

CHALLENGE



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Oakland Workers Fight Racist Rent Hikes

OAKLAND, CA—Twice, Oakland workers and their children invaded the wealthy enclave of Piedmont to confront racist slumlord Steven Kalmbach at his \$4 million mansion. This battle is centered in East Oakland, a predominately Black, immigrant and working-class area.

For weeks, up to a dozen Oakland families and friends fought back against Kalmbach who doubled rent, from \$1200 to \$2400/month. According to a notice, the tenants must pay the new rent or move. This is basically an eviction notice.

Capitalist investors salivate over “opportunities” to profit from the “housing stock” there. Police terrorizing of Black and Latin youth, and Immigrant Customs Enforcement activity work hand in glove with these investors. Progressive Labor Party is uniting with local antiracist fighters and building a base for communist politics.

Bosses Profit Off of Housing Crisis

Starting with the foreclosures in 2008, the racist removal of many families is now in full gear. Kalmbach is the Northern California Director of Pulte Homes; a parasitic investment company specializing in buying “distressed property” as foreclosures at fire-sale prices during the housing crisis of 2007-2009. Even at \$1200/month, Kalmbach is making a profit on his investment especially since he does almost nothing to maintain the property.

But modest profit is not enough for these blood-sucking capitalists, as they seek to maximum profits off the “hot” Bay Area housing market. He had the audacity to say he needed the money to send his son to college and make a return on his investments, and might “negotiate” smaller rent increases for individual families but eventually, he would raise the rents to “market rate.”

Workers’ Solidarity Leads the Way

The workers responded with collective actions and are involved in a local non-profit to plan the fightback. This organization’s direct actions recently succeeded in preventing foreclosures, evictions and rent increases for several working class families. Tactics varied from direct action picketing, to email/calling blasts, and coverage in local liberal media. There are Oakland and



Tenants rally at Frank Ogawa Plaza in front of City Hall in Oakland. They are protesting a legal loophole that is leading to rising rents and evictions.

Statewide movements to pass laws for reforms in housing and rent control. Their demands include:

- Providing relocation funds to tenants facing rent increases over 10 percent.
- Prevent discrimination due to a tenant’s immigration status.
- Make single-family homes covered by rent control.
- Find socially conscious investors to set up a Land Trust to buy property and rent it as affordable housing or provide a path to home ownership.
- Secure funding for housing for the homeless.

The bosses are attacking the livelihood of mainly immigrant workers and families. Many tenants have school-age kids, and work as house-

keepers, bussers, landscapers and in other low-paying jobs. The battle for decent housing is related to the battle for better wages and benefits.

Their homes are mainly small two bedroom bungalows. Some families have been living there for ten years. Even at \$1200/month these low-paid workers struggle to make ends meet. Therefore, the proposed rent increases are essentially an eviction notice and an invitation to join the ever-increasing number of displaced and homeless in the Bay Area. Twenty-five percent of Oakland’s homeless have jobs. Of course, this is all legal and approved by the capitalist government: “Single-family homes aren’t covered by rent control because they are exempt under Costa-Hawkins, a state law passed in 1995 that limits local rent control efforts” (East Bay Times,

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JOIN THE INTERNATIONAL FIGHT FOR COMMUNIST REVOLUTION

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OUR FIGHT

☆Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to destroy capitalism and the dictatorship of the capitalist class. We organize workers, soldiers and youth into a revolutionary movement for communism.

☆The dictatorship of the working class — communism—can provide a lasting solution to the disaster that is today’s world for billions of people. This cannot be done through electoral politics, but requires a revolutionary movement and a mass Red Army led by PLP.

☆Worldwide capitalism, in its relentless drive for profit, inevitably leads to war, fascism, poverty, disease, starvation and environmental destruction. The capitalist class, through its state power — governments, armies, police, schools and culture — maintains a dictatorship over the world’s workers. The capitalist dictatorship supports, and is supported by, the anti-working-class ideologies of racism, sexism, nationalism, individualism and religion.

☆While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim “communism is dead,” capitalism is the real failure for billions worldwide. Capitalism returned to Russia and China because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system, like wages and privileges. Russia and China did not establish communism.

☆Communism means working collectively to build a worker-run society. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. While capitalism needs unemployment, communism needs everyone to contribute and share in society’s benefits and burdens.

☆Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of “race.” Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit Black, Latin, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working class.

☆Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women— sexism—and divisive gender roles created by the class society.

☆Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

☆Communism means that the minds of millions of workers must become free from religion’s false promises, unscientific thinking and poisonous ideology. Communism will triumph when the masses of workers can use the science of dialectical materialism to understand, analyze and change the world to meet their needs and aspirations.

☆Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!

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WHO WRITES FOR CHALLENGE?

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

U.S. & China Rivalry in West Africa A Prelude to War

The killing of four U.S. troops in Niger brought to light the escalating role of the U.S. military in West Africa—and the sharpening rivalry between the U.S. and China throughout this strategically vital continent.

In his March 2017 testimony before Congress, the commander of the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) spoke bluntly about inter-imperialist competition in the region:

Just as the U.S. pursues strategic interests in Africa, international competitors, including China and Russia, are doing the same...whether with trade, natural resources exploitation, or weapons sales, These competitors weaken our African partners’ ability to govern...and they also undermine and diminish U.S. influence....

U.S. imperialism is determined to exploit African resources and labor in the service of corporate profits and geopolitical power. Former president Barack Obama greased the path for corporate entrenchment with programs like Doing Business in Africa Campaign, Power Africa, and Trade Africa. In 2014, in another Obama initiative, the U.S.-Africa Business Forum (USABF), public and private deals totaling \$62 billion were cemented. Between 2008 and 2015, direct U.S. investment in Africa jumped more than 70 percent, from \$37 billion to \$64 billion (Whitehouse Archives, 9/21/16).

China, Imperialist Giant in Africa

But China, which has quietly laid its groundwork in Africa for decades, remains far in the lead. In 2009, it surpassed the U.S. as the continent’s largest trading partner. From 2000 to 2014, trade between China and Africa rose more than 20-fold, from \$10 billion to \$220 billion, while US-Africa trade faltered (see graph, page 5). In 2015, to increase Chinese influence, President Xi Jinping pledged \$60 billion over three years for African infrastructure projects ranging from pipelines, and ports to railways and highways, from manufacturing plants to electric power generation (Financial Times, 6/13, Forbes, 3/14). To protect its expanding role, China is establishing a naval base in Djibouti, in East Africa, the first overseas base for the People’s Liberation Army Navy. In addition, China has deployed a total of 2,500 troops with United Nations peacekeeping missions in South Sudan, Liberia, and Mali. President Xi has pledged up to 8,000 such troops, along with \$100 million to the African Union standby force and \$1 billion to establish a UN Peace and Development Trust Fund. More than a million Chinese nationals are currently in Africa as workers, contractors, or businesspeople (CNN, 7/13).

