

CHALLENGE



THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

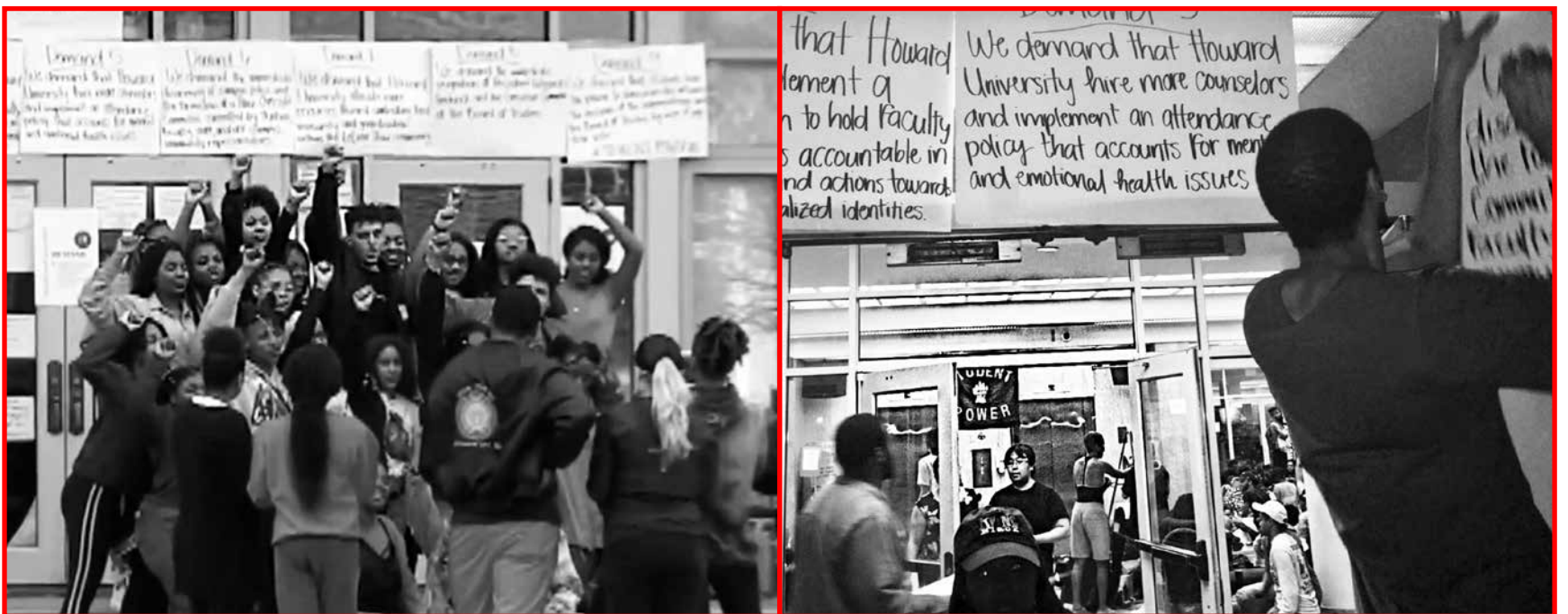
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Howard University

STUDENT OCCUPATION ENTERS DAY 7; SHUT DOWN, LOCK DOWN CAPITALISM



WASHINGTON DC, April 4—Calling for the firing of the Howard University president, along with an end to racist tuition hikes and a sexist campus culture, HU Resist and hundreds of Howard University students are occupying the main administration building.

On March 25, the protesters made nine demands to both address immediate needs on campus and express support for workers in the surrounding LeDroit-Shaw neighborhood. (See box, page 3.) Four days later, the students seized the administration building. As we go to press, the occupation has entered its seventh day, with 450 students holding the building—and renaming it the Kwame Ture Student Center (after Stokely Carmichael). Students have secured all entrances to block the return of campus police. The community has responded by bringing food, water, bedding, and solidarity to the occupiers.

Through bold struggle and deepening connections with workers, HU Resist students are learning that the capitalist system itself must be dismantled and replaced with a communist society that can meet the needs of the international working class. Many, including those who led the occupation and organized an earlier town hall, are reading CHALLENGE and other communist literature to better understand the strategic need for a revolutionary party that galvanizes all aspects of the class struggle. As one student noted, the Howard occupation—marked by student solidarity, mutual respect and assistance, and love for fellow students and workers—was a taste of communism.

Seizing an opportunity

HU Resist has worked diligently throughout this semester to survey student needs and opinions, the basis for the nine demands. Shortly after the demands were released on March 25, a major scandal erupted on campus—the embezzlement by six administrative staff of more than \$1 million in financial aid money, a crime the administration

had covered up for years. At a March 29 HU Resist rally, anger over this theft from poor students reached a boiling point. Seizing the opportunity, HU Resist led hundreds of students into the administration building.

President Wayne A.I. Frederick has declined to meet with the students, huddling instead with a few of his handpicked student supporters. Members of the Board of Trustees, however, have met several times with the HU Resist organizers to negotiate the demands. As of press time, the Board had agreed only to one demand, a commitment to provide campus housing for students under 21.

At the same time, 70 faculty members have signed an open letter of solidarity with the students, with more faculty signing daily. The letter has been retweeted over 500 times, signifying the importance of faculty support for the bold student action. After an appeal from an HU Resist representative, the leadership of the Faculty Senate has set a no-confidence vote for President Frederick, the provost, the chief operating officer, and the Board's executive committee, to be held by Friday, April 6.

HU Resist fights gentrification and wage theft

At a town hall meeting two weeks earlier, HU Resist teamed with a worker rights nonprofit organization, Jobs with Justice, to expose Howard's unconscionable collaboration in unsafe, unfair labor practices, and in the displacement of Black residents. As the so-called "Mecca" of historically Black universities, Howard says it is committed to "the development of distinguished, historically aware, and compassionate graduates, and to the discovery of solutions to human problems." But actions speak louder than mission statements. In an effort to maximize investment returns, Howard has joined with Gateway Investment Partners to construct a 319-unit luxury apartment building in the working-class neighborhood adjacent to campus.

The development will feature a swimming pool, a courtyard with fireplaces and grilling stations, a test kitchen for cooking demonstrations, a fitness center and yoga studio, and a rooftop observation deck with views of the U.S. Capitol.

What it won't include is affordable housing. The project is designed to accelerate gentrification in D.C.'s historic Shaw and Pleasant Plains neighborhoods, to jack up rents and property taxes, and to drive workers and their families from their homes—and even out of the city.

Construction workers, community members, & students fight back

To rub salt into the wound, Gateway brought in Power Design, Inc. as its electrical subcontractor. Power Design uses labor brokers—typically shell companies—to hire and misclassify workers as independent contractors, a scheme designed to evade labor laws and 'fair' payment. Its business model actually budgets for wage theft, allowing it to win contracts as the lowest bidder by robbing workers. Power Design has faced more than 20 federal lawsuits and class actions, including multiple suits for wage theft in several area construction projects. Nonetheless, and despite an ongoing investigation by the D.C. attorney general, it was approved by the D.C. administration as an apprenticeship program sponsor.

