

# CHALLENGE



THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

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**50 Years of PLP**

# THE FIGHT FOR COMMUNISM NEEDS YOU!



April 17 marked the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Progressive Labor Party. From a meeting of barely two dozen members of the old U.S. communist movement, PLP has grown into an international Party now organizing in 27 countries.

Over our first half-century, PLP has propelled the march to communism — first by leading anti-racist, working-class struggle, and through that struggle advancing communist ideas. This two-pronged strategy — practice and theory — is the basis for winning masses of workers to fight for communism.

Why communism? In our vision, the working class will determine the future of society. It will destroy the capitalist world and its brutal exploitation. It will smash a system that drives us into constant unemployment and poverty. It will stop the racism and sexism that drags down all workers. It will smash the racist cops who break our strikes and kill our Black, Latin, Asian and immigrant sisters and brothers. And it will put an end

to the imperialist wars that send our youth to kill their class brothers and sisters worldwide, all for the bosses' profits.

### A Communist World

Here is our vision for a communist world:

- A society run by workers and for workers. After all, the working class produces everything of value and should rightfully receive the benefits of our labor. Collectively, we can determine how to share what we produce, according to need.
- Abolition of the exploitative wage system and the money that runs it. We have no need for the parasitic bosses who steal most of the value of our labor through wage slavery.
- Multi-racial unity with women and men workers and an end to the racism and sexism that divides the working class. Racism and sexism is

rooted in capitalism; the bosses rely on it to steal trillions in super-profits worldwide.

• Elimination of all borders, artificial lines drawn by the bosses to make even more profits from workers they call "foreigners." Nationalism is an anti-worker ideology that enables the imperialist rulers to exploit natural resources and cheap labor. It also enables them to make war on other workers. Communists are internationalists because the working class is one international class, with a common class interest, under one red flag.

This is the world PLP has fought for from the start. We will continue to fight until our class prevails. We invite all workers to join this struggle — for ourselves, and for our children and grandchildren.

### Struggle and Theory

From our earliest beginnings in the 1960s, PLP has fought tooth and nail against attacks by the ruling class. We have organized and supported Ford workers and striking teachers in Mexico; wildcatting miners in Hazard, Kentucky; longshore workers in New York City; jute workers in India; miners in Britain; garment workers in Los Angeles; bank workers in Colombia; transit workers in Washington,

DC; Chrysler sit-down strikers at Detroit's Mack Avenue plant; farm workers in California, and bakery workers at Stella D'Oro in the Bronx. We have stood with evicted workers in Palestine-Israel, earthquake victims in Pakistan, and hurricane victims in Haiti, New Orleans, and New York City. We have led anti-imperialist struggles against the UN in Haiti. This is by no means an exhaustive list.

Anti-racism is a hallmark of PLP. We backed Black workers and youth in the 1964 Harlem Rebellion, and fought off racist school segregationists in Boston in 1975. In 1976, we integrated Chicago's Marquette Park. Throughout our existence, we have led more than a hundred thousand protesters against the Ku Klux Klan and neo-Nazis across the United States. We have mobilized against racist killer cops from Brooklyn, New York,

**Continued on page 4**

## 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, Latin, 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.

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## Editorial

# U.S. vs. China

# Trade Deal Means Trade War

Barack Obama's Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) represents a major step toward war between capitalists in the U.S. and China. With the two imperialist powers locked in an escalating competition for global dominance, the TPP is more than a trade deal that will heighten exploitation and destroy jobs for U.S. workers. It's a sign that U.S. bosses are preparing to square off against their ascending rival.

The international revolutionary communist Progressive Labor Party is fighting to unite workers worldwide to smash imperialism at its source: the capitalist system. We call on all workers to march with us on May Day and fight for our class, not the bosses' country. Join PLP and the fight to turn imperialist war into class war for communism!

### TPP: A Provocation to China

In late March, the liberal Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) think tank, bankrolled by ExxonMobil and JPMorgan Chase, published a special report: "Revising U.S. Grand Strategy Toward China." The bloodthirsty authors Robert D. Blackwill and Ashley J. Tellis previously planned strategy and tactics for the National Security Council during the U.S. wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Their preamble sets a warlike tone:

*Washington needs a new grand strategy toward China that centers on balancing the rise of Chinese power...[I]t must involve crucial changes to the current policy in order to limit the dangers that China's economic and military expansion pose to U.S. interests in Asia and globally...[P]reserving U.S. primacy in the global system ought to remain the central objective of U.S. grand strategy in the twenty-first century.*

According to Blackwill and Tellis, the TPP is an essential step toward squaring off with China. Framed as a regulatory and investment treaty, it projects an anti-China trading and military bloc consisting of Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, the U.S. and Vietnam, and, prospectively, South Korea and Taiwan.

For the past four decades, U.S. capitalists have raked in trillions by exploiting cheap labor and vast markets in China's booming economy. While voicing concern over the gradual rise in China's worldwide might, U.S. rulers have yet to formulate a coherent plan for countering it. Obama followed his "pivot-to-Asia" policy with a chaotic series of half-measures, among them the stationing of 2,500 Marines in Australia and four Navy ships in Singapore. But the TPP represents an explicit confrontation with China — economically, politically, militarily. If the Exxon/Chase forces — the dominant faction of U.S. capitalism — hold sway, an armed conflict will be closer than ever.

### Capitalist 'Peace' = Preparation for War

While "Revising U.S. Grand Strategy Toward China" is not quite a declaration of war, it points in that direction. Its authors warn, "No nation in Asia, least of all China, will take seriously U.S. military enhancement in Asia unless the United States takes the following vigorous and comprehensive steps":

- A substantial increase in the U.S. military budget and military aid to pro-U.S. regimes in Asia;
- Maintenance of the current nuclear weapon balance between the U.S. and China;
- An even greater U.S. advantage in long-range stealth unmanned drones and undersea war capability;
- More ballistic missiles (fast-traveling weapons that fly out of the atmosphere) to back U.S. allies in the Pacific;
- An intensive naval and air presence in the South and East China Seas.

In addition, the U.S. bosses want their junior partners in Japan and Australia to accelerate their remilitarization and military cooperation. In India, the U.S. capitalist butchers hope to use a 1.25-billion-strong working class as cannon fodder in the possible imperialist war with China. To keep

## Obama Seeks to Secure U.S. Backyard

U.S. President Barack Obama's recent trip to Latin America represents another step in the bid to out-do U.S. imperialist rivals, China and Russia. Obama seemed to be right at home, shouting colloquial greetings at a cheering crowd in Jamaica and touting the economic and diplomatic possibilities that would result from renewed relations with Latin America at the summit in Panama. For Obama and the capitalists he serves, the trip was crucial in securing relations in a region where rivals China and Russia are gaining influence. Chinese banks' investments, for example, in Latin America increased by 71 percent last year (CNN, 03/04/15) and Russia has outlined plans to build military bases in Nicaragua, Cuba and Venezuela (CSIS, 03/24/15). Obama and his capitalist bosses thus have many reasons to be worried about Russia's and China's activities in their "backyard."

