economic influence on the European continent. And U.S. bosses are worried about the possibility that the Eurocrisis will trigger a second worldwide financial crash. To analyze the current crisis, we must first look at how current European power relations developed.

After the mass destruction of World War II, the main political goal of U.S. bosses was to limit post-war communist influence in a devastated Europe. According to General Lucius D. Clay, Deputy Governor of the U.S. Occupation in Germany: "There is no choice between being a communist on 1,500 calories a day and a believer in democracy on a thousand." Although crudely anti-communist, this quote shows why the U.S. backed the resurgence of what was then the West German economy in 1946. French bosses, the long-time enemies of the German ruling class, were initially opposed to this move. But by 1950, under U.S. pressure, they went along.

In 1952, Stalin had written, in *Economic Problems of Socialism*: "To eliminate the inevitability of war, it is necessary to abolish imperialism." Marxist analysis of capitalism showed workers how big economic crises led to mass destruction of productive forces in imperialist wars. But liberal and social democratic politicians claimed that the various national bourgeoisies could reconcile their differences peacefully. To that end, European economic unions like the Coal and Steel Community (founded in 1951) were promoted as a way for countries to avoid the terrible consequences of war. These unions, however, were maintained within the context of U.S. dominance.

After the fall of the Soviet Union and German reunification, European bosses began asserting their independence. The European Union (EU) was formed in 1993. In 1999, eleven EU countries, led by France and Germany, established a common currency, the Euro, in a subset of the EU known as the Eurozone. Now a majority of EU countries use the Euro.

The EU's bank, the European Central Bank (ECB), is supposed to represent the interests of all seventeen 17 EU member countries. But the reality is that both Germany and France wield huge power over the ECB. Germany contributes most to the ECB's capital and has the biggest banks in Europe. The ECB policy of raising interest rates in the midst of a sharp economic downturn has damaged the economies of smaller EU countries, but benefits Germany.

Thirsting for maximum return on investments, European banks put an enormous amount of capital into the U.S. upsurge in housing before the 2007 crash. As the U.S. housing market collapsed, these profit-driven bankers moved money into the purchase of "sovereign" bonds issued by various EU governments. Between the second quarter of 2007 and the third quarter of 2009, EU banks shifted \$827 billion into bonds issued by Portugal, Ireland, Italy, Greece, and Spain (New York Times, 11/11/11). The banks reaped huge amounts from interest and made tens of millions of dollars underwriting these bonds.

In 2009, a new Greek government admitted that previous administrations had lied about the size of the country's budget deficit. German and French bosses used this admission as a pretext to impose a vicious austerity regime on Greek workers as a condition of any EU bailout. In reality, most of the "bailout" money sent to Greece has wound up in the pockets of the French, German and other bankers who bought Greek "sovereign" bonds.

Despite these measures, the worldwide capital-

ist economy has yet to recover from the crashes of 2007-2008. Short of war, capitalism has no choice but to shift the burden of the bankers' losses to the working class. Smelling blood, the world's biggest banks and other bondholders are seeking to turn the sovereign debt crisis into a net gain by attacking living conditions for workers throughout Europe.

Bond interest rates in Italy, Spain, Ireland and Portugal have soared. This in turn has forced local bosses in Italy and Greece to install "technocrats" (direct servants of the bankers) as government leaders, and has brought a conservative, pro-austerity government to power in Spain. All of these bosses have a mandate to attack the workers in their countries even more sharply.

But far from solving the capitalists' problems, austerity regimes can only make them worse. Several European economies are now forecast to be in deep recession before the end of this year, making it even more difficult for their governments to cover their debt payments to the bankers.

The five countries whose sovereign bonds have been downgraded owe a total of \$2.2 trillion (New York Times, 10/22/11). If they were to default on this debt, German, French, and U.S. banks would sustain some of the biggest losses. According to billionaire George Soros, this "deflationary debt trap" will lead to a "self-reinforcing process of disintegration" — that is, a global financial collapse (Huffington Post 12/5/11). Meanwhile, Chinese bosses are sitting back, hoping to pick up the pieces after the crash.

The capitalists' current path could bring the world to a depression like the one of the 1930s, which led to World War II. Once again, the bosses' economic crisis will compel them to re-divide the imperialists' markets and resources and destroy productive capacity. For the international working class, the only solution to the bosses' inevitable wars is a communist revolution. ☸

Israeli Bosses' Racism Exploits Both Jewish and Arab Workers

HAZOR HAGLILIT, ISRAEL-PALESTINE, November 12 — After declaring Israel an independent state in May 1948, the racist Zionist bosses faced a problem they call: "The Demographic Problem." Despite expelling some 750,000 Palestinians from their homes and demolishing around 540 of their villages, 20% of the population of the newly created State of Israel, were Palestinian Arabs. The majority of Palestinians, within Israel, were concentrated in two areas: The Triangle (Central Israel) and the Galilee (northern part of Israel). In those areas, Palestinians constituted the majority of the population. In order to change this, the Zionist government started a racist campaign to "Judify" the Galilee.

