

# CHALLENGE



THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

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## Students Shut Down Anti-Muslim Fascist Speaker

**NEW YORK CITY, October 10**—Over 300 Columbia University students and others held a militant protest against Tommy Robinson, who had been invited by campus Republicans. Robinson, who founded the English Defense League, violently opposes all immigrants, whom he calls criminals. It is Robinson who has been jailed for assault and mortgage fraud. It is ironic that Robinson entered the US from the UK using a stolen passport.

Students from the Muslim Students Association, Columbia University Apartheid Divest, Barnard Columbia Socialists, Student-Worker Solidarity (SWS), and Barnard Columbia Solidarity Network united against Robinson. Members of Black Lives Matter, the Southern Poverty Law Center, and several friends of PLP members, who take night classes and teach students by day, also came to protest, despite busy schedules.

Thirty students got inside the poorly attended event and interrupted the speech, holding up signs that read "hate speech = violence" and "Muslims are welcome here." Outside, other protestors chanted, made speeches, and marched. The following night a group of about 50 students met to plan actions against upcoming fascist speakers and to defend protestors who entered the hall and have been informed by the Columbia administration that they may be disciplined for their actions.

### Liberal Institution Welcomes Racists

Robinson is one of a string of fascists and extreme racists who have been invited to speak at Columbia, including Charles Murray last year. They have been invited under the banner of free speech, which only gives them a platform from which to spread their lies about the working class. The hypocritical Columbia administrators oppose racism in words but in deeds facilitate racist organizing while threatening anti-racist protestors.



No surprise. Columbia is run by a board, 75 percent of which are bankers and corporate executives. They represent a capitalist ruling class whose profit-making requires keeping workers divided, weak, and fighting each other, through various forms of racism and sexism. For example, they need the University community to accept the displacement of mostly poor Black workers from Harlem in order to expand their campus.

Capitalism would have severe difficulty surviving in the U.S., or anywhere, unless the rulers keep wages and living/working conditions as low as possible. They succeed by creating inequalities that divide workers against each other—in particular by forcing non-white and women workers to accept roughly 75 percent of the wages of white men on average, whether through lower pay for similar work or because they are forced into less valued jobs. Also the lower levels of health, education, housing and sanitation in Black, Latin, and immigrant neighborhoods save the bosses a bundle. But often unrecognized, these divisions, by

severely hindering working class unity, also force down the wages and conditions for white workers, along with their non-white and immigrant sisters and brothers.

PLP members from the community and a nearby activist church in Harlem have been attending Columbia SWS meetings for five years. SWS organizes for better pay and conditions for campus workers, including student workers, and supports the unionization campaigns of adjuncts and graduate student teaching assistants. Almost all of these efforts have been successful because of the students' militancy and persistence. All the members receive CHALLENGE, and several have attended and spoken at PLP-sponsored May Day marches in recent years. A

lthough these students are very dedicated and pro-worker, we have yet to win them to see the possibility of, and need for, communist revolution. This is a long march, but we will continue to advance.✊

### 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?

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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Editorial

# Catalonia: Identity Politics a Dead End for Workers

With Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy announcing plans to remove Catalonia’s separatist leaders and crush the region’s drive for independence, workers face a no-win proposition, a clash between rising fascism and nationalist identity politics. No matter which side prevails, workers will continue to be divided and exploited by the capitalist profit system.

With the U.S.-centric world order in accelerating decline, capitalism is in disarray throughout the world. On October 1, long-simmering tensions intensified when Catalonia staged an independence referendum. In scenes reminiscent of the fascist Francisco Franco regime that ruled Spain into the mid-1970s, Spanish police responded with clubs and rubber bullets, injuring 750 people. Even so, a reported 2.3 million turned out to vote, with 90 percent choosing to split from Spain (Telegraph, 10/2). In response, Spain has threatened to impose new elections for the region’s presidency (to replace the secessionist Charles Puigdemont), suspend the Catalanian parliament, and send in the police and army. Two prominent separatists were jailed without bail.

Catalonia’s independence movement is misleading millions of workers to unite behind the region’s capitalist bosses. The violent battle to come will place workers in the crossfire. Only a communist revolution led by Progressive Labor Party, can smash national and regional borders. Only a communist society can meet the needs of the international working class.

### Nationalism: Bosses’ Tool

Nationalism and identity politics are reactionary responses to capitalism in crisis. Since the 2008 global recession, Spain’s workers have suffered with one of the weakest economies in Europe. Even after a recent “recovery,” the country’s unemployment rates stands at 17 percent—and 39 percent for youth (tradingeconomics.com). To protect their dwindling profits, Spanish capitalists have imposed austerity pay freezes and spending cuts. Catalonia is Spain’s most prosperous region, accounting for 20 percent of the nation’s economy and 25 percent of its exports. In the absence of a mass communist movement and working class consciousness, some workers in Catalonia resent those in poorer regions who may get a few crumbs from Catalonia’s high tax bill (CNN, 9/29). They don’t yet see that their true enemies are the blood-sucking capitalist bosses, whether in Madrid or Barcelona:

*The contemporary project of independence offers the hope or illusion of a new nation unencumbered by austerity, corruption, and what Catalan nationalists view as Catalonia’s excessive contribution to the rest of Spain in the form of taxes and transfers to less wealthy regions. This narrative, however, ignores Catalan elites’ implication in corruption scandals, as well as Catalan nationalists’ record in government of applying unpopular austerity policies on behalf of the economic elites of both Spain and Catalonia. In the discourse of Catalan nationalism, that is, the politics of identity has trumped the politics of class. (Foreign Affairs, 10/18).*

### Catalonian Separatism Bad for EU, U.S.

Catalonia’s Brexit-style movement is bad news for capitalists everywhere, from Spain to the U.S.-aligned European Union to the region itself. If Catalonia became independent, its bosses could lose free trade within the EU. One of Catalonia’s biggest banks has already moved its headquarters to another part of Spain; a second bank, along with many other businesses, is considering doing the same (Vox, 10/10).

The rise of Catalanian nationalism is not unlike the movement for Scottish independence or Britain’s vote last year to leave the European Union. It’s also echoed in the mass support for U.S. Racist-in-Chief

## Brief History of Spain

The two major nationalist movements in Spain are based in Catalonia and the Basque Country. For nearly a century, local bosses in those two regions have built movements around local nationalism. In the 1920s, after World War I and the Russian Revolution upended the old European power structure, national liberation and separatist movements gained momentum across the globe, from Egypt and India to, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Spain.

In Spain, a unified country for over 500 years, both the Basque Country and Catalonia saw the formation of independence parties in 1922. This coincided with a period of infighting within the Spanish ruling class. One one side stood the old elite, the monarchists and big land owners; on the other, the new rising liberal capitalists. In 1931, the liberal wing won a temporary victory and established a Spanish Republic. To keep the loyalty of local Catalanian and Basque bosses, the Republican government gave them significant autonomy.

