

CHALLENGE



THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

volume 46 no.2

January 29, 2014

suggested donation \$0.50

France: Goodyear, Gov't Gang-up

Workers Occupy Plant, Seize Bosses



Workers block Goodyear plant with huge bonfires of burning tires.

AMIENS, January 14 — Facing the mass layoff of all 1,173 workers, over 200 invaded the Goodyear tire plant here on January 6 and held two senior bosses captive in an attempt to force negotiations for huge severance pay before the closing of the plant. They rolled giant farm-tractor wheels in to block the room holding the bosses. The enraged workers then set off a huge bonfire of tires at the plant and vowed to occupy it until demands were met. They are occupying the factory and blocking a warehouse containing 240,000 tires worth hundreds of millions of euros.

On the second day of the standoff cops freed the two bosses, threatening the workers with hordes of police from Paris to "whack the workers" and jail them

under a law prescribing a 5-year prison term and a \$102,000 fine for each worker. Last March, a protest by these workers left 15 cops injured.

There is no clearer example of the use of the state by the capitalist class to enforce the exploitation of the working class.

François Hollande, the Socialist president of France, "pushed through...labor laws...making it easier for companies to fire workers, [and] reduce their pay and work hours" while introducing \$27 billion worth of tax breaks for businesses....The imminent closing of the Goodyear plant [is] the latest in a series of mass layoffs

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Workers fought the cops' tear-gas and pepper spray with burning tires and other projectiles.

[The following is excerpted from a proclamation by the workers at the Goodyear plant.]

'J'accuse'

One hundred and sixteen years ago Emile Zola wrote "J'accuse" and openly attacked the government on social injustice in the Dreyfus affair. [In 1894, Alfred Dreyfus, a French-Jewish military officer was falsely accused and convicted of treason. It unleashed an anti-semitic fever in France.] Today... [we] at Goodyear accuse the Hollande government on the social injustice for over 1,100 families directly concerned and thousands of other jobs indirectly concerned by a shameful factory closing in a corporation that is realizing colossal profits....The Hollande government is the orchestra conductor and...Goodyear...and the judges are all in tune....To this...add the...law to make layoffs secure....

...The government refuses to show us the report of the work inspectors who courageously noted the calamitous situation in our factory and the dangers of death to which the workers are exposed... [so as] not hinder Goodyear in its sinister undertakings....And what is to be said...of the non-stop violations of the rights of the workers, the harassment where the government shuts its eyes and barricades itself behind judicial decisions piloted by this same government?

Yes,...this same Hollande who came in October 2011 to promise us that if he was elected, he would forbid layoffs by corporations...that are making a profit, this same Hollande who promised more rights for workers and for two years has done the exact opposite.... In validating his candidacy as president we have thus validated the project of Goodyear management....We openly accuse the government of aiding in the closure of our factory, of aiding a shameful takeover, of putting pressure on the judicial system so...decisions...will be in total contradiction with the labor laws....Such orchestrated skullduggery!!!....The Sarkozy government didn't make us any presents [but] it...never dared do what the Hollande government is doing!

The Hollande government is helping a multinational which is making billions...and paying dividends to shareholders to close a factory and to lay off over 1,000 workers. Where is...the French president...making jobs a top priority?....

The Goodyear workers are not dead....We are going to do everything so that by the end of January we will be in the streets to say STOP this policy...helping the multinationals to leave while having at their service all the power of the French government!

Similarly, what are the trade union leaders...waiting for?...Why didn't they answer favorably our many demands....Pretending to resist and to oppose while shutting their eyes....The Goodyear workers will... show that they are not the puppets that one can manipulate at the dawn of an election! 2014 will be the year of the Goodyear workers....a year of struggle....

...We know that other workers are subject to the same situation, the judicial system, the government... are all guilty of a genocide...against the world of Labor....We...just want to...work, to not...enlarge the ranks of the unemployed and the excluded and if for that it is necessary to have recourse to extreme methods, we will not hesitate to do it....

We will fight without limit...Let s/he who has ears hear!

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. While capitalism needs unemployment, communism needs everyone to contribute and 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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WHO WRITES FOR CHALLENGE?

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.

CHALLENGE/DESAFIO (ISSN 0009-1049) published bi-weekly by Challenge Periodicals. 1 issue \$.50. One Year: \$15. Six months: \$10. Send address changes to CHALLENGE Periodicals, GPO Box 808 Brooklyn, NY 11202, January 29, 2014. Volume 46, No. 2

Editorial

Workers' Support For Oil Wars Fading

Capitalist Carnage in Iraq



The growing carnage in Iraq — 8,868 workers slaughtered in 2013 (Washington Post, 1/12) — is the result of the U.S. invasion that has left the country in ruins. This is typical of all wars under capitalism. In the current era, U.S. imperialism has become the ultimate weapon of mass destruction. In Iraq it has killed and displaced millions since 1991. They are the victims not of "sectarian violence," but of the inter-imperialist rivalry for control over energy resources.

Because of insufficient cash for costly occupations and a shortage of GI boots on the ground, U.S. rulers have had to modify their strategy for controlling oil-rich Iraq. After pursuing failed military occupations from Vietnam to Afghanistan to Iraq, the Pentagon would find it politically difficult to send troops to overturn al Qaeda's capture of Fallujah. Instead, they are fostering infighting and a potential civil war among Iraqi locals, even as they plan for larger wars worldwide.

With the demise of the Soviet Union and its huge military, U.S. rulers thought they could invade smaller countries unhindered. But the Afghanistan and Iraq quagmires have shown they cannot control the world's oil and gas resources with the one percent of the U.S. population that now enlists in their military. And they cannot raise the additional troops needed unless they somehow win over the war-weary U.S. working class to support their profit-driven bloodbaths.

This is the central problem for the U.S. ruling class: a lack of support from the domestic population. That's why National War College professor Michael Mazarr warns, "In the future, the United States is likely to rely less on power projection and more on domestic preparedness" (*Foreign Affairs Journal*, Council on Foreign Relations).

U.S. Capitalism: Murder, Inc.

But this raises another problem for the capitalists. Their racist, imperialist system is not only murdering millions in wars worldwide and leaving billions destitute, from Bangladesh to the Middle East and beyond. It is also destroying the livelihoods of tens of millions of working-class families within the United States. Massive, long-term unemployment, poverty-level wages, unaffordable health care, millions losing their homes to bankers' foreclosures — all of these are crises endemic to capitalism. They fall even more heavily on black, Latino and Asian workers, since the capitalists use racism to produce the super-profits they need to survive.