Workers should be leery however at Obama's attempt to attract support. The U.S., after all, has never acted in the favor of workers in Latin America. Countries like Jamaica are in utter debt because of the U.S. policies. The International Monetary Fund (IMF), the imperialist bank led by the U.S. and other world powers, imposes harsh austerity measures on Jamaica in order to collect an insurmountable debt that continues to stifle its fragile economy. Workers have no stake in this fight between imperialist rivals.

India's bosses in the U.S. imperialist camp, Blackwell and Tellis argue that the U.S. should ease restraints on military technology transfer to India, increase military cooperation (especially between the two countries' navies), and regard India's nuclear weapons arsenal as an asset.

On behalf of their ruling-class masters, Blackwell and Tellis argue that it's a mistake to view China as a potential ally or partner. They understand that all alliances among capitalists are temporary, and the current illusion of China-U.S. harmony is no different. The two imperialist powers may seem to be cooperating for the moment, but their interests are rapidly diverging:

*That self-defeating preoccupation by the United States based on a long-term goal of U.S.-China strategic partnership...should end. It is unrealistic to imagine that China's grand strategy toward the United States will...accept American power and influence as linchpins of Asian peace and security. The central question concerning the future of Asia is whether the United States will have...the right grand strategy to deal with China to protect vital U.S. national interests.*

### Flashpoint for Armed Conflict

The Pacific region represents one of several possible imperialist flashpoints for a massive armed confrontation. Vital U.S. capitalist interests are also at risk in the Middle East and Eastern Europe, among other potential hot spots.

The capitalists' maneuvers toward broader wars will affect every worker on the planet. In the U.S., Black, Latin, and immigrant workers will be hit the hardest. These workers are already suffering from racist mass incarceration, mass unemployment — and, for Black workers in particular — a recent upswing in murders and assaults by the kkkops.

The bosses arrogantly assume that the working class will continue to spill its blood indefinitely for their imperialist holocausts. They are wrong. The international working class, led by PLP, will be their undoing. Our Party is growing as it unites workers under the red flag.

May Day means that ALL workers stand together as a single class and fight for their class interests. This May Day, PLP will march in 27 countries. We are calling on all workers to join us in building a mass movement of millions for communist revolution!✊

# Workers Target High-Flying Bosses

**NEWARK, NJ, April 15** — Airport workers at the three major New York area airports are beginning to fight back against low wages, meager benefits and unsafe working conditions. They are called “passenger service workers” (PSWs), which include screeners, wheelchair attendants, baggage handlers, skycaps, ticket checkers, cabin cleaners, ramp agents and dispatchers.

Despite union misleadership and attempts to ally the workers with politicians, the workers are in a fighting spirit. About 75 airport workers joined 75 other people at a \$15/hr minimum-wage demonstration today. Over 100 workers took copies of CHALLENGE. They chanted loudly as they marched from Newark City Hall to a local McDonald’s restaurant.

## Wage Slavery Kills

A Summit on Poverty at a local college here highlighted the dire conditions of these workers, and featured their fighting spirit. Sponsored by SEIU 32B/J, the union organizing the workers, and several community organizations, the presentation started with two short films on organizing efforts in Newark and Philadelphia airports. A rank-and-file worker thanked the union for its organizing campaign, but said that the small wage increase gained by some of the workers (to \$10.10/hr) is nowhere near enough to support a family. She spoke eloquently about how workers must fight back against overwork that she said contributed to the on-the-job death of one of her coworkers.

Another speaker referred to the history of Newark International Airport to illustrate her point that this is a long-term struggle that must continue. Instead of the

3,500 jobs promised by the airline bosses and the Port Authority when the new airport was built in 1969, just 300 jobs materialized. Only a few being positions were filled with Black and Latin workers. Both she and a second speaker connected the current low-wage jobs to the capitalists’ need to exploit all workers, and to super-exploit Black and Latin workers.

That second speaker connected the increasing homelessness in Newark, where there are several tent cities, to the long-term decline in the U.S. of real wages, and of the real minimum wage. For example, the real minimum wage is 20 percent below what it was in 1969; the real minimum wage for skycaps and other positions depending on tips is almost 50 percent below its 1969 value. These pitiful wages mean workers spend a much higher percentage on basic necessities like housing and food. He said that recent studies show that there is an increasing number of employed workers who are homeless. These lower wages increase the value stolen by the capitalists, leading to higher profits for the airline bosses and their sleazy subcontractors.

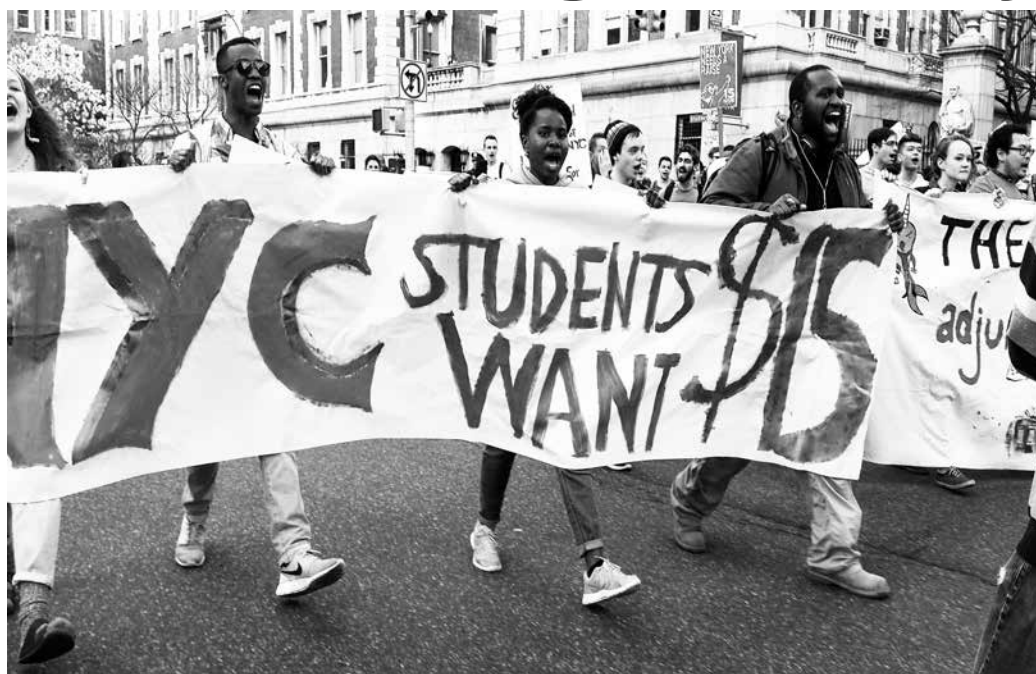
## Union Breeds Illusions

The union’s organizing campaign is based partly on the idea that the airline bosses can be convinced that it is in their interest to raise wages somewhat because there would be less worker turnover, more stable business conditions, and thus more regional growth. This is a deadly illusion. Maximizing profits is required by the laws of capitalist competition. As Karl Marx said, one capitalist kills many. The U.S. airline industry in particular, which now has only four major carriers, has

seen decades of cost-cutting in all job classifications, and contracting out of lower-paying positions, creating company war chests that led to three major mergers and now record profits. This consolidation has also been subsidized by the capitalist government. Not including tax-free bonds and other giveaways, after the Sept. 11 attack, the federal government gave or loaned the airlines an additional \$15 billion. Little to none of this money has gone into workers’ pockets. Many work for subcontractors who now control positions which were formerly unionized airline jobs. In 2014, the four biggest airlines raked in profits of \$8 billion (*USA Today*, 1/27/15). Meanwhile, according to a 2012 report, the median wage for contracted PSWs is \$8/hr, putting a family of four well below the poverty line. Seventeen percent of airport workers rely on Food Stamps to feed their families.

