

# CHALLENGE



THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

Volume 51 No. 9

May 1, 2019

suggested donation \$1

# MARCH ON MAY DAY!



MEXICO



IRAQ



SOUTH AFRICA



UNITED STATES

**INSIDE:**

China's cyber fascism...p2

MTA workers and riders unite...p4

Puerto Rico trip affirms working-class solidarity...p3

There's nothing socialist about Venezuela...p8

## 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!

## CONTACT US

**Email**  
desafio.challenge@gmail.com

**Mail**  
Box 808 GPO, Brooklyn, NY 11202

**Internet**  
www.plp.org  
challengenewspaper.wordpress.com  
Twitter: @PLPchallenge  
Facebook: Challenge Desafio

## 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.

CHALLENGE/DESAFIO (ISSN 0009-1049) published bi-weekly by Challenge Periodicals. 1 issue \$1. One Year: \$20. Six months: \$15. Send address changes to CHALLENGE Periodicals, GPO Box 808 Brooklyn, NY 11202, May 1, 2019•Volume 51 No. 9

## Editorial

# China's cyber fascism

Having state power means controlling the government, military, police, schools, and other institutions. It also means controlling mass technology—as China's capitalist bosses are now demonstrating as they implement full-blown fascism. From artificial intelligence to various phone apps pushing ruling-class ideas, the Chinese bosses are both attacking and mobilizing workers to serve the bosses' interests while crushing dissent within their own ranks.

## Internet is valuable tool to control workers

One goal of fascism is to win workers to fight and die for the bosses' profits. To do this, the capitalists know they must control workers' ideas. The newest and most popular app in China is called “Study the Great Nation.” It builds President Xi Jinping's cult of personality by forcing students and workers to keep track of current events and to study the Jinping's thoughts. Some employers force workers to take screen shots of their scores each day (NYT, 4/7). Millions are compelled to take part in this daily ritual.

China is also building a social credit system that will not only track your financial status but also calculate your “honesty” and “patriotism.” Workers' scores will determine if they can get on an airplane, use a high-speed train, or be allowed to purchase “luxury items” (South China Morning Post, 3/26).

Over the last decade, China's bosses have been working toward greater control over the internet and tech firms, including censorship of social media platforms. In 2009, when workers were rebelling in Xinjiang province, the Chinese government completely shut down the internet for months. In a recent incident, a live streamer was arrested for “disrespecting” the famous red scarf worn by the Communist Party's youth league by catching fish while wearing one (CNN, 4/9).

Since the 1970s, after crushing the Cultural Revolution, the Chinese bosses have promoted individualism on the path toward capitalism. Now, however, they must fight against individualism to mobilize the population for fascism. Beyond using government officials to monitor the internet, these capitalists have set up “censorship factories” where low-wage workers enforce the bosses' “Great Firewall” policies (NYT, 1/2). Many Chinese tech firms that assist in day-to-day surveillance of daily life also depend on government support in major research in quantum computing and human-computer interaction. This New York Times article shows the difference between the U.S. bosses' and China's bosses' power: “Making themselves useful to the government is often the price that Chinese firms must pay for regulatory and financial blessings — even for the very right to exist as a business” (NYT 5/2/18).

## Crushing dissent

Over the past 10 years, the Chinese ruling class has consolidated power and ensured that any disagreements stay within the leadership. Lou Jiwei, who led the social security fund in China, was abruptly removed after criticizing the “Made in China 2025” campaign (Nikkei Asian Review, 4/5), a slow-moving initiative to make China more competitive with other major powers in pharmaceuticals, automobile manufacturing, and robotics. China's capitalists' ability to maintain order within their class gives them more maneuverability to control the working class. China is already demon-



@PLPchallenge



Challenge Desafio

strating this drive toward fascism in western Xinjiang province, where the Uighurs, a minority population, continue to be held in “re-education” camps (see CHALLENGE, 10/10/18). The bosses have installed surveillance cameras, monitored online discussions, and sent thousands of undercover cops to spy and live with families to prevent any rebellion. More recently, China's bosses have deployed facial recognition software to racially profile the Uighurs and track their movements. This “automated racism” (NYT, 4/14) has also been extended to other parts of China.

While their political control of technology may make China's rulers appear strong, it in fact reflects their weakness. These fake “communists” have exposed themselves to many workers as the exploiters they are. Communist students who expose the Chinese bosses for their anti-working class attacks have been detained by the government (Reuters 12/27/18).

## U.S. struggles to catch up

China's main rival, the U.S. bosses, are still struggling to develop this type of full-blown, fascist control. The effort to rein in U.S. companies and put “national allegiance” over short-term profits has a long way to go. Microsoft has been helping the Chinese bosses build their military by working with a military-backed university in China to improve artificial intelligence and high-tech surveillance. “Many of these advanced technologies are dual-use, so they could also contribute to the PLA's (People's Liberation Army's) modernization and informatization drive, helping the Chinese military move closer to the 2049 goal of being a world-class military” (Japan Today, 4/12).

Google is under attack for pulling out of a contract to work with the U.S. military while continuing to partner with China in developing artificial intelligence research. General Joseph Dunford, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, warned that Google's activity “creates a challenge for us in maintaining a competitive advantage” (politico.com, 3/21).

## China is a lesson for all workers

What China is doing is what all bosses want. In the U.S. and other “democratic” imperialist nations, capitalists are fighting with one another in attempts to win workers' loyalty and consolidate their power. But make no mistake: All bosses are our enemies. War continues to slaughter and displace millions around the world. Real wages keep getting cut. Police violence continues to kill workers around the world. China's move toward fascism is the rule, not the exception.

The Progressive Labor Party looks to unite the international working class to fight this fascist onslaught. Our goal is to create a communist society where we can use these technological advances to benefit humanity rather than keep us controlled by the bosses. Join us! ☺

# Puerto Rico trip affirms working-class solidarity

**PUERTO RICO, April 15** —Two years after Hurricane Maria, the capitalist disaster that ravaged Puerto Rico's working class, six young Progressive Labor Party (PLP) members from New York and New Jersey returned to the island earlier this month (*see letter on page 6*).

