

CHALLENGE



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Rocks Send U.S. Puppet Martelly Fleeing

Haiti: Students Fight Fascist Attack

PORT-AU-PRINCE, February 18 — The ruling class is stepping up its attacks here. The government has turned its fascist power against the students, especially those at the State University of Haiti, and particularly the Faculty of Ethnology, invading the campus and brutally assaulting the students. However, the students fought back with rocks, sending Haitian President Martelly running off with his personal guards while a large force stayed.

At 3:00 p.m. on February 17 a Toyota with tinted windows pulled up to the Ethnology Faculty. An envoy from Martelly had come to announce his imminent arrival. This was the same campus — the most militant left-wing campus in Haiti — where Martelly had organized a December 27 raid to win over certain students and divide the rest.

Anti-Martelly students vowed not to let him on the campus as had happened in December when the pro-Martelly “pink” student-mercenaries (as they are known) took advantage of student vacations to open the gates for him. Now again they and his militia thugs were prepared to invade the Ethnology campus.

Martelly arrived at the head of a crowd in a Carnival-like entrance as performer “Sweet Micky” (Martelly’s stage name as a pop singer), shirt unbuttoned, urging on his thugs. After two turns around the campus shouting slogans (“Martelly, the country belongs to you, show your buttocks as you want. Micky is not afraid of anything!”).

Well-Planned Assault

Martelly tried to enter the campus grounds by force, along with his armed men. It was all well-organized. People in civilian clothes carrying guns, machetes, knives and clubs broke down the fence and invaded the courtyard. Eighteen windows on cars belonging to students and faculty were totally smashed. Dozens of students were manhandled and clubbed by the thugs who brutalized them with their batons and anything that could wound or kill.

All this occurred under the gaze of the well-armed security forces, who simultaneously used their heavy weapons to prevent the students from escaping. Those with heart conditions or asthma had trouble breathing. Many were taken to the hospital.

The cops took some students away after having beaten them nearly to death. The police fired their heavy weapons to scare off the students. Thus, the armed forces protect the profits of the criminal leaders who want to hang on to power!

Workers in the Ethnology department office, where some students had taken refuge from tear-gas attacks, were pushed around by Martelly’s thugs, who broke everything they couldn’t steal. They burglarized the office of everything of any value. Martelly’s armed gangsters in civilian clothes surrounded the campus until the last students left, ransacked and bruised.

This organized criminal act made certain students targets of Martelly’s thugs,

one being attacked by a pro-Martelly “pink” criminal. The massacre targets this campus to erase any denunciation of those in power, who lie and make false promises to the people and use mercenaries to divide them.

This recipe for fascism shows clearly that the rulers plan to re-institute dictatorship in its most ferocious form. All this explains the massive presence in the Martelly government of Duvalierist-Macoute forces (murderous holdovers from the former Duvalier dictatorship). Down with fascism! Long live communism!✊

Editor’s note: The above eyewitness account came from a student at the scene. We thank him and his comrades for fighting back and giving leadership to the international class struggle against fascism. As the 1930s Spanish communists said of Franco’s fascists, “No pasaran!” (“They shall not pass.”) We would add that Haiti’s rulers are a local capitalist ruling class who are clients of U.S. imperialism, not simply the gutter fascist Martelly and his thugs.

From an international perspective, this student struggle is an antiracist one. The fact that Haiti is being left to rot as a pool of reserve cheap labor for the region, and a possible military asset in the U.S. imperialists’ battles with their rivals, is a gross racist assault on all workers and students in Haiti. Antiracism, too, is an international fight.

[Note: An international petition campaign is being organized to condemn this raid and support the students’ struggle. Please sign it at www.ipetitions.com/petition/condemn-raid-on-haiti-university-campus. The students in Haiti will use it there.]

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Mideast Slaughter Prelude to World War?**U.S. Rulers Make War Plans for Syria and Iran**

U.S. rulers are shifting focus from encouraging an Israeli strike on Iran's nuclear facilities to a Libya-style, "humanitarian" proxy invasion of suddenly strategic Syria. Cynically seizing on the worsening carnage there, the imperialists served by Obama seek to deal the burgeoning China-Russia-Iran axis a major setback. "In the minds of many on President Obama's team, nothing would undercut Iran's capability to cause trouble in the region faster than if the mullahs lost [Syria's ruler] Bashar al-Assad" (New York Times, 2/25/12). (see box)

A Libya-like overthrow of the Syrian regime especially would be a blow to Putin's Russia whose main Mideast base has been Syria, the recipient of huge military supplies from the Kremlin. It would make more secure U.S. control of oil in neighboring Saudi Arabia, which simultaneously raises the

question of what to do about Iran itself.

Bosses Say U.S. Must Occupy, Not Just Bomb, Iran

Early last month, both the Times and the U.S. war department chief Leon Panetta had predicted an imminent attack on Iran from Israel. But by February 20, the Times warned that "pilots would have to fly more than 1,000 miles across unfriendly airspace, refuel in the air en route, fight off Iran's air defenses, attack multiple underground sites simultaneously — and use at least 100 planes."

"It ain't going to be that easy," said Lt. Gen. David A. Deptula, who retired last year as the Air Force's top intelligence official. But Israel's bosses, whose needs often clash with those of their bankrollers, may strike despite U.S. reservations.

U.S. and allied imperialists, however, realize that they are now incapable of launching the kind of massive military effort that defeating Iran requires. As the British ruling class's Economist magazine pointed out, "Short of occupation, the world cannot eliminate Iran's capacity to gain the bomb" (3/25/12). Tom Ricks of the Center for a New American Security, a Rockefeller-funded think tank that backs Obama, sounded the same note in quoting an unnamed U.S. policy planner: "If we do go to war, it will not be small... [I]f we go after [Iran's] abilities to project military power, we'd open a 15-year window" (Foreign Policy, 2/24/12).

