

CHALLENGE



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CHICAGO KKKOP MURDERS MAURICE GRANTON



24-year-old Maurice shot in the back

CHICAGO, June 12—The racist Chicago Police Department (CPD) took the life of another member of our class. On the night of June 6, a killer cop shot 24-year-old Black father Maurice Granton Jr. in the back, killing him after a chase in the city's south side Bronzeville neighborhood.

This blatant murder again demonstrates the role of the racist police under capitalism. Workers and community members have protested throughout the area since Maurice's murder. Members of Progressive Labor Party (PLP) have joined them in their struggles and put forward communist revolution as the only solution to end these racist police murders once and for all!

Workers, kkkops square off in neighborhood, hospital

Immediately after Maurice was murdered, workers responded angrily in the neighborhood. They confronted the police who tried to keep or-

der. People were gathered on all four corners of the intersection. They shouted questions at the racist cops, asking them where Maurice's wounds were and how they could justify such a shooting. The cops responded by brutalizing people in the crowd, including harassing a 10-year-old boy who had dropped a phone and then using a taser on a woman who was trying to help Maurice after he was shot. Others were taken into custody.

At the University of Chicago Hospital, where Maurice was fighting for his life, racist hospital officials tried to usher his family out of the emergency room waiting area. The family was not having it, and in the end, CPD and University cops threw his family out. Then, more than a dozen armed cops formed a line in front of the entrance and said the area was on lockdown.

Only ruthless capitalism would be so cold as to gun down a worker, then proceed to block off his loved ones from seeing him as he died. This whole

racist system needs to be destroyed!

Remember Maurice, call out the bosses

The next day, tensions were still high. PLers joined an angry young worker who was encouraging fight back. We knew this area well since we have had a CHALLENGE sale here regularly for several years and it was on this year's May Day march route. We got out CHALLENGE, met more neighbors and Maurice's sister, Joanna.

That same evening, Maurice's family held a vigil where he had been shot. Maurice leaves behind two young girls who he loved and lived for. His sister said he was very funny and just wanted to have a family since he didn't have one growing up. In all, there were about 75 people there to show their anger for his racist murder.

Different speakers at the vigil called for release of the body-cam footage, a new mayor, to put pressure on Kim Foxx (the Cook County State's Attorney), and to "fix" the broken racist CPD. They

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JOIN THE INTERNATIONAL FIGHT FOR COMMUNIST REVOLUTION

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OUR FIGHT

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

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WHO WRITES FOR CHALLENGE?

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

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

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Editorial

Trump’s G7 blunder abets U.S. decline

President Donald Trump’s Group of 7 blunder in Quebec illustrates the disarray and decay plaguing U.S. imperialism. By refusing to sign the summit’s closing communiqué, and then blasting Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau as “weak” and “dishonest” three days before he embraced North Korea’s Kim Jong Un, Trump further alienated the closest U.S. allies. The week before, he’d assaulted the European Union, Canada, and Mexico with tariffs on steel and aluminum imports.

According to the New York Times, the mouthpiece for the main wing of the U.S. ruling class, Trump “all but blew up the Group of 7 nations that the United States has led for more than four decades and essentially declared open political war on America’s closest neighbor” (6/10).

Pre-Trump, the U.S. and its most important allies (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, the UK, and Japan) would collaborate on how to check their common imperialist foes, China and Russia. Trump has torpedoed this tradition and with it the “rules-based international order,” aka the “liberal world order”—the capitalist bosses’ code for the structure for U.S. imperialist dominance post-World War II. Tellingly, Trump asked for Russia to be let back in the G7, four years after they were kicked out for annexing Crimea and supporting separatists in eastern Ukraine.

“America First”: a losing proposition

For the dominant finance capital wing, the likes of JPMorgan Chase and ExxonMobil, Trump’s undisciplined opportunism threatens their position atop the imperialist pecking order. Trump’s foreign policy and trade decisions are under attack by both Republican and Democratic politicians, the stooges who serve these bosses’ agenda. Pulling out of the Paris Climate accord, scuttling the Iran nuclear deal, moving the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem, instigating a tariff war--each provocation, they complain, leaves the U.S. more isolated and less able to project its power. Meanwhile, U.S. bosses worry that Trump’s moves toward open racism and fascism will rip the mask of “democracy” from the murderous profit system—and undermine the bosses’ efforts to reinvigorate U.S. patriotism and enlist U.S. workers in the next global war.

Meanwhile, unhappy U.S. allies are left trying to prop up what’s left of the liberal world order, hoping for “a president who shares their values” after the 2020 elections (The Atlantic, 6/10). Or as Richard Haass, president of the Council on Foreign Relations, the main wing’s leading think tank, put it: “The United States has knocked itself off the pedestal” (Economist, 6/7).

Trump’s reckoning

In recent months, Trump has more openly defied the biggest bosses’ attempts to constrain him. He ousted former ExxonMobil CEO and Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and Hoover Institute member and National Security Advisor H.R. McMaster, both reliable main-wing operatives. In their place, Trump appointed Mike Pompeo, once the favorite congressman of the Koch Brothers, and John Bolton, the loose cannon who has made a career out of sabotaging multilateral agreements like the Iran nuclear deal.

The U.S. domestic-oriented wing (led by the Kochs, the Mercers, and Sheldon Adelson, among others) has no interest in investing in the massive military ground forces required to maintain a U.S.-dominated world order. As a result, they place less value on the international alliances that Trump is subverting.

But the main-wing bosses aren’t taking this ly-

“The United States has knocked itself off the pedestal”

—Richard Haass, CFR president

ing down. The escalating Mueller investigation represents their effort to bring Trump to heel. In May 2016, Trump’s foreign policy advisor George Papadopoulos told the Australian ambassador to Britain, Alexander Downer, that Russia had “derogatory information” about Hillary Clinton (Observer, 6/5). Papadopoulos turned out to be one of many incompetents in Trump’s camp who have opened the president to scrutiny, giving Mueller’s team an opening. Whether this opening leads to anything in the near future will hinge in part on whether the main-wing bosses are willing to risk a civil war with the president’s racist base.

