

CHALLENGE



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From Flint to NYC

Fight Racist

Lead Crisis in Schools

BROOKLYN, NY, April 5—Once again, racist education bosses at the Department of Education (DOE) are showing their disregard for and neglect of Black and Latin working class children. In February, it was found that the water at more than half of all New York City public schools had lead present—an element so toxic to humans that there is no “safe” amount of it (WNYC News, 3/30). In some NYC schools, the levels are higher than were in Flint, Michigan at the height of the lead crisis there.

This recent round of testing is not the first, but previous testing was done after water was flushed through the systems, effectively making the test results inaccurate. It’s hard to know how long youth and education workers have been exposed to this poison. The DOE’s response to this crisis has been unacceptable and racist.

How Do You Spell “Racist”? D-O-E

At one Brooklyn high school campus, elevated lead levels were found in several areas of the building and the sports fields. The DOE sent a dismissive letter home with students to convince parents not to be concerned.

In the wake of the outrageous Flint water crisis, and the discovery of lead throughout the Newark school system, the racist DOE bosses had the audacity to push that having lead in our water was not a big deal, and could be avoided by just drinking from particular areas of the school. The letter went on to inform parents that the problem would be dealt with by simply having the custodians flush the pipes for a period of time each Monday morning! The letter did not disclose the actual levels the water tested at, nor make parents aware of the devastating effects of lead poisoning on children’s brain development, or recommend lead testing for their children.

This is a racist attack on our students. In this school, students must pass through scanners every day to enter. Metal detectors are nearly exclusive to schools that are predominantly Black and Latin. Students are harassed and humiliated as they are subjected to repeated searches and removal of items from their bag and themselves before they can get to class. A ridiculous

assortment of items are banned from the school building or are forcibly removed from students’ bodies, and this is enforceable because of the scanners: hot food, headbands, hairpins, combs, nail clippers, open beverages, and other liquids. When students try to enter with hot tea in a thermos it is taken away, when students buy a juice at the store and take a sip before getting to scanning it is taken away, when students bring in reusable water bottles they are forced to pour it out or it is taken away. So when students can’t drink the water in the school and can’t bring water in from home, what are they to do?

Fight for Clean Water: The Struggle Is On!

Teachers and students were outraged at the news of the lead levels and the dismissive letter from the DOE. A group of teachers called for an emergency meeting with the principal, where they pushed for several things: that there be an end to the ban on open bottles coming into the school, that the DOE provide water coolers in the school, and that the DOE provide free lead testing to our children. The principal responded that there was no need, because there was one water fountain that the DOE claimed was perfectly safe. We’ve heard that before! She was so callous as to complain about teachers and parents telling students not to drink the water, and that she had had to spend so much of her day convincing students that they should drink it.

Our next step was to reach out to as many parents as possible. Parents of students in our adviso-



Children and family protest toxic lead water in Flint, Michigan

ries were equally outraged and agreed that with all the history of lying about lead levels, this was too serious an issue to be complacent. Though we were referencing Flint, Michigan and Newark, New Jersey, nobody hesitated to see that the bosses there are the same as the bosses here. For now, the parents of the Parent-Teacher Association have stronger ties to the principal than with the teachers, and have bought her argument that because a few students may choose to bring alcohol in, the ban on open bottles should stay.

Though there was some discouragement amongst teachers and students when we heard that, the fight for clean and safe water will be taken on. Students and teachers are meeting this week to discuss what is happening in the school and to make plans. One important part of that will be recognizing that the disregard for the wellbeing of working class youth is part and parcel of this system, and that while we fight for the immediate needs of our students, the longer fight for a world built by and for the working class is the most important fight to win our students and school communities to.✳

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!

CONTACT US

Email
desafio.challenge@gmail.com
Mail
Box 808 GPO, Brooklyn, NY 11202
Internet
www.plp.org
challengenewspaper.wordpress.com

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

Russia-U.S. Imperialist Conflict Points Toward War

Today’s U.S.-Russia relations are “worse” than they were after World War I, at the “lowest possible point in history,” a Russian official says (ABC News, 4/2). But as this inter-imperialist rivalry continues to escalate, and global war looms ever closer, the U.S. ruling class is in disarray.

U.S. Bosses’ Dilemma

Donald Trump has mocked CIA and FBI reports of Russian cyber-attacks to manipulate last fall’s election in Trump’s favor. The new president has praised his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin, and several Trump appointees and advisers have met secretly with Russian officials and intelligence agents—including Attorney General Jeff Sessions, Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, and former National Security Advisor Michael Flynn, who was forced to resign in February after lying about meetings with Russian Ambassador Sergey Kislyak. Meanwhile, Republican Congressman Devin Nunes, chairman of the House Intelligence Committee that is “investigating” the Trump-Russia connection, is sharing classified information with Trump (npr.org, 3/25).

Foreign Affairs, the publication of the Council on Foreign Relations, U.S. finance capital’s leading think tank, is pushing for a tougher line with Russia:

Trump inherited a ruptured U.S.-Russian relationship, the culmination of more than 25 years of alternating hopes and disappointments...[A]t the heart of the breakdown lie disagreements over issues that each country views as fundamental to its interests...Thus, the challenge for the new administration is to manage this relationship skillfully and to keep it from getting worse.

Should Trump instead attempt to cozy up to Moscow, the most likely outcome would be that Putin would pocket Washington’s unilateral concessions and pursue new adventures or make demands in other areas. The resulting damage to U.S. influence and credibility in Europe and beyond would prove considerable (March/April).

The U.S. rulers are facing a dilemma. On the one hand, they need to defend their Middle East oil interests—by any means necessary—against competing capitalist bosses in a resurgent Russia and an expansionist China. On the other, they’re a long way from winning the U.S. working class to accept a military draft and to fight and die in a ground war. After the April 4 chemical attack in northern Syria, the latest atrocity by the Russia-backed Bashar al-Assad regime, New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman addressed the U.S. bosses’ limitations:

“The only obstacle to putting real U.S. military leverage into Syria is democracy in America,” explained the foreign policy expert Michael Mandelbaum, author of Mission Failure: America and the World in the Post-Cold War Era. “The American public simply does not want to spend the blood and treasure to produce what would probably be a less awful but still not good outcome in Syria.” And that is a byproduct of the failed George W. Bush interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan (4/5).