But this heightened exploitation also has consequences for the bosses. Class struggle is escalating throughout the world. Mass anger is on the rise in a working class ripe for rebellion. Tens of thousands are already fighting back in Cambodia, Palestine-Israel, Greece, Spain, Latin America, the Middle East and Africa. But the fightback cannot win unless it aims to eliminate capitalism, the root of workers' problems.

The Progressive Labor Party must give leadership to organize a communist revolution and eliminate the bosses and their brutal system. Only a society run by and for the working class can end the destructiveness of capitalism. Our Party

is planting its roots in a score of countries to organize that revolution.

Using al Qaeda in Fallujah

Iraq is emerging once again as a focal point for U.S. rulers. Consider their deceitful response to al Qaeda's recent takeover of Fallujah, a city that U.S. imperialists brutally stormed twice in 2004. Then they killed thousands of working-class Iraqis, many of them civilians, along with hundreds of working-class GIs to "secure" Anbar Province, the country's largest. Today, however, President Barack Obama is vowing not to send in the Marines. "It's their fight," says Secretary of State John Kerry.

Don't believe him. U.S. bosses remain locked into Iraq's petroleum-soaked politics. In fact, "How the Fall of Fallujah Could Be Good for the U.S." was published last week (1/10/14) on the website of the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), a think tank funded largely by ExxonMobil.

The article calls the terrorist triumph in Fallujah "a bright spot of opportunity" that will frighten shaky allies into embracing the U.S. war machine, which is "accelerating...foreign military sales deliveries and...looking to provide an additional shipment of Hellfire missiles" and "more surveillance drones [for the Iraqi government]," according to White House spokesman Jay Carney (BBC, 1/6).

The CFR hopes that anti-al Qaeda sentiment will inspire unity among Iraqi, U.S., Afghan and Saudi rulers, and deter hostile Iran and Russia:

For the first time since 2011, when U.S. troops left Iraq, Washington has leverage with recalcitrant leaders like [Iraq's] Maliki....This spreading war makes U.S. coercive diplomacy critical not just to dealing with Iraq, but also to pressuring Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Russia (which is contracting with Iraq to sell arms) to cooperate. With increasingly desperate partners in Baghdad and Kabul, Washington now has its chance.

Oil, the Crucial Factor

The deadly Iraq intrigue involves ExxonMobil up to its elbows. The company's vast and growing operations in the country are aimed at controlling Iraqi oil sources of which rival Chinese bosses need more every day. Exxon is also seeking to destabilize the troublesome Nuri al-Maliki regime. In particular, the company is undermining the Baghdad regime by cutting oil-pumping deals with Iraq's self-governing Kurdish bosses in the north. The plan is to ship Kurdish crude through Turkey, which war secretary Chuck Hagel is courting as an ally in future global wars.

"ExxonMobil has spudded [begun drilling — Ed.] at the Pirmam block in Erbil province and has erected a rig in preparation for drilling at the al-Qush block in Ninewa province, breaking ground for the first time in the super major's six-

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School Bus Strikers Slam Union Misleaders

NEW YORK CITY, December 26 — “How can you have people with 35 years on the job get fired, while they hire somebody off the streets? It’s not fair, it’s not right.” That’s what a woman school bus driver with 26 years on the job had to say as she and more than 100 of her co-workers picketed outside their union hall, demanding the resignation of their union president. As Mayor de Blasio starts negotiating contracts for 300,000 city workers, today’s rally is an opening shot in what can be a major antiracist struggle against this capitalist state.

The school bus drivers and matrons are members of Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 1811. In January 2013, they led a month-long strike — the first school bus strike since the three-month 1979 wildcat — against racist billionaire Mayor Bloomberg and the bus company contractors who wanted to eliminate any seniority or job security by doing away with the Employee Protection Provision (EPP) in their contract. The EPP states that when a bus company won the bid to a particular route, the workers who had been driving that route would keep their jobs. The clause had been won by the workers during the 1979 strike. Bloomberg decided to accept bids on certain school bus routes without the EPP and the workers flexed their class power by responding with a strike.

During the five weeks of mass pickets, rallies and marches in the frigid winter, PLP organized workers and students to join the strikers. Hundreds of CHALLENGES were circulated. Rather than have all the more than 300,000 city workers who also had no contract shut the city down with a general strike, the racist ATU leadership and the Democrats pulled the rug out from under the mostly immigrant strikers. All five Democratic mayoral candidates signed a letter telling workers to return to work without a contract, and that after becoming mayor, they would “revisit the EPP.” This exposes whom politicians and union leaders actually serve: the bosses. The ATU leadership’s class position — like all unions — support capitalist profits against workers’ need.

The strike ended and dozens of workers found they had no jobs to return to. Many were fired and replaced;



Bus workers show readiness to lead their own fight.

some bus companies shut down and later reopened with new names and new lower paid workers. On December 17, parents and bus drivers protested the shutdown of the Atlantic Express, the fifth largest school bus operator in the U.S. and Canada. Strikebreakers who had crossed the picket lines kept their jobs. And the ATU leadership did nothing. The Democratic candidates, including de Blasio, did nothing. It was a brutal racist attack on mostly black and Latino and immigrant workers and the families they serve.

While life has gotten much harder for the remaining and former drivers and matrons, PLP is fighting along-

side and strengthening our ties. A delegation of strikers attended PLP’s May Day celebration last spring, and friends were active in today’s picket at ATU headquarters and in the rally protesting the closing of Atlantic Express. The school bus drivers and matrons have let us know that they are ready to fight. We will challenge the politicians and union leaders for the political leadership of a growing number of transport workers as we continue to struggle alongside our friends to win them to communism.☺

Palestine: Mass Protests Help Free Militant Fighter

ISSAWIYEH, December 28 — PLers came to show solidarity with the released Palestinian political prisoner, Samer Tariq Issawi. Issawi, a left-wing Palestinian fighter. He was first arrested in 2002 under allegations of manufacturing bombs and firing on Israeli citizens, and was convicted of membership in an illegal organization, possession of explosives, and attempted murder based on very flimsy evidence. He was sentenced to 26 years in prison. In October 2011, he was released in the deal between Israel and Hamas for the release of the Israeli POW Gilad Shalit, held by Hamas.

