



# CHALLENGE

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## Winning Means Destroying the Profit System:

# Stella D'Oro Strikers Fight for All Workers

**Bronx, NY, June 16** — As we go to press the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) has ruled in favor of the Stella D'Oro strikers. The ruling reinstates the workers to their old jobs with full back pay, holidays and benefits, and orders the company to resume negotiations for a new contract. This victory for the workers, who showed strength and perseverance over the ten month strike, was greeted by booming chants of "The workers united will never be defeated!" at a union meeting where the decision was explained.

Over the course of this strike the workers have had to battle virtually every aspect of the bosses' state. Ten months facing the cops protecting the scabs, the removal of the picketers' shelter, the harassment of militant workers by the District Attorney, and ten months battling through the court

system. For the moment, the decision rolls back the pay and benefit cut imposed by the Brynwood venture capitalists who own the company. The bosses have 15 days to appeal the decision, so the strike continues. If the bosses eventually lose in court, they will still try to get concessions from the union, and the workers, now having gone this far, will have to keep fighting.

### Fighting Bosses' Racist and Sexist Divisions

Amid this battle the Stella strikers have shown the way to fight the ruling class by demonstrating the importance of multi-racial unity and fighting sexism. Early on, some of the male strikers were offered their jobs back, but not one took the bosses up on it. They risked losing their jobs to stay on the line instead of accepting a con-

tract that left the women workers out in the cold. Only in this way can workers win — uniting black, Latin, Asian, white, men and women workers, fighting together against the same enemy, capitalism.

Rank-and-file workers from many unions have come out to support the Stella strikers. Train operators have saluted them as the subway cars rolled by on the elevated tracks passing the plant. Busloads of teachers, professors and students have marched to the plant gate. All despite the major union leaders not lifting a finger to build support. The Stella workers' union, the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers, and Grain Millers (BCTGM) International did not push the AFL-CIO for a national labor boycott.

### Profit System = Bosses' Robbery

As support has grown for the Stella D'Oro strike, two contradictions have defined it: workers versus bosses, and revolution versus reform. The capitalist profit system means bosses reap the value workers create, leaving us only a tiny fraction as a wage. Fighting for reforms means only fighting to "win" the strike, which at best means keeping a bit more of what we create (see cartoon), but maintaining the bosses' ability to go on stealing profit from our labor.

In the struggle of workers against bosses, PLP fights for the whole working class seizing power from the bosses' state — international communist revolution. This means workers controlling production for workers' need, not for bosses' profit. Winning a better contract at Stella can boost the morale of many workers beyond the Bronx, but unfortunately if capitalism is left intact the bosses will use their power to try to reverse these victories. Reform is a treadmill, generation after generation fighting to keep the little we have, and in the end the bosses rip off every generation after us.

As revolutionaries we define "winning" differently. Winning means more workers becoming life-long organizers for the working class to win the communist world we need. Our goal is not only a contract, it's a growing workers'

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# Long-range U.S. Oil-War Plans vs. Russia, China Shadows Iran Crisis

The mass protests over the recent election in Iran do not signal a looming counterrevolution against the thirty-year reign of the ayatollahs, as many in the U.S. mass media at first imagined. And, unfortunately for our class, President Ahmadinejad's opponents lack the communist leadership necessary to build a movement to overthrow the profit system. These people's efforts and courage — and sometimes their lives — are being wasted in a doomed struggle to replace one group of capitalist exploiters with another.

## Fearing Iran Explosion, U.S. Rulers Tone Down "Green Revolution" Hype...

The liberal sector of the U.S. media mistook the outbreak of agitation in Teheran for a "color revolution." They inaccurately compared it to the anti-Russian election outcomes in Eastern Europe in the early years of this decade, a pro-U.S. campaign that was bankrolled by billionaire George Soros through his Open Society Institute. As *The New Yorker* gushed, "Iran seemed headed for a confrontation between...the forces for secular democracy and those for autocratic theocracy." (6/29/09)

What is actually at play, however, is the rift between factions of filthy-rich oil ayatollahs with divergent views on how best to increase the take of the Iranian ruling class. The dominant Ahmadinejad wing favors a strategic alliance with Russia and China. Failed candidate Moussavi & Co. lean toward a quicker-buck deal with Western oil firms like Halliburton and Shell.

Ahmadinejad's brutal crackdown, which has murdered at least 20 people, strengthens his nuclear-bent, anti-U.S. faction and sharpens the global

imperialist rivalry. In response, Obama has placed his promised "diplomacy" with Teheran on hold. With U.S. armed forces bogged down for the moment in the Iraq-Afghanistan-Pakistan oil and gas wars, his administration is issuing long-term military threats against Iran — and its Russian and Chinese backers.

Obama & Co. are walking on eggshells in Iran. Evidence of U.S. meddling recalling the 1953 CIA coup [see box below] could set off an anti-U.S. backlash far worse than in 1979. The overstretched U.S. war machine can't seize and occupy Iran just now. So U.S. rulers, in the form of the Rockefeller Foundation-backed New America Foundation, have been busy planting op-ed pieces arguing that Iran's election was legitimate. Their cynical "proof" is that repressive internal security forces have remained loyal to Ahmadinejad. While Iran's internal politics make electoral regime change in Iran impossible for Obama, U.S. commitments elsewhere in the region preclude imminent military action.

## ...As Pentagon Takes Long-Range Aim At Teheran

But make no mistake. The U.S. has Iran in its crosshairs. In the midst of the election furor, Defense Secretary Robert Gates, who took part in wording the Carter Doctrine [see box at right] and misses no opportunity to espouse it, held a telling press conference. Said Gates (6/18/09), "We are already in two major conflicts. So what if we have a third one or a fourth one or a fifth?" *The New York Times* (6/22/09) clarified Gates's statement, quoting unnamed Pentagon officials about "potentially significant operations elsewhere ... against Iran, North Korea or even China and Russia." Arch-imperialist U.S. strategist — and war criminal — Zbigniew Brzezinski sums up the U.S. outlook for Iran: "I'm pessimistic in the short term, and optimistic in the long term." (NYT, 6/28/09) Brzezinski assumes a relatively easy U.S. remilitarization, including a re-instated draft.

For workers, communist consciousness remains the missing link to an effective fight against the rulers' war moves. Working-class Iranian marchers wrongly think a new set of mullahs will do the trick. Workers in the U.S. remain pacified by their new liberal president. They fail to see that Obama is escalating the assault on their livelihoods to maxi-

## Carter's 1980 Doctrine Basis for Current Oil Wars

The specter of a Russian-Iranian strategic coalition bridging through Afghanistan has haunted Western imperialists for almost two centuries. The current U.S. view dates back to Carter's 1980 State of the Union speech, when he warned Iranian leaders that "the real danger to their nation lies in the north, in the Soviet Union and from the Soviet troops now in Afghanistan...." He continued:

"The region which is now threatened by Soviet troops in Afghanistan is of great strategic importance: It contains more than two-thirds of the world's exportable oil. The Soviet effort to dominate Afghanistan has brought Soviet military forces to within 300 miles of the Indian Ocean and close to the Straits of Hormuz, through which most of the world's oil must flow. [Editor's note: The straits are a 35-mile-wide passage between Iran and U.S.-armed Oman.] The Soviet Union is now attempting to consolidate a strategic position, therefore, that poses a grave threat to the free movement of Middle East oil.... An attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force."

