

CHALLENGE



THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

OBAMA: SAVE RACIST SYSTEM OVER WORKERS' DEAD BODIES



WASHINGTON, DC, January 20 — The only apparent opposition at the inauguration of the new Obama regime came from a multiracial group of PLP communists and friends. A bullhorn rally was held at Gallery Place, a major Metro stop just outside the "security zone" for the Obama inauguration parade. Speakers at the rally called on the crowd heading to the parade to join PLP in the struggle against capitalism and racism instead of supporting Obama.

In a demonstration of the fascism of this system, 25,000 civilian and military police locked down the city. The day's events were used to practice methods for the ruler's need to control the working class.

PLP RALLIES AGAINST THE NEW CEO OF RACIST CAPITALISM

WASHINGTON, DC, January 20 — Speakers at our rally alerted the throngs of people that Obama, far from making things better, would lead workers and students into expanded war. He would continue racist oppression from Chicago, where police terror and hospital closings marked his time in leadership, to Gaza, where he gave his stamp of approval to genocide. He will reward the thieving capitalists with bailouts just as he condoned those George Bush had given.

Many agreed that the struggle would have to continue, but thought that Obama would still be an improvement. One person told us that he had just won a 3-year battle against D.C. for police brutality and was interested in joining our campaigns on this issue. Several youth from Baltimore were happy to see us, as they knew us from our work in their city as part of the Algebra Project/Peer-to-Peer (see CHALLENGE 10/15/08). Several other young people agreed that Obama just represented capitalism, just more of the same, and that we had to intensify our fight-back.

There were a few hostile responses, one demanding that we talk about Bush's crimes. We told him that we'd been doing that for eight years! Another said we shouldn't "rain on Obama's parade" and should give him a chance. But we can't give murderous capitalism a chance. Capitalism always has, and always will, serve the ruling class, not the working class. We are in the midst of a severe economic and military crisis, and the working class must be mobilized to fight racism and capitalism now!

We gained several new contacts for the Party and distributed over 800 flyers and 400 CHALLENGES. We also came away determined to win the millions of workers deceived by the election to a revolutionary struggle against racist capitalism, and not compliance with the increased war and fascism being ushered in by this new CEO of U.S. capitalism.

The two million or so people that came to the inauguration, among them a sizeable number of black and Latino workers, believed what they were witnessing represented an historic victory against racism. In reality, they witnessed the latest in the succession of representatives of the U.S. ruling class, the most racist and murderous group of thieves in history.

Obama made it clear that for the working class, things will get worse, and the workers will be the ones paying for the latest crisis. Obama didn't blame this racist system for the crisis, one that has enslaved millions and waged genocidal wars for the past 400 years, but instead blamed "our collective failure to make hard choices and prepare the nation for a new age."

The desperate conditions of millions of workers were glossed over as Obama paid only lip service to the swathes of racist foreclosures. Up to 10,000 homes per week have been claimed. Millions of black, Latino and other workers were unable to keep up payments on houses they were encouraged to buy at high prices and at eventual exorbitant interest rates. Similarly dismissed was the prison-like conditions of our schools, stating simply that "homes have been lost...our schools fail too many."

He immediately followed that saying, "no less profound is...the nagging fear that America's decline is inevitable." "America's decline" is indeed the "profound fear" of the Rockefeller-led wing of the U.S. ruling class, the banks and companies like J.P. Morgan Chase, Citigroup, and Exxon Mobil, who have trillions of dollars invested in U.S. imperialism and have cast a nervous eye on their growing imperialist rivals in Russia, China, and the European Union.

Obama and his administration are the ruling class's number one investment. They're counting on him to win U.S. workers to support wider wars, unlike the Bush gang who not only squandered the chance to mobilize the country but provoked the anger of millions of workers worldwide. Key to this effort is the movement for national service, a precursor to support for a larger military as was evident in the references to the, "Brave Americans...who patrol far-off deserts and distant mountains. ...[and] embody the spirit of service: a willingness to find meaning in something greater than themselves."

In addition to this thinly veiled call to kill and die for U.S. imperialism was another message extolling workers to sacrifice to save the bosses' system which Obama called on people to imitate, "the selflessness of workers who would rather cut their hours than see a friend lose their job which sees us through our darkest hours" — in effect, a wage-cut. Meanwhile, of the current U.S. prison population of 2.4 million — the largest ever in human history, and now over 1% of the total adult U.S. population — 70% are black and Latino. The inmate population languishing in the prisons of 10 states is expected to increase by 25% or more by 2011.

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Obama Blesses Torture, Wider Oil War, Wage-Cuts

Barack Obama, far from making things better, will lead workers and students into expanded war, continue racist oppression and continue to reward the thieving capitalists with bailouts just as George Bush did.

In fact, Obama may well get away with murder for the benefit of U.S. rulers all the more easily because of his huge popular support. The millions who turned out for him in Washington suggest many working-class Obama backers were acting against their own class interests. Obama's first speech, in effect, actually called for both bankers' bailouts and workers' wage-cuts (work fewer hours to save others' jobs). He never once asked corporations to take less profits to "save jobs."

The Sham of 'Closing' Guantanamo

As head of the U.S. war machine, Obama immediately abandoned two campaign promises: vowing to close the Guantánamo torture mill and to pull U.S. troops out of Iraq. On Guantánamo, the liberal, imperialist Brookings Institution (website, 1/24/09) assured U.S. capitalists that this move is, on one level, a crowd-pleasing ruse designed to "warm the hearts of human rights activists." Brookings fellow Benjamin Wittes wrote:

"Obama's executive order...does a lot less than many people seem to imagine....It does not require any detainee's release or transfer. It does not require

any detainee's prosecution. It does not preclude the eventual use of military commissions or some other alternative trial venue. And, critically, it does not preclude the continued non-criminal detention of certain — perhaps many — current Guantánamo detainees....Guantánamo, in short, will close, but Guantánamo detentions may well continue."

As for torture, Brookings says Obama's first act in office enables a new Inquisition. "It...contain[s] an important nod to the possibility that the CIA may have legitimate needs for techniques the military does not authorize....The CIA will regain some measure of interrogation flexibility as a result of

strikes since Barack Obama became president and a clear sign that the controversial military policy begun by George W. Bush has not changed....Three children lost their lives."

Obama's pursuit of the Afghan war is no better than Israel's bosses' Gaza genocide. "The U.S. military said on Saturday that troops, backed by air support, had killed 15 militants in an overnight operation. But Assadullah Wafa, a Karzai [the Afghan president] adviser investigating the deaths, said on Sunday that '16 civilians, many of them children and women, were killed' in the operation" (Reuters, 1/25). "Hundreds of angry villagers demonstrated...in Mehtarlam... after [the] American raid." (NY Times, 1/26)

"American commandos broke down doors and unleashed dogs without warning on January 7...in Masamut...in eastern Afghanistan....typical of many [raids] conducted" in the

country. "One of the first to be killed was...a member of the Afghan Border police who was home on leave....His brother...said he was killed as soon as he looked out his front door." (NYT)

When villagers were carrying a wounded man "on a rope bed down a slope...to get help....a helicopter fired a rocket at them, killing the wounded man and two of the bearers." (NYT)

All this is typical of the racist attacks that the U.S. military metes out to defenseless civilians in Afghanistan, Iraq and elsewhere to maintain its imperialist profit empire.