World War III Call to Arms

Obama may not put GI boots on Syrian soil or bless Israel's use of U.S.-made bunker busters in Iran. But that hardly makes him a pacifist. The imperialists whom Obama serves have far bigger goals. Richard Betts, a CIA adviser and David Rockefeller fellow at the U.S. rulers' Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), has written a World War III call to arms.

Rejecting the neo-conservative notion of waging relatively small wars on the cheap, Betts openly revives the General Colin Powell Doctrine as head of Bush, Sr.'s Joint Chiefs of Staff: deploying "overwhelming, decisive force." The following, chilling citations from Betts come from a CFR publicity event for his new book, *American Force: Dangers, Delusions, and Dilemmas in National Security*, held in January:

[E]xcessive emphasis on dealing with minor current challenges, I think, can detract from the resources we'll have available in the future, when we may face big ones again, such as a more difficult China.

China is doing as much...as the United States, in terms of planning militarily for the contingency of conflict with the other.

[T]here's no alternative for great powers to planning for the possibility of conflict with other great powers that share some conflicting interests.

Betts is pushing to get plans in place for a full-scale militarization in the U.S., like those of the 1917 and 1941 World Wars. A controversial restoration of the draft, which the rulers inevitably will need to wage a broader war, is implied rather than mentioned explicitly.

So that's why I put emphasis on a mobilization strategy, one that's oriented towards, in large part, organizing the military for a rapid readjustment if things in the world go really bad.

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.

A Military Plan for Imperialist Conquest of Syria

The rulers' main mouthpiece, the NY Times, ran an op-ed piece by the aptly named Anne Marie Slaughter that opened, "Foreign military intervention in Syria offers the best hope for curtailing a long, bloody and destabilizing civil war" (2/24/12). Slaughter called on "Turkey, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Jordan to arm the opposition soldiers with anti-tank, counter sniper and portable anti-aircraft weapons."

Slaughter also prescribed trained assassins, "special forces from countries like Qatar, Turkey and possibly Britain and France." But overall command, as in Libya, would come from the U.S., which has the most to lose in any war near the Saudi heart of its Middle East oil empire. Washington alone has the satellites and AWACS (Airborne Warning and Control System) that can provide necessary "intelligence... on tank and aircraft movements, the placement of artillery batteries and communications lines among Syrian government forces."

Betts outlines the main coalitions in the coming global conflict: a U.S.-Europe-India axis arrayed against China, Russia, and various vassal states like Iran, the old Soviet republics, and North Korea. He emphasizes the need to re-militarize NATO members that contributed too little, in his view, to recent U.S.-dominated campaigns. Betts calls it "burden shifting, getting the allies to do more."

[The U.S. should] avoid increasing incentives for China and Russia to form a more direct alliance against the West.

[T]he extent that we can cultivate and develop strategic ties with India, that helps in regard to China.

Betts hardly cares about the mass murders from nuking smaller anti-U.S. regimes. Even as it trims its costly nuclear arsenal, the U.S. could wipe out Iran or North Korea.

We could go down to a thousand nuclear weapons and that would still astronomically outclass anything Iran or North Korea has on the horizon.

For the present, Betts argues, the main thing is to get along with China in order to buy time for the big build-up.

I think it's important to do as much as we can for as long as we can to avoid making conflict between the United States and China a self-fulfilling prophecy.

In the run-up, Betts foresees "uncomfortable adjustments" within the U.S. — in other words, fascist discipline imposed on capitalists and workers. Of course such "adjustments" for capitalists mean paying for a more efficient war machine. But they fall far more heavily on the working class: massive wage cuts, mass unemployment, intensified racist and sexist attacks, slashed healthcare, as well as sending youth off to fight and die in imperialist wars. In the U.S., this means a DREAM Act that propels immigrant youth into the military.

Arch-imperialist, war criminal Henry Kissinger, who as Nixon's secretary of state, directed the U.S. genocide in Vietnam, concurs, on both counts: the wisdom of avoiding conflict with China in the immediate future, and the necessity of a severe housecleaning to prepare for an impending clash.

The rise of China is less the result of its increased military strength than of the United States' own declining competitive position, driven by factors such as obsolescent infrastructure, inadequate attention to research and development, and a seemingly dysfunctional

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OUR FIGHT

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Fired Workers Fight for Jobs, INTERNATIONAL UNITY CRUCIAL

Haiti: Women Defy Capitalist Repression

PORT-AU-PRINCE, February 27 — Many workers in many industries in Haiti have been fired for organizing a union or striking, including printers, hospital workers, archivists, transportation workers, teachers, city workers and others. This treatment violates labor laws on the books but never enforced. One such group who has stayed together in their union and are still — years later — demanding their jobs back, met with PLP to find out about the Party and to ask how it could help them expand their campaign.

This is a very determined group of workers, including many active women, who have dared to oppose the repressive and cruel capitalist system here by staging demonstrations, confronting the corrupt management, organizing petitions and press conferences, and requesting the support of various unions and organizations. Although their efforts so far have been ignored by the rulers, they continue their fight-back.

Those of us present were thrilled to see such courageous workers

who, in spite of the misery being imposed on them by the deadly duo of capitalism and imperialism in Haiti, continue the struggle for dignity and bread. We explained that we will do what we can to obtain the support of other unions where we have a presence. Our student friends will continue to meet with a workers' committee to plan how students and workers can help one another's struggles. The workers clearly understood the need for this unity of workers and students in confronting a common enemy.

Spreading the Struggle

Our exchange of experiences and ideas gave rise to a pledge on our part to work harder in the U.S. to denounce these attacks on workers in Haiti and to step up circulation of a petition in their support. We delivered some petitions containing hundreds of signatures for the workers, who received them with great appreciation and will show them to other unions. They will also gather signatures on a petition of their own

supporting U.S workers' struggles.