Sooner or later, though, the main wing will seek to smash the domestic wing,. Before they can impose fascism and a global war effort upon the working class, the main-wing bosses will need much greater discipline in their own ranks.

High stakes for all

The stakes for the U.S. ruling class are high. Their position as the world’s dominant imperialist is challenged more each day. In Africa, Chinese investment has exceeded the U.S. since 2009 (FT, 6/13/17). In South America, China is already the largest trading partner with Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Peru (Atlantic, 2/3). The Chinese military buildup in the South China Sea continues unabated. Meanwhile, the ongoing nightmare for workers in Syria illustrates how Russia is outmaneuvering the U.S. in the Middle East.

As Foreign Affairs (4/30) noted:

The era of Pax Americana is over, but the next chapter of America’s role in the world is still being written. We are headed toward a new world order, and the United States should take a leadership role in shaping what that order will be. If it doesn’t, the outcome will be decided without it, its interests, and its values.

The stakes for the international working class are equally high. Whatever the outcome of this investigation, impeachment or the next election will hurt the working class. U.S. rulers will have conflicts internal and external, but they will always be in agreement about exploiting the working class and using their bodies to fight the next oil war. Working-class brothers and sisters must continue to look under the mask of capitalist “democracy.”

The deadliest mistake we can make would be to take sides in a fight among capitalist bosses. Robert Mueller and the FBI are the bosses’ professional contract killers, among the most lethal and racist enemies of the working class. Cheering for the impeachment of Trump equates to siding with a segment of the ruling class that is even more ready, willing, and able to unleash war and fascism on the world. We are told that Trump is destroying “democracy.” But for workers, capitalist electoral democracy has always been a dangerous myth, a cloak thrown over the capitalists’ brutal class dictatorship. It’s not just Trump, it’s capitalism! No president can ever serve workers’ interests. Only a communist revolution, led by Progressive Labor Party, can create the world we need.☸

KCC students and workers fight racist Goldstein

BROOKLYN, June 7—Students, staff and faculty have been gaining plenty of experience in class struggle at Kingsborough Community College (KCC) this semester. With the leadership of a new student in the Progressive Labor Party and friends, our multiracial sanctuary committee has shifted gears from defending our working-class friends against racist attacks like those on our fellow cafeteria workers, to going on the offensive against an openly racist administrator.

‘No to racism, no to Goldstein’

Not long after May Day, it came to the attention of the students and faculty that KCC’s “Director of Communications and Public Relations,” Michael Goldstein, the public face of the college, was posting openly racist, sexist, anti-immigrant, and anti-Muslim statements on social media.

When some antiracist faculty obtained several screenshots, they turned them over to the larger group of students and faculty. Goldstein’s racism gave way to anger and determination to fight back. This was especially true for women and Muslim students, many from Yemen, which is suffering from intense U.S.-Saudi imperialist attacks. We decided that a leaflet must be written calling for Goldstein’s termination.

In less than a week, a leaflet was collectively discussed and produced involving two dozen students. Immigrant women and PL’ers have taken a lead role in distributing the leaflets and, as CHALLENGE goes to press, over 1,000 have been distributed around campus, just in time for final exams. About 20 percent of KCC’s roughly 10,000 students are Muslim, and the response has been overwhelmingly positive.

There has been no official response from the administration, but the antiracists and PL’ers at KCC have continued meeting, sharing CHALLENGE, and discussing plans to escalate the struggle further. KCC is the only community college in Brooklyn. Since the summer semesters are as busy as the rest of the academic year, the racists are put on notice: get ready for a long, hot summer!

A single spark

The struggle against racist Goldstein directly follows the demonstration and march (CHALLENGE, 4/18) on the KCC President’s office in defense of the cafeteria workers’ jobs. Many students approached groups like the pro-immigrant KCC Sanctuary Committee to find out how to become more involved.

Thanks to regular distributions of CHALLENGE outside of the campus gates and PLP support of local struggles, this May Day also saw recruitment and new friendships among the students to PLP. Through study groups on topics like reform and revolution, PL’s student work began sharpening at the time that some students became interested in



KCC students, staff and workers marched on and confronted the KCC President’s chief of staff to support the cafeteria workers (see CHALLENGE, 4/18).

fighting back.

PLP fights for a communist ‘paradise’ on earth

The fightbacks of this past semester have presented serious struggles in gaining confidence in the working class. Many students and cafeteria workers, like masses of workers around the world, are depressed, cynical, and hopeless. Many are won over to different forms of individualism and escapism.

Some believe in Islam’s promise of a paradise after death. There are open communist atheists (and a pro-communist Christian) side-by-side with them in struggle who also break fasts and break bread together during this month of Ramadan. Together, they provide a glimpse that a communist “paradise on earth” is worth fighting for. Unlike a religious paradise, there will be many problems and struggles under communism, all to be solved in the interest of and by the world’s working class.

It’s revealing, this idea of communism—this

simple idea that workers should run the world, without any racist borders. It’s an idea and optimism that capitalism can never kill. Recently, a PL’er was discussing politics with a new Muslim friend, unsure of how she would respond to CHALLENGE. When the PL’er opened the conversation talking about how Muslims and communists have a long history of fighting side by side, she responded “Yeah! Like in the Soviet Union.”

As the discussion continued, the young Muslim woman showed a clear understanding of how racism and imperialism functioned around the world. The PL’er asked how she knew all this. “Oh, these people have been giving out CHALLENGE newspaper in front of campus for awhile, I try to read each one and sometimes it has articles about history and politics. It’s an interesting paper.”

The “Dark Night” of imperialist war and devastation will have its end, in part, because this young woman, an antiracist fighter, is one of several more who are open to struggle, and are becoming nails in capitalism’s coffin. The struggle continues.✊

Fight CPD’s murder of Maurice

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pointed out how young Black and Latin people are being criminalized and targeted for murder, while the police act with impunity.