The Times indicated that tremendous opposition is developing to this kind of mass murder. And now Obama wants to make Afghanistan into a full-scale war, but according to Andrew Bacevich, international relations professor at Boston U., "It could be that sending 30,000 more troops is throwing money and lives down the rat hole." (NYT, 1/15)

There is only one viable alternative to Obama's pro-capitalist, pro-war, anti-worker mass frenzy. It lies in building for a communist revolution that will someday bury the war-makers' capitalist system, which tortures and kills for profit. ☸

Obama will have to deploy even more forces in the region to fend off threats from Iran and China that have only grown since 2003.

this."

On Iraq "withdrawal," the Obama regime has no intention of abandoning U.S. rulers' deadly struggle for oil-rich Iraq. According to a January 21 White House press release, "Under the Obama-Biden plan, a residual force will remain in Iraq and in the region to conduct targeted counter-terrorism missions against al Qaeda in Iraq and protect American diplomatic and civilian personnel." The Los Angeles Times reported (1/21) that this will involve, "A... force of tens of thousands."

Obama hopes to secure the six-million-barrel-per-day Iraqi oil production U.S. rulers envisioned on the eve of their 2003 invasion. But before Exxon Mobil and Chevron eventually take decisive possession of Iraq's oil fields, Obama will have to deploy even more forces in the region to fend off threats from Iran and China that have only grown since 2003.

DEADLIER WAR IN AFGHANISTAN

Other events indicate that Obama, who vows to intensify U.S. military operations in Afghanistan and beyond, will prove an even deadlier war criminal than Bush. The Times of London reported (1/23), "Missiles fired from suspected US drones killed at least 15 people inside Pakistan today, the first such

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In the dangers of the ruling class's efforts to build its movement, there are opportunities. Millions hate racism, imperialism, and sexism, and could be won to dedicate their lives to ending the brutal system that requires these evils.

Obama melodramatically showered us with images of slave-owner George Washington "huddling by dying campfires" and called on us to be "faithful to the ideals of our forbears." Does he mean the first eight U.S. presidents, all of whom owned slaves? When only white, property-owning men were considered citizens and Native Americans were exterminated by the millions? What "greatness" about the U.S. is he talking about if not genocide and slavery?

The horrifying conditions of, and racism against, immigrant workers, and the Ku Klux Klan's reign of terror, continued full steam into the 20th century. The U.S. was just cutting its teeth as a rival imperialist power to the genocidal British and French imperialists. No, U.S. rulers have never been great at anything except mass murder — and now, with about 750 U.S. military bases worldwide, Obama wants to

usher in "a new era" of U.S. global dominance.

The international working class's inspiration is not in the slave-owners' revolt in the U.S. war of independence from Britain, nor in racist Abraham Lincoln's "solution" of shipping black slaves back to Africa. It's in the mass slave rebellions and the actions of Nat Turner, Harriet Tubman and John Brown which led to the crushing of slavery.

We fight today with the memory of the brave millions of the Haitian Revolution of 1801, which inspired generations of workers because they taught the world how to fight back. The pride in our history is in the workers at Stalingrad who smashed the Nazis; in the caves of Yenan, China as the communist-led workers regrouped after the Long March to win workers' power in the most populated country on earth; and in countless other uprisings where our class rose against all odds and dared to struggle for a world free of the capitalist slavery that Obama represents. Real change will come when millions of workers read and distribute CHALLENGE and become steeled in class struggle. Join the Progressive Labor Party and help build a mass international communist movement, learn from our predecessors' mistakes and victories, and help destroy this system once and for all. ☸

OUR FIGHT

★ **Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to smash capitalism — wage slavery. While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions all over the world.**

★ **Capitalism returned to the Soviet Union and China because socialism failed to wipe out many aspects of the profit system, like wages and division of labor.**

★ **Capitalism inevitably leads to wars. PLP organizes workers, students and soldiers to turn these wars into a revolution for communism — the dictatorship of the proletariat. This fight requires a mass Red Army led by the communist PLP.**

★ **Communism means working collectively to build a society where sharing is based on need. 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.**

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

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

★ **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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Strikers, PLP Agree:

'MAKE THE BOSSES TAKE THE LOSSES'

BRONX, NY, January 26 — "It may be freezing...but they will not shut us down!" declared one Stella D'Oro striker. These bold workers just passed the 5-month mark of their strike. The vicious bosses, the private equity firm Brynwood Partners, have tried "...to slash these workers wages by 25%, do away with Saturday overtime and impose a new, crushing 20% employee contribution to worker health care benefits" (NY Daily News 1/22), plus eliminate four holidays, one week of vacation and all 12 paid sick days!

The strikers talk constantly about their hatred for the new owners, who broke up their lives trying to destroy the union and resell the plant as a low-wage, non-union operation. "We're there to work hard, we didn't want to be out here in the cold; they pushed us out the doors."

Although these scumbag bosses have tried to bring the strikers to their knees, while replacing them with scabs (supposedly limited to two months), not one worker has crossed the picket line. "I agree that the best way to get them [the Brynwood bosses] where it hurts is by taking our labor power away from them," one worker told a PLP teacher.

Class struggle is a harsh, punishing master of workers' lives. It crashes into our lives in the form of wars and lockouts, layoffs and medical bills. And, in this case, racism, as the overwhelming majority of the strikers are black and Latino, super-oppressed by these bosses to rake in super-profits.

The strikers have no more health insurance. COBRA costs \$1,200/month for family coverage. Applying for it doesn't guarantee being accepted. Not having health insurance is a worry generally, but especially when you're on picket duty in 21° weather.

"No contract, no cookies!" remains the slogan of 136 striking workers. "The support from people in the neighborhood has kept us going," explained another striker as he took another stack of 40 CHALLENGES and placed them next to the coffee

and donuts.

Within minutes most workers picked them up and began reading. "I like this paper!" exclaimed one striker. She said, "It really talks about fighting back!" She then asked if PL would help them build for their march and rally at Target here on January 31. They thanked us again for raising \$5,000 dollars for their local. We said we'd try to announce the march at the next teachers union Delegate Assembly and ask for more money to support their strike. In addition to bringing the usual coffee and donuts, we also donated a bunch of hand- and foot-warmers.

"A" is one of the most active strikers, a modest guy who's also a natural workers' leader, leading by example. When we first met him last October, he was distributing flyers on the picket line and did so whenever the union brought some. They stopped coming a long time ago and few got printed anyway — no resources. The International gives nothing beyond strike pay. They had the gall to offer the Local a loan at interest rates higher than a bank's!

When discussing the risk of getting sick on these four-hour mid-winter shifts, "A" told us he'd gone to a clinic run by the Espada family of Bronx politicians, seeking the free care that Espada, Sr. had promised the strikers at a rally. At the clinic Espada, Jr. became very hostile: "How do I know my father told you that? Do you have it in writing? Where's the paper? Why has no one else come in?" So there was no free care, only insults. "A" turned his back on Espada and left.

