



# CHALLENGE

REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER OF THE INTERNATIONAL PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

volume 41 no. 02

april 22, 2009

suggested donation \$.50

**Worldwide Fight vs. Crisis Needs Communist Leadership:**

# Workers in Europe Seize Factories, Bosses

Militant, mass demonstrations hit London and other European cities protesting the G20 meetings while the big imperialist powers bickered about how to handle the capitalist economic meltdown. There was also a demonstration attacked by the cops in Strasbourg, France, during NATO's 60th Anniversary meeting where the European rulers decided to send a very limited amount of extra troops to aid the U.S. war over oil-gas pipelines in Afghanistan.

Workers are angry. A common chant in many of their protests — from Dublin to Paris, from Rome to Athens — is, "We won't pay for their crisis!" Workers in the U.S. and elsewhere should follow their example in upping the ante of class struggle against the capitalist attacks. However, the anger and class hatred of these workers are being misled by union hacks, fake leftists and ruling-class politicians who build nationalism and illusions that voting for a "lesser evil" capitalist is the solution.

Nationalism and racism hold back these struggles. GM workers in Germany and Sweden limited their demands to keeping their plants open since they are "more efficient" than others, which weakens and divides international workers' solidarity. Meanwhile, racism against immigrants and non-white citizen workers is growing throughout the continent. Anti-racism is vital to these fight-backs.

## General Strike in Greece

On April 2, a massive general strike in all industries shut down Greece, with huge marches in Athens and nationwide, protesting G20 policies and their own right-wing government of Prime Minister Karamanlis. Most schools, ports and department stores in most big cities closed down. TV, radio and newspapers were affected.

In Athens there were three marches by different union groups, including heavy contingents of workers — mostly women — from the United Textile company whose 14 factories are suffering mass layoffs. The Finance Minister is demanding United Textiles fire 950 of the 1200 workers at these plants before approving a "survival plan" for the company. Hacks of two unions are accusing each other of betraying this struggle, but neither are supporting workers' occupation of the plants. This is no surprise, since these sell-outs also refused to support the mass rebellions of young workers and students that hit Greece last year when the cops killed a young student.

## France: Caterpillar Workers Seize Bosses, Continental Workers Burn Tires in Paris

Striking Caterpillar (CAT) workers at the Grenoble and Echirolles plants held five bosses in their offices after management refused to discuss a 733 jobs-cut in a workforce of 2,800. After netting a \$3.5-billion profit in 2008, CAT announced it would eliminate 22,000 jobs worldwide based on an estimated 55% drop in orders.



CAT, the world's largest manufacturer of construction equipment, produces much of that large machinery in France and provides armored vehicles for the British army and several other countries. It also makes the D9 armored bulldozers with which the Israeli army razed Palestinian housing. CAT CEO James Owens was Bush's nominee to a trade advisory board and is now on Obama's Economic Recovery Advisory Board.

The "CAT-napping" is just the latest in a series of similar actions throughout France:

- March, 2009 — The boss of Sony France was forcibly held at the Pontons-sur-Adour plant.
- Workers seized the industrial manager of the 3M factory at Pithiviers near Orléans.
- Riot police had to rescue the billionaire chief executive of the retail and luxury group PPR after workers protesting 1,200 job cuts blocked his taxi for over an hour as he left a meeting.
- Union delegates at the FCI plant near Paris held two directors in the meeting room until police intervened. They were supported by striking workers who have been picketing around the clock for six weeks against layoffs and plant closings.

On March 25, workers from the German-owned Continental Tire factory in Clairoux converged on Paris to burn tires on the city's main boulevard, demanding the government bail out the company. Continental is moving its work to Timisoara, Romania where the average monthly wage is 280-420 Euros (\$375-\$500). In Clairoux it's 1,700 Euros (over \$2,000). Continental is closing two plants in France and another in Germany. It broke its promise to keep work at the Clairoux factory through 2012 after workers had made big concessions in 2006.

On March 16, angry workers burst into a board meeting and pelted the bosses with eggs and shoes. The bosses held their next meeting, under strict security, 600 miles away in Nice.

These bold actions are good but demanding to "save our

*continued on p. 8*

## EDITORIAL>>

### Obama Ups 'Body Count': Afghan Deaths, U.S. Jobless

page 2

## STRIKES>>

### Stella D'Oro Strikers Face Bosses' System and Its State

page 3

## IMMIGRATION>>

### 'DREAM Act' is Attack on Immigrant Youth

page 4

## EL SALVADOR>>

### Salvadoran Bosses' 'Lesser Evil' Preserves Profit System

page 5

## TRANSIT>>

### As Economic Crisis Looms Over Contract Fight: Forging Communist Base Among LA Transit Workers

page 5

# Obama Ups 'Body Count': Afghan Deaths, U.S. Jobless

Barack Obama won 62 million votes on a "peace" platform — that slated 17,000 more troops to Afghanistan — while promising "to create new jobs." Instead, his brief regime has relentlessly attacked workers with intensifying war and economic misery.

Obama is sending 21,000 more GIs to Afghanistan now and backs his generals' demands for an additional 10,000 this fall. U.S.-led forces have slain 27,000 Afghan civilians since 2001. Obama's surge can only worsen the death toll.

The U.S. war machine's new commander-in-chief is also stepping up airstrikes into Pakistan. One such raid killed a dozen civilians on April 1. More than 400 people have died in the Iraq war since Inauguration Day. Bush Sr.'s invasion, Clinton's sanctions and bombings, and Bush Jr.'s invasion and occupation took over two million Iraqi lives. Obama, despite his lies about "withdrawal," is extending the U.S. oil war's body

count while pledging to keep combat brigades in Iraq.

Domestically, it's workers' livelihoods that suffer mass extermination. According to doctored government figures, at least 1.7 million jobs have disappeared on Obama's watch, so far. The true figure, counting "discouraged" workers and part-timers who can't find non-existent full-time jobs, is double that. And his scheme to "save Detroit" forces both job- and pay-cuts on autoworkers.

Obama can't and won't bring either peace or prosperity because he, like all politicians, serves his nation's capitalist class. Obama's top advisors, hailing from major corporations and ruling-class think-tanks, are tightly tied to the dominant, imperialist JP Morgan Chase-Exxon Mobil-Rockefeller wing of U.S. capital, as CHALLENGE has often noted.

Obama's bailout of Citigroup, AIG & Co. further exposes his true class loyalty. It wipes out shareholdings that include workers' pensions and 401Ks, but guarantees billions — via AIG's bailout money — to creditor banks like Goldman Sachs.

## White House Job No. 1: Wars to Save U.S. Oil Empire

Obama's U.S. capitalist masters face sharpening political, military and economic competition from imperialist and regional rivals. Thus, he's expanding military operations in the Middle East and Central and South Asia to protect U.S. bosses' most important single source of profits, oil, and its control as a weapon against its rivals.

But threats to Exxon Mobil's and Chevron's "black gold" keep mounting. Energy-thirsty China is building attack submarines and aircraft carriers to challenge U.S.-Navy dominance over oil routes. Iran's oil baron mullahs exert growing influence in Palestine, Iraq, Lebanon, and Syria, which surround Saudi Arabia, U.S. imperialism's grand profit prize. Putin's Russia, which supplies energy to much of Europe, using it as blackmail, seeks a new empire that includes a nuked-up Iran.

Obama is pouring \$10.5 billion in lethal military aid into already nuclear, unstable Pakistan in hopes of rooting out Taliban and al Qaeda forces there.

