

CHALLENGE



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On Strike!

FIGHT SEGREGATED LEARNING CONDITIONS



CHICAGO, February 18—Working-class educators, students, and parents were able to secure a hard-fought reform victory from the racist bosses today. After nine days on the picket lines, teachers from Chicago International Charter Schools (CICS) and their employer have agreed on a tentative contract for the network that limits class sizes, provides protections to counselors and social workers, and guarantees teacher raises.

The CICS struggle was the second charter school strike in the city within three months, and is part of a growing anti-racist education movement taking place across the U.S. Comrades from Progressive Labor Party (PLP) were honored to be a part of this struggle, offering daily support and

communist politics on the front lines. In the classrooms and in the streets, our Party remains eager to keep fanning the flames of working-class fight-back and international revolution.

Segregated learning conditions

On February 5, nearly 200 workers from four different CICS schools, responsible for educating over 2,000 students, began their strike. Their decision to strike was motivated by the need to fight back against the racist learning and working environments inside their schools. According to the CICS website, some 96 percent are non-white (chicagointl.org, 2/19). Because of the inherent racism of capitalism, these overwhelmingly Black

and Latin students chronically lack resources such as up-to-date textbooks, internet and computers, proper heat in the classrooms, and support staff such as paraprofessionals.

In Chicago, one of the most segregated cities in the world, these striking teachers were able to organize lively multiracial, multi-generational picket lines that incorporated music, dancing, chants, parents, and community members. Even as temperatures on the picket dropped below freezing most mornings, morale was high. Working-class solidarity was alive in the form of donated food and coffee, hand warmers, and honks of support from workers driving nearby.

Beyond the school campuses, the racist education bosses were also targeted in their luxurious downtown corporate offices, as the strikers and their supporters found more ways to apply pressure. On February 13, they held a sit-in and shut down the lobby and elevators at 1 Wacker Drive, a large office tower housing the offices of the CICS Board President and Treasurer, for two hours. The next day, racist Mayor Rahm Emanuel's office was targeted during a visit to City Hall.

Racist police bully students & strikers

Bringing the fight on multiple fronts and enlisting a broad base of working-class support throughout the city were no doubt critical in winning the strike. PLP comrades stressed the role of the kkkops in protecting the interests of the capitalist bosses.

On one of the first days of the strike, the police were called in to threaten picketers at a south side

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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

Budget deal on border wall: more fascist terror for workers

Although a federal budget deal was reached between Democrats and Republicans in the U.S. Congress, workers should have no illusions that either party has our class interests at heart. President Donald Trump's open, vicious, anti-immigrant racism and his fascist “state of emergency” is a big attack on our class. But both competing wings of the U.S. ruling class—the main-wing finance capitalists represented by the Democrats, and the Fortress America nationalists fronted by Trump and his Republican base—serve the needs of U.S. capitalism. Both sides back the maximum exploitation of the working class, using whatever terror is necessary. Immigrant workers and children languish in torturous detention camps on the border with Mexico, and throughout the U.S. interior, with at least 22 deaths in the last two years (nbcnews.com, 1/6). Meanwhile Democrats and Republicans are quibbling over how many tens of thousands of bunks and cots the camps should contain!

Communists reject the bosses' phony national borders, which are designed to control labor and resources while keeping our class divided. Communists understand that working-class solidarity knows no boundaries. The slogan of Progressive Labor Party is “One world, one class, one flag.” Workers share a class interest to smash the profit system, the fundamental cause of the misery and death inflicted upon us. Only a communist revolution can abolish profit and exploitation, enable workers to seize state power, and create a borderless world that serves workers' needs.

On January 25, after a long impasse and a 35-day partial government shut-down over Trump's demand for \$5.7 billion for a border wall. Trump finally signed a budget bill pushed through by the Democrats. The legislation allowed for \$1.3 billion for the wall and an additional \$1.75 billion for surveillance technology and more immigration cops. Now Trump wants to take more money for his wall from military construction and other funds. His declared “state of emergency” is dangerous to our class for several reasons. First, it is rooted in the racist “immigrant invasion” myth that plays into Trump's white-supremacist base. Second, it expands the executive power that has marked the growth of U.S. fascism since the 1980s. Finally, it sets a precedent for extra-legal fascist rule in the bosses' run-up to their war with China and/or Russia.

In the face of a furious inter-imperialist challenge by China's bosses, the U.S. main wing will be pushing new forms of “multicultural” patriotism (Foreign Affairs, March/April 2019). Unlike Trump, the finance capitalists know the U.S. needs to recruit immigrant fighters for an inevitable World War III. They continue to push for the DREAM Act and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), which would funnel young immigrants into the U.S. military. Most of the U.S. population, including 92 percent of Democrats, are against Trump's wall (Washington Post, 1/14/19). But the Democratic Party's opposition to Trump only highlights their own hypocrisy and a criminal history of attacks on immigrant workers.

Racist Democrats no friends of immigrants

In 1996, President Bill Clinton signed into law two bills passed by a majority Republican Congress: the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act, and the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act. The first used the spectre of “Islamic terrorism” to justify “secret evidence” in deportation hearings. The second vastly expanded the list of federal and state criminal violations as grounds for deportation. Both laws led to today's mass deportations and rising fascism. By empowering anti-immigrant racism, they also drove down working conditions for all work-

ers. More recently, Deporter-in-Chief Barack Obama deported 3 million immigrants during his eight years in office. Hillary Clinton, the Democrats' 2016 presidential candidate, recently warned Europe's governments to “get a handle on migration” and “send a very clear message [to immigrants]—We are not going to be able to provide refuge and support” (The Guardian, 11/22/18). Clinton previously backed her husband's racist immigration reform policies. As a U.S. senator, she joined Obama and Chuck Schumer, the current Senate minority leader, in voting for the Secure Fence Act of 2006, which authorized 700 miles of border fencing (Washington Post, 1/10/19).

While Trump promotes open racist terror through forced family separation, renewed workplace raids, and extended imprisonment of asylum-seekers in his Nazi-style concentration camps, the liberals' brand of fascism is more dangerous to our class. Some Democratic Party leaders, recognizing the rise of anti-capitalist sentiment among younger workers, try to pose as friends of immigrants. They use popular social democrats like Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez to enhance their “progressive” image. But the social democrats records expose them for the liars they are.

When Ocasio-Cortez and others call for an end to ICE (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement), their plan is to reassign the immigration gestapo to other agencies that will continue to terrorize workers (The Atlantic, 7/11/18). None of these fake-leftists question the legitimacy of national borders. None of them are calling for the detention camps to be dismantled, or for freeing these victims of U.S. imperialism. None of them are friends of the international working class.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's willingness to make a deal with Trump shows that her objection to the “immorality” of the wall is nothing more than opportunist rhetoric. In 2013, Pelosi supported a bipartisan bill for more border fencing. She and other key Democrats want kinder, gentler concentration camps that allow parents and children to be jailed together, not separately. They want a smaller wall and more drones, surveillance, and cybersecurity—potentially greater threats to workers than anything Trump has imagined.

