

PL'ERS TO ANTI-WAR MARCHERS: 'IT'S NOT JUST BUSH, IT'S CAPITALISM!' page 4

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CHALLENGE



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**FIGHTING RACISM,
IMPERIALISM ...
INDUSTRIAL
WORKERS
ARE THE KEY**

"There is no black and white here, just brothers and sisters." So said the Northrup Grumman shipyard strikers (see adjoining article) who welcomed young students to Pascagoula, Miss. This multi-racial class outlook is essential to answering the escalating racist attacks on the working class.

From the 7,000 striking shipbuilders in Pascagoula to the 40,000 European Airbus workers that have struck to save 10,000 jobs, these attacks stem from the sharpening inter-imperialist rivalry that is leading to wider wars. No workers will be spared. From Germany to the Gulf, from Paris to Pascagoula, the international working class faces the same enemy, same fight. The only answer to imperialism's endless attacks and wars is communist revolution.

Today, fast-charging emerging imperialist competitors are building their war industries. The Chinese government plans to build large commercial jets by 2020. They're testing a regional jet (70-105 passengers). Airbus is building an assembly plant in Yanliang and the

'Today, fast-charging emerging imperialist competitors are building their war industries.'

Chinese are partners in the European global positioning satellite (GPS) project, Galileo. In January, they completed development of their Jian-10 advanced fighter jet, aircraft engines and air-to-air missiles "soaring to the top levels of aerospace defense technology." (Associated Press, 1/05)

Russia consolidated its aerospace industry under state control last year, and made its own fighter-jet alliance with Italy and France. Airbus gave them a 5% stake in the new A350 passenger jet. Everybody is beating a path to the Russian aerospace engineering centers — considered among the world's best. "The most influential man in global commercial-aviation said that Boeing and Airbus should expect serious competition to emerge from China and Russia [in the next decade]." (Seattle Times, 3/14)

On another front, China wants to build a blue-water Navy to defend their worldwide oil sources. Their commercial shipbuilding advances make their plans credible. China is now the number two or three commercial shipbuilder, depending on who's doing the counting, and may soon become number one. The U.S. isn't even in the running.

As the rising imperialists flex their muscles, all bosses must wring every last cent out of the working class to compete. U.S. bosses have launched a full assault, especially on the industrial working class, in their bid to remain top dog. These attacks spell fascism, and will finance bigger wars on the horizon.

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Black and White Shipbuilders: SHUT DOWN RACIST



WARMAKER, STRIKE-BREAKER

PASCAGOULA, MS March 25 — "We're on strike for the younger workers and their families," was how a few strikers at the Ingalls shipyard explained their fight against Northrop Grumman, which owns the giant yard. Almost 7,000 workers, black and white, men and women, have been on strike since March 8 against the largest employer in Mississippi.

This strike has been billed as the first "post-Katrina strike," in that housing and other costs have doubled in this area, which was devastated by the hurricane. A gallon of milk costs over \$4.00. The wages at the shipyards in the Deep South are about half of those at the Bath shipyard in Maine, largely due to the intense racism in the South. This shows how racism is used to attack ALL workers. Workers on the picket line reject this racism saying, "Ain't no black and white on this line, just brothers and sisters!"

To underline the point, many displaced shipbuilders in New Orleans, black workers who were scattered around the country, have been replaced by Latino immigrant "guest workers" for as little as \$8.00 an hour! These workers live in small trailers, 8-10 workers to a trailer, in fenced-off trailer parks in the middle of nowhere. New workers are rotated in every several months as "old" workers are sent home. There have been several protests, especially after one worker was killed, and attempts at unity between guest workers and black workers.

This strike, like Airbus strikers in Europe who are fighting the layoffs of 10,000 aerospace workers, striking auto workers in Belgium, France, Russia and Romania (see page 2, 5) and the loss of 100,000 GM, Ford, Chrysler and Delphi jobs in the U.S., all reflect the sharpening inter-imperialist rivalry as bosses in every country are forced to attack workers more and more to stay afloat. This life-and-death struggle between bosses leads to more and bigger wars for control of markets, cheap labor and resources, especially oil. The Northrop Grumman and Airbus workers are vital to the bosses' ability to wage war, and the key to stopping these imperialist warmakers dead in their tracks. Industrial workers around the world, armed with communist ideas and leading an international PLP, can lead the struggle for communist revolution.

Northrop Grumman is one of the largest defense contractors in the U.S., raking in billions in profits from the war in Iraq. They received almost \$3 billion from the Navy and FEMA to rebuild the shipyard after Hurricane Katrina, yet some strikers are still living in FEMA trailers. Northrop Grumman

received \$101 an hour per worker to clean up the shipyard, but the workers only received the \$18 an hour they normally make. The company kept the other \$83 an hour.

There are 12 unions on strike, the largest being the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 733. The Pascagoula Metal Trades Council represents the other 11 unions, including from carpenters and pipe fitters to the IAM. In February, 90 percent of the workers rejected a company proposal for a four-year contract with no pay raises and increased health insurance costs, after stealing almost \$100 million from the workers' health fund. In March the company proposed basically the same deal, and again 90 percent of the workers voted "NO!" This time, they walked out. On March 12, more than 2,000 strikers marched more than six miles from the shipyard to Pascagoula.

Three students from Chicago were received with open arms when they drove down to Pascagoula, bringing food and support to the strikers. After spending time with the workers, in their homes and on the picket lines, they left with a better understanding of how the bosses use racism to grease their war machine, and that multi-racial unity is the key to smashing racism.

While mostly white students were marching to mark the fourth anniversary of the Iraq war, a student told the strikers that even though they weren't striking against the war, shutting down one of the biggest warmakers, leaving an unfinished Navy destroyer and two freighters sitting silently, was the most significant anti-war action in the country. The workers hadn't thought about it like that, but most liked the idea. One guy started yelling that he was for the war, and other strikers, black and white, told him to go home. The vast majority of strikers they spoke with, including vets and those with family in the military, opposed the Iraq war.

The Northrop Grumman workers are striking for us all. They are showing the unity of black and white workers in a period of growing racism. They have shut down a warmaker in the midst of war. They are walking the line at a time when hundreds of thousands of union jobs in auto, steel, aerospace, the airlines and more are being wiped out with barely a whimper. They need our support.

Take up collections of food and money. Sign and circulate statements of solidarity. Send them to: IBEW Local 733, 2518 Market Street, Pascagoula, MS 39563.

[For information about the food bank, call Tweety at (228) 249-1600]



OBAMA & CO.: MASTERS OF DECEIT

Barack Obama's lifelong service to the biggest U.S. capitalists belies his "man-of-the-people" image and provides an important lesson on the dialectical category of appearance and essence. Examining Obama's career through the lens of class analysis shatters his charismatic false front and exposes a sworn enemy of workers. Despite his popular appeal, Obama has always worked for the main wing of U.S. rulers, helping them implement the police state and widening wars they need.

Fresh out of Columbia University in 1984, Obama landed a job as writer-researcher at Business International Corporation (BIC) in New York. At the time, BIC was helping Big Oil and Wall Street battle the Reagan White House over imperialist policy. For the benefit of Chiquita Banana, Dole and other U.S. agri-businesses, the Reagan gang was arming Nicaragua's anti-government Contras (and the fascist Salvadoran regime) and threatening an invasion of the region. U.S. banks and oil companies, however, needed to shift the focus to the Middle East. The construction of a Mid-East invasion fleet, set in motion by Democrat President Carter, was well under way. So with Obama's assistance, BIC churned out report after report warning that "what Reagan is doing [in Central America] is not good for business." ("Power and Profit," by Ronald Cox, University Press of Kentucky, 1994) In a small but significant way, Obama's scribbling contributed to the exposure of the Iran-Contra scandal, which turned the Pentagon's gun-sights toward the Persian Gulf.

NEXT, STINT AS COMMUNITY MISLEADER

Having proved his class loyalty at BIC, Obama moved the next year to Chicago, where he launched the Developing Communities Project (DCP), a smoke-and-mirrors operation designed to stifle working-class rebellion by masking capitalism's brutality with liberal illusions of "progress." Funded by the Gameliel Foundation, which gets millions from the rulers' Ford Foundation, Obama's DCP offered "job training" and "college prep" on Chicago's South Side. This was part of the rulers' "carrot

and stick approach," the "carrot" being Obama's role, to help hide the "stick," the soaring unemployment and imprisonment among the area's mostly black workers, who also faced torture and murder from city cops. (See CHALLENGE, 1/17/07)

Three years of rubbing elbows with the poor were enough for Obama. In 1988, he was off to Harvard Law School. But unlike most of his classmates, who went on to represent corporations directly, Obama decided he could be of more use to the ruling class by deceiving workers in the greatest charade in history, the U.S. electoral system.