The trip was organized as a follow up to last year's summer project, the Puerto Rico Brigade, with the purpose of reinforcing our bonds of solidarity, and delivering PLP's internationalist message to our working-class brothers and sisters surviving there.

Although Maria ran its natural course, an increasingly fascist storm still rages on for the island workers. To date, 4,600 workers have died of causes attributable to ruling class negligence before and after the hurricane. U.S. bosses continue clamping fangs down into the working class with austerity measures (*The Atlantic*, 5/29/18).

The trip exposed that there is no disaster more destructive and lethal for workers than this system. From Puerto Rico to New Orleans to Haiti, workers cannot escape capitalism's lethal grip. Thus this trip was a step towards building the kind of international working-class solidarity we need

to smash capitalism, and replace it with the only system that guarantees us a future—communism. More importantly our trip sharpened the young PL'ers ideologically, as they learned from workers in the trenches, shared stories, distributed CHALLENGE to workers and students, and struggled with newer comrades about how nationalism is toxic for workers in Puerto Rico.

## Capitalism deadlier than any natural disaster

While the damage caused by Hurricane Maria was extensive, the disaster of capitalism and U.S. imperialism has been pummeling the island since 1898, with raging super-exploitation and violent repression, stemming from the racist Jones Act, which turned the island into a cash mill for banks and corporations.

Before the hurricane, 45 percent of workers were suffering from poverty and 10 percent unemployment (*CHALLENGE*, 10/25/17). More recently, the Puerto Rico Oversight Management Stability Act (PROMESA), the austerity measures that cut funding to important social services—passed by liberal terrorist ex-president Barack Obama in

2016—exacerbated the attacks.

Since then, inflation has worsened and workers' wages remain stagnant; students are being piled together in trailers used as makeshift classrooms, as funds are hoarded by the bosses.

When the ruling class neglected Puerto Rico after the storm, we teamed up with the PR October Brigade, university students, workers, and a veteran comrade to take matters into our own hands and rebuild, both literally and consciously. Young Party members helped clean up after the storm, delivered supplies to workers, led communist study groups, and attended rallies fighting these vicious cuts.

The Department of Education closed more than 400 schools under Secretary Julia Keleher's regime. Yet many teachers and parents are not taking it lying down. The Federation of Puerto Rican Teachers (FMPR in Spanish) has occupied at least ten schools with community assistance and help from El Movimiento al Rescate de Mi Escuela y Comunidad (the Movement to Rescue our Schools

*Continued on page 5*

# Grad students expose rotten university system



## Universities under capitalism serve the bosses needs

At the same time that many UIC students and workers have fought against economic insecurity and declining emotional health, the overall university system has continued to distinguish itself as a for-profit institution like all colleges and universities under capitalism. The same UIC bosses who claimed they couldn't afford to pay student workers the Chicago minimum wage received an endowment of almost \$400 million dollars in 2017, and salaries and bonuses for the chancellors and president total hundreds of thousands of dollars a year.

What's more, this past year the university bosses unveiled a plan to pour over \$1 billion into renovating the campus over the next ten years, including building a new soccer stadium and ice-skating rink (*Chicago Sun-Times*, 12/31/18). These superficial vanity projects are sure to make the university more exclusive towards working-class students while displacing more workers and their families in the surrounding communities.

This is what passes for higher education under the profit system. Graduate students are worked to physical and mental exhaustion, helping churn out research that is instrumental in the university bosses cutting lucrative deals with major corporations, military contractors, and government agencies. Undergraduates lack basic support services to assist them in their courses, and graduate saddled with astronomical debt. All the while, the ideology promoted is saturated with pro-capitalist ideas that will not help students fight against a racist and sexist system of exploitation, wars and ecological ruin.

## Lasting victories

In the wake of a strike against the bosses, it's essential to define what constitutes real victory in the class struggle. Pay raises and better staffing can be offset or rolled back entirely, but the relationships forged in working-class fightback are much harder for the bosses to erase. It is the act of expanding the base and militancy of the mass movement that must be the key goal in any reform struggle. Such a strategy gives us communists opportunities to have more workers and students questioning the capitalist system entirely, and discussing how an egalitarian society based on science, collectivity, anti-racism, and anti-sexism could educate our class infinitely better. ☛

**CHICAGO, April 5**—Graduate workers from the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) along with their supporters gathered for a rally on campus today to mark the end of their three-week strike against the racist university administration. The Graduate Employees Organization (GEO) Local 6297 union, representing some 1,600 workers, secured a tentative contract guaranteeing annual raises and a decrease in parasitic university fees.

The strike has been instrumental in further exposing the exploitative working conditions for graduate and teacher assistants, which inevitably translate into inferior learning conditions for the university's predominately Black, Latin, and international student population.

The strike highlighted the decadence of the capitalist bosses' academic institutions, which function first and foremost as factories of ideological and social control, bound to the profit motive of capitalism. Comrades from Progressive Labor Party (PLP) had a small role in supporting the strike, and look forward to connecting the lessons learned from the struggle to the larger fight of crushing the bosses' rotten system entirely with communist revolution!

## Graduate workers fight oppressive conditions

Shortly after the tentative contract agreement was announced, PLP joined over 100 graduate workers, students, faculty, and community supporters in the campus quad for a victory rally. Various speakers reflected on the oppressive conditions that led to the strike and the key role

that bold action and solidarity played throughout the struggle. As one speaker sharply stated, "The graduate students are the backbone of this university, yet the university has been treating them like they are the appendix." She wasn't joking. According to UIC's official statements, the graduate employee minimum salary for two semesters with 20 hours of work per week is a measly \$18,000. Arbitrary charges and medical fees for the university's Campus Care coverage have been steadily rising, bleeding working students of hundreds of dollars every semester.

