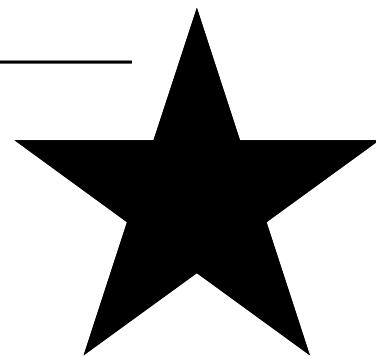


---

PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY MAGAZINE • SPRING 2018. VOL. 15 NO. 1 • \$7

# PLP



## 50 YEARS OF ADVANCING COMMUNIST STRUGGLE & THEORY

---

### IN THIS ISSUE

DARK NIGHT SHALL HAVE ITS END...3  
PLP HISTORY: 50 YEARS OF FIGHTBACK...20  
AND MORE!

### ALSO:

BLACK AND RED, THE UNTOLD HISTORY...30  
MIGRATION CRISIS...39

---

## OUR FIGHT:

- ✱ PLP fights to smash capitalism and the dictatorship of the capitalist class. We organize workers, soldiers, and youth into a revolutionary movement for communism.
- ✱ Only 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. Everyone will 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!

PL MAGAZINE, SPRING 2018 VOL 15. NO. 1  
PUBLISHED BY  
CHALLENGE PERIODICALS  
GPO 808, BROOKLYN, NY 11202

*With this issue, we revive the original PL Magazine and aspire to carry on its legacy as a leader in communist thought. This edition celebrates Progressive Labor Party's 50 years+ of advancing communist theory and practice. Some essays have been previously published in CHALLENGE but their timely insights merited a reprint.*

*The purpose of PL Magazine is to deepen the Party's and the international working class's understanding of the world situation, history, class struggle, and communist theory and organizing. PL Magazine is for the working class, produced by the working class. Our publication practices logically flow from the Party line and our vision of the communist society we fight for—anyone can think, write, organize, and lead. We aim to cultivate red and multiracial intellectuals (not solely experts) who are grounded in the working class.*

*The fact that essays are not signed grows from PLP's criticism of the cult of the individual in the former socialist Soviet Union and China. All knowledge belongs to, and comes from, the masses. We want to thwart the possibility of building up a "following" around any particular individual. While an article may be written by one or two people, the final version is based on collective investigation and criticism. Many times the collective discussion precedes an individual's writing.*

*Share this magazine widely! We welcome letters from readers about articles in PL Magazine and related topics as well as comments on the magazine itself.*

*To send comments and articles, email [desafio.challenge@gmail.com](mailto:desafio.challenge@gmail.com)*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### 50 YEARS

- Dark Night Shall Have Its End.....3
- 50 Years of a Fighting Party.....12
- Collective Leadership,  
An Advance for Communism.....14
- The Party and Revolution:  
Economic Crisis shows the Need for Communism.....16
- PLP History, a Five-Part Essay.....20

### ESSAYS

- Black and Red, the Untold History.....30
- Migration Crisis, A Window Into  
the Oppressive Capitalist System.....39

WWW.PLP.ORG

Twitter: @PLPchallenge  
Facebook: Challenge Desafio  
[desafio.challenge@gmail.com](mailto:desafio.challenge@gmail.com)  
[challengenewspaper.wordpress.com](http://challengenewspaper.wordpress.com)



# Dark Night Shall Have its End

-Report from the Steering Committee, July 2015

*The struggle for state power is inseparable from the struggle between correct and incorrect ideas about how to win, keep, and consolidate it. The ideological struggle against revisionism — the ideas and practice of the class enemy within the communist movement — has taken place since the beginning of the struggle for proletarian revolution. Revisionism attempts to distort the revolutionary content of Marxism-Leninism. It assumes many forms; it seeks to ride the revolutionary tide of world history by appearing in increasingly militant disguise; but its counter-revolutionary essence remains the same.*

—From *Road to Revolution III*

Capitalism is proving more each day that it can offer the world's workers nothing but endless horrors. Its "triumph" brings imperialist war; mass racist and sexist poverty and unemployment; racist police terror and border control; fascist "homeland security"; hunger and malnutrition, even in the richest countries; ethnic and religious genocide; and mind-numbing cultural degradation. This is the intrinsic nature of the profit system; it cannot change. It will prevail until it is smashed by communist revolution. That is the main task for workers of the world: to destroy the old order and create something new. The challenge was never easy, but today it is harder than ever. Why? Because of the cynicism and passivity resulting from the collapse of the old communist movement.

Nonetheless, we have every reason for revolutionary optimism. Our Party's experience in the mass movement shows that a growing number of workers, soldiers and students are looking for a way out of capitalism's house of horrors—for a society based on something other than bottomless greed and self-interest. Their search for an alternative creates an opportunity to win them to our political ideas. Though there are no quick solutions, what we do now—or what we fail to do—is more important than ever. We must boldly face the fascist onslaught with a vision of a

communist future free from exploitation, racism, sexism, and imperialist war.

With the reversals in Russia and China to full-blown capitalism, we have lost the model and inspiration of a center for the world communist movement. The international working class is suffering unprecedented poverty, hunger, war, disease, and racist oppression. The current menu of political "options" consists of one set of billionaires or another, from Democratic Party liberals to Tea Party Republicans to Middle East capitalists who use religion to veil their greed for oil profits. Whether reformist, nationalist, or openly fascist, these bosses have no solutions for us. The only solution—the one way to stop imperialist bloodbaths for all time—remains international communist revolution.

## REVISIONISM, THE MOVEMENT'S ACHILLES' HEEL

Since our last convention in 2010, we have collectively intensified our Party's internal struggle over reformism. This is a healthy, necessary development. From its origins in *The Communist Manifesto* through Lenin's *What Is to Be Done?* and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China, the communist movement has always advanced through the fight against reformism. Known to communists as "revisionism," reformism was the old movement's Achilles' heel. While we must fight for reforms to participate in the class struggle and win workers to communist ideas, reformism is a deadly ideology. It makes reforms the end rather than a means to build the revolutionary movement.

The bosses love to gloat that communism was an illusion from the start—that it could never work. They have rewritten history to portray Stalin as worse than Hitler, and continue to slander one of the greatest leaders in working-class history. Even at a time when class struggle is at a low ebb, the capitalists are still haunted by the specter of communism.

The political seeds of the old movement's collapse were contained in many of its core documents and pol-



icies. Those errors eroded and ultimately reversed the achievements of courageous revolutionary organizations and unparalleled working-class heroism. Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, and Mao all believed in socialism as a necessary halfway step on the road to communism. They all spoke on both sides of the question of nationalism. In *State and Revolution*, Lenin held to the incorrect notion that the state apparatus should remain separate from the Party.

All of these brave thinkers feared that communism was too advanced for most workers, who would need to be motivated by material incentives. Mao compounded this opportunism with his theory of “New Democracy,” which twisted dialectics to justify alliances with “lesser evil” bosses. Moreover, all of these leaders, to one extent or another, allowed the cult of the personality, the glorification of an individual over politics or ideas. (To help ensure that we forge a different path, PLP has moved to a model of collective leadership.)

Our Party was born in the fight against these anti-communist tendencies, and has continuously fought to deepen the struggle. A number of PLP documents, including *Road to Revolution I-IV* and *Reform and Revolution*, were milestones in communist ideology. From its beginning, the Party defied the Communist Party USA’s opportunism. By the late 1960s, in the heat of struggle against the Vietnam War and racism, we came to understand that the Soviet Union had turned into its opposite, an imperialist power in competition with the U.S. Both practice and intensive ideological struggle led the Party to conclude that all nationalism was poison. We have witnessed this virulent phenomenon time and again, most recently in the Dominican Republic, where local bosses have built popular support for the racist expulsion of workers of Haitian descent by blaming them for economic problems rooted in capitalism.

In the early 1980s, with *Road to Revolution IV*, PLP concluded that seizing power—and then keeping it to build an international communist workers’ dictatorship—hinged on bringing communist consciousness to hundreds of millions of workers organized into one revolutionary party. RR IV called for the elimination of money. The capitalist wage system would be replaced by communist distribution: from each according to commitment, to each according to need, with no special privileges for Party members. These theoretical advances were vital contributions to the arsenal of revolutionary communism.

On the other hand, we have a long way to go to replace the old movement as a beacon of hope for billions of workers. In the present period, we need to struggle very hard to make limited progress. Each advance, from the sale of one more CHALLENGE to the recruitment of one more worker, has political significance and value. Each helps us move toward a higher level of struggle. If we are to reach our goal, we must turn the capitalists’ attacks into opportunities to fight back. Each murder by the bosses’ police demands

---

*Stalin warned that a new Dark Age would follow the defeat of the Soviet Union.*

*Reversing the current class dynamic—and lifting our collective class consciousness—will take much time, commitment, persistence, sweat, and blood.*

---

that we explain that racist terror is neither an accident nor an individual cop’s mistake, but rather a necessity for capitalist dictatorship—a calculated tactic to intimidate and divide us. Each “natural” disaster, from earthquakes in Pakistan and Haiti to hurricanes in the U.S. and Mexico, exposes how little the capitalists care about workers.

## REVIVING CLASS STRUGGLE IN A DIFFICULT PERIOD

Serving the working class and leading it toward revolution is a great honor, and our Party must take every opening to do so. All of us can improve, and the quality of our work falls far short of our potential. In particular, we need to push each other to be bolder in the face of repression.

It is imperative, however, that we approach this question dialectically. We need to acknowledge that the current relationship of class forces is not in our favor; at present, the balance of power tips toward the capitalists’ side. A large part of our predicament is objective and outside our control. The old movement’s collapse is the worst defeat ever suffered by the international working class. Stalin warned that a new Dark Age would follow the defeat of the Soviet Union; indeed, the recovery is taking generations. In many respects, the working class now labors under the heaviest economic, political, ideological, and cultural burdens in its history.

But communists must never use objective circumstances to avoid criticism and self-criticism. We must instead correct errors and advance the revolutionary process. Although PLP may remain small for some time, we must continue to sharpen the internal struggle against reformism/revisionism. Without this struggle, we can never hope to overcome the errors of the past. With it, we can begin to accelerate our growth, even in a difficult period; we can pass to our successors, and to their successors, a Party that will move mountains. As new revolutionary conditions inevitably emerge, a sharpened line and practice will enable us to make the most of them. Reversing the current class dynamic—and lifting our collective class consciousness—will take much time, commitment, persistence, ➤➤

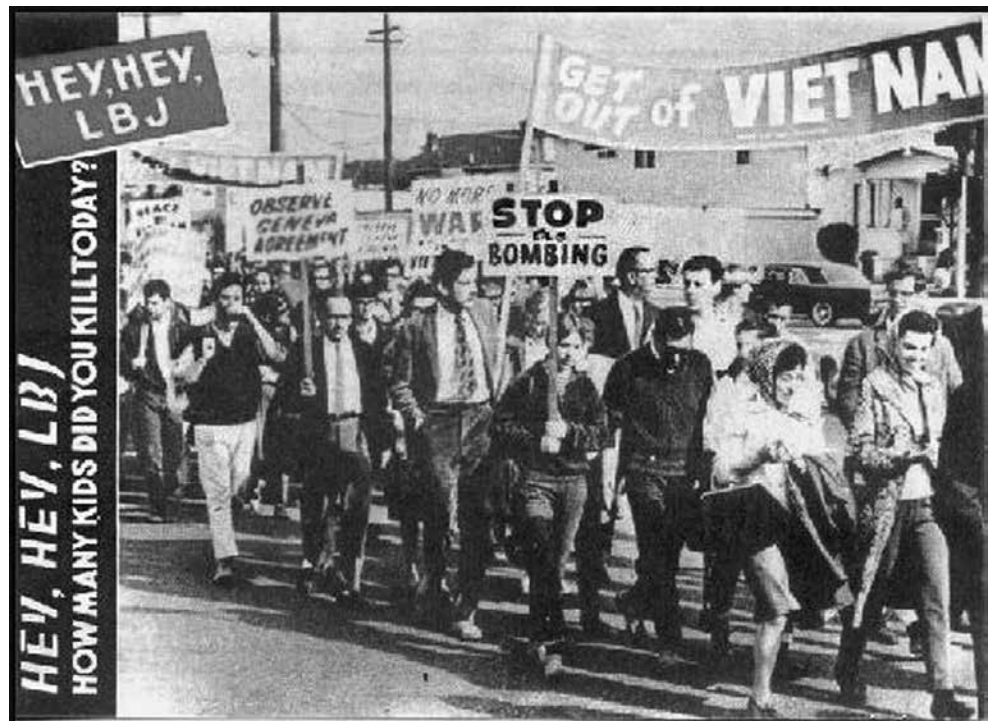
sweat, and blood.

The biggest error our Party made after Road to Revolution IV was to underestimate the significance of the old movement's collapse. We correctly identified the restoration of capitalism in the former Soviet Union and China. We failed, however, to understand its devastating consequences for the revolutionary process worldwide, or how it would breathe new life into the most lethal force in the history of the world: U.S. imperialism. Nor did we see clearly the emergence of China and the re-emergence of Russia as the U.S. imperialists' main rivals, and as their most likely foes in the next global war.

The end of socialism plunged the Soviet working class into a depression. By weakening Moscow as an imperialist counterforce and cooling the exorbitant arms race, it also enabled U.S. rulers to dodge some of the capitalist contradictions that wrecked markets in Eastern Europe, Central Asia and Africa, in the former Soviet sphere. For more than a decade after the Soviet Union's breakup, U.S. rulers had a blank check to wreak murder and mayhem in the former Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, and Iraq. To this day, U.S. military primacy gives the bosses more room to maneuver than they had during the Cold War—though their latitude is narrowing as tensions with capitalist Russia and China mount.

Even more critically, the implosion of the Soviet Union has devastated class struggle throughout the world. Where so-called activist movements still exist, they are utterly dominated by members or agents of the ruling class. Blatant class collaborators preside over labor unions' dwindling memberships. The U.S. bosses continue to push FBI informer Al Sharpton as the pacifying misleader of the movement against murders by cops. Billionaire imperialist George Soros marshals pro-capitalist reformers worldwide for "human rights." (His foundation trained the organizers of the Arab Spring and the current leadership of Black Lives Matter, which is leading the dead-end campaign to reform U.S. police departments.) It wasn't the working class that led a million-strong protest in Paris against Islamic terrorism; it was a group of racist state terrorists, represented by the capitalist presidents of a dozen nations. Barack Obama, who has droned to death more innocents than the number killed on 9/11, successfully posed as an anti-racist champion in his eulogies for murdered church members in Charleston, South Carolina.

For the mass movement to break from capitalism and advance toward communist revolution, it must first break



from these misleaders and their oppressive ideology.

## THE SIXTIES: WORKERS FIGHT BACK

The world was a very different place in the late 1960s, as our young Party entered a stage of rapid growth. In Vietnam, the Tet Offensive staggered U.S. imperialism. French-led pressure on world gold markets threatened to collapse the entire U.S. financial system. The rise of the Japanese and German economies led to overproduction that undermined the U.S. steel industry. Periodic embargos and price increases by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Companies induced shaky U.S. allies, including Japan, to reject U.S. policies to dominate the oil-producing region in the Middle East.

At the height of the Vietnam War, capitalists around the world faced massive insurgencies by workers, students, and soldiers. Broad, militant work stoppages were commonplace. Large sections of the U.S. military were in open mutiny. Dozens of major cities were struck by rebellions, an object lesson that Black workers were the key to revolution. The campuses were cauldrons of revolt. It seemed that the working class could become unbeatable if led by revolutionary communist politics.

Between 1968 and 1971, worker and student strikes rocked Europe, the United States and Latin America. In France, a student strike in May 1968 sparked a general strike involving 10 million workers (two-thirds of the French working class) and halting air, rail, and ship traffic. Workers and students marched through the streets of Paris singing the communist anthem, the "Internationale." This worker-student strike paralyzed a modern imperialist economy and indicated that the profit system's contradictions could and will explode into a revolutionary oppor- ➤

tunity.

In June 1968, in Mexico, a protest by high school students spread to the universities and to the electrical, railroad, and petroleum industries, even threatening to shut down the Olympics. In November 1969, 143,000 General Electric workers went on strike as half a million anti-war demonstrators packed Washington, DC. PLP led thousands in a breakaway demonstration to the Labor Department to build an anti-imperialist, worker-student alliance. Thousands took up the chant: “War-Maker, Strikebreaker—Smash GE!”

In 1970, a wildcat strike by postal workers in New York City spread throughout the U.S. The entire mail system was crippled for a week. The strike was soon sold out, but it shook the bosses and gave the world another glimpse of workers’ power.

These rebellions reflected 60 years of revolutionary practice, good and bad, inspired first by the Bolshevik and Chinese revolutions and later by the Vietnamese resistance and the Cultural Revolution in China. Hundreds of millions of people were involved. If the Party is going to advance the historical struggle for communism, we must make a balanced, objective evaluation of the old movement’s strengths and weaknesses. Its strengths led the working class to monumental advances. The first proletarian dictatorship in the Soviet Union, the Soviet-led fight against fascism in World War II, the Chinese Revolution and the GPCR, along with the great anti-imperialist struggles of the 1950s and 1960s, gave hope to workers everywhere. The world saw that the oppressed could throw off their chains.

A failure to learn from the old movement’s errors would be a grave mistake. But a failure to recognize its achievements is equally dangerous.

## BOSSSES ATTACK AND DISTRACT

The threat to U.S. imperialist hegemony was temporarily contained as the U.S. moved off the gold standard and ended its troop buildup in Vietnam. But the elements that precipitated the galvanizing events of 1968 remained intact. Confronted with an economic crisis, the U.S. capitalist bosses stepped up their attacks on workers around the world. In Vietnam, they escalated their genocidal bombing campaigns. Within the U.S., troops were sent to cities to brutally put down rebellions. The capitalists used drugs and anti-drug laws to pacify and then incarcerate millions of mainly Black workers. Inflation, layoffs and factory shutdowns forced millions more into unemployment and poverty.

Yet even as they stepped up their attacks on the working class, U.S. imperialists began negotiations for trade with socialist China. In 1972, as the deals were sealed, racist mass-murderer Richard Nixon was feted in Beijing. New markets for goods and investments propped up profits for U.S. bosses, even as newly minted capitalists in China and

Russia paved the way for the heightened inter-imperialist competition of the current period.

By late 1973, the U.S. and Europe had entered the worst recession since the Great Depression of the 1930s. Industrial production and the rate of profit plummeted. Unemployment and inflation both soared into double digits. “Stagflation,” as the bosses’ media called it, was a form of capitalist crisis never seen before. Its “solution” triggered the crippling bank failures of the 1980s.

Revisionism restored the profit system to the former Soviet Union and China. It turned Vietnam into a sweatshop haven for international capitalist investment. Nationalism degraded inner-city rebellions into electoral campaigns for Black mayors. The bosses also installed more Black police chiefs, principals, military officers, and corporate executives—all of whom helped to usher in even more intense racism. Pro-capitalist union leaders and patriotic class collaboration destroyed the once-mighty strike movement. After Democratic President Jimmy Carter initiated deregulation, inflation, and austerity programs to cut real wages, he stoked anti-immigrant racism by building a fence on the U.S./Mexico border.