Poverty and racism are the inevitable products of a capitalist system that requires savage competition between the bosses in every industry, and a grinding down of the working class in each industry to the lowest wage possible for survival. But like the rebellion in Ferguson, the struggle of airport workers shows that workers can and will fight back. Only communism will abolish class distinctions and the hunger and homelessness that result from capitalism. Under communism, we will produce according to commitment and share whatever we produce according to need. Communist leadership in the current struggle of airport workers can hasten the day when we consign these horrors of capitalism to the scrap heap of history.☺

## Low-Wage Workers: Smash Wage Slavery



Over 200 students in Harlem take the streets to protest for low-wage workers.

**NEW YORK CITY, April 15** — In one of the largest labor actions in recent history, tens of thousands of workers in 40 countries around the world went on strike against low wages today.

In New York City, workers and their supporters briefly blocked the Brooklyn Bridge and closed down a McDonald’s. Members of PLP marched and chanted shoulder to shoulder with these workers and over the course of the day we distributed hundreds of CHALLENGEs and 1,000 leaflets inviting workers to march with us on International Workers Day May 2.

There are over 1.5 million low-wage workers in NYC who can’t survive on \$8.75/hr in the most expensive city in the U.S. The low-wage service sector — including fast food, restaurants, airport, retail, carwashers and home health attendants — is the fastest growing in the U.S.

From its beginnings capitalism has always been a barbaric system of wage slavery. The exploitation of all workers is based on racist super-exploitation of mainly Black, Latin and immigrant workers. While fast food workers make \$350 a week, the bosses rob them of billions of dollars

**There is no escape from class inequality under capitalism.**

in their cutthroat battle for profits. This low-wage campaign does not even include the thousands of undocumented workers who work below minimum wage and cannot legally have \$15/hr wages. There is no escape from class inequality under capitalism.

Capitalist politicians, union and community leaders support \$15/hr. But the working class knows what we “win” under the capitalist system, the bosses take away with higher prices, taxes, periodic recessions, and depressions.

Capitalist reforms cannot solve the crisis of the world’s workers. The only solution is revolution for workers’ power to build an egalitarian society. March on International Workers Day and join the Progressive Labor Party!☺

## KKKops Off Campus!

**TEXAS, April 17** — In response to Dallas Police Department’s (DPD) racist recruiting efforts on campus, Progressive Labor Party students and neighborhood fighters demonstrated against police murders of mainly Black and Latin workers!

The DPD posted signs attempting to entice 200 students to join their racist police force. On the surface, DPD was looking for students from 18 to 24 years of age with 60-plus hours of college credits. The real reason they were specifically targeting our campus is because it’s an urban community college. In other words, they are trying to recruit working-class Black, Latin, and immigrant students, the very same students targeted by the cops. A comrade went up to one of the recruiters and asked what they were looking for, and the recruiter replied, “People from tougher neighborhoods.”

### ‘Whole Damn System Racist As Hell!’

In response to this racist outreach, a campus club wrote a leaflet on racist police terror and planned an action. While passing out this flyer, many students agreed that the police should not be on campus. During the demonstration, a large group of cops on bicycles circled us. Several police vans also monitored us. The kkkops eyed us continually throughout the action, trying to intimidate us. This only encouraged us to chant louder and louder! “Killer cops you can’t hide, we charge you with genocide” and “Indict, convict, send those killer cops to jail, the whole damn system is racist as hell!”

Students and fighters from the neighborhood united. We held signs to voice our anger with not only the recent recruitment on campus but also the racist police murders.

The cops’ desperate attempt to recruit our youth and students in the context of the Ferguson rebellion can be seen as a fascist strategy. What better way to discipline Black and Latin youth than to recruit them into the terror machine that is the police? The DPD is the ninth largest department in the U.S. The recruiters boast that they hire 35,000 people from around the U.S. per year from as far away as Kentucky, Arizona and New York. The students’ history of fighting racism on this campus is no secret. Following the Ferguson rebellion, we demonstrated in solidarity with the anti-racist fighters.

This fight at our community college is an important one. Fighting racism strikes at the heart of capitalism. As of today, the police killed 342 people throughout the U.S. this year alone. And they dare recruit Black and Latin youth to their racist terror force. No matter the “race” of a cop, a cop is a cop: enemy of the working class.

These cops plan to come back to our campus to recruit again. We plan to challenge them with further action and our communist politics. We will win more students, professors, and campus workers to our side.☺

# March On Dilley, TX To Smash Anti-Immigrant Racism!

**TEXAS, April 20** — In December 2014, the racist Obama government opened a new prison in Dilley, a small southern town in Texas to hold up to 2,400 immigrant women and youth who have been crossing into the U.S. since last summer. The new prison space was justified by Obama's Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) lawyers because, they claimed, that the women and youth pose a "threat to U.S. national security" by their mass migration. Therefore all are held without bail even if they have a potential claim for asylum for fleeing persecution in their native countries.

The U.S. government has a profound racist fear of Latin and Black workers, who have the potential to lead a new wave of struggle. Almost all of these women and youth are fleeing violence, especially sexist attacks and killings, in Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador.

## U.S. Bosses Fear Rebellion

The U.S. rulers know that the inmates of Dilley prison and their family members across the U.S. and in their home countries represent a threat of rebellion against capitalism. The act of crossing the border itself is an act of rebellion. Because these families are part of the most exploited sections of the world's population, they are the most likely to fight back hardest throughout their lives. The situation is the same for Black working-class families in the U.S., who are increasingly subject to police murder in the streets and who face the very highest rates of arrest and incarceration.

Racism is a divide-and-conquer strategy that only benefits the bosses, because super-exploitation of different sections of the working class guarantees that wages and conditions of all workers will remain low and be forced lower. Each group is brainwashed to accept the worsening conditions of the other. By keeping wages and conditions horrible for Black, Latin and Asian women workers, the system keeps millions of workers below a poverty level. Racism hurts the entire working

class. It allows white and citizen workers' wages and conditions to be driven down further. That is why the standard of living for workers in the U.S. worsens every year, except for the very rich. Racism is the key to capitalism's profits!