A rapid community health assessment of over 600 graduate student workers conducted by campus public health organizations during the strike detailed some harsh realities. Seventy-seven percent of graduate workers don't earn enough to cover their basic living expenses in rapidly gentrifying Chicago. Eight out of ten reported experiencing general anxiety, and seven out of ten reported depression (*uic-geo.net*). But despite these obstacles, the same graduate workers were able to lead a three-week strike that forced the university bosses to concede to some of their demands. The speeches shared experiences of their daily pickets on campus, cramming administration boardrooms during contract negotiations, classroom walkouts, and marching through the surrounding community after drawing support from local unions, faculty, and undergraduate students. Hundreds of classes taught by graduate workers had to be cancelled, even though the university claimed that courses went on uninterrupted (*Chicago Tribune*, 4/4).

# Transit workers and riders unite!

The Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) controls all of New York City's public transportation. Over a year ago it proposed a 15-month complete shutdown of the L train subway line, in order to complete much needed repairs. Just four months before the repairs were to begin, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo played the hero role and announced a new plan so as not to "inconvenience" the riding public. That's a big lie, typical of all politicians. The transit system was built to get workers to work. The trains function for the "convenience" of the bosses not the workers.

Actually, the MTA abuses two groups of workers, the riding public and the transit workers, members of the Transit Workers Union (TWU). Both of these groups of workers should come together to fight the capitalists who see the MTA as their tool and not a service for working people. The L train shut down is a prime example that shows the transit bosses' real purpose, to make capitalists' profits. The initial shut down proposal would have cost businesses a lot of money so Governor Cuomo dispatched his own set of expert engineers to declare it a bad plan (NYcurbed.com, 1/3). The new plan is to shut the L line down during off peak hours, during the weekend so it doesn't affect the bosses' bottom line.

Moreover, Cuomo doesn't actually care about the health risk the construction project poses to



workers (NY Post, 3/11). Workers traveling to work on weekdays will likely inhale the toxic dust left off from the weekend work. But what's a little silica dust in the name of capitalism? It's nothing to the bosses. What about the TWU workers that work

in these L trains stations? They too will face exposure to the silica dust just like the workers riding to work.

Meanwhile the TWU has not made a public outcry about these working conditions. It's a contract year. The union tells the rank and file members that the riders are not their friends. The union makes sure the workers are divided. The capitalist-controlled media makes sure the riders hate the TWU members who ensure these riders get to work. The media makes it seem that train and bus delays are the product of lazy workers and not bad management, the same bad management that would allow the workers, both riders and service providers, to live with silica dust. And neither the media nor the politicians blame the billionaire business owners and their capitalist system.

What can be done? The same thing that always needs to be done. Workers need to fight back! This could be an epic win if the riders and transit workers fought this together. The bosses keep us divided, but if we fought together we could win. A win against silica would be great. However, how many more battles would we have to fight? Fighting for small but important battles is crucial, but the ultimate solution is a communist revolution, where the workers run everything. Only then will we work and ride in safe conditions. ☸

## NYPD targets antiracists, workers expose liberal fascism

**THE BRONX, April 15**—The police picked on the wrong family when they arrested Yajaira Saavedra. She and her family own La Morada restaurant, a place of antiracism and fightback for undocumented and immigrant workers. As racist cops carried out business as usual in the South Bronx, terrorizing Black and Latin workers, our class was ready to fight back.

The family called a community press conference. Progressive Labor Party participated and recognizes it as part of a bigger fight against capitalism and racism. "I was under the impression that I was in a sanctuary city, but more barriers are being placed by the mass policing that targets unjustly the working class like my family and local street vendors," Natalia Mendez, the mother of the family, told the press (Civil Eats, 1/18). Clearly, sanctuary is no protection for workers.

### Harassed by police

On January 11, Yajaira Saavedra, daughter of Natalia, saw the New York Police Department (NYPD) carrying out a sting operation outside of La Morada and began filming the incident. She was unaware that three plainclothes cops were inside the restaurant. One demanded that she stop recording. After revealing that he was an undercover cop, he ordered her to shut down the restaurant. When she demanded a warrant, he replied "I don't have a warrant, but I have a badge and a gun and if you don't do as I say, I'm going to flip the restaurant around," flashing his gun as he spoke.

After Yajaira demanded he leave the restaurant, the officer returned with more members of their gang to arrest Yajaira. Without reading her rights to her, they threw her into a black van and brought her to the precinct. Yajaira's sister, who was also threatened with arrest, had a panic attack and had to be treated by Emergency Medical Technicians. Community members mobilized immediately and demanded Yajaira's release, which occurred three hours later (Civil Eats, 1/18).

### Safety in fightback

Yajaira is a holder of DACA, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, the Barack Obama-era program that delays deportations of undocumented immigrants who came here as children. She could've been easily deported as a result of this arrest.

The Mendez-Saavedra family is known for their fightback against racism. Yajaira started an

advocacy group that promoted education access for undocumented immigrants. Her brother Marco has infiltrated detention centers three times, most recently with the Dream 9, a group of undocumented fighters who left the United States and re-entered to document and expose the fascist conditions of the of U.S. immigration system during the Obama administration (The Independent, 1/12/18).

Yajaira was correct when she said, "As an undocumented immigrant, we are always on our toes when it comes to immigration raids and police raids. They both create terror." The bosses' mass terror campaign deports immigrants daily on charges as minor as driving without a license, possession of marijuana, shoplifting, or violating probation (The Pew Charitable Trusts, 12/21/16). Liberal reforms like DACA, which only delay deportations on the condition of being passive to the system, keep workers in limbo and in a permanent state of fear.

While workers are told again and again to shut up and not resist, we in the Progressive Labor Party say, the only possibility of security is in fighting back. To take it a step further, joining a worldwide struggle against police terror, racism, and capitalism is the only real protection workers have.

