



# CHALLENGE

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## Follow Stella D'Oro Workers' Lead Against Rulers' Attacks: 'Make the Bosses Take the Losses'

**NEW YORK CITY, September 12** — Stella D'Oro bosses told its workers this week that they will be thrown on the street and that their bakery will be closed — the brand and some machinery having been sold to Lance, a non-union company. It will make the products at a bakery in Ashland, Ohio.

Stella workers, having struck for 11 months in a fiercely militant struggle against wage-cuts, descended with their supporters on the otherwise silent Labor Day parade today. Their contingent of 350 filled a city block with banners, signs, and chants of "Keep Stella in the Bronx: Fight, Fight, Fight!" and "The Workers, United, Will Never Be Defeated." Cleaners from Domestic Workers United and musicians from the Rude Mechanicals group made the chanters' rhythms dance and sparkle.

The effect on workers marching past was electric. Eyes brightened, fists went up, the booming chants echoed from scores of marchers, especially the many ranks of construction workers walking behind or riding on their heavy rigs. Imagine those rigs surrounding the Stella plant, preventing any machines being moved out!

"Keep Stella in the Bronx" struck a real chord with New York workers who identify the Bronx as a working-class borough. If they didn't know about the Stella struggle, they do now.

PLP's Stella supporters helped build the action from within our own unions and mass organizations, and continued the flow of CHALLENGE sales and chants like, "Kick the Bosses in the Ass: Power to the Working Class;" and "Make the Bosses Take the Losses: Keep Stella Open." PL'ers added the chant, "Whose Factory? Our Factory!" which attacks the essence of

capitalism, and the internationalist chant in Spanish, "From north to south, from east to west, we'll win the battle, whatever the cost."

The workers are planning a September 25 march and rally from Wall Street, site of Lance's banker, Goldman Sachs, to City Hall. PLP members are backing the workers as they absorb this heavy blow, helping them contact the Ashland workers to explain what happened here, and planning how to fight for their jobs.

The bosses' laws protect their ownership of the means of production, enabling them to move around assets indiscriminately without any thought about the effect on workers. None of us is safe under their rule. The Communist Manifesto described this inevitable destructive effect of capitalism back in 1848: "Everything solid melts into air."

But workers inevitably resist being discarded like a bad batch of cookies. We're learning from such battles that the real war is against capitalism itself, and that our international revolutionary party can create an alternative, a communist society where workers rule and share all the value we produce. But for that to happen, we must melt capitalism into the air.

These are days of hard political debate and soul-searching struggle among the Stella workers themselves. Their communist party, the PLP, is among them with practical help and unbreakable friendships, with the ideas of CHALLENGE, and with trust in the working class.

It is workers such as this dynamic international group at a small Bronx bakery who will help make PLP a mass party able to destroy the whole rotten system. ☪

# Oil \$\$\$ Put U.S. Rulers in Iraq for the Long Haul

Most everyone has come to understand that the U.S. rulers' invasion of Iraq was all about oil. But not even the oil barons knew just how much was up for grabs. Now it's revealed that Barack Obama has 8.2 million reasons not to withdraw U.S. troops from Iraq anytime soon. That's how many barrels of oil companies like Exxon Mobil claim they can pump every day — if it ever becomes safe for them to operate there.

Stunning production targets emerging from Iraq's ongoing oilfield licensing talks with major firms put it on a strategic par with oil kingpin Saudi Arabia. The rising stakes underlie the recent upsurge in Iraqi factional violence and guarantee not only a permanent U.S. military occupation but future deadly "surges" to help Exxon & Co. realize their goal. Production today stagnates around 2.3 million barrels a day (mbd).

Invading Iraq was the brainchild of U.S. Big Oil. Occupation plans took shape in a high-level joint project of the Rockefeller-led Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) and the James A. Baker Institute, imperialist think-tanks both closely linked to Exxon Mobil and J.P. Morgan Chase. Just before the 2003 invasion, the CFR-Baker cabal issued a report, "Iraq: The Day After," promising that "U.S. and allied military forces will quickly occupy, control, and protect oil fields" in order to "achieve more significant increases — say, to 6 mbd by 2010."

When the Bushites bungled the invasion by sending too few troops, the liberal, imperialist wing of U.S. capitalists blamed renegade necons like Cheney and Rumsfeld for launching a misguided "war of choice." But U.S. imperialists cannot afford to walk away from the 8 mbd

windfall that new technology makes possible.

## Saudi Rulers Unreliable Allies for U.S. Rulers

Controlling 8 mbd of Iraqi crude would sharply reduce U.S. dependence on shaky Saudi Arabia as the world's sole "swing producer," meaning a country having enough spare capacity to adjust production in an economic or military crisis.

But Saudi royals rule a powder keg. Though they profit from the most lucrative long-term deal in capitalism's history, serving as Exxon's biggest oil supplier, their 30 million subjects receive nothing from this bonanza. They sympathize more with al Qaeda and Hamas than with Washington. Prince Turki al-Faisal, former chief of Saudi intelligence, in an op-ed piece in the NY Times (9/13/09), said it would be unwise for his country to normalize diplomatic relations with U.S. ally Israel. The prince fears that Saudi workers' anger at Israel's concentration-camp treatment of Palestinians may dethrone his oily dynasty.

So Exxon Mobil-led groups have bids in for 6.3 mbd, or almost four-fifths of Iraq's potential [See Table]. Meanwhile the U.S. war machine remains ever poised to invade Saudi Arabia to prop up its ruling princes if the masses were to rebel. The Pentagon has massive bases to the north (Iraq), to the east (Bahrain and Qatar), to the west (Djibouti) and to the south (Diego Garcia).

