



CHALLENGE

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Workers vie for power, battle racist housing



NEW YORK CITY, January 21—"Whose streets? Our streets! Whose city? Our city!" On Martin Luther King Day, these fierce chants set the icy streets ablaze as a multiracial and multi-generational battalion of nearly three hundred workers marching against working-class displacement. This rally exposed that under capitalism, housing is a commodity, not a basic necessity.

The march was a result of the anger of workers across the city, and the tireless anti-displacement organizing the Coalition to Protect Chinatown, and the City Wide Alliance against Displacement. Workers poured in from Staten Island to Philly to protest the city's racist capitulating to real estate developers—pricing out mainly Black and Latin workers from their homes. A contingent from the

Progressive Labor Party (PLP) joined the march, and was inspired by the militant show of multiracial unity, and working-class women leadership. In spite of this being on record as one of the coldest days in January, the working class in NYC was

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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

Venezuela caught between rival imperialists

The economic and political crisis is rapidly intensifying in the resource-rich nation of Venezuela. As workers starve or die for lack of basic medical care, battle lines have been drawn between blocs of rival imperialists. The possibilities range from a CIA-inspired coup, to an all-out proxy war to a U.S. military intervention.

On January 23, Juan Guaidó, the opposition leader and head of Venezuela’s National Assembly, declared himself interim president in open defiance of last spring’s contested national elections. His move was supported by the U.S. bosses and their allies in Latin America and Europe. Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro shot back with a demand that all U.S. diplomats leave the country within 72 hours. Maduro has the backing of U.S. rivals Russia, China, and Iran.

It is the international working class that stands to suffer most from the capitalists’ power struggles. As workers, we have nothing to gain from either the imperialist bosses and puppets like Guaidó, or fake-left bosses like Maduro and his phony “socialist” predecessor, Hugo Chavez. Our path to liberation lies in building a mass Progressive Labor Party and international Red Army, to crush the profit-hungry capitalists with communist revolution!

U.S. imperialists eye an opportunity

With the rise of Guaidó and mass opposition to the corrupt and disastrous Maduro regime, the U.S. capitalist class sees a golden opportunity to take control of Venezuela’s vast natural resource wealth. The country’s Orinoco Belt region is home to the world’s largest proven oil reserves, with estimates of close to 300 billion barrels (Telesur, 1/28).

Petroleum is the lifeblood of industrial capitalism. Control over the flow of oil and gas is essential for global imperialist domination. Since Guaidó’s announcement, U.S. President Donald Trump, along with National Security Advisor John Bolton and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, have thrown their weight behind Guaidó. They’re trying to use the crisis to tip the country in favor of U.S. imperialism.

To that end, the U.S. offered \$20 million in “humanitarian” aid—a drop in the bucket in a country where people lost an average of 25 pounds of body weight in the space of a year and nearly 90 percent live in poverty (borgenproject.org). The Trump administration also imposed new sanctions on Venezuela’s state-owned oil company, PDVSA, with the intention of funneling billions of dollars in oil revenue away from the Maduro government (Washington Post, 1/28). If these measures prove inadequate in forcing regime change, Bolton has echoed Trump’s stance that “all options are on the table,” including U.S. troop deployment (The Telegraph, 1/29).

The call to oust Maduro is a bipartisan affair, a rare moment of unity for the divided U.S. ruling class. Democrats have upped the ante by pushing bills through Congress to undermine Maduro’s rule (CBS News, 1/31). But the fact that Maduro is still hanging on to power—at least as CHALLENGE goes to press—exposes the accelerating decline of U.S. imperialism.

Chinese, Russian imperialists won’t be easily uprooted

The significance of the U.S. rulers’ push for regime change has not been lost on their two imperialist arch-rivals, China and Russia, who have long targeted Venezuela to expand their influence in Latin America. Both countries are formally objecting to U.S. sanctions. It is im-

portant to note, however, that the well-being of workers in Venezuela doesn’t factor into these complaints.

The Russian bosses recently have enlarged their footprint in Venezuela. Over the last few years, they have lent the Maduro government \$17 billion, and the two nations held joint military drills as recently as December 2018 (msn.com, 1/26). In response to the 2014 U.S. destabilization of Ukraine, a nation on their own border, Russian imperialists are digging in to keep Venezuela as their military beachhead in Latin America, historically the U.S. imperialists’ backyard.

Between 2007 and 2014, China supplied \$63 billion in loans to Venezuela, or 53 percent of all Chinese loans to Latin America for that period. To ensure repayment from the cash-strapped country, the Chinese bosses insisted on being reimbursed with oil (Foreign Policy, 6/6/17). They understand that a pro-U.S. Guaidó regime could disrupt both their oil supply and their strategic regional influence. To defend their stake, they have increased arms sales to Maduro to help his military and police death squads crack down on internal dissent (Al Jazeera, 1/30). At the same time, China’s Foreign Ministry issued a public statement that notably refused to take sides. If Maduro goes under, China would need “to cultivate a relationship with [Guaidó] that preserves its economic interests” (New York Times, 2/4). There is no loyalty among capitalist thieves. Even so, the clash of interests of the three top imperialist powers could set off a bloody proxy war that would threaten millions of working-class lives.

Compromises with capitalism always fail the working class

For workers, everyday life is a crisis in Venezuela. An estimated 2 million people have fled the country since 2015, nearly 5,000 per day (The Guardian, 10/1/18). Millions more are facing acute shortages of medicine and food, skyrocketing inflation rates, and a brutal crackdown on protests.

The experiment with a fake-socialist welfare state in Venezuela, piloted first by Hugo Chavez, was doomed to fail workers from the start. Chavez bankrolled a considerable expansion of the social safety net by exploiting the country’s massive oil wealth while also skimming off billions for his “Bolivarian” bosses. But shortly after his death in 2013, as the price of oil plummeted, the safety net was ripped to shreds. What remains is an intensely nationalist and impoverished military state under the murderous rule of Maduro and his drug-trafficking cronies (New York Times, 7/15/18).

Workers never held state power in Venezuela. They never controlled the means of production. A mass communist party must destroy the profit system through armed revolution, and build an egalitarian society based on production for workers’ needs. We can never make that happen by electing fake-leftist misleaders beholden to capitalist interests, in Venezuela or the U.S. or anywhere else.