The Spanish Republic was short-lived. In 1936, the monarchists and most of the Spanish military allied under the Spanish fascist party, the Falange. The ensuing Spanish Civil War became the opening battle of the World War II, and the focal point for a mass, international anti-fascist movement led by communists. International Brigades of volunteers were organized by the Communist International and spirited into Spain to take on the fascists. More than a million Spanish workers were killed, as well as many thousands of communists and anti-fascists fighting on the side of the Republic. While the ant-fascist forces lost the battle in Spain, their courageous struggle inspired workers around the world to ultimately defeat the Nazis.

In Spain, which was nominally neutral in World War II, the ruling class united under Franco’s murderous regime. The Basque and Catalonia independence movements were suppressed, though they staged periodic insurrections. But in the post-war period, Spanish fascism became a political problem for the dominant U.S. and German bosses who were fighting the Cold War against the Soviet Union and portraying themselves as champions of democracy. When Franco died in 1975, the Spanish ruling class transitioned to a liberal democracy to gain membership in the European Community, forerunner to the European Union.

Donald Trump’s moves to exclude Muslim and Latin immigrants. Workers are being won to the backward idea that uniting around nationalism and shutting out the world will protect them from unemployment, pay cuts, and deteriorating schools and housing. It is Progressive Labor Party’s job to show workers that out suffering is caused not by our working-class sisters and brothers, but by the bosses who exploit us for maximum profit. Racism and nationalism weaken our class and stop us from fighting back.

Under communism, there will be no capitalist bosses dividing us. There will be no money, no unemployment, no recessions. Nobody will profit off someone else’s back; everyone will have housing, food, and security. Only a world based on working-class unity and collectivity can meet workers’ needs. This is the world that Progressive Labor Party fights for.

### Destroy Capitalism with Mass Revolutionary Violence

The brutal police violence in Catalonia reminds us that capitalists don’t play nice when their interests are threatened. When the voters came out, the “democratic” nation of Spain used state terror to smash anti-Spanish dissent. It even shut down the Internet! The bosses won’t let workers vote away the capitalist status quo. Real change will come only with an organized, mass, united working class that is ready to use revolutionary violence. Progressive Labor Party fights to unite the working class under the red flag of communism. Join us!🇸🇰



# 100 Protest vs. Adjuncts' Working Conditions

**NEW YORK CITY**—More than 100 adjuncts, graduate students and professors of the City University of New York (CUNY) picketed outside Democrat New York State Governor Cuomo's office today, demanding salaries of \$7,000 a course, and a seniority plan for adjuncts. Chanting "What's Outrageous, Adjunct Wages!", "Down, Down, With Exploitation, Up, Up, With Education." We then marched a few blocks to the CUNY headquarters and picketed there.

## PSC: Business Unionism As Usual

Although most of demonstrators are members of CUNY faculty and staff's union, the Professional Staff Congress, the PSC did not endorse the protest. The PSC is hoping the governor will sign a "Maintenance of Effort" bill (MOE) that will give the university more money, and is therefore refraining from saying anything critical about him. This is a mistake because (1) it's likely that Cuomo will veto the bill anyway, as he did in 2015; and (2) the only way to win adjunct salaries of \$7K and seniority provisions for adjuncts is to mobilize support from students and working class supporters in the community. Coddling a governor who has forced concessionary contracts on public unions, pushed through an inferior pension plan for public workers, raised student tuition and collected millions from New York billionaires for his campaigns, is a losing strategy.

For its part, the liberal PSC misleaders claim to fight for adjuncts and grad students, claiming at various times that the deals they've made with CUNY are the best the union could've realistically gotten. In response, some adjunct professors and graduate students have organized groups around their own needs within the PSC, and view the full-time faculty as CUNY bosses. The PSC has hung the adjuncts out to dry in exchange for concessions from the CUNY bosses- but the pitting of adjuncts against full-timers is a part of the bosses' plan to exploit all education workers, which mainly hurts the mostly Black, Latin and immigrant student population of CUNY, and public colleges generally.

## 'An Injury to One Is An Injury To All'

All across the country, university administrators, governors, mayors and state legislators are addicted to cheap labor at public colleges. That's why the majority of college courses at CUNY and nationally are taught by contingent faculty — adjuncts. Decades ago, three-quarters of the faculty were tenure-track, and one-quarter were not. Now the numbers are reversed, and only a quarter are tenure-track. Of those faculty that are full-time, the greatest proportion are white workers. Of those that are adjunct, a greater proportion than ever are Black, Latin, and women, making the bosses' pitting of adjuncts against full-timers more and more of a racist divide-and-conquer strategy (Inside Higher Ed, 8/22/16).

As the percentage of adjuncts has steadily risen in recent decades, the faculty union misleaders failed to respond to the rise of adjunct labor as racist and sexist attacks to bring down the security of all faculty workers. Unless the special exploitation of adjunct professors is addressed, there will be fewer and fewer full-time jobs, and more and more incentives for the CUNY bosses to rely on contingent faculty. Ultimately, this means fewer and fewer dollars to colleges for education of New York's working class youth.

The old slogan "An Injury to One is an Injury to All" shows that if bosses are allowed to more severely exploit one group of workers, they would soon spread that extra exploitation. We see that with adjuncts and we see it more broadly: private sector workers have been forced to accept lower wages and benefits; defined-benefit pensions have been replaced with inferior 401-K plans. Now that conditions in the private sector have

been lowered, the capitalist ruling class is going after the public sector. The capitalists have attacked public sector unions for decades through both Democrat and Republican administrations, reducing their wages and benefits, and slashing public spending while lowering taxes on corporations and the very wealthy.

For communists in the Progressive Labor Party, these attacks are opportunities to organize and fight back.

## Struggles Ahead

The sharpest of these attacks is the Janus case that's going before the U.S. Supreme Court in a few weeks. This court case aims at eliminating 'agency fee' payments, or union dues, which they hope will weaken unions by damaging their treasuries. In the meantime, the union misleaders have buried their heads in the sand by backing liberal Democrat politicians, instead of organizing and building support against these attacks. There are more than 200,000 public workers in NYC who are threatened by this court case, and yet there have been no mass demonstrations.

Unions like the PSC offer only bad solutions. PLP fights for real improvements for adjuncts, full-timers, and students, while organizing for the



overthrow of the entire system that makes this exploitation possible. For PLers, adjuncts and full-time faculty organizing their 275,000 working-class CUNY students is a primary task. These youth are being prepared by the capitalist class for either precarious, low-paying jobs, or into the military to fight and die for U.S. imperialism. Almost half of college graduates in the U.S. have jobs that don't require a college education, and also half work in low-wage jobs.