Latin construction workers from the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers and white workers from the carpenters' union were among those attending the town hall. Quickly overcoming their initial hesitancy to address the crowd, many stepped up to attest to the unfair, unsafe labor practices they have encountered on the project site. Community members expressed outrage at Howard's complicity in worker exploitation. A 60-year-old Black woman from the neighborhood

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OUR FIGHT

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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WHO WRITES FOR CHALLENGE?

CHALLENGE is for the working class, produced by the working class. The fact that CHALLENGE/PLP articles are not signed grows from PLP's criticism of the cult of the individual in the former socialist Soviet Union and China. We do not want to encourage the possibility of building up a “following” around any particular individual.

While an article may be written by one person, the final version is based on collective discussion and criticism. Many times this collective discussion even precedes an individual's writing of an article.

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Editorial

Facebook aids opposition; Main wing bosses crack fascist whip

Facebook is on the hot seat as the main-wing U.S. bosses have launched a multi-front attack to force billionaire CEO Mark Zuckerberg to contribute more to their war plans. They're also sending a message to the other technology mega-companies: They must serve the political needs of finance capitalism or suffer the consequences.

Two leading ruling-class mouthpieces, the New York Times and the Observer of London, have led the charge in exposing Cambridge Analytica, an election consulting committee that paid for Facebook user data on 87 million people. The information was used to help elect Donald Trump and earlier to win the Brexit referendum to split Britain from the European Union.

The attack comes now because president Trump has grown increasingly erratic and unreliable. As the U.S. rulers' main wing, led by investment banks like JPMorgan Chase and multinational oil companies like ExxonMobil, struggles to hold on as the world's leading imperialist power, it needs to try to push Trump back in line. It needs to stop the tech industry from helping rival capitalists who are backing the loose-cannon president. And as it builds toward war and fascism, it needs to bring U.S. media—including social media—under tighter control.

Facebook's crime: aiding the opposition

One of Cambridge Analytica's leading investors is Trump supporter Robert Mercer, whose daughter Rebecca sits on their board. Former Trump advisor Steve Bannon, the white supremacist and “America First” isolationist who put Breitbart News on the map, was a fellow board member. In the 2014 and 2016 election cycles, Cambridge Analytica funneled data and “psychographic modeling” to a political action committee founded by John Bolton, Trump's new national security advisor and a longtime opponent of the U.S. bosses' attempts to build the international alliances they'll need for World War III (Washington Post, 3/23).

Mercer, one of the wealthiest capitalists in the rulers' domestically oriented wing, has funded campaigns for tax cuts, ending Obamacare, denying climate change, and shutting down immigration. The Mercers have targeted U.S. Senate leader Mitch McConnell and other mainstream Republican politicians, who are important players in protecting the bosses' imperialist interests in the Middle East and elsewhere.

The main wing of the ruling class is making a special example out of Zuckerberg, whose crime was to help Mercer keep arch-imperialist and loyal main-wing servant Hillary Clinton out of the Oval Office. One way or the other, Zuckerberg will be compelled to give up some of his billions—just as Bill Gates was disciplined by the federal antitrust suit against Microsoft. In 2000, two years after the suit was brought by Bill Clinton's Department of Justice, Gates founded the Gates Foundation. Over the last 10 years alone, it has donated \$34 billion to education reform and non-governmental organizations operating in foreign countries on issues supported by the main-wing U.S. bosses.

In the face of weakening U.S. dominance and a fast-rising China, the world order established after World War II is falling apart. The U.S. ruling class is locked in a desperate struggle against renegade members of its own class as well as its big international rivals. The U.S. bosses' weakening situation will continue to drive them toward fascism. They must discipline the Mercers and Kochs—along with Facebook, Google, and Apple—as they intensify their exploitation and terrorization of the working class. They'll need far more national unity to have a chance to prevail in the next global war.

Facebook attacked

In 2011, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) imposed a consent decree on Facebook regarding protection of personal data. This represented the first overt attempt by the big capitalists to bring Zuckerberg to heel. Subsequently, Facebook sought to prove its loyalty in the 2012 presidential election. Carol Davidsen Media Director of Obama for America said, “Facebook...didn't stop us...[Facebook] [was] candid



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Challenge Desafio

that they allowed us to do things they wouldn't have allowed someone else to do because they were on our side” (Daily Mail 3/18).

In fact, Facebook has always collected user data and for years has shared that data with paid advertisers and app developers. Sharing data is the reason Facebook exists. It's how it became a \$500 billion company, and it's certainly nothing new. But the company's Mercer-Trump connection has led former FTC officials to suggest that Facebook has violated its consent decree, which could lead to hundreds of millions of dollars in fines (fortune.com, 3/30).

U.S. envious of rival bosses' fascism

The main trend in the world today is growing fascism. In general, other top imperialist and regional powers have more controlled and unified ruling classes than the U.S. Their media outlets function as a reliable arm of the state. Opposition voices are neutralized, shut down, and often killed. The U.S. main wing must be envious—and taking notes.

In Russia, shortly after assuming the presidency in 2000, Vladimir Putin began consolidating his control: “Oligarch owners were either co-opted, jailed or exiled, and by 2006 most major Russian media were either directly or indirectly under Putin's administration's control.... The editors-in-chief of all the major media in Russia attend regular ‘strategy meetings’ with Putin's staffers” (The Guardian, 3/24/17).

In China, state control over the news media “is achieved through a complex combination of party monitoring of news content, legal restrictions on journalists, and financial incentives for self-censorship” (2006 FreedomHouse Report). China also cracks down on video-streaming websites and requires users to register their real names on online forums. “New rules also require online news websites to be overseen by government-approved editorial staff and for workers to have reporting credentials from the central government” (CNBC, 10/26/17).

In Saudi Arabia, during the recent purge by Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman, two media tycoons were among those arrested: Prince Alwaleed bin Talal, majority owner of the Rotana media company, and Waleed Al Ibrahim, the owner of MBC and Al Arabiya, a pan-Arab news channel based in Dubai. Controlling “a wide network of Middle Eastern television channels, radio stations, music labels and digital entertainment assets from Morocco to Oman, [they] were reportedly arrested for resisting the crown prince's repeated attempts over the past year to buy their companies” (Al Jazeera, 11/19/17).

Similar situations can be found in Iran and Turkey, among other countries.

U.S. plays catch up

Beyond extracting money from capitalists reluctant to pay their share, the U.S. rulers are desperate to gain a tighter leash over their media. When the U.S. bosses rose to world preeminence as the dominant capitalist power after World War II, mass media was narrowly held and easily controlled. There were three national news networks and four or five newspapers with national influence.

Today, with the rise of cable, satellites, and the internet, thousands of stations have national reach. Small operators like Breitbart and InfoWars can reach tens of millions of people. The attack on Facebook can be seen as the big U.S. bosses' attempt to bring undisciplined, rogue media, including social media, under greater control by the state.

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March For Our Lives:

Communists expose murderous pols & profit system

TEXAS, March 24—Bringing communist ideas to the masses, the Progressive Labor Party and friends joined thousands in Texas in the March for Our Lives protests.