At home, Obama's "stimulus" won't reverse U.S. capitalism's inevitable descent into decay. U.S. workers' real wages have declined over the past three decades. Yet producing useful goods here, with aging plants and infrastructure — increasingly costly to upgrade — has become, in the main, less profitable than in rival countries.

So U.S. finance capitalists turned from investing in cars, appliances and textiles to trading basically worthless "paper" instruments like bundled bad mortgages and credit default swaps, and at exorbitant prices. Fraud disguised as finance boosted U.S. earnings rates for a time. But the current bust lays bare U.S. bosses' fundamental and widening global profit disadvantage.

## Rival Rulers Draw Daggers at G-20 And NATO Summits

Obama's feeble effect at recent G-20 and NATO summits underscore U.S. rulers' deepening predicaments. Rising capitalist powerhouses China, India, and even Brazil played 800-pound-elephant roles at the G-20 eco-

nomie confab in London, new threats U.S. bosses can't deal with. Pundits said G-20 was more like the failed 1933 central bankers' meeting in London, which highlighted the insoluble economic disputes that led in large part to World War II.

Meanwhile, Obama's attendance at NATO's 60th birthday party gained only token support for the U.S.'s Afghan war. Only Britain, whose Mideast-focused Shell and BP tie it to the Exxon-Chevron-Pentagon agenda, pledged more than a few hundred soldiers. The NATO festivity also unintentionally prompted a 20,000-strong pro-Russian protest in Ukraine's capital Kiev against president Yushchenko's bid to join the U.S.-led war coalition.

## World War III Needs Spur U.S. Infrastructure Schemes

If Obama does, in fact, overcome a dysfunctional Congress to create jobs, it won't be to revitalize GM's Pontiac sales, but rather to beef up U.S. infrastructure, enhancing its capacity to wage world war. Felix Rohatyn, a major U.S. imperialist strategist, has written a book, "Bold Endeavors," which recounts past huge U.S. public/private undertakings that enhanced "national security." These include transcontinental railroads, the Panama Canal and interstate highways.

Rohatyn urges Obama to rebuild rails, ports and roads to make the U.S. not just more productive but better able to withstand attack and project its considerable military might overseas. U.S. rulers, and servants like Obama and Rohatyn, understand that, ultimately, recovery lies in destroying rivals' productive capacity (including human capital) through war and forcibly seizing their territory, raw materials and markets.

War-maker, job-destroyer, union-buster Obama nevertheless enjoys a high 66% approval rating, according to pollsters. Many people, who rely on government to solve their problems, believe his election struck a blow against racism. But Obama, by winning workers to support the government, actually helps U.S. rulers get away with racist murder, quite literally in their Iraq and Afghan slaughters. Unemployment under Obama, approaching 30 million and counting, hits black, Latino, and immigrant workers hardest. Obama's military cold-bloodedly targets unarmed Arabs and Asians.

For workers, supporting Obama, or any agent of the class enemy, is a big mistake. Rather we need to organize to destroy the profit system, which can't provide us a living but often deals us death. That is our revolutionary, communist Party's long-term aim. ☪

## 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!**

**PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY**  
P.O. Box 808 Brooklyn NY 11202

• [www.plp.org](http://www.plp.org)

• email: [desafio.challenge@gmail.com](mailto:desafio.challenge@gmail.com)

• blog: [challengenewspaper.wordpress.com](http://challengenewspaper.wordpress.com)

• 718-630-9440

CHALLENGE/DESAFIO (ISSN 0009-1049) published bi-weekly by Challenge Periodicals. 1 issue \$.50. One Year: \$15. Six months: \$10. Send address changes to CHALLENGE Periodicals, GPO Box 808 Brooklyn, NY 11202, April 22, 2009, Volume 41, No. 02



## 'Scabs in Blue! Scabs in Blue!'

# Stella D'Oro Strikers Face Bosses' System and Its State

**BRONX, NY, April 1** — On a rainy, cold afternoon, chants of "Scabs in blue! Scabs in blue!" rang out as the bosses' cops stopped Stella D'Oro strikers and their supporters from marching from their picket line to a local supermarket. They wanted to urge neighborhood workers to support this strike by boycotting Stella D'Oro products. As a PL'er addressing the rally explained, Stella strikers are fighting not just their own bosses but the capitalist system and its state. The strikers very much liked the front-page article in the April 8th CHALLENGE championing their struggle — one of the very rare strikes in the U.S. today showing multi-racial, working-class unity against the bosses' attacks.

Sometimes strikers talk with cops at a picket line or demonstration. Cops, however, are not neutral. They serve to protect the interests of the bosses and their system. Has a cop ever arrested scabs for dangerously racing their cars through a picket line or arrested bosses for falsely accusing strike leaders of harassment? Hell no! Has a judge ever issued an injunction to prevent bosses from hiring scabs to break strikes? Never.

At today's picket line the cops invented laws to limit the effectiveness of strikers and their supporters. First they said we couldn't cross

the street in front of the factory. Then they said if we left the picket line in front of the factory, we couldn't return to resume picketing. Finally when we tried to march on another route, they said that we couldn't walk on the sidewalk to the supermarket because we needed a march permit.

Although the multi-racial group of over 150 strikers and supporters wanted to press forward, a score of cops with guns at their sides were able to stop us. Later, at a closing rally for today's action, a strike supporter from the Professional Staff Congress (college teachers' union) declared that if the cops didn't protect the Stella bosses, the workers might have won this strike long ago. Like the speaker said, "We'll be back!"



While the Stella D'Oro strike is about trying to maintain prior levels of pay and benefits, this strike has proven that the capitalist system benefits only the bosses. What we need is to smash the bosses' system with communist revolution!✪

# May Day Brings Communist Politics to LA School Struggle

**LOS ANGELES, April 4** — "I move that UTLA adopt the motion calling for a one-day strike on May First," said a comrade in the teachers union (UTLA) House of Representatives. This motion had passed overwhelmingly in four of the nine area meetings two weeks previously.

On March 13, nearly 9,000 teachers and health and human services personnel got pink slips for June layoffs. The jobs of many classified workers are threatened too. In response, teachers, other school workers, parents and students are fighting back and PLP is giving communist leadership.

The day of the layoffs saw walkouts and spontaneous demonstrations. Since then, there has been much more organized struggle, including before-school picketing and some militant job actions where teachers and students walked in an hour late. More actions are planned, with students, parents and non-teaching employees. Hundreds of "Petitions to Save our Schools" are circulating charging teacher layoffs as racist — layoffs of new teachers hit schools with black and Latino kids (the vast majority) the hardest — and an attack on the whole working class.

PLP members and friends are active in these struggles, linking these layoffs to the deep crisis of capitalism. The capitalists' goal is profit at all costs; our goal is the well-being of ourselves and our class, to have decent jobs, raise our families and survive. These two goals are directly contradictory. The bosses demand more and more of the value workers produce (which is all value) through cuts and taxes to prop up their banks, profits and expanding wars in the Middle-East for control of oil and gas resources to maintain their empire.

We advocated an illegal strike against layoffs and cutbacks, calling for a one-day work stoppage on May 1 — joining with immigrants organizing for an immigrants' rights march that day — in an action to defend the education of the children of all workers. From the start, the union leadership opposed the resolution, saying it would be too difficult politically to organize a one-day strike on May Day, the same day that immigrants were marching, because so many teachers are both anti-communist and anti-immigrant.

These fake leftists are seen nationally as "progressive," but when it counts they're unwilling to fight for the unity of the working class or to defend the rights of immigrants and their children. "Our message will be diluted in the immigrants rights march," said a member of the Board of Directors. A young teacher responded, "May Day represents the international working class, and we support a one-day strike in defense of our teachers, our students, and their families." The union leadership put forward, and narrowly won, a substitute motion for a membership vote to ratify a one-day work stoppage — any other day in May but May Day!