### Gentrification, a war on workers

Yajaira's arrest occurs in the wake of intensifying gentrification in the Bronx. As rents rise and new real estate pops up, long-time residents face eviction. Gentrification, enabled by racism and police terror, is sown into the fabric of capitalism—a system in which the ruling class' profits always come before the safety and well-being of workers

Gentrification depends on increased police terror against Black and Latin working-class people. The city is building a new \$68 million facility for NYPD's 40th precinct, the current location of which is just a few blocks from La Morada (ABC News, 7/10/18). In 2013, the precinct's Deputy Inspector was caught on tape instructing cops to specifically stop and frisk "male Blacks 14 to 21" (Daily News, 3/21/13). The police are continuing a current-day War on Drugs in the area. Earlier this year, Mayor Bill de Blasio ordered sweeps in the neighborhood targeting homeless people and people who use drugs, a move that he called off after much public criticism (Politico, 1/13). Crack-

downs do not address addiction, and instead are a cover for violence against mainly Black and Latin workers. It is significant to note that all of this is happening in a "sanctuary city" under the Democratic Party.

### Liberal politicians are the main danger

Liberal politicians offer no real solution to fascist violence against immigrants, and are not on the side of the working class even though they pretend to be. At the Saavedra-Mendez family's press conference, attended by Progressive Labor Party, workers rightly expressed suspicion of the liberal establishment, calling into question the concept of the American Dream and police accountability. "American Dream, American Promise, the only promise that America gives is that you're gonna get whipped as a Black and brown person," said one resident.

Just as many workers cannot be won to the blatant anti-immigrant racism of the right, neither can we be pulled into liberal attempts to redeem electoral politics through multicultural patriotism. In response to Donald Trump's overt attacks on immigrants, liberals have supported so called "sanctuary cities" to protect immigrant workers. What good is a "sanctuary city" if residents can't pay rent and get terrorized by police daily. Folks live in fear of being snatched and separated from their loved ones. Similarly, policies like DACA and the NYS DREAM Act offer temporary and insufficient reforms, while at the same time increase workers' buy-in to a multicultural American Dream.

Any movement that's under the bosses' leadership will serve those bosses' interests. A sanctuary movement under the liberal bosses serves the longterm needs of the U.S. ruling class. As the bosses gear up for World War III, multicultural patriotism will be used to build an army willing to fight for the U.S. empire.

The comments made at the press conference give us confidence that workers will resist these liberal narratives, and we must continue to struggle with all workers to ensure this is so.

Rather than liberal reforms, we must fight for revolutionary change. We must abolish borders and create a safer world for all of us by fighting for communism. ☸

# Free Ramsey Orta, working-class hero! Jail racist murderer Daniel Pantaleo

**STATEN ISLAND, NY, April 16**— On May 13, a phony NYPD departmental “disciplinary” trial will be held for Daniel Pantaleo, the racist cop who murdered Eric Garner on July 17, 2014, using a banned chokehold. While Eric was being murdered, Ramsey Orta, a neighborhood resident, turned on his cell phone and took a video of the murder of his friend. Ramsey filmed the killing while seven other callous cops and Emergency Medical Technicians watched and did nothing as Eric said, “I can’t breathe” eleven times.

These criminals with badges have not been charged with any crimes yet, and they certainly have not been fired. Mayor Bill de Blasio allowed current and former police commissioners to permit Pantaleo to continue to working (and even make an excessive amount of overtime). The trial is phony because it only makes a recommendation to the Police Commissioner.

SiaraPB (Staten Island Against Racism and Police Brutality), formed after Eric’s murder, will demonstrate for justice for Eric Garner and demand criminal charges against Pantaleo at the NYPD headquarters at 1 Police Plaza at 9am on Monday, May 13.

## Ramsey Orta’s journey through prison system is not over

Because Ramsey Orta made sure the video was made public, workers all over the world became aware of the racist brutality of the New York Police Department. This created an international firestorm and made Ramsey a target of the police. We won’t forget that if it were not for Ramsey’s courage, we would not clearly and vividly know the truth about Eric Garner’s death. There are many other cop murders of unarmed Black and Latin people, but their details are not known because they are covered up by the police and the media—there is no video.

Yet, Ramsey was released and arrested many times after the video went public. Two of the charges led to his imprisonment and he is now serving a harsh sentence of close to four years. As an essentially political prisoner, Ramsey has been treated very badly during his time in prison: he has been transferred six times to different prisons very far from New York City, where his family and friends live; he is frequently harassed, given violations for minor infractions, and even put in solitary for very

minor infractions. Siara PB and the Progressive Labor Party have organized to help people visit Ramsey. We continue to support him. He will be in prison serving until July, 2020 and will likely face police harassment when he is released.

## Anti-racist struggles help build communism

One of the things we’ve learned participating in anti-racist, anti-killer cop movements in the last few years is that many, many workers and students talk about the fact that we must change the whole system, usually meaning reforming the police and judicial system. Our job as communists is to help them understand that the capitalist system needs racism to divide the working class and make more profits and that the cops and the courts are part of the state apparatus that keeps the capitalists in power. Only by destroying capitalism and by the working class taking power under a mass communist party will we be able to abolish the capitalist injustice system. Bringing workers and students to that level of understanding is our job as members and friends of the Progressive Labor Party. Join us on MAY DAY! ☘

## Turn collective reforestation into communist revolution

In 2010 a terrible earthquake killed 3,000 workers in Haiti. After years of U.S., Canadian, French and other foreign corporations exploit Haiti’s resources, the workers of Haiti were left vulnerable to this capitalist-made disaster. Every year since then the Haitian non-profit FEDASE, along with members of our church, have been organizing an annual fundraising dinner to support the efforts of grassroots organizers in Haiti.

### Planting the seeds of communism through class struggle

The money collected during this multiracial evening will go towards planting trees in Haiti. A decision was made to plant fruit trees because there is less incentive for workers to cut them down to make charcoal, which is a source of income for the them. If the trees bear fruit, the fruit can be sold and/or eaten. As these trees grow and bear fruit, let’s make sure that revolutionary communist ideas also grow.