Carter was essentially declaring the same war that Obama is now waging in Iraq and Afghanistan — and that will logically expand into Iran.

mize the bosses' profits — and to impose an increasingly exploitive police state that wages ever wider wars. Our Party must serve as an internationalist eye-opener both to the capitalist sources of workers' misery and to its revolutionary, communist solution. ☺

## 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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## Iran: Missing Cornerstone of U.S.-U.K. Energy Empire

Third in the world in oil reserves and second in natural gas, Iran commands key Persian Gulf and Caspian Sea supply routes. Allied control of the "Persian Corridor" and its underlying crude helped the U.S. and the Soviet Union defeat the Nazis in World War II. In 1953, after Iran elected a Soviet-tilting government, President Mossadegh threatened to nationalize the British-owned Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. Shortly, a CIA-led coup placed the dictatorial Shah on the throne. Anglo-Iranian, now called British Petroleum, remained in Iran, but only as a junior partner to U.S. giant Exxon-Mobil's forerunners.

For decades, the Pentagon armed the Shah's regime, which served the U.S. both as an oil source and a hired gun protecting the eastern flank of the Mid-east treasure trove, with grand prize Saudi Arabia at its center. Israel policed the western side. In 1979, two events brought this regional racket crashing down. The Soviets, by then fully capitalist and imperialist, invaded Afghanistan. Meanwhile, Iranian Islamist nationalists, backed by the pro-Soviet, phony communist Tudeh party, deposed the Shah.

The U.S. countered both militarily and ideologically. In Afghanistan, Washington supported anti-Soviet Islamic warriors, ultimately the base of al Qaeda and the Taliban. Jimmy Carter declared that the Mid-east was of vital U.S. interest (see box above), meaning that Exxon Mobil's exclusive oil and gas rights would be defended by U.S. troops. Carter launched the Navy's Persian Gulf Rapid Deployment Force, which has grown into the Pentagon's Central Command. Today CENTCOM, with the slaughter of millions of Iraqis, Afghans, and Pakistanis under its belt, has the mandate to plan and execute future assaults on Iran.

Back in 1979, U.S. rulers demonized Iran's new Islamist regime by provoking the "hostage crisis." David Rockefeller and Henry Kissinger brought the ailing ex-Shah to New York for medical treatment, knowing full well that it would trigger a response in Teheran. Outraged Iranian militants retaliated by taking hostage 50 U.S. diplomats and spies at the U.S. embassy. As a result, Iran's mullah-Tudeh alliance was branded as a terrorist rogue state — a label that clings to the clerics to this day and will serve to justify a possible U.S. invasion.



## Chicago Transit Workers Protest Bosses' Retiree Health Cuts

CHICAGO, IL, June 18

— Today more than one hundred active and retired city bus drivers picketed the Chicago Transit Authority's (CTA) main offices to stop the racist CTA bosses from cutting retiree health care on July 1. Almost 7,000 retired workers and their families will be forced to pay as much as \$1,300/month for medical coverage, deducted from their pension checks. The workers are seeking a federal court injunction to stop the July 1 cutoff.



Huberman and Mayor Daley will continue their fascist reign of terror, this time on teachers and students. This is the real "stimulus package" to bail out the biggest banks and pay for the current economic crisis of capitalism. Uniting transit workers, teachers and students to support one another, taking to the streets and shutting the city down would be more powerful than any injunction could ever be. We have to rely on the power of the working class, and our ability to grasp and fight for revolutionary communist politics, not capitalist courts or politicians to save us.

### 'The Workers United Will Never Be Defeated!'

A PLP contingent made up mostly of high school students attended today's rally and kicked off our mini-Summer Project. We sold 50 CHALLENGES and everyone got a PLP leaflet. Our call for an anti-racist worker-student alliance and organizing working-class solidarity was very well-received by the workers. Racist Ron Huberman was head of the CTA when the state law was passed to steal retiree health care. Since then he has replaced Obama's Education Secretary Arne Duncan as head of the crisis-ridden Chicago Public Schools.

We made several contacts and later that evening a retired CTA worker and Parent Representative from a local high school joined us in a discussion about racist health care at Stroger Cook County Hospital. ☘

## Persist, Persist, Persist...

# Exposing Nationalism Opens Door for Red Ideas

LOS ANGELES, CA — "When I go back to my place of origin (Guatemala), I'm going to change the way I act with my wife and kids... I think I've lost a lot of time... I want to be like you," said a garment worker to a comrade and fellow worker.

The friendly and political relationship with this worker and his friends started a year and a half ago. The first week I worked in this factory, I sat down at lunchtime at a table with a group of workers. They moved to the other end of the table. I continued to sit at the same table every day, but the group only talked among themselves. I always greeted them with, "Hi, how are you?" Some answered me, others didn't.

A few weeks passed and my comrades in PLP told me, "You have to break into this circle; keep trying; look for discussions about problems in the factory or with immigration, or about soccer." After continuing to attempt conversation, little by little some started to reply. One day I gave a pat on the back to one worker. He said to me, very irritated, "What's up with you?" I answered that I considered them my friends. Seeing this, others started talking, and they invited me to share their food.

Now we all sit together and discuss all aspects of life, including politics. One discussion that changed a lot was when the Mexican and Guatemalan soccer teams were playing each other (I was born in Mexico, they in Guatemala). I pointed out how the bosses use nationalism to divide and exploit us more. They were very impressed and liked my conclusion that we need international unity.

One day, with much emotion, a co-worker talked about traveling through Mexico on the "train of death" — many

workers travel on top of trains and fall to their deaths — to the U.S. In a town in Veracruz, working-class families threw food and water to those on the train. He said, "These people didn't know us, but still they helped us to survive."

Days later my coworkers and I planned a meal at my house and they brought the food. My wife and others in our PLP club joined us and we presented communist ideas and CHALLENGE newspaper. Some of these workers have since participated in study groups and a group came to our May Day dinner. On several occasions they've invited us to parties with their friends, in which they initiate political discussions, saying that "we need a revolution."

There's a long road ahead to develop them as communist leaders, and win them to develop CHALLENGE networks and class struggle, but a recent event shows us we're on the correct road. In the factory we celebrated the birthday of a coworker from Asia. My friends took leadership in organizing discussions about nationalism when another Asian worker made racist comments about Asian workers from other countries. Several of these workers, including the one who said, "I want to be like you all," have been asked to meet with PLP and to fight for communist revolution. The fight against nationalism has opened a base for communist ideas and practices.

California Industrial Worker

## H.S. Student-Teacher Picketline Hits Slash in School Budget



BROOKLYN, NY, June 23 — A multi-racial group of around thirty staff members at our local high school picketed outside this morning, carrying signs, and chanting: "They say cut back, we say fight back" and "Bail out the schools, not the banks." Teachers, paraprofessionals and school aides kept the spirit going on the line as drivers passing by honked loudly in support.

