

CHALLENGE



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INDIANA

STUDENTS DUMP BOSSES' ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM

GARY, INDIANA, May 10—When a waste company and government bosses wanted to build a dump in a mainly Black working-class neighborhood, students and residents confronted this blatant environmental racism head on. They shut down a bosses' meeting and physically ran out the politicians and local capitalists.

Black students from a local school have been some of the most militant leaders of this developing fightback. The communist Progressive Labor Party commends these brave fighters and is present to help build and sharpen the class struggle here against the racist bosses.

Bosses plan garbage dump next to school

Last April, students, teachers, and administrators from the Steel City Academy Charter School learned that a private corporation applied for a solid waste processing permit. They intended to build a \$60 million waste facility less than 100 feet from the school. The application, completed by Maya Energy, LLC, was filed with the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM).

The waste facility was presented as a "recycling center." The school and residents often refer to the facility as a "dump" because it is expected to house and compact 2400 tons of garbage a day within close proximity to students and educators. Many already suffer from health issues as a result of toxic air pollution, lead poisoning, and other byproducts of a murderous capitalist system. Gary's population is 80 percent Black, and the median household income is \$29,522. The bosses' racist disregard for working-class lives is self-evident.

After negative feedback from Gary workers and youth, Maya Energy was allowed to revise their application and resubmit it this past February. In March, Maya Energy was invited to explain their revised project once again to the school and residents.

One thousand people submitted their comments opposing the project, with many requesting a public hearing, that IDEM and Maya Energy reluctantly agreed to hold at a local union hall on May 10.

'Our education over your dump'

At the union meeting, PLP joined over 200 students, teachers, administrators, and residents to



put Maya and the city bosses on notice. Union misleaders said that people would be let in at the start time of the meeting, but when students, teachers and workers began chanting "Hey, Hey! Ho, Ho! Maya E has got to go!" the union leaders quickly showed their sell-out nature and announced that the meeting was cancelled. They even turned away union members who opposed Maya Energy and the dump!

IDEM bosses, wanting to save face, moved the meeting to the school. The working-class crowd refused to play nice with them there, either. Students were quick to hang up signs that read "Our Education Over Your Dump" and "We Will Not Sacrifice Our Community/Playground/Education."

They lined up to ask IDEM questions about how Maya Energy's dump would affect not only the students' health, but also the health of the surrounding community.

Students tied in themes of environmental rac-

ism and exploitation in their questioning. When one student asked, "Do you care about our well-being?" an IDEM official responded, "It's not my

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May Day stories
from Mexico,
Haiti, Pakistan,
East Africa, and
more!

JOIN THE INTERNATIONAL FIGHT FOR COMMUNIST REVOLUTION

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OUR FIGHT

- ★Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to destroy capitalism and the dictatorship of the capitalist class. We organize workers, soldiers and youth into a revolutionary movement for communism.
- ★The dictatorship of the working class — communism—can provide a lasting solution to the disaster that is today’s world for billions of people. This cannot be done through electoral politics, but requires a revolutionary movement and a mass Red Army led by PLP.
- ★Worldwide capitalism, in its relentless drive for profit, inevitably leads to war, fascism, poverty, disease, starvation and environmental destruction. The capitalist class, through its state power — governments, armies, police, schools and culture — maintains a dictatorship over the world’s workers. The capitalist dictatorship supports, and is supported by, the anti-working-class ideologies of racism, sexism, nationalism, individualism and religion.
- ★While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim “communism is dead,” capitalism is the real failure for billions worldwide. Capitalism returned to Russia and China because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system, like wages and privileges. Russia and China did not establish communism.
- ★Communism means working collectively to build a worker-run society. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. While capitalism needs unemployment, communism needs everyone to contribute and share in society’s benefits and burdens.
- ★Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of “race.” Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit Black, Latin, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working class.
- ★Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women— sexism—and divisive gender roles created by the class society.
- ★Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.
- ★Communism means that the minds of millions of workers must become free from religion’s false promises, unscientific thinking and poisonous ideology. Communism will triumph when the masses of workers can use the science of dialectical materialism to understand, analyze and change the world to meet their needs and aspirations.
- ★Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!

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WHO WRITES FOR CHALLENGE?

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

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

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Editorial

Nicaragua

Bosses’ splits deepen, fake left fails workers again

The blowback from inter-imperialist rivalry has hit the international working class hard again, this time in Nicaragua. Over the last month, thousands of students have led the way in protesting planned cuts to social security and an increase in payroll taxes. The criminal president of Nicaragua, Daniel Ortega, has responded with state terror, resulting in as many as 63 dead, hundreds wounded, and mass calls for Ortega’s resignation.

The history of the Nicaraguan ruling class, as well as imperialist interests in the region, exposes the roots of the current crisis.

Nicaragua caught in imperialist crosshairs

Nicaragua’s geography, bridging the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, has placed it in the crosshairs of imperialist rivalry since the 16th-century Spanish conquest. In 1912, after German and Japanese bosses threatened to build a canal to compete with the U.S.-controlled Panama Canal, the U.S. Marines invaded Nicaragua and occupied the country until 1933.

Today, while the U.S. remains the dominant imperialist in Central America and the Caribbean, with \$80 billion in two-way trade last year, its position continues to weaken as Chinese and Russian bosses close in (Bloomberg News, 6/5/2017). China considers Central America a part of their “New Silk Road,” a plan for world economic dominance, and has invested billions in a competing canal, an effort that stalled after workers protested their displacement. In 2016, Russia docked war ships off the Nicaraguan coast and sold the Ortega regime 50 new tanks and aircraft in exchange for access to airspace and ports. Additionally, the Russian ruling class is building a law enforcement center near Nicaragua’s Pacific coast (Miami Herald, 9/15/2016).

The U.S. has responded to China’s “soft power” and Russia’s “hard power” in kind. In 2017, the U.S. Congress passed the Nicaraguan Investment Conditionality Act (NICA), which threatens to cut off foreign aid. Simultaneously, the U.S. conducted naval exercises with mock invasions of 13 countries, including Nicaragua, to challenge China’s maritime claims (Asia Times, 4/26/2016).

