

CHALLENGE



THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

volume 42 no. 18

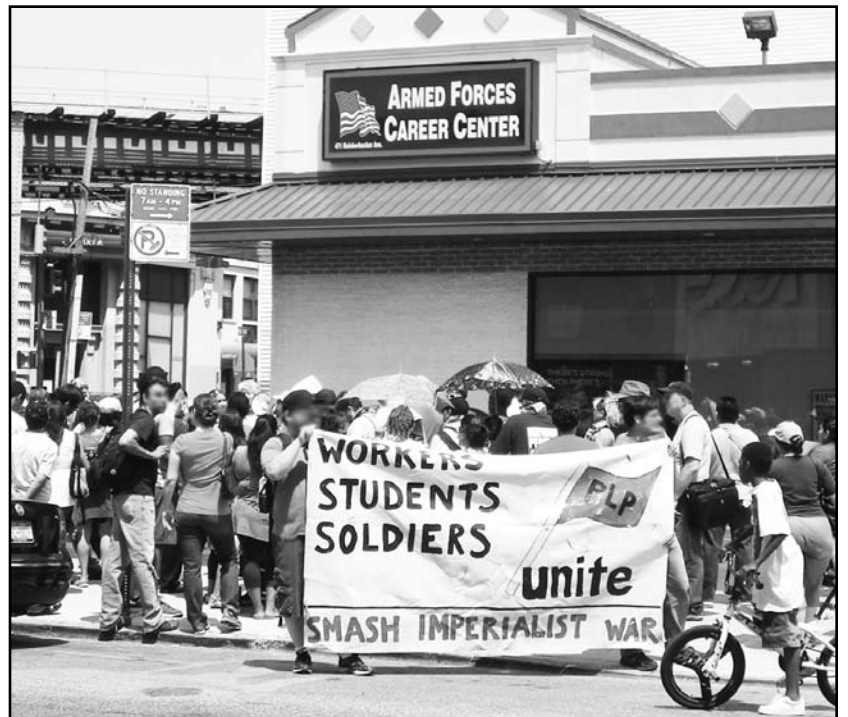
september 8, 2010

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Black and Latino Workers Unite to Defeat Bosses' Racism

STATEN ISLAND, NY, August 4 — Hundreds of black, white, Asian and Latino workers, students and their families marched and rallied here against the more than 17 known racist attacks against undocumented workers from Latin America. This multi-racial protest was organized by workers from a group that fights for immigrants' rights, along with PLP. PL's years of work in a mostly black church united black workers and Latino workers here, in the face of anti-immigrant racism and police terror.

Carrying signs like "fight racist attacks" and "unite against racism," PL'ers expanded the struggle to more than a narrow fight against violence or solely a citizenship issue that can be "solved" by the liberal bosses' nightmarish immigration reform (see CHALLENGE July and August). PLP's leadership sharpened the line of the protest to directly confront racism. Hundreds of CHALLENGES were distributed and were read by onlookers and virtually all the marchers.



Summer Project 2010: Week of Struggle Sets Tone for Convention

NEW YORK, NY — The Summer Project showed that PLP is all about trying to create a fighting mass party. Participants came from around the world and boosted the confidence of the youth-led Summer Project, which led up to PLP's 2010 Convention (see page 3). We sold over 7,550 CHALLENGE's and improved our tactics of talking to workers when distributing the paper to make contacts and asking workers to pay for the paper. We collected over \$2,000 and made dozens of contacts.

We sold CHALLENGE at factories, bus barns, hospitals, schools and working-class neighborhoods. One group spent a day at a military base distributing CHALLENGES and GI Notes and making contacts with soldiers.

Study groups were held on how to build a base for communist revolution and how the fall of the old communist movement affects our fight today.

One of the most significant events of the Project was a demonstration in front of the Council on Foreign Relations where U.S. bosses plan how best to attack workers and wage imperialist war. Another was a demonstration in Staten Island where a few black workers who have been temporarily won to the bosses' racism have brutally attacked immigrant workers (see article above). PLP is fighting for working-class unity of all workers, immigrant and U.S. born, who have more in common with each other than with the bosses.

We also screened several movies like "Cradle Will Rock," a movie about the politics of art and "Salt of the Earth," an anti-sexist movie about a miners' strike.

Letters from the Summer Project

As a 28-year-old student from Palestine, I was positively surprised by the readiness of U.S. workers to accept our line. Before I came here I thought that anti-communist attitudes were prevalent here but now I know that the U.S. working class is very open to our ideas.

We sold a very large number of CHALLENGES at the schools, one hospital and a bus barn. We also held two rallies. Workers passing by were quite supportive of us and many were ready to buy CHALLENGE. I think that U.S. workers are open to our ideas and that Party clubs

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Multi-racial Unity is Key

The recent racist attacks in Staten Island by black youth on undocumented workers is an example of how racism divides the working class. Black workers attacking and nearly killing Latino workers reflects the efforts of the bosses to pit workers against workers, and prevent a united multi-racial fight against capitalism. But PL can win workers to communist-led unity against racism.

The racism of the liberal left is highlighted by the mass organization at the forefront of the struggle pushing this solely as a "Latino issue." This idea is dangerous, as organizing a group of workers based on race only further pits one group against another. Workers must see themselves as part of the working-class, not one "nationality" or "race," more similar to other workers of the world than to their national bosses. Only with this understanding can workers unite to smash those capitalist bosses. At the rally, our chants, "Asian, Latin, black, and white — to smash racism, we must unite!" and "Las luchas obreras no tienen fronteras" were taken up by many marchers.

The city is also increasing its police presence as a response to these attacks; the same NYPD KKKops who attack, jail and kill our class on a regular basis. The NYPD has set up 24-hour surveillance of the neighborhood with a Nazi-style mobile Skywatch tower and a Mobile Command Center truck. These are not measures taken to protect workers — this is part of the ramping up of fascist terror to keep workers, black and Latino, documented and undocumented, in line to be able to maintain the U.S.'s imperialist war needs.

Grow Through Struggle

Workers and students from across the country attending PLP's Summer Project the following week held another rally in Staten Island. Hundreds more CHALLENGES were taken by black and Latino workers on the street. Bus drivers, steeled by their transit strike of a few years ago and the racism they faced, honked thunderously in support of our anti-racist signs.

Hundreds of leaflets were handed out, stating that the most vicious attack on immigrant workers is coming from Obama and the liberal Democrats who are deporting record numbers of our sisters and brothers. As the bosses dig us deeper into this economic crisis we face more unemployment, budget cuts, fare/tuition hikes, etc. Their media blames immigrants and promotes anti-immigrant lies, but the real culprit for this crisis is the profit system, capitalism.

