

# CHALLENGE



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## CHICAGO: ANTIRACISTS CONFRONT 'ACT FOR AMERICA'

# DEATH TO FASCISM



**CHICAGO, June 10**—The fascist group “ACT for America” attempted to hold a rally in Chicago to spread racist anti-Muslim hate speech today, and to provoke anti-immigrant hatred under the guise of protesting so-called “Sharia [Muslim] Law.” Unfortunately for these neo-Nazis, they were outnumbered two to one, and directly confronted by a counter-protest led by Progressive Labor Party members and friends who chanted “Death, death, death, to the fascists! Power, power, power to the workers!”

### PLP Sets The Tone: Smash Fascism!

At their racist debut in Chicago, despite their absurd costumes, motley signs, and flag waving, there was nothing funny about these white nationalist proto-Nazis and their racist message. Through their rhetoric, they try to demonize Muslims to set the stage for racist attacks.

Police separated the two groups, allowing the ACT fascists to set up on one street corner unrestricted, while surrounding anti-racist protesters across the street with police and barricades. Our PLP contingent and friends immediately made a plan to cross the street and confront the fascists, while selling CHALLENGE and asking other anti-racists to join us.

Although many protesters agreed that we shouldn't have been pinned down while the racists were not, most were still reluctant to join us. PLP members with their signs crossed the barricades and directly confronted ACT members, pushing them off the sidewalk. The racists ended up with their backs to the Chicago River and surrounded by anti-racist demonstrators. By this time, many more had joined us in confronting the racists. ACT members had nowhere to go and their message was drowned out by chants of “Asian, Latin, Black, and white – workers of the world unite!” and “The only solution is communist revolution!” The police quickly rushed to protect the small band of white supremacists who fled on foot.

PLP members distributed about 100 CHALLENGES and collected contact information from workers who are interested in coming to meetings. Some expressed support in attending the upcoming trial on Wednesday, June 21 8:30 am at 26th and California, of a protester who was arrested and held in contempt of court during the trial of Jason Van Dyke, the racist cop who murdered Laquan McDonald.

### Brigitte Gabriel: Servant of U.S. Capitalist Class

The growth of fascist movements occurs

### ACT: Mainstreaming Fascism

ACT for America draws its members from various gutter variety right-wing groups, including but not limited to the Tea Party, Trump supporters, and anti-immigrant groups. They claim a membership in the hundreds of thousands, with members organized into teams to pressure their local newspapers, elected officials and local school boards with their racist politics. This includes attempting to ban restaurants and public schools from serving food prepared according to Muslim dietary requirements, called “halal,” because this “indirectly contributes to Islamic terrorism” and apparently subverts so-called “American” values (ACT Houston and Seattle websites).

Founded by Lebanese-born Christian fascist Brigitte Gabriel, it's also been named an extremist hate group by the liberal Southern Poverty Law Center. When Gabriel isn't working to advance anti-Muslim legislation like protecting free speech for racists or restricting where refugees can settle (ACT website), she's busy flooding U.S. workers with wild anti-immigrant racist hate speech, like calling Arabs “barbarians” and implying that all Muslims are potential terrorists (CNN, 3/8/11) and “painting a wide swath of humanity as subhuman” (Talk To Action, 8/15/07).

In her 2008 book, They Must Be Stopped, Gabriel wrote that “terrorist attacks...are what Islam is at its very core” (The Atlantic, 3/21/17). Neo-Nazis and racists have picked up these arguments to justify racist violence against workers of Middle Eastern and South Asian descent. The communist Progressive Labor Party opposes all religions and religious thinking, and fights to win all workers to the scientific outlook of dialectical materialism. However, let's not be fooled by the capitalist media and the religious mask that neo-Nazi movements are using to commit racist terror against our working class sisters and brothers who, for now, follow the Muslim faith.

alongside disarray and weakness within the U.S. capitalist class, manifested by the embattled Trump administration.

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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?

CHALLENGE is for the working class, produced by the working class. 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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Editorials

# Qatar and Inter-Imperialist Rivalry

# A Widening Gulf

Disarray in the U.S. ruling class is creating more instability worldwide. On June 5, two weeks after President Donald Trump was feted by state terrorist Saudi rulers, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and four other Middle Eastern countries (Libya, Yemen, United Arab Emirates, and Bahrain) cut all ties with the tiny island nation of Qatar.

A flare-up between Saudi Arabia and Qatar, both crucial to U.S. imperialism, can only make the region even more volatile. But the brunt of the Saudi coalition’s blockade will fall on the backs of the Qatari working class.

The Saudi rulers have charged that Qatar funds extremist Islamic groups like Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood—and, most damning, because it’s too cozy with Saudi Arabia’s main regional rival, Iran. The hypocrisy of bosses the world over knows no limits. Capitalist-run Qatar attacks workers on a daily basis. So do all of the country’s accusers. And so does the United States, most monstrously of all. Collectively, these capitalist bosses have the blood of our class on their hands.

## Isolation of Qatar, Proxy Attack on Iran

Amid its sharpening competition with China and Russia, the relative decline of the U.S. has created instability and anxiety for countries relying on U.S. hegemony to maintain their oil profits and control aggression by warring regional powers.

The Middle East contains two main imperialist camps: Russia, Iran, and Turkey on one side, and the

U.S., Saudi Arabia, and Israel on the other. Both sides are ready and willing to slaughter workers to come out on top. The international working class has no dog in this fight.

The bosses of Sunni-dominated Saudi Arabia and Shia Iran have been at each others’ throats for decades. While they often couch their conflict in religious terms to mislead masses of workers, their real conflict is over political power and control over resources in the Persian Gulf. In moving against Qatar, Saudi Arabia, a virtual slave state and the world’s biggest oil producer, is closely allied with the U.S., aims to check Iranian influence. Qatar and Iran share the offshore North Field, the world’s largest natural gas deposit. The Saudis want to stop Qatar’s funding of regional threats (like Hamas in the Gaza Strip), and to quash Al Jazeera, the Qatari-based media outlet that builds unrest among workers in Saudi Arabia.

## A Problematic U.S. Ally

Qatar’s Al Udeid Air Base is home to the largest U.S. military base in the Middle East. It hosts 11,000 military personnel in the U.S. Air Force and the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), and is “a core part of Washington’s worldwide military infrastructure” (Foreign Affairs, 6/13). CENTCOM uses Qatar as a forward operating base for its mass murders in the Middle East, including bombings of civilians in Syria and Iraq. At the same time, Qatar wields political and economic influence that make it an uncomfortable U.S. ally:

*Continued on page 5*

## Disarray in UK

# On Road to Fascism

An army of “homeless people” is stationed across British cities, armed with Heckler and Koch MP7 rifles.