Students, adjunct and full-time faculty, and campus workers are all working class sisters and brothers who have no need for this exploitative system. We need to stand up and fight - and continue building alliances of students, workers and faculty - to build a mass movement to take this struggle all the way to communism.✊

## Capitalist Hospital Dumps its Sickest Patients

**BAY AREA, October 9**—California Pacific Medical Center, the biggest and richest hospital chain in San Francisco, wanted to dump its sickest and most frail long-term patients out of the city, where they frequently die without family support. It's not profitable for capitalism to provide a healthy future for our class. The bosses' profits will always come before workers' needs. In the Progressive Labor Party, we say that a system that won't guarantee proper care for its most vulnerable workers doesn't deserve to exist!

CPMC plans to close its Subacute Unit at St. Luke's Hospital, a community hospital in a poor and Latino neighborhood that CPMC took over and then tried to close. Subacute units give long-term care for very sick or frail patients, typically on ventilators or with tracheotomies, sometimes for decades. Patients are almost always poor and on Medicaid/Medi-CAL, which pays hospitals very little, so hospitals have closed their subacute units, causing a nationwide crisis.

Subacute patients need family members to visit and advocate for them on an almost daily basis, and often die within a year after long-distance transfers. CPMC's Subacute Unit is the only one in town, and patients were told they would be transferred to other cities, even though CPMC is building two new hospitals in town that could accommodate them.

## Workers' Power

The CPMC patients' families are tight-knit, seeing each other almost every day on the unit. They are fighting back and have forced CPMC to say they'll accept current subacute patients at their other facilities in San Francisco. But the families, looking beyond themselves to the future, demand CPMC accept new subacute patients and that the city create new subacute beds. CPMC has begun to spread contradictory

information and rumors to confuse and discredit the families and break up their unity, which is making the families even angrier.

But this is not just about how hospitals are willing to kill patients for profit; it's also about how capitalist culture and ideology debases our humanity. Capitalist culture blasts more individualism and callousness and more acceptance of the bosses' values. They push the idea that if you're not generating profits, you're unproductive and a parasite. The newspaper stories of the subacute patients' problems have produced comments like, "It's shocking that younger people don't revolt against spending so much money on extreme care for 80 year-olds with no means to provide for themselves."

This lack of empathy is a product of capitalism in crisis. We struggle to hold our heads above water and find the time and energy to develop good values in our families. Hating capitalism and working to overcome it helps keep your sanity. Otherwise, the sight of capitalism's atrocities numbs you, makes you suicidal, or makes you hate people. Parents struggle to teach their kids sharing and helping each other. Communists struggle to make all society be like that.

## Only Communism Will Heal Our Class

For communists, the slogan "To each according to need," has guided us since the days of Karl Marx. In other words, we don't rely on the bosses who will never put our needs above their profits. Their system, capitalism, always has been, and always will be a system of profit, greed, racism and sexism. Capitalism is a system where workers only have worth as long as they can labor and produce profit for a boss. Only a system truly based on the needs of workers, communism, will bring us decent health and healthcare. The CPMC Subacute patients' families are an inspiration.✊

# Chicago Beverage Tax Toxic for Workers

**CHICAGO**—Capitalism is a sick and sick-making system that at best allows the illusion of healthy choices for the working class. The Sweetened Beverage Tax in Chicago is a toxic choice for workers: either pay more for harmful sugary beverages or sacrifice what little health care remains available to you. Progressive Labor Party (PLP) members have been struggling with co-workers, patients, and friends to oppose both unhealthy foods and the choices presented by liberal bosses and politicians, winning our base closer to a communist vision of a truly healthy society.

The Sweetened Beverage Tax (penny-per-ounce) on juice and soda was proposed by liberal Democrat Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle to cover a \$200 million dollar shortfall in the county's budget for 2018 (Chicago Sun Times, 10/5). She was backed by billionaire Michael Bloomberg, who piloted a similar scheme as New York City mayor. He's contributed some \$13 million to push the Chicago version of the tax (Chicago Daily Herald, 10/14).

Illustrating the infighting among competing capitalists, after only a few months the tax is on the verge of repeal, as the beverage bosses and various small business owners oppose it. They exploit the frustrations of the city's workers, who already pay the nation's highest sales tax of 10.25%

(Fortune, 7/16/15), spinning the tax as a big-government mandate that denies "freedom of choice" – as though there were "freedom of choice" for affordable healthy foods.

Neither of these capitalist factions and their bottom lines can afford to care about workers' health. Nor do their elected representatives. As one of Preckwinkle's first acts in 2011, south side Oak Forest Hospital was closed, destroying lives. Meanwhile Bloomberg, crying crocodile tears for children suffering from sugar overload, unleashed the NYPD to "stop and frisk" hundreds of thousands of Black youth and immigrant workers. The beverage bosses only care about the how the tax cuts into their ability to market their profit-making poisons to working-class families.

With the tax's repeal on December 1st, it's virtually inevitable that the Cook County Health System of Chicago will resort to another round of layoffs and patient-service cuts to cover the \$200 million dollar deficit. As with the Chicago Public Schools' budget crisis, the workers will suffer the cutbacks while the politicians use billions in workers' tax revenue to pay for their banking and real estate masters' bond interest and other services. The pretense of winning working people to healthier lifestyles sinks into a cynical and destructive parody.

Communists in PLP know that only a mass international Party of millions, fighting for revolution to achieve an egalitarian society, can guarantee our optimal health as a class. Fighting for communism means that we abolish the profit motive that drives health care under capitalism, where decent care is available only if you can pay for it. It means replacing profit with comprehensive health care available to any worker who needs it, without cost to the individual, but rather borne by our class as a whole. Fighting for communism means that we struggle long-term with our fellow workers to win them away from unhealthy lifestyle habits that go with living in a divisive and competitive class society. Building the Party brings closer the day that all decisions affecting the masses, from food production to public health to minimizing destruction from natural disasters, will be made collectively, and based on science and our needs as workers.

The capitalist bosses want us to pick our poison: consume their unhealthy food that destroys our bodies, or pay a punishing tax in order to cover their latest budget crisis. PLP organizes with our working-class sisters and brothers to reject both! Join us to fight for a communist world and the health we truly need and deserve.☺

# Iraqi Kurdish Nationalists: Caught in Three-Way Imperialist Fire

The internal conflict between Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) is another example of inter-imperialist conflict between China and United States. The New Silk Road is a part of China's strategy to protect their oil supply from the U.S. Navy.

The nationalist crisis can be traced back to World War I. After the war, the British and French imperialists carved up the Ottoman Empire, leaving the Kurdish people (spread across Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Syria, and Armenia) without the statehood they were promised.

Iraqi Kurdistan, a semi-autonomous region within Iraq, passed an independence referendum with a 73 percent turnout and 93 percent yes vote. A civil war between the Kurdish and Iraq is heating up. There's fighting between the KRG's and Iraq's armed forces over control of the oil fields around Kirkuk.