## Increased Rivalry Leads to Imperialist War

The U.S. capitalist class backs Central and South American governments to secure continuing U.S. imperialist domination there, where these countries are sources of profit and resources. In these countries, as in the Middle East, the U.S. imperialists must counter European, Chinese and Russian bosses' investment and expanding influence. The U.S. recently assisted the present government of Honduras in suppressing a movement to align Honduras with Venezuela, which is in the Russian imperialist orbit.

Currently, the rulers of the U.S., Europe, Russia and China are intensifying their imperialist competition with each other for the world's wealth. As the U.S. prepares for wider war with their imperialist rivals, it needs to build racist fear of immigrants along the southern border. Thus Dilley is part of an effort to build nationalism, as well as to convince citizens that "foreign" workers seek to steal jobs. This was a foundation of Hitler's brand of fascist ideology in the 1930s, which taught that Jews were stealing jobs and property from non-Jews. It went from rhetoric to concentration camps, to mass exterminations.

Dilley, and the intensification of racism at the U.S. Mexican border today, is at the cutting edge of 21st century U.S. fascism. Since 2000, the number of Border Patrol agents has doubled to 18,000 and fencing multiplied nine times to 700 miles. Predator drones now patrol a stretch of 900 miles along the border, with over 10,000 flights in the past two years. This, along with government-backed attacks on immigrants by border

vigilantes such as the Minutemen, demonstrates the ability of capitalism to use fascist tools of the state to perpetuate racist terror on a mass scale.

"Deporter-in-Chief" Obama has deported more people than any other president — 2.4 million immigrants since taking office — and separated even more. Now he is imprisoning thousands at Dilley. Today, as in Germany in the 1930s, the liberals are paving the road to fascism.

## March on May Day!

The bosses are looking to the 2016 presidential election in order to pacify workers' anger over unemployment and racism. All the clowns in the electoral circus are enemies of the working class whether they are socialist, liberal, or conservative. The mass deportations and mass incarceration of Black and Latin workers is not the byproduct of a "broken" immigration system. It is the product of a racist capitalist system, a system that depends on racist super-exploitation to survive. Capitalism cannot be fixed. The U.S. bosses want these immigrant workers to be cannon fodder for larger and deadlier imperialist wars looming on the horizon through programs like the Dream Act.

Many churches and activist groups are calling for marches to release the inmates, and the Progressive Labor Party will be there to march with them! However, PLP fights for something more. In the past, Russian and Chinese workers and peasants, led by communists, defeated capitalism and ran society, and defeated German and Japanese fascism. Today, learning from past victories and failures of the old communist movement, and with the communist leadership of PLP, we can build a mass Red Army of the working class that will not only smash Dilley prison, but the entire capitalist system with communist revolution. MARCH ON DILLEY PRISON ON MAY 2, 2015!✊

# The Fight for Communism Needs YOU!

## Continued from front page

to Los Angeles, to Chicago, to Ferguson, Missouri.

PLP has stood in the forefront of opposition to the bosses' wars. In the 1960s, we were the first to organize mass demonstrations for the U.S. to "Get Out of Vietnam!" We formed the Worker-Student Alliance in the anti-war Students for a Democratic Society. PLP broke the U.S. travel ban to Cuba and undermined the rulers' House Un-American Activities Committee to the point of collapse. More recently, working both within the military and on the streets, we exposed the U.S. rulers' invasions of Iraq as a murderous oil grab.

None of these developments came out of thin air. They grew out of our Party's analysis of past class struggles and the achievements of millions of workers. PLP studied the strengths and weaknesses of the communist movement led by — among many others — Karl Marx, Vladimir Lenin, Josef Stalin and Mao Zedong. In 1917, this movement created a revolution in Russia; in 1949, a revolution in China. It defeated the Nazis in Europe and the fascists in Japan in World War II. It reached its highest point in China's Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, which attempted to push back a growing elitism in the party leadership and put the masses in charge of society.

PLP is the only group to point out what went wrong in the Soviet Union and China. We are the only organization to analyze how socialism in those countries led back to the unvarnished profit system, where all workers are now mired.

A communist society will have no bosses or profits. It will be led by the working class through its Progressive Labor Party.

## Marxism: An Evolving Idea

The history of the Progressive Labor Party began in 1962. A small group of communists left the Communist Party USA and organized the Progressive Labor Movement (PLM). They rejected the CPUSA's capitulation to capitalism and its abandonment of the open advocacy of communist revolution. The old communist movement proposed that the bosses would peacefully relinquish control of society and allow what the CP called "socialism" to be "voted into existence." The communists

who formed PLM refused to mislead workers and broke away from the old guard.

In the course of PLP's history, we have rejected some traditional Marxist concepts and advanced a number of new ones, all based on our practice and our examination of world events and the decay of the old communist movement. These new principles are expressed in a series of documents, including Road to Revolution I, II, III and IV; Revolution Not Reform; and "Dark Night Shall Have Its End." (These are all available on plp.org or in pamphlet form.)

Above all, Progressive Labor Party stands for the principle that the working class must fight directly for communism rather than moving first through a transi-

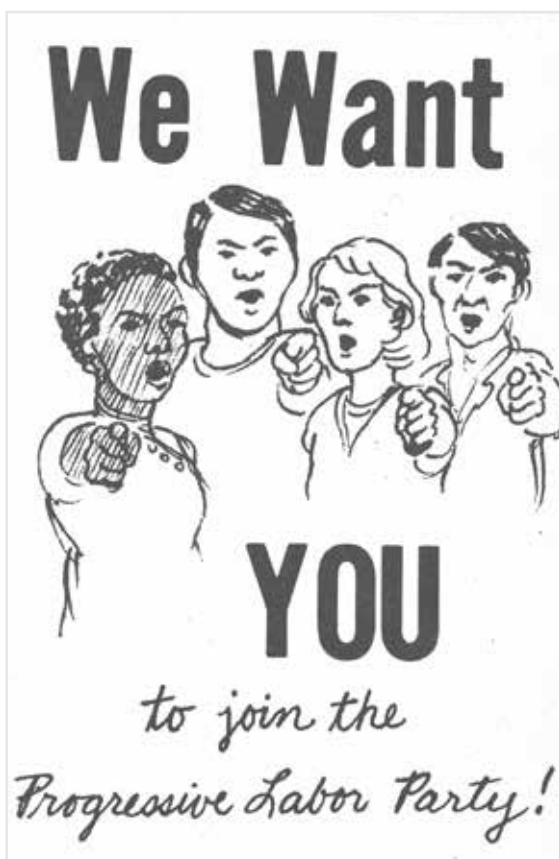
tional phase of socialism. We reject this two-stage theory because events have shown that socialism inevitably leads back to full-blown capitalism. In both Russia and China, socialism preserved capitalist features such as money and the wage system, leading to inequalities that divided the working class. In both of these countries, the communist party became a new ruling class where privileges were attained through party membership. We believe the working class can and will be won before the revolution to fight directly for communism — to abolish the wage system, the cult of the individual and other capitalist relics.