To counteract growing Chinese clout in Africa and stake a claim to the continent’s vast resources for its own empire, the U.S. is countering militarily. AFRICOM was established by President George W. Bush in 2007 and greatly expanded under Obama. This year, some 6,000 U.S. troops will conduct 3,500 “operations” out of military bases and U.S. embassies across Africa—a 1,900 percent increase since 2007 (Newsweek, 10/23). At least 800 troops are stationed in Niger, where the U.S. is completing construction of a \$100 million drone installation capable of launching advanced attack and surveillance drones, like the MQ9 Reaper and Predator (Newsweek, 9/30/16).

U.S. Build for War

At the same time, the U.S. continues to build up its main base of operation in Djibouti and set up “forward operating” bases throughout Africa, which it describes as “temporary facilities” (Mother Jones, 9/6/2013). The U.S. recently agreed to commit \$60 million to a joint anti-terrorist (read: imperialist) force under U.N. auspices. The European Union has likewise pledged \$58 million, with France playing a

The Scramble for Africa in Historical Perspective

Imperialist exploitation of Africa is nothing new. Today’s national borders on the continent began with the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885, establishing most of the continent’s borders today. German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck used negotiations to avoid a European war over African territory. True to their racist colonial mindset, the European powers invited no Africans to these discussions.

As imperialists competed for dominance over the continent’s riches, Africans suffered the greatest losses. Leading up to World War I, Germany demanded a broader role in Africa at the expense of the British, French, and Belgian colonial powers. About 1 million people were killed in East Africa in the ensuing conflict. In World War II, over a million Africans were conscripted to fight for their colonial oppressors. After the war, the U.S. deepened its involvement in the continent. It plundered raw materials and tried to blunt the influence of the Soviet Union, which supported national liberation movements combatting colonialism.

These liberation struggles, influenced and often led by communists, seemed to hold great promise. Bold revolutionary actions were taken in Ghana (Kwame Nkrumah), Tanzania (Julius Nyerere), Guinea (Sekou Toure), Mali (Modibo Keita), Angola (Agostinho Neto), and Mozambique (Samora Machel). Because these movements allied with local capitalists, they reverted back to neocolonialism and capitalism. But their brave, anti-colonialist struggle remains inspirational.

As the imperialist powers continue to exploit workers and resources in Africa as they challenge one another for world hegemony, PLP seeks to build communist revolution and smash capitalist exploitation for all time.

leading role in the Lake Chad region, where it has longstanding colonial interests. The U.N. already has a force of 14,000 personnel in neighboring Mali (New York Times, 10/30).

The official U.S. rationale for expanding its military presence in Africa is to defeat the same radical Islamic insurgencies that U.S. imperialism helped create by devastating Libya and assassinating Muammar Qaddafi (Independent, 9/15/16). In reality, this expansion is a thinly veiled pretext to secure the bosses’ foothold and safeguard U.S. corporate investments and resource transfers. The U.S. imperialists’ best bet is to put U.S. boots on the ground. From Vietnam to Afghanistan, efforts to train local proxy military forces to defend U.S. interests have failed dismally (Foreign Affairs, Nov-Dec 2017). Most recently, in the October 4 ambush in Niger, local troops fled the scene before French special forces arrived.

As the conflict among imperialists escalates in

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Yemen, Venezuela, Charlottesville

International Forum Builds Working-Class Unity

NEW YORK CITY—Twenty-five PLP members and friends in the community from eight different countries held a forum connecting Yemen, Venezuela and the rebellion in Charlottesville. For the first time, seven immigrants from Yemen participated. Together we read a leaflet about the theme. The discussion took place in English, Spanish, and Arabic.

We made the connections between these three places in different parts of the world. Forums like these are the basis of international working-class unity.

Yemen

Yemen has been destroyed by non-stop bombing by Saudi Arabia, backed up by U.S. bombing drones and billions of U.S. dollars in armaments to Saudi Arabia. Yemen has untapped oil and natural gas reserves, is located on an important oil shipping waterway and is directly across from Djibouti, where the U.S. has a new military base overlooking oil riches and oil routes from West Africa to the Middle East and beyond. As our Yemeni friends said, "It's about power and oil."

This genocidal war by the Saudis, backed by the U.S., against the Houthi rebels, backed by Iran, has killed more than 10,000 civilians and wounded over 40,000. By UN estimates seven million Yemenis out of a population of 25 million are facing starvation. According to the World Health Organization there are 777,229 cases of cholera, soon to surpass Haiti which reached 815,000 cases seven years after the outbreak there. It has taken only six months to reach those numbers in Yemen. More than half of the cholera victims in Yemen are below 18 years of age and 26 percent of those are under 5. The utter destruction of infrastructure and sewer systems has led to a near total absence of pure drinking water. In addition there is a near total blockade on the entry of any kind of aid. The Yemeni refugee crisis equals Syr-



ia's resulting in many deaths; Yemeni refugees are among those targeted by the U.S. government's anti-Muslim travel ban. We are learning more every day from our Yemeni friends.

Venezuela

Like Yemen in Venezuela it's all about imperialist competition for control of oil. We talked about the growing tension between the U.S. and Venezuela, focusing on the rivalry between U.S. and Chinese imperialists over control of oil reserves. In Venezuela the working class is facing shortages of food, medicine and basic services. The children and infant mortality rate has risen drastically. All this is due to the fall of oil prices, in great part designed by the U.S. and its Saudi partners. Furthermore the U.S. government has spent hundreds of thousands of dollars to fund opposition groups to Maduro, leading to hundreds of deaths.

Charlottesville

On August 11 and 12 300 Nazi terrorist and white supremacists invaded the small university town of Charlottesville to «defend» the Confederate statue of Robert E. Lee. Given the green

light by the election of arch racist, fascist Donald Trump, they marched with no police interference attacking protesters, who fought back valiently, killing one and wounding 19.

Everyone at the forum agreed that the deadly situation is Yemen and Venezuela are the consequence of inter-imperialist rivalry for power and control of oil that puts us closer to world war 3. In the U.S. the intensification of racism and nationalism is what the ruling class pushes to divide and win the working class to support racist terror and poverty as they force young people to be cannon fodder in wider wars.