We stated, however, that we have no "magic bullet" to help them win their demands. The capitalist system is a deadly treadmill of attacks against workers worldwide. Like any reform struggle, even if they succeed, the bosses can take those wins away the next day, or make new attacks. Without an outlook that involves the destruction of capitalism and the fight for communism, we will always be fighting the next assault against our class since that's what the system produces in its thirst for profit from our labor.

During the meeting we discussed the ten PLP principles stated in "Our Fight" from the Kreyòl issue of CHALLENGE. In response, women workers were especially passionate in their hatred of the system. One told us she lives in a single room with four grown children since being fired. She asked how workers could win an armed revolution when the state has all the weapons. One answer stressed that our strength is in our numbers, if we get organized.

Some liked "Our Fight" but asked how these ideas could help win their long struggle for their jobs. We stressed that each battle, win or lose, can "win" if we come out of it stronger in numbers and with more comrades committed to revolution. One comrade found it very painful to have to tell such hard-hit workers that only revolution and expanding the Party can win. But that is the challenge we all face.

Their determination is a good example of a working-class fighting spirit. No matter how destitute, hungry and oppressed the workers might be, they are fighting back and refusing to submit to the nightmare of misery and neglect that their masters have created for them in Haiti. They have our support and admiration as communists. In the course of their struggle, they can understand that capitalism, just like a leech sucking up our blood, must be destroyed so that we can live and prosper under a system of justice and equality: communism. ☪

Immigrant Steel Workers Fight Fascist Firing

SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA, February 17 — PLP members joined 500 workers and students in a march and rally to support the 200 undocumented workers and families fired by Pacific Steel Casting (PSC) in Berkeley, California.

We distributed a leaflet and CHALLENGES, focusing on racism in capitalism as a labor policy. Many gave thumbs up to our poster: "A world without Borders is a Communist World" (Un Mundo sin Fronteras es un mundo Comunista).

We are following up on contacts among these workers and some of the younger activists on the march, which included NGO's, community organizations, churches and Occupy Oakland. There was no official presence from the labor movement.

Using CHALLENGE and actions in our various mass organizations, we're aiming to make May Day truly a march to unite the international working class and the many individual struggles in this area.

Workers at Pacific Steel Foundry, members of Glaziers, Molders and Plasterers Union Local 164B had a 3-day strike last March against a company-threatened 10% pay cut plus an increase in the cost of health benefits.

Later, the workers filed a \$30 million class action lawsuit against Pacific Steel for failure to provide rest and meal breaks. By December, ICE (Immigration & Customs Enforcement) had conducted "silent raids" which required Pacific Steel to verify all workers' Social Security status (I-9 audit raids).

The company then fired 200 workers (a third of the workforce). Most had 5 to 20 years seniority. Now their pension benefits are "in question"

Government Policies: Legalized Racism to Increase Profits

- Chain gang and Jim Crow laws in the South from 1880-1920's; the anti-loitering laws of those years are equivalent to the nonviolent "drug arrests" and deportation policies of today. Both result in racist jailing.

- Workers from Mexico were "repatriated" (deported) in the 1930's and re-imported in the 1940's to replace workers drafted in World War II.

- Workers of Japanese ancestry were interned when World War II began. Their property and jobs were stolen. They were replaced by Latino, black and dust-bowl refugees (often white) to perform farm labor.

- The vast prison population today, disproportionately comprising black and Latino workers, provides profits from free or below-minimum-wage labor for U.S. corporations. Those on probation increase the ranks of the desperate unemployed.

- The present destruction of jobs in the public sector (transit and schools) disproportionately hurts black workers because 1 of 5 employed black workers have jobs in the public sector.

As Karl Marx pointed out, "the reserve army of labor" is built into capitalism. It condemns millions to misery and helps suppress the wages of those who have jobs.

even though they paid into the union pension fund for years. Many have citizen children, pay taxes and own homes. One fired worker, 14-year veteran Jesús Navarro, was denied a kidney transplant by UC Medical Center here due to his undocumented status. After huge protest and outrage, UCSF medical center is now negotiating a transplant.

Bosses Profit, Union Misleaders Collaborate

While the steel industry "offshored," these workers have produced huge profits over the years for this "family-owned company." It is the 4th largest such plant left in the U.S. Current wages, \$11-\$19/hr, used to be substandard for the steel industry up to the 1980's. Union leaders negotiated these low wages, with the justification of "making the

company productive" and "keeping the jobs here."

Pacific Steel has now rehired about 200 workers, presumably at the lowered \$11/hr starting wage. Both the company and the union leaders (including Vice-President Ignacio De La Fuente who is also president of the Oakland City Council) say their hands are tied by "Federal Policy" and the law.

Those fired have formed a rank-and-file Workers Committee for Mutual Support. The official union leadership has abandoned them but they are reaching out through mass leafleting in mainly Spanish-speaking communities and social justice organizations.

Racist War on Workers

"If, through enforcement, a large

fraction of illegal immigrants returned to their home countries, there would seem to be an ample supply of idle American workers to replace them, particularly workers who have relatively little education." (Center for Immigration Studies (CIS), think tank on immigration policy)

The 200 replacement workers (mainly Latino and black) Pacific Steel has hired — U.S.-born or "legal" residents — are the "ample supply" mentioned above which unemployment has forced into these "sub-standard conditions."

With Obama's Secure Communities program, deportations have reached record numbers, 300 000 annually since 2009, almost double that of George Bush. ICE "silent raids" (I-9 audits) have focused on companies with unionized workers.

These are parts of the racist, anti-immigrant policy. This is how fascism operates, as a virtual gun to the heads of these workers.

The Communist Alternative

"We want to feel proud that working our jobs means we are contributing to the well-being of the human race and to ourselves." This is Progressive Labor Party's view of a future communist society. We organize to fight for a better life today while struggling long-range for communist revolution.