He says "bad people" provoked the strike, people so greedy they're crazed, almost inhuman: "Why do they want more, more, more when they're already rich? Why do they want to ruin our lives for a few more dollars? Why are they like that?"

When the cops made the strikers tear down their well-made protective tarp and dump their chairs; when they refused a permit for a warming van; when Brynwood owner Hank Hartung lied and



had a striker arrested and jailed for five days on a charge that has little chance of sticking in court — why are they like that? Is this just how people are? No, it's capitalism as a system.

When talking to "A" about it, it feels good to be a communist, with a Party that's studied these things and a tradition going back 160 years. Maybe "A" will join PLP in the future, take communist ideas and run with them and bring his leadership ability into the Party and the class war way beyond one strike and one company and one bosses' nation.

Maybe along the road to revolution these strikers will join hands with workers in Israel and Gaza, and "the workers of the world will rise again." Then the mystery of why bosses and cops and politicians and International union officials are like that will become clear to them all.

Many of the strikers openly support the slogan, "Make the bosses take the losses!" ☸

Confront Aerospace Layoffs, Pension Theft with Red-Led Class Struggle

SEATTLE, WA, January 26 — "Don't you think we ought to do something about that [the scab parts]?" asked a machinist at the last union meeting. Machinist union members had been on strike for the past 17 weeks at the Vought aerospace subcontractor factory in Nashville, Tenn. Within days of walking out, the company brought busloads of scabs into the plant, escorted by armed cops. Tom Wroblewski, IAM District 751 president at Boeing, had just admitted that the struck plant was shipping scab parts to our factories in the Puget Sound. After hemming and hawing, Wroblewski finally offered a pathetic dodge. "We stand ready to help [the strikers]," he declared.

Others demanded the union quit "standing around" and start publicizing the Vought strike in our local union newspaper. "Our members don't even know about all this," confided a shop steward and CHALLENGE reader to one of our comrades.

Unfortunately, time ran out for these strikers (and eventually will for us as well if we don't start organizing class solidarity). Faced with a threat to replace the 1,000 strikers with permanent scabs and the isolation perpetuated by the IAM under the useless slogan "we stand ready to help," the Vought strikers accepted the company's final offer soon after our meeting here. Every worker with less than 16 years will no longer accumulate pension benefits, but will have to survive on an increasingly shaky 401(k).

Union 'Leader' Hopes For 'Labor Peace'

Wroblewski began this meeting hoping that the

coming year would not be as "eventful" as the last, which saw an eight-week strike. Shop steward after shop steward quickly challenged this notion.

As well as calling for real solidarity with the Nashville strikers, they blasted the union for its silence about rumored layoffs. The company has since officially announced the elimination of 4,500 positions in commercial aerospace.

"We told you," said one facilities steward, "that the contract language would not protect facilities maintenance jobs. All the company had to do was cite the economy instead of subcontractors and that's exactly what they did." Despite the fact that Boeing has yet to lower production quotas, some facilities maintenance crews have been cut by 50%.

"Didn't we tell you when we were trying to sell the contract that the new language would save 2,200 facilities and related jobs," he answered. "Well, if you heard that, so did the company, so they must have known what we expected. Now it's up to the company to 'do the right thing.'" Was this guy born yesterday?!

Class Struggle Building For Revolution Our Only Hope

CHALLENGE readers have been discussing the bosses' worldwide economic crisis. We agreed that the crisis has "upped the ante." For example, this union meeting made it even clearer that we can't rely on "contract language" to protect us from the bosses' attacks.

Many still cling to the hope that Obama will save our skins, but even he's announced his intention to go after Medicare and Social Security. Cuts in these

two programs are racist since black and Latino retirees are more dependent on these government programs. Like all racist attacks, they end up hurting the whole working class.

The union's reliance on contracts and Democratic Party politics is a failed strategy. Every layoff, foreclosure, theft of our pensions and medical care must be met with revolutionary, anti-racist class-conscious struggle. Strikes, big and small wildcats, shop walkouts and sit-ins, and increased circulation of the revolutionary communist CHALLENGE newspaper are among the most effective ways to meet these attacks.

This is no doubt a tall order. Only the slow but intensified class struggle on the job and for revolutionary communist ideas among our fellow workers, centered in activist readers groups, will prepare the ground. Keeping our eye on the revolutionary ball will eventually produce the numbers of communists we need to end the bosses' capitalist nightmare once and for all. ☸



Salvador's Election 'Choices': Who's the Next Hangman?

EL SALVADOR — The recent murders in Morazán of two farm workers, activists in the FMLN, show once more the criminal nature of capitalism and how deadly the elections are for the working class. The bosses make all the rules and the workers lose. Only the long-term armed struggle for communism can put an end to the capitalist imperialist monster.

In the last two years more than 25 people have been murdered by the "death squads" backed by the ARENA political party. Among them was the FMLN Mayor of the city of Alegría, Usulután, in 2008. Another was a student leader and FMLN activist in Santa Ana. These murders are added to the hundreds executed by the death squads since the "peace accords" in 1992 and the more than 100,000 massacred during the civil war during the 1980's. The only peace that capitalism can offer the working class is the "peace" of the cemetery. In the face of these murders, the only thing the electoral leaders call for are "investigations."

The recent elections for mayor and deputies in El Salvador show how no electoral party represents a real alternative for workers. Currently in El Salvador, bourgeois political power is divided between ARENA and the FMLN, due to the number of mayors and deputies from both parties. However, this has not improved the living conditions of the workers. These elections have been used to ideologically disarm the working class, creating the illusion that with a vote, we can achieve the changes we need.

According to Mauricio Funes, Presidential can-

didate of the FMLN, "There can be alternating between the parties." In other words, the FMLN and ARENA can alternate in power — like in the U.S. with the Democrats and the Republicans while worldwide they both exploit and massacre workers. Funes, like all the politicians and bosses, urges workers to vote, thereby validating capitalist elections, enthusiastically electing our next hangman.

The bosses and the Salvadoran government, with the support of the U.S. imperialists, are guilty, not only of this genocide but also of hunger, drugs,

'Even if another party or politician comes to power, exploitation, imperialist wars and poverty will continue, because the root of exploitation, the capitalist system, stays intact.'

unemployment, poverty, repression and exploitation of the working class. The fascist ARENA party is the traditional main representative of the bosses and their capitalist system. But other electoral parties, like the FMLN, PDC, and PCN are asking the bosses to let them administer their system of exploitation and get crumbs to benefit the leading bodies of these parties and the bosses they represent.

Even if another party or politician comes to power, exploitation, imperialist wars and poverty will continue, because the root of exploitation, the capitalist system, stays intact. Capitalist elections

don't provide a solution to exploitation for workers. Throughout Latin America, electoral groups like Hugo Chavez of Venezuela and his 21st Century "Socialism," the PRD (Party of Democratic Revolution) in Mexico, Daniel Ortega and the FSLN in Nicaragua and others help perpetuate the bosses' electoral deceit.

Since millions of workers continue having illusions that their lives can improve with "lesser evil politicians," the members and friends of PLP participate with our fellow workers in struggles against the bosses, while exposing their election deceit and showing workers the need for communist revolution. Communists armed with CHALLENGE need to build networks to develop class consciousness. The paper helps us in daily discussions, study groups, strikes, and in periods of elections like this one, because we use revolutionary ideas as the basis of the class struggle. We're fighting to build a mass PLP in the factories, schools, fields and barracks.