However, Exxon & Co. shouldn't start counting their Iraqi chickens just yet. Iraq still has no national law governing oil contracts. And no sooner had Iraq held its first oilfield auction in June, "the semi-autonomous Kurdistan Regional Government condemned it as unconstitutional." (Energy Intelligence, 9/7/09)

## More 'Surges' On The Agenda?

Fighting among rival Iraqi Sunnis, Shiites and Kurds, and attacks on U.S. bases have intensified since the oil projects were revealed. The NY Times (9/13/09) suggests that U.S. troops may have to seize the streets again: "After the withdrawal of most American combat forces from Iraq's cities on June 30, violence has remained a constant, with attackers able to plant and detonate bombs... seemingly with impunity."

U.S. rulers and their allies are ready to worsen an already sickening equation: over

one million dead Iraqis and more than 4,000 dead GIs "in exchange for" eight million daily barrels of crude.

We need a sharpening fight against U.S. imperialism — in the shops and unions, the communities and churches, among GIs, and in all mass organizations — to mount militant battles against the U.S. bosses' deadly goals. Out of these class struggles, tying the mountainous racist and economic attacks on the working class to the need to exterminate the profit system, we can build a mass PLP that can lead a communist revolution to destroy capitalism and its endless oil wars. ☛

Iraq Licensing Round Results		
Field	Bid	Bidders
Rumaila	2,850,000	BP (British)
		CNPC (Chinese)
	3,100,000	Exxon (U.S.) Petronas (Malaysian)
West Qurna	2,325,000	Exxon
		Shell (Dutch)
	1,900,000	CNPC
	1,500,000	Petronas Japex (Japanese) Lukoil (Russian) Conoco (U.S.)
Zubair	1,125,000	Eni (Italian)
		Sinopec (Chinese) Occidental (U.S.) Korea Gas
	1,075,000	CNPC
		BP
	850,000	Exxon Shell Petronas
Kirkuk	825,000	Shell
		Sinopec CNPC Turkish Petroleum
	450,000	CNOOC (China) Sinochem (China)
Bai Hassan	390,000	Conoco CNOOC Sinochem

Source: Energy Intelligence Group

## 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

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**The latest economic crisis has produced difficulties similar to those our working-class brothers and sisters are facing worldwide. Several members of the CHALLENGE staff can now only work part-time on the paper. Therefore, we will have to function in a more timely and organized manner. This requires everyone's help.**

**From now on, any articles reaching us after the Monday morning before Wednesday's press date will not be printed until the following issue. Also, it would help if articles were written within a day or two of an event and sent in immediately if possible. The more organized and disciplined we all become, the better CHALLENGE will be.**

**Thank you, CHALLENGE staff**

# Howard U. Students, Workers Unite vs. Job and Service Cuts

**WASHINGTON, D.C., Sept. 4** — Over 300 Howard University students, CHALLENGE readers and workers protested the administration's plan to cut services and jobs, and hike tuition. Workers from SEIU Local 32BJ joined in the rally in support of the students and also demanded that the University stop its plan to contract out union jobs.

The Howard University Student Association (HUSA) raised 13 demands, including the firing of the executive leadership in the Office of Student Affairs due to their efforts to censor students; a public, transparent budget so students could see just how real the supposed deficit is; improvements in on-campus housing facilities; expansion and upgrade of the computer network; and a recycling plan to comply with the law and to reduce global warming.

Administrators refused to meet with the protestors, some of whom decided to march into the administration building to confront these bosses despite the HUSA leadership's effort to stop them. The campus police shoved and kicked some of the students, including militant members of the Political Education and Action Committee (PEAC), to keep them out. Hard to believe that the new president's slogan is "Students First!"

The economic crisis is hitting universities hard, and they in turn are hitting students and workers with big tuition hikes, cuts in services, layoffs, contracting out union jobs, and a more repressive at-

mosphere. The source of the economic crisis is the capitalist system with its single-minded focus on maximizing profit at the expense of everyone else. The universities' role is to actually serve these capitalist interests.

During the same week that the protest occurred, Howard University announced a \$2.5 million grant program from the Director of National Intelligence to develop a curriculum that will feed a pipeline of students into the CIA, NSA, and other intelligence agencies.

This effort to provide more agents for imperialism complements the existing Howard University ROTC programs. ROTC enrolls almost 200 Howard students per year by bribing them with scholarships to become the executioners of workers and students in Iraq and Afghanistan. These wars are waged so that U.S. corporations can continue to dominate world oil markets and pipelines and maximize their profits. Military officers and intel-



ligence agents are hit men for U.S. imperialism!

The struggle that heated up this week must begin to join with workers and students around the world to eliminate the source of the vicious attacks they face from profit-hungry imperialists across the globe. A concrete step these students can take in this process is joining the PLP. ☪

## Call for Teachers' Strike vs. Fascist School Reform

**LOS ANGELES, CA, Sept. 14** — At the United Teachers of Los Angeles (UTLA) area union meetings last week, some teachers called for a strike against the attacks on students and teachers, showing that "education reform" is fascist and part of the rulers' moves to prepare for wider war.

On August 25, the Board of Education voted to turn over up to 200 lower-performing schools and 51 new schools to charter school operators. This is fascist reorganization of the local school system

by a U.S. ruling class that is in an on-going war and an era-defining economic crisis. After years of neglect this school reorganization is a qualitative shift as the bosses attempt to create a school system that will produce technically-trained and patriotic young workers to join the military and future war production. PLP needs to work among these youth who are future workers and soldiers, key forces for revolution.

This school reorganization is also being pushed

in Obama's so called "Race to the Top," where his education secretary Arne Duncan, has proposed a competition for \$4.35 billion in federal grants to carry out "school reform." States like California, where teachers' unions had won laws that prohibit tying teacher evaluation and pay scales to student test data (so called "merit pay") will be ineligible for these funds. But Duncan was in Sacramento recently to help State Senator Gloria Romero's bid to change the law to make California eligible. And the LA Board of education just voted to enter the "Race to the Top" competition, also agreeing to tie teacher evaluations to test scores. These tests emphasize patriotism. Tying test scores to teacher evaluations is a way to enforce teaching patriotic lies and allow administrations to get rid of higher-paid older teachers while hiring younger teachers for lower wages and benefits.