The heart of the project consisted of creating new settlements called "Maabara" (transitional camps — mostly tents and huts made of wood and metal sheets.) These settlements were populated by Jewish immigrants, mostly Jews from Arab countries and from North Africa.

Jewish Immigrants Source of Cheap Labor

The new immigrants served as cheap labor for local industries set up by the government and the bosses. The new settlers increased the Jewish population in the Galilee which led to a Jewish majority. The new settlements populated "The Frontier" in the north and south and could serve as cannon fodder and as a first barrier in case of an invasion by a neighboring Arab country. The Zionists gave these settlements a special name calling them a "Development Town" (Ayarat Pituach). Shderot in the South, known as a target for Kassam rockets from Gaza, is one of them, while Hatzor Haglilit is one in the north.

The policy of the Zionist bosses was similar in most of the "Development Towns." A cheap labor

force was at hand so the government, with money from local taxes and donations from rich Jewish bosses overseas, gave grants and subsidies to local bosses who established industrial factories in those towns. They employed the local new immigrants at a minimum wage making millions of dollars, while maximizing their profits. As a result of this policy the "Development Towns" turned out to be towns owned by the local industry. Most of the town's life revolved around the factory. In Hazor Haglilit it was Vita Inc. producing pickled vegetables in cans.

During the "high" periods the bosses collected hundreds of millions of dollars which they refused to share with local workers who produced

Upon being fired, the workers of Pri Haglilit went on a wildcat strike picketing the plant's gate.

this wealth for them. But during the "down" periods the workers were the first to suffer the consequences. Competition from similar industries, cheap imports of the same product and rising costs of production decreased the profits of the Vita Haglilit bosses, and brought the company to the verge of bankruptcy.

Another Industrial enterprise, "Hazi Hinam" seized the opportunity and with financial aid from the government acquired the plant at a bargain

price and profited from it for a while. After making a fortune for a few years, the management of Pri Haglilit (ex Vita Haglilit) decided on reorganization, code word for laying off workers. Once again Hazor workers had to pay the price for capitalism striving to make maximum profits.

During November 2011, 100 workers of Pri Haglilit received pink slips. One of the workers, 53 years old, was summoned for a hearing before being laid off. He said "I am shocked, I don't know what I am going to do. I have worked for Pri Haglilit for 30 years, I have seven children but they told me they would leave Hazor, there is no future for them here."

Solidarity is Crucial

Upon being fired, the workers of Pri Haglilit went on a wildcat strike picketing the plant's gate. The workers realized that without solidarity with the fired workers they are next in line. The bosses of Pri Haglilit had already declared their intentions to move the Plant to Naharia (30 miles away) where operating costs and local taxes are lower.

A retired worker of Pri Haglilit summed up the situation: "Every time new bosses arrive to "salvage" Pri Haglilit, they get financial support from the state, and draw enormous salaries [for themselves]. After a while they start the layoff process until the government shows up again with financial support which, once again, ends up in their pockets."

All workers in historic Palestine, Hebrews and Arabs alike, should learn from the case of Hazor Haglilit. Capitalism is a ruthless, vicious economic system developed by the bosses for their sake. We in PLP support all Pri Haglilit workers' demands.

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France: Joblessness Tops 17%**Union 'Leaders' Help Bosses Shift Crisis onto Workers**

PARIS, December 29 — Unemployment in November hit new record levels in France, and the bosses' government and the union misleaders agree: shift the burden of the crisis onto the backs of the working class by putting workers on short time, cutting their income, in order to help maintain the bosses' profits.

Pôle emploi, the unemployment office, reports an "official" jobless rate of 10.1% — 2,844,800 jobless in an active population of 28,269,000 — a level of unemployment unseen in the past 12 years. However, the real rate rose to 17.1%.

The 1,400,000 persons working part-time but actively seeking full-time work raises the rate to 15.0%. An additional 589,600 workers on the unemployment rolls were sick, in job training or had a government-subsidized job so were not counted in the "official" rate because they were not obliged to actively look for work. This ups the real unemployment rate to 17.1%.

All this hits black and Arab immigrant workers from sub-Saharan and North Africa, and their children, particularly hard (see box). Because of racist discrimination, they are already at the lower end of the jobs and income level and now are being driven deeper into poverty.

On December 27, the Minister for Labor said that a January 18 summit on jobs "will make it possible ... to put forward quick-action solutions to limit the effects of the economic crisis as much as possible." He notably favored making it easier for companies to put workers on short time. French President Nicolas Sarkozy will preside over the labor-management summit.

On December 27, France's largest trade union confederation, the CGT, said it will propose to the summit "the elimination of untaxed overtime hours; reinforced checks on financial aid granted to companies, with a firm commitment to maintaining jobs; and the establishment of a mechanism to avoid layoffs by working short time."

Thus, the CGT is trying to help the capitalists manage the recession and shift the crisis onto the workers. It's trying to patch up the rotten capitalist system instead of pointing workers towards revo-

lutionary change.

The CGT is also calling for nation-wide demonstrations on January 18, demanding more jobs, more purchasing power for all, and a united struggle against the government's austerity policies. Although these reformist demands may sound positive, the demonstrations (as in the past) will probably prove to be little more than an opportunity for workers to blow off steam, especially since the CGT has carefully avoided calling for strikes to back up the demands.