Only the unity of the international working class and the building of a mass revolutionary communist PLP can make us stronger to confront the horrors of imperialist war and enable us to convert those wars into revolution for communism and workers power. We concluded our event with distribution of CHALLENGE and vowed to continue the fight for the working class of Yemen. All enjoyed a delicious lunch with food from Ecuador and Yemen. Power to the international working class!✊

Oakland Protests Racist Slumlord

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9/29). As the fight continues, it is important to show whose interests the government protects.✊

No Safety Under Capitalism

At a debrief, organizers and lawyers encouraged people to get involved in legislative campaigns. A PLP member active in this fightback said it was "outrageous that one man in a \$4 million mansion could dictate the lives of dozens of working-class family members, giving them the choices of poverty or homelessness. As long as homes could be owned for private profit that we will never have justice, equality, or a secure place to live."

Kalmbach sees "housing stock" as "an investment opportunity". PLP sees that these houses are full of living; breathing families who need decent shelter and have the capacity to organize and fight back. We will continue to fight and learn to more confidently promote a communist future for the working class.✊



Housing: Communism vs. Capitalism

From Oakland to New York City, the deterioration of affordable housing is part of a larger trend. "The Reagan administration cut Housing and Urban Development to pieces. Today, rental-housing vouchers—a Nixon-era project to shift government assistance away from supply—only cover one-quarter of eligible families. Having a roof over your head is a privilege, not a right...More than 11 million households pay half their income in rent; nearly half of all tenant households pay more than 30 percent of income in rent, the standard mark of affordability" (Slate, June 2017).

Clearly, housing is another way capitalism fails the working class. How will communism handle it? Communism means abolishing private property, exploitation, money, and wages. Progressive Labor Party (PLP) organizes to struggle for a system that guarantees that everyone has secure shelter. And, planned development dealing with floods, hurricanes, and earthquakes will be part of planning housing. Working collectively, we can build housing for shelter, not for profit. In a communist world, no one can throw you out because societies'

resources are shared by all based on need.

This concept of "share and sharer alike" exists today in spite of the capitalist ideas that say, "You decide what is best for you and yours." For example, millions of workers in Mexico City and Puerto Rico turned out after the earthquake & hurricane to rescue and provide for their neighbors and families without monetary gain. We need a vision and a goal of how the world could be organized differently. Communists strive to build a world where it is part of the air we breathe that looking after "you and yours" means looking after everyone.

Will there be disagreement and struggle as we work towards this goal? Yes. Can this side of humanity win out? Yes. Communists in PLP see this potential in every reform battle that fights for what we need now under capitalism. These struggles show that capitalism is broken. Communists take these battles to the next level that capitalism and private property must be eliminated to develop housing security for the international working class.

Texas: Bosses Attack Hurricane Victims

TEXAS—Two months after the devastation from Hurricane Harvey, the world series has put Houston in the spotlight again. For much of the city life seems to have returned to normal.

Nationalist Slogan Masks Capitalism’s Role

The “Houston Strong” slogan that was pushed in the aftermath of the storm has now reached a fever pitch with the Astros win. This slogan masks the capitalist causes of the disaster and hides the ongoing crisis faced by the workers hardest hit by the hurricane.

Despite being a natural disaster, the laws of capitalism are at the heart of what made Hurricane Harvey a catastrophe.

Houston’s population has grown exponentially in the past few decades and developers seeking to maximize profit have taken full advantage of Houston’s lax building laws. Houston’s lack of zoning laws doesn’t require builders to use flood prevention like green zones or retention ponds to offset their development. And with the explosion of urban dense housing near the inner city and unregulated sprawl outside the city, there is very little land left to absorb floodwater in a rain event like Harvey.

Added to this is the city’s aging flood protection infrastructure. The bayou system in Houston is not capable of handling the large storms that have hit the city in the past several years and development around them has left little room to widen the bayou system.

The Addicks and Barker reservoirs, the only two reservoirs in the city to hold storm water, are 70 years old and in desperate need of updating. In the late 2000s the Army Corps of Engineers rated Houston’s reservoirs and spillways as “extremely high-risk” infrastructure. Like much of the U.S., infrastructure is rotting away as the bosses divert

In the midst of the storm, it wasn’t the government that saved people but instead it was a multi-racial army of workers that organized to save themselves and their fellow workers.

billions to their imperialist wars in the Middle East, Africa and around the world.

In the midst of the storm, it wasn’t the government that saved people but instead it was a multi-racial army of workers that organized to save themselves and their fellow workers. Images of white workers in particular with access to fishing boats and large trucks rescuing fellow Asian, Latin, Black and white workers demonstrated the potential for multi-racial unity among workers.

Despite this display of working-class multi-racial unity, the narrative the media ran with was a nationalist “Houston Strong” account that promoted an all-class patriotic version of the rescues.

Racist Attack on Black Youth

On top of the “Houston Strong” narrative, the media injected its usual dose of racist “looting” coverage. At the height of the storm, Reuters ran a story claiming, “Storm-hit Houston reels from influx of evacuees, crime outbreak” citing an “outbreak of looting and armed robberies”. The “looters” in these stories are almost always assumed to be Black youth. Despite appearing in an international newsfeed, there was no evidence of a

“crime outbreak” to back up this claim. In fact, the crime rate actually went down during the hurricane compared to the previous year (kut.org).

While a slew of fake tweets and news reports labeled Black youth as “looters,” the reality was that Black and Latin youth were among the most devastated by the hurricane. The more time we spent volunteering in the evacuation shelters, the more obvious it became that despite the widespread nature of the disaster, it was mainly poor Black and Latin workers who lacked funds and a safety net that caused them to end up in the evacuation shelters.

FEMA

The structural racism of this capitalist system means that mainly poor Black and Latin workers who live in the most impoverished, segregated neighborhoods in the city and whose school are the most underfunded will bear the brunt of these capitalist disasters. The pennies FEMA is offering families who have the time and energy to navigate through FEMA’s bureaucratic hula-hoops is barely enough to cover a few bills much less restart your life. For undocumented workers, the fear of deportation has prevented many from seeking government assistance, further deepening their already desperate situation. Disasters like Harvey only deepen the structural racism that already exists under capitalism.

Volunteering in the evacuation shelter and working with the teacher’s union to help teachers and their families clean out their homes, Progressive Labor Party had the opportunity to build ties with fellow workers and to discuss the ways in which capitalism turned a natural disaster into a man-made catastrophe. Now that school is in session, we are looking to work with students and their families in more long-term ways to both expose this racist capitalist system and to build a movement to fight back against it.✪

College Campus Struggles—Smash All Borders

NEW YORK CITY, November 8—From coast to coast, college students have an important role to play in the fight for an antiracist, antisexist communist world. As the 2017 college conference commences this weekend, it’s a good time to reflect on the stakes, struggles, and potential of campus fightbacks where Progressive Labor Party has a base. The following is not a comprehensive list, but just some highlights of the year.