The school, like many others in this capitalist crisis, has no positions for some staff members, is cutting hours for other staff and cutting programs for students. The administration hasn't let us know exactly what will be cut, but even the small details which have leaked out scare and anger the staff.

We followed up with a bagel breakfast/union meeting, where the discussion was focused on how we can organize our chapter

to fight both for the students and the staff. Plans were made to send letters to parents and set up various committees. Teachers and school workers were asked to join the Stella D'Oro picket lines over vacation and to attend planning meetings during the summer to get ready for the long fight ahead. Considering that we are heading into summer vacation, pulling off the protest and the union meeting was a big victory.

Our Party was part of the leadership of both this struggle and a staff newsletter which addressed many of the issues in the school. We can do a better job of trying to analyze and explain why these cuts and attacks are happening. They are part of a larger crisis throughout capitalism. Because of the racism inherent in the system, this kind of cut will most deeply hurt schools like ours, with its primarily black and Latino students, already struggling to provide them an education.

Our job now is to continue to sell CHALLENGE subscriptions to our friends, build new leadership within the school and bring revolutionary politics to this fight. ☘

## Stella D'Oro

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movement and a Party able to abolish the profit system. This strike has been an opportunity to put PLP's communist ideas into practice.

PLP organizers advocate militant strike action to stop production in the best fighting traditions of the working class, like the great Flint sit-down strike against GM in 1936-37 (see [www.plp.org/pamphlets/flintstrike.html](http://www.plp.org/pamphlets/flintstrike.html)). A communist-led working class would bring much more power to bear. The last rally of 1,000 closed the Stella plant that day. Bringing mass crowds of workers to block the gates to stop scab production has given workers their best chance to fight the wage cuts.

Many workers in other unions are involved and showing their support. The millions of workers in the city could surround the Stella plant, as well as other workplaces, every day, stopping scabs and deliveries. One union staffer said in response: "But that would be a different country." That's the point. Only communist ideas can inspire us to build a mass of workers to win that different world.

What will inspire us to dig in, organize, and take the risks of real militancy? The real value of our revolutionary line is that it shows workers there is a future worth fighting for, whatever the risks — a world without bosses, a world run by workers. This has a long history in the communist movement, and PLP carries that today into the Stella strike and all workers' battles. We invite and encourage, all the Stella D'Oro strikers to join this fight for workers power, and become members of PLP.

The Stella strikers are fighting back hard against the bosses, when others are caving in without a fight. They are reading CHALLENGE, discussing the ideas, getting better organized, and digging in — following the Party's approach of reaching out to other workers in the Bronx for support. Communists and non-communists are all learning a lot in this strike. PLP's Summer Project among these workers will fight to expand our communist base and consolidate the gains made during this strike. ☘

## No More 'Happy' Talk

# Boeing Workers: Prepare To Fight For Our Class

**SEATTLE, WA** — The IAM has lost hundreds of members during the last six months, with thousands to follow. The company is planning to lay off 10,000 by year's end. The International Air Transport Association (IATA) has said this downturn is worse than after 9/11, with nearly \$20 billion lost over two years. Subcontracting has increased while racist attacks on largely black and Latino subcontractor workers have intensified. We have suffered through recessions before, but is something more happening here?

Aerospace and auto are often referred to as the twin spines of U.S. manufacturing. The change in auto is clear. The UAW has become an extension of the government, agreeing recently to a wage freeze after having cut wages in half for new hires, to 21,000 more GM layoffs and to a strike ban until 2015. The Feds now own 70% of the company, while Obama praises workers for "sacrificing for future generations." Those future generations will work for poverty wages if they are lucky enough to get an auto job.

Louis Uchitelle, senior New York Times economics reporter, asked if aerospace is following in Detroit's footsteps. For the first time, the winter quarter saw a trade deficit in aerospace components. Although it is not as far along as auto, Uchitelle fears the same process is unfolding in aerospace.

Even as conditions worsen, misleaders try to cover up with happy talk. Indeed, May's Aero Mechanic tells us "the future is bright" and to "focus our efforts on building a better relationship with

Boeing [bosses]."

Meanwhile, strikes are becoming illegal in industry after industry — whether or not you have a union. Locally, "Boeing is signaling that unless it gets no-strike assurance...a second [787] production line will be in some other state, probably South Carolina." (Seattle Times, 6/19) The paper demands, "This accommodation with modern business...most unions made decades ago...needs to happen at Boeing now." Just ask the autoworkers how well that turned out!

### Deadly Insanity

The insanity of capitalism has created a crisis of overproduction. More producers are making too many airplanes and cars for the market to bear. It's not that workers don't need reliable cars and safe airplanes. Rather, it's that capitalism is a commodity system that produces for sale and profit, not for our needs.

At some point these periodic crises become unmanageable in the usual way. No bubble or stimulus can do the trick. The ruling capitalist class, through its government, takes direct control of industry and finance to insure the survival of their class.

The famous political economist R. Palme Dutt recognized in this pattern the birth of fascism. "Fascism is the working out, in conditions of extreme decay, the most typical tendencies of modern capitalism. [It] discloses itself as the dictatorship of big Capital [in crisis]."

The form may not look exactly like '30s fascism,

but the essence remains the same. The bosses' bottom line becomes the survival of the empire. Basic industry is salvaged by mercilessly attacking the working class in order to prepare for the only solution available to the bosses: war to destroy their competitors' productive capacity.

### The Sane Alternative

Traditional trade union politics is not equal to the task of defending workers in this scenario. We need a more advanced political outlook.

This must start with the understanding that production for profit must go. Communism, production for the needs of our class is the only system that can organize production sanely.

The bosses won't give up their power easily. We can vote for "progressive" candidates until we are blue in the face and still the government will serve the interests of the biggest bosses. We can negotiate in good faith till the cows come home and still the bosses break contracts with impunity. No, the only way to take power from the ruling class is through communist revolution.

We must fight these attacks tooth and nail and increase the circulation of our paper, CHALLENGE. Join our Boeing CHALLENGE study-action groups as we collectively learn the lessons we'll need to break free from the path the bosses have laid out for us and to respond to the bosses' wars and fascist attacks on our brothers and sisters with multi-racial unity and class struggle, preparing to smash capitalism with our revolutionary might. Only then can we say, "The future is bright." ☪

## Industrial Workers Crucial to Battle vs. Exploitation

"We are trying everything we can to keep everyone employed here and we need everyone to work safer, with better quality and of course more production," a manager said to employees of a subcontractor aerospace factory, "Again it's a profit thing. We are in competition with countries with lower costs and we need your help to stay competitive."

The bosses' goals are profit and saving their empire, which are directly opposed to the well-being of our families and friends. They want us to blame workers from other countries for the attacks on us, and win us to fight in their wars. But the capitalists and their system are to blame for attacking workers everywhere.

Some rank-and-file workers in non-union factories began to slow down production in a conscious effort to fight speed-up. We should learn from their class-conscious acts, and follow their example. Also, aerospace workers at Cytec in Anaheim struck for six weeks against being forced to work 60 hours a week with no overtime pay. Strikers on the picket line were open to CHALLENGE and to uniting aerospace workers in union and non-union factories.