## Core Principles

PLP's main principles are:

- Internationalism, under the slogan "Smash All Borders," where workers' class unity is represented by a single mass, international Party;
- The fight against racism, a strategic necessity in the struggle to overthrow capitalism;
- The fight against the special oppression of women — sexism — another critical component in uniting the working class, a prerequisite for revolution;
- A concentration among industrial workers, who produce the capitalists' profits and the weapons for the bosses' imperialist wars;
- Workers' power through armed struggle, since the rulers constantly use their armed state power to violently suppress the working class.

Throughout its existence, PLP has fought for these principles in unceasing class struggle. We have learned that building the Party is the first order of business for communists. Capitalism cannot be reformed. Whatever gains workers make in reform struggles are limited and temporary; sooner or later, the bosses always use their state power to take them back. Communists strive to turn reform struggles into schools for communism, into vehicles for building the Party. Winning workers to PLP is the one and only victory the ruling class can never take back. We therefore urge all workers and youth to join us now for the next half-century in this historic task: to organize a communist revolution.✊



# Colombia: Teachers Strike for Students

**BOGOTA, April 22** — Teachers of a rural town in Bogota, Colombia, went on strike in response to the Ministry of Education's racist policies against working-class students.

The school administration maintained overcrowded classrooms by assigning 50 students to a room which can hold a maximum of 30, creating a health hazard, and harassing the students. This abuse, when added to the lack of a budget to respond to students' needs, motivated the strike.

The ministry called on the teachers' representative to stop the strike and begin negotiations. It also wanted to accept a parents' representative. The union refused and demanded the presence of 17 parents, one for each rural district. The union demanded a negotiating committee be set up.

After several days of negotiations, it was agreed to use the budget to improve the school under parents' supervision. This budget was already allocated but the dean had refused to spend it, a move that highlighted his sinister motives. The students will be placed in other schools.

This agreement was the product of working-class unity and forcefulness. It showed that the initial fear of several teachers — who argued nothing could be done and that they would get hurt

Exploiting and attacking the working class is part and parcel of capitalism.

— could be transformed by the struggle.

The teachers, as well as the other unions, have been suffering the consequences of the capitalist crisis. Year after year, they lose what they've won in previous struggles. The union bosses are a bunch of collaborationist misleaders who are in bed with the government.

Participation in reform struggles is part of the training for communist leaders. We must be part of those struggles to influence and guide the revolutionary struggle. Exploiting and attacking the working class is part and parcel of capitalism. It takes away crumbs workers gained through years of struggle.

A united working class under the leadership of the PLP is truly indestructible and in the long run the just revolutionary struggle for communism will succeed. Everything you do, and neglect to do, matters. Join PLP. ☛

# Israel/Palestine: One State or Two, Capitalism Rules

**DALLAS, TX, MARCH 29** — Several PLers attended a small conference here of members of the One Democratic State (in Palestine) group.

This group oppose the two-state proposal because of two basic reasons: 1) Given the use of the right-wing settlements by the Israeli government to divide up and take over more and more of the remaining West Bank, any "Palestinian state" will be a collection of geographically separated islands. 2) All residents of, and refugees from, Palestine of all ethnicities should be able to live together in peace, justice and equality. They also want to see the end of both the Zionist government and the Palestinian Authority, which they view as a puppet of the government of Israel.

At the conference the question of what kind of state should be implemented was raised by PLers. Whether there are two states or one state, as long as it is under capitalism there will continue to be inequality, racism, oppression, exploitation and wars. Only by building communist revolution will we ever have a



## Internationalism

world where working-class families can live together as one.

There was no agreement on what type of state there should be. It was left with the statement, "We encourage continued discussion on the future economic system."

At the conference we did meet some people who are looking for ways to work for a better world. CHALLENGEs and flyers were distributed to people with whom we talked. We plan to keep in touch with some of those we met. It is important that we not ignore opportunities to reach out to people with our politics and our actions. The working class has nothing to lose but our chains. ☛

# May Day: International Workers' Holiday

May Day is the international holiday celebrated by tens of millions of workers worldwide. It was born out of — and honors — the Chicago workers' historic struggle for the eight-hour day on May 1, 1886. This launched general strike that spread to 350,000 workers across the country. It's a day when workers around the globe march for their common demands, signifying international working-class solidarity.

In 1884, the AFL passed a resolution to make eight hours "a legal day's labor from and after May 1, 1886." Workers were forced to labor "from sun-up to sundown," up to 14 hours a day. The Chicago Central Labor Council then called for a general strike on May 1, 1886, to demand the 8-hour day.

On that day, Chicago stood still as "Tens of thousands downed their tools and moved into the streets. No smoke curled from the tall chimneys of the factories and mills," reported one paper.

On May 3, the cops murdered six strikers at the McCormick Reaper Works. The next day thousands marched in protest into Chicago's Haymarket Square. A bomb was thrown by a police agent. Four workers were killed, seven cops died and 200 workers were wounded in what became known as the Haymarket Massacre.

Nine demonstration leaders were framed for "instigating a riot." Four were hung. A mass protest movement forced the Governor to free those still alive after the government admitted the frame-up.

The tens of thousands who won the 8-hour day saw it eroded, so another general strike was called for May 1, 1890.

At the July 1889 meeting of the International Workers Association, organized and led by Karl Marx, the U.S. delegate reported on the struggle. The Association decided "to organize a great international demonstration, so that...on one appointed day the [world's] toiling masses shall demand" the 8-hour day. "Since a similar demonstration has already been decided upon by the American Federation of Labor...this day is adopted for the international demonstration." This kind of international solidarity is vitally needed today.

As it progressed, the international communist movement took up the struggle and organized May 1st celebrations every year. In the U.S., it was championed for many years by the old Communist Party, with 250,000 marching in New York City in the 1940s. But when that party abandoned any communist principles, May Day was resurrected by the Progressive Labor Party in 1971 which advanced more revolutionary ideas. May Day marches have been organized by the PLP for the past 44 years, in many cities — Washington, D.C., New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Boston, Philadelphia,



2014 May Day in Mexico

Detroit, Houston, Delano, California and others, as well as PLP contingents in Latin America, Asia, and Africa.

In the U.S., bosses try to smear May Day as being "imported from Soviet Russia," it remains as a significant contribution born in the actions of those Chicago strikers over a century ago. Today we march for the universal demands of all workers, regardless of capitalist-created borders: against imperialist war, against racism and sexism, for unity of immigrant and citizen workers, against wage

slavery, against fascist police terror and for the communist solution to all these attacks facing the international working class.

How prophetic were the last words of Haymarket martyr August Spies as the hangman's noose was tied around his neck and he declared, "There will come a time when our silence will be more powerful than the voices you strangle today!" ☛

# LETTERS

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

## When Auto Workers Fought Racist Police Terror

On April 17, 2015, the New York Times ran a front-page story on the racist police murder of 10-year-old Clifford Glover in Queens, NY. Clifford was walking to work with his Dad on a Sunday morning. His Dad had just been paid the day before and had a lot of cash in his pocket. An unmarked police car pulled over and a plainclothes cop got out and told them to stop. Fearing they were being robbed, they ran and cop Thomas Shea shot Clifford in the back, saying the five-foot tall, 100-pound 10-year-old fit the description of a robbery suspect. He also said Clifford turned toward Shea and pointed a gun at him. Clifford never turned, never had a gun and was shot in the back. This was in 1973. Sound familiar?