In the face of the current attack, UTLA leadership is urging teachers to write local proposals to school reform themselves. While the union pays lip service to organizing the Charter Schools, they are not even trying to organize all teachers, including charter employees, into the same bargaining unit. UTLA President Duffy, loyal servant of capitalism, calls on teachers to get involved in so-called grass roots school reorganization such as the innovation division, "i-design." Such reorganization would be done to meet the ruling class's needs, but would have to be approved by the school board and probably require a corporate partner. This is not grass roots; it's doing the bosses' patriotic work to remake the schools to better prepare students for war, to defend a system of exploitation, racism and war. Local school control means teachers working with students and parents to administer their fascist system. We can't unite with those who oppress us, exploit us and send us off to war!

More layoffs and foreclosures are coming, so patriotic education reform will take on more importance for the bosses. A trade union response to this attack is totally inadequate. PLP calls on teachers, students and parents to organize a strike against the fascist reorganization of public schools. Organizing such a strike, based on expanding CHALLENGE networks, builds the unity of parents, teachers, and students to prepare us for the struggle to get rid of the capitalist system and build a communist society. ☪



**BOSTON, MA, August 24, 2009** — A multi-racial group of PLP members and friends picketed the Haitian Consulate demanding a living wage for Haitian workers. We called for the release of all detained or arrested Haitian demonstrators.

"Haitian, Latin, Black, Red, White, Workers of the World, Unite!" and "Living Wage for Haitians," we chanted. A speaker attacked Pres. Obama for doing nothing to help the Haitian working class. The Haitian government was called a "criminal enterprise" for supporting Haitian and foreign capitalists at the expense of the workers. A worker spoke and explained how low wages anywhere in the world hurt all workers.

The U.S.-supported coup in Haiti in 2006 has led to even worse conditions there. Truly, communist revolution is the only way for working people to end the misery caused by capitalism. ☪

# Workers in Honduras, El Salvador Unite vs. Coup Bosses' Attacks

**EL SALVADOR, September 13** — Recently at a meeting of teachers from El Salvador and Honduras, the latter (a member of the federation of Honduran workers) thanked the Salvadoran workers for their working-class solidarity in the face of the current crisis besetting workers in Honduras following the coup that ousted Manuel Zelaya. Zelaya is a millionaire member of the Honduran bourgeoisie who opposed trade deals with the U.S. and its allies, instead veering towards the Russian and Chinese imperialists through Venezuela's Hugo Chavez.

The teacher from Honduras told of the temporary reforms financed by Chavez (to expand his influence in the region), enabling Zelaya to raise teachers' wages to \$1,000 a month (as compared to \$500 a month for a teacher in El Salvador); afternoon snacks at schools; free uniforms and notebooks, among other measures. This has put Zelaya in conflict with sections of the Honduran ruling class, who were angered by Honduras joining ALBA (Chavez's trade alliance) and Petrocaribe (Chavez's oil alliance).

In Honduras they barely had time to cry for Roger Vallejo Soriano, a 38-year-old teacher shot in the head last July 30th during a demonstration protesting the coup, when another teacher, Martin Florencio Rivera, 37, was stabbed 25 times

and killed after having participated in a wake for Soriano. All this is part of the brutal repression carried out by the security forces of the government of Roberto Michelleti.

Soriano was a victim of the on-going attacks by the police and the army, along with rapes of women. The teacher who spoke at the meeting was sprayed with cancer-causing chemicals when she participated in the marches.

In response to a PLP comrade's question about the lessons drawn from this brutality, workers from Honduras replied: "We definitely must organize much better against the attacks of the system; we're certain that the international bosses, including those in El Salvador, were involved in this coup."

Said a PLP comrade, "If the bosses are organized, why can't the international working class be organized for our own interests."

This story reminded us of the massacres teachers in El Salvadoran suffered in the 1970's and 1980's. A PL teacher who participated in these struggles and saw the army and police kill many teachers in front of their students related his experiences in the teachers' resistance in El Salvador and invited the teachers from Honduras to organize with PLP internationally to resist the bosses' attacks.

The teachers and the international working class must see that the return of Manuel Zelaya, another capitalist exploiter, or any other capitalist president, will not end our problems. Those who exploit and kill the workers continue in power. There's no reason to keep electing them.

The working class must fight for power by building its international party to organize for communist revolution, not continue supporting the murderous, rotten capitalist system. We must spread our networks of our revolutionary communist newspaper CHALLENGE internationally, to organize at work, school and in the fields to fight for a just system, communism. That's how we can avenge the deaths of our class brothers and sisters. ☸

## Paraguay: Lugo Talks 'Left' but Intensifies Capitalist Exploitation

**PARAGUAY** — One year after taking power, "Leftist" President Fernando Lugo's promises have proven to be empty. Liberation can only come when the latifundistas (large agricultural capitalists) are expropriated, imperialists are expelled, industrial capitalists overthrown, and workers seize power through revolution with communist goals of equality and collectivity.

Since he led no revolution and workers did not take power, Lugo, like all capitalist politicians, maneuvers among the U.S. and European imperialists, the Bolivarian Bloc, and the Brazilian ruling class to try to cut deals for the Paraguayan capitalists and landowners. These deals have all deepened the exploitation and oppression of workers in Paraguay.

He has made health care free in public health centers, begun to develop limited social programs for children, and attempted to cut a better deal with Brazil over the price it pays for energy from the jointly-operated Itaipu Hydroelectric plant. But these reforms pale next to the severe exploitation workers face in Paraguay.

### Soy, Sesame and Capitalist Poison

Paraguay is the 6th largest producer of soy in the world. The players in the sesame and soy game in Paraguay are the small rural farmers, Paraguayan and Brazilian Agribusiness, large landowners (Latifundistas — 2% of the population owns 70% of the land!), and major U.S. companies including Monsanto, Cargill and Syngenta.