However, in July 2012, Issawi was arrested once more for violating the (very strict) terms of his release, sentenced to eight more months in prison and threatened with the re-activation of his old jail sentence, which would put him behind bars for almost two more decades. In response, he went on an intermittent hunger strike, between August 2012 and April 2013, demanding his release.

Massive protests sprung up around Israel-Palestine and abroad to demand his release. The protest brought results, and in April 2013 a deal was agreed upon between Issawi and the regime, ending his hunger strike and allowing

for his release after his eight month jail term.

In December 2013, he was finally released to his home village of Issawiye, after enduring the horrors of imprisonment. The real reason for his imprisonment is political; the evidence of any “crimes” committed by him are flimsy at best.

He was arrested as part of the Israeli regime’s harassment of Palestinian political fighters, especially those of working-class background and left political alignment. However, the resolute, multi-ethnic struggle against his unjust imprisonment forced even this fascist state to capitulate and grant him his freedom.

Two PLers visited Issawi and his family today. We have been very well-received by the locals, and CHALLENGE (in English and Arabic) was enthusiastically welcomed. As communists, we stand shoulder to shoulder with all those who fight against apartheid and fascism. Only by a united, multi-ethnic struggle, can we smash the racist, capitalist Zionist system and replace it with a communist workers’ state from the river Jordan to the Mediterranean, as a stepping-stone toward a red Middle East and a red, borderless world.☺

Capitalist Carnage in Iraq

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block deal with the autonomous Kurdistan region” (Iraq Oil Report, 1/10/14).

“A Kurdish export deal may be just the tip of a broader wedge that could split Iraq in two” (Oil Price, 1/5/14). The Obama administration is working hand-in-glove with arch-imperialist Exxon in weakening Maliki. Vice President Joseph Biden has become a salesman for Exxon (just as Obama is shilling for Boeing, see page 4):

In a phone call with the Kurdish Regional Government’s President, Masoud Barzani...U.S. Vice President Joseph Biden also addressed the issue, encouraging the regional leader to find a common way forward on oil exports [through Turkey] and revenue sharing. An agreement also stands to benefit oil firms that have bet on Iraqi Kurdistan, despite drawing the ire of Baghdad. Major oil companies led by Exxon Mobil Corp. and Chevron Corp. have followed wildcatters like London-listed Genel Energy PLC into the region.

It’s not just Kurdistan that makes Exxon and Maliki enemies. Exxon has a majority stake in Iraq’s largest southern oil field, West Qurna 1 — the main prize of the Bush wars and Clinton sanctions that killed millions. But in Exxon’s eyes, the terms at West Qurna are too favorable to Baghdad. Unlike the Kurdish production-sharing agreement, under which Exxon owns much of the oil it

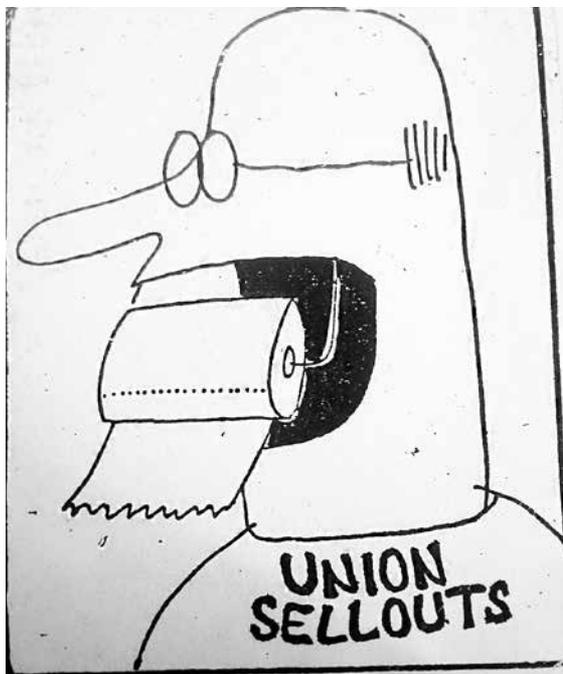
pumps, the West Qurna deal is strictly a service contract. Baghdad’s would-be billionaires pay Exxon less than \$2 per barrel to extract oil that Iraq’s bosses are then free to sell. For two years Exxon has been threatening to pull out of southern Iraq, where its technological expertise is indispensable to the Maliki gang’s profits, unless it gets a piece of the pie. Maliki “needs a real air force to fight the Qaeda occupiers” (CFR). The U.S. will arm him only if he toes the Exxon line on oil ownership.

Inter-Imperialist Rivalry vs. Communist Revolution

The worldwide fight over energy resources has intensified inter-imperialist rivalries. In opposition to the U.S. rulers’ maneuvers, great swaths of the former Soviet Union have morphed into an anti-U.S., Russian-led armed coalition under Russia’s president, Vladimir Putin. Meanwhile, China’s economic rise puts it on a military collision course with the U.S. from the Persian Gulf to the East China Sea.

These rivalries spell death for the world’s workers, who have no stake in any side of the inter-imperialist fight. PLP says there is only one side for workers in the class war. It’s the side that produces all the wealth that the bosses steal from our labor. Our side is the working class. And our answer to imperialist war is a communist revolution that destroys capitalism and puts workers in power.☺

Boeing's Economic Blackmail Shackles Workers



SEATTLE, January 3 — Today, 30,000 Boeing workers, members of the International Association of Machinists (IAM) Lodge 751, voted to give away pensions for new hires and to let Boeing freeze their own pension plans in 2016. The contract, not due to expire until 2016, will now be extended to 2024.

This is a major step in the growth of fascism, where the bosses rule through force and terror. Boeing used politicians of both parties and the union leaders to strip away 70 years of collective bargaining and economic gains. They do this partly because they can, but mostly to meet growing challenges from competing international imperialist powers.

Historically, these challenges have always been resolved through war. By 2024, starting pay for the bottom three pay grades will be at the state minimum wage, currently \$9.19/hr, half of the current starting wage.

Overall, wage increases will be four percent over eight years. Also, over the life of the contract, monthly health care premiums will increase by \$3,000/year. And Boeing reserves the right to unilaterally reduce health care benefits to avoid Obamacare's so-called "Cadillac tax" on top-shelf health coverage, fought for by auto, steel and aerospace workers.