Indigenous Indians in Peru and workers in France have united in mass and often violent protests against their oppression. All over the globe, men, women, immigrant and citizen workers have organized against the bosses' attacks and won reforms. Now those reforms, like jobs, medical insurance, and maternity leave are being stripped away because of the bosses' crisis. Capitalism can't meet the needs of our class. It only offers us continuous cycles of unemployment, depression, war and crises that the working class pays for with our blood, sweat, tears and lives on the shop floor, in the streets and on the battlefields of war.

We have to fight to re-organize society without profit. Communism means a society that thrives by relying on the workers to produce and fight for our class' needs. As industrial workers, we hold a strategic position to influence the rest of the working class by organizing against the bosses and their profit system with our own international Party, the PLP.

Growing unemployment and the threat of

joblessness mean millions of workers and their families, sometimes desperate, struggling to survive the bosses' system of exploitation and imperialist war. In some subcontractor factories, workers work only three days a week. One aerospace machinist said, "There have been weeks when I have gone to work everyday thinking it could be my last."

The bosses push for increased fascist repression — more cops and immigration cops and increased spending for prisons — in preparation for more class struggle and higher "crime" rates because they fear our anger and potential unity to fight back against their system.

In one factory 12 of the 16 workers who were laid off do not qualify for unemployment benefits because of their citizenship status. Some workers say, "I have to keep my nose clean and stay below the radar." The bosses use this fear to divide us, speed up production and to try to keep workers from fighting hour- and wage-cuts.

Their immigration laws and attacks on black workers are racist attacks on all workers, used to lower wages and weaken our determination to unite and fight together. Our answer must be to show that the source of these attacks is capitalism, and to unite in strikes and mass protests against the attacks on our survival and building these struggles into a rebellion against the capitalist system worldwide.

These same bosses want us to believe that we have no other option, that "we" [U.S. workers and U.S. bosses] are all in this together." They want us to passively accept war and fascism, which means cutting our own throats.

Workers already have the ability to build and run all the machinery and transportation we need. The bosses hold back our potential by squashing our ideas and initiative to improve things because it is not profitable. They want us to think that without them we're useless. But their worst nightmare is our invincible unity led by communist ideas to fight to get rid of the profit system and produce for our needs. Let's make this a reality by reading and distributing CHALLENGE, joining a study action group to fight the bosses, and building international PLP. ☪

## Mexico's Elections: Voting for Bosses' Pals = More Repression of Workers

**MEXICO CITY, June 27** — The July 5 elections will elect 500 federal deputies, six governors, 468 local deputies, 606 City Hall officials, 20 municipal boards and 16 delegations. The Center of Social Studies and Public Opinion of the House of Representatives predicts that — despite all their million-dollar resources and giant propaganda apparatus — between 65% and 69% of the electorate will not vote.

Control of the House of Representatives is vital for the different ruling-class factions, since this body decides who controls the country's energy wealth — oil, electricity and gas — along with which imperialist to ally. It will also determine the judicial system's fascist reforms and the new labor laws designed to repress workers' protests and eliminate labor rights.

The two key governing bodies up for election are Nuevo León, the state with the country's second largest industrial production, and Sonora, the industrial state with an active harbor which borders the U.S. The PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party) currently rules both states but PAN (National Action Party) is mounting a strong challenge.

Of the 1,616 politicians to be elected, not one represents workers' interests. They all serve the millionaire businessmen or the drug dealers and defend the interests of those who put them in office. Voting means electing who will be our hangmen. We must organize a non-electoral party which unites all workers to take power and build a new society: communism. That's the only road to liberate ourselves from these parasites.

As a result of the hypocritical management of President Calderon, the department head of Jobs and Security has presided over 386,000 layoffs in November and December 2008 alone as well as 6,290 murders so far this year. The main drug cartels' structure remains intact. It's predicted the economy will shrink 7.1% this year. Calderon's false promises have created a hell for millions of

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# Honduras Coup: Workers Have No Side in Bosses' Dogfight

**HONDURAS, June 28** — The armed forces took President Manuel Zelaya prisoner and exiled him to Costa Rica under direct orders from the Honduran Congress. The fight between the bosses supporting Zelaya and those backing Robert Micheletti, ex-president of the Assembly and now interim President, was sharpened when Zelaya tried to call a "popular referendum" to change the constitution, including ending the term limit for the Presidency, enabling him to run again.

But this is only the appearance. The essence is that U.S. imperialists have promoted this counter-attack to challenge the Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas (ALBA — Spanish initials) of Venezuela's Hugo Chavez (a big Zelaya supporter) and his allies, including the Russian and Chinese imperialists.

The Honduran army and police have arrested, beaten and killed Zelaya supporters to terrorize the population and build passivity. Workers have bravely confronted the tanks and rifles, defying death. Thousands took to the streets to protest, including calling for a general strike to return Zelaya to power.

But we workers shouldn't support any of these bosses' groups. Instead we must use the current situation to take our destiny into our own hands, fighting for the communist future that we need. In exposing that "democracy," or the well-being of workers under capitalism, doesn't exist — that we live under a dictatorship of Capital — we will be revealing the only alternative: a workers' revolution for communism.

Micheletti and his group of bosses and military thugs are recognized as murderous assassins and exploiters, old allies of U.S. imperialism. But the "popular referendum" of Zelaya is also a farce, used to fool the workers with the capitalist lie that through elections we can make the changes we need. With hundreds of years of elections the world over, we workers continue to be exploited, repressed and killed from hunger, terror and imperialist war.

Honduras, with a wealth of natural resources, is one of the poorest countries in Latin America, where ALL the bosses, represented by the differ-



ent electoral parties, have exploited the working class. Recently the teachers have been in mass struggle for better working and living conditions. A million Hondurans live in the U.S., the majority under threat of deportation and savage racist exploitation. Many were forced to come to the U.S. in the wake of the devastation of Hurricane Mitch, which left them homeless and with no other recourse. Thousands of unemployed farm workers suffer the attacks of global capitalism. Neither the U.S. imperialists nor the ALBA are the solution to the problems the workers suffer. They are both just competing wings of capitalism.

When one group of bosses sees its power threatened, they take off their mask and show their true fascist face. The working class needs a true communist party like PLP, which will organize a revolution to end racist capitalism once and for all, not another bosses' electoral party tied to one or another racist imperialist exploiter.

We need to build a true communist society where we ALL produce to meet the needs of the working class, not the profits of a handful of murdering thieves.

The sharpening battle among both local and imperialist bosses means more attacks on workers in Honduras and worldwide, as well as more war. The workers' fury against the conditions imposed by capitalism shown in these demonstrations must be channeled daily into building for communist revolution. ☸

## U.S. Rulers' Hand Seen in Honduras Coup

In September 2006, U.S. President Bush met with Manuel Zelaya. He wanted Bush to help "lower energy costs to Honduras, one of the Western Hemisphere nations most dependent on imported oil, including to generate electricity. Bush's response stressed the importance of relying on market mechanisms and of limits on government interference." (Znet, 7/30/2007) Bush refused this deal to Zelaya.

