

CHALLENGE



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Remembering Quake Inspires Brooklyn Students

Solidarity with Workers in Haiti

BROOKLYN, January 11 — More than three hundred students at Clara Barton High School, along with about twenty-five staff members, attended an inspiring commemoration of the second anniversary of the earthquake in Haiti. It was organized and led by students who belong to an after-school club that has been fighting attacks by the school administration against teachers and students for many years. Important ideas were raised about imperialism and the roots of Haiti's poverty, and why students in the U.S. need to build solidarity with the working class in Haiti. Students and teachers grasped the communist ideas of solidarity with workers around the world, of multiracial unity, and of fighting for a better future than the bosses' plan for wars, drastic cuts in social services, and increased racism.

There were speeches and performances, ranging from spoken word and debate to singing and step dancing. The program stressed unity, solidarity and the struggle for a better world.

One song was sung in both Creole and English, with many in the audience learning the Creole words for the first time. This was symbolically important because students from Haiti have endured a lack of adequate programs and services at the school. There was also delicious food donated by area restaurants, as well as by staff and parents. As many students and teachers commented afterwards, the whole program was "amazing."

The preparation for the event was as significant as the commemoration itself. The multi-racial student organizers were from Africa, South Asia, China, the Caribbean and the U.S. They were clear from the start in their goal to send a strong message of unity and solidarity with the workers and students who struggle for a better life in Haiti, where 600,000 still live in tents. Their collective effort inspired more and more students and teachers to come forward and offer to help. Each day, more students joined committees and got involved in the planning. The enthusiasm spread.

The fighting spirit at Clara Barton comes out of a long and vibrant history of activism. Students went to New Orleans to help after Hurricane Katrina, organized anti-racist mass assemblies, and marched in New York and in Washington against imperialist war and budget cuts. More than 300 CHALLENGEs are distributed outside the school. Members of Progressive Labor Party have defended the rights of both students and teachers against attacks by the school administration, which regularly harasses teachers with accusations and investigations. PL members and friends have withstood these attacks and continue to fight for what is in the best interests of students and staff.

Although the Bloomberg administration has built fear and passivity in many schools in New York, the fighting spirit at Clara Barton has not wavered. To sustain and spread the resistance to more friends and other schools, many more people need to be recruited to commit to a lifelong struggle to build a communist world. Join the Progressive Labor Party! ☺



Obama Moves to Iran and S. Asia

U.S. Imperialists' Endless Wars

Having spread death and destruction across much of the Middle East, U.S. imperialists now seek to expand their horror show to the Far East. Barack Obama is methodically preparing for eventual war on China. In December he initiated the deployment of 2,500 U.S. Marines in Australia. In January he issued a Pentagon decree entitled, "Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense." It states: "While the U.S. military will continue to contribute to security globally, we will of necessity rebalance toward the Asia-Pacific region [emphasis added]."

Host of Problems = Hard Time for Rulers to Re-elect Obama

But U.S. rulers face two major problems in gearing up for a clash with China. First, they have a growing need to wage wider Middle East oil wars, especially as tensions with Iran heighten. It's a task made more difficult by a shortage of combat troops, which could necessitate a wildly unpopular military draft.

Second, while the ruling class sorely needs a war president, it may have a hard time retaining their invader-in-chief Obama's services after November's election. Millions of voters could be turned off by mass racist unemployment, continuing economic depression, millions of home foreclosures, deportation of nearly two million immigrants, a wage freeze on federal workers, and an administration run by bailed-out bankers who have reaped profit bonanzas

during a Depression they helped create.

War Clouds Darken over Iran

Iran threatens more each day to become the next U.S. front for open warfare. Covert action, like CIA-Mossad [Israeli secret police] rubouts of Iranian nuclear scientists, has been raging for years. On January 13, two days after the latest assassination, Iran sentenced an ex-U.S. Marine to death for spying. And while Washington ramps up oil sanctions to discourage the building of nuclear bombs, Iran threatens to attack U.S. Navy ships in the Persian Gulf.

The only question is whether the first air strikes on Iran will come from the U.S. or Israel. Obama is deceitfully trying to deflect blame onto the supposedly more belligerent Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu: "Inside the Israeli security establishment, a sort of good cop, bad cop routine, in which Israeli officials rattle sabers amid a U.S. scramble to restrain them, has assumed its own name: 'Hold Me Back'" (Wall Street Journal, 1/14/12). The lie is that Israeli bosses, armed to the teeth with U.S. weapons, always act without influence from the White House. Sometimes they do, but there appears to be strategic unity regarding Iran. Says the Journal's article:

The U.S. military is preparing for a number of possible responses to an Israeli strike, including assaults by pro-Iranian Shiite militias in Iraq

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against the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, according to U.S. officials. In large measure to deter Iran, the U.S. has 15,000 troops in Kuwait, and has moved a second aircraft carrier strike group to the Persian Gulf area. It has also been pre-positioning aircraft and other military equipment, officials say. Arms transfers to key allies in the Gulf, including the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, have been fast-tracked.

This context lends added significance to Obama's recent announcement to send 9,000 troops to Israel in a joint U.S.-Israeli military exercise, a move alleged to be "temporarily withdrawn."

As for Iraq, al Qaeda bombs killed 73 people there in the second week in January. The country still lacks the stability required to boost oil production to the original U.S. target of six million barrels a day (mbd), much less the Maliki regime's pie-in-the-sky promise of 12 mbd. In reality, Exxon Mobil and other oil giants — hoping to cash in on the

U.S.-led genocide — are now pumping at a rate below three mbd. This shortfall is enough to prompt U.S. rulers to consider a re-invasion.

Nor will U.S. imperialists be able to stop the shooting in Afghanistan any time soon, not after pictures surfaced of U.S. snipers urinating on their Taliban "kills." For a time, U.S. bosses had hinted at pointing toward some sort of negotiated settlement with the Taliban.

In addition to Afghan mineral wealth and the proposed TAPI (Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India) natural gas pipeline, the U.S. needs Afghanistan for permanent bases in a land that borders Iran, China and a resurgent Russian-dominated bloc.

Taliban cooperation with the U.S. would get them a cut of the mine and pipeline profits. Bill Clinton had worked on a similar pipeline deal between the Taliban and the Unocal oil company in the 1990s, but it fell through when the Taliban switched to a rival Argentine energy firm, Bidas. From that point on, the Taliban became the enemy in U.S. rulers' eyes. Today, it is the suddenly "viral" release of the year-old corpse desecration video that derails talks.