At the time, I was working at the Ford Assembly Plant in Mahwah, NJ. Our small PLP club had a regular CHALLENGE readership among our co-workers and 1973 was a contract year. We were trying to organize for more militant action against Ford and the UAW union leadership since Ford had us working tons of overtime in order to build up a huge stockpile of cars so they could sit out any possible strike. There was a Black caucus in the plant, loosely tied to DRUM (Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement) and the League of Revolutionary Black Workers in Detroit. They were trying to address racism in the UAW, hoping to elect more Black union officers (there was only one at the time).

Then the NYPD murdered Clifford Glover. We brought that issue to the factory floor. We distributed a flier about the racist murder and circulated a petition, demanding that our UAW local union take a public stand against the police and in support of the family, and demanding that Shea be indicted for murder. The workers' response was electric. It far surpassed their response to all the contract and "bread-and-butter" issues we'd been organizing around.

We literally circulated the petition on the Ford assembly line. We placed the petition in the frame of the car and as it went down the line, workers would take off their work gloves, sign the petition, and send it to the next person. We did this in a few departments. Even among those workers who didn't sign, no one ratted us out to the bosses. (Or if they did, it was after the fact.) In a couple of hours we'd collected over 350 signatures. The mood of the workers and our relationship to them had made a qualitative change for the good.

The May union meeting had an overflow crowd as the union leadership, the Black caucus and PLP mobilized our respective bases to attend, each group either advancing or sabotaging the fight against racist police terror. The union leadership was outnumbered but had more of a plan and maneuvered to successfully adjourn the meeting with no action taken. We had no Plan B to take over the meeting after it was adjourned, to plan action with the workers who were there. But rather than being dejected and cynical, the workers were even angrier.

The struggle in the plant accelerated. PLP members were targeted. I was suspended for three days for having CHALLENGE and PLP literature in my locker. But by early June, when the temperatures exceeded 100 degrees in the plant, we were able to lead a wildcat strike that shut down Ford for a week. This was big news, and it helped our comrades in Detroit to organize the Mack Ave sit-down strike against Chrysler just two months later. Workers seized the plant, the first such auto strike in nearly 40 years.

There's a lot to be learned from these struggles, positive and not so positive, but mainly that we have

to take the fight against racist police terror to our shop floors and inside our unions. The fight over the racist murder of Clifford Glover helped workers to see things more clearly. Many of them knew it could have been them and their children. And that raised political consciousness, making them more willing to take bold action against Ford and the union misleadership.

Bringing the fight against racism and police terror to our jobs and unions will help steel us, help build a mass PLP and make us a Party worthy of leading the working class to power.

★ ★ ★

## Ayotzinapa: Your Struggle is Our Struggle

On March 25, Lili, a new member of our PLP club here in Chicago, received a text that a caravan from Ayotzinapa, Guerrero, Mexico would be here April 3–6. Very little to none was mentioned in the Latin and English media. Two other caravans were already hitting the Pacific and East coasts the earlier part of March. These three caravans, representing students friends and family members of the 43 Normalistas (students attending the teachers college) who were attacked and disappeared on September 26–27, were coming to cities throughout the U.S. and ending in Washington, DC.

The purpose of the Caravana 43 was to expose the lies of the Mexican government and to seek political support from workers in the U.S. and finally from president Obama himself. Obama is no friend of these families. Only the international working class can show solidarity with workers in Mexico.

The 43 young men attended college in Ayotzinapa to become teachers with the sole purpose of going back to teach the kids in the towns they came from. The students were on their way to the town of Iguala, Guerrero to raise funds for their college when armed military local, state and federal cops stopped their bus. Six students were killed and some injured — two of whom are still in a coma. One student had his face cut off!

The story is that the 43 students were handed over to a drug gang in Guerrero, Mexico. There are still rumors that the 43 disappeared students were killed and their bodies burned, or that the students are still alive and are being used to pick crops somewhere in the mountain region.

The Caravana 43 committee, made up of several leftist community organizations and four Roman Catholic Churches in the Spanish-speaking communities, organized the activities here. The first one began with a folk dance until the visitors' arrival at the plaza. A student visitor Beto spoke. He survived the attacks back in September. He and the two other visitors, Esperanza and Lolo, were taken to a nearby restaurant to be interviewed by a local TV station. Esperanza is the mother of one of the 43 disappeared students. Lolo is a teacher and uncle of one of the 43 students.

On Saturday, April 4, a rally was held in front of one church. It was here that I gave a DESAFIO, CHALLENGE's Spanish counterpart, to the three visitors. We then marched through the Pilsen neighborhood in Chicago.

We chanted, "Alive you took them. Alive we want them back." A comrade and I took turns distributing 120 CHALLENGEs and holding two posters (see photo). The posters (the Spanish versions) read

"Brothers/Sisters — your sadness is our sadness, your anger is our anger, your struggle is 100 percent our struggle. Fight for Communism" and "From May Day to Ferguson, MO. to Ayotzinapa: Fight to Destroy Capitalism." Esperanza, Lolo, and Beto marched with a contingent of nearly 100.

At the community forum, Esperanza spoke first. She and her family are poor farm workers, as are the rest of the Ayotzinapa families. She spoke of watching a TV soap opera at the time her son and others were attacked. "Never in my wildest imagination would I have thought of such a horrific thing happening to my son. And me, [I was] watching a soap opera. Can you imagine that?!"



The mothers are no longer watching soap operas. They are in the thick of the struggle giving leadership to find their loved ones. One of the slogans of the Ayotzinapa struggle is, "They took everything from us. They even took away our fear."

More residents participated at the evening forum. Because of their struggle to get the disappeared students back, 600 more families joined the fight. Beto spoke. He felt that before trying to change the "macro" (the system), the "micro" had to be changed. He identified the "micro" as the children that aspire to be either drug-traffickers or soap opera stars when they grow up. Since 2006, the racist U.S.-fueled drug war in Mexico has led to the disappearance of more than 30,000 people. From 2007 to 2012, there were officially over 121,000 homicides, with over 50,000 under the current government under president Enrique Peña Nieto.

Terrorism, disappearances, and murder of youth are an everyday occurrence for working-class families throughout the world. In the U.S. alone, 1.5 million Black men (this includes only ages 25 to 54) are missing due to death or jail. On top of unemployment, sexist and racist working conditions, this is what capitalism means for billions of workers!

A press conference at the Workers United Hall on April 6 concluded with a protest in front of the Mexican Consulate down the street. Esperanza and Lolo spoke. As the Chicago police moved in to defend the front doors of the consulate, Esperanza and Lolo were whisked off. I found out later that Beto had received threats and didn't make it to Monday's protest. I circulated about another 45 CHALLENGEs to the protesters and those going in and out of the Consulate.