The agrochemical and biotech companies are helping the latifundistas force peasants off their land by legal tricks and poisoning crops. How? The majority of the soy produced in Paraguay is based on Monsanto Corporation's transgenic seeds that are genetically modified for resistance to the herbicide glyphosate. Massive spraying of glyphosate kills everything else, including small farmers' crops. Lugo's solution?

Ban such spraying 100 yards from waterways, wetlands, roads and populated areas. But this barely touches the problem of the small farmers, and may even be reversed given the power of the latifundistas and their imperialist allies. In 2008, the soy production rate was twice what it was in 1998. The major effect of the soy planting is that it has effectively displaced thousands of rural farmers who plant subsistence crops. Activists have begun to occupy big farms and have mobilized in the streets of Asuncion to fight against the expansion of soybean plantations.

### Corruption, Courts, Cops

The Paraguayan Supreme Court judges were appointed over decades by the Colorado party (the fascist party that had historic ties to Hitler) and is both corrupt and powerful. The judges refuse justice to workers. For instance, they have been deaf to the appeals and demonstrations of workers seeking justice in the Ycua Bolanos case. This involved a fire at a supermarket whose owners (Coloradoans) ordered their security guards to lock the doors, killing over 350 people. President Lugo has opposed the appointment of another Coloradoan, Lovera Canete, to the court, but has declared he will not veto the right-wing Senate's appointment of him.

Even more shocking, however, to Lugo supporters, has been Lugo's decision to allow fascist Sabino Augusto Montanaro to re-enter Paraguay. Montanaro fled when the Alfredo Stroessner dictatorship fell in 1989 because he feared retribution due to the torture and murders he ordered of Political Military Organization (OPM) fighters, Paraguayan Communist Party members, and their allies. In fact, Montanaro was directly responsible for the assassination of the guerilla column Mcal Lopez. Lugo puts out the welcome mat for this fascist trash? Not the mark of a friend of the working class!

### The Way Forward

Workers in Paraguay have a long way to go in the class struggle. Lugo misleads workers into the arms of latifundistas, capitalists, and imperialists, weakening the resistance to exploitation in the same way that Obama's popularity is misleading many workers into supporting imperialist war in Afghanistan.

Instead of supporting these phony leftists and building false hopes that sooner or later demoralize our class, we must build a revolutionary communist movement for change based on workers' power, rather than on wishful thinking that a charismatic leader will deliver when the state apparatus is firmly in the hands of the bourgeoisie. Joining with PLP members around the world would be an important step in this process in Paraguay. ☸

### The Face of Poverty

- 2,156,312 Paraguayan workers (36%) live in poverty, of which 1,172,274 (19%) are living in extreme poverty. Four out of every 10 Paraguayans are poor.
- 40% of the poor receive 11% of the total resources produced in the country while 41% of the resources are concentrated among the 10% richest.
- 15 of every 100 Paraguayans survive on less than 1 U.S. Dollar a day and 30 out of 100 survive on 2\$ a day.
- 78% of Paraguayans have no type of health care — 4,741,046 people
- Unemployment affects 8.7% of the population
- Underemployment affects 26.5% of the population — more than 760,000 people receive minimum wage.
- 133,000 women are illiterate and 15% are from the countryside.

# Bosses' Education Reform: Use Schools to Strengthen Profit System

Every September, parents send their children back to school in the hopes that they will learn, grow and prepare for bright futures. But the capitalists who run the public school systems have their own racist plans for our children. As the economic crisis deepens and inter-imperialist rivalry over the worlds' resources expands, the capitalist bosses become more and more entrenched in their own problems. Desperate to bail out their crumbling financial system and to prepare for more military conflict in the Middle East and Afghanistan, the U.S. bosses spend billions. Shamelessly they continue to steal from the working class to save themselves and their system.

The current budget crises affecting U.S. school systems is a clear statement of capitalist priorities. These cuts are strangling a school system that was already failing our class's children. In big cities where the majority of students are black and Latino, and families are already disproportionately suffering from unemployment and low wages, the cuts will be the worst.

In Los Angeles, classes will average 42 students. In NYC the school budget has been slashed by billions. This is forcing larger class sizes and cutting anything the Dept. of Education considers non-essential: art music, foreign language, sports, and after-school programs. In Chicago, where Obama's Secretary of Education Arne Duncan honed his skills at cutting services to black and Latino students, many reading coaches, after-school and tutoring programs were eliminated. In San Antonio, schools full of black and Latino students are being shut down.

Washington, D.C., with a nearly all-black public school system, has been in the forefront of the bosses' reform experiments, even as students continue to suffer. There, cuts are leading to layoffs of teachers as well as less money for vouchers and charter schools. While the schools are slashed, not a dime has been cut from the billions of dollars in interest going from the education budgets to the banks.

The attacks on working-class students are driven by the current crisis of the capitalists. In the 1950's, the U.S. had emerged victorious from World War II and was launching the Cold War. U.S. bosses had the money to build huge factories that produced steel, autos, airplanes and factory equipment. After the Soviet Union launched Sputnik into space, the U.S. bosses drove to invest in education for the "Space Race." Now the U.S. is a power in decline. Those higher-paying industrial jobs are almost all gone. And the school systems with working-class students, always the poorest, are being gutted.

Capitalists view our children only as fodder for the bosses' system. To the extent the bosses do care about educating working-class youth it is to have a politically loyal, skilled workforce to exploit. Technical education and patriotism are being pushed for black and Latino students. The advocacy for technical education reflects the growing need the ruling class has for skilled workers like engineers, drill press operators, and machinists, jobs needed for war production. Developing curriculum for the schools to create a workforce prepared for war is often masked by rhetoric saying the U.S. "needs to compete" with international rivals.