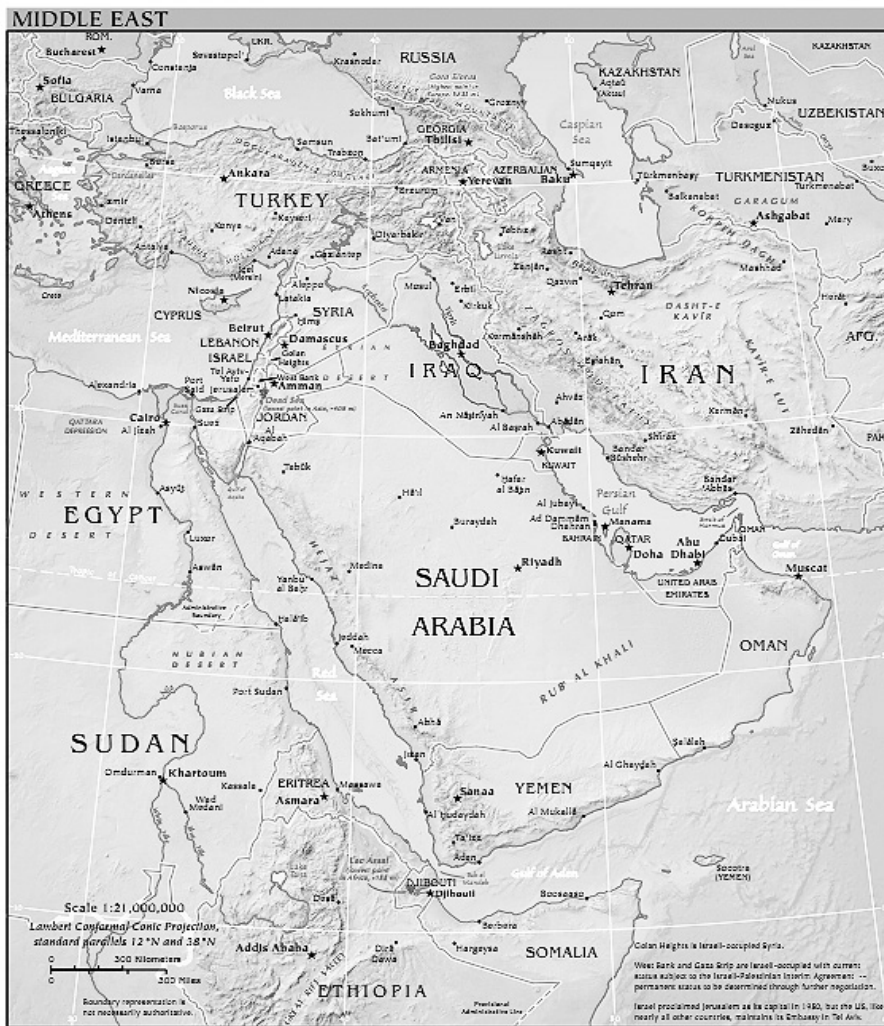
War Agenda to be Forced on Opportunist Romney and Fragmented Republicans

Obama has succeeded in broadening the U.S. war machine's active theaters of operation from Iraq and Afghanistan to Pakistan, Libya, Yemen, Somalia and Bahrain. Looking ahead, Iran, Syria and China are now stated U.S. adversaries. And who better to lead these racist attacks on Asian workers, the rulers figure, than the first black president of the U.S.? But Obama might not be around to lead the charge. Barring unlikely economic improvement or an "October Surprise" (a ruling-class-concocted provocation to whip up popular support for Obama), Republican Mitt Romney has a strong chance to enter the White House next year. An avowed supporter of U.S. imperialism, Romney vows to reverse Obama's Pentagon cuts and increase Navy shipbuilding by 50 percent.

But as leader of a Republican party deeply divided in both its capitalist donor base and its working-class voter base, Romney caters to a host of contradictory interests. Gary Hart, a major imperialist strategist, laments the GOP's grab bag of "conservative Protestant evangelicals, neoconservative foreign policy and national security hawks, the Tea Party, much but not all of Wall Street, many of Main Street's small business owners, libertarians and cultural conservatives, among others" (NY Times, 12/16/11). Some of these factions oppose the war plans of the dominant Rockefeller wing of the ruling class.

Why Articles Are Not Signed

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



Anti-tax, Anti-regulation Forces Hamper Rulers' War Drive

The liberal imperialists' New York Times, in its Boston Globe subsidiary, accused Romney of "trying to appease enough constituencies to get himself the nomination" (1/6/12). The Globe was referring to the anti-tax, anti-regulation forces that could hamper the money-raising and centralization needed for the global war foreseen by Obama's backers. The Globe endorsed the more consistent imperialist Jon Huntsman, who had been Obama's ambassador to China. The newspaper warned that "the religious right, represented by Rick Santorum, and Tea Party activists represented by Ron Paul, have pushed Romney in unwanted directions."

Huntsman, the Globe said, would have been "a better president." But now that he's out of the race, the Globe believes that Huntsman "could still make Romney a better candidate" by pushing the main Rockefeller's force's imperialist aims.

Political events are driven not by candidates' pandering, but by the sharpening imperialist competition to carve up the world's resources, labor and markets through war. Elections hold significance for our class and Party only in revealing the tactical fights within the ruling class. This enables us to more accurately expose and attack the various capitalist forces that shape the politicians' programs and disputes. At the same time, we point out that elections represent only the interests of various sections of the ruling class. Under capitalism, every vote diverts workers away from class war against the bosses.

As revealed in reports on class struggle in CHALLENGE, our task is to win workers and youth in the various ruling-class-led organizations that PLP'ers are active in: unions and shops, schools and colleges, churches and community groups. Our aim is to help them see that the problems faced by our class stem directly from the profit system: racism, sexism, mass unemployment, poverty and war. As long as this system exists, its miseries will continue to enrich the rulers through the labor of the workers, the class that produces all value but gets back only the part of that value necessary to survive.

Capitalism cannot be reformed. It has always been based on exploitation, depressions and wars. We strive to create a society — communism — run by and for our class, without bosses and profits and the nightmares for workers to which they inevitably lead. Only by building a revolutionary communist party, the Progressive Labor Party, composed of tens of millions of workers, can we achieve the ultimate goal of destroying the murderous profit system in communist revolution.✱

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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Racist Unemployment: A Vicious Circle Destroying Workers' Lives

NEW YORK CITY, December 10 — More than forty people came together at a church here to discuss the devastating impact of unemployment on all workers, as well as the racist attacks on education and healthcare in immigrant communities.

A pediatrician reported that job losses in poor neighborhoods cause increases in homelessness, domestic violence, poor nutrition and obesity, along with higher rates of asthma and other chronic diseases. Children suffer from higher stress, anxiety and low self-esteem, which contribute to behavior problems and low grades in school.

Unemployment Cuts Workers' Health

As unemployment worsens, more workers lose health coverage and are unable to pay for the high cost of private insurance. Due to the bosses' financial crisis and an ever-growing war budget, massive cuts in public services and the safety net are forcing the closing of hospitals, layoffs of healthcare providers, and reduced access to wellness or prevention programs in working-class communities.

