

CHALLENGE



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STRIKING TEACHER-STUDENT MARCH ROARS THROUGH HAITI



PORT-AU-PRINCE, November 13 — Up to 15,000 students and striking teachers marched through the capital today, their battle cry, "The only solution is revolution" filling the streets.

The march stopped at over a dozen public and private schools, with students and teachers swelling the ranks at each one. At many schools, large metal gates locked by administrators to keep students inside and marchers out were forced open by persistent students banging on and climbing the gates, signaling to the students and teachers inside that the strike was here to pick them up. Soon the gates were flung open and a flood of students poured out into the march. The demonstration was carried along on the energy and vitality of students chanting: "School-children today, university students tomorrow."

Strike Spreads

In the militant march, tires were set afire and eventually the police shot into the crowd, essentially made up of schoolchildren, while the UN force MINUSTAH lobbed tear gas into the march for hours, including at the public hospital. Several students were arrested, several hospitalized for tear gas inhalation, and one injured when the police shot into the crowd. Strikes and walkouts also took place in other cities — St. Marc (where 2,000 marched), Gonaïves, Jeremie and elsewhere.

This mass mobilization in Haiti, in the tradition of the only slave revolt

ever to end slavery in the western hemisphere and establish a state, was called by UNNOH, a union of many public school teachers who struck against the horrendous conditions in the schools.

Three days before the strike university student Damaël D'Haiti was murdered by an off-duty cop (see CHALLENGE, 11/28,) and the rage of an entire community fueled the march, swelling the numbers of youth. UNNOH denounced the murder and took on the struggle of the youth as its own.

A multiracial group of PLP communists and friends participated and gave crucial leadership to the militant demonstration. Hundreds of copies of DEFI (the local edition of CHALLENGE) and an independent PLP flyer analyzing the limits of reformism and calling for communist revolution were distributed. More students stepped forward to provide leadership. Several will become DEFI readers and will be asked to join a Party study-action group.

Capitalism Can't Be Reformed

Before the march some students discussed the strike movement with PL'ers. The students were rightfully disillusioned by how often unions and reform movements fail, and by the fact that even when they succeed in extracting a few crumbs from the bosses' table their success is often short-lived. As long as the system which profits from the exploitation of working people still exists, these ills

will persist and reform struggles will continue endlessly. PL'ers spelled out the need to destroy the very capitalist system that's responsible. A Party flyer explained how strikes can become schools for revolution, when PLP can lead our class to take state power.

As CHALLENGE has indicated previously, amid capitalism's global crisis, workers' living conditions in Haiti are worse than the already intolerable conditions of workers in the U.S., France and other imperialist countries. In Haiti, the imperialists control half the national budget. They are, in fact, responsible for the 70% unemployment rate; for the mere 10% of schools being publicly funded; for the classrooms crowded with up to 250 students; and for the pittance teachers receive as salary.

The international bosses' plans are for war, not for alleviating the suffering of millions of workers in Haiti and worldwide. The racist violence against the working class in Haiti, the UN troops in MINUSTAH, killer cops, union-busting and the cholera epidemic are all only a taste of the ugly reality that capitalism offers our entire class. Reform is not on their agenda. Meanwhile, imperialist "aid" organizations pour workers' donations into luxury hotels like the one built by the Red Cross.

The Potential of United Workers

The strike and mobilization did succeed, however, in forcing the government's Minister of Education to

negotiate with the teachers' unions, with talks scheduled to open November 23. Still, no demands have been granted. UNNOH vowed to maintain the pressure and put teachers on the alert if the talks did not quickly produce real results. Their two-day strike, supported by student and worker groups, showed what potential workers have when they're united.

Demands include a living wage of \$1,250 a month (they now average about \$150, while rent for a small apartment in Port-au-Prince exceeds \$100 a month); back pay (some teachers are unpaid for years and only come to work because of their dedication to their students); better conditions for students; hot meals for students and teachers; vaccination against cholera in all schools and colleges; and repeal of the 2% supplementary tax levied only on workers' income, not on the bosses'.

Greater efforts are needed to spread such militant demands and strike action to other groups of workers in Haiti who unfortunately did not appear in large numbers to support the UNNOH strike. That includes workers in the sub-contractor textile plants in free-trade zones like the one being built in Caracol in Haiti's north. These zones are hailed by Hillary and Bill Clinton and the Haitian ruling class, but in reality use aid funds for the profits of the factory owners.

International Support

This strike had an international dimension. UNNOH thanked other teacher unions and their members from North America who supported the strike by sending letters, funds and organizers to Haiti. PLP members and friends helped build this support. The international delegation on the march was protected from the police and MINUSTAH by comrades and friends.

Workers and students crossed borders during the months of organizing together, going from school to school throughout the country in recent weeks, building strike committees and winning student support. Workers' struggles transcend all borders. Rebuilding international solidarity, in the great tradition of the communist movement, is an important step towards communist revolution. These modest efforts demonstrate that as we build internationalism in workers' mass organizations, PLP is truly becoming an international Party. ☺

Gaza Carnage Prelude to U.S.-Israeli War on Iran?



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
P.O. Box 808 Brooklyn NY 11202
• www.plp.org
• email: desafio.challenge@gmail.com
• blog: challengenewspaper.wordpress.com

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For eight straight days, U.S.-armed Israel bombed Palestinian civilians in what the New York Times called a "practice run for any future armed confrontation with Iran" (11/23/12). Meanwhile, President Barack Obama was on a Southeast Asia road trip to round up allies for any potential conflict with China.

These actions underscore the fundamental dilemma facing U.S. capitalists. They are desperate to maintain their global top-dog status, but they're not quite ready for the regional and world wars that inevitably loom as imperialist rivalries intensify. Obama stands ready to expand U.S. military adventures beyond Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia and Yemen, but has failed to build the domestic unity and patriotism that his ruling-class backers need. At the same time, the U.S. bosses lack international support to secure Iraqi oil and Afghan gas routes against Islamist militias.

Factional fighting has destabilized Iraq and limited Exxon Mobil's ability to extract barely half its goal for oil production there. The Taliban and Islamic militias have prevented construction of the gas pipeline extending through Afghanistan from central Asia. As they struggle in these smaller arenas, U.S. imperialists know it will be far more difficult to confront the militaries in Iran and China.

Complicating the bosses' move toward wider wars is their need to impose even more fascist discipline on U.S. workers, who are ripe for rebellion. These workers are suffering unchecked racist unemployment, widespread poverty (with 46 million people under the poverty line), and the massive, racist incarceration of 1.7 million black and Latino workers and youth. All of these attacks drag down wages and conditions for white workers, as well.