CUNY, Site of Struggle

The City University of New York (CUNY) is often held up as the great beacon of hope for its 275,000 working-class students. In reality, CUNY students—the majority of whom are Black, Latin, Asian, and immigrant—are the targets of vicious racist attacks and cutbacks, in the form of chronic underfunding, rising tuition, overcrowded classes, crumbling infrastructures, increasingly poor job prospects, and increasing military recruitment to fight and die for U.S. imperialism.

Meanwhile, the majorities of courses are taught by adjunct instructors who are part-time, grossly underpaid, and lack job security. A growing number of adjuncts are Black, Latin, and women, making the bosses’ pitting of adjuncts against full-timers more and more of a racist divide-and-conquer strategy. The film clip “Professors in Poverty” illustrates the number of professors who are living below the poverty level, struggling to survive (available on youtube).

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

PLP members and friends have tried to be immersed in campus struggles where they exist and initiate them where they don’t. Our goal is to raise our ideas about internationalism, breaking down all of the bosses’ divisions, fighting racism and sexism, and showing why workers and students need a truly egalitarian world—communism.

- The fightback of CUNY includes:
- Adjuncts demanding a living wage— of \$7,000 a course, and a seniority plan. They marched a few blocks to CUNY headquarters and picketed there. PLP fights for real improvements for adjuncts, full-timers, and students, while at the same time organizing for the overthrow of the entire system that makes this exploitation possible. When adjuncts and full-time faculty organize alongside their students in working-class unity, more is possible.
 - Brooklyn: Sanctuary Committee organizing against anti-immigrant racism following Trump’s attack on Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. a group of students and faculty disrupted Mayor de Blasio’s press conference and unfurled a giant banner that read “Defend DACA: Smash Racism!” PLP has been active in organizing campus workers and trying to challenge the divisions between students and workers. Through our work with Sanctuary, we have also started a petition campaign pressuring the professors’ union (PSC) to respond in a much bigger way to the needs of the working class in hurricane-devastated Puerto Rico.
 - THE Bronx: Students and faculty on many CUNY campuses have been hit hard by the crisis in Puerto Rico. Last semester at Bronx Community College (BCC), we had focused on a number of actions and teach-ins around immigration and fighting racism, and when Hurricane Maria and its aftermath devastated the working class of Puerto Rico, we began immediately organizing relief work on campus. In contrast to the administration’s red tape and slow response, the students collected over \$2,000 in one day in a Solidarity Day, as well as hundreds of donation items. The spirit of the students and many staff and faculty was amazing—as the writer John Steinbeck wrote, “if you need help, go to the poor.”
 - At another Bronx campus, last year, students and education workers ruined the day for the administration. Instead of an uneventful ribbon-cutting ceremony on the new quad, the assembled deceit-
- ful politicians, including Lieutenant Governor Kathleen Hochul and Chancellor James B. Milliken, were confronted with a multiracial group of students and faculty protesting tuition hikes at CUNY. These politicians and administrators voted repeatedly for these increases—and the President of our school had the nerve to invite them to be praised!

Fightback Across the Country

We take inspiration from the Howard students who shut down Former FBI Director James Comey at convocation. The students marched into the auditorium just before Comey was to speak, singing the old protest song, “We Shall Not Be Moved.” The students issued a statement saying Comey “represents an institution diametrically opposed to the interests of Black people domestically and abroad. While his tenure at the FBI has finished, his impact on our community remains.”

We take inspiration from Columbia students who shut down fascist speaker Tommy Robinson last month. He founded the English Defense League, violently opposes all immigrants. Students from many campus groups attended the protest against him, along with friends of PLP.

We take inspiration from the Stanford students who staged a sit-in demanding sanctuary for undocumented students in front of hundreds during a University Welcome event in April. A dozen students walked onto stage with signs stating, “ICE is not welcome,” and sat down for an hour, chanting intermittently.

Continue the Struggle

The working class is being bombarded at every juncture—our students are facing growing fascism, while are told to allow “free speech” for all kinds of Nazis and fascists. Our adjuncts, while being given lip service by the union, will continue to be a source of cheap labor. Our task is clear. We must continue and step our efforts to fight all forms of racism and sexism wherever and however we can, while striving and learning how to build Progressive Labor Party and organize for a communist world.✪

Hollywood Weinstein Scandal & The Disciplining of the Democratic Party

The sexual assault scandal that started with Harvey Weinstein has spread across Hollywood and engulfed the whole of the bosses' media in the U.S., Canada, Britain, and France. Masses of women workers unleashed their wrath, publicly coming forward to call out their harassers and tormenters, many of them in the bosses' entertainment industry and the bosses' governments. Some were shamed into resignation. In France, women shared stories on social media with the hashtag, #Balancetonporc, or "rat out your pig."

Waves of inspiring anti-sexist stories have even rocked local communities as women workers made the exposure of Weinstein their own.

Communists in the Progressive Labor Party salute this mass bravery. Our class will need it to build a communist world without racism and sexism. Fighting for a movement capable of eliminating capitalism also means analyzing reality, and investigating things like the exposure of Harvey Weinstein.

The reality is: these exposures have nothing to do with any justice under capitalism for the vicious sexist attacks against women workers. Harvey Weinstein's depraved attacks on women in the movie industry were widely known for decades.

The New York City District Attorneys and the NYPD had evidence against Weinstein but never chose to press charges (NYT, 10/11). The editorial staff at major capitalist news outlets including the New York Times, NBC and New York Magazine suppressed stories exposing Weinstein for years. Reporters not only knew about what was going on, many of them had been victims themselves (Weekly Standard, 10/9).

Capitalists and their media don't care for women workers. The bosses see women workers, at best, as instruments of production of future workers, or as objects. Capitalist media empires rake in staggering profits from sexist marketing and pornography, while their friends in the informal capitalist economy traffic women workers into slavery around the world.

Women and girls comprise the majority of the largest disaster facing the international working class: refugees forced across racist capitalist borders from Central America to South Sudan, DR Congo, Syria and the Middle East. Across these borders, women workers are herded into refugee camps and subject to extreme poverty, abuse, exploitation, and trafficking. In Yemen, the Saudi and U.S. bombings have forced women into even more extreme conditions.

The reason the bosses' media is focusing on the Harvey Weinstein scandal has to do with shifting alliances within and among the capitalist class, and their Democratic Party.

