

# CHALLENGE



THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

Volume 51 No. 11

May 29, 2019

suggested donation \$1

# MAY DAY 2019



## Brooklyn



## Italy



## Turkey



## Mexico

MAY DAY ISSUE INCLUDES REPORTS FROM...

CHICAGO, BROOKLYN, LOS ANGELES, ISRAEL, HAITI, COLOMBIA, AND MORE..



## 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.

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 29, 2019-Volume 51 No. 11

## Editorial

# Iran, flashpoint for world war?

U.S. President Donald Trump has restored sanctions against Iran while sending four B-52 bombers and an aircraft carrier strike force to intimidate the Iranian capitalist bosses. Iran has threatened to close the Strait of Hormuz to oil traffic (Reuters, 4/26) and to attack U.S. assets in Iraq or Syria. As imperialists large and small threaten military strikes in the heart of the oil-rich Middle East, an increasingly volatile situation brings global war ever closer.

Workers have no interest in these bosses' conflicts. We must organize for a communist revolution now to be ready to turn an inevitable inter-imperialist world war into class war for workers' power. Then we can build an anti-racist, anti-sexist world where the working class runs all aspects of society.

Iran is contending for power in the Middle East. They are a regional imperialist competing mainly with U.S.-backed Saudi Arabian and Israeli imperialists. Now Trump has eliminated the sanction waivers that allowed eight countries, including China, to continue buying Iranian oil. The goal is to shut down Iranian oil sales, increasing the suffering of the working class to the point that the ruling Iranian regime will be destabilized. The Iranian bosses have responded by beginning to pull back from the 2015 nuclear deal that limited their ability to pursue the production of nuclear weapons.

### Main-wing imperialist strategy

The nuclear agreement between Iran, the U.S., and five other countries, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), was a major achievement of the Barack Obama administration. It was part of the imperialist strategy of the dominant, finance capital wing of the U.S. ruling class, which is straining to sustain its declining empire.

The main-wing strategy will eventually lead to fighting a world war—but not yet! The 2015 nuclear agreement allowed these Wall Street imperialists to work with their European allies in NATO against not only Iran, but also their Chinese and Russian imperialist rivals. It gave them time to try to mobilize the U.S. working class to fight in the next world war. Last but not least, the main-wing U.S. bosses need time to discipline their own class to prepare for war.

### Trump: an erratic tool of domestic capitalists

Trump has thrown a wrench into the main wing's plans. While unstable and impetuous, he has mostly done the bidding of the subordinate faction of the U.S. ruling class, the domestically oriented U. S. capitalists. Trump's plan is to devastate the Iranian economy and cripple the Iranian rulers. His unilateral sanctions have unsettled the United States' longstanding European allies, who were already nervous after Trump's repeated attacks on the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and other multinational institutions. Both National Security Advisor John Bolton and Trump “are dismissive of the international architecture of treaties and alliances, which was largely constructed by the United States following World War II” (New Yorker, 5/6). If war breaks out with Iran, European Union support for the U.S. will be lukewarm at best.

For the workers of Iran, as for workers throughout the world, the future under capital-

ism holds only more suffering. Join us in the Progressive Labor Party in the long battle to organize workers and students everywhere to fight against our true enemy: the blood-sucking capitalist bosses!

### China and Russia

Imperialist powers eventually resolve their rivalries through war. We can see this today from Yemen and Syria to Ukraine and Afghanistan. Under current world conditions, rivalry among the world's three main imperialist powers are the primary driving force of events. Iran, which has built significant ties with Russian and Chinese imperialists, could be the flashpoint for a much bigger war, even a world war.

In Syria, Iranian militias have been fighting side by side with Russian military forces to defend the ruthless dictator Bashar al-Assad. The Russians have gained a major regional foothold in Syria, with significant troops, military equipment, and military bases. How far will they go to protect their investment and support their Iranian ally against U.S. pressure?

Iran also has a significant presence in Iraq, where its militias are an extension of Iran's military (New York Times, 5/8). Meanwhile, the Iraqi government is about to sign a \$53 billion oil deal jointly with ExxonMobil and PetroChina (Reuters, 5/7). China, the main buyer of Iranian oil, has skirted U.S. sanctions by making its purchases outside the U.S. dollar-dominated financial system. It may be no coincidence that negotiations between the U. S. and China over tariffs and trade policy have broken down.