France's second-largest union confederation, the CFDT (more conservative than the CGT) will advance four points at the summit: (1) working short time to avoid layoffs; (2) more access to unemployment benefits for temporary workers; (3) state action to maintain jobs for youth; and (4) hiring 2,000 more workers at the unemployment agency, Pôle emploi, to deal with the expected increase in unemployment!

The CFDT is not even organizing workers to demonstrate behind these demands, much less go on strike. In other words, it's begging the bosses to make a symbolic gesture, a sure-fire recipe for disaster. Capitalism is based on the bosses netting maximum profits, making it impossible for the bosses to show pity, even if they wanted to.

This summit will amount to nothing more than a showy photo-op for the government in the run-up to the April 22 presidential elections. Workers are wasting their time if they look to the bosses, the government or the union leaders for solutions. The initiative for action will have to come from the rank and file.

The upshot is that the government and the union leaders are working together to persuade the bosses to put workers on short time instead of laying them off. They're aiming to avoid the kind of

Racist Unemployment Hits Black and Arab Workers

According to an Oct. 19, 2010 government report entitled "Trajectoire et Origines," all else being equal, the unemployment rate among immigrants from Sub-Saharan (mostly black) and North Africa (mostly Arab) is over twice that of people born to French parents. The unemployment rate among children of black or Arab immigrants is 1.8 to 2 times higher.

The report revealed that almost 25% of black immigrants and 19% of Algerian immigrants had been unjustly turned down for a job within the previous five years, as had 12% of the children of black or North African immigrants.

This racist discrimination means immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa and Algeria earn 12%-13% less than people born to French parents.

The study showed that there was no significant difference in unemployment or income levels between European immigrants and people born to French parents.

social unrest resulting from mass unemployment. But this is no solution, even in terms of capitalism.

The government will receive less revenue from income and corporate taxes. Already, it's increasing taxes on natural gas, food and home improvements. Lower incomes and higher taxes will force workers to reduce their expenses even more, plunging France deeper into an economic depression.

Ultimately, the bosses and their government can only look to imperialist adventures to exit the crisis. French participation in the wars in Libya and Afghanistan is no accident — the French ruling class is honing the war readiness of the French army.

The capitalist system has plunged this country into a vicious circle in which austerity begets economic stagnation and unemployment, which in turn lead to more draconian austerity measures. For the working class here — as for workers worldwide — the only solution is to smash capitalist exploitation through communist revolution.☺

Obama, Iran Threaten New Mid-East Oil War

continued from page 2

ests and alliances of capitalism. Another Rockefeller-bankrolled think tank, the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), identified these "regions of competition" as inseparable from the oil dogfight now centering on Iran: "Gulf Cooperation Council countries [including Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and U.S. Fifth Fleet host Bahrain], Yemen, Iraq, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Gaza and the West Bank, Pakistan, Turkey, Afghanistan, Central Asia, Europe, Russia, China, Japan and Asia, Venezuela, Cuba, Brazil" (*Iran and the Threat to 'Close' the Gulf*, CSIS website, 12/29/11).

Wider wars will likely result from a U.S. attack on Iran. Planning the attack and awaiting Obama's order, General Dempsey said, "Any [Iranian] miscalculation could mean that we are drawn into conflict, and that would be a tragedy for the region and the world" (CNN, 12/20/11).

U.S. rulers have employed direct military action in the Middle East since 1979, when Iran's Islamist oil barons booted out Shah Reza Pahlavi, the Exxon/Rockefeller puppet whom the U.S. CIA had installed in power. U.S. influence in this cornerstone of its worldwide empire continues to erode. In response, U.S. rulers must forcibly claw back strategic lost territories, like Iraq and Iran, and militarize for its inevitable confrontation with strengthening imperialist foes China and Russia. Whether they can accomplish these goals in the face of their own internal disunity is another question (and the subject of coming CHALLENGE articles). Their struggle is further complicated by the worldwide economic crisis that threatens both U.S. and European stability.

Working Class Must Rise Up Against Capitalism's Mass Murder

The global scramble for energy profits has already killed millions of working class Iraqis and thousands of their working class brothers and sisters in the U.S. military. This imperialist competition is killing still more in Afghanistan and Pakistan. With Chinese and Russian involvement and the nuclear wildcard, an Iran oil war could prove far deadlier still for the international working class.

The only way to stop the worsening murder and misery inflicted on our class by oil-soaked billionaires is to destroy the profit system itself and replace it with working-class rule. Tens of millions of workers throughout the world are already resisting the bosses' attacks. Strikes and demonstrations are on the rise in the Middle East, the European Union, Latin America, China, Pakistan, India, and — with the Occupy movement — in the U.S.

But to smash capitalism, the root cause of this misery, requires communist leadership to point the way. It's not enough to replace one set of capitalist murderers for another; the entire, horrific profit system must be replaced with workers' power. A new system must be erected to produce for workers' needs, not bosses' profits — the source of racism, sexism, mass unemployment, poverty and unceasing wars.