The U.S. bosses’ moves to ice out imperialist rivals dates to 1936, when the U.S. ruling class installed the Somoza family, representing Nicaragua’s wealthy land-owners, as a brutal and corrupt dictatorship. Meanwhile, the U.S. pillaged resources from Nicaragua for the next 43 years.

Phony Left Sandinistas

In 1979, U.S. control suffered a blow from the Sandinista “socialist” revolution, led in part by fake-leftist Ortega. Under President Ronald Reagan, the U.S. funneled money and drugs to fund the CIA-backed Contra rebels, the rightwing terror groups that instigated a civil war and murdered as many as 50,000 people (Washington Post, 6/10/04). Voted out of office in 1990, Ortega and his wife (and current vice president), Rosario Murillo, re-invented themselves. In 2006, they partnered with former enemy and Contra leader Jaime Morales to return to electoral power. Upon winning, “the first thing the administration would do is talk immediately with all the businessmen to maintain their confidence and reassure them everything was fine” (The Guardian, 11/8/06).

Oil-financed socialism

Ortega quickly formed an alliance with then-president Hugo Chavez of Venezuela, built a network of oil-financed businesses, and joined Chavez’s trade bloc, in direct opposition to the U.S. bosses. According to Nicaragua’s Central Bank, Venezuela gave Nicaragua \$457 million in aid, with a joint Venezuelan-Nicaraguan company managing the funds. Ortega’s family skimmed much of this wealth to consolidate its power. In 2009, in a clear move toward fascism, Nicaragua’s Supreme Court and Supreme Electoral

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Council removed constitutional obstacles to Ortega standing for another term in office. This power play effectively eliminated opponents from other political parties (BBC News 11/7/11).

But by 2015, with the collapse of the Venezuelan economy and the loss of cheap Venezuelan oil on credit, the U.S. became Nicaragua’s main source of oil. As a result, the Nicaraguan ruling class was forced to stockpile U.S. dollars to pay up front. This economic crisis triggered the latest political crisis, with the Nicaraguan bosses attempting to solve their problems on the backs of the workers.

These attacks have not been taken lying down. In 2015, thousands of small farmers protested Ortega’s deal with Chinese billionaires to build a canal through Nicaragua. This spring, militant students and workers have taken to the streets to fight back against both the police and Ortega’s fascist Sandanista Youth gangs, which have collaborated with the police to stone protesters.

U.S. sponsored protests

With Ortega cozying up to Russian and Chinese bosses, the U.S. rulers appear to be financing the student resistance. As The North American Congress on Latin America (NACLA) noted, “The 19 of April Movement shares many characteristics with...the Arab Spring, Occupy Wall Street, the Movement for Black Lives” (5/14).

According to the New York Times, all of these movements have been funded and trained by the CIA and pro-imperialist groups like the National Democratic Institute and George Soros’ Freedom House (New York Times, 4/14/11). Ditto for the Color Revolutions in Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan, which have largely failed in ousting pro-Russian ruling class factions (Center for Strategic and International Studies, 5/28/14).

Deepening splits within the Nicaraguan ruling class likely led to a shift by the Superior Council on Private Enterprise (COSEP), which initially supported Ortega, to organize an April 22 student march. On April 23 the U.S. Embassy closed its Managua operations (NACLA, 5/14).

Nicaragua workers need communism

Although Ortega has rolled back his proposed cuts to the social security system, the nationwide protests have continued. The working class of Nicaragua recognizes that it has long been sold out by the FSLN, the political party founded by the Sandinistas, which was rooted in the anti-revolutionary strategy of all-class unity. This fake-left movement was aligned from the start with business interests and Nicaragua’s reactionary clergy; it never had intentions of sharing wealth and power with the working class.

Nicaragua is yet another example of the detrimental impact of the collapse of the old communist movement in Russia and China. The working class needs a mass communist party now more than ever.

Absent of communist leadership and ideas, the rebellion in Nicaragua will at best be another sponsored movement under the bosses’ control, like the Arab Spring in Egypt. But workers’ fighting spirit is alive and well, and the Progressive Labor Party aims to spread it to every country worldwide. Our fight will not be for the removal of one politician, but for the destruction of the capitalist system and an end to oppression of all the workers of the world.☛

Mexico City May Day Dinner & March



MEXICO CITY—For May Day celebrations, the collective decided to organize a dinner for our friends and family members, many of whom have participated with us in rallies, marches, and study groups, in order to invite them to join Progressive Labor Party and march with us on May Day.

The dinner

The dinner's events were moderated by a comrade who has worked with us for less than a year, and who shows great interest in understanding and carrying out the Party's line. We began by introducing everyone so that all were acknowledged and known. This system separates us such that knowing each other allows us to recognize that we all suffer the same exploitation, racism, and sexism.

A comrade then gave a brief report on the international situation in a communist context, which allowed us to discuss the national situation in the

midst of elections.

The next talk was by a woman comrade who explained why from a class perspective electoral democracy did not represent the working class, and only becomes a trick to allow the national oligarchy to recycle itself and to make fascism legitimate national policy.

The next talk was by another woman comrade who recounted the origins of May Day, and how it has always served as the beacon for the working class to ensure it stays the course of class struggle.

Finally, another comrade discussed the line of our party, why we are organized in a communist party, why we struggle, how we organize, and what we struggle for. Everyone was invited to join us and march with us.

The event turned out to be very sociable and our ideas were well received, we were able to commit several attendees to agree to meet in study groups to better understand the line and the reality of the situation faced by the working class.

The march

Like every year, we met in front of the "Palacio de Bellas Artes" to have a rally at the meeting point of the few independent unions that still exist in the city. They no longer have the same influence due to the violence and the electoral climate in the country. We then withdrew to meet up with the various other collectives and march as a contingent. By 10 am, a collection of 40 PLers, family members, and sympathizers. We distributed 1,500 flyers.

We joined the march toward the Zocalo, our red flags high, with a banner and three megaphones that announced our presence. We exposed the disastrous effects of capitalism on the working class while laying out the connections between capitalists and politicians who serve one another to extract maximum profits from workers (see page 5). We sang communist the songs of Bella Ciao and the International and chanted our slogans.