Anti-immigrant racism is nothing new in the U.S. It is deeply embedded in the country's history. From the Alien & Sedition Acts of 1796 to the Chinese Exclusion laws of the 1880s to the eugenics-based national origin quotas of 1924, U.S. bosses have used their control of the state to divide the working class. The latest bipartisan budget agreement continues the same pattern. Working class struggle may temporarily force changes to the rulers' immigration policy. But anti-immigrant terror, enforced by racist cops, has been a given from the beginning.

Workers' power can shutdown racist borders

Workers have the power to fight all of these racist attacks. As the caravan of thousands of workers from Central America moved northward to flee the capitalist horrors of poverty, gang violence, and state-sponsored fascism, hundreds of workers from Mexico and elsewhere responded to the call for working-class solidarity. They provided the travelers with food, water, clothing, and shelter. Despite the bosses' racist anti-immigrant propaganda, many workers recognize how our own lives are tied up with those of our class brothers and sisters. Members of Progressive Labor Party (PLP) have joined this mass movement of support. We call on our comrades, friends, and all workers to join these heroic efforts now!✊

Chicago education workers on strike

Continued from page 1

school where students and teachers are mostly Black, but not at the more diverse, and less integrated, north side schools. Many strikers correctly interpreted this as a racist attack. The cops went so far as to tell the picketers they couldn't talk to the parents on the public sidewalk and threatened to arrest them.

What's more, the cops escorted scabs across the picket line. The police play the role of paid racist goons on the side of the capitalists. Although some of the strikers disagreed with this communist outlook at the time, it provided an opportunity to sharpen the discussion on class struggle in later interactions.

Charter schools: racist capitalist scheme

Charter holders in Illinois are required to be not-for-profit organizations. But they take millions in public taxes (money that came from workers) for management fees. CICS has a charter for 14 schools. But they don't manage any of them. Instead, they subcontract to for-profit management companies that are actually their wholly-owned subsidiaries. Then these companies take more money for managing the schools.

CICS pays their CEO, Elizabeth Shaw, over \$200,000 per year to not run 14 schools. CICS has \$36 million in on hand reserves, but prior to the strike had refused to spend any of it to improve the schools. At the same time, CICS raised its management fees by \$1.2 million in this year alone (ctulocal1.org, 2/14). This money alone is enough to meet the workers' contract proposals.

Charter schools for many years have been touted as an alternative to the failing public education system under capitalism. But in reality, they represent a way for the bosses to increase inequality for working-class students and to undermine unionized teacher workforces in the public schools. Many charter schools act as fascist prison-like facilities for their mostly Black and Latin student populations, pushing intense discipline in an effort to prepare working-class youth for war.

In the end, they end up failing the majority of working-class youth, like their public school counterparts. Education under capitalism will always serve the interests of the bosses, serving to indoctrinate workers on the "virtues" of the system instead of providing the tools for liberation.

Learn to fight, fight to learn

Within the past year, working-class teachers in the U.S. have been teaching valuable lessons about the class struggle against the racist and sexist bosses. From West Virginia to California, to Arizona and Illinois, the movement against racist attacks in education has been growing in size and intensity as more workers grasp their potential class power.

PLP will continue to support and provide leadership to these struggles whenever possible. Beyond just a "fair" contract or a moratorium on charter schools, we will advocate communist revolution and a worker-run collective society as the only means to ensure an education worthy of unlocking the true potential of our children. ☺

Police & ICE terrorize immigrant workers

Maryland, February 12—A cohort of Progressive Labor Party (PLP) members in Prince George's County in Maryland have been working in a new coalition sponsored by an immigrants' rights organization to address police misconduct. A town hall meeting was held that included Latin and Black victims of police brutality in collaboration with ICE (U.S. immigrations and Customs Enforcement).

One particularly horrible case was described by "Jorge," a "Dreamer." He said, "local law enforcement's job is [supposed] to keep us safe. Their job was to keep my mother, who was once a victim, of domestic violence safe, instead they arrested her, and told her she has 60 days to leave my sister and me alone in this country."

Jorge's mother was detained by a Prince George's County Sheriff's officer while on her way to work. The officer said Jorge's mother was speeding but Jorge pointed out "My mother's driving makes other drivers go around her because it's going so slow. I believe that the officer was racially motivated to pull my mother over."

A petition calling for passage of "The Racial Equity in Policing" bill by the County Council is being circulated, and Council members are being lobbied. The bill includes the following points:

- Prevent any cooperation between Prince George's County police and

ICE

- Support police accountability through the mandatory use of police body cameras
- Support an independent investigation with prosecutorial power anytime there is a death or serious trauma at the hands of the police
- Ban the use of internal, extra-judicial gang database.

A strength of this emerging movement is the multiracial, multi-generational character of participants in the effort. But there are weaknesses in the group's position, which holds that we can address the mistrust between law enforcement and workers by passing reforms that help deepen our engagement with police. This approach misses the fundamental role of the police in a capitalist society – intimidate, divide, and terrorize the working class to ensure maximum profits for the capitalists. Some participants in this coalition who have been reading CHALLENGE are interested in this analysis and realize that it means we need revolution, not just working with politicians and police. We will continue to work on individual cases of brutality, of illegal police-ICE collaboration and of unjustified maintenance by the cops of a secret "gang list" while continuing to look towards a revolutionary future. ☺

NY Dream Act

Working-class youth deserve the whole world

NEW YORK CITY, February 20—Eighteen years after the bill was first dreamt up in 2001, New York State just approved its own version of the Dream Act, giving a select few undocumented college students access to financial aid. The Dream Act is a win for the liberal bosses, represented mainly by the Democratic Party, who aim to exploit undocumented youth as a chess piece in their games of war and fascism.

A living nightmare

The DREAM Act (acronym for Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act) was a path to conditional permanent residency for undocumented youth who demonstrate "good moral character" and either serve two years in the military or college without aid.

This state-level Dream Act can neither stop deportation nor grant any legal rights to stay in the United States. Instead, it promises young people eligibility for state aid for college. "The Immigration Policy Center estimates that because of financial constraints, only 5 to 10 percent of the 4,500 undocumented students who graduate from New York high schools each year go on to pursue college degrees" (NY Times, 1/23). New York will now be one of the seven states that have passed similar legislation. When I broke the news to my undocumented family member, she cried then sighed, "better than nothing."

While the anti-Trump liberal movement is hailing this as a victory, it's actually a slap in the face. Much like our Black and Latin brothers and sisters (citizen or not), undocumented families live under the threat of state terror. Some state financial aid is helpful, for those who can afford to go to college in the first place. Our class deserves more than crumbs for the select few who keep their head down and don't question. The liberal rulers are winning Black, Latin, and Asian youth to a degree of cynicism that strangles potential for rebellion in the cradle. Of course, no one sees this NY Dream Act as the end of a fightback. Rather, it's the beginning. The question is, who will lead it—the working class under communist influence or the ruling class for their imperialist empire?