In January 2007, Zelaya's government took temporary control of Chevron's and Exxon's terminals. In March, the Honduran government established diplomatic relations with Cuba. In July, Zelaya went to Nicaragua to celebrate the overthrow of dictator Somoza, sharing the platform with Daniel Ortega and Hugo Chavez, angering Washington.

In January 2008, Zelaya announced that Hon-

duras would join the Venezuela-led Petrocaribe initiative, a regional energy security alliance, through which Venezuela sells oil with flexible credit terms and preferential prices to Caribbean nations. U.S. diplomats worried that others would follow. In August 2008, the Honduran government joined ALBA (Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas), signing further trade and especially energy agreements with Chavez.

Chavez enjoys oil deals with China, Russia and others. His ALBA initiative directly challenges the U.S. Free Trade Pact with Central America. Despite Obama's "condemnation" of the coup ousting Zelaya, U.S. imperialists wanted to eliminate him and his growing ties to Chavez and rival imperialists. It's up to communists to turn these attacks into a movement to destroy all bosses with communist revolution.

## Racism, Music Industry Profiteers Killed 'King of Pop'

The death of the King of Pop has sparked mass sympathy for Michael Jackson. As an entertainer Jackson was talented, but he was just another product of capitalist culture. As a person he was eaten alive by racism, an abusive father, and the music business.

After the break-up of the Jackson Five, Michael became the most popular solo singer in the history of U.S. music. He was the first black artist to appear on MTV, and the album "Thriller" is still the highest-selling album in history. Most of the songs from this period foreshadowed selfish themes that would come to later dominate pop music.

The demons of racism took their toll on Jackson. Endless plastic surgery, and tortuous skin bleaching bewildered the world as Michael Jackson tried to "become white." As he was destroying his body Jackson began engaging in exploitative relationships with young children. While this was happening before the eyes of the entire world, Michael's "mentors" in the music business did nothing to intervene as the money rolled in and they lined their pockets.

Michael Jackson was ground up by the nature of music under capitalism and turned into a commodity, unable to have real relationships. In one of his last interviews he talked about only being comfortable on stage, where he knew what to do, and behind the gates of his fantasy world "Neverland," where he could make his own rules. Michael Jackson was the ultimate product, the can't-lose money-maker, in many ways, the American Dream come true. But the price of this "success" was a large chunk of his humanity, and ultimately his life. ☸

## U.K. Oil Strikers Need Intern'l Unity, Not Attacks on 'Foreign' Workers

The ugly nationalism of the British refinery workers strikes shows the urgent international need for PLP's communist politics. The demand of "British Jobs For British Workers" makes immigrant workers the enemy of the striking workers — a division that only serves the capitalist bosses and dooms the striking workers to be pawns in the larger battles between local and international bosses. The strike at the New York City Stella D'Oro bakery may be much smaller in numbers. Yet that strike by predominantly immigrant workers, who have welcomed and embraced PLP's communist ideas, points to the only direction that truly serves the working class: multi-racial unity, internationalism, anti-sexism and communist revolution.

The oil refinery strike was sparked in February at the Lindsey oil refinery in Lincolnshire. The refinery is owned by the French corporation Total, the world's fourth-largest oil and gas company. While hundreds of British-born workers have been laid off, Total brought in an Italian sub-contractor who used workers from Italy, Portugal and Poland.

The unions representing the British workers, the GMB and UNITE, may or may not have authorized the earlier stages of the strikes. The Total bosses called the strikes "wildcats." This has led some observers to praise the apparent rank-and-file nature of the strike and the strikers' seeming defiance of their union leaders, while ignoring the strike's racist and nationalist politics. Whether the union leaders supported the earlier strikes or not, they now call for larger mobilizations and support the strikes' nationalist demands. Proof again that

the bosses' labor leaders will do whatever it takes to keep workers divided and chained to their "own" capitalists.

The strikes' main nationalist demand echoes none other than United Kingdom (UK) Prime Minister and Labour Party leader Gordon Brown. At a Labour party conference in September 2007 Brown said: 'This is our vision: Britain leading the global economy . . . drawing on the talents of all to create British jobs for British workers.' One striker even carried a sign 'In the wise words of Gordon Brown: UK Jobs for British Workers.' (The Daily Mail 1/31/09)

These may be "wise" words for the UK bosses but they are poisonous for workers of all countries. Capitalism is based on profits made by exploiting workers at home and in foreign countries. The bosses will use racism and nationalism to increase their profits, divide workers internationally and win workers to ally with their national capitalists against capitalists and workers of different countries. At the same time that refinery strikers carry signs quoting Gordon Brown, the UK bosses and Brown are attacking UK postal and Tube (subway) workers who have conducted strikes of their own. Brown is also an enthusiastic supporter of the U.S. oil wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The bosses and their politicians and labor leaders are no friends of ours. We can only advance the fight against layoffs and unemployment by uniting all workers in mass anti-racist struggle. Internationalist workers' unity is the communist road we must travel. ☸

# LETTERS



## Proposing PLP Student Club in Tanzania

On June 7th a meeting took place in the Mlimani City Mall in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania in which I introduced PLP's ideas to a group of high school teachers and students. The organizer of the meeting teaches in a high school in Tanzania. For the last year he has been distributing CHALLENGE to some of his students and fellow teachers.

Even though the younger generation in Tanzania, including those at the meeting, has had little exposure to the history of the worldwide communist movement, they have been impacted by its legacy. After independence in 1961, socialism was established in Tanzania. It led to tremendous advances for the masses (in human relations as well as material conditions of life), but it was a doomed system.

Like socialism everywhere, it maintained capitalist practices and ideas — like wages, classes, privilege, nationalism, elitism, and bourgeois styles of leadership. In 1985, socialism was officially replaced by a "free market" system. Although the older generation remains nostalgic about Tanzanian socialism and its leader Julius Nyerere, it seems to me that there is little understanding about why socialism failed. (A confusion that I believe is prevalent all over the world and which PLP's analysis addresses.) Whereas many more Tanzanians are clear about why capitalism is failing, the failure of socialism has left them confused and skeptical about the possibility of any kind of economic and political system ending poverty, war, corruption, imperialism, and racism.

The discussion focused on the issue of what communism is and how it can be achieved. Is human nature inherently selfish, or is the selfishness we see a result of capitalist conditioning? How will culture have to change in order to win people to work for the common good? Why is the seizure of power a necessary step in achieving communism? How do we choose leadership and involve the masses in decision-making to achieve communist (not bourgeois) democracy? Does each country choose its own version of communism or do we build one party that represents the interests of the international working class? They asked questions about how the ruling class in the U.S. views PLP, where else in the world the party exists, and what is PLP's outlook toward religion.

Everyone listened attentively as one of Nyerere's speeches was read aloud. Nyerere had said that inequality and not poverty is the main problem in the world since poverty could be easily overcome if inequality was destroyed. These profound words from Mwalimu, (the Swahili word for "teacher") were clearly pointing to a communist solution. By the end of the discussion everyone was leaning forward around the table with a palpable interest and openness to PLP's ideas. The main organizer proposed that they form a PLP student club in their high school and try to spread communist ideas to students in other schools. This was a great suggestion!