I spoke briefly with Esperanza, Lolo and Beto at the weekend events. Self-critically, I should have been much bolder in getting to know them. Lili has family members in Mexico who are involved in the struggle to bring justice to the disappeared students. Our club has been in contact with them.

The committee organizers weren't able to get as many residents out as I expected. Most of those involved that weekend were young political organizers, several of whom I had known when we were involved together in the La Casita sit-in about three years ago. (Working mothers occupied La Casita, an elementary school field house, for 43 days to protest its demolition.) I had also seen three women friends who used to be in PLP, one who participated in the Boston Summer Project along with her (now deceased) 17-year-old sister and me in 1975! I will make it a point to renew our friendship.

The struggle in Ayotzinapa is an international one. It is up to PLP to link the mass terrorization and disappearances of youth in Mexico to youth in the U.S. and worldwide as part of this destructive capitalist system.

★ ★ ★

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# Imperialism Is Poison for Workers

Continued from page 8

that led to the overthrow of Muammar Gaddafi. The Chinese walked away from some \$30 billion in investment by abandoning Libya.

In Sudan, the Chinese fared a little better. They first supported the Sudanese government in Khartoum fighting against the U.S.-backed separatist rebels in the south. When the rebels succeeded in splitting their oil-rich province from the Khartoum regime's control, the Chinese deftly switched their "friendship" to the separatists, and continued their gas and oil projects. As part of their development of South Sudan's petroleum industry, 80 percent of the oil exported from there goes to China. China has stationed Chinese troops in the region to guard the wells and pipelines through which the oil is exported.

Most of *China's Second Continent* toys with the question of whether or not China's bosses have become a true imperialist power in Africa. The book makes no real effort to answer the question until the Epilogue, in which the author finally but reluctantly says, "yes." But he ignores or sidesteps the key feature of imperialism: the inevitable tendency toward war to divide and re-divide the world for capitalist exploitation.

In reference to the Chinese pull-out from Libya the author ignores that the U.S. and French imperialist forces intervened on the side of anti-Gaddafi rebels. The implications for military conflict between superpowers competing for Africa's resources are clear, even if this author doesn't mention them. Nowhere in the book does he even mention AFRICOM, the U.S. military's command for Africa, established in 2008.

## All Imperialist Powers Destroy Workers' Lives

For Chinese workers, no less than African workers

or workers in any country, the implications of a new imperialist power rising to challenge the current top dog in the African continent need to be understood. The main contradiction is not "good" exploiters versus "bad" exploiters, but workers versus the imperialists. Working-class youth from the U.S. who have been sent to kill and be killed by their class brothers and sisters in various resource wars from Vietnam to Iraq can attest to the fact that the working people of imperialist countries have nothing to gain and everything to lose from wars over natural resources, markets or trade routes. For a billionaire owner of an oil company, there is the potential for enormous gain. For the soldier in the bunker, there is death, dismemberment or post-traumatic stress disorder. It is the duty of communists to constantly raise a clear analysis of world-shaping developments — like China's growing empire in Africa — for our friends so they don't fall victim to "lesser-evil" capitalist propaganda.

## Africa: Flashpoint for World War?

The key point for communists is that Africa is becoming a likely flashpoint where the rivalry between great powers could develop into an inter-imperialist world war. That would turn workers from all countries into potential cannon fodder (soldiers used as mere war expenditures). This is the main message workers around the world need to hear.

Comrades should organize forums and book groups to increase knowledge and understanding among our friends. We should also look for opportunities to unite Chinese, African and other workers in multiracial protests. This could take the form of solidarity demonstrations around specific incidents growing out of this intensifying U.S.-China rivalry in Africa. Our comrades from Africa and China and U.S. marching together on May Day is a good start! ☺

## A Communist Definition of Imperialism

In *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*, Lenin quoted Cecil Rhodes, the British financier for whom the colony of Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) was named, who made the following comment after hearing angry protest speeches by unemployed London workers: "I became more than ever convinced of the importance of imperialism. ... My cherished idea is a solution for the social problem, i.e., in order to save the 40,000,000 inhabitants of the United Kingdom from a bloody civil war, we colonial statesmen must acquire new lands to settle the surplus population, to provide new markets for the goods produced by them. ... If you want to avoid civil war, you must become imperialists."

Lenin listed these key developments that define imperialism in the capitalist epoch:

- The concentration of production and capital into monopolies;
- The merging of bank capital with industrial capital, creating a financial oligarchy;
- The export of capital (as distinguished from the export of commodities) to other countries;
- The formation of international capitalist monopolies which share the world among themselves;
- The territorial division (and periodic re-division through war) of the whole world among the great capitalist powers.

## 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

### Obama 'anti-war president'? Who's kidding who?

GW, 4/15 — Obama is no anti-war president....

...In the last six years, the Obama administration has bombed seven countries in the Middle East alone and armed countless more with tens of billions of dollars in weapons....

...The U.S. is already escalating...its involvement across the Middle East. In Afghanistan, the president has...delayed pulling U.S. troops out...so they can continue special forces raids and drone strikes, despite loudly celebrating the supposed "end" of combat operations....In Iraq, U.S. forces escalated its air strikes in the so-called battle to re-take Tikrit....

...The U.S. has given Saudi Arabia an astronomical \$90 billion in military equipment and weapons over the past four years and, as the Washington Post reported, it will play a "huge" role in any fighting. U.S. drones are...patrolling Yemeni skies and even helping Saudi Arabia "decide where to bomb," according to the Wall Street Journal....

...[Obama] had already authorized dozens of drone strikes...(which backfired and many...think strengthened al Qaeda). He gave the Yemeni government \$500 million in heavy weaponry and military gear, all of which is...likely in the hands of U.S. enemies....

...In Afghanistan, the U.S. gave the government nearly 500,000 weapons that are not accounted for (and that was a couple of years ago)... The Obama administration...[armed] rebels in Syria where many of the weapons promptly fell into enemy hands....

Photographer Gregg Carlstrom...summed it up... as Saudi Arabia started to drop bombs on Yemen: "US praises US ally for bombing US-equipped militia aligned with US foe who is partnering with US to fight another US-equipped militia."

### Oil and gas profits ride roughshod over Oklahoma earthquakes

NYT, 4/4 — Earthquakes Jolt Oklahoma....Oil and gas wells cited....

PRAGUE, Okla. — Yanked without warning from a desafio.challenge@gmail.com

deep sleep...[by] a 5.0 magnitude earthquake — the first of three as strong or stronger over several days in November 2011 — ...peeled the brick façade from [Jennifer Lee Cooper's] \$117,000 home....Repairs have so far cost \$12,000 and forced her to take a second job, at night, to pay the bill....

Many scientists...say those quakes, and thousands of others,...are mainly...caused by wells used to bury vast amounts of wastewater from oil and gas exploration deep in the earth near fault zones....

"As long as you keep injecting wastewater along that fault zone, you're going to have earthquakes," said...the chief...at the federal Earthquake Science Center....

More than five years after the quakes began a sharp and steady increase, the strongest action by the...governor...has been to name a council to exchange information....The State Legislature...passed bills...barring local officials from regulating oil and gas wells in their jurisdictions....