In 1981, Ronald Reagan ushered in the modern era of workplace fascism when he fired striking air traffic controllers and replaced them with scabs. Bill Clinton picked up where Reagan left off by abolishing welfare. He instituted the racist and sexist slave labor called “workfare,” forcing former welfare recipients, mainly mothers, to replace unionized workers and “earn” their old welfare checks. “Workfare” added more than a million workers to the low-wage labor pool.

The emergence of a new capitalist ruling class in former colonies and battlegrounds like Vietnam spawned pessimism and despair within the working class. By the 1980s, U.S. rulers had seized on the ideological vacuum to promote workers’ acquiescence in the profit system. To distract the working class and divert anti-capitalist anger, the bosses’ media and universities encouraged a fragmented “identity politics” based on gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and the pseudo-scientific concept of “race.” This reactionary ideology has spread from college campuses into the workplace and even the military. To further submerge class consciousness, U.S. capitalism pushed the most vapid, self-interested consumer culture: You are what you buy.

## THERE ARE NO LESSER EVILS

The damage to workers’ struggles appears even greater when viewed in today’s global context. Inter-imperialist rivalry, the main source of international conflict today, has sharpened significantly in the years since this document was first published, mainly to the detriment of U.S. rulers. Russia has annexed Crimea and invaded Georgia and Ukraine. China brandishes its growing military might in East Asia and the South China Sea. After a small success in Kosovo, U.S. imperialists have struck out in Afghanistan, ➤

Libya, and Iraq.

But the U.S. rulers' losses are not necessarily workers' gains. Without exception, the main opposition to U.S. imperialism is reactionary and nationalist in character. In many cases, it is equally imperialist. A case in point is the U.S. rulers' bungled invasion of Iraq, where ISIS capitalists have used Islamic extremism to gain control over vast swaths of territory in both Iraq and Syria. There is no "good" side here, only a choice among thieves and murderers: oil field-seizing ISIS forces led by former officers from Saddam Hussein's famously corrupt Sunni regime; Shia politicians, who aspire to dominate oil profits in open league with Iranian bosses; Exxon-backed Kurdish fighters; the U.S. itself and its British junior partners; their rising Russian and Chinese capitalist rivals. Growing foreign enlistments reflect a degree of support for ISIS among oppressed people around the world. But as CHALLENGE has pointed out, the group's main funding comes from the same non-royal wing of Saudi bosses that bankrolled Osama bin Laden. They want to oust ExxonMobil and capture Saudi and Iraqi oil profits for themselves. An ISIS-ruled Persian Gulf would give the region's oppressed masses only a new master to enslave them.

This is fundamentally different from 1960s Vietnam, where communists led the resistance to U.S. imperialism. For all the revisionist weaknesses that eventually defeated them, they rightly inspired millions around the world. The same cannot be said of ISIS, al Qaeda, Hamas, or Hezbollah, whose leaders are driven by dollar signs. The old communist movement's mistake of promoting "the lesser of two evils" has proven more deadly than ever.

## REVOLUTIONARY POLITICS OVER ECONOMICS

Our badly mistaken estimate of the consequences of the old movement's collapse held back every area of our work. Within our press and internal documents, it led to reformism and economism—the misguided notion that economic factors can outweigh politics. Political struggle must always be primary in building a movement to abolish capitalism. Throughout the 1990s, we wrote about economic upheavals like the collapse of the "Asian Tigers" and the rising dilemma of capitalist overproduction. While we paid lip service to the primacy of politics over economics, and repeated that only communist revolution could destroy capitalist exploitation, these articles emphasized the growing economic crisis faced by U.S. imperialism. We proposed that the Asian economies were doomed and that the U.S. economy could soon follow them. We were wrong. We placed mechanical economic relations above political relations between classes.

Overproduction is an absolute characteristic of capitalism and its relentless drive for profits. But our suggestion that overproduction by itself would lead to a capitalist Armageddon was far off the mark. As has been shown many times, the bosses can survive any crisis, depression, war, or nuclear "holocaust." What they won't be able to

survive is communist revolution. Free (for the moment) of an imperialist rival that can challenge them militarily, unchecked by an aroused, communist-led working class, U.S. imperialists have managed to contain their problems and stay on top. This doesn't mean their contradictions aren't serious, or that they won't ultimately become impossible to manage. But the rulers are managing them at the moment. They are able to do so mainly off the backs of a weakened working class, made more vulnerable by a decline in class consciousness.

Indeed, U.S. capitalists have largely recovered from the Crash of 2007, a reflection of the profit system's cyclical boom-and-bust that stems from overproduction. Aided by falling real wages and a sharp increase in actual unemployment, corporate profits have surged even beyond the levels of the early years of the American Empire, immediately after World War II.

In *What Is to Be Done*, Lenin exposes the bankruptcy of "economism," the ideological deviation that economic strife will "spontaneously" assume a revolutionary political character. In fact, worsening economic conditions do not automatically generate revolutionary consciousness among workers. Revolutionary consciousness requires a revolutionary Party with a mass base. (If it were otherwise, most of the world would already be in revolt.) While we have opposed this deviation in theory, our practice has been less consistent. In our press, economism can take the form of one-sided articles that emphasize the immediate economic or reform struggle, with the obligatory concluding call for communist revolution. If only reality was so simple!

Both the deviation and the correction begin with the Party leadership. The mere existence of Road to Revolution IV cannot guarantee immunity from reformism. Viewed with more than thirty years of hindsight, RRIV barely scratched the surface in assessing the consequences of the old movement's defeat. Reality always outpaces consciousness. The life-and-death struggle against reformism/revisionism will be with us as long as social classes continue to exist. Mao's prediction of ten thousand years of struggle after the seizure of power, while perhaps an exaggeration, doesn't seem so far-fetched.

## SMASH INDIVIDUALISM

The struggle to sharpen CHALLENGE articles, for the relevant communist points to emerge clearly from the start, is an essential first step. We must strive to draw correct revolutionary lessons from battles over racism, wages, schools, police brutality, rotten medical care, the bosses' electoral circus, the special oppression of women, or any other issue that affects workers.

Yet we are after something even more profound. The fight for communism is, more than anything, a fight to make communist politics primary. That was the main lesson of the Cultural Revolution in China. Although the Chinese communists wound up with the wrong politics, they ➤➤

also made advances that we are still struggling to absorb. Making politics primary means more than pointing out that the capitalist police can never serve the working class, or that imperialism makes war inevitable, or that the profit system cannot survive without racism. These are all crucial points, and we must struggle in our press and our daily political work to make them skillfully and persuasively. But the fight to make communist politics primary has another, deeper level. It lies at the crossroads of ideology, culture, philosophy, and psychology. It is the struggle against idealism, subjectivity, mechanical thinking, and one-sidedness—in other words, the fight for revolutionary dialectics.

Understanding dialectics requires practice, class struggle, and a simultaneous battle against all of the system's rotten "isms." Chief among these is individualism. As "Jailbreak," the Party's popular explanation of dialectics, says from the start,

"The worst jail is the mental one you don't recognize." Individualism is the antithesis of objectivity and working-class consciousness. The rulers promote it from the time children are in the womb. While capitalism encourages selfish individualism, it suppresses individuality by forcing people to work, consume and learn along rigid paths defined by the biggest corporations. Under communism, individuals will contribute in many different ways, but always in the interest of the collective.

The communist principle of democratic centralism reflects the need to destroy and replace individualism with a radically different world outlook. Democratic centralism considers the experience of millions of workers and applies it scientifically to fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat and against capitalist ideas and practices in our class. The working class needs to develop a sophisticated understanding of great political questions on an international scale. Lenin wrote that a baker should be able to analyze the affairs of state. But knowledge is useless if workers aren't won to replace individualism with a commitment to their class, and to infuse their daily lives with class consciousness.

Veteran PLers have an advantage. They joined the movement when hundreds of millions of people worldwide were engaged in militant class struggle. At the height of the Vietnam War and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, the contrast between capitalist individualism and communist theory and practice was far clearer than it is today. Workers involved in those movements learned that the working class can accomplish great things, but only when people overcome the selfish, individualist attitudes and habits we are taught under capitalism.

In the USSR of the 1930s and 40's, millions learned the collectivism that is integral to working-class consciousness. They learned it from political struggle, from collective labor, and from an educational system imbued with these ideas. In *The Soviet Power*, Hewlett Johnson, the "Red" Dean of Canterbury, wrote the following about the

U.S.S.R. prior to World War II: "From the tenderest years the Soviet child is taught to work with others at useful and corporate tasks. Soviet children, like English children, for instance, will play with cubes [blocks]. But Soviet cubes or bricks will often and purposefully be too large for a single child to handle. He will call a companion, and together they will build their house of cubes. Co-operation becomes instinctive."

The power of this collectivism was dramatically displayed in 1941 in the huge eastward relocation of Soviet industry, beyond the Ural Mountains, carried out to prevent it from falling into the hands of the Nazis. As Hitler's armies advanced, 1,500 complete factories and more than two million workers were packed onto trains and barges and moved a thousand miles or more. Living under horrendous conditions in tents and dugouts, the workers resumed making tanks and planes in less than three months. This enormous job was essential to the Soviet victory over the fascists. It could not have been carried out by people whose outlook was "me first."

In Johnson's seemingly insignificant detail about children's play, one can measure the impact of the defeat our class has suffered. Our Party believes in making class consciousness "instinctive," but wishful thinking won't make it so. Class consciousness can replace individualism only after a protracted period of the sharpest class struggle and the consolidation of communist state power. Regardless of its political shortcomings, Soviet education in the 1930s was on to something crucial with those blocks and bricks. We live in a capitalist culture infested by reformism, subjectivity, and individualism. Every member and leader of our Party suffers from these diseases.

---

*We have powerful tools at our disposal. If used correctly, they can help us advance.*

---

## FROM THE MASSES, TO THE MASSES

But we also have powerful tools at our disposal. If used correctly, they can help us advance.

First, we have our Party and its political line. The Party stands for communist revolution, the violent seizure of power for the dictatorship of the proletariat. The Party stands for working-class consciousness, objectivity, and dialectical materialism. The Party teaches us to serve the working class rather than ourselves. To act on this line, to overcome our errors and bourgeois tendencies, represents the work of several lifetimes, especially in an era of anemic class struggle. But the line remains a beacon to keep in sight at all times.





Second, we understand the critical importance of building a base in the industrial working class and among workers in the military. In addition, we continue to organize in the non-industrial working class and service industries and among youth. We have much to offer our fellow workers in terms of political understanding. The demanding, rewarding struggle to build unbreakable personal and political ties with our fellow workers and others is more crucial than ever. We all know people who are communists at heart and in search of a movement, even if they don't yet realize it.

In today's political climate, where rotten capitalist ideas hold sway 24/7, these personal ties must be our highest priority. If we are to convince other workers on our jobs that we have the solution to end capitalism, we must prove to them that communists will fight at their side. Only deep friendships, developed over years and tested in all sorts of struggle, can get the job done.

At the same time, we need to understand that communist development is a two-way street—as Mao wrote, “from the masses, to the masses.” Our fellow workers have a lot to offer us, sometimes more than we have to offer them. As we gain a more dialectical materialist understanding, we'll also learn more from workers in class struggle—theory and practice will go hand in hand. We'll continually develop our line to keep up with our newfound collective understanding.

Ultimately, a Party immersed in the working class will destroy imperialism and the old capitalist order. Relying on other workers will make us immeasurably stronger. It will sustain us through hard times and secure the Party against fascist terror. We cannot hope to win any other way.

## EXPANDING THE LIMITS

Recognizing opportunity in a general way is one thing; acting on it specifically is another. Wherever we fight to sharpen the class struggle in our concentrations, whether on the job or in the community, we get a strong response. In our participation in the recent wave of demonstrations against racist police terror, we showed how a small but disciplined and organized group can influence the masses. The slogans of PLP became mass

slogans; the boldness of PLP pushed the limits in a range of actions.

We can do even more. By building PLP in our strategic concentrations, we can give leadership way beyond our numbers. We can challenge the liberals and union hacks for leadership of large sections of the working class. As we grow stronger, we can lead strikes and walkouts against racism on our jobs. Imagine transit and auto workers walking out against racist terror and taking over City Hall. In class struggle, we must constantly push the limits.

Communist criticism and self-criticism seeks correction, not confession or revenge. We must take the same clear-headed approach to our own shortcomings that we use to analyze the world situation. Though we are trying to do the right thing, we have serious weaknesses; we must struggle constructively with each other to recognize and rectify them.

Workers and working-class youth remain the cornerstone of our revolutionary strategy. Each day we can see glimmers of real hope. Many of our comrades work hard to carry out the line and have earned the trust and confidence of their co-workers. One high school teacher regularly distributed 300 CHALLENGES while earning a well-deserved reputation as an excellent educator. Within a liberal immigrants rights group, a PLP club has built a CD readership of 150 and recruited 12 immigrant workers to the Party. These examples and others like them serve as models of communist cadre and leadership.

In Washington, D.C., a PLP member's election as president of the bus drivers' union local contains valuable lessons. This breakthrough required decades of day-to-day struggle and base-building with the comrade's fellow workers. It required a militant fight against racist and sexist wage differentials. It involved the consistent mass sale of CHALLENGE. It included the patient, principled struggle against reformism, both inside the local and within the Party. And the process is far from over. New opportunities—and new dangers—are already arising in this work. The general point is that we must continue to fight for more revolutionary practice in the mass organizations.

In the Bronx, in a long-term Party effort in solidarity with workers at the Stella d'Oro cookie factory, we saw the importance of fighting sexism to strengthen our unity against the bosses.

After they offered a raise for the more skilled workers, who were all men, by taking money from wage cuts ➤➤



to women workers, the rank-and-file voted the deal down and went on strike. Conscious anti-sexism strengthened the struggle both tactically and politically, and led to the recruitment of several workers to the Party.

In the recent fight against racist police terror led by workers and youth in Ferguson, Missouri, we have had some modest success. The grand jury's refusal to indict racist cop Darren Wilson for the murder of unarmed 18-year-old Mike Brown—a decision rigged by the bosses' prosecutor—catalyzed mass rebellion. First

we waged a struggle within our Party to go to Ferguson over the Thanksgiving weekend. Once we arrived, we organized a plan to break the cops' ban on street demonstrations by stepping off the curb and marching in the street. The workers in Ferguson joined us. The police attacked with pepper gas and clubs and arrests. We withstood their attack and returned even stronger the next night.

Of equal importance, we built ties with Ferguson workers and youth by hosting a dinner and discussing the principles of PLP. As a result, we've been able to recruit a number of Ferguson rebels and bring others closer to the Party. We've also recruited small groups of rebellious workers in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Baltimore and other cities.

Through the actions in Ferguson and subsequent demonstrations around the world, our younger comrades learned—and older comrades were reminded—that we must respond with boldness and enthusiasm to the class struggle. When we are able to put the needs of our class first, we invariably win more workers to the revolutionary communist PLP.

## SEIZING OPPORTUNITIES

The Party press is another area where significant improvements are needed. As conditions sharpen and the capitalists' dominant, finance-capital wing further implements its plans for police-state fascism and global war, the importance of CHALLENGE will grow, both as a tool for mass organizing and a vehicle for internal Party communication. At the moment, sales are modest. The hand-to-hand distribution of CHALLENGE and the development of reader/seller networks remain crucial to our base-building strategy. The more we increase those sales, both in public and in our networks, the more the communist content of CHALLENGE articles will improve. The paper's quantity and quality are directly interrelated.

The present low level of class struggle will not last forever. World War I gave birth to the Bolshevik Revolution; World War II gave rise to the Chinese Revolution. If wars are prerequisites for communist revolution, there are even deadlier ones coming our way. Driven by their need for maximum profit, the capitalists are heading pell-mell toward World War III.

But that's just one side of the story. History shows that rebellion within the capitalists' armed forces will grow. U.S. workers will not sit still indefinitely as the rulers fortify their



*A 2012 student demonstration in Haiti. Banner reads, "Join the fight against injustice, insecurity, poor studying conditions, cholera, and MINUSTAH."*

fascist police state. These contradictions may take many years to reach a boil. But at some point, perhaps sooner than later, the pace will rapidly accelerate. As the next world war approaches and capitalist oppression intensifies in every corner of the globe, we can make great leaps in influencing the masses. But the working class will not wait for us. History is made by those at its leading edge.

We have done better of late in responding to the rulers' attacks. In Brooklyn, we are first on the street against racist cops and their allies: sell-out politicians, church leaders, and other pacifist community groups. In South Asia, we are in active struggle against the super-exploitation of women, often taking on traitorous trade union misleaders. In Mexico, we have joined fights against the rulers' deliberate flooding of poor neighborhoods and the education bosses' campaign to implement an even more oppressive system for students and teachers. Wherever we have worked to earn our reputation as staunch anti-racist fighters and communist organizers, we have recruited to the Party.

The rulers are rightly worried about their ability to motivate oppressed and impoverished workers to join the military and die for U.S. imperialism. Winning Black and Latin soldiers—men and women—to sacrifice their lives for this rotten system is no easy task, especially after the Iraq and Afghanistan fiascos engineered by Republican Bush and Democrat Obama. The military is demoralized. These soldiers are among the workers most subjected to racist police violence, mass incarceration and mass deportation. More time may be needed before the military erupts into open rebellion, as we saw in the U.S. war against Vietnam. But the trends don't favor the imperialists; they represent an opening for us.

The economy lends us further opportunity. The current "recovery" is based on the heightened exploitation of the working class. The liberal agenda for fascism and war will ➤➤

continue to grind down workers' living conditions. As wages fall, retirement vanishes, medical care worsens, schools deteriorate, housing collapses, and racist police atrocities mount, workers will grow more militant. Cynicism and passivity will give way to anger. Once this happens, our communist practice today will determine our potential. What we do now, counts.

## THE FUTURE IS BRIGHT

Our responsibility is immense. From the shop to the battlefield, the future of class struggle and humanity depends on workers' political consciousness and activity. As the current wave of anti-immigrant racism illustrates, the political line of the working class will derive from one of two sources: capitalists or communists. The liberal capitalist line points to the Koch brothers as the enemy and offers the likes of Hillary Clinton as an alternative. The communist line takes a class position on internationalism and imperialist war, and calls for revolution. There is a world of difference, a life-and-death difference, between these two positions, and it is our obligation to make that clear. If we fail, workers will remain trapped in the enemy's fortress. If we succeed, the working class will break out at last to cre-

ate a communist society, no matter how long or demanding the road may be.

The mass international protests in 2003 against the U.S. invasion of Iraq and the mass anti-racist marches of 2014 and 2015 should be viewed as straws in the wind. They show the potential for a mass working-class movement. The anti-war protests died out because the protesters had no ideology beyond the immediate issue. When the war happened despite their efforts, they were demoralized. The anti-racist protests have faded (for now) because they had nowhere to go beyond a call for police reforms and the election of liberal capitalist candidates.

Even so, we should view these outbreaks of unrest as positive signs of more to come, as an opportunity and a challenge. As U.S. rulers plunge into broader global conflicts, turmoil and mass protest are sure to follow—and on a scale we have not seen in close to half a century. The international character of these protests should confirm the correctness of our commitment to build an international PLP. We need to look no further than the 2014 slogan, “We are Ferguson,” which spread throughout the world.