PLP will continue to work and grow in the struggle. One student who attended the first rally joined the Party on the way home. Marches like this illustrate how by working patiently in a mass organization, PLP can lead workers to struggle against capitalism. By linking our work in these organizations together, a quantity of protests like this can lead to a qualitative shift where PLP eventually leads millions of workers into conflict with the state itself. Capitalists need racism to maintain their system, but the working class has absolutely no need for this destructive ideology. Through a communist revolution, we can build a world where one group of workers doesn't attack other workers, but works together to meet their needs. (See page 4 article on black and Latino workers' unity in a pharmaceutical plant) ☺

Imperialists' Fight Over Profits, Not 'Terror,' Fuels Obama's Secret/Open Wars

PLP has warned for decades that U.S. rulers must conduct ever wider wars to shore up their slipping status as the world's top imperialists. Now, in addition to their Afghan and Iraqi bloodbaths, the NY Times reports (8/15) that Obama & Co. are running secret and not-so-secret military operations (using Hellfire and cruise missiles, drone attacks and cluster bombs) in Yemen, Somalia, Kenya, Algeria, Morocco, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Pakistan, Iran, and Tajikistan.

The Times, a major mouthpiece for U.S. bosses, claims Obama's objective is "combating terrorists." But what's really driving the covert U.S. death squads is intensifying competition with rival imperialists — especially China, Russia and junior partner Iran — for sources of profit. This overriding, inter-imperialist aspect

to U.S. war-making also explains why the Obama regime is extending promised deadlines for withdrawing from Iraq and Afghanistan back into infinity.

China, Russia, Iran Main Foes of U.S. Rulers

The Times "exposé" omits the geo-strategically critical energy wealth and transit routes that lie in or near the 11 targeted countries. Though the words "oil" and "gas" do not appear, it gives the game away by making Saudi Arabia the bulls-eye on an accompanying map of the covert war zone (see map, page 5). The kingdom holds the world's most important oil reserves. Thus, the Times' piece deals mainly with clandestine U.S. raids in Yemen, which borders Saudi Arabia and commands strategic export lanes from it.

For decades after World War II, control of Saudi, Iranian, Iraqi and Kuwaiti (and, of course, North American) oil immensely aided U.S. and allied (mainly British) rulers' domination of the non-Soviet world. For the benefit of their ruling-class owners, the ancestors of Exxon Mobil, Chevron, BP and Shell dictated the price and terms of supply of capitalism's lifeblood to three quarters of the planet.

That was then. The U.S. lost Iran to pro-Russian and pro-Chinese ayatollahs in 1979. And today, rising imperialist China, a major buyer of Saudi and Kuwaiti oil, is building a "blue-water" navy to end its need for brokers like Exxon, Chevron, and Shell. That navy includes warships to guard tankers delivering oil to China's burgeoning manufacturing economy.

China and Russia hold contracts on huge oil fields in Iraq, which seven years of U.S. occupation have failed to pacify sufficiently to get that huge potential reserve out of the ground for exploitation. Moscow and Beijing may be tempted to initiate their own "regime change" in Baghdad by bolstering already significant Iranian influence there.

Gas supplies also motivate Obama's semi-secret wars. Iran — whose nuclear arms program Russia is assisting — and Algeria, both on the Pentagon/CIA hit list, belong to the Moscow-led Gas Exporting Countries Forum. The Putin gang wants to formalize it into an anti-U.S. OPEC of natural gas.

Iran and Russia might have become competitors as gas exporters. Instead, opposition to the U.S. makes them staunch partners in the gas trade and on potential battlefields. Russia's "support" of UN sanctions on Iran is a farce. And their military alliance is expanding.

"The Hindu" reports (7/26) that "Russia's Energy Minister Sergei Shmatko said last week that he saw 'practically no limits' to cooperation with Iran in the energy field. 'No sanctions will hinder our cooperation in hydrocarbons'....Russia is Iran's main source for arms and technology. In the past 15 years, Russia

As our previous editorial indicated (CHALLENGE, 8/18), these varying ruling-class strategies reflect two main options that thus far they are at a loss to decide on:

- **Counter-insurgency**, which amounts to full-scale, vastly expensive colonial occupation that subjugates the entire population, largely through the deadly seizure of cities; or,
- **Counter-terrorism**, less costly and perhaps less effective for U.S. invaders, which targets suspected Al Qaeda and Taliban leaders and allies for assassination in the hope that the rank and file will see the light.

has supplied Iran with combat aircraft, helicopters, diesel submarines, tanks and air defence systems."

The Kremlin also backs an Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline to challenge the U.S.-led Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) pipeline project, now bogged down in Bush-Obama's botched Afghan war.

Assassinations Can't Win Oil Fields for U.S. Bosses

So why did the Times, which speaks for the U.S. imperialist establishment, disclose Obama's "cloak and dagger" campaign? Because it's not working. Citing the ultimate authority of the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), U.S. rulers' leading foreign policy think-tank, the Times concluded, "Micah Zenko, a fellow at the CFR, examines in a forthcoming book what he has labeled 'discrete military operations' from the Balkans to Pakistan since the end of the cold war in 1991. He found that these operations seldom achieve either their military or political objectives."

The Times has another CFR-Establishment lifer, Edmund Hull, weigh in: "To be successful in the long run, we have to take a far broader approach that emphasizes political, social and economic forces." This means massive invasions and occupations, which Hull thinks serves the rulers better than assassinations (see box). Hull was Clinton's deputy coordinator for counter-terrorism.

U.S. Bosses, Like All Imperialists, Need Mass Invasions and Long-term Occupations

The Times piece sends a message to Obama: "War on the cheap" won't fulfill U.S. imperialists' needs. They want him to mobilize society for broader, inevitably, global conflict. They call for "shared sacrifice" to finance a more expensive war. U.S. bosses will intensify attacks on the working class — more budget cuts in social services, teacher layoffs, lowering wages, more healthcare cuts, raising the Social Security retirement age and whatever else they can get away with.

The needs of weakening U.S. rulers means they must go on an even more intensive war footing, forcibly seizing back slices of the world they've lost or risk losing their riches. This ups the ante both for Obama's administration and for our class. We must get on a full war footing ourselves. Our Party's plan is to build a base in workplaces, campuses, neighborhoods and in the Army to militantly expose and oppose the war-makers. Such actions will ultimately prove schools for communist revolution. ☺

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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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, P.O. Box 808 Brooklyn, NY 11202. September 8 2010. Volume 42, No. 18

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.

This issue of CHALLENGE will be a 3-week issue. The next issue will come out on September 9.

PLP Convention 2010: Internationalism and Youth Lead The Way

The historic 2010 Convention of Progressive Labor Party brought to life the slogan 'one flag, one world, one Party.' Over 500 members and supporters from at least 17 countries gathered to reaffirm our commitment to communist revolution.

From the first speaker, a young black woman worker explaining in sharp detail the current stage of inter-imperialist rivalry and the irrevocable move towards world capitalist war, to the closing session in which the new International Steering Committee of the Party was overwhelmingly affirmed by the entire convention, this event marked a significant new stage in the life of the Party.

The opening speech set the tone for the rest of the event:

- The phony "leftist" leaders of Latin America, Castro, Chavez, Lula, and Correa, were revealed to be tools of Chinese and Russian imperialism.
- The imperialist powers were called out for the mass racist exploitation of Haitian workers that created the conditions for the 2010 earthquake disaster in which over 200,000 Haitians died.
- The destruction of the social safety net in Europe was exposed.
- The continuing humanitarian disaster in Africa that has resulted from 200 years of imperialism was linked to intensifying inter-imperialist rivalry.
- The mass racist attacks on immigrant workers all

over the world were exposed.