That new system, our Party's ultimate aim, can be won only through communist revolution.☺

Israeli Bosses' Racism

continued from page 4

But even if there are victories, they can be reversed at any time by the courts, the Knesset (Israeli Parliament) and the other bosses' state organs. It is only a question of time before they shut the plant, moving it to Naharia where they can extract higher profits.

The bosses treat the workers like the pickled cans they produce: Open them, use them and throw them away. Only in a communist society producing for need rather than for profit will all workers have humanity. Under communism everybody would contribute according to commitment and the total product would be divided based on need.

Workers need to build the revolutionary communist PLP to put an end to the capitalist system — a dictatorship of the bosses — and build communism — the dictatorship of the workers to serve their needs.☺



LETTERS

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

SEIU No Cure for Attacks on Hospital Workers

I have been working at a Chicago area hospital for the past two years. My department consists of workers from all over the world —India, Haiti, Nigeria, South America and Eastern Europe, as well as native-born blacks and whites. The unions encourage workers to be divided, instead of uniting against all layoffs. We fight to recognize that attacks on us are racist and sexist, and fight back against these divisions on a class basis.

One of the first agitations we organized was a meeting with our division boss about two supervisors who were disrespecting us. One co-worker helped organize people to the meeting. We wrote up grievances against the supervisors and struggled with workers to lend their names and support to the grievances. The director denied all the complaints, but several months later, the supervisors were fired. Unfortunately, this was only the beginning of our troubles.

An ongoing struggle is to help a ventilator-dependent patient stay alive by preventing his transfer to a shoddy nursing home (see CHALLENGE 11/2/11). An entire shift picketed in front of the hospital supporting the patient, and protesting layoffs. The county bosses closed the hospital where twelve ventilator dependent patients lived for many years. All but two have died since being transferred to under-staffed nursing homes.

Most recently, workers confronted the bosses about impending layoffs, since the closing of another county hospital and reducing services at a third public hospital. The hospital bosses denied knowing about the layoffs, and said it was in the hands of the head of the human resources department, who used to be vice-president of a local in our SEIU union. The union leaders and politicians go together like hand in glove. It is the job of union leaders to steer workers to accept layoffs and cuts, and manipulate us into allying ourselves with politicians (see CHALLENGE 11/16/11).

Before we could confront the union misleaders, three workers were laid off. An outpouring of workers confronted the union president, who played dumb. In reality, the union facilitated the layoff by organizing the displacement of workers.

We were invited to a negotiations meeting later the same morning at which the bosses' lawyer said they would "look into it." SEIU has been negotiating for a new contract for three and a half years, and has failed to organize workers towards direct action, even after union members overwhelmingly voted to authorize a strike. At the last union meeting, the president casually announced 100 layoffs.

The union local includes thousands of members who work for the government, schools, parks, and jails. It has the capacity to shut down a significant portion of the state, but is unwilling to lead any militant fight-back. In Wisconsin, the unions failed to shut down the state by not striking; instead they submitted to the destruction of collective bargaining for public employees. Negotiating with the bosses' cronies is a dead-end road for workers. In fact, the union leaders are satisfied with hundreds of jobless workers.

The unions reproduce the exploitative worker-capitalist relationship. They have no interest in smashing the bosses' and their state, because they reap benefits from it. What we need is communist leadership, fighting back as a worker, for a worker-run hospital and more. PLP strives to unite the workers against the layoffs, and to fight for communist revolution. Working-class unity, under communist leadership will defeat all bosses and their agents.

Hospital worker



CHALLENGE On the Mark for This Emerging Red

I write this after having been separated from PLP for many years. I was active in college, but fell away after graduating and later going to law school.

I used to read CHALLENGE regularly; I write this to say that your analysis of the global political-economic situation was at least ten years ahead of its time. In the wake of the September 11 attack in New York, CHALLENGE warned us that the government's new focus on "homeland security" would lay the foundation for fascism if and when capitalism suffered its next crisis.

As it stands, Al Qaeda currently has fewer than a dozen active members (even by the CIA's estimate). Our "democratic" president has dispatched Osama bin Laden. Yet Congress and the president are poised to legalize martial law. The National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2012 declares U.S. soil to be a "battlefield." Anyone suspected of terrorist activity can be detained indefinitely without trial (and no doubt subjected to "enhanced interrogation" during that time).

Let us not lose sight of the timing of this. Al Qaeda is less of a threat than ever. What does threaten the established order is the burgeoning class consciousness that materialized as the Occupy Wall Street (OWS) movement. At least one leaked memorandum from London has attempted to link OWS members with "terrorist" organizations.

In the years since September 11, these same police organizations have received paramilitary training and equipment from the federal government — at least one city in Georgia has even received an amphibious tank. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has hosted 18-city conference calls to help coordinate the police response to the OWS protests. Armed and armored DHS police were present during a recent raid on Occupy San Francisco (photographs exist).

Now we can all see that both Republicans and Democrats agree on the issues that matter most to the ruling class (or "the 1%" as the OWS is calling it these days). Class-conscious working people are the threat, and fascism/war are the solutions.

In short: you were right. Here's 50 bucks. Keep it up.