The profit system's contradictions are universal and absolute. Our response to the bosses' rivalries and wars will help us grow where the Party is established and generate new possibilities where we don't yet exist. With a sharpened internal struggle against reformism, we can train ourselves to carry out this all-important assignment.

Each Party member must build a base and become a leader, both inside the Party and within the mass movement. Each Party club must recruit members, spread CHALLENGE and our ideas, and build the fight against the racist bosses. No amount of fascist repression or imperialist war can erase the historic need of the international working class to make communist revolution.

As Marx wrote: Every problem creates the elements of its solution.

PLP represents the future. For all of our limits and shortcomings, despite the difficult period we are facing, our opportunities are abundant. By learning to diagnose the disease of reformism more quickly and sharply, we can also learn to cure it. The task will be arduous, the years of struggle many and long. But history demands nothing less of us. The working class deserves nothing less.

As we continue to build upon the theory and practice of the communist movement, Progressive Labor Party has the potential to midwife a new humanity into the world. We must stay the course with revolutionary patience and revolutionary urgency. The current period will not last forever; the change may come sooner than we can now foresee.

Dark Night will have its end.☛



**Convention Opening Statment****Fifty Years of a Fighting Party**

As we celebrate our first 50 years of PLP, I'd like to remind us why we fight for a new collective world.

"Kids Who Die" by Langston Hughes

This is for the kids who die  
Black and white  
For kids will die certainly  
The old and rich will live on awhile,  
As always,  
Eating blood and gold,  
Letting kids die.

Kids will die in the swamps of Mississippi  
Organizing sharecroppers  
Kids will die in the streets of Chicago  
Organizing workers  
Kids will die in the orange groves of California  
Telling others to get together  
Whites and Filipinos,  
Negroes and Mexicans,  
All kinds of kids will die  
Who don't believe in lies, and  
Bribes, and contentment  
And a lousy peace.

Of course, the wise and the learned  
Who pen editorials in the papers,  
And the gentlemen with Dr. in front of their names  
White and Black,  
Who make surveys and write books  
Will live on weaving words to smother the kids who die,  
And the sleazy courts,  
And the bribe-reaching police,  
And the blood-loving generals,  
And the money-loving preachers  
Will all raise their hands against the kids who die,  
Beating them with laws and clubs and bayonets and bullets  
To frighten the people—  
For the kids who die are like iron in the blood of the people—  
And the old and rich don't want the people to get wise  
To their own power,  
To believe an Angelo Herndon, or even get together

Listen, kids who die—  
Maybe, now, there will be no monument for you  
Except in our hearts,  
Maybe your bodies'll be lost in a swamp  
Or a prison grave, or the potter's field,  
Or the rivers where you're drowned like Leibknecht  
But the day will come—  
You are sure yourselves that it is coming—  
When the marching feet of the masses  
Will raise for you a living monument of love,  
And joy, and laughter,  
And black hands and white hands clasped as one,  
And a song that reaches the sky—  
The song of the life triumphant  
Through the kids who die.

Who was Angelo Herndon? He was a young organizer of workers and member of the Communist Party who was tried and convicted of treason—twice.

Although this was written about Kids who die in this country, we know it is meaningful all over the world. We build our movement for the kids who die everywhere.

This is a very important convention for our Party, not only for celebrating the 50 years of our existence, but for the proposed new leadership structure, which is an extension of the work we have done in building more collective structures.

This is an advance from the old movement, which believed it had to have one leader. This change recognizes the need to break with the single leader idea. It is an acknowledgment of the numbers of people it actually takes to build a movement like ours, and the idea that we need millions of people who all have the potential to be leaders.

This is a contribution to the movement for the liberation of the working class and it will take all our members to guarantee its success.



## CONTRIBUTIONS & LESSONS

I'd like to take a few minutes to emphasize some of our other contributions to the working class movement and some of the lessons we have learned in our 50 years

We have expanded on the understanding of our great predecessors. We have recognized that the hopes of the two-stage theory were in vain. The next stage never came and the societies that made the efforts for a new world were turned into their opposite. Today, the main rivals for top dog imperialist status are the U.S., China and Russia.

The hold of capitalist ideas is strong. We've learned if we are not vigilant in struggle against revisionism and liberalism, we can't defeat these bosses' ideas.

We have learned that we must have patience with our fellow workers on the one hand and we must work in an urgent way on the other in order to bring about the kind of world we need.

Mao Tse Tung once spoke of how the line was developed.

FROM THE MASSES TO THE MASSES. This is more than a slogan in our Party.

Participation in the mass movement, allows us to learn from the workers. We bring their knowledge and questions and aspirations back to the clubs. The clubs discuss this and carry it forward to the next level and the next level and it shows up in our practice and our theory and works its way back out into the mass movement and the process continues.

This process is what makes us strong. Without these relationships among the workers, our line would not develop.

We've learned that we'll always make errors and should not fear them. The process of collective criticism and self-criticism will help us correct them. We have improved at not making one-sided corrections to one-sided errors.

We've learned that in order to make progress, we must embrace struggle. When we are able to go beyond ourselves to participate and lead struggle, we can grow. The Ferguson fightback has taught us that. The Mexico teachers struggle has shown us that. The fight to serve the working class in Pakistan and Haiti after earthquakes has also given us a treasure trove of lessons.

We've learned that if we are to be able to build a world based on collectivity, we must begin now to build it in our Party.

Our fight to free the world of racism, sexism and individualism is a long struggle. It is a lifetime of struggle.

We know that we can do better than this system has done. We can do better than a capitalist dictatorship which gives us wars, diseases caused by lack of sanitation, government-sanctioned terrorism, mass murders, hunger, homelessness, racism and sexism, and a poisonous culture which holds us back and prevents us from understanding

and changing reality.

## A GREAT HONOR

Please permit me a few personal words. I've been a member for forty years. When I came around, I believed it would be a short struggle and then we would have the working class dictatorship to which we aspire, new kind of world. Over the years, I have realized that the length of time it takes for us to defeat the bosses, is not important. What choice is there? I, and you I'm sure will agree that the choice to do nothing is not viable. In the world, there are many more people like me; ordinary workers, looking to make sense of our lives. Our Party is here to help explain. This struggle has given me more than I've given to it. It has brought meaning to my life and enriched it beyond what I believed possible. It has helped me and my family to understand the problems we have and put them in the context of the greater world and the system we live under.

It has allowed me to make a modest contribution to the change we must bring about. The assignment I have tried to carry out the last few years has been a great honor. The confidence the Party showed in giving me this assignment, is the kind of confidence we must continue to have in our class. The confidence that we can run the world, that we don't need CEOs and politicians.

## WORKERS KNOW WHAT IT TAKES

A few months ago I was sitting in a café with my family, and a construction worker spoke to us. He told us about the building he was working on and the lack of planning that had gone into it. He said they build up these apartment buildings on top of an unchanged infrastructure. The subway system stays the same, the electrical system stays the same, the sewage system is unchanged, the gas lines are stressed, and so on. I asked him, what would you do?

He said, I'd tear it down and start from the bottom to rebuild.

Workers know what it takes to build a society.

Bertolt Brecht once wrote about communism:

It's sensible, anyone can understand it  
It's easy  
You're not an exploiter, so you can grasp it  
It's a good thing for you  
Find out more about it  
The stupid call it stupid and the squalid call it squalid  
It's against squalor and against stupidity  
The exploiters call it a crime but we know it is the end of crime  
It is not madness, but the end of madness  
It is not the riddle but the solution  
It is the simplest thing so hard to achieve

But try we must. Let our next 50 years be a series of sharper struggles against our exploiters. Let us continue to: try, fail, try, fail, try, succeed. Never give up! Until the final conflict when the working class is the human race.✪

# Collective Leadership, An Advance for Communism

The collective leadership is another step in the direction we have been moving for a long time.

A few decades ago, when we stopped using bylines in CHALLENGE, the main reason was not so much security for workers writing about their jobs, but to combat the cult of the individual. The editorial and feature article writers produce articles based primarily on collective discussion. The articles reflect the line and practice of the Party, not the individual ideas of the author.

Collective leadership flows from the logic of our line and our vision of the communist society we fight for. Collective leadership reflects our practice—and practice is primary. The series of Road to Revolutions advanced communist theory by analyzing the practice of the world communist movement. The proposal is mainly, but not exclusively, based on an analysis of our practice.

## GREW OUT OF NECESSITY

Up until the time until Luis got sick, he had been the sole editor of CHALLENGE for about 15 years. He was amazing. He wrote, translated both ways, and edited, while discussing the fine points of inter-imperialist rivalry and obscure communist parties. He was a one-man band, though even he had some help. But once he was knocked out the lineup, producing the paper became a collective task. Luis was replaced by a committee that reached out to an even wider collective for help. Once the committee got traction, the paper improved.

We formed the CHALLENGE collective out of necessity. Once it was operational, it became clear that we could never go back to a single editor. Despite Luis's amazing contribution, it had been the wrong way to produce our newspaper.

A few years later, we watched the LA gang of five ride off into the Red Dawn of their imaginations. Again, out of necessity, we had to reorganize the international work. The comrade who had pulled together and led the CHALLENGE collective was tasked with pulling together and leading the international collective. Other comrades

---

*The reality is, one person—no matter how towering a figure—does not lead the Party and never has.*

---

accepted responsibility for CHALLENGE. More collective responsibility developed and leaders took on new assignments, destroying the old model of being an expert for life in one field.

## EVERY MEMBER CAN BE A LEADER

These experiences raised a question: why can't comrades have many assignments over the years? Why should anyone be a club leader, CHALLENGE editor, international organizer, or Party chair for decades? Doesn't building a mass Party mean relying on the masses and believing everyone can give leadership?

We thought back to our experience with a Party chair who, for many reasons, was driving the Party off a cliff. The prior chair (Milt) and the new central committee gave the new chair (Willy) the benefit of doubt and agreed to some serious mistakes—Road to Revolution 4.5 and “temporarily” disbanding a level of work.

But when the full impact of these decisions became clear, a struggle was carried out to get the Party back on track. Willy eventually stood alone while the collective leadership of the Party struggled to unify and save the Party. That was collective leadership.

The reality is, one person—no matter how towering a figure—does not lead the Party and never has. During the discussion around Road to Revolution III and Road to Revolution IV and the cult of the individual, Milt said that all of the classics written by Lenin, Stalin, and Mao should have been published in the name of their respective par- ➤➤

---

*The collective leadership  
is another break with  
the old movement.*

---

ties, since they were all the result of a lot of discussion and struggle and input from many comrades.

As we continued to advance revolutionary ideology and move it more to the left, breaking with many of the old ideas and practices of the old movement, we continued to have one chair.

The collective leadership is another break with the old movement. It comes from our practice and that of many others. How many thousands of workers and youth gave leadership during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China? How many comrades led the South African Communist Party when their leadership was in exile or in jail? How many comrades led the dismantling of 1,000 factories in the Soviet Union and transporting them and rebuilding them east of the Urals, while being bombarded by Nazi Germany?



## DETAILS AND POSSIBILITIES

The collective leadership is based in New York City, our largest and strongest concentration. This could change as a result of developments in the class struggle and the Party.

Leaders will continue working at their present jobs and building a base in mass organizations. Our growing number of retired or semi-retired members can be “arms and legs.” The day will come when we will need many full-time leaders.

Each member of the leadership collective will have a particular responsibility, such as international work, U.S. work, propaganda, and industrial work. The responsibility of industrial work has been added to reflect recent changes and opportunities for the Party to rebuild our industrial work. This is in line with the Party’s position on the key role of industrial workers to revolution, and our emphasis on building industrial concentrations. Our international Party will strengthen and develop from having industrial work represented at this level.

One member could propose the agenda and chair the meetings for a given period of time or this responsibility could be rotated.

People might come in and out of the collective based on the needs of the Party and the development of comrades. The steering committee and central committee will regularly examine the leadership collective’s work and make any needed changes.

## NO ORGANIZATIONAL GUARANTEE

Only our line and immersing ourselves in the class struggle can keep us on the road to communist revolution. No organizational plan can guarantee success. Two out of three tries with individual chairs helped us advance; one set us back. It’s time for a collective leadership, which conforms more to our line and practice. This approach worked well for two of our earliest leaders—Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels.

A skeptical comrade said at a meeting, “we need someone to make the call when a call needs to be made.” We need a thousand people who are able to make the call. Collective leadership is another step in that direction.✪

# The Party and Revolution: Economic Crisis Shows the Need for Communism

**C**apitalism is in a period of extended crisis. There is a tendency of the rate of profit to fall and a persistent overproduction on a global basis relative to the world's workers' ability to buy. This is pushing the U.S. economy toward stagnation, punctuated by crises for the working class for over the past 30 years.

Profit rates tend to fall because of the growing organic composition of capital due to competition and new technology. More machinery and less labor are used in the production process. The problem persists despite many efforts by the capitalists to correct it. The capitalists created a debt economy by extending unsustainable amounts of credit to the working class so they could sell their goods, but such debt has a natural limit before bankruptcy and crisis hit. The rapid growth of China also temporarily helped offset this tendency by opening new investment opportunities for U.S. capital with lower organic composition. It has also helped offset the tendency toward overproduction by opening up new markets for U.S. products. But this has not been enough for capitalism to grow rapidly.

The U.S. capitalists are taking many other steps to improve their rate of profit, i.e., speeding up workers to increase productivity, cutting taxes on corporate profits, reducing the wages and benefits to workers, sharpening racist attacks on Black and Latin workers in particular, and shifting costs of education, mass transit, pensions and health care on to the backs of workers. These actions have done little to end economic stagnation. Stagnation has affected Western Europe and Japan for many years and now even China is beginning to experience a slowing economy. As these problems intensify, depression and the danger of world war between the imperialists grow. The scores of current smaller wars around the world, especially in the Middle East and Africa, are the early lead-ins to a wider World War III. Fascism become more imminent.

Capitalism can never resolve its internal contradictions in favor of the working class. No matter how deep a crisis the bosses find themselves in, we cannot underestimate their ability to hold onto their system through the

state and backward anti-worker politics. This entire system must be abolished through communist revolution. The Progressive Labor Party is organizing for this goal.

## COMMUNISM REQUIRES REVOLUTION

In the current historical period, communist revolution means ending the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie by destroying their state apparatus (this apparatus includes, among other institutions of oppression and control, the police, FBI, and the military and the ideological apparatus that supports it). With revolution, the working class will replace the bosses' state with the dictatorship of the working class. This workers' state will then wipe out the remnants of the bourgeoisie and their allies within the geographic area in which the revolution has taken place. They defend that area against capitalist attacks from the areas which are not yet under workers' control. Communism will solve the problems caused by capitalism because production will be organized to meet human needs on a global basis, not for private profit for a handful of rulers. Communism will also struggle to defeat bourgeois ideas within the working class. Achieving this goal may well prove to be the most difficult task of all.

## REVOLUTION AND THE PARTY: LENIN

From the time of the Paris Commune in 1871 to Lenin's writing of *What Is To Be Done* in 1901, the working class movement in the West went in two directions, anarchism and social democracy. By 1901 the anarchists were carrying out terrorism as their strategy for change (anarchists assassinated six heads of state in this period including U.S. President McKinley) and the social democrats of the Second International entirely focused on competing in elections (mainly led by Bernstein and the German Social Democratic Party). The revolutionary core of Marxism had been set aside.

With *What Is To Be Done*, Lenin and the Bolshevik Party moved Marxism back in a revolutionary direction. The communists called for organizing a vanguard revolutionary party capable of evading and finally smashing the re- ➤



pressive forces of the state. The Bolsheviks also advocated building and using a nation-wide newspaper to educate workers politically.

The party's political program was to fight for socialism, which it described as the lower phase of communism. Fighting for socialism meant smashing the state, creating workers' state control of the means of production and the land, and offering individual material incentives through a wage system for the workers and peasants. Lenin viewed this program as an advance over the reformist demands of the Social Democrats which he called "economism".

This model with some variations became the basis of all revolutionary movements in the 20th century.

### **A VANGUARD PARTY IS INADEQUATE: ON TO A MASS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY**

Experience from that century shows us that this model can make revolution but is inadequate for the transformation of society to communism once the capitalists have been initially defeated. The reversals of the world communist movement, particularly in the Soviet Union and China, have created an extended period of disillusionment among the working class for our movement. Both revolutionary events, despite what the capitalists say, were tremendous advances for the working class. They inspired workers all around the world to take up the fight for a better life with a vision of a world free of exploitation. But the communist parties of these countries never attempted to win the masses to communism and to abolishing the wage system. Socialism proved to be the road back to capitalism, not a step toward communism.

In the Soviet Union and elsewhere, the maintenance of individual wage-based incentives, with differentials among workers that grew over time, led to the constant re-emerging of forces opposed to the revolution. These forces, often supported by the imperialist countries, were a constant threat to the revolution. The Bolsheviks, despite the weaknesses in their own line, scored many tactical victories over them but were never able to defeat them strategically. By the 1950's, these forces led by Khrushchev, Zhukov, and hundreds of other party leaders who had been won over to a capitalist strategy were able to seize control of the party and reestablish capitalism.

The U.S. Communist Party had a similar weakness in that they never attempted to win the masses of working people to a vision of a communist, egalitarian, collective society in which the wage system was abolished. Progressive Labor Party is correcting that weakness. Our ability to do that is based on the experiences of the old movement. We can succeed if we keep our focus on winning workers to understand that communism is the best possible world and one that we should all fight for.

We all know the difficulties of doing that in a capitalist society. The capitalists have created many institutions, including churches, schools, professional sports teams and cultural trends to confuse workers about the nature of cap-



italist society. The Party collective can help overcome the obstacles these institutions create.

In *What Is To Be Done*, Lenin saw a conflict between the vanguard party that he felt was necessary to lead the revolution and the mass electoral party that was promoted by Bernstein and the other leaders of the Second International. He correctly pointed out that the mass parties of the Second International could not make revolution because they were incapable of dealing with the repressive apparatus of the state. He was correct about the need for a party. But it is also necessary for the party to be a mass party.

Making the transition from a small party to a mass party that eventually involves the entire working class is a complex task. As the crisis of capitalism continues, and the bosses drive closer toward fascism and war, our work in mass organizations and the class struggle we lead will help the party grow *quantitatively*. To experience *qualitative* growth, we must make communism a mass issue in the working class. This requires a tremendous increase in the distribution of CHALLENGE and other party literature in our communities, unions, churches, schools, and professional associations. Masses of workers must come to understand that communism is the only alternative to imperialist war, to continued environmental destruction (e.g., climate change), to the general state of poor health, to racism, sexism, and all other divisions among the working class, to unemployment, to homelessness and poverty, to hunger, to continual economic and bodily insecurity, and most fundamentally to the unrewarding nature of work that profits the few at the expense of the toil of the many. The PLP is confident that the masses of workers will grasp communist ideas and reject capitalist ones.

### **LIBERALS AND REVISIONISTS: ENEMIES OF THE PARTY AND REVOLUTION**

As we build a base for communism in the mass ➤➤

---

*Revisionist ideas, growing out of the old communist movement, strip the revolutionary heart out of the revolutionary vision of the egalitarian future and constantly compromise with capitalist ideas and practices.*

---

movement, there will be two developments. First, the ruling class will try to repress us, and second, revisionist and liberal ideas will become more pervasive. Liberal ideas are against revolution and support a “kinder, gentler” capitalism, as if that were possible. Revisionist ideas, growing out of the old communist movement, strip the heart out of the revolutionary vision of the egalitarian future and constantly compromise with capitalist ideas and practices.