An immigrant worker pointed out that these problems are even more severe in immigrant communities because of racist laws and the scapegoating of undocumented workers. Some documented immigrants are blaming the undocumented for the loss of jobs, causing division when there needs to be unity to fight the bosses. More arrests and higher deportation rates are dividing families and making them more impoverished. The fear of deportation makes the undocumented easier targets for super-exploitation. They are working harder for even less pay, and are less likely to seek healthcare when ill.

With the U.S. economy's loss of millions of "living-wage" jobs in the manufacturing sector, many working-class students are forced to defer entry into the job market. As college tuition costs rise and cuts are made in traditional scholarship grants and lower-cost government loans, these students are at the mercy of the private-sector student loan racket, which exploits them with high interest rates. With few good-paying jobs available after they graduate, they may never get out of debt.

Bosses Say: 'No Job? Join the Army'

The major reason for all of these cutbacks is the huge outlay the bosses need to defend the U.S. oil empire. As rising military spending destroys the ability of all workers to make a decent living, the capitalist war-makers recruit working-class children into the army with promises of teaching them useful skills, getting them into college and paying off their student loans. They will say anything to get young workers to fight and kill other working-class youth around the world for the imperialist needs of the ruling class.

After the panel presentation, we broke into groups to come up with actions and fight-back opportunities to take to our communities. We all agreed that we can't rely on the government to help us. Our working-class communities must come together to resolve these issues.

In a joint action with Occupy Wall Street, we are planning to co-sponsor a press conference and rally outside a hotel that is hosting a power breakfast of financiers, politicians and other capitalists. Their topic: how to "solve" the hospital crisis in Brooklyn (see page 4). At \$75 a plate, you can be sure the interests of the working class will not be on the menu.✊



PLP Forging Ahead in Tanzania

DAR ES SALAAM, TANZANIA, January 7 — Recently, a group of CHALLENGE readers met here for a discussion about our Party and its ideas. First the group examined Obama's war in Libya. When he was elected, many people in East Africa had mistakenly believed that his policies would help Africa rather than initiate invasions and assassinations of African leaders. However, this U.S.-backed invasion exposed the "First U.S. African President" as pursuing the same oil-driven imperialist foreign policy as George Bush. In the discussion, Party members debunked the lie of "humanitarian intervention" (i.e., protecting civilian lives) as nothing but a cover for U.S. imperialism.

Next the group confronted the challenges of building the communist movement in Tanzania where widespread anger at the government's corrupt collusion with foreign and local big business exists side-by-side with a culture of passivity and resignation. The Tanzanian public sector trade unions, for example, are big on talk but short on action, leaving government workers defenseless against layoffs and oppressive working conditions.

Spirit of Rebellion Growing

The opposition party, Chadema, is as corrupt as the ruling party, CCM (Party of the Revolution). Chadema is opportunistically trying to take advantage of widespread discontent — especially among unemployed youth — to gain power for itself. The Tanzanian comrades agreed that despite Chadema's motives, its militant condemnation of CCM is inspiring workers to have the courage to speak out and fight back. PL'ers pointed out that this spirit of rebellion will be squandered unless it is organized and led by communists.

A comrade from U.S. explained how the liberalism trap works in the U.S. where the

Democrats are trying to co-opt the Occupy movement in order to help Obama's election campaign and keep its supporters focused on reform rather than revolution. In Tanzania, as everywhere else in the world, the electoral system is used to control the working class rather than serve its needs. History has shown that only communists will lead an uncompromising fight on behalf of the working class.

Plenty of Graduates — But No Jobs

Destroying capitalism and replacing it with communism seemed like a far-away dream to some of our comrades in Tanzania until the discussion moved to the deep crisis facing global capitalism, which is opening up opportunities for our movement internationally. For example, In Tanzania, secondary schools and universities are cranking out tens of thousands of graduates with credentials and high expectations for a better life but with almost no chance of employment. These youth are a natural base for the international communist movement we're building.

Another example is the 40 people in Dar es Salaam who died needlessly from flooding just before Christmas. Last fall, CCM used helicopters to win people to vote for them in the elections, but they couldn't produce one helicopter to save the lives of stranded people.

PL's line of "one international working class, one party" is a winner because it helps us learn and gain strength from struggles in other countries, like Pakistan, where the class struggle is more advanced. CHALLENGE readers in Tanzania need to take heart. Things don't stay the same, and the subterranean fire produced by capitalism's wars, poverty and inequality is burning in cities and villages worldwide.✊

Bosses' 'Security,' Dress Code Turns High School into Jail

BROOKLYN, January 16 — The rising wave of fascism in the United States is apparent at Clara Barton High School. Under Principal Richard Forman, the administration is focused on order and discipline while neglecting students' needs at every turn. A security system is turning the school into a jail. A dress code is imposed without any evidence that it benefits learning. Essential courses are not offered for all students who need them. Teachers who fight to do more for students are "excessed" and moved out.

Predictably, the school is failing. According to online data from the New York Times, only 43 percent of students earn state-exam diplomas, and less than half enroll in college after graduation. Forman has gotten rid of teachers to whom students went with problems at school or even at home. These teachers exposed students to the outside world instead of relentlessly pushing their heads into textbooks. They attempted to start new clubs and new Advanced Placement (AP) classes. But now they are gone.

A 'Uniform' Education

Forman's racism is exposed every day. He and other school officials seem more concerned with students' physical appearance than their education. They have done nothing to address the shortage of AP classes, with only one class available for each subject. Meanwhile, the principal's allies on the Parent Teacher Association have pushed for all students to wear a uniform, but they never discuss how the school could provide all the courses students need. Students in grades nine to eleven are supposed to wear uniforms, while students in the twelfth grade "dress for success": collared shirts and dressy pants. Jeans, t-shirts, dresses and sweaters are banned. When students are caught out of uniform, their ID cards are scanned for referrals for disciplinary action.

Furthermore, promoting the dress code over a better education is time-consuming and leads to unfair punishment. Students must stop at the door each morning to show their collared shirts, a delay that leads many of them to get lower

grades because they are late for class.

Even worse, students are criminalized by being forced to undergo scanning before entering the school. They are harassed each day by security guards and school officials. One student was asked to take off her hijab (the traditional head covering for Muslim women and girls) to show her collared shirt. After she walked away, she was called back twice to show her shirt again. When asked about the incident, she said, "What surprised me the most is that Dr. Forman stood right there and did not say a word." The principal uses this racism to intimidate and divide students and to keep the Department of Education's oppressive system in place.

Clara Barton is far from the only school dealing with budget cuts and rising fascism. The "elite" Brooklyn Technological High School has similar problems, including a lack of paper, teachers, and even books. Virtually all public schools in New York reflect the inequalities of capitalism, a system where the working class suffers while the rich rule. Meanwhile, there is no shortage of money for the U.S. rulers to compete with China and to fight to protect their oil interests in the Middle East.

