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CHALLENGE



STATE OF DISUNION: DEMS WANT LARGER OIL WAR

In his State of the Union address, Bush spewed a series of lies and half-truths meant to obscure reality, appease opposing factions of capitalists and hood-wink workers. Rebuttals from liberals were just as dishonest. They urged an end to the Iraq fiasco but simultaneously moved for "larger wars." The politicians' tortured, phony rhetoric masks the true state of the bosses' so-called Union. In the face of mounting threats to U.S. rulers' worldwide empire, particularly to its strategic cornerstone, control of the Middle East and its oil, disunity and disarray prevail.

CAPITALISTS' SELF-INTEREST HAMPERS RULERS' CALL FOR WARTIME UNITY

The liberal, imperialist wing of U.S. capitalists, including the likes of J.P. Morgan Chase and Exxon Mobil, ultimately requires a full-scale military mobilization of the nation, complete with tax hikes and tighter government regulation of businesses. But many capitalists in Bush's base are unwilling to sacrifice their freedom or bottom lines to the greater good of U.S. imperialism. His address threw bones to both camps, mainly favoring his base. Bush vowed to "balance the federal budget...without raising taxes." The liberal New York Times' January 28th editorial pointed out the absurdity of such a proposal in wartime. He pandered to the anti-regulationists by saying economic growth depends on "more enterprise," not "more government."

Most importantly, Bush said he could achieve "victory" in Iraq with 21,500 already-enlisted troops. Liberals had earlier denounced Bush's "surge" scheme as "too little, too late." Sen. Jay Rockefeller commented, "I don't think he understands the world." (NY Times, 1/19) Bush, however, paid lip service to the main imperialist wing by promising to add 92,000 soldiers and marines "in the next five years" and suggesting a "volunteer Civilian Reserve Corps" to assist the military overseas. But he failed to explain where the new troops would come from, given current recruiting shortfalls. And the Reserve Corps, "like other calls to national service by Bush...lacks an actual plan." (Boston Globe, 1/26)

For U.S. rulers, the picture is far bleaker than the one Bush painted. Their enemies are fast gaining strength. Iran, aided by China and Russia, is on the road to acquiring nuclear weapons and becoming the dominant Mid-East power. Al Qaeda, which represents non-royal Saudi capitalists shut out of the oil bonanza, "is a more dangerous enemy today than it was before 9/11," according to the liberal Brookings Institution (report, 1/18/07). "It has retained its base of operations in the badlands of Pakistan and Afghanistan, and it has created a new base in western Iraq. It has spread like a virus elsewhere, developing cadre throughout the Muslim world and...in Europe." China's blue water navy project directly challenges U.S. supremacy over oil shipping routes. Its recent missile test puts U.S. military satellites at risk.

LIBERALS' REPLY TO BUNGLER BUSH: MOBILIZE FOR BROADER CONFLICTS

In this dire context, the Democrats chose racist, arch-militarist Sen. James Webb to deliver their re

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WORKERS, PATIENTS BLAST CHICAGO BOSSSES' RACIST CUTS



CHICAGO, Jan. 29 — Despite frigid 10 degree temperatures, more than 500 workers, patients and youth picketed the Cook County Building while about 2,000 more, mostly users of threatened services, packed the budget hearing inside. The target of their anger was County Board President Todd Stroger and the County Commissioners (mostly black Democrats) who are balancing a \$500 million deficit with racist budget cuts against the poorest, sickest and most vulnerable victims.

The public health deficit matches exactly the \$100 million cut in federal funding, mainly due to the escalating \$2 billion-a-week bloodbath for oil in Iraq. The clinic closings and service cuts are concentrated on the overwhelmingly black South and West sides. Thus racism becomes the cutting edge of the fascist attacks needed to finance the rulers' imperialist wars. In some ways, this action of black, Latin and white workers was a more significant anti-war rally than the much larger one held in Washington, D.C. two days earlier.

The AFL-CIO hacks of the Chicago Federation of Labor hijacked today's demonstration, taking it from the nurses who had originally called it, and kept the organized workers on the outside, away from those on the inside.

PLP participated on many levels. We organized workers and patients through various mass organizations, distributed CHALLENGE and PLP

literature to many friendly marchers, met new friends and struggled with those closest to us to get more involved in building the revolutionary communist movement to overthrow the racist warmakers and budget-slashers.

Of the total deficit, \$100 million is in public health. Stroger and racist Dr. ("I didn't come here for the homeless") Simon, plan to close two-thirds of the public clinics (18), cut services at Stroger, Provident and Oak Forest Hospitals, and eliminate 6,500 jobs. Cook County has more than one million people without health insurance. Over 80% of the County patient population is black and Latino and 70% are employed but uninsured.

Even though there won't be a final budget until February 28, school-based clinics are closing. Four doctors were fired from the Cermak Clinic inside the Cook County Jail. The Surgical unit has been closed at Oak Forest Hospital. The Pediatric ER is closing at Stroger. One doctor said a cut in hours at the Fantus Clinic means 100 fewer patients are seen every day. They are marched over to the Stroger ER when the clinic closes and many spend the night, unseen, only to return to the clinic early next morning. Like Katrina in slow motion, public health is our Superdome. Stroger is our Mayor Nagin.

Today's action was the culmination of two weeks of growing activity. On January 18, about 200 workers picketed Stroger Hospital. On January 23, over 1,500 people packed

and surrounded the Markham Courthouse for the first of four public budget hearings. The following day 200 workers and patients picketed Provident Hospital and the next day almost 1,000 packed the second budget hearing in the northern suburb of Skokie. Mostly black women nurses have spearheaded much of this activity.

But the day ended with a thud at an SEIU-sponsored "town hall meeting," where about 350 workers and professionals were subjected to a sleazy panel of preachers and politicians. They told us that Jesus would save us, and if we wanted to help we should tell them which of our co-workers are unnecessary so they can make the "right" cuts! This meeting was organized as a diversion from this morning's rally because SEIU wanted to steer people away from recalling that it gave the Stroger campaign \$800,000 in the last election.

We must organize bolder and sharper actions that will expose the union leaders and politicians in a mass way and help lead more workers and youth, especially black and Latino, to join and build the PLP for communist revolution.

Black Rebellions, Workers' Unity Belie Bosses' History

After three centuries of racist brutality and exploitation, the rulers' media offer us Black History Month (BHM), extolling a few black men and women of fame and fortune. Oprah Winfrey, presidential candidate Barack Obama and black Super Bowl coaches will be trotted out to convince us that the system works, allowing individuals to overcome racism. In reality, the system means black workers suffer double unemployment rates, one-third less family income and infant-mortality rates rivaling those of the world's poorest countries. BHM is part of the rulers' body of ideology intended to convince black workers to ignore the super-exploitation millions suffer from all bosses and give their loyalty to bosses of their own "race," rather than uniting with all workers, Latino, Asian and white in loyalty to their class. Loyalty to their "own" bosses, who are part of the capitalist system creating all this exploitation, then misleads them into patriotically supporting the big bosses' wars.

During BHM, the bosses cannot afford to teach the real history of mass struggles against slavery, united black and white working-class struggles against racism and capitalist exploitation, or how communists participated in and led many of these heroic actions. Extraordinary singer and actor Paul Robeson may be mentioned, but not his lifetime dedication to the working class and communism. No one will quote his statement that visiting the then-socialist Soviet Union was the first time in his life he felt free of racism.

There will be no allusion to communist



"WHEN I WAS VISITING [THEN] SOCIALIST SOVIET UNION, IT WAS THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE I FELT FREE OF RACISM.

-PAUL ROBESON

historian Herbert Aptheker debunking over 100 years of ruling-class racist academic lies about slaves happy to be exploited by their "benevolent" plantation masters. Aptheker documented over 400 organized slave revolts, several supported by white workers, north and south. Lincoln will be said to have "freed" the slaves without discussion of Harriet Tubman and John Brown organizing an integrated armed band to raid Harper's Ferry to inspire slave revolts. While the raid caused frightened southern slave-holders to secede, 180,000 runaway slaves joined the Union army to fight for freedom for all slaves.

BHM will not notice the 25,000 black and white workers in 1892 New Orleans who overcame segregated local unions and united in an eleven-day general strike. Bosses counter-attacked with racist propaganda, ruling-class led racist riots and a U.S. Supreme Court decision legalizing segregation

(Homer Plessy of Plessy vs. Ferguson was fighting to desegregate New Orleans streetcars). Nevertheless, in 1907, white workers overcame lifetime racist indoctrination to follow the lead of black workers in a mass strike, shutting down the entire New Orleans port and winning many of their reform demands.