On top of everything else, the bosses have to be worried about the ability of the volatile Trump to handle an increasingly charged situation. The arch-imperialists of Foreign Affairs warned that the U.S. should “proceed with caution” against Russia and “cooperate but push back,” depending on the circumstances, “without sleepwalking into a collision” (Euronews, March 8)..

But a collision appears to be coming, whether the bosses are ready or not. In March, in a Council on Foreign Relations special report, Kimberly Marten wrote that “aggression” by Putin “makes the possibility of a war in Europe between nuclear-armed adversaries frighteningly real.” (Marten is director of Columbia University’s Harriman Institute, the Cold War-era “aca-

The U.S. bosses rank second to none for rank hypocrisy, as shown by their howls of protests over Russian manipulation of last fall’s U.S. election. Over the last 70 years, from Harry Truman to Trump, every U.S. president has ignored the myth of “national sovereignty” whenever it got in the way of U.S. imperialist interests. Between 1947 and 2000, the U.S. interfered in 81 foreign elections. The U.S. military invaded and/or overthrew the government in Korea, Vietnam, Iran, Dominican Republic, Cuba, Haiti, El Salvador, Chile, Guatemala, Indonesia, Afghanistan, and Iraq—among many others. In his 2003 book, Killing Hope, William Blum documents 55 invasions or CIA-sponsored overthrows since 1945. In the 1990s, for just one example, Bill Clinton imposed sanctions and bombed water treatment plants in Iraq, murdering 500,000 children with dysentery and starvation.

demic center” funded by the Rockefeller Foundation.)

Rulers’ Infighting and Dysfunction

The growing scandal and infighting over Russian interference in the U.S. elections exposes deepening dysfunction inside the bosses’ political system. As Russian and Chinese rulers have imposed more intense fascist discipline on members of their class, U.S. bosses are fighting among themselves—a reflection of both strategic disagreements and short-term greed. As the head of Special Operations Command, Gen. Raymond Thomas, said, “Our government continues to be in unbelievable turmoil. I hope they sort it out soon because we’re a nation at war.”

Pre-Trump, the U.S. imperialists were busy sharpening their attacks against Russia. They tried to overthrow Russian allies in Syria, Iran and Libya. In 2014, after Russia reclaimed Crimea from Ukraine, the President Barack Obama imposed economic sanctions. And in a famous interview with CNN, Obama acknowledged that the U.S. had “brokered a deal to transition power” in the 2014 coup against pro-Russia Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich. But these efforts were temporarily blunted by Trump’s more conciliatory stance, including a plan to cooperate with Putin in fighting “terrorism” and an instruction to the CIA to halt support for anti-Assad rebel forces in Syria (intel-news.org, 2/23).

Proxy War in Syria

The power of U.S. imperialism depends on control of production and distribution of cheaply extracted Middle East oil, mainly in Saudi Arabia and Iraq. Russia is challenging U.S. control by backing Assad and his Iranian allies in the Syrian civil war. In conducting air strikes and landing ground troops in Syria, Russia is striking closer to the world’s energy heartland.

In response, the U.S. bosses are doing what they can—within political limits—to shore up their shaky hold on the region. Under the guise of fighting ISIS, the U.S. military “is sending up to an additional 2,500 ground troops to a staging base in Kuwait from which they could be called upon to back up coalition forces battling the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria....About 1,700 soldiers from the same unit are overseas now, spread between Iraq and Kuwait” (Army Times, 3/9).

If the main wing of the U.S. ruling class, finance capital, has its way, this escalation will be just the front line of a massive military intervention. As imperialist mouthpiece Thomas Friedman wrote (4/5):

The least bad solution is a partition of Syria and the creation of a primarily Sunni protected area — protected by an international force, including, if necessary, some U.S. troops. (Emphasis added.) That should at least stop the killing — and the refugee flows that are fueling a populist-nationalist backlash all across

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'Act for America, KKK, RACIST Nazis Go Away!'

TEXAS, March 23—A crowd of 100 protested the country's largest anti-Muslim hate group, American Congress for Truth (A.C.T. for America), who was holding a panel at a church to discuss the prevention of Mosques from being built in the U.S.

Progressive Labor Party organized a small but highly important contingent including a friend to influence the passive and nationalist message of the liberal organizers. PLP distributed leaflets, which analyzed how necessary racism is for the bosses in maintaining racial divisions among the working class and calling for fight back with on the job organizing as the main strategy for fighting anti-Muslim racism.

At first the crowd was silent and organized in a place where cars passing by had an obscure view of the rally. PLP managed to break the silence with our militant chants and relocate the crowd where hundreds of cars passed by and honked in support. As PLP continued with leading the chants two of the organizers approached two PLers and told us that our chants were "unfocused" because they were not particular to A.C.T. and that the deportations of immigrants did not have enough to do with banning Muslims. One PLer pointed to one chant in particular: "Act for America, KKK, RACIST Nazis go away!" and asked how it was unfocused exactly.

The dispute proceeded for another minute as the PLer argued that they compartmentalize specific issues and don't see the broader context.

Nevertheless, because PLP pushed to continue the chanting, the crowd continued with us. PLP defied the liberals and pushed the anti-racist message with much support. One woman said to PLP how she liked our chants. The organizers tried to "approve" certain chants but of course we did not listen.

The rally continued until it was time for speeches by the organizers. A handful of liberal local politicians spoke trying to mislead people further into trusting the electoral process and evoke nationalism by citing the first amendment. However, not all were rotten, there was a speaker or two that did say progressive things. Most of the crowd was still won to the liberal message of passivity and using nonviolence and compassion against callous mass murdering racists, a strategy that historically, has failed the working class. The chairman of the democratic party said something to the effect of "we should pray for the racists to go away."

A friend of PLP said, "Prayer doesn't work, what else can we do?"

She basically called him out for not providing any real solution. The speeches were also filled with nationalism and the idea that this is not "what America stands for" when in fact it is exactly what America stands for and always has been. U.S bosses have persecuted migrants since the 1790's when rulers feared French immigrants influenced by the French Revolution.

One comrade put forth an analysis that U.S imperialism has a genocidal presence in destroying and destabilizing the countries from which Muslims are fleeing. In Yemen, Afghanistan, Pakistan Iraq, Syria all of which have prolonged U.S involvement with racist and genocidal occupations. He also mentioned that the anti-Muslim racism spewed by organizations like ACT justifies the bombing of Muslim countries like Yemen and provokes racist terrorism against Muslim mosques and communities. In the spirit of militancy, he also denounced that we should "love" and "embrace" these racist pigs trying to murder our Muslim working class brothers and sisters.