We learned from the successes and failures of communists in the Soviet Union and China as they attempted to build new societies. While those communists abolished private profit, they still maintained a capitalist mode of production: pro-

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PL'ers Point Occupy LA Toward Worker-Student Alliance

LOS ANGELES, February 29 — In the months following the clearing of the Occupy encampment in downtown Los Angeles, the idea of the 99% has penetrated college campuses and workplaces throughout Southern California. From public college students facing tuition hikes to transit and airport workers confronted with wage-cuts, the Occupy message resonates deeply in their respective fights. This political development is an opportunity to build the strategic worker-student alliance that can serve as the basis for a revolutionary communist movement.

anti-communist proposal was shot down.

Student members of Progressive Labor Party recently organized a conference on the economic crisis of capitalism and higher education at a state university here. The students collaborated with transit workers,

high school teachers and friends from the Occupy movement to hold workshops on the need for a worker-student alliance. One political goal was to show the similarities between the struggles of students and teachers in high schools and colleges.

Point of Disunity

At the morning plenary, one group of students raised a "point of unity" that called for the exclusion of communist parties from the conference. Some Occupy participants, particularly the self-proclaimed "facilitators" (the de facto leaders of this "leaderless" movement), red bait organizations they see as "authoritarian."

But on this campus, where a PL comrade has spent months building a base around communist politics, most disapproved of this red-baiting. A PL teacher pointed out that this proposed "point of unity" was both anti-communist and dishonest at a conference that was designed for the exchange of ideas. Many in the audience responded with applause, and the anti-communist proposal was shot down.

Later in the afternoon, the worker-student alliance workshop explored the real points of unity between student and worker struggles. One transit worker recalled his experiences as a student organizer in Central America and pointed out capitalism will continue to oppress us regardless of any victories in reform struggles around tuition hikes or wages. The discussion then turned to consider what kind of revolutionary movement was necessary to destroy capitalism.

Connect Cuts to Capitalist Crisis

At a writing workshop, teachers and students planned a pamphlet to explain the economic causes of the problems in education and to strategize fight-backs that unify students and teachers on high school and college campuses. Another workshop connected the rapidly rising cost of higher education, firings of teachers, and cutbacks in class offerings to the current crisis of finance capital.

Students and instructors understood that a failing economic system is to blame for these problems

and enthusiastically agreed that this discussion should be part of future conferences.

Between now and May Day, PLP students and workers plan to organize similar events in various worksite and campus struggles in Southern California. The Occupy movement shows that many are angered and frustrated with the crisis of capitalism but also unclear as to how to respond. By building a mass, militant worker-student alliance, PLP can advance toward the development of a revolutionary communist movement that is powerful enough to destroy capitalism.✪



No Capitalism = No Profits, No Prison

NEW JERSEY, February 22 — Sixty people marched twelve miles today to protest against the racist expansion of detention centers in Northern New Jersey. We were young and old, black, white, and Latino, representing many countries. We marched to three detention centers and three branches of the Wells Fargo bank, which invests in the federally funded companies that profit from the workers they imprison.

The protest was organized by First Friends and the Interfaith Refugee Action Team at Elizabeth (IRATE), an umbrella group that sponsors legal aid, social services and volunteer visits to detainees. Some of us were critical of the march's vague demands, such as "justice" and "freedom." We remarked that the sort of justice that has people paying up to \$12,000 to release their loved ones into a system of unemployment is really an extension of imprisonment.

And we argued that workers are free under capitalism only to have our children and resources used to wage war for the bosses' profits.

After beginning the march at Liberty Island, we visited a Catholic church, an Islamic school and a Jewish synagogue in Jersey City. We stopped for a while at the new, 420-bed Delaney Detention Center, one of several in this area. (The Essex County Jail is making room for up to 800 detainees. Hudson County in Kearny is up to 800 beds, Bergen County to 1,500, and Elizabeth to 320). The Delaney facility is in the middle of a toxic waste area where the pollution has a strong odor.

IRATE has a mailing list of 4,000, which they used to draw more than a hundred volunteers, social workers, attorneys and former detainees to a closing vigil in Elizabeth. The more progressive chants included, "No ganancias, no cárceles" (No profits, no jails) and "Comunidades unidas, no serán

vencidas" (Communities united will never be defeated). A PLP member explained that the entire capitalist system is organized around profits for a small ruling class, and that our "communities united" consist only of workers, not the rich who exploit us. At the soup supper later, the comrade

Sixty people marched twelve miles to protest against the racist expansion of detention centers.

distributed CHALLENGE to everyone there while pointing out the necessity of an international party.

There was tremendous enthusiasm and energy among these interns, low-paid social workers, and over-worked attorneys. One group of twenty Mother Seton High School students had participated in this march for several years. A young woman had just been accepted to law school, where she plans to focus on immigration law. These people cheered each other on despite the sad news about one woman's husband who'd been deported to Lebanon that morning after two months in solitary confinement with insufficient medicine for his chronic illness. His case is one of countless stories of how immigrants are terrorized in the U.S. It's also a reminder that the capitalist system cannot be reformed and must be destroyed.✪

U.S. Rulers Make War Plans for Syria and Iran

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governmental process. The United States should address these issues with ingenuity and determination... instead of blaming a putative adversary (Foreign Affairs, March-April 2012).

Despite the recent surge of Tea Party candidate Rick Santorum, reflecting divisions in the bosses' ranks, the two most likely winners of this November's presidential election — Barack Obama and Mitt Romney — are fully on board for this long-term war agenda.

None of these bosses' politician servants care one bit for the tens of millions who would die in these mass slaughters. But this is the logic of profit-driven capitalism — anything to maintain their exploitative system, and, in the case of U.S. rulers, to remain top dog among their rival imperialists.