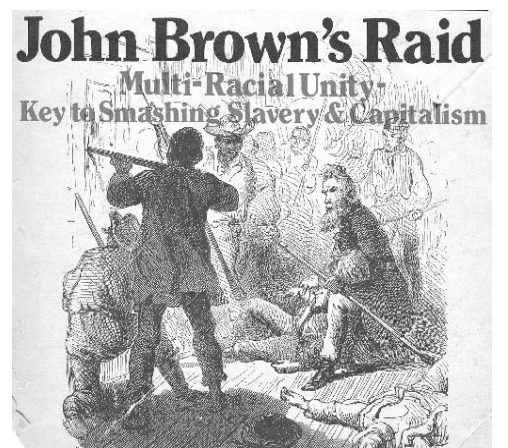
In the 1930s, black workers played a crucial role in the communist-led organization of mass, integrated industrial unions (in opposition to the racist, segregated craft unions). Communists provided most of the leadership for many other anti-racist activities such as the world-wide protests against the phony rape frame-up of black youths in Scottsboro, Alabama, that exposed the racist Jim Crow system.

In the 1960s and '70s, the newly formed PLP continued this tradition by supporting and participating in black rebellions in Detroit, Newark and New York City where the PLP poster "Wanted for Murder, Gilligan the Cop" became the symbol of angry protests against racist police brutality. In 1975 PLP defeated the racist anti-busing movement in Boston. Since the 1960s PLP has frustrated the growth of racist KKK and Nazi groups (supported by cops and the courts all over the U.S.) by taking to the streets in demonstrations and physical attacks. In this past month, PLP has joined protests against killer kops in Chicago and NYC, bringing communist analysis and militance as an alternative to the silent pacifism of ruling-class agents like Al Sharpton.

From as far back as Karl Marx's statement during the U.S. Civil War that "labor in the white skin can never be free while labor in the black skin is in chains," communists have seen that capitalism cannot survive without the profits from the super-exploitation of black workers. Even though many militant reform struggles have made dents in racist institutions like

segregation, the bosses have always been able to use state power to reverse those advances. For instance, the Jim Crow prison chain gangs of the 1930s have merely been replaced by today's largest prison population in world history, incarcerating more black youth than are attending college. Lehman Bros. banking empire began in 1850 as a cotton brokerage house profiting from slavery's exploitation. Today Lehman Bros. finances the Corrections Corporation of America that profits from the frame-ups and non-violent drug convictions that produce over 500,000 present day slaves — prison laborers earning as little as 23 cents an hour, who are over 70% black and Latin.

Communists must counter the omissions and distortions of BHM with the militant history of integrated working-class struggles against racism. More importantly, we must expose that capitalism and racism always have and always will go hand-in-hand. The working class needs the multi-racial unity that can only be forged in anti-racist struggles. To defeat racist exploitation we have to use that unity to build a communist movement to overthrow capitalism and its racist outrages.



WHAT WE FIGHT FOR:

☆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 workers.

☆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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Dems Want Larger Oil War

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

sponse to Bush. (Webb actually wrote a book, "Born Fighting," claiming that U.S. greatness derives largely from an inherited Scots-Irish "warrior culture.") Webb criticized Bush's Iraq debacle mainly because it hinders a broader invasion of the entire region. Webb said he long ago knew that it "would take our energy and attention away from the larger war against terrorism and... leave us strategically vulnerable in the most violent and turbulent corner of the world."

Webb echoes Gen. William Odom, a leading advocate of "redeployment," who recently told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, "Any military proposals today that do not account for both larger wars, as well as the Iranian threat to the Arab states on the Persian Gulf, must be judged wholly inadequate if not counterproductive." Hinting at the massive force build-up needed, Odom says, "two or three million troops" would be insufficient to subdue Iraq alone. Democratic presidential hopeful John Edwards keeps up the liberals' war cry, "To ensure that Iran never gets nuclear weapons, we need to keep all options on the table." (NYT, 1/28)

Playing on the popular myth that Mid-East wars stem from U.S. dependence on imported oil, Bush proposed developing alternative fuels. U.S. rulers may indeed find ways to reduce oil consumption at home, but they will continue to use every means they have, including war, to maintain

mastery of the world's oil trade. Along with their British junior partners, U.S. bosses wield tremendous power over other countries by dictating the terms of their energy supplies. Putin's Russian oil and gas blackmail of various European nations pales beside the global strong-arming by Exxon Mobil, Chevron-Texaco, Shell and BP.

NEW ORLEANS RACIST ATROCITY NO CONCERN OF POLITICIANS

Bush's speech tried to win over workers with an income tax deduction for health care, a ploy that, in fact, serves the ruling class. Workers' health, after all, is a genuine concern both for capitalists seeking maximum profits in their factories and those needing fit manpower for their war machine. Health care would still remain beyond the reach of millions of minimum-wage workers, immigrants and the unemployed.

But the true level of Bush's "compassion" for the working class emerged in an obscene omission. He said not one word about New Orleans. The cold-blooded murder, both by neglect and cops' bullets, and ongoing misery suffered mainly by the city's black residents constitutes one of the worst racist atrocities on U.S. soil since slavery. Democrat Webb spoke only of "restoring the vitality [meaning profitability] of New Orleans." Webb failed to blame Democratic mayor Ray Nagin, who stands just as guilty as the Bush gang.

LIBERALS ALREADY WIDENING WAR, CRACKING DOWN AT HOME

Amid the divisions highlighted in the speeches, strong signs appear that the imperialists' main wing is gaining the upper hand. The new head of the Pentagon's Central Command, which stretches from Central Asia through the Mid-East to East Africa is an admiral rather than a general. This shift indicates a broadening of focus from Iraq to the entire Persian Gulf's vast seaborne crude oil exports and to China's coming naval threat. A second U.S. aircraft carrier group is steaming to the Gulf. The U.S. has begun air strikes in Somalia, which commands chokepoints along the world's busiest oil routes. At home, the imperialists are tightening their grip on industry, at workers' expense. Pfizer's announced layoff of 10,000 follows drastically stepped-up regulation of "blockbuster" drugs that siphon capital from the war effort.

While the liberal warmakers battle to get their own capitalist house in order, their bigger problem remains widespread popular opposition to imperialist war, a Vietnam era legacy. The rulers' predicament affords PLP and the working class an opportunity to build for the only viable alternative to the bosses' profit wars, communist revolution.

PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

P.O. 808 Brooklyn NY 11202

www.plp.com

email:cd188@juno.com

Phone: 718-630-9440

Communists Bring Revolutionary Alternative to Anti-War Marches

WASHINGTON, D.C., Jan. 27 — PLP brought revolutionary communist politics today to over 100,000 demonstrators marching against the war in Iraq. Led by a group of high school students, we marched through the streets chanting, "The only solution is communist revolution." Sparked by the energy of NYC high school students and others we distributed over 3,500 CHALLENGES and 5,000 leaflets, presenting an anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist alternative to the march's pro-Democrat liberal leaders' line of "Bush is the problem—impeach him and everything will be okay."

As we rolled by the corner of First and Independence, one comrade spoke loudly and forcefully that no Democrats or Republicans, no liberal politicians or

LOS ANGELES, Jan. 27—"One, two, three, four, We don't want your racist war!" "Same enemy! Same fight! Workers of the world, unite!" These were some of the slogans taken up by a group of Iraqi Vets in the anti-war march here of over 3,000. One marcher in uniform yelled "chant louder!" One of these vets asked a PL'er, "What kind of revolution are you talking about?" When he told

elections can fix capitalism and that there will be no end to wars under this murderous system. The marchers' response was positive overall, with some openly applauding our analysis. Though we experienced some anti-communist reactions, the majority were interested and supportive.

Workers and students are open to revolutionary ideas. PLP's responsibility is to bring communist politics to all anti-war activities. This demonstration proved that even a small group, but with new young people alongside veterans of our movement, can reach tens of thousands with our ideas. The continued practice and the commitment of our young people will enrich the march towards a communist revolution.

him, the vet said, "You're preaching to the choir." Another vet hugged a PL'er and told him that he definitely wanted more info about organizing against racism and imperialism in the military. Overall, PLP led militant chants against racism and imperialism in a multi-racial contingent of students and teachers while we distributed thousands of leaflets and hundreds of CHALLENGES.



