

CHALLENGE



THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

volume 49 no.11

May 31, 2017

suggested donation \$1

COLOMBIA MAY DAY

MARCH FOR A COMMUNIST WORLD

COLOMBIA, May 1—The peace between social classes serves the criminal bosses, down with the capitalist dictatorship, arise the communist revolution, long live the international communist May Day!

In celebration of May Day the contingent of the PLP resonated these and many other chants resonated with anger and enthusiasm. This manifestation was carried out in Bogota, Colombia commemorating the International Workers' Day. Since early on we began selling and distributing CHALLENGE, making an emphasis on the line and the PLP program and communism as the only solution to escape the capitalist jail. Electoral groups of the left, unions, social organizations and women groups began to group and organize their banners.

Behind the banner of our paper, Challenge 65 people, women, men, students and workers took on the responsibility and the initiative to mobilize their friends and lead our protest with belligerence. We spread a powerful message, well received by many workers, rescuing the international proletariat and the need for communist revolution to end police terror, racism, nationalism, fascism, and the bosses' war. More than 200 Challenges were distributed and 3000 fliers were given.

We had an amicable debate about the revolutionary program of the PLP with a group of farm workers that came from Guatemala, Panama, Chile, Uruguay and Bolivia, and they asked us questions about socialism and communism, which were the mistakes in the way the struggles was carried out in USSR, Cuba, Nicaragua, El Salvador and now in Venezuela, we explained that our line is based on the mistakes and wise decisions of the past to build a communist future with a revolutionary process that gives workers the importance as the main actors and avoids falling in revisionism, without dismissing the importance of past struggles and the daily ones that will liberate us. The comrades understood the message



and we said bye warmly taking with them pleasantly the literature.

The unions showed their total cynism and pacifism, leading their members to march as docile lambs and the most they asked for was for justice and better conditions under capitalism. The unions limit themselves to beg for better salaries and more honest politicians given the dominant corruption, reason why many workers are dissident with those traitor politicians and organized other protests in seven different neighborhoods. PLP marched waving their red flags with pride and yelling our chants "against the profiteer capitalism for communist worker state, no more sexism fight for communism", with great approval and admiration of the attendants, so much so that many of the marchers asked for copies, help-

ing us chant 27 chants with communist fervor and capitalist system hate. These protest are battle camps for our ideas and practices, they have to be schools for the class struggle in which we build a mass movement for our communist goal.

Some of the ones chanted with revolutionary enthusiasm and others: "Justice will arrive, communism with win," "let's replace the capitalist dream for communist revolution" and "changing capitalist rulers is choosing the same".

We picked up fliers and papers from other organizations to advance in our study of the current situation and state of class struggle. Our objective is to influence the worker organizations so that we struggle and we see communism as something possible to govern our destiny and all of humanity's. ☺

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.

CHALLENGE/DESAFIO (ISSN 0009-1049) published bi-weekly by Challenge Periodicals. 1 issue \$1. One Year: \$20. Six months: \$15. Send address changes to CHALLENGE Periodicals, GPO Box 808 Brooklyn, NY 11202, May 31, 2017. Volume 49, No. 11

Editorial

France Election

Macron, New Face of Fascism

The election of ex-investment banker Emmanuel Macron as president of France reflects the global crisis of capitalism. Like all other capitalist powers, the French ruling class has responded with rising fascism and heightened attacks on the working class. Like Donald Trump (and Barack Obama before him), who has surrounded himself with Wall Street bankers, French finance capital is maneuvering to maintain its rule.

Beneath Macron's liberal, "pro-immigrant" rhetoric, this so-called outsider and his "independent" political party (En Marche!) received the full backing of France's political elites, with unlimited media and financial support. Simultaneously, he effectively isolated the mainstream capitalist parties that have lost credibility with French workers.

Trending Decline and Disarray

Faced with an unsustainable budget deficit, the French bosses are in a bind. Heading into the April 23 presidential election and the runoff two weeks later, they knew that their next president would need to escalate the rulers' attacks on the working class. The rulers want to eliminate job protections and to slash spending on pensions, health care, family allowances, and unemployment benefits—which altogether account for more than a third of France's Gross Domestic Product (www.thelocal.fr, 12/22/16). Since the 1980s, the French government has either partially or fully privatized many national industries, including Air France, France Telecom and Renault. However, the government still plays a role in certain key national sectors, such as agriculture and healthcare, including labor protection laws that are cutting into the profits and competitiveness of the French bosses (Focus Economics May 2017).

Macron has already promised to pursue the anti-worker labor reforms of his unpopular "Socialist" Party predecessor, Francois Hollande, including attacks on unions and collective bargaining, prohibition of strikes, and cuts to social benefits, while privatizing health care and education. The French ruling class hopes that Macron can do so while winning mass applause instead of mass upheaval. The more openly fascist National Front's Marine Le Pen, the losing candidate in the May election runoff, had similar proposals to Macron on the domestic front, but likely would have generated the intense opposition the U.S. ruling class now faces with the anti-Trump movement. It's hard to attack the workers and mobilize for war when the workers are on strike and fighting back in the streets! It's no surprise that Obama endorsed Macron three days before the election.

The French bosses are learning from the experience of the U.S. ruling class. For more than 30 years, the U.S. rulers have attacked wages and pensions and privatized the healthcare and education systems with relatively little fightback. Tens of millions of workers—including super-exploited black workers—have been misled and pacified by the Democratic Party. In the 1990s, President Bill Clinton signed trade agreements that eliminated decent-paying factory jobs, mostly eliminated welfare, unleashed 100,000 more racist cops on the streets, and created the largest prison population in the world, filled with mostly Black and Latin workers. Then Obama—who, like Macron, campaigned on a "pro-immigrant" platform—deported more immigrant workers than any president in U.S. history.

In France, Macron plans to add his "shiny new face" of liberal fascism with promises to add 10,000 more cops and 5,000 more border cops, to increase the National Guard to 85,000, and to expand their prison detention centers by 15,000 additional spaces—policies in step with those advocated by Le Pen (French Institute of International Relations, April 2017).

