

CHALLENGE



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PL'ers Lead Multi-Racial Action Exposing Racist Tea Party

WORCESTER, MA, May 12 — PLP led a multi-racial demonstration of 150 workers and youth to oppose a racist Tea Party rally that was defending Arizona's fascist anti-immigration law.

Prior to a May 11 City Council vote not to discuss a boycott of Arizona for that law targeting immigrants from Latin America, PLP members and friends formed a coalition of groups to present a resolution to the Council to boycott Arizona (see letter, page 6). Meanwhile the ACLU and the Mayor sent their versions of an anti-Arizona boycott to the City Clerk.

But yesterday, the racist Council voted not even to discuss it, even though it had previously voted on resolutions such as divesting from Darfur and passed a "no-hate" resolution against anti-Semitic graffiti. However, in this case the Latino community was raising its concerns about racial profiling and how it was targeting Latinos.

We continued to organize for a rally in front of City Hall. But when we heard that the Tea Party and the racist paramilitary MinuteMen would hold a counter-demonstration to support the fascist Arizona law, we fought for a large turnout to demonstrate against the Tea Party.

Many working people in the city were outraged that the Tea Party would show up so they brought their friends to the action. As usual, the TV and press never interviewed any anti-Tea Party groups, covering only the Tea Party and the City officials.

On the rally day, PLP'ers arrived at City Hall a half hour before the Tea Party and two of us established ourselves in the middle of the Plaza, forcing the Tea Party off to the side. Some wore confederate flags and seemingly included MinuteMen thugs.

The Tea Party racists began yelling at our comrades and friends, saying we were "illegal" and to "go back to Cuba." We called them Nazis and yelled "death to fascist laws." More and more people came, swelling the anti-racist boycott crowd to 150, overwhelming the 30 out-of-town Tea Party racists.

When the Tea Party gang saw us using our sound system, they tried to provoke us by pointing their bullhorn one foot from our ears. One of our comrades boldly blocked a Tea Party racist from harassing an anti-racist speaker on our open microphone with a sign that read, "Death to fascist laws!"

We continued to label them fascist and racists, while calling for multi-racial unity and for a worker-run society. We chanted, "Asian, Latin, black, and white, against racism we must unite!"; and, "Same enemy, same fight, workers of the world unite!" which many workers liked. We also chanted, "Working people have no nation! Smash racist deportations!"

The workers in the crowd became energized when one of our friends led a chant in Spanish, "Aquí estamos y aquí nos quedamos!" ("Here we are and here we'll stay!"), a chant undocumented workers used in New Bedford, MA, when federal immigration cops raided a factory and arrested them. Many people said later that although the Tea Party intimidated them, they felt stronger when PLP members and friends stood up to the fascists.

The confrontation and the City Council's racist vote caused such anger that people stepped up to call for a community meeting two days later to continue the fight against racism. ☺

Israel-Palestine: PL'er Raises Red Flag vs. Fascism



NYC march against Israeli fascist attack. See article 'Nationalist Two-State 'Solution' Won't Free Palestine's Workers,' p. 5

TEL AVIV, ISRAEL, June 2 — Following the massacre on one of the supply ships headed to Gaza earlier this month, the Israeli fascist group "Im Tirtzu" organized a rally at the entrance of the Tel Aviv University in support of that deed and of the Israeli army. The fascists were supported by the Student Council and managed to attract a large crowd of students to their rally.

Various left groups, as well as a significant number of Palestinian nationalists, staged a counter-demonstration in front of the fascist rally, calling Israel a fascist state. Unfortunately, most of them followed a nationalist line, either calling for a two-state "solution" or raising Turkish flags. Nationalism — including that of oppressed nations such as the Palestinians — is a dead-end ideology. It serves the bosses by convincing workers that they have more in common with the bosses from "their"

country, than with workers around the world. Nationalist slogans are also ineffective in repelling the rising fascist tide in today's Israel. An internationalist, communist line is needed. The only way to rid the world of racist, capitalist attacks is for all workers to unite worldwide to overthrow capitalism and establish communism.

One of our comrades took part in this counter-demonstration, and brought along a red flag with the PLP symbol on it, proudly making a stand for communism and against nationalism. When he was asked by one of the nationalists what the flag had to do with the demonstration, he replied "communism is the only way to smash fascism once and for all."

Later the fascist horde, supported by the cops, charged the counter-demonstration and tried to beat up the demonstrators; one counter-demonstrator was arrested. But our comrade carried out our Party line and fought valiantly against the attack.

We have many lessons to learn from this demonstration, but the most important is about the urgency of building a mass communist party in Israel/Palestine in particular and in the entire world in general. If we had a larger contingent of communists at that demonstration, for example, we could have smashed the fascists. So we will double our efforts towards building the Party. Join Us!

A Comrade in Israel/Palestine (see eyewitness letter, page 6)

Anti-Racism Supplement!

See special insert, after page 4:

Racism — Capitalism's Key Strategy to Maximize Profits and Divide Working Class Then and Now

The Progressive Labor Party in the Fight Against Racism and Capitalism

U.S. War Machine's Phony 'Anti-Terror' Masks Obama's Wider War

The U.S. war machine kills workers openly to control Iraqi oil fields and a projected Afghanistan pipeline. While Obama's brass claims to be aiming at Islamic extremists and drug traffickers, their main objective is guarding U.S. imperialism, especially its control of global energy supplies. Under liberal "peace candidate" Obama, secret assassinations, torture, and intimidation by terror surpass atrocities ordered by avowed warmonger Bush. "Obama, one senior military official said, has allowed 'things that the previous administration did not.'" (Washington Post, 6/4)

But Obama is also promoting less obvious forms of murder for profit. "[T]he Obama administration has significantly expanded a largely secret U.S. war against al-Qaeda and other 'radical' groups, according to senior military and administration officials. Special Operations forces...are deployed in

75 countries, compared with about 60 at the beginning of last year. In addition to units that have spent years in the Philippines and Colombia, teams are operating in Yemen and elsewhere in the Middle East, Africa and Central Asia." (WP article)

To win U.S. workers to back this war operation, Obama & Co. are using various prosecutions of alleged terrorist "bombers" to foment mass racist terror against Arabs and Muslims in the U.S. They also propagandize U.S. troops with anti-Arab/Muslim racism to demonize the "enemy" as less than human.

Their purpose is to divert workers' anger over racist unemployment, foreclosures and racist budget cuts which affect the entire working class while falling heaviest on black and Latino workers. The money saved from these cuts and mass layoffs can then be used to fund their imperialist wars. Given the ruling class's many-sided operation, it behooves PLP'ers to go on a war footing ourselves to meet these attacks.

Major Oil Sources and Routes Focus of U.S. 'Anti-Terror' Clandestine Violence

Somalia's Horn of Africa — second only to the Persian Gulf's Strait of Hormuz as a strategic chokepoint for exports of Mid-East crude — draws special attention from the Pentagon's clandestine wing. "Commanders are developing plans for increasing the use of such forces in Somalia, where a Special Operations raid last year killed the alleged head of al-Qaeda in East Africa." (WP article)

To help sway public opinion against a Somali "terrorist menace," on June 5 the FBI and NYPD arrested two men they said were headed to a "jihadist" training camp in Somalia. Yemen lies across from Somalia on the eastern side of the shipping lane. U.S. rulers justify intervention there by alleging ties between a fundamentalist Yemeni cleric and the incompetent "Christmas underwear" and Times Square bombers as well as the deadly, deranged Ft. Hood shooter.