Clash Among U.S. Rulers

U.S. rulers are in disarray. Major U.S. capitalists are clashing over how to mobilize for war and the best way to wage it. Behind the scenes, their dispute shaped the supposedly tax-focused elections and the scandal involving former CIA head David Petraeus (See page 7). The less powerful Tea Party bosses, who question the need for overseas war under any circumstances, found themselves shunted to the side in the electoral circus.

There is a basic disagreement between the views put forward by Obama backer Colin Powell and the approach favored by the George W. Bush administration, as espoused by former Vice President Richard Cheney and War Secretary Donald Rumsfeld. The Powell Doctrine requires the long-term build-up of overwhelming U.S. forces in a broad international coalition. The Cheney-Rumsfeld faction prefers on-the-cheap, high-tech warfare with limited ground troops. Having Israel lay the groundwork via missile warfare in Gaza serves these latter forces. Beyond these internal divisions within the U.S. dominant finance capitalist wing, their international allies have interests that don't always coincide.

Israel is a case in point. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu sees a nuclear-capable Iran as an immediate threat to Israel's existence. He sent a warning to Iran by dropping huge bunker-buster bombs (supplied by the U.S.) on Gaza. This attack horrified the Exxon Mobil-JPMorgan Chase ruling-class faction, which is ill-prepared

for the long and costly war that could ensue. But it warmed the heart of the neo-conservative supporter Sheldon Adelson. Owning newspapers in Israel (along with casinos in China, the United States' main imperialist rival), Adelson pledged \$100 million to Team Romney. He was counting on a Romney administration to give the go-ahead to Netanyahu while also reducing tax revenues — a clear threat to the long-term war plans of the finance capitalists.

Wider Conflict in Near-Term War

As reported by the Huffington Post (11/20/12), Anthony Cordesman, a prominent strategist at the Rockefeller-bankrolled Center for Strategic and International Studies, warns of a near-term "wider conflict — one that could see Iranian missiles targeting American troops in Afghanistan, Hezbollah rocket and guerrilla attacks into Northern Israel from Lebanon, U.S. warships fighting through minefields to re-open the strait of Hormuz [the conduit for huge supplies of oil] and smoke billowing from wrecked tankers and oil facilities along the Persian Gulf."

Cordesman spoke of Netanyahu's planned Israeli air strikes on Iran, which Obama succeeded in postponing until after his election but seemed more imminent after the Gaza foray. To forestall such hasty action, Obama diverted Secretary of State Hillary Clinton from her anti-China, alliance-building Asian tour and sent her to Cairo and Tel Aviv to craft a deal on Gaza.

That short-circuited Netanyahu's Iran plan for the moment. But in a further demonstration of the weakness of U.S. diplomacy, Egyptian president Mohammed Morsi, representing the Muslim Brotherhood, parlayed his role as the Hamas-Israel power broker into a grab for a pro-Islamist, anti-U.S. dictatorship.

Even as war raged in Gaza and Syria, however, Obama stuck to his task by meeting with Vietnamese and Cambodian rulers at the recent pro-U.S. Association of Southeast Asian Nations summit. His focus was a testament to the prime importance of the imperialist competition between the U.S. and China. But despite Obama's best efforts, these regional alliances remain uncertain.

Will millions of working-class Vietnamese and Cambodians fight for the same U.S. rulers who massacred five million of their family members in the 1960s and '70s? The racism that propelled those genocidal attacks reflects just how cheaply U.S. bosses view Asian workers. It is also an extension of how they view black, Latino and Asian workers and youth within the U.S.

Emerging Class Struggle

In counterpoint to the U.S. rulers' war needs is the rise of class struggle worldwide. Millions of textile workers have struck in Pakistan and Bangladesh. Millions more have marched against European bosses' poverty-imposed austerity. Anti-racist and student-teacher struggle is sweeping Haiti. Hundreds of thousands of miners in South Africa have squared off against the U.S.- and British-backed corporate owners of the mining riches there. Protests against racist cop murderers have erupted in various U.S. cities. For the first time, multi-billion-dollar Walmart has been confronted by strikes within the U.S. against their poverty wages and exploitative working conditions.

Progressive Labor Party members and friends have been active in many of these fight-backs. We have supported and sometimes led these workers' struggles while spreading our communist outlook. These ideas point the way to the solution to capitalist exploitation: revolution to overthrow the racist, sexist profit system and establish workers' rule. Join us!✊

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.

Avenge Racist KKKop Murder of Reynaldo Cuevas



BRONX, NY, November 17 — Tonight a crowd marked our weekly protest and march against the NYPD's racist murder of 20-year-old Reynaldo Cuevas. The next time the police peddle their sick lie that their job is to "protect and serve," we must remember Reynaldo's murder and how they gunned down another innocent youth whose only "crime" was "living while Latino."

On September 7, Reynaldo and his uncle were finishing work at the family bodega when they stumbled upon a burglary. Three armed robbers forced them to the floor. When the cops arrived, the two workers seized the moment to flee for safety. Or so they thought. Rey's uncle ran outside with his hands up, with Rey right behind him. Surveillance video clearly shows Reynaldo fall onto the sidewalk in an attempt to avoid cop Ramysh Bangali. Bangali pounced on him, pointed the gun at his head and fired, killing him.

This was no accident. It's part of kkkop Training 101: treat every black and Latino as a criminal, especially youth. This bosses' terror is used to force black and Latino workers to accept poverty wages. For all the fake tears and excuses by Mayor Bloomberg and Police Chief KKKelly, Reynaldo was viciously gunned down, as an uncle uttered bitterly, "like a dog."

But the racism doesn't stop there. Ana Cuevas, Reynaldo's mother, is still grieving the loss of her husband who, two years ago, was gunned down in the Dominican Republic (DR), an innocent victim of another burglary. That case too is saturated with racism. The DR is a virtual colony of U.S. imperialism, where it promotes tourism, drugs and prostitution for cheap profit. Some desperate workers turn to crime and the entire working class pays the price for a system that runs for the maximum profit of a few bosses while exploiting and reducing the overwhelming majority of workers to poverty. The Cuevas's "American Dream" of a better life in the U.S. has been exposed as a racist nightmare.

In their grief and rage, Reynaldo's family has courageously taken up the banner of protest. Drawing lessons from the Ramarley Graham and Shantel Davis struggles, the Cuevas family and supporters have been holding weekly protests and marches to the 42nd Precinct, one week for every year of Reynaldo's life. During our last protest, several workers, women and men, stopped us to share their own stories of racist beatings at the hands of the cops and to scream obscenities at them outside the precinct.