Many were angry. Of 250 teachers at the meeting, 100 took CHALLENGE. There are real victories here. By making May Day a mass issue we've raised with students, teachers and other school workers the real meaning of May Day — International Workers' Day.

May Day is the day when workers worldwide fight for our class, against the racist exploitation and wars of the capitalist bosses. It's been our day since 1886, when workers in Chicago fought for the eight-hour day, and has been cel-

ebrated around the world ever since. PLP has brought the fight for internationalism and communist revolution back to May Day.

That's why we're having a PLP contingent within the immigrants' rights march, to champion this communist nature of May Day. This is distinct from the march organizers who support the liberal rulers' plans to exploit immigrant workers for super-profits in low-wage jobs and use their youth as cannon fodder in the bosses' imperialist wars.

The struggle is helping our friends see the nature of the capitalist crisis. We say shutting down Los Angeles on May Day would be part of building up to a strike to shut down the school system until all jobs are restored. More importantly, it would help to build unity for the long-term fight to destroy the profit system. We've explained that we should have no illusions that even a militant strike will reverse all the attacks. This is a contracting capitalist system in crisis — one built into the system based on profits for a few at the expense of millions of workers.

Instead we need a system run by and for the working class, not the bankers, to eliminate the bosses and organize society to produce for the needs of the working class, not for profits. We need communism, not socialism (which retained banks), for a world without money, bosses or borders. Our success will be measured in expanding CHALLENGE networks and recruiting more PLP members! ✪

# Building for May Day Amid Capitalist Carnage in Detroit

**DETROIT, April 6** — “Why are we marching? What are we going to get out of it?” she asked. A PLP member responded, “We’re marching to build a movement. We’re marching to show the workers in NYC, and those we bring, that there’s a movement growing that’s out to overthrow this system and fight for communism, equality, no bosses and no profits.” “YES!” shouted the American Axle worker from the couch. “That’s what we need!”

That exchange captured the mood of the May Day committee meeting here last week. Bringing a busload of workers and youth to march on May Day will be our answer to the overwhelming racist oppression that has laid waste to Detroit and stolen the future from our youth. This is our answer to the bankers and auto bosses who grab billions in salaries and bonuses while destroying jobs and boarding up homes.

Here, more than 50% of all black males are unemployed and the jails are full. There are no supermarkets or movie theaters but there are curfews against our youth and plainclothes cops harass students inside the schools. Forty thousand homes are boarded up, more empty homes than homeless people, because under capitalism if the bosses can’t sell it for a profit, it can’t be used, no matter

what the need.

We met in the shadow of GM world headquarters, while the Obama auto task force, led by two former investment bankers, was forcing chairman and CEO Rick Wagoner into a retirement worth about \$23 million. With the global financial crisis deepening, the federal government is taking direct control of the fascist restructuring of the shrinking auto industry. GM was given 60 days to come back with a bigger list of plant closings and job cuts, and still more wage, health care and pension cuts from the UAW. Chrysler was given 30 days to form a partnership with Fiat. These conditions must be met in order to get more government money. If not, both companies will be forced into that financial chop shop known as bankruptcy court.

The ruling class is using Obama to whip the auto industry into fighting shape after having been routed on their home turf. CEO Wagoner’s ouster means an even more fascist crackdown on GM workers who should realize they are in great danger. GM’s pro-capitalist UAW “partners” will be asked to deliver even deeper wage and benefit concessions, including retiree health benefits. The message to the workers is clear: if you don’t give it up, we’ll take it in bankruptcy court. Many illusions

that auto workers have in Obama are being challenged, if not smashed.

Fiat said it was eager to merge with Chrysler, especially after Obama said he would bless the deal with \$6 billion in federal aid. G.M. said it would “take whatever steps are necessary to successfully restructure the company.” So far, all is quiet at UAW headquarters at Solidarity House, as these miserable low-lives finally face their own mortality. They hitched their wagon to U.S. imperialism 50 years ago, and now they are feeling every bit of the decline of their masters.

Unlike them, we shed no tears for the bosses. We will build a new communist world on their graves. We fight for the laid-off truck driver and his family, the high school students, the hospital, county and hotel workers, the American Axle worker and his partner and their 8-month old baby boy. After the four-month American Axle strike in the winter of ‘07-‘08, two-thirds of the workers lost their jobs, and wages were cut in half. At the ratification meeting at King H.S., workers tore up the contract and shouted down their leaders. One year later, the flicker of communist revolution still burns. This May Day it will burn a little brighter. ✪

## ‘DREAM Act’ is Attack on Immigrant Youth

**LOS ANGELES, April 7** — We’re fighting to bring people to march with PLP on May Day for internationalism and communist revolution. There were immigrants’ rights marches here the last two Saturdays, giving us a good start. The immigrants’ rights groups are mobilizing for Obama’s “comprehensive immigration reform” and the DREAM Act. We’re fighting in the streets, schools and factories to make this a struggle to unite the whole working class against the capitalist crisis and show that the solution is communism.

In the March 28 march, when PLP youth answered every liberal chant with a different one, many others joined in. When we chanted that we’ll have a world without borders, a good section of the march took it up.

Then on April 4, about 2,000 mainly Latino immigrant workers, marched through downtown Los Angeles in support of the DREAM Act, re-introduced in both houses of Congress on March 26. The latest version of this immigration legislation puts undocumented immigrant youth on a path supposedly to citizenship if they’ve lived in the U.S. for at least five years, graduated from high school and completed two years of either college or military service. But the DREAM Act does not change an undocumented immigrant youth’s current ineligibility for government financial aid for college.

For most working-class immigrant youth it’s far easier to join the military than enter college, which is prohibitively expensive. In effect, the DREAM Act offers undocumented immigrant youth the promise of citizenship in exchange for service to U.S. imperialism. In fact, the timing for this Bill fits right into Obama’s current effort to send more troops to Afghanistan. The Pentagon has been a