Liberal and revisionist forces will advance defeatist ideas, such as the notion that the working class is “not ready” to accept the end of the wage system, or the theory that society’s ability to produce has not reached a high enough level to provide the abundance that is necessary for communist consciousness to become widespread among the working class. The PLP rejects both of these ideas as arrogant dismissals of the potential of workers to make revolution. We need a Party to organize the fight for our line (and for the leadership of the broad working class movement) about the need for a direct fight for communism through revolution, and expose the lack of confidence in the working class by liberal and revisionist forces.

The time is now to push beyond such antiquated and incorrect ideas. Capitalism has nothing good left to offer the working class. It is time to abolish it entirely. To do this, we need a well-organized Party to convince our brothers and sisters to act on the basis of this analysis, move toward revolution, and fight against revisionist backsliding.

Capitalist society has reached the point where further economic development is severely limited because of the social relations created by capitalism. The destruction of capital, or diminishing of its value, is the only means whereby capitalists can try to mitigate, at least temporarily, the tendency for the profit rate to fall. Since the only ways in which capital can be destroyed or devalued are through constant wars and economic crises, capitalism in its late stages is continually destroying jobs and lives while it is creating more and more relatively useless junk. Many workers know from their own experiences how destructive capitalism has become. Of course, crisis in and of itself will

not win workers to revolution. The task of a revolutionary Party is winning them to see that communism, not a reformed capitalism or a regulated capitalism, is the only viable alternative.

It remains vital to have a correct estimate of the nature of the historical period in which we live. At the moment, due to the reversals of the past, the growth of the revolutionary movement is proceeding slowly. But life is a powerful teacher. The Party, as a growing collective of conscious, communist workers, must be there to help workers draw correct conclusions about the nature of the class struggle and how to avoid the errors of the past. And so, with the Party in place and vigorous, the historical period will eventually be transformed into one of more class struggle and revolutionary potential.

## IMPROVING OUR WORK

The Progressive Labor Party knows that a mass revolutionary Party can be built. But based on past experience, we need the following:

1. The Party must have a line that wins at least the major portion of workers to communism before the revolution and that implements it as soon as the working class seizes power. That line must include the ending of the wage system, smashing racism and sexism, and building internationalism. Communists cannot seek to reconcile class divisions or to regulate them; the capitalist class and their capitalist values must be eliminated. This change requires revolution and a continuing comradely struggle after the revolution to consolidate communist values among the working class.
2. The Party must be a mass Party so that the majority of the working class can be actively involved in the transformation. It is magical thinking to suppose that almost everyone will join the Party before a revolution, but many can be won to support the Party’s ideas and the fight for communism. Our size must never be used as an excuse for not engaging in class struggle or for watering down (or hiding) our analysis.
3. The Party must also have an underground section so that it can survive attacks from the ruling class. But at the same time this section must not become isolated from its base in the working class.
4. Party members must understand that they are right to replace the leadership of their collectives if the leaders fail to continue serving the working class by fighting for communism. The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR) in the late 1960s in China failed because the workers and students who fought against revisionism were blinded by the cult of the personality surrounding Mao. The GPCR did show that millions of workers understood that socialism was the road back to capitalism, and that building communism was necessary to meet the ➤➤

needs of the working class.

5. The Party will lead society. The idea that in a communist society the Party and the state are separate centers of power is an illusion. The Party will not create organizations to rubber stamp its decisions. The basis of all political struggles will be how to meet the needs of the working class. There will certainly be disagreements on how to do this, but by applying communist principles they can be resolved by comradely struggle.

To build a mass revolutionary Party, Party members must be involved in mass organizations where they can meet people who do not yet agree with communism but who can engage in class struggle side by side. This means that Party members should go to school, get a job, join the military, join a community organization, join and participate actively in a union, and/or join a faith-based organization that includes many people open to ideas of a better world here on earth. Every member of the revolutionary Party must attempt to build a new revolutionary collective among his/her friends.

This new collective will learn about revolutionary politics and engage in class struggle. It will distribute CHALLENGE and other Party literature. Over time this collective will become a Party club, and then repeat the process.

These clubs will then be formed into communist networks, which will eventually contain most working people in any area, school, industry, union, community organization, or church.

As these networks grow, they will certainly be attacked by the state, and they must be prepared to fight back by any means necessary to guarantee their survival and final victory.

## LEADERSHIP AND STRUGGLE

Who will lead these Party groups? Those most committed to the fight for communism and the principles described above. They are subject to replacement by the members of their collective at any time their commitment weakens. This will hold true from the smallest Party groupings at the local level to the central leadership of the Party.

The only guarantee that this approach will work is the growing commitment of the working class to communism. This commitment will grow based on the criticism and self-criticism of our ideas and practices. There are no bureaucratic solutions to problems of leadership in a communist society.

The ongoing crisis of capitalism is causing many spontaneous uprisings against the system. With a communist vision of the future, with a commitment to organizing a revolutionary Party and with patience we can build a true revolutionary movement.

The struggle to build the Party will continue to have many ups and downs. The bosses are constantly pushing their ideas, and this is bound to have an effect on Party

*To build a mass revolutionary Party, Party members must be involved in mass organizations where they can meet people who do not yet agree with communism but who can engage in class struggle side by side.*

members and our base. Therefore, even for people who join the Party, we must continue to struggle each other to deepen our commitment. The fight against the bosses' ideas in our movement will go on for a long time.

We will not win every struggle against the bosses' ideas in our Party. Some individuals will become corrupt and mistakes will be made. But again openness to criticism and self-criticism will help us correct these errors.

Much of this seems very general, so what does it mean to be a member of the Progressive Labor Party?

1. Agree with the idea of fighting for communism, communicating this vision with as many people in one's base as possible, and helping develop this idea further. This requires studying dialectical materialism and embedding oneself in the working class.
2. Fight racism, sexism, wherever one works, studies, and lives. Have an internationalist outlook.
3. Distribute and contribute to CHALLENGE and other Party literature.
4. Be active in a Party club, meeting regularly, and helping develop and carry out its plans.
5. Help lead the Party. Helping one's comrades change and grow. Embrace honest struggle with over levels of commitment, development, and activity through criticism and self-criticism.
6. Be active in a mass organization and fight for the most left line within the struggle.
7. Contribute financially to the Party.
8. Recruiting workers, students, and soldiers to the Party. Helping build a multiracial Party of women and men.

Comrades, friends—Join us!✊

# PLP HISTORY

## 1. Building the Party with Industrial Workers

*April 17 is the anniversary of the founding of the Progressive Labor Party. From a small group of communists who left the Communist Party USA in 1962 and organized the Progressive Labor Movement (PLM), PLP has grown into an international Party.*

*Over our first half-century, PLP has propelled the march to communism — first by leading anti-racist, working-class struggle, and through that struggle advancing communist ideas. The following five essays explore specific struggles that helped PLP grow to our current presence in 27 countries on five continents.*

*We begin with our concentration among industrial workers.*

### THE HAZARD MINERS SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN

In the winter of 1962-63, Black and white miners in Kentucky, Tennessee and West Virginia went on a bitter wildcat strike, rebelling against inhuman working conditions and starvation wages. (Average weekly pay was \$25.) The mine owners, police and local officials launched a campaign of terror and scabbing to break the strike. Organizing out of their base in Hazard, Kentucky, five hundred rank-and-file miners armed themselves to prepare for class war. They dynamited bridges and blew up scab mines.

Led by one of our railroad comrades, a local union official, PLM formed the Trade Union Solidarity Committee (TUSC) to back the Hazard Miners. TUSC organized in unions and working-class communities across the country, and workers responded enthusiastically. Truckloads of food, clothing and holiday gifts for miners' children were shipped to Hazard, along with PL magazines that brought communist ideas to the strikers. A mass meeting in New York drew nearly a thousand workers and students in zero-degree weather to hear the miners' rank-and-file lead-

er, Berman Gibson.

The bosses went crazy. In a front-page banner outline, the Hazard Herald, screamed: "Communism Comes to the Mountains!" The liberals around President John Kennedy understood the hazard in Hazard: a multi-racial group of armed miners uniting with communists to fight the bosses. They responded with a well-funded redbaiting campaign, and sent their anti-communist liberals to take over the Solidarity Committee.

Initially, the miners resisted the anti-communist attack. But as it mounted, Gibson and others retreated and turned to the liberals. After many months, the strike petered out. PLM learned vital lessons from this campaign:

- Workers will arm themselves to defend their class interests when it's clear to them that armed struggle is necessary;
- Striking workers will respond enthusiastically to bold leadership;
- While the bosses won't hesitate to use violence to break a strike or rebellion, their most powerful weapon is anti-communism;
- Red-baiting can be defeated only through protracted class struggle where communists give active leadership.

### THE 1964-65 LONGSHORE STRIKE

On October 1, 1964, 60,000 members of the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) struck all ports from Maine to Texas to fight the shipowners' demand to cut half their jobs. The strike's impact on U.S. trade impelled President Lyndon Johnson to use a Taft-Hartley injunction to force the strikers temporarily back to work. The government demanded a settlement "within the national interest." The resulting contract undermined workers' job security. Anthony Scotto, head of the Brooklyn local (and a "made" member of the Mafia's Gambino family), called it the "best contract ever."

All eight New York City daily papers lauded the contract. Only CHALLENGE, PLM's newspaper, exposed the sellout and called on workers to reject it. The paper was distributed up and down the docks. Many workers asked for extra copies to distribute, despite their union's anti-communist leadership.

A worker told CHALLENGE that the federal government had been ready to indict the ILA's gangster-ridden leadership for racketeering, but offered to quash the indictments if the leadership persuaded the rank and file to ratify the sellout contract. When CHALLENGE exposed this deal on its front page, Scotto denounced the paper's "red lies" at a meeting of over 2,000 longshoremen in Brooklyn. He read the entire flyer out loud. But the workers, hearing the contract detail for the first time, were so enraged that they voted overwhelmingly to reject the contract and go back on strike.

*Scotto denounced CHALLENGE's "red lies" at a meeting of over 2,000 long-shoremen. He read the entire flyer out loud. But the workers, hearing the contract detail for the first time, were so enraged that they voted overwhelmingly to reject the contract and go back on strike.*

### 'REDS UNDER THEIR BEDS?'

The bosses' press reported that "communist influence was swaying" the dockers to oppose the contract. ILA president Teddy Gleason blamed "communists" for the rank-and-file rebellion. Scotto pointed to "outside agitators." The World-Telegram's front page declared: "Red Hand Seen on the Waterfront." Victor Reisel, a notorious anti-labor columnist, ranted that "Chinese revolutionaries" were "spreading unrest on the docks" and warned that Mao Tse-Tung was "taking over our great urban centers."

CHALLENGE ran its own headline: "Dockers Resist Sellout, Bosses See Red!"

Johnson's assistant secretary of labor ordered the FBI to "investigate communist influence on the New York and Baltimore docks." A new contract added a few crumbs for workers. A majority of the working longshoremen voted it down, but the misleaders used other trades in the union and retired workers to get it passed, ending a four-month struggle. Containerization was ushered in, and thousands of jobs were lost in the years that followed.

PL'ers learned that workers are less likely to fall for red-baiting or be intimidated by mobsters when they are consciously engaged in class struggle. We also witnessed the importance of multi-racial unity. With Black and white longshoremen working together on the job and in the strike, the bosses were unable to use racism to split and weaken them.

Finally, our experience with the ILA helped PL understand the absolute necessity of being embedded in the

working class, rather than working from the outside. While our literature played a big role in the strike, our lack of members on the docks hindered our ability to recruit longshoremen and build our organization. The bedrock principle remains: To win workers to revolution, communists must build a base in the working class.

### PLP LEADS DC'S TRANSIT WORKERS

For 40 years, PLP has been a leading force among thousands of transit workers in the Metro system in Washington, DC. In the 1970s, local government took over the private bus companies as the workforce changed from mostly white to mostly Black. In 1978, the new public transit authority attacked workers by attempting to deny them a cost-of-living increase in a period of high inflation. PLP members and friends led a six-day wildcat strike that defeated the attack. The bosses' attempt to fire the strike leaders failed.

In the early 1990s, Metro attacked again, threatening to privatize the bus fleet unless workers accepted wage and benefit concessions. The Party and militant workers led hundreds in fights against cuts in bus service and jobs. Meanwhile, the union misleadership agreed to a cap on wage-step increases, lower starting salaries for new workers, and a slower wage progression. During these battles, a PL'er, whose communist politics were well known, was elected to the union's executive board.

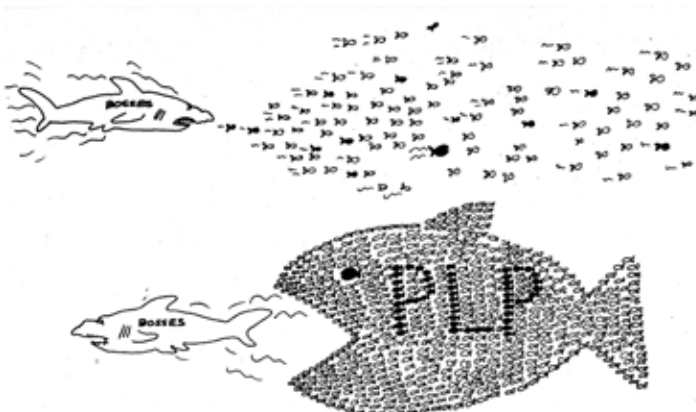
In 1998, the union leadership agreed to further givebacks in wage progression, along with limited health insurance benefits for new workers and defunding of the pension system. The PL'er was the only executive board member to oppose this sellout. In 2004, he won the local presidency. The overwhelmingly Black membership refused to succumb to anti-communist attacks and to a nationalist appeal by the incumbent Black president. They followed their class interests in uniting behind the white PLP member.

In the 2004 contract, the wage progression was reduced, and Metro was required to contribute to the pension fund. A new wave of anti-communism was aimed at the Party member, who returned to driving a bus. By that time, however, hundreds of workers had been influenced by PLP and CHALLENGE. A number of them joined the Party. The fight against privatization and anti-worker discipline has been waged by a new generation of Party members at Metro.

We learned the limits of union leadership, no matter how red the politics.

The Party has recently led an anti-racist fight against background checks that would've barred employment for workers convicted by the bosses' criminal injustice system. A disproportionate number of these workers were Black; the background checks would've cut off one of their few avenues to higher-paying jobs.

The struggle to fight the bosses and to build the Party continues.★



## 2. Mack Ave. Plant Takeover

In 1970, more than 400,000 workers struck General Motors (then the biggest employer in the U.S.) for 67 days to win a big raise and the 30-and-out retirement pension plan.

Three years later, with watershed contract negotiations looming between the United Auto Workers (UAW) and the Big Three automakers (GM, Ford, and Chrysler), thousands of young, conscious, militant Black workers were an emerging force. The auto bosses had hired about 10,000 Black workers as a direct result of the 1967 Black-led rebellions in Detroit and Newark against racist police brutality and for jobs. Many were Vietnam veterans who had rebelled in 1967 and again in 1968 after the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. The Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement (DRUM) and the PLP-led Workers Action Movement (WAM) were gaining strength and credibility by challenging the racism of the UAW leadership and the auto bosses.

PLP was organizing in factories in New Jersey, Detroit, Cleveland and California. In one New Jersey Ford plant, the Party and a Black caucus staged a week-long wildcat strike to stop Ford from using massive overtime to build a stockpile and undermine a possible strike. In the Cleveland Ford plant, we established the first six-hour day committee. Had it been enacted, a six-hour day would have created thousands of new jobs by adding an extra shift.

In Detroit, at Chrysler's Mack Avenue stamping plant, we were waging an anti-racist health and safety struggle, demanding fans where temperatures routinely soared above 100 degrees. (For workers, the bosses couldn't find any fans. But when they later replaced workers with robots, they found money for air conditioning.) It was during this struggle, in August 1973, that a PLP member was fired.

Meanwhile, at Huber Foundry, Chrysler workers walked out over a racist incident involving a supervisor. At Jefferson Assembly, a racist foreman called a Black worker the n-word. The worker climbed to the top of the plant and shut off the power. The other workers carried him out on their shoulders and the foreman was fired.

### HISTORIC OCCUPATION

At Mack Avenue, our fired member snuck back into the plant and on the line. When Chrysler security tried to remove him, they were beaten back by 350 workers who seized the factory. It was the first plant occupation in the U.S. in more than three decades, since the communist-led Great Flint Sit-Down Strike established the UAW in 1937.

As the Mack Avenue workers secured the plant, the PLP organized support from around the city and surrounding community. Picket lines ringed the plant while workers passed bags of groceries to those inside. The following day, with the Chrysler security guards routed, the bosses called

on the cops—the capitalists' shock troops in class struggle—to evict the strikers. But the 350 workers surged down to the ground floor and met the police with their fists in the air, chanting, "FIGHT BACK! FIGHT BACK!" The cops retreated, no doubt under orders from Chrysler not to destroy the factory.

A detachment of PLP workers and supporters went to UAW Local 212 offices to demand union backing for the strike. When the local president refused, a scuffle erupted. By the time it was over, his glass desk was in little pieces and many union hacks were injured. Then the UAW revealed its pro-boss colors by organizing a thousand thugs from four states to physically retake the plant for Chrysler. Some were known Klansmen; others were newly elected or appointed Black officials. The strikers' number had dwindled to about 50, too few to repel the UAW hacks and their baseball bats. The fired white comrade and a Black worker who gave crucial leadership to the action were arrested, both charged with felonious assault.

### WORKERS BACK PLP

PLP turned to workers and students to wage a political defense in the factories, at Wayne State University, and in unemployment and welfare offices. Many supporters attended the subsequent trial, and many more gave money. The Black worker who was arrested, a Vietnam vet, joined the Party the day he was called to testify. The charges were dropped when the prosecutor was unable to produce a single Chrysler production worker to testify. Not one.

When the plant reopened, UAW officials walked up and down the line with Chrysler bosses, fingering workers who had participated. About 35 were fired on the spot. Most eventually won their jobs back, but our comrades were blackballed from the industry. The UAW and the auto bosses then tried to purge PLP from the auto industry and the union.

From that point on, the UAW functioned as an overt arm of the auto bosses. Six years after the Mack Avenue action, the union entered an agreement with President Jimmy Carter and Chrysler boss Lee Iacocca to bail out the company, closing many plants and wiping out thousands of jobs. The UAW played a similar anti-worker role in 2008, when it accepted Obama's "restructuring" of the industry after the 2007 economic crisis, which closed dozens of more plants and cut starting pay in half.

PLP's leadership and the militancy displayed by auto workers — and especially Black workers — reinforced the Party's concept that the industrial working class can become the heart of a communist revolution.✊

# 3. Fighting Racism is the Key to Revolution

In the class war to overthrow capitalism, fighting racism is a strategic necessity. When the bosses divide Black and white workers, the entire working class is denied the potential of Black workers' leadership in the fight for armed communist revolution. In the United States, drawing from their historical super-oppression, Black workers led the battle against slavery. They have stood on the front lines in major strikes, in the fight for jobs and in other attacks on the profit system.