In San Antonio, we participated in both the annual Cesar Chavez March and the March for Our Lives, held on the same day. We distributed hundreds of leaflets that exposed the central role the bosses' violence against the working class under capitalism.

Our leaflet connected the terror of mass shootings at schools to the "legal" state violence perpetuated by the U.S. border patrol, police, and military. We called on workers to smash capitalism by taking the fight to the rulers' doorstep, into their office buildings and onto our jobs. As workers, we have the power to shut down the murderous profit system. Our leaflet was well received at both marches.

The day before the march in Houston, we made signs and brainstormed chants at a school event where we discussed how gun violence is a symptom of a violent capitalist system. The following day, a group of 10 high school students, teachers, and parents joined the 15,000-strong protest in an effort to push the rally's politics to the left. As the march got under way, we led chants of "No Trump, No NRA, No Fascist USA!" that rang thorough downtown.

We marched from a downtown park to the downtown office of Senator Ted Cruz, who was targeted by the march's liberal organizers because of his support for the National Rifle Association (NRA). The organizers' main goal was to register more voters and expand support for Democratic candidates in this fall's congressional elections. But while it's easy to expose racist Republicans like Donald Trump and Cruz, we must also expose racist Democrats like U.S. Representative Henry Cuellar, who pushed for the fascist "Secure Communities" deportation program that has intensified at-

tacks on immigrants.

Ted Cruz has got to go

As we neared Cruz's office, the crowd chanted, "Hey, hey, ho, ho, Ted Cruz has got to go!" The main message from the march leaders to the mostly white crowd was that we should focus on voting Cruz out of office. A PL'er turned to a Spanish teacher and to the students in our group, who were Black and Latin, and said we should do a chant in Spanish. Everyone agreed.

A PL'er yelled out that not only do politicians like Ted Cruz enable mass shootings in our schools, but they are also anti-immigrant racists. We urged the crowd around us to join in a chant in our chant: "Ted Cruz Escucha, Estamos en La Lucha!" ("Listen Ted Cruz, We Are in the Struggle!") The mainly white crowd joined in, and we kept the chant going as long as we could. Instead of calling on everyone to vote, we were telling the bosses that the multiracial working class is ready to fight back against racism.

Afterward, one high school student and rally organizer approached our group and said she liked our Spanish chant. We talked for a while and exchanged information. We'll be touching base with her to organize around the next round of national school walkouts on April 20.

For our students, this was their first protest ever. Despite some initial hesitation, a number of them stepped up and were unafraid to lead chants and push the march to the left. A few students made contacts and are planning future actions. They are emerging as leaders. The march was a valuable reminder that when you make anti-racism the center of what you do, the working class will follow your lead.

As April 20 and May Day approach, we will continue to put forward the Party's ideas and train students to be fighters for the working class.☺

CHICAGO, March 24— A multiracial, multi-generational contingent of Progressive Labor Party comrades joined the thunderous March for Our Lives action in Union Park. It was apparent how much vicious gun violence resonated with students and parents. PLP broadcasting our revolutionary communist line that gun violence stems from an inherently violent and racist capitalist system.

The PLP contingent distributed at least 500 CHALLENGEs and over 1,000 flyers at the entrance of the park. The flyer connected these mass shootings to the violent decadence of capitalism. Many marchers, especially youth, were receptive to our communist politics and picked up on the chants that we started, including, "Turn the gun around, shoot the bosses down."

Liberals Exploit Working-class anger

To contrast the liberal, pro-democratic Party chant of "Vote Them Out!"—referring to pro-NRA, Republican politicians in Congress—PL'ers chanted "Bigger than NRA, Bigger than Guns!" It's essential to call out the racist opportunistic liberal bosses, such as the ones who organized this mostly-white, less-working-class march. These hypocrites cynically exploit working-class anger and grief as part of their plan to channel workers into their dead-end voting game and prop up their deadly profit system.

The Democrats have proven themselves to be just as deadly and indifferent to workers' suffering as their Republican counterparts, if not more. Whether turning a blind eye to the racist gun violence devastating Black and Latin neighborhoods here in Chicago, dropping

bombs on our working-class sisters and brothers in the Middle East, or deporting scores of families to near-certain death in Central America, they constantly show where their intentions and interests lie.

Capitalism dependent on violence

All politicians at the end of the day serve the capitalist system, which needs state violence such as racist police killings, deportations, and imperialist war in order to survive. Only a communist society, led by a mass international PLP, can break the alienation, desperation, and relentless drive for profit in capitalism that destroys millions of workers' lives every year.

Communism is the best possible method to eliminate the widespread violence we witness today. We will revolutionize society away from inequality and competition. That will require organized and revolutionary class violence against the bosses and their state. Workers worldwide will be armed with communist politics. Through prolonged struggle, we will build a world based on equality, cooperation, and workers' power.

Although the racist and sexist liberal bosses are the ones steering these mass demonstrations today, their influence can and must be exposed for the deadly lie that it is.

It's our responsibility as communists to immerse ourselves in struggle with these masses of youth and parents, in order to build working-class solidarity and class consciousness. In doing so, we can widen the target beyond just Trump and the NRA, to that of the whole rotten violent system of capitalism.☺

HUResist Occupies Campus Building, Demonstrates Student Power

Continued from page 1

challenged the City Council member who oversees the Department of Employee Services to "fix this NOW!" An older Black man from the neighborhood pointed out that similar struggles are occurring across the city, including Barry Farm and Brookland Manor, where developers are displacing working-class families from some of D.C.'s last truly affordable housing units.

Several Howard students bore witness to their poorly maintained student dormitories, some of which lack hot water and oblige students to reach out to peers living elsewhere for a hot shower. Moreover, there is a shortage of dorm space to meet demand. With Howard selling dorm buildings to luxury developers, some students are forced to live miles from campus. HU Resist presented a draft resolution on hous-

ing to be addressed to the Howard administration, soliciting suggestions for demands from attendees. On the matter of "affordable" housing, local residents and workers highlighted the discrepancy between the average annual income for the area's white workers, which exceeds \$100,000, compared with the \$30,000 average for Black and Latin workers. Using the high median incomes of primarily white workers in the affordability formula skews the calculation against Black and Latin residents, essentially shutting them out of access to housing in D.C.

In collaboration with local residents and construction workers, more than 40 Howard students played key roles in speaking at the town hall and organizing the continuing fight-back. With such militant, class-conscious youth in the lead, the future is bright.☺

DEMANDS OF HOWARD UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

In addition to the ouster of the HU president, the students have made these demands:

- Give the student body power over University policies and appointments of board members, administrators, and faculty.
- Immediately disarm campus police, who have drawn guns on several students, and create a Police Oversight Committee controlled by students, faculty, staff, and off-campus community representatives.
- Freeze tuition and open the books on bloated administration salaries and perks. (Since 2008, the cost of tuition at Howard has nearly doubled, while the median income of Black households has declined.)
- Guarantee adequate campus housing for all students under the age of 21. (The Board of Trustees

has now agreed to this demand.)