We distributed more CHALLENGEs at the vigil, as well as a flyer exposing capitalism as the real culprit in this murder. It was pointed out that it did not matter that the cop who shot Maurice was a Black cop. This is true. In the end, they are all racist terrorists, doing the bidding of their capitalist masters who run society for their profits and power. Switching up a few politicians or getting more Black cops hired will never significantly change a system that needs racist and sexist state terror in order to exist.

Fight the bosses’ racist attacks

Racist capitalism had failed Maurice, just as countless others, from a very young age. He lived in foster homes growing up. Maurice attended Dyett High School, which had been gutted of resources

for years and almost closed in 2015, had it not been for the community who organized a 19-day hunger strike which forced Chicago Public Schools to keep the school open. He was forced to live in an area with no jobs. And now, the racist system’s cops finish him off by shooting him in the back.

The bosses have been clearly worried about this shooting. They used their racist media to make Maurice look bad, including releasing a video that supposedly shows him holding a weapon, as well as sharing his Facebook pages in an attempt to justify their racist murder.

Various working-class neighborhoods in Chicago are gentrifying rapidly. Since 2000, over 300,000 Black workers and their families have been driven out of Chicago. The bosses are using their “war on crime and violence” as a way to move workers out of the way by evicting them out of their homes and terrorizing them.

Bronzeville could be potentially very valuable for the real estate bosses. It is close to downtown,

has two train stations, two nearby highways and new multi-million-dollar bike/pedestrian bridges leading to the revamped lakefront with new bike lanes and improved beaches.

However, people in this neighborhood that we’ve talked to understand all these plans and want to fight. Many have expressed interest in demonstrating at the police station where this killer cop works. Others want to go to City Hall and hold a march. All great ideas that our Party will continue to help organize, lead, and participate in.

PLP will keep up the struggle alongside our class sisters and brothers in any mass movements that we find ourselves. It’s essential to win more workers and students to the necessity of destroying this system of capitalism that is responsible for the widespread violence our class suffers daily. Our goal remains to wipe out these racist cops, bosses, and capitalism in Chicago and everywhere through communist revolution, and build in its place a worker-led society that meets our needs.✊

Teachers strike against education reform law, again!



MEXICO, JUNE 4—The teachers went on strike! Again! They were joined by rebellious teachers from Chiapas, Guerrero, Michoacán, and other states throughout Mexico. Again! They organized encampments in Oaxaca City and in Mexico City. Again! The capitalist state apparatus and media attacked them. Again!

The battle for small victories for the working class is neverending. Only workers power through communist revolution can finally end capitalist exploitation.

The PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party) government led by Alejandro Murat in Oaxaca and President Enrique Pedro Nieto thought they had

Section 22 (Oaxaca Teacher's Union) locked down in such a way that we wouldn't be able to rise up and fight back. The whole capitalist state apparatus was employed from June 2013 until now to impose the labor attacks disguised as educational reforms. In fact, these "reforms" are about privatizing education, cutbacks in educational funding, and firing teachers through punitive testing. They are also an attack on the teacher unions, especially the rebellious CNTE (National Coordinator of Educational Workers) and its' Oaxaca local, Section 22. This militant Oaxaca local is also demanding more teacher jobs and the freeing of all political prisoners.

Part of the teacher's strike action involves keeping a large encampment in the center of Oaxaca City while at the same time carrying out various actions in strategic locations. Thousands of teachers blocked access to Oaxaca's international airport, breaking the stranglehold of the state government and forcing them to the negotiation table to deal with the demands of the Section 22 leadership. After the government's response, the striking workers will determine how the struggle should proceed.

Today, the struggle widened to other groups, as it is being joined by the national CNTE. Nationwide 200,000 teachers are expected to participate, as well as 10,000 in Mexico City, to get rid of the educational reforms by taking advantage of the coming elections when the capitalists compete for political power. This struggle holds great importance at a time when the national capitalists and imperialists confront each other.

During the enormous march led by the CNTE on June 4th in Mexico City, PLP members and friends leafleted to show support for the teachers and called on them to organize in the communist Progressive Labor Party and reject the electoral farce. In Oaxaca meanwhile, dozens of militant teachers who have been influenced by PLP's communist ideas have remained active and are providing leadership to the protests. The false promises of the presidential candidates have not placated the militancy of the teachers. We have known through decades of experience that only through organizing and struggle can we defend ourselves against the shocks created by capitalism. Our challenge is to advance upon this understanding toward revolutionary consciousness and actions that will overthrow the system of capitalist oppression and replace it with a society of communist equality.✪

Colombia: elections only resolve fights among bosses

COLOMBIA, June 13—The Colombian ruling class finds itself in the middle of a historic election campaign between former member of leftwing rebel group and mayor of Bogota Gustavo Petro against Ivan Duque. Duque is "handpicked by ex-President Álvaro Uribe Vélez, a towering figure among the country's conservatives for his staunch opposition to the peace deal signed between the Colombian government and the FARC guerrilla group" (The Nation, 4/18).

Colombia, the U.S.'s closest strategic ally in Latin America, is dealing with a fractured ruling class that risks upending the peace deal. Volatility in Colombia means uncertainty for imperialist rivals U.S., Russia, and China.

Petro is a liberal nationalist candidate who promises to tax wealthy landowners and stock investors. He also "favor[s] downgrading their country's economic and military ties with Washington" (Foreign Affairs, 10/3/17). Duque's patron Uribe, "whose political philosophy is known as "uribismo," stands for military and paramilitary warfare against the insurgents, close ties with the United States and the ruthless eradication of drugs" (The Washington Post, 5/23).

Don't fall for the electoral game

They try to deceive the masses with their corrupt electoral circus waving their flags of: lies, anti-communism, fake peace accords and false anti-corruption campaigns. They do this to paper over their state crisis and breathe new life into their discredited institutions of bourgeois dictatorship. They pacify the struggles between local bosses and consolidate their political, economic, and cultural power over the masses who suffer under the warlords that savage them with misery, hunger, and unemployment. They increase the destruction of the environment and invite more droughts, floods, avalanches, and even earthquakes.