After the speeches by all the reformists and our comrade we started a picket in front of the church. At first it was mostly the party and some base members, but after a couple minutes the younger part of the crowd started to join us! When it was over a few college students gathered around us and in the end we exchanged contacts from mainly women that liked our leaflet and our comrades speech.

We must work on being bolder and furthering our commitments in the face of growing fascism and capitalist crisis. It is important to oppose all forms of racism by going to rallies and marches and continuing organizing multiracial fightbacks on the job. By fighting back and recruiting people to PLP, we pave the way to a communist future.

Students Debate Politics in Growing Sanctuary Struggle

QUEENS, NY, April 2—Following Trump's election, LaGuardia Community College students, faculty, and staff began mobilizing to begin a Sanctuary movement. The Trump administration is increasing its' racist and sexist attacks on the working class. They are bringing us ever closer to world war. We have to increase our efforts to organize a multiracial working class to fight back. A sanctuary movement is a good start. Let's also make it a step on the road to a world run by the working class, communism.

The threats against immigrants, Muslims, women, and transpeople were on the minds of the more than 100 people who gathered in December. Many were politically active for the first time. At least 40 percent of students at LaGuardia Community College were born in other countries, 57 percent are female, and 86 percent are "non-white." Even more are the children of immigrants, and many are Muslim.

Link Sanctuary Fight to Capitalist Inequality

From this initial meeting, groups have been mobilized to learn and train others about legal protections, find resources for students and family members struggling with immigration status, develop a rapid response network, integrate lessons into syllabi, and to connect with community organizations. Many of the workers and students involved in these efforts want to link the sanctuary fight to the bigger problems of capitalism, such as racist police terror, poverty, health care, education. As we build this sanctuary movement, we should expose and organize to destroy the whole capitalist system.

The college administration's response has been to pull many of the leaders into an ad hoc committee, now dubbed LaGuardia Rising, to work with attorneys to find "suitable responses." Staff

and faculty have been told that the word "sanctuary" is a call to illegal actions, leaving many worried about their jobs.

Nevertheless the Sanctuary Coalition, a loosely connected group of committees and individuals who are dedicated to resistance, are working in parallel to train anyone who is interested about resources and basic protections for immigrant students, build a rapid response network, and disseminate information.

Town Hall: Whom Do the Cops Serve?

A town hall meeting brought in hundreds of community members in mid March, students are visiting classes with the support of faculty to educate other students, and students reached out with a table at the college Club Fair to build the movement. Many at the college are mobilized.

Some leaders are working with the administration, who assured the community that Immigration Customs Enforcement would never be allowed into classrooms: If ICE personnel come to campus with judicial warrants, college security will get the students instead. What's the difference if you are picked up by ICE or brought by col-



lege security to ICE? At the most recent Town Hall meeting, some students discussed working with the police. This is a trap. The cops serve the billionaire bosses. They protect the bosses' property and profits.

The concern is deep and sincere, but the movement is riddled with contradictions. Questions abound. Should students hide their immigration status to protect themselves and their families, or should they boldly declare themselves undocumented as a political action? Are students who are already registered as DREAMers at risk? Should Sanctuary activists work with the college administration? As we build this anti-racist and anti-sexist movement, questions will be answered and issues will be resolved. We invite everyone fight against anti-immigrant racism to the Progressive Labor Party's May Day march on April 29th (see the ad on page 8).✊

Workers in Haiti Need Reforestation and Revolution

NEW YORK CITY, April 5—The pianist hit the ivory and ebony keys. The singer used her voice, and the Haitian and church communities gathered together let out a whoop of excitement during our sixth annual fundraiser to benefit grassroots work in Haiti. 120 people attended on a miserably rainy evening in a church basement to raise funds for reforestation projects in South-east Haiti.

The organizations at the dinner are trying to develop volunteer work within their local communities in Haiti, to reforest areas that have serious soil erosion due to the loss of great forests. In another room there was a slide show of the work being done. Several thousand dollars were collected that evening with a silent auction, a raffle and an entrance fee. The work to bring people together and the struggles to maintain the continuity of the participating groups, create a deep respect for each other. It is with this kind of practical work against a tide of racism and sexism that strengthens this growing unity.

The struggles to free Haiti from French slavery and the worker's battles to ensure life and emancipation have never disappeared in Haiti. The battle is always to try to eke out a living in a nation that was impoverished by Western imperialist nations. For the past 75 years or so, the United States has played the role previously played by European nations. That is, drawing

every penny of value possible out of the labor and the land of Haiti. United States troops have invaded and occupied Haiti so U. S. banks could collect their bloody profits. Today United Nations troops still occupy Haiti. Their biggest "contribution" is bringing cholera to this poor country. Meanwhile the various "non-profit" aid organizations mainly benefit themselves and do virtually nothing for the Haitian workers.

Haitians were the first slaves to free themselves with a revolution in 1804 and had been forced for over a 100 years to repay the value of what was "stolen" from the slave owners – namely themselves. One of the speakers said that the capitalist class would never let Haiti forget, because they still remember and tremble at the thought of the Haitian revolution. Along with fighting deforestation and all the other evils brought on by capitalism and imperialism, Haitian workers need another revolution. We need to support our Progressive Labor Party comrades in Haiti as they fight for a Haitian revolution that will be part of the worldwide revolution for communism.

At our fundraiser the Haitian style black rice, the rice and beans, griot, chicken, salads, vegetable stews, macaroni au gratin were gathered up, and taken to tables where people talked and enjoyed each other's company, argued, and laughed. Many people who came also produced the food. The kitchen had been jumping all

evening in preparation with, what appeared, as seamless collaboration between the two communities.

Then the performances began. One of the musical groups, playing jazz, had people jumping up and dancing to the rhythm. Later a Haitian group sang songs of love, of life, of struggle. The many people who could not speak Haitian Kreyol loved the sound and the cadence of the music. It is hard to express the overwhelming feeling of joyous community and solidarity.

The leader of the Haitian organization and church members gave speeches. Music and poetry were in the air, and a deeper commitment was made to future organizing. When it was time for the cleanup, every single person present moved in amazing grace and, within 15 minutes, the hall was almost pristine. The kitchen took longer. Everybody helped. This is how everyone should live. Without each other we live in the capitalist nightmare of isolation. This was a small antidote for all the isolation and madness of a society that values money over people – that values profit over the needs of the many.

