

CHALLENGE



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KOREAN PENINSULA: FLASHPOINT OF CHINA-U.S. RIVALRY

North Korea's latest ballistic missile tests have exposed growing tensions between the U.S. and Chinese ruling classes. On March 6, a week before U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson began his tour of Asia to build support in the region, North Korea launched four ballistic missiles that landed within 200 miles of Japan's coastline. On March 19, North Korea announced the successful test of a new high-thrust rocket engine that "could help with the country's development of ICBMs—inter-continental ballistic missiles" with the potential to reach targets in the United States (cnn.com, 3/19). Despite pledges to "cooperate" between Tillerson and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in containing North Korea's military ambitions, recent developments show how these major powers are building toward war (New York Times, 3/19).

U.S. Aim: Defend South Korea or Attack China?

The Korean Peninsula, a historic buffer and invasion route in East Asia, lies at the convergence of vital imperialist interests of the United States, China, Russia, and regional power Japan. The aggressive U.S. response to North Korea's missile tests represents an escalated threat to a 60-year nuclear balance of power. Stating that "all options are on the table," including military force, Tillerson made it clear to both North Korea and China, North Korea's main ally, that the U.S. is moving beyond negotiations and economic sanctions (Bloomberg, 3/17). The U.S. immediately started deploying its Terminal High Altitude Area Defense System (THAAD) in South Korea, the U.S. proxy in the Peninsula since 1948.

According to China's capitalist media, THAAD's radar capabilities are designed to spy on China's missile systems and military movements and undermine its self-defense against a potential U.S. preemptive strike (CNN, 3/7). China sees the "defense" system as a provocative "attempt to hem in its strategic position—and as a betrayal of the closer ties it has developed with South Korea over the last five years" (Foreign Affairs, 2/8). As South



Thousands of workers in South Korea protest against THAAD (U.S. missile system) and the capitalist warmakers' willingness to sacrifice workers' lives.

Korea's largest trading partner, China has retaliated by attacking the South Korean economy. The Chinese bosses have imposed a travel ban to South Korea, resulting in billions of lost revenue, and have targeted the South Korean Lotte Group, which owns the land where THAAD is being built. Citing code violations, China has shut down over half of Lotte stores in China (Bloomberg, 3/8).

Meanwhile, North Korea's missile test has opened the door for Japan, China's main regional rival and the main U.S. ally in the region, to participate in U.S.-South Korean joint military drills, which North Korea considers "a rehearsal for invasion" (NYT, 3/5). Japan plans to send its Izumo helicopter carrier on tour for the first time through the South China Sea, the shipping route for \$5 tril-

lion in annual global trade and a looming flashpoint between Chinese and U.S. imperialists.

China is also looking to exploit U.S. President Donald Trump's rejection of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), which had been negotiated by Barack Obama to bolster U.S. economic power in China's backyard. Predictably, China is moving to fill the void. Both China and South Korea are joining signatories to the blocked TPP in trade talks in Chile. Chinese bosses will be pushing their alternative trade alliance, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (Reuters 3/13). U.S. rejection of the TPP may alienate Japan, which was counting on the partnership to boost its

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JOIN THE INTERNATIONAL FIGHT FOR COMMUNIST REVOLUTION

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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.
- ★ 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

Korean Peninsula: Flashpoint of China-U.S. Rivalry



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economy. It could also lead a number of U.S. allies to hedge their bets in the sharpening inter-imperialist competition.

At present, subduing North Korea is in the interest of both Chinese and U.S. rulers. At the moment, neither the U.S. nor China is prepared for a direct conflict. In an attempt to avoid giving U.S. bosses another pretext to increase their military influence in the region, China disciplined North Korea by suspending all coal imports, which account for nearly 40 percent of North Korea’s total exports (NYT, 2/18). But China’s bosses are reluctant to push North Korea too hard and risk triggering regime change and further destabilization on the Peninsula.

South Korean Instability Threatens U.S.

THAAD may not be a permanent fixture. The recent impeachment of South Korean President Park Geun-hye, who welcomed the system, could lead his successor to reconsider it. Already hurt by economic pressure from China, South Korean businesses are weighing their options.

Despite its strength as the 11th-largest economy in the world, South Korea is facing a crisis of unemployment, particularly among its youth. In February, its unemployment rate among 15-to-29-year-olds exceeded 12 percent (Business Times 3/15). According to the South Korean daily newspaper Hanyoreh, sellout unions are willing to agree to lower wages and cut hours to provide more work for youth (3/15).

Thousands of workers in South Korea are protesting in front of Lotte stores against THAAD—and the capitalist warmakers’ willingness to sacrifice workers’ lives. Many are first-time fighters; a large number are women. One farmworker said, “These rallies and such I had never done in my life. I believed that politics had nothing to do with me. All I have to do is vote for someone who can represent my region and country and that’s it...Now my perspective has changed a lot.” (Foreign Policy in Focus, 2/8).

These workers illustrate the ability of our class to fight back and seek class-conscious leadership. Protesting the South Korean government or U.S. imperialism is a good first step. At a time when billions of workers could be threatened or conscripted by the next world war, winning these workers to a communist line is more important than ever.