The British Army’s Special Air Service troops have been deployed as part of a new strategy against terror attacks.

Over the past three months, the working class of the United Kingdom has suffered three terrorist attacks, two in London and one in Manchester. For the bosses, these events have underscored the bosses’ debate over which brand of fascism will rule Britain. On June 8, when Jeremy Corbyn’s Labour Party made a surprisingly strong election showing against the ruling Conservatives, the disagreement got even sharper.

## Building a Police State

The British imperialists have created their own terrorists by funding and fueling religious violence in the Middle East in their pursuit of oil, profit, and power.

Now, after these three vile attacks of individual terrorism, the UK’s capitalist bosses are moving more urgently to impose fascism—a heightened form of state terrorism—on the home front.

Prime Minister Theresa May, after being criticized for her role in overseeing police cuts, called for bolstering of police and security forces, including “changing human-rights laws to restrict the movement of suspects and ease their deportation” (Economist, 6/10).

While general police budget has been cut due to dropping crime rates, the budget for counter-terrorism “rose from £579m (\$750 million) in 2010-11 to £633m in 2017-18. The intelligence agencies were given the go-ahead to recruit almost 2,000 extra officers in 2015, as the threat from Islamic State emerged” (Economist, 6/10).

Despite these increases, Britain’s former counter-terrorism chief Robert Quick charged that cuts to the police budget, and specifically “community policing,” has “hurt their counter-terrorism efforts” (Guardian, 6/6).

Others are advocating the recruitment of working-class people—including young Muslims—to be the

eyes and arms of the capitalist state.

Cornwall police commissioner Alison Hernandez entertained the idea of civilian gun owners “helping defend rural areas against terror attack” (Guardian, 6/12). Though a senior officer dismissed the idea, the debate reflects a ruling class in disarray and in a dance with rising fascism.

## Things Fall Apart

After its June 8 elections, the UK now has a prime minister who has lost respect, authority, and the Conservative Party’s majority in Parliament.

Next week, May is scheduled to begin negotiations on Britain’s breakup with the European Union. She appears unlikely to last long as prime minister, but whoever has the job will need to grapple with a UK in internal disarray, with declining real wages and a rise in racist nationalism. In other words, Britain looks much like the U.S. in the Donald Trump era.

Labor Party leader Jeremy Corbyn, the UK’s Bernie Sanders, successfully misled much of the British youth who bothered to turn out to vote. Corbyn proposed not only to nationalize mail, rail, and energy businesses, but also to “raise corporation tax by more than a third over the next three years and plow the proceeds into schools and universities” (Bloomberg, 5/9). The disciplining of billionaires and nationalizing of companies is a hallmark of a country on the road to fascism and war.

## Road to Revolution

Workers in UK, Europe, and worldwide have no real stake in one camp of fascists over another. While it is uncertain how the instability of the UK’s rulers will play out, the working class can be sure to expect more attacks on our class—be it from individual terrorists, state terrorists, or more wars.

Progressive Labor Party calls on workers to build a road to communist revolution. We carry on and advance the fight of communists before us. Join us as we construct an international Party to overthrow this horrifying profit system.☸

# Los Angeles: Suspended for Fighting Racism

**LOS ANGELES, June 12**—In a cowardly move meant to halt resistance, Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) suspended three teachers at a high school here, including a PL teacher, one week before summer break. The teachers were associated with citywide student walkouts in protest of Trump's inauguration over six months ago.

What began as a letter of misconduct turned into a mandatory suspension. These teachers allowed discussions in their classes around important issues, like police terror and anti-immigrant policies. Apparently, that is a suspendable offense! Waiting a week before summer break is an obvious attempt by the district to curb the ability of the staff, parents, and students to organize against these suspensions.

Our fellow teachers have shown support and fightback. Half of the faculty signed a letter protesting the suspensions and the underlying message they are sending to the teachers about discussing political issues in class. Students confronted the principal in person to demand answers.

## School Bosses Expose Themselves as Racists

This segregated school is nearly 100 percent Black and Latin and has a history of walkouts organized by students. Suspending teachers associated with the walkout is a silencing and terrorization strategy by the school bosses. The principal even interrogated students. When the school district decides to discipline teachers in response to student fightback, they are sending a clear racist message to students, families, and workers.

They do not care that sexist, anti-immigrant, and racist rhetoric angers our working class brothers and sisters. They do not care that racist segregation of schools continues to leave Black and Latin students behind. They do not care that



Thousands of high school students in Los Angeles protest the election victory of Donald Trump in November 2016.

the police are killing our Black and Latin working-class brothers and sisters with impunity. They do not want students to voice their opinions or take an active stand against racism and sexism. They just want them to stay in class and learn to be obedient to the system.

LAUSD, the largest public school system after New York City, is exposing themselves to be the racist ruling-class agents that they are. Nearly three-fourths of students are Latin. Though Black students make up 9.16 percent of the population, they received 32.3 percent of suspensions in 2014 (Daily News, 1/14/15). When teachers are shut

down for fighting racism, it's a racist attack on students' education. LAUSD has confirmed that segregation and racism are no accident; they're part of the bosses' plan to keep the future working class divided and alienated.

Teachers in other parts of the city are facing similar attacks, some also suspended. A plan is in the works to have a larger, more general protest to the district's attempt to silence teachers and students during a critical time of increased fascism in the country. We will keep CHALLENGE informed as we move forward. The class struggle continues!✊

# Fight to Change School's Racist Name



**VIRGINIA, June 8**—Forty advocates for changing J.E.B. Stuart High School's racist name rocked Virginia's Fairfax County School Board meeting with bold anti-racist speeches amid a cheering throng of supporters.

## Students Give Leadership

In this two-year fight, Black students in the high school have given leadership. Two Black Stuart high school students led off tonight's testimonies, declaring that unless the school board changed the name, it would forever be linked with the racist segregationist school board that named the school in 1958.

"I walk into the weight room [every Tuesday and Thursday] to see a giant mural of J. E. B Stuart painted on a wall in front of me. He's portrayed like a hero...This sends a message to me that General Stuart and what he fought for is deemed heroic...My ancestors being bought and sold like cattle is OK, because J.E.B. Stuart was a patriot," said one student.

## 19th Century Fascist

Stuart was a general and considered the "eyes and ears" of the Confederate Army. He fought to preserve slavery in the 1860s during the Civil War in the United States. Stuart helped capture white anti-racist abolitionist John Brown at Harpers Ferry in 1859. (With the help of Frederick Douglass and Harriet Tubman, John Brown organized armed insurrections against slave owners. For his fight against slavery, he was executed.)