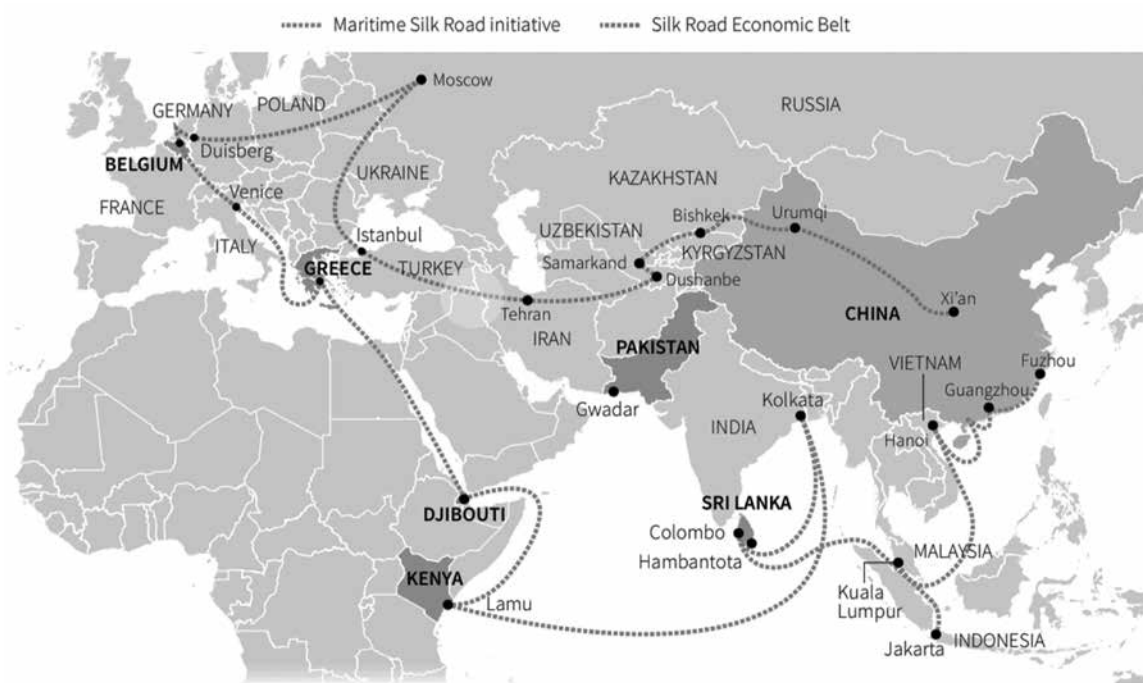
At the heart of it are the vast oil fields at the edge of Kirkuk. Its oil reserves are estimated at 45 billion barrels.

## Russia, Threat to U.S.

Russia, a major imperialist, did not condemn the independence referendum. Russia has invested in Kurdistan and signed a 20-year deal to buy Kurdistan's oil and refine it in Germany. In retaliation, the U.S. began to pass new sanctions against Russia, but said that the new sanctions were over Ukraine. These sanctions also affected Germany (see CHALLENGE 8/30).

Russia announced they plan to build a pipeline from the Kurdistan region to the Black Sea region. They would ensure that Turkey would get a piece of the pipeline action running through it to both Europe and Asia. Letting Turkey in on the deal has sent alarm bells to the U.S.-Saudi-NATO struggle to maintain their control of the world's oil.

Russia's presence in the Mediterranean Sea and Middle East is at a greater level than even during the former Soviet Union. Russia and China are directly challenging the Carter Doctrine that any threat to Middle Eastern oil is a direct threat to the U.S.



China intends to build a major economic hub right in Northern Iraq.

## China's Pivot to the Middle East

China's strategy is clear after looking at a map of the New Silk Road. Taking advantage of U.S. decline and rising racism, China seeks exert greater control in the Middle East.

*[U.S.] is moving out of this region and the US President pledged to build walls...to international immigrants and in particular Muslims, [it] has forced these countries to look east...China's vital energy interests in the region have given it reasons to take a larger interest in regional security...With the Completion of the Gulf Pearl Chain, China can achieve...control of its energy needs and will open a new markets and trade routes for the Gulf Countries (China Daily, 6/5).*

China plans to make Northern Iraq an important economic hub. They'll either do business with Iraq or Kurdistan. They maintained a close economic relationship with the Kurdish oil industry.

The conflict? The U.S. has spent billions of dollars in the Iraqi Kurdistan, and won't allow China to buy oil companies that have already signed deals with Kurdistan. They will try to use their influence in Iraq to ensure it is U.S. imperialism that controls the oil, not China. They will push back against "the secession of Iraqi Kurdistan [that] would allow China to cut lucrative bilateral deals with Kurdish companies" (The Diplomat, 10/5).

As ISIS is a lesser concern for Iraq, they are continuing to occupy Kirkuk and the oil fields around it. Kurdistan's forces continue to retreat before Iraq and it remains to be seen how China will profit from this new proxy war. It is a strategic necessity for the U.S. to maintain their dominance over the oil in the Middle East.

Regardless of the flag waving and nationalism being spread in Kurdistan (and Catalonia, see page 2) there are no good guys. The working class is being misled by nationalism. The only flag the working class should wave is PLP's red flag of communism.☺



# Capitalism Causes Deadly Climate Change

In its entire 400-year-plus existence, capitalists have been hard at work decimating forests, poisoning rivers, polluting the air and exterminating ocean life. The pursuit of profit turns the life-sustaining qualities of the planet are commodities to be exploited and fought over. Moreover, the capitalist treatment of the planet mirrors its treatment of the working class. The same profit motive that drives them to ruin our environment also subjects us to the horrors of racism and sexism, brutal working conditions, and imperialist war, with its threat of nuclear holocaust. Buying a hybrid car, recycling plastics and using more efficient light bulbs will not change the destructive tendencies of capitalism. Only communist revolution can rescue the planet, and the workers that inhabit it.

## Racism Makes Super-Exploited Groups The Most Vulnerable

The racism inherent in capitalism means that Black and Latin workers are hurt most by climate change. They are systematically placed in the most vulnerable locations for flooding and housed in poorly constructed homes. The poorest workers don't have the financial resources to protect themselves and rebuild after extreme storms and are left homeless and more desperately poor.

Sociologist Robert Bullard, discussing how environmental racism impacts people of color in Houston, writes: "They not only have to deal with flooding in their homes, but pollution in water that's contaminated when water floods refineries and plants. You're talking about a perfect storm of pollution, environmental racism, and health risks that are probably not going to be measured and assessed until decades later. The fact is that laissez-faire, unrestrained capitalism and lack of zoning means people with money can put protections up, and people without can't" (Huffington Post, 8/29).