Regardless of the future of THAAD, it is clear the U.S. will push back against China in this pivotal re-

gion. From the Caribbean to the Mediterranean to the South China Sea, it is becoming harder for the bosses to conceal their buildup to war. As they advance in their preparations, we must continue to prepare as well—for communist revolution.☸

North Korea: No Friend to Workers

At the end of World War II, in the wake of its occupation by the defeated Japanese fascists, the Korean Peninsula was “temporarily” divided into North and South. Former fascist collaborators controlled the South in alliance with the Japanese, who were now protected by U.S. rulers. The North was led by anti-fascists who had fought these collaborators. In June 1950, a war erupted between North and South. The U.S. said the North invaded, a claim open to dispute. On June 25, the early editions of the New York Times ran an Associated Press dispatch reporting that the South’s troops had crossed into North Korea. But later editions dropped that story and launched a full-scale media offensive claiming the North had initiated the clash. Whatever actually happened, the conflict became a proxy war between the Soviet/China-backed North and the U.S.-backed South. For three years, the Cold War became hot; one million Koreans lost their lives. The U.S. drove the North’s army toward the Chinese border. Commanding General Douglas MacArthur wanted to cross into China, but the tide turned when massed Chinese volunteers drove the U.S. forces back into the South. U.S. President Harry Truman fired MacArthur, and eventually the U.S. ruling class decided it had no choice but to settle the conflict at the original North-South dividing line. That line stands to this day, with 30,000 U.S. troops still massed in the South. By the late 1950s, the Soviet Union—having kept many capitalist features, including the wage system—abandoned the struggle for communism and regressed into a state capitalist regime. The North Korean leadership, caught up in the Cold War against the U.S. and its South Korean puppet, became a Soviet puppet. Following the Russian example, it developed into its present state. Workers throughout the Korean Peninsula, on both sides of the bosses’ line, are suffering under the capitalist yoke. Only communism will free them from exploitation and the constant threat of imperialist war.

Haiti: International Working Women's Day and Class Struggle

HAITI, March 8—Progressive Labor Party organized a conference and cultural activities on the occasion of International Working Women's Day in a city in Haiti. Despite driving in rain and flooded streets, several dozen people participated: high school students, women, men, children, and women from many local women's organizations.

A worker at the Ministry of Women's Rights and the Status of Women gave an overview of the situation and the struggle of women, pointing to both progress and limitations of women's movements since 1950 when women in Haiti won voting rights and since 1986, with the fall of the Duvalier dictatorship.

One of the leaders of a women's organization remarked several times how extraordinary it is for a non-feminist organization to organize such an activity to mark this date.

Feminism Is A Ruling-Class Assault on Working Women

The other speaker, a PLP member, exposed the main cause of sexism: the capitalist system which is based on social inequalities and social division. They made it clear that in order to have equality among all workers, we must end the current economic/political system. They gave examples that prove that the feminism was invented and fueled by bourgeois ideology.

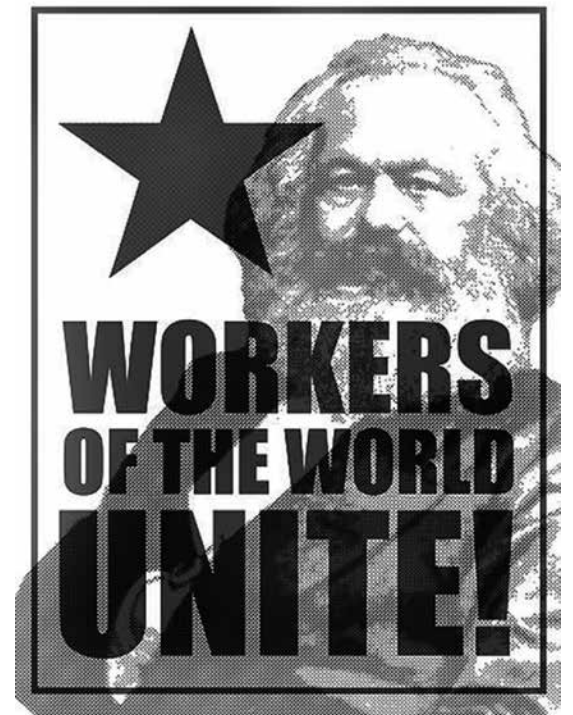
There was a lively debate on the necessity of fighting to end the super-exploitation of working class women in the context of class struggle. One person denounced hypocrisy in the feminist organizations in which there are inequalities between the women members. A young leader of a women's group agreed when a comrade pointed out that the struggle for the liberation of women should not be reduced to asking for mercy from the bourgeois state.

At the end of the conference, she said: "I agree with what you are saying, we can do things together."

Several proposals were put forward to continue discussions for further action.

The PLP comrade called on the participants not to be fooled by the idea that all women have the same experiences. "The conditions of existence of rich women are not those of poor women, and peasants. Therefore, they do not have the same consciousness and the same vision of the world."

Indeed, class struggle is primary. As the speaker pointed out, the entire working class has the same interest. Our fight must be for equality in all aspects of life, from home to school to work. Women must fight against their exploitation alongside their class brothers, and men must welcome women as fighters and leaders of their com-



mon struggle.

Let us join PLP to build for communist revolution so that everyone, women and men, can fight side by side for the liberation and well-being of our class. Onward to May Day!✊

Lynchburg Protests Imperialist War and Racism



LYNCHBURG, VIRGINIA, March 18—Today, this southern town known primarily for the college started by arch-racist Jerry Falwell, held its first protest over the next imperialist war! Over 50 Lynchburg residents marched against Trump's proposed budget that would slash environmental protection and education funding and add over \$52 billion to the U.S. war budget.