Racist Stuart made a name for himself by literally fighting to keep the right to oppress, exploit, and murder Black and indigenous peoples. He served during Bleeding Kansas and in the bloody border wars against indigenous people.

J.E.B. Stuart is the most diverse high school in



Fairfax County: only a quarter of the students are white, a little over 60 percent are Latin and Black. This struggle to change the high school's name is giving the school and county community an opportunity to be on the side of anti-racism. Some adults and students who are in favor of keeping Stuart's name said they were called white supremacists and felt intimidated. But that is no excuse for their racism!

The school board is scheduled to vote on the name change on June 22. More next issue!✊

# Colleges, A Site of Fightback

### Atlanta University Protests | 1960

A group of civil-rights leaders, including Martin Luther King Jr. joined thousands of students who marched and staged sit-ins at local businesses, from lunch counters to department stores.

### Berkeley Sit-In | 1964

A student-led all-night sit in was the culminating demonstration of one of the most seminal protests of the Free Speech Movement, after a student was arrested for handing out information on civil rights on campus. Nearly 800 students were arrested as part of the sit-in, resulting in the university voting to end all restrictions on political activity.

### Columbia U. Vietnam Protest | 1968

Students raised the Viet Cong flag as they took occupation of a campus building that lasted for close to a week calling for the university to stop conducting research for the Vietnam War. After negotiations with the administration failed, more than 700 students were arrested and attacked.

### Harvard Strike | 1969

Led by Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), over the span of two weeks, Harvard students who were opposed to the Vietnam War and its Reserve Officers' Training Corps presence on campus organized a series of demonstrations. After students overtook one of the college's oldest buildings, University Hall, administrators called in police who used Mace and clubs to attack the demonstrators.



### Jackson State College | 1970

During protests against the Vietnam War, a group of mostly Black students at Jackson State College (now University), were confronted by city and state police in the middle of the night. The students held an event in objection to the invasion of Cambodia, prompting 75 local police units to be dispatched. Police began shooting into the crowd, killing two students and leaving 12 injured. Many more sustained minor injuries from broken glass in the incident, wherein 30 seconds of gunfire and 140 shotgun rounds left every window along one city street shattered.

### Kent State | 1970

Also known as the Kent State Massacre, thousands of students began protesting after President Nixon announced the U.S. invasion of Cambodia. After the crowds refused to disperse, the National Guard first used tear gas against protesters, and then opened fire, killing four students and wounding nine others.

### National Movement | 1972

SDS organized a multi-school national movement against racist eugenicists Arthur Jensen, Richard Herstein, and William Shockley. University Action Group succeeded in getting resolutions passed in multiple professional organizations condemning the racist "theories." Scientists & Engineers of Social and Political Action later succeeded in getting the American Physics Society to "dissociate" itself from the physicist Shockley's racist "theories" as well.

### Columbia U. Against Apartheid | 1985

Students took part in a three-week demonstration to push the school to divest its investments to go to South Africa. The demonstration pushed the Union Theological Seminary's board of directors to sell its holdings in American companies with "major, direct involvement in South Africa."

## Graduates Defy Racist Speakers

Throughout the months of May and June, students across the United States have been taking stands, turning their backs, and loudly protesting the racist commencement speakers their colleges and universities have invited to send them off into the "real world."

### Colleges: Ruling-Class Institutions

Established just less than 400 years ago, the U.S. university system has been a breeding ground for imperialist leaders, think tanks, and providing funding for mass murders around the world.

As a microcosm of the state, college campuses exist to develop the ruling-class thought leaders while also giving liberal-leaning students enough leeway to buy into the façade of activism and first amendment "rights." College campus sit-ins, peaceful protests, and study groups have often been bolstered by institutions, teachers and administrations until they grew organized, militant, and—most threatening—integrated.

### A Contradiction for the Bosses

The bosses, and the institutions they rely on to maintain state power, need racism to keep workers divided. This year, U.S. bosses are in one of their greatest binds in recent years. With the undisciplined, racist, sexist, and fascist Donald Trump at the supposed helm of the country, the main wing of the ruling-class is struggling to maintain order, while also encouraging their biggest resource for ideological control and profit.

College students and workers have historically played a central role in anti-racist movements (see spread above). The Civil Rights movement, protest against Vietnam, Cambodia, and Apartheid in South Africa and Israel were led by integrated student groups.

This year, however, students are under attack for even the most peaceful of protests. Major media outlets, another arm of the capitalist system, ganged up on students for boldly disrupting racist commencement speakers. Meanwhile, new laws in Illinois, Tennessee, Colorado and Arizona are also in consideration in an effort to prevent institutions and students from dis-inviting speakers and force administrations to penalize students

who obstruct and protest. (USA Today, 5/10)

Students at Bethune-Cookman Univeristy, a Historically Black College and University (HBCU) in Florida, stood up, turned their backs on, and booed their commencement speaker—Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos, who was invited to speak after Trump promised funding for HBCUs. Racist DeVos called HBCU's "pioneers when it comes to school choice," when in reality, such colleges were the only option for Black workers during de jure segregation. The college's president publicly chastised this group of all Black students; later on, the bosses' media attacked them with numerous headlines.

"Some students stood up and turned their back, and the booing was so loud at different points in the speech that the school's president stood up, interrupted DeVos, took the microphone, and said to the students, "If this behavior continues, your degrees will be mailed to you. Choose which way you want to go." (The Washington Post, 5/12)

At Yale thousands of graduate students and workers marched toward the commencement ceremony last month to demand the school begin negotiations with a union that was formed by students after the National Labor Relations Board lifted a ban on organizing teachers' assistants and researchers at private universities. (CHALLENGE, 6/14)

And perhaps the most outrageous attack in recent months was towards the group of integrated students at Middlebury College who shut down a speech by the racist and sexist eugenicist Charles Murray. (CHALLENGE, 4/19) The students have since been charged with serious penalties and been labeled "violent" and "unruly" for protesting the leading voice in eugenics.

Racist teachers and administrators are disguising their racism as pro-free speech. "In this country, threat kind of speech is legal. We have no hate speech exception in the first amendment. Even stopping the most virulent Nazi on campus isn't free speech; it is civil disobedience," said James Weinstein, professor of constitutional law at Arizona State University (USA Today, 5/13).