After Harvard, Obama started Illinois Project Vote, which registered 150,000 new voters for the 1992 election. Voting gives workers the illusion that they have a say in a system which actually is a dictatorship of the capitalists. Obama threw his own hat into the ring in 1996, running successfully for state senator. He proved very adept at leading black workers — whom the system oppresses most severely — down the dead-end road to the ballot box. Eight years later, Obama won the U.S. Senate seat he hopes to use as a springboard to the White House.

In 1993, Obama had joined the Chicago Law firm of Miner, Barnhill & Galland, where he remains "of counsel." Under the pretense of assisting workers, the firm specializes in voting rights. Its founder and chief partner, Judson H. Miner, was once corporation counsel for the City of Chicago, and, as such, defended rotten schools, hospitals and housing, as well as killer cops. Obama's own love affair with these murderers is blossoming. Obama's website boasts, "He supported the reauthorization of the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program in the 109th Congress and supports efforts to increase COPS funding." Begun by Clinton in 1994, "COPS" has put an additional 118,000 armed, anti-working-class thugs on the street. Many perform "intelligence duties" like spying on war protestors.

JFK'S IMPERIALIST LIAR-IN-CHIEF SEES PROMISE IN OBAMA

For his skill in hoodwinking workers, Obama has earned the praise of a grandmaster of deceit, JFK advisor and speechwriter Ted Sorensen. After introducing Obama at a recent New York fund-raiser as the only can-

didate he believed could restore the nation's credibility around the world, Sorensen gushed, "'Obama, like JFK, is such a natural.'" (New York Times, 3/10/07) For the past four decades Sorensen has, with the liberal media's help, spread the lie (still useful to the liberals) that JFK would have withdrawn from Vietnam early. This is the same Sorensen who wrote the imperialist manifesto JFK mouthed at his inauguration, "Let every nation know...that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe, in order to assure the survival and the success of liberty." (For "liberty" read "U.S. imperialism.")

The modern descendant of the JFK-Vietnam falsehood says that Obama and fellow liberals oppose the Iraq war. Essence, in the form of voting records, once again trumps the mere appearance of campaign promises. [See box.] Obama is as phony as the House Democrats who vow to bring the troops home, while they vote the blood-thirsty Pentagon every penny it wants and more. Falling for what politicians say or how they look is a grave error. Getting past liberals' appearance and attacking their war-making, capitalist essence, is an important step towards understanding the world in order to change it. ☪

OBAMA'S REAL 'WAR RECORD'

(Quoted directly from the Boston Globe, 3/20/07):

Campaigning for the Illinois Senate seat in 2003 and 2004, Obama scolded Bush for invading Iraq and vowed he would "unequivocally" vote against an additional \$87 billion to pay for it. Yet since taking office in January 2005, he has voted for four separate war appropriations, totaling more than \$300 billion. Last June, Obama voted no to Senator John F. Kerry's proposal to remove most combat troops from Iraq by July 2007, warning that an "arbitrary deadline" could "compound" the Bush administration's mistake. And now he's voted for a Republican-sponsored resolution that stated the Senate would not cut off funding for troops in Iraq. ☪

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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Industrial Workers the Key

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Racism, the Imperialists' Tool

Racism is the cutting edge of all these attacks. Boeing sent 10,000 jobs to low-cost subcontractors employing mostly Latino immigrant workers in Southern California and Texas. Maine's Bath Works, Pascagoula shipyards' main competitor, pays near \$30/hour. In Pascagoula, ravaged by racism, workers receive about \$18. In New Orleans, shipyards have replaced the super-exploited black workers — and white workers — with Latino "guest workers" at \$8/hour. A similar pattern must be developing as Airbus and VW cut tens of thousands of jobs across Europe.

No union leader on either side of the Atlantic will fight for anti-racist, anti-imperialist internationalism. Ultimately they all fight for their bosses. Witness the spectacle of the U.S. auto industry as the UAW arranges for the destruction of over 70,000 union jobs to save Ford and GM. As Lenin noted during World War I, when war approaches these "International" union bosses run to the tents of their masters.

No serious resistance can be mounted until workers consciously fight racism and begin to embrace communist ideas as their own. No matter how militant the struggle for economic gains, workers worldwide will remain chained to their exploiters unless we unite super-exploited black, Latin, Asian and white workers in the U.S., Arab, Turkish, African and white workers across Europe, to lead the whole industrial working class. This fight against racism applies to Asia, Africa and Latin America as well.

We must organize support for the Northrop Grumman and Airbus strikers among all workers, students and soldiers (see page 1). Raising money for food, letters, petitions, resolutions and demonstrations of strike support around our anti-racist, communist politics are the order of the day. The current anti-war movement is aimed at one or another presidential candidate in 2008. But PLP relies on the industrial working class to lead the struggle against racism and imperialist war. Stepping forward in this moment of class struggle can help build our revolutionary forces in key places to end this imperialist nightmare with communist revolution. ☪

Class Struggle Rocking Europe

TOULOUSE, FRANCE, March 22 — On March 16, thousands of Airbus workers across Europe struck and demonstrated against layoffs of 10,000.

In Hamburg, 20,000 workers rallied. Seven thousand struck the Blagnac factory near Toulouse, and workers from Germany joined the protest. Others from various nationalities wore T-shirts proclaiming, "All for one, one for all — solidarity against layoffs." In Méaulte, 4,000 struck the whole day, amid demonstrations in Paris, Saint Nazaire and Nantes. In Spain, 7,200 Airbus workers walked out for one hour. In Laupheim, Germany, 2,000 formed a human chain around the plant.

But one big demonstration planned for Brussels was abandoned amid rumors of rifts among the leaders of the European Metalworkers Federation. All the demonstrations were smaller than envisioned, exposing the union hacks' mis-leadership. In Hamburg, the IG Metall union invited right-wing Christian-Democrat politicians to spew nationalist poison. The prime minister of Baden-Württemberg (near the Laupheim plant) proclaimed that, "We're fighting for Airbus in Germany."

Similarly in France, a CFE-CGC union leaflet blamed German workers for production delays that spawned the Power 8 plan, and the FO union leader said more German workers should be axed. Only international solidarity can answer the Airbus bosses' mass layoffs in this age of sharpening inter-imperialist rivalry (see page 1).

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fight back



Students, Teachers Beat Attack on New Orleans Volunteers

BROOKLYN, NY, March 23—"To be attacked by the enemy is a good thing." We learned this lesson again last week as a sharp struggle developed in our school over a volunteer trip we organized to New Orleans. While many staff members raised money and supported our anti-racist efforts to continue doing work there, the principal began a "witch-hunt," trying to intimidate and scare people who participated in an "unauthorized" trip. He called in a few staff members and students to attempt to frighten them.

However, his strategy backfired miserably when it became clear that students, parents and staff would fight back. It began when a staff member was called in, advised to have a union rep and threatened with a wider "investigation." The staff member, a member of PLP, refused to "name names" of others involved and, with the help of friends, put out a leaflet exposing the attack on the trip. In a heated staff meeting a few days later, she spoke out against the investigation and confronted the principal and his allies publicly.

Since then, teachers have come to her every day, congratulating her and thanking her for telling it like it is. One teacher said, "I know you're a communist. I guess we need more communists to shake things up!" Many teachers have said that they would do whatever is needed to support her. The administration has had to back down,

close their phony investigation and retreat for now. The outpouring of both support and anger is the only reason for this.

But, teachers can see the handwriting on the wall at many of our schools as the conditions become more fascist. A climate of fear is developing so that more and more people are afraid of stepping out of line, getting written up and getting into "trouble." Ultimately, it is only the growth of our Party that can meet this head on, As school bosses become less tolerant of our activities and ideas, we need a few victories to show people that you can stand up to these principals and administrators.. The only reason we withstood this attack is the years of daily organizing and political work that has been done here: study groups, meetings, small struggles, getting to know people, socializing and selling CHALLENGE.

Even though a teacher seems to be the focus, the attack on the trip is mainly a direct attack on our students. There is much discussion about new Dept. of Education regulations and whether students have the right to do things outside of school with staff members. The principal is trying to push some bogus regulations that will make it illegal for students to go to rallies, demonstrations or meetings unless he approves! Students are writing a petition and will continue challenging this. They are seeing the school become more like a prison and realize that some



of the most important learning to take place is outside of the classroom. PLP will continue growing and organizing at this and other schools, and we will not back down. We plan to bring many students, parents and teachers to our May Day activities. We will continue organizing relief work in New Orleans with teachers, students and parents, and we will stand up to any and all attacks from the administration! ☘

Students Meet CIA Recruiters HEAD ON



NEW YORK, NY, Mar. 22 — "I felt so empowered!" "Yeah, today the working class is on the offensive," said students after a multi-racial group "welcomed" the CIA's National Clandestine Service recruiters to Hunter College with angry protest. The recruiters sought students for the "global war on terror," with a special interest in speakers of Asian and Middle Eastern languages and in black students. Hunter students and teachers, including military veterans and anti-racists, organized to disrupt the event and expose the true role of the CIA, using a leaflet and discussion with friends, classmates and coworkers.