Turning Red Again

Thanks-for-Fighting-Racism Feast

The 26th annual Thanks-for-Fighting-Racism Feast in Washington, DC was a huge success. Fifty friends, comrades and workers participated in answer to the genocidal Thanksgiving Day. This potluck celebrates our multi-racial, international unity and discusses the anti-racist struggles going on locally and worldwide.

The first speaker recounted the history of PL's fight against racism from Harlem to Prince Georges County. PL has been fighting policy brutality, racist courts, and the KKK. Next was a speech regarding the struggle against HIV and the racism which plagues those involved in this fight.

Then, an Occupier reported on the latest developments at Occupy DC, where the DC PL'ers facilitated teach-ins, joined actions and general assemblies, and sold CHALLENGE regularly at the site. The Occupy movement is being steered towards electoral politics, and it is important for PL'ers to continue building for communism at these movements.

Another comrade described the struggle at Metro Bus. Due to the union misleaders selling out to the bosses, the new contract gave puny raises, took back health care benefits and raided the pension fund. The black and Latino workers will suffer the most. We must point out no one is secure under capitalism. Lastly, a comrade gave stirring closing remarks about the personal experiences that led him to join PLP.

The Thanks-for-Fighting-Racism Feast was a big hit. We will continue inviting friends to this event so they can see what the long haul, militant, multi-racial struggle looks like. The revolution may not be a tea party, but it can start with a feast, as long as it is a Thanks-for-Fighting-Racism Feast!

DC comrade

Transit Workers Need Class War Leadership

The December 3rd NYC TWU (Transit Workers Union) general membership meeting left me feeling transit workers were being set up to lose. There were two hours of speeches about unions mobilizing politicians trying to roll back the bosses' nationwide war on workers' rights and even media mention of charges of "class warfare" because the TWU had given some support to the Occupy Wall Street (OWS) movement.

That movement has changed the bosses' nationwide austerity message to one that capitalist exploitation by the rich bosses needs to be attacked. To the embarrassment of the union movement, workers everywhere are picking up on the class warfare idea that reflects their reality and are demanding leadership willing to take on their parasitic employers.

During the meeting, I heard nothing about mobilizing for a strike, which was never mentioned even though it would be overwhelmingly supported by transit workers if the MTA bosses insisted on a big give-back contract, which seems likely. Strikes are a vital weapon workers have historically used to win most of the benefits they have today, which are rapidly being lost. The decades-long decline of the labor movement and worker compensation can be traced both to union "leaders" who have life-styles more like politicians and CEOs and to workers who have allowed themselves to be used as powerless voters instead of the producers of all wealth. Workers must understand their power and return to organizing class warfare to secure their needs.

At the meeting, over 40 workers lined up behind two mikes for a very brief question-only session that ended after only six speakers because, I believe, the comments were becoming too hot to handle. One worker forced a resolution demanding re-hiring of all 1,000-plus workers laid off. It passed unanimously. Another worker asked how the union can begin negotiating the MTA's three-year wage freeze and give-back proposals without counter demands and a no-contract-no-work deadline. The worker ahead of me on the mike line was told his question would end the session. He said he would give up his question to ask why all the other workers were not being allowed to speak.

Although I didn't get to speak, I wanted to raise the class warfare idea by asking why the TWU doesn't demand that the bosses who benefit from mass transit be forced to pay for the system which provides access to their businesses, which in turn produces hundreds of billions in profits off transit workers' labor. I listed the multi-trillion dollar real estate industry, tens of thousands of stores like Macy's, the multi-billion-dollar tourist industry and the trillion-dollars-per-day Wall Street transactions that would lose more than half their value without workers' and consumers' access to mass transit produced by our work.

Actually, at one time the real estate, department store and business interests used to pay most of the operating costs for mass transit. Now all costs are forced on riders and taxpayers.

I would have asked how bankers and bondholders get away with stealing two billion dollars every year in transit debt payments from MTA fares paid by millions of mostly black, Latino and immigrant workers every day.

Transit workers have a long history of class war against the bosses, from the Great Depression to the 1966 NYC strike that broke the nation-wide wage freeze (used to finance the Vietnam War), to the Civil Rights movement. Many organizing these struggles were communists and anti-racists who used class warfare — strikes, anti-racism and labor solidarity — because they understood that those actions supported all workers' needs which capitalism could never provide.

The bosses can survive recessions, depressions and wars but their greatest fear is that the working class, armed with communist ideas, will unite and turn the bosses' class war against workers into a war against the capitalist predatory profit system to create a communist society.

Transit worker

Asia: Coming Battleground in U.S.-China Rulers' Dogfight

"The future of politics will be decided in Asia, not Afghanistan or Iraq, and the United States will be right at the center of the action," writes Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in the current issue of Foreign Policy magazine. In the article, "America's Pacific Century," she announces a major change in U.S. foreign policy, a "pivot to new global realities," that sets its sights among the three giants of the Asia-Pacific: China, India and the U.S.