Racist Rulers Fear Unity of Black and Latino Youth

LOS ANGELES, Jan. 28 — After the racist killing of a young black teenager, Cheryl Green, by Latino gang members, the press says the situation has "gotten out of hand" and more cops are needed. The same ruling class that has been pushing racist divide-and-conquer politics between black and Latino gangs now says they have to clamp down on the gangs to end the violence. This is the same ruling class whose system has fostered mass racist unemployment, racist health care, poverty-stricken schools and housing, police brutality and super-exploitation against black and Latino working people. But, of course, to the rulers that situation hasn't "gotten out of hand."

The school board member representing south LA has sponsored a series of youth leadership meetings about "unity," bringing Cesar Chávez' granddaughter to speak at schools about the contribution of Martin Luther King and the civil rights movement to the farmworkers' movement. We know something about this — and the struggle against pacifism, sellouts and pro-imperialist politics, and for militant, revolutionary class-conscious struggle in both movements. We fight for the understanding that an injury to one is an injury to all.

The ruling class fears the militant, multi-racial working-class unity demonstrated during the 1992 Rodney King rebellion. They know that the anger and potential unity of black and Latino youth represents one of the biggest threats to their plans for wider imperialist war and increasing racism at home. Their biggest fear is that black and Latino youth will unite with white youth as well to fight the racist bosses — in the neighborhoods, the factories and the army. They've been promoting racist division for a long time. Now they say they're "shocked" and are hoping for unity around pacifism and U.S. patriotism.

PLP has been organizing multi-racial youth communist collectives for more than twenty years. We've fought in the schools

where we work for unity against racism, against the bosses' imperialist wars and against racist school cops, racist teachers and against nationalist and racist ideas that divide students and teachers. Lately we've been bringing black and Latino students under the Party's leadership to anti-war marches, to anti-Minutemen demonstrations, to the New Orleans Summer Project and to May Day marches for communist revolution to smash racist capitalism.

At our schools we've responded to the current racist tensions both in brainstorming with colleagues about how to build unity and in the student clubs we work with. In one class, the students wrote poems in tribute to 14-year-old Cheryl Green. One student club is fighting for multi-racial unity during black history month; planning to recite anti-racist poems in Spanish and English about unity, written by the Afro-Cuban communist poet Nicolas Guillen. In another school we're helping to sponsor an art contest: "Striving for Unity." These activities can help build for May Day to expose the bosses and their ideas as the source of racist terror, division and imperialist war. They will call on all youth to join the fight to eliminate racism once and for all with communist revolution.

More PLP members will mean more fighters against the bosses' racism. As a multi-racial group led by PLP loudly chanted at the Minuteman rally in downtown LA: "Racism is the bosses' tool — We won't be divided and we won't be fooled!"

School clubs must organize to go out to other high schools, including the Harbor Gateway area, site of this murder. Having rallies and leafleting with a multi-racial group of youth can help build the working-class unity our class needs for the long-term fight to bury the racist bosses.

Pfizer's Rx for Saving \$4 Billion: CUT 10,000 Jobs

BROOKLYN, NY, Jan. 24 — Not content with robbing billions of dollars from workers through charging exorbitant prices for medicines, Pfizer Pharmaceuticals, the country's largest drug company, will try to maintain its exploitative profit margins by robbing 600 workers here of jobs many have held all their lives. It's part of a worldwide elimination of 10,000 jobs.

The company says it must compensate for lost sales when its patents expire on drugs like Lipitor (and they can be produced generically at much lower prices). The plant has been here for over 60 years, but Pfizer's CEO, Jeffrey Kindler, says "there is little room for nostalgia... There are no sacred cows." (NY Daily News, 1/23)

No sacred cows except one — profits. And these worldwide cuts are expected to save Pfizer \$4 billion.

The company's announcement follows the shutdown of another long-time Williamsburg factory, Domino Sugar, in 2004, after 150 years of operation. Together, these closings symbolize the borough's vanishing manufacturing base. They are eliminating relatively decent-paying jobs for a large percentage of black and Latino as well as white workers, another step in reducing the wage rates of all workers. Most of these older workers will be unable to find new jobs at the same pay scale, if they can find any job at all.

"I'm just praying...that I can find



work," said Roberto Nieves, with 28 years at Pfizer, which also will be laying off his twin brother, uncles and nieces. "We have a mortgage to pay. I have a kid in college and one in high school," Nieves told the NY Post (1/24), as he saw his "American dream" going up in smoke.

Such mass layoffs are symptomatic of how capitalists "solve" their problems, at the expense of workers' lives. When profits are threatened, workers are first to go. That's why we need a worker-controlled communist society, not based on profits, only on workers sharing the value of everything we produce.

GIs Protest Iraq War at the U.S. Capitol

WASHINGTON, D.C., Jan. 16 — Today three active-duty military personnel, flanked by members of the Iraq Veterans Against the War, Veterans for Peace, Vietnam Veterans Against the War, Military Families Speak Out and other supporters presented over 1,000 "appeals for redress" to Congressman Dennis Kucinich demanding an end to the war in Iraq. At this media event, presidential candidate Kucinich and three other members of Congress cynically used these bold GIs to build their own future campaigns, given that the vast majority of voters are now anti-war.

These liberal politicians have no intention of abandoning U.S. imperialists' oil interests in the Middle East. In fact, they will seize on the assertion by the anti-war GIs that, even though they oppose the war, they are "patriotic American[s] proud to serve the nation in uniform." They will use this patriotism (a vile notion that workers and bosses have the same interests when in fact they are diametrically opposed) to build allegiance to the bosses' "national interest." This means supporting capitalist interests including their long-term determination to control the Middle East for their profit! PLPers must constantly expose patriotism as serving only the bosses' interest and win GIs to an internationalist, pro-working class, anti-racist outlook.

The three GI presenters spoke boldly and forcefully about the need to end the war. One Marine declared he had opposed the war from the day it began, but nevertheless served in Iraq with his unit. This contradiction must be resolved by bolder GI actions against U.S. imperialism, however difficult this may be.

This media event was the culmination of six months of agitation at U.S.

military installations by active-duty GIs worldwide, and demonstrated the depth of the troops' anti-Iraq war feeling.

The day before in Norfolk, Virginia, a similar news conference drew approximately 100 serious anti-war activists to support these anti-war GIs. The GI speeches stressed the need for solidarity between civilian workers and military personnel in the anti-war movement. One GI cited Martin Luther King's 1967 "Breaking the Silence" speech that publicly attacked the U.S. war in Vietnam, linking the fight against the war to the fight against racism in the U.S.

King's pacifist strategy was wrong since it allowed the rulers to maintain their power and mis-led workers away from militant struggle. Nevertheless, a militant struggle against racism within the U.S. is an integral part of the fight against imperialist war, and must be central to the emerging GI movement.

These actions may well be the first explicit anti-war protests organized by active-duty military personnel during the current Iraq war. Besides many individual acts of defiance (including desertions, refusals to deploy, and small-scale mutinies), they demonstrate GI anger at being used and abused by U.S. imperialism. As one sailor noted, when you're floating off the coast of Iraq and Kuwait and see nothing but oil derricks dotting the horizon, it's not hard to convince your shipmates that the war is about control of Middle-East oil resources and has nothing to do with "democracy" or "national security."

The emergence of a publicly-organized GI anti-war movement offers a great opportunity to escalate the fight against U.S. imperialism and for communism and workers' power. However, the movement's current strategy is largely

misdirected towards working within the system. Appealing to members of Congress, while a clever publicity tactic, has the danger of sucking this new movement into supporting the ruling class through the liberal politicians the rulers control, like those who "supported" these GIs.

Currently, the main forces in the ruling class, represented by these liberal politicians, are desperately casting about for ways to control Mid-East oil. Bush's strategy is failing to meet ruling-class needs. The latter may very well sweep away the Bushites through scandals and/or elections, and install politicians who will try to effectively secure U.S. oil and geopolitical interests in the region.

These liberal politicians, like those pretending to support the anti-war GIs, will launch wider wars in the coming period as the battle sharpens between U.S. imperialism and its rivals, from the European Union to China. GI activism could be misled into focusing on legislative or electoral politics. "Winning" (for example, by electing Hillary Clinton or Barack Obama as president) would just swap the Bushites for the equally (or even more) dangerous liberal politicians. This would work against GIs' short- and long-term interests. They would be cutting their own throats. All politicians are enemies of the working class.