A communist world to win

PLP calls on the international working class to undertake our own path to power. We call on workers to reject stooges like Guaidó and Maduro and their imperialist masters, and to fight instead for communist revolution. As contradictions between the bosses heat up and erupt in open conflict, the need for a mass international PLP and Red Army becomes all the more essential. It is the only road out of this capitalist hell.

Workers of the world, unite! We have a world to win, and nothing to lose but our chains✊

Workers vie for power, battle racist housing

unstoppable on this day.

Capitalism puts profits over workers' needs

Since his 2013 election, liberal de Blasio has bent over backwards for developers—the same ones who funded his 2017 reelection campaign—granting them sweetheart tax abatements to build giant skyscrapers. In turn, they're supposed to must set aside some units as “affordable” housing.

The reality is that when the bosses determine what is affordable, these apartments aren't actually affordable for many working-class people. Under capitalism, housing isn't a human right. Rather, it's a commodity, one the ruling class has a tight grip on, and heavily regulates, choosing profit over workers' lives. We see this playing out in NYCHA (New York City Housing Authority) with residents living in deplorable conditions such as decrepit apartments, toxic lead in their water, no heat. Similarly, there are more homeless youth in the city than people living in Albany (NY Times 10/18).

A mayor for the bosses

Yet our “progressive” mayor has time to offer Amazon a \$3 billion tax break to expand its global empire by building their headquarters in Long Island City, another clear testament to the fact that de Blasio is merely a servant to ruling class interests. Some progressive! Workers know better, as reflected in one sign with a photo of de Blasio and Trump side by side boldly reading “De Blasio and Trump two sides of the same coin.” Those contradictions quelled up the anger in our bodies, warming us as we headed downtown. Truly, this system has nothing for us to look forward to, except to smash it!

City Planning Commission; stooges for the bosses

In December, the City Planning Commission approved four luxury towers for the Lower East Side area, which initially triggered the march. The commission ignored standing zoning laws

forbidding such developments in the area—ones that will interfere with local privacy, sunlight, and traffic. Not so coincidentally, many CPC members receive money from real estate interests, just like their ringleader. Members at the mass organization are realizing how spineless and sniveling these politicians and planners are, and that they only see the dollar signs.

One Latin worker mentioned how we were standing directly under the Extell tower, another ugly glass box, with a “poor door” (a separate entrance for low-income workers). She laid out clearly another key demand: “No towers! No compromise!” She emphasized that de Blasio and Trump are two sides of the same capitalist coin by saying that while Trump wants to build a wall to keep workers from Latin America out, de Blasio wants to build towers to force workers out of their homes and neighborhood. The young comrade went on to chant this slogan that while Immigration and Customs Enforcement deports workers, de Blasio displaces workers in this so called “sanctuary city.”

Later, a young Asian worker delivered a rousing speech about the lawsuit the community filed to stop the illegal towers, and how it would serve as the ultimate push for the Chinatown Working Group Plan (CWG). The CWG plan, once dismissed by the mayor as too ambitious, was a plan created by workers in the Lower East Side and Chinatown that would create protections against rezoning, and would allow working people in their community to control what gets built, and for whom.

De Blasio, kkkops try to shut us down

Days before the march, the City tried shutting us down by saying we could only use the sidewalk because we would be blocking bus lanes. That only increased our determination. De Blasio's goons in blue, the NYPD, were out in aggressive full force, trying to intimidate us and saying being off the street is for our safety. These kkkops pretend they care for our well being, yet they're going into our neighborhoods, murdering Black youth

Fighting racist upzonings

What is happening in the Lower East Side stems from a 2008 city downzoning for the East Village area, while leaving out the less rich Lower East Side and Chinatown.

This racist restructuring is giving way to the mass towers going up in the area. It's also happening in Inwood and East Harlem, which lost such protections in recent zoning approvals. We're working with our mass organization in is supporting the Chinatown Working Group plan. The CWG would place height restrictions on buildings in the neighborhood.

with impunity. They threatened to arrest some of us for inciting a riot, yet the only ones being violent were the cops. We eventually outflanked them and briefly took the streets to spread our message! Police are an essential part of the city's displacement agenda. While de Blasio passes policy, his thugs are out here enforcing it.

One year anniversary of Bowery' tenants struggle

The march came around a year to the day that the city's Department of Housing Preservation and Development unjustly evicted over 70 Asian tenants at 80-85 Bowery, all because their slumlord needed to make repairs he'd lagged on for years. It was a blatant effort to transform their homes into luxury condos. The Coalition united with these workers against the racist slumlord and the City, beating both back with mass actions and class struggle, until they were able to return to their homes last August. It is clear these efforts to displace us are connected. And they won't stop until we end them permanently. Though a reform struggle, it enables us workers to push back against the ruling class, showing us what we are capable of accomplishing, sharpening us to become vehicles for class struggle. We have a lot more work to do, and a world to win! Our working class brothers and sisters leading the way towards communist revolution. ☸

Newark rallies hit racist gentrification, and homelessness

NEWARK, NJ January 29—With three days of rallies on the steps of City Hall organized by the War Against Poverty Coalition (WAPC), the fight-back against mass homelessness in Newark has picked up!. These rallies demanded an end to homelessness, gentrification and racist unemployment. They came on the brink of an arctic blast of cold air and on the anniversary of the death of Carolyn Perry, a disabled Black worker who froze to death four years ago in a tent city in Newark. Even as we fight to save lives in the middle of this deep freeze, we must remember that capitalism has its fingerprints all over the crime scene surrounding our brothers and sisters who have died as the direct result of racism and poverty.

The capitalist system we live under dictates that the very things that people need to survive—food, housing, heat, hot water, etc.—must be sold as a commodity, so that some boss makes a profit. This forces unemployed and low-wage employed workers who cannot afford living space to double up in apartments, live in shelters, camp out in tents, or sleep in bus and train stations, even while billionaires live in huge mansions. Only a communist revolution would change that dynamic. Our revolution would ensure that everything produced by the working class, including all decent housing, would be taken

over and distributed according to need.

