

# CHALLENGE



THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

volume 42 no. 2

january 20, 2010

suggested donation \$.50

# As Oil Wars Spread, Biggest Terrorists: U.S. Rulers

Since Inauguration Day, the Obama regime has ruthlessly enforced working-class "sacrifices" to protect embattled U.S. capitalists. Workers — suffering Depression-level job, wage and service cuts — bear the multi-trillion-dollar costs of Obama & Co.'s bank bailouts and ever-expanding Middle East energy wars. And on these killing fields, working-class soldiers and civilians unwillingly pay with their lives as Team Obama defends the profits of oil giants like Exxon Mobil, as well as U.S. rulers' attempt to control energy supplies and pipeline routes to maintain their shaky global supremacy.

Now, with six million U.S. workers whose only income is food stamps and over 30 million unemployed or underemployed, Obama has opened a new war front in Yemen. It reinforces his Afghan surge, Pakistan raids, and non-existent Iraqi withdrawal.

Oil and mineral resources and geography drive U.S. rulers' Yemen offensive. Significantly, Yemen borders Saudi Arabia, which holds the world's largest oil reserves. It has been the cornerstone of U.S. geostrategic dominance since World War II when President Roosevelt made a pact with Saudi rulers to defend their dictatorship in exchange for exclusive U.S. access to Saudi oil. And Yemen's extensive Red Sea and Gulf of

Aden coastlines command the export routes for Saudi crude to Europe, Africa and the Americas.

## Death Toll Mounts as U.S.-led Oil Wars Widen to Yemen and Somalia

U.S. rulers have two major foes in Yemen. Al Qaeda forces there represent non-royal Saudi capitalists, led by Osama bin Laden, who, long excluded from it, seek to cut in on that kingdom's fabulous oil wealth, at Exxon Mobil's expense. In addition, Iranian-backed Houthi insurgents in Yemen, like Hamas in Palestine and Hezbollah in Lebanon, comprise yet another proxy anti-U.S. army. They serve not only Iran's ayatollahs seeking regional power but also far larger, long-term U.S. imperialist rivals China and Russia. China already has deals for Iran's oil while Russia supplies Iran's nuclear needs.

Obama hit Yemen long before the unsuccessful Christmas Day plane bombing. "The United States provided firepower, intelligence and other support to the government of Yemen as it carried out raids this week to strike at suspected hideouts of al Qaeda." (NY Times, 12/18/09) And BBC reported (12/21/09), "The town of al-Nadeer [a Houthi stronghold] was targeted by air-strikes [killing] 54 civilians, including women and children," via Saudi Arabian planes piloted by Saudi royal princes in U.S.-supplied jets — part of the afore-mentioned U.S. deal with the Saudi ruling family.

Bloomberg News (1/3/10) repeats the cause-and-effect lie: "The U.S. and U.K. governments will increase counter-terrorism efforts in Yemen and Somalia as they respond to a failed attempt to blow up an airplane over Detroit."

Why Somalia and why the Brits? It's all about oil. Somalia, itself beset by anti-U.S. Islamic forces, mirrors Yemen in bordering Saudi export routes. Pirates based in Somalia have already seized a few Saudi oil shipments. A future, anti-U.S. Somali government could curtail these shipments far more severely.

## Obama Uses Fascism to Stifle Fight-Back

For some time now, step by step, U.S. rulers have tightened the screws on workers' daily lives:

- Obama's bailout of GM forced mass layoffs and cutoffs of retiree benefits to make

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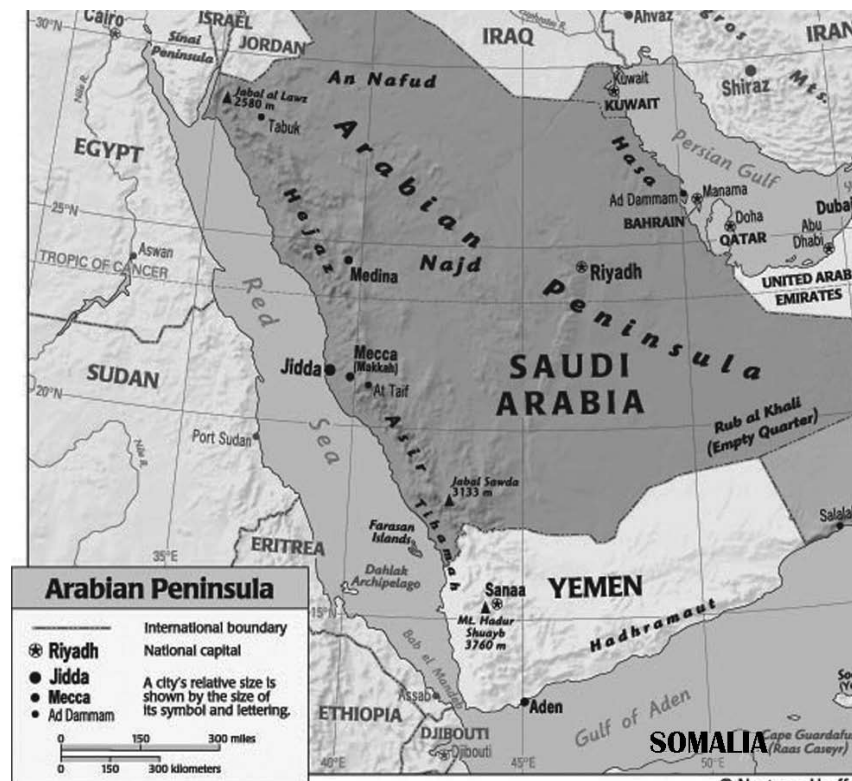
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# Fight Racist Unemployment: Bosses Profit on Workers' Backs

With all the rosy hoopla coming from Wall Street and the Obama administration about the economy "turning around" and unemployment "dipping" to 10% in November, the real picture belies their hot air. As reported by the website <shadowstats.com> which "shadows" government statistics, a "double-dip" recession is in place. "What lies ahead should be a renewed plunge in economic activity."

The severity and duration of the current Great Recession is unprecedented since the Great Depression of the 1930s. "One in eight Americans receive food stamps, including one in four children." (NY Times, 1/3) Actually, there are about 35 million workers in the U.S. unemployed or underemployed. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the November unemployment rate of 10% represents 15.4 million jobless. But those figures do not include:

- At least 9.2 million working part-time, unable to find non-existent full-time jobs;
- At least 2.3 million "discouraged" workers who are not counted because they have not sought a job in the four weeks preceding the government polling;
- The unreported long-term unemployed (more than a year), who the Clinton administration re-defined as "beyond discouraged" and are not recorded in any government figures, even as "discouraged";
- Those youth who joined the military because they couldn't find a job, except a "job" killing and being killed in two U.S. imperialist wars;
- Those on welfare who would work if a job and child day-care were available;
- Those in prison for non-violent offenses (over half of the 2.4 million incarcerated) who in most

countries are not jailed but put in re-hab situations, many of whom would add to the jobless rolls;

- Many of the three million homeless, living either on the streets, in tents or in shanty towns and who government polling fails to reach;
- Those among the estimated 12 million undocumented workers who are "non-persons" in the eyes of government statisticians.

Add that all up and there's no doubt that U.S. capitalism is in the throes of another Great Depression.

## Racist Unemployment

Because of racism embedded in the profit system, conditions are even worse for black, Latino, Asian and Native American workers. Black workers face a jobless rate double that of white workers, and Latino and Asian workers slightly less than double. Unemployment estimates among Native Americans run as high as 90%.