The only true advance for the international working class is to unify the struggle to establish a new communist social order that provides for their needs, especially the basics such as: clean water and food, well-built housing, comfortable and flexible transportation, high schools and universities with excellent education and much more. All



of this without counting money, profits, or borders.

For 208 years, Colombian capitalism has achieved its liberal-conservative dictatorships over the working class and unemployed. This has deepened the dependence on U.S. imperialism by robbing riches and natural resources. It is clear that it is really the IMF, World Bank, UN, OECD, the mafias, and the corporate monopolies that rule. Who and How? They threaten workers to vote for Iván Duque (the "right-wing" candidate) or else they will be jobless because if Gustavo Petro (the "left-wing" candidate) wins, businesses will be expropriated and businessmen will flee the country creating another Venezuela, and so we must save our country from the clutches of communism. This fear mongering fabrication hides the fact that both liberals and conservatives are workers' class enemies. The working class is clearly disillusioned by the electoral

system: "All of the surveys, however, feature a high percentage of the population intends to abstain from the vote, cast blank ballots, or are undecided" (Telesur, 6/12).

Lefty ideas at ballot box is a dead end

The working class will never have power by following the electoral path. We can see this clearly.

- FMLN (The Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front) traitors in El Salvador,
- Daniel Ortega in Nicaragua
- Nelson Mandela in South Africa
- the metal worker Lula Da Silva who ruled Brazil for eight years

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Fight Racist Disaster & Displacement in Puerto Rico

NEW YORK CITY, June 10—The normally festive Puerto Rican Day Parade was noticeably different this year as participants waved black and gray flags and wore t-shirts commemorating those who died in the 2017 Hurricane Maria. Thousands turned out, including a contingent of Puerto Rican families who have been displaced by the hurricane. At the same time, there was celebration and recognition of the resilience and grassroots organizing efforts of the working class on the island. While U.S. capitalists have plans to maintain Puerto Rico as a playground for investors, bitcoin businesses, and real estate developers, workers have a different idea. Collectives have formed all over the island to reopen the schools, fight mass evictions of farmers, occupy spaces, and develop communities that rely on solar power rather than electricity.

Katrina and Maria = genocide

According to Mercedes Martinez, president of the Teachers Federation of Puerto Rico, the immediate response to the hurricane was to close schools. She said,

Many people still don't have electricity or water. Batteries are being stolen out of generators. People are tired and vulnerable—and the ruling class is taking advantage of this disaster to advance a corporate reform agenda. For all the public sector workers in our country, including in education, organizing now is very hard.

The Secretary of Education tried to shut down more schools after the hurricane, but



This year's Puerto Rican Day parade in NYC

our communities fought back and won. Teachers worked to fix up many of the schools even though the government didn't want to reopen them. We had to protest with the communities, requesting that children be able to go back to school. She shut down

50 schools during the hurricane, and we were able to stop the closings of 30 of them.
(Labor Notes, 5/14)

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Santa Monica police racist to the core

SANTA MONICA, CA—The Santa Monica Police Department (SMPD) is racist to the core.

It was April 21, 2015. Justin Palmer, 36-year-old, tried to use the electric car charging station in Virginia Avenue Park in Santa Monica, California, to have power to drive to work the next day. It was well before 11 PM, the closing time for the park. He waited his turn and when he pulled up to the station, it was slightly after 11 PM. A cop car arrived and told Palmer the park was closed. When he explained he had arrived before 11 PM and had to wait, the cops asked for identification. When he asked what he had done wrong, the father of four was thrown to the ground and handcuffed, and pepper sprayed in the face. Palmer suffered lingering back and shoulder injuries.

While others have been seen using the charging station after closing time, the difference here is that Justin Palmer is Black. This would have been just another racist interaction between white cops and a Black motorist. However, the police assault on Palmer was caught on camera and he was able to successfully sue the SMPD.

SMPD has a history of racist profiling. A few months after the attack on Palmer, a Black woman named Fay Wells was locked out of her apartment in a mostly white neighborhood of Santa Monica. She called a locksmith to get her back inside. A white neighbor reported a burglary and 17 cops swarmed to her building, pointing their guns at her and barging into her apartment without permission.

“21st Century Policing” = putting lipstick on a pig

When these two incidents of racist policing occurred in Santa Monica, the Chief of the SMPD was Jacqueline Seabrooks, who headed the department from 2012 to 2017. In both cases, she defended the cops. While she was the Police Chief in Inglewood from 2007 to 2012, her department was so well known for police killings of Black residents that a U.S. Department of Justice report admonished the Inglewood police and a LA Times investigation found that Inglewood cops “repeatedly resorted to physical or deadly force against unarmed suspects.”

Seabrooks is a proponent of “21st Century Policing,” a program that came out of a Task Force



created by then-President Obama in 2014 in response to the mass protests against the murder of 18-year old Michael Brown by white kkkop Darren Wilson. The goal of the Task Force was to restore people's trust in and collaboration with law enforcement agencies, while continuing to reduce crime. It recommended the increased use of data gathering, technology and community partnerships to reduce crime.

One of the co-chairs of the Task Force was Charles Ramsey, who had once been the Chief of Police in Washington, DC. He became notorious in 2002 when he directed police to surround more than 400 people protesting against the International Monetary Fund and World Bank and without ordering them to leave, arrested them all, including journalists. Ramsey was overhead saying, “We’re going to lock them up and teach them a lesson!”

This is the official trying to restore faith in police departments.

Seabrooks and Ramsey are Black, and they are racist just the same. It hasn't reduced the daily, relentless racism of police in the U.S. Santa Monica uses a form of community policing, an initiative developed by former NYPD Commissioner William Bratton in the 1990's to encourage community collaboration with police. While community policing was the carrot used to entice people to cooperate with local police, at the same time Bratton developed the stick of “broken windows policing.” People are arrested for minor crimes like riding a bicycle on the sidewalk, or jumping a subway turnstile, or drinking alcohol from an open bottle, which would purportedly help to prevent bigger crimes. Studies have shown that “broken windows” arrests do nothing to prevent larger crimes but do have the effect of saddling mostly Black and Latin young people with criminal records that damage their chances of future employment.