Both China and Russia have attacked the increased U. S. sanctions. On May 8, Iran's foreign minister, Javad Zarif, met in Moscow with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, who said: “The U.S. is to blame for the situation and it makes it difficult for both Iran to fulfill its obligations and ... for the general state of the nuclear non-proliferation regime.” Speaking for the Chinese foreign ministry, Geng Shuang said that China “resolutely opposes” the U. S. sanctions (Aljazeera, 5/8).

### European Union must choose sides

The intensified U.S. sanctions to contain Iran puts added pressure on the European Union (EU), the junior partners in the U.S.-controlled, post-World War II liberal world order. U.S. dominance was already declining before Trump's election, and now the EU is a shaky ally at best. They are trying to set their imperial ambitions independently of the U.S., which is not to the liking of the U.S. finance capitalists.

How long can the U.S. keep the EU in line as the U.S. declines as a world power? What will the EU do to prevent being bullied by the likes of Trump? The EU “cannot accept that the U.S. decided the regions with which the European companies can or cannot do business,” declared Belgian Prime Minister Charles Michel (Foreign Affairs, 10/10/2018).

The U.S. still runs the show today because the U.S. dollar is the world's reserve currency for global trade. But the EU has plans to establish a so-called Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV), a financial institution that is “technically not a bank” but will process payments between Iran and its international trading partners, thereby sidestepping the U.S. financial system.

In the calculations of any and all of these imperialists, the lives of working class people count for very little. When the bosses talk about protecting their “interests,” they mean protecting their profits, not workers' lives. The working class has no stake in these bosses' conflicts. Join PLP and fight for communism!✊

# Brooklyn: march for communism!

Hundreds of lively, determined, and celebratory workers gathered in Brooklyn to celebrate May Day this year. (see letters on page 6). With our red flags, red stars, and red ponchos we were prepared and ready to share—leaflets for the chants and water bottles for when the scorching sun eventually came out. We continued with what was planned and kept each other's morale high. To start, one comrade gave a speech in Spanish about the migrant caravan and two new Progressive Labor Party (PLP) members presented speeches on why they joined, speaking to how capitalism affects disabled people, pushes people to escapism and how the extension of racism leaves workers isolated in this deplorable system.

By the time the third speech was finished, the sun came out and so did onlookers from restaurants, salons and bodegas.

## Wave those red flags, wave them high. The COMMUNISTS are marching by!

A great number of us marched behind a large truck, decked out in communist banners in English, Spanish and Creole, walking tough and determined as we waved our red flags in the air. There were many new workers and students joining the march for the first time. They were introduced to our politics through our bold chants. On both sides of the street, there were several comrades

on each block distributing papers. Collectively we distributed hundreds of Challenge papers, connecting with people peeking out of their shops and cars while some workers even ran up to comrades and requested copies before we could ask. And even when some people didn't take our papers or humorously danced to the reggae and hip-hop instrumentals, it was evident that most knew our lines were strong and serious. Many others shared expressions of affirmation and joy in response to our militant messages. All throughout the Avenue, Brooklynites rapped along with the chants, cheering us on as we encouraged them to fight back and join our march.

## We got to fight back!

As we reached our destination, and gathered to hear the main speech in Spanish and English we were met by 14 police vehicles and 30 individual cops standing on the edge of our demonstration signaling their bosses' fear of workers' growing desire to seize power through communist revolution. May Day is a celebration of the revolutionary potential of the working class. It is a celebration of our long march towards a world without racism, sexism, and exploitation. And, we need YOU to join the fight!

## Who are we? PLP

For the first time in years, a high school student gave the main speech, speaking out about

how racism affects students, from racist policies to ICE terror. We also honored a family that has been actively marching with PLP for 4 generations, starting with a man who is now 90 years old. His son came in his honor, sharing that his father had instilled communist values and the importance of fightback since he was a 16-year-old. This year he was able to bring his son and grandson along with him. While we did face some opposition once we reached the end of the rally at Prospect Park, we still won over many workers. One man on his bike, hoarse from cursing communism, ranted about how it doesn't work and we should give up and fight for capitalism. Instead of meeting the man with his aggressive energy, we continued on and chanted QUE VIVA! QUE VIVA! QUE VIVA EL COMUNISMO! Another worker that wasn't with PLP loudly challenged the antagonist to look up what capitalism actually means, further stating that "capitalism means only a few benefit from the exploitation of many and does not work for the greater good of us all." It was moving to witness what happens when one person stands against the Party's line and we not only stand strong together but have more workers join our side. We encourage friends of the party to join PLP and comrades that are already a part to remain firm in what we fight for. Communism will win! Que viva el comunismo! ☘