However, students at Notre Dame, a private

and predominately white university, have only gotten praise for walking out on Vice President Mike Pence, who was invited to speak at the commencement in lieu of Trump. "School officials knew of the student walkout plans and did not try to stop them. The students – more than 100 out of a few thousand who were earning degrees – walked quietly out, and there were some cheers and boos sounded, through only briefly" (The Washington Post, 5/21).

Students have historically been given space to explore varying political ideologies and practices at college but within limits controllable by the ruling-class. The bosses play a balancing game between their need for a vibrant movement that keeps the farce of democracy and patriotism alive and their need to control and funnel the movement for their war aims.

Multiracial student movements, a threat to the bosses, are quickly shutdown by any means necessary. New York Times columnist Frank Bruni exposes himself for the ruling-class mouthpiece he is when he instructs working-class and multiracial students to not "bite the hand that feeds them."

"They ratchet up their language to a degree that weakens its currency for direr circumstances. And they undermine their goals—our goals—by pushing away good-hearted allies and handling ammunition to the very people who itch to dismiss them" (NYT, 6/3).

### Pledge to Continue to Fight

CHALLENGE says hats off to all graduates and students who organized against racist speakers! As young and future workers at colleges across the country continue to expose these institutions as racist-for-profit breeding grounds, the need for political leadership and guidance is greater than ever. Commencement speech protests may be the first fightback as students join workforces that are equally as racist, sexist, and segregated.

Graduates, the struggle for a better world continues and the working-class needs you to pledge allegiance to a lifetime of antiracism. Only a multiracial international movement for communism can abolish this segregated society once and for all.✊

# Qatar & Imperialist Rivalry



Continued from page 2

*Qatar...is known in Washington political circles less as a reliable partner than as the home of Al Jazeera (which is often critical of U.S. policy), a sponsor of the Muslim Brotherhood (which many U.S. observers oppose), and an antagonist of the U.S.-backed government of Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi....*

*And Qatar's liquefied natural gas is critical to states across the world, from the United Kingdom to China, India, Japan, and South Korea: a healthy set of allies should the situation escalate further (Foreign Affairs, 6/13).*

By resuming development of North Field after a 12-year moratorium, Qatar's gas supply is expected to increase by 10 percent, to a capacity of 2 billion cubic feet per day, the equivalent of 400,000 barrels of oil (Reuters, 4/3). This signals a move to compete with Saudi oil, already hit by declining prices.

Meanwhile, the isolation campaign against Qatar puts Chinese imperialists in a bind:

*[It] pressures China to take sides, complicates its effort to tiptoe through the minefield of Middle Eastern conflicts and rivalries by maintaining good relations with all parties, and threatens its Belt and Road Initiative with the likely expansion of the Saudi-Iranian proxy war into Balochistan, a key Pakistani node of the plan (South China Morning Post, 6/12).*

## U.S. Empire in Decay

After Trump recklessly applauded Saudi Arabia's anti-Qatar campaign, the dominant section of the U.S. ruling class quickly reined him in: "In a phone call with the Qatari Emir, Trump extended an olive branch offering to help the parties resolve their differences by coming to a White House meeting if necessary" (CNN, 6/8).

Mindful of Qatar's importance to U.S. military interests, U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, former CEO of ExxonMobil, added, "We certainly would encourage the parties to sit down together and address these differences....[W]e think it is important that the [Gulf Cooperation Council] remain unified" (Vox, 6/6).

## Fightback Points to a Communist Future

The working class in the Middle East faces some of the most brutal horrors that capitalism can unleash. Divisive nationalism and religious dogma may be primary at the moment, but their hold on workers' consciousness is far from eternal. The rich history of communist-led fightback in this region demonstrates how workers throughout the world have been won away from the bosses' lethal ideology to international revolutionary struggle. Those workers can be won again!

Working people everywhere need to join and build the international Progressive Labor Party. We must develop the Party into the weapon that de-

stroys the bosses' deadly system—and into the tool that builds a classless, communist world.☸

## Religious Identity vs. Communist Consciousness

Over the past century, religious and ethnic identity have displaced class consciousness in the Middle East. That monumental shift has devastated the working class. The winning of masses of workers to Shia or Sunni Islam, or to racist Zionism in Israel, is the root cause of the region's dead-end conflicts. Only communist revolution can solve them.

In the mid-20th century, the international communist movement, though infected by revisionist politics that would ultimately lead to its reversal, was strong across much of the Middle East. A non-religious, anti-sexist, anti-imperialist workers movement led millions. To defend their ruthless profit system, the U.S. bosses deployed the CIA to stage a coup and installed the mass-murderous Shah of Iran. In Iraq, the U.S. rulers backed the brutal, anti-communist Ba'ath Party. In the 1960s, before he rose to power and then fell out of U.S. favor, Saddam Hussein actively colluded with the CIA: "Using lists of suspected Communists and other leftists provided by the C.I.A., the Baathists systematically murdered untold numbers of Iraq's educated elite -- killings in which Saddam Hussein himself is said to have participated" (New York Times, 3/14/03).

In 1979, in Iran, the Shia mullahs who overthrew the Shah, a U.S. puppet, removed their oil-rich state from U.S. imperialist control. But the new regime was also firmly anti-communist. It was in this context, with a weakened working class, that the Carter Doctrine declared U.S. primacy in the Middle East.

Since then, the U.S. bosses have sowed chaos in the region in their increasingly desperate efforts to control Middle Eastern oil. Millions of workers' lives have been sacrificed to the rulers' profits. In the U.S., anti-Black racism and the citizen-immigrant divide are the key fault lines that weaken the working class and make us vulnerable to the bosses' attacks. In the Middle East, religious, ethnic, and nationalist loyalties have served the same destructive purpose.

Saddam Hussein showered a corrupt Sunni elite with bribes while imposing fascist terror on the Shia and Kurdish populations. In 1980, with U.S. backing, he launched a devastating eight-year war on Iran in which millions died. The Gulf States, from Saudi Arabia to Qatar and beyond, divide and exploit their working classes along national and religious lines. The workers of Saudi Arabia's oil-rich eastern region are super-exploited Shia Muslims and Pakistani immigrants.

The workers of the Middle East will continue to be used as fodder by the bosses as long as they remain won to reactionary, capitalist ideas that cloud their common class interest: the overthrow of capitalism.

# Chicago Confronts Fascists

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No matter what happens with Trump, the belief that "all Muslims are terrorists" does not begin or end with him, and it's an idea that only serves the ruling U.S. capitalist class. On the one hand, the U.S. bosses are trying to win Black, Latin, Muslim and immigrant workers to fight and die for U.S. imperialism. On the other hand, fighting for U.S. imperialism means committing genocidal-scale mass slaughter for control over global oil in the Middle East and Central Asia. And in terms of preparing workers in the U.S. for imperialist war, Gabriel serves an important role.