President Obama's speech to school chil-

dren on September 8 urged them to "set high goals, knuckle down in their studies and persevere through failure." (NYT 9/9/09) Many parents embrace hard work and perseverance for our children but the subtext of the speech is that if children don't succeed in life, it must be their own fault because they did not work hard enough. This idea ignores the reality of the capitalist world. No matter how hard school children work, they will not be allowed to all become doctors or lawyers. They will not even all have jobs. Capitalism relies on a pool of unemployed workers to keep wages low. In the current crises, unemployment is even higher;

***The Progressive Labor Party wants students to learn real history and real skills, to learn to organize, to learn to fight back and to learn to serve our class by building the fight for communist revolution.***

teaching workers to blame themselves prevents them from blaming the true cause of unemployment — capitalism.

Capitalist schools spend much time dividing students into different groups. Tests are designed to magnify differences and assign arbitrary cut-offs, so children get sorted into different programs from gifted and advanced placement to prison-like dumping schools. Capitalist schools prepare a select few to steer towards the elite professions. The majority of students are left to fight for low-paying jobs or join the military (see letter, p. 6).

"Tough Choices, Tough Times," the report of the rulers' New Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce, proposes that capitalism's divisions be further entrenched in the schools by forcing students into a defined path after the tenth grade, either college-bound or vocational. Obama wants school children to knuckle down in their studies and persevere through a system that is failing and that fails to offer them the future they deserve.

This latest economic crisis and the quagmire of constant war have left the rulers in a political bind. Individualism is a cornerstone of capitalism and since the anti-war and anti-racist rebellions of the 60's the U.S. bosses have championed the politics, the art, the music and the philosophy of "me-first." Schools collaborated with a curriculum rich in the stories of individual success and national progress as the result of individual "can-do" spirit or single-minded pursuit of individual success in the face of great odds.

The fact that the Nazis were defeated by the Soviet communists has been written out of history books. The bosses rewrote the truth of racism in the United States as the fiction of enlightened individuals struggling to champion

the ideals of individual freedom. Slavery became an unfortunate "mistake" rather than the conscious policy of 250 years of racist rule codified in colonial law and the Constitution and enforced with ruthless violence that continues to define U.S. society today.

Obama tried to shift the message of individual success when he told students, "Don't give up on yourself, because when you give up on yourself, you give up on your country." National service has been a part of the Obama campaign since the beginning and now Obama is calling on schools to teach children to serve their country and to be inspired to sacrifice for the good of the nation. But it's not "their" country, it's the bosses'.

Obama and the rest of the ruling class know that the schools have been failing our children for a long time. They cynically use their own failure to meet workers' needs as a rallying cry for reforms. Many of these reforms have won the support of parents and teachers who hope that they will improve education; but

none of these reforms will change the fundamental problems of a system that doesn't care about working-class children. After years and years of education reform plans, 39% of children in the U.S. live in families earning less than the amount needed to meet their basic needs. (Center for Children in Poverty) Capitalism cannot educate the majority of children, and for the bosses it is not a principle whether students learn to accept inequality in a large school or a small one.

Reading CHALLENGE in the last few years, one can see many examples of fighting against anti-working-class attacks in the schools: from high school students protesting budget cuts and walking out against police brutality, to college students demonstrating against a pro-torture professor and developing a Freedom School when summer session is cancelled. The Progressive Labor Party is not training students to calmly accept the life capitalism has in store for them. We want students to learn real history and real skills, to learn to organize, to learn to fight back and to learn to serve our class by building the fight for communist revolution. ☛



# LETTERS

## Joblessness 'Recruits' Workers on Both Sides of Bosses' War

Why do soldiers from different countries join the military to fight each other? Many times it is because they cannot get a job.

The San Francisco Chronicle (2/17/09) reported that a U.S. colonel said he believes the increase of militant activity is not ideologically-based but stems from poor Afghans being enticed into fighting by their need for money. Afghan officials "believe it's the guys who say, 'Hey, you want \$100 to shoot an RPG at a humvee when it goes by,' and the guy says, 'Yeah, I'll do that, because I've got to feed my family.'"

Pentagon officials say that the economic downturn and a rising unemployment rate are making the military a more attractive option. Undersecretary of State David Chu said the military does "benefit when things look less positive in civil society." (SFC, 11/30/08)

The bosses want us to fight each other so they can be rich and control their country's economy. We should unite with these other workers so we can fight for a better life for all of us instead of killing each other for the benefit of the rich.

Internationalism is a communist idea. It says workers of the world have more in common with each other than with the bosses that run the country they live in. The bosses teach nationalism and patriotism to convince us to ally with them, but remember, every ruling class teaches patriotism; only the communists teach internationalism.

*California reader*

## Eyewitness to NATO Afghan Slaughter

[The following letter is from an eyewitness in Afghanistan to the events described below, which gives the lie to U.S. military reports on who was killed and how many.]

I was at a burial ceremony of our colleague cousin who died in the latest explosion. He was not a Taliban, only a villager. Most of the victims were civilians.

The bombing was in the Chardara district, 15 kilometers from Kundaz City. Some say it killed over 200, gathering to obtain fuel from hijacked tankers. Then came the NATO airstrikes. It included a few Taliban, the others are all villagers.

What are these bastards doing? Killing innocent

people — is this democracy?

Today around 10:20 AM a vehicle suicide bomber exploded himself on Khanabad Road, close to Lodin village on the way to Khanabad, killing one German soldier and injuring two. The bomber was from Chardara; three members of his family died in the airstrike bombing.

*A friend in Afghanistan*

## Reject Capitalist Ideas

In my workplace I can listen and talk to workers, many of whom are low-paid and trying to survive selling knick-knacks at traffic lights in the city of Bogota, Colombia.