Under the leadership of the Seven Hills Progressive Society, marchers started at the African American Legacy Museum and marched through the neighborhood to the circle. This action built on an earlier rally (CHALLENGE 3/8) that protested Trump's ban on Muslim immigrants and his fascist wall to keep out Mexican workers.

Friends and members of Progressive Labor

Party (PLP) helped ensure the success of the march with leaflets, chants and stirring music pumped through the bullhorn. The music of Bob Marley and Phil Ochs helped the marchers up the Virginia hills. A range of chants against war and racism energized the march, "System Change—Not Climate Change" and "Health Care is a Right—That is Why We Fight!" Drivers honked their horns in support of the militant calls for workers to fight back while pedestrians eagerly reached for leaflets. Workers here are woke and ready to fight. We can reach workers everywhere!

Marchers also circulated a petition to the Governor demanding that the Virginia Prison System re-institute "parole" to reduce the racist impact of mass incarceration. In the mid-1990s, the Virginia

government abolished parole, meaning that all incarcerated people, disproportionately Black, had to serve their entire time, even for minor drug offenses.

The protest, made up of mainly white workers, many of them retired, reached out to Black workers to ensure multi-racial unity in the fight against the bosses. PLP members discussed the upcoming May Day March in New York City on April 29 with many marchers. It seems likely that we will have a Lynchburg contingent at that march.

Dare to struggle, dare to win! The entire working class can move forward to revolution!✊

Defend the Undocumented—Sanctuary ‘Status’ Insufficient



MARYLAND, March 21—As the city council in Prince George’s County, was debating whether to be a sanctuary city, some neighbors organized a rally and marched to the public hearing to support Sanctuary City status. Some council members seemed to be for it, but many residents were fearful. We need to organize to dispel these fears by building a strong, grassroots network to support those threatened with deportation. Just voting for symbolic sanctuary status is not enough.

Speaking at that hearing, a Progressive Labor Party (PLP) emphasized the racist nature of deportations and how racism should not be allowed within the city. Our next step was a public outreach rally. Seven neighbors set up a table and talked to shoppers outside a local working class grocery store. The group was multiracial with signs in Spanish and English and speakers included white, Latin, and Black neighbors. Within the hour we made 25 contacts. We planned a potluck dinner on April 1st and another outreach later in April. During the rally we received no negative or racist comments, though some

Share your stories of fighting anti-immigrant racism on Facebook: [Challenge Desafio](#)

shoppers expressed fear because of their immigration status. The event increased our confidence in the working class.

In follow up conversations, the PL’er has stressed that a Sanctuary City ordinance won’t keep residents safe. Grassroots working class organizing and unity, on the other hand, can defend our brothers and sisters directly. At some point we must break these racist laws. It’s the capitalist racist system that is the root cause of these problems, not just Trump—after all, former President Barack Obama deported 3.2 million people in his eight years in office. Communism, a system run by workers with no wage and profit system and no borders, is the only solution to these growing fascist attacks. Building multiracial, working class unity for communism through outreach, potluck dinners, other gatherings, and sharper class struggle are needed to grow our Party into the fighting organization the working class needs.✊

Obamacare, Now Trumpcare, An Attack on Workers

The Donald Trump administration’s move to replace Obamacare is a move to replace a severely weakened and inadequate healthcare system with an even worse one. The inability of the wealthiest country in the history of capitalism to provide healthcare for the working class exposes that healthcare for profit is incompatible with providing for the needs of the working class.

Healthcare, A Profit Industry

Health insurance cannot be both comprehensive and profitable. The health insurance companies make money by signing up young healthy people to buy policies, while limiting the costs they spend on care for the sick who require more services. This formula has been extremely profitable. United Health, one of the five largest insurers in the country, announced it was pulling out of the Obamacare plans because they made less money than anticipated. Their profits for the year were “only” \$11 billion, record breaking, but \$850 million less than expected, with the bulk of the difference coming from losses associated with policies linked to the Obamacare plans. (Consumer Affairs, 11/1 2016).

If a company making that much profit won’t provide care to people, it is futile to expect health insurers to provide comprehensive healthcare to the working class.

Healthcare Was a Hard Fought Gain

A system of employer-paid health coverage emerged in the U.S. out of mass struggles. As the working class fought to build unions, healthcare became part of the struggle. Union membership in the U.S. reached its peak in 1954 with about 35 percent of the workforce unionized. In the late 1950s and into the 60s, the ruling class attacked the unions, mainly using anti-communist McCarthyism to divide and terrorize workers.

The trend to de-unionize the workforce was accelerated under Carter and then Reagan to the point where now only about 10 percent of the U.S. working class is unionized (Bureau of Labor Statistics 1/26).

Ruling Class Smash Unions and Healthcare

The percent of people having health insurance rose and fell in an almost identical way as the rate of unionization. Health coverage reached a peak of about 80 percent in 1968. It remained stable until 1980 when it began a steady drop. What was needed was a plan to provide bare-bones coverage and place the cost on the backs of the working class. An imperialist power needs its part of its population to receive enough healthcare to fight wars. That’s when Obamacare came in.