Clara Barton has a long history of students fighting back, from protests against restrictions on students bringing in water to anti-racist assemblies and anti-budget-cut rallies. All students need to be more active in building this movement to fight for a worker-run world.✊



Profit System Hazardous to Workers' Health

Protest Racist Attacks on Brooklyn Hospitals

BROOKLYN, January 11 — Hundreds of angry hospital workers and supporters rallied loudly in front of the Brooklyn Marriott Hotel here this week as racist financier Stephen Berger, a darling of Governor Cuomo, announced his plan to “save” health care in the borough of Brooklyn. Workers who had never been at such a protest (or at least not for a long time) chanted as bosses from Downstate Hospital, Wall Street moguls and Berger himself entered the hotel for a fancy breakfast.

Brooklyn is a borough of 2.5 million people. One in five live below the poverty line and two in five are on Medicaid. An untold number are without any health insurance. In 1980, Brooklyn had 26 hospitals — now it has 15. There are now 41% fewer acute care beds, 2.3 beds per 1,000 residents, compared with Manhattan’s 4.7, the state’s 3.1 and the nation’s 2.6. Disparities in health by income and “race” are concentrated in certain New York City communities, including several in Brooklyn. In 2001, life expectancy in our poorest neighborhoods was eight years shorter than in its wealthiest; that is 4,000 extra premature deaths/year in the poorest communities.

Racism: The Worst Disease

The facts show the racist nature of the U.S. health care system. Brooklyn is 36% black and 20% Latino. Latino New Yorkers are twice as likely to have diabetes. Black New Yorkers are three times more likely to die of diabetes than white residents. Ninety-four percent of elevated blood levels in New York City are among African Americans, Latinos and Asians. If infant mortality rates were equalized, the lives of some 200 babies of these ethnic groups would be saved each year (NYC DOHMH “Health Disparities in NYC,” 2004).

The hospitals in Brooklyn who serve its poorest residents have been set up to fail by Medicaid cuts. Stephen Berger, a hedge fund mogul and part of the unelected government of New York has led a task force for Governor Cuomo to come up with a plan to “rescue” health care in Brooklyn. He proposes closing Downstate Hospital in central Brooklyn and Kingsborough Psychiatric Hospital.

Another of the proposals is to invite private investors into Brooklyn hospitals. We have already seen for-profit Medisys’ disastrous mismanagement of Brookdale Medical Center. We’ve seen Continuum executives making between one and two million dollar salaries while millions of dollars at Long Island College Hospital’s real estate and other assets disappeared under their management. We can’t stand by and watch healthcare for profit drain other hospitals in the poor and black and Latino neighborhoods and, then abandon them for New York State to rescue (or not).

After the rally, workers asked, “Did we accomplish anything? Did anything change?” Our answer is that life is a constant struggle between the working class and the big businessmen who run the economy and the government. We were there in force as this New York ruling class announced



its plan to close two public hospitals in the underserved borough of Brooklyn. We took strength from each other. But stopping their attacks is going to take more action. We need to unite patients, communities and workers, black, Latino and white, to oppose them at every stage of their plan, much like what was done during the Civil Rights movement of the 50’s and 60’s.

Interestingly, the unions were absent from this action. The union that made a deal with the Berger hospital closures a few years ago, SEIU-1199, which represents many of the affected Brookdale and Interfaith Hospital workers, was nowhere to be seen. Also the unions from Kings County Hospital, which is across the street from Downstate, including the city union’s District Council 37, were conspicuously absent. Brooklyn patients and jobs are in jeopardy. We need working-class unity, not territorialism!

The bottom line is that we live in a capitalist system where the rich get richer and the poor get poorer; a system where the only funds the demopublicans “can’t” cut are for oil wars and bailouts of banks “too big to fail.” We have to fight against these attacks on medical care. But living conditions for the working class, especially black and Latino workers, are so rotten under this system that we will never be healthy until we rid ourselves of the profiteers and run things according to the needs of our class. Contact revolutionary communist PLP to find out more.☺



PL Salvador School: Fight and Mobilize for Communism

EL SALVADOR — In our November communist school here, many comrades participated in the political discussion about the reality workers this country and the rest of the world live in. We must destroy the brutal capitalist domination to have social equality. PL’s politics have motivated many young people. About 26 have participated with us in each school.

We must fight against the electoral parties of this capitalist machine. This dead-end strategy is used by the bosses to alienate us and to make us believe that their “democracy” works for the working class. As members of the Party, we have made the commitment to spread CHALLENGE widely, as a revolutionary weapon, to politicize and make our co-workers and neighbors aware. We have communist ideas, perseverance and the will to win workers to PLP.

Mobilize the Masses

Our young comrades from different parts of the country have developed a strong ideological ability and understanding of PL’s ideas. The main subject of this school was how to mobilize the masses for communism. It is clear that communist revolution is the only way to defeat and destroy capitalism; therefore, this must be the only goal of the revolutionary process. The participation of each one of the comrades was interesting. We discussed our friends’ understanding of the Party’s line, related to the ideological-political work with their communities.

Other subjects we debated were the way the revolutionary struggle in El Salvador has been betrayed by the FMLN, and the way to rescue the contributions of the Paris commune, the Russian Revolution, and the Chinese Revolution. We highlighted the mistakes made in those revolutions in erecting a new bourgeois class and ignoring the fact that the masses could have led the battle towards communism.

We analyzed the role of CHALLENGE, which must always spread the Party’s ideas. We focused the discussion on how to use the paper to recruit and how to increase its circulation among our base.

Each of the participants has agreed to spread our communist ideas. We are working on strengthening the communication between our members from different areas of the country with the international Party. This will help us fight capitalism until we destroy the capitalist class, and its armed power.

It’s worth mentioning that at this event, most of the comrades participating were young women and men, with a high level of revolutionary consciousness, with clarity on the steps to take and with an immediate objective of building a consciousness in the exploited class. Our main objective is to conquer power by establishing a communist system on an international scale.☺

Winter Project Helps Build PLP in Palestine-Israel

ISRAEL/PALESTINE, January — We have returned from the winter project to the Middle East, with our minds once more agog at the racism, oppression and absurdity of the actions of the Israeli government. Not only did we see the horrors of the 45-year-old military occupation of Palestine, but also the discrimination against Israeli Arabs and the marked class distinctions among Jews. Those who were new to the area were in a constant state of shock and disbelief at the situations we encountered. We were buoyed, however, by participating in struggles and meeting new friends who were digesting our ideas.