"Plans exist for preemptive or retaliatory strikes in numerous places around the world, meant to be put into action when a plot has been identified, or after an attack linked to a specific group." (WP article) Widespread hatred of U.S. imperialism, largely misguided into Islamic sects, gives Obama & Co. plausible, secret targets, aimed at protecting oil and gas supplies and pipelines.

An earlier leak to the NY Times (5/24) revealed that top U.S. general Petraeus "has ordered a broad expansion of clandestine military activity in an effort to disrupt militant groups or counter threats in Iran, Saudi Arabia, Somalia and other countries in the region." Saudi royalty control the world's greatest oil reserves and make a huge part of them available to Exxon Mobil in a sweetheart deal. Since Bin Laden and other non-royal



Saudis were shut out of the scheme, it motivated these competing capitalists to organize al Qaeda and the resulting 9/11 attacks. U.S. enemy Iran also has both oil and nuclear dreams of dominating the Mid-East.

Obama/Gates Attack on Military Industrial Profiteers Aims at More Lethal Conventional Forces

U.S. rulers, meanwhile, are striving for greater killing power under the guise of saving taxpayers' money. A key feature of the Pentagon's Base Realignment and Closing Program, which is supposed to save billions, is building a new 8,000-strong Navy/Marine base on the Pacific island of Guam. U.S. strategists hope expanding the outpost, which will have a pier for aircraft carriers, will give them an extra edge in confronting the challenge of China's growing blue-water fleet which can patrol the world's oceans to secure its own energy supplies.

The NY Times (6/3) reported that, "Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates has ordered the military and the Pentagon's civilian bureaucracy to find tens of billions of dollars in annual savings to pay for war-fighting operations....The goal is...3 percent real growth each year, beyond inflation, in the accounts that pay for combat operations." Gates wants to rein in costly, dubiously useful, weapons programs to shift expenditures to projects expanding deadly U.S. force. This deadliness-enhancing, "more-bang-for-the-buck" program also involves basing forces where they are most likely to fight.

The purpose of the coming U.S. offensive for Kandahar is to ensure U.S. presence in that city, a strategic point along the projected TAPI pipeline to run from Turkmenistan through Afghanistan to the Indian Ocean.

Finally, the U.S. military is, in fact, prolonging the occupation it pretends to be winding down in earthquake-ravaged Haiti. (see page 8) As U.S. ground troops leave, the USS Iwo Jima is scheduled to arrive. The Iwo Jima is not a hospital ship but an amphibious assault vessel with 2,000 heavily-armed Marines aboard.

Their continued military presence encircling Haiti aims at exploiting the vast oil and gas reserves under the Caribbean Sea which Russia and China are already eyeing. Both countries sent their presidents to Cuba to negotiate financing of projects whereby they could beat U.S. Big Oil to the punch here.

Yet despite their seeming ability to kill anywhere at any time with vastly superior weapons, U.S. rulers face a perilous future militarily. Shaky "ally" Israel, unstable foe North Korea and/or strategic adversaries Iran, China and Russia could in a flash provoke a global conflict causing more casualties — on all sides — than Iraq and Afghanistan combined.

We, as revolutionary communists, should expose the bosses' aggressive militarizing, like Obama's burgeoning death squads, and put ourselves on a wartime footing. ☸

OUR FIGHT

★ **Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to destroy capitalism and the dictatorship of the capitalist class. We organize workers, soldiers and youth into a revolutionary movement for communism.**

★ **Only the dictatorship of the working class — communism — can provide a lasting solution to the disaster that is today's world for billions of people. This cannot be done through electoral politics, but requires a revolutionary movement and a mass Red Army led by PLP.**

★ **Worldwide capitalism, in its relentless drive for profit, inevitably leads to war, fascism, poverty, disease, starvation and environmental destruction. The capitalist class, through its state power — governments, armies, police, schools and culture — maintains a dictatorship over the world's workers. The capitalist dictatorship supports, and is supported by, the anti-working-class ideologies of racism, sexism, nationalism, individualism and religion.**

★ **While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions worldwide. Capitalism returned to Russia and China because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system, like wages and privileges. Russia and China did not establish communism.**

★ **Communism means working collectively to build a worker-run society. 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." Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit black, Latino, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working class.**

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

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

★ **Communism means that the minds of millions of workers must become free from religion's false promises, unscientific thinking and poisonous ideology. Communism will triumph when the masses of workers can use the science of dialectical materialism to understand, analyze and change the world to meet their needs and aspirations.**

★ **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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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.

Racist Court Frees Cop Who Murdered Black Teenager

GARY, IN, March 31 — No question about it; the racist U.S. court system does not serve the working class. Levi Randolph, a Gary cop, was acquitted of reckless homicide charges by the Lake Superior Court. In January 2006, Randolph murdered Vincent Smith Jr., a 16-year-old black youth, by shooting him in the back of the head as the teen fled his cousin's house.

Randolph claimed he was shooting in self-defense, but as stated, Smith was running away and only had a cell phone in his possession. The truth is that the working class must always be on the defensive when dealing with police. Cops are the bosses' thugs carrying out their dirty work, terrorizing black and Latino neighborhoods. This is done to keep workers scared as racist attacks on the working class worsen.

Following Smith's murder, PLP and community groups led protests, speeches, and vigils, demanding that Randolph be taken off the streets and charged with murder. In March 2007, when Randolph was finally indicted for "reckless homicide," many people who were involved in this battle felt relieved that "something was finally being done" in this struggle. Unfortunately they believed the liberal lie that the bosses' courts will solve the workers' problems. However, Vincent Smith's murder was not a "reckless homicide." It was the callous execution of an unarmed young black man, which is common for police.

The trial was scheduled for November 2008. PLP led protesters gathered around

the courthouse calling for Randolph's head. The judge then declared a mistrial, saying that jurors had been compromised by the action outside.

In March 2010, Randolph's trial finally took place. Randolph was defended in court by Scott King, the crooked former mayor of Gary. He charmed the jury and perpetuated the lie that Randolph shot Smith in self-defense. The prosecuting attorney made little effort to argue her case, even referring to Smith as the "figure in the black hoodie." It is not a surprise that the prosecutor would throw away a case that involved the police murder of a black youth.

Throughout the four-year campaign there were many lessons learned from this struggle. But none rang louder than the fact that the cops and courts work hand-in-fist to oppress the working class. Justice cannot be found in the bosses' courts, and the cops are their thugs.

Racism cannot be fought by relying on the bosses. Yet, the best thing to come out of the campaign was the anti-racist, working-class unity that brought people together to fight against this police murder.