Liberal bosses play undocumented kids

The passing of this pathetic Dream Act reflects how the U.S. ruling class will be using the fight against deportations as a way to buy votes and allegiance to their imperialist war agenda. When workers ally with our class enemies, we are being won over to a key element of fascism: all-class unity.

"The Dream Act's passage reflected the Democratic Party's turn to the left on immigration, an issue party leaders once handled gingerly out of fear of angering some white voters... The party's 2020 presidential hopefuls — including some who once held more hawkish views on immigration, like Senator Kirsten Gillibrand of New York — are already moving to reassure liberal activists on the issue in an effort to protect themselves in the 2020 campaign" (NY Times, 1/23). Let's not mistaken these politicians' opportunism for actual support for immigrant families.

After all, this is the same party that deported 3 million people under liberal Barack Obama's presidency. "As of 2016... the number of people living in the United States without documents decreased to 10.7 million from a peak of 12.2 million in 2007. The sharp decline came largely during the Obama administration and in the wake of the Great Recession. Deportations also sharply rose during that time" (NY Times, 11/27). Where was the liberal cry for humanity then?

Driving a wedge between students and workers

The consequences of the Dream Act is much more insidious in that the legislation not only disciplines working-class youth for nationalism, but it also pits students against workers. NYC Department of Education Chancellor Richard Carranza called these students "the best of New York City and America... They have gone to school, gotten great grades, and in many cases served our communities and country..." (Chalk Beat, 1/10). By limiting the fight to just "good children," this elitist reform criminalizes parents and adults whose only "crime" was crossing an artificial border.

Nothing but desperation and love for one's children will cause a parent to make the perilous journey across a desert, only to risk living in concentration camps or living under the threat of being snatched up like prey. These are the choices under capitalism. This reform reaffirms the myth of pulling yourself up by the bootstraps. In that sense, the blame goes back on the undocumented families for being undocumented, while the system gets away scot-free. The working class did not fail; the system set us up for failure.

We must refuse the bosses' attempt to divide us by "good" and "bad" immigrants. We must see through the liberal wing's posturing. We must organize all those around us to invoke love of our class across borders by fighting for a world where we are defined, not by the pieces of papers we hold, but by our labor, creativity, and contribution to communism. ☺

Venezuela: inter-imperialist struggle causes crisis

There have been intense daily protests in Venezuela since 2017. The opposition in a threatening move declared Juan Guaidó as president in the National Assembly, and foremost as “President in Charge” of the country. This shows us as we’ve said in many articles that socialism of the 21st century offers almost the same as capitalism. We have to move the masses towards Communism.

The Venezuelan conflict has reaffirmed the chess pieces in inter-imperialist rivalries. This country has the biggest oil reserves in the world. Mike Pence, the vice-president of the United States, was the first to recognize Juan Guaidó as “president in charge” of Venezuela, after Canada, Colombia, Chile, Costa Rica and other countries lined up with the U.S. interests did the same.

While China, Russia, Bolivia and its allies continue to recognize Nicolas Maduro as president of Venezuela. It seems like a proxy war is possible (funded and prepared by the U.S.). The same thing that happened in Iraq, Libya, Yemen (and more) will happen in Venezuela.

While it’s true that the U.S. intervention has worsened the crisis, we can’t limit our analysis just to that, as other leftist organizations do. The his-

tory of Venezuela shows, once again that keeping money, the market and production of social relations inevitably leads to a crisis.

Hugo Chávez’s (president from 1999 to 2013) era had economic, political, and social success not because of socialism. He reached political success because his government was able to channel the greatest increase of crude oil price in history. Another aspect is savage oil inflation pushed by external elements out of Venezuela that funded fast growing minimum wages, mass construction of homes and educational, medical, and national coverage.

Nicolás Maduro inherited a time bomb from Chavez. The inevitable happened. The oil price collapsed in 2014 and the country entered a crisis with no end.

Learning from this process means understanding that communist revolution can’t depend on the ability to sell and buy resources or seeing the masses as simple beneficiaries of reforms. At no point did the working class in Venezuela rule the means of production or society.

The working class needs to be won over to communist ideas, and organized by the Progres-

sive Labor Party (PLP). The party has to be the main driver of these much needed changes, for a new way of life. Eliminating money and profit immediately will free the creativity of the masses for the solution of immediate problems (food, water, shelter, security). We must fight for the production of food, people’s needs, communist education, massive campaigns to eradicate sanitary problems, for the zones controlled by the Party. The success of these goals will prepare the masses and demonstrate the organizational capacity of the Party, with our class leading the way.

In contrast the outcome of the Venezuelan crisis depends on who the military officials and middle ranking, and base soldiers supports. The officials of the Venezuelan military continue to be loyal to the official government, despite the pressure and the offering of amnesty on behalf of the opposition.

PLP long recognized the failures of socialism. Today we organize and fight for communism in many parts of the world. The Venezuelan crisis makes clear the need for a working class revolutionary communist party with a fixed aim: communism.✪

White Fragility attempts to stifle natural multiracial unity

LOS ANGELES, February 20—The church in which members of Progressive Labor Party (PLP) work organized a discussion on *White Fragility* by Robin DiAngelo, a book written purposefully for white people, by a white person, about the defensiveness of white people in regards to racism. This text successfully erases any class analysis of racism and builds on the cynical ruling class idea that white and Black workers cannot unite against racism:

In 2011, DiAngelo coined the term “white fragility” to describe the disbelieving defensiveness that white people exhibit when their ideas about race and racism are challenged...She argues that our largely segregated society is set up to insulate whites from racial discomfort, so that they fall to pieces at the first application of stress (The New Yorker, 7/23/2018).

DiAngelo is popular among white liberals. She is an academic who has worked as a diversity trainer for businesses. Her theory of white fragility is based on the idea that white privilege insulates white people from racial stress and any discussion of race and racism makes them defensive. It also pushes the idea that white people are solely responsible for both creating and dismantling racism in the United States.

While DiAngelo states that race was a social construct created by the white ruling class to justify slavery and keep poor white workers separate from enslaved Blacks and indigenous workers, she gives little to no examples of ways for white workers to fight back against it.

Her book is more descriptive than solution oriented. All she suggests is for white people to acknowledge their white privilege, and join all-white anti-racist organizations like SURJ (Showing Up for Racial Justice) who will support Black Lives Matter, listen, reflect, and be more racially aware toward nonwhite people. We cannot fight racism by using the very tools the bosses use to keep us divided.

On the class question of racism

In Black Reconstruction in America, communist fighter and thinker W.E.B. Du Bois writes,

[T]he white group of laborers, while they receive a low wage, were compensated in part by a sort of public and psychological wage. They were given public deference and titles of courtesy because they were white. They were admitted freely with all classes of white people to public functions, public parks, and the best schools.