The Israelis are continuing their policy of driving out Palestinians by actually demolishing their houses by the thousands or otherwise making their lives so miserable that they will emigrate. In the East Jerusalem neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah, the weekly demonstrations continued against Jewish takeover of homes Palestinians have lived in for 60 years, having been driven out of West Jerusalem in 1948.

Israeli Attack-Dogs

We sat with a family there, half of whose home has been occupied by young Israeli men and their dogs, who attack members of the family. In two other East Jerusalem areas, we visited villages whose land is being confiscated by Israeli expansion.

To the south, in the Negev (desert), Bedouins who agreed to become citizens in '48, live in "un-recognized" villages that receive no services. One, El Araqib, has been razed and rebuilt 33 times since July 2010 because the government, with the financial backing of an U.S. fundamentalist Christian organization, wishes to build a forest. We saw how houses for 500 people and 4,500 olive trees had been bulldozed into a sandy wasteland. The remaining residents are living in trucks and trailers in their cemetery.

Every week they, their neighbors and Israeli

activists stand nearby at a busy intersection with banners, drums and speeches. They welcomed a talk about fighting racism by one of our young visitors.

In Tel Aviv, the massive tent cities and summer demonstrations for more social services and housing are gone, for they mostly involved middle-class people and lacked any political analysis. However, in a working-class area of Tel Aviv, Hatikvah, and in other places around the country, small encampments remain of those who have lost their homes even though most work. We marched in a militant demonstration of hundreds of workers and activists at which 43 people were arrested. Our comrades participate regularly in all these actions and have a steady base of readers and friends.

Fascist Military Courts

In the West Bank, conditions continue to be appalling. The representatives of a prisoners' support group described how Palestinians can be arrested for belonging to any political party, even the ruling Fatah, holding a flag, congregating in a group of more than 10, or making any political statements. They come before military courts and can be held without charge for "investigation" indefinitely, as long as a military officer renews it every three months.

Forty percent of all Palestinian men have been jailed in the last 50 years. Since over 400 prisoners were released in the widely publicized exchange for the sole Israeli prisoner Shalit, an equal number has been arrested. There is widespread use of torture, even on children. The corrupt Palestinian ruling parties, Fatah and Hamas, also arrest and abuse hundreds of Palestinian activists.

Life in the Occupied Territories continues to be constrained by the wall erected by Israeli rulers to fence in the Palestinians and the lack of work, mobility, goods, and health care. In one refugee

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CHALLENGE a Winner at Young Workers' Conference

MINNEAPOLIS, December 28 — Recently the AFL-CIO held its annual NEXT UP! Young Workers Conference. Despite the union hacks toeing the Obama/Democratic Party line, many young workers were not fooled and dozens eagerly took copies of CHALLENGE. Many workshops provided opportunities to talk to young workers from throughout the U.S. about communism and PLP.

Those conducting the immigration workshop, while well-informed, refused to discuss the racist, fascist nature of deportations, E-verify or Secure Communities. They conveniently found no time for questions when a PLP'er fought to discuss this.

A session on starting a Labor Party led to heated debate over whether a new electoral party was needed or the Democrats were good enough. Several youth complained that any party operating within capitalist rules would be useless. Time to share another CHALLENGE!

A PLP'er took advantage of the "un-conference sessions," where individuals could propose their own ideas before all 700 participants. He stressed the need for multiracial unity, making the anti-racist fight primary, and realizing that any capitalist "solution" would fail the workers. Obama, he said, had been a horrible option for workers, citing the legal lynching of Troy Davis in Georgia and the multiple bombing campaigns by U.S. imperialism abroad.

Initial groans were followed by feverish clapping at the bold comments. Twenty young workers joined this session that pushed for militant multiracial unity to fight capitalism. One student, frustrated with the unions and elections, said he saw no end in sight to the myriad of problems cre-

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U.S. Billionaire Funds NGO Evictions of Jerusalem Workers

SHEIKH JARRAH, EAST JERUSALEM, January 6 — Palestinian and Jewish activists, including PL'ers from Israel-Palestine and the U.S., held a rally protesting the racist eviction of Palestinian families from their homes in this neighborhood, minutes away from the center of Jerusalem. The demonstrators demanded real justice, the return of the families to their houses and the removal of violent settlers and brutal cops from the neighborhood.

Since the 1990's, settlers, paid for handsomely by the El'ad and Ateret Cohanim NGOs (non-government organizations), used the Israeli courts to seize houses here. Despite the fact that the Palestinian residents, all working class, were the legal owners of their homes and had all the documents necessary to prove this, the court ruled for the settlers — upper-middle-class Jews — who only had very dubious documents of ownership. Obviously the Israeli court of "justice" is openly racist and prefers the "rights" of wealthy Jewish settlers over those of Palestinian or Jewish workers.

NGOs Serve Ruling Class

Both settler NGOs operating in East Jerusalem, El'ad and Ateret Cohanim, are heavily funded by Irving Moskowitz, a U.S. capitalist and "philanthropist" based in Miami, who has made his fortune from constructing private hospitals and casinos. Moskowitz pays the settlers to take over Palestinian houses and land throughout East Jerusalem so he can build real-estate projects (for wealthy Jews only) a few minutes drive from the city center, and reaps super-profits in the process.

PL'ers from both Israel-Palestine and the U.S. have visited the home of the al-Kurd family here. The family had received its home and land from



UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Work Agency) in 1956. A few years later the Jordanian government, which ruled the West Bank and East Jerusalem between 1948 and 1967, acknowledged the family as the owners of their house.

But apparently having full land title and living on the land for 56 years wasn't enough for the Israeli court. In the 1990's, the al-Kurd family built a small housing unit in their yard for one of their sons. The Israeli court ruled that this construction was "illegal" and repossessed the housing unit. From 1999 to 2009 it stood empty.

In 2009, however, teenage settlers were al-

lowed to live in this unit, rent free, and were also paid to live there! These settlers are very violent towards the al-Kurd family; they order their dogs to attack the family members. However, if the al-Kurd family dares to report these attacks to the police, they themselves get arrested, not the aggressive settlers!

The court has decided that the entire al-Kurd house belongs to the settlers' NGO. Now there's a standing lawsuit against the family, demanding they pay a hefty rent to that NGO for the house

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LETTERS



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



NIGERIA, January 17 — Over 10,000 protestors shut down cities in response to fuel-price doubling from 65 to 140 naira (0.8 USD) per litre, which led to an enormous inflation in the cost of food and other necessities. Tagging themselves “Occupy Nigeria,” the rallies spread to well over eight states. In the cities of Kano and Lagos, demonstrators burned patrol cars. Cops responded with bullets and tear gas. The two main labor unions, Nigeria Labour Congress and Trade Union Congress, currently suspended the strike. The Nigerian Joint Action Front called for continued strikes. President Goodluck Johnathan ordered heavy military presence in the country’s major cities.