A combination of moving more people onto Medicaid and forcing young healthy people to

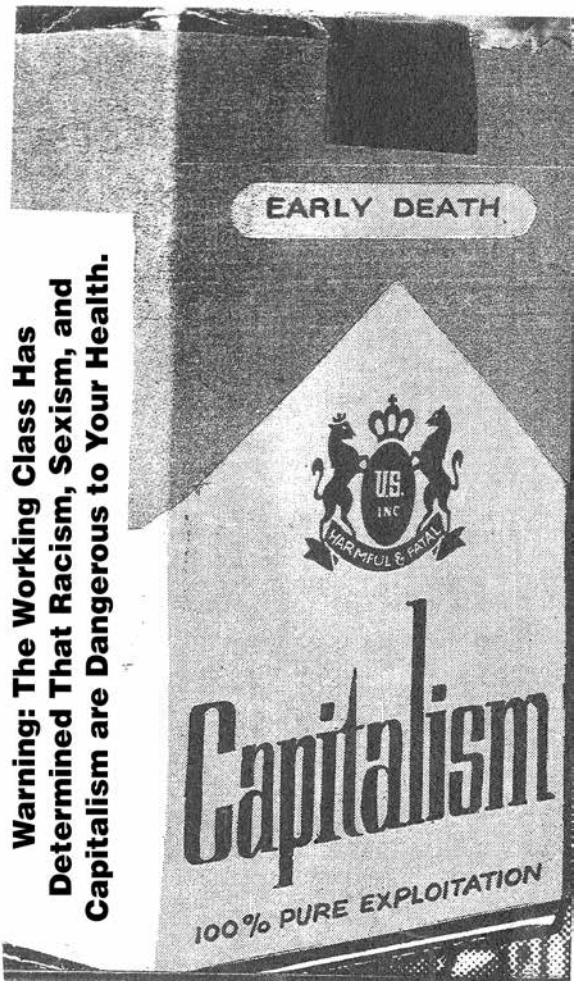
buy expensive insurance with high deductibles increased the amount of people with insurance. This year, the average cost of the Obamacare Bronze plan (the cheapest) is \$311/month for an individual 30 year old. The plan includes over \$6000/year in deductible or out of pocket costs. Which means if you are sick, you will be paying thousands more on top of your premiums (Healthpocket.com 10/26/2016). This high cost, low coverage health insurance is nothing like the virtually free coverage unionized workers fought for at the height of the union movement. Obamacare was part of the thrust of reversing social gains won by the working class in the course of more than a century of struggle. This is indicative of how important it is to build a mass fighting movement against capitalism, and to build a society based on need and commitment rather than money and exploitation.

Further Decay

As expensive as Obamacare is, it is scheduled to get worse next year with increases in premiums and more out-of-pocket costs. But the deterioration of healthcare under the Obamacare plan is not fast enough for some members of the ruling class.

The United States empire is weaker than at any time since World War II. Healthcare is one arena of struggle that reflects this weakness. The Trump administration is now fronting for the insurance companies and the faction of bosses who want to attack the working class even faster. The new healthcare bill “would eliminate the mandate for most [people] in favor of a new system of tax credits to induce people to buy insurance on the open market. It would also eventually roll back the expansion of Medicaid that has provided coverage to more than 10 million people in 31 states” (NY Times, 3/7). Medicaid serves the poorest section of the U.S. working-class children and parents, as well as many older and disabled workers.

The race to the bottom in healthcare coverage is a symptom of a profit system that cannot provide livable existence for the working class.✊



March 8: A Day of Struggle Against Sexism and Capitalism

MEXICO, March 8 —One of the main ideological weapons used by the capitalist class to attack and divide the working class is sexism, particularly the oppression of women workers. Capitalism uses racism to divide the working class into supposedly “different” categories of Black, white, Latin and Asian, or amongst indigenous and non-indigenous. In a similar way, sexism divides the working class into groups of men and women, each with supposed inherent differences beyond what the biological sciences can prove. These so-called “differences” usually all end up saying men are superior in some way. Placing a particular emphasis on these differences between women and men workers intentionally hides the psychological, economic, social and even other biological similarities amongst workers.

Another way capitalists try to divide women and men workers politically is through their efforts to commercialize March 8, International Women’s Day, a day of communist struggle against oppression of women in the capitalist system. This day has an aspect of consciousness and organization that all women and men workers have to honor and rescue.

Capitalism: Division, Oppression and Conquest

The capitalist profit system uses their political weapon of sexism to economically exploit women more intensely than men. According to data from one of the bosses’ main international mouthpieces, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the salary gap between women and men workers in 2014 was 18%, and the employment gap was 35%, both for comparable jobs. Women internationally also disproportionately shoulder the “double burden” of taking care of most of the domestic home labor, are the main caregivers and do most child upbringing, without ever getting paid.

The working class of Mexico is a case study in sexism and why the international working class must smash this entire capitalist system. The Mexican bosses’ government’s National Institute of Statistics calculated that the value of “routine work done in the home” alone was worth more than 20 percent of the entire national economy, or GDP, and 80 percent of this labor is done by women workers. This report acknowledged that domestic labor is more valuable than manufacturing (16.7 percent), commerce (15.5 percent), or education (4.1 percent) (INEGI, 4/7/16).

The main consequence from this sexist exploitation by the capitalists in Mexico can be seen at different levels. The most visible is sexual harassment, found on the streets or buses, work and school. Another way the capitalist culture normal-



2016 May Day march in Mexico. Banner reads, “Communist revolution solution to imperialist hell. Workers of the world unite!”

izes both the violence of intensified economic exploitation and physical violence against women is through their media and promotion of pornography, a multibillion dollar world industry worth more than three professional sports leagues in the U.S. (New York Times, 5/20/01). More than 30 percent of women in Mexico have suffered sexual violence at least once, with the actual numbers likely higher because women are terrorized into not reporting attacks.