Only through this unity and communist politics from Progressive Labor Party can we end the bosses' rule and the police terror they use to oppress the whole working class. ☺

PL'er Exposes U.S. Racism, DREAM Act Scam at Prayer Vigil

CHICAGO, May 15 — Today, a multi-racial group of workers converged on the office of a national politician in an effort to expose and protest his indifference to the plight of workers currently suffering racist terror in Arizona. The reform group we have been working in planned a prayer vigil and press conference in the parking lot just outside his doors. While we, as members of the PLP, know that electoral politics and faith in religion ultimately betray the working class, we attended this demonstration and supported our friends who organized it. In addition, we saw this as an opportunity to inject a communist analysis to the event.

While many spoke of reform and the power of prayer, some gave strong historical, economic and working-class analyses. They spoke about how racism is at the core of SB-1070, the new Arizona law, and how black, Latino and white workers need to unite instead of letting superficial differences keep us divided.

While a lot of the day was good, it had its weaknesses. The purpose of the event was to "pray" for a reform. The leadership's goal is to further the DREAM Act and have Obama pass comprehensive immigration reform. This faith in the system and Obama is a death sentence for the working class. The DREAM Act would use the promise of "legalization" to trick these youth into giving eight years and maybe their lives to the military. Any reform passed will not have our best interest at heart; rather, it would be a vehicle for perpetuating our exploitation.

A Party member spoke and exposed the racist history of the United States. She also spoke to the importance of having faith in our fellow workers, and not politicians or even a "god." She also exposed the racist link between the current financial crisis and the scapegoating of Latino workers, falsely blaming them for "taking away" the jobs of citizens. Lastly she stressed the importance of militant political action. Her analysis was well-received, and many wanted to hear more.

The purpose of working in these groups is not to win the reform; but to grow as communists and build ties with other workers. This is the only way to build the fight for communism, an anti-racist society where all workers would work together for our common needs. Lenin once said, "Unions are schools for communism." Groups like this are similar to unions, because they give us the opportunity to fight the bosses, meet other workers, and share communism with them. We look forward to further struggle with these new friends. ☺

Communist Revolution Will Smash Racist Police Terror

DETROIT, MI, June 6 — "They killed my baby and I want someone to tell the truth." That's what Charles Jones, the father of seven-year-old Aiyana Stanley Jones said after she was murdered by Detroit police when they raided the wrong apartment on May 16. Aiyana was shot in the head as she slept in her East Side home.

The trigger-happy cowards of the Special Response Team threw a flash grenade through the window and shot Aiyana from outside the house around 12:45 am before charging in with guns drawn. The racist murderers were executing a "no-knock" search warrant for a homicide suspect and claim the gun went off after "some level of physical contact" with Aiyana's grandmother.

Aiyana's grandmother, Mertilla Jones, was arrested and released. She said, "They blew my granddaughter's brains out. They killed her right before my eyes... the Detroit police killed my granddaughter."

While anger about the racist murder runs deep, reaction has been mild. People have left flowers and balloons at Aiyana's home, and there have been a few rallies against the cops. Big-name attorney, and possible candidate for Governor, Jeffrey Feiger has taken on the case, moving the focus from the streets to the bosses' courts, from justice to getting paid. It is dangerous for workers to rely on this — big checks from the city won't stop racist police terror.

If auto workers and youth walked out of the factories and schools and surrounded

city hall and police headquarters, shutting the city down and taking on the racist killers, we would be better positioned to build a mass revolutionary movement that can end racist police terror forever.

After decades of plant closings and mass layoffs, Detroit is suffering more than New Orleans after Katrina. Workers are the victims of the decline of the U.S. auto industry and the inter-imperialist rivalries shaping world events. Racist unemployment is at 50 percent for black males. Schools are closing by the dozens. Workers and youth face a daily struggle for survival, including utility shutoffs, evictions and foreclosures. The Democratic Party and United Auto Workers (UAW) have bailed out the auto bosses with untold billions in tax breaks and concessions for the past 50 years but have nothing for the 90% black population of workers and youth.

The bosses want the cops to terrorize us into accepting a future of poverty and war. The 1967 Detroit Rebellion against racism and the 1973 PLP-led Mack Avenue Sit-Down Strike continue to haunt the racist bosses and their flunkies. Our task is to build a mass, anti-racist PLP and make their worst fears come true. ☺

UAW Hacks Stand Up... For the Auto Bosses

The UAW's Constitutional Convention will be June 14-17 in Detroit. Union leaders based their future on the success of U.S. auto bosses for the past 50 years. They grew when GM, Ford and Chrysler were top dogs, and have been hammered as U.S. bosses have been hit hard by European and Asian competitors.

Whoever emerges from the convention with leadership of the union is guaranteed to continue the policies of the old leadership: billions in concessions to auto bosses, tens of thousands of jobs sacrificed, wages and benefits for new workers slashed by more than half, retiree health care benefits that were "guaranteed for life" cut, and a failure to organize a foreign-owned factory. Looking to them for change is a waste of time. And after seeing how all the reform victories were washed away, trying to repeat the past would be worse.

U.S. Social Forum: Who Does it Serve?

The following week, June 22-26, Detroit will host more than 15,000 people at the U.S. Social Forum (USSF). USSF is funded largely by NGO's and non-profits — the money trail heading right back to the ruling class — and supported by many of the same politicians and union leaders who are committed to saving U.S. imperialism.

The same racist ruling class that brutalizes black workers and youth on a daily basis, that murdered 7-year-old Aiyana Stanley Jones in her sleep, has given the keys to the city to the UAW and USSF. Obviously they feel no threat from either.

But the many participants view them as an opportunity to exchange ideas, strategies, and experiences with people from different movements and social groups that are fighting to transform society. PLP will be active in both events, slowly paving the long road to communist revolution. Our main goal is to meet new friends, and win the people that participate to build a stronger PLP in Detroit.

Graduation Lesson: Protest Racist Governor's Racist Cuts

NEW YORK CITY, May 28 — The administration of Bronx Community College fully displayed its contempt and disregard for our students by inviting Governor David Paterson to speak at graduation. In doing so, it also revealed the tremendous danger that nationalism and racism hold for the working class and the absolute necessity for their defeat, along with all other capitalist ideas, by communist revolution.

The president, a black woman, praised Paterson as the first black governor and stated that he should be welcomed because of this fact. Apparently the fact that Paterson had submitted a budget full of racist cuts that will directly affect our mostly black and Latino students wasn't an issue for her, or the administration. In fact, Paterson has proposed cutting the tuition assistance program more than \$90 million and his budget cuts will cut almost \$3 million from the school's budget alone over the next two years. Add to this the threatened cuts to free student subway passes and the attempt to lay off thousands of public school teachers and it is apparent that a boss is a boss and the governor's "race" hasn't stopped him from launching one racist attack after another against workers in New York.

In the weeks leading up to commencement, a

few students and professors decided that his presence was an insult to our college where students and faculty endure this rotten, racist system, yet work very hard to educate and learn. At our initial planning meeting, we struggled over whether to loudly boo or to stand silently and turn our backs to Paterson as he spoke. In deference to the graduating class, we chose the silent protest, hoping that the friends and family seated behind us would see our actions.

We spent a week leafleting and talking to people on campus about the racist budget cuts and linking them to the economic crisis caused by banks and to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. An overwhelming number of campus members were upset at the choice of speaker and were supportive of the protest. At the same time, nationalism did rear its ugly head, with some commenting that Paterson should be respected as the first black governor of New York.