Boeing workers voted down a similar contract by a 2-1 margin last November. These fascist cutbacks follow similar attacks in auto and steel, when those industries were losing billions to their international competitors. Many were either bankrupt or on the brink. Not so with Boeing, the world's largest commercial airline manufacturer and the second biggest military contractor. In 2013, the company enjoyed record profits, with over \$400 billion in back orders.

CEO Jim McNerney, Obama's choice to chair the President's Export Council, received \$27.5 million in total compensation, up 20 percent. (McNerney is a former top executive of 3M and General Electric, and serves on the board of directors for Procter and Gamble and IBM. He is a trustee of Northwestern University.) In November, Washington State politicians handed Boeing \$8.7 billion in tax breaks, the largest package any state has ever given a single corporation.

Union Betrayals

Still, Boeing demanded draconian concessions and threatened to move production of the 777X jet liner to a non-union factory in South Carolina, along with thousands of jobs (and \$25 million/year in union dues). IAM President Buffenbarger went to bat for the company and scheduled another vote. How else could he hold onto his \$300,000-plus salary, or the nine other IAM International reps who were paid more than \$265,000, or the \$1 million a year needed to maintain the union's Lear jet?

The contract passed by about 600 votes, 51-49 percent.

The turnout was much lower than in November because the IAM leadership scheduled the vote while

Obama: Boeing's Top Salesman

Speaking to the Export Council last September, President Obama said, "I think Jim [McNerney, Chairman and CEO of Boeing], at least, will confirm that I'm happy to go out and make sales. I'm expecting a gold watch — [laughter] — from Boeing at the end of my presidency, because I know that I'm on the list of top salesmen at Boeing. And that applies to all of you."

many members were away on holiday vacations. To grease the skids, Boeing offered workers a \$15,000 signing bonus.

Since the financial crash of 2008, unions have given up pensions for new hires in the auto industry, General Electric, Verizon, Honeywell and now Boeing. Jim Levitt, a 35-year veteran machinist at Boeing, described the "grim mood" of the workers to Labor Notes. "I'm astonished there wasn't an explosion. Almost everyone just put up with it... Very few signs, no chanting, no nothing... Less than 100 people were in the room for the vote-count announcement, in stark contrast to other times we've voted on a contract. The few hardy souls who came to the main Seattle hall of Machinists (IAM) District Lodge 751 seemed stunned when the results were read. Only one or two shouted anything, and within a minute the room was empty. It all ended with barely a whimper."

The loss of pensions at Boeing is another painful reminder that no victory is guaranteed, no security is possible as long as the bosses hold power. We don't need better politicians or new union leaders. We need to take power from the bosses and build a communist world that meets the needs of the workers. We need to build a mass revolutionary PLP that can lead Boeing workers and the whole working class in an armed insurrection. This is no pipe dream. For many years, Boeing workers have read and distributed CHALLENGE and supported our movement. And many more will again.✊

France: Goodyear Workers Occupy Plant, Seize Bosses

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at large companies across France....For the nine months ended September 30, Goodyear had net income of \$372 million" (New York Times, 1/8).

Demand \$130 Million Severance Pay

The workers are demanding severance packages of \$110,000 each plus \$2,500 for each year worked. "It will take years for these workers to find new jobs, and the older ones will have almost no chance," declared a French economics professor. (NYT)

The workers' main union, the CGT, which supported Hollande in the last election, has fallen to the "strategy" of looking for a new capitalist buyer to bail out the President. Throughout the year since the plant closure was announced, Goodyear ignored legal proceedings on workers' hygiene, safety and working conditions, while accusing the workers of "vandalism" and "theft." Of course, throughout the years it is Goodyear bosses who have stolen billions in profits from the workers' labor. It is notable that Goodyear is a U.S.-based transnational company and that when it's in their class interests, the bosses and their governments act together to screw the workers. Workers must show support and solidarity across borders in order to fight the bosses at the point of production.

The militancy of the workers is to be lauded, but unfortunately — as can be seen from the adjoining workers' proclamation — under capitalism conditions are stacked against the working class. The bosses use both the former right-wing government of Sarkozy and the current Socialist government of Hollande to oppress



Workers fought cops and damaged a large police vehicle which was videoing them.

our class, which creates everything of value in society and yet the profit system enables the bosses to steal the value of what we produce.

It is only a communist revolution that can end this horror, not the mis-leadership of unions like the CGT nor the phonies who call themselves "communist" while betraying the workers in one bosses' election after another.

This requires a communist party — which still needs to be built in France — to turn the anger and militancy of the working class to lead to the overthrow of capitalism and establish a society run by and for the workers.✊

Garment Workers on the Move

PORT-AU-PRINCE, December 28 — The call to students and militants came over our emails very early Wednesday morning, December 11:

Get cracking! This morning at 7 am, the workers are hitting the streets to demand a minimum wage of 500 gourdes [\$11.30 per day]. Every student activist is expected outside the industrial park. We did it in 2009 [last big national struggle for the minimum wage], we can do it in 2013. Pass on the message!

It was the second day of workers' demonstrations in Port-au-Prince for a minimum day's wage of 500 gourdes (\$11.30), a third of what a family of three needs for a subsistence living. The High Commission for Wages (CSS) had just set it at 225 gourdes (\$5), an increase of 25 gourdes, which is effectively wiped out by the current 10 percent inflation rate. Hundreds of demonstrators, mainly young women, assembled in front of the National Society of Industrial Parks (SONAPI) — the capital city's industrial zone — to march to the Hotel Royal Oasis in Pétienville. In that luxury hotel in a rich area, some big shots and members of CSS were conducting a meeting (Alterpresse, 12/11/2013). "500 gourdes! You guys don't want it; but we want it, we want it!" they chanted outside the hotel. This wage would, according to the marchers, "allow us to deal better with the rising cost of living."

A speaker condemned the fact that "the bosses have refused to raise wages while increasing the work-rate and working hours in the factories." The workers, women and men, denounced both their work-day of more than 10 hours and their so-called representatives on the CSS who had failed to defend them. They sought the support of Parliament in their struggle against the betrayal of the CSS, which is on the bosses' side. They demanded a wage more adequate to their needs. They showed real unity in the struggle. The marchers were prevented from demonstrating in front of the president's private residence by the U.S.-trained police.