ACT for America's founder Brigitte Gabriel (see box), far from being some fringe element enjoying a few moments of fame, is firmly entrenched within the U.S. ruling class. Through her contacts with U.S. security personnel and the White House, Gabriel has long advocated for the profiling and surveillance of Muslim workers in the U.S. According to The Atlantic, "former National Security Advisor, Michael Flynn, served on ACT's board. CIA Director Mike Pompeo last year won the group's National Security Eagle Award. Trump counterterrorism advisor Sebastian Gorka has spoken before ACT chapters."

In October of 2016, her website announced that her racism had earned her membership in one of the bosses' bizarre private members-only fraternities, the "Knights of Malta." Now, Gabriel enjoys expensive vacations with fellow former mass murderers for the U.S. capitalist class like Henry Kissinger, Tony Blair, and George H.W. Bush.

## Anti-Fascists Turn Up

ACT for America held demonstrations in 25 cities and towns around the U.S. Almost everywhere they were greeted by crowds of anti-fascist workers and youth, often outnumbering the fascists who dared to show their faces with the racist, neo-Nazi filth of ACT for America. In Pennsylvania, the KKK-tied "Oath Keepers" provided security for ACT fascists while in Seattle, youth and police engaged in street battles. In California at the site of the San Bernardino terrorist attack, ACT fascists tried smashing car windows of the multi-racial anti-fascists, who formed a wall with linked arms before police dispersed the crowd.

Workers and youth in the U.S. are not taking these neo-Nazis lying down! These are good signs for the working class as we steel ourselves for the battles ahead! While many workers and youth are today marching under liberal and pacifist misleadership of capitalist-controlled religious groups and organizations, many are looking for an alternative. An alternative to not just defeating the fascists and neo-Nazis in the streets, but for a whole new world. PLP believes in fighting for communist revolution and uniting as one international working class. The bosses' cops, the courts, their laws and their pacifist misleaders set the tone for the capitalist ruling class. Our actions as communists in the Progressive Labor Party must set the tone for the working class. Join us and fight back for the communist world our class deserves!☸

Review of *Yezhov vs. Stalin*

# Dispelling Anti-Communist Myth of Red Hero, Joseph Stalin

The 1930s were a decade of raging worldwide class war. Everywhere, workers were inspired to fight back against capitalism by the example of the world's first workers' state, the Soviet Union. From North and South America to Europe, Africa and Asia, communist-led workers led strikes and armed insurrection as the capitalist classes prepared for what became World War II. Within the Soviet Union, the class war raged just as bitterly, but the working class there had one huge advantage over the capitalists and their allies—the workers had won and held state power.

One of the organs of power used by the Soviet Union to hold class rule during this period was the Commission for Internal Affairs (Russian acronym "NKVD"). Soviet workers created the NKVD to manage everything from internal security, to border control and firefighting. For capitalists around the world, lies and partial-truths about the NKVD are key to attacking the example of the Soviet Union.

In particular, anticommunists use a series of executions that occurred from 1936-1939 to slander the entire Soviet workers' state. Recent scholarship is helping workers around the world understand this period of time. A new book by Grover Furr, *Yezhov vs. Stalin*, describes the monumental 1930s villainy of Nikolai Yezhov, head of the NKVD.

## Red Thirties: Building a New World

Black pro-communist poet Langston Hughes once described the Soviet Union of the 1930s in his autobiography as a land with "no Jim Crow," and also "a land still in flux" in places "where Soviet patterns [of life] were as yet none too firmly fixed." Hughes marveled at what the diverse, multiethnic Soviet working class was building - without blueprints for their new society - while recognizing it was a state at war with capitalist habits and capitalist allies attempting to mount a comeback.

Despite numerous struggles and an uneven pace of development, masses of workers built an industrial base where there was none before in a matter of a few years. All the while they also built schools, libraries and worked toward abolishing racism, sexist treatment of women, child labor, hunger, illiteracy, and low standards of living. It was not a utopian paradise, but a glimpse of what the working class can do once it holds state power.

As the Soviet Union forged ahead, the rest of the world sank into the Great Depression, fascism, and imperialist war. In 1931, Japanese fascists invaded China; German fascists took power in 1933; Italian fascists invaded Ethiopia in 1935, and both German and Italian fascists invaded Spain in 1936. The Soviet Union's dizzying progress spurred a sharpening internal class struggle, as pro-capitalist forces inside and around the world recognized the Soviets as a mortal threat.

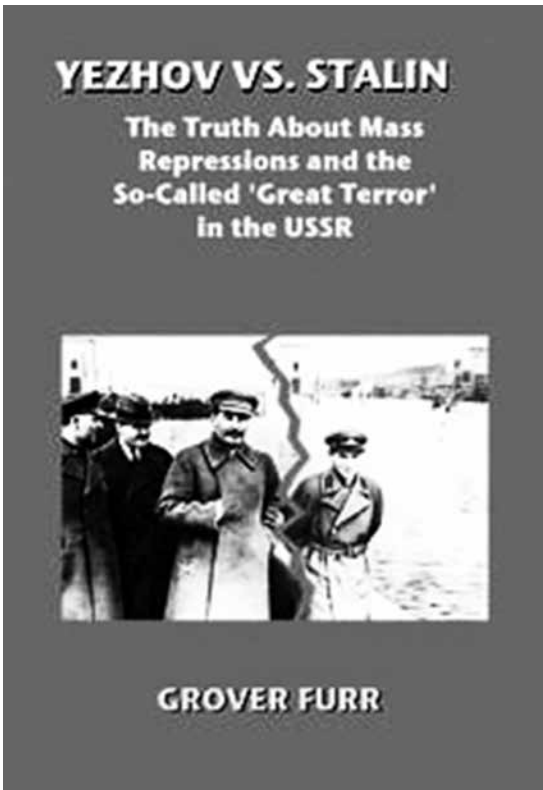
In a country covering one-sixth of the earth's surface, even well into the 1930s the Bolsheviks struggled in places to unify their immense state apparatus. Some Bolsheviks, like Nikolai Yezhov, disguised their disagreements and personal ambitions behind the red flag, enough to land him the top job at the NKVD in 1936.

## 'The Bad Time of Yezhov'

Furr's work shows that a significant minority of working-class enemies at first successfully hid their conspiratorial alliances with internal and external working-class enemies, including in the case of some the Nazis and Japanese fascists leading up to World War II.