For French finance capital, however, Macron's vic-

French Imperialist Role

Despite the decline and fall of their colonial empire, the French bosses retain an interest in playing an imperialist role on the world stage. The National Front's Marine Le Pen took an isolationist stance, calling for French withdrawal from NATO and the European Union, and rejection of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). Additionally she argued for lifting sanctions and making an alliance with Russia. Her movement stands in contradiction to the French bosses' pro-U.S. and pro-Europe stance since World War II through the alliances with other European countries and the United States. Macron's more traditional positions won him the main bosses' backing and ultimately won him the election.

While calling for cuts in public spending and attacks on workers, Macron is promoting French imperialism by supporting increased spending on the military and its adventures around the world. The French military, the largest in Europe at 205,000-strong, is actively planning to modernize its nuclear weapons. It has 30,000 troops deployed in Africa and the Middle East, in its support of the U.S.-led imperialist "war on terror."

Under "Operation Chammal," the French army has a full battery of Caesar 155mm gun-howitzers, along with French Rafale fighter aircraft, fighting alongside U.S. forces in their oil war in Iraq and Syria. The French rulers continue their imperialist ravaging of Africa for oil and minerals in Libya and their "Operation Barkhane" in Mali, Mauritania, Burkina Faso, Niger and Chad (U.S. Department of Defense, Jan 2017).

tory fails to solve the fundamental problem every ruling power faces as inter-imperialist rivals prepare for the next global war. The bosses must win the allegiance of the working class and unite workers behind their patriotic agenda while at the same time waging vicious racist, sexist attacks. Even with Macron as an option, 25 percent of all eligible French voters abstained from casting a ballot, the highest proportion since 1969. An additional 25 percent of those voting for Macron did so only as a vote against Le Pen. (CNN, 5/8).

La Lutte

Last summer, when Macron was Hollande's economy minister, and the country was gripped with violent protests over government attempts to eliminate job security and the 35-hour work week, Macron was pelted with eggs, one landing directly on his shiny, new face.

In the weeks leading up to this spring's elections, masses of high school and college students, deciding that neither Macron nor Le Pen were acceptable choices for their future, waged a no-voting campaign. Led by the slogan, "No Fatherland, No Boss, No Le Pen, No Macron," youth hit the streets around the country to protest French imperialism. Two thousand turned out in the western French city of Rennes. In Paris, protests blocked entrances to 20 high schools.

These bold youth faced off against police in riot gear, who attacked them with tear gas. While denouncing Le Pen's racist nationalism and Macron's pro-business front is a start, only a communist movement can bring the change these young people seek. Only a communist revolution, led by Progressive Labor Party, can smash the bosses and their Fatherland

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MAY DAY 2017

HAITI

HAITI, May 1—On May Day in Haiti, Progressive Labor Party (PLP) continued to denounce capitalism while raising the consciousness of the masses about the conditions of workers and the atrocious exploitation and domination by the bosses. In one small city, comrades organized a day of activities, including a conference-debate during which we presented the history of May Day and the situation of the working class in this region; a dinner and cultural evening of militant song and poetry. Other comrades participated in a mass march of workers in the capital city, Port-au-Prince.

Prior to May Day, comrades had invited a local labor leader to participate in a regular weekly local radio show that they host, to speak about the May Day march. Our comrades put the emphasis on class struggle, ending capitalism and fighting for a just, worker-led egalitarian society—communism.

Every day our Party is creating confidence in the masses. More and more, those close to us are becoming class conscious and coming closer to the struggle that we fight for. In order to organize our May Day activities in the town, we relied on local and international comrades for financial support. Workers and students living abroad and in Haiti contributed what they could to make the day a success. Despite the threat of rain (there had been serious flooding in this town for the week prior to May Day), close to 100 people participated enthusiastically in the day's activities, which lasted seven hours.

The speakers denounced the attempts of the ruling class to expropriate May Day from the workers. The bosses try to make the day one of mindless festivity, food and fairs. They call it the Day of

Agriculture and Work, but several speakers noted what a lie that was, since Haiti has neither prospering agriculture—there is instead systematic deforestation and total lack of support for small farmers and farm-workers—nor work—the Haitian working class faces an unemployment rate of 83 percent, with most people involved in the below-subsistence level informal sector and the 7 percent employed in the private sector rarely earning the \$5/day minimum wage (the remaining 11 percent are in government jobs).

Despite a mass struggle since 2009 for an increase in the daily minimum wage—now \$5/day—workers have been suffering. Despite election box approval, the bosses, the State and the Council on Salary have continued to lie and deceive. Horrible, crushing inflation has not changed the rulers' minds; to the contrary, there have been firings in the factories for those who dare to complain. And that's only among the formally employed: for homemakers, market sellers, drivers, cultivators and sharecroppers, things are maybe even worse. For teachers and office workers, the situation is also precarious, especially given the devaluation of the Haitian gourde (prior to the 2010 earthquake, there were 40 gourdes to the U.S. dollar; today it's 68.5). A high school teacher working 6 hours a day earns less than \$160 (all wages cited in \$US)/month (and often is owed at least 6 months wages); a bank cashier earns about \$245/month; women house servants earn between \$28–\$80/month. So-called "free workers,"

that is, those without a fixed job in the informal economy can earn \$3–5/day; a mason can earn \$7.8–\$11.70 for a day's labor. These workers have no benefits, unemployment nor health insurance and can be fired at will by the bosses.

Other speakers stated emphatically that this was all really just another form of slavery. Many examples were given, including newspaper reports that in some U.S.-owned businesses, workers face such intense speed-up that they have to wear diapers because the bosses don't allow them time to take care of their needs; there are factories in the free trade zones that don't give workers enough time to have a meal during the work day. It is clear that the capitalist system tries to dehumanize workers, who create all value and profits for the bosses. "We can't accept these conditions!" several workers exclaimed. "We have to fight back against them and the bosses who profit!"

One leader of a local women's group, with whom we have been working since our forum for International Working Women's Day last March 8, noted that women must take part in the class struggle of the working class. Several participants made clear that they understood that the working class is exploited and dominated everywhere in the world and that workers must get together to fight for their liberation.