Many Hunter students said they felt nervous going up against the CIA, but one said "not doing anything would have meant we let the CIA off the hook for the murder of millions of working-class people." Others said they felt comforted because of our solid plan to disrupt the event, avoid arrests, and still effectively reach other students. More than a dozen went in to disrupt, while more leafleted and gathered students outside the room.

Inside, a senior CIA officer described the CIA's "unchanging mission of compiling intelligence from around the world." A protester immediately asked what role imperialism had in its mission and was told he should try the State Department! The officer informed us that President Bush and the National Security Council want to dramatically expand the National Clandestine Service by accepting all who are qualified. As he tried to continue, the student was joined by others who noted the CIA's endless list of crimes, stressing that

they were racist terrorists who murdered millions to protect profit and that they couldn't just come to recruit our peers to help torture and commit genocide.

For several minutes, the CIA recruiter stopped his presentation completely while the protesting students and pro-CIA students argued. At least ten students who genuinely wanted to hear the speaker vigorously defended the recruiter's right to speak. A protestor called out, "This is very serious; we're talking about people's lives and we can't just let them speak." We were surprised that the pro-CIA students were more hostile than the school police and CIA recruiters. This argument among students illustrates that the real struggle is the one within our own class, to rid ourselves and each other of capitalist ideas.

School administrators lost patience after about ten minutes and warned that the disrupters would be kicked out if they continued. They persisted. Applause greeted the students outside as they were removed, one by one. As the last young protestor was escorted out, students chanted: "Free speech!" She responded: "Not for the CIA!" and led students to chant, "Who is a terrorist? The CIA's a terrorist!" We continued chanting and leafleting passing students as the event continued. Afterwards, the school's dean of students defended allowing the CIA on the campus and said he could have shut down the protest instead of allowing it. One student said, "That's because you have state power and we don't!"

Our party needs more actions like this. We attack racists like the Minutemen and the Klan whenever we can, which is good, but how often do we get to actually attack the designers of imperialism, which has killed many more than those gutter racists? Also, workers get attacked more viciously every day, and we shouldn't hesitate to take the offensive. Students were inspired and consolidated to the Party and are planning a forum to inform more students about what happened. Pro-CIA students will be invited to talk about what they thought. We've got work to do. ☘

Black, Latino, White Workers, Youth March vs. Racist Police Terror

LOS ANGELES, CA. —"The workers united will never be defeated," 100 people chanted and marched to the Hollenbeck police station where the workers, with communist leadership, defied the racist cops for murdering Mauricio Paris Cornejo. This action resulted from working and struggling in mass organizations and with friends, along with distributing 500 leaflets in the neighborhood. Cornejo's friends spoke in several high school classes about the case and invited the students to participate. They stressed that both black and Latino workers face racist police terror and need to unite against it.

When a march and protest was proposed to an immigration reform coalition, some of the members resisted, saying police terror had nothing to do with immigration, that it would "distract" the coalition from its main goal. But others said police terror has the same roots as immigration raids and deportations. Still others noted that both black and Latino workers face brutal racist police terror. Residents of Ramona Gardens (where Cornejo lived) attended the meeting and proposed action. After a sharp debate, the group decided to support the march from the projects to the police station.

We marched that route, some 2½ miles, beginning with a multi-racial group of mostly neighborhood men, women and youth. The anger and determination were visible on the signs and in the voices of all. We chanted, "Police, racist pigs and murderers!" as well as slogans against the immigration cops and the war. As we marched, people left their homes to listen. Hundreds of CHALLENGES and leaflets were distributed.

When we arrived at the police station, about



30 cops formed a fence at the entrance. Speeches, signs and poems denounced the police as the real terrorists for having killed Cornejo in cold blood, for terrorizing the youth, especially blacks and Latinos, and for defending the interests of the capitalist rulers.

"The police are the biggest gang." "The only way to end their racist terror is to see that the root of the problem is the capitalist system and to organize a communist movement in the long run to finally destroy it." These were some of the many points resounding off the station's walls. All who participated were very glad they marched and promised to continue the fight.

Working in mass organizations can bring results. Although these exist to fight for reforms and build loyalty to capitalism, communists must introduce the problems affecting the working class, make the connections and to fight to win the organizations' members to question the very existence of the capitalist system. We must propose the kind of anti-racist actions that enable our Party, its ideas and our friends to sharpen the struggle; that is the way we can build a mass communist PLP.☘

U.S. Exploiters Can Always Top Themselves

Signal International recruited 300 "guest workers" from India to perform repairs in the Pascagoula shipyard (now on strike); charged them a \$20,000 "fee" (!); paid them half the promised \$18/hr; "housed" them in groups of 24 in 12X18-foot rooms at \$35 a day! When the workers organized to protest these horrific conditions, Signal shipped some of them back to India and lowered the pay of the remainder.

One fired worker, having "sold his home [in India]" and with "no place to return to," slashed his wrists. "He was only able to earn a small part of the thousands paid to the recruiter and said "he couldn't go home like that." (New American Media)



workers unite!

PL'ers to Anti-War Marchers: 'It's Not Just Bush, It's Capitalism!'



D.C.: Vets-Workers Unity A Must

WASHINGTON, D.C., March 19 — Prior to the March 17th anti-war march here, 25 members and friends of the Progressive Labor Party gathered over breakfast to discuss the critical issues facing the anti-war movement, especially the need to bring an understanding to the marchers of imperialism, anti-racism and the need for a revolutionary party. Such an understanding will steel workers and students for the coming intensification of U.S. war actions in

the Middle East.

Iraq is just a prelude! Democrat President Jimmy Carter's 1980 State of the Union address warned that an "attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force." He created a Rapid Deployment Force to back that up. The likely Democratic Party candidates have already pledged allegiance to the Carter Doctrine by supporting policies that prepare for wider war in the region; they criticize the Bush administration's fiasco in Iraq because its tactics hamper U.S. rulers' ability to control the oil throughout the Middle East.

At the march itself, PLP'ers distributed 150 CHALLENGES and over 500 leaflets explaining the need for communist revolution to stop imperialist war and inviting them to march on May Day to build the PLP to lead this revolutionary struggle.

The best part of the march itself was the presence of several active-duty GIs and about 20 members of Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW), some of whom spoke boldly about the need to move from symbolic demonstrations to active resistance. PLP believes this resistance should include mass GI refusals to fight the war (not just individual AWOLs and desertions), sharpening the fight against racism everywhere, closing down ROTC on campuses and in high schools, developing strikes against war producers,

and winning people to revolution, not elections, as the only way to shut down imperialist war.

The next day IVAW conducted "Operative First Casualty" (dramatizing that "truth is the first casualty of war"). A dozen Iraq vets, dressed in their desert camouflage uniforms, simulated Baghdad-style raids at various sites around the city (including the Capitol!) by rounding up their civilian collaborators, restraining them with cuffs and black bags over their heads, and screaming at them, while others distributed flyers to passers-by explaining why they were "bringing Baghdad to D.C." This action was inspired by a 1970 Vietnam Veterans Against the War action called "Operation RAW" ("War" spelled backwards, and standing for "Rapid American Withdrawal") in which 200 Vietnam Vets conducted similar actions in New Jersey.

U.S. capitalists cannot withdraw from the Middle East. The bosses' need to keep control over oil pipelines, away from imperialist rivals, will force them to spill our blood to maintain their profits and dominant geo-political position. The U.S. bosses' continued vicious, racist rampage throughout the Middle East, Africa and Asia may very well spark growth of the GI and veterans' movement in size and militancy. The danger is that the liberals will try to direct it into dead-end electoral politics ("elect a Democrat president in 2008"). Uniting the GI-veterans movement with the rest of the working-class movement under PLP leadership is the strategy for revolutionary advance. ☸

NYC: Youth Lead, Link Racist Terror At Home, Abroad



NEW YORK, NY, March 18 — "Bush, Democrats, No Solution, We Need Communist Revolution" rang through the streets of Manhattan as a PLP-led youth contingent brought a revolutionary message to the tens of thousands of anti-war marchers.