U.S. Capitalists: Changing Tactics, Institutions

In the first place, the movie industry, the media and the political gridlock in Washington, D.C. are losing a fair amount of the influence they once had. Animals like Weinstein and others play important roles for the bosses, but that role is changing thanks to political-economic pressures (Weekly Standard, 10/9) as U.S. capital-

ism becomes more desperate. No longer protected by the capitalist state's media, old scores are being settled, and victims are stepping forward.

Weinstein's exposure is also about the direction the capitalists may take the Democratic Party. In the opening months of the Democratic and Republican primaries for the 2016 presidential election, Hillary Clinton's campaign strategy revolved around promoting Trump as the Republican contender in the general election. Their thinking was that Trump's gutter racism and sexism would make him easier to beat than a more mainstream candidate, like Marco Rubio.

The election result came as a shock to Clinton, the capitalist class, and probably even Trump himself. It led to disaster for the Clinton electoral machine and the Democratic Party, and there have been brutal internal fights within their party since. These fights reflect the capitalist class' deep disagreements on how to win workers in the U.S. to support a more liberal, inclusive brand of U.S. imperialism to fight rival, emboldened imperialist powers like China and Russia.

The fight within the Democratic Party has on the one hand, politicians like Clinton, Obama, and Nancy Pelosi. On the other, there's Bernie Sanders, Elizabeth Warren, and others who have drawn masses of students and working class youth angry at the effects of capitalism, and looking for leadership.

Harvey Weinstein was not only one of the most powerful men in Hollywood, he was one of the Clintons' principal donors. Less than one month after Weinstein was exposed, a new book by former Democratic National Committee (DNC) chairwoman Donna Brazile, attacking Hillary's campaign, is a one-two punch to the Clinton-Obama wing. Taking down Weinstein is a blow to an entire wing of the DNC. For some in the capitalist class anxiously watching China and Russia's imperial rise, the Clinton-Obama wing may have outlived its usefulness.

Hillary Clinton's racist, sexist career of service to U.S. imperialism is rightfully hated by millions of workers, but her decline is no victory for the working class. On the contrary, the bosses' media's extensive coverage of these scandals and ensuing mass anger may indicate, or certainly precipitate, a resurgent Sanders-Warren wing within their party. And this wing, as beholden to capitalism and defending U.S. imperialism as Clinton or Trump, may pose the greatest danger to the working class yet.

Imperialism and Fascism Rising

It's no coincidence that the bosses are also infighting over tax reform, to squeeze workers and even certain sectors of the ruling class to pay for their imperialist war machine and defend their blood-soaked empire. They'll sort out their problems soon enough. To defend U.S. imperialism, the bosses will need fascism, which means first imposing discipline among the U.S. capitalist class.

The disagreements over how the DNC runs is a tactical argument about how to fool and mislead the working class into supporting U.S. imperialism the best.

And once the bosses settle their factional disputes,

the next step will be to discipline the working class through a combination of increasing terror on one hand, and loyalty on the other. We are already seeing hints of this as the bosses try to imply that somehow young working-class children, particularly Black and Latin children are potential sexual predators who have to be brought into line. In a perverse hypocrisy that we cannot allow to go unopposed, the sick rulers who have been promoting this horribly sexist culture and destroying the lives of Black and Latin children through a racist segregated school system, pushing of drugs and cutting benefits are now seeking to engage young women in joining them in painting young men as the enemy.

At the moment, Black working class youth like those rebelling in St. Louis, and Charlottesville last summer are disillusioned with U.S. capitalism. That means opportunities for communists in PLP to grow our movement.

Smash Sexism, Racism and Imperialism

For communists, the bravery of the mainly women workers raising their voices and demanding justice demands support from the working class.

Support means both fighting back on the job, and building study groups to study capitalism and the science of revolution. Capitalism depends on sexist, racist and nationalist divisions among workers to extract maximum profits from them all. Under capitalism, women workers, especially Black women, suffer the sharpest and most intense form of capitalism's exploitation and oppression.

The idea that the ruling class could take on sexism is absurd. The industries where these animals reign are the drivers of the sexist culture that glorifies the objectification of women. In fact, not only are women objectified, but men and women are constantly encouraged to objectify not only others but themselves as well.

Capitalism commodifies everything. Sex is used to sell everything from soap to cars. The wage system makes it impossible for workers to own anything, including our bodies. We are entrapped by the need to work for the capitalists, seek loans from the capitalists and make a living in the industries controlled by the capitalists.

What the bosses offer is more women in the halls of power as the best they can do. But the 500,000 children in Iraq starved to death on the orders of Madeleine Albright, or the now millions killed in wars started at the behest of Secretary of State Clinton let us know how that story always ends.

Wherever capitalism can divide workers the deepest, the worse off ALL workers are. One century ago, striking women workers in Russia knew this. When they convinced men workers to join their strike, together they set into motion what became the Bolshevik Revolution—and the world's first workers' state. They proved we can seize power and run the world for ourselves. It will be done again. Join PLP, and help make that day come sooner!☺

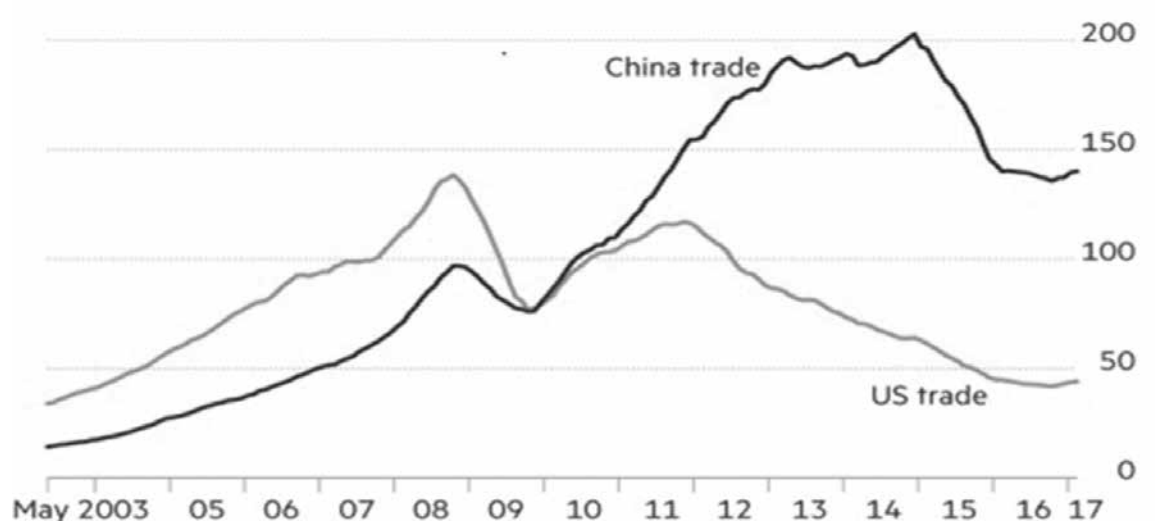
U.S. & China Rivalry in West Africa Prelude to War

Continued from page 2

Africa, the Middle East, the South China Sea, and Latin America, a global armed conflict grows more likely. The next world war will require a much larger U.S. army than the current active duty roster of 483,000 soldiers. Restoration of the military draft appears inevitable.