Newark “redevelopment” no renaissance for workers

As in many industrial centers in the Northeast and Midwest, Newark became a predominantly Black and Latin city in the 1960s as more and more bosses closed or moved their factories and shops down south or to other countries. Residents were left with the social consequences of mass racist unemployment—poverty, drug use, mental health problems, crime, etc. In the 1980s, under the guise of a “renaissance” for city residents, the biggest corporations, led by Prudential Insurance Company, devised a plan to slowly gentrify Newark's Downtown District. With the help of local and state politicians, who approved massive tax abatements and tax credits to spur “redevelopment,” Prudential's plans have largely been implemented. Rents in the areas in and around Downtown have soared. This has, of course, resulted in more and more mainly Black and Latin workers being put out on the streets.

Politicians' failures trigger fightback

“Rising rents, tax abatements; we won't accept our displacement.” With these words, the WAPC rallies linked the gentrification of

Downtown Newark to the increasing homelessness on its main streets and at Penn Station, the local bus and train terminal. City-funded shelters simply can't accommodate hundreds who are in need. One WAPC brother went to Penn Station during early morning hours and took pictures of scores of homeless workers sleeping on the floor of the station behind bright red barricades put up by transit cops, in stairwells or on passenger benches. WAPC enlarged the pictures and taped them on poster-board. WAPC held up these and other signs as residents passed by City Hall.

Numerous residents expressed their support for the cause. Several WAPC members were activated through the struggle to make all 3 rallies happen. Several other workers signed up to join the fight against homelessness and racist gentrification.

Within WAPC, there are still many illusions about relying on politicians to change things, and about reform plans promising “affordable housing for all.” Capitalism can never provide housing based upon need for more than a tiny section of the working class. Competition for available housing underlies the profit plans of developers, investors and bankers. PLP members will continue to work in WAPC to bring our ideas to this battle for our class brothers and sisters☸

Oakland: Stop racist attacks on education!



The struggle in Oakland, California is heating up! The last couple of weeks have been action packed as the multi-racial working class, students, teachers, parents and community supporters, has mobilized against on-going, racist plans to dismantle public education from k-12 to Community College. In the following three instances, Progressive Labor Party members and friends are actively promoting communist ideas, as they fight for better schools.

No More Chances for the Chancellor

January 17—As Oakland teachers gear up for a potential strike, Laney College and Peralta District staff put the bosses’ minions and cowardly unions on notice. A contingent of faculty at Laney Community College riled up the crowd at a pre-semester gathering and faced down the Chancellor. 300 members of the morning audience stood up, turned their backs for 30 seconds, and chanted along with us, “When education is under attack, what do we do? Stand up! Fight back!” Even though the chancellor was flanked by three large Alameda County Sheriffs, a cowardly boss tactic, the courageous workers did not back down and set the tone for the new semester. We cannot allow the status quo abuse to continue without causing a ruckus and hoped our action would spark more fight back.

For years now, the Chancellor has funneled money for needed classes and programs to hire chums and associates in the usual administrative shell gaming of public funds. A year ago, a collective of staff, students, community and at the last

minute, union members campaigned to help defeat his attempts to sell district land to the Oakland A’s baseball team. He’s a true capitalist school boss, unapologetic, and as we say in the Bay, really “feelin’ himself.”

This fightback was discussed about a month ago. It was popularly received by a large part of the local union but it took the leadership of some teachers to turn talk into action. Despite the lack of time, we organized: created & printed a leaflet which documented the chancellor’s well known abuses, blasted fight tunes and crafted handmade signs.

Days later, the Chancellor tried to contain the damage and “flip the script” of this bold action with an email to the staff in the four Colleges in the Peralta Community College District. He called for unity “to institute a new culture” a New Peralta Way. Many know that this “unity” is garbage. The Chancellor’s “culture” is to destabilize the curriculum so students can’t get needed courses for graduation, create “debt peonage” among students who can’t afford the fees, destroy adjunct teaching positions with part-timing and drive dedicated teachers out of a job with below subsistence wages.



Oakland Unified School District, Ready to Strike!

January 18—Teachers and students from five Oakland high schools staged a sick out/wildcat rally and march on Oakland Unified School District (OUSD). Not officially sectioned by the Oakland

Education Association (OEA) meant that this action, like the previous wildcat, represented rank and file teachers on the move organizing at the school level and reaching out to students and families. “Ready to Strike” was the theme of the day. As we distributed over sixty CHALLENGES, PLP members learned that many teachers in Oakland are committed to schools for the common good just like the teachers in Los Angeles(LA). They understand that teachers’ teaching conditions are students learning conditions. Students and parents both talked about how the high turnover rate of Oakland teachers was due to unsustainable pay, housing insecurity and arbitrary administration decision to “non reelect” teachers after one or two years.



Workers & students dig deep to keep Roots Academy open

January 23—Teachers, parents and students from Roots Academy shut down the OUSD to stop school closing. Citing Budget problems, “empty seats” and “under enrollment”, OUSD plans to close 24 schools over the next years while they process “public” Charter School applications to use “empty classroom” on public school sites.

Roots Academy is the first on the chopping block. Closing Roots is the epitome of institutional racism and displacement; it is a predominately Black and Latin school in the working class neighborhood of East Oakland, which is also subject to foreclosures, evictions, and profiteering in the housing market. The board’s “experts” have cited Roots as a “failing school.”

The bureaucratic drivel about following Board procedure and listening to the staff recommendations to close the school did not impress the students as they continued to denounce the board. A few days later at a special meeting packed again with Roots supporters—OUSD racist Board of Ed voted to close Roots Academy. OEA plans a legal challenge and the Roots community vowed that the struggle continues.

In the midst of these battles, PLP held a study/action meeting (see letter, page 6) on education under capitalism. We hoped to better prepare ourselves to marry the immediate fight against the destabilizing, privatization and re-segregation of education for the working class with the long-range goal of building an egalitarian communist world✪

Support the caravan, smash all borders

NEW YORK CITY, January 30—Tonight, the National Writers Union held a forum where volunteers reported on their experience at the Mexican/U.S. border as part of the New Sanctuary Caravan project, to stand in solidarity with workers who have traveled thousands of miles in a caravan from Central America, fleeing poverty and violence. These national borders are one of the great evils of capitalism. The capitalist bosses travel freely around the world seeking profits and destroying the lives of workers.

Attending the forum were union and immigration activists, journalists, teachers, and retired workers of all ages, including members and friends of the Progressive Labor Party. Two of the speakers were members of the National Writers Union, a local of the United Auto Workers (UAW), which has organized other UAW locals to provide money and volunteers for this project.