The hikes are a mere symptom of a wider problem: capitalism. Nigeria is Africa’s largest crude oil producer and the fifth largest supplier to the U.S. If oil workers went through with their threat to cut Nigeria’s crude oil production, this would’ve been a blow to huge profits. Demonstrators expanded the protest to fight back against stark political-economic disparities. Like the Arab Spring, they are fighting for a government reform. Workers worldwide should be in solidarity with these protestors and fight to sharpen the class struggle to an eventual obliteration of the bosses and their state. ☸

Justice from Israeli Bosses? ‘Like asking cows to give wine, not milk’

I came to visit a Palestinian family from Ramle (a small town near the Ben-Gurion Airport) whose house was demolished. The town hall and the Israeli Rail company claim the family’s home stands in the way of constructing a new school for locomotive drivers. This is far from the truth.

Unfortunately, this is not the only case I saw. In all house demolitions: (a) the number of cops sent to demolish is enormous — they use a lot of violence, including against women and children; (b) the families face the risk of being charged for the expenses of the demolition; and (c) the official who signed the warrant always has second thoughts afterwards.

This is against both Palestinian and Jewish workers. Here is one incident among many: a family in the Hatikva tent city in southern Tel-Aviv received an eviction warrant. Activists sent protest letters to the Welfare and Social Services minister. Some got a reply saying that this issue was being taken care of and thus there is no need for letters. The minister demanded a representative to speak to him. We refused. If he needs a representative, he knows where to find the family in the Hatikva tent city!

I relate both of these examples to the protest during the summer in Israel-Palestine, similar to the Occupy Movement in the U.S. The people demand social justice from a capitalist government that can’t, and won’t, provide it. It’s like asking a cow to give wine instead of milk.

Prime Minister Netanyahu continues to lie. He promised to implement free education for children between the ages of three and six. Only a third of children in these ages have free kindergartens. There are not even enough kindergartens in existence to implement this law. The free kindergartens are open until 2 PM. Parents who work until 4 PM will have to pay 780 Shekkels (about \$200) a month for extended daycare. Everyone knows that in Netanyahu’s government, one hand gives, the other takes. Takes indeed!

Capitalism can’t provide social solutions. The rich get richer, the poor get poorer. You can see this in the wages. The tax cut was at a fixed percentage. So those with higher wages will see a lot more money than those with lower. Those, like me, who earn the minimum wage, get left behind. Meanwhile, city taxes and electricity prices increased.

More and more people are angry about the economy but this is not enough. More and more activists show solidarity but this is not enough. The only answer is to completely eradicate capitalism.

It’s intolerable that evicted families have to live in tents in the rainy winter or the searing summer. It’s intolerable that parents have to pay huge sums of money for their children’s education. It’s intolerable that the wealthy will have good healthcare while the poor will get healthcare at their deathbeds. It’s intolerable that the money goes to the military, the settlements and the bosses — not to the working class.

We, the workers, both Palestinians and Jews, must stop this. Voting for a capitalist prime minister will only make things worse. We must change the system from its root!

Housekeeping Worker from Tel-Aviv-Jaffa

Cops Help Bosses Steal Workers’ Overtime Pay

We chanted, “Workers United Will Never Be Defeated” and “This Fist You See Means Power to the Workers.” In NYC, about 25 workers led a militant picket in front of the office of a construction company in solidarity with workers whose exploitative boss had stolen their overtime pay along with other moneys.

After an hour, the boss and his relatives showed up. They took some photos and videos and tried to provoke a confrontation. They also called the police, who showed up when we were getting ready to leave. The boss interpreted this as fear on our part.

We then decided to stay longer and chant much louder because we wanted to show this boss and the cops that the working class is not afraid. We will fight to defend our rights and in a not-so-distant future, we will be fighting against the whole capitalist system.

When we left, we felt satisfied fulfilling our duty. We also realized, however, that the cops are accomplices to the bosses. These cops continued to talk to this exploitative boss and his family as if they were friends.

Workers of the world, unite to build a society that responds to the interest of our working class — a communist society.

A Red Fighter

El Salvador: The Party Comes First

On October 1, we held the second PLP communist school. We met up in a place close to the town council; they had invited us to a social celebration in honor of the month of children, but instead of going to the social activity we went to the Party school.

The presence of ten readers of CHALLENGE in the morning was very important because we analyzed the reality we workers of the fields live through in this exploitative system. As we listen to or read the news, we realize how workers in the world are exploited, killed by the bosses and their lackeys.

We analyzed the CHALLENGE editorial, about the hospital workers that are fighting racist attacks.

It gives us more courage to get organized and fight to build a communist society. We have understood that sexism and racism are chains of capitalist exploitation that the bosses use to divide us, to better exploit us and to produce more profit for this disgusting system.

The capitalist system can only be defeated and destroyed if we destroy its profits. Then an organized working class will build a new society without these faults. The fight makes us stronger, it teaches us that we are not alone, that we can unite against the bosses and this homicidal system.

The PLP is the flag of the proletariat and its leadership. United, we will win.

Comrade from El Salvador

Turkish and Israeli Bosses Deny Armenian Holocaust

During World War I, the Ottoman Empire (whose heir is now Turkey) committed systematic genocide against the Armenian people. There were mass deportations and murder, including forced death marches. Between 1 and 1.5 million Armenians were murdered. Other ethnic groups, such as Assyrians and Greeks, were also attacked. This was part of the institutional racism of the Ottoman Empire, similar to the institutional racism of each and every class system regime.

In 1914, the Ottoman Empire passed a law requiring every man under the age of 45 to enlist in the army or pay a fine. The Armenians were conscripted as well. Their weapons were taken from them and they were divided into units to build roads and facilities under the harshest conditions imaginable. Compare this to the current Israeli government, which wants to pass a law requiring Palestinian workers to enlist in the Israeli army or in “civil service,” despite the fact that they have suffered oppression and racism for 64 years.

Because of the horrid conditions in the Ottoman army, some Armenians deserted. Some even crossed over to Ottoman’s opponent, the Tsarist Russian army. In early 1915, Armenian units of the Russian army began recruiting Armenians from inside the Ottoman Empire, which served as an excuse for the massacre.

The slaughter began on April 24, 1915, when the Ottoman army systemically uprooted thousands of Armenian families from their homes and forced them to march hundreds of kilometers without food or water towards the Syrian deserts. Ottoman soldiers tortured, raped, and slaughtered the Armenians with impunity. That night, 250 Armenian leaders were murdered in Istanbul at the order of the Ottoman government.

Today’s Turkey still does not recognize the Armenian genocide, claiming that it just was a tragic wartime event and refuses to take responsibility. This is how fascist governments get away with genocide. Most Armenians worldwide are descendants of the survivors of this massacre.