For the revolutionary communist Progressive Labor Party, there can be only one response. We must build a mass, international, anti-racist movement to turn inter-imperialist war into revolutionary war for workers' power and communism. As the rulers' latest fight for spoils intensifies, we look to our brothers and sisters throughout Africa to help lead this battle!☺

Chinese and US trade with Africa
Total trade value (\$bn)



LETTERS

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

Trigger-happy Cops Fear Workers' Revenge

The Howard University article (CHALLENGE, 10/11) correctly rejects the racist “Ferguson effect” – the false claim that cops are “fearful of...public criticism for being too violent and therefore [are] avoiding confrontations with criminals” (Washington Post, 9/22). However, cops do fear being killed in confrontations that they provoke, through stop-and-search, traffic stops, and other harassments.

Cops kill workers – Black, Latin, and white – at an annual rate four to six times the rate they are killed, and the death rate among cops has fallen by more than 2/3 in the last 30 years (BBC, 7/18/16). Moreover, more than twice as many cops are killed by white than by Black working-class men, a fact hidden generally by the mass media (NY Daily News, 5/11/16). Fear makes cops trigger-happy—shoot first, investigate later – and shoot not to disarm but to kill, for fear of missing the target.

Capitalist rulers and their armed state, particularly police departments, should be filled with fear—fear that masses of workers whom they exploit and oppress will rise up and send our wage-slave masters to well-deserved graves.

During the centuries of U.S. slavery, countless revolts by enslaved Africans kept the slavocracy paralyzed with fear, producing vicious attempts to terrorize their forced laborers into submission. Extreme violence and terrorism is the usual response by rulers to the real, and often actualized, threats of overthrow and executions invited by subjugation to savage servitude. Many laws were passed in Virginia and other slave states in a race to out-terrorize those who kept the slavocracy terrorized—in addition to extra-judicial and unpunished killings of their rebellious victims.

Cops’ fears, combined with racist attitudes that consign Black workers to subhuman status, is a deadly mixture that leads to the judicially sanctioned shoot-first-investigate-later approach. Prosecutors and judges usually exonerate cops for ostensibly defending themselves when cops claim they feared for their lives. Cops even get away with planting guns on their dead victims to support those claims.

Given the extreme exploitation under capitalism, and equally extreme oppression to make that exploitation possible, it is no wonder that cops and their masters are fearful of the working class, and not just of Black workers, but of white and all other workers as well. There is fear on both sides, but only the cops are allowed to kill without fear of punishment, and generally without fear of public criticism.

Can there be any doubt that in this tense standoff between our exploiters and our class, the only solution for the working class is to end the standoff by terminating the existence of the capitalist system that demands exploitation and oppression, as well as state terrorism, for its survival. We invite all workers to join PLP to hasten the day of victory for our class.

Capitalism: An Unnatural Disaster

The editorial (9/27) correctly identified the issue that the flooding in South Asia, West Africa and the U.S. is caused by capitalism’s uncontrolled growth and the anarchy of capitalism. Another aspect of the anarchy of capitalism is the catastrophe of climate change, caused by hundreds of years of anarchistic capitalism. The floods and hurricanes are from warming oceans creating much greater rainfall from hotter oceans. The fires are caused by years of drought due to global warming.

Climate change is a class issue. Working class folks, and those who are targets of racism are the first and most severely impacted by drought, hurricanes, floods and fires, in part because of racial and class discrimination in housing. The contradictions of capitalism mean that the system cannot stop, slow down or reduce the burning of fossil fuels, which is the main cause of climate change. The profit system requires exploitation to the hilt, or is replaced by competitors. The capitalists must be overthrown by force to stop climate change.

The consequences of burning fossil fuels are palpable today; millions are displaced and killed. In the longer-term future, the habitability of the planet is in doubt. It is certain that capitalism cannot solve the problem; communism is the only answer.

The bosses have tried to take over the environmental movement and claim, “we’re all in this together.” The bosses always try to get in front of movements as

they did with Black Lives Matter to mislead the fight against racism. We see the trick the bosses are trying to pull. Climate change is a class issue as highlighted by the movement led by indigenous-led workers against the Dakota Access Pipeline. That movement is an example of the power of multiracial unity against racism and capitalist exploitation.

The Progressive Labor Party’s responsibility is to overthrow the rotting capitalist system. One of the contradictions caused by capitalism is climate change. We must lead that fight.

Two More Battles Before the Spanish Civil War

The editorial (11/8) about Catalonia refers to the Spanish Civil War (1936-39) as “the opening battle of World War II.” It was the opening battle within Europe, but two earlier armed conflicts, one in Asia, one in Africa, also led to World War II: The Japanese invasion and occupation of Manchuria (Sept 1931) and the Italian invasion and annexation of Ethiopia (Oct 1935).

Individual Heroes Do Not Make History

When we describe the history of our communist movement, we should avoid slipping into the error of the “cult of the personality”, just as we avoid it in describing PLP’s own history of struggle. The backpage article on Bolshevik history (CHALLENGE 10/25) was the cult of the personality personified and contradicts our opposition to the “cult.”

Lenin and Stalin are made the “heroes” of the pre-revolutionary working class and Bolshevik struggles, with the rest of the Party and the working class just the supporting cast. This kind of cult approach leads to the capitalist historians’ mistaken “great men make history” which in practice is just as sexist as the name implies, as well as being a gross insult to the mass of workers who in the end were the force that smashed the rulers of im-



Son: Dad, I want to have a career in organized crime.
Father: In government or in a bank?

perial Russia and established working class rule.
Leadership is important in all struggles—those who are at the moment most dedicated and disciplined and who have the greatest understanding have an obligation to lead the way. The greatest obligation of that leadership, though, is to continually be developing more communist leaders, particularly among the youth who are our future.

From our earliest days, we have been committed to collectivity and confidence in the power of the working class to understand and lead the fight for communism. We as a Party collectively move our understanding and practice forward. Workers learn from communists and communists learn from the working class how to struggle for and win a new egalitarian world of workers rule.