U.S. capitalism needs, and thrives on, this racism to rake in hundreds of billions in super-profits — the difference in income between white workers and the super-exploited. It's equally useful to the

bosses as a weapon to divide and weaken the entire working class's ability to fight back.

In the 1930s, a huge communist-led movement of the unemployed involved hundreds of thousands, and at times millions, taking to the streets and fighting for welfare relief and unemployment insurance. Both were eventually won by this mass struggle. But, as with all reform gains, the ruling class chops away at them, so that Clinton's "welfare reform" removed millions from even this dole, while the bosses' laws leave 60% of the jobless ineligible for unemployment benefits.

Launching such a movement now in the shops and unions could pressure the rulers to reverse some of the screws they've put on our class. But even more importantly, it could unify the working class's fight against this system that forces workers into such dire straits. A mass movement uniting the unemployed and employed, can become a school for communism, out of which PLP — involved in the leadership of such a fight — could win masses to join PLP and see the necessity of a revolution to wipe out capitalism. ☸

## U.S. Rulers Biggest Terrorists

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the company financially "solvent" at workers' expense;

- Racist stop-and-frisk policies in big cities;
- "Random" searches in mass transit, airports and train stations;
- Encouraging informing on fellow citizens ("if you see something, say something");
- Police and metal detectors in public schools;
- Anti-immigrant raids, harassment and jailings.

All of this is becoming accepted practice in Obama's "land of the free," using fear to get the working class to gradually accept fascist control of their daily lives in a militaristic society. Obama's targeting of the Yemeni source of a Nigerian rich kid's "underwear bomb" is merely a pretext to intensify these policies. Now U.S. rulers are using the December 25 airline incident to advance their plans for a police state, of which stepped-up screening of air passengers is only a part. They mean to make Israeli-style racial profiling widely accepted, along with Gestapo-like treatment of the general public.

Under orders from Obama's authorities, pillows, laptops and blankets will be barred from fliers' laps in the last hour of flight, along with trips to the bathroom, not to mention snatching blankets covering babies (yes, it's happened). Such moves coincide with recent Obama administration legalistic jockeying towards open fascism.

In November, Obama's federal court reaffirmed Bush, Jr.'s abolition of lawyer-client privilege in the Lynne Stewart case, a militant lawyer convicted of supporting terrorism by relaying a message for a client accused of terrorism. In December, another Obama panel enforced federal

cop terror by refusing to prosecute the owners of the Pilgrim Pride poultry company for exploiting immigrants after hundreds of these workers underwent jail time, deportation, or both. His immigration agents worked with LA garment manufacturer American Apparel to fire half its immigrant workforce. Obama presides over a vast racist prison system with over 2.4 million inmates, 70% black and Latino. But all workers are its potential victims.

### Why The Rulers Need Fascism

As the layoffs, wage-cuts, two-tier wage systems, racist police attacks, billion-dollar gifts to bankers, home foreclosures, millions "living" on food stamps and on the streets — as all this mounts, the ruling class fears workers may begin to rebel, especially if led by communists. They want fascist controls in place to ward off any attempts to fight this oppression.

Candidate Obama won more than 60 million voters — mainly working-class — to promises of jobs and peace, and advancement for black and Latino workers. President Obama now delivers the opposite. His election, in fact, proves that workers never win by "voting the rascals out." The problem is not that a "weak" Obama has opportunistically embraced the "special interests," as some of his disappointed liberal former supporters claim. The problem is the profit system itself. Under it, every politician represents one faction or another of capitalists who gain from exploiting workers in one fashion or another.

Obama serves the dominant, imperialist Rockefeller-led wing of U.S. bosses. These are the biggest capitalists who, in defending the long-range interests of their system, use fascist control to discipline those rivals concerned only with their immediate short-term profits, at the risk of producing, or aggravating, crises like the current one.

So fascism serves many purposes for the rulers: to discipline the working class; make it pay for the capitalists' periodic crises; combat potential rebellion; and also discipline the "Enron" types in their own class.

The only solution for the working class lies beyond the ballot box, in building a revolutionary, communist party, the PLP, with the long-term outlook of establishing true workers' power — communism. Then we workers will control our lives and collectively distribute the fruits of our labors, free of bosses' exploitation, racism, sexism and endless imperialist wars. ☸

## OUR FIGHT

★ **Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to smash capitalism — wage slavery. While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions all over the world.**

★ **Capitalism returned to the Soviet Union and China because socialism failed to wipe out many aspects of the profit system, like wages and division of labor.**

★ **Capitalism inevitably leads to wars. PLP organizes workers, students and soldiers to turn these wars into a revolution for communism — the dictatorship of the proletariat. This fight requires a mass Red Army led by the communist PLP.**

★ **Communism means working collectively to build a society where sharing is based on need. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. Everyone will share in society's benefits and burdens.**

★ **Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of race.**

★ **Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women — sexism — and traditional gender roles created by class society.**

★ **Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One International working class, one world, one Party.**

★ **Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!**

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

• [www.plp.org](http://www.plp.org)

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

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

• 718-630-9440

CHALLENGE/DESAFIO (ISSN 0009-1049) published bi-weekly by Challenge Periodicals. 1 issue \$.50. One Year: \$15. Six months: \$10. Send address changes to CHALLENGE Periodicals, GPO Box 808 Brooklyn, NY 11202, January 20 2010, Volume 42, No. 2

### Why Articles Are Not Signed

The fact that CHALLENGE/PLP articles are not signed grows from PLP's criticism of the cult of the individual in the former socialist Soviet Union and China. We do not want to encourage the possibility of building up a "following" around any particular individual. While an article may be written by one person, the final version is based on collective discussion and criticism. Many times this collective discussion even precedes an individual's writing of an article.

# Student Rally Links Racist Fare Fraud to War, Bankers' Bailout

**BROOKLYN, NY, December 21** — As soon as students at our school heard about the rally against Metrocard cuts, they got together to figure out plans to mobilize our friends and teachers. We were furious about the MTA's latest proposal to cut free and reduced-fare student Metrocards for all NYC students in order to balance their budget. This racist attack against the overwhelmingly black and Latino school population would cost families about \$1,000 a year for each child when one-in-three black workers and one-in-four Latino workers are unemployed. Half-a-million students use free or half-fare Metrocards to get to school.

Once again the bosses are forcing the working class to pay for their ongoing capitalist crisis and imperialist wars. This system, that can't provide basic education and transportation for its young people, must be destroyed.

Over the weekend we decided to hand out flyers by the train station most students use, calling for a walkout and then to go to the city-wide rally. All day students talked with their friends about the actions. We passed out leaflets in the cafeteria and in their classes. We made signs for the rally and there was a sense of excitement throughout the school.

Some teachers used their history classroom to help organize for the rally. They said that these attacks are part of a class war being waged against the workers by the ruling class. The point was made that we could see these attacks as a test, to see how New York City students will respond to ongoing

attacks.

In one class, students organized a debate. The resolution was: "Mayor Bloomberg should pay for NYC's economic crisis." Twenty-six students supported the resolution while only three argued against it. This debate led to even more discussions about whether a walkout and protests were the correct way to deal with budget cuts.

One student talked about the need to fight back and explained that the reason why the budget cuts exist is partly because of the trillions of dollars being spent on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan for oil. He pointed to all the bases the U.S. has built in the Middle East and told students not to have any illusions about the U.S. pulling the troops out.

When two o'clock came, a small group of students, signs in hand, went around the school knocking on classroom doors and encouraging students to walk out. Unfortunately the walk out was smaller than we had hoped. More time was needed to really organize such an event. Although some students got discouraged, the students who did go to the rally were glad they went and plan on continuing to organize more actions in the school.