PLP welcomes our Tanzanian brothers and sisters to join our Party. We have a world to win!

*Boston Comrade*

## BBQ Raises Dough for LA Summer Project

More than twenty-five high school and college

students and teachers from New York and New Jersey had a barbecue to help raise money for the CUNY students who are going to L.A. in July to be part of the Party Summer Project. We raised over \$1,000 and had an excellent discussion about the Project. We were fortunate to have four students who participated in last year's Project in L.A. articulately describe their agitation at textile and aerospace factories, movie nights, political classes and BBQs. They all explained how much they had learned — about conditions in the plants, about working collectively, and about presenting communist ideas to workers.

Comrades brought friends and food, and despite some rain, we had a great time. Besides talking about the Summer Project, two comrades beautifully sang "Joe Hill," "Deportee," "Clifford Glover," and other progressive songs. We celebrated a year of struggle against budget cuts at CUNY and the NYC public schools, as well as supporting the Stella D'Oro workers.

We encourage CHALLENGE readers to host BBQs, parties or film-showings to raise money for the Summer Projects in Seattle and L.A.

*CUNY teacher*

## Food and Politics for Strikers Who Won't Scab

I made a pot of curried chicken and rice and drove over to the Stella D'Oro plant in the Bronx. There were 15 workers there and as usual they were warm and welcoming. It was a pleasure feeding workers who have stayed together on the picket line for 10 months, refusing to break ranks and scab for a company that's trying to cut their wages and benefits. One of the shop stewards has walking pneumonia and he looked tired, but he was there because he feels responsible to the other workers.

Many of the workers immediately recognized those of us in the PSC (the CUNY faculty and staff union) who have joined them on the picket lines, helped them give out flyers calling for a boycott of Stella D'Oro products, and worked with them to organize support rallies and marches. Besides the chicken and rice, I also distributed copies of CHALLENGE, with a large front-page picture of the recent march of almost a thousand people — including many Party comrades — to the plant gates.

I had an interesting conversation with an unemployed printer who was there supporting his friend who's on strike. He has been laid off from two printing companies, the last because clients are now sending printing jobs to competitors in China, where workers are paid very little. He agreed that workers of all different trades need to unite as a class against the owners who compete to see who can pay the least in wages and benefits.

This summer, PLP students and teachers will be visiting the workers regularly, bringing food and red politics to a terrific group of men and women who are determined not to surrender to the owners, and who need and deserve our support.

*Red Faculty*

## Haiti: Need World Support for Workers' Fight vs. Starvation Wages

CHALLENGE readers in Haiti send this report. There is sharp struggle in the streets here to get the President René Préval to enact a minimum-wage law passed by the Parliament. Préval is obeying the employers' association and

refusing to raise the wage from 70 gourdes (\$1.70) to 200 gourdes (\$5) per day; these rock-bottom wages allow imperialists like WalMart and J.C. Penney to subcontract work to Haitian bosses. The recent general strike in Guadeloupe, which impressed Haitian workers, was over this issue of the low buying power of the wage. Workers will not tolerate starvation wages forever.

This struggle is uniting students from the State University of Haiti (who are resisting privatization) with workers and organizations trying to rebuild the Left. Some activists in this movement read CHALLENGE and pass it from hand to hand. With some disagreements, they respect PLP's take on communism and are appealing to the Party to organize international solidarity to help their wage fight and to get young militants out of prison.

Haitian students, with medical students in the lead, joined workers in the streets the week of June 4 with militant protests at the presidential palace. They burned vehicles, smashed windows of an NGO funded by George Soros, and threw rocks at the police and the UN occupation troops of MINUSTAH (United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti).

More than 20 young people have been jailed without charges and moved from prison to prison to keep their comrades from helping them. One young militant was shot in the head, though he escaped serious injury. Some union leaders have had to go into hiding. Tear gas was pumped into the children's wards of the hospital that serves the poor of the city, and parents had to carry their sick kids out into the street to escape the gas. The fight goes on. (More details available at [www.alterpresse.org](http://www.alterpresse.org), and [www.lenouvelliste.com](http://www.lenouvelliste.com).)

The best solidarity is to strengthen the Party where we live and extend its reach to Haiti and everywhere. But we also need to spread the word now in every country where CHALLENGE is read. Please mail a message like this to President René Préval, National Palace, Port-au-Prince, Haiti: "As workers and students of [name the country], we stand in solidarity with our Haitian sisters and brothers who are fighting for a minimum wage of \$5 a day. We demand the release of all protesters jailed for seeking the simple human right of a living wage."

Please forward this appeal widely. We can also organize a picket at the local Haitian consulate (even a small one will be noticed). Send reports of any pickets to CHALLENGE. By such small steps an international communist movement to end wage slavery will grow again.

*Friends of PLP in Haiti*

## Cytec Strikers See Need for Unity with Non-Union Workers

ORANGE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA — Cytec workers, members of the IAM, went on strike for six weeks against proposed 60-hour workweeks with no overtime pay, and against wage cuts. No strikers crossed the picket line. The company brought in scabs and cops threatened arrests, taking pictures as strikers held up trucks and cars.

The strikers say that Cytec, which makes a special epoxy for military airplanes, has a non-union plant in Texas. They see that the bosses are threatening the workers so that they will accept the same conditions as the non-union plant, or production will be moved there.

These workers, black, Latino and white, gladly took CHALLENGE and invited us to return to their factory during the PLP Summer Project. We had long discussions with some strikers about capitalism's crisis and the communist solution. Communism would end production for profit and the exploitation of workers, as workers would control production, based on the needs of the working class.

Some strikers gave us their contact information. They are interested in meeting with other defense workers to talk about building a movement to unify union and non-union aerospace workers against the bosses. ☺

## Mexico Elections

*continued from p. 4*

workers, still more evidence that we should have no confidence in them. We can only believe in the capacity we workers have to unite and fight to get rid of them.

Some ruling-class sectors say they're indignant over the current rulers' corruption and lousy management of the country's problems. Their "alternative" is to vote to "punish" the parties. Their real motive is to recover the privileges that other thieves have snatched from them.

We shouldn't fall into their traps. Confidence

in any of them only worsens our conditions. We must replace their fraudulent democracy with a communist-led workers' society.

The fraud in the 2006 Presidential elections disillusioned and angered many. López Obrador's movement has used this to try to trick the discontented into supporting capitalist "democracy." The anger of millions of workers must be converted into revolutionary consciousness to overthrow capitalism for the benefit of those who produce all the wealth. This is PLP's goal. Join us. ☺



# Anti-Racists Pack Courtroom to Back Black Youth

**MARYLAND, June 27** — In the ongoing case of the two activist black youths who have been jailed and denied bail for over four months, one has received a favorable ruling. He won his legal motion to be charged as a juvenile, not as an adult, meaning he won't face a possible 80-year sentence.

While awaiting the youth's trial, a similar case was heard and after about 12 minutes, the judge summarily threw away that other young man's life, ruling that he would indeed be tried as an adult, and therefore could face many years in jail.