“The meeting between U.S. volunteers and the fleeing migrants has been transformative,” said one audience member, himself a volunteer, praising the New Sanctuary Coalition and El Otro Lado for providing food, shelter, legal aide, staff, and space in Tijuana, while building international solidarity with the slogan of “no borders.” However, he added, “there’s a need for more than defensive action, more than aid. We need more bold

action, more political leadership.” To follow up this person’s point we need communist leadership that fights for a world run by the working class.

He then told how refugees living in one shelter were ordered by Mexican police to leave or be ejected by force. When they refused to leave, volunteers went and stood in front of the shelter. The police retreated. A nice example of working class power.

The thousands who have been flocking to the border directly contradict Trump and his supporters’ racist characterization of immigrants as “criminals.” People are outraged at the plight of migrants, who are stopped at the border, then forced to wait weeks, even months, before they’re allowed to cross and apply for asylum.

One refugee, a woman in a shelter, told a volunteer that she fled from her home, after a gang member threatened to kill her and her children if she didn’t continue paying “rent.” Desperate, she joined the caravan leaving her children behind, not realizing the asylum process could take years before she would see them again.

A doctor in the audience linked the border crisis to current U.S. government efforts to replace the president of Venezuela with a right-wing leader. Guaido, the right wing leader, is a puppet of U.S. imperialism and the corrupt President Madu-

ro is a stooge of Chinese and Russian imperialism. Workers need to reject both (See editorial, page 2).

“All my patients are undocumented,” she said. “We need to see this situation as part of a long history of U.S. imperialism forcing people to flee.” Most current refugees are from Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador, countries with a long history of repressive regimes supported by the U.S.

Another person reminded listeners that restrictive immigration policies are a “bi-partisan” effort. Greatly expanding the size of the Border Patrol, building walls, and increasing spending for border security began under Democratic President Clinton.

The biggest victory of organizing support for the humanitarian crisis is the potential to change mass consciousness among millions of workers. The UAW, with 40,000 members in this region, is committing thousands of dollars to support volunteers. Other activists are organizing to get Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) out of NY Courts as well as to provide money, vans, and medical relief. PLP will continue to organize in our unions, community organizations, schools, and workplaces to develop and transform mass class-consciousness into a working class political force with the power to smash all borders with communist revolution✪

No free speech for racists! KCC fighters defend antiracist prof

BROOKLYN, NY, January 23 After months of asking, prodding, and at last threatening disciplinary action, the City University of New York's (CUNY) interrogation squad finally got an anti-racist professor into a room to grill him!

As CHALLENGE has been reporting since last spring, a multiracial group of students, and staff at Kingsborough Community College (KCC) produced and began distributing leaflets calling for the termination of a racist administrator, Michael Goldstein. Members of the communist Progressive Labor Party struggled over and received a positive response to the militant anti-racist position of “no free speech for racists!”

Led by mostly immigrant women students, along with Black and white students, workers and faculty, the struggle quickly grew to dozens of students. These students reached hundreds more, distributing over 1,500 leaflets and hundreds of CHALLENGE newspapers calling for racist Goldstein's termination.

Instead of investigating racist Goldstein, CUNY's Public Safety bosses decided to try intimidating faculty they suspect took part in the campaign. The cops sent these faculty certified letters requesting them to appear so they could “fish” for information. Following the bad advice of their union representatives, the Professional Staff Congress (PSC), several professors appeared. The cops used campus video surveillance to identify an antiracist professor they were certain was involved, and compelled him to appear.

Turning danger into opportunity

This professor rejected the passive, legalistic, strategy counseled by the PSC. Instead, bold and militant plans were made to continue organizing mass struggle, defend both the leaflet and the campaign against Goldstein, defy the interroga-

tors, and challenge them to investigate the racists.

This struggle provided many opportunities for PLers to expose the racist, pro-capitalist class nature of both KCC and of CUNY in our student PLP study groups. We also made a plan to collaborate on a new leaflet, and distribute it on the day of the interrogation.

At the interrogation, the professor came with an anti-racist faculty member as a witness, instead of a PSC representative. “What caused you to attack [Goldstein] with these leaflets?” the investigators asked. The professor answered simply: “Racists should not be working at our school.” He explained that while he was not involved in the leaflet's production, he supports this struggle, and will always support exposing racists.

Students: potential revolutionary force

The interrogators brought up the notion of “free speech” and a “free and fair exchange of ideas.” A small group of so-called progressive or left faculty at the school argue in favor of this view as well. Students, workers and many faculty, however, generally agree with us. No free speech for racists!

How can a classroom of immigrant and Black students be fair and equitable if faculty or administrators feel free to express racist ideas against these students? A few of these fake leftist professors also have the racist view that when students fight back, they don't understand what they are doing. They are being used. But students understand racism better than many professors because it directly affects their lives.

Yet in practice, these same liberal faculty often fail to follow their own cherished idealism. After students and staff attacked racist Goldstein

for his hateful views against immigrant, Muslim, Black, Latin, and LGBT workers, the anti-racist faculty were criticized by some of these liberal faculty. Some even asked this anti-racist professor to step down from a union leadership position. As it turned out, some other faculty were inspired by this anti racist struggle. Because of these anti-racists, the effort failed.

There is irony in this experience. Liberal “left” faculty, in their actions, supported the rights of the racist to express his views, but then worked to limit anti-racist views. A couple of “leaders of the left” on campus even asked the antiracist faculty to turn themselves in to the police. The students were outraged when they found out this had been said by the same faculty who claim to support them.

In the PLP study groups, we discuss how liberal ideas often end up attacking militant anti-racism. These events underline the importance of expanding our CHALLENGE networks even further beyond the mass of students and staff who read it regularly, and struggling to continue expanding revolutionary communist ideas.

Gear up for spring and May Day!

A dozen students and faculty waited an hour and a half to hear a report from the interrogation. Our spirits were high and our determination to continue the fight against racism was strengthened. Being attacked for fighting racism is a good thing. With every step we've taken, our sisters and brothers have responded with friendship and comradeship. We're gaining the confidence that many workers and students support this fight, and some are joining us. This coming spring semester we're enlisting every one of our new comrades and friends to continue our mass anti-racist struggle, and build for May Day✊

D.C. Women' March

Union hacks promote voting, workers want to fightback!