Crucial in this strategic turn to maintain U.S. hegemony is the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), a vast trade network spread across the Asia-Pacific rim promoted by Obama at the APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) forum in November. Currently being negotiated by nine countries, the TPP is essentially a U.S. thrust to exploit the markets, cheap labor and raw materials of the world's fastest growing region and is also a move to contain China, the main threat to U.S. imperialist aims.

In 1997, then Chinese Premier Jiang Zemin likened a similar strategy to having China "play Gulliver to Southeast Asia's Lilliputians, with the United States supplying the rope and string." But China is no sleeping giant. The Chinese Global Times warned that, "any country which chooses to be a pawn in the U.S. chess game will lose the opportunity to benefit from China's economy."

Obama urged the nine Beijing neighbors to join this "landmark 21st-century trade deal," noting China's trade barriers, high tariffs and taxes on foreign investors. Chinese Premier Wen countered that the region's countries share interests as developing nations with dynamic economies, unlike the West which, "lacks momentum," and is "plagued by serious financial and debt crises."

But these threats and promises of economic gains and losses veil serious intentions to control the region's economy, militarily if necessary.

In November China hosted a meeting of its regional security/economic bloc, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) whose members, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, frequently hold joint military exercises.

At the meeting Wen called for developing multilateral trade and economic ties between its members and recommended Iran, (currently U.S. enemy #1), and Pakistan for membership. India and Turkey have observer status.

Obama makes no bones about U.S. intentions to back up its capitalist interests with military force. On his recent visit to Australia he announced

the deployment of 2,500 Marines to Darwin, (the Australian port closest to China) and stated that the U.S. was "here to stay" as a Pacific power.

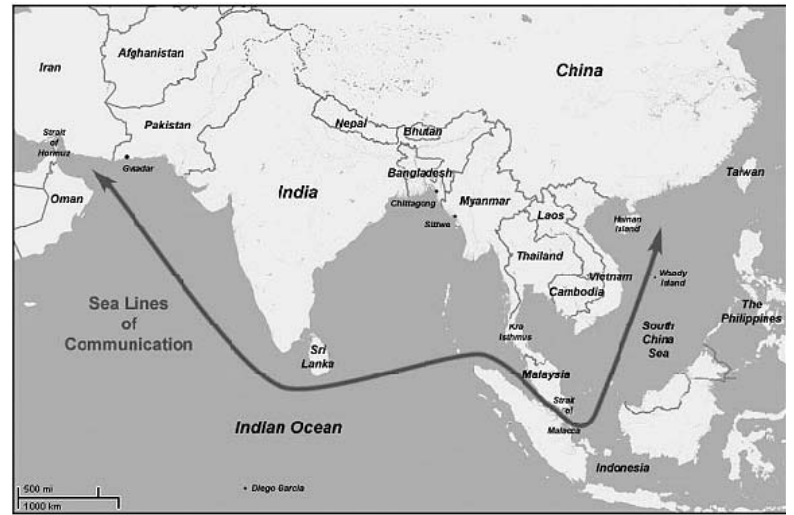
Hammering the point home, Clinton symbolically chose to speak from the deck of the guided missile cruiser U.S.S. Fitzgerald in Manila Bay, Philippines: "We are making sure that our collective defense capabilities and communications infrastructure are operationally and materially capable of deterring provocations from the full spectrum of state and non-state actors."

Central to keeping China at bay in the Asia-Pacific is the U.S. backing of puppet regimes in Thailand and Malaysia, strengthening alliances with the Philippines, Japan, South Korea and Australia and pursuing "broader, deeper, and more purposeful relationships" with India and Indonesia.

These events come at a time of heightening tensions in the South China Sea over the oil-rich Spratly Islands, whose energy reserves may rival those of Kuwait, and which are claimed by China, the Philippines and other Southeast Asian nations. At a meeting of Asia-Pacific leaders, (ASEAN) in Indonesia, the U.S. and China disagreed about how to handle the claims, with Wen issuing a warning to the U.S., saying "outside forces" had no excuse to get involved in the complex maritime dispute.

The stakes are high. Half the world's tonnage passes through the South China Sea. Control of its sea lanes is a necessity for U.S. capitalists eager to invest for super-profits and for China, whose economy relies heavily on sea transportation for its import and export trade, including Middle East oil, vital for its industry.

The U.S. is aggressively attempting to weaken China's growing economic relationships, such as between China and Pakistan which are involved in the development of a deep-sea port, heavily financed by China, at Qwadar on the Arabian Sea in Pakistan's Baluchistan province. The project came under heavy attack by Baluchi separatists, secretly funded by the CIA and Britain, slowing down completion of the port and forcing the Chinese to work under the protection of the Pakistani Army.



Pakistan is facing increased attacks from U.S. intelligence and military forces in what many see as an attempt to destabilize and break up the nation (composed of four main provinces). An independent Baluchistan (and possibly Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) would cut off China's Gwadar port, leaving the sea lanes under U.S. control and give the U.S. access through Northern Pakistan to Afghanistan and the oil and gas fields of the Caspian Basin.

New U.S. relations with India, which Obama calls "one of the defining partnerships of the 21st century, rooted in common values and interests," is further straining the Pakistani-U.S. strategic partnership and sharpening tensions between China and India. The U.S. is helping India become a leading military power, selling it uranium and providing nuclear know-how. India, world's largest weapons importer, accounts for 9% of the world's arms transactions. They buy warships, destroyers and nuclear submarines to build a navy rivaling China's.