The Cuevas family is rightly demanding that Bangali be indicted for Rey's murder. But even

as they chant, "No Justice, No Peace, No Racist Police!" they must also recognize that the fight is bigger than one murdered youth. We must view these protests as part of building a movement to destroy the very roots of racism: the capitalist system and its absolute need to super-exploit black and Latino workers for profit.

Progressive Labor Party has been — and will continue to be — involved in these struggles to

Bosses' Dilemma: Need Racist Terror and Black, Latino Soldiers

There is yet another cruel irony in the case. Reynaldo was planning to enlist in the U.S. Army. His sister, in fact, was in basic training with the Marines at the time of the murder.

This fact illustrates a central problem for the ruling class that we need to learn well: while the rulers need to terrorize black and Latino youth in the cities to submit to poverty, they're also forced to arm them so they can join their military, and kill and die in imperialist profit wars overseas.

It is young workers like Reynaldo and Nicole who we must win to realize that all bosses are our enemies and that they should fight on the side of the working class, for communist revolution, before the bosses gun them down. Legions of armed black, Latino and white soldiers will be key forces in any revolution. The Reynaldo Cuevas case is part of our education.

offer comfort, support, and the political leadership necessary to wipe out racist police terror once and for all with communist revolution. JOIN US EVERY SATURDAY from 5-8 PM! Corner of 169th Street and Franklin Avenue in the Bronx.☸

Link Workers' Struggles to Fight vs. Racism

NEW YORK, November 17 — Over 200 workers and students attended a conference to make plans to fight racism with multiracial, international unity. The goal of the day was to unite seemingly unconnected struggles into an antiracist army. Attendees were drawn from movements fighting back against the racist police murders of Ramarley Graham and Shantel Davis; fighting the layoffs and closing of Downstate Hospital; Hurricane Sandy victims and volunteers; immigrant workers' rights organizers; workers organizing on their jobs; organizers of the anti-Cholera campaign struggle in Haiti and U.S.; as well as high school and college students and teachers.

The conference began with messages from representatives of these movements. The keynote speaker set the tone for the day when he called for workers and students to walk out if kkkop Richard Haste, Ramarley Graham's murderer, was acquitted. Organizing a walkout isn't easy, he said, but if we start building now in all our organizations then "if Haste walks, we walk," could become a reality.

Particularly moving were reports from the teachers' strike in Haiti, the campaign to end Cholera there and the emotional history of people's fight to survive Hurricane Sandy. All this is occurring amid the racist treatment they faced from both governmental and Red Cross/Salvation Army-type organizations. Eleven hundred dollars was raised on the spot to help these displaced workers and their families.

Over lunch and later in numerous workshops, we shared experiences in organizing fights against racism. We discussed how racism is the bosses' main tool to divide the working

class from fighting back while super-exploiting brown and black workers around the world. Therefore the main class to benefit from racism is the ruling class.

We discussed the need of a multi-racial group to fight racism wherever it rears its ugly head.

Out of these rich discussions, we agreed to participate in some specific anti-racist actions:

- Plan and participate in a mass march against police violence from 1 Police Plaza to City Hall during the Martin Luther King weekend.
- Support the retired Downstate Hospital worker on December 4, 2012 at Brooklyn Criminal Court. He was arrested while supporting an anti-layoff struggle.
- Attend the December 11, 2012 trial of kkkop Richard Haste in the Bronx Criminal Court to show support for Ramarley Graham's family while demanding that Haste be convicted.
- Use petitions and a power point presentation to build the fight against the Cholera epidemic in Haiti.

Most importantly, we agreed to bring these plans to our churches schools, jobs and the various organizations we belong to in order to build a mass response to racism.☸

1,100 Protest in 100 U.S. Cities

Workers Strike vs. Walmart's Exploitation

DC - MARYLAND

WASHINGTON, DC, November 23 — Over 400 workers took to the streets here to protest slave-labor conditions at Walmart, the world's largest retailer and third largest corporation. Walmart has branches around the world and over two million wage-slaves working for them. Fiercely anti-union, Walmart systematically keeps workers as low-wage part-timers to avoid paying any benefits, forcing workers onto food stamps and Medicaid to survive. If black and white workers fought a civil war to end racist chattel slavery over 150 years ago, it is high time to fight a revolutionary war for communism to end racist wage-slavery!

Such a revolutionary line was not, however, the order of the day except for the message brought to various rallies in the U.S by the Progressive Labor Party and its friends, distributing CHALLENGE to participants in the various actions around town and making several new contacts interested in revolution.

Marchers Confront Bosses, Cops

In the largest action in the DC area, the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 400 organized a fleet of six buses at 7:30 a.m. to take unionists, community residents, and students to the Landover Hills Walmart in Maryland. This Walmart serves largely black and Latino residents and has fewer products and a lower quality than other Walmarts, typically how capitalist chain retailers treat their customers in a structurally racist manner. Marchers circled the store, chanting boldly against the mistreatment of its workers. They were quickly met by Walmart managers, backed by over 10 squad cars of police.

The bosses declared that everyone would be charged with trespassing if they didn't leave right away. Marchers responded with a brief prayer circle and then a march back to the buses in too quick a retreat, given their numbers.

One bus travelled to another Walmart in Severna, Maryland where over 30 activists infiltrated the store and, at a given time, came together inside the store for an Occupy-style mic check. They loudly denounced Walmart. The workers were all smiles and the customers were very supportive — and then management and the cops aggressively intervened to throw out the activists.

Workers Refuse to Back Off

In a separate action at the Walmart in Germantown, Maryland, over 25 unionists (machinists, teamsters, transit, and food workers) arrived to pass out leaflets and secure signatures on petitions. The UFCW again insisted on no confrontation, even instructing UFCW staff to take pictures of anyone "creating a disturbance" (i.e., getting militant against the boss) and report them to the police! The managers streamed out of the store demanding that the protesters leave, but the workers refused and continued their protest. The police said, in this case, that, since workers were not doing anything illegal, they would not move against the small group. Again, CHALLENGEs were distributed and new contacts made.

Finally, at the Clinton, Maryland Walmart, a team of three including friends of the PLP arrived to see if there was any action there. The cops were ready and primed at this site, aggressively confronting the team with hard stares. We were obviously guilty of SWB — Standing While Black. When one of our team approached the door, the manager came out with his walkie talkie blaring, so fearful was he of any possible labor action and fully determined to aggressively push back against any opposition, however slight.