Any individual glorification detracts from a commitment to and reliance on the working class to rule. We struggle for a mass party of millions, for the idea that every worker will become a leader of the revolution.

USSR: The Great Conspiracy

Continued from page 8

ized a “White” counterrevolutionary army among the Cossacks in southern Russia, proclaimed “the independence of the Don,” and was preparing to march on Moscow to overthrow the Soviet Government. Secret groups of Czarist officers in Petrograd and Moscow were acting as anti-Soviet spies for Kaledin and were maintaining contact with Ambassador Francis.

The U.S. recommended a secret loan to Kaledin via the British or French, then publicly denied it, but on December 23, 1917, the British and French met in Paris and secretly concluded an agreement to dismember Soviet Russia. England was to receive a “zone of influence” in Russia, giving her the oil of the Caucasus and control of the Baltic provinces; France a “zone” giving her the iron and coal of the Donets Basin and control of the Crimea. This secret Anglo-French treaty shaped these two nations’ policy towards Russia.

It took until 1922 for the eventual triumph of the Soviet people over the Whites and the Allied troops.✪

Soviet Poster reads: The League of Nations

Supreme Court Janus Case Is A Racist Assault on Workers

The U.S. Supreme Court has agreed to hear *Janus v. American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, Council 31* this fall. This case centers on the ability of public sector unions to collect so-called “fair-share fees.” These fees are the equivalent of dues charged for services unions provide regardless of membership status to those workers who are not members. Fair share fees were have been collected since the *Abood* case in 1977 found them constitutional. Ending this practice would financially hurt the unions and further weaken them.

Janus is a Racist Attack

According to the Atlantic Black Star (9/27), the *Janus* is the latest effort of the States Policy Network (SPN) and the American Legislative and Exchange Council (ALEC) to destroy public sector unions. This effort reflects differences within the ruling class about how to keep workers from fighting back. The main wing of the U.S. ruling class is more willing to tolerate union leaders who support the capitalist system and lead workers away from class struggle and deliver them into the waiting arms of the Democratic Party. The Koch brothers, who fund SPN and ALEC, prefer to destroy the unions altogether.

In 2016 7.1 million government workers were members of unions. That is a little more than 34

percent of all government workers. Since the public sector is the largest employer of Black and historically more likely to join unions than any other racial group, says Jackson, such anti-union campaigns have particular implications for Black workers.

According to Dr Steven C Pitts, UC Berkeley, on average, Black union members earn 16.4 percent higher wages than non-union members and are more likely to have employer-provided health insurance (17 percent) and an employer sponsored retirement plan (18 percent).

Janus v. AFSCME also reflects the pressures US imperialism is facing internationally. To improve their economic competitiveness the rate of exploitation of the working class must be increased.

Unions Decline Fueled by Anti-communism

The *Janus* case attacks public sector unions which is the main place where workers are unionized today. In the mid 1950s, 35 percent of all U.S. workers were members of unions. Almost all of these worked in the private sector. Today, only 11.9 percent of U.S. workers are members of unions. Of this number 6.9 percent are private sector workers while 36.2 percent work in the public sector. A main factor in the decline in unionization was the Taft Hartley Law of 1947. This law

outlawed militant activities of unions and made it illegal for Communists to hold union office.

Progressive Labor Party, a revolutionary communist party cannot be bound by the bosses’ laws. We understand that capitalism and its laws oppress us. After members of the U.S. Communist Party were kicked out (sometimes willingly) from union leadership, adherence to other Taft-Hartley restrictions limited fightback. PLers seek to bring communist ideas into the workers struggles. This would mean that court cases like *Janus* would be unable to defeat us. PLers fight like hell in the class struggle but understand that to get rid of the capitalist system of class oppression we must build for communist revolution.☸



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

U.S. terrorists: profiteering ‘Big Pharma’ drug dealers killed 200,000

NYT, 10/19 — For decades America has...ignored the biggest drug pushers of all: American pharmaceutical companies.

...You get 15 people hooked on opioids, and you’re a thug that deserves to rot in hell; you get 150,000 people hooked, and you’re a marketing genius who deserves a huge bonus.

Big Pharma...systematically manipulated the entire country for 25 years,...responsible for many of the 64,000 deaths of Americans last year from drugs — more than the number of Americans who died in Vietnam and Iraq wars combined.

The opioid crisis unfolded because...[of] the astounding profits that could be made....In the 1960s...80 percent of Americans hooked on opioids began with heroin....Today, 75 percent of people with opioid addictions began with prescription painkillers....Pharmaceutical companies in the 1990s sought to promote opioid painkillers as new blockbuster drugs....

...The opioid promoters hailed opioids as “safe and effective,” and they particularly encouraged opioids for returning veterans — one reason why so many veterans have suffered addictions.

Pharma companies spent heavily advertising opioids — \$14 million in medical journals alone....Companies even argued that signs of addiction were a reason to prescribe more opioids,...that when a patient showed strange behavior, “the clinician’s first response” should be to increase the dose of opioids....One company, Insys Therapeutics...redirected a powerful opioid called Subsys, meant for cancer pain, to patients without cancer. Sarah Fuller, a woman with neck and back pain, was prescribed Subsys by her doctor, who received payments from Insys.

Fuller died of an overdose of Subsys.

...Insys...revenue tripled in the next two years....the Sackler family, owner of...OxyContin, joined Forbes’s list of richest American families in 2015, with \$14 billion....Since 2000, more than 200,000 Americans have died from overdoses of prescription opioids — the consequence of a deliberate strategy to make money ignoring public welfare....Some of America’s leading companies and business executives [have been] systematically manipulating doctors and patients and killing people on a scale that terrorists could never dream of.

Myanmar victimized by U.S. rulers

The New Yorker, 10/23 (letter) — Myanmar became of the world’s poorest countries....But its economic decline was also the result of sanctions imposed by the U.S....but to become a client state of the U.S. would mean infiltration by the C.I.A., and the looting of its treasury by U.S. banks, N.G.O.s and multinational corporations.

Yemen: Capitalists’ war incites genocidal cholera crisis

GW, 10/20 — The cholera epidemic in Yemen has become the largest and fastest-spreading outbreak of the disease in modern history, with a million cases expected by the year’s end and at least 600,000 children likely to be affected....

Children under five account for a quarter of all cases.The spread of the outbreak...has been exacerbated by hunger and malnutrition....

...Save the Children’s country director...said an outbreak of this scale...is “what you get when a country if brought to its knees by conflict, when a healthcare system is on the brink of collapse, when its children are starving and when its people are blocked from getting the medical treatment they need....There’s no doubt this is a man-made crisis....”