As the hearing for our teen started, we were packed into the courtroom and his lawyer asked us to stand. As we stood, the lawyer said, "They would all like to speak," and the judge responded, "They just did!" In fact, toward the end of the hearing, the judge said that in her nearly 30 years on the bench, she had never seen that much support for anyone!

The two victims of the street robberies that our youths are charged with also testified. One, when asked for a recommended decision, replied that he himself "didn't grow up in the best neighborhood" and that friends of his had made poor choices. He never answered the judge's question and — obviously conflicted, as reflected in his long, thoughtful silence — he finally said he didn't want to give an opinion. He seemed to have been truly affected by the highly positive things that witnesses said about

the young activist.

When our young friend took the stand, he said he wants "a chance to prove to all the supporters that I can be the person they expect me to be." That was the voice of someone who has walked the picket line supporting striking Stella D'Oro workers; who has voyaged to the San Joaquin Valley to hear first-hand the history of farmworkers' struggles; who has helped give

***Our young friend has walked the picket line supporting striking Stella D'Oro workers; voyaged to the San Joaquin Valley to hear the history of farmworkers' struggles; helped lead the fight for student bus passes...***

leadership to the successful fight for student bus passes to be accepted later in the evening so students without adequate funds can participate in after-school activities. It was the voice of our future.

If the racism that's inherent in capitalism wasn't already clear after this day in court, all one needed to do was look at the "prestigious" names carved in the courtroom's stonework. One was the Supreme Court Judge Taney who ruled in the racist 1857 Dred Scott decision. He

labeled African-Americans as "beings of an inferior order, and altogether unfit to associate with the white race, either in social or political relations, and so far inferior that they had no rights which the white man was bound to respect."

We need to flip that, and argue that the capitalist class has no laws which the working class is bound to respect. Just as the Dred Scott decision is considered to have been one of the indirect causes of the Civil War, the rejection of racism needs to find its fruition in a revolution to achieve a communist society.

Capitalism is a deadly system. It perpetuates itself by promoting a deadly culture: self-centered thinking, racism, and getting ahead by preying on others. In a sense, it's not surprising that many people — including members of the working class and even members of the communist movement — are influenced by these bosses' ideas and sometimes make bad decisions.

After all, the class in power always dominates human thought because they control the means of disseminating culture: music, movies, textbooks, TV and so on.

As Progressive Labor Party grows in size and strength, a positive communist culture will become increasingly influential. Our bad decisions will lessen. Our humanity will, more and more, trump the sick corrupt spirit of capitalism. ✪

## RED EYE ON THE NEWS

Below are excerpts from mainstream newspapers that may be of use for our readers. Abbreviations: NYT=New York Times, GW=Guardian Weekly, LAT=Los Angeles Times

### Reformers so phony they can't win

GW 6/19 — Most of the major social democratic parties in Europe have been sliding into decline for years. The reverses did not come out of the blue. But they offer a strikingly similar picture. Labour's 16% share of the poll in Britain was matched by the Parti Socialiste's 16% in France, the SPD's 21% in Germany.

It is important to understand that this is a long-term process, not a sudden spasm. Immediately after the collapse of communism, it seemed as though the hour of social democracy had finally arrived. Yet most centre-left parties in Europe were already failing to attract big enough coalitions of voter support to continue in government. Since the European economies went over the edge, the centre-left's predicament has got far worse.

### Democrats selling out on health

NYT 6/22 — Voters overwhelmingly favor the creation of a public health insurance option that competes with private insurers.

The real risk is that health care reform will be undermined by "centrist" Democratic senators who insist on watering down key elements of reform. I use scare quotes around "centrist" by the way, because if the center means the position held by most Americans, the self-proclaimed centrists are in fact way out in right field.

What the balking Democrats seem most determined to do is to kill the public option. Whatever may be motivating these Democrats, they don't seem able to explain their reasons in public. Yes, some of the balking senators receive large campaign contributions from the medical-indus-

trial complex — who in politics doesn't?

### Far-right shifts focus of media

Wash. Post 6/5 — When Rush Limbaugh sneezes or Newt Gingrich tweets, their views ricochet from the Internet to cable television and into the traditional media. It is remarkable how successful they are in setting what passes for the news agenda.

The power of the Limbaugh-Gingrich axis means that Obama is regularly cast as somewhere on the far left of a truncated political spectrum.

The media are largely ignoring critiques that come from the left.

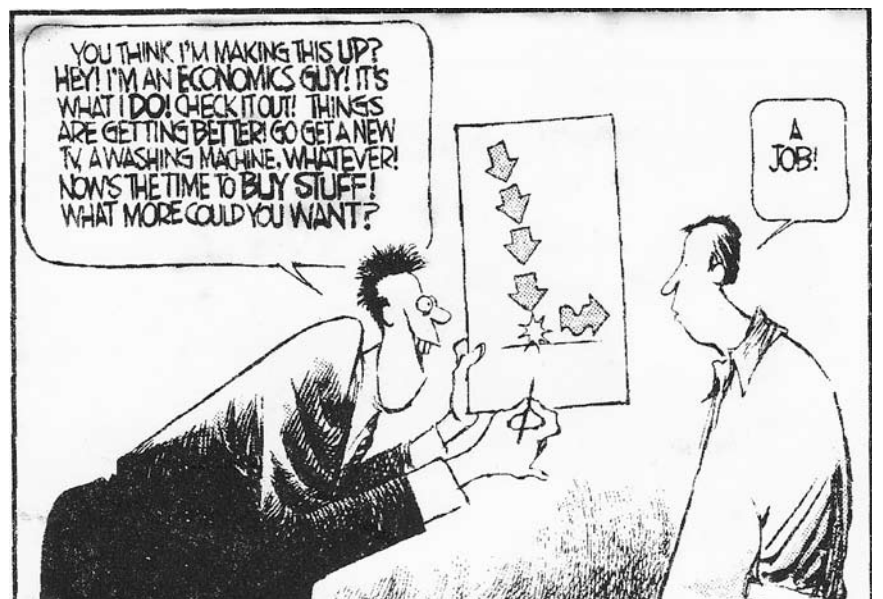
Isn't Afghanistan a more important issue to debate than a single comment by Judge Sonia Sotomayor about the relative wisdom of Latinas?

### Maybe U.S. really in it for oil?

NYT 6/23 — The news from Afghanistan is grim. In the first week of June, there were more than 400 attacks, a level not seen since late 2001. Washington has already spent 7 ½ years and more than \$15 billion on failed training programs.

The Pentagon also neglected to keep track of weapons it gave out, like mortars, grenade launchers and automatic rifles. Tens of thousands disappeared, sold to the highest bidder and, in some cases, used against American soldiers.

Kabul's central government is notoriously corrupt, but the tales from the field are even more distressing. Journalists for The Times have reported seeing police officers burglarizing a home and growing opium poppies inside police



compounds. American soldiers complain of police supervisors shaking down villagers.

### Immigrants graduate — to what?

NYT 6/24 — We were caught between exhilaration and despair at a graduation on Tuesday as we watched more than 500 young people in caps and gowns gather in a park a few steps from the United States Capitol. While there was talk of bright futures, the speeches were threaded with notes of impatience and defiance and made clear that those hopes were in no way assured.