During the 1968 election, the Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW) discovered the hard way that an electoral strategy is bogus. VVAW sent 400 veterans into the supposedly anti-war Senator Eugene McCarthy-for-President campaign. Then McCarthy quit (although if he had won the nomination it would have only compounded a losing strategy); the vets were beaten by Chi-

cago's police — along with thousands of other anti-war activists — at the Democratic Convention, and VVAW fell apart, demoralized by the failure of the system to respond to its efforts. It revived later when it embraced more of a class-struggle, confrontational approach in its Winter Soldier action (an event to publicize war crimes and atrocities by the U.S. military in Vietnam); in its Dewey Canyon II action (in which vets threw their medals over the fence at Congress) and in its embrace of militancy by active-duty GIs.

The alternative strategy for today's GI movement begins with understanding how the Iraq war is created by the needs of the whole imperialist system, administered by all politicians (liberal and conservative) to benefit the major corporations and banks — the ruling class. With this analysis, the GI movement can reject patriotism, build ties to U.S. workers and students and to workers worldwide on the basis of multi-racial, international working-class unity. These workers include most soldiers wearing the uniform of the "enemy"!

The GI movement can organize rank-and-file groups (no officers!) to fight the military's racism and imperialism, and oppose orders to fight for the oil interests of U.S. rulers. To secure their own interests as part of the working class, GIs should join the communist PLP and prepare to oppose their commanders. They need to join in a workers' revolution against the entire capitalist system, a system that deems them as expendable tools in the bosses' battle for profits and power.

Iraq Vets Expose Brass's Racism, Refuse Suicide Mission

TACOMA, WA, Jan. 21 — "Racial dehumanizing doesn't originate with the grunts," concluded an Iraq veteran at "A Citizen's Hearing on the Legality of U.S. Action in Iraq," organized by various anti-war groups near the Ft. Lewis army base. The Iraq veterans' testimonies eclipsed the speeches of the "big stars," like Daniel Ellsberg of the Pentagon Papers fame. These soldiers brought the questions of racism and class consciousness into an otherwise bleak discussion on legalities and U.S. "democracy" (see box).

Billed as a war tribunal, the Citizen's Hearing was based on the Nuremberg Principals, which, following World War II, said soldiers should not carry out "unlawful" orders that could lead to war crimes. Only a hand-picked panel could ask questions of those testifying, freezing out the 300-plus in the audience. The aim was to gather information on the "illegality" of the Iraq war for use at Lt. Ehren Watada's courts-martial February 5.

Watada refused to deploy to Iraq. He maintains the war is illegal and unconstitutional, violating his oath to defend the U.S. Constitution. If the war was "legal," would he willingly go and order soldiers to kill other workers on behalf of U.S. imperialism? Apparently so. He volunteered to deploy in Afghanistan instead. Anyway, the question of the war's legality is moot because the judge has already ruled the defense team cannot introduce evidence or opinion bearing on the war's legal status.

The young vets in Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW) broke through this boring "legality" debate. They spoke freely and passionately about their combat experiences. Just about everyone had stories about the racist dehumanization of Iraqis that came from the brass, down the chain of command to the enlistees. In fact, racism was raised many times in the two days of soldiers' testimony. One in particular emphasized that racist indoctrination was meant to blunt class consciousness. He told an inspiring story how he and others led his unit to refuse to go on a suicide mission. This is what PLP members and their friends in Military Families Speak out (MFSO) came to hear.

The panel head tried to use these vets' anger to warn young people not to join the military. We met with these vets away from the cameras and panels. All were excited

to hear we knew soldiers who purposely joined the military to organize against racism and imperialist war. They recognized that this was a different strategic outlook than just passively warning people to "stay out." They also agreed it would take mass rebellion among rank-and-file soldiers on the ground to end the war. They took our literature enthusiastically and contact information was exchanged to continue the struggle.

Obviously there's tremendous opportunity here to bring revolutionary politics to these soldiers and their sup-

porters. We intend to go to the gates at Ft. Lewis to talk with them further, and hopefully meet more active-duty soldiers and their families in the surrounding communities. Everyone reading this article should plan, as soon as possible, to reach out to friends and family in — or thinking about joining — the military. There's a lot of renewed anger about the war out there now. Seize the day.

Anti-Racist Iraq Vet Is Highlight of Anti-War Panel

At the "Citizen's war tribunal," an Iraq vet told of his orientation in Kuwait by the brass before "going in country." The officer in charge asked the assembled grunts what they would do if their convoy saw an Iraqi kid in the middle of the road. "We'd stop," answered one soldier.

"You never stop for a fucking hajji kid," the office yelled back.

"We'd go down another road," offered another troop.

"You never veer from your path for a fucking hajji kid. You run the fucking hajji kid over!"

"Racial dehumanizing," the Iraq vet emphasized, "doesn't originate with the grunts." It is the conscious strategy of the officer corps, meant to justify U.S. imperialism's brutal atrocities.

To make sure we got the point, he talked about a division briefing in front of the commanding general. Divisional briefings, he noted, were the second highest briefings in Iraq.

The day before, an 18-year-old, only in the army a few months, panicked. He shot at a car rapidly approaching a check-point. These check-points were randomly established throughout the city. You never knew where one would pop up. He then saw the results of his work. An Iraqi mother and her children were dead.

A full-bird colonel, kissing-up in hopes of getting his General star, turned to face the room. "None of this would happen if these fucking hajjis learn to drive," he said, dismissing the atrocity.

After the colonel's testimony, the panel head asked the vet two final (leading) questions. Do you think the U.S. is committing war crimes in Iraq?

The vet had no trouble answering, "Yes!"

The last question showed where the panel organizers were heading. "Would you advise somebody thinking of going into the Armed Forces not to join because they could become part of the war crimes?"

Afterwards, the Iraq vet talked with a Vietnam-era Ft. Lewis VVAW organizer. The Vietnam vet told the young soldier how he had joined the army to organize against racism and the war. Soldiers could do more than just individually disobey "illegal" orders and warn others not to join. They could organize their fellow "grunts" to lead the anti-imperialist movement. He clearly emphasized that his was a different strategic outlook than just passively warning young people to "stay out."

This excited the Iraq veteran, despite having been backed into the limited strategy advocated by the panel head a few moments earlier. He had just begun to read about the GI movement during Vietnam. He asked for more information about it. The anger among these GIs is real. They are potential revolutionary leaders.

Swapping Rulers Won't Help Guinea General Strikers

CONAKRY, GUINEA, Jan. 28 A general strike — the third in the past 12 months — shut down this country of nine million for 18 days. January 22 became the bloodiest day in the history of the second republic. A human tidal wave marched across the city, met by police tear gas, riot sticks, grenades and bullets yielding a heavy death toll and wounding thousands. Hired gunmen even shot up the hospitals.

The strike was sparked when 72-year-old president Lansana Conté sprang his embezzler buddies from jail — Mamadou Sylla, Guinea's richest man, and Fodé Soumah, former vice-governor of the country's central bank.

Echoing Louis XIV, the French absolute monarch, Conté proclaimed, "La Justice, c'est moi." ["I am justice."]

But the causes of the general strike go much deeper. A first general strike in February 2006 won a 30% pay hike for public workers and the adoption of a minimum wage. But devaluation of the franc in March and the end of subsidized gasoline prices in May wiped out these gains, so the trade union battle started up again. In June 2006, the bloody repression of student demonstrations killed about 20 and triggered a second, unsuccessful general strike. In the third strike the unions demanded price-cuts for gas and staple foods, reimbursement of 2,000,000 euros in embezzled public funds, and imprisonment of the accused embezzlers.

Capitalism has caused widespread misery here. The average family spends an estimated 90% of its income on food. Most public workers take home 35 to 50 euros a month, while their families eat 150 kilograms of rice monthly, costing 54 euros. Life expectancy is just 54 years and 70% of adults are illiterate.

Yet Guinea has immense mineral wealth: one-third of the world's bauxite reserves, plus gold, diamonds, iron, manganese, zinc, cobalt, nickel and uranium. But

the money winds up in the pockets of domestic and foreign capitalists.

Guinea lies in the French imperialist zone. Seventy French companies operate here in banking, insurance, maritime services, sales of gasoline and automobiles, air transport, pharmaceuticals, hotels, public works and telecoms. French capitalists enjoy a 13.7% share of Guinea's imports, far ahead of China (9.6%) and the U.S. (5.9%).