We need the workers in Haiti who are organizing collectively without any government aid to become the future organizers of a communist world. Our ties with the Haitian organizers are strong and the evening is always one of music, food, and good feeling. Everyone participates in the singing of songs in Kreyol and English. Photos from the work on the ground in Haiti are shown in a slide show while music from Haiti and other places is enjoyed.

This year a poem was read in two languages, Kreyol and English, by a member of the church and a member of FEDASE. A member of the Haitian group wrote the poem, which talks of struggle and com-

radeship against imperialism and exploitation.

The evening was followed by an after church discussion on reforestation in Haiti. The discussion opened with a history of the exploitative reparations imposed on the workers of Haiti by the French after the first successful revolution against slavery and imperialism in the world in 1804.

The French demanded payment for the Haitian people’s freedom, because they were now deprived of the lucrative profits of slavery. Ever since then corrupt governments dominated by imperialist powers have worked to keep the workers of Haiti without resources while super-exploiting their labor. One such exploiter is the Clinton Foundation, which built a low-wage garment factory, which by 2016 produced only 8,000 of the 100,000 jobs they promised.

### Bosses destroy, workers create

As one example of the vicious exploitation of Haiti’s natural resources, multinational corporations have cut down most of the natural hardwood forests. As a result of this theft, there is now only two percent of the tree coverage that existed previously. Lack of trees and plants exacerbate the mountainous terrain and leads to soil loss and mudslides endangering all residents.

FEDASE is working with students to plant trees and fund their schooling in an effort to combat this problem. Working together with these workers and their students we must build a communist world through collectivity and multi-racial unity, without corrupt governments that serve the capitalists. Power to the workers! ☘

## Puerto Rico trip affirms working-class solidarity!

*Continued on page 3*

and Communities).

### Trip to Toa Baja

On the third day of the visit, PLP organized a trip to Toa Baja to visit the Lorencita Ramirez de Arellano school, one of the schools the workers occupied. There, we spoke to parents and teachers who converted the shuttered school into a community center, complete with free tutoring, capoeira and fencing lessons provided free to local elementary school-aged children. The parents and teachers hope to collectively keep the school running, through grassroots funding, and count on educators organizing in the movement to volunteer their talents to serve the working class.

The movement is another example that workers are the only class fit to create the society we want for our children and youth. At a FMPR march, we learned about the school shutdowns, budget cuts, and their privatization. These learning conditions reflect teachers’ working conditions, as they often must buy school supplies, and provide air conditioning for students, while on average living on a \$27,000 a year salary (\$7,000 below the poverty line).

### More the same than different

One teacher particularly interested in our ideas and CHALLENGE pointed out how the abuse teachers face on the island is a product of capitalism, which does not care about truly educating workers. Through this discussion we were able to connect how these conditions are replicated in the U.S. We shared the notable example of how U.S. bosses used Hurricane Katrina as an excuse to expand corporate-backed charter

**CAPITALISM  
BREEDS SEXISM  
RACISM  
& IMPERIALISM!**



**FIGHT FOR A COMMUNIST WORLD**

schools, and the way in which capitalism uses disasters like Maria and Katrina to profit from working class misery.

Even though Puerto Rican nationalism was on full display at the march, we won some friends to internationalist ideas by showing that while workers everywhere face attacks at varying levels, we all have one common enemy, capitalism. Our hope is to continue to forge ahead, and fight with workers to rebuild Puerto Rico, with the ultimate goal winning workers to fight for the most important battle ahead, and that is for Communism, a world in which workers run society for the benefit of all. ☘

# LETTERS

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

## Lessons from Puerto Rico

I participated as more than 500 teachers converged on Plaza Colón in Old San Juan, Puerto Rico (see article, page 3), to protest against the imposition of charter schools (private schools using public funds) on the island. One victory in the more than a year and a half struggle led by teachers and parents has been that the “Hurricane Katrina/New Orleans” model of privatization and “charterization” of Puerto Rico was forestalled—at least for now.

As of 2019, there is only one charter school in Puerto Rico, unlike Newark where 40 percent of the schools are charters, or New Orleans where 95 percent are charters. Teachers in Puerto Rico say that charter schools are just another capitalist attack on public education. One teacher at the march said that while he was glad Julia Keleher (head of the Department of Education in Puerto Rico) was gone, it wasn’t a matter of personalities, but the capitalist system itself that seeks to extract the maximum profit from public education through charters, cramming 30 or 40 students into a class. He went on to say that independence for Puerto Rico was not enough, that Puerto Ricans needed to unite with workers from other lands to end capitalism and build worker-controlled communism. We were really glad to hear that!

After we got back home from this spring-break project in Puerto Rico, long-time friends of PLP heard about the imminent Rutgers University workers’ strike and offered to write a letter of solidarity in support of the workers. We always chant, “Las luchas obreras no tienen fronteras!” (“Workers’ struggles have no borders!”) It is beautiful to see the idea of internationalism in action!

I learned a few critical things from this experience: First, nationalism is an absolute dead end for workers. I’ve always known, of course, that white nationalism is evil and fascist. But seeing how nationalism is used against the working class in Puerto Rico made me realize that there are no “good nationalisms” either. Even bourgeois feminism is a kind of nationalism and as a woman I see how destructive it is. Basically, nationalism convinces workers to do the dirty work of the bourgeoisie. “Fight a war for us so we can kick out the old masters and become the new ones.” “Fight for #Metoo” so bourgeois women can have it easier in the boardroom while working class women will always have to contend with rape and sexual harassment as long as capitalism exists. Nationalism makes us think of ourselves as everything but workers. It blinds us from achieving class-consciousness.

Second, class-consciousness is powerful. Our small delegation, despite our differences, came together and formed our own neural network, as we exchanged ideas. I feel like I got so much smarter in just a few days because I was plugged in to the minds of other workers with burgeoning class-consciousness. This was amazing with just a handful of people, but imagine if seven billion workers around the world were connected via class-consciousness, with the tools of dialectical materialism and the praxis of class struggle, living in communism. We would be unstoppable! We could find the solutions to so many of humanity’s problems! I may never live to see that day but at least I can say I fought to bring it on. Third, PL comrades are super dope!