The state's oil and gas wells gush profits to corporate owners....a major contributor to...[Governor] Fallin and all three elected members of the...Commission which oversees oil and gas production and disposal wells....From 2011 to 2013....the amount of wastewater buried annually rose...to nearly 1.1 billion barrels. And Oklahoma went from three earthquakes of magnitude 3.0 or greater...to 750-plus this year....

...Last July, researchers stated in Science magazine that wastewater-induced earthquakes were approaching a fault near Oklahoma City capable of producing a magnitude 7.0 shock....

### 'American values': imprisoned pregnant women shackled during childbirth

NYT/ 4/10 — Tina Tinen...was doing a year for selling drugs and had arrived in prison halfway through her pregnancy. On her due date in November, 2011, the labor came so fast that an ambulance... [had] to take her to the hospital from the women's prison in Bedford Hills [N.Y.].

"Earth-stopping pain," she said. "The ambulance arrived. I was handcuffed to the gurney."

At the hospital...she remained handcuffed...as the contractions accelerated. "It was about one minute apart, just blinding pain," she said....Her...only child was born 19 minutes after she arrived. Later...when she was

permitted to go from a locked ward to the nursery, the corrections officer shackled her legs and her wrists....

In 2009, the State Legislature passed a bill banning the shackling of pregnant women just before, during or after childbirth....Yet, in a survey done since the ban became law, 23 of...27 pregnant women...reported that they were restrained in violations of its provisions....

...A second woman, Maria Caraballo, said that she had been handcuffed on Feb. 15, as she delivered her daughter and the placenta. "It was hard for me to give birth because I couldn't hardly lift myself up," she said. "The doctors told the officers to uncuff my hands, I was in labor. I wasn't going anywhere — they said no...."

...The forms...listed the gear the guards had signed out, including: two sets each of handcuffs, leg irons and waist chains.

### Billion\$ in profits extorted from prisoners' phone calls home

NYT, 3/31 — Since the police in Pennsylvania arrested Anthony Kofalt last March...his wife Heather has spent \$3,000 — about \$60 a week — on phone calls to the prisons and jails where he had been held.

The cost of a 15-minute call is \$12.95....The cost for a similar non-prison call...would be about 60 cents.

And every time Ms. Kofalt deposits \$25 into the prison phone account, the private company that runs the system applies a service charge of \$6.95....Ms. Lofalt...works as a home health care aide....

...The prison phone system is now a \$1.2 billion-a-year industry...setting rates and fees far in excess of those established by regular commercial providers. The business is...considerable — some 500 million...calls totaling more than six billion minutes in 2014....

...Hundreds of millions of dollars in concession fees...[are] paid by the phone companies to state and local prison systems in exchange for exclusive contracts. The fees...drive phone charges as high as \$1.22 per minute...compared with typical commercial rates of about 4 cents a minute....Global Tel-Link Corp., which controls 50 percent of the market...was sold for \$1 billion...to American Securities, a New York-based firm....

"They are profiting off of people in vulnerable situations," said Kasie Campbell, who said she lives paycheck to paycheck and spends \$150 a month on phone calls to her husband, Allen, in a Texas prison....

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# Imperialism Is Poison for Workers

Howard French's new book, *China's Second Continent: How a Million Migrants Are Building a New Empire in Africa* (2014) advances the notion that China is building a new empire. This is a country still admired by many workers in smaller capitalist countries for standing up to the old imperialist powers of Europe and North America. The Chinese government describes its activity in Africa as a "win-win" interaction, fraternal solidarity between developing countries.

Communists dismiss this as self-serving capitalist propaganda, based on the analysis of imperialism developed by Russian communist Vladimir Lenin nearly a century ago (see box on page 7). Even some African bosses fear the burgeoning Chinese presence as a form of "soft power" empire building. This would represent a dramatic change from China's activities in Africa during China's socialist period under Mao Zedong, a time when "third world solidarity" was more than an anti-colonialist slogan.

## Chinese Workers and Businesses in Africa

This book provides the reader with a useful snapshot of a massive and poorly understood continent through a series of short profiles of people on the ground in a dozen African countries. The author spoke with Chinese immigrants and African workers, focusing on the reasons the immigrants moved to Africa, their role in the economy and the way their presence is viewed by African workers.

The Africans interviewed range from government and NGO operatives to ordinary African workers employed by Chinese enterprises. Since he speaks Mandarin, his interviews included Chinese working-class immigrants.

The attraction of Africa is intense for many of them. Some were drawn by wages higher than they could find for similar work in China. Some had accumulated money working on projects for big Chinese firms and when their contracts were finished, decided to stay in Africa, acquire a bit of farmland or open a shop. In Africa, which has roughly 60 percent of the world's unused arable land, the prospect of setting up one's own farm is much better than back home in China. These farmers or operators of Chinese restaurants or roadside stalls would appear to be the majority of the one million Chinese workers living in Africa today.

Much of the author's critique of China's growing presence in Africa focuses on interactions between Chinese busi-

ness owners and the African workers they hire — or don't hire because of racism. China's capitalists are faulted for not contributing to the training of African workers, or guaranteeing technology transfers to the indigenous workers. Yet, the fault for this is often laid at the feet of African capitalists, who are described as all too eager to accept gifts in exchange for deals that hurt African workers.

Although French comes across as giving an even-handed account that alludes to exploitative behaviors of European and U.S. powers in Africa, it is the Chinese who are quoted calling the Africans "lazy." It's Chinese capitalists we hear berating or beating Black workers. No context or history from past colonizers is ever mentioned, such as the brutal Portuguese rulers who amputated the hands of mineworkers for not delivering enough gold. Rather, the supposed benefits of Western style "democratic reforms" are constantly touted and shown in contrast to the Chinese pragmatic business dealings that include ignoring abusive policies of the host governments. The list of U.S.-backed butchers in Africa and other parts of the world is long, but never mentioned once. Yet, the author scolds the Chinese capitalists for being unprincipled and uncensored with "human rights."

## China: A Serious Imperialist Rival

Besides the investment of private Chinese capital in Africa, there are official Chinese government infrastructure projects, often undertaken as part of a construction-for-raw-materials deal. In those deals, the Chinese imperialist bosses lock in prices for resources to be extracted over a number of years. One example is the \$6 billion deal recently negotiated with Congo. The Chinese government will build new roads, railway lines, hospitals and schools and in return have access to one of the world's largest deposits of copper and cobalt for the next 20 years.

In another copper-mining enterprise in Zambia, the falsehood of Chi-

nese bosses' "win-win" rhetoric emerges in the details of violent clashes between the Chinese bosses and African workers. During one clash on October 15, 2010, the bosses shot miners who protested dangerous and extremely harsh working conditions for little pay.

Two other important large resource

deals supported by the Chinese government deserve mention. They involve development of petroleum resources in Sudan and Libya. In 2011, the Chinese government evacuated tens of thousands of Chinese petroleum industry workers from Libya during the conflict

**Continued on page 7**



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