When we got to the rally, Charles Barron and other city council members were making speeches and playing loud music. The music was so loud that it drowned out most attempts at chanting led by students. As PLP members arrived with our own bullhorns, we began to give speeches exposing this

latest racist attack as part of the capitalist system, and raising the need for communist revolution. We explained that since trillions are being spent on imperialist war in Iraq and Afghanistan, bailouts for the banks and auto industry and debt service to the banks, the bosses must increasingly attack the working class. This began a series of speeches made by students, all expressing their anger at this attack.

One young man said that students had joined the rally to show their anger, not to celebrate. He directed his comments at the politicians and demanded that they turn the music off. Within seconds the whole crowd was chanting "Turn the music off." The bosses' politicians were isolated and students then took charge of the rally, chanting and picketing in the cold for the next hour. Three students, who made speeches about the need to fight back, were speaking on a bullhorn for the first time.

We learned a lot about what it takes to organize class struggle with both boldness and patience. We are gaining confidence in our ability to defend revolutionary ideas. One student expressed it this way: "This wasn't my first experience walking out from school, and I'm sure it won't be my last. I was excited and proud to be part of this movement and I know we will fight back and win students, teachers and workers to our side." ☺

## Hyatt's 'Hospitality': Racist Firings Spur Class War

**BOSTON, MA, November 11** — "Hyatt says lay off, We get pissed off" chanted faculty and students from Roxbury Community College (RCC) who, along with fired Hyatt workers held a spirited picket line at the Hyatt Hotel at Logan airport. The rally was called to protest the racist firing of the entire housekeeping staff, 90% Latinas, from the three Hyatt hotels in Boston. Through signs, speakers, and chants, we connected the firing of Hyatt housekeepers and cutbacks at community colleges to the crisis of capitalism.

All summer Hyatt's General Managers kept bringing in new housekeepers and assigning their staff to train them. The bosses told them that the new workers, hired by an out-of-state staffing company, would be filling in for them when they took vacation time and on weekends (so that they could have weekends off!). On August 31<sup>st</sup>, the Hyatt bosses informed their housekeepers that they were all being fired and replaced by the same workers they had just trained.

Many of them were overwhelmed with outrage, panic, and disbelief at such treatment. The new workers, also mainly Latinas, were hired at half the pay and with no benefits. Some, having made friends with the veteran workers, quit in solidarity.

When the workers began to protest their firings, liberal Mayor Menino and Governor Patrick tried to pacify them by brokering a deal with Hyatt: Give the workers their jobs back for one year with the same pay and benefits. The workers unanimously voted down this sellout! However, under the mis-leadership of Local 26, the Hotel Workers' Union, they've been pursuing another losing strategy. They have been try-

ing to get guests and conferences to boycott the hotels rather than use workers' power to shut down the three Hyatts (as well as other unionized hotels in the Boston area).

A month later, Governor Patrick announced the lay-offs of 1,000 Massachusetts state workers. When he was challenged for his hypocrisy, he said, "But we're not making them train their replacements!" To workers, it doesn't matter if we get fired by vicious and lying Hyatt bosses, or by two-faced liberals like Gov. Patrick. We are still losing our jobs to save corporate profits. Throughout Massachusetts the firings at the Hyatt have become a symbol of the class war against workers as the financial crisis intensifies.

Most importantly, the rally helped to bring several students around PLP. Their desire to support the Hyatt workers shows that many in our class reject the individualism that is rampant under capitalism. Their participation in a CHALLENGE Reader's Group will help them develop an understanding of capitalism and what it will take to liberate our class. Also, a PLP leaflet blaming capitalism for the mass firings at Hyatt was passed out at RCC by faculty and students from another college, building the kind of worker-student solidarity that will strengthen our Party work. ☺



## Airport Contract Fight Exposes Need for Revolution, Not Reform

**MIDWEST AIRPORT, December 30** — The class struggle of airport and metro-area cleaners is getting sharper as the bosses attempt to stall and delay over union contract negotiations. The SEIU bargaining committee, composed of rank-and-file janitors, confronted the cleaning bosses' high-priced lawyer in an angry exchange. Metro-cleaning bosses are keeping new cleaners on probation for an illegal extra 60 days. This is anti-working-class and nothing but racist super-exploitation which has many workers ready to strike if need be!

The majority of cleaners are African and Latino immigrants, from El Salvador, Mexico, Ethiopia and Somalia. These workers are tired of the cleaning bosses not respecting them, something bosses will never give workers under capitalism.

The bosses know that if negotiations break down after the December 31<sup>st</sup> deadline, it would take three weeks to replace strikers with scabs, which could be crucial for the metro cleaners' contract fight as well. This is why airport bosses are harassing the union shop steward. After an onsite union meeting at the airport, supervisors and managers wrote up only the steward for "failure to return to work area on time."

The airport bosses are desperate because they know what could happen if airport cleaners strike. They want to make an example of the steward to scare workers into not fighting back, and use this attack on the steward to get the union's focus off contract negotiations. The workers seemed determined in their battle against the racist bosses. The contract struggle is opening new opportunities for airport workers to learn about PLP and revolutionary politics.

The union steward gave a presentation to fellow workers called "Communist Revolution versus Capitalist Reform in our Contract Struggle." The workers asked great questions and some agreed a communist revolution for an anti-racist society is needed.

We put our small class struggle at the airport and metro area in the context of larger struggles worldwide, such as the immigrants' strikes in France, making the connection that we are all oppressed by capitalism. We also showed how our airport/metro area struggle is connected to the capitalist economic crisis. The bosses' solution for their problems is by taking away workers' gains. A communist revolution globally would liberate the international working class. We will win some day against our fascist oppressors. ☺

# Promoting PLP's Politics at MLA Convention

**PHILADELPHIA, January 2** — PLP members and friends were active at the recent Modern Language Association (MLA) convention through our participation with friends in the Radical Caucus (RC). In two RC-sponsored panels we advocated the need for revolution rather than reliance on reform, no matter how militant. In one panel, in fact, a presentation was made specifically on "teaching revolution."

We also helped promote two resolutions at the Delegate Assembly (DA). One called for firm job security and benefits for all higher education workers and was easily adopted. The second advocated that the University of Colorado rehire Ward Churchill, a Native American studies expert and activist who was fired because he expressed indifference to the deaths of those killed on 9/11.

Churchill was fired for expressing his opinion. Debate was so lengthy that a quorum — a critical number of delegates — was no longer present to vote on it. The RC may raise it again next year.

For the first time in many years there's an organized right-wing movement in the MLA. Russell Ber-

man, Stanford U. professor and "senior fellow" at the anti-communist Hoover Institution, did his best to confuse the issue around Churchill's firing. Ber- man will be MLA President in two years.

The DA Organizing Committee (DAOC), which runs the annual meeting, opposed both resolutions, as they've often done, although delegates have often ignored its recommendations, as they did here.

That's why the DAOC is aiming to sharply limit members' ability to bring resolutions before the annual meeting. This distrust of the delegates — who often pass RC motions and resolutions — will sharpen future struggles.

The DAOC and Executive Council appeared troubled by a 2008 RC-sponsored resolution critical of Israeli terrorism against Palestinian workers which passed at last year's annual meeting and in a MLA-member vote. Conservative and Zionist members will probably try to recall this resolution, which would open the whole issue to debate again.

Fewer members attended the convention this year, reflecting sharp cuts in university budgets and also causing a smaller RC meeting than previously.

This trend will surely continue.

This foreshadows much struggle ahead in the MLA. Next year the RC may propose that MLA's dues structure be progressive. Now it's regressive, the lower-paid members paying a higher percentage of their income in dues than higher-paid members do.