What We Must Do

The only solution to such wars, fascism, racism and sexism for the world's working class is to organize for the overthrow of capitalism with communist revolution. This means fighting and leading class struggle in all aspects of our lives — in the factories and unions, in the schools and on the campuses, in the churches and other mass organizations run by the bosses.

Through such fights communists in PLP can gain the confidence of masses of our co-workers and youth. Thereby, we can win them to the understanding that nothing less than the creation of society — led by a mass party — run with workers' power, without bosses and profits, can achieve a decent life for our class and our children.

This is Progressive Labor Party's goal. Join us! ✪

School Fight: PEP Gets a U; Capitalism Gets an F



2011 Brooklyn struggle, against the DOE's racist segregation of schools, has led up to the PEP struggle.

NEW YORK CITY, February 16
— "How do you spell racist? DOE!"

A young comrade led over 500 people in a series of such anti-racist chants as billionaire Bloomberg's Panel for Educational Policy (PEP) used their state power and had their Department of Education (DOE) close 33 largely black and Latino schools for "underperformance."

PLP members' exposure of capitalism as the real underperformer was well-received among co-workers there, as well as among passers-by who took over 300 leaflets containing the above headline.

NYC teacher union mis-leader Mike Mulgrew led a rally outside, trying to "boycott" the sharp struggle inside where angry masses had gathered in the high school auditorium. His effort to lead folks away from the panel meeting flopped. He made a lackluster cameo appearance once the defeat of his boss-serving ploy became apparent to all.

Comrade Indicts Profit System

Only PL had students actively leading chants. At one point, the crowd demanded to "let the students speak." Then our young comrade took center stage to give the only speech that named capitalism as the culprit. We met this young leader several years ago and she has been schooled in the fight against racist school closures. We need more youth like her.

The manipulation by Bloomberg and his henchmen emerged when black families appeared to speak up in favor of their charter schools which they see as a slight improvement over the abject failures passing for institutions of learning citywide. This set-up pitted them against other black and Latino families whose children overwhelmingly attend the public schools slated for closing. Rather than fighting each other, all working-class families must unite against the rulers who are destroying any opportunity for their children to make their way in this rotten society.

The purpose of the bosses' school system is to reproduce the racist class structure of U.S. society. The main function the bosses have for all teachers — public and charter — is to assist in this massive and ongoing "sorting" of human beings to keep the social pyramid of capitalism intact. From K to 12 and beyond we are expected to inculcate each generation with patriotism and passivity.

Charter schools, with the federal government behind them, are spreading like a cancer, functionally breaking the presence of unions in education, a way to make them weaker than ever. These Charter Schools are just another source of profit on the backs of the public sector. These

attacks, with all their attendant dislocation and chaos, are focused on black and Latino working-class communities.

The assault on teachers, students and parents reflects the heightened state of siege in which the rulers have placed the workers since the demise of the old communist movement. Workers' revolution is not on the agenda and the bosses are taking full advantage. For years, the bosses have been "measuring" and "analyzing" the performance and productivity of the working class.

For example, the bosses' managers want to convince workers making \$8.50 an hour at the local Kmart that they're "accountable" for stocking

the shelves as fast as they can so the company can prosper "for the benefit of the team." Kmart bosses making six- and seven-figure salaries use the word "team" to motivate and drive workers making minimum wage. Many workers see through this.

'Toe the Line or Be Fired'

For factory workers, discipline is tied to getting the worker to speed up production or be terminated. For teachers, this means using standardized tests — which teach nothing — and the new Danielson Framework for Teaching to develop a fascist monitoring tool. If teachers don't toe this line, they, too, are fired.

Ruling-class attacks on teachers directly attack students. The rulers' ideas of success for our children are minimum-wage jobs, mass racist unemployment or the "choice" of a "job" in the military to fight in their imperialist oil wars killing other workers. Throughout the country the majority of schools being closed are in black and Latino communities. The rulers are trying to further segregate our children in order to continue to exploit and profit off all working-class people.

Capitalism does not offer solutions to the racist education our children are experiencing. The young comrade who pointed to capitalism as the main culprit deserves much more than the non-existent "good old days" of public education the liberals are advocating. She, like young people worldwide, deserves a communist future, without bosses and profits. Today it felt like we brought that future little bit closer to fruition. Join PLP and fight for it. ☺

Undocumented Steel Workers Fight Fascist Firing

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duction for buying and selling in the market, wages and wage inequality for workers.

They became a ruling party that controlled and distributed what the working class produced, turning it into state capitalism, the socialist economic model. This produced a return to capitalism.

Our goal is REAL communism, with a mass communist party, with production for need and abolition of the wage system: from each according to commitment and ability, to each according to their need. When the international working class wins and holds control over all of society's economic, political and cultural institutions, it will unleash a creative power that will propel the human race to its highest accomplishments in all fields of endeavor. This is workers' power. ☺



Poster reads "Our strength is the strength of the people. Down with unjust layoffs. Defend human rights and immigrant labor rights."

LETTERS

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

Medi-Cal A Quagmire that Makes You Sicker

You have to be poor to qualify for Medi-Cal, which is California's version of Medicaid. But poverty is only the beginning of your troubles.

For example, following an injury requiring hip surgery, Maria needed physical therapy (PT). A physical therapist came to her house once — then she was on her own. Several months later, Maria still had severely reduced range of motion in her hip, making her unable to walk.

Between Maria's surgery and when I first saw her, Medi-Cal changed a regulation to reduce cost of treatment. The new regulation requires everyone in 30 California counties who has Medi-Cal to enroll in a managed-care plan (HMO).

For 3 million of the 4.4 million Medi-Cal recipients in 14 counties, only two plans are offered. Most plans contract out and require endless authorizations for each medical service. Before this regulation, patients had few choices, because most physicians would not accept Medi-Cal's meager payments. Now, patients have only two.