Only a handful of Walmart workers participated in any of these actions. If the UFCW and its OUR Walmart organizing group expect to make progress in unionizing Walmart more broadly, a strong base must be built on a grassroots basis, store by store.

Unionized or not, workers need to fight the entire system of capitalism and its racist structure. Unionized workers are being savagely attacked by a gang-up of the bosses and the union misleaders throughout the country, so bolder revolutionary organizing is a must in the face of severe economic crisis. From the contacts made today and the reinforcement of the relationship of PL'ers with their friends in the grassroots of the unions and Occupy DC, a growing revolutionary struggle will be possible in the coming period.☸

CHICAGO

CHICAGO, November 23 — A coalition of unions with the acronym OUR Walmart, (Organization United for Respect at Walmart) organized several hundred workers to picket at various Walmarts on Black Friday. Over the years, Walmart workers in the U.S. have tried to unionize but have met with fierce resistance. The bosses have consistently responded with reduced hours, firings and other hostile retaliation. In the face of this abuse, workers valiantly organized a strike action on the biggest shopping day of the year, without an official union.

Many corporations operate in the red (losing money) all year until Black Friday, when companies start to get into the black (turning a profit) because millions of workers begin their holiday shopping.

Lower Prices = Super-Exploitation

Each member of the Walton family (owners of Walmart) has amassed billions in wealth by paying retail workers poverty wages and international factory workers even less. The average Walmart worker only makes \$8.81 an hour, and as many as 80% need food stamps. In many states, Walmart workers are the top

recipients of Medicaid. Meanwhile, Walmart receives more than \$1.2 billion in tax breaks, free land and other government "handouts." If that wasn't bad enough, Walmart factory workers in China and other countries face deadly working conditions for unlivable wages and no benefits (NY Times). Walmart is also notorious for using child labor abroad.

Turn Black Friday Into Red Friday

The Progressive Labor Party supports Walmart workers in their struggle for livable wages and acceptable working conditions. Unfortunately, calling for the unionization of one corporation is not enough to end the racist, sexist exploitation that is the foundation of capitalism. Workers must see this and other strikes as opportunities to train ourselves to fight our class enemy, the capitalists. Other workers should honor the Walmart picket lines, discuss the fight back with others and call for other workers to strike in solidarity. Ultimately, a revolution must occur where workers seize state power from the murderous, profit-driven bosses. When we establish communism, each worker's labor and input will be invaluable in the advancement of society. Join PLP.☸

LOS ANGELES

LOS ANGELES, November 23 — When the Walmart workers arrived, the anticipation turned to excitement. Weeks prior, PL comrades met insurgent Walmart workers who had organized a walkout at their Southern California store (see CHALLENGE, 10/31). After several visits, PL organized a BBQ for them as they prepared for the "Black Friday" strike actions that took place last week. These Walmart workers striking against the world's largest retailer and private employer create the opportunity for PL to build class consciousness, an important step towards developing a communist outlook.

A comrade welcomed the workers and began the discussion by linking their struggle to that of teachers, students, airport workers, bakers, miners and all workers under attack by capitalism in crisis. When the workers spoke, our group of about 25, who participated in the BBQ despite the rain, learned first-hand about the retaliation Walmart unleashes on their "associates" who are told they are a part of the Walmart "family."

Workers have been written up, fired, harassed and had their hours cut, all publicly for customers and coworkers to witness. "It all happened out on the floor of the store, not even in the manager's office," said one of the workers.

Building up to the Black Friday strike, part of a strike wave against the giant retailer, Walmart took an aggressive stance. In addition to their policy of humiliation and intimidation, the company also filed a complaint with the National Labor Relations Board, calling the workers' actions illegal and sent out a memo to managers that advised them to threaten protesters who "trespass" with arrest.

A Latina worker central to the organizing asserted: "We make Walmart work! Without us there would be nothing! And to be treated like this?" Another shared that many coworkers, including her, are unable to afford healthcare costs due to part-time hours, low wages and expensive co-pays. Workers with chronic illnesses, women, and black and Latino workers bear this disproportionately.

The week following the PL BBQ, several hundred workers (including warehouse

workers from the Inland Empire where this fight was initiated), students and community members attended actions, including pickets, marches and civil disobedience, that were organized by various labor unions in front of three different Walmarts in Southern California. PL participated in these actions, providing water and offering healthcare support for the picket, in addition to a communist analysis of the fight against capitalist exploitation.

These recent actions against the giant Walmart can serve as an inspiration to workers everywhere. Through militant strikes and walkouts, working-class people become aware of their collective power and learn that fighting back against exploitation, racism and sexism in the workplace works. Organizing together and fighting together works. Communists agree, but we extend that analysis to all of society. One worker stated, "I can defend myself and speak for myself. But I am not heard. It is only when we stand up together that we are heard and make a difference." More than anyone, communists agree.

BOSTON

BOSTON, November 23 — Six members and friends of the PLP, including two students, leafleted and distributed CHALLENGE in the Walmart parking lot, mostly to customers. The response was generally supportive. The team renewed relations with an old friend who was shopping there and who had marched on May Day with PLP a few years ago. He was eager to get back in touch. Other responses from the people the team met included "Yes, it would be better if workers ran everything" and "Yes, we need to kill all those bosses". Many customers, knowing how abused the workers were, nevertheless felt trapped by having to shop there.☸

No to War on Gaza!

Yes to Class War!

TEL-AVIV, November 17 — Hundreds of Jewish and Arab demonstrators marched in central Tel-Aviv protesting the murderous war waged by Israeli rulers against the Gaza Strip. They demanded an end to the bloodshed and to the suffering caused by the ruling classes (both Israeli and Hamas bosses) to the workers of all nationalities and religions in and surrounding Gaza.

A small gang of Zionist fascists gathered near this rally, dancing with Israeli flags and shouting support for the war. But the fascist thugs didn't dare approach the leftist demonstrators.

Israeli Rulers' Phony Excuses

While Israeli rulers claim they're acting "in defense of Israeli citizens in the south" facing rocket fire from Gaza, that's as phony excuse as the one used to launch the war four years ago — in which 1,300 Palestinians were killed — "to liberate an Israeli POW from Hamas captivity." The fact is they made no real effort to free him (he was released in an exchange deal with Hamas).

Yet for four years the Israeli government ignored the distress of the Jewish workers of southern Israel, mostly working poor. Suddenly, right after the U.S. elections and two months before the Israeli elections, it is "protecting" these citizens.