We have a long way to go to build working-class unity. We will continue to raise consciousness and organize a mass movement of workers under the leadership of PLP.☺

Gearing up for May Day with young workers

A few days before May Day, the Party collectives from Mexico City and Mexico State united in a celebration of the coming May Day. We had three dinners in different neighborhoods where the workers we are organizing, for a communist revolution, live.

Around 60 people participated, we talked about the crisis, oppression, and the need for a party and communism. The main topics of discussion were the political climate with the current elections and the origins of May Day. Most of the attendees went on to march with us on May Day.

The meeting focused on the role played by Mexican politicians in obeying the capitalist class. Compared to other capitalist nations in the U.S.-aligned Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Mexico is one of the most corrupt and unequal with the Mexican political class earning salaries far higher than those earning minimum wages. The working class gets endlessly poorer as the basics such as fuel, among the most consumed products, become more expensive. On a daily basis it gets harder to receive basic health and social services since salaries are constantly getting cut.

We spoke about how the same politicians also own factories and are invested in the big industries, while their own family members profit and inherit wealth from the same. The negligence and nepotism by the political parties, the violent attacks against working class movements in the country, and the "structural reforms" that only serve the interests of the bosses all reflect the total lack of democracy for our class. We understand that the vote is a farce that only allows us to decide which party watches out for the interests of the competing imperialists.

We in the PLP in Mexico have deepened our understanding of communism by having discussions that develop consciousness and allow better understanding of how the capitalist system functions. We understand how the media are an instrument of capitalist manipulation, and that the electoral process is a form of control and merely an illusion for workers looking to better their condition. The political parties claim they are on the side of the working class despite their opulent lifestyles, and they use their bourgeois democracy to maintain their elite status while workers have no real say in how their society is run. We understand the political class are lying parasites, and voting for the lesser evil only breathes life into capitalism keeping it from being destroyed.

We live under a capitalist regime where constitutional instruments, like periodic elections, only serve the dominant class to elect which of their sectors will rule. Given the complete capitalist control from the get go over these elections through various instruments of manipulation (the media, academics, religion, and electoral justice system) it is clear the working class will remain in the same oppressed condition. The only difference is some bosses may be willing to offer us crumbs. Some politicians may be a servant for a competing ruler or imperialist.

In countries like Mexico, where economic inequality exists, and the dictatorship of capital gets bloodier by the day, elections only serve to manipulate and maintain control over the working classes by achieving the appearance of democracy.

Students dump on racist Maya Energy bosses

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authority to do so."

All were angry at this response that laid bare the capitalist system's fundamental contradictions. One parent said, "We are not trash. Gary is not for sale."

The capitalist bosses and their lackeys can only be expected to make decisions that keep their system profitable, even as those decisions constantly result in the destruction of workers' lives.

Towards the end of the meeting, a city boss took it upon himself to verbally attack everyone in the room, noting that "the school should have never existed" and telling parents to "be quiet" in order for him to continue talking.

The antiracist crowd immediately shut him down and chased him out of the meeting. The owner of Maya Energy showed up almost on cue to make his business pitch again, but we chased him off as well. It was a real glimpse at the potential of workers' power, and the power we can have once we unite.

For environmental change, build communism

Capitalism's racist impact on the environment doesn't begin and end in Gary, Indiana. Globally

we see the aftermath of the havoc the profit system has wreaked on communities where mostly Black and brown workers live. From the lead crisis in Flint, Michigan and East Chicago, to allowing the levees to collapse during Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, to annual flooding and mass displacement in South Asia, capitalism and workers' health just don't mix.

While workers and students called out the lying, manipulative nature of city officials and the system, they also spoke about reviving the environment in the same breath. Students led this discussion because before the Maya Energy struggle, many were learning about composting, alternative energy sources, and creating community gardens for their school and the city.

It remains our task as communists to connect these ecological projects and growing fightback to the need to build a mass PLP that will ultimately destroy capitalism, the fundamental source of environmental destruction. What we learn today will later help us build our egalitarian communist society, where workers' collective health and the environment are the priority, not profit.☺

PAKISTAN: May Day brings red ideas to workers

*Red salute to the working class,
The workers red flag will rise all over the world,
One flag, one fight, workers of the world unite,
Sharpen the struggle to get rid of the bosses ,
Down with capitalism, fundamentalism, racism and nationalism,
March united to victory,
Long live communism,
PLP is the only solution!*

These were the slogans chanted by many workers on the eve of May Day in Pakistan.

The Progressive Labor Party (PLP) was involved in different rallies, marches and discussions throughout the first week of May 2018. We brought city and agricultural workers and students to the marches with great enthusiasm. Our young comrades played a good role in organizing students for the May Day marches in both big and small towns. Our comrades explained the weaknesses and strengths of the old communist movement and stressed the need to build an international revolutionary communist movement under the red flag of PLP.

We explained the necessity to struggle directly for communism.

Before May Day 2018 we decided to participate in different marches organized by various political parties, student organizations, and worker and peasant unions with some red ideas.

One thing that should be encouraging for workers everywhere is that wherever we went with our revolutionary line, we met workers and students who were eager to learn more about our politics and the Party. When we explained the need to forge a united working class for an international communist revolution some unionists argued with us. They claimed that Marx called for socialism as a transition period so we must not go straight to communism. Refuting these reformers helped us to explain why we fight directly for communism. A transitory state will mean concessions with the bosses and preserving capitalist inequalities.

We analyzed the issues that the working class is facing at work and emphasized the need to make the struggle for a communist revolution primary as we fight for various reforms. Bosses are making billions while exploiting our labor but they offer nothing to make our lives even a little easier. There is no job security, no increase in wages, no safety on the job, and no medical or educational support for our families. As capitalists they need to vigorously exploit us and to plunder more and more profit. These capitalist bosses are also making our lives even more miserable by torturing and harassing us. They are using the contract system to avoid even the smallest benefits to which the working class has a legal right.

We condemned the lack of safety at workplaces. Almost every day we hear some bad news from around Pakistan that workers were killed while digging in coal mines, crushing the rocks for cement factories, or breaking ships for scrap metal. We want to organize strikes of coal miners and ship and rock breakers to force the government into providing safety at these workplaces.