Over-dependent on bauxite, which accounts for 90% of Guinea's export revenues, and with foreign debt equaling gross domestic product, the national economy is on the brink of collapse. But the world's imperialists only care about looting the country's natural resources. In June, 2005, Canadian Global Alumina, heading a consortium of French and other European companies, signed a \$1.5-billion contract to build an aluminum smelting plant. Not to be outdone, the U.S. companies Alcan and Alcoa also plan to build a \$1-billion plant.

U.S. bosses want a bigger slice of the pie. Concerned with the political transition when Conté dies (he has leukemia and diabetes) or is forced from power, U.S. diplomats began biennial visits here in March, 2006. Three army generals and Conté's son Ousmane are jockeying to replace the ailing dictator. The unions began negotiating on Jan. 25 over the powers of a "consensus prime minister," supposedly to ease Conté into retirement and defuse the present crisis. (On Jan. 27, the unions agreed to end the strike, reaching a tentative deal after Conté offered to cede some powers to a still unnamed prime minister and to lower rice and fuel prices.)



Cops open fire on demonstrators

That strategy is a sure loser. The French daily paper *Le Monde* (1/28) described the future prime minister as a "strong man" whose job will be "favoring development" — evidently, in the interests of the imperialist powers. Workers here will gain nothing by replacing one corrupt, blood-soaked politician with another. The only solution for Guinea's workers — and for workers worldwide — is to dump all the bourgeois politicians and the capitalist system they serve.

Teachers' Strike in France Could Spark Walkout of 5 Million



PARIS, Jan. 26 — Longer hours for lower pay! That's the French government's plan for middle- and senior-high teachers for the next school year. Fifteen trade unions representing 99% of the country's 419,000 teachers are calling for a national strike on February 8. Five trade union federations are calling on all 5,000,000 public workers to strike that same day for higher wages and against the planned elimination of 15,000 jobs in 2007.

Teachers' real wages fell by 20% on average between 1981 and 2004 according to a recent study. It says that because the teachers' unions have won smaller class sizes and paid hours off for special teaching tasks, teachers have put up with falling wages "without, in the final analysis, protesting too much."

But teachers' attitudes may be changing. When the government announced its draft decree to take

back the class hour reductions, on Dec. 18 half the country's teachers walked out, and 25,000 to 30,000 demonstrated in Paris the following day.

The government is also floating trial balloons on privatizing education. A general inspector of education, Philippe Barret, has written a book — with the tacit support of education minister Gilles de Robien — calling for physical education, art, music and drawing teachers to be replaced by private gym instructors and art "professionals."

Worldwide, the capitalists are taking back workers' gains of the past 50 years. This is sparking reform struggles providing an opportunity for revolutionaries to spread the word that there's only way for workers to win gains that can't be taken away — by overthrowing capitalism and establishing communism.

Military Tribunals Legalize Fascism

Last October 17, war criminal Bush signed into law sweeping new powers for the government's "military tribunals." Several "anti-war" Democratic Senators voted for it. Trials for accused "terrorists" will begin soon.

The bosses' dictatorship is absolute: they decide whether to make it more or less open. Many liberals and phony "leftists" advocate "restoring our civil liberties," but this won't change a capitalist system that installs fascism during crises. The recent Military Commissions Act (MCA) is one more example of this fascist beast, created by the profit system.

The MCA legalizes the round-up and jailing of any non-citizen the President designates an "unlawful enemy combatant." A detained "terrorist" with no right to habeas corpus (no chance of challenging the detention in court) — will be jailed until trial. The military tribunal can accept secret evidence and impose the death penalty based on that evidence. Although torture is supposedly banned, the President determines what "enhanced interrogation techniques" are legal.

Many people are still convinced that the "war on terror" is based on real and legitimate concerns. They must understand the bosses "terrorism" hysteria for what it really is — lies to justify a homeland security police state in preparation to crush opposition to endless wars.

U.S. imperialism created the Al Qaeda terrorists and other Islamic fundamentalists to use in their "cold war" battle against the former Soviet bosses. Bin Laden and others had extensive CIA connections. Before 9/11, U.S. intelligence agencies, at the very least, were well aware that Bin Laden & Co.

were planning to attack a major U.S. target. U.S. rulers are long-time experts at creating pretexts for large-scale military actions. In 1898, they manufactured the Spanish-American War, blaming Spain for sinking the battleship *Maine* (caused by a boiler explosion) in order to start a U.S. war of conquest. They concocted an attack on U.S. ships in the Tonkin Gulf to rationalize the criminal escalation of Vietnam War.

But 9/11 was nothing compared to the deaths U.S. imperialism perpetrated between Gulf Wars I and II. These two wars and sanctions killed 1.5 to 2 million Iraqis. Two million have left the country. Another 1.5 million are refugees inside Iraq itself — altogether totaling over 20% of the pre-Gulf War I Iraqi population.

U.S. rulers' care nothing about U.S. workers' or soldiers' safety. They will fight to the last drop of our blood in order to secure their profits and control Mid-East oil. They're furious at Bush & Co. because the Iraq fiasco has squandered the momentum and popular support they had post-9/11. But, they are preparing for "The Long War" (see *Army Times*, 10/23/06), as they call it — war to crush rival imperialists.

As this rivalry sharpens, opposition to endless wars will grow. The expanding police state will use the MCA to jail and "legally" murder workers, and especially communists ("enemy sympathizers") who strike against massive attacks on pensions, health benefits and wages and rally against imperialist oil wars. PLP will fight fascism daily, and prepare for our own "long war," using mass working-class violence to meet the bosses' violence and overthrow this exploitative and oppressive system. The future of the working class depends on it.

Letters

Anti-War March Lacks Working Class Focus

The January 27th Washington, D.C. anti-war march reflected the political line of the organizers and main speakers, which influenced many of the participants. There were far fewer "No Blood for Oil" signs and far more signs like "Escalation: The Wrong Way." The Democratic Party and its supporters, like SEIU's president Andy Stern, are shifting the focus away from immediate or even rapid withdrawal to opposing "the surge." Many signs and speakers attacked Bush for this. The tremendous Bush-bashing ignores the ruling-class consensus that U.S. soldiers should be fighting and dying to maintain control over Mid-East oil for many years to come.

The role of politicians like Kucinich — who say what many anti-war demonstrators want to hear — is to convince people that reform is still possible, and that the Democratic Party (no matter how evil) is the vehicle for that reform movement. People like Waters, Conyers, Woolsey and Kucinich play the worst role because they tie people to one of the two wings of the capitalist Democratic Party, keeping them hoping that an inherently violent and exploitative system can change its spots and become peaceful and humane.

Most of the pseudo-left groups spread the delusion that the Democrats can be swayed to defund the war and bring all the troops home. The "Communist" Party and the Committees for Correspondence appear to control the march organizers; they invited Conyers, Waters, Woolsey, Kucinich and other Democratic Party representatives. But equally bad are groups like the "Revolutionary Communist" Party. Their "Drive Out the Bush Regime" rhetoric says the neocons are the problem, rather than a declining imperialist empire desperately seeking to maintain hegemony through military means.

In many good conversations on our union buses, people were torn between an understanding that the war in Iraq stems from the profit system and a government that enforces that system, versus a liberal hope that elections can produce people who won't begin wars and will better people's lives rather than destroy them. So the main contradiction in the anti-war movement is between liberalism/pacifism and Marxism-Leninism and revolution.

Finally, once again the march was mostly white. Since the single issue is the war, racism and class exploitation are rarely, if ever, mentioned. When meat-packing plants are being raided and hundreds of immigrants deported; when affirmative action programs are being demolished and black enrollment in California public universities and elsewhere have plummeted; when hundreds of thousands of workers are laid off by companies like Ford and Pfizer (millions downsized in the past 25 years, three-fourths of whom will never work again or get jobs at lower pay); when workers' health and pension benefits are being slashed, the anti-war movement ignores it.

The organizers' outlook is not to build a class-struggle movement focused on the working class, one centered on anti-racism. Rather, these opportunistic pacifists champion "peace" and "reform." Capitalism, however, isn't playing along, offering only endless wars and "reform" — of social security, pensions, healthcare, education — all of which are designed to lower the social wage, and condition workers into accepting less.

A Red Marcher

Future GIs Show Red Potential

Just the word "potential" alone doesn't quite communicate our Party's opportunity to build a communist base in the U.S.

bosses' military. The possibilities that now exist, and which will grow as the bosses face more obstacles and crises in Iraq and elsewhere, are undeniable. The U.S. ruling class does not have a Nazi army. But in order to ensure that they never have one, and that we have our Red Army, it is absolutely important that we join the military in order to fight racism, nationalism/patriotism and other capitalist ideas while organizing working-class soldiers.