At commencement it was immediately clear that our small size and general lack of militancy among students and faculty limited what we could do. Ordinarily, faculty members sit directly behind the graduating students and in front of family and friends. This year the administration, who knew of

the protest, seated the faculty at the very back of the assembly. When we stood and turned around, only a few people could see, rather than hundreds and hundreds.

As Paterson rose to speak, about 20 people, consisting of mostly faculty and a few students and family members, stood and showed him our backs. Having graduating students join us would have been a powerful statement, but unfortunately none did. We will continue to work with graduates and students at the school so that when the administration makes an equally racist and anti-working-class choice for commencement speaker next year, we will be there with a bigger and stronger action to counter them.

Our task for the future is to not only convince students and teachers that we should loudly and militantly protest Paterson or his successor, but more importantly that, through communist revolution, we can remake society completely. Then there will be no politicians and their boss-masters to solve their crises on our backs. We will organize education in a way that best benefits our class. This protest helped us to advance this struggle with many of our friends and allowed us to begin it with others. ☺

Bronx Co-op City: Workers Need to Stop Scabs, Dump Union Misleaders in the Garbage



working or delivering packages and supplies.

No attempt is being made to enlist the support of the power plant workers who maintain the electricity and air conditioning for the more than 15,000 apartments in the development. One officer told the workers that since management ceased bargaining in good faith, 32BJ was filing a complaint with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). He failed to mention that it would be months before such a complaint will even be considered. The Stella D'oro workers waited eight months before they had a day in court!

When the picket lines first went up, NYC sanitation workers refused to pick up the trash, in support of the workers. But after the Health Department ruled that a health crisis was developing, they picked up the tons of garbage that had accumulated. The police and health departments are backing up the local bosses.

The vicious racist attack made by Riverbay management is not only to erode benefits but also to break the union. Workers all over the country face similar attacks. The spirit of the workers on the line is strong, but to survive, rank-and-file workers must take over the struggle.

Communist leadership is needed. If the workers continue to play by the bosses' rules they will lose. Enlist the support of other workers! Stop the scabs!

PL members have been on the picket lines and have made contacts. We must step up our efforts. We urge all CHALLENGE readers to send solidarity messages and come to Co-op City to show support. ☺

BULLETIN — As we go to press, negotiations have resumed and the workers have returned to the job. More next issue.

BRONX, NY, June 3 — Over 500 mainly black and Latino custodial workers and staff at Co-op City — the largest housing development in the U.S. — were locked out of their jobs by the management company, Riverbay Corp. Hundreds of workers marched and chanted "32BJ, 32BJ [their union], we will rock you, we will rock you" as they entered the rally area today.

Riverbay Corp. wants the workers to accept a different health care package, which would save management \$1.5 million yearly. The bosses claim that both health plans are just as "good." A groundskeeper told the crowd that he has four children. One, a seven-year-old, has a heart condition. The "new" health plan has yearly caps and would not provide adequate care for his family.

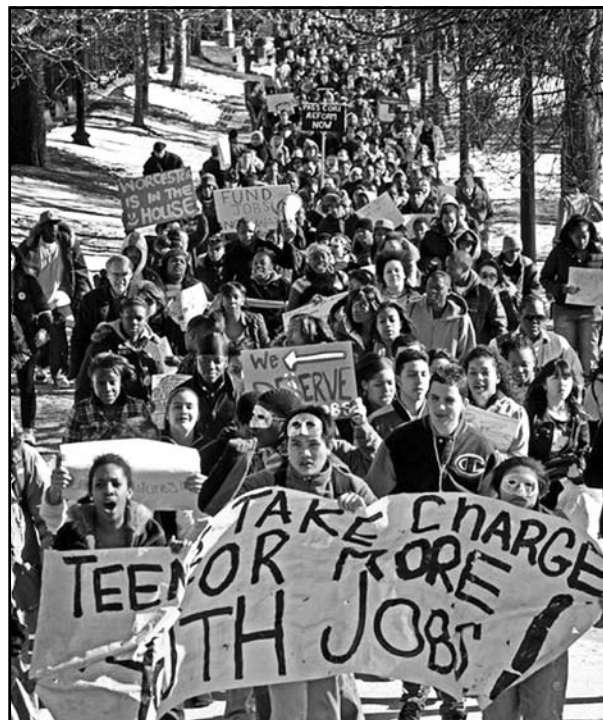
Union officials from SEIU Local 32BJ gave militant speeches, but their lack of action contradicts their words. Riverbay has organized managers and brought in scabs to replace the locked-out workers. The union chiefs have told the workers not to confront the scabs who are taking their jobs. In fact, 32BJ literature distributed to the community specifically states that the dispute is between 32BJ and Riverbay and that 32BJ is not asking other workers to stop

Students Walk Out Over Cuts; School Bosses Go Ballistic

NEW YORK CITY, June 2 — "Fight the budget cuts" shouted high school students from all around the city as they walked out of their schools. Student PL'ers helped to organize the protests as the multi-racial group of students gathered at Union Square Park and protested.

These protests are a start to fight back against the racist budget cuts that both students and their parents face in the city. Students fighting to protect their teachers' jobs and their needs caused the school administration to go ballistic. The true face of a boss was revealed as a Principal from a local school followed the students to Union Square and threatened to suspend them all. Some students were rounded up and are now being investigated to see who the leaders are.

It is doubtful that these walkouts could have occurred without Party leadership. This is an important struggle that students in NYC are currently engaged in, as they are using their power to shut down capitalism's ideological factory. These protests must become schools for communism that build PLP if we are to destroy the source of these racist budget cuts. ☺



Thousands of Boston youth take to the streets demanding jobs. (see Red Eye on the News, p. 7, on "Summer Jobs.")

NYC March vs. Israeli Fascist Attack: Nationalist Two-State 'Solution' Won't Free Palestine's Workers

NEW YORK CITY, May 31 — A few thousand New Yorkers marched on Memorial Day, with only a few hours notice, to protest the violent Israeli attack on the international flotilla bringing aid to Gaza. Much larger demonstrations were held in Turkey, London, Paris, Palestine and all over the Muslim world.

Israel has occupied Gaza and the West Bank since 1967; and in 2007 total siege was laid to Gaza, a tiny strip of land housing 1.5 million Palestinians (one of the most crowded places in the world). They are surrounded by a militarized wall, deprived of adequate food, water, housing, and medical care. Unemployment is about 80%. No one can enter or leave without Israeli permission, which is usually denied, even in cases of serious medical illness.

In December, 2008 and January 2009, Israel attacked the imprisoned population with overwhelming force, killing 1,440, wounding 5,000, and leaving 50,000 homeless. Since then almost no supplies have been allowed in; some are smuggled in through tunnels under the border from Egypt, which are regularly bombed.

Last week an international convoy of vessels carrying 10,000 tons of humanitarian aid set sail for Gaza, attempting also to break the naval blockade and highlight the conditions in Gaza. Although they expected to be stopped by the Israelis, no one expected to be

raided in international waters. The Israelis dropped from helicopters at night and killed at least nine activists and wounded many more. The rest were either detained or deported.