The march, on the 4th anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Iraq, was organized by United for Peace and Justice (UFPJ). It was yet another liberal call for U.S. bosses to bring the troops home. These liberals build illusions that the Democrats will end the war. But these same Democrats in Congress, while passing a resolution for a supposed timetable to get the troops out of Iraq, also gave Bush \$100 billion more for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The multi-racial youth-led PLP contingent at the march countered the pacifist, anti-Bush politics by distributing 1,000 CHALLENGES and 1,500 leaflets and leading spirited chants the whole time. Many marchers took leadership from high school students and joined in the many chants they led. At one point a young comrade was giving a speech about the racist police-murder of Sean Bell, when a marcher came over and asked "What does Sean Bell have to do with this anti-war march?" Our comrade responded immediately and repeated the question for the crowd on the bullhorn. He then made the connection by explaining that the bosses use racist terror both at home and abroad to maintain their capitalist system. He described how this country was built on the genocide of Native Americans and the enslavement of African workers and today continues its imperialist murder of Iraqis to protect its system. Our group then chanted "Sean Bell here, Iraqis there, fascist terror everywhere!" We will continue to spread our communist message to our friends, family and neighborhoods with study groups and CHALLENGE sales every Saturday leading up to May Day, the international workers' holiday. As another youth explained today, "Imperialist war and racist oppression will continue for as long as capitalism continues." Only when workers around the world understand that our common fight is the one against this brutal system and for communism, will we have won. Let's gear up and make this May Day the biggest one yet. ☸

L.A.: 'Iraq, Oaxaca, New Orleans; Smash Racist War Machine!'

LOS ANGELES, CA, March 17 — Chanting "Iraq, Oaxaca, New Orleans, Smash the Racist War Machine!" in military cadence, our enthusiastic multi-racial group marched here holding a PLP banner proclaiming, "It's not just Bush — It's Capitalism!" sharply contrasting with the liberals' thrust of "Get Bush." The 10,000 participants showed widespread discontent with the war in Iraq, providing an immense opportunity to direct this discontent toward its rightful source, the capitalist system.

A sizeable group of students and workers explained that replacing Bush with Obama or simply bringing the troops home temporarily won't end the death and suffering caused by imperialist wars; the only real alternative to this atrocity is communist revolution.

We distributed hundreds of CHALLENGES, including to young vets, and about 2,500 leaflets, proving that the U.S. capitalists' drive for oil is nothing new. For 25 years, presidents from Carter to Clinton have goose-stepped to the needs of U.S. imperialism, killing millions of workers.

At a post-march rally, a military mother who, though heartfelt in recalling her son's death, offered anti-Bush sentiment and an echo of the march's dom-

inant mantra: "Bring the Troops home now!" When Democrat politician Maxine Waters told the crowd to "write their representatives," a group in the audience had a different idea, with raised fists chanting, "Fight imperialism!"

The liberal rulers' attack on Bush reflects their preparations for wars against their imperialist rivals. They're building support for Barack Obama (see editorial, page 2) or Clinton, hoping to curb discontent, but also to win workers to a new imperialist politician as "a change for the better." U.S. bosses are counting on the 2008 election hype to win workers to support larger future wars.

The GI presence at this march highlights the necessity of bringing PLP's communist line to soldiers and vets at demonstrations, as well as those serving in the Mid-East and elsewhere.

This reinforces the need to spread communist ideas everywhere, both in a mass way and in smaller groups. PLP's uncompromising struggle against racism and for workers' revolution to take state power is a necessity for us, the working class. ☸

Bosses' Crisis Leading to Cal Faculty Strike

LOS ANGELES, March 26 — By a 94% vote, the unionized faculty of the California State University (CSU) voted to strike the 23-campus system, which serves 435,000 students, half of them black, Latino and Asian. The vote was over management's salary offer, but opposition to higher workloads and student fees are issues, too. Although management recently gave themselves big raises, faculty raises since 1997 are far behind inflation. Management's offer is less than 15% for four years, about 20% behind their list of "comparable institutions." Faculty workload has increased. The system has 29% more students than in 1995, but only a 21% increase in faculty, most of them part-timers. Class sizes are growing; at one large campus, it's up 13% and the number of classes dropped 11% in the last four years. With this growing workload, faculty are forced to cut corners, giving less time to each student. Meanwhile, in the last 10 years, student fees have increased 64%, with another 10% hike scheduled next fall.

The reduced funding that is gradually destroying the CSU system is a direct result of the growing crisis of U.S. capitalism, and particularly of its imperialist wars. Like most of the large industrial states, California bounces from one fiscal crisis to the next, mostly because the federal government sucks money out of the states so that they can pay for war plans.

For years, the feds have been transferring big-ticket programs like Medicaid, aid for low-income families, and medical care for poor children to the states. The feds give block grants for these programs which the states must match, but they cut the grants or fix them at too low a level, so the states must find the money somewhere to make up the difference or else eliminate the programs.

As war spending skyrockets, federal funds for the states are slashed further, including Medicaid last year, while an administration proposal would chop another \$24.7 billion over the next five years. The feds are also taking away \$12.7 billion for student financial aid over the next five years. Like the CSU tuition hikes, these cuts are racist, affecting black and Latino students most.

California's bosses have intensified the budget crunch for workers through a huge increase in legal repression, which they hope will contain anger against worsening conditions. The prison population has increased 73% since 1990, three times faster than the adult population. Prison funding has risen much faster than that for higher education. The "Three Strikes" law — 25 years to life for any third conviction — has meted out much longer sentences, costing at least a half billion dollars extra per year, equal to nearly one-fifth of state funding for the CSU.

The strike vote signifies that faculty intends to fight. However, the plan is only for two-day strikes at each campus. The union slogan — "I don't want to strike, but I will" — hardly expresses the determined struggle that will be needed to make any headway against the CSU cuts. Students should support these efforts and raise their own demands. PLP must show both faculty and students that capitalist imperialism and war lie behind the attack on CSU, and make the U.S. war budget a strike issue. These politics and PLP's participation in the struggle will enable the Party to grow and fight for the only long-range solution — communism. ☸

fight for communism!



30,000 Healthcare Workers Reject War Cuts

NEW YORK CITY, March 15 — Today, 30,000 angry healthcare workers demonstrated here in a freezing rain against Governor Spitzer's proposed \$1.2 billion healthcare cuts in Medicaid funding to hospitals, nursing homes and home-care providers.

Workers of all nationalities — black, Latino, Asian and white — represented their hospitals and nursing homes, coming from NYC, Long Island, Buffalo, and other upstate areas.

Many CHALLENGES were sold and hundreds of leaflets distributed denouncing the bosses' for-profit healthcare system. Some PL'ers marched with contingents from their jobs. A group of home-care workers passed out a flyer about their struggle for overtime pay. Until now the 1199 leadership has ignored their demands, and has relied on a court case filed six years ago. According to government figures, the 60,000 mainly immigrant women workers lose \$250 million per year in stolen overtime pay! Imagine the billions stolen over the past decades.

Since the invasion of Iraq, billions of dollars have been diverted from social programs to fund the war. Thus, millions of workers nationwide face huge budget cuts in the Medicaid and Medicare programs. These cuts will severely impact the lives of patients and healthcare workers.

NYC workers are predominantly black and Latino, making the cuts distinctly racist. Most are women. Already victims of a higher racist unemployment rate, still higher joblessness will spread more disease throughout their communities and the cuts will reduce health care there still further.

The Berger Commission recommendations are a direct attack on all aspects of healthcare workers' lives and patient care. They would close, merge and re-structure 57 hospitals state-wide, eliminating 4,200 beds and thousands of jobs.

The 1199-SEIU union and the hospital bosses representing the Greater New York Association made an alliance to fight Spitzer's cuts. Full-page newspaper ads criticized the Governor. However, this alliance was short-lived, with the bosses soon pulling out of the campaign.

At a Brooklyn hospital, many workers felt betrayed by the union leadership that allied with the hospital bosses. Only a limited number of workers were allowed to attend the rally. One worker stated to a group at the hospital, "The 1199 SEIU union is always forming a coalition with hospital bosses and politicians to stop healthcare cuts. The union is misleading many workers to rely on these capitalist forces that represent the system that creates conditions for layoffs and hospital closings" in the first place.

Another worker said, "Our union contributed funds towards Governor Spitzer's campaign for Attorney General. Now he turns his back on us."

At the rally many politicians and union leaders advocated reforming the healthcare industry. But in the past 15 years such reform programs did not prevent the clos-



ing of 34 hospitals in the State nor laying off thousands of workers. However, workers are constantly waging battles with the hospital bosses against short staffing, violations in patient care and to keep whatever benefits we have.

Under capitalism, the needs of workers and patients to improve health care through preventative measures and to assure health care for all in a non-racist health-care system cannot be met. Only in a communist-run system, with no bosses, politicians and rich people, can the working class have a commitment to all our brothers and sisters. ☺

Immigrant Workers Back Northrop, Airbus Strikers

"Those bastards do the same thing to all of us!" exclaimed a worker in our factory. We were discussing how all imperialist bosses trim costs on the backs of industrial workers because of their need to remain competitive against their rivals. We noted how the attacks on Airbus and Northrop workers stem from imperialist rivalry, just like the war in Iraq, immigration raids, racism and attacks on workers employed by these subcontractors.