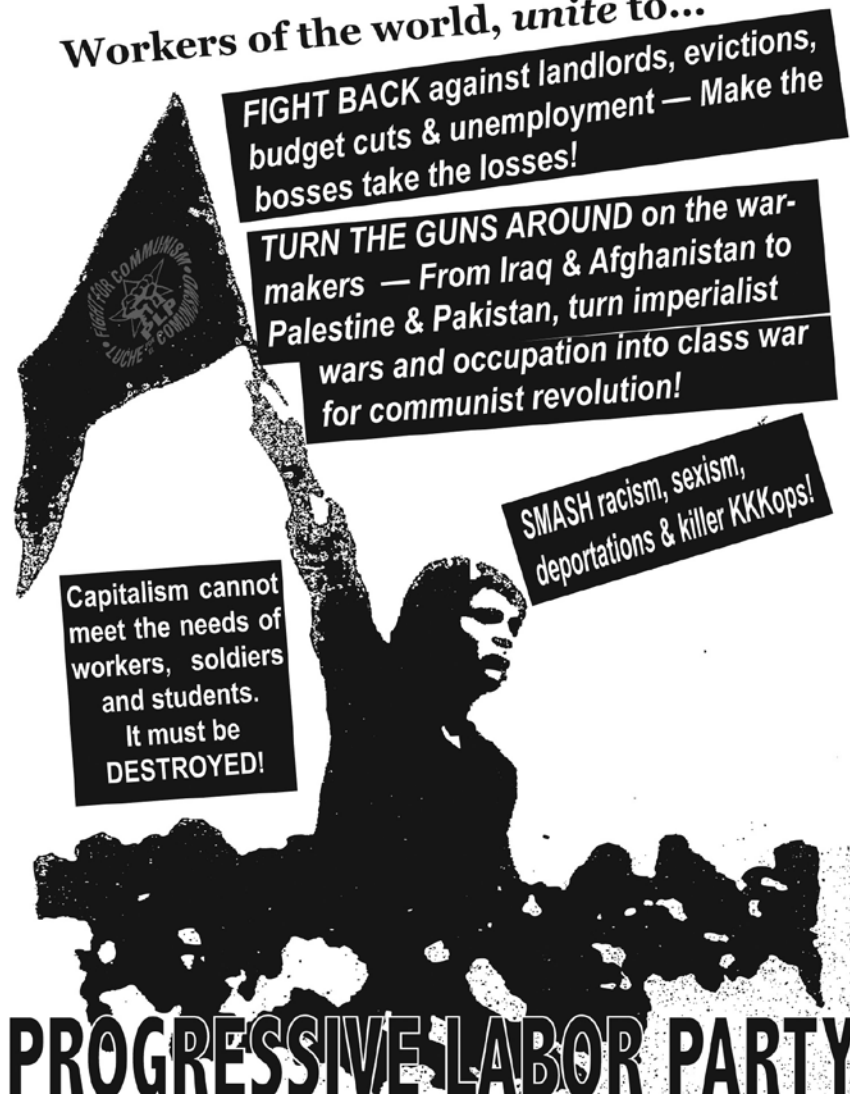
major supporter of the DREAM Act. It would result in 279,000 newly eligible people for either college enrollment or the military, and 715,000 more between ages 5 and 17 in the near future.

A contingent of PLP students and teachers participated in the march, leading chants for international working-class unity, and distributed leaflets that explained the fascist nature of immigration reform proposed by the U.S. ruling class. We passed out 1,600 leaflets which called for marching on May Day with PLP for workers’ unity and communist revolution. We also distributed about 400 CHALLENGES.

After the march the PLP group, mainly Latino immigrant high school students, analyzed the illusions created by the DREAM Act among immigrant youth and the need to understand how these types of reform movements ultimately serve the ruling class’s efforts to build patriotism and recruit youth into their army. We also discussed organizing against imperialism in the military.

## FIGHT FOR COMMUNISM! MARCH ON MAY DAY

Workers of the world, unite to...



Assemble with PLP:  
 NY- May 2, 11 am, Linden Blvd. & Flatbush Ave.  
 LA- May 1, 11 am, Olympic & Broadway  
 Seattle- May 1, 3:30 pm, Judkin Playground

Participating in this DREAM Act march helped PLP youth understand the importance of fighting for revolutionary communist politics that expose how immigration reform potentially can lead workers into supporting U.S. imperialism. The group of students and teachers also vowed to redouble their efforts to bring more youth to march with PLP on May Day. ✪

# Salvadoran Bosses' 'Lesser Evil' Preserves Profit System

**EL SALVADOR** — "If Funes wins, we'll be more controlled by the right and the fake left," remarked a comrade at a PLP communist school.

In the recent Presidential election, the FMLN's Mauricio Funes won with 1,350,000 votes, 51.2% of the electorate. Thousands of workers celebrated in the streets of the country's main cities, shouting, "Yes we could"; "The people united will never be defeated"; and, "Today is different. Funes is President."

When Funes and the FMLN's political commission declared victory, they said there were no winners or losers in this election — the victory was "for everyone"; that change had come and there were no distinctions between right and left.

It was very different from the speech people expected, which is why the right celebrated too. That same week, Vice-President-elect Sánchez Ceren stated, "Not all the promises made by the FMLN during the election can be fulfilled."

The liberal rulers paid for much of Funes' electoral campaign. They represented the group "Friends of Mauricio Funes," which includes millionaire businessman Nicolas Salume. He also financed the previous campaign of Antonio Saca (the outgoing President from the right-wing Arena party). Two sectors of Funes supporters made a deal for the FMLN to continue to control the mayors and the representatives while the capitalist "Friends of Funes" would pick the cabinet ministers. The bosses made sure that whoever won would continue capitalist policies.

The workers who see Funes and the FMLN as the solution within the capitalist system to the international crisis of unemployment, poverty and hunger will be frustrated since capitalism is in decline; none of these politicians can solve the crisis. Actually, they're part of the problem.

The sharpening inter-imperialist rivalry is also reflected here. Funes said he would follow the governing model of Obama and Brazil's Lula, while an FMLN group continues to insist that Funes must offer an opening to Cuba, Russia and China through Venezuela's Hugo Chavez.

The international capitalist crisis is intensifying here. The bosses can't keep hiding the emptiness of state coffers, so empty that subsidies for energy, transportation and rent can't be paid. Fiscal collections, consumption and sales have declined, and, according to the Central Reserve Bank, the country's projected growth rate is nearly zero. This is one of many countries affected by the crisis due to its dependence on remittances from families in the U.S., down \$250 million in the last year.

Progressive Labor Party has shown the only way forward amid the international capitalist crisis is to sharpen the workers' struggles worldwide; this country is no exception. Only the working class can save the working class.

During the election campaign, union and social group leaders diverted the working class from any sign of protest against the bosses or their system. But PLP continued to struggle against, and denounce, the deals among the bosses who financed

Arena and the FMLN.

This election was a multi-million dollar campaign by the FMLN and Arena. The FMLN leadership paid \$36 million to the media companies while 20,000 people are losing their jobs.

All these electoral events are aimed at lining up both the leaders of the capitalist system, as well as the workers, behind a group of bosses, whether in the U.S., Europe, Russia or China. All of these latter forces face the growing necessity of wider war and World War III, a war over international markets.

Now, after the elections, workers' anger is starting to surface. A worker on a local radio program said, "This Funes has already shown he's allied with the right. He just won the election and he showed his capitalist leanings. He'll respond to the capitalists' interests, like those of his friends who financed his campaign. As the saying goes, 'he who pays the piper calls the tune.'"

The election results mean a change in the governing party but not in the capitalist political and economic orientation. Those capitalists who now hold State power won't change the way they exercise it. Whether there's a neo-liberal or a state capitalist government, both are bad for the working class. There's only been a superficial change among the bosses.

The only solution for workers is the long-term struggle for the dictatorship of the working class and communism through the growth of an internationalist PLP. To all workers: lets all march worldwide on May Day! ☘

## As Economic Crisis Looms Over Contract Fight: Forging Communist Base Among LA Transit Workers

**LOS ANGELES, April 6** — "One of the first things I do each day is put CHALLENGES or leaflets in my backpack," said a PLP member. "I think about who I'm going to get the paper to today or what kind of political discussion I'll try to develop. I am motivated by a deepening anger against the storms of crisis, war and fascism that confronts our class, an anger that is growing in many of my co-workers."

Building a base of communist workers for the Party means knitting together a network of CHALLENGE readers, organizing study groups, forums, and personal social and political visits, as well as becoming part of class struggle. It also involves our own families, in trying to have the time and space for all this. Ideally it means integrating our family's participation in this process.

We've been working in the transportation industry for 10 years. Our PLP club now regularly distributes 55 CHALLENGES — having six veteran members, four new members and another five readers who help distribute one or two papers each.

We've worked with many workers over time. Some have responded immediately. Later, when they understand the seriousness of the situation, they may pause to think about it. Others are more cautious from the beginning and slowly get closer to us. Others want our literature and to help the Party in some way, without committing themselves completely. Others have joined and are advancing, taking more leadership.