Ever since the 17th century, when Black slaves were first brought to the Americas from Africa, racism has been the keystone of the U.S. capitalist system. Racism pits groups of workers against one another, diluting our class's strength in battles against the rulers. Racism enables the bosses to use lower-paid Black and Latin workers as a wedge against white workers struggling to improve wages and working conditions. As a result, the capitalist ruling class takes greater profits from all workers while stealing super-profits—totaling hundreds of billions of dollars a year—from Black and Latin workers.

By claiming that some workers are superior to others, racism devalues human life. To continue to build our Party, and ultimately to lead a communist revolution against the capitalist class, we must put the fight against racism and for multiracial, working-class unity front and center.

## HARLEM REBELLION

In 1964, the young Progressive Labor Movement played a lead role in the historic Harlem Rebellion, the first Black-led urban uprising of the era against police terror (more details and photos on page 36). On July 16, an off-duty cop, Lieutenant Thomas Gilligan, shot and murdered James Powell, a 15-year-old, 122-pound ninth-grader, in cold blood. For six consecutive nights, the anger of the Black masses boiled over in open rebellion in central Harlem and then in Bedford-Stuyvesant in Brooklyn. Thousands of militant youth took to the streets, directing their anger at the cops and at price-gouging store owners. Molotov cocktails were hurled at shops and police cars. Thousands of cops were rushed to Harlem to quell the revolt, but it continued to spread. Thousands of gunshots were exchanged.

Mayor Robert Wagner and his police commissioner put Harlem under virtual martial law, outlawing demonstrations, rallies and marches. Civil rights misleaders tried to control the crowd by calling for “peaceful protest,” but were ignored. The phony “leftist” Communist Party USA (CPUSA) backed these reformist pleas for peace at any price. PLM was the only force to give political direction to



*Cover of the first CHALLENGE*

the spontaneous rebellion.

Thousands of PLM posters declaring, “WANTED FOR MURDER, GILLIGAN THE COP!” were circulated throughout Harlem and beyond. Thousands of copies of CHALLENGE—published for the very first time a few weeks earlier—were distributed. Rebels marched in the streets with the paper’s front page as their flag.

PLM pointed out that the rebellion was also directed against Harlem’s pervasive racist conditions: an unemployment rate three times as high as the city as a whole; half the city’s average family income; three times the ratio of substandard housing; nearly twice the infant mortality rate. Black women workers were and are the most exploited section of the working class. This fight against racism was yoked to the fight against sexism. Though anti-sexist class-consciousness was not at the forefront, the Rebellion was also a fight against these sexist living and working



conditions in Harlem.

## BOSSES ATTACK PL

The bosses' media viciously attacked PL for "inciting riots." The CPUSA called us "adventurist." Our leaders' lives were threatened, and they were tailed by the cops' Red Squad 24 hours a day. Several were arrested for defying the rulers' bans on demonstrations and for "inciting to riot," which carried a potential sentence of 20 years in jail.

Specifically, PLM was enjoined from organizing marches between 110th Street and 155th Street for the whole width of Manhattan. We defied the ban and led a demonstration in the heart of Harlem. The Harlem PLM chapter leader was convicted and jailed for "inciting a riot," as were the printers who made the Gilligan poster. Dozens of PL'ers and friends were subpoenaed before a grand jury and threatened with contempt citations, and several were convicted and served prison time. An international defense campaign was launched; leftist philosophers Bertrand Russell and Jean-Paul Sartre, among others, spoke out on our members' behalf.

Although the rebellion soon subsided, our Party's reputation stayed strong in Black communities throughout the U.S. In San Francisco, where we had been virtually unknown, nearly 500 militant Black workers and youth turned out to hear a PLM leader give an eyewitness report of the Harlem struggle. Following Harlem, more than 100 cities nationwide, not content with "cooling it," felt the torch of rebellion.

Our role in the Harlem Rebellion is a testament to PL's lifelong commitment to fighting racism. This is part and parcel of defeating capitalism. We envision a world where the very concept of race will be abolished. We will build a communist society where all workers have the same opportunity to use all their potential to advance humanity and the planet. Join us in building the next generation of international leaders against racism.

## ANTI-RACISM AT FOREFRONT OF COMMUNIST FIGHTBACK

The Harlem Rebellion of 1964 raised the fight against racist oppression to a new level while exposing the class treason of Black reformist leadership. After Harlem, more than 100 cities in the U.S. felt the torch of rebellion. PL's leadership in this struggle set the tone for our unceasing fight against racism:

From the 1970s to the current day, PL'ers have orga-



*Member of Progressive Labor Party rips off hood of Mississippi Grand Dragon Bill Wilkinson in October 1978 as PLP and InCAR (International Committee Against Racism) prevented a major Klan gathering.* ➤➤

nized hundreds of attacks on the Ku Klux Klan and neo-Nazis wherever they spread their racist garbage. Rejecting the pacifist mythology that these gutter racists would fade away if ignored, we have attacked them head-on—and confronted the capitalists' cops who protect them. We have mounted these anti-racist, multiracial actions in New York City, Baltimore, Washington, DC, Detroit and St. Louis. We've done the same in smaller communities like Tupelo, Mississippi; Scotland, Connecticut; Jamesburg and Morristown, New Jersey; and scores of cities and towns in California. We invaded the Nazis' headquarters in Chicago. We beat a white supremacist leader in a Boston television interview. These militant anti-KKK/Nazi actions have involved an estimated 100,000 or more workers and youth.

On May Day, 1975, we mobilized 2,500 anti-racists in Boston to march against the segregationist, terrorist organization called ROAR (Restore Our Alienated Rights, accurately nicknamed Racists On A Rampage). When they physically attacked us, we routed them. We subsequently organized a summer project to combat ROAR's mob violence and its anti-busing racism. We integrated formerly all-white beaches, held anti-racist summer schools for Black children, and rallied to escort Black children into their first day of integrating formerly all-white schools. Our efforts smashed ROAR.

On May Day, 1976, we marched into Chicago's Marquette Park, where Nazis had barred Black people. We integrated that neighborhood.

Simultaneously, PLP exposed academic charlatans — like E.O. Wilson, Richard Herrnstein, and Arthur Jensen — who spewed racist filth about the "inferiority" of Black workers and the Nazi fantasy that unemployment was ➤➤





*Klan hood and regalia of Grand Wizard Bill Wilkinson are burned by PL and InCAR members at rally in Boston in November 1978, just weeks after they were ripped off the Imperial Worm in a militant anti-Klan rally.*

inherited in their genes. We mobilized demonstrations wherever these racists appeared, chased them off auditorium stages, and even poured a pitcher of water over Wilson's head in the middle of a lecture. (Our member called out, "Wilson, you're all wet!") PL's position was clear and uncompromising: No free speech for racists.

Throughout this period, PLP helped organize the International Committee Against Racism (InCAR), a mass anti-racist, multiracial group that led many of these struggles.

In Southern California, our Party has organized against the anti-immigrant Minute Men. We have gone to border towns to fight racist attacks on immigrant workers from Mexico, rallying support from citizen workers around the slogan, "Smash All Borders!"

More recently, PL'ers have taken to the streets in Brooklyn, Chicago, and Los Angeles to protest the police murders of Black women, men, and youth by racist cops. Our Party faced off with the KKK and other white supremacists in Los Angeles and Northern California.

PLP advanced the protest against the cops' murder of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri. We raised our slogan — "Fight Like Ferguson!" — among thousands across the country. Our Party also built a movement for rebellion

against racist police terror, not pacifist appeals to ruling-class officials from Barack Obama's Justice Department on down. We did the same in solidarity with workers and youth in Baltimore who are outraged by the cops' murder of Freddie Gray.

## ANTI-RACISM ON THE SHOP FLOOR

PLP has consistently raised the issue of racism among organized workers to unite them against the bosses' racist attacks. In April 1973, when a New York City undercover cop shot Clifford Glover, a Black 10-year-old in the back in Jamaica, Queens, a PLP club at the Ford auto plant in Mahwah, New Jersey, brought the atrocity onto the factory assembly line. Our Party petitioned the do-nothing union local leadership to take a public stance and demand that the cop be indicted for murder. The workers' response was electric. They were galvanized into action during a contract struggle that previously had been limited to economic issues. Their heightened political consciousness and militancy led to a week-long wildcat strike against 100-degree temperatures in the plant, which in turn set the tone for the Chrysler Mack Avenue sit-down strike two months later.

Beginning in the 1980's, PLP has provided anti-racist leadership to 6,000 Washington, DC Metro transit workers (see page 21). Recently, PLP has demanded that the union oppose racist background checks. Many workers have been won to our Party in this anti-racist fight.

## FIGHTING RACISM INTERNATIONALLY

PLP is now actively organizing on five continents (see more on page 28).

In the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, with tens of thousands still living in tents, we have spread the struggle against U.S. imperialism and racism, which have enslaved workers there for two centuries.

In Pakistan, PL'ers are mobilizing thousands of workers to fight racist super-exploitation by Pakistani bosses in alliance with U.S. imperialism. The bosses have slaughtered thousands in sweatshops and in Obama's drone attacks.

In Israel-Palestine, PL'ers are exposing and fighting the intense racism of the Israeli bosses (with U.S. ruling-class support) against workers from Africa and Palestine, who are victims of super-exploitation. We are also organizing workers against the Israeli rulers' mass evictions of villages inhabited by Palestinians.

These are only a few highlights of PLP's long fight against racism, the ideological foundation of the profit system. The struggle against racism will prepare our class to overthrow capitalism and obliterate exploitation and divisions among workers. It is the watchword of our Party. ☛

# 4. Birth of New Communist Movement, PL Sparks Class War

## PLM LEADS THE ANTI-VIETNAM WAR MOVEMENT

In the early 1960s, class struggle was heating up. The U.S. bosses embarked on a genocidal war in Vietnam. The leadership shown by the working class in Vietnam after decades of resistance to French imperialism inspired millions of workers worldwide. Black workers led rebellions in almost every major U.S. city and rocked the capitalist class back on its heels. In the midst of intensifying class struggle in March 1964, a Yale University conference on socialism was attended by many pseudo-left organizations, including the “Communist” Party USA and various Trotskyite groups. The conference was geared for a scholarly debate on theory. Only PLM broke through this nonsense to advocate building a militant anti-imperialist movement!

PLM leader Milt Rosen electrified the audience of 500 students and faculty by focusing on opposing U.S. imperialism’s efforts to crush the revolutionary movement in Vietnam. He called for a nation-wide mobilization on May 2 to protest U.S. aggression there. The proposal was approved overwhelmingly and a May 2nd Committee was organized under PLM’s leadership.

On May 2, thousands of workers and students marched and rallied in cities nationwide. In New York City, 1,000 heard PL speeches about the necessity for communist revolution. They broke a police ban on demonstrations in midtown Manhattan, winding their way through Times Square to the United Nations, demanding: “U.S. Get Out of Vietnam Now!” It was the first national demonstration against the U.S. imperialist invasion and the forerunner of countless protests against U.S. rulers in the years ahead.

The Committee became a national organization called the May 2nd Movement (M2M). Hundreds joined. They played a major role in popularizing the struggle against U.S. imperialism’s war against workers and peasants in Vietnam. They issued hundreds of thousands of leaflets, buttons and pamphlets; initiated numerous university teach-ins; organized rallies and marches; and developed “Free Universities” as an off-campus alternative to the rulers’ educational system.

Following a massive Washington, D.C. anti-war rally of 25,000 organized by Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) in the spring of 1965, PLM’s leadership fought inside

M2M to dissolve it and join SDS, a move supported by the overwhelming majority within M2M.

M2M did play a vanguard role in opposing U.S. imperialist aggression in Vietnam and successfully broke with the old pacifist “peace movement” dominated by the Communist Party USA. That movement was never anti-imperialist but rather championed ruling-class collaboration behind slogans like “Ban the Bomb”; “Peaceful Co-existence”; and “For A Sane Nuclear Policy” — as if the working class could ever make peace with imperialist rulers! PL’s slogan—“U.S. Get Out of Vietnam Now!”—was eventually adopted by millions.

M2M helped move the emerging anti-war forces to the left and toward anti-imperialism. Many youthful fighters joined PLM, having learned from their mass struggles in the M2M.

## BREAKING THE CUBA TRAVEL BAN

Although Cuba eventually became a state capitalist country, the Cuban Revolution of the early 1960s had great appeal for youth in the U.S., and especially for Black and Latin workers. U.S. imperialist rulers feared the Cuban revolt would spark similar uprisings throughout Latin America and radicalize U.S. workers and students. President Kennedy’s CIA-directed Bay of Pigs invasion had failed miserably.

Prior to that invasion, PLM distributed tens of thousands of leaflets and held streets rallies warning about Kennedy’s plans. It even unfurled the first “Hands Off Cuba” banner in the galleries of the United Nations during the UN debate over the presence of Soviet missiles in Cuba, a crisis that aroused fears of a nuclear war.

After Cuba confiscated a billion dollars worth of U.S. corporate property, the Kennedy Administration instituted an economic boycott of Cuba and established a ban on travel there. While other pseudo-left groups merely reprinted Castro’s speeches, PLM boldly announced they would break the travel ban.

Over 500 students applied to the PLM-led Ad Hoc Committee to Travel to Cuba to defy the U.S. State Department. Seventy-five were selected. In the summer of 1963, the Committee outwitted a government plan to block

them and flew to Cuba via Czechoslovakia. The trip succeeded; 59 students broke the “Kennedy curtain.” It was reported in headlines nationwide. Attorney General Robert Kennedy condemned the organizers and promised to punish them.

Upon returning to New York, in a showdown at the airport, immigration officials tried to seize the ban-breakers’ passports, mark them “invalid” and refuse their entry back into the U.S., based on a 1918 law to control the travel of spies for Germany’s kaiser during World War I. The students refused to surrender their passports and sat down in the airport. Hundreds of family members and supporters were waiting nearby, along with newspaper and TV reporters. The standoff lasted two hours. Finally the agents gave in, allowing the students to enter while serving them with letters revoking their passports.

The pro-fascist New York Daily News ran a front-page photo of the students cheering as they came through immigration barriers, along with a headline scorecard: “PUNKS 1, STATE DEPARTMENT 0!”

Within weeks, more than 50 students were either cited for contempt or indicted for conspiracy to break the ban. Some faced 20-year prison terms, but the government’s attack failed miserably. A national defense campaign won widespread support. Most of the young PLM comrades and friends held firm and grew stronger in their commitment to fight the rulers. They announced they were organizing another trip to Cuba! The following year, almost a thousand students applied; 84 were selected and again broke the ban.

Afterward, four student committee leaders were indicted for illegal travel to Cuba. After a two-year fight, eventually reaching the Supreme Court, the charges were dropped. The ban had been beaten. Many students who had participated in the trips or supported them joined PLM, which emerged as a vigorous force in the emerging New Left in the U.S. The Cuba trips were a decisive turning point for PLM. As a head-on challenge to President Kennedy’s State Department travel ban, as well as a demonstration of solidarity with the working class in Cuba, they were a huge success — groundbreaking events in the development of student radicalism in the 1960s.

## WIPING OUT HUAC

In 1963, when the first group of students returned from Cuba after breaking the travel ban, the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) launched an anti-communist attack by summoning many of them to hearings in Washington in an attempt to intimidate and possibly jail them. Until then, the Committee had focused on asking Hollywood stars, Communist Party USA leaders and others if they were communists. Virtually all took refuge in the 5th Amendment, citing their constitutional right to refuse to answer. HUAC’s strategy was to cite them for contempt and threaten jail terms. The famous “Hollywood Ten” were imprisoned for up to a year.

CPUSA leaders “took the 5th,” posing as “defenders of the Constitution and of democracy.” No one ever answered the question directly. If they said “no,” the Committee would haul in some stoolpigeon to testify that they were communists. If they said that they once had been communists but had quit, the Committee would then ask them to name others they knew to be communists. It was a lose-lose proposition, but PLM changed the game.

While hundreds picketed outside, PL’ers took the stand and answered by declaring: “Yes, we are communists and proud of it!” This set HUAC members back on their heels; they weren’t prepared for that answer. It represented PL’s principle of openly advocating socialism, the term used prior to PLP’s proclaiming a direct goal of communism.

In April 1964, HUAC descended on Buffalo, where PLM had established an industrial and campus base. The Committee prattled on about a “threat of a new communist movement” that “needed to be dealt with.” A Buffalo Courier-Express headline clarified HUAC’s aim: “New Communist Operation Here A Prime Target.”

But in sharp contrast to the CPUSA’s defensive stance, PLM launched an all-out offensive; 1,500 pickets greeted the anti-communist red-baiters. The University of Buffalo Student Senate appropriated funds to support the protest. The entire city was in an uproar. Front-page headlines screamed: “Red Probers in Buffalo Hear the Sound of Fury”; “Witnesses Spark Uproar, Grapple With Marshals”; “UB Instructor Ridicules HUAC”; “Rain-Soaked Pickets’ Chants Echo Outside HUAC Session.” The demonstrators were supported by various mass groups, some printing full-page ads in the Buffalo paper. Clerics joined the picket line.

The hearings were completely disrupted. HUAC fled town. PL’s principle of confronting anti-communism directly and organizing mass support, rather than hiding behind the bosses’ Constitution, proved decisive.

In 1966, HUAC launched an investigation of “subversive activities” in the anti-war movement, subpoenaing many, including five student members of PL. The Party mobilized 800 protesters to pack the Washington, D.C. hearing room to disrupt the proceedings while also demonstrating outside Congress. They exposed the racist HUAC as Nazis, turning the hearings into an attack on capitalism and on the liberal Johnson Administration, accusing it of mass murder in Vietnam and racist policies in the U.S.

That was the last straw. Three years of bold PL actions led to HUAC’s demise at an official Congressional committee.

From our beginning, PL has stood at the forefront of attacking racism and imperialism, fighting back against every attack the bosses can throw at it. The lessons of all these struggles are that it’s necessary to anticipate ruling-class attacks and develop alternative plans to defeat them. Dare to struggle! Dare to win! Be bold! Always be guided by the principle of acting in the best interests of the working class. Grow stronger through struggle. Ruling-class terror will never destroy the communist movement.✪

## 5. Build International PLP

# Smash All Borders

Progressive Labor Party advanced a tradition of communist internationalism that began with the First International and the Paris Commune of 1871. We have carried the torch of internationalism to its logical and necessary conclusion: one world, one class, one Party fighting directly for communism. No retreats along nationalist lines!

PLP is an international communist party because the working class is one class everywhere, with a universal class interest. Since workers produce everything of value, we can collectively determine how to share it according to need. We don't need bosses, a class that steals most of that value through wage slavery. We stand for the abolition of capitalism; we fight to eliminate racism, sexism, and nationalism.

Our internationalism means working-class unity that follows the slogan, "Smash All Borders!"

It means a united working class led by one mass, international Party containing hundreds of millions of communist workers. We reject the call by various national "communist" parties for nationalist "roads to socialism." This formulation is drawn from capitalist-created countries that divide the international working class and negate its universal class character.