That is because all of the[se] students are in this country "illegally." These students came here as minors, hitched to their parents' aspirations for a better life. But once they graduated from high school, they found their choices restricted to the same dead-end jobs and shadowed lives that their parents live.

They look tired, solemn, defiant, hopeful in the way young people have that banishes cynicism. They seem incredulous that a message they grew up with — work hard, stay in school, study and you will succeed — does not apply to them.

**MORE ITEMS AVAILABLE ONLINE:**  
[www.plp.org](http://www.plp.org)

# Profit-Hungry D.C. Transit Bosses Try to Blame Crash on Workers

**WASHINGTON, DC, June 29** — A horrible crash of two trains on this city's Metrorail killed nine people, including the operator, and injured 80 others. The bosses' media first tried to blame the operator, but then discovered she had done everything possible to avoid the crash. Now the bosses are trying to find some other worker to blame. But it's the profit-hungry capitalist system and its willing flunkies like the Metro Board and the General Manager who are the killers here. Capitalism forces us into minimal safety and to make maximum profits for the bosses. Transit workers should take the lead in building for revolution against such a vicious, exploitative, racist system!

## What Happened?

The immediate cause of the crash was a failure of the automatic train-control system which regulates the train-speed, directing it to stop at the stations, and maintains a safe distance between trains. For several years, this system has revealed many flaws. Trains have overrun stations, have slowed down and then suddenly surged forward requiring quick action by the operator to avoid a mishap and have run red signals when in automatic control. Management always blames the operators and suspends them or disqualifies them from operating the train.

## More of Same Negligence by the Bosses

In 2005, the union began fighting this, de-

manding a change in the Authority's knee-jerk, "blame-the-operator" attitude. Management refused. It's easier and cheaper to blame a worker than to fix a defective system! In fact, at a Safety Committee meeting in November 2006, management took the position that the issue of the trains overrunning stations was not even a safety issue, but rather one of "labor relations" because operator error was causing the problem!

Then, in December 2006, when two track-walkers were killed because of management's inadequate safety policies, the bosses claimed they were ready to make safety a top priority. A new General Manager was appointed and he promptly hired an outside consulting firm to investigate safety at Metro. But after about six months, it became clear that the consultant was more concerned about reducing Metro's workmen's compensation costs than dealing with the safety issues the workers were raising. The issue faded when the new union leadership (quite cozy with management) took over, leading to this month's deadly results.

Last April, at a hearing on Metro's proposed service cuts, the former union president testified that the safety consultant hired by the General Manager was a waste of money because the bosses were not dealing with the real issues. Metro Board chairman Jim Graham ignored the comments.

The real culprits, the local governments that

own Metro and the General Manager who administers it, are all attempting to escape the workers' anger. We must not let them off the hook. They are criminals and should be treated as such. General Manager John Catoe, who is now calling the operator who was killed a hero, last month was demanding her wages be frozen and her benefits cut. What hypocrisy! Workers must understand that Graham, Catoe and all the Board members decided long ago to work for capitalist interests and support their system, putting money and corporate profits ahead of workers' safety.

PLP'ers and friends are fighting to hold Metro management accountable. They're organizing to bring masses of workers to the next union meeting where a resolution will be introduced to demand a demonstration at the Metro headquarters and the firing of the Metro manager.

Despite the bosses' crocodile tears and their promises to "do better," the system won't become safer any more than it did after the deaths of three Metro workers in 2006. Only if workers ran the system with the interests of workers riding the system in mind, would safety improve. That's why more Metro workers should help build PLP's revolutionary movement for communism, which would change the priorities of the entire society from maximizing corporate profits, waging wars to expand them and using racist systems to enforce their rule to one of putting the needs of the world's workers above all else. ☼

# Build A Worker-Student-Soldier Alliance — Fight for Communism

To fight against the root of exploitation and oppression — capitalism — workers, students, and soldiers worldwide must build unity with communist ideas. Successful revolutionary movements in Russia and China demonstrated the power of the worker-student-soldier alliance; today the international revolutionary communist Progressive Labor Party sees this unity as essential to the working-class' success in fighting against racism and imperialism and for communism.

France's general strike of 1968 sharply illustrates the power of workers and students. Protesting against declining living standards, the legacy of imperialism in Algeria, the Vietnam War and poor working conditions, workers and students struck out against Renault, among others, and stopped the whole country from running — literally — with a general strike. They succeeded in scaring the ruling class by their potential to stop capitalism. However, lacking revolutionary communist leadership, they settled for temporary reforms rather than fighting to take power and run society in the interest of the working class and their student allies. Forty years later, the French rulers are stripping every one of these reforms as their system faces crisis.

As future workers, students play an important role in revolution. In every historical period of class society, the universities have been centers where ideas are formed and propagated in defense of the ruling class. Under capitalism they are where racism, sexism and nationalism are justified. Universities like Harvard and its Kennedy School of Government not only plan and justify imperialist wars, but train students to mislead their own class by becoming liberal reformist leaders.

Many other universities and colleges train students to be reformist union leaders as well. They teach them that they can escape the working class because they are "smarter" and more "hard working." Students angered at racism, sexism and imperialism and who want to change things are encouraged to join groups on campus under reformist and patriotic lines. The leaders

of these groups say that they can get better wages and working conditions and a just U.S. society through voting and unions, and channel the students' immense energies into fighting for dead-end reform and into "service" for the nation. In this period of capitalist crisis and war, neither voting nor unions can stop the attacks on us.

PLP has historically led the fight for worker-student unity against imperialism, racism and capitalism. During the Vietnam War, PL students, active in fighting against the war, also organized mass support for General Electric strikers. GE workers were producing weapons for the war. Students realized that to end imperialism, student rallies and sit-ins were not enough, and to build a strong anti-war movement workers are key since they produce weapons that are needed to fight the bosses, while also being the sole source of the bosses' profits. The only way to end imperialism is with a revolution to get rid of its capitalist source. Because of its size, because of being exploited, its organization and political potential, the working class is crucial for revolution.

Yet workers and students cannot do it by themselves. Soldiers, sailors and marines, play a key role by uniting with their working-class

brothers and sisters. Soldiers are forced to risk their lives for the bosses' oil profits. The rulers try to force them to carry out acts of extreme racism upon workers in other countries. Black and Latino soldiers are particularly open to opposing imperialist wars and the capitalist system, to rebelling and turning their guns on the bosses, owing to the blatantly racist system they are sent to defend. White soldiers can follow their lead.

During the Vietnam War, many white soldiers followed the lead of black and Latino soldiers in rebelling against the racist imperialist war. In the face of a mass strike, the National Guard is often called in to protect the interests of the bosses, but with communist consciousness, soldiers will side (and have done so) with workers and fight the common capitalist enemy. In Russia in 1917 during World War I, soldiers refused to fight for the bosses and joined workers to make a revolution for workers' power.

We urgently need worker-soldier-student unity against the very system that attacks both workers and students. We encourage students to join and build worker-student alliance groups at their schools to bring anti-imperialist and communist ideas and actions to the students, workers and soldiers, and to build PLP. ☼

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