The media refers to these catastrophes as "natural disasters." However, one thousand people did not die in Bangladesh, Nepal and India this summer only because of nature. Millions of Puerto Ricans were not left without power or water, threatened by outbreaks of deadly communicable diseases and dying from lack of medicines because of nature. Fires alone cannot be blamed for the destruction happening in Northern California, Portugal and Spain. Capitalist racism, greed and drive for profit created the conditions that allowed all of these disasters to occur.

## The Future Of Capitalism-Caused Climate Change

The following facts are from "The Uninhabitable Earth" by David Wallace-Wells (NY Mag, July edition).

- Barring a radical reduction in global warming, sea levels will rise AT LEAST four feet by 2100. One third of the world's cities are coastal, so power plants, ports, farmlands, fisheries, river deltas, marshland and rice paddies will flood.
- High temperatures will end the production of many basic foods such wheat, corn and soybeans. By 2080, Europe will be in constant and extreme drought. NASA, in 2015, predicted that future droughts in the Midwest of the US would soon be the worst in 1000 years.
- Global warming threatens to release potentially dangerous microbes that have been locked in frozen ground around the poles. Also, the range of the insects that spread diseases such as malaria and Zika virus could increase, meaning millions more will be exposed to these and other diseases.
- Higher temperatures increase health-damaging ozone in the air. More ozone leads to deaths from respiratory and cardiac illnesses. Wildfires will increase and add more carbon



A mass climate change march in New York City

particulate to the air, causing more health problems.

## Capitalists Have No Answer For the Crisis

The response of right-wing "climate deniers" to these well-supported predictions represents the outlook of one segment of the US ruling class, concerned only with short-term profit and indifferent to the deadly effects of global climate change. Other bosses realize that worsening climate change could potentially eat away at their profits. Even oil companies like Exxon-Mobil have recently been jumping on the "green wagon" and investing in renewable energy sources, because they worry that "severe weather disrupts delivery of supplies." At the same time, the energy companies fully intend to extract tens of trillions of dollars worth of oil and gas still below the ground, which will spew more carbon dioxide into the air and raise global temperatures, with terrible results.

Meanwhile, the liberal ruling class refuses to blame capitalism for the problem. Instead, they primarily place the blame for climate change at the feet of the working class. We're driving too many SUVs! We're not recycling! The New York Times even had the racist nerve to blame poverty-stricken Indians for contributing to climate change by burning cow dung for heat and cook-

ing (12/8/2015).

The capitalist media continuously pushes the false narrative that it is the collective responsibility of workers to fix the problem. So we must change our consumption patterns while they continue to perpetuate the very things that caused the crisis in the first place. So now we have a slew of eco-friendly, sustainable, and green products preying on workers' guilt, and peddling the false notion that consuming eco-friendly goods will solve the problem.

The bosses push these individual responses in order to avoid opposition to their system. The iron-clad rules of capitalism mean that if Boss A chooses not to exploit a particular resource due to concern about the climate, Boss B will swoop in, claim and exploit that resource, and drive Boss A out of business. This is reflected in the Paris Climate Accords. This agreement between global capitalist leaders represents the best they can do at resolving the contradiction between profit accumulation and environmental destruction. It doesn't start until 2020, and is merely a non-binding, toothless set of "targets" for reducing the emission of greenhouse gases. There are no consequences when countries fail to meet their targets. In a communist, planned economy, targets would be set and all of society would be set to the task of meeting those targets.

## Communist Revolution Is the Solution to Climate Change

We are constantly reminded that "human" activities such as fossil fuel burning, deforestation, meat production and agriculture as the main culprits that release gases like methane, carbon dioxide, and nitrous oxide, into the atmosphere – without connecting it to the giant corporations that profit mightily from those activities.

In order to reduce carbon emissions and prevent catastrophic climate change, it is absolutely essential to destroy capitalism and replace it with communism. While workers will die and suffer, capitalism will survive all manner of global weather calamity. What they absolutely cannot survive is communist revolution. The united working class is the only force, natural or otherwise, that can bring this exploitative and murderous system to an end. Become a part of this force today by joining PLP.✪



LETTERS

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

Walking through Mexico City after Earthquake

In one of the hardest hit neighborhoods around Roma and Condesa, Mexico City, several buildings collapsed during the earthquake and many more were damaged to the point of being uninhabitable.

Many deaths were the result of people trapped in buildings. Walking around the neighborhood a couple of days after the quake was both traumatic and inspiring. Many streets were blocked and yellow tape blocked off buildings at risk of collapse.

Two parks in the neighborhood were being used as makeshift refugee centers for people left homeless.

The city bureaucracy was overwhelmed by the disaster, but the neighborhood was full of young volunteers. Donated water, supplies and informal meals were being passed out everywhere you looked. Many neighborhood restaurants were giving free food to volunteers and refugees. Calls would go out, literally shouted in the street, for carpenters or other skills. From time to time, self-organized brigades of volunteers would run from one area to another as news of a new building collapse would spread.

Even in this, the hardest hit area, only a few square blocks, there was also “regular” life trying to go on as people who were able to returned to work and businesses reopened amid the streets teeming with machine gun armed soldiers. Many restaurants were filled with people and in the vast majority of the city there was little or no visible damage. Get out of the neighborhood and you could almost forget there was an earthquake.

Among the collapsed buildings were several new ones, including the school in another neighborhood where 20 children were killed, built after the codes were changed to require them to be earthquake resistant. But business came before people’s lives and bribes and willful ignorance let the codes get ignored in many cases.

Not shamed by their collusion with the criminal developers, the ruling class is trying to undue some of the positive collective response by building patriotism among the young volunteers. Mexican flags are appearing across the neighborhood even as the victims are still being removed and people without the money to properly repair their buildings have to decide whether to take the loss or risk living in a weakened apartment building. Flags will not hold

those buildings up when the next quake comes.

The city is promising money to properly fix up buildings, but it seems impossible to believe that the distribution of the funds will be better than the corruption filled system that was “ensuring” new buildings were safe to begin with.

★★★★★

Call For Action After Capitalist-Caused Disasters

The otherwise excellent editorial on the devastation of Puerto Rico by racism and imperialism left out one important point. It is necessary for communists and other class-conscious workers to be involved in the struggles to survive disasters like the aftermath of Hurricane Maria. We must lead the class struggles that will develop as local and national bosses try to profit off of the reconstruction and gentrification that almost always follow these disasters.

Progressive Labor Party organized in Texas and New Orleans in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. In Texas, we were part of the relief efforts for our brothers and sisters that were forced to relocate from New Orleans. In New Orleans itself, we organized a months-long project the summer after Katrina. Scores of Party members and friends participated in the process of clearing debris and rebuilding in working class areas like the Lower Ninth Ward, while exposing the limits of reform and the need for revolution. PLP has done similar things in Pakistan and Haiti.

On my job, I proposed to my co-workers that we raise money for relief efforts for Puerto Rico. We are setting up a small committee. I have also called for a demonstration condemning the racist failure of Trump and U.S. bosses to provide for the needs of workers there. These kinds of activities give us opportunities to raise communist ideas and build international solidarity with workers worldwide.