White privilege theorists love to co-opt Du

Bois’s words out of context. This psychological wage is the ideological division used to prevent white and Black workers from uniting as one class. Du Bois continues,

“The result of this was that the wages of both classes could be kept low, the whites fearing to be supplanted by Negro labor, the Negroes always being threatened by the substitution of white labor.”

Without that crucial analysis, we fall into the trap of blaming each other for a systematic problem that hurts us all, albeit to different degrees. White privilege theory, and all identity politics, is based on a politics of difference, which deliberately seeks to undermine and break any potential for working-class unity.

Who benefits from racism?

White Fragility touched on institutional racism in the context of white people (as a monolithic group) running the institutions and not on capitalism needing racism to keep the working class divided and super exploiting Black, Latin, Asian, and immigrant workers. What DiAngelo conveniently fails to do is show how, under the threat of rebellion, the U.S. constructed race and racism off the tears, blood, flesh of Black, indigenous, and white workers. Lerone Bennett’s masterpiece essay *The Road Not Taken* in *The Shaping of Black America* illustrates this:

The race problem in America was a deliberate invention of men who systematically separated blacks and whites in order to make money...Curiously unconcerned about their color, these people worked together and relaxed together. They had essentially the same interests, the same aspirations, and the same grievances. They conspired together and waged a common struggle against their common enemy—the big planter apparatus and a social system that legalized terror against black and white bondsmen.

[The separation of our class] was done by the creation of a total system of domination, a system that penetrated every corner of Colonial life and made use of every Colonial institution. Nothing was left to chance. The assemblies, the courts, the churches, and the press were thrown into the breach.

The whole system of separation and subordination rested on official state terror. The exigencies of the situation required men to kill some white people to keep them white and to kill many blacks to keep them black. In the North and South, men and women

were maimed, tortured, and murdered in a comprehensive campaign of mass conditioning. The severed heads of black and white rebels were impaled on poles along the road as warnings to black people and white people, and opponents of the status quo were starved to death in chains and roasted slowly over open fires. Some rebels were branded; others were castrated. This exemplary cruelty, which was carried out as a deliberate process of mass education, was an inherent part of the new system.

Clearly, if the ruling class ran a state terror campaign to create race and racism, it cannot be for the benefit of any worker. White privilege is a ruling-class idea.

In the *Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels said it plainly, “The ruling ideas of each age have ever been the ideas of its ruling class.”

Segregation continues today

Race and racism has been maintained. Lerone Bennett’s essay continues:

As the seventeenth century ended and the eighteenth century began, white arrogance increased, and a yawning chasm opened up between blacks and whites....Responding to this situation, blacks began to define themselves in opposition to whites, who were viewed as enemies and oppressors.

The bosses over the four hundred years of conditioning have succeeded in separating the natural unity between Black and white workers. Institutions like schools are more segregated today than they were in the 1960s (The Atlantic, 6/11/12). At the discussion, participants talked about their segregated neighborhoods and schools. Another PL’er brought up going to a diverse school that was still very segregated and their experience with Black and Latin students being racist towards each other. The moderators quickly jumped in to say that wasn’t racism because “people of color can’t be racist.”

What do they fear the most?

An oppressor’s greatest fear is multiracial unity. When Black workers can organize hand in hand with their white counterpart, we are subverting 400 years of racist conditioning. Our discussion showed that workers of all races want to learn about racism and how to combat it. We will continue to struggle with those who were open to the ideas of multiracial unity and actively fighting racism.✪

LA Strike: union sells out, workers exercise power

On day one of the teachers' strike in Los Angeles, California almost 50,000 parents, teachers, and students converged in front of LA City Hall to march to the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) headquarters. As the days went by, community support grew despite a major teacher-bashing media campaign. Day five of the strike was a turning point, with more than 60,000 people rallying, and surveys showing almost 80 percent of LA County supporting the striking teachers.

LAUSD has historically been a school district with rampant racism and segregation. The rise of charter schools intensified this, taking away students with more academic skills and leaving the public schools in poor Black and Latin communities with higher percentages of students who need intensive support with less funding.

For the first time, 86 percent of public school children in LA are non-white (kidsdata.org), and California is now the state with the highest student-to-teacher ratio in the country (Education Week 1/19). Teachers, students, and the community were fed up with class sizes of 42 students or more, racist random searches, and the slashing of nursing services to just once a week, among other problems.

Liberal politicians kill workers power

As the strike continued, misleading liberal politicians like Governor Gavin Newsom, LA Mayor Eric Garcetti, and California State Superintendent Tony Thurmond jumped on the bandwagon. The role of the Democrats and liberals in periods of increased working class fight back is to pacify us and push us towards reforming the system instead of destroying it.

For example, even though he paid lip service to the plight of students and teachers, Garcetti put pressure on the teachers' union to go back to the bargaining table in order to quickly end the strike. This just shows that Democrats are not real allies of the working class.

Democrats like Diane Ravitch blame workers rights for "bad education." In the liberal Brookings Institute, she stated "American public education is a failed enterprise... Test scores are low because there are so many bad teachers, whose jobs are protected by powerful unions..." (11/10).

Under Barack Obama's Administration, Democrat Arne Duncan unleashed racist austerity measures against Chicago public schools by starving the budget, promoting charter schools, and purged Black educators from the schools (Common Dreams.org 01/19). Despite the liberals' rhetoric in the media, conservatives and liberals are on the same page when it comes to education.

Workers solidarity should be our only allegiance

Whether Republican or Democrat, the bosses have always tried to control the educational system in the interests of maintaining capitalism. Recently, the conservative Koch network of billionaire bosses, and politicians held a 'seminar' in California, where they discussed "increasing technology for individualized learning" and "pluralistic school models" (Washington Post 1/19).

This would mean higher teacher-to-student ratios and less job security, resources and basic rights for teachers and students, especially at schools in the working class Black and Latin neighborhoods.

When it comes down to it, the union leadership is no friend to the working class either. For example, United Teachers Los Angeles (UTLA) pushed the teachers to vote in a few short hours on day six of the strike so that they would getback

to work the next day as the school board and the politicians wanted.

They touted a substandard deal as a "huge win" and got teachers and students to celebrate miniscule improvements such as lowering class size by four students over the next three years and a 6 percent raise (barely covering cost of living increases in LA). This is business as usual for union sellouts: making backdoor deals, squashing militant fightback of the rank-and-file, and further dividing the working class.

That was a lesson for a lot of the teachers in our schools: do not trust the union leadership. In one school, teachers were talking about refusing to pay union dues and saying we can't depend on the union leadership.

Although 80 percent of the union membership voted to accept the contract, because the union leadership said that it was the best we could get, many know it will not address the heart of inequity in the schools. Some of these teachers are our coworkers who read CHALLENGE regularly, a number that doubled after the strike.