Our goal is not to maintain capitalism but to destroy it and build a new communist society based on production to meet the needs of the international working class. The working class needs its own party. Not an electoral party, but a true revolutionary communist party, like the international PLP. Many of those killed in the last decades were friends or fellow workers. The best way to honor their memory is not just to shed tears but to commit our lives to continue the fight for a real communist revolution. ☪

Jobs, Union Struggles and PL Ideas Pays Off

Last year I began working for the local transit system. I've left CHALLENGE around for others to read and discussed communism a few times. But on Obama's inauguration day several of us had an intense conversation about communism while watching the inauguration coverage at work. I sparked a debate when I commented that Obama would screw us for four years.

One co-worker, an Obama supporter who calls himself a capitalist, urged me to give Obama "a chance to mess up" because he hasn't even done anything yet. I mentioned Obama's racist record in Illinois (from the January 28th CHALLENGE). Then he asked who I'd want as a "representative." I said I want workers, including them, to run things, not those who actually represent their own ruling class. That didn't satisfy them and they insisted I name a "leader."

I named PLP's chairperson but maintained that our class needs masses of leaders, not so-called representatives, and that I support the organization that publishes CHALLENGE. I explained that it wasn't an electoral party but a revolutionary communist organization consisting of, and led by, workers, not politicians.

Another worker, also an Obama supporter, said that revolution would just put a new set of exploiters in power. I noted that the Russian Revolution made great advances (achieving 0% unemployment during the Great Depression and industrialization of an agrarian economy in 20 years) even though socialism did ultimately revert to capitalism. He didn't believe the statistics, saying that even if true, the Russian communists probably killed off those unable to work to reach 0% unemployment.

It was a tough crowd for communist ideas but the debate was friendly. Another co-worker who walked in on the conversation even said he'd rather have a communist society than capitalist one, although he voted for Obama. I plan to get him CHALLENGE more regularly.

Mostly we agreed that capitalism causes major problems — economic crisis, unemployment, disease, global warming, etc. But most of my co-workers are cynical about the possibility of a truly non-corrupt leadership and working for need (instead of money). They're also relatively happy with capitalism, momentarily, as long as they're getting some crumbs.

One positive result from the conversation was that the worker who wanted me to give Obama a chance to mess up conceded that he himself does care about keeping passengers safe, acknowledging that even he, a self-proclaimed "capitalist," is motivated by more than money to do maintenance work.

This conversation showed me that my efforts to encourage more reading of CHALLENGE, participate in more union and non-union struggles, and to win the trust of more of my co-workers by spending more time with them off the job is paying off. I had had a very similar long conversation about communism last summer with these same co-workers and was cut off and ignored at points. But as I've learned the job more, gotten to know my co-workers better, participated in a safety slowdown, and confronted union hacks over sellout measures, I've gained their respect — proving that building unbreakable communist ties with workers is both difficult and rewarding.

Red Transit Worker

Workers' Protests vs. Bosses' Crisis Heats Up Iceland, Baltic Nations

The "small capitalist tigers" of the world have lost their claws because of the international economic meltdown. The coalition government of Iceland, the Nordic country of 300,000 people, has collapsed after conservative Prime Minister Geir Haarde couldn't reach a deal with his Social-Democratic coalition partners.

Iceland's economy grew tremendously based on financial speculation. In October, its financial system collapsed under the weight of debt, leading to a currency crisis, rising unemployment and daily protests. The economy is forecast to shrink 9.6% this year. (BBC World News, 1/26).

According to a PLP'er who just returned from Iceland, some 10,000 people demonstrated on January 24. Protestors have been throwing snowballs and other objects at the politicians in parliament. Some youth have clashed with the cops.

CAPITALIST CRISIS HITS BALTIC COUNTRIES

The former Soviet Baltic republics have also been hit hard by the bosses' crisis. In mid-January, the largest protest since Latvia broke from the Soviet Union saw 10,000 demonstrate in the capital city of Riga against government economic policies. Some angry demonstrators clashed with the cops and attacked government buildings while burning a police car. They repudiated the government's tough anti-worker policies, including tax increases, instituted to cope with growing economic problems that have spurred rising unemployment. Latvia was once the fastest growing European Union economy until the financial bubble burst last year.

That same week, cops in Lithuania used tear gas and rubber-tipped bullets to disperse thousands of protesters outside the country's parliament. The rally was called by trade unions to protest an austerity drive in which the center-right government is seeking to slash public-sector wages by up to 15% and raise the consumption tax.

Many workers in the former Soviet Republics had the illusion that free-market capitalism would surpass state capitalism which by then ruled the former Soviet Union. But most workers saw their standard of living drop, losing whatever social gains remained from the original communist-led Soviet Union. The only ones benefiting from free market-capitalism were the "oligarchs" who basically stole the wealth created by the working class.

Today, the capitalist meltdown and its drive for a new world war to re-divide the world are shattering illusions some workers might have had about the profit system. The task is to rebuild the communist movement, learning from the strengths and errors of past revolutions. There is no middle road for the international working class. ☪

France: Workers Must Unite Immigrants, Youth in Looming General Strike

PARIS, January 24 — A 24-hour general strike called by eight trade union confederations is set to rock France. Both government and private-sector workers are likely to participate in large numbers. Demands include: limiting job cuts; reducing income from stocks and bonds to increase wages; changing European Union policy to bolster consumption, the welfare state, and social housing; and regulating international finance.

These tepid reformist demands show that, in the name of "unity," the most radical confederations are once again lining up behind the lowest common denominator acceptable to the right-wing unions. Even in their independent position statements, the radical unions go no further than calling for renewing the general strike, day by day, and "refusing to pay for the capitalist crisis."

All this is a far cry from what workers here really need: revolutionary leadership to overthrow capitalism and establish communist workers' rule.

In addition to private-sector workers in the metal trades, mining, banking, telecommunications and retailing, public workers in health, rail and urban transport, the post office, gas and electricity and education will join the strike.

The January 29 walkout will also hit the campuses, where teachers and researchers are feeling the lash of an increasingly authoritarian government. In December, French president Nicolas Sarkozy increased his control over the broadcast media. This month he shattered illusions of "judicial impartiality" by eliminating the examining magistrates who supposedly counter-balance executive power. Now he's moving to bring the education system under greater autocratic control.

This constitutes a three-pronged attack: (1) changing the status of faculty, (2) changing the recruitment of primary and secondary school teachers, and (3) reinforcing religious education.

Previously, all faculty pursued research and

teaching in equal measure. Now university presidents will use their new powers under last year's LRU law to give the "best minds" more time for research and administrative tasks, while the others take up the slack and teach longer hours. Thus the presidents will be able to advance teachers who side with the bosses.

In the past, many teaching positions were filled by national competitive exams. Successful candidates were then paid during one year of teacher training. Now, three roadblocks will make it harder for working-class people to become teachers: (1) candidates will have to write a master's thesis while studying for the competitive exam (difficult if you're working to pay your way through school — as do 70% of the students in the working-class Paris suburbs, many of whom are of North or sub-Saharan African origin); (2) candidates' "files" (their social background), will become a selection criterion, in addition to exam results; and (3) there will be no paid year of teacher training.