WASHINGTON, DC, January 19 – At the third annual Women's March, thousands of protestors gathered and marched down Pennsylvania Avenue past the Trump Hotel. Progressive Labor Party (PLP) members joined both the feeder rally at the New York City union headquarters of the AFL-CIO, and the main rally, getting our communist line out with sales of CHALLENGE and flyers inviting marchers to an event sponsored by Mass Liberation, a local anti-racist group on January 26.

Mass Liberation's event focused on the case of Roxana Santos, a Salvadoran worker who has been threatened with deportation after being unlawfully arrested a decade ago in Maryland (Washington Post 1/1). Workers at the Women's March were astounded to learn that Ms. Santos was arrested by ICE (Immigration & Customs Enforcement) for deportation, as she was leaving the courthouse after winning her civil rights lawsuit against the Maryland county sheriff's department for racial profiling and illegal detention.

The issue resonated with the crowd and generated a lot of interest at the AFL-CIO rally because it supported the workers leading the Los Angeles teachers' strike. The strike, a militant reform action, was anti-sexist, pro-education and pro-labor, challenging the exploitation of public school privatization; it gave workers the opportunity to organize and work together. Some workers even saluted CHALLENGE sellers with a clenched fist in response to the “STRIKE!” headline as they passed by.

The AFL-CIO speakers were a disappointment, limiting their strategy for change to elec-



toral activity. Workers' rights will never be won by voting, but only by an international, worker-led revolution. In stark contrast, one local protestor, and friend of PLP gave a fiery speech calling for a general strike against the shutdown of the government. Young workers cheered in support, while AFL-CIO hacks simply studied their shoes carefully during the speech.

Meanwhile, a Ford worker from Kentucky suggested we should respond the way workers

in France do—all walk out! We had a lengthy conversation with a Black steelworker from Pittsburgh, who wondered, like the Kentucky Ford worker, why the 800,000 workers furloughed by the shutdown weren't in the streets, shutting down the city.

“We need worker solidarity across unions,” he said, “to shut down the country until they get people back to work.” He added, “workers have to be less afraid.” He went on to describe how the Pittsburgh bosses have dressed up the city's waterfront, but have left the neighborhoods in terrible shape due to corruption and cutbacks.

One young woman from San Diego, whose brother is incarcerated, was interested in the APHA (American Public Health Assn) resolution that names police violence as a public health threat (see CHALLENGE, December 19, 2018). A former guard from North Carolina told us he was horrified and quit his job once he realized the private prison industry just wanted to make profits by getting more and more prisoners. Two young Black D.C. teachers also took CHALLENGE, saying that conditions in D.C. schools were deteriorating as well.

With new friends and connections made at the rally, PLP will continue to grow the communist movement, fight past the no-win electoral strategies, and advance on the road to revolution✊

LETTERS

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

Strikes: schools for communism

I recently attended a Progressive Labor Party forum about education in Oakland. About 30 PLP members and friends attended, including teachers, parents, and students, all of whom will be directly impacted if teachers go on strike in Oakland. The facilitators did a great job of encouraging everyone to contribute, and it was exciting to hear how communists evaluate reform struggles from the perspective of building a communist movement as they unite with others to win immediate demands. Every battle has victories and mistakes that can help guide us.

We heard an overview of an intense, multi-racial rebellion that took place at San Francisco State College 50 years ago. Two veterans of that fight against racism presented lessons from the struggle, which was led by the Black Student Union, the Third World Liberation Front and Students for a Democratic Society, all three of which had members of PLP in leadership roles. One clear lesson of the strike was that “racial”/“ethnic” divisions among student organizations crumbled in the face of the common enemy: the institutionalized racism of the State College system and the violent police attacks on striking students and teachers.

PLP grew, with new recruits having gained confidence from the struggle that capitalism could be defeated. As was said at the time, “Revolution was in the air,” and students worldwide were looking for a revolutionary organization that saw the working class as the force to destroy capitalism. Some who joined PLP then are still engaged in building the protracted movement to fight for communism among students and workers.

The 1968-69 strike at SFSC is credited with the birth of Ethnic Studies. At the forum, we discussed the contradictory aspects of Ethnic Studies. On the one hand, students were correct in wanting the college to teach more than the history of great white men. On the other hand, ethnic studies often emphasize differences and obscures how capitalist-created categories of “race” such as “Black” and “White” can hide what we, the international working class, have in common.

Furthermore, as one former student explained, the concept of class was missing in his Chicano Studies program. For instance, students were taught about the accomplishments of the Aztec Empire, but not about class division: the exploitation of slaves and landless peasants, and the privileges enjoyed by Aztec nobles.

Many hoped at the time that Ethnic Studies would be a road to upward mobility, but today we have persistent racial inequality, student and teacher homelessness, food and housing insecurity, low wages and record debt of all types (student loans, credit card, mortgage). The corporate rulers are privatizing and closing down schools at all levels, and people are fighting back. As one parent said, “Here we are back again....we need something different.”

During the forum, we had a conference call with a PLP high school teacher who was just on strike in Los Angeles. Although she explained the limitations of the “wins” in their contract (class size will remain far too big), she celebrated the solidarity and unity of the education workers on strike with the parents, students, community members and other union workers who supported them.(See CHALLENGE 2/6 for a deeper analysis.)

Strike was on everyone’s mind, as an Oakland teacher described preparations for a strike.A San Francisco teacher who had been a part-time employee of the teachers union was upset with how the union leadership had squashed attempts to seriously organize rank-and-file members.Another teacher was encouraged to hear about the unity in the LA strike,



which was in stark contrast with school administrators who call parents that advocate for their children “a problem.”

One parent spoke emphatically of his desire to be a part of the battle for better education for children. A student asked why schools are closing when classes are overcrowded. An immigrant worker suggested that we have a conference call with PLP teachers in Oaxaca to learn from their years of building teacher/student/family/worker solidarity, resulting in massive strikes.People at the forum offered ideas for strike support: adopting schools, helping with the strike fund, bringing food, walking the picket line and the possibility of organizing “freedom schools” during a strike. We want to build workers’ morale and engage in great conversations about overthrowing this rotten system. The strikes at SF State College and LA showed workers and students the power of collective action. Let’s develop that so the working class can take power and run society.