Members of Progressive Labor Party (PLP) in LA have been working inside reform movements and inside the teachers' union for many years. After a fight (led by members of PLP) for the teachers' union to take an official stand against the racist police, a Racial Justice Committee was formed.

From struggles to implement restorative justice programs in schools, to attempts to end the racist random search policy, PLP members have struggled regularly with union members who considered themselves to be anti-racists. It's partially because of this work that the union bargained with the district around anti-racist issues instead of just salary and class sizes. Known as "bargaining for the common good," this is one of the main reasons the community supported the strike.

This inclusion of the community into the fight, along with the obvious support of the students, parents, and school staff in this struggle against billionaires and privatizers, was a huge forward step for the working class here. Even if the strike ended too early and gave up too many concessions, the fight itself was worth it. At one high school, after bold militant action to identify and stop scabs, there was a stronger sense of trust and unity among the teachers and staff.

One of the teachers pointed out more clearly how school cops and administrators in heated situations become tools of state power. The strike sparked conversations about the history of the labor movement, failed unions, communist ideology, racism, and organizing the working class for revolution. Strikes are opportunities for class-conscious ideological development, but it will take more of this sort of work to turn them into schools for communism.

In order for a wave of large strikes to turn into a revolution to change the system, we have to develop class consciousness. Small things we do can have larger repercussions down the line as we build workers' unity, anti-racism, anti-sexism and turn cynicism into scientific analysis.

The real victory of this strike was the community, students and coworkers coming together to fight for the working class, and teaching our students about the value of class struggle.

We will continue the fight together with our working class brothers and sisters to get them to see the need for revolution and a communist system in which everything, including education, will be run by and for the working class. Getting CHALLENGE to more people and following through with people who have expressed interest in PLP events is an important next step.✪

Organize against racism

Members of PLP recently went to Accelerated Charters Schools in South Los Angeles to join their strike against deplorable working conditions. This is the first charter school in LA to strike, a positive development in teacher resistance against the racist capitalist education system, since one in five students in LA are now in charter schools. The Accelerated Charter Schools suffer from 50 percent yearly teacher turnover, no health insurance, huge class sizes, and firing of teachers on the spot.

This particular school has a mainly Latin student population. This is typical of charter schools. Since schools in the United States in neighborhoods with whiter and wealthier students usually get more resources, families from those neighborhoods don't rely on charter schools. This has led to charter schools creating even more segregation and racism in schools.

One math teacher at the school told us "... good teachers are not asked to come back. They stay for one to two years before leaving. Last year, the 8th graders had six teachers (substitutes) for the first half of the year, one credentialed teacher for one month, then another teacher for the last three months." This has created an apathetic environment, and students reject the teachers due to the high turnover. The same teacher said, "It's just a business. If you speak up for the students and talk about shortages in the classroom, they get rid of you."

After 10 days of picketing, Accelerated teachers successfully forced through a contract that will both improve their working conditions and their students' learning conditions. Some of this included: annual signing bonuses of \$10,000 for teachers, the formation of a Collaborative Consensus Committee for stakeholders to discuss issues and implement improvements to school wide practices, and annual increases in the employer's share of healthcare costs (UTLA.net 01/19). Even though they received these bonuses and necessities such as arbitration, teachers will still have enormous class sizes, short staff, and salaries that do not keep up with inflation. There is still work to be done!

PLP members have gone to both public and charter schools to show the need for unity in both sectors. The Democrats and Republicans want us to see public and charter school teachers as natural enemies. Randi Weingarten, the president of the American Federation of Teachers, said that "... the elite types who use charters as a force for competition will see this as a big blow. We're now seeing a mainstream shift toward neighborhood public schools with the goal being: let's make them work for all kids." (utla.net 01/19) However, this is a false paradigm.

In all schools they teach our kids to accept capitalism and push them into low-wage jobs, prisons, or the military. We can never have "fair contracts" under capitalism whether you are in public or charter schools. In this, public and charter school teachers are natural allies, and should continue to organize together against these racist teaching and learning conditions. To get the schools we need and deserve for all of our students and our teachers, we need to use these strikes as lessons in a school for communism.

LETTERS

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

What it means to join?

I recently attended my first official meeting with Progressive Labor Party (PLP) in New Jersey and afterward made explicit my intention to become a party member. On the car ride home, a comrade asked me what joining the Party meant for me, in both a practical and ideological sense.

This was, and is, an important question to consider, as Karl Marx and many other communists have and continue to ask what the relationship between anti-capitalist study and action is. As a scholar and an industrial laborer, it is a problem never far from my mind.

So the question, ever present, pushes me to consider joining the Party as the first step toward an answer: a method by which I continue to marry my communist education and communist action. The Party is an organized community that acts as both a resource for important information on the dynamics of class antagonisms and a tool for organized revolutionary action.

Joining the Party means access to veteran comrades; their thoughts and experiences in protest, worker organizing, writing, and thinking. It means access to important thinking by the likes of Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, and Vladimir Lenin. At the first Party meeting I attended, we ate good food, listened to productive debates about organizing workers within academic and labor unions, sought and received feedback on our efforts within liberal and reformist mass organizations, made plans for presenting at conferences, and heard reports on and plans for international organizing around migrants at the Mexico-U.S. border and in Puerto Rico.

I left feeling connected, informed, and ready to make moves. So joining the Party also inevitably means friendship and community, and the assurance that radical political critique and response not be without comradeship and joy. Finally, joining the Party is an important source of accountability and duty—two aspects without which no revolution can be successfully carried out. Making the commitment to myself and our comrades to carry the Party line out into the world is to render the revolution real, and begin our necessary escape from the easy compartmentalization of our thinking and working lives. The capitalist world would have us believe that we be one or the other: thinker or worker.

We are inundated with liberal, centrist, and right-wing depictions of workers as happily thoughtless, with either extremely narrow or zero concerns, incapable of analysis or disgusted by it. Workers don't care about the mechanisms of exploitation, they say, they are primal beasts of immediacy: too dumb, too needy, too racist to ever understand or care.

This kind of compartmentalization of the worker from the thinker and vice versa benefits only the bosses, who require our alienation from ourselves and each other to maintain their exploitative power. It is our job to read these divisive tactics for what they are, to refuse the easy dismissal of our ability to understand the mechanics of our exploitation at the bosses' hands, and ultimately, our ability to combine our learning and working selves so that we might collectively plan, resist, and overthrow their system of oppression.

Being a member of PLP means embracing and trusting the proletarian class in spite of capitalist propaganda. It means sharing with and learning from workers and party members. It means committing to daily intellectual and political struggle. It means transforming the propositions of communist theory into worker-centered action.

Membership gives my comrades and me the necessary confidence of community, so that we can feel empowered in our responsibility to raise class-consciousness in ourselves and others, to disrupt and obstruct capitalist exploitation of workers, and to build toward communist revolution.