For a long time, but especially since President Uribe Velez came to power, the working class has been fooled and kept busy by the media, which has blamed the misery in which we live here on only the symptoms of capitalism. It's common to hear that it is because of pyramid schemes, the guerillas, the paramilitary, the worldwide crisis, traffic restrictions, too much rain, not enough rain, holidays, bank taxes, monopolies, landowners, bad governments and other innumerable reasons, that we live in poverty, violence and social decay.

That is why workers look for whoever can take them out of this state of misery. I tell people that the only culprit is the capitalist system itself. It is the system that produces individualism, racism, imperialist wars, sexism, and the miserable conditions workers are forced to live under, by a small minority that has the fascist state under its control.

That is why the only solution in our hands is to dump capitalism for its opposite, communism. That's a system with no bosses, no wage slavery, a society controlled by workers united in Progressive Labor Party. This is not easy, but we should begin by rejecting practices such as consumerism and sexism, and strengthening the reading of political texts and dialectical materialism, reading, contributing to and distributing CHALLENGE — being a communist under capitalism.

*CHALLENGE reader*

## Sotomayor As Judge Can Only Take Rulers' Side

The recent hoopla about Sonia Sotomayor's appointment to the Supreme Court helped the bosses reinforce an illusion they've worked hard at building: that the Supreme Court is "above politics" and

makes rulings that protect or help people and limits bad things the government does. They constantly repeat how the Court's rulings "ended segregated schools" (who's kidding who!), legalized abortion and protect people from unfair police actions.

Many working people cheered her appointment because she comes from a working-class Puerto Rican family living in a Bronx, NY housing project — so she must be "one of us," right? Wrong! No matter where she came from, she's an Ivy League-educated judge who earned her promotion through a long history of doing the ruling class's work in the courts. After all, that's what the courts are for.

The rulers push the appearance of a Court with one black justice, one Latina and (now) two women as a body "representing" diverse sectors of society. But the essence is that there are two main antagonistic classes in capitalist society: workers who produce everything of value and bosses who exploit them for their private profit. There are no workers on this Court, never have been and never will be. Once Sotomayor became a judge, she joined the bosses' side.

The Supreme Court is part of the structure of this class rule. It has two important jobs: maintaining the illusion that there's justice for workers, and helping the ruling class police itself, sorting out differences and keeping the bosses in power. Does it matter who's on the Supreme Court? Largely, no. The Court makes its rulings by interpreting constitutional law to meet the needs of the ruling class at a particular time.

During slavery the Court upheld it. When workers began to unionize and strike, the Court gave the bosses injunctions to stop them. When the air traffic controllers struck, the courts helped Reagan fire them all. And when the bosses needed a cover for election fraud, it turned to the Supreme Court to elect Bush. So when the bosses — especially the main liberal wing Obama represents — need to make the Court "look a little better" to workers, they appoint a Sotomayor.

In a future communist society, the "courts" will also represent its ruling class: but then it will be the working class. The "courts" will be workers who decide who has violated the rules the working class established to enforce working-class rule, and how they can be rehabilitated, if possible. The Sotomayors, Thomases, Roberts and Scalias will then be part of the garbage can of history.

*Brooklyn Red*

# Global Warming: Only Communism Can Save the Planet, Not Capitalist Schemes

**Book Reviews: "Hot, Flat, and Crowded: Why We Need a Green Revolution – And How It Can Renew America," by Thomas Friedman (Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, New York, 2008); and "The Green-Collar Economy: How One Solution Can Fix Our Two Biggest Problems," by Van Jones with Ariane Conrad (Harper One, New York, 2008).**

These two books on global warming were published last year as the Obama campaign moved into high gear. Friedman is a NY Times columnist. Jones is a human rights activist who Obama appointed as Special Advisor for Green Jobs but then was forced to resign recently after being attacked by right-wing Republicans for supposedly being a "Marxist."

Both Friedman and Jones recognize that today's severe global warming is due to increasing greenhouse gases (GHGs) produced by fossil fuels (oil, coal and natural gas) in industry, transportation and in the generation of electrical power. They both recognize the urgent need for a solution. But they both (incorrectly) suggest, in different ways, that the capitalist market can solve this problem, if only governments worldwide would adopt "the correct policies."

In his book, Friedman is an unabashed apologist for U.S. imperialism. Jones, on the other hand, denounces the U.S. history of genocidal theft of Indian lands, slavery and the ongoing racist treatment of black, Latin, Asian and Native American working-class people, as well as the extreme sexist discrimination against women. Racism/sexism and global warming are the "two biggest problems" (his subti-

tle) facing the world.

Friedman writes as though racism and the current oil wars never happened and calls on the U.S. to regain its mythical moral leadership in the world (after Bush allegedly destroyed it) by taking the lead in decreasing GHG emissions. Jones, on the other hand, calls on the U.S. government to solve global warming by creating green jobs to build clean energy usage that will also help to abolish the inequality of income and opportunity suffered by black and Latino workers. He says neither problem can be solved without solving the other.

The two authors seem to be living in two different universes — Friedman in fantasyland while Jones is almost in the real world.

While Jones doesn't defend the war-criminal U.S. ruling class like Friedman does, he appears clueless about the nature of capitalism. He doesn't recognize the antagonistic relationship between the capitalist class and the working class. He doesn't see the capitalists' absolute need to promote racism and sexism to enhance their super-profits and to maintain their political power — control of the state. This enables them to exert their class domination over both the working class and over competing imperialists.

Though Jones advocates the full involvement of "minority" workers to pressure the government to foster use of solar panels, windmills and other forms of clean energy, he proposes that such a coalition be led by "progressive" businessmen. (!) This

position is misleading pie in the sky, typical of those like Jones who toy with revolutionary ideas at one point in their lives and then reject them to pursue a career in the Democratic Party.

His central error is not understanding that capitalism, with its driving profit motive, cannot stop using fossil fuels without dismantling virtually the entire body of physical capital in the world, replacing it with new physical plant and modes of transportation employing clean energy sources. The world's capitalist classes can never agree to do this.