These immigrant workers at several Southern California industrial shops showed a strong sense of class solidarity, anti-racism and internationalism. Despite the fascist conditions in these factories, they eagerly wrote, circulated and signed petitions supporting striking Airbus workers in Europe and Northrop workers in Mississippi (see pages 1, 2).

One worker, who gladly agreed to help write the petition, took it home for her neighbors to sign. One neighbor, also a factory worker, responded by taking it to work to share with some of his co-workers.

The petitions all clearly extended support and international solidarity and included links to the imperialist war in Iraq. One worker's petition read in part, "We support your struggle because we are exploited too. They suck every last bit of labor from us for a measly wage while cutting our health benefits every chance they get." Another petition called for "international solidarity, not the bosses' nationalism".

The extent of support and political struggle generated with these petitions was limited primarily by our size. This makes two things very clear to our PLP club: One is the need to recruit more comrades to working in these factories; the second is to put CHALLENGE into the hands of more and more industrial workers in order to expand our base and recruit these workers, inside and outside the factories, out of intensified class struggle.

These immigrant workers' response to the Airbus and Northrop strikes is a small example of exactly what the bosses fear most: workers' unity and communist leadership among the industrial working class. But the anti-racism and international solidarity demonstrated by industrial workers in Southern California would not have occurred without PLP'ers in these shops bringing these ideas to them.

There's great potential for building a mass base for PLP and international communism among these workers. The bosses are trying to win us to nationalism. Our job is to continue winning industrial workers to see that our interests lie with workers worldwide, in the fight for communist revolution, to destroy the world's bosses once and for all. ☺

Russia, Romania:

Strikers Challenge Ford, Renault

St. Petersburg (formerly Leningrad) is now "Russia's Detroit." The world's auto giants are erecting assembly plants there to get into the growing Russian market (1.8 million cars purchased in 2006). But workers are fighting for their own demands.

Contrary to Ford's U.S. situation, production is growing at its 5-year-old Vsevolosk plant (66,000 Focus models built last year). Ford expects a 10% increase in 2007. But on Feb. 14, workers threw a monkey wrench into the bosses' plans: 80% of its 11,000 unionized workers (of a workforce of 19,000) struck, rejecting Ford's offer of a 14% to 20% wage hike. The workers not only won the wage hike but also permanent jobs for temporary workers and job protection in case of job-related illness.

Ford's cries of losing money worldwide cut no ice with these militant workers. This strike sets an example internationally, showing workers in the U.S., Mexico and elsewhere that autoworkers can fight back despite Ford's poverty cries. (On Jan. 25, Ford announced a historic loss of \$12.7 billion in its U.S. operations).

Renault Workers Win in Romania

In 1979, Renault bought the Dacia auto plant in Romania, producing 100,000 cars a year with 28,000 workers. In 2006, 11,000 workers built 196,000 cars, an 80% increase in productivity.

The workers demanded a 25% wage hike to partially compensate for this super-exploitation; the company offered only 6%. On Feb. 15, a two-hour warning strike and the threat of a total strike the next day forced Renault to change its mind, fearing a long walkout by angry, determined workers. So the workers won a 20% wage hike for 2007 plus one hot meal daily and a 60% payment for the cost of workers' transportation to the plant.

French workers at the huge Renault Technocentre design plant outside Paris should emulate this fight-back against speed-up. In the last five months, the intense speed-up has caused five employees there to kill themselves. Renault is well-known for its racism and brutal treatment of workers.

Auto bosses are using the workers of the old Soviet bloc as a source of cheap labor, but these workers are beginning to stand up and fight. However, under capitalism, one way or another, the bosses will eventually take away gains made today. Thus, the main lesson drawn from these struggles should be workers' need to rebuild an internationalist communist movement, learning from the mistakes and achievements of the past. That's how the slogan, "Workers of the world, unite!" will become a reality. ☺

Chiquita Banana Gets Slap on Wrist for Funding Death Squads

Chiquita Brands, one of the world's largest and most powerful food companies, has agreed to pay a \$25-million fine to end a federal investigation accusing it of paying off Colombian death squads to protect their profits. Human rights groups have quickly called the settlement too lenient, charging that the Bush administration chose to file a "document of criminal information" against the company — a less aggressive form of prosecution — instead of forcing Justice Department indictments which could have quadrupled the fine. Some Democrats, fearing the growth of Chávez and other anti-U.S. capitalist and imperialist rivals in the region, are pushing for some cosmetic changes in the U.S. support for the fascist death squads. But this won't change the murderous essence of imperialism.

Chiquita has a long history of murdering workers in Latin America. On Dec. 6, 1928, over 3,000 strikers were massacred in the main square

of Cienaga, Colombia, one of the largest such slaughters in Latin America. After 24 days of striking the United Fruit Company (today's Chiquita Brands), the army attacked a rally in that plaza. The army gave demonstrators five minutes to disperse, but before the time was up workers declared, "Save yourself a minute; we're not moving."

The army opened fire, killing some 3,000. Gabriel Garcia Marquez's famous novel "100 Years of Solitude" claims even more were murdered since many were thrown into the sea. In 1953, United Fruit organized the CIA-led coup against Guatemala nationalist President Jacobo Arbenz, who had threatened to nationalize the banana plantations. Several decades of death-squad governments followed, killing hundreds of thousands of Guatemalan workers and peasants,

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< Letters >

Paraguay's Lugo Shows His True Colors. . . and They're Not Red

Ex-Bishop and reformist Fernando Lugo has announced that he will be leading a Citizens' March on March 29 to push him to the top of the polls for Paraguay's 2008 presidential elections (see CHALLENGE, 1/17/07). To placate the ruling class's liberal wing, he has officially become a member of the Concertación (a united front opposing the Colorado Movement). The Colorado Party has ruled for more than 60 years, and this opposition is going to great lengths to derail it. The Concertación includes the supposedly left-wing Lugo, social movements, farmer, worker and student groups, several socialist parties, the Liberal Party, UNACE and the Fatherland Party (Patria Querida). But many don't realize that Lugo is extremely dangerous for workers. The lesser-evil strategy is neither a temporary solution nor a long-lasting one. This parallels the 2006 U.S. election and the "anybody-but-Bush" strategy. It is doomed to fail; it does not serve the interests of the Paraguayan working class. Lugo & Co. might loosen the shackles a little, but they will not and cannot free the slave.

Recently Lugo announced that as president he would initiate policies similar to Bachelet's in Chile or Lula's in Brazil. Workers only need look at Chile to see the inequality of their free market—"socialist" model, or look to a Brazil full of criminal gangs, drug traffickers, poverty and high disease rates to see that such models, mixing state- and free market-capitalism, do not benefit the working class. President Nicanor Duarte Frutos compared Lugo to Venezuela's Chávez and then proposed putting all of Paraguay's reserve money into Venezuelan banks, not in the U.S. This strategy clearly placates the so-called leftists, yet meanwhile the U.S. military presence in Paraguay has increased under Frutos. Lugo also raised the possibility that imprisoned General Lino Oviedo — trained at the CIA-run death-squad School of the Americas — become his running mate. When we march on the 29th, we must strive to sharpen these contradictions, sell DESAFIO and distribute pamphlets demonstrating that Lugo, the Liberal Party, Patria Querida and others won't change the situation in Paraguay. We must do much more to build the communist PLP, to fight for a society sharing what we workers produce based on need.

Red Guarani

Colombia: Bush Visit Brings More Murders and Arrests

Bogotá was militarized when Bush visited his buddy, fascist President Alvaro Uribe. There were over 5,000 raids and searches and 325 arrests. Thousands protested despite heavy repression. Many were injured.

PLP participated, sold DESAFIO-CHALLENGE and brought our politics to workers and students to try to turn the spontaneous anger of many into a school for our communist ideas as a way to counter the imperialist-capitalist terror.

This battle energized us to fight harder for our line in the middle of the sharpening capitalist-imperialist contradictions, and to raise the level of the growing consciousness of many workers and youth about the phony nature of the bosses' democracy. Many are understanding the sellouts of the union hacks and even "progressive" Bogotá Mayor, Luis Eduardo Garzón, who did not hesitate to use the cops to viciously attack protestors.

Red Worker in Colombia

Murder of Politicians A Fight Among Drug Dealers

The Feb. 19 murder in Guatemala of three Salvadoran Congressmen from the ARENA party (also members of the Central American Parliament) along with their chauffeur once again revealed the terror of narco politics. Although we may never know the whole truth because "respectable and powerful politicians" from Guatemala and El Salvador are involved, we do know that those who control the enormous profits from the murderous drug trade and who make the decisions are in the top hierarchies of the government. The gangs are only "soldiers" who carry out orders from above.

According to the NGO Washington Office for Latin American Affairs and the UN Truth Commission in Guatemala, there are clandestine groups acting from inside the Guatemalan government, controlled by retired and active military leaders. These groups are linked to the bosses' political parties, the police, the judiciary, the army and the public accounting office. This allows them to act with complete impunity in laundering money, selling weapons and other crimes.