Recently we've organized four forums involving 30 different workers —Latino, African American and white, and some from Russia and the Middle East. The forums concerned the history of the working class and the need for PLP and the fight for communism as the only viable alternative to the world-wide crisis of capitalism, imperialist war and fascism.

There's a great potential to recruit new

members in a short time. Building a communist base requires patience and urgency — patience because it's not so easy to change workers' minds. Much consistency and persistence are needed.

Consistency: we can't just take people CHALLENGE once and then, after a few months, bring them another one. We have to take the political development of each worker seriously and follow up, but without being mechanical. Many times we want to force the process of development because we're not viewing things dialectically. If you plant a fruit tree, you can't expect to be eating mangos in one month. It won't happen! Then you could decide to abandon it and leap to a new one, and on and on, without success.

We're involved in the class struggle. We're forming a strike committee, with PL'ers, readers and co-workers to fight around the contract this summer. Three years ago, during the last contract fight, we formed a committee that gave communist political leadership during the strike, organizing protests, meetings, leafleting, articles and CHALLENGE sales, and bringing other workers and students to the picket lines. The current economic crisis — which our contract fight is a part of — is an opportunity to expose the capitalist system and show workers the vision of a new communist world.

Besides inviting all the CHALLENGE readers to the May Day Dinner, we're also struggling with them to invite their friends and families. May Day offers the chance to clarify PLP's communist ideas, enabling us to build a mass communist party of the working class. To achieve that, we need many communists, and for that we need an expanding network of CHALLENGE readers that becomes a mass network.

These advances come from sharpening the political struggle inside the club and the leadership to spread PLP's communist politics. ☘

"When are we going to talk about politics?" a transit driver asked a CHALLENGE seller at a work site. "I've got a lot to say and some questions to ask you." In the past, this driver occasionally took a paper. He was friendly but not particularly interested in PLP's communist ideas. Today that's changed. He, his wife and two children are all victims of capitalism's crisis. In the "tender" phrase of the bankers, this family is "underwater" — they owe substantially more on their house than it's worth, even after paying \$100,000 down. He's one of millions being sacrificed to bail out the billionaire swindlers. Stung by the betrayal of his "American Dream," we hope this driver and more like him will come to the May Day Dinner where he can learn about the historic battles against capitalism and begin to participate in the current movement. We plan to involve him in PLP activities during the contract struggle and upcoming Summer Project.

Now, even before the contract expires, the collapsing U.S. economy is falling on our heads and on the rest of the world's workers. The bosses' media complain about the speed of the collapse of manufacturing, but transit workers could be next on the chopping block if they need us to transport fewer workers to the factories. The economic meltdown increases our opportunities to win these workers to PLP's politics while fighting the attacks on our co-workers' and riders' lives.

During the last contract struggle we encouraged drivers and riders to unite, held social events and explained that "Contracts only spell out the terms of our oppression; they don't stop exploitation." Some transit workers who participated in these activities became more interested in the long-term possibility of communist revolution.

We say everyone can help fight for communism. A retired comrade, no longer driving, has helped circulate CHALLENGE and communist leaflets to transit workers. Not being tied to the time clock, he can visit drivers and mechanics on all shifts. Guys ask him, "How is retirement?" He replies, "I love not being a wage-slave, but this system is after us old folks too. A pension based on capitalist investments is a contract written on toilet paper. The contract struggle will involve retiree issues. The company will try to play active transit workers against retirees by saying there isn't enough money for both with this budget deficit. Sure, I retired from the company but you can't retire from the class struggle and the fight for communism."

One thing is certain. The capitalist crisis will continue to push workers "underwater." As bosses under Bush allowed workers to drown in Hurricane Katrina, the bosses under Obama will not, and cannot, rescue our class from the ravages of this economic hurricane. PLP's goal of communist revolution is the only lifeline in these storms. ☘

# LETTERS



## Anti-Communism: Bosses' Key Weapon vs. Workers

Many workers in Europe are taking to the streets to protest the bosses' forcing workers to take the losses for capitalism's financial meltdown [see front page — Editor]. Now "theories" are being advanced on why workers in the U.S. aren't taking similar action. The NY Times' (4/5) labor editor comes up with a series of lies and half-truths, with "analyses" from various academics and union "leaders" to "explain" it: workers here "have individualistic streaks"; "guilt, shame and individualism undercut any impulse to collective action"; "declining numbers" in union membership; "enthusiasm for Obama"; blah, blah, blah.

Unable to hide the militant history of the U.S. working class, the Times admits that "worker protests" in the 1930s "were fueled by the then powerful Communist...Partly." And even then the Times feels incumbent to attribute the militancy of the 1936-37 44-day Flint sit-down strike and seizure of GM plants to "President Roosevelt's blessing." It fails to mention Roosevelt's National Guard surrounding the plant with machine guns aimed at the sit-downers. Some "blessing"!

Then it says "American labor leaders...work hand-in-glove with C.E.O's to improve corporate competitiveness." It quotes Leo Gerard, Steelworkers union president, saying there are "smarter things to do than demonstrating against layoffs." What's "smarter"? "All that is needed is some expert lobbying in Washington."

Yes, this "expert lobbying" has reduced union membership from 35% to "just 7.4 percent of private-sector workers today."

Of course, the Times and their pundits don't want to point to the real source of passivity: anti-communism and the ouster of communists from leadership in the labor movement. The full weight of the ruling class and its state apparatus was brought down on the working class in the rabid Cold War anti-communist offensive following World War II.

The demise of militancy got its start with the kicking out of the reds in the late 1940s, masterminded by the Times' darling labor "leader," Walter Reuther. In the 1950s and '60s, mass movements erupted against racism and the war in Vietnam, alongside the Cultural Revolution in China, all of which involved masses taking to the streets and no doubt influenced workers' struggles. This included armed miners' battles in the Kentucky coalfields, nationwide strikes in steel and GE, the '71 national

shutdown by postal workers and the '73 PLP-led Chrysler Mack Ave. sit-down strike.

But with the end of the Vietnam War and the demise of the international communist movement, the situation deteriorated, so by the early 1980s President Reagan felt secure enough about the pro-capitalist union leaders to fire 10,000 striking air controllers. Had the labor fakers organized the rest of the unionized airline workers to respect the strikers' picket lines, it could have shut the entire industry tighter than a drum. Then it wouldn't have been so easy to fire those workers. (Coincidentally, the only union to support Reagan's 1980 run for the White House was...the air controllers! Which goes to show how far workers can get when they follow the union honchos' lead to look to elections to solve their problems.)

Unfortunately, the communists of the pre-World War II era made the fundamental mistake of not really trying to win the tens of thousands of workers supporting them to the goal of revolution to overthrow the bosses' system. So even though the ruling class and its lieutenants in the AFL-CIO succeeded in ousting the communists from leadership, a huge base could have been established for future militant and revolutionary action.

PLP is trying to learn that lesson. Historically, workers have always fought their oppressors, especially with militant and revolutionary leadership. Therefore we immerse ourselves in the workers' class struggles, in the fight against racism and for unity of all workers. We tie those experiences to understanding the necessity for communist revolution, not settle for reforms that can be taken away at the first drop of the Depression hat. Marching on May Day is a good step in that direction.

*Red Labor Buff*

## Boston, MA: Thousands fight school cutbacks

"You won't balance your budget on the back of my child!" "Do you know what Boston students' lives are like? We need MORE social workers, not less!" "Bail out schools, not banks." That's what some of the thousands of parents and students said, as they angrily attacked school cutbacks in "budget hearings" called by Supt. Carol Johnson. Between 210 and 900 school jobs (out of 8,000 teacher and staff positions) will be cut; 110 "permanent" teachers and paraprofessionals, and 400 provisional teachers, will be cut. Art, music, and language programs are to be closed; many math, English, science, and social studies teachers will be cut.