- Commit to an "active fight" against rape culture on campus. (Six students have sued the University over its failure to uphold its Title IX obligations in their sexual assault cases.)
- Establish a grievance system to hold faculty and administrators accountable for their words and actions toward marginalized students.
- Expand counseling and mental health services, which are now woefully understaffed.

To demonstrate their interest in the wellbeing of area workers, students are also demanding that the University allocate resources for a community food pantry and to work with community residents to reduce displacement from gentrification.

International forum opposes imperialist war on Yemen

BROOKLYN, NY March 13—About 100 workers, youth and community antiracists participated in a mass forum on ending the war and capitalist crisis in Yemen. It was held in a neighborhood where many Yemeni families live. The forum was in Arabic, English, and Spanish—a great show of international solidarity (see letter, page 6).

A comrade from Progressive Labor Party linked the crisis in Yemen to the struggle against racist terror at home and raised the need to build an international movement for communist revolution. PLers distributed CHALLENGE and made contacts.

Dire conditions for workers

Yemen has been torn by civil war and battered by the relentless attack of Saudi Arabia and the U.S. since March 2015. With a population of 27 million, at least 10,000 have been slaughtered, more than two million have been displaced. The conditions are so dire that 80 percent of the population requires urgent food and medical aid.

With more than 14 million people without clean water or sanitation due to the targeted bombing of water treatment plants and infrastructure, Yemen has the worst ever-recorded cholera epidemic. Over 20,000 dead and 600,000 confirmed cases of cholera. The United Nations considers it the “worst humanitarian disaster” in the world today. While the capitalist media would like to call this a humanitarian crisis (so as to strip the class politics from the situation), we know it’s a capitalist crisis of their own making.

Workers speak up

The highlight of the event was the testimony given by a number of young people who spoke of how the war impacted them. One family was stranded in a refugee camp, unable to come to the U.S. due to the anti-Muslim travel ban. Another was captured and tortured in Yemen.

Yet another shared a story of how beautiful Yemen was before the war, and now how her father is worried for the safety of relatives still there.

A young woman talked about the anti-Muslim racism she faces in school. A young man said that we all must do what we can to, “Stop the War! Stop the War! Stop the War!”

Yemen, hotspot of oil wars

Yemen, the most impoverished country in the Middle East, is next to Saudi Arabia, the richest. The narrow strait of Bab-el-Mandeb borders Yemen, Djibouti, and Eritrea. Millions of gallons of oil pass through this chokepoint each day. It may also have the largest untapped oil deposits in the world. This area is of longtime geopolitical importance for U.S. hegemony. In 1991, the U.S. Army War College published an unclassified study that called Bab Al-Mandeb “a confrontation arena between the superpowers, which tried to establish and then promote their military presence and influence there.”

Saudi Arabia and the U.S. are desperate to keep control of the area and prevent it from falling into the hands of Iran, their major regional rival for control of the Middle East and Horn of Africa. This struggle between regional powers is drawing in the major imperialists, including Russia and China, and also explains the spreading conflicts in Syria, Somalia, Israel-Palestine, Sudan, Iraq and Afghanistan. The widening war in the region is bringing the world closer to World War III.

When the bosses are locked in competition and war, it’s always the working class that suffers and dies.

First steps towards solidarity

A Middle East expert, who was a child refugee from the Iran-Iraq war, discussed the history of the conflict and attacked the billions of dollars in U.S. weapons sales to Israel and Saudi Arabia. A speaker from the National Writers Union spoke about attacks on media workers covering the war. A speaker from Yemen Aid detailed the crisis and

Protesters Decry war criminal Saudi Prince MBS



Anti-war protests against fascist Saudi Prince Mohammed bin Salman in UK

NEW YORK CITY, March 20—Mohammed bin Salman embarked on a three-country visit with stops in Cairo, London, and New York to strengthen his hand on the global stage.

When he was touring NYC, protesters gathered on the City Hall on Monday and in Lower Manhattan on Tuesday to decry Saudi Arabia’s war on the working class in Yemen. Mohammed bin Salman was escorted with two limousines. While MBS was making war deals with Wall Street, oil company Halliburton, aircraft company Boeing, antiracists chanted, “Say it loud say it clear—Saudi Prince Not Welcome Here!” Protesters also picked up the chant, “U.S., Saudi You Can’t Hide—You Charge You With Genocide in Yemen.”

On tour

MBS’s visit in the U.S. included but not limited to: Trump, vice president Mike Pence, CIA director, Jared Kushner, and the secretaries of defense, treasury, and commerce. He also toured Saudi-lined oil facilities on the Texas Gulf Coast and met with Houston-based oil executives. Trump “offered an optimistic forecast of lucrative U.S. arms sales to the kingdom and more Saudi investment in the United States” (Chicago Tribune, 3/21)

MBS has a war plan for Saudi Arabia: “Saudi Vision 2030, [which] calls for localizing ‘50 percent of military equipment spending’ by the end of the next decade” (Defense One, 4/4).

In London, MBS met with defense secretary Gavin Williamson, among others. He was also greeted with massive crowd of anti-war protesters. ☺

what they are doing to try to respond to it. Those in attendance donated to the organizations, including a Haitian community group and a Latin group, showing working-class international solidarity.

A woman from the floor called on everyone to come out to protest the visit of Saudi Crown Prince Salman to New York City (see box).

The positive response was overwhelming. Building relationships with working-class families from Yemen is a step towards forging international solidarity. Whenever PLP can expose the bosses’ profit and war motives behind world crises while also strengthening confidence in our class to fight back, our class gains class consciousness. ☺

‘Education for Liberation’ Conference Empowers Antiracist Students

NEW YORK CITY, March 17—Students led the Education for Liberation conference in a local college to discuss how to fight for workers’ power while getting educated in the bosses’ school system. True to Progressive Labor Party’s commitment to youth-driven leadership, both teacher and student comrades led two workshops on the critical topics of racial integration inside schools and the concealed issue of the school-to-prison pipeline (STPP). With an emphasis on militant fight back against racial inequality as the best “therapy,” the conference succeeded in not only strengthening the political understanding of young comrades while also widening the number of workers who are now supportive of PLP’s fight for a better world (see letters page 6).

After PLP members opened the conference by placing our fight for communism in the larger context of revolutionary history around the world, a group of high school students presented their understanding of how capitalist culture shapes emotional and psychological stress within schools using tactics like standardized testing. Other students also shared the racist ways in which capitalist school culture is organized to alienate Black students in particular.

Even though we had a definite set of values that we were putting forward, all participants were encouraged to voice their opinions. A professor stated how hard he had worked to receive his degrees, and that we should celebrate the opportunity that people have to work hard. In response, a PLP member exposed how the bosses’ education system utilizes the illusion of meritocracy to instill capitalist values in students. Everyone appreciated the productive exchange, and the professor who advocated for meritocracy was able to perceive a more critical perspective on the topic.

In one of the groups led by teachers, students were asked what role STPP plays in society. STPP is retooling classroom management and discipline to be more punitive to serve as an avenue for masses of working class children, especially Black and Latin, to eventually be criminalized and cut off from many career opportunities as adults. This invisible mechanism in turn has afforded bosses the opportunity to justify their racist portrayal of Black and Latin workers and divide the working class.