Netanyahu and his tycoon backers don't really care about workers suffering from low pay, rising living costs, and broad cuts in education, healthcare and welfare. The real reason the Netanyahu government launched this latest carnage — which early on has killed 132 Palestinians, including 18 children — is the changed situation in the Middle East.

With the emergence of the Arab Spring, instead of pro-U.S. dictators such as Egypt's Mubarak who silently agreed to any action by Israel, the Zionists now face an unstable Arab world fought over by imperialist blocs. In Arab countries such as Egypt and Tunisia, the Muslim Brotherhood is now in power, presumably winning elections "democratically" but still serving the imperialists, not their people.



In these conditions, especially given the power struggle between Netanyahu and his wealthy U.S. patrons (such as billionaire Sheldon Adelson and Mitt Romney) versus Obama and his finance capitalist bosses, the Israeli regime must prove its power as a U.S. "cop" in the Middle East. Mass bombings in Gaza and mustering 75,000 troops on the Gaza border serve as a warning to all regimes in the region, and particularly to Iran, that despite the Arab Spring, Israel and the U.S. patrons are a forced to be reckoned with.

Diverting Mass Protests

Additionally, the war comes after the mass social protest in Israel in the summer of 2011 (similar to Occupy Wall Street) in which hundreds of thousands of workers took to the streets protesting the destruction of their lives by capitalism. Netanyahu and his wealthy friends know very well that a "successful" war (that is, with few Israeli casualties and many Palestinian dead) can momentarily push aside masses' protests over the cost of living, the burden of taxes, the starvation wages and the fact of class exploitation, and win their support for the regime, the tycoons and the massive military establishment.

Israeli fascists of all kinds drool over this war. For example, at Haifa University, in response to a quiet vigil organized by students from Palestine memorializing those killed in Gaza, the "Im Tirzu" activists danced in great celebration flying Israeli flags. The previous war — named "Operation Cast Lead" — increased popular support for the regime, and so does the present one, "Operation Pillar Cloud."

Of course, all this helps Netanyahu in the coming January 2013 elections (although his opponent Yehimovich, a socialist, has begun to speak in militarist and even fascist tones). This plays right into the hands of open fascist parliament member Michael Ben-Ari, who speaks aloud those things Netanyahu dreams about: "Let's turn Gaza into a graveyard."

Hamas — Another Capitalist Exploiter

Meanwhile, Hamas, a reactionary religious organization, operates a corrupt capitalist regime in the Gaza Strip, where the rich enjoy posh shopping malls and expensive restaurants while the working class starves and suffers from at least 50 percent unemployment. Despite the mutual hateful speeches by both Hamas and Israel, in reality both ruling classes wish the current Gaza situation to continue — that is, Hamas as a sub-contractor of Israel in the Gaza Strip, keeping the workers down and repressing more radical factions.

Ahmed Jaabari, the Palestinian militarist who was assassinated at the beginning of the current round of violence, was, in fact, an indirect servant of the Israeli (and U.S.) ruling class. He even reached a comfortable compromise with Israel for POW exchanges last year. But he was sacrificed for the needs of the imperialists.

Israel has no interest in bringing down Hamas and again taking over the Gaza Strip. It will cost a huge amount of money and put Israel in a prolonged ground

war against Gaza's masses. When "Operation Pillar Cloud" ends, Hamas very likely will continue to rule Gaza and rockets will continue to fall on workers in southern Israel. This enables Hamas to stay relevant in the eyes of Gaza's population which cries out for retribution for the Israeli bombing raids on the Gaza Strip. Netanyahu, of course, does not care that workers in southern Israel get hit by rockets from time to time, as long as the long-term indirect rule over Gaza continues.

The rulers' current war runs against the interests of the Jewish workers in Israel. The mass killings in Gaza will not make their lives safer. On the contrary, Finance Minister Yuval Shteinitz has already announced mass budget cuts (except for the military, of course) to fund this costly war, cuts which will make the lives of the Jewish workers even more hellish.

The hatred preached by the ruling classes of all nations and creeds serves only the Hamas barons and the 19 ruling families of Israel, who laugh all the way to the bank while we tighten our belts and get drafted en-masse for a pointless war serving only the rulers' profits.

PLP Backs Class War

We in Progressive Labor Party oppose both Netanyahu and his backers — the Israeli capitalists — and the capitalist Hamas bosses in Gaza. We're not pacifists, however. We support only one kind of war: class war waged by the working class against the capitalist exploiters. The real terrorists here are both Hamas and the Netanyahu government and its patrons, the big tycoons, who turn us into slaves for their profits.

The only real answer to poverty and war is to take to the streets and battle our own enemy — the capitalists. We must fight to smash racism and capitalist borders between workers erected by the bosses to separate us! Only communist revolution for a society run by and for the working class can free us from the capitalist exploitation that oppresses the workers being slaughtered in this war. Workers of the world, unite!✊



LETTERS

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

'Why I joined PLP...'

My interest in politics began in 2008 when I entered college. I wanted to be a Criminal Justice major, but after taking my first political science course I was so intrigued by it that I switched my major. As I took more courses and learned more about the U.S. government, I discovered all of the flaws, the racism and the evils that surround it.

I also began to look at the two major parties in the U.S.. The Republicans are a party of conservatives who look out for nothing more than themselves, who claim to be Christian but turn a blind eye to helping fellow citizens, and who invest time and money to increase their own wealth instead of fixing social ills.

Next are the Democrats who have a reputation for helping workers, but who really do nothing but carry on the rulers' agenda of more wars to control oil, more deportations and more unemployment and lower wages for those lucky enough to still have a job.

The presidential candidates finance their campaigns from Exxon, BP, JP Morgan, tobacco and alcohol companies, and so on. How can a president possibly fix the social ills that plague us if he or she is looking out first for the interests of corporations like JP Morgan?

I had no party to affiliate myself with until I discovered Progressive Labor Party, one that wants the working class to excel to new heights, a party that will not accept money from corporations, a party that is incorruptible and has the potential to do so many things. A party that marches, protests and tries in every way possible to help comrades and workers.

This is why I joined PLP!

A New Comrade

I Taught in Red China, Red China Taught Me

The following is an interview with a teacher who taught in China, referred to as "comrade."

PL'er: When and where did you teach in China?

Comrade: 1984 to 1988, in Hurbín in North-eastern China and Beijing (the capital).

PL'er: What was teaching there like?

Comrade: I had the best students I will ever expect to have!

PL'er: What was your average day like?