★★★★★

Trump’s Sick, Racist Move

President Donald Trump used the term “sons of bitches” to describe the mostly Black NFL player’s protest against Black oppression. The move is designed to whip up nationalism and racism against Black people in the United States. It is a sick move by a sick leader of a sick system.

★★★★★

An Interview with a Carwash Workers Organizer in NYC

*What’s happening with the carwash workers?*

I’m keeping workers united to fight off the bosses’ bribes and lies to decertify the union. By NLRB [National Labor Relations Board] pro-boss rules the boss has 90 days before the contract expires to get 30 percent of the workers to agree to decertify.

*What are the workers demands now?*

The workers who do specialized cleaning want an enclosed space where they can work inside to avoid extreme weather conditions in summer and winter. Also the bosses force workers to use dangerous chemicals without proper protection as “required” by the Dept. of Health. Workers want holiday pay and regular scheduled hours.

*How big is the carwash?*

There are 46 workers working 2-12 hour shifts at a grueling pace. They are mainly Latin, undocumented workers. And of course, the bosses are profit driven racist exploiters. The contract is weak in a number of areas. Self-critically we organizers need to work better to train the rank and file to defend the contract and fight for their health and safety.

*How much change or reform is possible under capitalism for the carwash workers?*

Under this system I don’t think there will be significant change in the carwash industry. The size and nature of the workforce and the separation into small shops limit the workers’ capacity to fight back. But given these limits workers have fought back against inhuman conditions and to organize the union over many weeks in outside weather, as long as five months. The workers have been united and courageous, giving leadership to the whole working class. Critically the union leaders have not organized powerful support, but rank and file workers from different industries have been 100 percent supportive.

*In the future the working class must overthrow capitalism and take power. Do you agree?*

Yes, because that is the only way that we can ensure that brutal capitalist exploitation will end. Without a doubt I think workers would be open to revolutionary communist ideas. It’s our job to begin these discussions with them, using CHALLENGE newspaper, which can be read out loud depending on the workers’ literacy levels.



University of Maine Students March against Racism

WASHINGTON, D.C. October 1—Students from the University of Maine (UMO) drove to Washington, D.C. to join the national March for Black Women for racial justice. Students from Howard University’s HUResist also attended. The March for Black Women merged with the March for Racial Justice, protesting state violence, police terror and racist murders, at the U.S. Department of (In)Justice. The march ended on the National Mall, condemning institutional racism.

Anti-racist fighters launched the March for Racial Justice after the acquittal of the Minnesota cop who murdered Philando Castile. Their goal is a national mobilization against racist police terror. The March for Racial Justice was a nationwide protest in 18 cities, from Los Angeles to New York City, from Olympia, Washington to Dallas, Texas and Tallahassee, Florida.

The March for Black Women focused on denouncing “the propagation of state-violence and the widespread incarceration of Black women and girls, rape and all sexualized violence, the murders and brutalization of transwomen and the disappearances of our girls from our streets, our schools and our homes.” Organizers of this “march within a march” believed that it was vital to highlight the centrality of Black women in the oppression of racism and in the leadership of the resistance to it.

A supporter of the PLP who organized the UMO student contingent shared the following account of the day:

*During the early part of the day, beautiful people of different identifications (class, sex, race, age, students, workers) stood together to listen and learn from women speakers who covered topics such as racism, sexual and domestic violence, hurricane relief, white supremacy, systemic racism, patriarchal constructs, transphobia, homophobia, and xenophobia.*

*We hit the streets, it was powerful, like every time I set foot on the streets of DC in solidarity with brothers and sisters who are tired of oppression. It was amazing to see the freshmen women of my group from UMO, wide-eyed and amazed because it was their first protest. It was*

*great to be able to show them what direct action looks like. Taking the streets and disrupting traffic is powerful because it raises awareness. Will it change things in a day? No. But it may spark fire in the heart of many people to give their time and energy to this revolution.*

*I was moved to tears when everyone took a knee and then people started yelling, “Black women stand up!” I am moved to tears now writing it. The struggle of Black and Brown women is so real and so much of a burden to carry.*

*Personally, I made it a point to incorporate anti-capitalist chants. At one point I climbed a marble wall and chanted through my loudspeaker, “Hey hey, ho ho, capitalism has got to go!”*

*As I chanted I got louder, more passionate and a lot of people were pumped. People were either wondering what capitalism had to do with this march or they were “real woke” and knew exactly why I was so furiously yelling with my fist in the air. I saw people jumping up and down with me chanting against capitalism. I believe in the good things coming. I believe people are getting ready and are ready for change, real change, the change that will free future generations.*

Her account of the day shows the importance of collective action against racism, but also demonstrates the limitations of the current leadership of these movements. The speakers in the morning condemned many of the ills of capitalism, but failed to call out the capitalist system, the well-head of all of these forms of oppression. Capitalism’s insatiable lust for profits above all and at all costs spawns myriad oppressions to divide sections of the working class against others, both to extract maximum profits and weaken our ability to fight back.

Fortunately, this comrade took it upon herself to make this connection herself with her own “rally within the rally”, heightening the consciousness of hundreds of participants in the march, and showing the way forward to her fellow UMO students to liberation through communist revolution.🌐

# Vietnam War: GI's Turned the Guns Around

The Ken Burns documentary "The Vietnam War," has been touted by the rulers' media as an outstanding depiction of that U.S. invasion, presenting "both sides"—the opposition by GIs and the anti-war movement, as well as the soldiers' so-called heroism on the battlefield and their families' support at home.

But the 10-part series has a huge omission: It leaves out the mass rebellion of soldiers, sailors, and airmen, many times led by Black GIs. The achievements of Vietnam's workers and peasants in their "people's war" laid the basis for GIs to "turn the guns around" on U.S. officers, and which helped force the U.S. surrender.

How serious was that rebellion? While it was certainly the Vietnamese people and not the U.S. anti-war movement that was decisive in their victory, the U.S. rulers faced such a wave of rebellion that they were afraid they could lose control of the armed forces.

In a June 1971 article titled "The Collapse of the Armed Forces" in the Armed Forces Journal, a newspaper for military officers, Col. Robert Heintz detailed the extent of the rebellion and opposition of GIs on the ground, saying that "the morale, discipline, and battle-worthiness of the U.S. Armed Forces...are lower and worse than at any time in this [20th] century and possibly in the history of the United States."

He added that the mass rebellion had "only been exceeded in this century by...the collapse of the Tsarist armies in 1916 and 1917.... There appear to be some 144 underground newspapers published on or aimed at U.S. military bases in this country and overseas....At least 14 GI dissent organizations (including two made up exclusively of officers) now operate more or less openly."