## Union Turf War Leaves Workers Hanging

**CHICAGO, IL March 30** — On March 21, the SEIU held a secret meeting and removed four militant women leaders from being stewards and chief stewards at Stroger (Cook County) Hospital. This is SEIU's revenge for these women's role in a recently failed organizing drive. The four stewards and chief stewards, Sonja Sanson, Bernadette Cornejo, Angie Ballard and Dimples Hughes-Williams, are going to need the active support of their co-workers to answer the County/SEIU attacks that are coming. More than anything, we need a stronger PLP at County.

For the past eight months, Cook County healthcare workers were caught in a turf war between the giant SEIU and the California Nurses Association's (CNA) national organization, National Nurses Organizing Committee (NNOC). After two years of budget cuts that cost over 2,000 jobs and closed half the clinics that serve the more than one million uninsured workers and children here, SEIU and NNOC decided to spend millions raiding each other for a bigger share of a shrinking pie instead of organizing a massive strike of workers and patients against racist cutbacks. These pro-capitalist unions compete with each other just like the bosses do.

The most militant and class-conscious workers put their necks on the line for NNOC's workers union, the Caregivers and Health Employees Union (CHEU). Despite their "progressive" reputation, NNOC maintains separate unions for nurses and workers. Based on the active support of these

most militant rank and file leaders, the CHEU organizing drive became a mutiny against the SEIU leadership that had supported the budget cutters and sabotaged any fight back. Elections were scheduled in all four SEIU bargaining units.

On February 20, just days before the scheduled elections, CHEU pulled out, without any discussion with the workers involved. SEIU and CNA, who had been battling each other all over the country, formed an "alliance" to end the feud. While SEIU president Andy Stern and CNA president Rose Ann DeMoro were shaking hands and passing checks, the most militant County workers were left holding the bag. Some CHEU supporters had already been fired, and SEIU has no intention of fighting to bring them back.

As the economy continues to crumble, workers face more racist unemployment and cutbacks while the bosses get trillion-dollar bailouts. As workers have been forced to accept speed-up, wage-cuts, increases in our healthcare premiums and loss of pensions, the unions serve the bosses. We cannot expect anything different. No union can end the global crisis of capitalism. No contract can negotiate away the growing fascism, racist terror and war that the capitalists will need to force us to pay for their crisis. We are turning these attacks, and the growing anger of the workers, into a bigger base for PLP and more May Day marchers. Communist revolution is our answer to these attacks, and to the bosses' crisis. ☪

The capitalist government works for the rich against the working class. That's why anything that workers have won, like public education, can be taken back.

Gov. Deval Patrick announced \$165 million for schools in Mass. but \$0 for the mainly black and Latino students of Boston! Teacher unions spent heavily for Patrick/Obama — but these politicians are the enemies of working people.

The Boston Teachers' Union has called a mass rally for May 19 at 4 pm together with parents, teachers, and students to restore all school cutbacks. Now the job of PLP'ers is to build a massive rally; to talk to more parents, students and teachers about PLP; to sell more Challenges, and recruit members during this struggle.

*Boston Comrade*

## Capitalism Can't Crush Memories of Collective Struggle in East Berlin

On a recent week's trip to Berlin, we — a group of veteran communists — spent a lot of time thinking about history. People are often taught to honor things that, if they were taught the truth, they wouldn't be celebrating at all.

In Berlin's case, there is the glory of this or that ancient era (when most people were crushed under feudalism), the golden age of one king or another with his palaces (built with the blood of workers and sustained by war), the rise of German power in the 19th-century (as part of the rise of imperialism all over), and more. In this century, publicly everyone agrees not to celebrate Hitler's era, but Berlin is still caught in its aftermath.

After WW II, Berlin was a capitalist outpost surrounded by East Germany. With whatever errors they made, East German workers were trying to create a socialist Germany — not glorifying capitalism. We recognize that socialism could no more happen under revisionist East German leadership than it could under western capitalism. But we saw exhibits explaining the struggles to rebuild after the war — clearing the rubble, meeting in collectives to try to figure out how to rebuild, what the much-needed housing should look like. Despite all the stories about people cramped together in apartments, East Germany had actually overcome its housing shortage through these initiatives.

West Berlin had exactly the opposite mission: to try to lure people from the east back into accepting capitalism, to wanting Levis and Coke and glorification of big business and celebrities. So, it needed not only huge amounts of capital invested in shiny new office towers, and subsidies to lure people from West Germany to live there and give the impression of a lively city; it also needed to constantly trash-talk East Germany and in particular East Berlin.

We went expecting that even 20 years after the end of the wall East Berlin would be old and decrepit and gray, and that former West Berlin would be in Technicolor and young and lively. That's what we'd always heard. Hah. It didn't take us long to discover, when looking at buildings that pre-dated 1989, that both sides looked very much alike. We've read for years about big, soul-less, dispiriting apartment blocks in the east... well, the same designs were built in the west as well, and most of them don't look bad at all.

Throughout the week we found a considerable degree of nostalgia for the pre-1989 East. People were looking for change as their revisionist government became weaker and less responsive but they weren't looking for a corporate takeover by West Germany. People still come to the statues of Marx and Engels near the City Hall to take family pictures. A plan to replace the East-style walk-don't walk signs ran into big resistance, and more.

Perhaps this is why, today, so much of the history talked about in Berlin is focused on the Berlin Wall which divided the city East from West, and on continuing to depict East Germany as the gray place with the ugly buildings, and all the rest. They've even rebuilt "Checkpoint Charlie" on a downtown street with students hired to masquerade as border guards. Even with glitzy modernism, even with the Euro zone, even after 20 years, capitalism is faced with memories it can't kill, of a time when, even with errors, a different history was being built.

*Red tourist*

# Black Youths Jailed; Real Criminals Go Scot-free

**February** — Two 16-year-old youths have been incarcerated for several months now by the criminal IN-justice system. They are being charged as adults for “aggravated assault” and denied bail! According to allegations, the young men used a knife to demand money from someone on the street.

At the time of the arrest they were separated and forcefully interrogated for hours. The police told the youths that if they did not “confess” to more crimes, their pictures would be shown to any number of random victims who could be convinced to “identify” them as perpetrators. The racist cops told the youths that this would be easy to accomplish simply because they are black. About 70% of the U.S prison population is black and Latino. While blacks and Latinos comprise only 25% of the U.S. population, nearly triple that percent are in prison.

The official police report does tell the truth about one thing. It states that the youths said they were hungry. Viewing that issue more broadly, every day over 30 million people go to bed hungry in the U.S., including 46% of all black children, 40%

of Latino children and 16% of white children. The cause of this hunger is the international system of capitalism – U.S. imperialism in particular – which has also killed over 650,000 Iraqis in the last four years, and well over 1.2 million since 1992. Globally, more than 850 million people live on less than one dollar a day - the international poverty line set by the World Bank - and half the world’s population lives on less than \$2-a-day! Over 250,000 children die every week of hunger and malnutrition. The vast majorities are black, Latin and Asian.

Why aren’t the criminals responsible for this in jail? For one, what they call democracy is really a dictatorship of the business owners, of the capitalist class. They control the power of the state, — courts, cops, government, schools, and military — that they use it to violently maintain power. Two, there is not yet a mass revolutionary communist movement to overthrow this system.

Members of PLP are active in the defense and support of these two teens. The support group is having regular meetings and has divided up tasks, like organizing a schedule for visits to see the youths in jail, raising money to put into the jail

commissary accounts (so the two teens have access to basics like writing paper and stamps), meeting with the defense lawyers, and generating publicity about the case.