# Rutgers strike, school for communism

**NEW JERSEY** —“Our working conditions are your learning conditions!” Under this unifying idea, graduate students and faculty have been organizing and moving towards a strike over the past few months here at Rutgers University, building mass student support and solidarity along the way. The causes of the strike include:

- Bloated salaries of administrators (many making more than \$250,000 a year)
- Low salaries for faculty; sexist, unequal pay for women and men professors.
- Administrative neglect of promises to racially diversify the faculty.
- Different salaries among the three campuses of Rutgers, with lower salaries for faculty working at the Newark and Camden campuses where there are many more Black, Latin and immigrant students
- Near-starvation wages of graduate students.
- Job insecurity for non-tenure track full-time lecturers, who have twice the teaching load of their tenure-track counterparts, and earn one quarter to one third as much income.

Student - teacher unity has been prominently on display during the fightback, as this growing movement is organizing to ensure gains are made by every sector of the students and faculty, and not just the tenured faculty.

## An injury to one is an injury to all

While the leadership of the union (AAUP) bargained “hard.” It was mainly for the tenure-track faculty, as they saw the biggest gains. Graduate students—many of whom are paid so poorly that they have to visit the campus food bank—did not

win a badly needed retroactive pay increase for this year. After four years, they will be earning a mere \$30,000, an unlivable wage in the state of New Jersey. Some non-tenure track, full-time lecturers will gain longer contracts, but still not guaranteed tenure. This means that they face continuing job insecurity in the academic “gig” economy.

The real elephant in the room, though, has been the situation of Part-Time Lecturers (PTLs), most of whom make a minimal \$5,100 per semester course, have no health benefits, are hired from semester to semester with little prior notice, and can be fired without cause. PTLs are, moreover, excluded from the AAUP bargaining unity, representing tenure-track faculty and graduate workers. The increasing use of PTLs rather than full-time faculty at Rutgers is the scandal of higher education throughout the U.S., where “adjunctification” has become a weapon by the U.S. capitalist class for dismantling tenure, which decades ago was a hard-fought reform victory.

## The meaning of “victory”

The AAUP leadership misleads this growing movement of student-teacher unity in proclaiming the outcome of recent contract negotiations to be a “historic” victory. This union misleadership has given a stamp of approval to the structured inequality destroying living and learning standards across Rutgers University and increasingly prevailing in higher education throughout the U.S. Moreover, the kinds of gains won for tenure-track faculty will be wiped away if they do not unite in a single union with faculty who are lower in the teaching hierarchy.

Our real victory consists in the movement of solidarity that has developed over the course of the academic year. Members of the Board of Governors routinely encountered large and militant picket lines chanting “Shame! Shame!” Stu-

dents—burdened by debt and headed into the “gig” economy themselves—joined the picket lines and formed groups to support faculty and grads in the event of a strike. Members of the campus janitors’ union did not remove posters plastered around the campus. Construction workers in a nearby building ceased using their loud equipment when rallies were taking place. Other unions marched in support. Members of one Steelworkers Union traveled from as far as Pittsburgh to express solidarity. Faculty from colleges in New York and New Jersey spoke at Newark campus rallies in support of a strike at Rutgers.

## Strikes can be schools for communist revolution

Lenin, a communist revolutionary who helped lead the working class to build the world's first workers' state, the Soviet Union, once wrote that strikes are “schools for communism.”

Lenin did not mean that the economic gains won are gradual stepping-stones toward communist revolution. He meant that participation in class-conscious reform struggles can open workers to the revolutionary idea that the international working class needs to run the whole of society. Members and friends of PLP, intimately involved in the strike movement at various levels, have continually brought CHALLENGE and the words “capitalism,” “communism,” “revolution,” and “class struggle” into the conversation—and received big cheers. We have learned valuable lessons about how to put forward a revolutionary perspective in the midst of a reform struggle. Our ranks are expanding. Beneath the cynicism and passivity seemingly prevailing on college campuses these days, there exists a tremendous potential for building a revolutionary communist movement. ☘



# Chicago: May Day, workers' day

**CHICAGO, May 1**—Today we celebrated May Day, the true workers' holiday celebrated by the working class internationally. Over 80 of us gathered at a local hall on Chicago's west side to talk about the history of how workers at Haymarket Square in Chicago fought back against capitalist exploitation by holding a 300,000-strong general strike on May 1, 1886 that sent shockwaves around the world. The Progressive Labor Party (PLP) is carrying on the tradition of workers at Haymarket through international communist struggle to destroy capitalism, with an emphasis on Black workers and youth being the key to revolution.