Scattered widely geographically, Yezhov's group appeared to the remote Central Committee in Moscow as representatives of the working class. Knowing that the Central Committee was hunting known terrorists after a variety of sabotages and assassinations, Yezhov's group used their authority to mislabel thousands of dedicated communists, and protect the anticommunists.

Creating chaos and pitting workers against their own state is one of the ways capitalists try to regain power. Through this dual deception they hoped to overthrow the workers' state and reimpose the capitalist class, certainly in exchange for privileges. Until their plot was discovered and ended, they succeeded in creating their massive mayhem. Yezhov and his anticommunist NKVD associates executed some 700,000 mostly innocent workers, labeling them as enemies of the working class, and the Soviet Union.



## Setting The Record Straight

Known in Russian as the "Yezhovshchina," (meaning: "the bad time of Yezhov"), anticommunist authors like Robert Conquest instead label it the "Great Terror" and blame it on the Soviet leadership and Stalin, a name and blame adopted by most historians ever since.

Historians who endorse the anticommunist version of history blame Stalin for crimes that at first he and his colleagues knew nothing about, and that were halted once he and other Soviet leaders discovered their existence. There are several myths underlying this false version.

Anticommunists claim that Yezhov was only carrying out Stalin's orders, that there were no conspirators against the state and no collaboration with the Nazis and Japanese fascists, and that confessions at trial by co-conspirators were false and the result of torture.

Furr shows all of these to be false. He examined and quotes from recently released Soviet-era archival documents, among other primary source materials. Furr proves first that the leadership of the Soviet state (Stalin, Molotov, Zhdanov, Voroshilov, Beria and others) did indeed design its policies in the interests of the working class. Secondly, that class enemies did indeed conspire to commit mass murder and assassination and to overthrow the new working-class state, seize power, and resurrect an exploitative capitalist society.

## Lessons from Class Struggle

Running at a little over 200 pages, Furr's book is accessible to readers with some familiarity with Soviet history and would work well in Progressive Labor Party study groups debating whether or not the working class can seize and hold power, what that might look like, and what we can learn and apply today from the Soviet experience. One takeaway is that the seizure of state power is not the conclusion of a revolution, but the beginning. With the Soviet Union as a guide, we know the capitalist class will do anything to regain power.

With exceptions like Grover Furr, historians under capitalism generally accept the outlook of the capitalist class today in power. Opposition to their accepted outlook from a working class perspective brings retribution, while the rewards include publicity, prizes, promotions, job security, and fame. The anticommunist approach to history is reinforced, and the anti-Stalin outlook is a central feature of most of their writings.

Understanding the actual history of this first pioneering attempt at communist revolution is part of the foundation for the class-consciousness needed for the eventual victory of the world's working class over the extreme exploitation and oppression of capitalism.

This review cannot begin to answer all the questions that will arise in the minds of thousands of readers. But the book can at least begin to answer them.☸

# MLK'S CONTRADICTIONS

Continued from page 8

*challenge us to be more concerned about social justice. However much is wrong with communism, we must admit that it arose as a protest against the hardships of the underprivileged. The Communist Manifesto, which was published in 1847 by Marx and Engels, emphasizes throughout how the middle-class has exploited the lower-class. Communism in society is a classless society. Along with this goes a strong attempt to eliminate racial prejudice. Communism seeks to transcend the superficialities of race and color, and you are able to join the Communist Party whatever the color of your skin or the quality of your blood."* (MLK speech "Can a Christian be a Communist")

At the end of the famed march from Selma to Montgomery, King gave perhaps his clearest speech on the roots of racism as a tool used by the bosses to divide the working-class:

*Racial segregation as a way of life did not come about as a natural result of hatred between the races immediately after the Civil War. There were no laws segregating the races then...the segregation of the races was really a political stratagem... to keep the southern masses divided and southern labor the cheapest in the land. You see, it was a simple thing to keep the poor white masses working for near-starvation wages in the years that followed the Civil War. Why, if the poor white plantation or mill worker became dissatisfied with his low wages, the plantation or mill owner would merely threaten to fire him and hire former Negro slaves and pay him even less. Thus, the southern wage level was kept almost unbearably low.*

Later King began to expand his public activity to address the war in Vietnam and attempted to extoll the U.S. to end the war on communism.

*"[I]n the summer of 1965 the press reported King's off-the-cuff remarks to a Southern Christian Leadership Conference rally in Virginia: "We're not going to defeat Communism with bombs and guns and gases.... We must work this out in the framework of our democracy" ("Dr. King Declares"). In his 1967 book, Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community? King decried America's "morbid fear of Communism," arguing that it prevented people from embracing a "revolutionary spirit and ... declaring eternal opposition to poverty, racism, and militarism." (Stanford University King Encyclopedia)*

While there are so many unanswered questions about the assassination of Martin Luther King in 1968, like the killing of Malcolm X, it coincided with an expansion in King's political focus from civil rights for Blacks in the United States to fighting for economic rights for the working class and opposing imperialism. King was killed in Memphis where he was actively supporting striking Black sanitation workers.

As the ruling-class pressured King and ultimately murdered him, the working-class became increasingly politicized. Rebellions of Black workers rocked Newark, Watts, Harlem and Detroit and U.S Soldiers were rebelling against the war in Vietnam. In spite of the bosses' attempts to smother the movement, the working-class was rising up. The bosses may have hoped that killing King would stop the movement but instead the attack hardened the resolve of the working-class, particularly Black workers, to continue to fight.☸

# LETTERS

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

## The NAACP Feared Reds

The CHALLENGE Scottsboro article (5-31) says the NAACP joined the campaign to free the boys when one of the women accusers admitted to lying. This false idea neglects the role of the NAACP as an arm of the capitalist state as opposed to the role of the communist International Labor Defense that led mass worker demonstrations like the march of 3,000 to Washington in 1933. That march terrorized the capitalists with the thought of Black people following communist leadership.

The book *Communists in Harlem During the Depression* by Mark Faison exposes the role of the Black bourgeoisie like A. Philip Randolph, Roy Wilkins, and W.E.B. DuBois. These top leaders of the NAACP attacked communist ideas in the Black communities. Communists called the NAACP the Nicest Association for the Advancement of Certain People.

The NAACP was controlled by revisionists (those with capitalist ideas within the ranks of the working class). The NAACP was forced to join the Scottsboro campaign because they feared that communists would threaten their capitalist influence among Black workers.