Before, the French government did not recognize diplomas awarded by Vatican-controlled universities on a par with those from state universities. Now a treaty with the Vatican will allow conservative Catholic institutions to play a bigger role in shaping the French "meritocracy."

The situation on the campuses is a microcosm of French society. With inter-imperialist rivalry mounting in recent years, the French bosses have steadily increased their state's capacity to regiment and control society. This accelerated with the May 2007



election of President Sarkozy. Now the financial and economic crises are pushing the bosses to move even faster, with full-blown fascism becoming an increasingly probable outcome.

In the past, the union leaders and many workers have looked the other way while immigrant workers and youth from the former French colonies in Africa suffered police terror and racist super-exploitation. The lack of anti-racist unity with these immigrant workers and youth has weakened ALL workers. The best outcome that can emerge from this general strike and many other struggles is the building of an anti-racist, multi-ethnic revolutionary leadership to fight the sharper attacks the working class is facing. That's the road that will lead to building a society without any racist bosses: communism! ✪

General Strike Shuts Guadeloupe

POINTE-A-PITRE, GUADELOUPE, January 24 — Workers here have shut down this island since January 20 with a general strike against the high cost of living. Over 3,000 marched here on the first day. The workers of this French overseas department in the Caribbean — 70% of whose 500,000 inhabitants are black — are showing the way for all workers in France and the Caribbean being hit hard by the worldwide capitalist meltdown.

Determined flying squads of strikers yesterday closed banks, stores and shopping centers. The island's 115 gas stations have been closed since January 19. Electricity production has been cut 70%.

The Kont Pwofitasyon Collective, composed of nearly all the trade unions as well as political parties and associations, organized the strike. Collective spokesman Elie Domota said it would continue next week if the French government did not abandon its tactic of stalling over the 120 demands advanced by the collective.

The weakness of this collective is its all-class unity character, which therefore includes local bosses who basically want a bigger share of the exploitation of workers on the island. Contrary to this, workers must turn their anger and struggles into schools for communism and raise the demand that a system which can't serve the basic interests of the working class must be destroyed. ✪

The Devil Does Wear Prada

As I write this letter, I can't help but feel like an imposter. Employed in fashion — the pulpit that promotes luxury, vanity, classism and consumption — my world would appear to be in diametric opposition to the PLP cause. I live and work in the industry's capital, New York City (yes the devil does wear Prada). I have a front row seat to all the goings on behind the curtain — the anorexia, the egos, and the inflated salaries.

While it is the fruits of the seamstress's labor (mostly women but a few are also men) being marketed, the budget for a day's photo shoot dwarfs her yearly salary. She toils, in many countries including the U.S., often under illegal conditions. The immigrant/sweatshop worker will not be celebrated, much less invited to the downtown soiree to be toasted alongside the boss. Her sons and daughters will be extracted to go and fight this country's "patriotic" wars, and possibly return maimed or in a box.

I've grown disillusioned and angry not only at this "world" but at myself — for subjecting myself to such a bloated and extravagant existence. Consciousness was always within me though — empathizing with people from different walks of life — but doing what I could and the efforts I found myself engaged in were not enough. A new approach to the problem from a different angle was needed.

I had the good fortune to be invited to a

PLP study group. I was captivated by the discussion amongst these young people: racism as capitalism's tool to divide and separate, war for oil, the U.S.'s class system — an especially taboo subject in today's society.

Now I can't deny that the working class is systematically kept down and controlled by the bosses. My resignation has been replaced by the question: "Is it possible to build this new Utopia, and if so, how could I make a difference?" I want to be a part of the hope and the action, on the front line.

One stormy evening I stood in solidarity with the Stella D'Oro workers who had been on strike for four months. I was inspired and awed by their commitment to stand for what they believed in, and the sacrifices made by the few for all.

As I wrestle with what it means to join PLP, its ideas and its struggle, as well as with my own struggles and contradictions, I am all the more empowered. I feel assured to be part of the collective standing steadfast committed to fight inequality, racism, classism, capitalism, and imperialism.

Part of the collective

LETTERS



PLP: A Compass, A Happy Birthday

The following are excerpts from a letter that my son gave me for my 70th birthday, and I want to share them with CHALLENGE readers:

Happy 70th birthday! I have been struggling with what to do in the way of a present. To purchase anything for you would seem silly to commemorate a decade-end birthday.

Without a doubt, the greatest gift I have received from you is my world view. Having an understanding of capitalism based from outside of it allows me to see with clarity so much that would otherwise be invisible to me. Having a communist perspective has not been easy, but it has given me a compass with which I have been able to orient. I do not know how others function without such a compass; they must assume that contradictions without resolution are the norm, which implies that truth cannot be found.

I suppose religion answers the need for a compass for some people — faith in some set of ideas without need to understand. For me, having the communist compass has meant not only that I have the tools to make sense of human affairs but the more general understanding that truth is attainable by persevering with simple questions. I have discovered that conventional wisdom is commonly wrong, not only because of deliberate manipulation by the dominant ideology, but often due to persistence of honest guesses that have never been questioned, in part, because so many people lack the confidence that questioning can uncover truth.

This compass also has provided my reference for personal relationships and has been the basis of a clear code of ethics. In short, my communist worldview, which I received from you is at the core of who I am. Therefore, it seems fitting that my gift to you relate to our shared world view. In an effort to help keep this world view alive, I have contributed \$1,000 to PLP in your name (in principle).

Happy 70th and viva comunismo!

An aging but still young comrade

Constructing Red Fight vs. Layoffs

I recently talked to two apprentice workers in the construction trades who have been recently laid off. I heard that in 2009 only half the members of our local will be working. The company I work for recently sent out a letter urging workers to be more productive, using the threat that more and more jobs are going to non-union companies. The letter said we shouldn't drink coffee at the start of the work day or leave for lunch early. Somehow this is supposed to make us 14% more productive. It's likely a "Code of Excellence" adopted by our international union will contain provisions that allow for speed-up and harassment, like have been seen in other construction trades.

Under capitalism, workers are never safe or able to live without fear. One aspect of this is racist unemployment. I say racist because layoffs hit the hardest at the historically last-hired, first-fired minority workers. But no workers are safe from the threat of layoffs, regardless of skin color. In my local, many of my friends are now unemployed and in the coming year, more will be. Some of this is due to the crisis of overproduction. When the bosses produce more than they can sell, they lay off the producers — us. All workers suffer — on the job from speed-up, off the job from being unable to afford a "decent" standard of living.

Struggling on the job against speed-up is a good action to fight back. I have been talking to my friends about ways to fight against layoffs. We talk about how the bosses use non-union outfits to drive down wages and why we need to build unity of employed and unemployed as well as union and non-union workers. I have begun talking to a number of my friends about how this unity could be used to smash capitalism and

build a society where workers control production, share the fruits of our labor and build a world free of racism exploitation and war.