The other group, led by teachers and students, taught us that bosses make segregation seem like natural and the moves they take to entrench it seem invisible. As the panelists explained the nature of segregation at their school, participants recognized the aspects of that contradiction and discussed the steps they took to organize multiracial fightback.

Worldwide, working class youth are being exposed to capitalist exploitation everyday. This conference demonstrated that given the opportunity to teach us about the oppression they see, youth from Brooklyn to Haiti around PLP will energetically provide leadership and learn with us to fight back. More teachers and students on the forefront of class struggle in their schools and colleges will be able to add to the panels and discussions that PLP sponsors.

For now, we turned racist, anti-communist attacks in the NYC school system into the basis for a larger, wider campaign to unite more workers than ever around an agenda that will give our young people a real education. Join us in the streets on May Day! ☺

Haiti Fundraiser Builds Workers Unity

NEW YORK CITY, March 24—“I come from Haiti, a country Donald Trump calls a ‘shithole.’ What he leaves out...is that Haiti was a rich and green island when Christopher Columbus arrived.” Thus spoke a Haitian immigrant at a fundraising dinner of over 100 guests. “But after the Spanish, French and U.S. came and went, Haiti looked totally different. Channeling Trump, maybe what I should have said was ‘after the shitholes came and went,’ Haiti was left in debt and had been stripped of its natural resources and left in misery. No resource was more affected than its forest cover: two-thirds percent of Haiti is green today; compare that to its nearest neighbors, the Dominican Republic at 28 percent and Cuba at 31 percent.”

Solidarity since 2010

A Haitian community group and a local church organized the fundraising dinner. It’s been eight years since the 2010 earthquake devastated the working class in Haiti. Every year since, we break

bread and talk about building solidarity between workers in Haiti and those in the U.S. All funds raised go towards reforestation projects in small communities in Haiti.

Pointedly attacking the racist results of imperialism, we were a group of Black, white, Latin, Arab, U.S.-born and immigrant working-class people who mingled, sang inspiring songs in Creole, English and French, and laughed together, showing in word and deed how multi-racial and international unity can fight the bosses’ plans for our class.

More similar than different

One participant spoke about the current war in Yemen, supported financially by billions of U.S. arms dollars, and called on the audience to come out to oppose the visit of the Saudi Prince to get more money for bombs (see page 4). An Arab worker spoke poignantly about the cholera epidemic, showing how people from Yemen and Haiti, two countries in different parts of the world, are

united in their common oppression by the profit system, whether by so-called “natural” disasters or expressly by war. “There is more that unites us than separates us,” he said, pledging an additional donation to fight the effects of deforestation in Haiti.

This event had a more political character than in the past, in part because of the reality of world events and the racist-in-chief in the U.S. White House, but also because of the influence of PLP’s ideas inside these organizations.

We have fought for our friends to understand why Haitian workers and other immigrants are forced to leave their homelands in an attempt to escape the super-exploitation of the capitalist system, whether looking for jobs or to get away from wars, as the imperialists fight among themselves to divide up the world for their own class interests.

We are clearly one working class, and should have no allegiance to anything but our class, our flag and the Party that represents it. On to May Day!✪

Auto Workers Union

Corruption, a capitalist custom



DETROIT, MI, March 15— The U.S. courts are investigating and charging United Auto Workers union (UAW) officials for accepting bribes from Fiat Chrysler Automobiles NV (FCA).

As the UAW constitutional convention approaches this June, the union mirrors the state of U.S. capitalism: corruption, declining power and influence. The situation is ripe for union misleaders and company bosses to indulge each other with bribes, luxuries, and money laundering.

The convention is supposed to set the tone for the 2019 contract talks with General Motors, Ford and FCA. But the main goal is to renew a 25 percent dues increase from 2014. Then, as now, the leadership used the contract talks with the auto bosses as the reason to keep feeding a strike fund that stands at more than \$700 million. Another joke—a huge strike fund for a union that barely fights the bosses, let alone goes on strike. It is just more money to pad the misleaders’ lavish lifestyle.

Union bosses accept bribes from auto bosses

But it turns out that while UAW leaders were increasing our dues, they were also taking bribes from FCA bosses. Last July, federal prosecutors charged FCA executives with funneling \$1.5 million in bribes to UAW officials in exchange for a contract that ultimately cut wages and benefits and sharply expanded the number of low-paid temporary workers. Like workers everywhere, auto workers are exploited more and more as the bosses get richer. Even more disgusting, the bribe money

was taken from funds meant to train hourly workers. According to the indictments, the bribes were intended to keep UAW sellouts, “fat, dumb and happy.”

FCA’s chief negotiator, Alphons Iacobelli, and Jerome Durden, an FCA financial analyst, have both pleaded guilty and are cooperating with prosecutors. The money was going directly across the bargaining table to UAW VP for Fiat Chrysler, General Holiefield and his administrative assistant Keith Mickens. A new indictment against Mickens alleges that he and other UAW officials arranged for travel for Monica Morgan, Holiefield’s wife. Mickens also served as vice president of Leave the Light on Foundation, a phony charity used to launder money.

Morgan pleaded guilty to accepting \$200,000 and UAW staffer Virdell King pleaded guilty to the improper use of a credit card to make tens of thousands of dollars of personal purchases and expensive gifts for other UAW officers. This included a \$2,180 shotgun for UAW VP Norwood Jewell, who was forced into early retirement.

Expose ruling-class collusion

This scandal will keep growing. Iacobelli’s plea deal refers to a plan to make secret \$50,000 payments to select UAW officers on the eve of the 2015 contract negotiations.

There was mass rank-and-file opposition to the 2015 contract. Workers are furious and threatening to reverse the dues increase and reject any initial contract settlement. Could there be a strike against

FCA next year? The UAW leadership would allow a strike only to cover the stink of the current bribery scandal.

This corruption is the logical result of more than 50 years of pro-capitalist union leadership that has covered its treachery in racist “Buy American” flag-waving and being foot soldiers of the Democratic Party. UAW leaders, like the rest of the AFL-CIO leadership, work to ensure the bosses’ profits and keep a lid on the class struggle. Prosecuting a few crooks will not change that.

The Progressive Labor Party (PLP) aims to build an international communist movement, led by industrial workers, that can lead our class to power. By building an international PLP, we can plant the seeds for autoworkers worldwide to unite and take on the racist profit system.✪

Facebook & fascism

Continued from page 2 The bosses have no problem collecting our data

While Facebook has been selling whatever “private” information they can, we should not be fooled by the ruling class’s feigned concern over the collection of personal data. In fact, the bosses have long relied on private companies to collect and hold onto personal data. The USA Freedom Act, hypocritically touted as a limit on the power of the National Security Agency (NSA), was signed by Obama in 2015. It requires every phone carrier to collect and hold indefinitely the records of all their customers.

“As a result, the NSA no longer has to worry about keeping up its own database and...the percentage of available records has shot up from 30 percent to virtually 100. Rather than one internal, incomplete database, the NSA can now query any of several complete ones” (ABC News 10/20/16).