As these facts were laid bare the audience of hundreds roared and stomped their feet shouting, "Smash racist deportation, working people have no nation!" and "Racism means... We got to fight back! Imperialism means... We got to fight back!"

Despite the bosses' attacks on the working class all over the world the speaker showed that workers are willing to fight back.

- Thousands of workers, teachers, students and farm workers took to the streets of Oaxaca, Mexico in the mass rebellion of 2006.
- Over 6,000 immigrant workers went on strike for eight months against racist French bosses this year.
- Tens of thousands of striking garment workers, led by women workers, in Bangladesh shut down over 700 factories.
- Striking Stella D'Oro workers from the Bronx fought for eleven months resisting police attacks and the sexist attacks of Stella bosses who sought to divide the workers.

Workers were overwhelmed with emotion, passion and dedication to the fight for a communist world as we left the opening session and gathered in workshops. There, we engaged in discussion over the line of Progressive Labor Party, and how to carry it out (see *Our Fight*, page 2). Comradely, but intense, struggle characterized the workshops.

We discussed every aspect of our line from the fight against sexism to Democratic Centralism and the need for the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

These discussions were anchored in reports on the current practice of the Party and concluded with concrete plans for how to continue and improve the work as we move forward. Similarly, the Closing Plenary session, where resolutions were presented to affirm many aspects of our line, engendered additional sharp but comradely struggle.

This character of the Convention, in which we recognize that our unity about the need for communist revolution still contains within it differences about particular aspects of our

line refutes the anti-communist myth that communists blindly obey their leaders. Only a communist party operating through democratic centralism could achieve this complex interplay of unity and disagreement.

These workshops were enormously enriched by the presence of comrades from around the world. Members from three African countries, throughout the Caribbean, South America, Central America, Mexico, Turkey, Greece, Arab and Jewish workers from Palestine and the U.S. were vocal participants in the workshops.

These comrades' descriptions of the nightmarish conditions in which our working-class brothers and sisters are driven by the racist, fascist needs of world imperialism sharpened the understanding of every member about the need to organize and build PLP.

Their descriptions of the struggles in which they are engaged and their progress in recruiting to the Party in all these areas of the world made it clear that we have made a modest, but significant, leap forward in building a truly international Party.

In addition, leadership was embraced by a collective of multi-racial young comrades — the next generation of Party leadership developing before our eyes at the convention. They worked for an entire year leading up to this momentous event. Collectively they organized every aspect of the convention from details like food and housing to pressing questions about our line.

Speaking in front of a large banner reading "Workers of the World Unite!" in twelve languages, one young Latino leader, a transit worker, gave a speech describing the history of communist struggle. "How have communists built and developed the communist movement?" he asked. "Through class struggle!" "What did the communists do when faced with the capitalists' deadly attacks?" he asked. They "toughened up."

The lesson was clear, as the imperialist powers impose fascist repression on the working class while pulling each other closer and closer to World

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Summer Project 2010: Week of Struggle Sets Tone for Convention

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should sell CHALLENGE on a routine basis and in regular locations for workers to be able to get our paper every two weeks on the street. I was also impressed with the revolutionary determination of the Party members over here and their comradely spirit as our hosts. I think that the Party has the potential to change the world and establish a better world — the worker's world — once and for all.

A Comrade from Palestine

The future of PLP is bright. The dedication and commitment of young comrades from many areas is very inspiring. Their desire to get up early in the morning, sell CHALLENGE, and study the Party's ideas is a testament to the Party developing new leadership. One of the most impressive aspects of the project was the collectivity among comrades.

People of all ages worked together to figure out meals, transportation, housing, CHALLENGE sales, and social events. In addition, the willingness of our young comrades to strike up conversations with workers during our paper sales shows tremendous potential in our efforts to build a base in the working class. For the future, we could do a better job in discussing ways in which contacts could be made with some of the workers during these conversations.

Finally, an important lesson for all of us was how CHALLENGE can truly become a mass paper. In one location, we were able to distribute over 400 papers in 45 minutes and 250 in 20 minutes in another location.

Project volunteer

I sold CHALLENGE for the first time, which was amazing because I got money. I got to meet new people in the Party and got to reunite with friends I met at the John Brown march in West Virginia. I got to learn what it means to be a comrade and what it means to be in the Party. I received \$20 selling CHALLENGE, which I thought was amazing for one day. I learned how many people are not informed with what is going on and how some people know and agree with us, which is awesome and feels good that you have some support. Overall, I think that this Summer Project was a wonderful experience that I learned a lot from and will always remember.

Project volunteer

When I sold CHALLENGE I learned that the bosses are taking away people's money because the bosses want more money. When I sold CHALLENGE I made \$3.56. I also gave the bus drivers CHALLENGE because the bosses were taking the

MTA jobs away from the bus drivers.

10-year-old Project volunteer

Generally, it was incredible and overwhelming to see how the Party operates on a huge scale, especially for us, comrades from a remote club. I could see the U.S. working class very open to communist politics especially in very oppressed areas like Bushwick in Brooklyn and at the CHALLENGE sales in front of high schools which were also located in working-class areas such as in Queens and the Bronx. For me it was a unique visit to see New York not as a tourist but as a worker who lives in the city. It was also impressive to see the dedication and devotion to the revolutionary communist cause in the heart of the imperialist beast. It was incredible to meet comrades from all over the world and to get inspired by their sacrifice in order to build the international revolutionary communist party.

In conclusion this visit emphasized the need for proletarian internationalism and the correctness of the line of the workers' communist revolution and how the old slogan is still relevant.

Workers of the World Unite!

A comrade from the Middle East

Cuban Socialism: Wrong Road for Haitian Workers

A report from friends of the Party travelling in Haiti:

About 100 trade unionists and students listened attentively to a Cuban diplomat speak about the Cuban Revolution. This political forum was organized by the teachers' union as part of a campaign to raise the political consciousness of their constituency as well as the Haitian masses.

After the Cuban diplomat's talk, members of the audience raised some interesting questions about how the world viewed the Cuban and Haitian revolutions and how the reversal of socialism impacted Cuban society. Then a university student asked the speaker if the Cuban government had publicly criticized Brazil for supplying MINUSTAH with the vast majority of their troops (MINUSTAH is the UN military force which occupies Haiti today). The student pointed out that since Cuba and Brazil have an alliance, Cuba's criticism would carry a lot of weight in exposing MINUSTAH'S role in advancing U.S. imperialism's agenda for Haiti.

The diplomat's response to the student drew an angry reaction from many in the audience. She said, while making it clear that this was the official position of the Cuban government, that Cuba would not criticize Brazil because this was "not Cuba's business" and the "Haitian people have to work out their own problems." Like any other slick liberal politician, she pretended to take the high moral ground, making it seem as though taking a stand in solidarity with Haitians was equivalent to appropriating their struggle.

The 20,000 MINUSTAH troops that occupy Haiti today replaced the 22,000 U.S. troops that seized the Haitian airport the day after the earthquake. Their convoys ride through the teeming streets of Port-au-Prince in full riot

gear with machine guns conspicuously displayed, conveying power and control. They are doing nothing to minimize the wretched misery of the 1.5 million Haitians made homeless by the earthquake.