At this gathering, many of us could see both the "beloved community" of the Civil Rights movement, and the future of communism. Care for those who need the care and destroy the capitalism that creates poverty, division, racism, sexism and war. The future is bright!☺

Bosses' Divisions Play Out in Healthcare

The fight over repealing Obamacare exposes the growing infighting in the ruling class. Different factions are building political movements as they vie for power they try to leverage their movement against opposing groups of capitalists. The Tea party capitalists led by the Koch Brothers were able to mobilize the Freedom Caucus politicians to send a message that the ruling class has to take them into account.

The infighting is sharpening because the current situation of the U.S. bosses is extremely unstable and there are big fights coming as the bosses sort out their differences.

The differences that are playing out over health care range from the Freedom Caucus wanting to do away with virtually all government health care to the Bernie Sanders/ Keith Ellison democrats fronting for the bosses who want to give more crumbs in the form of expanding Medicaid as big wars loom on the horizon.

The factions are somewhat fluid but here is an effort to give a description of the various factions.

The Trump faction

Trump built a political movement that got him elected, probably to his own surprise. The Trump movement has been built around racist attacks on immigrants and white nationalism. Trump was supported by the billionaire Mercer family, his own money as well as what amounted to hundreds of millions of dollars of free publicity from the Breitbart news run by White Nationalist Steve Bannon who saw Trump as a way to get into the White House, as well as the main news outlets like NBC and CNN who were encouraged by the Clinton campaign to build up Trump as the easiest opponent for Clinton.

The Main wing bosses have fought to surround Trump with their guys in the form Generals and finance people they feel are reliable. At the same time the Mercer family and Steve Bannon people are fighting for their own positions. On healthcare, like most issues the Trump faction has been schizophrenic, reflecting the infighting in its own ranks. Swinging wildly from healthcare for all to promising the Freedom caucus an end to almost all mandated care.

The Main wing

The Main capitalists, the biggest oil, finance, media and tech companies including JP Morgan Chase, Goldman Sachs, George Soros, Warren Buffet, Bill Gates, Apple, Google, Exxon-Mobile, the Big Three

Auto makers. These are the biggest capitalists and have had the outlook of maintaining the U.S. position as the dominant capitalist power. They were the backers of the Clinton campaign and are represented by what the media refers to as the centrist politicians mainly in the Democratic Party, people such as Nancy Pelosi, Chuck Schumer, Maxine Waters and a wing of the Republican party including John McCain, Lindsey Graham and others.

This is the group that has rallied around Obamacare as a kind of half measure to try to appease the working class but not make the insurance or drug companies give up any profits.

Freedom Caucus

Backed by the Koch Brothers and the Heritage Foundation, this group has the Tea Party base and wants to do away with all mandatory requirements for insurance. In particular they have mobilized their base of small businesses owners who are pushing back against the requirement for companies with over 50 workers to offer mandatory insurance. But the bigger issue for them is to show they have some strength after Trump was able to co-op their base during the election. The fight over Obamacare was mainly an attempt to reassert themselves.

Sanders/Ellison wing of Democratic Party

Internal fight over tactics in the Democratic Party is playing out in the wake of the Republican failure on health care. Sanders/ Ellison forces who favor a more aggressive move towards state control over U.S. capitalism and have the support of younger people in the party are calling for single-payer health care and confronted Nancy Pelosi at a town hall to demand she back the demand.

This group represents the set of bosses who believe that in order for the U.S. to remain a world power major changes have to be made to win the working class to support much bigger wars. They want to tell the drug and insurance companies that they need to cut their profits to get workers on board with their plans.

What all these faction have in common is that they cynically see the working class as pawns to be manipulated and used for their purposes. Healthcare is a matter of life and death for the working class; not a carrot to be held out or taken away. This is the real sickness of capitalism.☹

Russia-U.S. Conflict Points to War

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the European Union.

It won't be pretty or easy. But in the Cold War we put 400,000 troops in Europe to keep the sectarian peace there and to keep Europe on a democracy track. Having NATO and the Arab League establish a safe zone in Syria for the same purpose is worth a try.

Weakening NATO, Military Face-Off in the Baltic

For the past 70 years, NATO was the most important instrument to project U.S. power in Europe. Now, the alliance may be weakening. Britain is leaving the European Union. Turkey, a NATO country bordering Syria and Iraq, is allying with Russia in the Syrian civil war. Nationalist, racist anti-immigrant parties are growing in influence in France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Denmark. "Globalism"—the euphemism for U.S. imperialism—is in retreat.

But the U.S. rulers will not concede Europe without a fight. Earlier this year, they sent 4,000 troops and Abrams battle tanks to the Russia-bordering Baltic states of Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania. Russia has responded by moving army and air defense units to its borders.

Fight Back

The bosses have their plans to continue to rule and exploit us, but they are up against the most powerful force in the world, with a long and proud history of fighting imperialism: the international working class. Today we need an international communist movement more than ever. We must unite worldwide and organize for communist revolution to smash imperialist war. Smash all borders! Workers' Power! Join Progressive Labor Party!✪

Teachers Rage Against Bosses' Control

NEW YORK CITY, April 1—Our high school is getting a crash course in worker's power and class-consciousness. The school bosses run the science department in the way that best suit ruling-class need. The students are heavily tracked to get into the elite courses, effectively dividing the future working class. A few teachers are given the least-performing students with the low ratings that accompany them. Then, they are served a heaping helping of abuse from the science Assistant Principal who regularly plays Christian music in her office while displaying a crucifix.

The Chapter Leader started a staff-wide petition against her abuses. Some teachers who benefited from her unequal treatment in the Science department were not only against the petition but also drafted a letter in support of the AP and against their fellow co-workers! It came to a head at a union meeting where a PL'er, the chapter leader, and other teachers called them out their siding with their boss against their fellow workers.

Attack Hurts Students Most

This attack is in a working-class high school with a relatively large special-needs population. Seventy one percent of the students are Latin and Black, 21 percent Asian, and 7 percent white. Many are Muslim and immigrants, both documented and undocumented, from Eastern Europe, Africa, Latin America, and Asia. On the surface, this school seems multiracial, when in reality students are live segregated lives through the tracking system (see box). The school is in the top 20 overcrowded classrooms. An attack on teachers and maintaining a tracked school system perpetuate a segregationist and elitist education.