Building Trades Red

Students, Teachers Reach Out to Marines

Recently we high school and college students and teachers went to visit Marines. We discussed that they're being sent to kill and die for oil profits, not for any "American dream." We also explained what Obama is doing — making people think he's for change while deceiving people to go to war.

We asked, "Are oil profits worth your lives? Do you know what you're fighting for?" We felt communists should reach out to the military: we need soldiers on our side to make a revolution,.

We got many different reactions. Some rookies, just out of boot camp, are totally brainwashed. Several refused to talk to us. We find that when distributing CHALLENGE at our own high school that some students react similarly — they don't want to think about what's happening.

However, we had a lot of good conversations. One guy said he was really questioning the war, and that racism had everything to do with it — to kill somebody, you have to take away their human face. Some really wanted answers — why they were really being sent over there anyway.

We told the Marines Obama had said he intended to get the U.S. out of Iraq and send more troops to Afghanistan. They said it's already happening. So we learned it's not Obama; it's what the U.S. ruling class had already decided, with or without Obama.

Overall it was a good experience. We encourage PLP members across the U.S., or in whatever country they live, to reach out to the troops. We have much to say and can also learn a lot as well. We'll be back!

LA High School Students

Mexico: Red School Analyzes Capitalist Exploitation

We had a successful two-day PL communist school in Mexico. Over 30 women and men, industrial workers, high school and college students, unemployed, taxi drivers, teachers and others participated. We started with political economy. We viewed capitalist ideas and practices as dominating all aspects of our lives, seeing that capital is a social relation of accumulation of vast wealth in the hands of a few by exploiting and oppressing the masses of workers.

Studying the rise of capitalism we showed the new capitalist class emerging by amassing great capital and taking control of the means of production through a process called primitive accumulation: land grabs, robbery, massive slavery and genocide worldwide.

This new system created the working class. Then the state created laws to end the feudal system and drive serfs off the land and into the cities where to survive, they were forced into factories to sell their labor power and become dependent wage slaves.

continued on next page

PLP Won 6,000 to '71 March vs. Racist Unemployment

The article on racist unemployment (CHALLENGE, 1/28) calls for all workers to unite and fight it. It is useful to review the lessons of the March 1971 PLP-led March against Racist Unemployment held in several cities — Washington, D.C., Sacramento and Houston. Some 6,000 workers and students marched in Washington.

I was relatively new to PL, involved in organizing high school students and squatters (mostly Latin immigrant workers) who had seized three buildings owned by Columbia University and the Church of St. John the Divine in Manhattan.

The anti-war and anti-racist movements were still relatively strong. Workers were on the move nationwide and globally. In 1970 postal workers led a massive national wildcat walkout, seriously affecting businesses (no e-mails then), forcing President Nixon to order the National Guard to try and smash the strike. There were still outpourings protesting the war in Vietnam, and anti-racist rebellions in major cities.

PLP linked these struggles in organizing marches for jobs. The response was tremendous among workers and youth from many areas in which PL'ers were active, as well as among anti-war GIs and jobless workers. In contrast to Washington anti-war marches, ours was multi-racial — over half the participants were black and Latino. It showed that PLP and its communist politics were making inroads among workers and youth as well as anti-war activists.

Although the marches protested unemployment, CHALLENGE was crucial in building for them; and the speeches, banners and skits attacked imperialism and capitalism and called for revolutionary socialism. (Some years later we learned from such activities that our main task as communists is to bring revolutionary politics to all struggles, embodied in our document "Re-

form and Revolution." A decade later PLP saw the need to fight directly for communism, not for the half-way house of socialism).

It was a day I'll never forget. It was the first time I spoke before so many people. I was then teaching at George Washington H.S. and, along with another comrade, worked with youth who had formed an Anti-Racist Student group. The administration attacked one leader, blaming PLP for putting up posters inside the school calling for the march to "Smash Racist Unemployment." A busload of students came to the march.

Afterwards, others from the school asked me why they weren't invited. A PLP study group grew from this, including some militant students, one young teacher, garment workers and even a former priest who had organized landless peasants in the Caribbean.

Six weeks later, PLP organized its first mass, openly communist May Day march since the heyday of the old Communist Party. A multi-racial group of 2,500 workers and youth strode through Harlem. Police agents posing as "leftists" and "revolutionary nationalists" physically attacked the march but were quickly repulsed.

Today, facing similar (but even sharper) problems worldwide — imperialist war, racist unemployment, police terror and a capitalist economy meltdown — building a base for our communist politics among workers and youth is crucial. We must expose the union hacks, liberal politicians and others whose treachery wants to sink us into the abyss of cynicism and passivity. Most important, we must attack Obama's sham "jobs creation" which, under the guise of "national service," will produce slave labor to make workers and youth pay even more for the expanding oil-pipeline war in Afghanistan.

The task ahead is not easy. Millions have illusions in Obama and are falling for his call to "sacrifice for the nation" (read, the bosses' war machine). But we shouldn't be overwhelmed by, nor underestimate, Obamania. Patience and urgency should guide us.

Learning from the Past to Fight for the Future

LETTERS

continued

Now with economic globalization and free markets, primitive accumulation continues to occur. China is a clear and terrible example in which the Chinese "Communist" Party dismantled the huge agricultural cooperatives, forcing millions of farm workers to look for wage labor in the new factory zones of the cities for the lowest wages. The world, regional, or civil wars that occur when capitalism is in crisis are used by the victorious capitalists to increase their capital through armed robbery on a mass scale.

Analyzing the source of capitalist wealth, two examples given showed how the value added to commodities by the worker, which is the surplus value, is really what makes the bosses rich — because everything is produced by the workers. We saw how and why crises are inherent in the capitalist system, specifically the crisis of overproduction; and that to resolve them, the capitalists have to lay off workers, lower wages, and resort to war over markets and resources, and to destroy the productive capacity of their rivals.

Finally we concluded that the only solution is to destroy this system, which does not meet the needs of workers and build communism, where the international working class will produce to meet its own needs, not for any boss' profit. During these two days of ideological study, 5 invited guests want to participate in our future activities.

Comrade from Mexico

Capitalist 'SILO' Tax Schemes Threaten All Transit Workers and Riders

LOS ANGELES, CA — You may never have heard of SILO, but this tax evasion scheme of the MTA is one of the reasons why school children lack books and clinics and hospitals in working-class neighborhoods have closed down. Taxes that should have gone to pay for these services were pocketed by the corporations in SILO: Sale In, Lease Out. Now that it has blown up in their face, the MTA and the public officials are going to make the riders and MTA workers pay in the upcoming contract.

Starting in the late 1980's, Los Angeles MTA and Rapid Transit Division (RTD) entered into rip-off tax deals with private investors. Over the years MTA sold \$1.5 billion worth of transit assets to large banks for \$65 million. In all, 1,000 LA Metro buses, trains, five transit divisions and even a parking lot were sold. (LA Times 10/18/ 08) After buying government property for pennies on the dollar, the banks stood to make extra money by leasing the property back to MTA. But, the big prize was the \$4.4 billion nationwide tax swindle that these banks gobbled up.

LA MTA is one of the largest players in these illegal tax scams. After repeated IRS warnings, SILO's were ruled an abusive tax shelter in late 2003. The investors had until the end of 2008 to settle up. Losing their huge tax break, banks searched for a way out.