Comrade: I would teach my English class for four hours each morning, in the afternoon I would prepare my lessons and meet with students. We also had to go shopping everyday for fresh vegetables, and more.

PL'er: What was life like there?

Comrade: It was a collective lifestyle. Everyone was part of a work unit. Everyone had a badge, the same clothing and more or less equal wages. I was reading lots of historical literature about socialism and communism. At this time, when Deng Xiao Ping said, "Socialism needed to be reformed," I could see things were beginning to change. It began in the countryside.

Farmers had two plots of land. One was the collective plot where all was sold to the state. The second plot they could grow anything they wanted and sell it to on the open market. And so Deng Xiao Ping sowed the seeds of capitalism!

Even though we were living and reading about socialism everybody knew change was coming.

Workers and students used to call each other tongzhi (comrade in Chinese), that fell out of favor! socialism was gradually disappeared.

Stockton Comrade

Editor's note: Deng Xiao Ping was an enemy of the revolution, as all revisionists [anti-communists in red clothing] are, who led China backward to capitalism under the name of reforming socialism. Today, PLP understands that fighting for socialism as the transition from capitalism to communism is both dangerous and erroneous. Drawing from the lessons of the old movement, we fight directly for communism. Anything less means retaining elements of class society, the seeds of the profit system.

Sandy's Lesson: Capitalism's Selfishness Not 'Human Nature'

In the wake of "Superstorm" Sandy, millions of mostly working-class people were left in the dark throughout areas of New Jersey. In Hoboken, some of the poorest areas, were hardest hit. These are predominantly black and Latino areas, and had been left to fester while the city developed super-expensive condos on higher ground. For years, these areas have flooded whenever there has been a flash thunderstorm.

During this storm, workers gathered together to collect their resources and check on their neighbors to make sure they were safe and warm. As the days went on, and food started going to waste, many collectively made dinners and rode out the nights waiting for the three to four feet of water to recede from the front of our buildings.

After the waters receded, a city-wide electric blackout continued. Many of us put pres-

sure on local government to make sure these areas of Hoboken wouldn't be forgotten. We knew that the rich areas in the uptown section of the city would get power first, big names like Eli Manning of the New York Giants live there.

Also, after the waters receded many of the better-off residents of the city were able to leave to stay with family or friends or in hotels, while the residents of the city projects were left wondering when the power would come back on.

Through this storm and destruction, we learned, as workers, that greed and selfishness, which the bosses push as "human nature," aren't in our genes. Our instincts are about working together to take care of our working-class brothers and sisters in the face of capitalist-created disaster. More importantly, it reinforced the reasons for fighting against capitalism and ending it — because it continues its racist exploitation of workers and keeps them impoverished in wage slavery hell.

New Jersey Comrade

Bangladesh: Workers Shut Bosses' Death Traps



Garment Workers in Bangladesh Unite with Walmart Workers in the U.S.

DHAKA, BANGLADESH, November 27 — Thousands of garment workers poured into the streets of Ashulia, the industrial belt north of here, protesting the deaths of at least 112 mostly women workers, burnt alive in the Tarzeen Factory, trapped by poor escape routes.

The protesting workers paralyzed much of Ashulia, blocked roads and forced the closing of many of the country's 4,500 garment factories. They produce \$18 billion in profits per year, second in textile exports only to China.

The workers were burned beyond recognition because the capitalists who run these factories won't spend money on fire escapes or follow safety rules. Most of the workers who died were on the first and second floors and were killed, fire officials said, because there

were not enough exits for them to get out.

"The factory had three staircases, and all of them were down through the ground floor," said Maj. Mohammad Mahbub, the operations director for the fire department, according to The Associated Press. "So the workers could not come out when the fire engulfed the building."

Since 2006 over 500 workers have died in garment factory fires. Experts say the fires could easily have been avoided if the factory owners had taken the right precautions. Many factories are in cramped neighborhoods, have too few fire escapes and widely flout safety measures. The industry employs more than three million workers in Bangladesh, mostly women.

Garment workers' minimum wage here is about \$37 a

month while the bosses' sales total over \$35 million a year. Yet these workers had NO fire exits! Another element of the tragedy is that they provided childcare in the factory. It has yet to be known how many children were lost in the fire.

Some of the buyers from this plant are the Gap, Tommy Hilfiger and Walmart who is attacking its striking workforce in the U.S. while it literally murders them overseas. So U.S. bosses are part of the murder of these workers.

PLP is organizing with the striking Walmart workers in the U.S. and backs the workers in Bangladesh who've been fighting the terrible conditions that capitalism has forced upon them. We will continue to support the brave women and men workers who are struggling in Bangladesh and all over the world.✊

Petraeus Dumped by Rulers' Battle Over War Strategies

After helping to slaughter millions of Iraqis and Afghans, the fact that ousted CIA chief and former general David Petraeus cheated on his wife should shock nobody. Like their U.S. bosses, military leaders propagate capitalism's exploitation of women inside and outside the armed forces. What matters is the scandal's political aspect, and how it points to the main finance capitalists' push towards wider wars and the military draft that likely will be needed to carry them out.

Barack Obama's policies faithfully serve finance capital's outlook for long-term war. But while Obama won his second term in the White House, the Republican Party — despite deep divisions in their ranks over war policy — maintained its majority in the House of Representatives. This is the context that reveals the significance of the Petraeus scandal.

An Arab-baiting FBI agent named Frederick Humphries did Petraeus in. (Humphries helped entrap Muslims into "terrorist" busts, though few stuck.) He learned of Petraeus's infidelity from a socialite who fraternized

with top brass in the Pentagon's Tampa-based Central Command, which runs all U.S. military operations in the oil-rich Mideast. Humphries informed Republican House Majority Leader Eric Cantor, who owes his allegiance to the Tea Party faction of the U.S. ruling class.

Petraeus Follows the Costly 'Overwhelming Force' Doctrine

Aside from his mass murder of working-class Iraqis and Afghans, Petraeus earned his ruling-class media fame by devising an expensive "Petraeus Doctrine" for fighting wars. In the spirit of Colin Powell, former head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (see page 2), it calls for 25 "counterinsurgent" U.S. soldiers for every 1,000 residents of an invaded country (Boston Globe, 11/28/07). That would add up to at least 750,000 troops in Iraq and a similar number in Afghanistan. Pro-Israel neo-conservatives, who advocate "war on the cheap," tolerated Petraeus for a time because the U.S. domestic economic crisis prevented Obama from implementing the gen-

eral's costly policy.