At this annual RC meeting our members and friends explained that capitalism, not who's president, is the root cause of all the injustices and problems in higher education, in society and in the world. We promoted a Marxist class analysis and the need for communist revolution to overthrow capitalism.

Some younger activists have begun to help lead the RC in reaching out to other groups within the MLA, an excellent development.

Our most important effort is to develop ties with new people and with older friends. It's challenging to plan political activities among members spanning all of North America and who meet only once a year. We struggle to stay in touch during the year and introduce CHALLENGE to them. ☪

## Newark Rally: 'Bush, Obama — Different Name, Same Game!'

**NEWARK, NJ, January 4** — On the cold, rainy, dark evening after Obama announced his expansion of the war in Afghanistan, 50 people, including PLP members, joined in a rally outside the Gateway Center offices of New Jersey Senators Lautenberg and Menendez. In spite of the lousy weather, we could have distributed hundreds more leaflets than we had. The support we received from commuters returning from New York City and drivers passing by was amazing. And people were eager to join in our chants, including "Bush, Obama. Different name, same game," "Soldiers, sailors and marines. Resist the bloody war machine," and "Lautenberg, Menendez. Stop the funding for the killing."

By the beginning of 2008, the U.S. ruling class as a whole knew that it was in big trouble. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan were not going as planned, the house-of-cards economy was beginning to crumble and large sections of the working class, including students and those who consider themselves "progressives," were rapidly growing into a disaffected force bemoaning the direction of the country. But all was not lost for the ruling class. The old money section found its knight in shining armor: a young black man with a charming wife and adorable children, who spoke in terms reminiscent of their earlier "heroes," Martin Luther King and the Kennedy brothers. And it worked, at least for a while. Students, members of black and Latino communities and aging activists from the 60's believed, and rallied in numbers with enthusiasm not seen in decades.

But those of us in the Progressive Labor Party, and our friends, saw immediately that this was yet another cruel hoax being perpetrated on the working class, for whom there is no truly "kinder face" of capitalism. Whether the titular head of the government is Democrat or Republican, liberal or conservative, black or white, the message for the working class is clear — the ruling class will use whatever means it feels necessary to maintain its place on the world stage, including driving the working class further and further into the hole of unemployment, insecurity and endless wars.

So what has the working class seen from Obama during his first year in office? An official unemployment rate currently at 10%, with a real rate over 20%, and even higher in many working-class communities. Billions upon

billions of dollars pumped into the banks and big business, with little to nothing being done to help people save their homes and get jobs. A retreat from promises to close Guantanamo and stop Bush administration policies such as rendition. A healthcare "reform" program which ultimately will do nothing more than pump billions more into insurance and pharmaceutical companies while forcing working-class families to privately pay for policies with no meaningful restrictions on cost. And while Obama was somewhat truthful about his plans for Afghanistan, he never admitted that when done, he would put more troops in that country than Bush ever did and expand U.S. attacks to Pakistan and Yemen.

Many workers support this latest version of the ruling class's "knight in shining armor." Many of them believed that they could get universal health care by just demonstrating and lobbying for it. Even more believed that Obama was just making his "more-troops-to-Afghanistan" statements solely in order to get elected, that he'd never "really" do that. When Obama came to the new sports arena in Newark, several days before the November gubernatorial election, thousands of people, overwhelmingly black, stood in line for hours, young children in tow, in order to see and hear him.

Four members of local chapters of two anti-war groups went down to the arena with 400 leaflets calling for the immediate withdrawal of all troops from Iraq and Afghanistan. We were stunned at the response, with many people practically grabbing the leaflets from our hands. We gave out all 400 within a half hour, and could have distributed several thousand more.

This period is certainly one fraught with danger for the working class, as the ruling class attacks on us became increasingly vicious. But it is also a time of great opportunity, as our brothers and sisters learn first-hand the painful lesson that capitalism offers nothing but more suffering. Only a communist revolution will provide us with what we need, a society in which we are able to develop our full potential and enjoy the fruits of our labor. ☪

## Youth Leadership Takes Hold at Salvador PLP Communist Schools

**EL SALVADOR, January 2** — "There will always be the exploited until we eliminate the exploiters," declared a worker at one of two communist political schools comprising 35 workers, students and farmworkers. These end-of-the-year gatherings were filled with political education, revolutionary solidarity and splendid dinners.

We discussed an international report, the document "Reform and Revolution" and CHALLENGE — distribution, writing articles and building clubs and study groups.

Two junior high school students explained how inter-imperialist rivalry between the U.S., Russia, China and Europe has worldwide effects, including directly on the working class here. They are understanding and spreading PLP's communist ideas. One participated in several meetings; the other was attending for the first time. Both were applauded for their contributions about PLP's revolutionary struggle.

Two comrades led the "Reform and Revolution" discussion. The youth directed questions to everyone, especially the Party leadership here, about the urgency of advancing revolutionary communism, not becoming absorbed in the work of the reform leaders. The older comrade reviewed his experience in mass organizations since the 1960's.

One comrade observed that those here "are those we've most developed onto the communist road and we're directing to take our scientific Marxist Leninist ideas into all the mass organizations."

Another comrade revealed that her organization just had a march of 500 women demanding jobs and better living conditions. Because of this, they immediately assigned a comrade to that area in January, aiming to establish contacts with the factory workers in the "free zones" (maquillas) through comrades living there.

Another comrade said she was leading classes for women on "Non-Sexist and Inclusive Education," presenting a communist line. Some teachers have already responded positively. El Salvador has many feminist movements which pose the struggle as one of men against women, not as a fight to destroy the capitalist system, the source of sexism. This comrade has a political base in this union,

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# China-U.S. Pipeline Battle Speeds Drive to World War

Chinese imperialists recently opened a pipeline that will deliver 70 billion cubic meters of natural gas yearly from Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan to China's Xinjiang province. This sharply intensifies the inter-imperialist dogfight over central Asia's vast energy resources, benefiting the China-Russia-Iran axis while inflicting a serious blow to U.S. bosses' geopolitical interests. China's gains will force the U.S. rulers to launch more regional wars, accelerating the drive toward World War III.

The Chinese pipeline is a major blow to the U.S.-EU plans for the Nabucco and TAPI pipelines that led to the increased U.S. troop commitment in Afghanistan. Nabucco would deliver central Asian gas to Europe through Turkey, bypassing Russia and Iran and breaking Russia's chokehold on the European energy market. TAPI (the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India pipeline) would take this gas to Pakistan and India, further isolating Iran.

Now, Moscow can continue to use its virtual monopoly of Europe's energy market to align major European countries with its geopolitical interests. Pakistan and India may have to rely on Iranian gas via IPI (the Iran-Pakistan-India pipeline) which Pakistan and Iran, against U.S. opposition, have agreed to build.

## Bypassing Malacca Strait Crucial to China's War Strategy

Eighty percent of China's imported oil passes through Malacca, a narrow sea passage easily closed by the U.S. in case of a major confrontation with China. To get around this, China is building pipeline ports in Pakistan and Myanmar, both of which border China, to deliver this oil and future Myanmar gas via land routes to China's northwest provinces.

U.S. bosses have already deployed war ships in the Indian Ocean, positioned to intercept these

Chinese oil tankers, and are negotiating for more naval bases in the area. China's response: speed up construction of its blue-water navy and build a string of naval bases along the Indian Ocean rim.

## Middle Eastern Oil Indispensable for China's Growth And Military Power

The richest energy sources for China, available via land, lie in Central Asia, the Middle East and Russia. Thus, China has also built a pipeline from oil-rich Kazakhstan that, starting this year, will carry 400,000 barrels per day to Xinjiang. China is also signing mega-deals with Russia to deliver, also through Xinjiang, Siberian oil and gas for the next two decades.