The Israeli ruling class figured they could get away with this fascist attack because no serious opposition was mounted to their 2008-2009 invasions or the wave of demolition of Palestinian homes in Jerusalem since then. The U.S., whom Israel is dependent on for survival, has not held back one penny from Israel. It gives more aid to Israel than to any other country in the world. Even the bulk of Palestinians, who live in the West Bank protested little because their leadership, the Fatah party, is committed to accommodating Israel, and suppressed all demonstrations.

The U.S. desperately wants a two-state solution, which would quiet the pro-Palestinian furor that inflames many Muslims and others against the U.S. Many Israelis oppose this idea because they want Israel to control all the land that is now the occupied territories, and for the Palestinians to disappear. This ideology is fed by the virulent racism taught to all Israelis, that Palestinians are subhuman, violent creatures who must be eradicated.

Many Palestinian activists call for Palestinian independence as their only goal. Neither a two-state nor a one-secular-state solution will improve life for the Palestinian working class. Their economy is under

the domination of a small group of wealthy families, who would continue to control the country in cahoots with Israel and international capitalists. Politically, they are ruled in the West Bank by Fatah and in Gaza by Hamas, an Islamic fundamentalist group with ties to Iran. So horrific are they as rulers that last week they demolished Gazan houses for "building without a permit," just like the Israelis do.

The majority of Palestinian workers and farmers would be no better off under the heel of these parties, except for increased freedom of movement. Israeli activists against the occupation also do not consider the structure of their own society, its ties to U.S. imperialism, and the need to build a worker-run, anti-racist, multi-ethnic society for the sake of its own workers and students.

Members of the PLP work with Palestinian, Israeli and U.S. activists to point out the need to fight for a communist society for all workers, not just for national independence or an end to the occupation. National liberation struggles have been waged around the world since the rise of imperialism. From South Africa to El Salvador, from Congo to Algeria, national liberation has not led to a better life for workers, who continue to be exploited by local bosses in partnership with international capitalists. Join us to build an international struggle for communism. Down with capitalism. Down with nationalism. ☸

France: Union Hacks' 'Re-run' Ducks Real General Strike

PARIS, June 6 — While union misleaders are scheduling new mass demonstrations for June 24 — the F.O. confederation is calling for a national strike on June 15 — they and their politician allies have no real strategy to fight the Sarkozy government's plans to cut 50 billion euros from the budget by 2013; to raise the legal retirement age; and to make workers work longer for a full retirement pension. Instead, they're offering a repeat of last year's losing strategy of a succession of symbolic 24-hour strikes and demonstrations.

This will follow actions on March 23 (800,000 marched in 180 cities); 350,000 on May Day; and perhaps a million on May 27, none of which mobilized the working class to launch an open-ended general strike of millions. Meanwhile, unemployment is rising to nearly 4,000,000 (including part-timers who can't find full-time jobs), 14% of the labor force of 28 million.

The union confederations reveal an underlying weakness in that they must meet still again on June

14 to "decide" whether to call a national 24-hour strike on June 24, in their demands for "dialogue" with the government and for "a new policy."

It is clear that these labor misleaders and the various political parties (Socialist, Left, "Communist" and New Anti-Capitalist Party) see no alternative to capitalism and only want to organize enough resistance to limit the damage and protect their bureaucratic positions. As CHALLENGE predicted on June 18, 2009, "Only communist leadership, dedicated not to negotiating with the government to 'improve' capitalism, but to overthrowing the government and the capitalist system, offers a way forward for the working class here." That is coming true as this year turns into a bad remake of last year.

It is only through organizing to deliver a knock-out blow — communist revolution — that effective resistance to the Sarkozy government's "reforms" can be forged. ☸

U.K. Teachers, Students: 'No ifs, no buts, no education cuts!'



LONDON, ENGLAND, May 5 — A thousand teachers and students marched side by side through central London today to protest severe cuts to the United Kingdom's (U.K.) higher- and further-education sectors. Chanting "No ifs, no buts, no education cuts" they marched past the Houses of Parliament and Westminster Abbey to a rally addressed by teacher and student unions.

Management at several U.K. universities have already backed down in the past few weeks and called off compulsory redundancies (layoffs) following decisive action by the unions.

Many more universities and further-education colleges are trying to lay off hundreds of teaching staff, claiming tight budgets and government cuts leave them no alternative. The University and College Union (UCU) that represents these workers has examined the figures put forward by one university and says that poor financial decisions by bosses are behind the proposed job cuts. Management has refused to consider alternatives to the layoffs.

Students are standing alongside their teachers in protest of larger classes and fewer teachers for the same fees. They know that cuts in teaching jobs translate into cuts in their education. Students have set up their own campaign to fight cuts at the University of Westminster and occupied the vice-chancellor's office in a two-day sit-in earlier this spring. ☸

exploitation here in France. The 100 undocumented workers who marched from Paris to Nice were among the protesters. (See CHALLENGE, May 26.) A second demonstration of 600 undocumented workers was held today.

In a statement, the marchers said: "The warmth of the welcome accorded by the inhabitants of the towns and villages along the march contrasted favorably with the nauseating debate on 'national identity' launched by the French government. The majority of people thus demonstrated that they have not fallen into the trap of racism and xenophobia." ☸

Undocumented Strikers Occupy Bastille Square, Battle Cops

PARIS, June 6 — Striking undocumented workers, most of African origin, battled riot cops as they continued occupying Bastille Square to pressure the government to reopen negotiations on the "legalization" of all undocumented workers. Talks have been at a standstill since May 20.

On May 27, the strikers — at times as many as 2,000 — began occupying the stairway to the Opera building in Bastille Square. Riot police refused to allow supporters to bring in food and water. After sleeping on the steps, the strikers would fold their sleeping bags and help municipal workers to clean the area.

At 7 a.m. on June 3, a horde of riot police massed at the foot of the stairs; then more gendarmes arrived from the top of the stairs and began tear-gassing the strikers. A violent fight broke out; a dozen strikers were injured and over 40 were arrested.

At 8 a.m., over 500 strikers, driven from the stairs, regrouped on the other side of the Square, where the police encircled them. However, when a growing number of Parisians arrived to support the strikers, the police withdrew three hours later, except for a line blocking access to the stairway. The undocumented strikers spent the night in Bastille Square.

Yesterday, Fofana Mo, a Senegalese, declared "There are French people in Africa, so why can't we come here? Is there gold in France? Are there dia-



LYON, FRANCE, May 25 — Demonstrators demand the "legalization" of Guilherme Hauka Azanga, including 5,000 letters supporting the Angolan immigrant, working in France for eight years (see CHALLENGE, 5/28)

monds? Is there oil? They come to take our wealth and we don't have the right to live here!"

PARIS TO NICE MARCH HITS FRENCH RULERS' RACISM

NICE, FRANCE, May 31 — Nearly 1,000 undocumented workers demonstrated yesterday at the opening of the France-Africa summit to condemn the participation of the neo-colonial rulers of Africa in their

LETTERS



PL Study Group Stirs Up 'Plenty to think about...'