Police and Santa Monica gentrification

Santa Monica now has a new Chief of Police, Cynthia Renaud, formerly the police chief of Folsom, California. She plans to hire more police for the steadily gentrifying Santa Monica, with its rising housing prices and evictions of low-income residents unable to afford the skyrocketing rents. More than 2,000 rent controlled units have been lost in Santa Monica. Meanwhile, the city has become the home of high tech and music companies such as Activision Blizzard, Sony's Naughty Dog and Universal Music Group.

The role of the police will be to keep a lid on the growing anger of people upset with rising rents, evictions and other social problems. They will be used to harass the homeless in Santa Monica, whose numbers are increasing. And they will target Black and Latin residents for special harassment, as they've done in the past.

In a class divided society, the police will always be used to defend the interests of the wealthy while harassing and imprisoning the most oppressed. If we want to change that, we have to fight for a society without classes, without inequality and racism, a society based on sharing and cooperation: communism.☺

LETTER

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

NEA fails workers in Puerto Rico & exposes its racist self

The leadership of the National Education Association (NEA), the union I'm in, should not be trusted. They will never take a public stand on behalf of teachers, other union members, or students. What I know now as a delegate to the national meeting last year makes this clear.

Each year, thousands of teachers gather in a major city in the United States to discuss NEA policies and programs. Educator-delegates debate and vote on requests and demands of other teachers from around the country. Oftentimes, one person will suggest an action and that proposal will get debated, amended, and voted on.

Even before hurricane Maria hit Puerto Rico last year, the entire population was getting slammed by the ever-growing capitalist monster to take anything and everything away from the working class. The U.S. government was debating a bill that would force Puerto Ricans further into poverty because of debt mostly not even owed by them. I wrote up a proposal to bring attention to the problem.

It said, "Through a press release, the NEA will

state our opposition to the draconian austerity measures and privatization of public services being imposed on the people of Puerto Rico through the Puerto Rican Oversight Management and Economic Stability Act (PROMESA) of 2016, as this debt was not created nor is owed by the Puerto Rican people." Schools were closing across the island. Teachers were losing wages and jobs. Students were paying too much for university study.

We also held a rally in front of the Santander Bank in downtown Boston, MA where the teachers' meeting was being held. Speakers in favor of the proposal planned to connect their city's budget cuts to the attacks on the working class in Puerto Rico.

Once the proposal was read for discussion, there were no objections and no debates. Essentially, thousands of educators from across the country voted in support of this press release.

Did they do it? Of course not. Their utter disregard is clearly racist against the working class of Puerto Rico. By Progressive Labor's standards, this demand barely had teeth yet the capitalist-dominated leadership of the NEA figured out how to NOT do it.

NEA decided that quiet lobbying efforts would fulfill the intent of the proposal and wrote, "While NEA was not successful in all advocacy efforts, we made

sure to be on the record by sending a letter to Congress voicing concerns." Simply put—NEA betrayed educators and families.

NEA's leadership used the convenience of Hurricane Maria that continues to devastate Puerto Rico's people as a pathetic excuse for doing nothing. In fact, I bet that the capitalists remembered how easy it was to privatize New Orleans public schools in 2005 after Hurricane Katrina devastated the mostly Black areas of the city, and decided Puerto Rico was next.

A press release, weak by PL's revolutionary standards, would have shown an ounce of support. NEA denied their members even that. This clearly exposes the NEA leadership as pro-capitalist and unwilling to risk a thing for the international working class. We shouldn't forget this.

Puerto Rico's students, teachers, and other workers have been protesting, getting beaten up by private mercenaries and local police. They are losing their jobs, their homes, their schools and are being forced from their communities. There is no acceptable excuse for NEA's utter disregard of the press release—a simple demand of solidarity. This is a clear lesson that capitalism cannot be reformed and workers must unite for communism.

★★★★★

Colombia

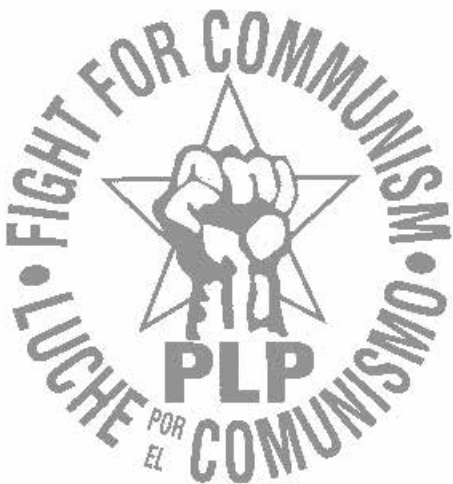
Continued from page 4

- union leader and former Bogota mayor Luis Eduardo Garzon the minister of labor
- Michelle Bachelet who lived under the fascist dictatorship of Pinochet.

More recently, we see in Colombia how former guerillas and union leaders have become mayors and governors who oppress and jail their electorate. These elected officials have followed their bosses down the path of nationalism and class collaboration, demoralizing the revolutionary struggle and reinforcing the concept of bourgeois democracy.

Capitalists need elections to sell us on the myth that voting will help to reform the profit system and make it more responsive to the needs of workers. However, this is not the only reason. They also hope to find populist (fascist) candidates that can mislead and pacify the millions of workers who are not conforming to their plan. In either case, our class gains nothing by electing either one.

The bosses' candidates will never liberate the working class. Only the destruction of the bourgeois state and its wage slavery with a communist revolution can liberate the working class from oppression, exploitation, racism, sexism, and imperialist war. We don't need the bosses or their fake elections. With our newspaper DESAFIO we are present in marches, meetings, and electoral discussions; presenting to workers our ideas about the unity of struggle and organization. Many tell us that this sounds fine, but it is a long struggle, and what do we do in the meantime? We respond with class struggle and recruitment efforts to PLP.