The jails will be filled with the capitalists only when we make a communist revolution, put an end to the whole profit system, and struggle successfully to completely defeat the legacy of racism. For now, as the system drives our class further into misery, PL does not condone anti-working class actions. It is wrong to forcefully take something from another member of our class. Even more importantly, however, we must point out that the main criminals are not youths who may sometimes make a bad decision, but the system itself which ravages our lives much more deeply.

Our alternative is to bring communist ideas to workers, youth, and soldiers. We must organize to smash capitalism, the root of our class problems. An important first step is to bring a sizable contingent to our May Day activities, where everyone can be inspired by a glimmer of the positive, communist future ahead. ☺

## RED EYE ON THE NEWS

Below are excerpts from mainstream newspapers that may be of use for our readers. For more, go to [challengenewspaper.wordpress.com](http://challengenewspaper.wordpress.com).

Abbreviations: NYT=New York Times, GW=Guardian Weekly, LAT=Los Angeles Times

### People can vote, but kids starve

**NYT, 3/13**— Small, sick, listless children have long been India’s scourge — “a national shame,” in the words of its prime minister. But even after a decade of galloping economic growth, child malnutrition rates are worse here than in many sub-Saharan African countries and they stand out...in a proud democracy....Child malnutrition in India is 42.5 percent. Malnutrition makes children more prone to illness and stunts physical and intellectual growth for a lifetime....Economists and public health experts say stubborn malnutrition rates point to a central failing in this democracy.

### Bishops were warned on abusers

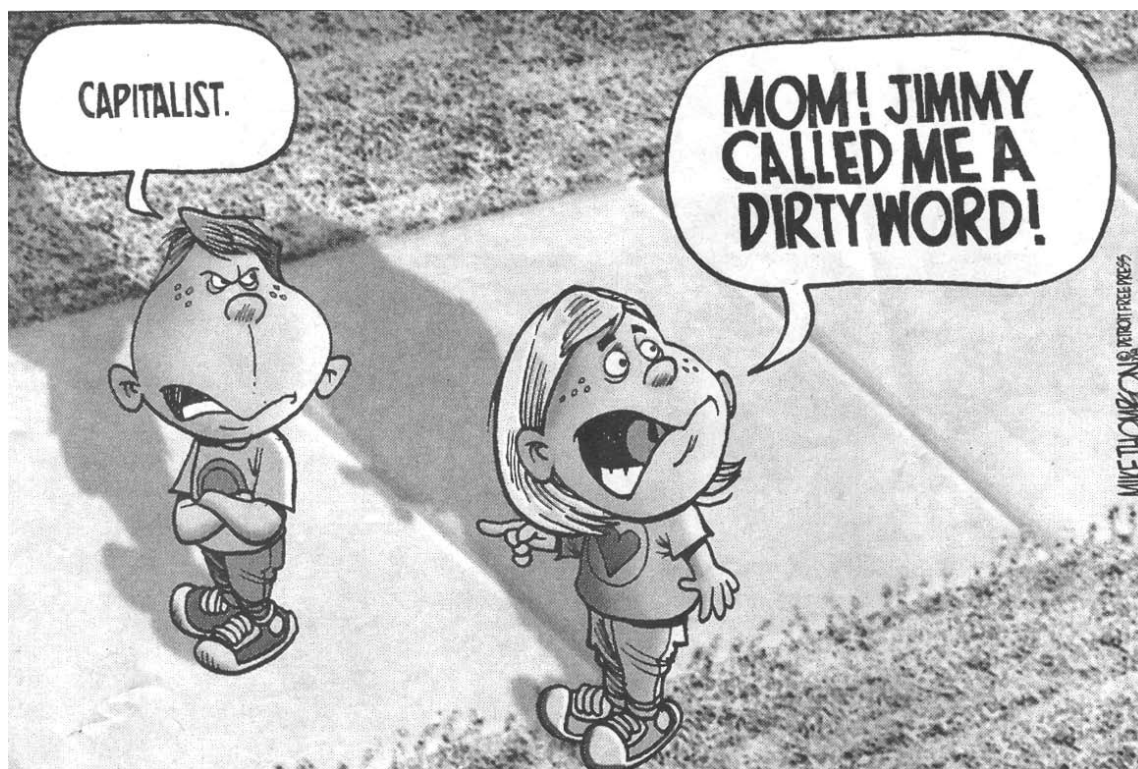
**NYT, 4/3**— The founder of a Roman catholic religious order that ran retreat centers for troubled priests warned American bishops in forceful letters dating back to 1952 that pedophiles should be removed from the priesthood because they could not be cured....The letters were unsealed by a judge... The documents contradict the most consistent defense given by bishops about the sexual abuse scandal: that they were unaware until recently that offenders could not be rehabilitated and returned to the ministry....The scandals, which reached a peak in 2002, revealed that for decades bishops had taken priests with histories of sexual abuse and re-assigned them to parishes and schools where they abused new victims.

### Docs see disabilities, but say no

**NYT, 4/1**— The worker, a driver for a plumbing company, told the doctor he had fallen, banging up his back, shoulder and ribs. He was seeking expanded workers’ compensation benefits because he no longer felt he could do his job.

Dr. Samuels, an independent medical examiner in the state workers’ compensation system, seemed to agree. As he moved about a scuffed Brooklyn office last April, he called out test results indicative of an injured man. His words were captured on videotape.

Yet the report Dr. Samuels later submitted to the New York State Workers’ Compensation Board cleared the driver for work and told a far different



story: no back spasms. No tender neck. In fact, no recent injury at all.

“If you did a truly pure report,” he said later in an interview, “you’d be out on your ears and the insurers wouldn’t pay for it. You have to give them what they want, or you’re in Florida. That’s the game, baby.”....Fraud and misbehavior are woven through the process in less obvious ways that hurt workers...Numerous disabled workers are so ground down by the process that they begin to unravel. “I’ve talked to workers that held a gun to their head as we talked.”

### Nobel sees bailouts as robbery

**NYT, 4/1**— “What the Obama administration is doing is far worse than nationalization: it is ersatz capitalism, the privatizing of gains and the socializing of losses. It is a “partnership” in which one partner robs the other — with the private sector in control...it’s the kind of Rube Goldberg device that Wall Street loves — clever, complex and nontransparent, allowing huge transfers of wealth to the financial markets.”

Joseph E. Stiglitz was awarded the Nobel prize in economics in 2001.

### You think you have a contract?

**NYT, 4/1**— Under a plan being worked out by the administration, G.M. would file for prearranged bankruptcy....Delphi used a bankruptcy judge’s threat to void union contracts to wring concessions out of its workers, said a professor of industrial relations....“That’s a very potent threat, to withdraw

from the collective agreement in bankruptcy,” Mr. Chaison said. Several airlines also used bankruptcy proceedings to force unions to modify agreements.

### For many, the crisis = no food

**NYT, 4/2**— “In London, Washington and Paris, people talk of bonuses or no bonuses,” Robert Zoellick, the World Bank president, said this week. “In parts of Africa, South Asia and Latin America, the struggle is for food or no food.”

As usual, the greatest price for incompetence at the summit will be borne by the poorest people in the world — who aren’t represented there and who never approved any bad loans... Impoverished parents in developing countries often try to keep their sons alive in famines by taking food from their daughters, so...the increase in child mortality during an economic downturn is five times higher for girls than for boys.