Central Asia can satisfy all of China's gas needs, but not all of its oil. Imperialist alliances are temporary. Russia, an imperialist competitor, could in the long run be an unreliable source. Thus, Chinese bosses need to confront the U.S. for control of the Middle East, most sharply right now over Iraq and Iran.

In spite of the fact that Exxon Mobil and Shell won bids on the biggest oil fields in Iraq's June oil auction and almost got double the price China and Russia will receive per barrel of oil produced, US bosses are not happy. As oil magnate T. Boone Pickens told the Congressional Natural Gas Caucus in October, "We're entitled to it... Heck, we even lost 5,000 of our people, 65,000 injured and a trillion, five hundred billion dollars. We leave there with the Chinese getting the oil."

That won't happen peacefully. The US rulers did not butcher over a million Iraqi workers for China's sake! The U.S. oil majors did not even bother to participate in the bidding at Iraq's December auction. With over 250,000 soldiers and mercenaries still occupying Iraq, they plan to change the rules of the game. Chinese bosses also know that they

are at a disadvantage in Iraq. That only leaves them Iran – for now.

Iran has the second largest gas and third largest oil deposits in the world. It's China's best bet for securing its oil by land. So China has invested over \$120 billion in Iranian energy infrastructure over the last five years, while becoming Iran's main trading partner and a main arms supplier.

But the U.S. bosses want that Iranian gas, too, especially after China's gains in Central Asia. That's what could resurrect Nabucco and TAPI. If they can't take advantage of current Iranian political unrest to install a pro-U.S. regime, the U.S. ruling class will sooner, rather than later, possibly have to risk invading Iran.

War has increasingly become the only option for U.S. imperialism. Richard Morningstar, US special envoy for energy, told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee about China's use of its huge monetary reserves to back its geopolitical thrust into Central Asia: "...and we [U.S.] can't compete in this way." Stephen Blank of the U.S. War College wrote last October that Xinjiang, China's doorway to Central Asia's trade and energy and Russian oil, is a "pressure cooker" that Beijing can't control. His implication: the U.S. could use its ties with the province's Uighur separatist movement to make the pipelines inoperable.

U.S. covert operations in Xinjiang and Tibet and widening regional wars in Yemen and Afghanistan show that the profit system is marching inevitably toward WWII. It is ever more urgent to spread our communist line among workers, soldiers, and students and win masses of them in the US and worldwide to join PLP. We must prepare to turn the world bosses' bloodbath into an armed uprising for communism. ☸

## El Salvador

*continued from p. 4*

helping to strengthen this work. Together with these other teachers she explained that her political training stems from the Party's line, centering the discussion on the evils of capitalism, like sexism.

A comrade heading the editorial collective led the discussion of CHALLENGE, emphasizing two points: (1) the need to write more for the paper; and (2) using CHALLENGE as an organizer, educator and agitator for the working class. On the first point, a young comrade noted that Lenin, in "What is to Be Done," emphasized "that a Party without a communist newspaper reporting workers' struggles worldwide has serious problems growing with a communist line."

On the second point, it was stressed that each Party member must convert CHALLENGE networks into study groups about communist politics and activity. We can't continue giving someone the paper without following up with that person politically. Just distributing the paper doesn't guarantee political development; quantity and quality should go together. The paper should open the door to political discussions about building more clubs, study groups and class struggle.

The comrades also emphasized how the content of CHALLENGE historically has reflected the reality of the capitalist system, and how we must fight the illusions within the working class in reformism, and in the bosses' elections. We discussed the electoral victories of Obama in the U.S. and Funes-FMLN in El Salvador. Many workers think, "here comes the change." CHALLENGE has fought these illusory ideas the bosses try to instill in workers.

This weekend culminated a whole process of previous meetings and visits throughout the year which defined the topics, decide who would come and who would lead the discussions, as well as the process of teaching and learning inside the PLP to develop more and better leaders. We pledged, in 2010, to enter the fight with greater commitment, strength and desire to build the PLP in the working class. ☸

## Capitalism Turns Cure into Racist Killer, Cutting Back on Mammography

It isn't bad enough that capitalism ruins our health through overwork, unemployment, on-the-job accidents, air and water pollution, toxins in food, and sending young working-class men and women to war to kill other workers or be killed. Nor is it bad enough that it provides a kind of health care that gives us one of the worst overall outcomes for the working class in the entire industrialized part of the world, in terms of life expectancy, infant mortality, and other measures of health.

Now the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force, a so-called panel of "experts" appointed by the U.S. Government, calls for wrecking even what little preventive care we get. In the middle of November they revised their previous recommendations for screening mammography, which happens today to be the best way to detect breast cancer while it is still curable. This panel of "experts" consists of 16 doctors, nurses, and scientists who study statistics, but contains not a single expert in breast care. That is, not a single cancer specialist, radiologist (particularly one specializing in mammography), or breast surgeon.

The Task Force recommended that women from 40 to 49 years of age, or older than 75 years, not receive screening mammography and that women between 50 and 74 be screened only every other year rather than every year, as it now stands. They claim that screening mammography does women more harm than good by emphasizing the number of times women are called back for additional mammographic views or for an ultrasound, or for a biopsy (usually involving use of a needle to take a small piece of tissue to be examined under a microscope). Many more women are called back than actually have cancer, approximately 30 times as many on average. But most of these women are cleared at the first stage, many more at the second stage, and only about one in six of these gets a biopsy.

The Task Force, however, has decided the "stress" for women being called back is worse

than the cancer being found after it has reached such a size that it is no longer curable. They have been supported by various doctors and others on the grounds that they are basing their conclusions on science. But science only provides numbers. Weighing the numbers is a political value judgment. And their value judgment is that saving money for the imperialist ruling class to use for more wars is more important than the women's lives that could be saved.

Besides, the number of women who are called back or who undergo biopsy varies tremendously with the experience of the mammographer (radiologist who interprets the x-rays). So rather than call for improving their skill and experience by more training and by requiring that only specialists in mammography be allowed to interpret mammograms, the Task Force calls for allowing fewer women to receive mammography.

Three weeks following these recommendations, the state of California put part of them into practice, despite the fact that most doctors are refusing to follow them. California has now stated that they will no longer provide Medicare and Medicaid funding for screening mammography for women in their 40s — a racist death sentence for far too many of the overwhelmingly black and Latina working-class women recipients of those programs. Capitalism truly kills, in more ways than we can count. ☸

Mammography done on an annual basis, along with improved treatment of breast cancer, has been shown to save about 30-40% of lives from this particular disease, with mammography contributing most of that improvement. Doing it every other year will allow many more cancers to escape detection until they are no longer curable, just as the racist differences in the availability of medical care causes a higher death rate from breast cancer for black women (28%) than for white women (18%).

# LETTERS

## Mobilizing A Community Can Build PLP

A few comrades work in a large community organization in our city. The stated "mission" of the organization is represented by three words: "community, justice and equality." The work of the organization is focused on proposing legislation, supporting candidates, legal cases, job training and services, such as "accessing healthcare" and adult education.

Large efforts are made to satisfy funders' "expectations." The community is mostly black and Latino, the members of the organization are almost exclusively Latino. Small reforms are trumpeted as big victories. On the other hand, many members and staff regularly participate in direct actions, some bold, and are open to discussions about the nature of the capitalist society we live in. The "mission" is not lost on them. Opportunities for members of PLP are plentiful, but must be actively, deliberately and boldly pursued.

Recently a few comrades organized and led a mini-conference at the community organization. Thirty workers and youth came, including PLP members and friends.