★★★★★

Newark workers protest gov’t shutdown

Workers were used as bargaining chips between the Republicans and Democrats as they debated funding for the racist border wall. Make no mistake, the bosses will risk the lives of the working class again and again.

Although Donald Trump announced that he has agreed to fund and reopen the government for three weeks, we cannot trust these manipulative capitalist parties who put the lives of workers at stake. This shutdown showed us two things: the working class is no more valuable to the ruling class than chess pieces on a board game; and whether Republican or Democrat, a capitalist system that is willing to gamble with the life of one section of the working-class to decide the fate of another needs to be shut down, and permanently replaced by a worker run system.

In Newark, NJ a group of students, teachers and workers decided to protest along with federal workers on Martin Luther King Day, at Newark International Airport. The organizers met three days prior and started the planning with open discussion and reflection on what we knew about federal workers, why the government shutdown was happening and for what reasons did people feel the need to migrate to the United States. A few of us shared that we were in Progressive Labor Party (PLP), and why we joined the party. We wrote up a paragraph to pass out on pamphlet sized papers and use as a speech to rally others. The speech reads:

No, we are not federally employed BUT we are here to show solidarity to fellow workers. Today is the 31st day of the government shutdown and it is important that we show up for each other in times of struggle. It is crucial that we acknowledge that all of our struggles are connected, from the migrant caravan at the Mexican border to Newark, NJ. If one of us is affected, we all are affected. So what’s next? Contact desafio.challenge@gmail.com to keep organizing.When workers are under attack, what do we do? Stand up, fight back!

Neither the openly racist nor the liberal wings of the ruling class are capable of producing a permanent solution because that would mean weakening the U.S. role in inter-imperialist rivalry internationally. The current government shutdown is a manifestation of this internal fighting in the U.S. ruling class. The gov-

ernment is gambling with the lives of federal workers in order to make a decision about the lives of undocumented workers. No matter how this goes down, one group of workers gets screwed!

We hope for federal workers to connect their struggle to people in the migrant caravan and see through the bosses’ manipulation. May all workers have the resolve to resist boldly in the faces of the bosses and the ruling class.

★★★★★

Oakland strike, school for communism

Late last year, as Donald Trump built racist hysteria around the issue of the caravan of Central American immigrants heading towards the U.S border seeking refugee, I addressed a general membership meeting of about 300 municipal retirees explaining why all workers need to reject anti-immigrant propaganda.

I spoke about the conditions around the world which cause workers to leave their country of birth to seek a better life. I said that war, economic exploitation and political repression are often the reasons people flee. Imperialists (often U.S. imperialists) seeking to control the world’s wealth are usually the cause of these conditions. I reminded the crowd of the refugee ship named the St. Louis carrying Jewish refugees from Europe on the eve of WWII that was denied entry to several ports in the U.S. Many of those refugees, forced to return to Europe, later died in Hitler’s fascist death camps. I noted that many in the room were first- or second- generation immigrants. Others were part of the great northern migration within the U.S. whose families fled racism and economic oppression in southern states for what they hoped would a better life in the north. I concluded by saying that all workers needed to reject divide-and-conquer ideas and demagogues. A good round of applause was the response to my speech.

Later, at the Hispanic and Solidarity Committee of this association, a UAW (United Auto Workers) member spoke to us about building support for the refugees. His remarks were well received by the committee. It laid the ground for a \$1,000 contribution, approved at a later date, for the work being done to support refugee status seekers at the southern U.S. border.

The retiree organization I am part of represents over 50,000 retired workers. Although their skin color comes in different shades, they all have a stake in fighting back together against the racist capitalist system that oppresses us all.

★★★★★

Fighting racist displacement Lower East Side

I took part in the march in against the luxury developments that New York City’s “progressive” mayor deBlasio is helping ram through. These glass and steel monstrosities threaten thousands of working-class New Yorkers with rising rents and displacement. Yet single-digit temperatures couldn’t stop hundreds of us, Chinese, Latin, Black and white, from marching to City Hall. There was a great spirit of solidarity and strength as we shivered along the route. Along the way, we encountered many supportive members of the community who eagerly took CHALLENGE and our flyer.

The only criticism is that our literature wasn’t translated into Mandarin and Cantonese which would’ve been great! I look forward to the next event.

★★★★★

Autoworkers of the world: Unite!

Jerry Dias, the head of Unifor, the Canadian auto workers union, is on a campaign of boycotting autos manufactured in Mexico. The UAW, the U.S auto workers union plans to join the boycott too. At this very moment, 70,000 workers in Mexico who manufacture auto parts for U.S. cars are on strike. GM has laid off thousands of auto workers in Canada. The capitalists have no patriotism and nationalism. The workers should not have it either.Instead of boycott, let us unite and strike together. This would be a powerful movement.

★★★★★

Corrections from 2/6 CHALLENGE

In "Sudan workers rebel," a copyediting error resulted the following historical lie: "USSR.... defeat in World War II." In reality, the Soviet Union's Red Army crushed the fascists and led the world to victory.

In the "Van Dyke jailed; politicians exploit Laquan's murder," Toni Preckwinkle was incorrectly identified as "city medical examiner" at the time of Laquan McDonald's murder. Preckwinkle was the Cook County Board President.

Unemployment kills millions

The bosses' media, and their two flunky parties are flooding us with glowing accounts about "low jobless" figures and rising prosperity for the working class. Yet this "prosperity" completely ignores the fact that every rise of 1.4 percent in the jobless rate leads directly to the deaths of over 30,000 workers in the following five years from stress-related ailments, suicide and homicide!

A 1976 Congressional study by the Joint Economic Committee attempted to "estimate the cost in human suffering of people being out of work (N.Y. Times, 10/31/76). Think of what that translates into from the recent Great Recession when the jobless rate reached 10 percent, seven times the 1.4 percent figure. To say nothing of the loss in wages, and homes due to the inability to make mortgage payments, incurred by the millions of unemployed. How does that figure into the alleged "prosperity"? So any time a company lays off thousands of workers, it is contributing to masses of deaths over the following five years. Harvey Brenner of Johns Hopkins University testified to that Congressional Committee that, "The national rate of suicide in the United States can be viewed as an economic indicator," so closely is the link between joblessness and workers' violent deaths due to capitalism's constant and inevitable recessions.