Puerto Rico

Continued from page 5

It gave big real estate interests the ability to issue mass eviction notices to farmers and 55,000 foreclosures to families.

Following the model of New Orleans, the first response to the 2005 Hurricane Katrina, thousands were kicked out of public housing, which eventually became tourist areas and fancy condominiums. Public schools were closed, teachers were fired, the teachers union was crushed, and schools were privatized. Houses of working class people, mostly Black workers in the city's Ninth Ward, were torn down as residents were forced to relocate to Houston and other cities.

As thousands of workers languished at the Superdome, reports came in about people dying there. Black workers waited for hours and days to be rescued on their rooftops. The most shocking episode during the aftermath of Katrina was the shootings of Black residents on the Danziger bridge by New Orleans police as the residents were trying to get to safety.

The racism of the U.S. media was on full display as white residents were portrayed as "looking for food" while Black residents were "looting".

U.S. capitalism & imperialism, the real hurricane

Puerto Rico has been the richest colony in U.S. history. As documented in Juan Gonzalez's *Harvest of Empire*, Puerto Rico has been the home to huge drug companies (Big Pharma) and hundreds of Fortune 500 companies. Due to a tax loophole, U.S. owned firms escaped federal taxes. "Puerto Rico, in short, has become the primary offshore tax haven for the American drug industry" (p. 283). In 2008, nearly four out of every ten dollars made on the island ended up in U.S. firms (p. 284).

Gonzalez explains how the colonial status of the island turned Puerto Rico into a corporate bonanza unlike any other in the world, with duty-free trade, low wages, and tax loopholes. Seven members of a Management Board (known as La Junta) is charged with implementing cuts in pensions, public health and education to pay the debt created by the ruling class.



The struggle continues

Last March, a student led strike at the University of Puerto Rico shut down the campus in protest of austerity measures and the fiscal crisis. Solidarity marches were organized on campuses in the U.S. This year, workers and students rallied in the capital, San Juan on May Day and faced tear gas and arrests. Immediately after the hurricane, community groups (Brigades) began organizing in many areas, collectively organizing to bring food and water to people. At the same time, as in Haiti after the earthquake, various well-funded groups have shown up on the scene, backed by Big Pharma and other capitalist interests. Their goal is to whitewash over what has been done to the working class in Puerto Rico and prevent rebellions and challenges to the system.

All roads lead to revolution. We salute the many who have been fighting back in every way possible. The goal of an egalitarian society and workers power has never been more important. Whether we are fighting for the displaced Puerto Rican families living in NYC hotels, the students whose schools have closed, the college students whose tuition has increased, the workers whose pensions are in danger of being cut, the farmers whose land has been taken—we in PLP say always keep our ideas on the prize while in struggle—we have a world to win!✊

Rulers' profit motive destroys transit for workers

Continued from page 8

MTA makes workers pay

The MTA is already busy lining the banks' pockets. "The MTA's debt is greater than that of at least 30 of the world's nations...[This] heavy reliance on borrowing to fix transit is crushing riders like a packed subway car at rush hour" (Gothamist, 2/12/2015). To pay off its \$38.6 billion in debt, a whole 16 percent (\$2.6 billion) of the MTA \$16.6 billion budget will go to its annual debt service (NY Daily News, 2/13). This has made it impossible for the MTA to keep up with basic maintenance.

As the subways continue to rot, NYC Mayor de Blasio and NY Governor Andrew Cuomo are in a

finger pointing war. This is going on even as under de Blasio "the city's contribution to M.T.A. operations...dropped by almost 75 percent" (NY Times 11/18/17) and Cuomo continues to feed the banks a steady diet of transit loans and resulting interest payments.

Bosses' deadly solution to crisis is fascism

The bosses that de Blasio and Cuomo front for will eventually end the infighting. But the ruling class' way of settling their differences in this period of capitalism in crisis will be brutal for the working class. The Italian fascists claimed Mussolini made the trains run on time. While that's a pro-fascist myth, fascism is capitalism's go-to method when faced with crisis. In Italy and Germany, the bosses

moved to save their crumbling system by forcing bosses to pay more to the state and forcing the working class to kill and die in the name of the nation.

Fascism is rising and it is the way the bosses will try to deal with their problems like crumbling infrastructure. Our struggle is to fight the stealing and their service cuts and fight for a system that serves the working class. They can't fix capitalism. It is crisis after crisis, war after war.

Our liberation from this cycle of destruction comes from recognizing that the bosses' politicians aren't going to save us and that the working class, organized in the Progressive Labor, can build a communist society that will serve the needs of workers around the world. ☸



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

Guatemala, a volcano only for the poor

El País (Spain) 6/9/18—At 6 in the morning, Domingo Lopez, a thin and wirey 79 year-old farmer, woke up in...one of the six communities that rise up the flanks of the Fuego Volcano.

At this early hour...a special bulletin had already been issued by the Institute of Vulcanology...Nonetheless, due to disorganization, a lack of means, or laziness, no one thought to warn them in time...

And so he, his parents, siblings and grandchildren were buried beneath tons of ash following a river of boiling water, gas and rocks...

...a fine magma killed 109 and scattered through the area another 200 that have not been found and for whom no one is searching..."We didn't have time to do anything, the sky darkened and by the time I realized what was happening a hot river was rushing down the sides of the mountain knocking down everything"...

While this was happening, about three miles away the guests at one of the the most luxurious golf resorts in Central America...the hotel La Reunion, where rooms cost around \$200 a night...more than 300 people were evacuated from the imposing buildings...when at around 3 pm the volcanic tsunami of mud and ash razed the complex it was already empty...

"...We were expecting this since 6 am when the bulletin arrived from the Institute for Vulcanology. These are public alerts and we received them every few hours like everyone...explained a saddened Evelyn Gomez, manager of the hotel...in the face of the indifference shown by Conred (the civil defense) that ignored the warnings...Evelyn is responsible for having saved 300 lives, roughly the same number that were killed or remain missing..."