Less visible but interrelated forms of violence against women workers in Mexico, and the most brutal, are the “femicides.” A pandemic average of six women workers are murdered there each day, with 24 percent of them ever investigated, and 1.6 percent of murderers sentenced (Al Jazeera America, 1/4/15). These femicides are the main cause of death for working class women between the ages of 15-30 (INEGI 2016).

Bosses Mislead With Liberalism

Sexism is an integral and essential part of the capitalists system. It generates tremendous profits worldwide, and is an ideological political weapon to weaken and divert working class struggle by pitting women and men workers against each other. Even when the capitalists use liberal policies to minimize inequality amongst men and women, they can’t eliminate it, because it goes hand in hand with capitalism. In contrast to Mexico, the capitalists of Iceland, Sweden, Finland, Norway and others gloat about their advances for women.

The liberal capitalist press all over the world has been gushing particularly about Iceland’s new laws mandating equal pay for women, and is

held up as proof that capitalism can benefit both workers and bosses. This is false. Capitalism “gave” women workers nothing - with the support of many men workers, women waged strikes and fought for decades for higher pay and recognition of domestic labor in these countries. Even then, women and men workers are still not equal.

Closing gender pay gaps between women and men does not lead to women workers’ power. In between their vocal praise, the bosses’ press admits that “shifts in the political climate” in Iceland can “easily demolish” these gains (Guardian, 10/28/14). In other words, what the capitalists allow one day, they can take away the next.

Furthermore, at the same time that Iceland and other Nordic countries are now “mandating” equal pay, these laws often do not apply to immigrant women escaping imperialist conflict. In Iceland, racist immigration laws went so far as to mandate DNA testing for immigrants to prove “Icelandic” heritage (Iceland Review, 12/21/04).

Working Class Needs Red Women Leadership

Sexism can only be eliminated through a communist revolution, which will not only eliminate exploitation, but also abolish the special oppression of women and the sexist behavior.

Capitalists promote liberal ideas like feminism to struggle for women’s “rights”, and more “equality” amongst the sexes. These feminist movements have dragged many strong women fighters into liberal and right-wing struggles and even turned them against men workers. The workers need to be united and organized into a revolutionary party for communism so we can fight against the root cause of sexism; capitalism.

Humanity had its biggest advances in its struggle against sexism, when the workers took political power and applied antisexist politics in the Soviet Union and China. In the period of 1926 to 1961, in the Soviet Union, women’s salary increased 10 times, while the number of women engineers went from 600 to 379,000 from 1917 to 1961. There were similar advances in health and political representation. The law established gender equality - and workers defended these gains with their workers’ dictatorship. PLP has analyzed these victories elsewhere - as well as their weaknesses. Even with these advances the old communist movement did not eliminate sexism. It did however show the way forward to change the system dominated by a capitalist minority, and advance toward a society run by the working majority, communism.✪



LETTERS

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

Mexico: Gasolinazo Fight Continues

In Mexico, there continues to be a struggle over the increase in gasoline prices. The majority of people here don't know how to deal with this situation. Jobs continue to be tough and pay poorly, if jobs can be found at all.

There are millions of families that are living bare bones. This problem brings frustration, anger, and sadness. Many workers have needed to change from a gas stove to firewood or charcoal to cook because our wages don't go far enough to buy a tank of gas.

The wicked business men and women are bringing the country to the ground for working people. The gasoline price surge affects different aspects of the economy, but in reality, the ones most affected are the workers.

But we keep on fighting and uniting, more workers in states throughout Mexico to stop this damn capitalist system, which by analyzing the situation carefully, we know to be the number one enemy of the working class.

This useless cabinet of President Peña Nieto has already had the nerve to raise the cost of a liter of gasoline from \$12.00 to \$16.95 pesos, and a tank of gas from \$400 to \$500 pesos. And this does not stop here—this August, gas prices are expected to rise yet again.

For this, we are out and we will continue fighting, uniting more and more workers day by day to one day take out this pack of thieving bosses and politicians.

★★★★★

Cancer, A Disease Fortified by Capitalism

"I am sorry to tell you this, but you have lung cancer."

These are words that no one wants to hear, and that I never expected to hear, especially when eating right, exercising and never smoking was a way of life. However, living in a system where the environment around us is polluted and contaminated, all for profit, it is no surprise that 40 percent of all people living in the U.S. will be personally affected by a cancer diagnosis in their lifetime.

Since many rich people also get cancer, hundreds of millions of dollars have been spent to find a cure, including millions in workers' tax dollars. But even here, the profit motive is a driving force. New cancer drugs are commonly priced at \$100,000 a year or more, making gigantic profits for the big pharmaceutical companies. Meanwhile, hundreds of thousands of cancer patients either delay care by cutting pills in half or skipping treatment entirely. Whichever company patents a drug that can cure cancer will have struck oil, and will make an astronomical amount of profit from cancer patients.

In addition to the drug companies, hospital bosses are also reaping large profits. Early detection tests for certain cancers can run in the thousands of dollars. For most workers, this becomes cost prohibitive.