Maria could not return to her orthopedic surgeon, who had stopped working with Medi-Cal. Her primary-care physician in her HMO referred her to a different orthopedic surgeon. That orthopedist gave her a prescription for a PT 15 miles from her home. After many phone calls (partly because the original referral to PT had expired), I was able to get her a referral to PT within traveling distance. After Maria had three sessions, that PT group closed its contract with the HMO.

I arranged for a medical transportation company to take Maria to PT. They couldn't transport her because her leg was stuck straight out. I made other arrangements for transport, after going back to the primary MD and getting yet another order for PT. That doctor also ordered another ortho consult and additional diagnostic tests.

His orders never reached the middle level of the insurance company. I kept making phone calls to try to straighten this out, but could never get a live person on the phone. When we finally got Maria to PT, they took one look and said "her case was too complex" for them.

It took more phone calls and threats of filing a grievance to get Maria another orthopedic appointment. The orthopedist wouldn't see her without a new X-ray, which required going back to the primary care physician. The primary doc had to write new orders for the diagnostic tests, because the first ones never showed up at the insurance company.

These months of delays in getting Maria the physical therapy she needed resulted in irreparable damage to her hip and knee, and we still don't know what harm may have been caused by the delayed diagnostic tests, which have yet to happen.

Many Medi-Cal patients try to deal with their HMOs and insurance companies on their own, and eventually give up. The politicians have no qualms about cutting services to those at the bottom. You never hear them talk about cutting interest payments to California state bondholders.

The state has also been slashing funds for In-Home Supported Services (IHSS) and for group homes that serve the disabled population. They keep tightening the criteria for IHSS and cutting the number of hours of care patients get.

The cuts in the group homes force providers to cut corners in food quality and hiring standards. When the upcoming additional 10% cut is initiated, some providers say they will have no choice but to shut down. These cuts result in further destroying people's health and in shortening their lives. Seeing this is one reason why I participate in a CHALLENGE readers group.

Public Health Worker

Knowing a PL'er and CHALLENGE Changes Workers' Ideas about Communism

Since being laid off from my job at a school, the distribution of CHALLENGE at my former workplace — combined with concerted efforts to

What is Sexism?

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become the next generation of workers.

Bosses also use women as a disposable labor force. Not only are they paid less to do more work than their male counterparts, they are also sexually harassed, objectified, and subject to mass violence and genocide. Black, immigrant, Asian, and Latino women are triply exploited because of the racist nature of capitalism (see PL pamphlet *Smash Racism*). The super-exploitation and oppression of women workers affects the whole working class.

Men's wages are depressed precisely because women's are especially depressed. The differential pay between male and female wages serves to divide the working class. If men buy into the idea that their work is worth more, not only are they making it easier for bosses to super exploit women, they are also making it easier for bosses to exploit them.

Women working in unpaid labor at home are seen as profitable for men. The inexcusable violence against women is used to justify that it is "natural" for men to beat women. Both notions disregard the class content in sexism. When women are treated as domestic slaves, men become complicit with capitalism's systemic inequality. Violence is a safety valve for capital, projecting men's frustrations in their exploitation as wage slaves onto women.

How does a man who degrades his wife and children hurt from sexism? That male worker has divided himself against his family. In what could have been his source of strength against his alienation at work is now a source of disunity. And any temporary "gain" from having women perform tasks for men is greatly outweighed by the losses he experiences as a worker and as a father, partner, or friend of a female member of his own class.

build strong relationships with our friends and co-workers, in a conscious effort to broaden our base — is helping build the Party.

When workers and friends saw an article about the circumstances at our job, their responses were positive. Comments were made like, "That is just what is happening here," and "I hope people will see that we are really living under fascism".

Recently, we got together for some pizza, wine and political conversation. This event was the second in a series of meetings comrades from different workplaces are hosting. Our mission is to strengthen our relationships with workers and "cross-pollinate" our bases. We started by discussing the CHALLENGE article as previously mentioned. We reviewed how racism divides the working class and is used to depress the working conditions and wages of all.

One worker, who is white, said that black workers on the job had told her, "You are out here in the fields with us", when they were describing the disrespect suffered at the hands of black bosses on the job. She also said that PL's analysis of racism made it clearer that bosses of the same ethnic group as the workers will still be racist.

We concluded that even if our school was closed in the coming months, we could and should fight against what the capitalist class is doing to workers through the dismantling of public education. Some workers talked about their sharing CHALLENGE with their family and telling them, "Hey there is this guy at my job who is a communist".

We have encouraged every CHALLENGE reader to take two — "One for you and one for a friend." These workers shared stories of hearing about the "evils of the communist enemy" as they were growing up. But knowing a communist on the job and having the opportunity to read CHALLENGE was changing their ideas about communists and communism. PL'ers pointed out that the fights posed by the old socialist movements led to many of the benefits workers won, and are now losing.

We also strategized about how to fight for PL's politics in the current labor movement, how to avoid the anti-communist ideas that capitalism can be made better for workers or that masses of workers can't be won to fight for an immediate transformation to communism. Together, we read parts of the PLP document "Road to Revolution IV" and the "What We Fight For" section in CHALLENGE.

We decided we should get together more often. Word of another gathering reached the workplace and workers who did not attend said they wanted to come the next time. Our base-building efforts require us to be flexible.

The Party will grow through personal and political struggle. We should build strong relationships and win them to fight for the Party and its ideas in their personal and political lives. Pepperoni and Pinot Grigio do not make a revolution, but building personal ties and political honesty with our friends should definitely be put on our plates.

Red

India: Millions in General Strike

MUMBAI, INDIA, February 28 — Millions of workers in eleven major unions and 5,000 smaller ones went on a 24-hour general strike in one of the largest walkouts in the country's history. They were demanding protection against soaring prices of vital commodities, more jobs, an end to privatization and to government anti-labor policies and a rise in the minimum wage.