No good side in bosses’ dog-fights

Between the main wing fascists, the Tea Party klansmen, and the Chinese, Saudi, and Russian butchers, workers have no good choices under capitalism. As these bosses fight out their differences, the international working class will bear the brunt of the attacks.

Capitalism is built on racism, sexism, and the massive exploitation of workers around the globe. The rulers’ wars are killing millions and will kill and devastate millions more. In a period of rising fascism, the data the bosses are collecting will inevitably be used as a surveillance tool to try to stop us from fighting back. A communist revolution won’t be built through the bosses’ social media. It can only be constructed by building a base in the international working class. Join us!✪

LETTERS

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



NYC, March 20—Fifty antiracists protest Saudi Prince visit and U.S. war in Yemen (see page 4)

Student reflections: 'transformative experience'

The following abridged letters are from students who walked out against capitalist gun violence on March 14 and participated in PL's Education for Liberation conference on March 17 (see article, page 4).

Participating in the walkout was eye opening. Never before have I witnessed so many young people united under a common goal and demanding that the government change. The conference further affirmed the need for more youth fightback.

The school integration fight shows the power of multiracial unity and worker mobilization. Resistance against capitalism has never been tolerated in the U.S. Still, we are ready to combat these regimes.

★

I felt like an active participant in a larger revolutionary movement currently making strides to abolish the capitalist order of U.S. society and establish equality on all fronts.

The conference allowed me to gather with like-minded individuals and discuss how communism would eradicate problems in schools. By looking at similar communist movements from the past, I learned new methods of mobilizing and building on current movements. What's next for us is more student-led movements dedicated to overthrowing capitalism.

★

I felt a mixture of cynicism and hope. At the walkout, I was met with a sense of apathy and confusion among the crowd; many used this as a chance to skip school. Yet, it was empowering to march down to Borough Hall, all chanting, all washed in energy. The conference showed us a closer, firmer community willing to support us.

★

The walkout and the conference have one thing in common: ambition. Hope itself doesn't do what we did because hope is noncommittal—a sort of expectation that change will happen on its own. It won't. The diverse community at the conference continued what students did at the walkout. It proves our inherent determination to fight for change, even in the face of passivity.

★

The walkout was a much-needed step for change in our capitalist society. As the next generation, we must fight for people's rights as they are undermined by money and power. At the conference, we learned in depth about the School to Prison Pipeline, gun violence, and student fightbacks at other schools.

I hope individuals realize that gun violence and incarceration amongst Black and Latin youth is directly

linked to the domineering rich white men. It was empowering to see so many gathered for the same cause. The fight for justice is never over.

★

Playing a local role in a national walkout was a cathartic experience. I felt I was a part of something bigger than myself, something historical. Yet, I felt that young Black and Latin students and the working class have been engaging in protests for decades, and those protests have been sanctioned, shut down, and criminalized. I realized politicians mustn't use our future fightback as photo-ops.

★

Participating in the walkout was a transformative experience. I realized the potential of a communist insurgence. I was reminded that when we harness the power of education, capitalism can be torn apart; and that students, oppressed by the mechanisms of finance capital, still have an innate calling for a freedom only to be realized on the communist horizon.

For the first time in my life, I saw kids discarding the foul education that capitalism imposed on us in lieu of organic communist mobilizing. The epigram of the day: the specter of communism haunts the U.S.

For unabridged letters and more, go to PLP.ORG

★★★★★

Yemeni Forum

After work, some comrades and I went to a forum in a working-class Yemeni neighborhood (see page 4). This event was called due to the urgent and emergency crisis in Yemen and the lack of attention by the capitalist media.

There seemed to have been an effort by the organizers to keep the forum "neutral and only informative." There there have already been tensions within the Yemeni community regarding the political turmoil in Yemen.

First, we heard a background by an Iranian woman scholar who said at least 10,000 people have been killed, two million displaced and seven million in dire need of food and water.

Even though presenters were "careful" in discussing the political situation, the audience knew who the main actors were: the Saudi Arabian government, which is bombing Yemen, supported by the U.S.; the Houthi "rebels" inside Yemen are supported by Iran.

We heard heartbreaking stories. One worker was locked up with his friends for protesting. He survived by mere luck; his friends didn't.

The panel discussion showed in word and deed the valiant leadership of Arab working-class women worldwide. There were also many Yemeni students who talked about their families and home country torn by this war.

At the end, there was a short Q & A session. One experienced woman organizer had brought members from her mainly Latin community organization. She also provided Spanish translation to her guests, in a show of solidarity and a call for international unity. It impressed the audience. She was the only one who made it clear that the war in Yemen has to do with the pursuit of oil and profit.

She also called for an action in protesting the arrival of the Saudi prince in NYC, the same way the

Bella Ciao Greko



Greko Tolbert died recently at the age of 46. When Greko was young, he was shy and let kids pick on him.

Then in college, he completely changed. That was when Greko met Progressive Labor Party through a professor. He joined PLP and went to a demonstration against the Ku Klux Klan in Springfield, IL. Greko went after a Klansman and got arrested, the kkkops pulled him by his dreadlocks. When he got back to Chicago, he cut his hair, but didn't lose his fighting spirit.

Another time he was leading a sit-in at his college, Chicago State, and insisted that students needed to stay there until their demands were addressed. Some got tired after several hours, but not Greko.

While he did not stay in PLP, Greko continued to be a fighter and continued to help anyone who needed help. His memorial service was a testament to all those his too-short life touched, a multi-racial crowd of people, some who had known him since childhood, others he had met more recently, and everyone in between.

He worked in a facility for young men who had become wards of the state and his co-workers spoke about the way he was able to relate to and help the teens in a way no one else could. He will be sorely missed.

Saudi prince was received with protests when he had previously visited London. The audience cheered and applauded in agreement.

The Iranian woman scholar, with tears in her eyes, apologized on behalf of "her people" for their not supporting the struggle of "the Yemeni people." More evidence that Arab workers need anti-nationalist communist leadership led by PLP.

Some suggested that people call their senators to push them to vote on the "SJRES 54", a resolution proposing the removal of U.S. military forces in Yemen. Relying on U.S. politicians to end their war games is a dead-end strategy for us workers.

One PLP member called for international unity of the working class, but sounded mostly angry. I think we missed an opportunity to put forward a sharper criticism of the liberal and nationalist tone of the event. We must emphasize the need for a worldwide communist revolution as the only solution for workers' misery.

PLP is building relationships with these workers and aims to participate in future protests. The Party can play a positive internationalist role in this campaign.

In this period of growing imperialist wars, PLP needs to be in every space where workers are. We can lead our class to turn the guns around against all bosses and joined PLP's communist movement.

★★★★★

CORRECTION

The Iran article (4/4) left the incorrect impression that the 2010 Arab Spring and the 2011 Occupy movement were organic uprisings of workers. While masses of honest working-class people participated, both movements were funded and orchestrated by the U.S. ruling class. The Arab Spring was a CIA operation while Occupy was financed by billionaire George Soros.