Finally Russia, another player in the area, threatened to retaliate militarily if Washington goes ahead with a planned missile defense shield in Eastern Europe. America's Pacific Century is quickly shaping up into a battleground between superpowers and would-be superpowers. But class struggle is also heating up. Globally the working class is taking to the streets in increasing numbers, in Russia, China, the Arab countries, Asia, Europe and the U.S. It's time for the world's workers to unite in a communist revolution, led by the ideas of PLP, to overthrow these bloodthirsty imperialists and wipe out the hell of capitalism with a society run by and for the international working class. ☛

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

No prez will stop U.S. imperialism

GW, 12/9 — To the editor:

Your...article on Honduras...is a timely reminder that presidents may come and go, but the malign influence of the state department and the CIA in Latin America goes on forever. What is happening in Honduras now recalls the support the US gave to rightwing death squads in El Salvador and in Guatemala in the latter half of the 20th century. Conservative estimates put the death toll in El Salvador at 70,000 people; the Guatemalan figure is sometimes put at 50,000....

American interference in Latin America has always had the aim of creating client regimes that would be supportive of US...commercial interests....

It is delusory in the extreme to expect Barack Obama to buck this....

All U.S. soldiers soon home — NOT

NYT, 12/21 — Kabul, Afghanistan — The senior American commander in Afghanistan suggested... that American forces could remain in the country beyond 2014 despite President Obama's pledge to withdraw them by then. The commander's remarks amounted to the most emphatic signal to date that the United States military intended to secure a presence here, possibly for years....

He said negotiations with the government of President Hamid Karzai on a strategic partnership agreement would "almost certainly" include a "discussion with Afghanistan of what a post-2014 Afghanistan will look like."

Communism, yes! Congress, no!

NYT/CBS poll, 11/17 — The U.S. Congress had an approval rating of 9%. In another recent poll, the idea of "U.S. going communist" received an 11% approval rating.

To improve health, make life liveable!

NYT, 12/19 — To the editor:

....It is the circumstances in which people live and work that determine the health status of any population, in any nation....

Health care, while crucial to individual survival, makes at best a modest contribution to population health....

Even a perfect American health care system (let alone what we have now) cannot by itself fix our abysmal maldistribution of health....

My colleagues and I worked at the nation's first community health center in the Mississippi Delta in the 1960s....

We repaired collapsing plantation shacks. We built sanitary privies....We organized cooperative farms....

[Such] interventions did far more to save lives, ease suffering and improve our target population's health than any medical care did....



Cairo women jolt military rulers

NYT, 12/21 — CAIRO — Several thousand women demanding the end of military rule marched through downtown Cairo...in an extraordinary expression of anger over images of soldiers beating, stripping and kicking female demonstrators in Tahrir Square.

"Drag me, strip me, my brother's blood will cover me!" [many] chanted....

Historians called the event the biggest women's demonstration in modern Egyptian history, the most significant since a 1919 march against British colonialism....It also added a new and unexpected wave of protestors opposing the ruling military council's efforts to retain power and its tactics for suppressing public discontent.

MORE ITEMS AVAILABLE AT WWW.PLP.ORG

10th Anniversary of Haitian Union Group

PLP Points to Road to Revolution

PORT-AU-PRINCE, December 10 — Ten years of struggle by the unions in a progressive federation here have mostly meant heartbreaking frustration for the workers involved. They are still organizing, although their strikes, marches, mass meetings, forums, legal fights, petitions and press conferences have yielded so little. Yet they fight on. Many hundreds have been fired, in several different industries, for union activism. In fact almost every delegate at the dinner was currently jobless for that reason! In two unions they are still battling after three years or more for back pay and reinstatement after mass illegal layoffs of unionists. The workers in one case were rounded up and physically kicked out of their workplace by police SWAT teams.

So how do we win? Among the ideas considered by this group of committed men and women workers was the road to revolution, the need for a communist party, and the importance of an international revolutionary movement. These ideas were raised by a union leader from the old communist movement and developed by PLP speakers from two countries. They put it in the context of inter-imperialist rivalry and war, and what this turmoil in global capitalism means for Haitian workers.

They spoke of the bitterness of this period for workers under fascist and imperialist attack like those in Haiti, but also even in the U.S., where workers face frozen wages in union contracts and over 20% unemployment. They showed how Haitian unemployment and labor migration (1 million in North America) are an important tool in the bosses' plan to drive down wages and divide the working class in this whole region.

Unemployment in Haiti is between 70% and 90%, which makes any union struggle difficult as bosses use unemployed workers as weapons against those with jobs. Workers here respond to the bosses' use of the "reserve army of the unemployed" by helping one another day to day, making every job feed many of the jobless. Some progressive unions also seek to cross the divide by including the unemployed in their ranks. In one union there are 400 employed and 400 unemployed members. Those employed have actually taken the jobs of those fired en masse for unionizing. But despite the initial feeling against scabs, they are now accepted as brothers and sisters by those

who were kicked out. This union sings a song at the end of its delegate assembly that leads off: "Unions stand up! Strike for liberty!"