★★★★★

NJ water struggle exposes Baraka's racism

I have been involved in the fight for clean water in Newark, NJ. This fight has exposed how the liberal Democratic politicians are truly the enemies of the working class. Self-proclaimed "radical" Mayor Ras Baraka not only initially tried to cover up the lead in

the water for three months, but now he refuses to admit that the problem is bigger than originally stated.

His latest attack is on the residents of the East Ward. Despite evidence that homes in the East Ward are affected with lead, he continues to deny workers filters for their homes. When confronted about it at a town hall meeting, he said that he doesn't have that data. His new Head of the Water Department contradicted him. He admitted that there were high lead levels, but he said that one of the levels was high because a disgruntled former employee of the city used a pencil to create high lead levels. He repeated that lie twice before someone told him that pencils have graphite, not lead.

The good news is that a movement is starting to grow. A group called the Newark Water coalition led by young Black and Latin activists in the city shows a lot of potential. We will continue to fight to organize workers to see that it is our right to clean water. More importantly, this struggle will mean breaking ties with some of these Democratic politicians. We'll keep CHALLENGE informed as changes happen.

★★★★★

A worker, a fighter, a friend

The news of the death of a member of our mass organization and our base, took us by surprise and also his wife who now remains alone and without any kind of support. They had to leave and go back to their country of origin about a year and a half ago, because they could not get a job here, due to their age and of a work accident that also led to his death.

During a small tribute that we did in our weekly meeting in the mass organization, all of us who knew this fellow agreed that he had demonstrated great leadership in the small struggles and small victories of our mass organization, particularly against wage theft and racism.

Almost all of us who spoke during this small tribute agreed, that huge portions of the working class spend their entire lives working, under regimes of exploitation and racism, without the right to vacations, remuneration for overtime, under conditions often subhuman without being able to travel inside or outside the country, due to lack of documents to see their loved ones, and in the end after a work accident, losing the ability to find work.

The bosses evict workers as if they are animals without the right to anything and without being able to continue working with dignity, and do not receive severance for so many years of sacrifice. As in the case of this friend of ours who in the end also had to pick up cans, and bottles while limping on his leg, in order to survive. He and his wife were ill and in the end they felt forced to return to their country empty-handed with the hope of seeing their closest family members on the last days of his life.

This worker had participated with us in study groups and had accompanied us on some May Day marches. He was convinced that the working class united could achieve many things and although he did not become a member of the Party, he did agree that our ideas were the right ones to destroy capitalism through a communist revolution, the seizure of power and the construction of a communist society that will give us equality and solidarity and where we would share all the goods produced collectively.

At the end of the meeting, the spirit of workers solidarity was once again demonstrated in a humble fundraising effort. The money we raised was given to his wife, to cover some funeral expenses. That is the true spirit of struggle and solidarity of the workers and that in the end will lead us to total victory against capitalism and imperialism.

★★★★★

An unexpected act in a play about asylum

Recently I attended a play at a liberal church that depicted an actual court hearing for an immigrant seeking asylum. The case involved a woman with a visa and a green card married to a U.S. citizen. She was given a voter registration form to sign when applying for a driver's license, despite the agent having viewed her non-citizen credentials. She then assumed she could vote and did so, after which she was successfully prosecuted by Homeland Security. In the second act, taking place several years later, her conviction is reversed on appeal. The final act in the play involves

a judge, standing on the same level as the audience of several hundred, performing a citizenship ceremony and urging everyone to stand and participate, which almost everyone did. The citizen induction is dominated by promises to defend the interests of the U.S. with arms or by whatever other means are requested.

Since I was sitting near the front, I quickly went to the mic as soon as this was over and said that as good people, we should evaluate the U.S. government's actions in the world—ranging from killing thousands of workers in Yemen, Iraq, Afghanistan, Honduras and many other countries to the killing of Black and other workers by the police on our own streets—and ask to whom we should be loyal. Better to the workers of the world than their killers. I received booming applause and quite a few positive comments. Even the director approved and agreed they might add a post-performance discussion every night. I only regret that I had not thought to bring any CHALLENGES with me.

★★★★★

Comment in editorial: next war in Iran?

In the CHALLENGE (1/23) editorial "Liberal Terrorists and the Next War," Richard Haas is quoted saying the next major U.S. war will probably start in Iran. This is significant because it points to the underlying volatility of the world situation as the U.S. empire is increasingly challenged. The main wing bosses blew a collective gasket when Donald Trump announced the retreat from Syria; their response of trying to maintain the status quo with 2000 soldiers only highlighted that the U.S. rulers have few options and they are all, from the bosses' point of view, bad.

The U.S. ruling class is increasingly cornered and divided. It is rapidly losing control of the Middle-East after 20 years of war, facing aggressive rival imperialists in China and Russia. All this increases the likelihood of major war, possibly starting as a pre-emptive measure by the U.S. bosses in a gambit to stop their steadily declining world position. The Iran situation is a potential flashpoint because the Iranian capitalists have become one of the de facto victors of the U.S. wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria.

Adding a strengthening Iran to the volatility only increases the U.S. ruling class' desperation. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Trump, Haas, National Security Advisor John Bolton, Senator Lindsey Graham and company are fighting it out in a battle to hold onto their interests in a deteriorating situation.

Their in-fighting will most likely be resolved by increased fascism in the U.S. as the main wing tries to discipline the smaller bosses in preparation for wider war. World war in an age of nuclear weapons is not only massively destructive, but unpredictable and wildly chaotic. The bosses of any of the capitalist powers will not be able to either predict or control what happens.

Yet they are heading there all the same. As a class, we have to decide if we will continue to stand by the bosses in their genocidal folly or have the confidence in our class to fight for and build a communist society out of the rubble of the bosses' failed system. Building PLP today is the way forward.

★★★★★

Workers don't need socialism

In the State of Union address, Donald Trump, attacking socialist politicians, said the United States will never be a socialist country. The U.S. is one of the largest socialist governments for the rich in the world. The U.S. government gives trillions of our taxes to lower the tax rate of the rich. It gives hundreds of millions of our taxes to bail out crooked banks that created a recession, wrecking millions of workers lives for which not one banker went to jail.

"Our" government gives billions of our taxes to subsidize rich agricultural bosses. "Our" government has ended most safety regulations of air and water, saving rich corporations billions while polluting the environment.

But there is always capitalism for the workers, featuring inequality, austerity, homelessness, the worst health care among developed nations and the largest jail population in the world. Workers don't need socialism, which in the end is state capitalism.

Workers need to destroy that system and fight for communism, which is based on the needs of the working class.

★★★★★

Aurora shooting: capitalist alienation kills

AURORA, IL, February 15—Today, a 45 year-old Black worker Gary Martin, after learning he was fired, opened fire on supervisors and co-workers at Henry Pratt Co Warehouse in Aurora, a western suburb of Chicago. Martin killed five people before the cops gunned him down.