★★★★★

## Who determines need?

I went to a film showing about consumer-driven, greedy workers trampling over each other at store sales while other workers worldwide must endure heartbreaking conditions making mounds of products that quickly end up as land fill or pollution. The film depicted the brutal suppression of protests and. According to the movie, we needed to find an “orderly, reasonable” way for people to solve this worsening problem.

In the discussion period, I asked, “Who determines need?” I said majority percent of our national budget and taxes pay for formal 800 U.S. military bases in 70 countries whose mission is to shoot down workers and maintain U.S. imperialism. Any gains we have made as workers did not come from “orderly, reasonable” debate but through bloody, revolutionary class struggle. Then I held up CHALLENGE saying, “This paper is trying to end capitalist profits and build a system based on workers needs.” I sold every last copy CHALLENGE.

## COMRADE DONNA PERONE, REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST

Comrade Donna Perone, a committed member of the revolutionary communist Progressive Labor Party (PLP), passed away recently. Comrade Donna came from a family that included Italian partisans who fought fascism during World War II, a father and aunt who were members of the young communists in the 1930’s, and her favorite song was Bella Ciao. Comrade Donna fought the Ku Klux Klan many times in Boston when they tried to link up with the racist South Boston Marshals in the 1970’s and 1980’s. She fought for the integration of the Boston Public Schools, and to protect the rights of immigrants, as a bilingual education teacher and counselor, fluent in Spanish, French, and Italian. She led many teach-ins against racism and the growth of fascism in the United States. Comrade Donna also organized a film series which showed films about the Spanish Civil War, the revolutionary contributions of women, and communist leadership in the unions.

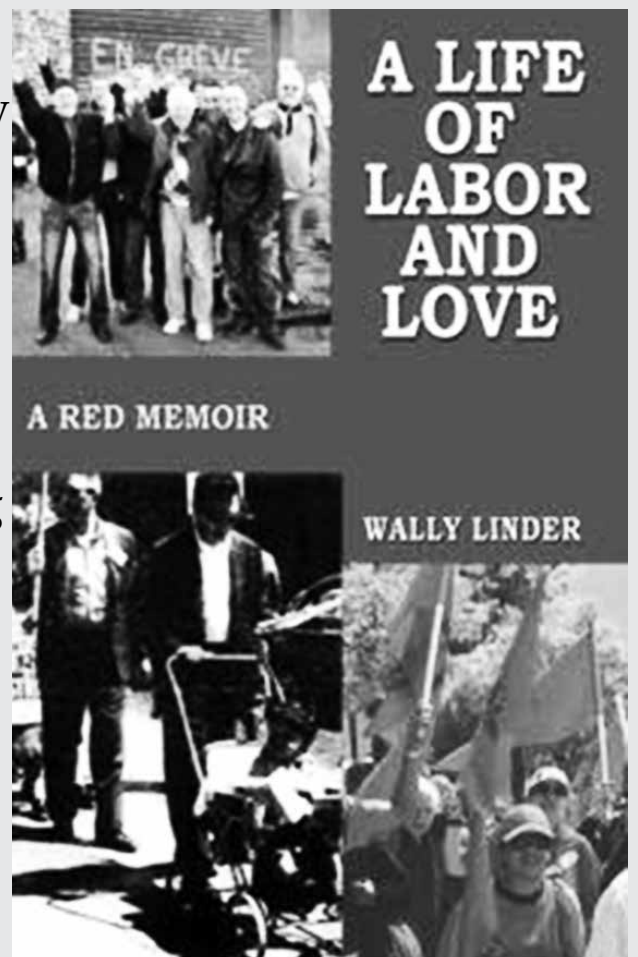


Comrade Donna Perone was a true internationalist who devoted her life to serving others. She fought cancer valiantly for two years, and went down fighting to her last breath. One of her final wishes was that the younger generation pick up the red flag of her hero, Joseph Stalin, and of the international communist movement, as the International working class continues to advance to their ultimate victory through worldwide communist revolution. ☛

## Red memoir: A life of Labor and Love

A memoir from Wally Lindor who helped found the Progressive Labor Party.

For a copy, send \$16 for the book (plus \$4 for shipping and handling) and your address via PayPal to wallylinder5230@gmail.com



# Ilhan Omar woos liberals into capitalists arms

The U.S. bosses are succeeding, at the moment, with enamoring young antiracists, Muslim workers, and pro-Palestinian activists with one of the recently elected U.S. congresswomen: Ilhan Omar of Minnesota. Omar recently critiqued the powerful American-Israeli Political Action Committee (AIPAC), a racist pro-Israel lobbyist group which steers large donations to U.S. politicians. Now, Omar and her recently elected “democratic socialist” colleagues are accused by pro-Israeli Zionists and racist pro-cop tabloids like the New York Post of anti-Semitism, in response to suggesting that Israel’s disproportionate influence in U.S. politics is due to money. However, their analysis of AIPAC’s role is fundamentally flawed—because it’s backwards. Omar and her “socialist” colleagues say Israel is controlling U.S. foreign policy through financial contributions. However, as history teaches us over and over, politics are primary over economics. No matter how many “Benjamins” may change hands through AIPAC, it’s U.S. imperialism that uses on the Israeli state to project power through the Middle East, and it’s Progressive Labor Party that’s building the only solution to end this imperialist nightmare once and for all: communist revolution!

## U.S.-Israeli bosses: no friend of Jewish workers

The U.S. bosses’ strong ties with Israel are not born out of any love for Jewish workers. This certainly was proven before and during World War II, when the U.S. did little to protest the racist, fascist anti-Jewish policies of the Nazis, nor did they welcome Jewish immigrants -unlike the Soviet Union. Nor, once the truth of the holocaust, the murder of six million Jewish workers, was exposed during the war, did the U.S. intervene to stop the slaughter.