Our comrades explained that reform cannot bring lasting change in the lives of the working class, so we must struggle for revolution. But the capitalist bosses will never allow workers to challenge their power by peaceful means. We have to organize ourselves in a united and militant struggle against the capitalist class. To replace capitalism with communism, we must overthrow the capitalists and establish workers' power.

In May Day marches and rallies workers were holding red flags, banners and placards. They were chanting slogans against capitalist exploitation, bosses, forced labor, unemployment, inflation, poverty, the contract system, harassment of women workers, torture of farm and domestic workers, child labor, religious fundamentalism, and terrorism. And in the midst of these militant working class fighters were members of the Progressive Labor Party called for workers' power—communism!

Long live PLP!✊

Vigorous May Day in EAST AFRICA

EAST AFRICA—Throughout cities and rural areas, PLP members united 650 teachers, students, parents, and workers to celebrate May Day in solidarity with working people around the world.

At these events, we discussed the fascist government crackdowns and the attacks on students' education and teachers' working conditions. We also discussed the need for communism and how it was different from the socialism of the 20th century.

University students in one meeting reported feeling deeply satisfied, saying it was the first time they had ever participated in this type of "strong discussion." They were inspired that the college students and everyday workers were meeting together to discuss these issues on an equal basis.

The fascist conditions throughout the region require our members to organize with skill and cunning and to have profound confidence in our base of friends.

A big red salute to our courageous and resourceful comrades in East Africa for confronting the fascist onslaught and bringing this historical holiday and its vision of workers' power to our class.✊

HAITI: May Day builds class consciousness

HAITI—While a small number of organizations and unions are aware of what May Day, International Workers Day means, a larger number buy into the bourgeois propaganda of the "festival of work and agriculture." Thus, in order to build for revolution, we must still fight to build working class-consciousness. That's the job of our Party, the Progressive Labor Party.

This May Day, PLP continued to draw lessons and build class consciousness based on the history of struggles that workers and students have been involved in, starting with the history of May Day. It was interesting for some, disappointing for others. But it was enriching for our Party, given the contradictions that emerged.

Rural workers, young and old, and members of women's organizations joined us in solidarity. We had planned with our comrades to present a history of workers' struggles in order to reinforce the idea of working-class unity in changing, in fact, transforming society.

We also wanted an opportunity to think about the situations that workers face today, especially here in Haiti. There has been a wave of arbitrary firings, repression and sexism in various work sites,. This is combined with below-poverty rate salaries, an ever growing rate of unemployment, and forced migration to countries like Brazil and Chili, where there is a need for low-wage workers.

Unfortunately, despite our efforts, some people were still blinded by the bosses' lies, and fell into the trap of believing May Day to be a festival. Some participated in the bosses' celebration of Haitian cooking—mainly for the rich and powerful locals and imperialist bloodsuckers in the capital.

The bosses' festival provoked a discussion among our friends and comrades about what is the underlying politics of workers' struggles. It was communist leader Vladimir Lenin who said that



Banner reads, May 1: international day of struggle of working class against bosses

there is no revolutionary struggle without revolutionary consciousness. And for us, that means that revolutionary consciousness must be built in our struggles, in the contradictions that we face, and through criticism and self-criticism. Our Party in Haiti is growing in quality with each experience we gain in struggle.

On the other hand, in the evening we met for a dinner-debate with some of our friends, some of whom work in the public sector. We reviewed the experience of the day and evaluated it together. This allowed us to see that, despite the seeming strength of bosses, the workers we are beginning to understand the fight that we need to wage in the

coming period.

One person expressed it in these terms: "Finally, I understand what we need to fight for and I agree with you in favor of revolution."

This evening was an opportunity for our comrades to see how we have begun to inspire confidence in the masses, although we still have a long way to go in order for more workers to understand our line and lead the fight for communist revolution.

PLP is building revolutionary class consciousness wherever we are. We fight to annihilate capitalism in all its forms. Join us to build a new world without exploitation, racism, sexism, and slavery.✊

OAXACA: Communist May Day attacks dead-end electoral politics

OAXACA—PLP members and friends marched along thousands of education workers, the fighting members of union Section 22. We waved our red flags, chanted, and carried a big banner that read:

¡A Revolutionary Communist May Day, THE ELECTORAL CHARADE IS A BOSSES DICTATORSHIP, Destroy capitalism, Build Communism!

Comrades helped distribute 3,000 leaflets (see box below).

This great mobilization happened during the 72-hour strike by the Coordinadora Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación (CNTE). There was massive participation of teachers from Oaxaca, Chiapas, Guerrero, Michoacán, Mexico City, Valley of Mexico, and many more.

The main demand is the repeal of the Education Reform, which ends labor and union rights, such as job security and retirement benefits.

Taking advantage of the electoral circus for president and senators, the CNTE is organizing for a national strike, looking forward to a general strike with other unions—Frente Único de Sindicatos Independientes & Organizaciones Nacionales, which is set to begin in the middle of May or June.

During this electoral process the working class is being bombarded by the media to elect their new oppressors in the capitalist imperialist class. Again, they want to impose a government loyal to the political and economic interests of the Trade Treaties and supported by the Structural Reforms.

On the other hand, we are pushing for class struggle, spreading our political line and getting more members who want a revolutionary communist change.☛



Main text of banner reads, A Revolutionary Communist May Day
THE ELECTORAL CHARADE IS A BOSSES DICTATORSHIP
Destroy Capitalism
Build Communism
ONE CLASS, ONE PARTY, WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITE

It's a bosses' dictatorship

A version of this flyer was handed out on May Day

The upcoming election in Mexico is about which economic and political bourgeois group will keep the presidency. The candidates have been clear, that the economic model will not change in essence. The exploitation by the profit system will continue. In the electoral charade, the only ones who win are the capitalists. The workers lose when they fall for the capitalists' game of 'being a good democratic citizen' legitimizing the bosses dictatorship and helping reproduce their governmental machinery.

Labor faker AMLO

The capitalists hope for a big voter turnout, especially those motivated by the dread of the extreme violence of president Enrique Peña Nieto's government. The frontrunner for the July 1 election is Andrés Manuel López Obrador, nicknamed AMLO. According to El Nuevo Herald, he has an 85 percent of being elected as president.