The struggle for wages under capitalism is a struggle to survive. Are workers here surviving under capitalism? Each day they face worsening problems: while the cost of living rises, they only earn a pittance. They lack access to food, health care, housing, education — everything! Two hundred twenty five gourdes a day is less than half the price of a main dish in a restaurant. How can workers

HAITI

send their children to school when their day's wage cannot feed even a single person? Most workers in Haiti live in horrible areas with no electricity, no security. In fact, according to the NY Times (1/12/14), over 170,000 people are still living in tents four years after a devastating earthquake. Every day they travel miles on foot to get to the hell that is their workplace. They have no right to any form of welfare assistance.

Meanwhile, the bosses grow fat on their labor: the worldwide apparel and textile industry had 2011 revenues around \$3 trillion (reportlinker.com), so you can imagine the profits from wages as low as these in Haiti or those in Bangladesh. It may be a "mature" industry where the profit rate is declining, but the misery of SONAPI workers still creates enormous profits for imperialist firms like GAP (2012 revenues of \$15.7 billion). The average monthly spending on clothes by residents in glittering Manhattan is \$362 (treehugger.com), three times the wage for making clothes in dusty Port-au-Prince.

This spontaneous struggle by garment workers

shows the necessity of workers' unity and organization, even as it also reveals the limit of forms of worker organization where the leaders are sometimes more on the bosses' side rather than workers'. It raises several worrying questions.

Politicians, especially certain parliamentary deputies, benefit from and want to continue profiting from these mass mobilizations. In 2009, the fight for the minimum wage made one deputy, Steven Benôit, so popular it pushed him into a Senate seat and might even have carried him into the Presidency. And yet the workers and their supporters who were the main participants in the movement gained nothing from it. Such struggles without a communist party to give them direction are at the mercy of opportunists. They benefit bourgeois politicians looking for political and economic power.

The working class, in Haiti, Bangladesh, or Cambodia, becomes a force to be reckoned with when it gains communist political consciousness. The workers of Haiti — of the whole world — must unite under the leadership of the communist PLP to finish with the dictatorship of the bosses in all the stinking garment sweatshops of the tropical South and around the world.✪



Garment workers in Haiti demonstrate to demand doubling of minimum wage.

CAMBODIA, January 15 — Garment workers here have shut down more than 500 factories. On Friday, January 3, hundreds of workers blocked a road leading out of the capital city of Phnom Penh, burnt tires and refused to back down from the police. They are demanding doubling of the minimum wage to \$160 a month.

More than half a million garment workers, mostly young women, are on strike here, where international retailers have flocked in search of cheaply produced clothing. Cambodian bosses export more than \$5 billion of apparel a year, from which the workers receive a tiny fraction. The Cambodian minimum wage is only \$80 a month, and working conditions are abysmal.

The International Labor Organization recently reported that garment factories routinely violate health and safety regulations, making the workplaces potential death traps. As one woman worker said: "The factories don't care about us. They pay us so little, work us so hard and throw us away when we cannot work for a moment."

Class struggle in China raised wages to the point where global retailers like Wal-Mart, Target, Gap, Nike and Carrefour in France now look to Cambodia to produce the clothing and shoes they sell. But wherever

CAMBODIA

capitalism goes, class struggle — including strikes and militant demonstrations — follows in its wake. The number of strikes in Cambodia increased nearly 170 percent between 2010 and 2012, and garment workers have led scores of strikes this year.

Like capitalist governments everywhere, the Cambodian government of PM Hun Sen is completely on the side of the manufacturers and their international buyers. It is refusing to raise the minimum wage beyond \$100 a month, which barely covers the cost of food and the rent for wooden shanties without running water or electricity, leaving nothing extra for emergencies (such as sickness) or enjoyment. The government has sent police with AK-47 rifles to brutally attack the demonstrators, killing four and wounding others.

There is currently a sharp political struggle in Cambodia between the Cambodian People's Party (the governing party of Hun Sen, which should be called the "Rich People's Party") and the opposition National

Rescue Party, led by Sam Rainsy. The latter party has led demonstrations of tens of thousands demanding that Hun Sen resign as Prime Minister and call new elections. The opposition is opportunistically using the mass uprising of garment workers to attract more people to its rallies by promising to raise wages, lower gasoline prices and provide free health care for the poor. However, as soon as it gets into power, the National Rescue Party will be taking orders from Cambodia's wealthy class and the global companies and banks that do business with it. Its leader, Sam Rainsy worked for years as a French investment banker and today promises a "clean government" that will work on behalf of international investors, in contrast to the corruption-ridden government of Hun Sen.

The workers of Cambodia, like the workers of Bangladesh and Haiti, have discovered that their interests and the interests of their employers are diametrically opposed. Some of these exploited workers — like millions of workers before them — have undoubtedly begun to think about creating a society run by and for workers, without owners or government officials using force to suppress their just struggles.✪



Cambodia follows Bangladesh's footsteps. Strikers attacked cops, who opened fire, wounding several. The 2013 factory collapse (murdering over 1,120 workers) in Bangladesh was a turning point for many garment workers worldwide.

LETTERS

We encourage all CHALLENGE readers to send in letters and articles about their experiences fighting the bosses worldwide.

Class Analysis Needed on Zionist Kibbutzim

The article in the January 15th CHALLENGE issue on protests against expropriation of Bedouins and ethnic cleansing in Israel was on the mark. However, when calling attention to the Zionist government's favoring collective farms, or kibbutzim, a more precise class analysis is called for. The article refers to "...dozens of well-off Kibbutzim, Moshavim and individual farms, all exclusive to upper-class Jews." True, the majority of these Israeli farms have by now succumbed, or soon will, to privatization and other capitalist influences. Like the commune movement in the U.S., establishing islands of egalitarianism in a sea of profits and private property is an impossibility. However, be it in centers like Tel Aviv or the countryside, Israeli workers struggle constantly. Rural workers have much more in common with the urban proletariat than is generally believed.

Workers in Israel/Palestine, nomadic or landed, like those worldwide, share equally in the class struggle.

Ruby

Court Hits Women's Birth Control Needs

Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor issued a temporary injunction barring the administration from enforcing the Obamacare birth control requirement against an order of Colorado nuns, the Little Sisters of the Poor and related groups. An anti-woman ruling coming from a woman in support of a religious group made up of women!