The report was based on 40 years of statistics and found "a consistent relationship in the unem-

ployment rate" that affects "all ages, both sexes, for whites and non-whites." And none of this deals with the related effects on the families of the jobless workers, in terms of malnutrition, mental anguish and sickness. The study said that infant mortality rates show dramatic increases within one to two years of an economic recession. Brenner said "short-term general hospital admissions in the U.S. respond very sharply to adverse changes in the economy as do mental hospital admissions for an unbroken period of about 127 years in the U.S." Death by suicide rises within the first month or two of a recession Heart disease peaks three to five years after the start of a recession.

Racism doubles the toll

And the government's own statistics show that jobless rates for Black workers are twice the rate for white workers, and result in increased rates for Latino workers as well. So all the categories cited above fall doubly harsh on the lives of these workers.

The millions of workers sent to an early grave as a direct result of joblessness over the years of the Great Depression and the multiple recessions since then could probably rival any mass killing anywhere in the world. But, of course, added to this are those affected by the same economic downturns in the rest of the capitalist world. Capitalism is an international phenomenon.

None of the above includes workers killed on

the job in industrial "accidents"—about 100,00 a year in the U.S.—because bosses refuse to spend profits on safety. Nor does it account for millions hurt or made sick (some terminally as in "cancer alley" in northeastern New Jersey) by their working conditions.

Phony figures

Never mind that—as CHALLENGE has reported—the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) so-called U3 U.S. unemployment rate of 4.0 doesn't count workers who have stopped looking for a job after four weeks of unemployment (which would double that 4.0 to 8.0, the BLS's so-called U6 rate); doesn't figure in millions of workers who take part-time jobs because full-time ones are unavailable (the so-called underemployed); doesn't count workers removed altogether from the unemployment rolls after being jobless for six months, nor those who join the military because they can't find a job, nor those who can't look for a needed job because day-care for their children is out of reach; nor the first-time job seekers just graduating high school or college. Shadowstats.com, which accounts for much of this, puts the true unemployment figure at 21.3 percent.

You best believe that capitalism is a murderous system. To eliminate these horrors, only a communist revolution—abolishing bosses, profits, a divisive wage system, racism and sexism—can do the job ☹



RED EYE ON THE NEWS . . .

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

Billionaire says capitalism is failing

New Yorker, 1/22 — DAVOS....the World Economic Forum...provides an informal checkup on the health of global capitalism....Seth Klarman...a highly influential investor based in Boston...calls [it] "a huge red flag about global social tensions, rising debt levels and receding American leadership."

Klarman...is the CEO...of...a hedge fund with \$27 billion in assets....His latest letter...states "it can't be business as usual amid constant protests, riots, shutdowns and escalating social tensions." Klarman...said short-sighted business practices are imperiling public confidence in capitalism itself....

In 2016, Harvard's Institute of Politics found that only 42 percent of millennials supported capitalism....People will say...Wall Street [is] an immoral place,...[with] disgusting amounts of greed and [where] nothing good happens....

...Oxfam...calculates that the combined fortunes of the world's 26 richest people reached a record \$1.4 TRILLION last year, equal to the total wealth of the 3.8 billion poorest people. "Can American Capitalism Survive" a new book is attracting attention in Washington....

For a generation of business leaders, maximizing shareholder value...is invoked to justify cutting jobs and benefits...to reward investors.

'Gender Justice' — or Injustice? — at 45 cents an hour

GW,1/25 — Spice Girls T-shirts sold to raise money for Comic Relief's "gender justice" campaign were made at a factory in Bangladesh where women earn 45 cents an hour....The tops were produced by mostly female machinists who said they were forced to work up to 16 hours a day and called "daughters of prostitutes" by managers for not hitting targets.

Why we need communism: competition drives automation, screws workers

NYT, 1/26 — Davos, Switzerland — They'll

never admit it in public, but...your bosses want machines to replace you as soon as possible....

Corporate executives [here]....in private settings....tell a different story: They are racing to automate their own work forces to stay ahead of the competition, with little regard for the impact on workers.

All over the world, executives are spending billions of dollars to transform their businesses into...highly automated operations. They crave the fat profit margins automation can deliver....by letting them whittle departments with thousands of workers down to just a few dozen....

American executives...come up with a long list of buzz-words and euphemisms to disguise their intent. Workers...[are] being "released" from onerous, repetitive tasks previously done by humans. Companies aren't laying off workers, they're "undergoing digital transformation."

A 2017 survey...found that 53 percent of companies already started to use machines to perform tasks previously done by humans....expected to climb to 72 percent by next year....

...The investment bank UBS projects that the artificial intelligence industry could be worth as much as \$18 billion by next year.

...A long-time technology executive predicts that artificial intelligence will eliminate 40 percent of the world's jobs within 15 years....

But at a time of political unrest and anti-elite movements...all of this automation is happening quietly, out of public view....

...The...Taiwanese electronics manufacturer Foxconn...plans to replace 80 percent of its workers with robots in the next five to ten years....

...A report by the World Economic Forum...estimated that...only one in four can be profitably reskilled by private-sector programs. The rest presumably will have to fend for themselves....

No money for bail? A half-million sit in jail in the U.S. on any given day

NYT, 1/29 — In the United States...."From the moment you are arrested you are given a bail amount....[But] there is an income disparity.... Wealthy defendants have the means to avoid detention. [For] low-income defendants....last year about 536,000 people sat in jail on any given day in

the United States, simply because they could not afford bail.

The 'free world'? Imprisoned immigrants forced to work for \$1/day

NYT, 1/30 — There are more than 48,000 people being held in immigrant detention in more than 200 facilities in the United States. More than two-thirds...are confined by private companies, working on contracts with the federal government. Those numbers have ballooned...drawing new attention to the terrible conditions detainees are living in.

One feature of privately run centers:...coercing detainees into working for a dollar a day and punishing those who don't....

Prison labor is protected [?] by the 13th Amendment, which abolished slavery and indentured servitude except as punishment for a crime. This exception means that prisons can require their prisoners to work, even without compensation.

But...people held in these facilities are not charged with any crime; they are being detained while awaiting asylum or deportation hearings.... However, immigrant detention centers need not pay workers more than one dollar a day, a rate set by Congress in 1950....It has never been increased....