In order to end once and for all the system of exploitation and domination that is capitalism, PLP raises class awareness in several countries at the present time. We are growing, despite the problems that workers face in this dark night. It shall have its end. PLP comrades are respected and they have the confidence of many workers. Workers everywhere, join us for communist revolution.✊

MEXICO

MEXICO CITY, MAY 1—A group of 45 comrades, sympathizers, and friends of Progressive Labor Party carried the red flags of communism in the May 1st march in Mexico City. Our revolutionary slogans and chants were heard by thousands of workers. We distributed 1,500 pamphlets of Challenge. In Oaxaca, another group of 12 comrades distributed 3,000 pamphlets in the march organized by the Teacher's Union Local Section 22.

History has taught us that workers can only confront imperialist war if we fight to get rid of the capitalist system that creates crisis, war, and fascism. That teaching is the heritage that the Russian and Chinese workers left us when they took power during WWI and WWII, respectively. We shouldn't forget that in order to put an end to both wars, it was essential that workers took power into their own hands.

The recent attacks by the United States on Syria and Afghanistan, much like the mobilization of aircraft carriers to the Korean Peninsula, is a signal of war against the imperialists of Russia and China, their true targets. It's a sign that the bosses are, with each action, closer to initiating a third world war, in which they will use both conventional and nuclear weapons and spill the blood of millions of workers, all for the sake of their profits. Under this reality, capitalism confirms its devastating and criminal essence.

Within the shadow of imperialist war, the ruling class of Mexico can only offer an electoral circus with increasing fascism. Workers must be very clear that bourgeois "democracy" is a dictatorship of the capitalist class over the working class—a dictatorship of a few privileged parasites who exploit that great majority of impoverished workers.

Electoral democracy is a fraud. This sham tries to trick the working class into thinking they have the "freedom" to choose their rulers, but the real-

ity is that it only serves to legitimize the new oppressors and exploiters. In no place or moment in history has the working class achieved its liberation by means of elections. The working class can only liberate itself when it organizes itself into a revolutionary party to take power through force and establish a dictatorship of the working class.

In the electoral process, the only ones who can participate are those who have millions in resources at their disposal and are willing to represent those who finance them. During their term they have to work to comply with their commitments to those who carried them into power.

All of the electoral parties represent the interests of some faction of the capitalist class, allied or subordinate to imperialist interests, principally those of the US. No electoral party actually represents the workers. The working class needs its own party to achieve a change from the capitalist economic, political and social system – a transformation that cannot be achieved through the electoral path, as that is a process completely controlled by the capitalist class.

When the capitalist "democracy" fails, the bosses turn to fascism, the most violent form of their judicial, police, and military apparatus that invokes the spread of fear among an upsurge of intense violence. To achieve this climate of fear, it is necessary for the country to usher in repressive state institutions before the presence of some supposed enemy that intends to "destabilize peace."



In Mexico, the supposed democracy has achieved alarming rates of robbery and murder, the deviant millionaires and the abuses of power of the governor of Veracruz through the orders of Felipe Calderon of PAN and of Enrique Peña Nieto of PRI, the killings in Ayotzinapa that they carried out, under the direction of Partido Revolucionario Democrático (PRD). PRD is the leader of Morena (another electoral party) and represents a nationalist sector whose win will only benefit a small group and not the mass of followers that they have succeeded in convincing. None of them represents the interests of the working class.

Drug trafficking, corruption, murder, and disappearances of journalists and fighters, the increase in poverty rates, the sexism that women suffer every day, the enrichment of a select few – all go hand in hand with the "democratic process" created by the capitalist system, the same system that has to be stopped, through the process of understanding its inner working and how to best fight it.

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Schools Segregation in Brooklyn

Once Again, DoE Rears its Racist Head

Park Slope Collegiate, a public secondary school that has led the fight against segregation and racist inequalities in the Department of Education, is now under assault by a DoE investigation of “Communist organizing” (New York Times, 5/4). The DoE has targeted anti-racist Principal Bloomberg as a member of Progressive Labor Party (which she isn’t) and accused her of recruiting students to PLP (which she hasn’t).

But the school bosses’ baseless charges are rooted in an antiracist history. Going back to the Scottsboro Boys case in the 1930s (see page 8) and through the Civil Rights movement and beyond, communists have led the multiracial fightback against racism in the streets, the schools and universities, the workplace, and the military.

The DoE’s attack on Park Slope Collegiate echoes the intimidation tactics of 1950s-era communist-hunter Joseph McCarthy. Two of New York City’s most powerful liberal bosses—Mayor Bill De Blasio and DoE Chancellor Carmen Farina—are counting on anti-communism to frighten and silence anyone who stands up against their racist policies, which consign the vast majority of Black and Latin children—approximately 75 percent of the city’s 1.1 million public school student population—to a segregated, second-class education. In so doing, these bosses have yet again exposed themselves as the shameless racists they are.

The Struggle at John Jay Campus

Park Slope Collegiate (PSC) is one of four schools on the long-neglected John Jay Campus, which is located in the heart of a wealthy white neighborhood in Brooklyn. Three of the schools enroll predominantly Black and Latin students from low-income families outside the neighborhood. In 2010, the DoE announced plans to install the fourth school, Millennium Brooklyn, a selective, significantly white high school that would be given more funding and resources per student than its co-located schools. Principal Bloomberg led PSC’s effort to organize against this elitist, racist plan, and proposed instead that white students in the neighborhood be integrated into the existing schools. But the struggle failed, and Millennium Brooklyn opened in 2011—one more

piece in “one of [the] most deeply segregated school systems in the nation” in “polychromatic” New York City (NYT, 5/17).

Since then, the principal and a group of anti-racist teachers and parents have led a multiracial fightback to demand the removal of metal detectors from the campus, to defend students against abuse by school security agents and the New York Police Department, and to challenge the cops who herded students out of the neighborhood at dismissal each day. Most recently, in February, Principal Bloomberg sent the DoE a complaint that documented racist inequalities in the city’s funding for varsity sports teams. The John Jay Campus sports program—which serves 1,859 students, more than 90 percent of them Black or Latin—was given only nine teams. But the Millennium sports program received 17 teams for only 1,261 students—including 641 students at Millennium High School in Manhattan, which uses John Jay’s gym facilities and is only 25 percent Black and Latin.