The Minister of Public Security and Justice in El Salvador, Rene Figueroa, says the murdered politicians "were not linked to narco trafficking." But in what seemed like double-talk, National Civil Police Chief Rodrigo Avila said, "There's no doubt that this was related to drug trafficking."

One of the murdered politicians was Eduardo D'Aubisson, son of Major Roberto "Blowtorch" D'Aubisson, leader of El Salvador's death squads. These squads, created in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador with CIA training, murdered hundreds of thousands of workers, students and farmworkers. Today these creatures of capitalism and imperialism enrich themselves by killing and poisoning the population with the dirty drug trade.

The phony left in El Salvador (the FMLN) calls on the U.S. FBI to "investigate" the "roots" of the problem to obtain "justice." That's like Tony Soprano investigating the godfather Don Corleone!

The drug trade is a capitalist business, based on profits and murder. Only by destroying the cause can we end this plague. This will be achieved by fighting for communism.

Salvador PLP

Hospital Workers Spread PL Flyer

While riding the train to the 1199 rally, I met a group of workers crowded into my subway car having an animated discussion on Spitzer's cuts and resulting layoffs. They were tremendously angry and frustrated that the union wasn't doing more. One woman said her army son was in Iraq and was very bitter about there being plenty of money for war but not for health care.

Distributing some Party leaflets, I gave one to the military mom. Immediately hands were reaching for copies. It was headlined "a system unable to provide decent health care shouldn't exist"; it linked these cutbacks to the oil war in Iraq; and sharply attacked the Rivera leadership for its alliance with the hospital bosses. It called for communist revolution to build a system that produces for the needs of the working class, not for profits.

The workers readily agreed that today's rally was too little, too late and reflected the fact that Rivera had already agreed to the cuts. They echoed many of the flyer's anti-capitalist statements.

At the rally I walked among the workers distributing flyers while shouting its headline and some of its main points. Scores of workers took small stacks for their friends and co-workers. Others asked for copies

to take back to their job sites. After the 800 flyers were gone, I distributed 30 CHALLENGES, using the front-page article from the Chicago hospital struggle to illustrate the similarity of workers' struggles elsewhere. All in all, a good day!

Retired Comrade

Film Raps Mali Capitalism— But Offers No Solution

I saw the African movie Bamako with two other teachers from my school. We were all very impressed. The film, whose setting is Mali's capital Bamako, is a powerful and artistically interesting indictment of the policies of capitalist financial and trade organizations: the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Set in a residential courtyard the film follows the personal lives of several Malians, while institutions of global capital [imperialism] are being tried outside. The prosecution calls witnesses (workers and farmers) who give heart-wrenching testimony about the devastating effects of huge debt; structural adjustment programs that drastically cut government social projects; the privatization of water and other basic needs; the charging of tuition for primary education; the replacement of food farming that sustains life with farming that produces crops for export; and unfair trade practices such as U.S. and European subsidizing agribusiness to the disadvantage of African producers.

The witnesses are eloquent and cite fact after fact of the social catastrophe befalling Mali and other African countries. The defense argues that the architects of globalization policies never intended to hurt the people of Africa. Rather, they "wanted to help" but were stymied by corrupt government officials.

The prosecution responds that corruption exists worldwide, and that global capital actually encourages and enables corrupt politicians. It also shows that the onerous debt African countries are paying has been repaid many times over, and that the amount paid for debt service is many times the amount spent on human services like education and health, ravaging the uneducated and the sick who can't get medical care.

The prosecution explains to the court and the sympathetic audience that Africa's enormous wealth — its gold, diamonds, oil, uranium, cocoa, cotton and other raw materials — as well as millions of slave laborers, have enriched the capitalist world, particularly multi-national corporations. Banks and capitalist outfits like the World Bank now loan money to corrupt local leaders, repaid on the backs of Africa's working class.

In the courtroom finale, the film unabashedly indicts capitalism, on behalf of which the IMF, the World Bank and the WTO function. But then the film has a dilemma: if the problem is capitalism, then the solution must be anti-capitalism and revolution. But then the director pulls back and calls for reform and the adoption of "humane" policies from organizations that the film has spent nearly two hours indicting.

It notes, for instance, that the World Bank is currently led by Paul Wolfowitz, one of the architects of the invasion of Iraq, which led to the deaths of hundreds of thousands and the expenditure of hundreds of billions of dollars, money that could have been spent on schools and hospitals. The profit system is good at enriching a relatively few and instigating



deadly wars for control of oil, and completely incapable of eradicating poverty, disease, and inequality. We can support reforms like canceling the debt, but we shouldn't spread illusions about capitalism becoming a "humane" system.

Nevertheless, Bamako is an amazing film, one that we should see with fellow workers, students, neighbors and people in organizations to which we belong.

Red Moviegoer

How Will Communism Improve Workers' Lives?

I think a letter in the March 14 issue correctly criticizes two CHALLENGE articles on the struggles at Cook County Hospital in Chicago for failing to describe how health care would be better for all workers in a world run by the international working class under a communist egalitarian system.

The letter points out that some possible health care improvements had been covered in the column entitled "Under Communism," later changed to "Forward to Communism." The column ran on the back page of every issue for over a year.

It would be better if such expected improvements were made part of articles about the struggles that PLP members are engaged in with fellow workers. Many articles about the Party's participation in struggles could benefit by referring to the way the particular focus of the struggle would be better for workers under communism.

That will take some thought on the part of the writers of each article, but this is one way we can keep communist politics as the most important focus of the article and of the struggle it describes.

Saguaro Rojo

Ex-Sailor Backs Shipyard Strikers

I was stationed at the Pascagoula shipyard in 1977. It was my first duty station where we met our ship, the USS Saipan, on which I spent the next three years. It was a very impressive yard then, 40,000 workers at shift change. Workers from four states worked there.

They build everything there — aircraft carriers, submarines and destroyers. It's no exaggeration to say that these workers have shut one of the biggest warmakers. They, and CHALLENGE, have my complete support.

Former Red Sailor



Class Struggle Rocking Europe

continued from page 2

LABOR STRUGGLES SWEEPING FRANCE

The French presidential elections have stirred up workers' worries and hopes. The Peugeot Aulnay plant strike for higher wages has sparked wage battles at Peugeot factories in Melun, Mulhouse and Sochaux. In Melun, two shop stewards who persuaded some workers to down tools are being threatened with firing.

On March 14, 300 Aulnay workers protested at Peugeot's swank Paris offices, in a chic neighborhood. "We've come to make some noise," explained Brahim, 25. "I make 1,200 euros a month and [after four years in the plant] my health is already deteriorating. I have stomach problems because of the odors on the assembly line. It's recognized as a work-related illness, but management refuses to switch me to a different work station." One demonstrator shouted at the executives behind the glass doors, "The company's got money, but we don't see the color of it! In the factory, it's slavery!"

On March 17, 500 workers occupied the Metzeler gasket factory near Rouen to prevent the bosses from shipping machines to Tunisia. Peugeot and Renault are pressuring Metzeler to cut costs, and for two years have been planning moving production abroad. On March 19, management signed an agreement promising it won't, reacting to pressure from government politicians, who want labor peace until after the presidential elections.

On March 20, 40% of the nation's schoolteachers struck against education minister Gilles de Robien's plan to axe 5,000 jobs, make teachers work longer hours with no pay increase and force them to teach subjects they haven't

studied. In Paris, 5,000 teachers demonstrated. That same day, Paris Transport Authority workers struck. Postal workers have been staging slowdowns.

On March 22, Marseilles dockers voted to continue their week-long strike over work at the future extension to the gas and oil terminal. Tankers are tied up, costing the bosses \$250,000 a day.

At the Cabaret sauvage in Paris, where 1,000 people were partying on March 18, Peugeot-Aulnay strikers of Arab and Chinese origin were invited to speak. "It's not just us!" one shouted, "All of France has caught this 'disease,' wage plague [demanding higher wages]." That sums up rank-and-file feelings.

All the top union leaders have met with the three leading presidential candidates, and all three candidates have announced — not too loudly — that, if elected, they'll push through labor "reforms." Secure career paths, "rigid" work contracts and unemployment insurance are all on the chopping block.

Given last year's anti-CPE movement (halting imposition of "flexible" working conditions) and the current labor agitation, the bosses and their politicians need the union hacks to push through these cutback "reforms." And the hacks are collaborating. While encouraging worker militancy right now, and sounding out rank-and-filers to determine what they'll swallow, they're fine-tuning their negotiating positions. But their reformist outlook will sell out the workers.

The conservative newspaper Le Figaro (3/21) warned that in "supporting" worker fight-backs, the union hacks are playing with fire. Indeed — workers need to build a red-led leadership to turn this struggle into a school for communism.☺

Chiquita Banana Death Squads

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many of them Indigenous.