Twenty-two nations now recognize the Armenian genocide. Israel does not. It doesn’t want “to harm the relations with Turkey.” Why do relations between two racist capitalist countries (Israel oppressing the Palestinians and Turkey oppressing the Kurds and Armenians even today) come before human lives?

To add insult to injury, Zionist groups refuse to describe the Armenian Genocide as a Holocaust. They wish to reserve the word “Holocaust” for the Jewish genocide during World War II. In these grotesque cases, the blood of an Armenian peasant or worker is not different from the blood of any other worker, including a Jewish one.

As communists, we condemn all forms of racism and of racist terror. Under capitalism, wars serve a clear interest of the ruling class — the arms industry, soldiers and everything serve the bosses’ interest to profit off of workers. There’s no consideration to human lives lost, homes destroyed and people becoming refugees.

Billions of workers all over the world have suffered, and still suffer, from oppression, discrimination and racism. We must fight against capitalism and build a world with no borders, wars and nationalism — a world where the working class will take its destiny into its own hands!

Housekeeping Worker from Tel-Aviv-Jaffa

Evictions of Jerusalem Workers

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which they own.

Free Housing for Racist Thugs; Evictions for Workers

This is the true face of capitalism: free housing for racist thugs and evictions for workers. Be it Columbia University's expansion into Harlem (at the expense of black workers; see CHALLENGE, 01/04/12) or Moskowitz's take-over of East Jerusalem, the bosses use courts, cops and racism to rob the working class and make huge profits along the way.

We, workers and unemployed from all nations and ethnic groups, must unite and fight these racist bosses and their fascist state machine, be it liberal Obama's subtle fascism or openly fascist Israeli ruler Netanyahu's overt apartheid state. As long as the bosses control the state, they will use it against our class. The only real answer to capitalism's horrors is for us, the working' class, to rally behind the flag of the communist PLP and smash the bosses' state, replacing it with a communist state of, for and by our class.✶

Winner at Young Workers' Conference

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ated by capitalism. He eagerly took CHALLENGE and listened carefully to PLP's ideas.

The conference, which opened poorly with Obama's Secretary of Labor Hilda Solis, ended just as badly with AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka giving the usual reformist speech supporting both Obama and Occupy Wall Street (but only to lead them into the Democratic Party). These misleaders do not walk the walk. They just front for the bosses. But despite their efforts, this conference was a great opportunity to distribute CHALLENGE and meet workers from all over the U.S., many of whom are tired of electoral politics and of the lies and misguidance of the union misleaders.

Next year, more PLP'ers should attend this conference, where young unionists come with open minds for our kind of solutions to capitalist, racist oppression. At such conferences, we must continue to identify the contradictions that separate reform from revolution.✶

Palestine-Israel Winter Project

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camp we visited, unemployment is 40%, compared to about 32% in the rest of the West Bank. Activists we talked with were pessimistic about mass resistance erupting soon, since there is a lack of a uniform set of demands or goals.

Our ideas, the need for a secular, multiracial, communist society, were attractive to some, and we renewed this discussion with friends we had met on previous visits. Many Palestinians are held back by nationalism, the desire to build a Palestinian state free of Israeli oppression, and too ready to ally with the local ruling parties, Fatah and Hamas, even as they recognize their corruption and ties to imperialism, the U.S., and Israeli bosses.

Building an International Party

As we left we were excited by the friends and adherents we left behind and saw our chance to influence many Jews and Arabs with our struggle to build an international, anti-nationalist working-class Party. In the U.S., we will educate our friends about the conditions there and work with the many organizations here that oppose the U.S. governments' massive support to Israel, \$3 billion annually, that keeps it afloat. Israel, with its powerful army and nuclear weapons, serves as the U.S. policeman in the region, to protect oil interests and serve as an ally in potential military ventures, such as an invasion of Iran. A fight against imperialism here is an essential part of the fight against fascism in Israel.✶



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

France, UK, US sent killers to Haiti

NYT, 1/1 —In 1791, what today is Haiti became the scene of the largest slave revolt in history. Over the next 13 years, the rebels fought off three successive attempts to re-enslave them. The first was by local planters and French soldiers, aided by arms from the United States, whose president and secretary of state, George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, were both slave owners horrified by the uprising. The second was by the British...eager for fertile sugar land and slaves to work it. And finally...Napoleon.

Ill-armed, barefoot and hungry, the rebels fought against huge odds....Napoleon sent the largest force that had ever set sail from France, losing more than 50,000 soldiers....The former slaves lost even more defeating these invasions....

By the time Haiti declared independence in 1804, many of its fields, towns and sugar mills were in ruins and its population shrunken by more than half. The Haitian Revolution, as it is known today, was a great inspiration to slaves still in bondage throughout the Americas, but it was devastating to the country itself....

France in 1825 insisted that Haiti pay compensation for the plantations taken from French owners. In case the Haitians did not agree, French warships lay offshore. The sum the French demanded was so big that a dozen years later, paying off this exorbitant ransom, and paying the interest on loans taken out for that purpose, was consuming 30 percent of Haiti's national budget. The ruinous cycle of debt continued into the next century....

Brute force still ruled in the next century, climaxing in the three-decade reign of the Duvaliers, father and son. Their militia, the dreaded Tontons Macoute, spread terror,...murdering as many as 60,000 people....

Duvalier, no matter how brutal, could usually count on American support as long as he was vocally anti-Communist. Father and son understood this well and shrewdly used that knowledge to retain power, as did petty tyrants across Latin America, Africa and Asia.

Part of the book [Haiti, The Aftershocks of History by Laurent Dubois] does feel chillingly up to date in its account of the United States Marine occupation of Haiti for some two decades starting in 1915. The occupation was accompanied by high-flown declarations of benevolence, but the real motive was to solidify American control of the economy and to replace a constitution that prevented foreigners from owning land....

United States troops burned entire villages accused of sheltering insurgents and ruthlessly executed captured rebels or — does this sound familiar? — men who might have been rebels; often there was no way to distinguish them from local farmers.

Unions follow bosses on pay-cuts

NYT, 12/30 — LOUISVILLE, KY — Manufacturers are hiring again in America, softening a long slide in factory employment. But for a new generation of blue-collar workers, even those protected by unions, the price of employment is likely to be

FINALLY, AN EMERGING EXIT STRATEGY



lower wages stretching to retirement.

That is particularly true of global manufacturers like General Electric....

The wages for the new hires...are \$10 to \$15 an hour less than the pay scale for hourly employees already on staff — with the additional concession that the newcomers will not catch up for the foreseeable future....

The shrunken pay scale for newcomers — \$12 to \$19 an hour versus \$21 to \$32 an hour for long-time workers — threatens to undo the middle-class status of even the best paid blue-collar jobs still left in manufacturing....Neither G.E.'s 2,000 hourly workers nor Ford's 2,900 nor their unions have objected.