The negligence continued throughout the day. A Conred worker...showed this newspaper reporter their mobile phone...[with] an alert...describing the increased seismic activity and ordering an evacuation of the area. By this time, villages like El Rodeo, La Reina, La Libertad, and San Miguel Los Lotes were nothing more than entombed memories. "These deaths could have been avoided, or, at the very least, reduced in number", explained Alejandro Maldonado, the director of Conred for 12 years.

Truckers' strike spreads, paralyzes Brazil, defies military

NYT, 5/28 — ...A weeklong standoff between striking truck drivers and the government has....[seen] hundreds of trucker roadblocks sealed off highways across the country as a protest against rising fuel prices ground Brazil's economy to a halt....Gas stations have run out of fuel.

Dozens of flights have been canceled, fresh food supplies...have dwindled and....many schools and universities suspended classes....

...A deal with the strike leaders proved premature. Roadblocks were maintained...and oil workers announced they intended to go on strike,...raising the prospect of a deepening crisis....

...[President] Temer's...order authorizing the military to clear roads using force.... failed to bring the strike to an end....

Union leaders have urged drivers to accept [a] deal. But...many protesters held firm....

Tremer's speech...prompted Brazilians frustrated by...a failed government to honk their horns and bang pots from their windows in protest in many cities across the country....

On [May 28]...protesters gathered at an oil refinery on the outskirts of Rio de Janeiro, which has been one of the focal points of the strike....Scores of unemployed oil workers, motorcycle couriers and public transportation workers said they wanted their grievances addressed as well.

"This started with the truckers but it reached millions," said Alexsandro Faria, 39, an unemployed scaffold builder...laid off in 2016...."If we only stay on our sofas, complaining about corruption, it won't work."

U.S. anthem written by slave-owner, extols slavery

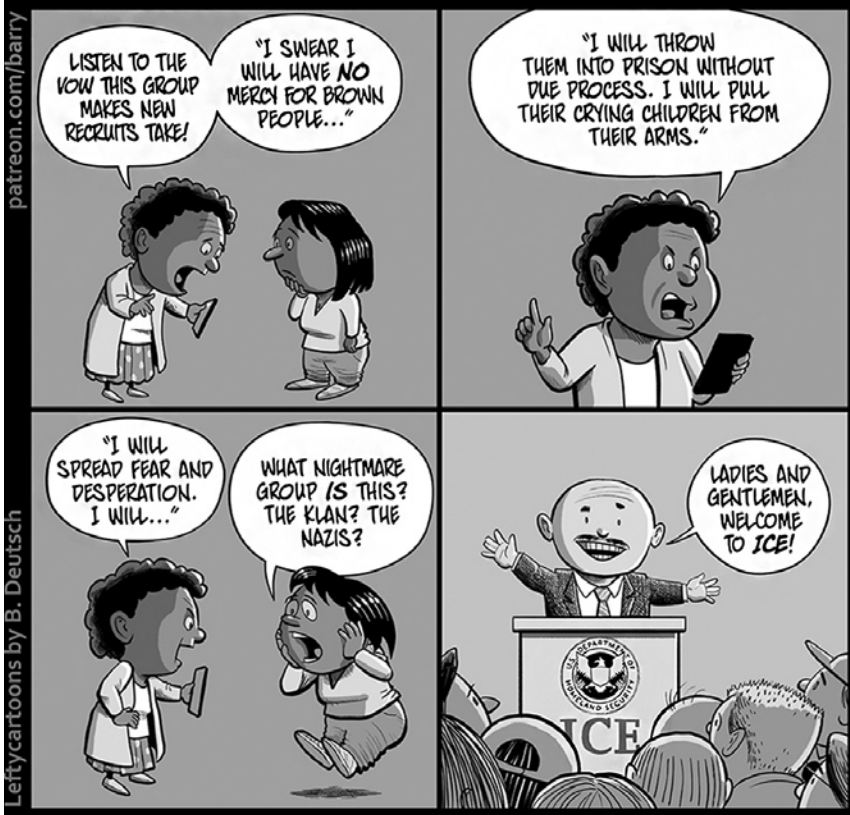
NYT, 6/10 — Many...born black in the 1950s abandoned reverence toward the national anthem....Muhammad Ali was stripped of his heavyweight boxing title for refusing induction into the Army. And the Vietnam War was unmasked as...morally repugnant...built on...racism and lies.

By...1969, dissent from the national anthem was endemic. It was an almost every-day occurrence to see groups of African-Americans (and whites as well)...remaining defiantly seated at sporting events as the audience rose...for the "Star-Spangled Banner...."

Francis Scott Key, a slave-owning Washington lawyer, wrote it to commemorate an American victory over the British during the War of 1812....

...The song tightened its grip on the country during the height of the lynching era in the South and became popular at baseball games...when African-Americans were barred from white baseball....Black columnists discredited the song by unearthing a long suppressed third stanza ("No refuge could save the hireling and slave/From the terror or flight or the gloom of the grave")...reflecting the composer's embrace of slavery....

...African-Americans [in a] recent poll show that two-thirds of them believe that the national



anthem protests — begun by Colin Kaepernick to protest injustice — are acceptable....The National Football League's decision to curtail the protests through...fines....is likely to radicalize players who...believe they have a role to play in the debate about police brutality and the resurgence of white supremacy in the age of Trump. Kneeling...may have been just the beginning.

Capitalists' profits thrive; Mattel CEO made 4,987 times median worker

NYT, 5/27 — A Walmart employee earning the company's median salary of \$19,177 would have to work more than a thousand years to earn the \$22.2 million that...the company's chief executive was awarded in 2017. At Live Nation Entertainment...an employee earning the median pay of \$24,406 would need to work for 2,893 years to earn the \$70.6 million that its chief executive...made last year....