Critically and self-critically, one major weakness of the event was the absence of the hospital work-

ers recently on strike — the sharpest struggle of the moment. Inevitably, four of their leaders were fired during the strike. Party members should certainly have made sure these workers were not only present but cheered and supported by the meeting. The anniversary dinner could and should have become a moment of organizing by the federation of more active and militant support of these members under attack.

Unfortunately at this point the federation focuses not enough on getting masses of workers behind struggles like this one, and too much on legal cases, trainings in union organization, and political forums. These are all useful, especially the political forums, which some unions use effectively as an organizing tool. But haven't 10 years shown them to not be really the road ahead?

This federation is also courted by a few big international union federations like PSI (Public Services International) and some big U.S., Canadian, and French unions like the AFT, CUPE (Canadian public employees), and SNES (a French teachers' union). It's interesting that these unions come from the Big Three imperialist powers who dominate Haiti. The term "labor imperialism" was coined to describe such international union operations. Not everyone involved deserves this term, but they could have the effect of pulling Haitian unions to the right as they pay to build clinics and rebuild union halls.

Revolutionaries in Haiti, like everywhere else, have a ways to go in making our ideas of a need for a communist revolution a material force which grips the masses. In small group discussions around the edges of this event, however, and in firming up political friendships between communists in PLP and other workers, those ideas are slowly picking up steam. The Party and workers generally can expect to be attacked as fascism gathers momentum in Haiti (see box). These ten years of pain and bitterness will toughen up workers for more decisive battle if we all learn from our mistakes and strike harder for workers' communist freedom. The cruel alternative is fascism and global war.☸

Fascism Grows in Haiti but Workers Are Resisting

One unionist reported to his delegate assembly how he had infiltrated a march through Cité Soleil, a desperately poor district, organized by a pro-Martelly group called "Ghetto Réuni" ("Reunited Ghetto") to whip up support for a Haitian army. They gave out t-shirts printed with "Haiti: Vous Etes Souveraine!" ("Haiti, You Are a Sovereign State!"), implying that UN MINUSTAH troops should be replaced by a fascist local army. A new t-shirt would be half someone's clothing needs for six months, and there were also small money handouts. A Rara (festival music) marching band attracted more people. March organizers used their hands like guns, chanting "The army's coming back!" Bosses will try to use the unemployed to build fascist mass movements, but the communist answer is to crush fascists ruthlessly with workers' strength and courage, such as that displayed by the worker who infiltrated Ghetto Réuni for his union.

FIGHT FOR A COMMUNIST WORLD
BUILD THE INTERNATIONAL PLP!
PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

ESL Students Know the Language: A Class Analysis of Capitalism

I teach English as a Second Language (ESL) to adult immigrant working-class students at a community-based organization that works in the Democratic Party/union-led Coalition for a Strong Economy for All. To prepare their members to participate in Occupy Wall Street, the directors of the organization wrote guidelines about the economic crisis for teachers to use in the "organizing" committees and classes.

The guidelines negated class analysis and said the 1% are the bankers and everyone else belongs to the 99% — the "yes-we-can-people" who want democracy, patriotism and unity, where everyone believes in the American dream and "pays their fair share." The organization's campaigns focus on four very limited reform Democratic Party demands — a living wage act, a state law which is a mini-version of the Dream Act, federal and state legislation for a "millionaire's tax" and Obama's "job plan."

By bypassing the reformist propaganda, my students and I created our own lesson about OWS and the economic crisis (in English). First I asked my students what they knew about OWS. Some students responded using words like poverty, unemployment, wealth and equality to explain what the movement is about. I then asked who they think is the 1%. They came up with the following:

Politicians, bankers, landlords, bosses, judges, army generals, professional actors, artists and athletes.

Then I asked who they think is the 99%. They said "workers."

"Anyone else?" I asked.

"Well, no."

I wrote economic crisis on the blackboard and below three more words: consequences, causes, solutions.

I asked students to talk in groups about each word. Around each of the three words, the students wrote more words in a circle:

Consequences: low wages, no jobs, rent, bills, family problems, and cuts in education.

Causes: corrupt politicians, bad government, exploitation, racism, greed, and war.

Solutions: change system, unity, fight back, revolution, jobs, no education cuts, no war, end discrimination against immigrants.

Using English vocabulary and without being prompted, the students came up with a basic analysis of class society and the nature of capitalism.

They expressed their desire for systemic change. I then asked students to expand their ideas in English. Finally, we switched to Spanish to add more details and debate our ideas in more depth. "Hey, my friends, you need English to talk to workers who don't speak Spanish and to build the unity and struggle we need," I concluded.

The class process allowed me to assess which students to talk with more about CHALLENGE and the Party. Five students in the class receive CHALLENGE, one takes four extras. Three former students are taking extra papers as well. Four students are in one of our four study groups at our organization/workplace, where we can talk fully about capitalism and communism, reform and revolution, and recruit new members to PLP. This is what the "road to communist revolution" looks like.

A comrade teacher

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