The theme of the conference was the global economic crisis. The first speaker linked the crisis to imperialism and oil wars. She said that any meaningful fight-back for jobs must be linked to fighting imperialist war and racism. The second speaker expressed the devastating effects of the economic crisis in the community where we organize. The remaining speakers explained that the economic crisis comes from the capitalist profit system. One speaker, originally from the Dominican Republic, gave a moving account of her experiences in her country of origin and in the U.S., how she met the Progressive Labor Party and decided to join and dedicate her life to the fight for communist revolution.

A comrade proposed mobilizing the community organization to march against imperialist oil war in Afghanistan and to demand jobs and no budget cuts, targeting the local Citibank. Members of the organization are going to leaflet the wider community and make every effort to invite black workers and youth to help organize the march. It is vital to build a multi-racial, international working-class movement.

This activity provides PLP members opportunities to lead class struggle, to introduce communist ideas, to expand readership and distributors of CHALLENGE and to move our friends closer to and into the Party. As one conference participant said, "PLP members are always welcome because we deepen the political consciousness of members of the organization."

*A comrade*

## 'Hanging Out' Becomes a (Red) Party Night

Recently, over thirty black, Latino, and white Party members and friends — workers, students and soldiers — came together for a social event at a local restaurant. The event was advertised as "fun and relaxing" and it was. As workers trickled in, the social atmosphere grew. Though many of them had met before, this is the first time we have had that many friends in the same room together. At its peak, the evening was a mixture of varying degrees of political discussion and bemoaning over our dismal Chicago sports teams. People were relaxed and making new friends. People exchanged numbers and made plans to "hang out again."

While our PLP club has had some success in building personal ties and developing friendships, we have realized that we need to be more focused in basing our relationships on political struggle. As the night was winding down, people began asking for copies of CHALLENGE.

This is the first time we had people meet "just to hang out" in this great a number. People left excited and energized and asking for study groups, movie nights and more events like this one. One guy took all the papers that one of the Party members had in his car to give to his own friends.

These social events are ways to express our communist way of life and add to the other political organizing we do. Combined with formal study groups and maintaining our struggles against racism, police terror and other forms of capitalist oppression, these kinds of activities can help us to bring more people to May Day.

*Chicago comrades*

## Lee Simon Never Let Up Being a Communist

I was very sad to hear that Lee Simon had died. Besides being a family friend and my parents' comrade, Lee taught at the middle school I attended. Lee showed me how to be a communist. He taught me how to write a leaflet and give a speech on the bullhorn. Lee was a tremendous CHALLENGE seller. He went out to 104th Street in Manhattan every Saturday for two hours and sold as many CHALLENGES as anyone I have ever seen. He was always calling me to make sure I was going.

Lee was regularly at the homes of his students and was very well-respected by their families. Every year he worked hard to bring people to May Day. Sometimes more came and sometimes not so many, but his commitment never seemed to falter.

He fought against students being held back because of racist tests and was attacked by the school bosses after the students walked out on the day of the test. When some of his students got into a summer program for black and Latino youth at Columbia University, Lee came under attack by nationalist leaders of the program for encouraging the students to stand up for those not given access to college education.

I had never seen something like that: in a big meeting of all the students and their families, one after another of these well-paid community hacks cynically attacked Lee for "trying to keep minority students down." Each time he stood up and went back at them, tit for tat, in his own understated way about how we have a responsibility not just to fight for ourselves but for the whole working class. I wanted to leave, but Lee just kept getting up and talking. Afterwards several families came up and thanked him for speaking up. Some of those families stayed in touch with the Party for years.

There was not an ounce of bravado or bluster in him, but no matter what kind of attack the bosses launched, I remember Lee as one of those guys that kept coming back for more.

*Former Student*

## Red Nails Lead to Red Politics

I've been getting my nails done in the same place for a few years now. Even when an arsonist burned down the nail salon, I followed the workers to their new location. At first, I was scared to talk politics in front of them, since they were from Vietnam and I feared their anti-communism. I always talk about current events and use the hour we had together every two weeks to discuss how greedy the bosses were and different stuff going on around the world.

The woman, who always does my nails, Bebe, has a young daughter. We talk about different schools in the neighborhood for her to apply to. Bebe wants to take ESL classes after work.

One day I was getting my nails done red. Bebe asked, "Are you getting them red for May Day?" I said, "Yes!" Then she explained how they always have a barbeque and celebrate May Day. In fact, the only two days in the year that the nail salon closes are for May Day and Chinese New Year.

I have now realized that I need to not let my fear and anti-communism get in the way and be more open about my politics with Bebe. We talked about the war in Vietnam, and the conditions in the country today. She told me that capitalism is just as bad there as it is here. There are a select few landowners with lots of money and the many poor who are left with nothing. Bebe felt that the "communists" winning the war wasn't worth fighting for, since so many innocent people died and the situations in the country are just as bad as they were before the war. Bebe blames U.S. imperialism for most things in the world, and it's my job to help her see that it's capitalism.

We talk about imperialism and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. I was in the salon during the count-down to the Obama presidency, and we had a good conversation about how regardless of who is in office, workers will still be oppressed. We had a good conversation about voting. Although they might agree that the current state of affairs in the U.S. is messed up, it's my job to explain how communism is the only answer to this situation.

When the Stella D'Oro strike started, we discussed it in the nail salon. At the time, one worker was eating Stella sesame breadsticks and was giving it out to everyone in the salon. I explained to eve-

ryone that those breadsticks were made with scab labor, and about how the factory is composed of immigrant workers from all around the world. The worker with the breadsticks crushed the full package and threw it out. She said, "We don't eat food made by scabs here," and for the rest of the strike, there were no Stella D'Oro cookies at that nail salon.

I wish we had more literature in Vietnamese so that Bebe and her coworkers could learn more about PLP. For now, I'll just keep talking to her about the articles and helping her learn English. I think that I could make a more concerted effort to spend time with Bebe and her family outside of the nail salon, and try to modify CHALLENGE articles in English in a way that she can read them with me and discuss them.

*Red Teacher*

## Spreading PLP's Ideas Across Borders

I'd like to comment on my recent participation at a meeting of workers in a community organization I'm involved in.

I always thought that respect is the basis of social unity but in the world we live in where no one respects anybody, many times we prefer to close our eyes and not see the injustices that happen daily all over the world and day by day teach one more about the working class. Why is it a crime to immigrate to the United States to work and have a better opportunity in life? For simply being an undocumented immigrant, one doesn't have a voice; and as if that were not enough, consider the racism and abuse hurled upon the working class by their employers.

I ask if one day not very far away we will open our eyes and see the light of hope that will guide us to a road to a new world where only equality between the social classes exists.

I had the opportunity to listen to a professor from PLP talk about capitalism, and it fascinated me when they said: "there must be a way to cut the legs off of capitalism." I agree with and carry the same ideas as PLP in its fight against capitalism.

I feel motivated and optimistic knowing that there are people who exist that believe in and trust each other, through all these years united for the same cause: achieving victory over capitalism. I have also decided to send CHALLENGE and talk about PLP with my friends and relatives in my country of origin, and they'll have the opportunity to share these ideas with others.

*Immigrant in NY*

## Communist School: 'An Injection for your Life...'

In one area of the country, about 20 people met for a communist school. Before the meeting, comrades said that this was like "an injection for your life" and that they didn't just come to teach but also to learn.

The meeting began with an international report given by young comrades talking about the inter-imperialist rivalry and how each side was trying to gain allies around the world. Also it was pointed out that the imperialists don't want to stop production to help the environment as shown in the meetings in Copenhagen. Obama received his Nobel "peace" prize while he was pushing forward his war plans, sending 30,000 more troops to Afghanistan. We saw how the imperialist battles are reflected in Central America.