Following World War II, the U.S. saw the need



to counter Soviet interests in the oil-rich Middle East, which also had mass communist parties building among both Arab and Jewish sectors of the working class. Thus grew the support for the formation of the state of Israel, and its ongoing support today. Today, the U.S. needs to counter the interests of imperialist rivals like Iran and China.

## Israel’s vicious bosses dependent on U.S.

When Israel’s wishes have run counter to those of the U.S., such as when the Barack Obama’s administration wished to make a treaty with Iran, the U.S. proceeded with its own preferred policy. Most U.S. administrations have hoped that Israel

would come to a settlement with the Palestinians so that the issue did not continue to inflame anti-Israeli sentiment around the world, although this is not a strong enough desire, to threaten and aid Israel seriously. Ilhan Omar and her fellow “democratic socialist” politicians’ analysis denies the reality that U.S. imperialism encompasses the entire world and is universally aimed at maintaining dominance. In a Washington Post op-ed (3/17), Omar stated that: “I believe in an inclusive foreign policy – one that centers on human rights, justice and peace as the pillars of America’s engagement in the world.” At no time in U.S. history have the bosses been driven by “human rights” concerns over imperialist power. The capitalist class uses vague terms like “human rights” as punchlines in speeches and as a cover for mass slaughter of workers all over the world.

## Arab, Jewish, Black, white: Workers unite

Politicians like Ilhan Omar, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Bernie Sanders, and others are celebrated in the bosses’ media because they sucker workers into the capitalists’ electoral system. These politicians—whether they actually believe it or not—is-claim that capitalism can provide healthcare and wealth to all workers, by electing a few more Democrats and making a few more tweaks.

They say that the U.S. military can be used for good, rather than for imperialism’s goals of conquering resources, markets, and cheap labor around the world. Capitalism cannot give up its profits, racism, fascist terror, or its imperialist wars. And we cannot elect away the evils of capitalism. To get rid of exploitation, racism, and imperialist war, you have to get rid of capitalism. You have to join PLP, march with us on May Day, and FIGHT BACK!✊



## RED EYE ON THE NEWS ...

Below are excerpts from the capitalist press that may be of use for our readers.  
NYT=New York Times

### U.S. Gestapo against children

NYT, 4/7 — It may take federal officials two years to identify what could be thousands of immigrant children who were separated from their families at the southern United States border...

...A report from government inspectors...revealed that the Trump administration most likely separated thousands more children from their parents than was previously believed...

...A group of separated families was unaccounted for because the government lacked an effective tracking system...

...A two-year wait to reunite families separated would be devastating. The longer these children remain separated...the more psychological trauma they would endure.

### Prisoner transport companies: portable concentration camps

NYT, 3/30 — Johnny Smith spent almost 24 hours shackled in the back of a prison van — barely conscious...before he died there in 2011. A private company was hauling Mr. Smith, 48, to Florida from Kentucky to face a drug charge: possession of a single oxycodone pill...

...The company’s “carelessness and gross negligence” had caused the death of Mr. Smith, a disabled construction worker, and awarded his children \$650,000 in damages...

To this day, the Smiths have not gotten a dollar of what they are owed by USG7, the company that transported their father...

...Private prison companies...remain almost entirely unregulated despite the industry’s extensive history of passenger deaths and injuries. Federal agencies that are supposed to oversee the industry almost never act....

...The brothers behind USG7 started...a new company under a different name...

The brothers...have held onto lucrative contracts with jails and sheriffs....an have acquired a major stake in the largest prisoner transport company in the nation...

The businesses pack their vans with as many inmates as possible....The vehicles seldom stop, and typically don’t have working seatbelts, air-conditioning, medical supplies or toilets....

...[These] companies...have been involved in more than 50 crashes...and 19 deaths since 2000....USG7...contributed significantly to the toll of accidents....Prisoners suffered severe injuries, including a broken neck in crashes of the company vans, which often travel at dangerously high speeds....The Smiths...spent several years trying to collect the \$650,000 judgement, but USG7 had apparently disappeared.

### Belgian imperialists admit to racist atrocities, 60 years later

NYT, 4/5 — Belgium ‘apologized’...for the kidnapping, segregation, deportation and forced adoption to mixed-race couples during its colonial rule of Burundi, Congo and Rwanda....

“Throughout Belgian colonial Africa, a system of targeted segregation of métis [“mixed-race”] and their families...violated the fundamental rights of peoples...”

...Experts on colonial history noted that Belgium’s “apology” came late — nearly 60 years after

the three countries gained independence....

...Children called métis...in the eyes of Belgium...undermined official segregation policies...

Fearing a repeat of the Red River Rebellion in Canada in 1869-1870, when people revolted and overthrew the local government, the Belgian authorities ordered métis children in Congo to be separated from their families...

An estimated 10,00 to 20,000 children were segregated from their parents....

“Children...of mixed color...were always considered as a threat to colonial enterprise, to profits and to...the domination of the white race...”

“Many never knew their mother or their father and many mothers never saw their children again...”

### Alabama prisons: torture chambers

NYT, 4/7 — ...Conditions in the [Alabama] state’s prisons are among the nation’s very worst.... [matching] cruel and unusual forms of punishment...

...An investigation that began in 2016 — shocked the conscience. Violent attacks and grisly deaths discovered long after they’ve occurred.... Overcrowding so excessive...that inmates are...in extreme danger. Grossly inadequate health care... the highest prison homicide rate in the country... Basic housing deficiencies, such as living areas in disrepair that robs inmates of their dignity.... Based on 2,000 photographs obtained by a civil rights group... the Alabama St. Clair Correctional Facility... “It is hard to imagine a cache of images less suitable for publication — they are full of nudity, indignity and gore.”

# There's nothing socialist about Venezuela

In flagrant violation of the Donald Trump administration's threats, the Venezuelan oil bosses are planning on welcoming two more Russian imperialist military planes with supplies to support the government of Nicolas Maduro (Buzz Feed News, 4/15). The latest support for the desperate Maduro government comes after the Russian bosses already sent supplies and 100 troops aboard two Russian military planes to Venezuela late last month (CBS News, 4/4).