"It's grotesque how unequal this has become," said Louis Hyman, a business historian at Cornell University. "For C.E.O.s, it's like they are winning the lottery year after year. For a lot of Americans, they don't have any savings....The chief executive's pay was 4,987 times that of the median employee...."

"Particularly in low-wage jobs, people are struggling to pay for housing, for health insurance, for child care," said Jennifer Gordon, a law professor at Fordham University. "When people are working two and three jobs and are not able to put together a decent wage, then at a very basic level they don't have time to be active in their children's schools...."

...The country's 200 chief executives....almost all of them white men, were awarded some \$4.4 billion last year...."The top layer of management lives like kings and queens, while the people at the bottom are scrabbling for a decent existence," Ms. Gordon said.

Working class under attack

Capitalism's profit drive destroys transit



MTA by the numbers

- Largest transit system in the world
- 1 in 3 riders make less than \$25,000 per year
- 2 in 3 riders are Black, Latin, Asian, or indigenous
- 61 percent of workers are Black or Latin

infrastructure and social services. Public schools, hospitals and the transportation system fell into ruin. The ruling class tried to shift the cost further onto workers by raising fares. The working class rebelled and refused as much as it could and still make it to work. By 1976, ridership had fallen to 1.5 billion from a 1946 peak of 2.5 billion (MTA).

As cities were dismantled, the short period of post-war capitalist growth came to a screeching halt. The 1973–75 recession signaled a qualitative change to a period of low economic growth in the U.S. and other post WWII powers (Fortune 2/2/2016).

Transit workers on strike in December 2005. (It's illegal under the bosses' laws for city workers to strike.) The workers effectively shut the city down while bosses lost millions per day for the three days. Today, we must raise class consciousness by building worker-rider unity against the MTA and the banks.

As sharpening inter-imperialist rivalry leads to larger wars and fascism, the U.S. capitalist rulers are trying to solve the crisis of their failing profit system by attacking the working class. Over the next several issues of CHALLENGE, we will be writing about how these attacks are affecting workers—and how a communist-led revolutionary movement can fight back.

New York City, the wealth capital in the most powerful country, has the worst subway system in the world. Chronic breakdowns and track signal problems have caused the on-time train rate to plummet to 65 percent (NYT 11/18/2017).

Governor Andrew Cuomo said the MTA “estimates it will cost \$43 billion and take about 15 years to turn around New York City’s struggling subway and bus systems...That comes in addition to the approximately \$50 billion in capital improvements the systems are likely to need over the next 15 years (Wall street Journal, 5/23). As the politicians and capitalists hash out an MTA plan this week, we look at the racist profit motives of the subways.

MTA is an example of how the profit drive destroys even the useful things under capitalism. Infrastructure like the subway system is only built, maintained, and renewed when the bosses need it for profits or to fight their wars. The MTA, which is not profitable to run except to the banks, historically has been minimally maintained leading to succeeding crisis. Only a communist society will build an infrastructure system to serve the needs of the working class worldwide.

Built to profit & segregate

The expansive train network connecting the city was considered a modern wonder in the early 20th century. Today it's filthy stations and literally rotting track beds stand as a stark example of how capitalism in decay is failing to serve one of the basic needs of society: getting people to work.

The impetus to build the subway was to increase property values in a growing Manhattan by pushing workers out of then-densely populated lower Manhattan. Since then, MTA fell into a cycle of crises. As Black and Latin workers were forced to bear the brunt of segregation, the subways suffered decades of neglect and decay in the second half the 20th century.

With each crisis, the banks lent billions of dollars to a broken system. The interest payments on those loans has continued to bleed the system dry to this day by eating up money that could be going to maintenance but instead goes into the pockets

of the ruling class.

The initial system was built by the City by borrowing from the banks and then leased out to private companies. The working class bore the cost as the city cut back on other services to pay the banks back from city tax revenue. Eventually the private companies, unable to raise fares because wages were so low, abandoned their franchises and the city took them over. (From a Nickel to a Token by Andrew J. Sparberg)

Post-World War II segregation

The next subway crisis was triggered by the ruling-class imposed segregation of workers after World War II. Soldiers, returning from defeating fascism in Europe, were demanding equality. The working class, through the international communist movement, was in the leadership of a large part of the world. The capitalists, terrified of a united working class, built racism and decimated the cities.

After World War II, the Federal Housing Administration (a precursor to HUD) and the Veterans Administration hired builders to mass-produce American suburbs... in order to ease the post-war housing shortage. Builders received federal loans on the explicit condition that homes would not be sold to Black homebuyers. (CITYLAB, 9/2/2015)

The loss of population, businesses and jobs devastated the tax base in the cities, leaving Black and Latin workers to live in the decayed shells of cities starved of funds. The MTA rapidly declined.

Recession

As New York City was bled dry, local bosses didn't pay for even the most basic maintenance of

The 80s

In the 1980s, the NY bosses returned to the banks for more loans. The money to get new subway cars and modernize stations kept the subway system running. But the reprieve was short lived. The underlying problem of low economic growth/ low tax environment deprived the system of needed funds.

The interest payments on new loans made things worse and successive Republican and Democratic Mayors and Governors from Rudolph Giuliani and George Pataki to Bill de Blasio and Mario Cuomo have cut spending on the subways and diverted tax money intended for basic maintenance (NY Times 11/18/2017).

Subway improvements for gentrification?

Much of the system's core, the track and signals, has been neglected for 100 years. Instead of fixing the core, the bosses' solution has been to spend billions on small expansions in the wealthy Upper East Side and to the formerly industrial area on Manhattan's far West Side. These few subway stops were built with over \$6 billion in new loans. They are designed to increase property values and raise tax dollars by moving white wealthy people into the city and push out the remaining Black and Latin workers in Manhattan.

Even as the NYC bosses would like to improve the subways for the newly gentrified increasingly white city, they are saddled by the lack of taxes and the increasing problems from lack of maintenance over the last 50 years. The short-term nature of pressures on a society that is decaying inhibits the bosses from solving basic problems even when they are willing to spend money on them.

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