MINUSTAH has shot into anti-government demonstrations, arrested and threatened radical students with their lives, and aided the Haitian police in murdering prisoners. Without MINUSTAH or other troops terrorizing the masses, the plans of the Haitian bourgeoisie and U.S. capitalists to reshape Haiti would be impossible to implement.

Cuba's refusal to oppose this repression exposes more than its opportunism. It exposes the true failure of socialism. Since socialist Cuba maintains commodity production and must, therefore, compete in the world capitalist market, it has joined with Venezuela, Brazil, and Bolivia to form the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas (ALBA). ALBA is an economic regional bloc that will strengthen their hands in competing with U.S. imperialism.

Progressive Labor Party, on the other hand, makes a complete break with this capitalist framework. We are building a new international communist movement that has learned from the reversal of the old one. One of the main lessons is that communists must make the politics of building egalitarianism primary over economic advancement or else we will lose it all, just like the USSR and China did. Cuba is rapidly moving down this same path. For the Cuban government today, economic alliances come before international working-class solidarity. This is an important lesson for all the Haitians, and others, who still look to Cuba as a model for social change. ☘



Unemployment: Bosses' Real GI 'Benefit'

Melanie Gutermuth is a twenty-five-year-old veteran. She served in the Army for four years. Since the completion of her service, she has been greeted with twelve months of unemployment. Joseph Jacobo is an Iraq war veteran. At the end of his military service, only the streets welcomed him home. He has been homeless since his return. Melanie and Joseph are two among hundreds of thousands of unemployed and/or homeless veterans.

There is a lot of talk about "taking care" of veterans returning from war, but the realities of capitalism, the system of profit we live under, hit them just as hard as their fellow civilian working-class brothers and sisters. The Department of Labor statistics report that the number of unemployed veterans has increased to more than 250,000 and the Veterans Affairs (VA) estimates that over 200,000 veterans are currently homeless. While some claim that widespread problems among veterans such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or substance abuse are to blame, a closer look at capitalism exposes the real root of the issues veterans are faced with.

Capitalism is an economic system based on profit. In order to remain competitive with other bosses around the globe, U.S. bosses must maximize profits by exploiting workers as much as possible. Under the best circumstances, some members of the working class are allowed to live comfortably. The profits earned through the super exploitation of most black and Latino workers have been sufficient to keep the U.S. bosses on top. In the current economic crisis though, this is no longer enough and mass lay-offs and unemployment become unavoidable.

Although this crisis began due to some major calculation errors on the part of the big banks, economic crises are inevitable under capitalism. The drive for maximum profit will always cause these crises. As long as we continue to allow this system to exist, the working class will suffer at the hand of the ruling class' greed. In order to guarantee that veterans and all workers have a place to live and a means for survival, we must build a communist society which will be run in the interest of the working class. This means that society will be run by workers in order to meet the needs of the whole working class.

Soldiers, sailors and marines have the potential to be the most important workers in this struggle. We are in the unique position to have been given weapons and sent into the most unstable and strategically important areas of the world that the U.S. bosses want to control. Armed with the revolutionary understanding that capitalism has nothing to offer the working class besides misery, we have the power to turn the guns around and replace this profit system with communism. Join Progressive Labor Party in the struggle to turn the bosses' "Army strong" into a revolutionary movement for communism. ☘

Black and Latin Workers' Unity Fights Bosses' Speed Up

I work in a pharmaceutical plant in the Bronx. Approximately 200 workers are Latino and about 30 are black. When I told several co-workers I was writing an article for CHALLENGE I asked them what I should write about. They said, "the racism of the factory." Guys, this one is for you.

When the manager does hire, he mostly hires black temporary workers, using them for the two months that the temp agency, not the factory, pays their wages. Then, when the company has to decide if they will hire them, the company fires most but keeps what they call the few "good workers," or favorites that they think will produce the most profits for the company.

The night crew that I'm on has 60 workers, almost half of whom are black. The morning crew outnumbers us 3 to 1, yet the bosses still have us compete with the morning crew for more production. The bosses even told us that if the morning shift finds a mistake from our work we have to find TWO mistakes from their shift. The night crew has always been pressured to work harder than the morning crew because of our small numbers.

Our boss tries to keep us divided from our morning-shift brothers and sisters, yet he fails to do so. We stay united on the same issues, like fighting for better air conditioning in the factory. Once it was so hot a worker almost passed out due to heat exhaustion. At a recent company meeting intended to be about how much we were slacking off and costing the company money, we spoke one after another turning it into a meeting about our concerns. We supported each other concerning the heat. We controlled that meeting.

This is why we need to organize to fight for communism; a society built upon workers' needs, where the workers lead every aspect of society. Under communism our meetings wouldn't be

based upon the bosses profit but simply what we workers need to figure out to get it done. Bosses will be a thing of the past. We won't need any bosses standing around getting rich off of our labor telling us how we need to make them more money.

Most of my co-workers I've talked to recognize the racism running the factory and dividing the workers. The bosses just made a new rule that divides workers more, giving us separate lunch schedules, and preventing us from socializing with one another. Some of the black workers on the job can see the racist ways of the company but blame it on their Latino brothers and sisters. I struggle with them not to fall for another "divide and conquer" tool of the bosses.

The bosses need racism, and not only to keep workers divided. When they want to increase their profits, they hire immigrant workers, pay them less and/or don't give them any benefits, and tell us that they are stealing our jobs. In our case, the disproportionately black night-shift workers are being worked harder to produce the same extreme amount of profits as the morning crew.

Now I have four workers on my job that regularly receive CHALLENGE. They all really enjoy reading the paper. They love how it's written by the workers for workers. They find it encouraging to read about all the other workers around the world experiencing the same racist exploiting cruelty by the bosses. We need to have these discussions on the job about what concerns us, continuing to struggle with each other. The only people we should be fighting are the bosses, just as we stood up to the district manager, for they don't care about workers' needs. Only a communist revolution can end the tyranny of these money-hungry bosses, and allow us to unite as one international multi-racial working class. ☘

France: What's Good for GM Is Lousy for Workers

STRASBOURG, July 31 — In what bosses in France hope will be a trend-setting decision, workers at GM's automatic transmission plant here approved a 10% cut in wages and benefits in return for keeping their jobs. The two-month struggle with GM illustrates the nightmare of life under capitalism.

In late September, 2008, when GM went bust, its Strasbourg plant was turned over to Motor Liquidation Company, a hollow shell charged with finding a buyer. Deals with VW, Mercedes and Weichai fell through. In June, GM offered to buy back the plant for one symbolic euro, on condition that the 1,150 autoworkers take the 10% cut and that all unions sign the three-year contract. GM promised to keep all workers on the payroll for the life of the contract. (265,000 jobs were lost in France in 2009, including 168,000 industrial jobs.)

The largest union at the plant, the CFTD, urged accepting GM's terms as "the lesser evil." It was backed by two smaller unions, the CFTC and FO, and by the Socialist Party. The second-largest union, the CGT, backed by the "Communist" Party, opposed the sellout.