The world's imperialists are locked in life-and-death competitive rivalries with each other. No "global policy" that interferes with their battle for maximum profits can possibly be written and enforced as long as these imperialists fight with each other over control of the world's resources and markets.

The main battle we face in the movement against global warming is defeating the misleading strategies of writers like Jones and the fantasies of liberals like Friedman. We must redouble our efforts to demonstrate that only the abolition of capitalism, classes and production for profit instead of for use can lay the foundation for a renewed planet. Only the world's working class, led by its communist party PLP, once having seized power from the capitalists and consolidated its power through revolution, will be able to clean up the world, revolutionize production processes with safe, clean energy and save the planet. ☸

# Obama's Afghan War Crucial to U.S. Bosses' Global Control

The fight between the U.S. imperialists and their Russian, Chinese and Iranian rivals — for control of the oil and gas fields of the Caspian Sea and Central Asia region and the pipeline routes to take these resources to market — is leading to wider Middle Eastern wars and eventually to an inevitable global confrontation. Controlling this region is crucial to the U.S. bosses' efforts to regain absolute control of oil-rich Middle East, which have been the basis for their dominant imperialist position since the end of World War II.

Obama chose to concentrate on the Afghanistan war in hopes the U.S. backed TAPI (Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India pipeline) could be built. This pipeline, bypassing both Russia and Iran, could reverse Russian-Chinese advances in the energy-rich former Soviet republics, giving the U.S. control of this strategic region.

If successful, together with a new string of U.S. bases in the area, TAPI would put Russia and China on the defensive militarily, break Russia's growing world energy monopoly, especially of the European Union's energy market, and position the U.S. bosses to potentially starve China of the energy resources needed to fuel its economic and military rise.

It would also free the U.S. military machine to deal with Iran, if it hadn't capitulated by then. Iraq could then be more easily pacified and U.S. imperialism's dream of extending its hegemony well into the 21st century would be within reach.

As U.S. imperialists' political, economic and military hegemony shrinks, their ability to control the outcome of world events becomes limited. An example is the recent Afghan presidential election, aimed at getting rid of Karzai, who has become an obstacle to their geopolitical goals in the area. He's

been cozying up to China and deepening his ties with the warlords of the Northern Alliance, backed by Russia, Iran and India.

Their electoral scheme failed. So far, with 99% of the votes counted, Karzai is the winner with 54% against the U.S. candidate Abdullah Abdullah's 28%. Plan B was to claim massive fraud and call for a run-off election rigged to guarantee Abdullah's victory. But some among their ranks like Zbigniew Brzezinski, former National Security Advisor to Jimmy Carter, disagree with this plan. They claim it would further destabilize Afghanistan and increase the "growing risk ...that the Taliban ...be viewed as a resistance movement against foreign occupation... and that would be a strategic defeat."

The U.S. ruling class is clearly at odds over this. Some are making frantic efforts to force Karzai into a unity government with his rival Abdullah Abdullah (known in Afghanistan as "Obama's wife"). Others see no option but to accept Karzai and to configure a government run by their ambassador Eikenberry and General McCrystal. Some call for the "Afghanization" of the war while others demand Obama's unflinching commitment to his surge. Some, with Saudi Arabia and Britain, are working for a negotiated settlement with the "good Taliban."

Besides, some of their European allies also disagree with the plan and are reluctant to send more troops. German Chancellor Angela Merkel praised the elections, while demanding, with leaders from Britain and France, an international conference to force the "Afghanization" of the war so "that the international engagement can be reduced." Brzezinski agrees, arguing it might reduce "the growing risk of the war becoming a war of foreigners against Afghans," and the Europeans allies "might be less likely to pull out entirely.... [Leaving] the U.S. alone

in the lurch."

Whatever tactics the U.S. butchers finally decide on, pipeline TAPI may never fly. It is detrimental to the ambitions of China, Russia and Iran. A U.S.-Taliban agreement will never bring peace to Afghanistan as the warlords of the Northern Alliance, the Taliban's sworn mortal enemies, will fight desperately to survive.

Even if the U.S. imperialists carve out an independent "Pashtunistan" from Afghanistan-Pakistan, as some are planning, the war is likely to widen as the area's instability helps China and Russia further consolidate their grip on the Caspian-Central Asia region. The Iranian nuclear issue — nothing but a fig leaf to hide the vital role of Iran's energy resources and strategic location in the fight for world domination — is rapidly forcing a showdown between the U.S., Russia, Iran and potentially Israel.

How many more millions must be murdered, maimed and displaced for the profits of the imperialists of the world? No election, peace agreement, U. N. resolution or slick-talking politician like Obama will ever put an end to this butchery. Workers, students and soldiers, getting angrier at the cutbacks and layoffs, need to see that the widening imperialist genocide, inherent in capitalist crisis, is costing \$billions and murdering so many members of our class! Students need to unite with soldiers and workers who bear the heaviest burden of the capitalist war economy. Only an international communist-conscious working class under the leadership of PLP can put an end to this bosses' inferno, with a communist revolution. ☪

## 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

### Teenagers bumped down, jobless

**NYT, 9/15** — This August, the teenage unemployment rate — that is, the percentage of teenagers who wanted a job who could not find one — was 25.5 percent, its highest level since the government began keeping track of such statistics in 1948. Likewise, the percentage of teenagers overall who were working was at its lowest level in recorded history.

"There are an amazing number of kids out there looking for work.".... Explanations...mostly boil down to being at the bottom....Half of college graduates under age 25 are in jobs that do not require college degrees, the highest portion in at least 18 years....This has led to less...room for new workers at the bottom.

### A raw health deal for immigrants

**NYT, 9/6** — President Obama is...giving repeated assurances that [undocumented] immigrants would be excluded from any subsidized benefits under health proposals before Congress....