The bosses are definitely in trouble when it comes to the political and ideological dedication of future soldiers. In my interaction with the youth in the middle of military processing, I found patriotism and anti-Arab racism are scarce.

For instance, I was bunked with one young Asian recruit at a hotel as we both awaited processing. During dinner we became comfortable with each other. When we finished I asked, "So, are you the patriotic type?" Without even a blink, he responded a solid "NO!" When we noted the certainty that we would both be deployed to Iraq, he told me he didn't want to go because he had enlisted for economic reasons, and that he'd rather just find ways not to fight, even in battle.

Another time I nearly broke out laughing on a bus to the processing station. The young recruits — white, Latino and black — were discussing possibly winding up in Iraq. One young white recruit asked the only lifer (a career military soldier) on the bus if he'd go to Iraq. He responded in a fervently patriotic fashion. The recruit just blinked and attempted to hide his sarcastic response with a half-smile sneer. It was tense but I could see similar smirks on many of the recruits' faces.

On another day, I was profoundly reminded that we must have trust in our class and about the need to be with the soldiers through thick and thin. While waiting for a doctor, many young recruits were discussing Iraq again. To my astonishment, one remarked, "This war isn't worth one dead American soldier." I quickly and quietly added, "And not a single dead Iraqi one either." All these mainly young white working-class recruits there didn't stare at me and react in a racist and patriotic manner; rather, they all sternly nodded in agreement!

It breaks my heart that I was rejected because I didn't meet military standards, that I won't be there with them in the long run. But even from my modest interactions with these future soldiers, it's evident that the word "potential" is an understatement. Sure, it will still take a lot of intense and lengthy struggle for us to make serious headway, but it can happen.

Political work in the military can be scary, but it's more rewarding than frightening. It isn't a sacrifice; it's a necessity. Knowing this eventually enabled me to overcome my own internal contradictions in order to try. Surely, if I could, many others can too and carry this work further forward.

To fulfill this task more seriously and effectively, we must win more to do it! This work is vital and empowering for our class. Our Party should host a series of study groups and PLP schools for young people on this subject.

It's central to winning a working-class revolution and finally eliminating racism, sexism and our class's exploitation and oppression. Our brothers and sisters in uniform need us.

Red Youth

Boston Campus Open to Anti-War Action

Since fall, military recruiters have been showing up in the Student Center at the predominantly black Roxbury Community College (RCC). They approach students who are playing pool in the Game Room

or hanging out in the Cafeteria, offering free ipod downloads as bait. Until recently, the student body was pretty passive and unaware, but now a group of students and faculty are exposing the recruiters as agents of U.S. imperialism. Next week, for the first time, students and faculty will be confronting Marine recruiters on campus. An anti-war movement is taking shape here.

During the last few months a few students and faculty, including PLP'ers, refused to let the campus forget that wars were raging in the Middle East. The faculty union sponsored a conference about how we educate students about military recruiters on campus. The union pledged to be present with literature about the war whenever recruiters set up a table at RCC. The student Pizza and Politics Club held discussions in which a former Marine, recently returned from Iraq and Afghanistan, brought home the reality and consequences of the war.

Now, the development of student leadership is the order of the day. As long as youth stay focused on their own individual problems, the rulers have a free hand to turn them into passive wage-slaves, cannon fodder and killing machines. The RCC student organizers must teach their fellow students class consciousness, the understanding that their problems stem from capitalism's inevitable oppression of the working class. Above all, students must learn that it is possible for our class to grasp world events and change society and that their friends who do decide to join the military can play a vital role in leading such change. They can demonstrate that collective action is possible, and that young people can be motivated by more than materialism and selfishness. Reading CHALLENGE will help them to develop a deeper understanding of how capitalism works and confidence in our class's ability to destroy it. However, ultimately, it is only by leading struggles, such as the impending confrontation with military recruiters, that they will learn how to lead future fights against the bosses in the barracks or on the job. Guiding this process is the profound responsibility of the PL'ers on campus.

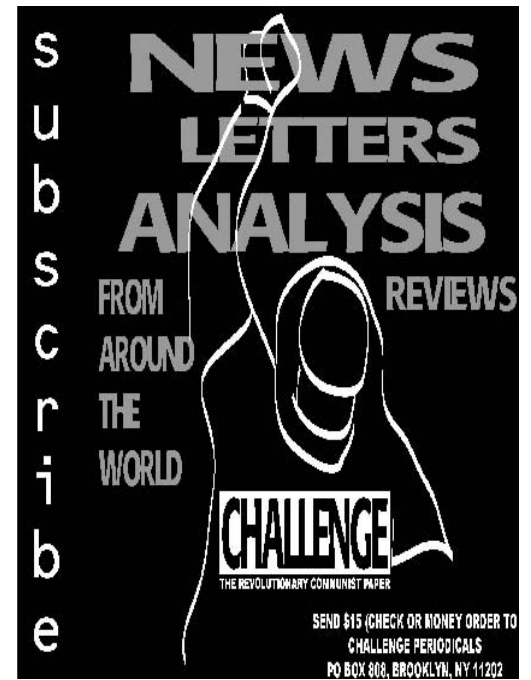
Boston Red

UN 'Peacekeepers' War On Haiti's Workers

Wherever the U.S.-led United Nations "Peacekeeping" forces go, you can be sure there's money to be made, even in Haiti, the Western Hemisphere's poorest country. The highly-organized gang of rulers, going back to Papa "Doc" Duvalier and Baby Doc — both supported by U.S. rulers — caused Haiti's dire poverty. During that time, the island's resources were stripped of mahogany, the farmlands were devastated by erosion and many workers were forced into slave labor on sugar cane plantations under Dominican Republic bosses. Tens of thousands have also become cheap labor in France, the U.S., Canada and Martinique.

When former president, Jean Aristide came to power for the second time in 2000, the Zinglindo gangs developed. They terrorized working-class people in the capital, Port au Prince, breaking into houses, robbing, raping and even killing women. Aristide was unable to control these gangs and his power diminished. The Bush administration organized a "rebellion" by the former Tontons Macoute (fascist thugs) and then sent the Marines to kidnap Aristide and remove him from power.

Then a 3,000-strong UN "peace-keeping" force replaced the U.S., French and Canadian imperialist troops, supposedly to avoid a civil war among rival criminal



gangs. A puppet government was created, led by Gerard Latortue. But as we discovered, neither the UN nor the Latortue government were ever concerned about the Haitian workers.

In the past 18 months, the gangs' tactics have changed to kidnapping many tourists, who are forced to pay thousands of U.S. dollars for their release or be killed. People now fear traveling to Haiti. Last December, the new government of Rene Garcia Preval was forced to close schools very early, before Christmas, because students were being kidnapped from schoolyards.

So then, before Christmas, hundreds of UN troops, led by the Brazilian army of the "socialist" Lula government marched into Cité Soleil, one of the poorest areas (where many of these gangs operate), and using heavy weapons randomly fired into people's houses, killing many women and children.

Money is literally being squeezed from the blood of workers and their children — all in the presence of UN troops and 5,000 Haitian police. Nothing changes; the situation only worsens! We need to dump their "peace-keepers" and their governments and go for communist revolution. Only under workers' power will we productively live in peace.

Haitian comrade

Farmworkers Receptive to PLP's Ideas

We are continuing to work here in California's San Joaquin Valley, passing out leaflets and distributing CHALLENGES to the farmworkers. Recently we've had very good discussions with a family from Oaxaca, one of whom is a teacher. Here he's working in the fields.

The repression suffered here leads to passivity. The supervisors and contractors are a rope around workers' necks, constantly threatening layoffs or punishments, to make them work faster and extract more profits for the bosses. Many workers live in real poverty.

In a recent discussion I explained that the bosses need to make maximum profits from our labor to finance their oil wars, and that, like us, the world's workers are dying of hunger, because of this profit drive.

I explained that's why we need to organize a mass revolutionary communist party, like Progressive Labor Party, to fight for our own class interests, for the seizure of power. Little by little our work is taking root, and, with persistence, we'll reap the fruits.

Comrade Red Grasshopper

Bosses Use GI 'Appeal' to Derail Their Anger

We were members of SDS (Students for a Democratic Society — a mass organization that opposed the Vietnam War) in the late 1960's and early 1970's. [Ed. Note: See PL History, page 8] We joined the Party as a result of its principled fight in SDS, and its leadership on the campuses for

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militant anti-imperialism, anti-racism, the worker-student alliance, for its fight against nationalism and most important, its advocacy of revolution to destroy imperialist war at its capitalist source. CHALLENGE didn't call the "Port Huron Statement" (by the social-democratic founders) a "blow to the solar plexus" of the imperialists as CHALLENGE (11/15/06) mistakenly said about the Appeal for Redress.