Gov't unemployment report a scam:

Figures don't lie but liars can figure

All the bosses' media headlines, plus U.S. president Donald Trump's claims, report the "lowest unemployment in 17 years," at 4.1 percent in February. But, as the Shadowstats analysis firm proves, this is "nonsense reporting of the first order."

The actual unemployment figure, counting ALL the jobless, is 21.8 percent. And *even that* number does not include:

- Young unemployed workers who, unable to find a job, join the military;
- Workers on welfare who want and need a job but are limited by a lack of daycare for their children;
- Millions of incarcerated workers and youth who once released from prison are out of the jobless count until they find employment;
- Millions of high school and college graduates seeking their first jobs and not counted as unemployed.

So even that more truthful 21.8 percent figure may easily be closer to 30 percent, a far cry from the rulers' 4.1 percent.

Two factors mainly account for the huge undercount of unemployment. The government's Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) publishes two jobless figures, U3 and U6. The U3, which grabs all the headlines, says it's 4.1 percent. It counts those working part-time as "employed" even though they want full-time jobs but can't find them. This only includes workers as unemployed who've been looking for work in the last four weeks. All others are not part of the 4.1 figure.

The BLS's U6 count, which the media never headlines, actually rose to 8.2 percent and includes short-time "discouraged" workers out of work for the last six months but who stopped looking because there were no jobs to be had. All others, many who've been jobless for more than a year, are

effectively eliminated from the unemployment figures and are defined by the BLS as "out of the labor force." In January that number exceeded five million. And this movement of discouraged workers "out of the labor force" is accelerating.

Shadowstats points out another way that the 4.1 percent figure is "seriously flawed," a game played by the BLS. The latter says that 313,000 jobs were added in February. But the BLS assumes that there was a net-positive addition from jobs created by new companies emerging in the economy, compared to jobs lost from companies going out of business (especially affected by hurricanes, floods and other disasters). But the BLS makes a "guesstimate" that the latter group's payrolls are still the same, part of the "employed" workforce because many company closings are never reported. Thus the new-company jobs are part of an overstatement of any employment, which Shadowstats reports "easily exceeds 200,000 a month." So much for the 313,000 figure.

Accompanying the jobless sham figures spread by the media is another one: "wages are rising." But real average weekly earnings have declined for three quarters in a row, and, adjusted for inflation, are still BELOW the levels of the 1970s. On top of this is the fact that the BLS never accounts for all the wages LOST by millions of workers during the long period of unemployment in the recent Great Recession. Most workers will never recover those losses, even if wages were to rise slightly.

Racist unemployment

The bosses' economists declare that a 5 percent unemployment rate means "full employment." But obviously the working class is suffering vast unemployment. The latter is especially true for Black workers whose joblessness because of racist discrimination is at least double that of white work-



"WHY ALL THIS FUSS ABOUT BEING UNEMPLOYED... I HAVEN'T WORKED A DAY IN THE LAST 20 YEARS!"

ers and has been for centuries. The bosses reap billions in profits from this racism since they hold Black workers as a threat to white workers' fear of losing their jobs, not to mention the lower wages paid to Black workers. Similar exploitation is true for Latin and millions of immigrant workers. All this divides and weakens the working class overall in its ability to unite to battle the bosses for all workers' class demands.

The only time there has been official full employment in the U.S. was during World War II when 14 million workers joined or were drafted into the armed forces, ending the unemployment of the Great Depression. As the Progressive Labor Party maintains, the only solution to unemployment is to fight for communist revolution to rid the world of capitalism whose profits need an army of the unemployed to survive. ☛



RED EYE ON THE NEWS . . .

Below are excerpts from mainstream newspapers that may be of use for our readers. Abbreviations: NYT=New York Times, GW=Guardian Weekly, LAT=Los Angeles Times

Echoes of 1968 general strike sweep France

NYT, 3/23 — Travel was upended, schools were closed, and tens of thousands took to the streets across France...as railway workers, teachers, students and air traffic controllers went on strike to protest President Macron's economic and social policies....

...Railway workers are already planning rolling strikes in April and May....More than 200,000 workers and students joined in protests around the country, about 48,000...in Paris....The student presence...was an echo of France's historic protests of 1968, which were led by students and began on the same day, March 22, 50 years ago. Those strikes...were quickly joined by union embers...bringing the country to a standstill....

...Nearly three of every four people...believed that the Macron government's policy overhauls were unjust....The protests...were initially scheduled by civil servants angered by salary freezes and by Macron's pledge to cut 120,000 jobs, as well as by...plans to...use more private contractors....

While the largest protests were in Paris, there were also large turnouts in Marseille, Nantes, Lyon and other cities....Christian Boumard, 57,...from Nantes, a union stronghold [said]...."The railroads are a public service.This is a political battle. It is not to gain some small benefit, it is a public service he is attacking."

U.S. imperialists' lies about Iraq invasion

NYT, 3/22, op-ed Kristoff — "We will be greeted as liberators" upon invading Iraq, Vice-President Dick Cheney counseled in 2003....He...relayed a prediction that the streets in Basra and Baghdad

are "sure to erupt in joy."

President...Bush declared...there was no doubt that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction. "Defense" Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said that an invasion would be largely self-financing and that it would last "five days or five weeks or five months, but it certainly isn't going to last any longer."

So 15 years ago this week...the United States....invaded Iraq....The financial cost alone...will top \$3 trillion, according to economists Joseph Stiglitz and Linda Blumes, or about \$24,000 per [U.S.] household. Some 4,400 [U.S.] soldiers died in Iraq, along with approximately 500,000 Iraqis.... [Ed. Note: more like one million].

The war helped trigger the Syria war, the genocide against the Yazidi and Middle East Christians, the rise of the Islamic State...and a broader Sunni-Shiite conflict in the Middle East that will claim lives for years to come.

Criminal INjustice system convicts thousands

NYT, 3/15 — At least 139 convicted defendants in the United States were exonerated last year...[from] wrongful convictions....according to...the National Registry of Exonerations....

"It makes you really wonder...how many would we see if there were more of these organizations," said...the editor of the registry.

Since 1989, when DNA was first used in an exonerated, at least 2,100 people have been cleared of their convictions....

On average, each defendant exonerated last year spent 10.6 years behind bars, adding up to almost 1,500 years spent waiting to be cleared.

Ledura Watkins....was released...more than 41 years after being convicted...on a hair found at the scene...later discredited....For Walter Lomax,...it took 46 years....Paul Gatling...had to wait 52 years....

Well over half of the people exonerated last year were initially convicted because of official mis-

conduct, such as officers threatening witnesses, analysts falsifying tests or officials withholding evidence that would have cleared the defendant.

In just half of the exonerations last year, defendants were wrongfully convicted in cases in which no crime was committed.

Black youth, jailed over 6 years, awaits trial

NYT, 2/17 — ...A man sat on Rikers Island for more than six years awaiting trial....The Manhattan district attorney's office kept him locked up as it struggled to bolster its case against him....