The strike was virtually total in transportation in Kerala state, with buses, taxis and rickshaws off the roads. Striking banking workers halted all financial transactions in the states of Punjab, Haryana and Chandigarh. In Mumbai, the country's financial center, the shutdown in banking was complete.

While the bosses and government were attacking even a one-day strike, it remains to be seen if workers will begin to realize that they need an extended walkout to get any real results. While the ruling classes always refer to India as the world's "largest democracy," the mass poverty and unemployment that exists here exposes the hypocrisy of that claim. Real solutions to workers' problems here will only come when the working class takes power, led by a revolutionary communist party.✊



'The workers' crew must seize the helm...'

Film Exposes Bosses' Exploitation of Global Transport

"The Forgotten Space" is a poetic, visually stunning, and unabashedly anti-capitalist documentary about the global transport system. The film opens aboard a massive cargo container ship carrying products from low-wage manufacturing and farming centers to major ports in Europe and the United States.

The seas are the pathways over which 100,000 ships, manned by 1.5 million seamen, deliver materials and goods worth trillions of dollars to a web of manufacturers (like Foxconn in China), importers (like Walmart and Apple), and banks and financiers on Wall Street and elsewhere. "The Forgotten Space" interviews the normally invisible people who make and transport the goods, rather than the billionaires who get both the credit and the profits.

The film depicts how the entire transport system of capitalism relies on cheap labor: factory workers in China; Korean and Indonesian workers who service the cargo ships; low-paid truck drivers at the huge port in Los Angeles.

As economist Minqi Li explains, capitalism relentlessly seeks to lower production costs by cutting wages and benefits and also by demanding lower taxes and minimal environmental regulations, giving it freedom to pollute the oceans.

The cargo container — a standardized metal box that can be moved from ship to train or truck

— was developed by U.S. shippers who were eager to cut the number of dockworkers required to load cargo. Millions of containers now travel the globe's oceans, a watery conveyor belt that moves 90 percent of the world's cargo. Once they reach their destinations, trains and trucks bring their contents to stores.

Meanwhile, farms in Holland are uprooted to make room for the tracks the railroads run on, while the entire village of Doel is demolished to expand the port of Antwerp, Belgium. Nothing appears to stand in the way of global capitalism as it moves factories abroad and shuts industrial workers to the unemployment lines or to stock shelves at retail stores.

Yet Minqi Li argues that something does stand in the way. The workers of China are now demanding higher wages and benefits, with a record number of strikes and job actions. Li asks, What happens to capitalism when it runs out of workers it can super-exploit?

His comments have a certain deterministic ring, as though capitalism will somehow fall apart when wages rise globally. Yet the film — which the filmmakers declared to be "openly Marxist" — concludes by suggesting, "The lowly crew must seize the helm."

Indeed, only when the working class destroys capitalism with a communist revolution, and takes

over the global economy, can it begin to plan a society that treats people humanely.



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

U.S. law allows Sexist layoffs

NYT, 1/31 — ...Amendments to the Americans with Disabilities Act require employers to provide reasonable accommodations to disabled employees...But because pregnancy itself is not considered a disability, employers are not obligated to accommodate most pregnant workers in any way.

As a result, thousands of pregnant women are pushed out of jobs...when they request an accommodation to help maintain a healthy pregnancy. Many are single mothers or a family's primary breadwinner. They are disproportionately low-income women, often in physically demanding jobs...

As of 2010, seven states, including California, had passed laws requiring private employers to provide at least some accommodations...

This kind of law is a public health necessity. Without its protections, pregnant women are reluctant to ask for the accommodations they need for their own health and for the health of their unborn children. For many women, a choice between working under unhealthy conditions and not working is no choice at all.

Law is no help to women in Afghanistan

NYT, 1/31 — The young Afghan woman gave birth to a third girl three months ago — to a husband, the authorities say, who had been demanding a boy. Last week, the man and his mother, in the northern Afghan province of Kunduz, put a rope around the woman's neck....

Storai's death was a chilling reminder of the low status of women in Afghanistan....

Kunduz is no stranger to domestic violence. In December, four gunmen...threw acid on three school-age girls and their mother in revenge after an attacker's offer of marriage to one of the girls, 18, was rejected by her father....

"What is most disappointing...is that the 2009



Elimination of Violence Against Women Law was supposed to change this, and it has had very little impact so far."....

Coal/oil money perverts U.S. gov't

Otherwords.org — ...You and I both know that the earth is heating up, right? Everybody knows that, with the possible exception of oil executives, the owners of coal mines, and...politicians.

Yet no number of hurricanes, droughts, floods, wildfires, melted glaciers or columns by granola liberals like me has inspired a somnolent Congress to confront the problem.

Why? Money, of course.

If money is the mother's milk of politics (and it is), then the oil and the coal industries are the biggest mothers on the block. They own our political system lock, stock, and sleazebag.

Politics: a career, not a service

NYT, 2/3 — Even conservative politicians used to find it necessary to pretend that they cared about the poor. Remember "compassionate conservatism"? Mr. Romney has, however, done away with that pretense.

At this rate, we may soon have politicians who

admit what has been obvious all along...they aren't concerned about the lives of ordinary [people], and never were.

Ignore tiny blips: economy terrible

NYT, 2/6 — ...Our economy remains deeply depressed. As the Economic Policy Institute points out, we started 2012 with fewer workers employed than in January 2011 — zero growth after 11 years, even as the population, and therefore the number of jobs we needed grew steadily. The institute estimates that even at January's pace of job creation it would take us until 2019 to return to full employment....Long-term unemployment — the percentage of workers who have been out of work for six months or more — remains at levels not seen since the Great Depression....More families [are] exhausting their savings, and not least, more of our [people] losing hope....

So here's what needs to be said about the latest numbers...but, things are not O.K. — not remotely O.K., This is still a terrible economy....