### RESPONSE:

*This letter raises some important points and its conclusion is correct, but it is also somewhat one-sided. The NAACP was and is a reformist organization that tries to make capitalism a little more bearable. It is not an actual arm of the capitalist state. Revisionists pose as communists, which the NAACP has never done. And though DuBois questioned communism, he also organized a symposium about communism for Black leaders and praised the principled anti-racism of communists. He then traveled to the Soviet Union, again praising its anti-racism, and eventually he actually joined the Communist Party.*

★★★★★

## PL Exposed FBI's Racist Scheme

I read your excellent exposé of the FBI (June 17 issue). I would add the fact that J. Edgar Hoover's fascist COINTELPRO program also targeted Progressive

Labor Party, worried about PLP's growth in influence when PLP won majority support at an SDS convention through its advocacy of the Worker-Student Alliance.

COINTELPRO attempted to smear PLP among militant Black workers and students by placing PLP's name on a lying and openly racist leaflet and distributing it to several antiracist organizations in the Los Angeles area. PLP exposed this scheme as well as FBI's racist character as a ruling-class institution, pointing out the many anti-racist fights PLP had launched against the KKK and neo-Nazi groups over decades.

COINTELPRO's attacks on PLP failed miserably as proven by the multi-racial support that PLP received in those struggles.

★★★★★

## "No Such Thing as Justice" in Capitalist China

A New York Times article (7/13) on families in Dapu, China poisoned by lead from a chemical factory which polluted their water quotes a grieving father: "There's no such thing as justice." He is right! Under capitalism, that is.

But the Times never mentioned the poisoned children of Flint; never mentions that capitalists worldwide, including in the U.S., routinely shrug off fines and regulations. They continue deadly pollution with no real penalty from the governments who support the profit system's needs before people's welfare.

The impossibility of justice in Dapu is attributed to something peculiar to China, not to capitalism as a system, so it ends up bashing China. The media message in general is that U.S. imperialist rivals, especially Russia and China, are our enemies. It is essentially building hatred of Russia and China, necessary in a time of war. The trick is to confuse in people's minds the bad regimes in China and Russia with the Chinese and Russian workers. We are urged to support our "good capitalists" against their evil capitalists—the essence of all war propaganda—and not to see that this means workers under bosses' flags fighting one another, instead of together

under one red flag fighting all bosses.

The article inspires pity for the rural poor in China, victims of corporations like Meilun Chemical Materials, and the corrupt local Party officials in Dapu who crush the protests. Does this work as an appeal for solidarity between workers here and workers in China? Solidarity between the victims of lead poisoning in Flint and Dapu? Not at all.

The story's main message is that polluting firms and corrupt officials will always defeat protesters in China—"you can't beat City Hall," as the old saying goes. The bosses send the same defeatist message to us here. The implication is that China's system, which is not identified as capitalist, is more brutal and corrupt than U.S. or "Western" capitalism. Tell that to Flint, or Detroit, or Puerto Rico.

Still, the article has a potentially different message for U.S. workers fighting polluters and capitalism itself: in China too, workers are fighting back. That is the basis for solidarity between workers here and in China, allied against both sets of bosses and their governments. Organizing practical solidarity between Flint and Dapu is a difficult task, and an argument for rapidly building an international communist party. But we should take heart from the fightback in both places. It shows how workers of all backgrounds, will fight back. That's the basis for working-class internationalism.

Workers' international solidarity is the alternative to the wars between capitalist nation-states which bedevil the globe, producing 65 million refugees already. Imagine war with China, or Russia. Or both simultaneously. We need to think ahead to such calamities, and build internationalism, which alone can challenge the bosses' command over armies of millions of workers. There is an alternative. Dapu's fighting parents, though discouraged now (at least per the Times), and the fighting parents of Flint and Detroit, are the working-class of today who will be one day, as the communist anthem The Internationale sings, "the human race" itself. Then there will be justice.

★★★★★



# 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

## Tunisia: Thousands of jobless youth shut pipeline, battle troops

NYT, 5/28 — El Kamour, Tunisia — Tired of waiting for the government to relieve their poverty and create jobs, thousands of young people have been camping here and demonstrating in...Tataouine for weeks.

...The protesters shut the main the main oil pipeline...and clashed with units of the National Guard who tried to burn down the camp....A police station and a National Guard post were burned in turn. One protester was killed and...two others were gravely wounded....

...The protests reflect mounting frustration at the broken promises of the country's...leaders to bring tangible improvement.

...The demonstrators are representative of a new generation...only to face the prospect of long-term unemployment.

A large number are university graduates....All out of work, they have forged a united movement...across the area....

In April, protestors began camping in front of the governor's office and a month ago set up the camp in the desert.

The government recently handed out new oil concessions...that only served s a reminder of how little the region benefits from the resource. The oil companies hire people generally from the outside....

...Thousands turned out to bury the man who was killed — Muhammad Anour Sakrafi...23 and unemployed.

In the desert camp...200 protesters were keeping...the pipeline...shut....

...They said they would remain until the government accepted 17 demands they had put forward....

...Walid Abdelimollah, 27, said, "We are here to the end. No going back!"...their signature chant.

In Tataouine, the protesters control the streets....camped outside the governor's office and at main intersections...reminiscent of the popular uprising of 2010 and 2011.

The governor resigned and left town....

## Capitalism, not hurricane, caused flooding of New Orleans

NYT, 5/28 (letter to editor) — ....To my mind...the flooding of New Orleans was overwhelmingly the fault of the Army Corps of Engineers, which was responsible for designing and building the levee system — not the hurricane itself.

An irregular, flawed federal funding process led to a piecemeal levee system that included some low-cost solutions that compromised the quality, safety and reliability of the designs, according to a report by the America Society of Civil Engineers Hurricane External Review Panel.

Had there been no design defects in the levees...Hurricane Katrina would...not now be referred to as a natural disaster....As a former resident of New Orleans...blame for the city's flooding...[should] shift from nature to the failed infrastructure. — Wm. Ferguson, Staunton, Va.

## Unintended Consequences? How U.S. rulers spawned ISIS/ISIL

NYT, 5/29, [Book Review: "Anatomy of Terror" by Ali Soufan] — Soufan underscores the disastrous role that the United States invasion of Iraq and its bungled occupation played in fueling terrorism, creating chaos and a power vacuum in Iraq — the perfect incubator for insurgent violence and bloodshed. Two calamitous decisions made by the Americans (dissolving the Iraqi Army and banning members of Saddam Hussein's Baath Party from positions of authority) would prove fateful....Embittered and unemployed "former Baathists soon became the backbone of the new Islamic State of Iraq....With their governmental, intelligence, and military experience, these men made themselves essential

to both ISIL's battlefield achievements and to the terror tactics it has deployed against ordinary citizens."