Our Pennsylvania CHALLENGE study group contains spirited and sometimes combative workers. Recently we discussed whether fascists should have freedom of speech. The discussion grew from the fact that the Neo-Nazi Aryan Nation is holding a rally at the Gettysburg battlefield in June.

One group member said he thought they should have this right, but added that a large protest should confront these fascists. Another member declared that the Aryan Nation is devoted to Hitler and genocide and should not have this right, but should be confronted and smashed by an integrated workers movement led by the PLP. A member who works as a waitress agreed with those sentiments.

Another member, a teacher, asked if the current government should be encouraged to pass laws barring these hate groups. But another felt this wasn't the way to go. He said the current government is a capitalist one, and is more likely to pass laws against communists, that only the workers can stop these types of groups.

Then we discussed a recent newspaper column which advocated that the current government could be reformed to serve the interests of workers. This is just a classic liberal position, said one member, and will never happen since the current government is controlled completely by the ruling capitalist class and can never be reformed. It will take a workers' revolution and establishment of a genuine workers' state to fundamentally alter conditions for all workers. Except for one person, most agreed with this assessment.

The waitress said the discussion group gave her more than enough to think about, stating she was glad this group existed, along with CHALLENGE, since the mass media told nothing but lies.

Next year we hope to attend the May Day march.

Red Coal

Angry Workers Slam Pols for Racist 'Non-Decision'

An angry crowd of 400 workers and youth filled City Council chambers on May 28 in Worcester, MA, to blast the racist Council members, shaking them up with cries of "Shame! Shame!"

After having confronted the Tea Party and their racist friends the previous week (see p. 1), the group returned here to expose the Council's racist decision to not even discuss a boycott of Arizona and its racist laws. This was not the first issue from the Latino community the Council refused to discuss. It also voted against a livery service in Latino neighborhoods and against keeping swimming pools open.

After a short rally at City Hall, during which Progressive Labor Party along with community leaders spoke, almost the entire rally marched up the steps to City Council Chambers. Some organizers of the second action had the youth tape their mouths so they'd "be polite" while people were told to stand silently. But the workers were very angry and refused to be silenced. They soon started chanting "shame, shame" and "vote them out!" at the City Councilors, while the youth chanted "No more hate." Some of our comrades and friends led the chant, "Asian, Latin, black and white, against racism we must unite!"

The councilors were shaken. Some called for "defusing" the anger. One councilor said if the city didn't do something it would explode. The local newspaper did not cover the rally, although a City Council reporter was present. So far, the newspaper has refused to print any letters about the action. It e-mailed one person, saying Councilor Barbara Haller was not a racist. Her actions have proved differently.

PLP members were in the leadership committee and others sold CHALLENGE. We pointed out how racism hurts everyone by dividing the working class. We called for a workers' society that we, not the bosses' politicians, would run and how it will meet the needs of our class.

Anti-Racist Red

Make an Opportunity — and Work Your Butt Off

A few months ago the political action committee of our local organization passed a resolution supporting immediate U.S. withdrawal from Iraq and Afghanistan. Now more than 80% of the 100 or so members who attended the annual meeting of the full membership have voted in favor of the resolution. The three months prior to the meeting were rich in ideological struggle, with articles for and against appearing in the group's newsletter.

We had to convince those who supported the resolution to attend the meeting and to be prepared to sit through discussion of organizational business. A number of people in the political action committee wrote articles and helped with the get-out-the-vote campaign, but too much was done by too few of us.

After the meeting a friend and fellow member of the political action committee took us out for a drink. We showed him CHALLENGE and will talk to him about continuing to receive the paper and about joining our monthly readers' group.

PLP's 2005 statement, Dark Night Shall Have Its End, talks about the importance of seizing every opportunity during this difficult period to bring about a new period in which the movement for communist revolution can grow even faster. We see two kinds of opportunities: those we create and those that arise independently of

our efforts.

We created this opportunity. Prior to our campaign, there was no groundswell of active opposition to the wars among the group's members, who were preoccupied with other issues. In fact, probably about 90% of the people who voted for the resolution had voted for Obama; our linking of Afghanistan to Iraq was initially very uncomfortable for most of them.

We had to prove that the U.S. wanted to "secure" Afghanistan in order to build the TAPI pipeline and that the U.S. had supported the Taliban and might even do so again if they could cut a pipeline deal with them. The Karzai regime is hopelessly corrupt and similar to the Taliban in its oppression of women. We argued that it was absurd to believe that the U.S. is invading Afghanistan to help build infrastructure and support "human rights." The U.S., state and municipal governments are so broke they can't even maintain infrastructure here and are conducting assault after assault on workers' rights, liberties, and standard of living.

Now another opportunity has come along, this one independent of our efforts. There's a big rally and march May 29th in Phoenix in opposition to Arizona's racist law attacking undocumented workers. We are working hard to mobilize members of the group to go to Phoenix where we can expose both the local fascist scapegoating of immigrants as well as the liberal Dream (Nightmare) Act fascism documented on the back page of the May 26 CHALLENGE.

Determined Comrade

Captured By The Israeli Military

My niece in Greece has been a political activist since she was 16 years old. One of the causes she has been involved in is the plight of the Palestinian people in Gaza. She has gone there several times to do humanitarian work as a doctor.

She was on the last boat in the flotilla captured by the Israeli military. Because the boat was in international waters, the captain would not surrender until receiving instructions from the Greek government. When he refused to surrender, Israeli soldiers beat him badly with their rifle butts. Everyone on the boat was arrested.

In jail, the captives were not allowed food or water for a day and a half and were repeatedly strip-searched. Sixteen people were eventually released but thirty-five still remain in jail and the Israeli government has not released information about their condition and what will happen to them.

The boat my niece was on was carrying medical supplies and books. The brutal actions of the Israeli government will not stop the international effort to break the blockade of Gaza and assist our brothers and sisters who are suffering there.

New York City Comrade

Wells Fargo Pushed Racist Subprime Loans and Sponsors Juneteenth

Wells Fargo, an official sponsor of Juneteenth in most cities (see supplement), systematically sold racist subprime mortgages to black workers. "Subprime loans" became well known in 2007. Tens of thousands of workers were duped by banks to buy a house at low interest rates while never being told that the rates would skyrocket.

A New York Times study found that black households that made more than \$68,000 a year were five times as likely to receive a subprime loan as whites with similar or lower incomes. For Wells Fargo borrowers, this disparity was even greater with whites in that income group holding two percent of the subprime loans compared to 16.1 percent for blacks. Mortgage lenders at Wells Fargo often referred to these subprime loans as "ghetto loans," referring to the black working class they targeted. Wells Fargo specifically targeted black churches, hoping church leaders could help convince their congregation to take out these loans. ☸

Ignore Nazis? No, Attack Them Head-on

GETTYSBURG, PA — The Neo-Nazi Aryan Nations are planning a rally here June 19, to try to recruit to their extremely racist, anti-immigrant and anti-Semitic fascism.

The local YWCA is planning a "celebration of diversity," to pull people away from attacking the Aryan Nations, saying it is better to not call attention to them. But PLP knows from decades of experience fighting groups such as the Aryan Nations and the KKK that the only way to defeat them is to attack them head-on. PLP has a long and successful history of smashing the ruling class' thugs.