Chiquita is not alone in supporting death squads to terrorize its workers and kill union leaders. Coca Cola and Drummond, which operate coal mines in Colombia, are being accused of such crimes.

Bush's failed "anti-Chávez tour" follows a long history of U.S. presidential claims of "helping" the people of Latin America. Roosevelt had his "good neighbor policy" in the 1930's while the U.S. supported dictators like the Dominican Republic's Trujillo and Nicaragua's Somoza. In the early '50s, Eisenhower sent his brother Milton to the region. He returned to report that it needed economic aid. Instead, more military hardware was sent.

Nixon, then Eisenhower's Vice-President, toured the region and was almost killed by angry crowds in Caracas and Lima. Again, more military aid and support for military dictatorships. Later Nelson Rockefeller went, producing a similar U.S. response. Kennedy established his "Alliance for Progress" to counter the in-

fluence of the 1959 Cuban revolution with the same results: military dictatorships in Brazil, Argentina, Peru, among others. Under his administration, the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba aimed at bringing the country back under U.S. imperialist control but failed miserably.

In 1965, after a right-wing junta in the Dominican Republic had deposed a liberal president, Lyndon Johnson invaded the country with 38,000 Marines to crush a mass uprising bent on bringing back the elected president. When Nixon was president, he and Kissinger engineered the 1973 fascist Pinochet coup in Chile, ousting the then-elected socialist president Allende. Carter and Reagan armed the death squads and Contras of El Salvador and Nicaragua. Clinton initiated "Plan Colombia," helping its drug-infested death-squad army. So Bush is just following his predecessors' footsteps.

(Next article: the need to build a red-led internationalist workers' movement to win the masses away from bourgeois nationalists like Chávez).

'I was a racketeer for capitalism...'

(From a 1933 speech by Marine Corps Major-General Smedley Butler)

War is just a racket....conducted for the benefit of the very few at the expense of the masses....

I spent 33 years...as a member of the country's most agile military force, the Marine Corps....most of my time being a high-class muscle man for Big Business, for Wall Street and the Bankers....I was a racketeer, a gangster for capitalism.

I helped make Mexico...safe for American oil interests in 1914. I helped make Haiti and Cuba a decent place for the National City Bank boys to collect revenues in. I helped in the raping of half a dozen Central American republics for the benefits of Wall Street....I helped purify Nicaragua for the international banking house of Brown Brothers in 1909-1912....I brought light to the Dominican Republic for American sugar interests in 1916. In China I helped to see to it that Standard Oil went its way unmolested....

I feel I could have given Al Capone a few hints. The best he could do was to operate his racket in three districts. I operated on three continents. ☺



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

Democracy fails the Stalin test

Riot police officers swarmed on a group of several dozen journalists and demonstrators on Saturday in Nizhny Novgorod, Russia's third-largest city, cutting off a protest against the government of President Vladimir V. Putin....

A small group of elderly people yelling "Fascists! Fascists!" tried to hold back a second wave of police officers....But they fell to the ground under heavy police shields.

"Look, this is a democracy," said one woman there who refused to be identified. "Under Stalin we had free education and free health care. Now we are not free to say anything." (NYT, 3/15)

Lula enslaves migrants

...Drive to the outskirts of Palmares Paulista and a much bleaker picture emerges of what President Lula has dubbed Brazil's "energy revolution". On one side, thick green plantations of sugar cane stretch out as far as the eye can see....

...At the same time [,] inside prison-like construction are the cortadores de cana — sugar cane cutters — part of a destitute internal migrant workforce of about 200,000 men who help prop up the country's ethanol industry....

"They will do anything to get by."

That includes working 12-hour shifts in scorching heat and earning just over \$1 per tonne of sugar cane. (GW, 3/29)

Latin America: Rage vs. US trade deals

...Protests have been fierce, with Mr. Bush being taunted by signs and graffiti calling him a "murderer" and a "fascist"....

Officials traveling with Mr. Bush acknowledged the sense among the region's poor that the benefits of trade deals with the United States have not trickled down to them....

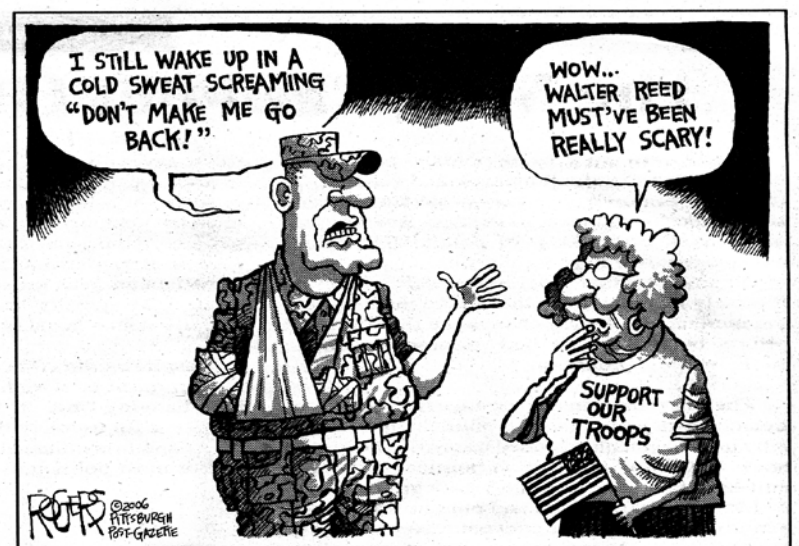
"For close to 20 years of democratic processes and rhetoric about the benefits of democracy and free markets, the average person is waking up and saying, how's my life gotten better?" said a senior administration official speaking on condition of anonymity. "This is a fair question..." (NYT, 3/14)

50% unemployment destroys black communities

...The official unemployment numbers...understate the problem of joblessness for all groups....

Over the past few years, the percentage of black male high school graduates in their 20s who were jobless (including those who abandoned all efforts to find a job) has ranged from well over a third to roughly 50 percent. Those are the kinds of statistics you get during a depression.

For dropouts, the rates of joblessness are staggering. For black males who left high school without a diploma, the real jobless rate at various times over the past few years has ranged from 59 percent to a breathtaking 72 percent....



Jobless rates at such sky-high levels don't just destroy lives, they destroy entire communities. (NYT, 3/15)

Oil \$\$\$ don't help Angola's workers

...Angola is finding itself at the crossroads of today's energy geopolitics. It has become the latest stage in a global rivalry playing out among Western, Russian and Chinese oil companies....

...Angola earned more than \$30 billion last year from its petroleum exports. But according to a recent World Bank report, 70 percent of the population lives on the equivalent of less than \$2 a day, the majority lack access to basic health care, and about one in four children die before their fifth birthday. (NYT, 3/20)

US military aims at Africa oil

The decision to establish Africom, as the command will be known, reflects the Bush administration's primary reliance on the use of force to pursue its strategic interests. Among the key goals for the new command, for example, is the assurance of oil imports from Africa which have assumed much greater importance given the hostility to the US presence in the Middle East. (GW, 3/22)

PLP HISTORY

PL Worker-Student Alliance Trumps SDS Right-wingers

SDS: PART V

The 1969 Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) Convention (June 18-22) in the Chicago Coliseum brought to a head the internal battle between left- and right-wings that had been seething within the organization for several years.

The left was represented by PLP and the Worker-Student Alliance (WSA) Caucus. Invigorated by the practical experience gained in leading sharp on-campus struggles against racism and the bosses' Vietnam genocide, the PLP-WSA contingent arrived at the Convention with a proposal entitled "Less Talk-More Action-Fight Racism!"

The right-wing (which shortly spawned the terrorist Weathermen) was led by outgoing SDS National Secretary Mike Klonsky and Inter-organizational Secretary Bernadine Dohrn. It included Mark Rudd, a former Columbia

SDS chapter chair, whom the rulers had turned into a media star after the 1968 Columbia strike. Throughout the period leading up to the strike, Rudd had consistently opposed the campaign over its main issues: Columbia's ties to the Institute for Defense Analyses and the university's racist expansion into Harlem.

The national SDS right-wing had named itself the "Revolutionary Youth Movement" (RYM). During the pre-convention period, RYM leaders had focused on two goals: in-fighting for political control within SDS and uniting to "get" PL by smashing the growing Worker-Student Alliance Caucus. Expelling PLP from SDS had replaced the struggle against racism and imperialist war as RYM's priority.

The bait was two-pronged: first, the time-worn anti-communist cliché about PLP as "external cadre" bent on

manipulating the SDS rank and file, and second, pseudo-revolutionary nationalism, backed by RYM's unprincipled alliance with the Black Panther Party. (See next issue for an analysis of this alliance.)