On July 16, 200 workers struck to protest the give-back, which includes a two-year wage freeze and voids a previous agreement establishing the 35-hour work week at the plant. But one week later, faced with a GM ultimatum to accept or see their jobs

shipped to Mexico, 70% of the 950 workers participating in a non-binding secret ballot referendum accepted the deal.

That same day, management organized some workers to hold CGT union stewards hostage for several hours, threatening to kill them if they did not sign the contract. On July 27, the CGT announced it was filing charges against the assailants.

But on July 28, the CGT signed a separate deal with GM, promising not to challenge the new contract in the courts for the next three years. GM allowed the CGT to save face and did not force the union to sign the contract. Today GM announced it was going ahead with the purchase, which will take two months to finalize.

Everyone knows the Strasbourg workers have gained nothing in giving in to GM's blackmail. In 2007, the Continental Tire factory workers in Clairoux agreed to return to a 40-hour week in exchange for a management promise not to close the factory. Today, it is closed.

Firstly, the bitter defeat for the GM workers demonstrates that a lack of unity plays into the bosses' hands. Secondly, it shows that the best our class can obtain under capitalism is rotten compromises. In both cases, the remedy is to unite around communist leadership to organize for a revolution that will put our class in power. ☪

Internationalism and Youth Lead The Way

continued from page 3

War III the Party has only one choice, to toughen up and struggle.

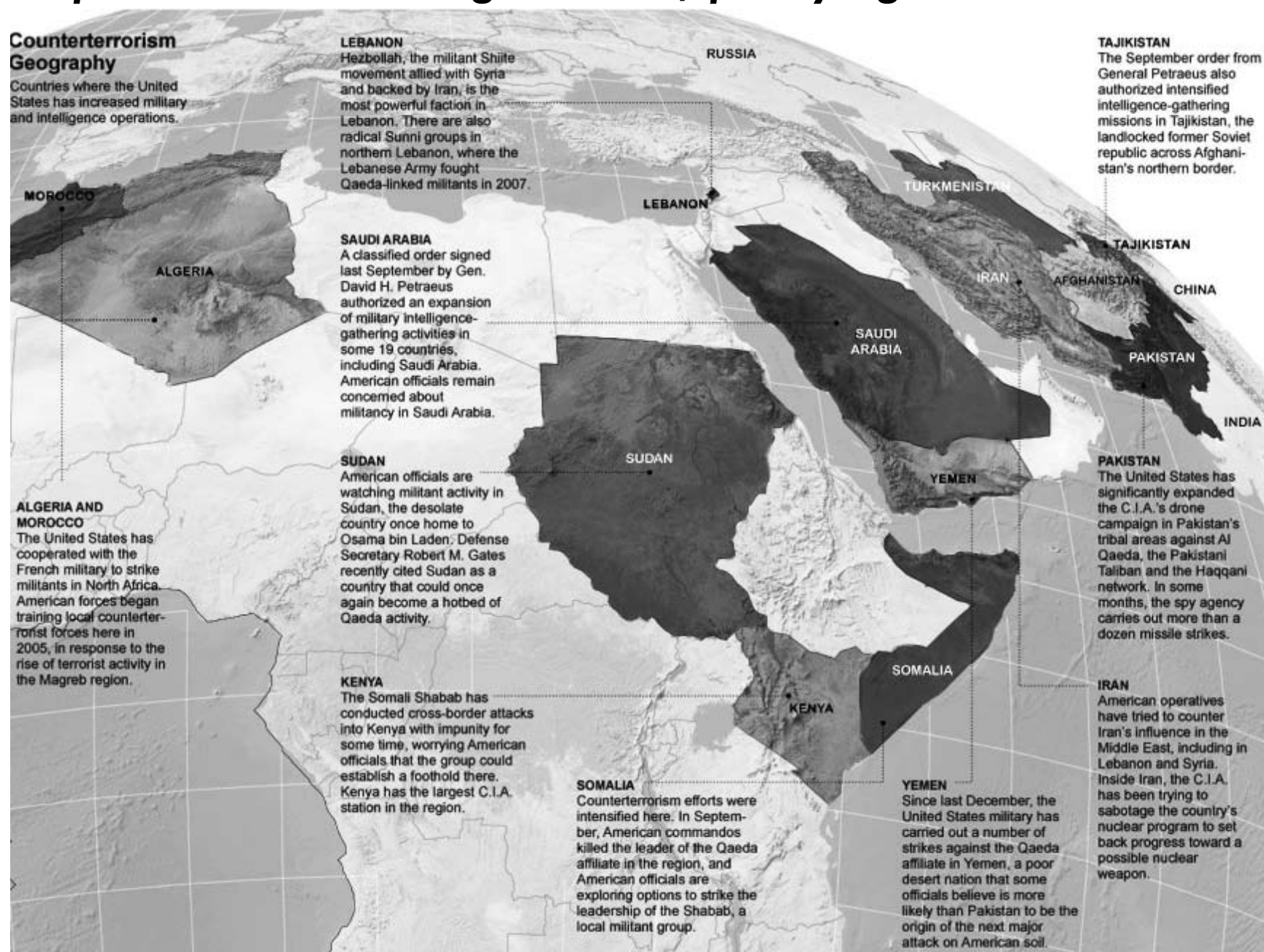
Another significant development was that the Party has achieved unity on the idea of working in mass organizations. This was clearly reflected in the character of the work reported on and struggled over in the workshops. The convention reaffirmed the rich history of communist struggle by the millions of dedicated comrades who have helped lead us to this historic point.

The final session ended with overwhelming agreement on the following three immediate plans for the Party:

- International leadership for the international Party of the working class organized into a unified body.
- Multi-racial, international young leaders are the future and will continue to be developed, with the aid and experience of veteran comrades, in preparation for the transition of leadership to the next generation.
- Conventions will be held every 5 years as the most collective method for assuring the growth of a principled communist Party organized under democratic centralism.

The Party convention reminded us that the dominance of imperialist capitalism means that the working class is in a period of "dark night" (see "Dark Night" at plp.org). The presence of so many people dedicated and ready to fight for communism means that this dark night will have its end. Yes, right now the capitalist class is strong and the Party is still small. But we will "toughen up" and we will advance our communist line in the class struggle and we will destroy this racist, imperialist capitalist system once and for all with communist revolution! Que viva, Que viva, Que viva comunismo! ☪

New York Times map showing strategic areas for U.S. imperialism's oil and gas needs, justifying U.S. covert wars



LETTERS



Workers' Fight vs. Joblessness Can Become 'School for Communism'

As CHALLENGE has repeatedly explained, capitalism breeds unemployment, which produces a "reserve army of the unemployed." The bosses use this reserve army to threaten employed workers with loss of their jobs if they don't accept lower wages and speed-up. This lowers the wages and conditions of the whole working class and keeps them subservient. It also leads to increased sexist wage differentials for women workers.

Because of racism, black and Latino workers in the U.S. and immigrant workers worldwide, suffer twice the jobless rates of white workers. This is used to divide and weaken the entire working class.

Full employment is impossible under a profit system. Only communism can achieve full employment, in a society without bosses and profits, with their resulting recessions/depressions.