Instead of hiring more teachers for the growing needs of the school and its rampant problems with

programing, the Principal would rather hire two more Assistant Principals to harass and control the staff and students. Two English Regents Prep (statewide standardized exams required for a diploma) classes are already taught by science teachers, of course, two of those that the Science AP regularly harasses. The school bosses prioritize control over student needs.

Teachers, in unity with parents, must fight for the needs of our students, the future leaders of the working class. The next step is to unite the parents and the teachers in struggle against the administration. The chapter leader and other teachers are going to be organizing teachers, students, and parents to fight back against the bosses' criminal plans.

After the chapter meeting, in which the science teachers had sided with the school boss at the expense of others, the ringleader was seen having a conversation with the school principal who literally gave him a pat on the back while he lamenting "I tried". What did he try? He tried to attack his fellow workers in order to protect his boss. Workers who embrace the individualist ideology of cozying up to the bosses and helping them attack workers have no shame and are pawns of the bosses. They are like scabs that help to heal the wounds that the workers inflict on the bosses by breaking strikes.

There is potential for struggle in the building, especially with May Day on the horizon. So, with all of the needs for the special-needs students and the general lack of teachers and overcrowded classes, the principal is deciding to dedicate his energy to creating more Advancement Placement classes! He wants to further dilute the general education classes and maintain an inequitable racist status quo. He is doing all of this in

Tracking, Modern Day Segregation

Tracking is keeping students in separate educational paths ("tracks") based on their academic performance. The origins of race-based tracking actually reach as far back as the federal court ruling in *Roberts v. The City of Boston* in 1850. It was a case that upheld separate school curriculums for Black and whites on the belief in inherent racial differences in intelligence. This case was later used to support *Plessy v. Ferguson*, which established the racist "separate but equal" law. No matter how you slice it, separate education is still an unequal education.

Following desegregation of schools—for many schools in the South, integration did not occur until the early 1970s—tracking students became a de facto policy of segregation. Black students were placed in lower-academic tracks with less experienced teachers. The tracking was often also based on funneling certain students into certain jobs—vocational paths for those from working-class backgrounds and general education paths for wealthier students. This reproduces the mental vs. manual division among the next generation of workers.

the name of helping the students.

There would be no need for tracking or Advance Placement class under communism since all students would all be given exactly what they need to best develop their intellectual potential. We will continue to organize against the bosses' control of the school. Struggles like these are the real schools where the lessons of class struggle are learned.✊

Mosul Bombing

When the United States invaded Iraq on a web of lies and deceit in order to take control of the oil, they created a cascade of catastrophe that continues to this day and is best typified in the recent bombing of Mosul by US forces.

Over 2,000 bombs have been dropped by the US forces during March on Mosul alone (Democracynow.org) and the US bosses are trying to act surprised by the fact that they may have killed up to 200 civilians during one attempt to bomb Islamic State (ISIS) fascists. The US bosses are now saying that the working class women, men, and children that they bombed must have been gathered as human shields by ISIS. They are implying that these proletariat are just the cost of doing business and defeating the terrorists who have controlled Mosul since January 2014. Our working class brothers and sisters have been slaughtered by the little terrorists like ISIS and the big terrorists like the US ruling class and the Iraqi government.

ISIS never would have happened in its current form had the US not invaded 14 years ago. The airstrike that killed so many in Mosul on March 17 was not an isolated incident as there are examples of home after home, sometimes as many as three in a row, all leveled because there was one ISIS fascist on the roof or a few in the garden. Why are the workers in Iraq's second largest city so expendable, so easy to sacrifice en masse? The victims of this war are the working class in Iraq, as we are the victims in every war. Even if the ISIS fascists are defeated and driven out of Mosul, the imperialist US and the Iraqi government aren't going to end exploitation. No, they have their own plans in place for how to exploit the workers in Mosul.✊

No Free Speech for 'Bell Curve' Racist Charles Murray

HARLEM, April 1—Progressive Labor Party salutes the brave students and staff across U.S. college campuses who protested the presence of racist Charles Murray. From Middlebury, Duke, Columbia, New York University, to Notre Dame and Villanova University, they have upheld that there should be no free speech for racists!

Charles Murray, best known for the pseudoscientist racist book *The Bell Curve*, is touring college campuses on the premise of promoting his new equally racist book *Coming Apart*. The book has gained increased attention since Donald Trump's election. The revival of Murray is no surprise; when overt racist politics are unapologetic fought for in the highest spheres of government, that legitimacy trickles out to colleges and all other institutions. Legitimizing "scientific" racist ideas set the groundwork for intensifying racist actions. When they're allowed to speak, they become emboldened. When they are emboldened, they grow. And when they grow, they put their words into actions—terrorizing and killing Black, Latin, Muslim, immigrant workers and youth.

Middlebury students by chasing Murray off campus carried out on a small scale what the brave soldiers of the Soviet Union proved in defeating Nazism: for the working class, the only response to fascism, and fascist ideas, is force. PLP fights for a society where racists like Charles Murray either scurry down into the darkness of the sewer where they belong, or they face the wrath of the multiracial working class.

At Duke University, Charles gave a talk the "cognitive elite": those with "higher intelligence levels" have better chance at economic prosperity. This is a classic racist blame-the-victim ideology that Murray first developed in 1994, along with his fellow racist Richard J. Herrnstein, in *The Bell Curve*. That book is a Nazi-like racist garbage disguised as social science, arguing that Black people are genetically inferior in intelligence to white people. PLP had led a modest struggle against the racist *The Bell Curve* then, and we continue to fight pseudo-scientific racism.

Protest at Columbia and NYU

A modest group of students, faculty, and community residents and Progressive Labor Party protested both at Columbia and NYU. PLP's flyer was titled, "No Free Speech for Racists!"

At NYU, students organized through the Torch Club to disrupt and chant down Murray. One held a sign, "No Eugenics on Campus — Fight Fascism." The university's Faculty of Color Caucus submitted a letter indicting Murray's talk as "hate and fear under the guise of scholarship and free speech." It is inspiring to see working-class people not



let racist academics off the hook. Colleges can be a site of struggle for antiracist pro-communist ideas among the students and workers.

It makes sense that a system based on racist exploitation and inequality creates institutions that perpetuate and legitimize that racism. Despite typically having liberal bona fides, colleges happily host racists and fascists of all types. Columbia—when it's not too busy disenfranchising Black, Latin families out of Harlem—hosted Jim Gilchrist, founder of the racist Minuteman Project; and Tommy Robinson (via Skype) the co-founder of the English Defence League, a fascist, anti-Muslim organization in the UK.