Two weeks after the principal made her complaint, the DoE’s Office of Special Investigations (OSI) arrived at PSC and announced it was investigating “communist activities taking place at the school.” Principal Bloomberg filed a lawsuit in federal court, charging that her civil rights and right to free speech had been violated. But “rights” under capitalism are protected only when they serve the bosses’ interests. On May 16, the OSI Gestapo invaded the school unannounced and interrogated students as young as 13, pressuring them to reveal their parents’ and teachers’ political beliefs and activities. The investigators’ witch-hunt was aided by the district superintendent and a ruthless guidance counselor. She escorted the students to her office—which had been commandeered as the interrogation room (PSC Pulse, PTA newsletter, May 16).

Why the Bosses Need Segregation

John Jay Campus is a microcosm of the racist inequalities in school systems throughout the U.S. What makes PSC different is that students, parents, and teachers at this school are fighting back.

Why is this fight such a threat to the DoE? The bosses cannot stand multiracial fightback in any form. They need to preserve school segregation to prepare Black, Latin, and immigrant children for the racism that awaits them on the job or in the military—or the prison work force. The super-exploitation of Black and Latin workers is analogous to the super-deprivation of Black and Latin students. To see Black, Latin, and white students rebelling together against racist conditions puts the bosses in a panic.

Under Capitalism, Real Estate Trumps Learning

Public schools today are more segregated than they were in 1954, when the U.S. Supreme Court, *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, acknowledged that “separate” could never be equal. New York State’s schools are the most segregated in the U.S. (<https://www.civilrightsproject.ucla.edu>, 2009).

De Blasio and Farina are doing their part to uphold the state’s ranking by perpetuating racist “choice” policies for secondary schools and defending elementary school zones that deliberately segregate students in the service of home real estate values for the middle class and the affluent. As the mayor said, “You have to also respect families who have made a decision to live in a certain area oftentimes because of a specific school” (Chalkbeat, 11/6/2015). And more recently: “We cannot change the basic reality of housing in New York City” (NYT, 5/11). De Blasio, who is running for reelection this fall, relies on millions of dollars in campaign contributions from the real estate sector.

Only Option: More Fightback!

Progressive Labor Party salutes the inspirational, antiracist fightback—at John Jay Campus and everywhere workers and students are daring to fight back. In attacking Park Slope Collegiate, the bosses are exposing their true racist colors. But in fighting racism, teachers and students are learning invaluable working-class lessons. They’re also boosting workers’ confidence in our ability to resist, organize, and survive in a period of rising fascism. ☪

MEXICO MAY DAY

Continued from page 1

During election season all candidates are labeled corrupt rats, but no one blames the capitalist system for the tragedies that the working class has to live through day to day in order for the bosses to gain more and more profit. No political platform or candidate in any election attacks the profit system of the bourgeois class. They only put ridiculous names to insufficient programs that are designed to gather votes.

The ex-mayor of Huixquilucan del Mazo Maza (the region with the most drug traffickers) represented the private sector of Banco Azteca and Grupo Servin. He has family connections with different politicians of Grupo Altacomulco, to which President Peña Nieto belongs. Partido Acción Nacional (PAN) politician Vásquez Mota is involved in allegations for his foundation Juntos Podemos (Together We Can), which has received more than \$1 billion pesos (Proceso, 5/18). Although Morena candidate Delfina Gómez isn’t known for corruption in her past, her party’s connection with billionaire Carlos Slim and bosses’ union Coparmex leaves many questions to be answered (El Financiero, 5/22).

We can’t ignore the massive business of these elections. For example, according to official electoral sources, there is at least \$394 million pesos that will be spent on this election (El Financiero, 5/22), and the 2017 budget for all the political parties combined is over \$4 billion pesos (Excelsior, 2/15). These figures may not even be an

accurate estimate, as the different ruling class parties sponsor various other activities and buy votes. It’s always necessary to consider the fact that all electoral parties spend exaggerated sums to promote themselves; to follow the money shows who really benefits.

What’s at Stake?

What drives the desire to win the electoral dispute in one of the most important states on a national level? It’s not the high poverty levels or the alarming rates of sexist violence. It’s the control of one of the most important industrial zones in the country at a key geostrategic point, with one side close to a metropolis that guarantees a cheap work force and the other side in the middle of the country’s most important commercial routes. If this were not enough, it’s also a migrant route for an exploited semi-slave workforce. We find ourselves in an upsurge of capitalist crisis, which will not hesitate to expose its fascist face and exalt the poisons of nationalism, individualism, and sexism, making it harder for workers to fight together against the international ruling class.

The bosses want to make us believe that nothing can be done to change the oppressive and exploitative system that is capitalism, but the Russian and Chinese workers showed that it is possible to wrench power from the capitalists and build a new society, led by the working class. Despite the dark night that offers imperialist war and fascism, the workers, with dedication and organization, will forge a communist future. ☪

Editorial

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and create a new society: “One Party, One World, One Class.”

While workers in the U.S. have seen an uptick in fightback against the Trump administration, it remains to be seen if Macron can effectively mislead and mute workers as effectively as Obama did in the U.S. Nonetheless, the fake left in France has shown its true colors by selling out the working class to the banks and capitalist system. And while Le Pen lost the election, her openly fascist party received more mass support from our class than ever.

No electoral capitalist party can defend workers against rising fascism. Only a revolutionary communist party like PLP can fight for the interests and needs of our class. Join us! ☪

Fight to Stop Deportation of Carimer Adujar

NEWARK, NJ, May 9—“Ho ho, hey hey, Carimer is here to stay!” “No hate, no fear, immigrants are welcome here!” So chanted a multiracial crowd of 300 students, union members, church leaders, and community fighters in support of Carimer Adujar, a 21-year-old student at Rutgers University at risk of deportation.