As the U.S. capitalist economy plunged, the banks found their escape hatch. The insurer for the SILO's was AIG, who crapped out so big they required two federal bailouts at \$150 billion. When AIG's credit rating dropped, the banks were off the hook. Thirty-one of the biggest public transit agencies in the U.S. were left holding the bag. Banks now own trains, buses and transit property valued at \$16 billion that they no longer want to keep on leasing to the transit agencies but that these can't afford to buy back.

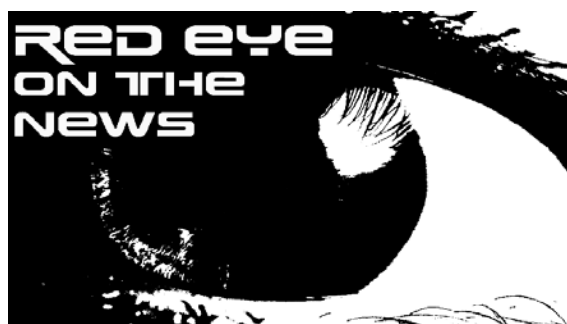
Like the nearly bankrupt Detroit auto bosses, but with much less publicity, the heads of major transit agencies, including MTA's Roger Snoble, scurried to Washington for help to buy back the equipment. Unlike the auto bosses, they didn't get it.

They need public transit to get workers to work. But as with the auto industry, whether bailout or bankruptcy, a re-organization will land squarely on the backs of the workers and riders of public transit. Black and Latino workers who rely on public transit to get to their jobs will be disproportionately affected by racist cuts. If we look at the give-backs forced on auto workers by union misleaders, we can see what capitalism is planning for workers at LA Metro: lower wages, trashed work rules, costlier medical and pension plans.

The grinding economic train wreck is teaching us an old lesson anew: we have nothing to lose and everything to gain by getting rid of a system that has one ugly surprise after another for masses of workers, including those of us who work in and use public transit.

Our Challenge in LA Transit

All three LA Metro contracts are up June 30, 2009. The heads of the unions, together with MTA's new boss, will prepare take-away contracts for us. Our PLP transit club met to plan how to put CHALLENGE, in the hands of many more of our co-workers. By raising the number of readers and communist political discussions, transit drivers, mechanics, and clerks can advance under attack. With CHALLENGE's revolutionary outlook and with deep, long-term relationships with our friends who read the paper, we can fight the bosses' attacks and build a growing hatred of the racist profit system that threatens us, and finally steer it to the junkyard of history where it belongs. ☘



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

Murderous capitalist world

GW, 1/23 – Women in the world's least developed countries are 300 times more likely to die during childbirth, or because of pregnancy complications, than those in the UK and similarly developed countries, a UN report said.

Do-gooders rescue evil system

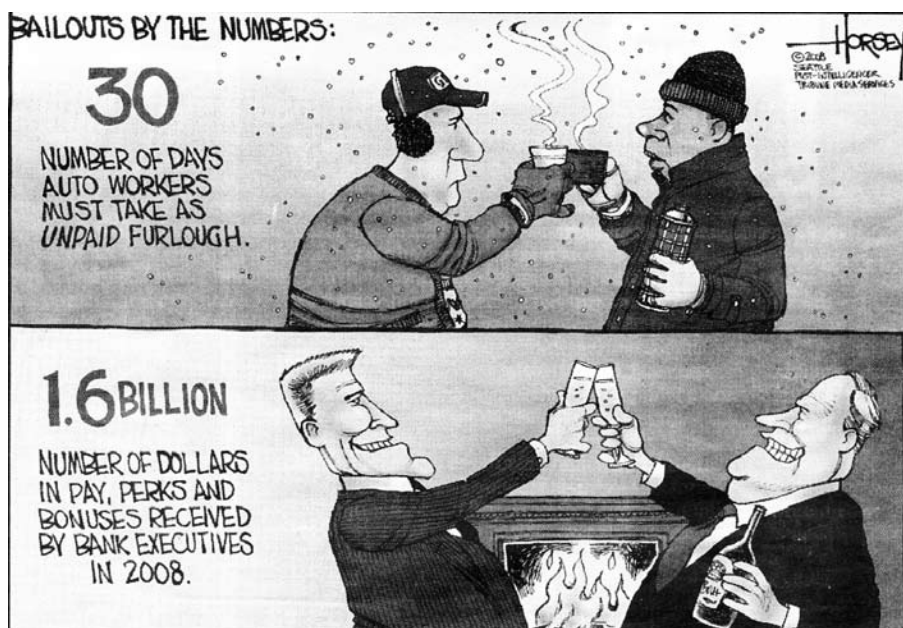
NYT, 1/20 – To the editor:

I learned firsthand from my grandmother, Eleanor Roosevelt, that "Pa's great strength" lay in what was behind his thinking — a genuine sense of starting programs that addressed the places and issues where Americans were hurting. (And in the process saving capitalism for this country.)

Ruling class IS above any law

NYT — Last Sunday President-elect Barack Obama was asked whether he would seek an investigation of possible crimes by the Bush administration. "I don't believe that anybody is above the law," he responded, but "we need to look forward as opposed to looking backwards."

...This means that those who hold power are indeed above the law because they don't face any consequences if they abuse their power.



U.S. pushed Korea prostitution

NYT, 1/8 – A group of former prostitutes in South Korea have accused some of their country's former leaders of...encouraging them to have sex with the American soldiers who protected South Korea from North Korea. They also accuse past South Korean governments, and the United States military, of taking a direct hand in the sex trade from the 1960s through the 1980s.

"Our government was one big pimp for the U.S. military," one of the women, Kim Ae-ran, 58, said in a recent interview.

They say the government-sponsored classes for them in basic English and etiquette – meant to help them sell themselves more effectively.

Capitalism's 'dream' sweatshops

NYT, 1/15 – Tour the vast garbage dump here in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. It's a mountain of festering refuse....Toxic stink leaves you gasping. Then the smoke parts and you come across a child ambling barefoot, searching for old plastic cups that recyclers will buy for five cents a pound.

While it shocks Americans to hear it, the central challenge in the poorest countries is not that sweatshops exploit too many people, but that they don't exploit enough. Talk to these families in many areas and a job in a sweatshop is a cherished dream.

Poisoned on job, can't win case

NYT, 1/25 – Mr. Abney, now sidelined by Parkinson's, had spent more than two decades up to his elbows in a drum of the solvent, trichloroethylene, while he cleaned metal piping.

.... 27 workers had either the anxiety, tremors, rigidity or other symptoms associated with Parkinson's...Medical researchers would not sign the form attesting that Mr. Abney's disease was linked to his work.

There is a huge gap between what researchers are discovering about environmental contaminants and what they can prove legally. Because the burden of proof is so high and the relative benefits are so low, lawyers have little financial incentive to take on a case like Mr. Abney's.

VALKYRIE: FASCIST MOVIE ABOUT NAZIS VERSUS NAZIS

In July 1944, German military officers attempted a plot, called Valkyrie, to kill Adolf Hitler. The film "Valkyrie" paints these plotters as anti-Nazi heroes. But in reality the assassination and coup attempt was just a fight among fascists. The political leadership of the plot opposed the Nazi (National Socialist) Party and its military wing, the SS. But, for all intents and purposes, the Valkyrie plotters were Nazis who built the fascist regime much more than they ever harmed it.