Capitalism will never negate sexism. Women's bodies are the source of the next generation of workers. Less birth now means less cheap labor later. Some feminists may be surprised that the first Latina female judge would rule this way, but it stands to reason that the bosses' courts would use religion as the ideological justification to deny birth control for women.

Religion tells the working class that to use birth control is a sin, but in a time of economic instability adding a new member into a working-class family is a decision that is harrowing and personal. The ruling class wants to make that decision of child birth beneficial to them even as they scapegoat black and Latino workers, using the stereotype that they are leeching the system by having children, particularly out of wedlock.

Religious organizations are in existence to mislead the working class ideologically and this latest ruling is an attack on women disguised as religious freedom.

An Antisexist

Capitalist Hustlers

Continued from page 7

The Watergate scandal, Nixon's resignation and the subsequent exposés by Sen. Church's Senate committee revealing illegal activities of the FBI, CIA and NSA were part of the bosses' attempts to blame the crises of that period on individuals rather than on capitalism itself.

"Abscam" occurred in the wake of these crises, at a time when public confidence in capitalism and the U.S. government was at an all-time low. At the same time, however, the international communist movement and the militant labor and civil rights struggles it had inspired were also collapsing because of their reliance on liberal reforms and bourgeois elections. The possibility of revolution was being abandoned and a new era of cynicism and individualism began to set in.

The "Abscam" operation was an attempt by the FBI to restore public confidence in both the FBI and in the larger U.S. political system. By focusing on "bad-apple" politicians, the FBI hoped to repair the damage to its image caused by the Church committee hearings and to show that the political system was ultimately sound. And while the bosses have been successful in winning many in the working class to once again believe in capitalist "democracy" and the American Dream, the ongoing crisis of capitalism has again shaken the faith of many workers.

The film uses the "Abscam" story of the past to teach us how to view the present. In the same way the FBI attempted to restore faith in the U.S. political system by exposing some of its problems, *American Hustle* attempts to rebuild faith in the American Dream by revealing its flaws.

The film taps into the ideology of cynicism that has been brewing since the 1970s and seems to proclaim, "Yeah, the American Dream is a bunch of bullshit. It's one big hustle. It's a corrupt game of survival of the fittest. So what — maybe you can survive, too."

Lacking any visible alternative to capitalism, workers are invited to "hustle" in pursuit of this new American Dream — to do whatever it takes to get theirs. Today the old American Dream's myth that hard work brings success is joined with a hustle mentality sold to a generation of youth through rap. The bosses promote drug dealers turned rappers like Jay-Z who hustled to survive the ghetto but climbed his way to being a billionaire boss.

The message to our youth: Under capitalism, everyone hustles and only the strong survive. Working class youth are taught to accept that capitalism is a game of survival of the fittest, and that those on the bottom are either weak or lazy. This hustle mentality erases working-class consciousness and teaches workers to strive to be a boss. It hides the fact that the working class, united and armed with communist ideas, is the only class that has the power to end the misery of capitalism.

Only communist ideas that promote collectivity over individualism and faith in the working class over cynicism can combat the death spiral of capitalist ideas. We must redouble our efforts in this period to combat the bosses' lies and hold up the torch of communism under the banners of the Progressive Labor Party to fight for a world where workers don't have to hustle to survive, and where the American nightmare of capitalism becomes a story of the past.✪

Masses of Black Migrants Denounce Israel's Neo-Nazi Dictatorship

TEL AVIV, January 15— Over 30,000 black migrants have been on strike for over a week against Israel's racist Anti-Infiltration Law and fascist living conditions, bringing businesses to a halt. They chanted "we need asylum" and "Yes to freedom, no to prison!"

More than 60,000 undocumented migrants, mainly from Eritrea and Sudan, are the superexploited workers of Israel. One man from Darfur said, "All of us are fleeing genocide, fleeing dictatorship regimes. Looking for protection." What they get is social murder: "open facilities" in which they are separated from families, required to answer roll call three times a day, prevented from seeking work, on lockdown at night, and surrounded by a fence of razor wire; detention centers in the Negev desert; imprisonment; racist living conditions; mass deportations; disregard of asylum applications.

The Zionist state, and any state for that matter, are racist apparatus installed by rulers to divide and control labor based on an artificial concept of borders. This foments discrimination based on documentation, or the lack thereof. Undocumented workers — be it in England, United States, China, or Russia — must unite with documented workers, in this particular case, Jewish and Palestinian workers, to smash the bosses' dictatorship. The strikers in Israel serve as an inspiration for workers everywhere, for they provide a glimpse of the potential of workers' power.✪



Capitalism: The Original *American Hustle*

It is the job of capitalism's Hollywood propaganda machine to keep the American Dream myth alive, by repackaging it as something that is obtainable even in a period of crisis. And *American Hustle* does just that.

"We all hustle to survive." That's not just the reality of the millions of unemployed discarded by capitalism, it also the tagline for the new Golden Globe winner film *American Hustle*. It is the latest in a series of David O. Russell films about survival and self-reinvention — cornerstones of capitalism's big "American Dream" lie. These themes speak to millions in the working class who struggle to survive and who hold on to the hope that one day they will be able to reinvent their lives to escape the daily grind of capitalism.

However, in this current period of economic crisis and imperialist competition, U.S. capitalism appears unable to offer the working class anything other than continued misery. Conditions for the working class are becoming visibly worse: mass deportations, mass unemployment, slashing of food stamps and unemployment benefits, prolonged war in the Middle East, and a growing National Security Agency (NSA) security state.

It is the job of capitalism's Hollywood propaganda machine to keep the American Dream myth alive, by repackaging it as something that is obtainable even in a period of crisis. And *American Hustle* does just that.