Two years ago, Petraeus became a more pointed threat to the neo-conservative line. As The Atlantic magazine noted, "Petraeus sees what so much of Washington refuses to see: that Israel's year-long contempt for Obama, initiated by the [2010] Gaza campaign, entrenched by Netanyahu's victory and compounded by continued settlements...is a problem. More than a problem, Israel's total impunity for its intransigence is becoming a liability for the advance of U.S. interests around the world" (3/14/10).

When Petraeus bungled the Benghazi incident, allowing Islamists to kill the U.S. ambassador to Libya and three CIA goons, the U.S.-Israel bloc pounced, though with a calculated delay that suggests a geopolitical deal at the highest level. Cantor, who had taken \$5 million in campaign funds from Sheldon Adelson, the billionaire pal of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, took Humphries' damning information to FBI head Robert Mueller. But it was withheld from other Republican leaders,

who could have used it to torpedo Obama's re-election.

One possibility is that the information was held back in return for Obama's tacit go-ahead for Netanyahu's Gaza slaughter.

Heading Toward A Military Draft

Petraeus had long enjoyed the backing of journalists like Thomas Ricks, a pro-Obama liberal at the Washington Post's Foreign Policy (FP) magazine and a fellow of the Center for a New American Security, a finance capital think tank. On a book tour praising Petraeus, Ricks lamented the general's demise but lauded public support for Obama's push for increased war taxes and the mass conscription that would logically follow: "Nor is a draft out of the question to these people. To my surprise, the same crowd...that applauded the tax hike also warmly welcomed my suggestion that the country would benefit from having some sort of draft" (FP, 11/19/12). ☛

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

Haiti: cholera traces to poverty

GW, 11/19 — Later this month, people will celebrate the battle fought by slaves against their French overlords that led to the establishment of world's first black-led republic in 1804.... "This country is very vulnerable. It has the world's worst cholera epidemic and 3.5% of the people in the capital are still living in tents.... In Haiti, the disasters come every day....

Even before Sandy, Haiti had more cholera cases than the rest of the world put together.... 7,500 people have died....

Cholera is a disease of the poor. It is not difficult to avoid or treat if basic sanitation and clean water are available.

Student poverty blocks teachers

LAT — Teachers are being saddled with absurdly high expectations. Some studies have shown a correlation between student performance and teacher "effectiveness," depending on how this elusive quality is measured. But there is a whole body of academic literature proving the stronger correlation between student performance and a much more important variable: family income.

Yes, I'm talking about poverty. Sorry to be so gauche, but.... on the SAT, on average.... each increment in higher family income translates into points on the test....

It is fair to insist that teachers approach their jobs with the assumption that every single child, rich or poor, can succeed. It is not fair to expect teachers to correct all the imbalances and remedy all the pathologies that result from growing inequality in our society.

U.S. generates riches, not good life

NYT, 10/30 — ...Capitalism has led us to where we are today. The United States may be good at generating wealth.... But the American way has not been effective at transforming affluence into broad-based well-being....

Cutthroat...capitalism has exacted high social

costs.... Perhaps unsurprisingly we suffer from some of the worst social ills known to the industrialized world....

More American children die before reaching age 19 than in any other rich country....

We understand the importance of early childhood development. Yet [U.S.]...

public spending on early childhood is the most meager among advanced nations....

The American way has produced a high-tech health care system that offers sophisticated cures for those who can afford them, yet it is astronomically expensive and poor at combating many run-of-the-mill ailments, and leaves millions uninsured.

Our safety net — to protect the most vulnerable from globalization's ravages — is threadbare.

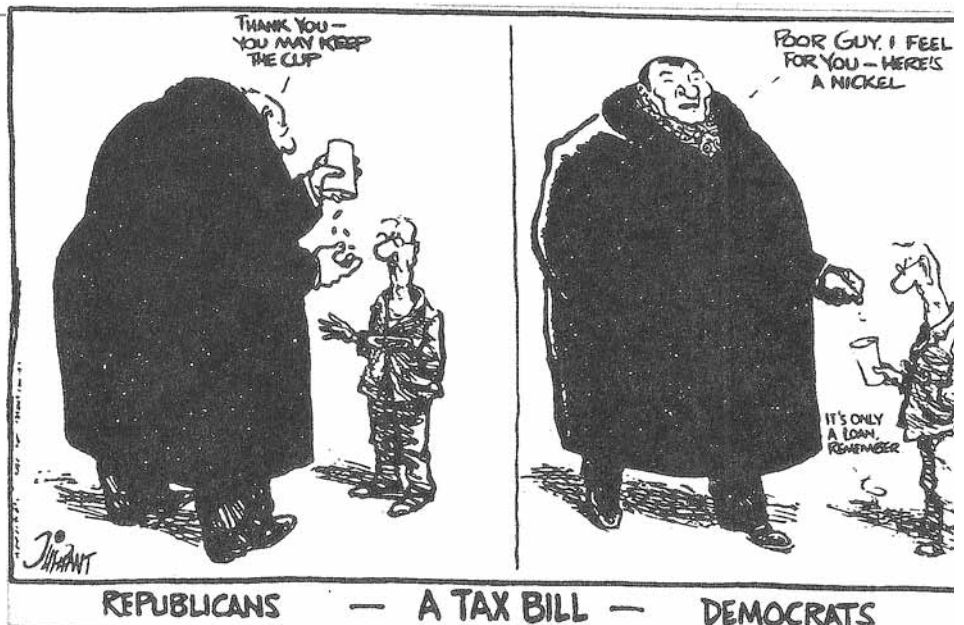
Money woes injure student aims

NYT, 11/15 — Money troubles interfere with the academic performance of about one-third of all college students, and a similar number of students regularly skip buying required academic materials because of the costs, according to a survey released on Thursday.

In an era of stagnant incomes and rising tuition and student debt, the burden of college costs on families and former students is well-documented. But the new findings from the National Survey of Student Engagement show that financial worries are a major source of stress for undergraduates while they are still in school.

About three-fifths of students surveyed reported that they often worry about having enough money to cover ordinary costs, and students who spend the most hours at paying jobs are, not surprisingly, those feeling the most financial stress. Among those who work more than 20 hours a week, about three-fifths said that their jobs got in the way of school work.

"For too many students, this is a real obstacle to achievement...."



Whistleblower cop got only hostility

NYT, 11/14 — David Durk, a New York police detective who with Officer Frank Serpico shattered the infamous blue wall of silence to expose widespread corruption in the city's Police Department in the 1960s and '70s, died on Tuesday....