Even the capitalists' media is reporting that massive unemployment will be continuing for years, having reached 33 million in the U.S. and into the hundreds of millions in Latin America, Europe, Africa and Asia, with no end in sight. This affects working-class families in every sector of the

economy, including first-job-seekers, students and returning vets.

Unemployment is, along with imperialist war, probably the capitalist evil that relates to every aspect of a communist analysis of the system. So it becomes vital to unite the employed and unemployed, and help organize a working-class fight-back. The potential exists to recruit many workers and youth to PLP. The unity of the working class is a prerequisite for making a communist revolution.

Therefore, it would be extremely important to raise this issue in every mass organization and win them to set up committees in unions, shops, schools and campuses, in communities and churches, which would provide the opportunity to explain a communist analysis of the roots of unemployment and therefore why capitalism must be destroyed.

If committees on this issue could be organized in any or all these areas, it might be possible to use this as a springboard to launch a larger movement against the ravages of unemployment. These committees could reach out to the unemployed in the communities. Teachers could ask who's unemployed by polling their students on unemployed family members and/or their friends, bus drivers

could distribute committee literature to their passengers, and so on.

Such a movement could raise demands like: unemployment benefits for all (currently a huge percentage of workers are ineligible) and for the full period of unemployment. Also benefits for jobless returning vets (after World War II all jobless GIs received \$20 a week, equal to hundreds in current dollars, for 52 weeks, the "52-20" program); unity with workers threatened with layoffs; organizing the unemployed to support strikers' picket lines and push the demand for jobs in the strikers' demands.

This occurred in the Great Depression when communists organized a National Unemployment Council of 800,000 that put millions of the jobless on the streets in protests, supported strikes and which is what won unemployment insurance in the first place.

But we should not make the mistake those communists did, of not tying unemployment to the need to destroy capitalism with revolution.

A Brooklyn Reader

As Racist Unemployment Soars, Workers Misery Fuels Rulers' Recovery

While the Obama Administration babbles about a supposed "economic recovery" over 33 million U.S. workers are still looking for non-existent jobs. There is only one job for every six jobless workers. The unemployment rate is really 21.6% according to ShadowStats.org which includes short- and long-term discouraged workers and underemployed workers, dwarfing the "official" 9.5% unemployment rate.

Many economists are calling this current "above-normal" level of unemployment the "new normal." The Atlantic's Don Peck says this could be the beginning of a "lost decade." It will fundamentally transform a whole generation, as families fall apart, neighborhoods fall into turmoil and young workers see their lifespan significantly shortened due to the effects of continuous unemployment.

With over 8.4 million jobs lost in this economic depression, it's become increasingly clear that recovery for many workers will be impossible. In order to provide jobs for the 1.5 million people joining the labor force each year and to return to the "normal" 5% unemployment rate in five years, the economy would have to create 250,000 jobs a month.

Then, to reach a "recovery" in two years that jumps to over 600,000 new jobs every month. In the last 20 years there has not been one monthly average job growth of 250,000. In fact, since 1989 the average has been 91,000 a month, far short of what capitalism needs for a "normal" recovery.

Now, as of July 30, 108 banks have failed this year alone, a pace exceeding the 140 bank failures in 2009. The collapse of the housing market is actually accelerating, with a record one million home foreclosures predicted for 2010. Bank of America hopes to be able to foreclose on 45,000 homes per month by December. And consumer spending, which accounts for 70% of total economic activity, continues to fall far short of expectations.

In short, the "recovery myth" is a political cover for an economic depression that is continually worsening. The current crisis U.S. unemployment levels are unlikely to ever decline, and may very well increase in coming years.

Workers Sped Up, Earn Less; Bosses Sit On \$1.8 Trillion

The fear of unemployment and layoffs has allowed U.S. companies to speed up workers while

cutting pay. Today workers are working 10% fewer hours while production remains at pre-cutback levels. This means they're working a lot harder for a lot less. Consequently non-financial companies are sitting on \$1.8 trillion and are still refusing to hire new workers.

The NY Times praised German "recovery," quoting a German economist that, "Fear of unemployment made workers more willing to accept concessions." By "resisting a rise in wages" German capitalists have profited handsomely, a victory for capitalism says the Times.

But the unemployment lifting capitalist profits is deadly for workers. The average life-span of a worker losing a job at 30 is reduced by 1½ years when compared with those who've never lost their job. As CHALLENGE has repeatedly noted from a 1971 Congressional report, a 1.4% rise in unemployment leads to 30,000 deaths over the following five years. A 3% increase in unemployment raises the suicide rate by 4.5%.

The racism that causes black and Latino workers to be the first fired and last hired makes them especially vulnerable to deadly unemployment. Black and Latino workers suffer unemployment rates twice that of white workers. This is a direct result of racist hiring practices designed to keep workers' divided and wages down.

Capitalists Unconcerned With Recovery for Workers

When economists talk about returning unemployment rates to the "normal" 5%, that means still over eight million workers on the streets! Capitalists are incapable of providing full employment. Only communism can transform work from a mechanism for the profit of the few into a liberating force for the world's working class.

For capitalists, workers' lives are always secondary to profits. To escape the evils of unemployment and its deadly side effects, the whole capitalist system must be destroyed. This begins with

fighting the bosses' plan to build their recovery on the backs of the working class. Employed and unemployed workers must unite to fight layoffs, evictions and foreclosures and racist bosses' imperialist wars. Ultimately unemployed workers, as all workers, must be won to join PLP and organize to replace the profit system with a communist society free of bosses, profits, racism and war. ☪

On October 2, Reject The Bosses Elections and Fight for Communist Revolution

Under the guise of launching a movement for jobs, the agents of the Rockefeller wing of the capitalist ruling class in the mass movement are organizing a mass demonstration on October 2 in Washington, D.C. to channel workers' anger into working for Democratic Party candidates in the upcoming Congressional elections. Its goal: keep workers' anger against racist unemployment under the tight control of the union misleaders and the NAACP and slap down the bosses' rivals in the racist Tea Party.

We must not think that the Rockefeller-led bosses are "lesser evils" compared to the Tea Party fascists. Actually, the Rockefeller wing, which tends to look towards the longer-term interests of the imperialist system as a whole, will strengthen its ability to impose fascism and wage wars far better than the amateur fascists in the Tea Party.

Initiated by Local 1199 of the SEIU and the NAACP, the October 2 "March for Jobs, Justice, and Peace" has been endorsed by the AFL-CIO leadership, possibly ensuring a massive turnout. The build-up to this event is an important opportunity for PL's revolutionary communists to deepen their ties in the mass organizations being recruited for this demonstration. We will expose the bosses and their agents in the workers' movement and fight for a revolutionary path instead of an electoral one.

The fight against racist unemployment must be a priority for revolutionaries. We should never side with one group of bosses against another — they will always serve their own interests, not ours. The current economic crisis has demonstrated yet again that capitalism can never serve us, and must be destroyed by communist revolution so that we workers can organize society to meet the needs of our class on an international basis. Join us on October 2 to expose the misleaders and build for workers' revolution worldwide!

In Memoriam: Harriet Rosen

Harriet Rosen, a life-long supporter of PLP from its earliest days, died on August 8 at 86. She was married to Milt Rosen, one of the original organizers of our Party. Her son sent the following remembrance to CHALLENGE.