Carimer had been summoned to appear at a hearing at the Federal Building before ICE (the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency) that might have resulted in her detention and deportation. At the age of 4, Carimer immigrated to the U.S. from the Dominican Republic along with her sister and mother, who was fleeing from domestic abuse. Though Carimer is in the Obama-era DACA program (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals), she was still vulnerable to being deported.

Carimer is a founder and current president of a campus organization called “UndocuRutgers,” a support group for students with DACA status; her being summoned before ICE was widely interpreted as an attempt at political intimidation. But Carimer contacted the faculty union, the AAUP (American Association of University Professors). The union spearheaded a spirited rally to defend Carimer outside the Federal office where the ICE hearing was held. She rejoined the crowd after 2.5 hours and a five minute hearing, telling them that no further action was being taken in her case. She thanked the crowd warmly for their support, saying that had they not been present the case might have turned out very differently.

The rally displayed both strengths and limitations.

On the plus side: (1) Members of the Progressive Labor Party (PLP) distributed some 150 leaflets and copies of Challenge newspaper to the crowd. (2) The militancy of the crowd at the rally exemplified what “sanctuary” has to mean at this time. While lots of cities and university campuses have designated themselves as “sanctuary” zones (that is safe areas for people in danger of deportation), this doesn’t necessarily mean anything when push comes to shove. Rutgers President Robert Barchi, for instance, made a big deal of declaring Rutgers a “sanctuary” campus soon after the 2016 election, but he did not lift a finger to defend Carimer. It was up to students and workers to take up her cause. (3) The multiracial make-up of the crowd, and its rejection of racist immigrant-baiting, constitutes the kind of defense that is needed in these increasingly perilous times, when the ruling class is vigorously promoting racism and US nationalism. (4) Some of the speakers were pretty radical! One pastor of a church with many Indonesian members who have been detained and deported declared, “I am a man of God and am not supposed to hate anyone. But I HATE the government symbolized by that [Federal] building!”

On the negative side: (1) Only the PLP leaflet connected the attack on Carimer and the wave of attacks on undocumented immigrants with the larger crisis of capitalism and the designs of U.S. imperialism. PLers need to get more deeply involved in these pro sanctuary organizations and fight for a revolutionary, class based analysis that explains that it’s “the whole damn system” and a better world is possible.

(2) While a few speakers alluded to the millions of deportations that occurred under the Obama regime—“This situation is nothing new”—in general the Democratic Party (DP) got a free pass by the organizers of the rally. A number of prominent DP politicians sent their warm wishes to Carimer, even though they have done nothing to combat the wave of state terrorism against predominantly immigrant communities in New Jersey.

(3) Even the most militant speakers embraced U.S. nationalism, proclaiming the multiculturalist credo that immigrants have always “contributed” to “America” and are the source of its “greatness.” This kind of seemingly progressive patriotism is a sure loser for the working class.

So self critically, we need more PL members more deeply involved in the organizations that are defending NJ’s undocumented population from racist attacks. We were not able to have a PLP speaker at this rally though we did speak at a small May Day rally on the Rutgers campus the week before. We were able to expose the hypocrisy of President Barchi’s inaction around and explained the need to abolish the capitalist system that is at the core of all social injustices. But we need to get our revolutionary ideas out more often and in more places. We need to be more deeply involved in various NJ immigrants’ rights organizations; including those defending DACA youth. At the Federal building rally, PL was present only in our leaflets and newspapers. Our revolutionary class analysis would have made a big difference and would have been well received. You have to be in it to win it!👊

Preparing for Fight

DC Transit Workers Disrupt Board Meeting

WASHINGTON, DC, May 17—As the deadline to sign a new contract loomed on April 27, members of Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority’s (WMATA) largest union rallied outside a meeting of the agency’s board to protest management’s failure to bargain in good faith and its aggressive attacks on worker rights. With an initial force of 200 picketers that swelled to 500 before the rally ended, Local 689 members, and two other unions that lent their support, chanted demands for respect and fair treatment while joining hands and surrounding the block-long building. Bold chants of “Whats do we want, respect! When do we want it, now! If we don’t get it we’ll shut this system down” rang out.

WMATA wants to revoke numerous worker gains made in past bargaining agreements, freeze wages, and reduce medical benefits: all in the name of cost savings, most likely at the behest of company’s financial advisor and the man who brought Detroit to its knees as its emergency manager, Kevyn Orr.

The most outrageous WMATA proposal is to abolish the defined benefit retirement plan. This plan has been in existence since 1945, when the union struck against the private transit company that predated WMATA, Capital Transit, and forced the bosses to establish it. WMATA wants to place all new employees in a 401(k), which will drain and ultimately bankrupt the existing pension fund because there would be a steady decline of contributions to the defined benefit plan as older workers retire. This risky scheme could leave workers with nothing to live on in retirement and potentially rob them of the hard-earned money they put in: Investing giant Vanguard has reported declines in 401(k) market returns as well as the average value of 401(k) holdings.

The prospect of workers facing financial disaster in old age are high. Compounding the ordinary risk of market investment is the likelihood of a secondary recession that has followed every major recession in America (like the Great Recession of 2007-09), and which we can expect to experience. That means Local 689’s pension fund may soon be in real trouble. The implementation of this proposal spells disaster for current and future retirees, and, possibly, the survival of the union.

Already, new hires of Local 689 members will not receive medical benefits in retirement. According to a 2015 Fidelity Investment report, “... a couple, both aged 65 and retiring this year, can now expect to spend an estimated \$240,000 on health care throughout retire-



ment,” an 11 percent increase over the previous year and up 29 percent from 2005. This increase in medical costs far outpaces annual cost of living expenses, for which Local 689 retirees receive increases when active members do. Because health benefits are such an expense to WMATA, management is now pushing to increase worker premium contributions. The effects of such a blow from this major unionized company will echo throughout transit systems and many other unionized companies in the Mid-Atlantic region, and possibly throughout the nation. Active members may respond by using their medical benefits less often, which could lead to more than usual health adversities they may face upon retirement. Add to this the already existing health plan exemptions, and we may be leading into a national health crisis.