He is the former mayor of Mexico City and framed as a "leftist." His style is sometimes called Trumpian: a nationalist "Mexico first" agenda. He accuses other politicians of wielding their influence only for personal gain. He promises to make Mexico less dependent on foreign trade and pledges to reduce inequality.

However, he insists he will not pick out foreign companies and that fighting corruption will make Mexico more attractive to investors. David smilde, senior fellow at the Washington Office on Latin America, points out that when Obrador was mayor, he seemed "like a moderate progressive trying to work outside of Mexico's traditional political class" (LA Times, 5/9).

Like other fake leftist politicians in Latin America, like Hugo Chavez in Venezuela or Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva in Brazil, capitalism and its need for profits remain in power. There may be temporary measures to allay some of scourges of poverty, but as soon as profits fall so does the investment in the working class. Only if capitalism is actually over-

thrown and workers run society in our collective interest can we prevail.

While politicians are united in their interest to oppress the working class, they differ in which section of the national bosses and imperialist they pledge allegiance to.

López Obrador and members of his Morena party "have been vocal about expanding their trade partnerships with countries like China — a stance largely in line with the priorities of current Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto" (Politico, 1/7). This worries the U.S. imperialists.

Obrador's "two main challengers are political moderates, but their rivalry is no less bitter for that. One [José Antonio Meade] is backed by the government. The other [Ricardo Anaya] is feeling heat from the federal prosecutor" (The Economist, 3/28).

No such thing as a good politician

We have to transform this social irritation into revolutionary consciousness to call on all sectors of the working class to change the system, into a system of social equality, communism.

The July 2018 election is held within the context of extreme social inequality: on one side, one of the most exploited and oppressed working class in the world and a multimillionaire capitalist class on the other. This capitalist system lets the bosses pay the lowest salaries in the world while making the workers work long hours. If the workers try to rebel, the "law" lets the bosses get away



with violent repression and disappearances. This, no doubt, is a fascist dictatorship of the capitalists over the working class.

We know about fascism of the capitalist system in Mexico because of the high levels of violence we have to endure, the deaths, disappearances, and the displacement of hundreds of people. This is higher than that of the countries openly at war. We cannot talk of democratic elections with this conditions! The violence against women, specifically feminicides, grows at the same time as the labor conditions get worse.

Some sectors of the capitalist class in Mexico, as well as the world, like López Obrador for the presidency of Mexico, which might determine if he wins, even though some sectors do not like him, and will do anything to stop him. We think that the bourgeois might use violence before the elections to justify the use of repressive force to control the electoral process.

Increasing crisis worldwide

Capitalism is in crisis worldwide as World War III looms between Europe, Russia, China, and the U.S. Inter-imperialist rivalries are worsening living conditions for workers as local politicians align with one world ruler's interests or another. In Mexico, all the candidates are moved by the power strings of the imperialists and the local bourgeoisie.

None of the candidates proposes anything other than capitalist exploitation and imperialist war, their program does not represent the millions of dispossessed. The working class has but one way to change things, organize around working-class democracy: democratic centralism. Democratic centralism is when we can discuss, openly, the political and organizational decisions to change the capitalist system of exploitation. Then, we carry it out the decision to the best of our ability before evaluating.

We have to build study and action groups in all schools, factories, and communities, so we can study reality and consciously transform society. Democratic Centralism promotes self-criticism and criticism to make us better communists.

We call on all workers to join PLP, a communist party that rejects elections! With PLP we will smash capitalism and replace it with communist society!

LETTERS

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

PL shuts down politician at Haymarket Square

The “official” labor movement in the United States truly is in sorry shape. This fact was crystal clear at the May Day kick-off rally this year at the Haymarket workers memorial in Chicago.

The union hack misleaders had the gall to invite gubernatorial candidate JB Pritzker, a capitalist politician whose family has profited in the billions from their exploitation of workers, to speak on the international workers’ holiday.

As soon as Pritzker was poised to address the workers, a comrade from our Progressive Labor Party contingent boldly took to the bullhorn to shout him down. “Workers died on this spot fighting for their rights and their liberation! You don’t get to be here! Get the fu*k out of here!!” At first Pritzker tried to deflect what was going on and spew some of his lies, but the confrontation proved too militant and he was forced to make a hasty retreat.

After Pritzker bailed, various union hacks re-

sponded to our action with verbal attacks and got in the comrade’s face. The union was even successful in getting some of the workers that they brought around to start chanting “JB! JB! JB!” in defense of that capitalist scum.

But on the other hand, various workers came up to us after the confrontation settled down, thanking our comrade and the Party for saying what needed to be said and taking an issue of CHALLENGE.

It was another clear lesson on the need to continue taking bold actions as a Party, as well as the need to continue being involved in the unions in order to build class consciousness among workers, winning them away from the idea of a capitalist political “savior” and instead towards real workers’ power through communist revolution.

★★★★★

May Day dinner: Korean Peninsula a hotspot for rivals

Our small May Day dinner in the Midwest was a success. The main speech was on ‘What the Korean

peace talks mean, and why PLP fights against all forms of imperialism.’ This speech focused on North Korean boss Kim Jong-un as a capitalist dictator, and South Korean boss Moon Jae-in as a lackey of U.S. imperialism, and how the working class in the Korean peninsula should reject all bosses. I remember a saying by German anti-fascist playwright Berthold Brecht: “When rulers talk peace, you better get your helmets.”

The U.S. imperialists might gain a short-term geopolitical advantage on the Korean Peninsula, but China and Russia will benefit in the long term against weakened U.S. imperialism. U.S. trade wars led by fascist-in-chief Donald Trump are a flashpoint that could lead to world war.

Only communist revolution led by PLP can give the international working class a fighting chance against a nuclear world war. One multiracial international working class, one party, PLP!

★★★★★

Marx Bicentennial: Fight for Communism

Karl Marx was born on May 5, 1818, in Trier, Germany. Marx, together with his lifelong comrade and friend Friedrich Engels, invented the scientific doctrine of working-class revolution. We call this doctrine “Marxism.”

From German philosophy, and especially from the philosophy of Hegel, Marx developed dialectical and historical materialism—the science of change in all aspects of life.