I want to thank the Party for the huge help you've all given me since I moved my parents to Los Angeles in 2004. This support really shows the true meaning of what it means to be a comrade. Only the working class can care for each other like this; the bosses would rather suck us dry and then leave us to die once we're no longer profitable to them.

My mom and dad were married in 1946; he was 20, she 22. My dad became active in communist politics right after the war; my mom had left leanings. One night, she and a girlfriend decided to attend a left-wing political meeting "to look for interesting men." My dad gave a speech at the meeting and she was obviously impressed. She was then dating Harry Bulova, heir to the Bulova Watch fortune. But my mother gave up a possible life of wealth to marry a guy dedicated to overthrowing the capitalist class.

After they were married, they lived in Brooklyn for a while. Then the Communist Party sent my dad to Buffalo, NY, to organize in factories there. Times were hard; I recall eating a lot of army surplus cheese. I do remember they made many friends in Buffalo, becoming very close to Morty and Phyllis Scheer, Helen and Teddy Schwartz and Paul and Jo Sporn. There were many others but these are the ones I recall because I was friendly with their children. My parents stayed life-long friends with these three couples and, as you know, my dad went on to form PL with these people.

My mom loved to entertain. She always had many people over and was always cooking. She was a great cook and got pleasure from preparing food for friends. She always prepared holiday feasts, filling the house with friends and relatives. When she was young, her family was very poor and at times went hungry. I believe this is one reason she enjoyed cooking these delicious meals. She was extremely hospitable. We always had people staying at our house.

My mom came from a dirt-poor family. Her father was a pharmacist who gave medications away for free to poor people. She had one sister and two brothers. Her fondest childhood memories were of the family going to Rockaway Beach in the spring when it was still deserted and staying through the summer in a rented bungalow (more like a dilapidated shack).

Later, when my parents moved back from Buffalo to NYC (I was five and my sister was an infant), they had no place to stay so we headed right out to Rockaway and rented a cheap bungalow. Re-

turning to Rockaway had huge sentimental value for Harriet because of her childhood memories. I think she liked the desolate nature of the beach and the camaraderie she felt with other friends who were renting there.

It was rough because it was deserted in the spring and my dad was away a lot, organizing PL. But my mom hung in there, supporting him while he built the Party. We returned every summer to Rockaway for at least eight years. I can recall many people staying with us and my mom always cooking and being extremely supportive of the folks visiting us there where my dad had many meetings.

My mom loved the Atlantic Coast. She grew up along the water and later my parents would often vacation with their friends at Montauk. When she'd visit me in LA, she'd always go on about how she preferred the Atlantic Coast because the beaches were wider and the landscape more rugged with dunes, etc.

My mom was the quintessential New Yorker. Few people knew she was a double Math/Physics major at Brooklyn College in the early 1940's. There weren't many women taking those subjects then (I believe she was the first such female, double major at BC). Unfortunately, her mom made her drop out of college to go to work.

For many years she was a salesgirl at woman's clothing stores in Manhattan and also a millinery buyer. When my sister and I were older, she returned to college and got a degree in Art History from Brooklyn College and a Master's in Library Science from Pratt Institute. For many years she worked as a librarian at the main branch of the Brooklyn Public Library where she became close friends with many of her co-workers.

She was a very loving mother, always helping me with my problems in school. I often got into trouble and she always took my side. When Sam Scheer and I were hit by a car in Cape Cod, Mass., she was the one comforting us on the plane when they flew us back to NYC. While we were in the hospital for five months, she took the train almost daily from Brooklyn up to Columbia Presbyterian Hospital.

My mom was a great person. She was smart, kind and very supportive of the struggle to build a world where all people are respected and treated with dignity. She loved cooking, art and was expert in doing the NY Times crossword puzzle (except the sports questions...the only ones I knew).

She loved to take us to the museum (albeit, my dad and I would sometimes give her a hard time about the modern art). She liked Picasso, partly because of his left-wing views. She had a great sense of humor and loved old Italian movies like "The Bicycle Thief" as well as some of the Italian

comedies. She was also a caring grandmother to my sister's kids and my daughter. I'm glad she was able to spend so much time at my sister's place watching her grandkids grow up.

It was very sad for me to watch her mind wither away. The diseases which proliferate unchecked in this society are horrible. We're forced to watch our loved ones die of illnesses that could be cured or at least dealt with more humanely, if we had a society that truly cared for people, not profits.

I'll always remember my mom as a kind, generous and supportive person. Thanks again to the Party for all your help. ☺

In Memoriam: Lena Caref

Lena Minkovskaya Caref was born on October 10, 1925 in Gomel, Belarus, the Soviet Union. She considered herself one of "Stalin's children," because as she often stated, "When I was growing up there was no crime, school was free, medical care was free, transportation was free, food was cheap, and people were all very happy with each other even if they had to work hard for what they had." She remained a fervent communist her entire life.

At the age of 11, she lost her mother and helped her father care for her younger brothers. At 15 she joined the defense against the western-sponsored German fascist invasion. She was first a welder's helper building an oil pipeline in Georgia and then worked in a hand grenade factory in Belarus. After the war, she and her husband Jacob left the Soviet Union for Poland, where they learned that his entire family was murdered by the Nazis, most in the gas ovens of Auschwitz. Leaving behind her beloved Soviet Union, she and Jacob made their way to a displaced person's camp in Marktredwitz, Germany where her oldest son was born.

Lena moved to Chicago in March 1949 after many attempts to leave Germany — the U.S. government limited Jewish immigration until forced to change by world pressure. Lena worked in many different jobs as a drill press operator at Bell and Howell and an LPN in hospitals and nursing homes. She joined, led and fought in many protests against the Viet Nam war and racism and within her residence.

As a loving grandmother, she cared for her four children, ten grandchildren and thirteen great-grandchildren. ☺

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

US renames the Iraq occupation!

GW, 8/13 — The US isn't withdrawing from Iraq at all — it's rebranding the occupation. Just as George Bush's war on terror was retitled "overseas contingency operations" when Obama became president, US "combat operations" will be rebranded from next month as "stability operations."

But as Major General Stephen Lanza, the US military spokesman in Iraq, told the New York Times: "In practical terms, nothing will change."

More than one way to a profit

NYT, 8/10 — The underhanded tactic, known as pay for delay, occurs when a generic drug company tries to bring its product to market by challenging the patents on a brand-name drug. Rather than engage in a costly and unpredictable court battle, the brand-name manufacturer sometimes pays the challenger substantial compensation to delay marketing its drug, and the generic company often wel-

comes the easy, risk-free money.

Both companies profit. The consumer, unfortunately, loses — by paying high, brand-name drug prices instead of lower prices for a generic.

Joblessness will be "structural"

Paul Krugman, NYT, 8/13 — I predict — having seen this movie before, in Japan — that...two years from now unemployment will still be extremely high, quite possibly higher than it is now. But instead of fixing the situation, politicians and Fed officials alike will declare that high unemployment is structural, beyond their control.

I'd like to imagine that public outrage will prevent this outcome. But while Americans are indeed angry, their anger is unfocused. And so our governing elite, which just isn't all that into the unemployed, will allow the jobs slump to go on and on.