These draconian cost saving strategies have been designed by the US’s most well-known financial advisors, Kevyn Duane Orr, part-time “strategic executive adviser” to WMATA. WMATA paid a fee of \$1.75 million dollars for two years of service to legal juggernaut Jones Day, where Orr heads the Washington DC branch.

The details of this contract have yet to be released, so any additional hidden fees or bonuses may not be disclosed in the near future. The media ignores this payout, as well as the \$2.9 million that WMATA spent to retain the two consulting firms, McKinsey & Co and Ernst & Young, which were hired to reform WMATA’s management and financial practices. Instead, the media attacks workers as overpaid and incompetent, trying to divide the riding public from the workers.

The proposed cutbacks thus far have been in discrete identifiable expenses that may prove to be short term solutions at best. Management’s number one agenda item has been to curtail labor and benefit costs, yet very little attention has been given to operational issues that reflect management error and incompetence. One Local 689 member lamented with exasperation, “I had a brief correspondence with the Chief Operations Officer [James Leader] detailing the number of managers and possible malfeasance in my department.” He continued, “I even sent him a letter addressed to Mr.

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Protest Outside Liberty University During Trump's First Commencement Speech



end up helping the local Republicans. They pathetically called instead for a day of service to plant flowers in the city—their idea of “resistance”.

Which Way Forward?

Within SHPS there are different ideas about how to fight back. Several signs called for impeachment of Trump and attacked his connections to Russia. Chants of “Hey hey, ho ho, Donald Trump has got to go” was the most enthusiastic one. While Trump is a lightning rod for our anger, such chants do not expose the power, racism, war, and casual brutality of the capitalist class. Debating “Pence vs Trump” or even “Bernie Sanders/Elizabeth Warren/Kamala Harris/ Joe Biden vs Trump” will not lead us to the revolution against capitalism that we need. One PLP member said that the choice of a “competent fascist” versus “an incompetent fascist” was not what we were about. This point led to a much better discussion about capitalism and the way it generates racism and oppression. These analyses will have to intensify among SHPS members and their base. Similarly, the strategic emphasis on antiracism and multiracial unity must be strengthened.

Boldness Will Win

LU and its students make up 20 percent of the population of Lynchburg and provide many area jobs directly and indirectly. It is the center of the Liberty Council which brings lawsuits attacking LGBTQ rights and promotes Christianity in government. Many of the protestors had signs calling for “building a wall” between church and state and threw religious teachings back at Trump and the University for policies that attack the working

class. One sign said “Jesus was a Refugee”. One student skipped her graduation ceremony to protest the sexism of Trump and LU with a sign “Girlcoting my commencement”, a play on the more common word, “boycott.”

The PLP congratulates the SHPS for organizing this bold action, recognizing that, given the prominence of LU in the city and the rank intimidation carried out by Trumpists across the country, fears about job and personal security was real. But many of the protestors overcame such concerns and joined the rally.

Two young restaurant workers joined the rally after being told about it by a coworker—who had voted for Trump! Another woman came despite working with a LU contractor who is friends with Falwell.

Three racists arrived midway into our protest with a large flag supporting white supremacy and Trump. Members of PLP and SHPS confronted the racists and separated them from the group while chanting for 20 minutes. The racist flag bearer tried to parade in front of our line, but our forces kept pace and chanted at him the whole time, driving the racists about half a block away from the rest of the rally. The racist also offered a Pepsi to the protestors, mocking the rally and invoking memory of the racist Pepsi commercia. Our leadership showed that we cannot just ignore these racists. Confronting them as we did today, and eventually stopping them physically, will be necessary since Trump's racist goons are supported by the police and courts.

Boldness and solidarity can defeat fear, and the working class can defeat the fascists as more of its members learn the lessons of the world communist movement. Plant revolutionary ideas among the workers, not flowers in the gardens of the bosses.✪

LYNCHBURG, VIRGINIA, May 13—On May Day 2017, a young man from Lynchburg declared to the May Day marchers in Brooklyn, NY that Liberty University (LU), founded and led by the racist and conservatively religious Falwell family, would not be a “safe space” for President Donald Trump to give a commencement speech.

He was not just whistling Dixie! Over 200 protestors marched and chanted along Ward Road across from LU for four hours, condemning the president and the ruling class for their racist policies. “No Trump, No KKK, No Fascist USA!” rang out as friends and members of the Progressive Labor Party (PLP) from Maryland and Lynchburg joined others in the Seven Hills Progressive Society (SHPS) to challenge the racist U.S. president in a spirited rally.

Protestors carried signs condemning the Trump administration's efforts to destroy health care and education for the working class and to promote racism against immigrants. Meanwhile, the Democratic Party leadership in Lynchburg criticized the protest as a provocation that would

History: Scotsboro Case

Continued from page 8

The local NAACP was reluctant to help defend the working-class youth. But a whole year after the arrests, one of the women accusers of rape came forward and admitted there was no rape and that the police had forced her into lying. This created an upsurge in anger about the case and the NAACP finally joined the ILD in the campaign to free the young men.

In spite of the beatings, jailings and threats, the ILD kept both the mass campaign and the legal fight going by organizing meetings, rallies and raising money to pay legal fees and other expenses for the families of the Scotsboro Boys.

The All-Southern Scotsboro and Civil Rights Conference was one such mass meeting that went on in spite of Klan and police intimidation. In the days prior to the conference Klansmen organized a twenty-car motorcade through the Black community and distributed leaflets that read “Communism Will Not Be Tolerated.”

Nonetheless some three hundred Blacks and fifty whites packed the meeting room and between 500 and 1000 were turned away because of lack of space and by the military presence of the police who stationed eighty cops equipped with three machine guns in posts across the street from the hall.

...As Hosea Hudson [a Black communist and labour leader in Deep South] recalled many stood up to the intimidation. “[People] just walked all under them rifles, just went on in the door and on to the meeting.” (Hammer

and Hoe)

The fight to free the railroaded young men took many years. Charges were finally dropped for four of the nine defendants. Sentences for the rest ranged from 75 years to death. All but two served prison sentences; all were free by 1946.