The Venezuelan ruling class, backing Maduro, is struggling to hold onto power in the face of low oil prices which have undermined the oil-money the Maduro bosses have used to buy votes and maintain the support of the Venezuelan working class. Sensing weakness in the ruling faction, a group of bosses friendlier to U.S. imperialism, fronted by Juan Guaido, leader of the National Assembly, are challenging Maduro for power.

The Maduro bosses are not alone in facing this kind of challenge. As oil prices have tumbled since 2013 including a 70 percent drop in 2014 (Aljazeera, 5/31/18) small time capitalist bosses in oil rich countries have been struggling to hold on to power across the globe. Most recently, infighting and civil war between capitalist factions is breaking out across North Africa, including Libya, Sudan and Algeria.

The current Venezuelan rulers have continued the charade of their deceased predecessor, Hugo Chavez. Namely putting their own cynical spin on the phenomena by scamming U.S. and European leftists into supporting them by hanging a socialist nameplate on their capitalist state power.

The failed system of buying the loyalty of the working class is also playing out in the U.S. as the liberal social contract that fueled rising U.S imperialism for 50 years is coming apart in the face of the massive loss of high paying industrial jobs and skyrocketing inequality. The universal failure of relying on the capitalists to provide for the needs of the working class speaks to why only a communist society won through a worker led revolution can serve the needs of our class.

## Maduro seeks protection from the big imperialists while workers starve

Russia's military and political forays in Venezuela highlight how Maduro is seeking imperialists to keep his ruling clique in power. A December visit from a pair of Russian nuclear bombers (Time, 12/15/18), ongoing training of Venezuelan police, installation of helicopter training facilities (Telegraph 4/2), and now delivery of "supplies and technical advisers" via Russian military aircraft in March are all raising the stakes.

On his recent trip to Latin America to drum up support for a U.S. assault on Venezuela, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo pointed to the recent start of daily flights by Iran's Mahan Air from Tehran to Caracas as an excuse to possibly invade Venezuela and slaughter more workers. For the working class caught between the imperialists and the local Venezuelan bosses dog fight, it's a lose-lose proposition. Maduro, Guaido, and the big imperialist powers all see the working class as expendable. For workers in Venezuela and around the world the only way forward is fighting for communism.

The current oil price crisis means that the Maduro regime can only generate foreign trade by promising future access to oil production. Together China and Russia have extended more than \$60 billion credit in exchange for future produc-



tion (Reuters 5/18). Yet the cynicism of imperialist relations knows no bounds. As China's rulers are unsure the Maduro regime can withstand pressure from U.S. imperialism and position Venezuela to fulfill its obligations, they have sent feelers to the anti-Maduro opposition (South China Morning Post, 2/25) and Juan Guaido.

The working class in Venezuela has suffered severely since the 2013 collapse in oil prices. Unable to sustain the payments to the working-class, Maduro has focused the system's dwindling resources into paying the military to keep his faction in power. For the masses of workers in Venezuela, what little money they have is worthless as the Venezuelan Bolivar has an inflation rate above 1 million percent annually. Meanwhile, "the top [military] brass has been shielded from Venezuela's economic meltdown because these officers receive numerous perks and have been put in charge of lucrative government operations—everything from arms purchases and steel production to food distribution and the vital oil industry" (NPR 1/25).

## Chavez's cynical bid for regional power funds Haitian fascism

About six percent of Venezuela's oil exports go to meet obligations of the Petrocaribe pact, signed by Chavez in 2005 as part of a bid to increase Venezuelan influence in the region, granting 16 Caribbean and Central American states oil on favorable

terms (Reuters, 5/18).

In Haiti, countless millions of dollars from the sale of discounted Venezuelan oil have come up missing. Anger at this ruling class thievery has sparked the sharpest and most sustained anti-government demonstrations in years. First Chavez and now Maduro have turned a blind eye to the development of Haitian fascism since 2005. In Haiti the bosses bloodthirsty cops killed nearly three dozen youth protesting the Petrocaribe scandal in February alone. (Human Rights Watch, 3/19). The fascist repression of worker's protesting in Haiti is blood on the hands of the Venezuelan oil bosses.

## Chavez spread dollars for votes

Hugo Chavez came to power by mobilizing the most impoverished section of the working class around a promise to spread some of the oil profits through government programs and state-run businesses. As a campaign strategy it worked in the moment. The 1999 election of Chavez aroused sharp opposition from the old Venezuelan ruling class and its middle-class lackeys which culminated in a 2002 Bush-supported but failed coup attempt to oust Chavez. Having survived these challenges to his power and feeling the windfall of petrodollars in the wake of price hikes resulting from the Iraq war, Chavez and his former foes in the Venezuelan ruling class called temporary of a truce.

Flush with oil wealth from roughly 2003 to 2014, Chavez was able to spread money among the most impoverished sections of the working class. At this time he was able to buy some short-term loyalty: "The wild oil rally of the 2000s, which took prices from \$11 a barrel the day Chávez was elected to as high as \$145, would delay the reckoning by about a decade. But it was inevitable" (Bloomberg, 12/6/18).

Chavez built much of his political machine using the guile of ruling class controlled, corrupt, nepotistic, and exploitative co-ops that mimicked the private sector businesses they were supposedly replacing (Aljazeera, 5/31/18). Now the Venezuelan oil bosses' house of cards is crashing down and the working class is bearing the pain. It is time we stop relying on one set of bosses or another. It is time to trust our class.

Communism is the political movement that realizes the power of the working class to run society and abolish the class system. Communist revolution is the ongoing process of workers moving into action in their own self-conscious class interest with the aim of carrying forward the struggle against capitalism to the end. That is the political movement the Progressive Labor Party (PLP) seeks to build. Join us. ✖

## SUBSCRIBE or RENEW!

All the communist politics, news, and struggle from around the world!

one-year subscription: \$20 individual \$45 for institution

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Make check or money order to:  
Challenge Periodicals,  
PO Box 808, Brooklyn, NY 11202