Min. wage rises; workers rebel

GW, 8/16 — Thousands of [Bangladeshi] garment workers rioted in central Dhaka last week after protests against low pay turned violent. The demonstrators overturned vehicles, burned tyres, smashed shop windows and blocked traffic in the Bangladeshi capital...Several people were injured and scores detained.



The protests were sparked by government announcement that monthly minimum wages for the millions of garment workers would rise... "We can't accept this raise... compared with the high cost of living. It's a betrayal."

Major retailers, including Wal-Mart, Tesco, H&M, Zara, Carrefour, Gap, Metro, JCPenney, Marks & Spencer, Kohl's and Levi Strauss, imported clothes in bulk from Bangladesh, which has some of the lowest labour costs in the world...the new official minimum wage has been set at \$43 a month.

MORE ITEMS AVAILABLE AT WWW.PLP.ORG

Reparations or Revolution?

The question of slavery reparations requires a communist analysis of capitalism, slavery, racism, and imperialism.

Harvard Professor Henry Louis Gates has shown that he remains committed to being a dishonest apologist for racism. Gates published an op-ed article in The New York Times (4/23/10) titled "Ending the Slavery Blame-Game." He argued that African leaders entered into what he calls "complex business partnerships" with European slave traders.

Thus, Pres. Obama, "the child of an African and an American...is uniquely positioned to attribute responsibility and culpability...to white people and black people on both sides of the Atlantic," so that the "divisive" issue of slavery reparations can be settled. What Gates is suggesting — without being honest enough to come right out and say it — is that President Obama should bring African and American leaders together at the White House — as Obama did with Gates and officer Crowley who arrested him — so they can put the question of slavery reparations behind them.

Both Gates and Obama have a history of blaming Africans for past slavery and present poverty and exploitation. Back in 1999, Gates produced a Public Television series, "Wonders of the African World." He emphasized the role of Arabs in the African slave trade, while glossing over the role of European and American slave traders. He avoided any serious discussion of the devastating nature and impact of colonialism and imperialism in Africa.

Similarly, Obama, speaking in Ghana in July 2009, lectured Africans to stop using slavery and colonialism as "excuses" for their lack of "good governance" today. Obama delivered this hypocritical message as his administration supports corrupt undemocratic governments, expands the U.S. military presence through Africom (the Pentagon military command for Africa), and escalates wars in Central Africa and the Horn of Africa.

Obama delivers similar lectures to African American workers, parents, and schoolchildren. He insists that they have no excuses for failing to get ahead, despite racist cuts in school budgets, massive unemployment, and mass incarceration.

What Gates is trying to do by writing about the complicity of African leaders in the slave trade is to exaggerate it and thereby imply that it is comparable to the role of European and American slave traders. This is an old lie that has been pushed for the obvious purpose of diverting attention from the main perpetrators onto the minor collaborators. Moreover, the fact that there were Jewish collaborators with the Nazis has not prevented large-scale reparations to Jewish groups.

Gates also dishonestly downplays the American responsibility for slavery. Columbia University historian Eric Foner, in a letter to the Times (4/25/10), pointed out that "the great growth of slavery in this country occurred after the closing of the Atlantic slave trade in 1808...It was Americans, not Africans, who created in the South the largest, most powerful slave system the modern world has known, a system whose profits accrued not only to slaveholders but also to factory owners and merchants in the North.

Africans had nothing to do with the slave trade within the United States, in which an estimated two million men, women and children were sold between 1820 and 1860. Identifying Africa's part in the history of slavery does not negate Americans' responsibility to confront the institution's central role in our own history."

W.E.B. Du Bois, in "The World and Africa," (1940), noted "it was Karl Marx who made the great unan-

swerable charge of the sources of capitalism in African slavery." Marx described how capitalism emerged through a bloody process of genocide, slavery, and colonial conquest which divided the world into a small class who possessed great wealth and a large class of proletarians robbed of everything they had except their own labor power. Capitalism arrived, Marx wrote, "dripping from head to foot, from every pore, with blood and dirt."

Communists understand that the crime of slavery was embedded in the larger crime of the rise of the global system of capitalism itself. Enslavement, conquest, and genocide carried out by European capitalists against the populations of Africa, Asia, and the Americas required the development and systematic establishment of a racist structure and ideology wherever capitalism spread. From chattel slavery capitalists developed colonial slavery and wage slavery and exploitation of the working class. Each kind of slavery requires intense racism.

Gates suggests that reparations would be a one-sided punishment on whites that overlooks the shared responsibility of blacks. But the actual problem with reparations is that they are a vastly inadequate punishment or remedy for the crimes of slavery and racism.

First, these crimes did not end either in the U.S. or in Africa with the abolition of chattel slavery. In the U.S. these crimes persisted for another century as racist super-exploitation under Jim Crow segregation. They persist in the present period as what Michelle Alexander —


in a recent book — calls "The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness." There are more blacks in prison today than at any time under Jim Crow. It is now legal to discriminate against blacks who have a criminal record in jobs, housing, education, and any government assistance program.

A 2008 report by United for a Fair Economy estimated that from 1998 to 2006 (before the sub-prime crisis), blacks lost \$71 billion to \$93 billion in home-value wealth from sub-prime loans. That was before the worst of the housing crisis and wave of evictions disproportionately hit black homeowners. Similarly, in Africa, the slave trade was followed by colonialism and post-colonial imperialism, which have killed more African workers and yielded greater capitalist profits than slavery did.

It is the global system of capitalism as a whole that is responsible for slavery, genocide, super-exploitation, imperialist wars, and global warming.

a progressive labor party periodical • Winter 2010

THE Communist



FIGHT FOR COMMUNISM

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Second, reparations are supposed to be an act of repair based on some genuine regret for previous harm done. Capitalists who continue to profit from racist exploitation, debt slavery, mass murder in imperialist wars, plunder of resources, and environmental destruction are incapable of repairing the world and incapable of meaningful regret. We should not spread the illusion that capitalists will ever be capable of making things right for their victims.

Reparations for slavery in the U.S. — in the unlikely event it ever happened — would be used to further consolidate the position of black capitalists, politicians, and administrators as members of the U.S. ruling class. It would produce more of the same results the Obama presidency has thus far produced. That is, it would confuse and pacify sections of the black working class, while continuing imperialist wars in the Middle East, Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

Reparations would continue mass incarceration of African Americans, racist detentions and deportations of immigrant workers, trillion dollar bailouts of bankers, insurance, and pharmaceutical, and hospital companies, massive loss of jobs, housing, education, and health care for workers, and environmental destruction that threatens the lives of billions of people all over the planet.

Third, it is not just capitalist individuals, companies, or countries that are responsible for slavery, genocide, super-exploitation, imperialist wars, and global warming. It is the global system of capitalism as a whole. Whatever bi-racial reparations formula Gates and Obama might try to sell as appropriate for the crimes of Western and African slave traders, workers must not allow the capitalist system to be let off so lightly. Capitalism deserves the death penalty. The working class must destroy the capitalist system. Only under communism will workers be able to repair the world for all the people who live in it. ☺

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