You Cannot Kill the Working Class

Angelo Herndon, a Black communist labour organizer, summed up the significance of the struggle in his essay entitled “You Cannot Kill the Working Class.”

If you know the South as I do, you know what the Scotsboro case means. Here were the landlords in their fine plantation homes, and the big white bosses in their city mansions, and the whole brutal force of [private security] and police who do their bidding. There they sat, smug and self-satisfied, and oh, so sure that nothing could ever interfere with them and their ways. For all time they would be able to sweat and cheat the [Black] people, and jail and frame and lynch and shoot them, as they pleased.

And all of a sudden someone laid a hand on their arm and said: “STOP.” It was a great big hand, a powerful hand, the hand of the workers. The bosses were shocked and horrified and scared. I know that. And I know also that after the fight began for the Scotsboro boys, every [Black] worker in mill or mine, every [Black] cropper on the Black Belt plantations, breathed a little easier and held his head a little higher.✪

DC Metro

Continued from page 5

Weidefeld [the General Manager], but he never followed through.” By ignoring workers' efforts to improve the safety and functioning of the transit system, WMATA management is endangering the public and undercutting the viability of public transportation in the Washington, D.C. region.

In the words of Zachary M. Shrag, author of *The Great Society Subway*, “great fires inspire rebuilding.” The recent series of safety lapses in the transit system due to management incompetence—some resulting in death and injury—and the barrage of attacks from the General Manager Weidefeld and local politicians may be the accelerant that Local 689 needs to reinvigorate and reaffirm its members and their responsibility to the labor movement. Workers united have the power to change all things that harm their well-being and that of others. That unity will require knowledge that our membership to learn the specific history of Local 689, of the global labor movement, and of the revolutionary political leadership that can defeat the global and local capitalists, and then develop the right fightback strategy. As the anti-Apartheid leader Steve Biko declared, “The greatest weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed.” Armed instead with new revolutionary knowledge, and developing new dedicated selfless leadership, Local 689 will gain the power to defend their rights and help preserve the liberties of the working class.✪

MOVIE REVIEW: THIRTEENTH

CHICAGO, IL—“What struck me about this movie – and don’t get me wrong, there is tons of good information about how they invented the whole ‘war on drugs’ thing just so they could lock people up and turn us into modern-day slaves – but still I was struck by how every inmate you saw in this film was black. I guess a lot of what we see on TV and movies shows that picture, but I remember looking around in prison and thinking, ‘Hey, where did all these white dudes come from?’”

This comment came from a young, Black worker at a screening of *Thirteenth*, a documentary about mass incarceration and racism in the United States. This young man worked for the Worker’s Center for Racial Justice and, like about a third of Black men, had spent time behind bars before becoming a labor organizer. His critique of *Thirteenth* was a refreshing relief from the “white skin privilege” ideas that are all too common at university sponsored mass events like this.

Mass Incarceration Is a Class Issue

In the audience of about 50 people were some members of the Progressive Labor Party (PLP). Working in various organizations we get used to hearing all sorts of reformist political ideas, often promoting identity politics of some sort. Though a little surprising, it was good to hear someone state so clearly that, like racism and sexism, mass incarceration is a class issue.

More clearly than giving a long, political analysis, this young man nailed it with a key observation from his own life. It helped that he was a long time friend of several PLP comrades. He may not have noticed this skewed editing in the film had he not had a multiracial group of friends, many PLP members. It helped that he was engaged in demonstrations with us in Ferguson as well as rough-and-tumble debates about Black Nation-



alism in friends’ kitchens over the years. Having what was probably the sharpest political point raised by this friend also helped PLers as we struggle for revolutionary communist ideas inside the organization that put on the screening. Whether we argue for multiracial unity over identity politics or for the need to use violent means if we ever want to end capitalism, our ideas are more respected in the midst of a serious and consistent fight against racism.

Organizing for reforms is hard work and can be very frustrating. Some comrades think that the “progressives” in many organizations will never be revolutionaries. They are stuck on the roller coaster of reform, they

are too religious or they are too committed to capitalist ideas. Being a serious communist means not giving in to those anti-worker ideas. What makes us so special? We all believed a lot of the same capitalist hype until we were exposed to the Party’s ideas repeatedly over time by people who we respected. So our job is to be active in these reform organizations, to earn respect as we struggle together for some improvements in our lives. But, at the same time, we do not hide our communist politics. We explain that a better world is not only possible, but is necessary for the working class. Agreement may not come quickly, but the struggle continues!✊



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

Multibillion bail industry locks up innocent workers

NYT, 5/6 — Maranda O’Connell, a 22-year-old single mother in Harris County, Texas, was arrested...for driving without a valid license. The judge set her bail at \$2,500. She couldn’t afford anything close to that, so she spent three days in jail — even though she posed no risk of skipping town or endangering anyone if she were released....

Across America, poor people like Ms. O’Donnell are held in jail for days, weeks or even months solely because they don’t have the cash to bail themselves out. All...are presumed innocent under the law...yet most plead guilty just to get out (usually with a sentence of time served)....

Harris County, which includes Houston and has the third-largest jail system in the country.... Judges there require defendants to post bail, regardless of ability to pay....

As a result, poor people charge with a misdemeanor end up stuck behind bars, while people with money...charged with the same offense walk free....

...Poor defendants...are disproportionately black and Latino....

...As cash bail has fueled a politically influential, multibillion industry, courts are relying on it more and more, and people who can’t afford it are getting locked up at ever greater rates....Forty percent of all misdemeanor defendants in Texas are locked up until their cases are resolved,...most because they can’t afford bail.

The consequences can be devastating. Lives fall apart after even a few days in jail — whether

because of job or housing loss or having children taken away....

...Nationwide...an estimated 450,000 people are held in pre-trial detention on any given day....

The cash-bail industry, which includes local bond agents backed by multinational insurance giants violates the...rights of American’s most vulnerable citizens in the name of profit — and with no discernable benefit to the public.

Racist inequality persists in Jim Crow U.S.