Unlike the old communist movement, PLP does not separate along nationalist lines. Though our circumstances and tactics may differ in the U.S. and East Africa, our political line for communist revolution is the same everywhere. We oppose nationalism, which leads to workers uniting behind "their" capitalist bosses and fighting "foreign" or immigrant workers. The concept of two opposing, worldwide classes — workers against bosses — is fundamental to destroying capitalism and establishing communism.

### PLP GROWS WORLDWIDE

The following are just some of the struggles that reflect the Party's internationalist practice:

In 1964, in solidarity with the workers and youth of Vietnam, PLP formed the May 2nd Movement to oppose the U.S. imperialist invasion of Vietnam. We organized the first mass demonstration against the war under the slogan, "U.S. Imperialism Get Out of Vietnam!" This slogan eventually was adopted by millions, challenging the calls by liberals and phony leftists to "Stop the Bombing" and



*Colombia, 2016: a mass base among youth gather to play soccer and study communist ideas.*

"Negotiate," neither of which indicted U.S. imperialism.

In the late 1960s and early '70s, PL'ers joined the military to win soldiers to refuse to kill their sisters and brothers in Vietnam and instead to turn the guns against the U.S. ruling class.

During the 1984-85 British miners' strike, PLP organized support campaigns, bringing miners to the U.S. to speak at rallies and on campuses. They exposed the brutal policies of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, who ordered police attacks on strikers and laid off tens of thousands.

In El Salvador, PLP recruited from among former fighters for the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front, after the FMLN became an electoral party that betrayed the revolution.

In Palestine-Israel, PLP joined mass demonstrations against Israeli rulers' demolition of Palestinian villages. We fought sub-standard wages enforced by slave traders and exposed the rulers' vicious racism perpetrated against Black immigrants.

In Mexico, PLP members in the teachers' union fought government attacks to break their strikes and cripple the schools through privatization.





*Israel, 2015: Black workers protest racist police murder of Damas Fikadeh and Israeli apartheid.*

In East Africa, PLP is organizing among students and teachers and waging anti-sexist struggles.

In Colombia, PLP mobilized striking workers, from refrigerator factories to beer factories. PLP's revolutionary line was so threatening to revisionists [fake leftists] and bosses alike that death threats to our comrades were common.

In Haiti, we grew from a club of trade unionists and students to one embedding itself into the agricultural working class. PLP fought against MINUSTAH, the UN occupation force that triggered the spread of cholera, as well as racist deportations and inadequate sewage and plumbing systems.

In Pakistan, PLers organized aid for workers devastated by an earthquake, while the government abandoned the victims. We are fighting to unite workers to challenge the bosses' attacks, especially on super-exploited women working in subhuman conditions and earning little or no pay.

With the advent of U.S. imperialist assaults on the working class in Afghanistan and Iraq, PL launched campaigns attacking the murders of millions by U.S. rulers, from George H.W. Bush to Bill Clinton to George W. Bush to Barack Obama. Pickets were organized at embassies in U.S. cities.

PLers enlisted in the military to spread the Party's ideas among soldiers in Iraq and to oppose attacks on working-class families there.

## PL by the Numbers

**50 Years**  
**27 Countries**  
**5 Continents**  
**1 Class**  
**1 Party**

### SPREADING SOLIDARITY AND IDEOLOGY

PLP has organized international solidarity for local struggles. Comrades in Haiti wrote letters of solidarity to City University of New York students during the campaign to oust war criminal David Petraeus from campus. In Brooklyn, PLP rallied in immigrant neighborhoods in response to racist deportations in the Dominican Republic.

Word of PLP's actions and communist ideology have spread across the world, both through immigrant workers from Latin America and through CHALLENGE on the internet. Today, CHALLENGE and other Party propaganda have been published in English, Spanish, French, Creole, Arabic, Hebrew, Dari, Urdu, Bangla, Mandarin—and soon, Swahili and more.

### ONE CLASS, ONE FIGHT FOR COMMUNISM

The world we fight for is one where workers' power will reign supreme. A communist world will wipe out borders created by the bosses to reap more profits from exploiting those they call "foreigners." It will eradicate imperialist wars, which the rulers launch to grab resources and cheap labor. In a communist world, there will be no foreigners, no "illegal" migrants, no refugees from war or poverty.

While the reformists continue to fragment themselves with the identity politics of race, gender, sexuality, or national loyalties, PLP unites ALL workers, based on class consciousness. Over the last 50 years, our staunch internationalism made has helped us grow from an organization with a handful of workers in New York to a Party that spans 27 countries in Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia, and Europe. That is no small victory! Forward to another 50 years of communist organizing that puts the international working class above the individual.

Workers in Senegal has the same interest as workers in China or Chile or the U.S.: a society that will meet their class's needs. An egalitarian, communist world. We invite all workers to join this struggle—for yourselves, for your children and for future generations.

We have a Party to organize and a world to win!✊

## Black and Red, the Untold History I

# The fight to free the Scottsboro Boys

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

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

*This four-part essay aims to reunite the history of communism with antiracism.*

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

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

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

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

*refused to accept “their place” in the hierarchy of race.*

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

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

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

### THE SCOTTSBORO BOYS

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

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

### COMMUNISTS, FIRST RESPONDERS

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





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

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

## BOSSSES COUNTER WITH TERROR

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## YOU CANNOT KILL THE WORKING CLASS

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

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

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



## Black & Red II

# Impetus for the Civil Rights Movement

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

The Civil Rights Movement was a decades-long mass uprising of Black and white workers and students against the most open forms of racism in the U.S. Its impetus was the growing international communist movement fresh off the defeat of fascism in Europe and quickly growing in China, Africa and around the world, combined with the growing resistance to racism by the Black workers in the U.S.

The U.S. ruling class tried to shut down the mass anti-racist fightback by using anti-communism to divide and terrorize the movement. In the period right after World War II, the Soviet Union was admired by workers around the world, including in the U.S., for defeating the Nazi war machine. The workers-led society in the Soviet Union stood in stark contrast to the legal segregation workers faced in the U.S.

### TRAINED BY CP, BECAME CIVIL RIGHTS LEADERS

While the racist Jim Crow laws in the South were are well known, segregation cut across the country. Black workers who moved to northern cities to look for jobs faced racism in looking for homes and on the job as well.

*Between 1940 and 1960 the Great Migration brought over six million African Americans to industrial centers in the urban North and West, where migrants were met with new forms of racial containment. They were often restricted to domestic and retail service work. Those who found industrial employment were kept out of labor unions (Baldwin).*

The communist movement had been heavily involved in the fight against racism in the South since around 1930 and had built up a mass movement that included Black and white workers and students. The struggle to defend the Scottsboro Boys, nine young Black men wrongly accused of raping two white women, galvanized the anti-racist movement. This communist-led struggle brought thousand of



*1956: Rosa Parks is fingerprinted by cop in Montgomery, Alabama.*

*Rosa Parks was one of many who were trained in the Communist Party and went on to become Civil Rights leaders. Some of her first political activities were about the Scottsboro case*

Black and white workers into organizations that fought racism and trained many of the leaders of the civil rights movement.

*If you look at all the...auxiliary organizations[of the Communist Party in Alabama], the International Labor Defense, which focused on civil rights issues, they had up to 2,000. The Sharecroppers Union had up to 12,000. You had the International Workers Order. You had the League of Young Southerners. You had the Southern Negro Youth Congress. [In total], it touched the lives easily of 20,000 people.*

*There were many people who were trained in the Communist Party who went on to become Civil Rights activists [including] Rosa Parks...some of her first political activities were around the Scottsboro case...She never joined the party, but as a young woman, she and her husband, in fact, attended some*





of the meetings...the infrastructure that was laid forward that becomes the Civil Rights Movement in Alabama, was laid in many ways, not entirely, by the Communist Party (Robin Kelly on WNYC Radio 2/16/2010).

## WW II AND AFTER: COMMUNIST FIGHTERS UNDER ATTACK

The movement against racism that grew in the 1930s didn't stop during World War II.

*The United States entered the wartime world as the self-professed face of democracy, but African Americans began to make links between Nazi racism, European imperialism, and American [racism].*

*Veteran activist and president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (BSCP) A. Philip Randolph threatened to lead a 100,000-person March on Washington Movement (MOWM) in November 1941 if wartime production was not desegregated...*

*Between 1942 and 1945 industrial centers, military camps, and port cities, including Detroit, New York, and Los Angeles, exploded with race riots. Ongoing... attempts to constrain black life erupted in violent riots in more than forty cities (Baldwin).*

After the war, the U.S. bosses came under increasing pressure as the Soviet Union and the international communist movement exposed the hypocrisy of U.S. capitalism, describing itself as a pillar of "democracy" while denying even the most basic freedom to Black workers.

Black communists played a leading role in exposing U.S. racism to the world and came under attack as well. Paul Robeson was a communist actor, singer, athlete and political activist. He was a man of international renown and used it to build the movement for workers' power and the fight against racism. Robeson and other communists came under extreme attack by the U.S. bosses who were terrified of the multi-racial fight against racism.

*In 1947 W. E. B. Du Bois placed the grievances of African Americans before the newly formed United Nations in his famous "Appeal to the World" address...singer and activist Paul Robeson signed a U.S.S.R. petition to the United Nations, "We Charge Genocide," documenting a series of human rights abuses against African Americans. Communist activist Claudia Jones organized in Harlem for jobs, housing, and humane immigration policies. Both Robeson's and Du Bois's passports were revoked until 1958 while the Trinidadian [Claudia] Jones was deported to Britain. In the Cold War context, black struggles for freedom were largely denounced as un-American (Baldwin).*

The bosses' anti-communist McCarthyism campaign was an attempt to strangle the communist movement in the U.S. and stop the fight against racism. It terrified many people. Leading fighters were driven underground, out of the



*1960: Multiracial group of children join demonstration against segregation*

country and some were put in jail. For a while, there were few public demonstrations against racism in the South or North as anyone, Black or white, who stood up against Jim Crow, housing or school segregation was labeled a communist and subject to being harassed or attacked by the FBI.

But the working class continued to fight and the struggle against racism eventually focused on the Jim Crow laws that segregated all forms of life in the South. The U.S. bosses were particularly vulnerable to the fight against Jim Crow laws. The German Nazis had used the laws as a model for setting up their fascist system "[Hitler in Main Kampf] describes the United States as 'the one state' that had made headway toward what he regarded as a healthy and utterly necessary racist regime" (NY Times 5/22). Black soldiers returning from the war were increasingly unwilling to tolerate fascism at home after fighting it in Europe.

Many Black workers began to resist legal segregation and Alabama civil rights leaders decided it was time to take mass action against the laws.

In 1955, Rosa Parks was asked to make a stand that would spark the campaign. When she refused to get out of her seat setting off the Montgomery Bus Boycott, the Black working class of Montgomery, experienced by the communist-led fight to defend the Scottsboro Boys and the many other battles against racism, was prepared to fight and that they did. 🌐

## Black & Red III

# Class Contradictions of King

***Part III covers the class contradictions of Martin Luther King, Jr., influenced by the Communist Party.***

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

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

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

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

*In short, American Communism was a movement*

*that grew out of what the historian Robin D. G. Kelley, the author of "Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists During the Great Depression," calls "the most despised and dispossessed elements of American society." "It was the Black workers drawn to the party, Professor Kelley argues, who shaped its political choices as much as ... the Communist International (NY Times 6/6).*

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

### U.S. RULERS FORCED TO SUPPORT CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

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

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

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

nism. The bosses' goal was to limit the movement to blaming the smaller Southern bosses for all of the racism in the country and ignore the racist conditions in the North.

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

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

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

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

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

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

*Racial segregation as a way of life did not come about as a natural result of hatred between the races immediately after the Civil War. There were no laws segregating the races then...the segregation of the races was really a political stratagem...to keep*



*the southern masses divided and southern labor the cheapest in the land. You see, it was a simple thing to keep the poor white masses working for near-starvation wages in the years that followed the Civil War. Why, if the poor white plantation or mill worker became dissatisfied with his low wages, the plantation or mill owner would merely threaten to fire him and hire former Negro slaves and pay him even less. Thus, the southern wage level was kept almost unbearably low.*

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

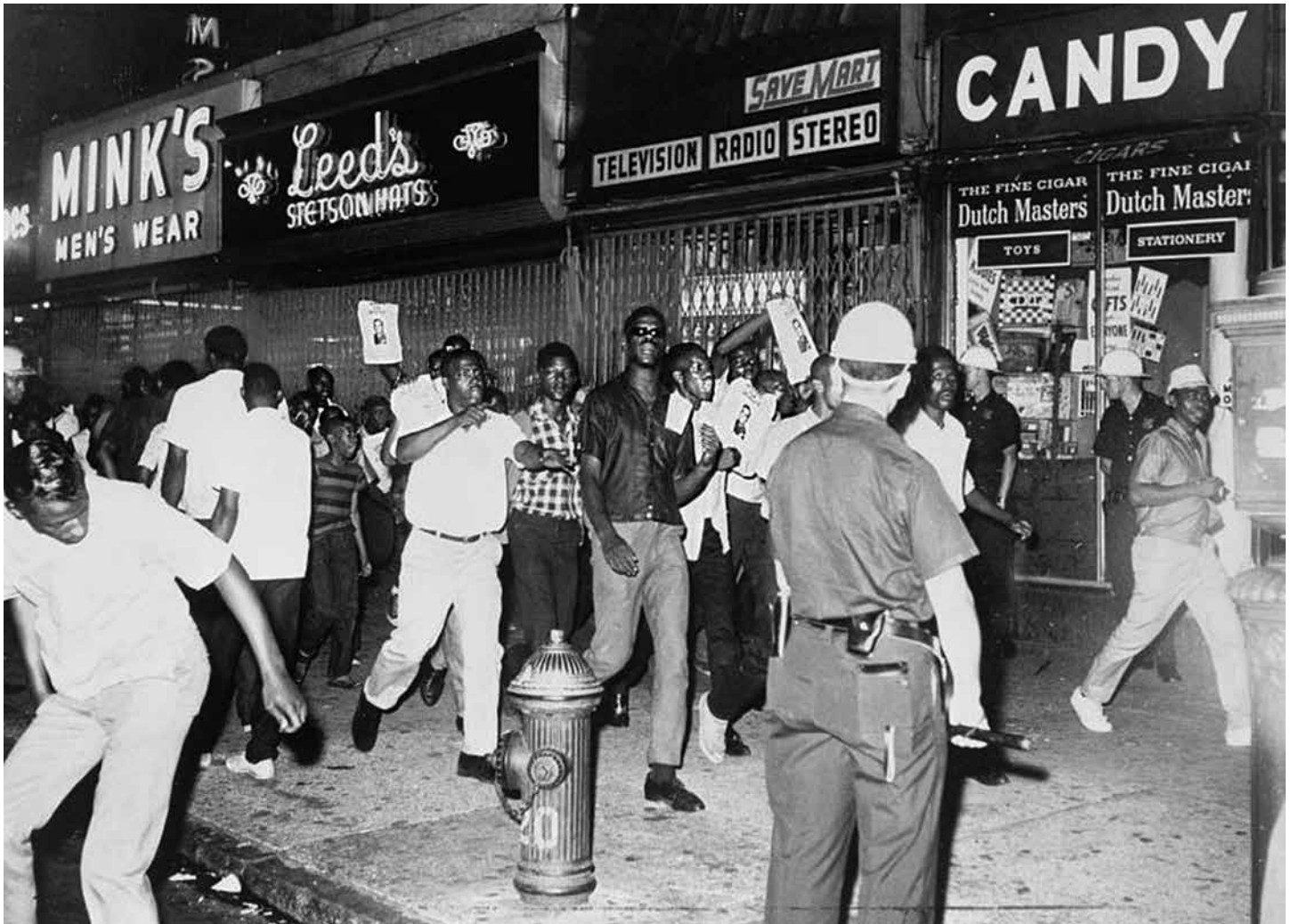
*"[I]n the summer of 1965 the press reported King's off-the-cuff remarks to a Southern Christian Leadership Conference rally in Virginia: "We're not going to defeat Communism with bombs and guns and gases.... We must work this out in the framework of our democracy" ("Dr. King Declares"). In his 1967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

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

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

## Black & Red IV

# The Harlem Rebellion



***We conclude by taking a look at the Harlem Rebellion and its communist influence.***

The Harlem Rebellion of 1964 shook the United States bosses and resonated around the world as the struggle against racism expanded from the fight against Jim Crow in the South to the cities of the North. Once again the communist movement helped lead and was deeply influenced by the fight against racism in the U.S.

The rebellion, sparked by the police killing a young Black man in cold blood, occurred at a moment when the working class around the world was rising up, led by the communist movement centered around the Chinese Com-

munist Party. The fledgling Progressive Labor Movement born out of the rise of the working class in China, was also shaped by the Harlem Rebellion.

In July 1964, 15 year-old James Powell was playing with friends on the sidewalk across from his school in the white neighborhood of Yorkville, when a building superintendent sprayed them down with a hose and unleashed a series of racial epithets at the Black children. The school kids ran at the super to get him to stop, and a cop, Thomas Gilligan, watching from across the street came at the group and shot James Powell in front of numerous witnesses.

Immediately about 300 Black students from the school



rallied at the site of the murder and confronted the police on the scene demanding Gilligan's arrest and inspiring the rebellion.

*It began outside the walls of a Harlem police station, days after Lt. Thomas Gilligan, a white, off-duty police officer, shot and killed a 15-year-old African-American student named James Powell on July 16. Two days of peaceful protests ensued. But on the third day, a crowd surrounded the police precinct, calling for Gilligan's arrest, and was met with swinging clubs of the New York Police Department, under a rainfall of glass bottles and garbage can lids thrown by residents from rooftops above. Gunfire broke out after police pushed thousands of demonstrators back a few blocks toward the corner of 125th Street and Lenox Avenue" (New York's 'Night Of Birmingham Horror' Sparked A Summer Of Riots, WNYC 7/18/14).*

The rebellion started only weeks after the U.S. had passed the 1964 Civil Rights Act which was Lyndon Johnson's response to the growing Civil Rights Movement in the South. That movement and the world-wide movement led by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) was politicizing the working class. The working class in China, had been victimized by the brutality of British, Japanese and U.S. imperialism. The history of imperialism was inseparable from the racist theories of the British ruling class. The victory of the working class in China inspired workers all over the world to rise up against imperialism and sharpened the struggle against racism. In Vietnam, the working class was in the process of defeating the largest imperialist power the world had ever seen, the war machine of the U.S. bosses. In the U.S., even as legal segregation and racism was being brought down in the South, Black workers in the North were taking on the embedded racism of liberal capitalism.