At the same time, [undocumented] immigrants would not be exempt from the obligations in the House bill...Most [undocumented] immigrants in the country would be required to buy health insurance or face tax penalties.

And since they would be barred from subsidies, they would have to pay for coverage at full rates, regardless of their income level.

### For profit, cheat the low-wagers

**NYT, 9/2** — Low-wage workers are routinely denied proper overtime pay and are often paid less than the minimum wage, according to a new study based on a survey of workers in New York, Los An-



geles and Chicago....

Researchers found that the typical worker had lost \$51 the previous week through wage violations, out of an average weekly earning of \$339.

The study found that women were far more likely to suffer minimum wage violations than men, with the highest prevalence among women who were [undocumented] immigrants. Among American-born workers, African-Americans had a violation rate nearly triple that for whites....One of the most surprising findings was how successful low-wage employers were in pressuring workers not to file for workers' compensation. Only 8 percent of those who suffered serious injuries on the job filed.

### Paul Robeson, noble anti-capitalist

**NYT, 9/3** — Paul Robeson's story is not forgotten, but is dimly remembered, particularly by the young. Born in 1898...he became the dominant college football player of his time, was elected to Phi Beta Kappa, was Rutgers class valedictorian and earned a law degree from Columbia University.

He almost single-handedly legitimized black

spirituals and folk music as an art form and became perhaps the most famous concert singer as well as a renowned actor....

He became a pioneering and uncompromising human rights advocate. He spoke out against segregation decades before the civil rights movement began, and was a fierce opponent of colonialism when that was barely an issue.

He also became an enthusiastic, unflagging admirer of the Soviet Union, something he never renounced or backed away from, even in the face of Stalin's [critics]. He embraced socialism, not capitalism, as the future. He was blacklisted, had his passport revoked, and, in many ways, was written out of history books....

"I've sat in on classes where people are talking about the 30's and about civil rights and about Martin Luther King, and there's this gap, as if this man never existed. He's one of the giants of the movement, and no one knows."

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

# Harper's Ferry Raid Shows: Rely on the Masses to Change the World

On October 17, 2009, PLP'ers are joining many others at Harper's Ferry to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Harper's Ferry raid which sparked the Civil War that ended chattel

form egalitarian maroon societies in defiance of the slave system, defending their communities by any means necessary. Slaveowners and their racist apologists claimed that these fighters

change, the more they stay the same." But PLP knows better, and acts on the historical knowledge contained in those two simple conclusions.



**Haitian Slave Rebellion, 1804**

were the "lunatic fringe," but John Brown and other anti-slavery activists knew better.

The slave rebellion led by Nat Turner in Virginia in 1831 terrified slaveowners because it demonstrated that every enslaved person was a potential "assassin" of his "beloved" master. Brown and other activists eagerly studied the formation of armies of thousands of the enslaved on the island of Santo Domingo and their success in annihilating their French masters in establishing a black Republic of Haiti in the 1790s.

While the anti-slavery movement grew apace, the European revolutionaries Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels were sharpening the working-class fight against wage slavery. Based on their participation in the revolutionary movement and their study of history they developed the philosophy of dialectical materialism. This philosophy, outlined in the Communist Manifesto of 1848, proven true over the years, explains that class struggle is the motive force of history. Periods of seeming passivity among the oppressed, however prolonged, are replaced by blazing struggle, like the explosion of a seemingly dormant volcano. Systems of class exploitation, although they seem at times, permanent, and even "natural," end. We are no longer cultivating crops and building pyramids in the Nile Valley. Slavery is ended. Feudalism has ended. Capitalism will also end.

Most people do not yet realize this, just as most people in 1859 did not yet realize that slavery was on the verge of extinction. The enslavement of Africans and the system built on this edifice had existed for over 200 years and appeared permanent, like capitalism today. But, with the growth of the PLP and a communist revolution in the face of imperialist war and the continuing crises of capitalism, communism will replace capitalism and all forms of class society. ☛

slavery in the U.S. Join us!

Denmark Vesey, Nat Turner, Osborne Anderson, John Brown, Harriet Tubman — these bold leaders of the anti-slavery struggle understood that the millions of enslaved Africans and millions more of the workers and small farmers oppressed by the slave oligarchy would, under the right conditions, rise up against slavery. They acted on this confidence in the masses and shook the world, from Charleston, S.C. and Southampton, Virginia, to bleeding Kansas and Harper's Ferry. We should emulate this boldness in our struggles today, for the oppressed of the world will also, under the right conditions and communist leadership, rise up to destroy their exploiters.

Racist ideology intensified in the run-up to the Civil War as the rulers tried to ideologically undermine the anti-slavery cause. Blacks were portrayed by Southern slaveowners as an "inferior breed," "happy" with slavery, and unfit because of their "inferiority" for a life of freedom alongside whites. Racists in the North repeated the picture of blacks as servile, shuffling, meek, cowardly and dancing in blissful ignorance.

These lies continue today in various forms and are applied to every ethnic group of workers to keep people divided and demoralized. Left out of today's picture is the eleven-month Stella O'Doro strike in NY, the sit-down strike at Republic Windows and Doors in Chicago, the massive outpouring of opposition to the racist attacks on the Jena 6, black students who fought back against oppression in Louisiana, and hundreds more actions, large and small, around the world.

Anti-slavery rebels knew, contrary to the racist images, that enslaved and free blacks and anti-slavery whites planned and carried out ingenious and daring escapes from slavery with courage and fortitude in the face of whippings, jailing and death. Thousands of slaves escaped to the Dismal Swamp in Virginia, to the Florida swamps, and to the mountains of Jamaica to

annihilating their French masters in establishing a black Republic of Haiti in the 1790s.

These experiences led to two profound, if simple, conclusions: people fight back against oppression and their struggle causes change. These conclusions are often poorly understood. Today, many workers say, "Nobody where I work wants to do anything" or "You can't fight City Hall." or "You can't win." Or "The more things



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