The movie only hints at what the conspirators stood for when we see the political leadership of the conspiracy insisting they surrender to the West, end the war, and close the concentration camps. They aim to arrest all members of the Nazi party and the SS and stage a coup placing Carl Friedrich Goerdeler, identified only as an elected politician, as Chancellor of a post-Hitler Germany.

This leads viewers to believe that the plotters are anti-racist and were motivated to save millions being killed in war. However, the plotters' urgency to kill Hitler and take control of Germany was spurred by Germany's military losses in the war, anti-communism, and a different but no less racist vision of fascism.

The film focuses on Lieutenant Colonel Count Claus von Stauffenberg — a German military officer dissatisfied with Hitler and Nazi leadership and wounded by British airfire in Tunisia — who enters into an anti-Hitler conspiracy of the German high command.

Stauffenberg, an aristocrat born in his family's castle, was impressed by Germany's initial military successes. Participating in Germany's 1939 invasion of Poland, Stauffenberg wrote home that Jews and "mixed races" are "a people only comfortable under the lash" and would "serve our agriculture well." Before the invasion Stauffenberg refused to participate in a ruling-class anti-Hitler movement unrelated to the Valkyrie plot.

After Germany's massive military and political defeat in Stalingrad in February 1943 Stauffenberg changed his mind. He concluded that not assassinating Hitler would be a greater evil than having the communist Soviet Union occupy Germany.

In late 1943, Stauffenberg dictated demands to the Allies as conditions for post-Hitler peace. They included: retaining Germany's pre-World War I eastern border (stripped by WW I's victors), keeping Austria and the Sudetenland (invaded by Germany early in WW II), and continuing to occupy territories east of Germany.

Goerdeler also generally supported the Nazi regime early on. He was mayor of Leipzig and served as Hitler's Price Commissioner in the early and mid-1930s. In October 1935, almost four years before the invasion of Poland, Goerdeler sent Hitler a memo recommending decreased arms production, devaluing the currency, and opening up industry to foreign investment — essentially that Germany's ruling class would benefit from allying with Western imperialists, instead of competing for supremacy.

Hitler's economists disagreed and the Nazi leadership pressured Goerdeler to resign as mayor and blocked his employment in Krupp AG, Germany's biggest company. While Goerdeler opposed some of Hitler's militarist economic policies, he admitted his own policies would result in 2-2.5 million unemployed workers. Clearly, Goerdeler had no problem devising his own fascist plans.

After Goerdeler's resignation in March 1937 he became Director of overseas sales at Robert Bosch GmbH, a major auto supplier that heavily profited off slave labor made possible by the Nazi regime. Goerdeler used his position to organize an anti-Hitler coup amongst the German ruling class.

As Germany's armies faced certain defeat from the Soviets, Goerdeler contacted the British government several times to negotiate a post-Hitler peace. Like Stauffenberg, he insisted that Germany



could not surrender to the communists and made similar demands of the Allies.

The most heroic spies and saboteurs among the German high command were communists and Soviet sympathizers who leaked intelligence to the Red Army and committed sabotage, helping communists kill 8 out of 10 Nazi troops in the war. Working-class Jews led rebellions in the Warsaw ghetto and at the Sobibor concentration camp. Many German workers housed Jews during the Holocaust. In every occupied territory the Nazis faced armed resistance, often led by communists. Our class has plenty of real heroes. The fascist plotters of Valkyrie are not among them.

We should not be fooled by the film to support any group of fascists and imperialists over another. Translate "Valkyrie" into the modern-day U.S. and you get more support for the liberal rulers who back Obama and the Democrats vs. Bush/McCain. However, both groups of U.S. rulers belong to the racist ruling class, just like the Valkyrie plotters and Hitler did. Instead, we should take inspiration from the Red Army that succeeded in smashing the Nazi war machine. ☺

The Crisis of Capitalism: Earthquake for California Workers

Community college administrators and student-government leaders plan to mobilize students to demand "revenue enhancement" (higher taxes) instead of budget cuts with rallies and marches in Pasadena (Feb. 27) and Sacramento (March 16). Members and friends of the communist PLP are organizing students and workers to participate around the theme: Smash budget cuts and racist unemployment! Make the bosses pay! This system — which can't provide education, housing or health care for all — must be destroyed!

More than 600,000 California workers lost full-time jobs between November 2007 and November 2008. Close to a million are officially "unemployed;" a million more can find only part-time work or have given up looking. Nearly 200,000 more aren't counted because they are in jail. In L.A., the real unemployment and underemployment rate is close to 20% and double that for black and Latino workers. Many who still have jobs are forced to take pay cuts, like San Jose teachers and CSULB workers who agreed to a two-day "furlough."

The California budget deficit is now \$42 billion. The bosses plan to increase the sales tax, reduce dependent tax credits, and cut billions from education while increasing tuition 9.3% in the University of California (UC) system, 10% in the California State University (CSU) system, and up to 50% in the community colleges.

As paychecks shrink, as IOUs are threatened in place of state income tax refunds, as financial aid checks shrink, more students and workers seek answers. Using our revolutionary ideas in patient long-term struggle we can build a base for communism.

"I gave a report on capitalism to my English class, but nobody reacted much," a community college student, who is a Navy vet, told a student activist friend. She urged him to keep it up. "Its good to have a chance to talk about things like this. When they don't know what they think about something, it doesn't mean they aren't paying attention."

Communists Fight Budget Cuts, Racism, Liberal Misleaders, Capitalism

Under capitalism, workers can't pay for needs, like health care, especially when wages are falling and racist unemployment is skyrocketing. Bosses push the lie that people who use public programs and services are being "selfish" or "greedy" for taking advantage of "entitlement programs" instead of "paying their fair share." The racist idea of a "culture of poverty" encourages workers to blame other workers instead of the system. This racism justifies cuts in programs like CalWorks which supports many community college students and their children. This same racism aims to pit us against each other. As communists we fight racism showing that it attacks all workers, building a united working-class movement to fight back.

Our Future Depends on Revolution, Not Reform

Liberal leaders want us to rely on them to fight the cuts, saying the community college system is the "key to California's economic recovery" since many unemployed people come back for new skills

or a new career.

But unemployed workers will now pay more for their classes with no promise of a job when they're done. Any "economic recovery" for the capitalist bosses will come off the backs of the working class and from wider, deadlier wars.

We can't rely on liberal capitalist politicians. The deepening crisis is an opportunity to build working-class unity, expose capitalism, sharpen the class struggle against the bosses and build the revolutionary Party that will one day lead workers to take power and build a communist society. We'll meet the needs of the international working class, eliminating profits and banks. We plan to expand the readership of CHALLENGE newspaper now and rely on our readers to bring these ideas into the movement against racist unemployment and budget cuts.

In doing so, we educate ourselves. We reveal the class system, our place in it, and our power to eliminate it. In our study groups we learn history, political economy, philosophy, and science so that we can understand what a revolution and an egalitarian communist society would look like. Join us! ☺

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