Beyond that, he reported that soldiers were offering bounties for the death of unpopular officers, and that fraggings (grenade attacks on officers) were up to one-a-day in one division. In many cases, troops refused to go out into the field; sometimes the refusers were set up in separate no-go units. Desertion was also common; in the seven years of war from 1966 to 1973, half a million troops simply left.

In the Navy, rebellions, often led by Black sailors, were common on major ships. Rebellions often included setting fire to parts of aircraft carriers, including the captain's and admiral's quarters. These rebellions kept five of the Navy's aircraft carriers in port and out of service for months or years. Heintz says: "When the USS Kitty Hawk was ordered to return...to Vietnam...black sailors led a major rebellion, including hand-to-hand battle with Marines sent to break up a meeting on board the ship....The Kitty Hawk was forced to return to San Diego...and was essentially removed from

the war altogether...."

The Air Force, too, was the scene of soldier resistance to the imperialist war

When Nixon launched a 12-day all-out bombardment of much of North Vietnam, "individual pilots refused to participate on moral grounds." Part of the super-secret 6990th Air Force Security Service — whose task was to warn B-52 bombers about Vietnamese air defenses — "staged a work stoppage bordering on open mutiny." Seymour Hersh interviewed ten members of this unit for his book, *The Price of Power: Kissinger in the White House*, and was told there were cheers whenever a B-52 was shot down.

None of these events appeared in Ken Burns' *The Vietnam War*. However, they confirm the validity of PLP's entrance into the services to win GIs to "turn the guns around." Our members who joined up played a modest role in these actions (which drew "honorable mention" in Burns' quoting Vice-President Spiro Agnew's condemnation of PLP, among others). (A future article will describe PLP GIs' activities in the military.)

That's the part of the Vietnam War history the ruling class would like us to forget as they prepare for new imperialist wars. They will need working class soldiers to fight their wars, as always, and the working class will again need to turn the guns around!👁



## 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

### Capitalist world crisis: bosses' profits up, workers' wages down

NYT, 10/8 — In many major countries, including the United States, Britain and Japan, ...workers are still waiting for...fatter paychecks....

...weak wages [are] an indicator of an...economic order in which working people are at the mercy of their employers. Unions have lost clout. Companies are relying on temporary and part-time workers while deploying robots...and automation...that allow them to produce more without paying extra to human beings....

In Britain....wages...[are]...below the rate of inflation, meaning workers' costs were rising faster than their pay. In Japan, weak wage growth is...a force that could keep the future lean, depriving workers of spending power....

Last year, only 10.7 percent of American workers were represented by a union, down from 20.1 percent in 1983....a key to why employers can pay lower wages....In short, 44 years passed with a typical American worker absorbing roughly [a] 2 percent wage cut....

[In] Elyria [Ohio]...Lindsay Martin worked at Janesville Acoustics....earning \$14 an hour. Then...the plant was shutting down....

She took a job at a gas station...for \$9 an hour, less than two-thirds of what she had previously earned....Japanese...corporate profits are at record highs....

Companies have...sat on their increased profits rather than share them with employees....

Almost half of Japanese workers under 25 are in part-time or temporary positions, up from 20 percent in 1990. And women, who typically earn 30 percent less than men, have filled a disproportional

tionate number of jobs

As the global crisis unfolded in 2008,...mass unemployment tore across Italy, Portugal and Spain, depressing wages across the continent... Norwegian wages....in 2016...declined in real terms by more than 1 percent....

In Arendal [Norway], Bandak..., a series of layoffs commenced. Workers...agreed to a 5 percent wage cut....The company soon descended into bankruptcy. And that was that for the...remaining workers. Per Harald Torjussen.... "feels a lot less secure....We may be approaching what it's like in the U.S. and the U.K."

### Study proves racism prevalent in ordinary every-day inter-actions

NYT, 10/8 — A team of economists has uncovered persuasive evidence that local government officials throughout the United States are less responsive to African-Americans than...to whites.

The researchers sent roughly 20,000 emails to local government[s]...[and] posed commonplace questions, like "Could you please tell me what your opening hours are?"....

Emails with black-sounding names [DeShawn Jackson or Tyrone Washington] were 13 percent more likely to go unanswered than those with white-sounding names [Greg Walsh or Jake Mueller]....

The findings appeared to be a striking indication of racial discrimination in mundane interactions. The tendency to ignore emails sent by African-Americans was pronounced in sheriffs' offices, but...also evident in school districts and libraries....

The new research...appears to have documented straightforward discrimination....[and] provide further indication of the many ways in which discrimination shapes the lives of African-Americans....

Racial discrimination in America....occurs not only in the labor market and the criminal justice system, but also in countless small frictions every

day.

### 'Testilying': Racist cops lie routinely

NYT, 10/10 — ...Police perjury and half-truths remain a persistent problem for the New York Police Department....False or mis-leading statements by the police has, on a national level, been intertwined with the issue of...whether officers are too quick to shoot people, particularly black men....

...In New York, the practice of routinely making up facts to justify a dubious arrest...got its own nickname..."testilying...."

...The Civilian Complaint Review Board...has documented an increase in cases in which police...give false statements.

"There is lying going on on a regular basis," said...the chairman of the review board.

### U.S. rulers backed 1965 Indonesian anti-communist mass murders

NYT, 10/18 — It was an anti-communist blood bath of at least half a million Indonesians. [Ed. Note: actually one million] And American officials...applaud[ed] the forces behind the killings, according to a newly declassified State Department file....An American political affairs counselor describes how...."Many provinces appear to be...executing their P.K.I [Indonesian Communist Party] prisoners, or by killing them before they are captured"....

"The U.S. was following what was happening...and if it wasn't for its support...the army would never have felt the confidence to take power."

The Indonesian slaughter took place at a time when Southeast Asia...was energized by socialist ideology.

The United States already had boots on the ground in Vietnam. Indonesia, then led by President Sukarno and home to one of the world's largest Communist parties, was seen by Washing-



BOLSHEVIK REVOLUTION CENTENNIAL SERIES

THE GREAT INSURRECTION OF 1917



Banner reads, “Long live the Council of Workers ‘and Soldiers’ Deputies”

*This is the part of an extensive series about the Bolshevik Revolution and the triumphs, as well as the defeats, of the world communist movement of the 20th century. We welcome your comments and criticisms, and encourage all readers to discuss this period of history with their friends, classmates, co-workers, family, and comrades.*

*The following illustrates the Bolsheviks’ armed uprising in Petrograd on October 27 / November 7, 1917. It is often called “the Russian Revolution.” In fact, uprisings took place in a great many cities and towns.*

In 1917, ordinary people took their lives into their own hands and remade their world. It was the most important event of the 20th century; for the first time in world history, workers seized state power and pioneered a worker-run society. The workers, organized in committees and councils, took over the means of production.

This event shook and influenced the whole world. The Soviet Union was an international beacon of hope for workers’ fighting to destroy the capitalists in their parts of the world.