Colleges extend a welcoming hand to these and other racists because they are part of a capitalist system that is soaked in the blood of racism. Students and workers have no need for these institutions and their racism! Even when they're not actively promoting racists, capitalist colleges are busy indoctrinating students in the ways of capitalism. Racism, individualism, nationalism, competition, isolation, elitism, and greed—these are the lessons at every college worldwide. Students at these colleges, on the other hand, like those in Vermont, Quebec, and South Africa, have protested these lessons. Their militancy and bravery should be emulated.

But we need more than militancy! We need a guiding political strategy that overthrows capitalism and the racism and sexism upon which it rests. Let's unite workers around the world of all "races" and nationalities, men and women, gay and straight, young and old. We invite anyone interested in learning about communism to join us to celebrate May Day, the international workers holiday.✊

LETTERS

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

Racist Deportation Over a Turnstile

We were already angry at deportations and other fascist attacks against the working class, especially against Black, Latin, and Asian workers.

Now it's happening to one of our members at our church. Our dear friend has become a victim of the fascist directives that started with former "Deporter-in-Chief" Obama and are continuing with Trump.

Our friend came to the U.S. when she was seven years old. Both her and her father are green-card holder (a permanent resident). As an adult, she became hooked on drugs while seeking escape from a horribly abusive marriage. A drug dealer in her housing project falsely identified her as also a drug dealer. Terrified by the cops' and prosecutors' threats of a long imprisonment, she pleaded guilty. Our racist criminal justice system uses this tactic to incarcerate millions of our mainly Black and Latin sisters and brothers.

Our friend was fortunate to find a devoted lawyer who obtained a pardon for her previous conviction and proceeded with the process for citizenship. In 1998, desperate to get to her low-wage job on time so she could support her family, the cops stopped her for jumping a turnstile and she was eventually convicted of "theft of services." What hypocrisy! The bourgeoisie steals our services every day.

In the summer of 2015, she learned that the government was going to deport her for the "crime" of jumping the turnstile! Her first appearance before a judge was postponed when a blizzard hit NYC.

We remain committed to fighting for our friend. Twenty-six members of our church have signed on, along with the pastor and church board to stand with her and her family to fight against her racist deportation. The chief regional pastor commended our member's actions and pledged his support for the thousands of members throughout the region who face the same threats.

We will fight our dear friend's deportation and build solidarity with our sisters and brothers worldwide. But only with communist revolution, will we once and for all, put an end to the racist and sexist attacks on working people everywhere.

★★★★★

Evaluating Cultural Revolution with Workers in China

When PLP was founded over 50 years ago, the main source of our ideological support came from the Chinese Communist Party, the CCP. In 1967, a few years after its founding, PLP disagreed with the actions taken by the CCP leadership (including Mao Zedong) during the Cultural Revolution. At that time, more than 40 million Red Guard workers, students and farmers were in open rebellion, attempting to defeat revisionism in the CCP and move toward a fully equal, communist society. Initially encouraged by Mao to defeat the more open right wingers in the CCP, Mao then branded them as "ultra-leftists" and used the Peoples Liberation Army to suppress them. PLP criticized the CCP and warned against the restoration of capitalism should the Cultural Revolution be defeated. The CCP broke off fraternal party relations with PLP over this disagreement in 1970.

PLP's analysis of events in China, and our break with nationalism as a sometimes "progressive" ideology, was published in the document "Road to Revolution III" in 1971. Our criticism of the CCP as becoming a revisionist party shocked many "Maoist" parties around the world.

Fast forward a half century. China is a fully capitalist country which now has some 250 million industrial workers, the largest industrial proletariat in the world. The CCP is still the ruling party, which says they preside over "socialism with Chinese characteristics," an absurd claim that is mocked inside China.

It turns out there are still communists in China; they just don't run the government. Recent contacts with communists, inside and outside China have been encouraging. Some have shown an interest in PLP's analysis from 1971, and Road to Revolution III was recently translated into Chinese so that it can be read and evaluated by more workers there.

One young worker recently described a study group discussion of Road to Revolution III. Mao is still considered a great revolutionary leader, as opposed to the current capitalist class that occupies the CCP, so



criticizing him is controversial in leftist circles. However, this worker wrote:

"Mao is a great leader. But he failed in the fight against revisionism. We have to draw some important lessons to accomplish this task. If we cannot tell Mao's achievements and mistakes, we cannot step further on the road to revolution."

"The road is long and tortuous but the future is bright."

★★★★★

Movie More Anti-Racist Than Given Credit

The review in Challenge of "I Am Not Your Negro" made a good point about how racism oppresses white workers as well as Black. But the review contained some factual errors.

Many of the images in the movie showed integrated groups of people fighting racism and many people standing up to very brutal attacks by the police at demonstrations. It also had scenes of Baldwin being very well received by groups of white students when he speaks against racism. The movie also says racism was created to have cheap labor, though it doesn't go into detail about how that works and showed images of Black workers picking and processing cotton. In a segment mentioned in the article, Baldwin and Lorraine Hansberry (a communist writer) confront Robert Kennedy and expose him as unwilling to fight racism. That's good!

Baldwin put forward the position that the fate of all of us in the United States is tied together. That was the main position of the movement as the time. It reflected an acceptance of nations, something Malcolm X, Martin Luther King Jr and Medgar Evers all accepted.

★★★★★

Iron Heel Relevant to Today's Fascism

Following the inauguration of fascist demagogue Trump, the sales of George Orwell's 1984 and Sinclair Lewis' Can It Happen Here? Skyrocketed on Amazon. 1984 deals with a totalitarian society ruled by Big Brother, which we can call Big Trump, and Can It Happen Here? Discusses fascism coming to this country waving the American flag. It is clear that many workers are becoming aware that something is desperately wrong and are looking for answers. One U.S. novel that is seldom mentioned and which is extremely relevant today is Jack London's classic The Iron Heel. Written in 1907, some have claimed that it was a prophetic novel

about the rise of fascism in the world.