Surplus value

From English political economy, the most advanced of its day, Marx and Engels took the Labor Theory of Value and developed from it the doctrine of surplus value, “the special law of motion governing the present-day capitalist mode of production” (Engels):

The worker spends one part of the day covering the cost of maintaining himself and his family (wages), while the other part of the day he works without remuneration, creating for the capitalist surplus-value, the source of profit, the source of the wealth of the capitalist class.

The doctrine of surplus-value is the cornerstone of Marx’s economic theory. (Lenin)

Marx developed this scientific theory in his famous work *Capital: Critique of Political Economy* (also known by its German title *Das Kapital*), and in shorter, more accessible works such as *Wages, Price and Profit*.

Class struggle

From French socialist theory, the most advanced and revolutionary of its day since it developed out of the study of the great French Revolution of the 18th century, Marx developed the doctrine of class struggle.

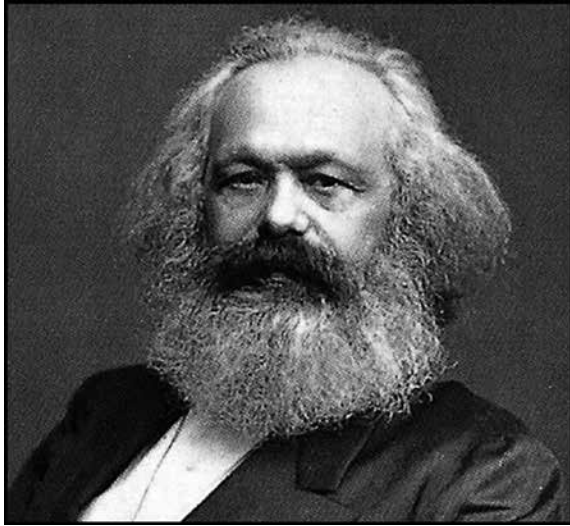
Just as Darwin discovered the law of development or organic nature, so Marx discovered the law of development of human history. (Engels)

All societies, past and present, have developed because of the struggle between the exploiting classes—slaveowners, feudal lords, bourgeois landowners, capitalists—and the exploited classes: slaves, serfs, and the working class. In every age, class struggle is the force that moves forward scientific, social, political, and intellectual development.

Violent revolution; the dictatorship of the proletariat

Marx understood that the struggle of the working class against capitalist exploitation must lead to violent revolution and the forceful overthrow of the capitalist system. In a letter to Joseph Weydemeyer, written in 1852, Marx wrote:

the class struggle leads necessarily to the Dictatorship of the Proletariat; this dicta-



Two of our earliest leaders of the communist movement—the collective of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels

torship is but the transition to the abolition of all classes and to the creation of a society of free and equal.

Vladimir Lenin, the great Russian revolutionary theorist and political leader and also the greatest student of Marxism, summed up Marxism this way:

The Marxist doctrine is omnipotent because it is true. It is comprehensive and harmonious, and provides men with an integral world outlook irreconcilable with any form of superstition, reaction, or defence of bourgeois oppression.

Marx the revolutionary

Marx was not only a brilliant thinker and theorist. He combined his theoretical work with ground-breaking revolutionary activity.

In 1847 Marx and Engels joined The Communist League, a secret revolutionary society, for which they wrote the famous “Communist Manifesto” (February, 1848). About the Manifesto, Lenin wrote:

This work outlines a new world-conception, consistent with materialism, which also embrace the realm of social life; dialectics, as the most comprehensive and profound doctrine of development; the theory of the class struggle and of the world-historic revolutionary role of the proletariat—the creator of a new, communist society.

The Communist League (1847-1852) was the predecessor of the International Working Men’s Association (The First International). Some of its members later played a leading role in the First International.

In 1864 (September 28) the International Working Men’s Association—the celebrated First International—was founded in Lon-

don. Marx was the heart and soul of this organization, and author of its first Address and of a host of resolutions, declaration and manifestoes. (Lenin)

The Civil War in France

In 1871 the working class of Paris rebelled against their government and held the city from March 18 until May 28. During this time the city was governed by the Paris Commune, a radical socialist and revolutionary government. In response to the bloody suppression of the Commune by the French Army Marx wrote *The Civil War in France*. In this work Marx drew the following lessons from this, the first great proletarian revolution in history:

1. The need to smash (as opposed to taking over or “appropriating”) bourgeois state power and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat.
2. The need for equality—particularly economic equality—between revolutionary cadre, state functionaries, and the masses of workers.
3. Immediate recall of leadership by the masses if leaders fail to carry out the desires and aspirations of the working class.
4. The abolition of a bourgeois-type standing army and the distribution of arms to the masses of people.

Engels wrote:

... Marx was before all else a revolutionist. His real mission in life was to contribute, in one way or another, to the overthrow of capitalist society and of the state institutions which it had brought into being, to contribute to the liberation of the modern proletariat, which he was the first to make conscious of its own position and its needs,

Continued on page 7

Commemorate Marx by fighting for communism

Continued from page 6

conscious of the conditions of its emancipation. Fighting was his element. And he fought with a passion, a tenacity and a success such as few could rival.

And, consequently, Marx was the best hated and most calumniated man of his time ... And he died beloved, revered and mourned by millions of revolutionary fellow workers ...

PLP fights to carry on Marx's Legacy

The Progressive Labor Party has studied the history of the communist movement in the light of its successes and errors and of our own. We continue to strongly support Marx's central theories and respect him as the greatest revolutionary theorist in history. We proudly call ourselves "Marxists."

Through the lessons of history, we disagree with a few tactics that Marx proposed. We understand that a standing army will be needed by any revolutionary communist society in order to fight off, and carry the battle to, the forces of capitalism and imperialism that will inevitably try to destroy any communist revolution. The Paris Commune was defeated largely because it had no army, and waited passively until the

French Army attacked it. This was a fatal error.

We also reject the notion, put forth by Marx in his "Critique of the Gotha Program," that inequality – Marx calls it "bourgeois right" – must be preserved during the first, or lower, stage of communism. Preserving inequality has been the excuse for Soviet misleaders like Nikita Khrushchev and Mikhail Gorbachev, and Chinese sell-outs like Deng Xiaoping, to turn socialist states back to exploitative capitalism.