### Recalling 1930’s, tent cities grow

**NYT, 3/26**— While encampments and street living have always been a part of the landscape in big cities like Los Angeles and New York, new tent cities have taken root — or grown from smaller enclaves of the homeless as more people lose jobs and housing — in such disparate places as Nashville, Olympia, Wash., and St. Petersburg, Fla.

In Seattle, homeless residents in the city’s 100-person encampment call it Nickelsville, an unflattering reference to the mayor, Greg Nickels.

# Obama's Plan 'Stimulates' Bosses' Attack on Workers

Barack Obama recently lectured workers, not on capitalism's systemic inability to avoid crisis and depression, but to "look beyond our own short-term interests to the wider set of obligations we have to each other...That's when we succeed. That's when we prosper. And that's what's needed right now." The working class, not the bosses, will take the losses, that's the meaning behind Obama's stimulus package.

The international working class must brace for this "stimulus" as an outright attack, foreshadowing even greater misery. One former economist of U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, Thomas Worsley, openly pondered the bosses need for war, saying to Bloomberg news recently, "Can we spend enough with peacetime spending to get us out [of the crisis?]"

In addition to the major banks, many states are on the verge of bankruptcy; their failure would trigger a catastrophe. Only \$54 billion has been allocated to states while 43 face a combined deficit of at least \$200 billion for this year alone. "This is a band-aid" said Michael Bird, of the federal affairs counsel at the National Conference of State Legislatures (U.S. News & World Report, 2/25/09).

Between mounting job and home losses, decades of gutting federal social programs, and deep cutbacks made after the previous recession of 2001, the crises facing workers, especially in states like California, New York, Florida, and Michigan, are set to intensify.

While Obama stated that this crisis was years in the making, Marx predicted crises like these in the mid 19th century. Workers in the U.S., especially blacks and Latinos, the biggest holders of sub-prime mortgages, are being crushed under mountains of debt which threaten to amplify the crisis as millions are tossed out onto the streets, unable to make their payments.

As for solutions, the bosses can't seem to print money fast enough. The billions of dollars in cash "injections" triggered unease amongst the Chinese ruling class, which holds several trillion dollars in U.S. Treasury Bills made worthless by the influx of dollars. The Chinese imperialists, flexing their new muscles internationally, recently called for a replacement of the dollar as the world's reserve currency.

## The Path Towards Wider War Among Imperialist Rivals

Obama's plan to "tax the wealthiest" is a sham, since the upper echelons of the ruling class have all sorts of loopholes to avoid paying taxes. Since the U.S. bosses can't sell off their own assets to rival imperialists without losing their position as top imperialist dog; their only option is to look to squeeze profits from workers currently being exploited by their imperialist rivals. This is a path towards war.

At the end of WW II the U.S. rulers were in a position to penetrate Latin America, Asia, and Africa unopposed by other capitalists. Times have changed. There is not a single part of the globe that hasn't been penetrated by one or more rivals to the U.S., namely China, Russia, and Germany. The era of unchallenged U.S. dominance is over.

It's unclear whether or not the financial wizards can cook up even a short-term solution to this crisis; the best they can hope for is to postpone this crisis for a larger one down the road. Rising competition in the face of worldwide crisis will ultimately lead to war between the biggest powers. The U.S. rulers will be forced to directly confront one or more of their rivals in wars of a scale that will dwarf the so-called "brushfires" around the globe now.

As the crisis deepens, millions of workers in the U.S. have been and will be laid off, and bankruptcies will only mount. The U.S. bosses will intensify exploitation here, and make us pay for their losses. As Obama's Chief of Staff Rahm Emanuel put so el-

oquently to the Wall Street Journal (11/21/09), "you never want a serious crisis to go to waste."

## The Revolutionary Path Workers Must Take

As May Day approaches, PLP'ers and friends must step up our efforts to win workers and their allies to our Party to fight for a path for workers out of this hell: the fight for communism. Our fight is to organize as large a section of the international working class as possible to oppose these cuts and "make the bosses take the losses." Everywhere we must support and build unity between employed and unemployed workers, and sharpen the struggle against racism in our schools, workplaces, and barracks. Workers worldwide must see that this crisis is capitalism's "business-as-usual," and that this system can only oppress us, bankrupt us, and send our children to kill and die to save one or another bosses' empire, while sticking us with the bill! ☪

## 'Renewable Energy' Subsidy for Profiteers?

Attempting to ride the growing wave of genuine concern many workers share over the health of the environment, the handouts given to "renewable energy" programs are supposed to reduce dependency on foreign oil but most of the petroleum consumed in the U.S. comes from either Mexico or Canada, and a large share is produced domestically. The U.S. rulers' main interest in Mid-East oil is about controlling the other imperialists' access to it. The popular slogan to "reduce dependency on foreign oil" is nothing but a hollow lie, but that won't stop Obama's ruling-class allies from paying their friends and business cronies at the expense of workers' taxes!

# Workers in Europe Seize Factories, Bosses

continued from p. 1

jobs" without international solidarity with workers in Romania is a dead-end for the working class.

## Visteon Workers Occupy Factories from London to Belfast

"They've treated us like dogs....But the workers in Ireland occupied so we thought now it's our turn to do something," declared a British Visteon worker as he and 100 of his co-workers occupied the Enfield factory in north London. Another added, "While [British Prime Minister] Gordon Brown was living it up with the G-20, we were losing our jobs. Brown says he has a big plan to save the world, but how about...our jobs?"

The plant's 200 workers built parts for Jaguar and Land Rover. On April 1, they were fired ten minutes before the end of their shift, and told they would have to ask the government for their last seven days' pay and would not collect any benefits.

Workers also occupied two Visteon plants in Basildon and Belfast Ireland. Over 50 workers slept inside the Basildon plant and many more were on the road outside. About 100 workers protested outside the Visteon Customer and Technology Centre. Showing solidarity, the office staff there walked out to join them.

Visteon was spun off by Ford in 2000; the majority are ex-Ford workers. One who worked for both companies for 25 years warned, "We know that if we're going to get anything we'll have to fight for it. Over the years we've given a lot of ground, maybe too much. We've even bought our own tools on occasion, just to help the company. And this is how they repay us." Another declared, "A lot of us are in danger of losing our homes. We're determined to stay because we have nothing to lose."

All workers, students and youth should send messages of support to the Visteon workers to: [stevehart@unitetheunion.com](mailto:stevehart@unitetheunion.com).

## Huge March Against Fascist Berlusconi

On April 3, hundreds of thousands of workers protested the economic policies of Silvio Berlusconi's fascist government. (His ruling party recently fused with remnants of Mussolini's old fascist movement.) The huge march in Rome started from five different points and converged on the Coliseum.

The marchers opposed government plans for mass cutbacks in education and public services and demanded an improved policy towards immigrants — super-exploited and persecuted because of racism. But the CGIL union federation leading the march, and the different politicians addressing the rally, just want to replace Berlusconi with their own brand of capitalist rule. They have no real solutions to the deep crisis of Italian capitalism hit hard by the worldwide financial meltdown.

The bosses and their pundits parroted nonsense about the "end of history" — meaning the



end of class struggle — after the implosion of the Soviet Union, but workers never stop fighting as the system bails out billionaires' while millions lose their jobs. But to turn that fight into the beginning of the end of capitalism, the main ingredient needed is a revolutionary communist leadership. May Day 2009 is the day to raise the red flag of communist revolution worldwide. That is the lesson CHALLENGE and PLP bring to the world's workers. Join us in making it possible! ☪

## SUBSCRIBE or RENEW!

All the communist politics, news, and struggle from around the world!

...\$15 individual 1 year

...\$35 for institution 1 year

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_



Make check or money order to: Challenge Periodicals, PO Box 808, Brooklyn, NY 11202