International Women's Day

Only Communism Can End Sexism

The only day the world recognizes women is the one to celebrate their "reproductive" role as mother and wife, Mother's Day. But it was the Soviets, the communist movement, that celebrated women as political beings with revolutionary power. March 8 is International Women's Day (IWD), the day that communists organized to salute the strength and contributions of women workers.

Women are not docile but have been organizing and fighting back for hundreds of years. In the United States, the fight of the slave and of women began from the same thread. The Grimke sisters fought against slavery and for women's rights as one and the same battle. Angelina Grimke declared, "Until he [a slave] gets his rights, we [women] shall never have ours." Struggles led up to the German communist Clara Zetkin taking the initiative in 1910 to organize an official International Working Women's Day. Anti-sexist struggle makes it a historic day for all workers, women and men.

Communists Fought to Smash Working Women's Oppression

During Czarist Russia, the struggle for working-class women became synonymous with the open call for the overthrow of the government. During World War I, the Russian Bolshevik Party tried to turn March 8th into a demonstration of women workers against imperialism. On that day, the women of St. Petersburg began and led the February revolution in 1917.

Re-centering IWD within its rich revolutionary communist history helps increase the class-consciousness and organization of working-class women. This militancy is crucial to the future of the working class.

Sexism Inherent in Capitalism

The inherent sexism in capitalism is clear within the context of maximizing profits. Historically, profits haven't always existed as part of society. When people began accumulating wealth, society changed from a primitive egalitarian society to one defined by class (see PL pamphlet *Communism and the Struggle Against Sexism*). In fact, the enslavement of women, the ultimate producers of labor, was essential to class society. To produce surplus, despots had to have unpaid labor and therefore they subjugated and enslaved women. As bosses increased their accumulation of surplus value (profit, value produced by workers over and above their wages), the gendered divisions of labor — previously based on mutual agreements in hunter-gather societies — became coercive. Hence, sexism is an inherent part of capitalism.

Capitalism has become an international parasitic system, and the world is made dependent on the major capitalists. Women and families are alienated, coerced, evicted from their land, and forced to migrate to imperialist countries to earn wages. These women are given the lowest-paying, labor-intensive jobs, which again profit the ruling class. The U.S. profits significantly from the sweat and blood of black, Latino, and Asian immigrant women. Immigrant women are ruled under fascist conditions — working nearly from meal to meal, while nonimmigrant women workers, such as single mothers on welfare, are also treated in a viciously sexist and racist manner.

Sexism Means We Must Fight Back

Women workers have always fought back against oppression. In Bangladesh, thousands of garment workers, mostly women, shut down 700 factories and the roads to the capital, Dhaka. They also hurled bricks at the sexist cops who tried to tear gas and beat them.

These workers produce billions of dollars of profit for corporations such as Walmart and H&M clothing stores, while only earning pennies. Part of the struggle against sexism begins on the factory floor, where women learn to fight fear, an instrument through which the bosses' state rules.

As these women fight against their super-exploitation, Arab women and children are defending their village against the Israeli fascists. Women nurses in Brooklyn joined their male colleagues in

India: Millions in General Strike



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multi-gender unity, are also fighting hospital closings and massive cutbacks in benefits and wages.

Feminism HURTS Women Workers

Feminism, a bourgeois philosophy, disregards the class nature of sexism. Anti-sexist struggles must reject it, because it divides the working class by blaming male workers and shunning them from anti-sexist struggles. This all-class unity for women sets us up for fascism by mobilizing women against their own class interests and sharpening the racist attacks on all workers.

It is communism, never feminism, that fights to eliminate the sexist divisions of the working class. Only communism can eliminate sexism by abolishing the wage system where work will be divided based on need and commitment, liberating women from the direct responsibility of pre-natal care and child rearing. It will be shared equally with men. This will remove incentives for sexist divisions and

workers will struggle to eliminate gender roles. Women will be valued according to their role in giving political leadership. This egalitarian foundation will give way to producing a society free from treating women as commodities.

For Communism, Women Must Lead Revolution

Historically, women are the most exploited of the working class. Class struggle is sharpest among the most exploited sectors of the working class. The experiences gained from this special oppression provides the basis for this leadership. Therefore, women are key to communist revolution.

The battle against sexism is an international one. When the woman worker in Haiti is raped, when a girl in Pakistan is sold into marriage, when a mother from South Africa is faced with eviction, this is an attack on the working class as a whole.

When we sharpen the contradictions between the ruling and the working class, workers will put anti-racist and anti-sexist politics at the forefront, doing away with the identities capitalism uses to divide us. We cannot fight sexism without having strong communist leaders who are women.

Though communists have made the greatest advances for women in the Soviet Union, most of the leadership was still male. PL has been fighting against sexism by maximizing women's revolutionary potential and having them take more leadership roles, as occurred with the women who led the bakery workers' fight against Stella D'Oro (see *CHALLENGES* in 2009).

We need to expose sexism at work and in all the struggles we are involved in. The fight against sexism is a day-to-day struggle. Challenge sexist notions of male supremacy among co-workers. Raise anti-sexist politics at school. Rally against sexist healthcare cuts at your workplace. Write to CHALLENGE about your struggle against sexism. Women and men, black and white, must embrace communism as the only weapon against sexism. ☺

What is Sexism?

Much like racism, sexism is a systematic tool used by the bosses to divide the working class against itself. It is the special oppression of female workers. This is manifested in many forms. In 1921, Lenin wrote that "under capitalism the female half of the human race is doubly oppressed....not only are they exploited as members of the working class, 'they continue to be 'household slaves,' for they are overburdened with the drudgery of the most squalid, backbreaking and stultifying toil in the kitchen and family household" (in a Supplement to Pravda No. 51). Part of this women's unpaid housework includes raising children, which is seen as an extension of their "reproductive" role. These children go on to

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