## What Day? May Day!

The event kicked off with a scavenger hunt that accompanied a gallery walk of photos and facts about communist struggles through the years and May Day history in particular. There were many teenagers who attended, and they quickly moved around the hall, answering questions to try to win the scavenger hunt. These youth were present as a result of our continued growing work in local schools. This group activity was followed by an inspiring speech by a comrade who is helping lead political work in the community and on his job at a west side hospital, where they are trying to get a union to counter the bosses' sexist and racist attacks.

It was encouraging to see a handful of these workers become motivated during the program to come to the microphone and speak about the capitalist horrors of their jobs and express interest in getting involved again. One works as a counselor in the jails, and mentioned how the system of capitalism has destroyed the lives of many of the incarcerated people where she works. Another announced that the charter school where she works is planning to go on strike on May 1st, the

third wave of charter school strikes in Chicago in five months. Two new members gave speeches on why they joined the Party. The first of which was a younger comrade, who spoke to the Party's strength in exposing the liberals as the primary threat to working-class people. She talked of continuing to build a base among youth, who regularly get funneled into the misleading hands of the Democratic Party but really are in need of the revolutionary PLP to change the world in our interests.

The second new comrade to speak was a working mother, who was won recently to the Party through our work in an anti-deportation reform group. Her speech, which was delivered in Spanish, spoke to how she had always been a fighter and learned to organize workers at a very young age, but it wasn't until she met the Party that she really felt at home in the U.S. She ended her speech with the words, "The bosses are afraid of the working people who have no fear."

We sang our May Day standards "Bella Ciao" and "The International" in both Spanish and English. Although a late spring snowstorm had forced us to cancel our rally and march, we held a rally indoors at the hall in which we shouted the Party's anti-racist and anti-sexist revolutionary chants, with practically the entire hall on their feet and engaged.

## Chicago's west side: a story of police terror, and poor healthcare

The reason we celebrated May Day on the city's west side is because of our history, past and present, of fighting racism in the area. In North Lawndale, there have been many murders committed by the hands of the racist Chicago Police Department. Michael Elam, Rekia Boyd, and Ste-

ven Rosenthal have all been murdered by the fascist kkkops in the neighborhood in recent years. We as a Party were active in many of the actions organized to protest their racist murders. Continuing to build a base among other anti-racist fighters in the neighborhood remains exceptionally important as the racist city bosses move ahead with their plans to build a \$95 million dollar new police academy nearby (See CHALLENGE, 4/3).

Racist health outcomes are also a harsh reality to workers here. In mostly-Black West Garfield Park, average life expectancy is around 69 years, compared to around 85 years in the wealthier downtown Loop (westsideunited.org). In west side hospitals such as Mount Sinai, mostly Black, Latin, and Asian women workers are short-staffed on the units and thus unable to provide safe and adequate care to their mostly Black and immigrant patients. Many comrades and friends have taken a leading role in organizing against sexist and racist attacks like these on our jobs in west side hospitals and university campuses and will take the inspiration from our May Day event to strengthen our efforts.

## We have a world to win

The comrade who gave the main speech during the dinner challenged those present to see their own struggles as part of a larger, international battle against the world's bosses. As pro-capitalist sellouts such as Elizabeth Warren, Bernie Sanders, and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez seek to dupe the masses and lead them into more fascism and imperialism, our Party and communist revolution remain the only real path out of a daily nightmare for billions.

On this May Day and every day, remember: We have a world to win, and nothing to lose but our chains!✊

# Los Angeles: We are the future

**Los Angeles, April 27** - We celebrated another year of the fight for communism with a lively May Day dinner. Over 60 students, teachers, health care workers, church members, friends, and family came together to share a potluck meal, speeches, collective art, discussion, struggle, and music.

Once again, our emcees were a Latina student and a Black teacher from our base. They kept everyone engaged and excited throughout the night. Our main speech talked about the Los Angeles teachers' strike as a school for communism. Even though the union sold out the teachers, the more important aspect was the teachers, students, and other workers coming together to fight. There were two UTLA teachers in attendance who received a strong round of applause, from the audience for their brave fight back.