Two thousand people attended the Convention, by far the largest turnout in SDS history. The first major fight concerned workshops. PLP and the WSA supported them as the best vehicle for discussing the tactics and politics of struggle and the important ideological differences within the organization. Klonsky & Co. opposed such discussion, offering the lame excuse that there was "no room in the vast Coliseum." When that was exposed as a hoax, Klonsky offered the absurd argument that workshops were PLP's "hunting ground for young people." Another RYM leader called supporting workshops "anti-communist" because it showed the SDS rank and file didn't trust a few leaders to settle matters on the floor.

The membership voted down this nonsense in favor of the workshops, but the RYM "national collective" offered speakers and panels to replace slots of workshop time. This tactic was cleverer, the "national collective" using it to block the workshops.

Most people had come to the Convention expecting to discuss different political approaches to the practical task of building an anti-imperialist, anti-racist movement. PLP's anti-nationalist position, which by now had been published in PL Magazine ("Revolutionaries Must Fight Nationalism"), could be understood only in this context. But the opportunist RYM crowd avoided all discussion of practice, smearing PL as "racist" and "opposed to struggle."

The RYM leadership never showed how the WSA's supposedly "reactionary" ideas undermined its practice during militant campus fights from San Francisco State to Harvard, in which the PLP and WSA had played key roles. When the RYM leaders' own practice was criticized, as at Columbia and Berkeley, they had no response except more red-baiting.

The racism panel exposed the total bankruptcy of the "national collective." (Next: The minority "expels" the majority.) ☸

(Excerpts from a Feb. 17 speech to the "Movement for A Democratic Society" by Mark Rudd, former leader of the SDS's right-wing, on "The Death of SDS," exposing the anti-communist lie that "PLP wrecked SDS." Actually PL'ers fought for a mass Worker-Student Alliance-based SDS while facing physical and ideological attacks from the terrorist Weathermen and other right-wingers.)

I [was]...one of the principal authors, almost forty years ago, of a totally failed strategy.... My little faction seized control of the SDS national office and several of the regional offices. We then made the tragic decision — in 1969, at the height of the [Vietnam] war — to kill off SDS because it wasn't revolutionary enough for us.... I remember a certain meeting with no more than ten people present — out of a national membership of 12,000 and perhaps ten times that many chapter members — at which we in the Weatherman clique running



the NO [National Office — Ed.] decided to scuttle SDS. I remember driving a VW van with Teddy Gold from the NY Regional Office...[in NYC — Ed.] to the Sanitation Dept. pier at the end of W. 14th Street...and dumping the addressograph mailing stencils and other records from the Regional Office onto a barge. These...decisions...I and my comrades made unilaterally....

We could have... fought to keep SDS in existence...to unite as many people as possible against the war (which is what the Vietnamese had asked us to do) while at the same time educating around imperialism. I often wonder, had we done so, where we would have been a few months later, in May, 1970, when the biggest student protests in American history jumped off?....

The Weatherman faction, by killing off SDS, did the work of the FBI for them. Assuming we weren't in the pay of the FBI, we should have been. ☸

Speculators Profit, Workers Pay the Bill

The recent subprime mortgage scandal shows that greed for profits under capitalism knows no limits. When profiteering causes a crisis, the pain is always passed on to the working class.

The booming real estate market in the early 2000s attracted speculators who wanted to get in on the scam of lending money to people with imperfect credit. Regulated financial institutions like banks could only give mortgages to those with adequate credit. Speculators rushed in to fill this void and set up new outfits that borrowed from banks in order to finance mortgages to subprimes (mostly low-wage workers who couldn't qualify for credit elsewhere) giving out mortgages pretty much to anyone who applied.

The media exclaimed how the "American dream" of home ownership now had been extended to all. The subprime mortgages were a fraud right from the beginning. They had seductive low-interest rates for the first few years but then the rates ballooned. To keep up the mortgage payments, workers could refinance (going further into debt) because housing prices were still rising. But now that the boom is over, and rising interest rates have made monthly mortgage payments much higher, millions of workers have fallen behind and are in default.

As the foreclosure sales (when workers are thrown out and the banks sell their houses), these workers will be saddled with the difference as a mountain of debt in many cases won't cover the amount of the bloated mortgages, (with capitalism's racism causing a disproportionate number of them to be black and Latin).

Workers woes will be compounded by new laws that largely prevent them from declaring bankruptcy -- at the same time corporate bankruptcy rights to abrogate union contracts and void worker pension guarantees were preserved. So much for the "promises" of capitalism!

Faced with the threat that the failure of the subprimes could cause a financial crisis, liberals are calling for regulating the mortgage speculators. This call for capitalism to "change its stripes" flies in the face of the bosses' constant drive for maximum profits. The "regulated" banks, after all, who weren't allowed to make the subprime loans, had little reservation about buying "bundles" of these mortgages from the speculators so that they could get a cut of the profits from workers' future misery. The only solution for workers will be getting rid of the speculators AND the "respectable" bosses who, with their usual greed, financed and profited from the subprime mortgages. ☸

Mortgage Collapse Spreading...

Lost profits from the collapse of the subprime mortgage speculations are worrisome to U.S. bosses. The real fear is that this collapse will spread throughout the whole economy. The NY Times estimates that over \$800 billion of highly vulnerable mortgages have been written in the last five years of the housing boom. Banks that have profited from those mortgages may now have to write off losses, as foreclosures are rising to record levels. These losses will depress housing prices, making it impossible for other homeowners to continue the refinancing that have enabled them to pay the higher mortgage payments caused by recent increases in interest rates.

This collapse promises to slow down or end the boom in new housing construction that has been the biggest plus for the bosses' economy in recent years. If the economy slows down sharply, the rulers will be harder pressed to pay for their war plans. Foreign capitalists who have financed the growing U.S. debt will want higher interest payments to "stay the course" and those higher rates would only make the housing crisis worse. US rulers will use tax increases, wage cuts and terror tactics to try to pass their losses onto the working class. Liberals will call for "shared sacrifice" which just means that workers get to pay the bill! ☸

CAL Teachers Oppose Imperialist Wars, Build Unity of Workers and Soldiers

LOS ANGELES, CA, March 18 — Delegates to the annual convention of the California Federation of Teachers (CFT) voted with their feet and their ballots this weekend. Almost 100 delegates joined the mass anti-war march in Hollywood. Some carried signs calling for "US Out of Iraq Now, No War on Iran." Other signs linked the Iraq war to racism and class struggle at home, supporting Katrina survivors striking war profiteer Northrop Grumman in Mississippi (see page 1). Others demanded the U.S. government stop destroying Baghdad and start rebuilding New Orleans.

Convention delegates supported a resolution of solidarity with the Northrop Grumman strikers, identifying the company as a major military contractor and highlighting the resources fattening company profits by 39% in the last quarter of 2006, resources desperately needed by workers who survived Katrina. Several delegates agreed with a leaflet saying this strike shows "the power of the working class to throw a monkey wrench into the heart of the war machine." Some also agreed that European strikers against Airbus face the same attacks.

Delegates also enthusiastically supported the Oaxaca teachers, raising over \$2,000 to send home with a guest speaker from their union. They approved resolutions opposing war on Iran and declaring solidarity with the faculty of the California State University system (who are not CFT members) in their current contract struggle. Nearly 400 delegates also voted to support Lt. Ehren Watada, who refused deployment to Iraq, but said he would go to Afghanistan, and to encourage CFT locals and members to "report our anti-war position to active-duty soldiers wherever possible." This indicated a growing awareness of the need for an anti-war movement inside the U.S. military. However, its cautious wording and lack of a plan show that much more work is needed to win anti-war teachers away from legalistic, patriotic pacifism,

to a revolutionary anti-imperialist outlook.

The liberal CFT leadership didn't openly oppose these resolutions, but pushed its own political agenda with speeches from Democratic Party politicians and a boring presentation on healthcare "reform." State Senator Gil Cedillo promoted his "California Dream Act" which would allow undocumented immigrant students to pay in-state tuition. The Act's name aims to confuse people into supporting the national "DREAM Act" which would draw immigrant youth into the military.

L.A. Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa begged teachers to support his plan to take over the city school system, for "reform" and "accountability." Few were impressed, but many still wrongly believe that liberal boss-sponsored "reforms" would benefit black and Latin working-class children. Little time was allowed for discussion. Sharper struggle is needed to expose the roots of the racism in the education system. These "reforms" aim to win students and teachers to patriotism. Some mistakenly try to "work with" or "around" these liberal reformers in the CFT leadership rather than confront their pro-imperialist politics.

The American Federation of Teachers Peace and Justice Caucus members gave leadership in advancing many of these resolutions and in organizing the march contingent. Now they must raise the issues in their schools and organize teachers and students for action.

CHALLENGE readers should get the paper to friends and invite them to PLP's May Day activities. This will prepare them to even more sharply challenge the leadership's liberal politics next time. Such a struggle can help PLP grow and is necessary to organize a communist revolution that would truly destroy the profit system and its wars. ☸