Other comrades talked about the theme of Reform and Revolution. It was a dynamic discussion as they asked the comrades who are in mass organizations what they are doing to fight for revolution in these organizations.

Other comrades emphasized that the union leaders serve capitalism and that if we push the unions but don't get close to the base, we're pushing the system. But other comrades said that yes, it's true that we shouldn't concentrate on the leaders but on the base, and concentrate on the fight for communism and the destruction of capitalism.

The last point discussed was the importance of CHALLENGE and the networks of distribution. At the end a comrade said, "the working class is the basis of capitalist economic production, and the working class has the power to destroy capitalism."

With these meetings, with the participation of our comrades, we're pushing the struggles against sexism, racism, nationalism, and pollution, which are all the fruits of capitalism. That's why it needs to be destroyed with communist revolution.

*Young Comrade from El Salvador*

# Comrade Lee Simon: A Selfless Fighter for the Working Class

Comrade John Lee Simon died on November 20 from multiple sclerosis, which he fought for many years and which ultimately debilitated him. Lee had a smile that lit up his face and those of others around him. We remember him with that smile and a bunch of CHALLENGES in his arm, lined up so you could see both the English and Spanish versions.

Lee was a determined, disciplined and courageous comrade, full of love for, and confidence in, the working class. As a junior high school science teacher he led many anti-racist struggles inside the school and in the community where he lived. Almost daily he visited parents and students in their homes. He sold them CHALLENGE, confidently saying that it is a revolutionary, communist newspaper and patiently explaining why it was important to read. Years later his students greeted him in the street; they called him Simon. Even as grown young men and women, Lee often remembered their names.

Lee was a generous, principled and selfless fighter for the working class. His practice exemplified his dedication to work collectively with his comrades and students, parents and teachers. Later he became a high school biology teacher. He continued to participate in and lead numerous fight-backs inside and outside the school, confronting a hated, tyrannical principal, always with CHALLENGE in his hands.

Once the principal tried to fire Lee. But to do so he had to excess five teachers with less seniority than Lee. Immediately Lee talked with his PLP club and together made a plan to mobilize teachers, students and parents to fight back, not only to save the teachers' jobs, but also to sharpen the struggle against the many problems the students and staff faced in the school. As Lee and his stu-

dents wrote for and distributed CHALLENGE, the students learned more about communism.

The Board of Education sent Lee to another school where he faced a heavier teaching load and torturous trips up and down stairs, as the multiple sclerosis caused his motor skills to diminish. Despite the difficulties Lee continued the fight and won his previous job back the following year, while the principal was forced to resign! Lee's determination and optimism never faltered.

Lee always stood up to anti-communism. Although increasingly uneasy on his feet he insisted on selling CHALLENGE on a street corner where he and other comrades always went. When a cowardly, loud-mouthed anti-communist threatened to hit him and take his CHALLENGES, Lee remained steadfast. Within seconds another comrade decked the anti-communist and he sprawled to the sidewalk. As he got up and went running for the cops, a crowd gathered to defend us. Many knew us and CHALLENGE and grabbed up all of our papers and leaflets. When the cops arrived the crowd sent them and the anti-communist away with loud taunts and chants.

Sadly soon after, Lee had to give up his teaching and public activities in the street. But for a number of years he visited tenants in his building, CHALLENGE in hand, with his cane and later with his wheelchair.

Lee was a devoted and loving husband and father. His wife in turn was his loving companion and caretaker in his extended period of illness. We remember many outings to the park with Lee, his children and ours. We remember festive occasions in his home. During good times and difficult times Lee's humility, positive attitude and cheerfulness



**Lee dedicated his life to selling CHALLENGE and building PLP. Here, a CHALLENGE seller at a May Day march in New York.**

both calmed and energized us. Our hearts go out to his family.

Lee's memory inspires us to be the kind of people and comrades that are necessary to fight for and establish a communist world. His optimism and confidence were rooted in his non-individualistic, collective approach to achieve our shared goal of an egalitarian society, based on struggle and change. He will always remain part of us as our struggle continues. ☺

## RED EYE ON THE NEWS

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

### Blatant racism by marijuana cops

**NYT, 12/23** — New York City is now entering its 10th year of pouring tens of millions of dollars into arresting people for the lowest-level misdemeanor marijuana cases....

Outside a music club on Greenwich Street in SoHo, the bouncers smoke joints as they check in the arriving customers. A young graphic artist routinely strolls through Chelsea, joint in hand....

But the SoHo bouncers and the Chelsea graphic artist don't have much to worry about, at least from the police: they are white. Even though surveys show they are part of the demographic group that makes the heaviest use of pot, white people in New York are the least likely to be arrested for it.

Last year, black New Yorkers were seven times more likely than whites to be arrested for marijuana possession and no more serious crime. Latinos were four times more likely.

### Youth unemployment can ruin life

**NYT, 12/23** — The House's jobs bill.... does not do nearly enough to address the ominous shortfall of jobs among the young people who have been driven from the job market — and marginalized economically — in record numbers.

The problem is especially alarming in low-income, minority communities where the jobless rate for high school students is hovering near 90 percent.

The part-time jobs that were once a rite of passage began to disappear rapidly at the start of this decade....

Things are especially bleak for low-income black students: only 4 in 100 found work this fall....

Young people who do not find work tend to become discouraged early on and stop trying.... They are likely to remain unemployed or underemployed well into their adult years.

### Job-boost bailout? No hurry

**NYT, 12/11** — We need really big job gains, month after month, if we want to see America return to anything that feels like full employment.

How big? My back of the envelope calculation says that we need to add around 18 million jobs over the next five years, or 300,000 jobs a month.

This puts last week's employment report, which showed job losses of "only" 11,000 in November, in perspective. It was basically a terrible report, which was reported as good news....

The Fed sprang into action when faced with the prospect of wrecked banks; it doesn't seem equally concerned about the prospect of wrecked lives.

### Merry Xmas for health profiteers

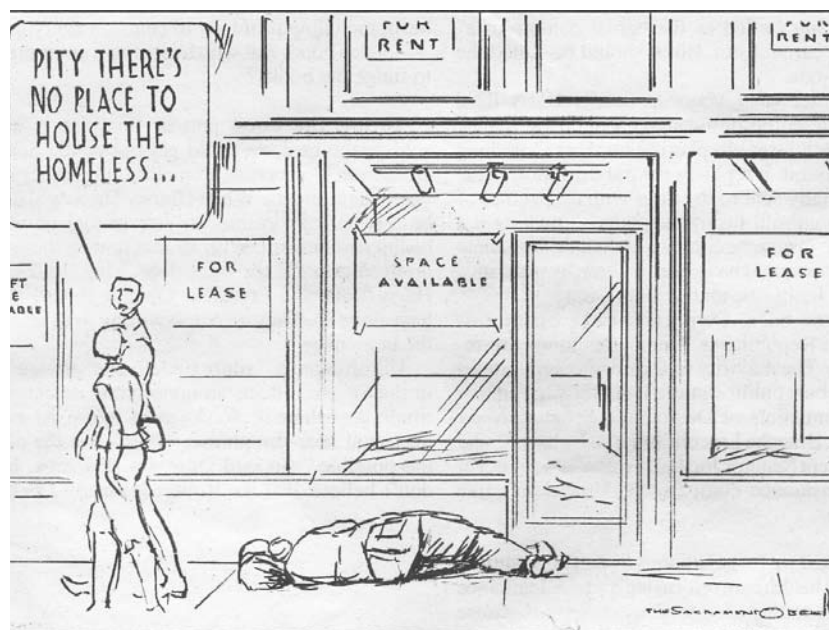
**NYT, 12/20** — The insurance companies were probably among the merriest of industries last week. Because the [health bill] mandates that everyone buy insurance, those companies stand to gain 30 million new customers — and there will be no government plan to compete with.