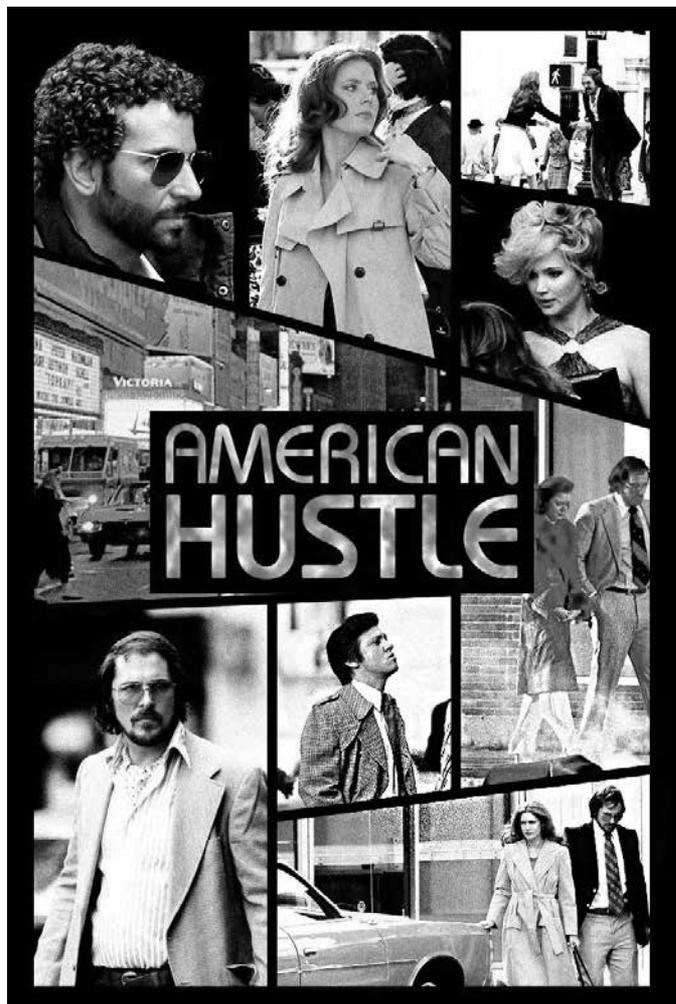
The film, a comedy-crime drama set in the late

1970s, begins with the words: "Some of this actually happened." It is a fictional account loosely based on a real FBI sting operation, "Abscam" (Arab Scam). In that operation, the FBI set up a fake Middle Eastern investment company and hired a con man to lure in white-collar criminals. The scam eventually attracted high-ranking politicians, including a U.S. Senator and several members of the House, who were convicted of accepting bribes in exchange for political services.

In the film's interpretation of "Abscam," con man Irving Rosenfeld (Christian Bale), his mistress/accomplice Sydney Prosser (Amy Adams) and FBI agent Richie DiMaso (Bradley Cooper) balance an odd love triangle with a half-baked scheme to bring down a few white-collar criminals.

Throughout the film everyone is hustling to get their piece of the pie. Rosenfeld and Prosser attempt to live the American Dream by selling forged paintings and fake loans. The FBI catches them. They eventually cut a deal, offering to help bring down a few criminals in exchange for their freedom. DiMaso's dream to move up in the FBI and have people work for him pushes him to go after bigger fish, including Congress and the mob. In the end, the politicians go to jail and Rosenfeld and Prosser, after conning the FBI, live happily ever after. They put their hustling days behind them in order to run their own legitimate art business. The takeaway message: the American Dream is possible, even in the midst of crisis, you just have to hustle your way to the top.

The reviews in the mainstream press praise the acting but have little to say about the politics raised in the film. To its credit, the film calls attention to an episode of political corruption in U.S. history few know anything about. But while the director has stated that he is more interested in telling a story about his characters than he is about telling history, his account of the 1970s (and



what he leaves out) must be taken seriously.

The capitalist crisis of today had its origins in the crises of the 1970s caused by the rise of U.S. imperialist rivals in Japan and Germany, stagflation (a condition of slow economic growth, high unemployment, and rise in prices), and the failure of U.S. imperialism in Vietnam.

Continued on page 6



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

Releasing poison in lust for profits

NYT, 1/3 — According to the Indonesian Ministry of Trade, the country imported slightly less than one metric ton of mercury in 2012....According to the United Nations trade statistics, however, 368 metric tons of mercury, about 810,000 pounds, were legally exported to Indonesia in 2012 from countries that included Singapore, the United States, Japan and Thailand.

The yawning gap between what Indonesia officially reported as receiving and what was actually exported to it is not an anomaly. In 2011, the country officially imported 7.8 metric tons of mercury, while the United Nations reported 286 metric tons were exported to Indonesia. The same disparity is evident for numerous other recent years.....

...The conclusion was obvious. Hundreds of tons of mercury had been smuggled into Indonesia for illegal small-scale miners in a modern gold rush that analysts say is causing major environmental and health crises.

"It's quick cash....You dig, you get money — and you get poison."

...The metal has also seeped into soil, rivers, fish ponds and rice fields. Mercury is known to cause health problems, which may not appear for years, that include brain damage; kidney, skin and eye problems; miscarriages; and dysfunctional neurological development in infants and children.

Comforting words for con victims!

NYT, 1/6 — The New York Times last month thrust JPMorgan into the spotlight on the fifth anniversary of [Bernard] Madoff's arrest.

Under the terms of the deal, the bank will pay more than \$1 billion to the prosecutors....The government plans to earmark some of the payout for Mr. Madoff's victims....

JPMorgan declined to comment for this article, but

has publicly maintained that "all personnel acted in good faith" in the Madoff matter.

False course credits for college athletes

NYT, 1/6 — Another shameful lesson in the multi-billion-dollar entertainment industry euphemistically referred to as collegiate sports is playing out at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. A former professor was indicted on fraud charges last month after running dozens of bogus and no-show courses heavily enrolled with student athletes looking for easy academic credits.

Investigations have found that over almost two decades as many as 200 classes offered little or no actual instruction, with the mere submission of any sort of term paper the only requirement for a passing mark. As many as 560 unauthorized grade changes were made across the years, some in the name of professors who said their signatures had been forged. This at a campus that presents itself as an academic-first institution.

The scandal points to the ever more dominant role in academic life played by revenue-rich intercollegiate athletics, where victories are badges in the booming business of televised sports [while the athletes get nothing]. Yet Chapel Hill officials have clung to the fiction that the dummy courses were not designed to protect athletes' eligibility....

School discipline harsh, unfair and racist

NYT, 1/6 — Schools across the [U.S.] are rethinking "zero tolerance" discipline policies under which children have been suspended, even arrested, for minor offenses like cursing, getting into shoving matches and other garden-variety misbehavior that in years past would have been resolved with detention or meetings with the child's parents.