## Table talk

In small groups we had lively discussions about the current 2020 presidential election candidates and whether we thought they could keep their reform promises under capitalism. Some people said they didn't know much about who was running so far.

Others had heated discussions about how far reforms could go under capitalism. One example given was a small business owner who tries to give their employees a living wage and benefits but found out that even by doing unpaid labor themselves, they could still not break even.

Other comrades argued that even if something like reparations for slavery were instituted, the ruling class could easily take them away when they needed. These discussions will continue when we return to our schools and workplaces



## Racism at the border and beyond

Throughout the dinner there was a slideshow presentation of scenes from the Tijuana, Mexico/United States border and examples of health care advances made in China after the revolution. Progressive Labor Party (PLP) has made numerous trips to the border and brought workers with them to join the fight against borders and the treatment

of migrant workers. A Latin medical student and a health care worker spoke about their experiences traveling to the border to give medical aid to migrant workers there, making comparisons to Mao's "Serve the People" campaigns in China. The comrade and student spoke about their motivations for making the trip: solidarity and not charity and in a small way dismantling the bosses' borders by building internationalism.

Another Black student, a future healthcare worker, talked about his participation in the fight against racist police murder. He had joined comrades and friends at the annual public health conference, so his speech highlighted this trip and how he aims to stay involved in a local fight against new jail construction in the city. These two speeches were a step forward for us as this was our first time in a long while that we had close friends of the party giving speeches at our May Day dinner.

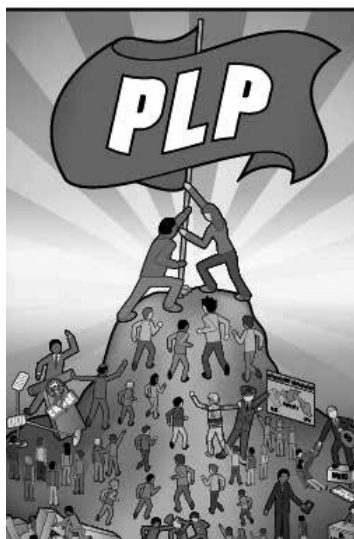
## Working class art

One of the highlights of the night was the collective art piece. Fourteen Black and Latin high school students enthusiastically contributed to the painting of a mural depicting the working class joining together to make one fist to dismantle the system. The painting was labeled May Day 2019 and will start a collection of future May Day art pieces.

As always, we closed with a call to action before singing The Internationale: join PLP, march with us on May Day, come to the summer project, read and distribute CHALLENGE. All of these are steps towards building the mass, communist party we need to destroy this oppressive, capitalist system and replace it with a communist workers' state.✊

# MAY DAY INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST GREETINGS

## Haiti



To comrades around the world— Here we are in the month of May just like that of 1886. A May that reminds us of the bitter victory of our class: the work day had been cut to 8 hours, but many workers and union leaders died, were jailed, wounded, or were hung for their efforts.

Yes, May is a month that marks us, and we will mark it as well, after the end of the bosses' rule. This is the moment that we will celebrate. We won't be celebrating our lives only as workers, but as revolutionaries.

Let us deplore that, in spite of the struggles carried out, all the demonstrations and marches against the exploitation of our class by the bosses,

our working conditions are often worse than in most of the countries in the world. And it is this sad reality which pushes us to unite as a class, to build, under the leadership of the Progressive Labor Party, a communist revolution. Communism, a system where workers rule in their own interests as a class, is the only solution to all the horrors of capitalism – racism, sexism, nationalism, unemployment, exploitation, poverty, imperialist wars, and all the rest.

Today, comrades in New York and around the world, the working class of Haiti, and the PLP of Haiti, salute you as we march together for our needs as a class. We in Haiti are fighting against many of the forms of capitalist exploitation that infect the rest of the world. Tens of thousands have been in the streets protesting against the bosses and their politicians, all of whom line their pockets at our expense. In Haiti, we are fighting against the corruption embodied in the PetroCaribe oil scandal, against the atrocious poverty under which many Haitian workers and their families rarely find one decent meal a day, in a country where over 70 percent of the workers are unemployed.

Mass marches in large Haitian cities on May 1, as well as other political activities, show that our class is on the move. We are fighting to build the PLP as the leadership of the working class in Haiti.