Standing on the shoulders on giants

Marx was the great philosopher—economist, theorist, thinker, and revolutionary activist—of the modern movement for an egalitarian society run by and for the producers of all value—the working class.

We commemorate him best when we try to follow in his footsteps and build the movement that he began—a movement for justice and equality for all working people.

We have a long way to go. But we have great predecessors, great ancestors, in this movement. Marx is one of the great giants. PLP and the communist movement is standing on his shoulders .

It is fitting that we remember him every day, and especially this month, the two hundredth anniversary of his birth.☺

Israel May Day

ISRAEL—Two hundred people marched in southern Tel-Aviv to mark May Day and to show the ruling class that we, the workers, refuse to be invisible. In the bosses' society and media, we who build everything and provide every service are invisible while the rich dominate the media. We marched to show otherwise.

The march was small and led by liberal and fake-left misleaders. But, it was multiracial— including Israeli Jewish, Arab, and Black migrant workers. Some slogans included "the answer to privatization—revolution!" and "invest in the [slum] neighborhoods and not in prisons and deportations!" We marched as part of the Coalition for Direct Employment, a multi-racial, women-led organization fighting to smash exploitative contract bosses.

One PL'er spoke about how she's fighting contract bosses and mall bosses who employ her in deplorable conditions in housekeeping.

As the brutal crisis on our sisters and brothers in Gaza worsen, as this apartheid state crushes Black, Arab, and Jewish workers alike, we need communism more than ever.☺



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

Hammer and sickle memorializes Rama Plaza factory fire

NYT, 4/29 — "Help me! people screamed," recalled [Mahmudul Hassan] Hridoy...remembering the moment the seventh floor of the eight-story Rana Plaza...manufacturing complex crumbled beneath his feet on April 24, 2013. The catastrophe injured 2,500 and killed more than 1,100...the deadliest garment industry 'accident' in modern history.

"Save me!' they cried," Mr. Hridoy said. "But nobody was listening...."

... "Those memories still haunt me...."

The land where Rama Plaza once stood is now overgrown with weeds. On the street-facing side, a cement monument, topped by an enormous pair of sculpted fists grasping the hammer and sickle, has been erected in victims' memory....Bangladesh has long been among the cheapest places to produce clothes, along with Vietnam and India. More than 4.4 million people — mostly women — work in its 3,000 factories where the minimum wage is currently 32¢ an hour, or \$68 a month.

Brands flock here to source \$30 billion worth of ready-made garments.... making Bangladesh the world's second largest apparel manufacturing center, after China....

...the Bangladesh apparel industry has been rife with sweatshops — among the grimmest ever anywhere....Between 2006 and 2012, more than 500 Bangladeshi garment workers died in factories fires....The Tarzeen Fashions factory went up in flames...in November 2012. At least 117 died, many burned beyond recognition....Sweatshops [still] exist in Bangladesh....Fire buckets [are] filled with trash, emergency water buckets [are] cracked and half empty, no one [is wearing] safety masks, most workers — some in their early teens — [are] barefoot, wiring...exposed, bolts of fabric and

scraps litter the floor, window panes...broken and [a] lone stairwell out of [a] tenement-like building [is] obstructed by cartons of finished products....

Already there has been union repression, with the jailing of labor leaders...and wage negotiations...will no doubt trigger worker protests and unrest....[The] minimum wage...is one-fifth a conservative living wage....

Recently, nearly 3,000 survivors and supporters — including nurses and doctors who treated the victims — gathered at Rana Plaza to mark the anniversary and honor the injured and dead....and marched with banners that read "Workers of the World Unite...."

U.S. troops join Saudi's war in Yemen

NYT, 5/4 — The Pentagon and the Trump administration...have misled Americans about growing military involvement in a war in Yemen....

In the latest expansion of America's secret wars,...Army commandos....are helping to locate and destroy missiles and launch sites used by indigenous Houthi rebels in Yemen....This...puts the lie to Pentagon statements that American military aid to the Saudi-led campaign in Yemen is limited to aircraft refueling, logistics and intelligence and is not related to combat....

In at least 14 countries, American troops are fighting...professed enemies of the United States....

The Saudis' brutal campaign in Yemen has created one of the world's worst humanitarian crises, with at least eight million people on the brink of famine, one million suspected of being infected with cholera and two million displaced from their homes....The killing of thousands of civilians and the humanitarian aid deprivations, most blamed on Saudi Arabia, could be war crimes in which the United States would be complicit....In 2015, a Saudi-led coalition, with President Barack Obama's backing, launched blistering attacks, including thousands of airstrikes....

Racist bail bondsmen extort billions from workers

NYT, 4/1 — ...Commercial bail has grown into a \$2 billion industry....

Bondsmen have extraordinary powers.... Some...[can] arrest their clients for any reason — or none at all....and...can...jail someone for missing a payment.

...Bond agents can charge steep fees, some... are illegal, with impunity....They can also...require their clients to...keep a curfew, allow searchers of their car or home...and open their medical, Social Security and phone records to inspection....

"They're living under a constant daily threat that 'if you don't bring more money, we're going to put you in jail....'"

"What they're doing is intimidating and coercing and lying...."

Commercial bail fees...siphon millions from poor, predominantly African-American and Hispanic communities....

...Bail companies are backed by large surety companies....

Together...[they] collect about \$2 billion a year in revenue...."to safeguard their profits at the expense of people's lives."

Abu Dhabi: Slave labor on campus, workers still owed millions

NYT, 5/11 — When investigators reported in 2015 that 10,000 migrant workers employed at New York University's campus in Abu Dhabi had not been paid money they were owed, and were subject to substandard working conditions, the university vowed to reimburse the workers and provide...compliance with labor standards.

Three years later, thousands of workers may still be owed millions of dollars. And...the university had not released a compliance report....

...A report...by the Coalition for Fair Labor, a group of N.Y.U. faculty members and students.... [has] its title — "Forced Labor at N.Y.U. Abu Dhabi...."

In 2014...an investigation into the plight of construction workers at the Abu Dhabi campus, document[ed] how many had been charged steep recruitment fees to get their jobs, how few were being paid what they had been promised, and how some lived in miserable conditions.