...Studies have shown that suspensions and expulsions do nothing to improve the school climate, while



increasing the risk that children will experience long-term social and academic problems. Federal data also indicates that minority students are disproportionately singled out for harsh disciplinary measures.

Bribing workers to conceal faults

NYT, 1/3 — I was fired the other day....

...A termination agreement was pinged into my inbox....

..."You agree," it reads, "that you will never make any negative or disparaging statements (orally or in writing) about the Company....If I don't agree to this non-disparagement clause, I will not receive my severance...pay...."

...When I shared that indication with one of my superiors at Byliner...I was soon informed...that there is nothing unusual about such clauses...and that Byliner might even agree to a mutual non-disparagement clause. That means if I don't say anything about the company, its representative won't say anything unkind about me....

...That a company would offer money for my silence, which is what this boils down to — well, I've seen many a mob movie about exactly that exchange.

MORE ITEMS AVAILABLE AT WWW.PLP.ORG

Haiti, Dominican Republic Fight Apartheid Law Aiming to Divide Working Class

On September 23, 2013, the Dominican Republic Supreme Court issued a ruling that strips citizenship from over 200,000 Dominicans of Haitian ancestry. It applies retroactively to anyone born after 1929 who does not have at least one parent of "Dominican blood." Those affected can no longer get birth certificates, attend school or college, marry, travel, or obtain jobs legally.

This act has galvanized the anger of Dominican and Haitian immigrant groups around the U.S., in Haiti, and in the D.R. itself. Far from dividing them, many are standing together to protest this ruling. In the U.S., they see how similar racist, anti-immigrant laws have affected all of them. Many protesters blame Dominican political and judicial leaders for creating the climate that paved the way for this ruling. We in the Progressive Labor Party believe that all borders need to be smashed so that all workers around the world can unite as one class.

This type of institutional racism is not new to the Dominican ruling class. In 1912, the government passed laws restricting the number of black-skinned immigrants, but the bosses in the sugar industry completely ignored that restriction to maximize profits by using Haitians as cheap labor. The majority of these workers were brought in by the sugar mill bosses, and forced to live and work in sub-human conditions in the notorious "bateyes" around sugar cane plantations. The descendants of these workers are the direct targets of this most recent racist act.

In 1937, U.S. Marine-trained Rafael Leonidas Trujillo, then the bloody dictator of the D.R., ordered all Haitians along the border to be tracked down and executed. Many reasons have been given for the killings, the most convincing of which is that Haitian workers were organizing into trade unions alongside Dominicans. Tens of thousands were murdered and their bodies thrown into the Massacre River along the border.

Another U.S. puppet in D.R., Joaquin Balaguer (Trujillo's right-hand man and the political brain behind him), published a book in 1983 titled "La Isla al Revés (The Island in Reverse)" in which he expressed deeply racist ideas about Haitians. Then, when Francisco Pena Gomez, leader of the Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD) who was black, ran for president in 1996, Balaguer openly promoted the idea that Pena Gomez was an undercover Haitian spy who, once in power, had planned to turn D.R. over to Haiti.

Balaguer was rekindling past enmities against Haitians. In 1822, the Haitian army — which had already defeated and driven out its French slave-masters on the western part of Hispaniola — invaded the D.R., which was called Spanish Haiti at the time. Although the subsequent 22-year Haitian occupation succeeded in ending slavery in the D.R., it also led to much hardship and animosity among Dominicans. The bosses were able to exploit those conditions into long-lasting anti-Haitian racism and Dominican nationalism.

So, why does the Dominican ruling class want this law now?

Because workers from Haiti make up more than 80% of the workforce in agriculture, especially on sugar

Demand Justice for Kyam Livingston



BROOKLYN, NY— In the past few months CHALLENGE has been covering the racist murder of Kyam Livingston, a 37-year-old worker and mother who died in a cell in Brooklyn Central Booking on July 21, 2013. She was ill and crying out in pain for over seven hours while her pleas, and the pleas for help from people in the cell with her, were ignored.

Her family is demanding answers: the surveillance tapes of the cell, the names of the jailers who callously allowed her to die, the prosecution of those jailers, and a real and thorough investigation of conditions in Central Booking to change the culture of cruelty and indifference to the working class.

The next event in this campaign for justice will be a Community Speakout to air other stories of racist treatment and dehumanization under the "justice" system of U.S. capitalism. All are invited to attend and add to the event.☺

Community Speakout on Tuesday, January 21 from 6:00-9:00 PM

Flatbush Dutch Reform Church
890 Flatbush Avenue (at Church Avenue)

plantations. There are also high concentrations in construction, tourism, and domestic services. They earn starvation wages and their collective labor has been a big factor in the overall economic upswing D.R. has enjoyed in recent years. But, following in the footsteps of their slave-master predecessors, the Dominican bosses are not satisfied with their racist profits. They insist on pushing for this law that will not only strip Dominicans of Haitian descent of their rights, but also deprive them and their families of vital social, health and educational services needed for their well-being and survival, and making their labor even cheaper.

Another reason that pushes the Dominican government to intensify a racist crisis is to help create a smokescreen for its attacks on the entire working class there. The Dominican Republic has some of the highest income disparity and unemployment rates in Latin America: Unemployment is officially at 14.4%, and the wealthiest 10% control 40% of the economy while the poorest half controls less than 20%.

Although the economy survived the 2010-12 global recession, and is one of the fastest growing economies in the region, it also has growing deficits. As a result, the International Monetary Fund has demanded more revenues, leading the government to pass a new tax law in

2012. As it always happens, the working class has to pay the bulk of the new taxes. However, workers and students throughout the country have been fighting back against the policy. On several occasions these actions have resulted in several deaths and injuries in confrontation with police.

The new law is so blatantly racist that many of those who have historically harmed Haiti are compelled to speak out. This includes the UN's own Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. This is the same UN that is responsible for bringing the deadly cholera epidemic to Haiti, killing over 8,500 and sickening over 700,000.

The working class in the Dominican Republic and the rest of us across the globe must send a clear message to these governments. We must not tolerate the racist treatment of our sisters and brothers in Hispaniola. The border that divides the island of Hispaniola was made by the colonialists and their imperialist successors who continue to exploit all of us. We must reject the nationalism and racism that is being pushed to divide us — we must unite as one class, one fist. With communist revolution we can rid ourselves of this vicious profit system. Only then can we construct a healthy world and a safe future for all our children.☺

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