A hundred years later, the capitalists of the world are still haunted by what our class was able to accomplish. And so, they slander the achievements of our communist predecessors every chance they get, in every media outlet they own. Progressive Labor Party reflects on the mass heroism of our class on this centennial celebration of the Bolshevik Revolution.

The Uprising

After the overthrow of the monarchy, the Bolsheviks and workers formed the Soviets (meaning “worker councils”) of Workers’ Deputies (Moscow Bolsheviks) and of Soldiers’ Deputies. As in Petrograd, there was sympathy for the moderate socialist parties. But by September 24, the Bolsheviks received an absolute majority of seats in district dumas (359 seats out of 710).

On the night of October 24 to October 25, the Bolshevik uprising began in Petrograd. The Moscow Bolsheviks learned about it at noon on October 25 (November 7 on the today’s international standard calendar). That same day, the Party Combat Center was set up to lead the insurrection. That afternoon, the Combat Center began fighting.

Parts of the Moscow troops were on alert and ready to execute only orders issued by the Military Revolutionary Committee (MRC). The MRC were powerful directing bodies of revolt, installing and securing the Soviet power. They stopped the publication of bourgeois newspapers and declared a general strike. Regional MRCs were created, military units that took the side of the Bolsheviks and their allies were put on alert. A provisional revolutionary committee was elected, since the executive committee of the Moscow Soldiers’ Soviet was in the hands of the Bolsheviks’ opponents.

Ten to twelve thousand workers, Red Guards, took to arms. District MRCs sent emissaries to factories and military units. On October 26, the Moscow MRC ordered all units of the Moscow garrison to combat readiness.

However, in Moscow there were perhaps as many as 20,000 Junkers (junior officers), all strongly anti-Bolshevik. The City Duma, headed by the rightwing socialist party, turned into a political center of resistance to the Bolsheviks. It relied mainly on cops and Junkers.

The chief of the Kremlin Arsenal agreed to give weapons to workers. But the Kremlin was blocked by detachments of Junkers. The commander of the Moscow Military District, Ryabtsev, requested loyal front troops while simultaneously entering into negotiations with the MRC.

On October 27, about 300 officers, cadets, and students loyal to the Provisional Government gathered at Moscow University and the Kremlin. The volunteer squad of students was called the “white guards,” the first time this term was used.

At 6 PM, colonel Ryabtsev and the Duma’s anti-revolutionary “Committee of Public Safety” (CPS) learned that troops were being sent from the front. Colonel Ryabtsev declared martial law and ordered the MRC to surrender. They refused. The same day Junkers attacked a detachment of revolutionary soldiers who were trying to break through to the Moscow City Council. Forty-five of the 150 people in the battle were killed or wounded.

**Junkers Take the Kremlin**

On the morning of October 28, colonel Ryabtsev demanded that the Bolsheviks surrender the Kremlin, claiming that the city was under his control. Not knowing the actual situation, Bolshevik leader Berzin did so. Then two companies of Junkers entered. Surviving soldiers later said that, after the prisoners handed over their weapons, they were shot. The counter-revolutionary forces bayoneted those who tried to flee.

The soldiers fought back. Six cadets and about 200 revolutionary soldiers were killed. Supporters of the CPS gained access to weapons from the Kremlin’s Central Arsenal.

Good Morning, Revolution:  
You’re the very best friend  
I ever hand.  
Together, we can take everything:  
Factories, arsenals, houses, ships,  
railroads, forests, fields, orchards,  
Bus lines, telegraphs, radios  
(Jesus! Raise hell with radios!)

Steel mills, coal mines, oil wells, gas,  
All the tools of production,  
(Great day in the morning!)

Everything—  
And turn ‘em over to the people who work.  
Rule and run ‘em for us people who work.

—excerpted from Langston Hughes,  
“Good Morning Revolution” (1932)

At the call of the Bolshevik Party, the MRC, and city trade unions, a general political strike began. A meeting of soldier committees asked all the military units to support the MRC. By day’s end, the revolutionary forces blocked the city center. From October 28 to October 31, revolutionary soldiers seized the Bryansk railway

station and provision warehouses, and stormed the headquarters of the Moscow Military District.

The morning of October 29 (November 11), the red soldiers dug trenches in the streets, built barricades and a stubborn struggle for the center of Moscow began. The Red forces launched an offensive, seizing the city hall. By 9 PM, the revolutionary troops occupied the telephone exchange and began shelling areas occupied by anti-Bolshevik forces, including the Kremlin. A truce was attempted but failed to hold. Anti-Bolshevik forces began to surrender to the forces of the revolutionary MRC.

On October 31 the MRC demanded unconditional surrender from the CPS. The Junkers, along with members of the counter-revolutionary CPS, were forced to move to the Kremlin and the Historical Museum.

On November 2 the shelling of the Kremlin by the Bolsheviks intensified and they occupied the Historical Museum. That night the Junkers left the Kremlin and agreed to disarm. A delegation of the CPS went to the MRC for negotiations. The MRC agreed to free all Junkers, officers and students provided they surrender their weapons.

On November 2, at 5 PM, the counterrevolutionary forces signed a surrender agreement. The MRC ordered a cease-fire, although in some areas the Junkers continued to resist and even attempted an offensive.

Finally, on November 3, the cadets, officers and students left the Kremlin and the building of the Alexander College. Many of them later joined the anti-Bolshevik Volunteer, or “White,” Army. Throughout Moscow, the Junkers were disarmed. A detachment of the Red Guard under the command of Comrade Petrov freed arrested revolutionary soldiers of the 56th regiment, led by the former commandant of the Kremlin’s arsenal, Comrade Berzin. The released prisoners were tortured and hungry. They had been kept without food for five days. Some were sick after all they had experienced as prisoners of the “Whites.” The liberated soldiers immediately grabbed the rifles abandoned by the Junkers and rushed at the colonel who had shot their comrades in the Kremlin, and at the Junkers holding grenades, and shot them on the spot.

On November 3, the manifesto of the MRC proclaimed the power of the Soviets of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies. During the uprising, the revolutionary forces suffered between several hundred and 1,000 killed and wounded.

Other Lessons

1. The Mensheviks entered the MRC from a desire “to mitigate the consequences of the insane adventure of the Bolsheviks.” Their participation made the actions of this body less decisive.
  2. If the Bolsheviks had not had a very strong and numerous base among the workers and soldiers of Moscow, they could never have beaten the highly motivated military cadets, Junkers, officers, and the regular army soldiers they commanded.
- The insurrection in Moscow was a series of hard-fought, bloody battles that took place over a whole week. The armed insurrection in Moscow proves that the Bolsheviks’ support among the workers, peasants, and soldiers, was broad and deep. The Bolsheviks had a strong base, won by years of hard, dedicated work, most of it under difficult, underground conditions.🔴

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