London is best known for his adventure novels such as Call of the Wild and The Sea Wolf, but London had been a left-wing socialist for many years. The Iron Heel grew out of his socialist convictions and his belief that a kinship of working people would become a reality on the planet. The novel is told from the standpoint of Avis Everhard, the daughter of a wealthy man and is unaware of the human suffering that is caused by the capitalist system. She meets Ernest, a revolutionary socialist agitator and theoretician. She falls in love with him, later marries him, and he shows her the realities of life for the workers in capitalist America. She, to put it in her words, began "to see through the appearances of the society in which I had all was lived, and to find the frightful realities that were beneath".

Ernest also argues passionately against capitalist ideologues, who are totally out of touch with the realities of life under capitalism and the Middle class, which Ernest claims, want to return to an imaginary past. He calls them "Machine Breakers" or Luddites. Ernest claims that labor saving machinery will be used for the liberation of the working class. Of course, the middle class, as we find out, is doomed by historical development as the trusts or oligarchy gain more and more power. It is this group of capitalists that would usher in the iron heel, London's term for fascism.

The real target of the rulers was the working class and the socialist movement that was making strides at the ballot box. This leads to a discussion of voting vs. armed struggle and eventually the resistance to the iron heel picks up a gun. Also, the Iron Heel attempts to buy off a segment of the workers or labor castes, while the majority of the workers face grinding poverty. It becomes clear that the goal of the ruling class is to save the capitalist system and prevent a worker's revolution.

The capitalist class also shuts down the socialist party printing presses, disappears worker-fighters, murders scores of workers and uses agents provocateurs to undermine the workers movement, while rounding up and jailing workers and socialists in the congress, including Ernest. The workers do not take any of this lying down and begin to resist through revolutionary violence. At one point, they are able to free some of their comrades from prison. Ernest is one of them, and he is reunited with Avis.

The conditions that London describes facing the workers exist today, as does a powerful capitalist ruling class. This novel, if read, might alert workers to the growing fascism in this country while providing an interesting read.

★★★★★

Review Wrongly Attacks the Man, Not Content

The review of I Am Not Your Negro (CHALLENGE, 4/5) was one sided and under researched. The claim that Baldwin lacked class analysis in his works is incorrect. Baldwin often talked and wrote about his experience as a young Black man living in poverty and how those Blacks that had "means" treated him.

Examples are in Baldwin's "Notes of a Native Son" (1955) and "Another Country" (1962). His literature uses social class as one of the lenses through which characters analyze their realities. In his essay, "Negroes Are Anti-Semetic Because They're Anti-White" (1967), Baldwin discusses the exploitation suffered by poor Black people in Harlem at the hands of Jewish slum lords and store owners, as well as Black and white social workers, teaches, postal bosses, and the military. This essay ends with Baldwin addressing the very real tension between Black workers and Jewish owners and his own refusal to hate a person or even a group for the ills of an exploitative system that is less vicious to some than others depending on the time.

There are valid critiques of Baldwin's outright refusal to officially join social movements. This review went from criticizing the movie to trying to discredit Baldwin and his work entirely. How can we totally dismiss someone for their own analysis of their reality? Who does that win, other than those made uncomfortable by Baldwin's existing anti-racist stance on things like education, nationalism, patriotism, militarism?

Throwing the baby out with the bathwater is putting it lightly when comparing what this article tries to do with Baldwin's legacy of literary investigation of social problems in the U.S.

★★★★★

Paris Commune: World's First Workers' Dictatorship

Continued from page 8

it expropriated the Bank of France, the French bourgeoisie would have had a much harder time raising a counter-revolutionary army.

The Commune recognized the need for equality among workers and revolutionary cadre. But we can see now that equalizing wages was no substitute for abolishing the wage system altogether.

As we march for Communism this May Day, the Progressive Labor Party will carry forward the spirit of the Paris Commune.

For more on the Paris Commune and the lessons communists drew from it, read Karl Marx's book, *The Civil War In France*; Frederick Engels, *The Great Lessons of the Paris Commune*.✱



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

Bangladeshi tanneries expose child-workers to toxic chemicals

GW, 3/31 — Children as young as eight working in the tanneries of Bangladesh producing leather that is in demand across Europe and the U.S. are exposed to toxic chemicals that...shorten their lives, a report says.

Approximately 90 percent of those who live and work in the overcrowded slums of Hazaribagh and Kamrangirchar, where hazardous chemicals are discharged into the air, streets and river, die before they reach 50....

[The report was] triggered by "the widespread industrial negligence and apathy of owners of tanneries and other hazardous material factories" towards the more than 600,000 largely migrant workers who have no access to...healthcare....

...250...tanneries In Hazaribagh...discharge 6,000 cubic meters of toxic effluent and 10 tons of solid waste every day...flouting...Bangladesh's own laws...in the employment of children under 18 in work that is harmful or hazardous.

The factories douse animal skins in cauldrons of chemicals a part of the processing of "Bengali black" leather which is exported to leather goods manufacturers in Italy, Spain and elsewhere....Workers are soaked to the skin, breathing the fumes most of the day, and eat and live in these surroundings throughout the year.

Trump's war on miners

NYT, 3/20 — Trump's vow to bring back the coal industry's heyday is a delusion....inspiring...legislatures in Appalachia to resurrect...loose safety laws that endangered miners' lives and protected owners' profits....

...Trump....is moving to help surface mine operators by eliminating protections for Appalachian streams and hamlets inundated by mine wastes.

The Kentucky Legislature...will cut back the four annual inspections now required at a working mine to as few as one....

West Virginia....state safety and health standards, developed across years amid the grief of repeated mining disasters, would be eliminated....a...retreat from the statehouse safety concerns voiced in 2010 when the Upper Big Branch disaster took 29 miners' lives....

...In Appalachia...the coal industry has...intimidated generations of lawmakers to favor mine owners....This latest bout, launched in tandem with Trump's fantasy job promises, can only leave remaining miners in greater danger on the job.

Haiti: UN caused cholera atrocity, now fails to fight it

NYT, 3/20 — ...the leader of the United Nations apologized to Haitians for the cholera epidemic that

has ravaged their country for more than six years — caused by infected peacekeepers sent to protect them — [and].... announced in December...a \$400 million strategy to combat the epidemic....Under its secretary general at the time, Ban Ki-moon, the organization had resisted any...blame for the epidemic, one of the worst cholera outbreaks in modern times.

Since then...the United Nations' strategy to fight the epidemic...has failed....A trust fund created to help finance the strategy has only about \$2 million....

...Mr. Ban' successor, António Guterres, asked for financial commitments to the trust fund by March 6. He...raise[d] the possibility of a mandatory dues assessment if there were no significant pledges.