But the drug companies were certainly joyful, too. So far, they have kept intact a deal with the White House to bar the importation of cheaper drugs from Canada and elsewhere....

The pharmaceutical industry has spent more money by far than.... any industry has ever spent on lobbying in a nine-month period.

### Dow won't clean up Bhopal poison

**NYT, 12/3** — This is the 25th anniversary of the



Bhopal gas disaster, an epic mess that started one night when a pesticide plant owned by the American chemical giant Union Carbide leaked a cloud of poisonous gas. Before the sun rose, almost 4,000 human beings... sank to their knees and did not get up. Half a million more fell ill, many with severely damaged lungs and eyes....

Ten to 30 people are said to die every month from exposure to the hundreds of tons of toxic waste left over in the former factory. But amazingly, the site still has not been cleaned up, because Dow Chemical, which since acquired Union Carbide, refuses to accept any responsibility. The... victims have long since run out of their measly compensation and are begging on the streets....

The families of the dead got an average of \$2,200; the wounded got \$550; a Dow spokeswoman explained, that amount "is plenty good for an Indian."....

The Indian government, fearful of scaring away foreign investors, has not pushed the issue with American authorities.

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

# A Life of Struggle Leads to PLP

**EL SALVADOR** — *This is the conclusion to the story that appeared in the January 6 CHALLENGE. It tells of a comrade, an ex-commander in the FMLN guerilla army, who met the PLP through an old ex-fellow combatant with whom he shared many wartime experiences. His old friend related PLP's communist ideas to him, after which he began reading CHALLENGE and attended several PLP club meetings, along with his wife (another ex-combatant). His subordinates in the war in El Salvador approved of his participation in PLP and asked him to write his history for CHALLENGE. Part I related his poverty-stricken childhood, the influence of the church, his joining the Revolutionary People's Army and his joining the struggle in Nicaragua to gain experience for the eventual liberation of El Salvador. Part I ended when he arrived in Nicaragua's northern zone of Estelí.*

*Part II:*

In Estelí, German Pomares, known as Danto, was in charge of 80 people, including an administrative structure, a medical team of three to five, a team to maintain weapons, ammunition and explosives and a communications team with a radio to coordinate their political and military plans with the responsible general at the front.

The rest were organized in squads, platoons and columns, prepared for combat. The three of us from El Salvador were integrated into a squad of ten men. After our first battle, we were put second in command of the squad.

In that first battle, one of the three comrades was killed. Three days later, in the final offensive, my other comrade was killed. The squad leader told me, "In these difficult times of our struggle, we can't retreat. You know that several of our Nicaraguan comrades died and today the other comrade from El Salvador died. Only you are left. You must be very strong and continue to advance because the struggle is ours and we're going to El Salvador."

With tears in my eyes, I told him, "I have no alternative but to continue forward, and we have to win." Three days later we defeated the enemy. A few months afterwards, our ERP organization sent me to bring back the three comrades still in

Managua. We returned to El Salvador in 1980.

From 1978, when I had left El Salvador, I had had no communication with my family or with our organization. When I returned, I discovered that my family and all the villagers had been killed, including the old people and the children. The people were ready to confront the enemy but had only a few old pistols and explosives that some friends had prepared.

Returning to El Salvador, I had had two experiences in the military — one in the barracks as a soldier and one in the Sandinista insurrection. In addition, I had the political understanding of how governments maintain their political and military power. All of this helped me; I shared it with the comrades for our struggle here in El Salvador.

Upon my return I was made second in the military and political command, in a zone called el Cacahuatique, the historic zone of war. By 1981 we were armed, having taken weapons from the enemy. The next year we attacked the barracks of the 3rd Infantry Brigade in the department of San Miguel and in other departments of El Salvador. I was seriously injured here by fragments from a grenade of an M79 launched by the enemy.

Our organization decided to take me for medical treatment, first to Nicaragua and then to Cuba. I lost my voice for two years but then I began to talk a little. In 1983 I returned to El Salvador and rejoined our army as second in command of our military force in Morazán. Our forces controlled the territory from 1983 until 1992 when the peace accords were signed. We were told to turn in all our weapons and then go to work in order to survive.

I wasn't convinced our new life would be very good because, in the countryside, we didn't do too well, economically or politically, but we still had to do it. They gave us a few things, a small plot of land, a house, a loan of 15,000 colones (US\$1,700) to begin work, a bed, a blanket, a stove, a container of gas, a table, a machete, a hoe, and an irrigation pump. With this, and with the war ended, in 1992 we went to the land we were given to start work.

In 1997, I decided to go to the United States

because our lives here had no political or economic future. In the U.S. I encountered problems for immigrants. To work, one had to have a work permit and to be able to speak English. Without that, there's no possibility of finding a good job.

But while in the U.S., I began to understand the repressive government social policy. With the little I had earned in five years, I re-paid my debts of 50,000 colones (US\$5,700).

I returned to El Salvador and witnessed the general political situation, of the right-wing and of the fake left inside the FMLN. They had little possibility of winning the 2004 elections. I realized this wasn't the moment to come to power because our people weren't willing to vote. I don't have much to say about electoral politics. I left the FMLN because I don't agree with their reactionary ideology. It is the same capitalism.

About my life: I didn't know how to read or write because I couldn't go to school. I learned a little in the army and a little more during the war, at least to write my name. But I learned to know myself, to respect others and how to survive with our people, our men and women comrades. I learned to understand our society in general.

After the peace accords I learned that those who were responsible for our organization, those in the ERP, had no regard for my contribution to our struggle in El Salvador and in Nicaragua. But I'm not sorry for my actions. I carried them out clearly, conscious of what I did. I ended up with physical problems, also not valued by the organization, but I valued what I did.

Note: I hope what I've written is useful and helps my two children. Today my life has many problems, physically and because of my age. These are obstacles, but we always look to survive on the revolutionary road. The FMLN has no hope. I've found among the PLP comrades a new spark of life to make the fight for the international working class. Many of the ex-fighters who were under my command are today members of the PLP and I'm headed in this direction. Greetings, Comrades of the World! ☛

## Did You Know...

...on March 6, 1930, during the Great Depression, 1,250,000 workers took to the streets in cities across the U.S. — 110,000 in New York City, 100,000 in Detroit — organized by the National Unemployment Council led by the Communist Party under the slogans, "Don't Starve, Fight!" and "Work or Wages!" During the next few years over two million marched to demand unemployment insurance, eventually forcing the Roosevelt administration to enact it in 1936.

...on September 6, 1856, white and Mexican workers backed a revolt by black slaves in Colorado County, Texas.

...on August 16, 1920, the Chicago Central Labor Council voted to go on a general strike if the U.S. went to war against the three-year-old Soviet Union.

...on July 19, 1877, striking railroad workers in Pittsburgh drove out the strike-breaking state militia and took control of the city for four days, establishing the famous "Pittsburgh Commune."

...on July 6, 1919, over 30,000 white workers, organized by the Chicago Stockyards Council, marched to demand withdrawal of Federal troops occupying black neighborhoods.

...on July 3, 1835, the children in Patterson, New Jersey's textile mills walked out on an "illegal" strike demanding the shortening of the work-

week to six days, with an 11-hour day.

...on September 12, 1932, in the depths of the Great Depression, when Toledo, Ohio, authorities cut off public assistance, the unemployed organized a march on local groceries and seized the food. ☛

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