What he found was a culture of corruption: of officers and superiors taking payoffs from gamblers, drug dealers, merchants and mobsters for protection and information, like the names of informers they wanted to kill; of officers stealing and dealing drugs, riding shotgun for pushers and intimidating witnesses.

In precinct after precinct, Mr. Durk found cash "pads" — lists of payoffs... — with shares for officers, sergeants and higher-ups. And behind the corruption, he discovered... a code of silence, called the blue wall....

As Mr. Durk recalled, "The fact is that almost wherever we turned in the city administration, and almost wherever we went in the rest of the city, we were met not with cooperation, not with appreciation, not with eagerness to seek out the truth, but with suspicion and hostility and... fear that at any moment our efforts might be betrayed...."

Mayor Lindsay created a commission.... but the fallout was minimal.... No senior police or city officials were charged....

After the... hearings, Dork continued pressing corruption reforms, but he found himself largely persona non grata in the department, in other agencies he worked for, and even among some reporters....

MORE ITEMS AVAILABLE AT WWW.PLP.ORG

How Communists Moved the Masses to Control Floods

In the wake of Hurricane Sandy, coverage in the bosses' media emphasizes the helplessness of humanity in the face of nature's destructiveness. Under capitalism, we are also constantly bombarded with the idea that people look out for themselves, and can never really work together for a common purpose without a money incentive.

But workers' own experiences show that these stories told by mouthpieces for the capitalists are lies. PLP members and friends have volunteered in local relief efforts in the New York/New Jersey area. We have heard about and witnessed both stories of life-saving heroism during the storm and the efforts of thousands of volunteers providing basic necessities to their class brothers and sisters.

History also shows that workers and peasants in communist-led societies have shown the human desire to work for the collective without material reward in return. The communist-led revolution in China in 1949 brought workers and peasants to power. Production and work was organized based upon national five-year plans.

These plans were discussed all over the country and decided in advance. In Northern China, near Peking, the capital of China, one area had experienced yearly rains that flooded the farmland because the local mountains were quite dry and had no trees or other vegetation to prevent the water from rushing downhill. To stop this yearly damage to the farmland, the region was scheduled for a "check dam" and reservoir during the Third Five Year Plan in 1963-1967.

The peasants in the local area decided for themselves that there was no need to wait. They put out a call to the communist party and other organizations in Peking in 1957. One hundred and twenty thousand volunteer workers responded. Everyone worked for free. Each factory or office sent no more than 10% of their workers to contribute to the collective labor. The 90% who stayed behind worked a little harder to make up for the labor loss, while the 10% who went continued to have their basic needs met.

Here are the words of a North American resident who was part of the project:

Of all the factors going in to making the project a success, unquestionably the most vital was the enthusiasm of the volunteers. I did a stint with some people from my office and it was an astonishing experience. Men and women who ordinarily did nothing more vigorous than tickling a typewriter or taking half a turn in a swivel chair were suddenly shoveling earth and toting gravel in baskets slung from shoulder poles, day and night, rain and shine.

Our cuisine consisted of gruel, bits of pickled vegetable, and a coarse corn muffin, but we wolfed them down as if they were epicurean delights. We slept eight in a tent, with only pallets of pine branches between us and the ground, but our slumber was deep and dreamless. I heard many a white collar worker say he never realized manual labor was so difficult and so satisfactory.

In less than five months, the dam was finished. Fifty thousand acres of land, which before were constantly hit by floods, now came under controlled irrigation.

Soldiers also volunteered to help, for no extra compensation. In order to support the workers involved in the project, "Peking's top-flight opera singers and actors and actresses went out to the site to perform for the workers. The boldness of the plan to build ahead of schedule kindled public imagination" (Peking Review, 1958, Issue 1).

As climate change increasingly affects our fellow workers around the world, it will become more and more important for PLP and its supporters to take inspiration from these historical events. The capitalists have no plan to protect workers from the ravages of their profit-induced destruction of the environment. Our job is to participate in the inevitable expressions of human solidarity, to fight the bosses to meet the needs of those affected, and to convince many of the volunteers as well as the victims of "natural" disasters how only communist revolution can end these scourges. The seeds for this struggle to build a profit-less world that will reestablish harmony with nature are contained in the courageous and selfless actions of workers who today are responding to the destruction of Hurricane Sandy.☺

Protesters Win Red Cross to Act



NEW YORK, November 27 — Red Cross reps are surrounded by protesters as they try to answer the complaints of families from Far Rockaway displaced by the storm and placed in three mid-town Holiday Inns. These families have been displaced with prejudice, with no regard for mental, medical or any of their needs. Kids are going without diapers, the ill without medication, people without food.

By the end of the day, the displaced families were being interviewed by scores of social workers, getting health care referrals and more. Red Cross officials promised to meet with all 106 displaced families at the three hotels.☺



FEMA on Sandy: Fiendish Effort to Mistreat Aid

In my neighborhood, I had an opportunity to speak with workers from Verizon and Con Ed, as well as folks who applied to help out with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) due to the effect of Hurricane Sandy. They told me how, in this capitalist system, those helping in the clean-up were treated as poorly as those they were sent to help.

Verizon had laid off so many workers that the remaining ones were left to carry the load of the overtime from Sandy. Somehow, the overtime money didn't compensate for the absence of the workers who did the job so well at our side.

Con Ed workers were promised overtime. Then they got an e-mail saying those who worked in Staten Island did so "voluntarily." These workers said thousands more homes had been devastated than the media reported, mostly in impoverished areas.

One friend who was trained to be a FEMA employee said, "The qualifications required were a clean criminal background and citizenship. I was to report to a training site in Philadelphia. I had to take classes for two days, paid \$125 for each day and 50 cents for traveling expenses. My friends and I went together.

"There were at least 1,000 people wanting to be employed. On the third day, a Parr agent (working on behalf of FEMA) told us many were being denied. I received a letter a week later stating, 'The Chief Security Officer has found you unfit for employment as a contractor employee with FEMA. This decision is based on adverse information contained in your credit bureau report.'

Never before in my life had I been told I was found unfit to help individuals. Every week, I run a soup kitchen and clothing donations from my church. I have never had a complaint. If the government hadn't closed its eyes in 2007 and allowed Wall Street to ravage the hard-working community, maybe I would be found fit to be a contractor for FEMA. Is FEMA fit to work for me or anyone struggling with disaster?"

In the communist-led Soviet Union and China, unemployment was zero; rebuilding flooded areas, constructing dams and wiping out diseases like syphilis and schistosomiasis were priorities, making useful jobs for millions.

Red Worker

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