The Gettysburg Police Department (GPD) has already announced that they will be providing security for the Aryan Nations, at a high cost to local taxpayers. In addition "the majority of everything involved is going to be taken care of by the

National Park Service," said Chief Dougherty [of the GPD], adding that federally-trained officers are attending the event.

The ruling class will always send their cops to protect racist groups' rallies. Racism is a necessity of capitalism, needed to break working-class unity and keep all workers' wages lower. The bosses and politicians are the biggest perpetrators and benefactors of racism.

PLP will always confront and smash Nazis and fascists in the streets, and will be in Gettysburg to show that the working class cannot ignore an attack on black, Latino and immigrant workers.

Ultimately, the only way to end both the racism inherent in capitalism and to smash these gutter racists is to fight for multi-racial working-class unity. Join PLP in Gettysburg, and build the anti-racist fight for communist revolution. ☸

MUNI Drivers Lead Battle vs. Boss-Union Hacks' Gang-up

SAN FRANCISCO, June 7 — As CHALLENGE reported in March, MUNI (SF mass transit) drivers rejected a "concession package" recommended by their TWU Local 250a Union leadership. This put a wrench in corporate SF's plan to solve the transit deficit by cutting labor costs. Recently, Mayor Newsom said: "It's critical that TWU step up and join every other labor union...by ratifying the \$14 million in labor concessions their leadership agreed to.... These...would immediately reverse nearly three-quarters of the \$28.8 million in service cuts." (SF Chronicle, 5/21)

In addition, SF Supervisors are trying to mobilize voters against the drivers with two Charter amendments which attack their wage and benefit package. The SF Chronicle editorialized (5/19): "...drivers haven't had to lift a finger when it comes to easing MUNI's financial burdens...With its pay rates locked into the city charter, the union can continue to thumb its nose at city officials and riders."

The Joint City Workers' Committee of the SF Labor Council has followed the Mayor's lead. They delivered concessions from all City workers but police, fire and nurses. The chairperson declared that his "primary work for the next few months will be to get MUNI operators to make concessions to the City." This leadership puts some workers in a mental jail. For example, an operator said, "Everyone is suffering so we have to give something up. If we just give a little, they'll leave us alone."

It's the drivers' strategic position and ability to bring the City to a halt that drives the corporate media and politicians in this well-planned media frenzy.

Ideas Are Changing

Drivers are furious. One said, "My dad would be rolling over in his grave if he saw what's happening!" Another said, "Many of us were the pride of our communities, now we're the bad guys." Old expectations are dying. Others express a new urgency and some fear: "Before, I just came to work and went home to my family without thinking about the job. I left all that to the union; I can't do that anymore."

Appearance Is Not Always Reality

Since 1967, the City Charter seemed to protect the drivers. Wages and benefits are "equal to the average of the top two" transit districts in the U.S. It lulled both the union leaders and many members into thinking, "We automatically get raises, we don't have to strike and we'll sue." This so-called "guarantee" is what the City politicians want to remove to "fix MUNI."

As PLP members point out, no law, no City Charter can protect us from ever-increasing demands from the capitalist class. They are squeezing more out of workers in this country to pay for wars for oil and competition with other capitalists worldwide.

Productivity has doubled. This City Charter did not protect families from growing debt, foreclosures, shrinking purchasing power, deteriorating schools, or expensive health coverage. Because of racism, this hit the predominantly black and Latino workforce and ridership particularly hard.

The Charter may appear to give us a break from fighting back, but the City powers will break it, find a "legal loophole" or change it when their economic necessity (profits) demands it. This is capitalism's reality for the working class.

In the face of changing lives and these vicious attacks, drivers organized job actions which the union leadership sabotaged. PLP members are in the class struggle while engaged in debates as drivers sort all this out. They are asking questions like:

Why do the union leaders interfere when we try to fight back?

Can the Charter or the government help us?

Who are our friends? Can workers organize solidarity?

Vote for concessions or VOTE NO and prepare to fight?

Can we strike? Will we win or lose?

Can we really destroy capitalism and is communism a viable alternative? ☸

(For further debate, see next issue)

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

Big oil always big gangsters

NYT, 5/29 — To the Editor: Anyone scandalized by Big Oil's influence within the government should read "Oil!" by Upton Sinclair, published in 1927. The book is a fictional expose of unscrupulous business and political practices during the early days of oil exploration and production in California.

Drilling technology may have evolved since then, but Sinclair shows that conflicts of interests, regulators in thrall to industry, "rapacious corporate scoundrels..." sweetheart deals, lease giveaways, bribery, fraud and the like are nothing new. They have permeated the oil industry since before the days of the Teapot Dome affair in the Harding administration.

Sinclair could have written the book yesterday. What is scandalous is not that such practices exist, but that they have been allowed to persist virtually unchanged for a century.

No visas for the exploited

NYT, 5/23 — Our housing industry, our service industry, our gardening, landscape industry, you name it — it's been dependent for decades on Mexican labor. None of those people qualify for an employment-based visa. So when the hate mongers say, "Why can't they wait in line? Why can't they get a visa?" — there aren't any visas to get! There's no line to wait in!

Reds in UAW showed the way

NYT, 5/29 — Striking at a vital plant to achieve an auto-industry domino effect was a tactic first used to good effect in the United States by the United Automobile Workers

The U.A.W. has repeatedly held strikes at crucial parts factories to shut down many assembly plants quickly....In going on strike at a China transmission factory, workers here have Honda by the jugular.

Transmission factories are the most expensive auto plants of all to build...The factory here supplies four Honda plants in China, all of which have

been shut down.

Automakers tend to put transmission factories only in the most politically stable and strike-free countries, because a shutdown for even a day is costly. Until now, China was seen as a safe bet.

But...workers here say now they are operating more by consensus. [Still] there has been no sign that the Chinese authorities are ready to let a cohesive group of labor activists emerge to lead a national independent union.

Summer job? Youth at end of line

NYT, 6/1 — This year is shaping up to be even worse than last for the millions of high school and college students looking for summer jobs.

State and local governments, traditionally among the biggest seasonal employers, are knee-deep in the budget woes....Private employers are also reluctant to hire until the economy shows more solid signs of recovery.

Students seeking summer jobs, generally 16 to 24 years old, are at the end of the job line, behind the jobless baby boomers who are competing with new college graduates who, in turn, are trying to elbow out undergraduates and high school students.

With so many people competing for so few jobs, unemployed youth "are the silent victims of the economy..."

Rich nations cause global misery

GW, 5/21 — The wealthy nations are plundering not only their own resources. The environmental disasters caused by the oil industry in Ecuador and Nigeria are not driven by Ecuadorian or Nigerian demand, but by the thirst for oil in richer nations. Deforestation in Indonesia is driven by the rich world's demand for palm oil and timber, in Brazil by our hunger for timber and animal feed.

So we find that far from cutting emissions since 1990, as the last government claimed, it has increased them. Wealth wrecks the environment.

"...Capitalism has absorbed the greens." Instead of seeking to protect the natural world... environmentalists now work on "sustaining human civilization at the comfort level which the world's



rich people feel is their right."