Quite the contrary, all argue that job creation must take precedence over holding the line on wages...."You must have a globally competitive wage to create jobs."

MORE ITEMS AVAILABLE AT WWW.PLP.ORG

PO Box 808, Brooklyn, NY 11202

Religion: Tool of Exploitation

The God Delusion, by Richard Dawkins, Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston/New York, 2006,
God and His Demons, by Michael Parenti, Prometheus Books, Amherst/New York, 2010.

If you are reading this, you are probably eager to see the world move beyond exploitation of the many by the few, and away from continual inter-imperialist wars for control over the world's resources. We are aware that many CHALLENGE readers rely, to some degree, on religion to produce such progress. But whatever you may think about religion and God, there is an inherent problem in religion that allows our profit-seeking exploiters and war-making executioners to get away with their daily theft and murder of our friends, our families, ourselves. The problem is that religion — whatever comfort it provides, or whatever unity it encourages among fellow worshippers — is used by our exploiters to bind us to their needs over our own.

Bibles Celebrate Murder and Mayhem

Religions of all sorts have been used for millennia to justify war and genocide in the name of god. They have always been used to lead us to regard other members of our exploited class as enemies rather than allies and fellow-sufferers. Over thousands of years of human history, new religions evolve out of older ones whenever a rising class needs a new weapon of mass control.

The God Delusion and *God and His Demons* are both worth reading despite their shortcomings. Richard Dawkins, a British evolutionary bi-

ologist, concentrates on the logical and factual inconsistencies in the Judeo-Christian Bible. He shows the disconnect between religion and morality, describes the murder and mayhem celebrated in the Old and New Testaments, and alludes to the frequent modern-day abuse of children by religionists. He also writes about the historical use of all religions, by clergy and other backers, to induce workers to kill other workers in endless wars for gain and profit. Dawkins' stated goal is to give skeptical readers enough evidence to argue against the belief in a supreme being.

Manufactured Religious Precepts

Michael Parenti, a Marxist historian in the U.S., places a greater emphasis on the predatory nature of fundamentalist preachers and priests, and how they have enslaved women and children to do their bidding, sexually and otherwise. He offers his own long selection of quotes from the Old and New Testaments to illustrate the bloody roots of the Judeo-Christian tradition. And he exposes the horrendous hypocrisy of contemporary clergy and politicians in their use of made-up religious precepts, such as those espoused by the anti-abortion and anti-gay movements in the service of meaningless "family values."

Dawkins' non-Marxist outlook, not surprisingly, fails to relate religion-fostered blindness to workers' willing submission to exploitation by the capitalist promoters of religion. Parenti, a Marxist, points out how leading capitalists use religion to induce the world's workers to do their bidding, against the workers' own interests.

But while he exposes the racism, nationalism, and wars fostered by several major religions (including Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism, among others), Parenti treads lightly on Jewish fundamentalism. Describing Jews as the historic "whipping boys" of other religions, he fails to consider how the Israeli ruling class and the Zionist movement inflict the same oppression on the Palestinian working class within Israel-Palestine. Nor does he expose these rulers' racist support of Apartheid South Africa, shipping arms to suppress black workers.

Perhaps the greatest failing of both Dawkins and Parenti is that neither relates the historical and present crimes of religionists to the need for the world's working class to free ourselves from the bonds of faith. Neither advocates the mental liberation of a scientific approach to all things in life. And neither understands that only a communist-led revolution can free ourselves from capitalist exploitation and oppression.

PLP has long argued that science rather than religion offers the world's working class a deliverance from the bondage of capitalism. One major article deals with the history of various religions and their uses — "Religion: Tool of Bosses, Enemy of Workers." Another explores the nature of science and its incompatibility with religion, and how science investigates the real world rather than an imagined or hoped-for one — "Intelligent Design." These articles can be found on the plp.org website under the "Literature" tab, section "leaflets and pamphlets." Both of these articles fill important gaps in these two useful, well-researched books.✶

Haiti: A Worker Joins the Class Struggle

PORT-AU-PRINCE, HAITI, December 10 — On a December morning, the Haitian sun came bursting in around the edges of the curtains, and Edgar's face was backlit. Hollow cheeks, deep-sunk eyes — a sculptural beauty shadowed by malnutrition. He had just told us after a long political discussion of the "Our Fight" section of CHALLENGE, "I'm with you, with all my heart."

Edgar earns US\$50 a month. He loves his work but despises his job, because it is managed for profit and doesn't serve those it is supposed to. He dreams passionately of how it could be run, persisting beyond hope in a plan to set up a small, ideal version of this sort of work in a town far from the filth and corruption of the capital.


The last paycheck he got was two months ago, and that was for the month of June; he only got that because he bucked the unspoken threat that complainers get fired and shamed the boss into giving him something. A loyal union member, he is very angry that his union is still too weak to be more active on immediate issues like delayed paychecks. He wondered who he could count on to help him strengthen the union.

Malnutrition Endemic in Haiti

So it's no wonder his elbows jaggedly jut from strained muscles. When we mentioned to a student comrade that Edgar might be suffering from malnutrition, we were told, "Most workers in Haiti suffer from malnutrition."

Some comrades had met Edgar a while back with other workers taking some PL classes. After the class, there were political discussion groups with those workers, joined by left-wing students PL'ers were also starting to meet. Edgar was there with a co-worker, both lovers of writing and alive to language. We studied texts like Wordsworth's Ode to Toussaint L'Ouverture, current Kreyòl political satire, and the Internationale. He was mostly silent in the political meetings.

Then we lost touch, seeing him only now and then in worker meetings. In one of those he surprised us by speaking of the Party as his own. So the organizers of a recent event were asked to please make sure he was there, and he was. He was invited back to eat with us, and he looked at the menu as though it had been written by Wordsworth. He chose carefully, then asked that the meal be wrapped up to go. "I'd like my girlfriend to taste this with me," he said. Not "to eat": "to taste."



NEW YORK CITY, January 12 — Workers and students demonstrated against the fascist regime in Haiti on the second-year anniversary of the Haiti earthquake. CHALLENGE was well received. Immigrant construction workers expressed agreement about international worker solidarity and eagerly took PL literature.

He lives with his partner in one room with a hot-plate, in a district our student comrade described as gangster-ridden, but which Edgar calls "a quiet zone." "What do you cook at home?" He smiled. "We eat rice — with rice; cornmeal porridge — with cornmeal; boiled plantains — with plantains." His partner had worked the same job but quit in disgust with the boss. Her dream is to perfect the Spanish language she loves.

What does it mean for the international communist movement when the Edgars of the inhumanly

super-exploited working class in Haiti join the PLP? We leave the reader to answer. Our answer must count. A comrade hugged Edgar at the door with a comment the translator could barely manage through tears: "Thank you for giving leadership to the working class."✶

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