Reginald Wiggins...was 16 at the time [and] was denied bail....His co-defendant, Jamal Armstead... "repeatedly indicated...he would never testify against" Mr. Wiggins....Prosecutors spent two-and-one-half years...trying to secure his cooperation.

Mr. Armstead's third trial ended in a mistrial just like the others. Mr. Wiggins gave up, pleading guilty to manslaughter charges....

...The time between Mr. Wiggins's arrest and plea spanned...from when he was 16 until he was 22....[He] was released on [Feb. 15].

Pope unapologetic for Church's 'cultural genocide'

NYT, 3/29 — ...The Roman Catholic Church...Pope Francis will not apologize for its role in a Canadian system that forced generations of indigenous children into boarding schools.The...system...was described as a form of "cultural genocide" by a national...Commission...that also concluded that many students were physically and emotionally abused....

...The Catholic Church, along with several Protestant denominations, operated most of the schools for the government....The schools operated from 1883 until...1998. The commission found that children were severely punished for speaking indigenous languages or following their cultural practices and that 3,201 students died while in the schools, often from mistreatment or neglect.

BOLSHEVIK REVOLUTION CENTENNIAL SERIES

TROTSKY, STAUNCH ANTICOMMUNIST

This celebratory column is in honor of the 100th anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution and the world communist movement of the 20th century. We mainly examine its triumphs. We welcome your comments and criticisms, and encourage all readers to discuss this period of history with their friends, classmates, co-workers, family, and comrades.

This article aims to tell the truth about Trotsky and his movement—a truth denied by all anticommunists as well as by all followers of the Trotsky cult.

Leon Trotsky (b. 1879) became a Marxist revolutionary during his youth; became a leading Bolshevik; and, during the last period of his life, the most influential anticommunist in the world. Today hundreds of Trotskyist groups worldwide continue to promote Trotsky's brand of anticommunism masquerading as "real" communists.

During the 1905 revolution in Russia Trotsky led the Soviet, or revolutionary council, in St. Petersburg. After a period of exile to Siberia, Trotsky fled abroad. He joined the Menshevik branch of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party and strongly opposed Vladimir Lenin and Lenin's Bolshevik branch.

In 1917 Trotsky returned to Russia. He joined a faction of Mensheviks who wanted the bourgeois, capitalist revolution that had deposed the Tsar, to continue to a socialist, working-class revolution. Trotsky recognized that only the Bolshevik Party, which he had long opposed, stood for such a revolution, so Trotsky negotiated a deal to join the Bolsheviks along with most of his faction and put Trotsky on the Bolshevik Central Committee.

During the Bolshevik Revolution and the following Civil War, Trotsky was one of the major Bolshevik leaders. He sabotaged the negotiations with the German Army, which led to the Germans occupying much more Russian territory. Trotsky led the military. He and Joseph Stalin clashed over how much to rely on officers from the Tsarist army who had rallied to the Bolsheviks—most of them temporarily. Trotsky favored the former Tsarist officers and Stalin wanted working class communists of the Red Army.

For a time after the war Trotsky remained an important Bolshevik leader. He and his supporters clashed with others in the Bolshevik leadership in the debates over policy during the Party Congresses and Conferences of the 1920s. An opposition formed against the policies advocated by Stalin and others. Trotsky, who was one of the leading oppositionists, promoted his own theory of "permanent revolution." This concept basically meant that the USSR could only survive as a socialist state if it were helped by socialist regimes in industrialized countries. Otherwise, the revolution in Russia would "degenerate." Trotsky had no solution for what to do if such revolutions did not take place.

Conspiracy

Even before Lenin died (January, 1924) Trotsky had formed a secret organization that conspired to take power in the USSR if—as Trotsky suspected—he failed to win the Party leadership once Lenin died. In order to work as secret Trotskyist agents inside the Party, Trotsky convinced some of his followers to cut all open ties with him and his supporters.

The Phony "Testament of Lenin"

In 1924, together with Lenin's widow Nadezhda Krupskaya (who had temporarily joined the opposition) Trotsky forged the documents later called "Lenin's Testament," which called for removing Stalin from his position as First Secretary of the Bolshevik Party. The "Testament" also praised Trotsky, though not too much—that would have been too obvious, since Lenin and Trotsky had been adversaries for a very long time and it had been Lenin who had insisted that Stalin become First Secretary.

In 1926 Trotsky published an article in which he insisted there was no such thing as "Lenin's Tes-

Brooklyn: April 28 at 11:30 AM. intersection of Hillel Pl & Flatbush Ave
Chicago: April 28 at 1:30 PM. intersection of 47 St and Cottage Grove Ave

tament." But in the 1930s, when he was living in exile and leading a major conspiracy against the Stalin leadership, Trotsky "forgot" his denial and even claimed that Lenin had wanted to form a faction with him to get rid of Stalin. This forged "Testament" has been an important weapon of anticommunists and Trotskyists ever since. The evidence that it is a forgery was just discovered in 2003, after the original documents became available.

Trotsky and his public supporters were expelled for factionalism in 1927—they had held a number of counter-demonstrations at the 10th anniversary of the Revolution. Then Trotsky's followers dishonestly claimed to "retract" their Trotskyist views and promised to follow the Party's line in the future. They did this in order to continue their secret conspiracy within the Party and to recruit other Party members.

Trotsky's Secret Conspiracy

Trotsky and his followers formed a secret "bloc" with other anti-Stalin conspiracies – the Rightists (Bukharin, Rykov, Tomsky) and others – and plotted the following crimes:

- * Terrorism: plans to kill Stalin and the Bolshevik leadership.
- * Sabotage against Soviet industry, mining, transportation.
- * Plans to sabotage the Red Army in the event of war with any capitalist states.
- * Kickbacks from German companies for sweetheart contracts with the Soviet government.

Trotsky conspired with Nazi Germany and militarist Japan—the most powerful and organized anticommunist forces in the world—to support these regimes, if they in turn would put the opposition

into power in the USSR, or support them if the opposition managed to get into power by itself. Trotsky also conspired against the Soviet Union with French capitalists and the British Secret Service and British government.

In return, Trotsky promised to undo collective ownership of land and industry and permit foreign private investment. He promised to get rid of the Communist International, headquartered in Moscow, which helped communist parties around the world fight against their own governments and was especially hated by capitalist rulers everywhere.

Trotsky's Writings

In his writings from exile Trotsky consistently lied about the Soviet Union and about the Stalin leadership. Trotsky had to lie! He was running a serious conspiracy against the Soviet government, and trying to make Stalin and the Bolsheviks look as bad as possible. He gained publicity and support by writing for capitalist magazines and newspapers. These publications were eager to print anything that made the USSR and the worldwide communist movement look "bad." They paid Trotsky handsomely.

Mainly, Trotsky was lying to his own followers. They chose to believe whatever he said or wrote when he claimed that he, Trotsky, was the "real communist", the "real successor to Lenin," and that the Stalin leadership were criminal betrayers of the Revolution. Trotsky's followers still "believe" him, "have faith" in him, despite mountains of evidence of Trotsky's lies and collaboration with the Nazis, Japanese, and British and French imperialists. ❖

(Part Two will continue and conclude our discussion of Trotsky)

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