For people that never smoked or worked with hazardous material, there is no early detection test for lung cancer. Insurance companies will not approve tests that could be potential indicators for this disease, making it difficult to detect its early, asymptomatic stages.

In my case, there were no warning signs or symptoms? So, how did my diagnosis come about? A close family member in PLP worked in a hospital lab for many years. He was a union delegate and participated in many struggles on the job. His political base and personal ties to his coworkers may have literally saved my life.

Lab workers run all chemistry tests on blood

drawn (not only what the doctor ordered), every 6-8 months. The CEA test (carcinoembryonic antigen), which is an indicator for potential colon cancer, came back slightly elevated, by only 2 points. A chest x-ray was done, and again, the lab workers got the results out in a quick and timely fashion. That same evening, I got the call that there was a shadow on the left upper lobe of my lung. And so, my unexpected journey began.

On hearing the news, we decided to reach out to our friends, co-workers and family members, who have given us tremendous support. So far, we are on the road to controlling this disease.

When the working class runs society, we will have a better understanding of how to confront and conquer this disease. And our motivation will be serving the international working class, not the profits of the drug companies.

★★★★★

Hidden Figures Unmasks and Denounces Racism

The CHALLENGE review of the movie *Hidden Figures* makes some correct points about the role of the civil rights movement in the fight against racism, but it could have been better in some important ways.

The overall one-sidedly critical tone of the article mischaracterizes the antiracist struggle shown in the movie. The three Black women, Katherine Johnson, Dorothy Vaughan and Mary Jackson, featured in the movie are shown fighting racism on a daily basis.

The movie takes place in 1962 at NASA, a period where Black women and white male scientists had almost no interaction because of segregation, many things we take for granted now had not yet been won and the mass line of the movement was about making America a better democracy. To work in an environment like that and stand up to the racist structures and attitudes those structures reinforce is fighting racism.

The article is critical of the characters for not organizing against racism. But, in the movie Karen Johnson confronts the racism of her co-workers; Dorothy Vaughan fights to get the other Black women computers out of the basement where they've been literally hidden; Mary Jackson demands the right to attend an all-white class, to name just three of the several scenes that depict the fight against racism.

The article also dismisses the scene where the white supervisor tears down the racist bathroom designations as a "white savior" moment. But that was a good scene (though it probably didn't happen that way) that showed a white person fighting racism.

The supervisor also gets won over by Katherine Johnson's demands to be in the meetings where her work is being discussed. A third example of whites overcoming racism is shown when John Glenn, who was a supporter of the civil rights movement, disregards the NASA officials and goes over to meet the Black women workers when the astronauts arrive at NASA and demands that Katherine Johnson check the figures before he agrees to take off. As we all know, when you are in a very racist environment it is difficult to go against the grain on a daily basis. The movie depicts people doing just that.

Additionally, the review could have said more about the accomplishments of the women who worked at NASA. The movie correctly highlights the reality that Black women were essential to the accomplishments of the space program. In this current environment of the mass acceptance of a racist school system that refuses to fully serve the vast majority of Black children in this country it is a very important point for the movie to make.

★★★★★



Abolishing Sexism, A Class Question

In the Bay Area, we recently had our first study group. Six friends come to learn about the Party's line on sexism, and Party members learned how to better break things down and lead discussions. By having these study groups, we hope to win people closer to the Party and sharpen ourselves on the line and on explaining it to people.

We read a feminist manifesto from the 1970s because one of our friends wanted to discuss the problems with feminism. We contrasted the feminist manifesto with a Party flyer about sexism. The feminist manifesto said that there is a male class and a female class, and that all of the female class is oppressed and needs to unite. Men should give up their male privilege (though it was unclear how they can do that) to help in women's liberation. By contrast, the Party says that there is a working class, with men and women workers, and a ruling class with men and women bosses. We tried to explain that economic exploitation and class society is the root of sexist oppression, and that women shouldn't be uniting with women across class but with all workers to smash capitalism.

We made some good headway on the topic but conversation focused a lot on identity politics and all-class unity. People thought that it's important to see that bosses like Hillary Clinton suffer from sexism too, and that she would benefit from ending capitalism because then she would not suffer from sexism. One person said CEO of Goldman Sachs, a white man, is oppressed by sexism because he must fall in line with gender roles, so he would also be liberated by communism. Similarly, people thought that Barack Obama and the Black ruling class suffer from racism, and so they should have a stake in ending capitalism too.

Party members tried to show that being rich wins from using sexism and racism to get there. Even if the sexism and racism these ruling-class figures perpetuate comes back to bite them, they profit off of these divisions. The root is exploitation and money. It is in their class interest to maintain racism and sexism. After all, if everyone had an interest in ending racism and sexism, we would be able to do it far more easily!

This was our first of many study groups to come. Though we had trouble explaining and overcoming ideas of all-class unity, feminism, and identity politics, it was good practice for us. We are energized here to continue to fight and grow the Party!

★★★★★

Movie Review: Neither Your Negro Nor A Revolutionary

18th century of plantation owners and others invented race because, following periodic rebellions like Bacon's Rebellion that threatened their rule, they feared the power of Black-white unity. From that time on as capitalism matured in the U.S. and grew in its lethal genocidal power, race served as a necessary tool by the capitalist ruling class to keep down all wages.