NYT, 5/3 — African-Americans and Hispanics continue to lag behind their white counterparts in employment, income and education....

The Urban League calculates an “equality index,” that weighs economic factors, health, education, social justice and civic engagement to compare African-Americans to whites.

The group found that whites outgained Blacks in all...categories except social engagement, and assigned an overall equality rating of 72.3 percent, meaning that Black people “are missing about 28 percent of the pie....

He index for Hispanics compared to whites... was 78.4 percent....

...“The Obama years were no panacea for America’s longstanding racial inequities....

In the Milwaukee area...the unemployment rate among Blacks was 13.8 percent, compared with

2.7percent among whites....

In...Chicago, Cleveland, Minneapolis and Toledo, Ohio,...white households on average earned more than

twice as much as Black households.

Life in Flint as precarious as ever

NYT, 4/25 — On [a] block of crumbling bungalows on Flint’s [Michigan] west side, residents said that in

life in Flint was as precarious as ever. Many are still distrustful of their tap water....

But there has been no relief from some of their most entrenched though less-publicized problems. And many of those have grown worse because of the tainted water that poisoned residents and further eroded their city’s reputation and property values.

Look down the block and you see what we’re dealing with, said Lloyd Thomas, 70 a veteran of General Motors....

The house next door has burned down, like so many others in Flint. Often the fires are set by arsonists, bent on...insurance fraud, who are never caught. He pointed to the sloping surface of Zimmerman Street, a block pockmarked by craters and deep ruts that never seem to be fully fixed.

“They say things here are going to get better, that we’re going to have a recovery,” Mr. Thomas said. “I just keep waiting on it.”

UN Voted to End Occupation in Haiti

Reuters, 4/13 — The mission...landed in Haiti in 2004.... It became arguably best known for introducing a deadly cholera strain to the country — and then refusing for years to take responsibility for it.

The cholera outbreak, which began in 2010, has killed at least 9,500 people so far and infected hundreds of thousands of Haitians. The [United Nations apologized](#) last year and proposed to [compensate](#) affected Haitians, but has [yet to raise money](#) for the effort. Of the \$400 million that the United Nations says it needs, it has received \$2.66 million, from only six countries....

The mission has also recently been troubled by allegations of sexual abuse. A sex ring, operated by Sri Lankan soldiers...exploited at least nine children, according to an internal United Nations report, The Associated Press reported.

BLACK AND RED, UNTOLD HISTORY PART I

THE FIGHT TO FREE THE SCOTTSBORO BOYS

History has segregated the fight against racism and the fight for an egalitarian system, communism. In reality, the two were connected like flesh and bone. Many antiracist struggles were led by, initiated by, or were fought with communists and communist-influenced organizations. Many Black fighters were also dedicated communists and pro-communists of their time.

In turn, the bosses have used anti-communism as a tool to terrorize and divide antiracist fightback. Regardless of communist affiliation, anyone who fought racism was at risk of being redbaited. Why? 1) The ruling class understands the natural relationship between antiracism and communism, and 2) Multiracial unity threatens the very racist system the bosses “work so hard” to maintain.

Below is part I of a series aimed at reuniting the history of communism with antiracism. Robin D.G. Kelley’s book *Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists during the Great Depression*, excerpted throughout this piece, is a good supplement for those who would like to find out more.

In the years after slavery, Southern U.S. bosses used racist terror in the form of the Ku Klux Klan, police beatings, and lynching, legal and extra-legal, to keep Black workers oppressed and as a source of cheap labor to drive down the wages of all workers Black and white.

Robin D.G. Kelley in *Hammer and Hoe* described it as the following:

White supremacist groups [including the KKK] organized by some of [Birmingham’s] leading citizens...enjoyed huge numerical and financial support...Klansmen [through intimidation and violence] sought to cleanse their city of Jews, Catholics, labor agitators, and recalcitrant African-Americans who refused to accept “their place” in the hierarchy of race

The Southern bosses police and kangaroo courts (sham legal proceedings) were the heart of this injustice system.

“Fear [of the Southern injustice system] came from the knowledge that the color of your skin made you a suspect—a suspect that looked just like the prime suspect—every time the police were looking for a black man.” (WNYC 2/1/2013)

When workers united and fought back against this terror, the bosses often used racism and anti-communism to try to divide the working class.



A rally demanding the freedom of the Scottsboro Boys in front of the White House (1933).

The Scottsboro Boys

On March 25, 1931 nine Black teenagers age 13 to 19 were pulled from a freight car near Paint Rock, Alabama and charged with raping two white women. Within three days, the young men were tried by an all-white jury, convicted and sentenced to death. A lynch mob gathered at the jail in Scottsboro, demanding the young men be turned over to the racist rioters.

Courthouse lynchings like this were common for Black workers and youth living in the Jim Crow south. So common in fact that the local branch of The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the other civic organizations, focused on helping small business owners, didn’t even respond to the case.

Communists, First Responders

One organization did respond, the International Labor Defense (ILD), a workers’ defense organization initiated by the Communist Party. ILD was made up of communist and non-communist workers, Black and white. Within days of the sham trial, the ILD set up a defense committee, obtained lawyers for the nine young men on death row and built the defense of the Scottsboro Boys into a worldwide cause that saved them from the electric chair and after a many years-long battle eventually won their freedom.

The fight to defend the Scottsboro Boys involved several thousands of people around the world. The ILD organized mass meetings where family members of the wrongly convicted young men would speak alongside members of the ILD.

Bosses Counter with Terror

The Southern bosses were terrified of this multiracial movement against lynchings and responded with a campaign of terror against Black and white supporters of the campaign. Along with the physical terror carried out by the Klan, a campaign of anti-communism was launched to scare workers away from the fight to save the Scottsboro Boys.

The anticommunist campaign took several forms. The kkkops arrested people, and beat people suspected of being supporters of the ILD. Black and white women were arrested and threatened with rape by the police. The bosses’ press spread anti-communism.

The Birmingham Labor Advocate warned its readers to beware of outside agitators who, “under the cover of darkness,” disseminated “Red literature preaching free love [and] inter marriage. (Hammer and Hoe)

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