Martin's fatal and inexcusable rampage is an extreme manifestation of the widespread alienation corroding the thoughts and actions of millions of workers worldwide who suffer under capitalism. As mass shootings become a more frequent occurrence, it becomes all the more essential to question and challenge the dehumanizing and unforgiving essence of the global profit system itself. The need for a revolutionary mass movement to crush capitalism and replace it with an egalitarian communist society is needed more than ever. Rather than relentless competition and the promotion of self-interest, workers uniting as a mass international Progressive Labor Party can build an egalitarian society where cooperation is the norm and where all workers' social, physical, and emotional needs are met.

Violent system begets violence

Although mass shootings generate many headlines, the gun violence in the U.S. is in fact more insidious. According to the Centers for Disease Control, the year 2016 saw approximately 39,000 people die from gun-related injuries in the United States. Around 2 percent, or 456, of these deaths were from mass shootings. But the great majority—nearly 23,000—were the result of suicides (Vox, 2/19). What 23,000 suicide gun deaths in one year signifies is an acute sense of despair among significant portions of the working class. Based on studies from the same year by the National Institute of

Mental Health, an estimated 16.2 million adults aged 18 or older reported having at least one major depressive episode. Of these 16.2 million, approximately 37 percent reported not receiving any type of treatment (nimh.nih.gov, 11/2017).

What's more, the trend of mental illness shows a correlation with class; the higher the dispossession of workers under capitalism, the more likely to report higher rates of despair and drug and alcohol abuse than individuals and families with higher levels of income and wealth (Princeton University, 6/18/18). Because the system engenders and hinges on the alienation of workers, capitalism cannot solve the problem of mental illness and gun violence. A violent system begets violence. A sick system begets sick people.

Though the U.S. is by far one of the wealthiest countries, it inevitably fails millions of workers and their families in terms of mental and thereby physical wellness. Public and mental health services and resources are increasingly sparse, taking a backseat to the more profitable outlets in healthcare, such as pharmaceutical interventions.

Politicians' hypocrisy on blast

As the details surrounded Martin's massacre in Aurora emerged, a wide range of political figures and public officials jumped at the opportunity to make statements. Recently elected billionaire Illinois Governor JB Pritzker, Illinois senators Tammy Duckworth and Dick Durbin, and even US President Donald Trump all wanted to demonstrate to the working class how much they "care" about workers when tragedy strikes. Their hypocrisy practically knows no bounds.

These same capitalist politicians are the same

class enemies that pass bills and resolutions that slash mental health resources, affordable housing, unemployment benefits, and jobs. They vote to authorize the bombing of our working-class brothers and sisters in other countries in order to defend US imperialism, and approve fascist border patrols and a massive deportation apparatus to detain and deport millions of immigrant workers. Martin's violence, as despicable and destructive as it was, can hardly hold a candle to the crimes perpetrated daily by capitalist scum, on behalf of their system. They readily exploit domestic crises just like the Aurora massacre because it helps deflect attention and blame away from the inherent violence of capitalism, with its economic violence, racist police killings, inequality, and profit wars.

Building communism is good for your mental health

In contrast to loner individualism and alienation that are inevitable outcomes of a system based on competition and profit, more attention must be devoted to the positive emotional impacts generated in collective, revolutionary working-class struggle. It's essential to understand our commonality as workers, who all stand to benefit from the destruction of capitalism and its replacement with an egalitarian communist society. Through our collective struggle the international working class can find the sense of purpose and connection so sorely lacking under this system. Mass shootings, depression and suicide as we know them are not inevitable social outcomes. It's in our power to minimize their effects almost entirely, but only if we steel ourselves to overthrow the rotten profit system that breeds them. ☛



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

"No person is illegal" say antifascist soccer fans

NYT, 2/10 — F.C. St. Pauli is an avowed anti-fascist soccer team based in Hamburg that plays in Germany...and...inside the stadium...displays signs proclaiming "no person is illegal." The club has an international fandom that defines itself in opposition to racism and violence that characterizes European football hooliganism.

The East River Pirates...are...one of 10 supporters' groups in North America...As such, East River Bar has become an unlikely spiritual home for German tourists, as well as a set of extremely devoted American fans who are far more interested in the team for their politics than whether or not they're in possession of the ball at any given time.

Blood money = billions in profits from workers' bodies

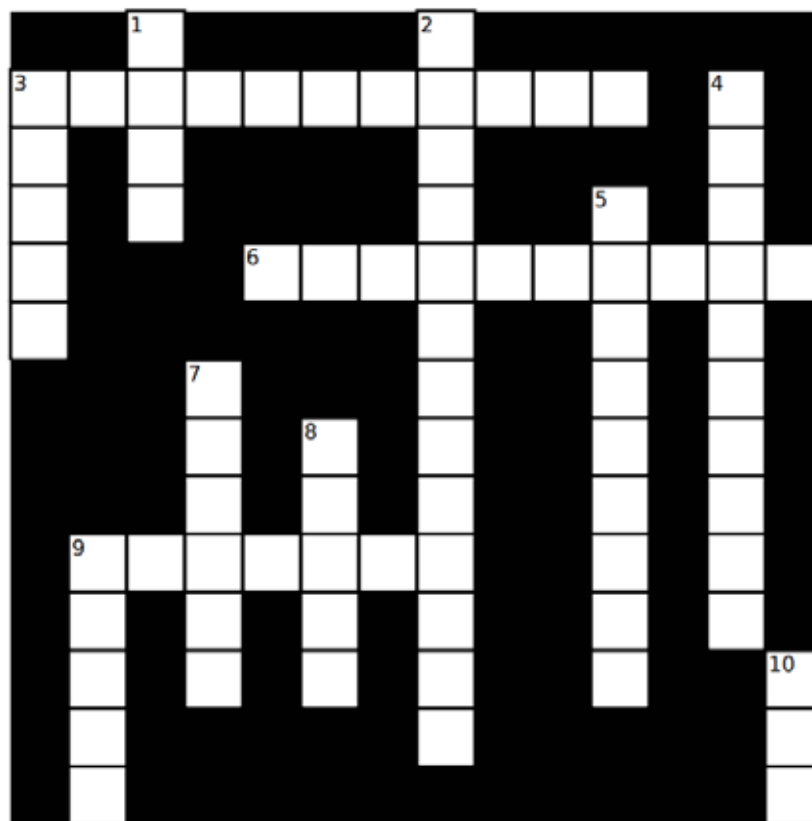
NYT, 2/3 — Jacqueline Watson needed money....She traveled 40 minutes by bus to CSL Plasma, a blood plasma collection center...in a strip mall in North Philadelphia.

"What brings me here is money," Ms. Watson, 46, said....She earns about \$30 each time she donates.

The plasma business is booming in the United States...global sales roughly quadrupling since 2000 to more than \$21 billion in 2017....Blood products made up 1.9 percent of all Americans exports in 2016, more than soybeans, more than computers....The industry depends on the blood of the very poor....