*The overwhelming majority of black New Yorkers saw their quality of life decline, whether it's school segregation, housing segregation, unemployment, earnings... [in the] period between the end of World War II and the 1964 riot... "This was Northern racism, which was quite different from Southern racism, in that Northern racism was covert," says Joseph Boskin, history professor emeritus at Boston University.*

*Boskin, who conducted interviews in Harlem after the [rebellion], says the unmet expectations of Black Americans in the North were starting to push some of them toward more militant routes for change, despite a national narrative of what seemed to be progress in the country's laws" (New York's 'Night Of Birmingham Horror' Sparked A Summer Of Riots, WNYC 7/18/14).*

The Progressive Labor Movement, the young forerunner to PLP, grew out of the rebellion and played a leading role at the same time. PLM produced a poster, 'Wanted for Murder - Gilligan the Cop' that became the banner of

# WANTED FOR MURDER



## GILLIGAN, THE COP

Lieut. Thomas Gilligan of The 14th Division

## HARLEM DEFENSE COUNCIL

226 Lenox Ave. N Y C

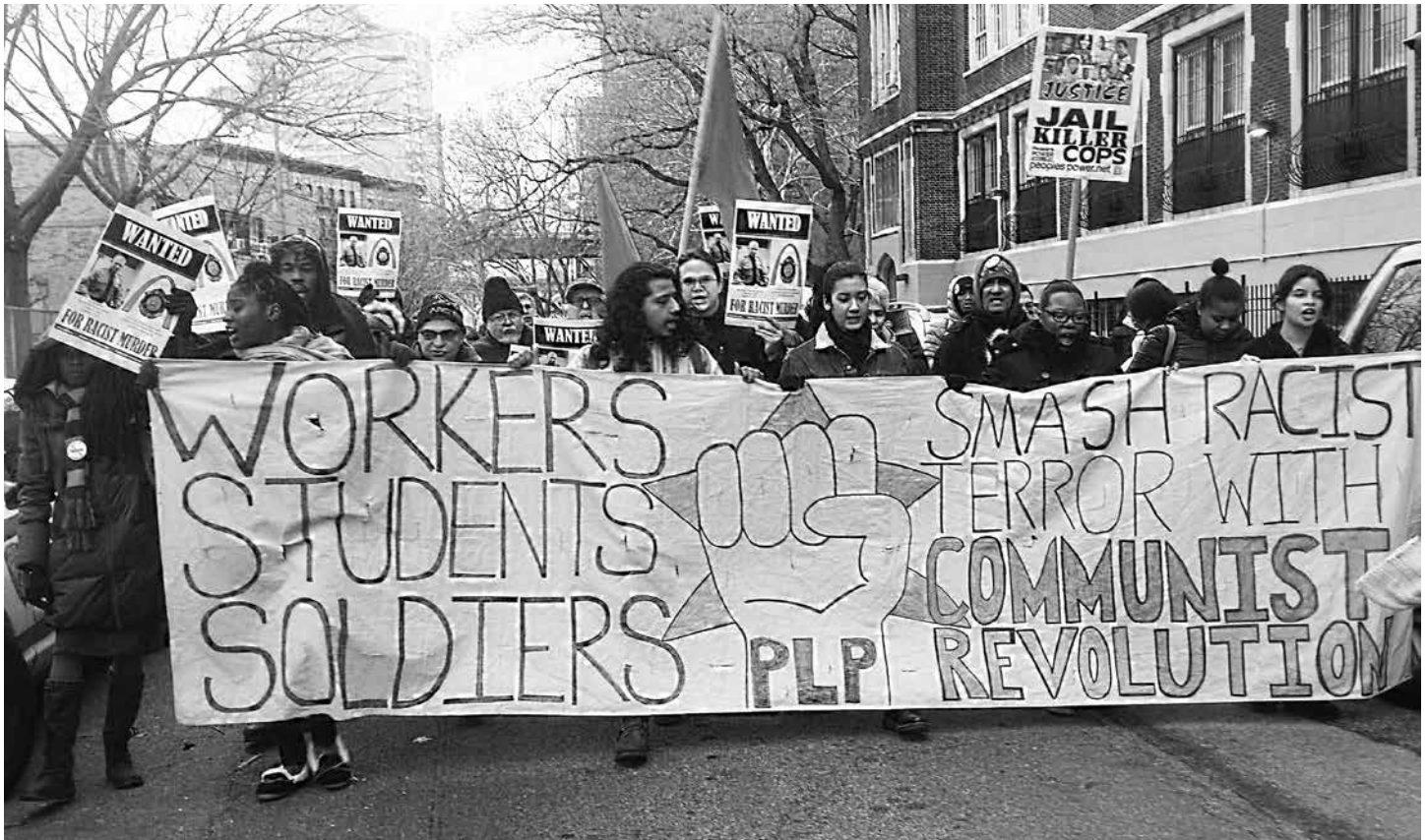
the struggle carried by thousands of people in the streets. The PLM organized marches and rallies even after the NYC bosses tried to ban all political activity.

The ruling class in New York, who thought of themselves as the "decent" bosses compared to the Jim Crow Southern capitalists, were caught off-guard by the anger of Black workers in Harlem who suffered under extreme inequality.

*The Harlem median family income was \$3,995 compared to ...\$6,100 [for NYC], that unemployment in Harlem was 300% higher than in the rest of the city, that sub-standard housing was 49% while in the rest of NYC it was 15%, that infant mortality was 45.3 per 1000 births but only 26.3 in the rest of the city... Life magazine lamented that "the only force that had the guts to give political direction to the spontaneous rebellion was PL." (Progressive Labor, Vol. 10, No. 1, August-September 1975)*

The Harlem Rebellion exposed racism as part of capitalism, even in U.S.'s most liberal center, NYC. After Harlem, within weeks, rebellions broke out in Rochester, Jersey City, Chicago and Philadelphia and over the next few years there were major rebellions in Watts (1965), Newark (1967)





*Harlem, December 2014: Progressive Labor Party continues to organize against police terror. Youth take over street in solidarity with Ferguson rebels.*

and Detroit (1967). Then in 1968, after Martin Luther King was assassinated, rebellions broke out in cities across the country and workers and students around the world, most notably in France and Chicago shook capitalism.

The ruling class has tried to write off the rebellions by calling them riots and dismissing the contribution and courage of the tens of thousands of Black workers who were part of the movement. But even now, 50 years later, the truth of the Harlem Rebellion has not been erased.

*Part of the problem is that in the North, many of the laws were not openly discriminatory,...It made it harder to seize the moral high ground and argue that nonviolent civil disobedience was justified.*

*So, growing frustrations found an outlet on the streets, according to Billy Mitchell, historian of Harlem's Apollo Theater.*

*"It wasn't just people just wildin' out, you know, and just going crazy. They understood what they were doing,"...*

*Looking back, Mitchell says he doesn't completely condone the violent response. But he says it was necessary.*

*"Sometimes you have got to really do something extraordinary or uncommon to get the attention of people," he adds.*

*(In the Heat of the Summer: The Harlem Riot of 1964 and the Road to America's Prison Crisis).*

The U.S. ruling class responded to the mass demonstrations and anti-imperialist movements with both terror and political crumbs. Police and soldiers fired on and killed civil rights demonstrators and students fighting racism and war in Orangeburg, SC, Jackson State, MS and Kent State, OH.

Combined with the brutal attacks, the ruling class enacted a series of reforms in cities with concentrations of Black workers. Lyndon Johnson launched the War on Poverty funneling millions of dollars to create community programs. The Democratic Party and northern capitalists spent millions getting Black mayors elected across the country.

The FBI revved up its COINTELPRO Program. A covert operation to target PLP and other groups to try to destroy the anti-imperialist movement. Leaders of PLP were arrested and some were convicted and jailed, others harassed and fired. Through those struggles and in the years since we've tried to keep up the fight against racism and build an integrated organization.

Black workers who have borne the brunt of racism and led the fight against it must be in the leadership of any working-class struggle and movement for communism. There will be no forward progress for the working class without the leadership of Black workers and a massive struggle against racism.🌐

# Migration Crisis

## A Window into the Oppressive Capitalist System

The news is full of tragic, shocking stories of the flight of refugees from the Middle East and Northern Africa. In Syria alone, more than four million workers and their families have fled during four years of civil and imperialist war. More than eight million are internally displaced, trapped between the Syrian government and ISIS—capitalists fighting capitalists. As these migrants look for safety, U.S. and Russian bombs continue to fall in the big powers' ongoing struggle to control Middle Eastern oil and profits.

From its beginnings, capitalism has treated workers' labor power as a commodity to be bought and exploited. Individual workers are discarded when they no longer serve the bosses' needs. Borders are ignored whenever they get in the way of profit. When Saddam Hussein becomes an unreliable petro-dollar partner, the U.S. invades and occupies Iraq. The Soviet Union annexes Crimea to reclaim strategic naval bases. China builds unmapped islands to dominate shipping lanes and host missile bases in the South China Sea.

With a call to arms against "terrorists," real or imagined, U.S. finance capitalists—the most murderous gang of terrorists in the world today—use their media and politicians to demonize refugees and immigrants. Once again, the bosses are blaming their victims. Refugees are workers forced to leave their homes because of capitalist crimes against the working class: inter-imperialist war, mass poverty and unemployment, racist and sexist violence. As workers, we must show our solidarity with refugees and unite with them in struggle, regardless of where we happen to live within the artificial capitalist lines called borders.

Five hundred years ago, millions of Black African workers and their families were kidnapped and shipped to the Americas. Hundreds of thousands died in the horrific conditions of the ocean crossing. Brutal slavery awaited those who survived. Merchants and bankers in London and New York financed this genocidal slave trade. Their high return on investment became the basis of many early capitalist fortunes.

Once their ill-gotten fortunes were consolidated, the

U.S. rulers' next step was to expand their control across the North American continent. A genocidal military campaign drove millions of Native Americans from the land they had lived in for centuries, with small numbers of survivors pushed into reservations without the means to sustain themselves. In Central and South America, expedition forces from European centers of capital forged a similar path of destruction.

Capitalism has never stopped moving workers by force, violence and wars of aggression. From colonial Europe to 21st-century inter-imperialist rivalry, the bosses' competition for profit has continually redrawn the boundaries of the globe. In the bloody process, countless millions of workers have been terrorized, pushed out, shipped out, kidnapped, and driven far from their places of birth.

During World War II, representing the interests of German capitalists like Gustav Krupp<sup>1</sup>, Nazi rulers ripped millions from their homes and moved them to concentration camps, where most were either killed outright or worked to death in another racist genocide. Meanwhile, U.S. rulers illegally forced up to 120,000 workers and children of Japanese descent—the majority of them U.S. citizens—into "internment camps," concentration camps by any other name. Japanese rulers of the era were no less barbaric, driving millions of Korean, Chinese and other Asians from their homes, often in murderous death marches.

Since 1994, when President Bill Clinton signed his mass incarceration bill into law, the U.S. criminal injustice system has seized from their communities millions of workers, mostly Black and Latin men. Generally caught up in minor drug offenses, these kidnapped inmates are exploited by a prison-industrial complex. Their slave labor feeds the profits of private-sector detention corporations like GEO and CCA, popular investment firms like Vanguard and Fidelity, Dell Computers, and Victoria's Secret. Industrialized food companies like Aramark receive millions for supplying maggot-infested meals. The current prison and jail population in the U.S. stands at 2.2 million, by far the largest in

<sup>1</sup> Gustav Krupp was the only German to be accused as a war criminal after both World War I and World War II. He was indicted at Nuremberg but never tried, and died of natural causes in 1950. ➤

the world—58 percent higher than the per-capita detention rate in Russia, and nearly six times the rate in China.<sup>2</sup>

While racism has played a leading role in modern capitalist slave oppression, sexism is close behind. Each year, millions of women and young girls are kidnapped by sex traffickers to generate profit from the depravity of the rich and powerful.

## AGRICULTURAL IMPERIALISM

Imperialism devastates the economies of poorer countries and drives farmers and workers from their homes in a desperate struggle for survival. Subsistence farmers are driven out of business by cheap, subsidized, mass-produced imports from imperialist countries. Farmers are forced into the cities in search of scarce jobs; the resulting labor surplus allows the capitalist bosses to cut wages even more. In China alone, 300 million agricultural workers—nearly the size of the U.S. population—have moved from the country to the cities over the last 30 years. Another 350 million may do so in the future, desperate to seek even underpaid jobs in vast international factories. Meanwhile, Chinese factories are closing as international corporations shift to even cheaper labor sources, like Vietnam or Central Asia.

In recent years, corporate giants like Monsanto have flooded poor countries with genetically modified seeds to increase farming “efficiency” in the short run. Over time, however, the new seeds bankrupt subsistence farmers who cannot afford them. They, too, become a part of the ever-growing, worldwide, unemployed reserve army of labor.

Millions of these ex-farmers have emigrated to the U.S. and Europe. Even when able to find work, they are subjected to racist scapegoating. Once again, capitalist politicians and their media blame the immigrants for the oppressive conditions produced by capitalism.

## FIGHTING BACK

Throughout the history of capitalism, the bosses’ kidnappings, enslavement and exploitation have been met by working-class resistance. Hundreds of slave revolts, the Underground Railroad, and the multiracial raid on a federal armory at Harpers Ferry inspired the Union troops who ended open slavery in the South. Despite limited weaponry, Native American populations fought back against capitalist expansion and won many battles.

PLP supports immigrant struggles worldwide, welcoming our brother and sister workers as we fight to overthrow the capitalist system that oppresses us all.

Capitalist Impoverishment and the Migration Crisis

2 World Prison Brief, Institute for Criminal Policy Research



Today, the entire world is capitalist. That includes Russia and China, where early attempts to build communist societies made tremendous progress in liberating workers from exploitation, but ultimately failed for reasons explored in other PLP literature (see Road to Revolution III at [www.plp.org](http://www.plp.org)). The capitalists have merged and consolidated to the point where the 500 largest multinational corporations account for up to 40 percent of world income. By 2016, the richest 1 percent of the world’s population is projected to amass more wealth than the other 99 percent.

Corporations, aided by government policies dictated by the bosses, strive to lower wages by any means necessary. Over the last twenty years, with the collapse of the socialist revolutions in the Soviet Union and China, the number of workers available for “free market” exploitation has more than doubled, from 1.5 to 3.3 billion. This “over-supply” of workers (from the bosses’ point of view) has allowed them to lower wages until 630 million workers now earn less than \$1.25 a day, while another 205 million are unemployed. Accelerating impoverishment has impelled ➤



growing numbers of workers to migrate, internally or internationally.

## **CAPITALISTS NEED RACISM AND NATIONALISM**

For capitalists to retain the loyalty of workers amid deepening oppression and poverty, the populace must be weakened and divided by racist and nationalist ideas. Every nation preaches patriotism, the concept that workers must be loyal to their own country's rulers. Instilled from earliest childhood, patriotism helps the bosses exploit the working class and fight wars with worker-soldiers while minimizing resistance. It teaches workers to regard their working-class sisters and brothers in other countries as enemies. The logical unity among workers of all nations is undermined by nationalist ideology.

Racism and religion are used to further divide workers, both within their own country and between countries. By fostering divisions between Black and white, Shiite and Sunni, Hutu and Tutsi, Catholic and Protestant, Dominican and Haitian, Arab and Jew, bosses mislead workers into blaming—even killing—each other over the problems caused by capitalism. Meanwhile, the capitalists are generally willing to unite when their interests are threatened. A case in point: The alliance of ten Western and Asian nations that attacked the Soviet Union after the 1917 revolution. Another: The alliance to fight Nazi Germany between Western capitalist governments and the socialist Soviet Union.

## **RACISM, NATIONALISM AND MIGRATION**

Racism and nationalism define the current refugee crisis. Nations are artificial creations that would not exist under communism. Eventually we will have one world where the working class rules in its own interest and shares all resources, according to need. When goods cannot be produced locally, they will be shared and distributed equitably. By contrast, wealthy capitalist nations today sell their resources at a profit to the highest bidder, or to manipulate alliances. In addition, they control the resources of poorer nations, often through deals with local ruling classes. Or they simply seize those resources directly, as in the U.S. invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq.

National boundaries are very useful to capitalists. When workers are forced to move by capitalist-created conditions, the bosses' politicians and media portray them as a foreign and frightening horde, an image that feeds patriotism and the bosses' push for inter-imperialist war. In the current period, capitalist propaganda in the U.S. and Europe stokes fear of Muslim workers from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and Africa, in particular.

The refugees are fenced with barbed wire, beaten and mistreated, abandoned in squalid camps, and forced to live without work or services or rights. Sometimes these atrocities gain the backing of a misguided portion of the native working class, though many workers do what they can to aid and welcome refugees.

Most discussions distinguish between external migration, from one country to another, and internal migration within a country. But the distinction is artificial. National borders are inventions of the ruling class, developed over thousands of years of class-divided societies to separate peoples with different languages and religions. Today, borders are used by the capitalist classes to divide workers from each other. They foster antagonisms that impede our unity to fight for a better life, and, eventually, to overthrow the bosses of all countries.

As of the end of 2014, 59 million migrants were forcibly displaced by conflict, violence, human rights violations, and natural hazard-induced disasters—the highest level ever recorded. Of that number, 19 million were refugees, migrants who'd fled to another country—14 percent more than in 2013. (For perspective, there were 2.4 million refugees worldwide in 1975.) In 2015, according to the United Nations, forcibly displaced workers and children likely "far surpassed" 60 million, including 20 million refugees fleeing war—most notably in Syria—and persecution.

Flight from conflict is in itself deadly. Since 2000, the International Organization for Migration has recorded 40,000 migration-related deaths. It's become routine to learn of overcrowded boats sinking and drowning hundreds of refugees, to see photographs of bodies washing up on the shore.

Tens of millions of workers have been displaced by development projects, including dams, roads, mining, urban clearance or deforestation. (An estimated 10 million a year are forced to move by dam projects alone.) These migrants, estimated at up to 100 million in the 1990s, usually remain in their home country but are rarely, if ever, adequately compensated. The number forced to flee natural and man-made disasters is unknown. A study by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists found that 3.4 million have been physically or economically displaced by projects funded by the World Bank, their lands seized and their livelihoods obliterated.

By 2020, according to the American Academy for the Advancement of Science, there will be 50 million climate migrants. Drought will force millions to flee their land to the slums of large cities. A rising sea level will make coastal lands uninhabitable. Storms will destroy homes and farmland in many parts of the world.

## **EFFECTS OF MIGRATIONS IN SPECIFIC AREAS**

### **THE MIDDLE EAST**

Today's news is dominated by the plight of Syrian refugees. The civil war in Syria, part of a broader competition between the U.S. and Russia, has displaced more than half the country's pre-war population and created more than 11 million refugees. More than 4 million have fled to Europe, with the rest left in Syria under horrific conditions. While the capitalist bosses define the conflict as one between democracy versus dictatorship and terrorism, it actually began—and continues to be—over oil. Syria's geography is ➤

critical to pipelines that can carry oil to the Mediterranean and Turkey and then to Europe. Imperialist nations have plunged Syria into a nightmare of civil war and terror. The Syrian working class finds itself forced to choose between living in a war zone and crossing dangerous waters to refuge—only to be denied food, water and shelter by many European countries.

How did all of this come about? The present conflict in Syria traces to 2011, when the U.S. began funding rebels against President Bashar al-Assad, an ally of Russia and Iran. The Russian alliance planned a gas pipeline from Iran's giant South Pars field through Iraq and Syria, with a possible extension to Lebanon, and eventually to Europe, the target market. Meanwhile, U.S. and European oil bosses had proposed a competing pipeline from Qatar through Syria and northward to Turkey, but Assad opposed it. These competing pipelines became the basis of the proxy war now raging in Syria and victimizing millions of working-class men, women and children.