[But] "the economic system we rely upon cannot be tamed without collapsing, for it relies upon... growth in order to function..."

System has no future for workers

NYT, 5/29 — ...Powerful companies do not have the best interests of the American people in mind when they are closing in on profits that ancient kingdoms could only envy. BP's profits are counted in the billions annually....You don't want to know what people will do for that kind of money.

There is nothing new to us about this. Haven't we just seen how the giant financial firms almost destroyed the American economy? Wasn't it just a few weeks before the hideous Deepwater Horizon disaster that a devastating mine explosion in West Virginia — at a mine run by a company with its own hideous safety record — killed 29 coal miners and ripped the heart out of yet another hard-working local community?

The idea of relying on the assurances of these corporate predators that they are looking out for the safety of their workers and the health of surrounding communities and the environment is beyond absurd.

The oil companies and other giant corporations have a stranglehold on American policies and behavior, and are choking off the prospects of a viable social and economic future for working people and their families.

MORE ITEMS AVAILABLE AT WWW.PLP.ORG

U.S. Imperialists' Attack on Haiti Spurs Worker-Student Fight-back

PORT-AU-PRINCE, May 19 — At a three-day teachers' union forum here about the government and imperialist donors' reconstruction plans for Haiti, teachers and students blasted the plans to "reconstruct" neocolonial capitalism in Haiti. The forum was organized by UNNOH, the National Union of Teachers' College Graduates of Haiti, along with CTSP (Confederation of Workers in the Public & Private Sectors).

The participants denounced the military occupation by UN troops in MINUSTAH (United Nations Mission to Stabilize Haiti) and by 1,000 U.S. troops, remaining from a much larger force.

About 130 teachers from K-12 schools and colleges attended, along with students and trade unionists from CTSP. In panels, workshops and passionate debates, we discussed what kind of country/state should be rebuilt; the role of education; the role of women; the role of the university; military occupation; a critical analysis of the Haitian government's Plan of Action; alternative politics in Latin America and the Caribbean; and plans to mobilize citizens for genuine reconstruction.

A U.S. professor described the model of reconstruction in New Orleans, which serves as a parallel to the situation here: racist policies turning natural disaster into unimaginable catastrophe followed by even more racist reconstruction plans.

This was an impressive and moving event — a great outpouring of Haitian teachers' grief, anger, and political thinking, a moment of solidarity and resolve. Several expressed parts of a communist analysis and a communist spirit of revolt. Capitalism and imperialism were roundly condemned by almost every speaker. But most ideas for action are still confined within prevailing liberal, nationalist and reformist norms. Organized communism has faded from the Haitian scene, but there is some openness to considering views such as those of PLP which propose to rebuild an international revolutionary communist movement and party, taking account of the errors of previous revolutions.

Racist Attacks on Haitian Workers and Students

Five days after the Forum, MINUSTAH troops entered the campus of the Faculty of Ethnology to harass activist students, confiscating computers and arresting one student. Two students had delivered militant speeches at the forum against the military occupation and phony reconstruction. The troops arrived with photos of students taken at the forum, apparently the motive for their crude attempt at intimidation. The imperialists are very afraid of working-class anger in a country born from slave rebellions. After students quickly organized a protest and sought support, including from PLP, their arrested comrade was released late the same day.

Passing the rotting, stinking camps like the one in the Champ de Mars, the main square of Port-au-Prince, you could certainly understand why revolution was in the air for some. How can we let our class brothers and sisters rot in these fascist camps under the shadow of UN and U.S. troops, there to enforce the 18-month Emergency Law just passed to allow the president to rule by decree? And the reconstruction plans envision Haiti only as a low-wage platform of production for export (e.g., textiles under the no-tariff HOPE laws passed by the U.S. Congress, or mangos and avocados for the U.S. market). Impoverished Haitian workers can now be used as a reserve army of labor to help hold down wages in the whole region, including the U.S.

and Canada. With the threat of moving jobs to Haiti, the U.S. bosses can use racism to build discord among workers and prevent them from banding together in international unity.

Caught between the present of the camps and a future of industrial and agricultural sweatshops or migration into the anti-immigrant U.S., Haitian workers and students are beginning to think hard about their situation, imagining how to put our class to work producing the food and other necessities of life for workers and farmers right here. PLP in Haiti is suggesting to our friends that workers need state power to do that, and to win state power we need a communist party and a red army. Those ideas once flourished in Haiti, and will again!

Can the Unions Serve the Workers?

A central question in Haiti is unionism. There is "dual unionism" here: on one side are the "yellow" unions like CNEH, the National Confederation of Haitian Teachers, in favor with the government, affiliated with the big international union federations like Education International (EI), doing nothing for their inactive members. They are "unions in a briefcase" as workers here say, with nothing on the ground. CNEH soaked up all the money teachers around the world contributed to EI, thinking they were giving to fellow teachers after the catastrophe.

On the other side are the seemingly more honest unionists who joined electrical, transport, telephone, teachers, nurses and other workers together in the CTSP federation. Many of the leaders and delegates of these unions are unemployed, fired from good jobs for organizing. They have led very militant reform struggles. The bus drivers in the SESP union, for example, were ALL fired and replaced by scabs when they successfully organized the SESP.

One discussion started at the forum on the limits of unions in anti-capitalist struggle. Can there be red unions, or red-led unions, under capitalism? The Haitian state has "good" labor laws on the books, for example, but breaks them all the time, as when they fired all the bus drivers. They enable the private employers, notably in the textile and other assembly industries for export, to do the same thing. Organizing in textiles is a clandestine operation.

PLP is presenting the idea that a revolutionary party is a necessity within unions and also to link the few unionized workers with the vast masses of the unemployed (70%). We speak of unions as possibly "schools of revolution," in Lenin's phrase, but only if there are communists



2008 protest in Haiti against rising food prices

working in them. We know that without communists working within them, unions are often turned into tools of the ruling class rather than the honest advocates for workers they may start as.

The Real Solution for Haiti: Communist Revolution

It will take a prolonged ideological struggle to bring the ideas of communism back to Haiti. PLP is in that struggle with our friends among unionized workers and students, inspired by their indomitable spirit. "There is no more social sap in Haiti," a student said, his image deriving from the deforested and eroded countryside. And yet his speech was undefeated, full of juice, full of radical thought and deeply felt. When he and his comrades deepen their already existing alliance with organized workers and go to the unorganized masses, the sap will rise and the trees will return to the hills where the slave revolt was born.

The crowning insult in the bosses' reconstruction plan is to promote a tourist industry (like the resort at Labadie where the Clintons, who "love" Haiti as vultures love their prey, spent their honeymoon). A tourist park in the mountains where the first revolution to destroy slavery was born, where Charlemagne Peralte's guerrillas fought off the U.S. marines in the 1920s? What a future!

The bosses have the government, MINUSTAH, the pirate crew of "donors" who formed the Interim Commission for the Reconstruction of Haiti, with Bill Clinton and prime minister Belleville as co-chairs and the World Bank as a dominant force. But Haitian workers and students have the courage, intelligence and the history of our whole class. And soon — together we are working for it and will bring it into being — they will have and will build to new heights an international revolutionary party, the PLP. ☛

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