Working class under attack

Racist Chicago bosses shut down schools

As sharpening inter-imperialist rivalry leads to a worldwide crisis of capitalism, the bosses are trying to strangle the working class into paying for it. Over the next several issues of CHALLENGE, we will be writing about the various ways our class is under attack.

In the latest racist assault on Black workers in Chicago, the city is closing four high schools in Englewood, a Black neighborhood on Chicago's South Side. Robeson High School will be closed immediately, while the three others—Hope, Harper and TEAM—will be phased out.

Since 2000, 250,000 Black workers have been driven out of Chicago, a drop of 25 percent of the city's Black population. In 2013, the city closed 50 elementary schools on the predominantly Black South and West sides. Since then, as abandonment and gentrification have continued to accelerate, 32,000 more Black children have left the public school system (Chicago Reporter, 12/19/17).

These attacks on Black working-class families are part of a racist push by the Chicago ruling class to shrink the city and make it wealthier and whiter. In both 2016 and 2017, Chicago was the only city of the largest ten in the country to lose population (Chicago Tribune, 3/22). Overall, the number of city residents has dropped from 2.9 million in 2000 to 2.7 million today.

The central feature of the Chicago bosses' racist plan is to disperse Black and Latino workers from the city into low-service, high-poverty suburbs, while focusing large-scale development in the areas closest to downtown. "There are probably over 40 cranes currently operating primarily [near downtown]—very little in other parts of the city in the neighborhoods where working class residents live, particularly African-American and Latino communities" (Citylab 5/31/17).

Just as the capitalist system worldwide fails miserably to meet workers' needs, the Chicago bosses are unable to provide even a basic standard of living and education for tens of thousands of local Black families. The only way out of this mess is to fight for a communist society that is run by and for the working class.

Bosses cut services to Black workers

Since the economic crisis of 2008-2010, when the bosses bailed out the banks and the real estate industry, the working class—and Black workers in particular—have paid the bill.

They closed neighborhood schools and mental health clinics; failed to rebuild public housing, dispersing thousands of poor black families across the region, and inadequately responded to ... unemployment and foreclosures in Black communities...It's a menu of disinvestment... The message that public policy sends to Black families in the city is that we're not going to take care of you and if you just keep going away, that's OK (Chicago Reporter 12/19/17).

It's a brutal cycle: Racist unemployment and foreclosures drive families out of Black neighborhoods; neighborhood schools close for lack of enrollment; more families leave their destabilized communities. As a result, large areas of Englewood are now decimated:

So many homes have been demolished that some blocks are just fields of weeds. What's left are side streets with wood frame homes, many of which are boarded up...the last decade and a half has been brutal. Not only did the housing crisis hit areas like this hard, but also the expansion of a massive rail yard swallowed up many of the homes... the school district's policy of school closings ...has contributed to population decline. In addition to Englewood High School, CPS has closed 14 [Englewood] area elementary schools over the past decade"(WBEZ News, 2/20).

The Chicago ruling class and their hit man, Mayor Rahm Emanuel, Barack Obama's former chief of staff, are perpetuating a long history of attacks on Black workers. Even in the mid-20th century, when Chicago was a growing center of industry and finance, Black workers were forced into segregated, underserved neighborhoods.

Now U.S. capitalism is on the decline. As the U.S. ruling class and its imperialist rivals head toward more and bigger wars, decent-paying industrial jobs have been replaced by low-paying service jobs or no jobs at all. Chicago's Black neighborhoods were "once teeming with manufacturing companies like Brach's Candy and Western Electric. ...If you go up to Cicero [Avenue], you see all these old factories. Well, they moved out and nobody moved in....What replaced them were vacant storefronts or churches" (Chicago Reporter, 3/29/16)

Today, the situation for Black workers in Chicago is desperate. Young Black men between 20 and 24 have an unemployment rate of 47 percent (DNAInfo, 5/26/17).

Bosses need more from real estate taxes

To keep profits and power, the Chicago bosses are chasing out the very workers whose parents and grandparents built the city. Rising residential real estate prices enable the city to generate tax revenues in an era of business tax breaks. In central city neighborhoods, high real estate prices are driving out working-class families while luring affluent people with the promise of elitist, segregated

ed public schools. In neighborhoods further from downtown, like Englewood or Austin on the West Side, the bosses have chosen to chase people out rather than reinvest in deteriorating schools and municipal services.

In the 1970s, when industry began to leave Chicago, the local ruling class lost a big part of its tax base. Instead of cutting profits or reducing the interest payments the city owed the banks, the bosses stopped fixing the schools. "By the early 1990s, audits of school facilities found them to be in abominable condition. Parents protested holding fallen bricks from their children's schools in hand...." Great Cities Institute 11/2016).

While the city issued \$2.5 billion in school bonds to renovate aging buildings and construct new ones, much of the funding was designed to encourage real estate inflation and gentrification by "expand[ing] the number of 'high performing' schools: i.e., Montessori and gifted elementary schools and International Baccalaureate, magnet and selective enrollment high schools. As they were intended to reach a city-wide market, most of the selective enrollment high schools were centrally located" (Great Cities Institute 11/2016).

Many billions of dollars are needed to keep the South and West sides livable. Instead, the bosses are shutting schools and cutting services to chase people out. In crisis, the capitalist rulers will always treat the working class as a disposable commodity. Like every other city, Chicago will belong to the bosses until the working class seizes power and builds a communist society to serve the needs of our class.☸

Nazi Israel commits mass murder



GAZA, May 15—The protests began on March 30 and continued until today, which marks 70 years since the Nakba, the day of ethnic cleansing of countless Palestinians to make room for the apartheid state of Israel.

The U.S. officially relocated its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Protests turned into a blood bath when the Israeli Defense Force killed and maimed demonstrators along the Gaza border.

In total, 111 murdered. 12,733 injured.

Majority of Palestinians who survived were shot in the lower limbs. The IDF shoots to cripple. Neither Hamas nor Israel is the solution to the working class here. Jewish, Arab, Black migrants must unite against their common enemy. There is no possibility for peace for the working class other than a long fight towards a borderless world.☸

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