In fighting for its ideas, PLP'ers criticized the liberal, anti-communist, pro-democracy line of the Social Democrats who started SDS, and the phony leftists and nationalists who later fought the Party for leadership. This kind of leadership by the Party was a guide to many who then decided to join PLP, learning to "struggle with, struggle against."

In SDS, the Party organized the worker-student alliance caucus, which sharpened the ideological struggle, and fought for and led strikes and building takeovers on the campuses against the war and racism, as opposed to liberals' pacifist proposals to "study peace." Tactics matter; they flow from politics.

Currently the soldiers and sailors Appeal for Redress has over 1,000 signers to an internet appeal, including 100 officers, according to the bosses' media. Good people are involved in this Appeal. But the liberal rulers are using it as part of their fight to win the working class to support wider war. We must expose these liberal imperialists (like Brzezinski) who say the U.S. should temporarily reduce troops in Iraq in order to prepare for wider war.

The bosses' media is publicizing the Appeal



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

Guantánamo not the only horror show

According to the Red Cross, the regime at Guantánamo causes psychological suffering that has driven inmates mad, with scores of suicide attempts and three inmates killing themselves last year....

...Amnesty International has declared "the gulag of our time." Guantánamo is not the only US torture camp. Bagram in Afghanistan has been dogged by stories of abuse, and there are secret US prisons around the world where it is widely feared new horrors are occurring....

Adorned on the walls of the Guantánamo camp is its mission statement: "Honour-bound to defend freedom".... (GW, 1/25)

Gates affirms: US Is in Gulf to stay

Mr. Gates said the build-up of US forces in the Gulf region, involving the dispatch of an aircraft carrier and Patriot missile defence batteries as well as the deployment of more than 20,000 US reinforcements to Iraq, was intended as a signal that Washington would not be intimidated. "We are simply reaffirming that statement of the importance of the Gulf Region to the United States and our determination to be an ongoing strong presence in that one area for a long time into the future," he said.... (GW, 1/25)

Scratch a Democrat, find an imperialist

...There is a continuing debate about whether military action may some day be necessary to set back Iran's nuclear activities....

Democrats...are positioning themselves to sound tough.

"To ensure that Iran never gets nuclear weapons, we need to keep all options on the table," former Senator John Edwards recently told an Israeli security conference. "Let me reiterate — all options." (NYT, 1/28)

as part of the attempt to derail soldiers' anger against the ruling class into the arms of the patriotic liberal imperialists. The Washington Post actually carried its report on the Appeal as part of an article on the Congressional Democrats' opposition to Bush's plans.

But anger against the war has the potential to become the basis of building workers' internationalism and the fight for communism. If the Appeals petition becomes a mass movement like SDS, then PLP needs to better play our role of leading the fight against racism, patriotism and imperialism within this movement.

CHALLENGE should lead and reflect the fight for internationalism among youth, including a fight to change the Appeal petition to be anti-racist, internationalist and non patriotic. Working in mass movements is complicated, but it shouldn't weaken our fight to expose liberal imperialism, fight racism, including anti-Arab racism, and for workers' internationalism and communist revolution.

There's great potential to fight for the left and recruit in many mass organizations. A letter in CHALLENGE (1/31) said we should concentrate forces on the Appeals Movement. But there are many rank-and-file, anti-war efforts being organized by groups of people in existing mass organizations which, while not "purely" our line, nonetheless involve aspects of anti-racism and internationalism, growing from struggle in the mass movement. Political battles over patriotism vs. internationalism can lead to building the Party.

Some Comrades

Wishful thinking won't stop fascist drift

Of the 80,000 Arabs and Muslim nationals who were required to register after 9/11, the 8,000 brought in for FBI interviews, and the 5,000 locked up in "preventive detention," none have been convicted of a terrorist crime....

Yet, like "Good Germans," we watch in the hope that the country couldn't possibly get any worse.

...The Democratic Party has been...futile and even worse, complicit, in the face of these war crimes and tyranny....

The Bush White House represents...[an] imperialist empire. The clamping down on the borders, the militarizing of the police and the creation of a spy state, the public-order policies that criminalize the mere presence of groups of youth, minorities, and immigrants, and the repression of legitimate forms of political protest are not designed to prevent terrorism. This rapidly evolving police state is designed primarily to both repress and coerce domestic and international populations who would challenge this American Empire. (MinutemanMedia.org, 1/4)

Wounded vets get government runaround

...Wounded veterans trying to obtain disability checks are being tied up in a bureaucratic nightmare. The Veterans Benefits Administration has a backlog of 400,000 pending claims — and rising. Veterans must wait for six months to two years to begin receiving the money....In the interim, thousands of veterans with disabilities are left to fend for themselves.

Thousands...have crippling disabilities such as brain or spinal injuries....

The VA system has a reputation for high quality care, but waiting lists to see a doctor at some facilities now run as long as several months... (LA Times)

Thousands Honor Memory of Murdered German Communists

BERLIN, Jan. 15 — Tens of thousands marched here today, honoring the memory of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, founders of the KPD (Communist Party of Germany). Marchers waved thousands of red flags in what has now become a yearly tradition. The two communist leaders were murdered in January 1919 by the paramilitary goons of the Free Corps, helped by the Social-democratic (SPD) government of Ebert and his Minister of the Interior, Norske.

Despite the heroic communist-led Spartacus uprising, the KPD was not strong enough to counter the mass support the SPD still maintained in the Workers' Councils. The SPD was the world's biggest socialist party. In 1914 it voted in Parliament to allot credits to the German bosses' drive for war (much like the Democrats voted for Bush's Iraq war in 2003).

In the summer of 1918 as the German armies faced defeat, the Bolsheviks, which had turned World War I into a revolutionary war against the Tsar and Russian

capitalism, inspired revolutionary fervor among Germany's soldiers. By October, red flags began appearing on trains carrying soldiers on leave. By November, revolution had erupted. Mutinies spread from ship to ship. Workers' and sailors' councils were being established everywhere; the old regime crumbled.

Then the SPD leaders returned to help the bosses and repressed the revolution killing the leaders of the new KPD, which unfortunately still had too small a base to overthrow capitalism. Despite the 1919 repression, two more revolutionary attempts occurred in 1921 and 1923, but again the KPD did not win enough of the masses away from the SPD traitors.

Eventually, in the early 1930's, the German bosses decided to drop the SPD and put their support behind Hitler and his National-Socialist (Nazi) Party. It took the Soviet Red Army to finally cut short Hitler's "1,000-year Reich" to 12 years.

**Society is sick in more ways than one**

...Health care providers are more aggressively seeking upfront collection of co-pays and deductibles. A component of this strategy is to encourage patients to use third-part lenders such as credit cards to pay for medical expenses they cannot afford....

A society is seriously out of whack when legalized loan sharks are encouraged to close in on those who are broke and desperately ill. (NYT, 1/22)

Poverty, 'race' make human guinea pigs

The most notorious medical experiment in American history is surely the Tuskegee syphilis study, in which 400 black men with syphilis were left untreated for 40 years....

Blacks have been forced to undergo painful, risky experimental surgery, dosed with radiation. They have been falsely assumed to feel pain less than whites and to require higher X-ray doses for a readable film....

Reprehensible behavior continued into the 20th century....