We shout out to you today: ON TO VICTORY!✊

## Israel

Israel is again becoming overtly fascist. Gone are the liberal masks of the 1990s and the early 2000s. Now, government officials openly advocate for annexing the (already occupied) West Bank and establishing an open apartheid regime where Palestinian residents will be forced to live under Israeli rule. The government increasingly censors the press, and uses libel lawsuits to silence criticism. Openly sexist, and - of course - racist politicians will likely be ministerial appointees in the next administration.

The Israeli Defense Forces have killed 182 Palestinians and wounded 9,204 while suppressing anti-siege protests on the Gaza border. Many more were killed as "collateral damage" in Israeli bombings of Hamas targets in Gaza in response to rocket fire on Israeli towns. Per UN data, 38 percent of Gazans live in poverty. There is 26 percent unemployment in Gaza, and 38 percent of the youth are unemployed. Fifty-four percent of Gazans are food insecure and over 75 percent are aid recipients. Gazan workers protested these conditions earlier this year, but Hamas - the religious movement in control of Gaza - repressed the protests with brutal force.

Given our limited resources,

we mainly participate in two struggles. The first is the National Coalition for Direct Employment. It's a multi-racial, women-led organization of workers fighting against "contract" bosses. These bosses are modern slave traders, who hire workers and then "rent" them out to various firms and government offices. A PL'er, a housekeeping worker in a mall employed through a contractor, leads one of the struggles.

The other struggle is against racism in southern Tel-Aviv. Thousands of Black asylum seekers have come to Tel-Aviv in the past two decades, fleeing fascism and genocide in their home countries. Local racists, encouraged by government officials, leading a campaign against them, claiming the asylum seekers are "rapists and murderers" who "destroy the neighborhoods". This racism helps "developers" who want to evict tenants from these poor neighborhoods and build luxury apartments. We join with local community fighters, led by working-class Black and Jewish women, to fight these fascist scums and build worker unity.

We are all struggling with capitalism's horrors. We need communism now more than ever! We will overcome these difficulties and continue the class struggle, together with our sisters and brothers in Israel-Palestine and the whole world.✊

## Colombia: One class, one world, one party



**BOGOTA, Colombia**—Thirty-five-thousand workers once again commemorated May Day, the international working-class holiday, marching in different parts of this city. Their struggles expressed economic and political demands.

Very early on members of Progressive Labor Party (PLP) distributed 80 CHALLENGE's and other communist literature. We paid close attention to the arrival of different groups like unions, indigenous, farm, and unemployed workers, students, revolutionary parties, and groups of women, among others.

We engaged in dialogue with some of them and exchanged ideas in such a way that we noticed the

fear of some workers to express themselves due to the racism and fascism that has plagued our class with the systematic murder of 600 worker leaders.

We had very good discussions about the electoral circus, capitalist corruption, "the indigenous problem", our anti-racist line, unemployment, internationalism, wage exploitation, socialism and communism.

"No more sexism, long live communism!" Long live an international communist May Day! These were some of the chants our Party shouted as we gave communist leadership to the working class. The PLP with a large block of 67 people, participated with great enthusiasm, shouting our slo-

gans with vigor, causing admiration and approval among the other protesters and onlookers.

Examples of the more than 30 chants were the following: To defeat the capitalist crisis in Venezuela, we need a workers' communist revolution! Neither Duque, nor Guaido, nor Maduro, communist leadership is the future! These chants differentiated us from the majority of groups led by the revisionists that blow vuvuzuelas and perform dances and carnival choreography which only serve to water down May Day's true significance, with capitalist consumerism. To this we exclaimed that the story of the working class is not a carnival party! Communism and revolutionary politics are the best education!

We continued marching and raising our red flags until we arrived at Bolivar plaza, a landmark which honors the capitalist and imperialist, and murderous dictatorship that workers have been subjected to for 208 years.

As usual, the trade union confederations, opportunists and social democratic politicians took possession of the platform to give their worn-out speeches imploring the bosses for improvements and greater justice and to achieve a fairer Colombia. They raised bourgeois symbols like the flag, and they played the national anthem.

In an organized manner, we picked up our banners and revolutionary flags and left the march with optimism agreeing to participate in future struggles and continue organizing for continued growth of our international Party. We ended our May Day energized, as we renewed our commitment to build a future communist society without politicians or bosses, without social classes or wage slavery, sexism, racism and all the capitalist scourges. One working class, one communist world and one Progressive Labor Party(PLP)!✊



# LETTERS

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



## A little and a little make a lot

The May Day march in Brooklyn was welcomed warmly by the multiracial, mainly immigrant working class population along Flatbush Avenue. I sold our paper along the route. I enjoyed approaching people participating in the chants led by those on the sound truck and darting into salons, restaurants, and laundries with the paper.