Since September 2015, Russia, the only foreign power with military assets openly deployed in Syria, has been waging an intensive air campaign at the request of Assad's government. Most the strikes by the Syrian government are against rebel militias backed by the U.S., Turkey and the ruling sheikhs of Saudi Arabia, though some strikes have

targeted ISIS and Al Qaeda. Meanwhile, ISIS receives funding from a network of private donors in oil-rich Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Kuwait. The result is a frontless proxy war with tens of millions of workers caught in the middle.

In sum, the forced displacement of Syrian refugees results from the objective needs of the capitalist profit system. This is the recurrent nightmare of imperialism. It will continue until capitalism is smashed.

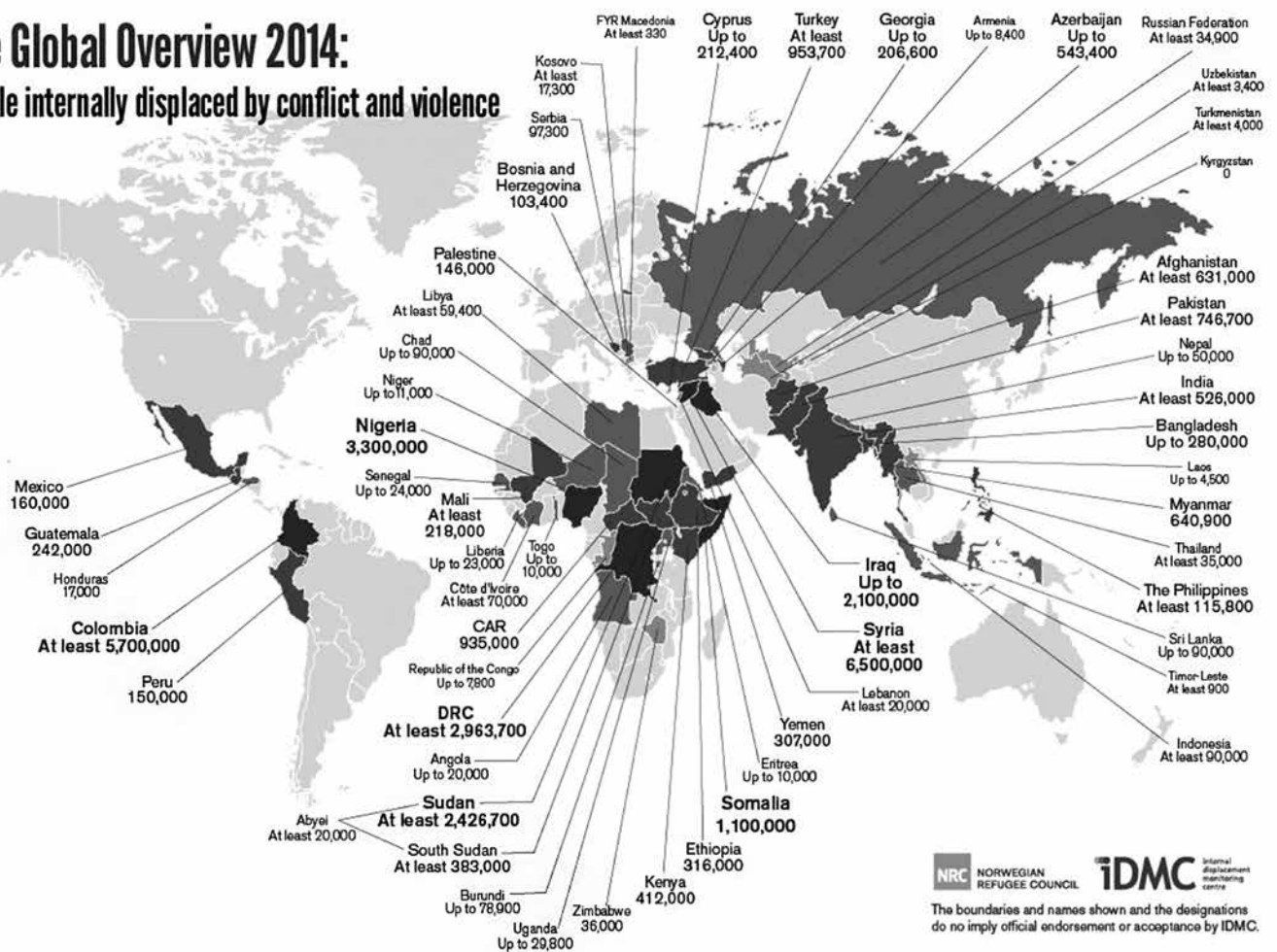
### THE UNITED STATES

As of 2012, the U.S. contained 41 million people born in other countries, or 13 percent of the total U.S. population. Nearly half of these immigrants were naturalized citizens. Of the 22 million non-citizens, 11 million were undocumented. It is estimated that half of the undocumented have overstayed their visas, with the rest crossing borders illegally. While these numbers may seem large, we should note that the U.S. had a proportionately larger immigrant population—nearly 15 percent—in 1890.

In 1960, 75 percent of the U.S. foreign-born population came from Europe, as compared to 12 percent today. The largest current bloc of immigrants (26 percent of the total) comes from Mexico, followed by other Latin American countries and Asia. Contrary to capitalist media propaganda, fewer than one in five immigrants live in poverty. They ➤➤

## The Global Overview 2014:

### People internally displaced by conflict and violence





use social services no more than the native-born population, and have a significantly lower crime rate.

In 2013, of the 11 million undocumented U.S. immigrants, 52 percent were from Mexico, down from 57 percent in 2007. Of these, 62 percent have been living in the U.S. for 13 years or longer, 88 percent for more than five years. They are employed at a higher rate than the general population. Hundreds of thousands have citizen relatives in the U.S. but would have to leave and wait 10 years before re-entering the country to qualify for a green card. Nearly 4 million have children who are citizens and 20 percent have a spouse with citizenship or legal status.

Right-wing politicians and media, along with state-protected militias like the Ku Klux Klan and Minutemen, use naked racism against immigrants to build loyalty to the U.S. and create antagonisms within the working class. By blaming crime, unemployment, failing schools and terrorist threats on the undocumented, they scapegoat the most vulnerable workers and protect the real enemies of workers everywhere: the capitalist bosses.

But even more dangerous are mainstream liberals like Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton, whose job is to mislead workers while serving the dominant finance capital wing of the U.S. ruling class. In his first term as president, from 2009 through 2012, the Obama administration removed more than 1.5 million immigrants, either stopping them at the border or deporting them from inside the U.S. Nearly all (98 percent) were Latin American or Caribbean nationals.

In response to an angry backlash, the Deportee-in-Chief promoted the DREAM (Development, Education, and Relief for Alien Minors) Act. Stalled—at least temporarily—by Republicans in Congress, Obama's legislation would have offered a path to citizenship to younger undocumented

immigrants who came to the U.S. as children and agreed to enlist in the military or complete at least two years of college. (For many, the latter option would be a practical impossibility.)

In the meantime, the Obama administration initiated an executive policy called the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), which offers approximately 2 million undocumented immigrants renewable two-year work permits and exemption from deportation. Despite the superficial anti-racist appearance of the DREAM Act and DACA, they were created to meet a desperate need for the capitalist ruling class: an expanded pool of cannon fodder for the broader imperialist war the rulers are actively planning.

Further, the super-exploitation of immigrants, as well as of women and Black and Latin workers in general, is essential to the capitalists' pursuit of maximum profits. Black, Latin and women workers get paid less than 80 percent of white male workers' wages for comparable work—an annual ruling-class theft of \$4 trillion a year,<sup>11</sup> or about 20 percent of the U.S. Gross Domestic Product.

### **LATIN AMERICA & the CARIBBEAN**

More than 40 percent of all immigrants to the U.S. are from Latin America, including Mexico. During and just after World War II, an acute shortage of farm labor threatened profits in the American West. More than 400,000 workers from Mexico, along with smaller numbers from the Caribbean and Honduras, were employed legally under the Bracero Program, which guaranteed growers a basic supply of labor. It also stimulated a sharp increase in super-exploited, unauthorized immigration, due to the dramatic wage gap between the U.S. (where agricultural workers lived in poverty) and Mexico (where they might be starving). In 1965, when the Bracero Program ended, ➤➤

the U.S. bosses engineered a new law to limit legal immigration from the entire Western Hemisphere to 120,000 a year. When this number proved inadequate for the growers' requirements, illegal immigration increased dramatically.

In the 1970s, a U.S. recession closed hundreds of unionized industrial plants and spurred the growth of a low-wage, no-benefit service economy. As global capitalism entered yet another crisis, the World Bank and International Monetary Fund bosses imposed austerity on Latin American workers, creating even greater pressure for immigration—increasingly of whole families.

In 1994, passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) spurred even more immigration from Mexico to the U.S. Subsidized American corn flooded and undersold the Mexican market, driving two million Mexican farmers out of work. Mega-corporations like Walmart opened shop in Mexico to take advantage of new tax and duty exemptions, forcing small local businesses to close. NAFTA generally lowered wages near the border, leading many families to send members into the U.S. interior to seek higher wages. The “free trade” widely hailed in the bosses' media was free only for the capitalists. NAFTA intensified wage slavery for workers in both Mexico and the U.S.

Beginning in the 1980s, the U.S. protected corporate investments in Central America by orchestrating the rise of violent military dictatorships in Nicaragua, Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras. Protest movements were crushed. In Mexico, Central America, and the Dominican Republic, with the cooperation of their junior capitalist partners, the U.S. erected huge assembly plants called *maquiladoras* to manufacture goods using raw materials from the U.S. This accelerated the loss of better-paying industrial jobs in the U.S. and expanded low-paying jobs in the target countries. By 1990, poverty rates in Central America reached nearly 60 percent. In 2006, U.S. rulers passed the Dominican Republic-Central American Free Trade Agreement, widening the scope of NAFTA-type policies and super-exploitation. As a result, more than 200,000 displaced workers have been forced to move into the *maquiladora* zones. At the same time, prices of food and other essentials rose by up to 16 percent. Between 2000 and 2010, the number of Central American migrants in the U.S. grew to 3.1 million, almost as many as the number from Mexico.

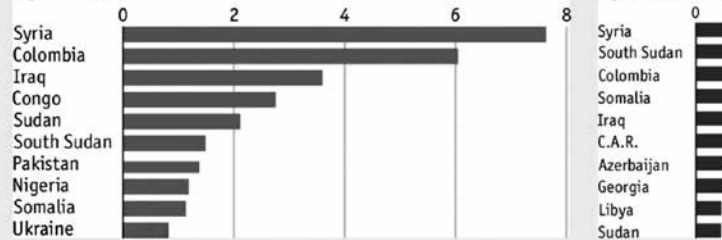
Another immigration factor is the “war on drugs.” Originating in the 1980s under Republican President Ronald Reagan, it was driven by CIA-promoted drug use in U.S. inner cities, which generated profits to fund the fascist death squads in Nicaragua. In the 1990s, under Democratic President Bill Clinton, the so-called war on drugs was used

#### Internally displaced persons and asylum-seekers

2014

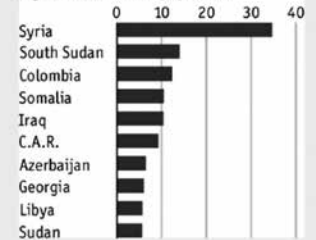
##### Internally displaced persons (IDPs)

Highest number, m



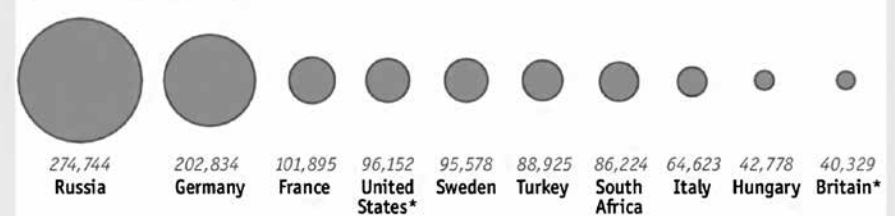
##### IDPs

Highest as % of total population



##### New applications for asylum

Highest number by country of asylum



Sources: UNHCR; IDMC; UN; The Economist

\*Number of cases or mix of persons and cases

Economist.com

to justify the mass incarceration of unemployed workers, disproportionately Black and Latin. (During Clinton's eight years in office, the federal/state prison population rose by 673,000.) Internationally, the U.S. bosses pushed their “enforcement” policies into the Caribbean and as far south as Colombia, enabling them to tighten their military control over those countries. In 1994, at the same time that NAFTA was displacing thousands, the U.S.-Mexico border was heavily militarized. Since that time, more than 6,000 people have died trying to cross. More recently, the Mexican ruling class has fortified their southern border, making emigration from Central America even more hazardous. But while the “war on drugs” succeeded in terrorizing workers, it failed abjectly in its stated mission. Drug consumption in the U.S. is now estimated at 62 percent of the world market; opioids (including heroin and prescription pain relievers) killed more than 28,000 people in 2014.<sup>4</sup> The drug cartels have grown even more powerful and violent; the murder rate in Central America doubled between 2000 and 2012. The surge in violence explains the recent wave of unaccompanied young immigrants risking their lives to come to the U.S., desperate to escape drug gang recruitment and killings.

In 2010, after Haiti was struck by a disastrous earthquake, the U.S. temporarily halted deportation of 30,000 Haitian immigrants but barred any additional newcomers. Despite millions pledged in aid, little has been built in Haiti except for new *maquiladoras*. Tens of thousands fled to look for jobs in the Dominican Republic, which is busy deporting them—along with more than half a million Haitians who have lived in the DR for decades but now find themselves targeted by blatant racism. During the Clinton administration, Haiti was coerced into lowering its tariffs on imported food, which displaced thousands of Haiti's rice

3 Los Angeles Times, 2/19/01.

4 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

farmers. After the earthquake, when food prices skyrocketed, it was impossible for the country to feed its people.

## AFRICA

Of the approximately 17.8 million refugees and displaced persons from Africa as of December 2014 (according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), 55 percent have migrated within the continent, often from landlocked areas in conflict, to coastal areas in a search of jobs and security. The most common destinations are South Africa, Ivory Coast, and Kenya. Most internal migrants in Africa lack legal protection. They are subject to human rights and sexual abuse, and suffer from poverty and exclusion from the main society.

As in other parts of the world, the crisis in Africa stems from a long history of imperialist exploitation. By 1914, 90 percent of Africa was controlled by various European powers: France, Germany, Belgium, Portugal, Britain. Although most states gained formal independence after World War II, they remained economically dependent on their former colonial masters. In the 1990s, the World Bank intervened increasingly in Africa; in the 2000s, both China and the U.S. made big investments in the continent. AFRICOM, the U.S. Africa Command, was established in 2007; its first operation was the coup in Libya. While there is only one acknowledged U.S. military base in Africa, a 2013 investigation by TomDispatch found military involvement in 49 of 53 nations, including the offshore islands.

Petroleum reserves in Libya, Sudan and Nigeria led self-serving national governments into alliances with Western and Chinese oil companies, to the detriment of local populations. In 2011, when oil prices were cresting and the Chinese capitalists were maneuvering for a bigger share of the pie, the Libyan government was overthrown by a U.S.-inspired coup. Three years later, according to the UNHCR, there were nearly 400,000 Libyan refugees and internally displaced persons. Although there is no more work to be found in the shut-down Libyan oilfields, migrants from the south still come, hoping to reach Europe from the northern coast. Smugglers charge extravagant fees for transport on flimsy, overcrowded boats, and thousands have drowned. In 2014, 68,000 North Africans arrived in Sicily, primarily from Eritrea, Mali, Nigeria, and Gambia.

The Horn of Africa, containing Somalia, Ethiopia, and Eritrea, is of vital importance to U.S. energy interests. Beyond being one of the largest unexplored regions for oil and gas, it borders the Red Sea, which connects the oil-rich Persian Gulf nations to Europe and Asia. This explains U.S. involvement in wars in Somalia and Ethiopia since the 1970s. Most recently, resurgence of conflicts in the Central African Republic, Mali, northern Nigeria, Somalia, and South Sudan have displaced millions, pushing more young men north toward Europe. Recent mayhem in northern Mali threatens to tip the country back into civil war, while camps in Mauritania and Burkina Faso overflow with refugees from a previous round of fighting.

Global warming, a pathology of capitalism, also plays a

role. The Sahel, an east-to-west strip south of Libya and Algeria, has been suffering the most severe drought of the past 100 years. As many as 2.5 million people have been driven to migrate, mostly north through Libya.

## ASIA

According to the United Nations, Asia accounts for 3.5 million refugees, 1.9 million internally displaced people and 1.4 million stateless people. The majority are from Myanmar and Afghanistan,<sup>22</sup> which was left divided and unstable by the 2001 U.S. invasion. By mid-2014, Afghani refugees numbered 1 million in Iran and 1.5 million in Pakistan. Another 700,000 are internally displaced. In Iraq, even before the recent siege by ISIS, 1.9 million Iraqis were either transborder refugees or internally displaced.

One of the largest 20th century migrations occurred in 1947-8 between India and the newly created state of Pakistan (then East and West Pakistan, but now Bangladesh in the east). People of different religions and cultures had coexisted in the area for centuries. But when the Indian rulers gained nominal political (though not economic) independence from Britain after World War II, more than fifteen million people migrated, with Muslims rushing north as Hindus fled south. Ethnic and nationalist passions were whipped into a frenzy of bloodshed; as many as two million died.

Today, the U.S. is still the world's leading super-power, though China and Russia are gaining. U.S. capitalist bosses continue to manipulate the rulers of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh for cheap labor and markets and to "fight terrorism" in U.S. interests. Poverty has led at least 12 million Bangladeshis to migrate to India in search of better pay. By 2005, at least 25 million Indians had migrated to Europe, England, the U.S. or Asia. By 2015, 8 million Pakistanis had fled violence, persecution or poverty. Twenty-seven percent of the population said they wished they could leave.

## JOIN THE PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

Migration is just one manifestation of the misery that world capitalism rains down upon the workers of the world. Without wars between competing ruling classes and their proxies, without racist and sexist exploitation of labor, there would be far less migration. In decades to come, life as we know it may well be destroyed by the next big war between imperialist superpowers. We have no choice but to overthrow the profit system, seize state power and impose a dictatorship of the proletariat. That is what we call communism, a society based on equality, sharing and production for workers' need rather than bosses' profit. We must be prepared for struggle with revolutionary potential to erupt anywhere in the world. And we must build smaller struggles along the way, to train ourselves as active participants, as leaders and as thinkers. Always we must emphasize working-class unity.

We have a world to win—a world without borders. Without racism or sexism, without migrants or refugees or deportees. 🌐



politics  
news

analysis . . .

STRUGGLE

**CHALLENGE**

**subscribe for only \$20/year**

**send check or money order to:**

**Challenge Periodicals, PO Box 808, Brooklyn NY 11202**



## SUBSCRIBE OR RENEW!

ALL THE COMMUNIST POLITICS, NEWS, AND STRUGGLE FROM  
AROUND THE WORLD!

....\$20 INDIVIDUAL 1 YEAR

....\$45 FOR INSTITUTION 1 YEAR

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

MAKE CHECK OR MONEY ORDER TO:

CHALLENGE PERIODICALS, PO BOX 808, BROOKLYN, NY 11202

---

# We Want



# YOU

*to join the  
Progressive Labor Party!*