"In the South," Ms. Washington writes, "rendering black women infertile without their knowledge during other surgery was so common that the procedure was called a 'Mississippi appendectomy.'" But the same was true in the North, as recently as the 1970s, when unnecessary hysterectomies were often done on poor black and Puerto Rican women to give doctors in training a chance to practice their skills. (NYT, 1/23)

Ex-Slaves, Seminoles

United to Defeat Racist U.S. Invaders

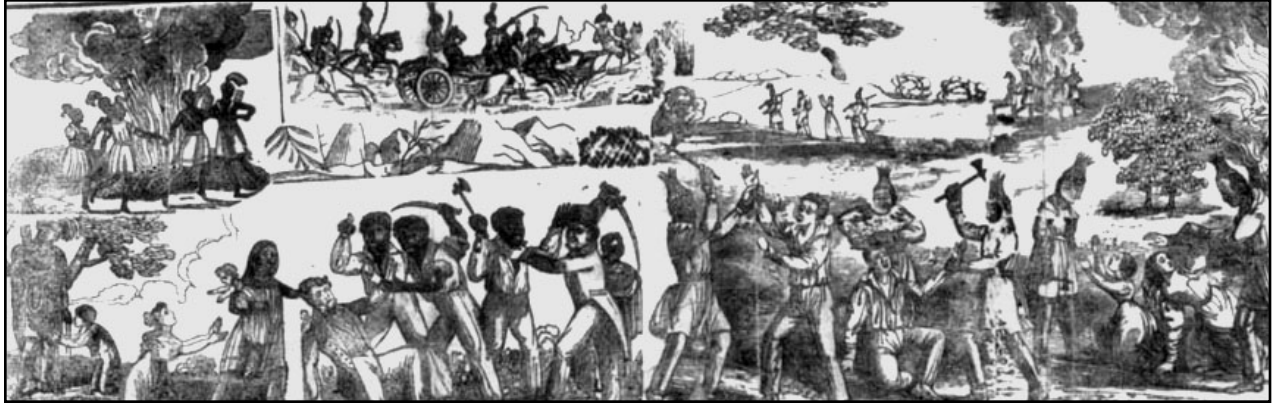
One of the more well-hidden parts of U.S. history involves the first foreign invasion by the U.S. military: from 1816 to 1836 the U.S. government invaded Florida — then a Spanish colony — in an attempt to wipe out the largest station on the Underground Railroad. Since 1728, slaves had been escaping from Southern plantations into Florida. They were among its earliest explorers and pioneer settlers and had welcomed Seminole Indians as fellow escapees from persecution. Together the two groups pooled their wide range of knowledge and agricultural skills and established united, free, self-governing communities that ultimately defeated the attacks of the largest army in the Western Hemisphere. It is still another shining example of anti-racist, multi-racial unity in the fight against the U.S. ruling class.

The slave-owners saw this settlement of escaped slaves as an immediate danger to their slave plantation system — men and women who did not live under white masters, carried arms, were allied with Native Americans and welcomed runaways to their villages. The South's rulers were determined to wipe them out.

By 1812, President James Madison and General Andrew Jackson, commander of the U.S. Southern District — both prominent slaveholders themselves — supported a private force, the "Patriots," later joined by the Tennessee militia and federal troops, that crossed into Florida on slave-hunting forays to seize free people for enslavement, but the ex-slaves and Seminoles united to repel this combined force.

Then, in 1816, Jackson resolved to take Florida and close down "this perpetual harbor for our slaves." He provoked an attack on "Fort Negro" on the Apalachicola River, where an explosion destroyed the fort and killed 270 people. Jackson's army executed its commander and marched the 63 survivors back into slavery.

Hundreds of Africans and Seminoles then retreated to the Suwannee River and built villages extending down the seacoast to Tampa Bay. They reorganized their army, preparing for future attacks.



An etching of the battles of ex-slaves and Seminoles defeating U.S. troops

Jackson, under incoming president James Monroe launched "a campaign of terror, devastation and intimidation" that included burning "sources of food in a calculated effort" to starve the populace into submission. According to historian William Weeks, this "exhibition of murder and plunder known as the First Seminole War" was part of Jackson's goal of "removing or eliminating Native Americans from the Southeast."

Secretary of State John Quincy Adams (later to succeed Monroe as President) believed in "Indian removal, slavery and the use of military force," says Weeks, and defended the invasion, "consciously distorted... and lied about the goals... reminding historians not to search for truth in official explanations of events."

In 1819, the U.S. bought Florida from Spain for \$5 million and it entered the Union as a slave state. But Washington found itself bogged down in a quagmire that was later to tie up half its army in Florida's swamplands.

The Second Seminole War began full scale in 1836. The then commander of U.S. operations, General Sidney Jesup, warned that the black and Seminole peoples were "identical in interests and feelings" and would "form a rallying point" for runaway slaves from adjacent states.

U.S. troops attacked peaceful villages, destroyed

crops, seized women and children as hostages and tried mightily to pit black against Seminole but all divisive attempts failed. U.S. military victory remained elusive. The defenders used classic guerilla tactics, running circles around the Hemisphere's most modern army. On Christmas Eve, 1837, about 400 red and black Seminoles, outnumbered two to one, inflicted the most stunning loss suffered by the U.S. Army in decades of Indian warfare.

In this Second Seminole War, 1,500 U.S. soldiers were killed and thousands were wounded or died of disease. Civilian losses were undoubtedly higher. Congress had spent \$40 million (pre-Civil War dollars!) but could not defeat the united black-Seminole forces.

Finally thousands of Seminoles and ex-slaves won assurances they could remain free and united if they agreed to migrate to the Oklahoma Indian Territory. Others neither surrendered nor left Florida. These united people had emerged undefeated with their community intact, after nearly 50 years of siege, an accomplishment without equal in domestic U.S. history.

(Sources: "Counterpunch," 12/23/06; William Weeks: "John Quincy Adams and the American Global Empire"; Kenneth Porter: "The Negro on the American Frontier" and also "The Black Seminoles: History of a Freedom-Seeking People"; and the General Jesup papers, 25th Congress)

PL History: How PLP Fought for Pro-Worker Anti-Racism in SDS



(Last issue chronicled PLP's decision to work within Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) during the escalation of U.S. imperialism's Vietnam genocide in order to move the mushrooming anti-war movement leftward and to build the Party.)

By the fall of 1967, SDS chapters had sprung up on hundreds of U.S. college campuses. Vigorous debate ensued on the tactics of anti-war activity. PLP members advocated the principle that tactics flowed from politics, and that class allegiance held the key to politics.

From the very beginning, PLP stood alone in fighting for a "Worker-Student Alliance." This position had several practical consequences:

- U.S. bosses got their cannon fodder for the Viet-

nam War through a military draft. However, college students could enjoy a "2-S" student deferment. PLP argued that a principled anti-war position required refusing this class privilege. PLP'ers rejected it individually and as a mass position. As a result, numbers of PLP members were drafted. The military brass deemed some unfit for military service for "political reasons." Others entered the military and organized against the war on the inside. PLP's principled position against the 2-S deferment won widespread respect throughout the movement, including the grudging admiration of the Party's rightwing opponents within SDS.

- From the start, PLP also vigorously opposed the position of the "official" leadership of the anti-war movement, that "Stop the bombing and negotiate" was the only mass line that could mobilize large numbers of people within the U.S. PLP argued that as an imperialist invader, the U.S. ruling class had no right to negotiate a blade of grass in Vietnam; that the only viable demand was "U.S. out NOW!" This struggle around this principle — correct as far as it went — was to have significant consequences several years later, when the Vietnamese "communist" leadership began negotiations with the Nixon administration.

- During the late 1960's, spontaneous working-class militancy was mushrooming, with industrial strikes, inner-city uprisings, and rebellion within the imperialist

military. PLP took the lead in arguing that students should support these struggles, particularly with concrete action.

- PLP organized summer "Work-in" projects in 1967, '68 and '69, with two main goals: first to educate anti-war students about the true nature of the working class and the need to unite with workers; second, to bring anti-war, anti-imperialist politics to the working class. In a limited way, the "Work-ins" were quite successful. The student participants shed many reactionary illusions about workers, not the least of which was the boss-promoted slander that workers were racist, reactionary "oafs" incapable of understanding their class interests. Workers who met Work-in participants saw the potential for uniting with anti-war students and communists. The bosses went nuts, releasing several official documents revealing their panic at the prospect of workers and students uniting massively to oppose the war. PLP argued that this panic alone indicated we were on the right track.

- Within SDS, increasingly sharp debate began to emerge around this issue. PLP argued for unity with workers in industry, transportation and communications, and to concretize this unity by supporting strikes in auto, other heavy industries, telephone (the computer was still two decades away as a mass item), hospitals, etc. SDS's "right wing" (as we called it) opposed this position, arguing that the "traditional" working class had become obsolete, that it was hopelessly reactionary, and that "the real hope for revolution" lay in the "new working class" of alienated intellectuals and professionals. The main spokesperson for this nonsense was Herbert Marcuse, a former German social-democrat who had emigrated to the U.S. and become a professor in California. The bosses happily anointed him the ideologue of the "New Left." They promoted his ideas and his book "One-Dimensional Man," even featuring him on the cover of Time Magazine. PLP continued to fight for the Worker-Student Alliance and to organize militant action that reflected this class position.

(Next: the 1968 Columbia University strike.)