More than two year’s of fighting between the [U.S.-backed] Saudi-led coalition and Houthi rebels has crippled the country,...leaving millions on the brink of famine....19.3 million Yemenis —

more than two-thirds of the population — does not have access to clean water and sanitation....

...Both parties to the conflict are continuing with their blatant disregard of the rights of children....Cholera should be easily treatable with oral rehydration salts and access to clean water.

Banks rake in billions from credit card squeeze on struggling customers

NYT, 10/20 — Udean Murray, a 62-year-old retired telephone operator...relies on more than a dozen credit cards to make ends meet. Her prescription medicine often goes on a Capitol One card....That’s a risky business for Mrs. Murray, whose only income is Social Security and who struggles each month to make the minimum payments on all her cards.

But it has been a boon for the nation’s biggest banks, which are earning millions of dollar a month on their credit card customers. The four top banks — Bank of America, JPMorgan Chase, Citigroup and Wells Fargo — together made more than \$4 billion in pretax income from their credit card businesses from July through September....

Outstanding credit card debt — the total balances that customers roll from month to month — hit a record \$1 trillion this year....Banks...take a small cut of each card transaction as a fee, and they typically charge annual interest rates of 15 percent or more for essential goods and services....The four leading banks raked in...\$21 billion in profits during the third quarter....

Many Americans have...their savings winnowed by...the recession and stagnant wages. Almost half of adults...could not pay for a \$400 expense without...borrowing money....

...Interest rates can near 36 percent. Some borrowers can end up owing more interest than they originally spent on their cards.

...The minimum monthly payments on her cards costs Ms. Murray \$500,...more than half of what she receives from Social Security....

BOLSHEVIK REVOLUTION CENTENNIAL SERIES

THE GREAT CONSPIRACY



1919 Soviet Poster

Caption reads: who is against the Soviet Union?

Churchill wryly told his World War II ally Stalin, after the Red Army had stopped Hitler's invading army in its tracks: "I'm lucky I didn't kill you back in 1919."

In 1919 Churchill had been in charge of invading forces from 14 capitalist countries attempting to overthrow the new Soviet government and to put in power the generals of the counter-revolutionary "White" Russian army fighting a civil war against the "Red" Soviets. From 1918 to 1922, troops from the U.S., Britain, France, Italy, Germany, Japan, Serbia, Poland, Rumania, Turkey, Czechoslovakia, Greece, and China intervened on the side of the "Whites" in the civil war which killed over seven million Soviet workers and peasants. Michael Sayers and Albert Kahn wrote the book *The Great Conspiracy* (1946), our main source here, about this now little-known invasion of the young Soviet Union. It shows the lengths world capitalism will go to to prevent the loss of its profit system. Revolution, and counter-revolution, are not a tea party! But in this epic test of its strength, the first workers' state triumphed.

The First Plot Is Hatched—and Defeated

The WWI Allies (Britain, France, Italy, and the U.S.) feared in 1917, as the German army was pressing the Russian army to near collapse, that Germany would gain control of the vast natural resources of Russia (oil, coal, wheat, and timber, much of it owned by Allied capitalists), and be free to concentrate their forces against the Allies on the Western front.

Rebellious Russian troops were deserting in the tens of thousands, having fought for three years against superior forces and suffered more casualties than all the Allies combined, and many were joining the revolutionary committees known as Soviets. As one soldier said:

Show me what I am fighting for. Is it Constantinople or is it free Russia? Is it democracy or is it the capitalist plunderers? If you can prove to me that I am defending the Revolution, then I'll go out and fight without capital punishment to force me. When the

land belongs to the peasants, and the factories to the workers, and the power to the Soviets, then we'll know we have something to fight for, and we'll fight for it.

A U.S. spy on a mission to keep Russia in the war, Raymond Robins, reported from a Russian village that when he asked to see the local government official, he was told to see the chairman of the Soviet, the workers', soldiers', and peasants' deputies. "But that's some sort of revolutionary organization!" Robins protested. "I want the regular civil power." "Oh that!" the peasants laughed. "That doesn't amount to anything. You had better see the chairman of the Soviet."

Robins' reports from the field favored reaching terms with the coming power in Russia, the Bolsheviks, but the decision of the Western capitalists went the other way. Sir Samuel Hoare, chief British spy, said a military dictatorship in Russia (replacing the first post-Tsar elected government of Kerensky) was the solution. The Allies planned this putsch before the Soviets' revolution, hoping to install the Russian army head Lavr Kornilov as dictator on September 6. Kornilov on September 8 called for the overthrow of the Kerensky provisional government and marched on Petrograd with 20,000 troops, accompanied by French and British officers in Russian uniforms. But the Petrograd Soviet mobilized armed workers (Red

Guards), soldiers, and sailors, who defeated the plotters' forces in four days. A Soldiers' Committee secretly formed by the Bolsheviks within his own army arrested Kornilov. The first plot actually strengthened the Soviets.

The World-Shaking Bolshevik Revolution

Still underground, Lenin called for "All Power to the Soviets! Down with the Provisional Government!" On November 7 the Bolsheviks took power in Petrograd:

To the Citizens of Russia!

The Provisional Government is deposed. The State Power has passed into the hands of the organ of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies...

The cause for which the people were fighting: immediate proposal of a democratic peace, abolition of landlord property rights over the land, labor control of production, creation of a Soviet Government—that cause is securely achieved.

That night the All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies met in the Smolny Institute, the mud of the trenches still on the soldiers' clothing, and a short, stocky man in a baggy, unpressed suit declared: "We shall now proceed to construct the Socialist order." It was Lenin, who headed the first Soviet government formed that night.

As he later told Robins,

We are going to challenge the world with a producers' republic. We are not putting in the Soviet anybody who simply owns stock, and simply has ownership. We are are putting in the producers. The Donets coal basin will be represented by the producers of coal; the railroad by producers of transportation; the postal system by producers of that system of communication, and so on.

The working class had taken state power. But the counter-revolution was about to begin.

Secret Diplomacy

The invasion to crush the Soviet workers' state was set in motion by secret diplomatic moves among the Allies. Though Robins still, after meeting with Lenin, recommended relations with the Soviets, the U.S. was plotting to overthrow them.

On December 2, 1917, Ambassador Francis sent Washington his first confidential report on the activities of General Alexei Kaledin, Ataman of the Don Cossacks. Francis described the General as "Kaledin, commander-in-chief of the Cossacks, numbering 200,000." General Kaledin had organ-

Continued on page 7

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