One worker asked me to wait while they ran upstairs, and came back with three bills. I put them away thinking they were one's. As we reached the end of the route, a woman handed me a twenty dollar bill and asked for change. I reached into my pocket looking for some larger bills among the many singles I had been given. To my surprise, among the bills in my pocket were three hundred dollar bills.

Many working people had donated some money when asked for something to "help build the movement". Someone had responded in a very generous way. I always ask for and get donations for the paper. I often quote my late mother who would say "a little and a little make a lot." Asking for donations as our march went by, made this larger contribution possible.

★★★★

## Sun comes out for communism

Like many other workers and comrades around the world, I marched for May Day this week alongside the Progressive Labor Party. This was my first year both marching for May Day and coming to the PLP march. While I have attended other marches, attending this one was different because there was a genuine solidarity among organizers, marchers, and even the community looking onto us.

Many marches today feel corporatized and performative, often diluting clear intentions and acting as a tool for the liberal establishment to gain loyalty and, more importantly, complacency. The PLP communist May Day march felt the opposite, openly chanting against the New York Police Department (NYPD) and telling the establishment to their faces what we want and will get. For a moment, I hope, the police felt weakness as a wave of red smothered their blue. Chants overtook their sirens. Perhaps they learned what class traitors they are.

The marchers, coming from other states and even countries, showed solidarity with all, even myself meeting many for the first time. Different backgrounds were able to come together against a clear common enemy, regardless of what the differences were. The openness of the march shone onto people looking on, as some joined in and others raised a fist in solidarity. It showed that many in the communities of New York City, even those who may not consider themselves communists, resonated with our hopes for the future. The workers of New York and the world want and can build that future.

Before the march started, the weather was damp and dreary. Some, including myself, were worried. But my concerns were soon extinguished by the excitement of PLP marchers. The march truck arrived to lead us and bellow our words down Flatbush Avenue and with it soon came the sun. The sun lasted until the end of the march and through the final speeches before clouds and a drizzle began to return,

as if the sun came out just for the march. In this, the pseudo-poetic side of me sees a message: the workers of the world can and will unite to clear the clouds and bring out the sun.

★★★★

## Church is an agent of capitalism

Working inside churches is an important way to organize the working class all over the world. I have been organizing women in my church in East Africa for about a year now. This year, Women's Day, a day when women are honored by the Catholic church, became an opportunity to expose the role of the church.

When Women's Day arrived, each member was told to contribute 70,000 shillings (about \$30), in order to join in a ceremony welcoming a new bishop. Due to economic difficulties and life hardships some of the women couldn't contribute. Those women were prevented from participating in the ceremony, even though they had been members of the church for a long time and used to always contribute time and money to the church. Then, at the ceremony, only the high-level people got the food and drinks.

After this happened the women were very angry

and started complaining that because they had no money the church didn't regard them as members.

My Progressive Labor Party (PLP) group and I joined them and explained that religion's false promises and poisonous ideology is one of the exploitative tools that capitalists use to fool and control the working class. We confronted the priest, and although he apologized, the women understood that this was just an attempt to pacify them.

The working class contributes much in labor and materials to build church-run schools and hospitals. But the churches make money from these institutions and never help the working class when they are in need. Then, when a member challenges these practices, they kick them out.

Our long-term goal is to help the church members understand what the church is doing to them and to build a movement to leave the church en masse. Then, we could form our own pro-working-class community. Only communism is a strong weapon against religion's false promises, and unscientific thinking. Joining PLP is the solution to all the evils done by the capitalists.

★★★★

## What does communism mean to you?

At the Progressive Labor Party May Day March in Brooklyn, I thought May Day is special to me because CHALLENGE shows how communist ideas are positively affecting workers' lives and relationships to other comrades and workers here and around the world.

I noticed CHALLENGE has become a real tribune of the working-class judging by the quality and sincerity of their letters on how understanding communist principles added new meaning to their struggles against the daily horrors of capitalist society and brought them closer to the Party.