The Voluntary Work Program is not really voluntary. If they try to take a day off or refuse to work, staff members punish them....

...CoreCivic and GEO have become the giants of the industry....

Private corporations hold...more than 70 percent of people in immigration detention. The government pays them a fixed daily price per person, so they have an economic incentive to run their facilities as cheaply as possible.

...In 2017, contracts with ICE accounted for 25 percent of [CoreCivic's] \$444 million in revenue. For GEO, ICE contracts brought in 19 percent of its \$2.26 billion revenue....

...The detention centers...[charge] exorbitant amounts for necessities....Four ounces of toothpaste sells for \$11....

Each company...donated \$250,000 to President Trump's inauguration.

The spectre of communism returns to haunt Chinese rulers

The capitalist rulers of China, who still call themselves the Chinese “Communist” Party (CCP), have a problem. The January 22 New York Times reports the CCP’s latest tactic to suppress Chinese communists. Organizers of the Jasic Technology struggle last summer were forced to watch videos of their young comrades, making confessions to the police for “spreading false information” and other acts deemed harmful to the state. One of those watching, expressing disdain for the CCP security forces, told the Times, “Do not use confession videos to cover up your sins. You can’t imagine that people will give up the fight because of a video.”

Renewed interest in real communism and support for workers’ struggles has been growing, and the CCP has been cracking down. In November 2017 state security police broke up a Marxist study group at Guangdong University of Technology, arresting four leaders. An outpouring of online protest, mostly from faculty and students at universities and organizers of Maoist websites pressured the authorities to release the organizers. The struggle took an important turn in early 2018 when a group of workers got involved. Mostly older workers, laid off from state owned enterprises, were gathered to protest the government’s decision to tear down a statue of Mao Zedong when they suddenly broke out banners supporting the students. An alliance between workers and students makes the authorities nervous – and for good reason.

The CCP, during its early existence, 1921 to 1976, fought for and carried out a socialist revolution. The CCP took power in 1949 after a long and bloody revolution. They led the workers and poor farmers to establish socialism, which they continued to build for about a quarter century. Even though the CCP turned capitalist after the 1970s, workers still know what a revolution looks like. They remember how people at the bottom can organize themselves and overthrow the government. The CCP sees what’s happening in China today and knows it could spell trouble for their rule.

Chinese government attacks workers and students

This past summer the worker-student alliance in China took another big step forward. Workers at the Jasic Technology factory in Shenzhen organized against slave-like working conditions. Employees said they were sometimes forced to work for weeks without a day off, with supervisors breathing down their necks, and even closely monitoring their bathroom breaks. When they tried to set up a union, organizers were fired. When others protested, they were arrested.

Among the workforce there are some young university graduates. Reuters (8/14/18) described this trend among young intellectuals: “When Shen Mengyu graduated with a master’s degree from a top Chinese

university in 2015, she could have landed a comfortable job in government or at one of China’s internet giants. Instead, she went to work at a car parts factory in the southern city of Guangzhou, pursuing her interest in labor activism.”

Other young graduates took jobs at NGOs that campaigned for enforcement of labor laws. Some Chinese laws actually look good on paper, but the provincial party bosses responsible for enforcing these laws are often part owners of the sweatshops, so the managers disregard laws calling for paying into pension funds, paying extra for overtime and the like. Idealistic young people fighting to reform this oppressive and corrupt system are often involved in Marxist study circles and are described as “neo-Marxists” or “neo-Maoists.” The CCP views their spreading of communist ideas among the workers with alarm.

Full-blown capitalism destroys socialist reforms

The economy of China has grown very rapidly since 1949. Capitalist pundits – both in China and in the West – love to talk about China’s economic growth since they turned away from socialism and embraced market capitalism around 1980. But actually the Chinese economy, measured by GDP (Gross Domestic Product) grew almost 10% per year during the Mao period, similar to recent years.

Moreover, those 25 to 30 years after the revolution saw unprecedented increases in health indicators like life expectancy as well as amazing strides in education. Illiteracy was largely eliminated right after the revolution. Then, during the Cultural Revolution period (1966 to 1976), there was an explosion in secondary education in the countryside and small towns where most people lived (D. Han, The Unknown Cultural Revolution).

But today the rate of GDP growth is slowing as China settles into a mature capitalist economy with glaring inequality, and China has become the “sweatshop of the world.” This is causing increasing unrest among the exploited workers and the farmers kicked off their land to build factories.

Today as the economy slows and factories start to close, the rising incomes seen in earlier years are stagnating. As the overworked workers lose their jobs from factory closings and their village land has been taken over by

some capitalist party boss, millions of workers are finding themselves in an impossible situation.

Fightback grows

What’s new in this fightback, the thing causing CCP boss Xi Jinping and other members of the ruling class to lose sleep, is the increasing connections between workers across China, combined with connections to students and campus intellectuals. That’s why coordinated raids on several campuses have occurred recently and a former state security leader has just been made the new CCP head at Peking University (South China Morning Post, 12/26/18). The SCMP reported one recent arrest: “Qiu Zhanxuan, head of the Peking University Marxist Society, was grabbed and forced into a waiting car ... by a group of heavy set men who identified themselves as police, ...” Of course, although it is less publicized in the West, many of the arrests, and some of the harshest sentences, have been for workers. The fact that the workers’ demands are starting to be political and not just economic has the authorities sweating. The last thing the CCP wants is idealistic young intellectuals helping the workers study revolutionary communism. It’s not clear how far the consciousness of the workers had advanced, but the demand for a union controlled by the workers, not under strict control of the CCP, is a political demand rather than just a call for higher wages.

There are millions who favor communism in China. They just don’t control the government. Critics of capitalism are becoming more and more vocal, even though criticism of government policy can get you arrested. Millions – some observers say the majority of the population – are increasingly angry about the betrayal of the equality and respect that were the goals of the communist-led revolution, back when the CCP was actually communist.

Progressive Labor Party salutes the workers and students who are fighting back and giving the rich capitalist bosses in the so-called Communist party sleepless nights. Workers and students all over the world have the same enemy and the same fight: we must destroy capitalism. The unique history of the communist movement in China deserves careful study and strong support for the fightback of the world’s largest industrial working class✊

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