The deadline came and sent without much response....

...Diplomats and UN officials said he had shelved the idea, partly because of strong resistance by some powerful members, including the United States....

Cholera...has killed nearly 10,000 people and sickened nearly 800,000 in Haiti...since it was introduced there in 2010 by...a UN peacekeeping force. This year, as of late February, nearly 2,000 new cases have been reported, amounting to hundreds a week.

'Why Social Justice and Capitalism Don't Mix'

NYT, 3/24 — ...Thinx, the...feminine hygiene company...entered the growing canon of employers that have fail[ed] to live up to their socially conscious branding. Former Thinx employees, many of them women in their 20s and 30s, allege some very un-feminist practices, including substandard pay, verbal abuse and sexual harassment....

Some former employees saw their experiences... as personal betrayals, given the company's ethos of female empowerment....Ms. [Miki] Agrawal [Thinx founder] has been accused by a former employee of unwanted physical contact...a violation of everything the company stands for....

Thinx's story...exposes the logical limitations... about employment and profit in [a] market-driven society: that profit-seeking can be compatible with social justice....

The popular myth that profit and social justice can go hand in hand underlies every would-be ethical business venture....The problem is that the market makes entrepreneurs choose between maximizing profit and transferring to workers the full returns of their productivity....



...If Ms. Agriwal had paid...higher salaries...she might have lost business to more ruthless competitors. Instead, she [paid]...her staff what she did because of a socially entrenched wage gap, a weak job market for young workers and her employees' willingness to work long hours and sacrifice pay for a cause....

...To uphold a profit-driven society willingly, workers must believe...that such a society "is worth their creative energy and passion" and that it "meets their need for justice and security."

That belief...part of the culture of Thinx...eventually crashed into reality.

Imperialist war drives Afghan kids out of school and into poverty

NYT, 3/24 — When the first day of school starts in Afghanistan...3.7 million boys and girls won't be in attendance, because of increased violence, displacement and poverty. The total number — roughly one in three school-age Afghan children — is expected to grow this year as violence between Afghan forces and the Taliban intensifies and Pakistan forces Afghan refugees to return home....

[As an example] Lina, 12...lives in a refugee camp in Kabul....

"I loved going to school, but we don't have enough money to buy notebooks and other things....Without notebooks it was not possible to study and do homework.

"If I don't go to school, I will become nothing in the future...."We live in...two tents. I sleep with my five brothers and sisters in one tent and my father and mother and two small sisters sleep in the other.

"For breakfast, if something is left over from dinner, we eat that. If not, we eat bread with tea. After breakfast I bring water from the well which is a one-hour walk away....Two or three times a day, I also collect small pieces of wood and plastic to burn for heating our home.

PARIS COMMUNE: WORLD'S FIRST WORKERS' DICTATORSHIP

As May Day, the international workers' holiday, nears, a look at the world's first success at workers' power:

One hundred forty-six years ago, in 1871, armed workers ran the French bosses out of Paris and established the Paris Commune. France was a world superpower. Germany had a growing industrial base and its own super-power ambitions. "We, the members of the International Working Men's Association, know of no frontiers," declared the communists. But competition between French and German capitalists led to war in 1870. The French army was soon routed.

The Parisian masses, though sympathetic to communism, were still swayed by nationalism. They demanded arms to defend the city from the besieging German army. The bourgeois government organized most adult males into its National Guard. However, these Guard units, made up of the working class, organized their own leadership committees in each district and a workers' Central Committee to unite them.

On March 17, 1871, the government gave in to the German army and fled to suburban Versailles. When troops returned the next day to fetch arms they had left behind, angry workers confronted them. The troops refused orders to shoot into the crowd. They handed their weapons to the workers.

The Central Committee of the National Guard took over City Hall and ran up the Red Flag of workers' revolution. For the first time in the history of class society, the working class had taken power.

Building Equality

The Central Committee called for new elections. "The men who will serve you best are those whom you choose from amongst yourselves," it urged the workers. Red flags were everywhere.

The Commune kept the bourgeois form of elections, but the victorious workers did not simply take over the bourgeois state machine. They smashed it and began to build something brand new: the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

The masses were the real masters of the Commune. Twenty thousand activists attended small club meetings daily to offer criticisms and make suggestions. Elected officials considered all proposals and usually acted on them. Officials who disregarded the masses were subject to immediate recall.

The workers' government disbanded the bourgeois Guard units. It suspended all decrees of the old government. Workers pulled down the Victory Column, symbol of French imperialism. They elected a Hungarian-German communist to their governing body, declaring that the Commune represented workers everywhere.

The workers' government wiped out state support of religion and took over church property. It capped officials' salaries so that none made more than a worker's wage. It took away bosses' rights to fine workers. It took over workshops that had been closed because of the economic depression and turned them over to workers' cooperatives.

This working-class dictatorship was the necessary prerequisite to abolishing the wage-slavery of capitalism. The Commune held power for ten short weeks. It proved for all time that the working class can, must, and will rule society.

Why Did The Workers Lose in 1871?

The French bourgeoisie used tax money taken from the workers' sweat to pay off the German government to release French prisoners of war. In May, after a bloody civil war in the streets, these soldiers re-took Paris for the bosses. The communist movement was quick to draw some of the lessons of this heroic and historic struggle. Others we only recognized a century later.

Smash Fascism with Communist Revolution!



Smash racism and sexism!
Smash all borders and imperialist war!

MAY DAY

SATURDAY APRIL 29 Progressive Labor Party	Brooklyn Chicago Los Angeles San Francisco
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Sign up with your local communist. \$20 employed, \$10 student & unemployed

- Workers need to smash the bosses' state. But the Commune did not go far enough. It was lenient with counter-revolutionaries and renegades. It allowed the French bourgeoisie to regroup, instead of organizing a Red Army to hunt it down. The bourgeoisie was not lenient at all after it crushed the Commune, murdering 100,000 workers (including children). The Commune was not able to link up with Communes in Lyons, Marseilles, and other cities. The working class dictatorship needs to arm and organize the masses, but it also needs a Red Army.
- The Commune organized workers into political clubs, but not into a Communist party. There was plenty of democracy (discussion of policy) but not much centralism (united action). The political form of bourgeois democracy undermined the working-class goals of the Commune.
- The Commune did not move quickly enough to abolish capitalism. Had

Continued on page 7

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