Blood plasma companies locate their collection centers disproportionately in destitute neighborhoods....Donors who sell their plasma frequently have fewer proteins in their blood, which...could put them at risk for infectious and liver and kidney disorders...[and] have reported tingling sensations, anemia and blacking out....The money...can be the only form of cash income for families living in extreme poverty....People at the CSL collection center in North Philadelphia...confirmed that the

Communist crossword puzzle no. 3



Across

- 3 Workers must seize this in order to abolish profit and exploitation.
- 6 One of the largest school districts in this state just ended a week long strike.
- 9 City host to charter school strike of nearly 200 workers.
- 1 "The ____ problem in America was a deliberate invention of men who systemically separated blacks and whites in order to make money." - Bennett
- 2 This international holiday on March 8 celebrates

Down

- 1 "The ____ problem in America was a deliberate invention of men who systemically separated blacks and whites in order to make money." - Bennett
- 2 This international holiday on March 8 celebrates

- _____ and their revolutionary power.
- 3 Racist, KKKop protected, crossers of picket lines.
- 4 The root cause of alienation and depression in workers.
- 5 Cynical literary phenomenon White _____, promotes identity politics and negates class analysis.
- 7 Opposition appointed "President in Charge" in Venezuela.
- 8 President responsible for deporting over 3 million immigrants while in office.
- 9 PLP Slogan: "One World, One _____, One Flag."
- 10 Natural resource at the root of Chavez's political rule.

visit plp.org for answers to puzzle no. 2

money they received there was their only income; they were putting it toward food, rent and bus fare.

International working women's day

Fight sexism, build communism

March 8 is International Working Women's Day. It's an international holiday that celebrates women and their revolutionary power, and it has strong roots in the communist movement. International Women's Day first began in New York as "Women's Day," organized by the Socialist Party of America. It was celebrated in 1909 as a commemoration of the 1908 strike of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union. In the 1910 meeting of communist and socialist leaders from around the world, known as the Second International, women members pushed to establish an International Women's Day. By 1911, over a million workers around the world were celebrating it. In 1917, striking women workers commemorating this holiday sparked uprisings that led to the Bolshevik Revolution, and the first workers' state, the Soviet Union. Anti-sexist struggle makes it a historic day for all workers, both women and men!

Worldwide, fascism is growing along with workers' suffering, and the problem of the worldwide attacks on working people, and especially on working women, is seemingly unsolvable.

The Progressive Labor Party (PLP) continues the revolutionary tradition of International Women's Day by fighting for true liberation for women and men: communism. We believe that all women and men of the international working class can do better than settle for Elizabeth Warren (U.S. presidential candidate) or Juan Guaidó (Venezuela's president). We can get rid of this whole system and replace it with one where we, the working class, run the world.

Women Workers at cutting edge of capitalist horror

President Donald Trump has eagerly continued Barack Obama's legacy of racist mass deportations by deporting, terrorizing, and separating workers. He is the ugly, naked, violent face of fascism.

Working women are one of his primary targets. The women who are deported to Latin America often face gang and government physical and sexual violence. Those who try to come back to the United States to be with their families are at risk of being sexually assaulted or sold into sex slavery. Even with the deportation of men workers, women who remain in the United States to raise children and pay the bills by themselves.

Women workers in the Middle East, Africa, and worldwide. In refugee camps in countries like Jordan, where women and children comprise more than 80 percent of the population, they are at a high risk of sexual assault. Often they lack basic reproductive and sexual health services, resulting in higher death rates. The United Nations recently reported that sexual violence is on the rise in South Sudan.

Women, and especially Black, Latin, and immigrant women, are the first to lose their jobs when the bosses need to cut. Wages are falling all over the world and it's getting harder and harder to pay for food, rent, and other necessities. Sexism means gendered divisions for the working class and super-profits for the bosses. Men's wages are depressed precisely because women's are even more depressed. Sexism means that working families, and working mothers in particular, are overburdened by childcare and housework. Sexism means that women are a disposable labor force for the bosses. When the occasional woman attains a position of power, the bosses use this exception as another excuse to blame other women for being poor. As long as we have a sexist division between unpaid and paid labor, there will be sexist oppression and ideology to uphold it.

History as a guide and a weapon

The international working class has faced down dark nights before, and will do so again. The Soviet Union made great progress under socialism, where prostitution was eliminated, communal daycares and kitchens flourished, and education was equal



for both women and men. Unlike today, maternity leave with full pay was universal; new mothers had no worry about losing their jobs.

At its height, 60 percent of the Soviet Union's engineers were women. Women were empowered across one-sixth of the earth's surface, and armed women workers played leading roles during World War 2, both in the Red Army, and the partisan movement that devastated the Nazi war machine behind enemy lines. The concept of housekeeping as "women's work" was abolished.

While the Soviet and Chinese revolutions made progress in many ways, they also had flaws we can learn from. They represent only the beginning of what we, the working class, can achieve in the future! This International Working Women's Day, we must celebrate women as the holiday's communist founders intended: for their historical contributions to building society and for their revolutionary strength.

Capitalist response to crises

Unlike communism, capitalism is based off of making profits, which is money stolen from workers. Bosses need to constantly expand their business and make more profits to stay alive. However, there are limits to how much they can expand. U.S. bosses are reaching those limits and facing competition from Russia and China. That is why they need to wage bigger wars and steal from workers even more. Those are the only two ways they can continue to grow business and make more profits.

Sexism is an important part of how bosses steal from workers, because it allows them to pay women less than men and fire women easily if they don't fall in line. It also divides men and women workers by convincing them that they are enemies. This allows them to pay men less, too, because they don't unite with their fellow workers to demand a better life. Sexism also means that working families, and

especially mothers, have to worry about childcare and housework, not the bosses.

Working Class response to crises

The world situation is quickly intensifying. The bosses may respond to crises by attacking and exploiting women more and stirring up racism, but our class has much to be hopeful for. But, millions of people around the world are refusing to fall into the trap of racism and sexism. Just this month, the world saw the largest general strike in history in India.

Communism will smash sexism

Sexism is inseparable from class society. The only way to end it is to eliminate classes by creating a communist society, where all workers can contribute and have our needs met.

But one day is not enough. We must dedicate ourselves to a lifetime of fighting sexism in our homes, at our jobs, and in the streets. In Pakistan, Progressive Labor Party is advancing the leadership of women in the fight against slave-labor working conditions for men and especially women. In PLP in Brooklyn, women are leading the fight for justice for Kyam Livingston, Shantel Davis, and Kimani Gray, all killed by racist and sexist kkkops. PLP marched and will continue to march and organize on the campus and on the job with the millions of workers who dare to dream a better world.

PLP in Mexico, women comrades are at the forefront of the fight against racist education reforms and fascist state terror. PLP in Haiti and Pakistan are fighting similar battles.

We must mobilize to destroy the whole sexist capitalist system and replace it with communism. Only then will the working class, both men and women, truly be liberated. The night may be dark, but our revolutionary future is bright!✪

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