Background to Baldwin's Era

James Baldwin lived and wrote during a sharp era of antiracist struggle, when Black working class fighters such as W.E.B. Dubois, Paul Robeson, Langston Hughes, Claudia Jones, and many, many others fused their art and, especially in Jones' case, cultural work, with calls for multiracial working class unity against capitalism and racism, sexism and imperialism. These fighters knew their real enemy was not white workers, it was the capitalist class that created racism itself.

The impression one gets from *I Am Not Your Negro* was that Baldwin was somewhat of an outsider from these struggles, with frequent name-dropping of major figures of the 1960s like Medgar Evers and Malcolm X. Baldwin participated in several marches, including the 1963 March on Washington (which Malcolm X sarcastically labeled the "Farce on Washington"), yet maintained his

personal "independence" from the movement. In philosophical terms that frequently manifest as literary themes throughout his writing, Baldwin, like Richard Wright before him and Ralph Ellison as represented in the 1952 novel, *Invisible Man*, isolated himself from international working-class struggle. In this way, through physical presence but mental aloofness, Baldwin misrepresents his true enemy: capitalism.

The struggles ahead will reveal our class enemy more clearly, and it is up to communists to struggle to build a mass working class movement and party, PLP, for communism. Unlike Baldwin's unscientific belief that "whites" are generally oppressors, we fight for workers all over the world to face that



September 5, 1963: Malcolm X and James Baldwin debate politics

the struggles of Black workers are the struggles of their sisters and brothers.

Then, and only then, can a new world be built through violence of a communist revolution forged in the unity of the whole, united international working class.☸



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

It's legal: billion-dollar companies pay zero taxes, stealing trillions

NYT, 3/10 — Complaining that the United States has one of the world's highest corporate tax levels... Trump [has]...repeatedly vowed to shrink it.

Yet...why have so many companies' income tax bills added up to zero?

That's what a new analysis of 258 profitable Fortune 500 companies that earned more than \$3.8 trillion in profits showed....

...The report, by the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy...found... 100 of them ...paid no taxes in at least one year between 2008 and 2015. Eighteen... occurred a total federal income tax bill of less than zero over the entire eight-year period — meaning they received rebates....

Companies take...tax loopholes...that enable them to legally avoid paying what they owe....

Multinational corporations like Apple, Microsoft... and Coca-Cola...book profits overseas, out of the reach of the Internal Revenue Service....

...A rigged tax code ...has essentially legalized tax dodging for large corporations....One five-story office building in the Cayman Islands is now "home" to more than 18,000 corporations....

Facebook, Aetna and Exxon Mobil, among others, give options to top executives to buy stock in the future at a discount....then...deduct their huge payouts as a loss....

Individual industries have...tax breaks that function as subsidies:...drilling for gas and oil, building Nascar racetracks or railroad tracks, roasting coffee,... producing ethanol or making movies (which saved the Walt Disney Company \$1.48 billion over eight years....

Companies with the biggest tax subsidies over eight years...included:

AT&T (\$38.1 billion); Wells Fargo (\$31.4 billion); JP-Morgan Chase (\$22.2 billion); Verizon (\$21.1 billion); IBM (\$17.8 billion); General Electric (\$15.4 billion); ExxonMobil (\$12.9 billion); 21st Century Fox (\$7.6 billion); Goldman Sacks (\$5.5 billion).

Racism keeps innocent Black people imprisoned the longest

NYT, 3/8 — Black people convicted of murder or sexual assault are significantly more likely than their white counterparts to be later found innocent of the crimes, according to a review of nearly 2,000 exonerations nation-wide....

Innocent blacks also had to wait disproportionately longer...to be cleared than innocent whites....Blacks wrongfully convicted of murder...spent an average of three more years in prison before being released than whites who were cleared....

...Blacks make up a disproportionate share of the wrongfully convicted....

The causes...run from inevitable consequences of patterns in crime and punishment to deliberate acts of racism....Misconduct, such as hiding evidence, tampering with witnesses or perjury...also have contributed to the racial disparity.

'Pro-life' = pro-death for Ireland's infants

GW, 3/10 — A mass grave containing the remains of infants has been found at a former Catholic care home in Ireland where it has been alleged up to 800 died....at the...former Bon Secours Mother and Baby Home in... Galway....

...Ages of the deceased ranged from 35 weeks to three years old....Bon Secours was one of more than a dozen such homes....The Bon Secours Sisters, a Catholic order,...received unmarried pregnant women to give birth. The women were separated from the children....The discovery confirms decades of suspicions that the vast majority of children who died at the home were interred at the site in unmarked graves....

Torment pregnant prisoners

NYT, 3/15 — When Stephanie Jorge reported to a federal jail in Brooklyn [NY]...to begin a three-month sentence for bank larceny...she was pregnant.

The correctional officers showed little interest. [When]...she began to hemorrhage, the officers would typically refuse to call an ambulance until they could summon three officers....that often took an hour or two....

At the hospital, doctors recommended bed rest and that she avoid exertion....But Ms. Jorge...was ignored the moment she was discharged back to the Metropolitan Detention Center....

Ms. Jorge...was made to strip, squat and cough A

guard watched to see if contraband fell from her vagina. The bleeding worsened....

"If it was up to them," Ms. Jorge said, "I would have lost this baby...."

The National Association of Women Judges, which sent a delegation to the jail, said the conditions were "unconscionable" and violated...rules pertaining to prisoners....Female inmates told the...Women Judges that the food is frequently rotten....