## United States: child support goes to wealthy, not to kids in poverty

NYT, 6/5 — International data show that child poverty in America remains at 20 percent — twice the rate in Germany and seven times the rate in Denmark....

...In the United States...the lowest-income children often get no income support, while children in wealthy families benefit from generous tax deductions.

## Yemen: U.S.-backed Saudi bombings, 10,000 dead, millions starving

NYT, 5/31 — Cholera deaths in war-torn Yemen have surged into the hundreds [and] more than a quarter Of Yemenis face famine....

...United Nations aid official, Stephen O'Brien...[said] "If there was no conflict in Yemen, there would be no descent into famine, misery, disease and death — a famine would certainly be avoidable and averted...."

He depicted the crisis as man-made, implicitly placing part of the blame on the Saudi-Arabia-led military coalition that has been bombing Yemen's Houthi rebels...for over two years....seeing them as proxies for Iran....

[The] indiscriminate bombings in Yemen...leaving roughly 10,000 Yemenis dead and millions destitute and at risk of disease....

...The Saudis...receive a strong signal of American support when President Trump...signed a \$110 billion weapons deal, including warplanes and armaments that could...be deployed in the Yemeni conflict....

...A fast-breaking cholera outbreak....reported....the cholera toll now approached 500, with roughly 60,000 cases, and...forecast 150,000 new cases in the next six months....

...More than 17 million Yemenis were "food insecure" — which means they lack a reliable food supply — 6.8 million were "one step away from famine." The country's population is roughly 25 million.

Many simply cannot afford to buy food.

BLACK AND RED, UNTOLD HISTORY PART III

KING'S CLASS CONTRADICTIONS

Ruling-class historians have 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.

This series aims to reunite the history of communism with antiracism. Part I explored how the fight to free Scottsboro Boys was ignited by the International Labor Defense of the Communist Party. See Robin D.G. Kelley’s book *Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists during the Great Depression* to find out more.

Part II explores how the international communist movement was the imeptus of the civil rights movement. It excerpts from the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in the essay, “The Civil Rights Movement” by researcher Davarian L. Baldwin at Trinity College.

The communist movement both helped inspire and was shaped by the anti-racist struggle for civil rights in the U.S. Martin Luther King Jr. and many of the leading civil rights figures were influenced by the Communist Party (CP). Rosa Parks had attended Communist Party meetings and been trained as an activist at the Highlander Folk School in Tennessee which had been supported by members and friends of the CP. Bayard Rustin, Stanley Levinson and Jack O'Dell, who all played important roles in King’s organization, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, that grew out of the Montgomery Bus Boycott, were active at various times in the communist movement.

Just as important was the 25-year history of the Communist Party in Alabama led by Black workers leading many struggles against racism and building several organizations including the International Labor Defense, the Sharecroppers Union, the International Workers Order, the League of Young Southerners, and the Southern Negro Youth Congress that in total involved around 20,000 mainly Black workers. These organizations were at their peak in the 1930’s, but the experience of fighting against racism and for the needs of the working-class laid the basis for the fight against Jim Crow laws in the 1950’s and 60’s.

*The party inspired loyalty for reasons beyond simply an affinity for Marxist ideas. It was the campaigns Communists ran against police brutality, the practice of lynching and the Jim Crow laws that made their politics relevant to the lives of ordinary people. In the North as well as the South, on soapboxes on the streets of Harlem as well as on plots of sharecropped land in Alabama, Communist organizing addressed the...concerns of black people.*

Communists believed that organizing the working-class would work only if white workers realized that their liberation, too, was bound up with the fate of black workers....

*In short, American Communism was a movement that grew out of what the historian Robin D. G. Kelley, the author of “Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists During the Great Depression,” calls “the most despised and dispossessed elements of American society.” “It was the Black workers drawn to the party, Professor Kelley argues, who shaped its political choices as much as*



King leading an antiwar march in Chicago, 1967, one year before he was assassinated

... the Communist International (NY Times 6/6).

Like the Scottsboro campaign 20 years earlier the Montgomery Bus Boycott, initiated when Rosa Parks refused to move to the Black section of a Montgomery, Alabama bus, drew world-wide attention to the fight against racism in the segregated South. The fight for civil rights became a major embarrassment to the U.S. ruling-class. At the time, China, the world’s largest country was communist-led, as was the Soviet Union. These two worker super powers provided leadership and support to anti-imperialist movements across Africa, Asia, and South America.

U.S. Rulers Forced to Support Civil Rights Movement

The U.S tried to counter the growing communist-led movements by championing capitalist democracy, but at every turn the racist conditions forced on Black workers in the United States and the increasing demonstrations against those conditions undercut the U.S. bosses’ attempts to gain support.

Under increasing pressure, the U.S. bosses were forced into tacitly supporting the growing civil rights movement. At the same time, they were terrified of the movement that brought together hundreds of thousands of Black and white workers and students in the fight against segregation. The U.S. ruling-class, between a rock and a hard place, tried to gain control of the movement by both working with and threatening Martin Luther King.

While John F. Kennedy and later Lyndon B. Johnson worked with Martin Luther King to end official Jim Crow, the bosses’ legal arm. led by Attorney General Robert Kennedy and FBI boss J. Edgar Hoover, spied on and tried to disrupt and control the movement by building anti-communism. The bosses’ goal was to limit the movement

to blaming the smaller Southern bosses for all of the racism in the country and ignore the racist conditions in the North.

The ruling-class went after every leader and institution connected to the civil rights movement to try to keep it under control. Martin Luther King as the leading figure of the movement came under particular attack and pressure.

*In 1963 King bowed to the wishes of the Kennedy Administration and fired SCLC employee Jack O'Dell after the FBI alleged that he was a Communist. King also agreed to cease direct communication with his friend and closest white advisor, Stanley Levison, although he eventually resumed contact with him in March 1965. FBI surveillance and bugs tracked King's political associations and produced evidence of King's extramarital sexual activities—information that was later leaked to some reporters.*

*In 1965 King faced questions from journalists on Meet the Press about his association with Tennessee's Highlander Folk School, which had been branded a “Communist training school” on billboards that appeared throughout Alabama during the Selma to Montgomery March and showed King attending a Highlander workshop. (Stanford University King Encyclopedia)*

King was a contradictory figure. He publicly professed anti-communism, yet he was undoubtedly influenced by the communist movement and recognized that communism reflected the desires of an exploited working-class oppressed by racism.

*Indeed, it may be that communism is a necessary corrective for a Christianity that has been all too passive and a democracy that has been all too inert. Communism should*

Continued on page 6

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