"I am ashamed of what we did to you," one federal judge...told Ms. [Joselin] Rosario....as he ordered her to Aruba....Sealed records amounted to "an indictment of the Bureau of Prisons for what they did in your case...."

...She said one officer confiscated her vitamins and another refused to let her, then eight months pregnant, remain in bed during the inmate count. "I told her I was dizzy..."The officer replied, "You're not dying. You're just pregnant. Get up."

Mexico: a police state torturing and killing

NYT, 3/17 — Even as Mexico fumes over President Trump's aggressive stance toward its people, the Mexican government is...trying to rip up basic legal protection for its citizens at home....

The governing party says the ["reform"] bill...will make "adjustments" to Mexico's new legal system, a linchpin of cooperation with the United States that was completed last year with more than \$300 million in American aid....

...It will broaden the power of the Mexican government to detain suspects for years before trial, enable the police to rely on hearsay in court and potentially allow prosecutors to use evidence obtained in torture....

...Rather than innocent before proved guilty, it would shift...the burden of proof to the accused....

"Mexico has worked hard to promote its image as a state that defends or advances international human rights....But at home, the human rights situation is dimly dreadful: severe abuse, torture, summary executions and virtually guaranteed impunity....

...Since the drug war began a decade ago, torture and extrajudicial killings have soared....The elite marine forces...kill 30 people for every person they injure....These laws...are...transitioning the country into something like a police state....

The United States has been notably quiet about the new bills....

I AM NOT YOUR NEGRO NOR AM I A REVOLUTIONARY

I Am Not Your Negro is a documentary about prominent Black author James Baldwin, directed by Haitian filmmaker Raoul Peck. It opens with James Baldwin's notes about the influential lives of Medgar Evers, Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr. Baldwin then describes himself, detailing who he is *not*; he is not a militant Black Panther. He is not a Muslim nor a Christian, who have their segregated churches. He says he doesn't hate all whites for he had a white teacher who took him to plays and concerts. He isn't in the NAACP, for "shoe shine boys like himself are repelled" from that organization and its elitist, pro-capitalist Black membership base.

That however is the closest we ever get to a class analysis, and the rest of the film shows "whites" as a general mass, without class distinction, to be the oppressors. The film cuts back and forth through history. The history of school integration portrays crowds of angry white youth, who Baldwin says represents the vast, unthinking cruel "white majority." In one scene, the U.S. president John F. Kennedy's brother and Attorney General at the time, Bobby Kennedy, is asked if he will urge his brother to accompany a Black student to school. Kennedy says that's a "meaningless moral gesture," and the screen shows crowds of racist white workers chanting "Keep Alabama White."

The film jumps forward to the Ferguson fightback. We see frame after frame of white riot cops and national guard with heavy weaponry. The footage doesn't focus on the hundreds of militant Black and white workers and youth fighting back. Victims of police murder—Tamir Rice, Trayvon Martin, Aiyana Jones and other youth are named, but Baldwin says that white people, like the response to the Black children killed in the Birmingham church firebombing in 1963, are "astounded" by such murders. He states that whites surround themselves with merchandise and fantasy movies to try to celebrate their own captivity in mindlessness. At the same time, they imprison one part of their own humanity—the Black people.

He talks about the two faces of America: the first face is of actor John Wayne. At the height of U.S. imperialism in the twentieth century, Wayne was the capitalist media's personification of "white manhood" for his movies where he is most famous for his roles as a heroic "cowboy" on the U.S. frontier. In these films, set in the 1800s, the genocide against the indigenous are ignored, they are portrayed in racist stereotypes, and are even played by other white actors. The other face Baldwin contrasts against this racist capitalist mythology is the reality of the U.S. government's massacre of hundreds of indigenous members of the Lakota Sioux tribe at Wounded Knee in 1890. The only "way out", says Baldwin, is that the two "faces" within all American whites have to confront one another. To do this, whites must face their own fears and need for superiority.

Capitalists Push Privilege Politics

A liberal movement called "Beloved Conversation Training"—often held in churches nationwide—shares Baldwin's view of ignoring the fundamental class opposition between white workers and white capitalists. Instead, capitalism is ignored almost entirely, and they treat "whites" as a giant oppressor group that shares the "dominant culture," implicitly affirming that white workers as well as white capitalists benefit from the oppression of Black workers. Thus, white workers have "white skin privilege." The training costs \$350, and proposes that white workers examine their own "micro-racism," or micro-aggressions, and how they participate in maintaining the systemic racist and genocidal oppression of Black workers.

These schools last an entire weekend and are followed by an eight week curriculum.

It's no mistake that this documentary on Baldwin dovetails with this ideology of "white skin privilege." Neither the film's subject, James Baldwin, nor

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white skin privilege theorists discuss the history of white and Black strikers gunned down side by side by the police. They don't talk about the relationship between Black unemployment and unemployment for the entire working class. They leave out the wage differentials between the northern U.S. states and the south, and the point that the lower the bosses can get away with paying Black workers, the lower the standard of living is driven for all workers, until everyone is hit with massive layoffs and outsourcing of jobs to workers in even lower wage countries for the capitalists to maintain their profit margins. *I Am Not Your Negro* repeats the same propaganda as the capitalist class: racist institutions, from banks to local Boards of Education that reinforce school segregation, are the fault of all "whites," and all "whites" rest on the oppression of "Blacks."

Both viewpoints ignore the real history of racism. The ruling class in the

Continued on page 7

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