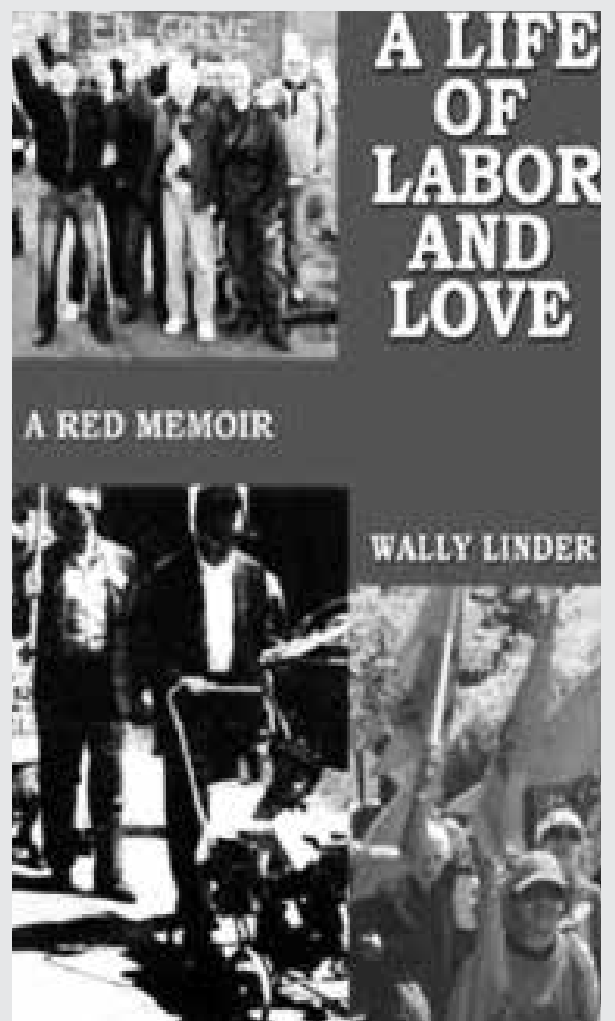
I have a small wish. I wish CHALLENGE readers would write in letters about what communism means to them.

★★★★

## A Red memoir: A life of Labor and Love

A memoir from Wally Linder who helped found the Progressive Labor Party.  
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# Johns Hopkins sit-in and West Wednesday

## Continued from page 8

want, and what's needed is a revolution to defeat capitalism, so that a truly communist, egalitarian society can be built.

Almost everyone eagerly took a copy of CHALLENGE, or pointed to the nearby person with whom they would be sharing the paper or, in a few cases, asked for the web address so they could read it online. A banner was posted that stated: "Progressive Labor Party Says Justice for Tyrone West: Put Killer Cops in Cell Blocks: Smash Racism & Capitalism."

## Fight back turns up on May Day!

One week later – after the large distribution of CHALLENGE – happened to be a very special time: the 300th weekly West Wednesday and, by fortunate coincidence, also May 1st. Members of the sit-in steering committee, together with regular participants from West Wednesday, worked together to plan a powerful rally in a working class section of the city, a march to the Johns Hopkins sit-in, and then a large-screen Skype connection in solidarity with activists around the country. May 1st turned out to be an especially strong time in the struggle against racism! Students at the sit-in courageously stepped up their forcefulness, some strategically chaining themselves to railings, to shut down business as usual in Garland Hall, the administrative building.

The sit-in, from that point forward, then became a lock-down occupation. And the 300th West Wednesday, on May Day, involved hundreds of people! Skyping in to



talk with the sit-in, on a large screen, were Sandra Bland's sister, and leaders of solidarity activities at Harvard, MIT, Yale, University of Chicago, and the Ringling College of Art & Design in Florida. Accountability for Tyrone West was a very strong theme in all the activities.

## Racists get a taste of their own medicine

As we left, we had a group of about fifteen

people escort Tawanda Jones, Tyrone's sister and a leader of the West Wednesday rallies, back to her car because the Hopkins administration had outrageously threatened her with trespass - but no one else - if she came to the sit-in after 6pm. A racist and his son were apparently waiting for us in the dark, by a poorly lit park, just outside the campus, within sight of Tawanda's parked car. Perhaps sent there by the police or by Johns Hopkins officials, he yelled at us, asked us to "Gather round," and - as most of us walked away - repeatedly said, "Bring it on," wanting us to face off with him.

The racist - whose Facebook page includes praise of the fascist that drove his vehicle into Heather Heyer, killing her in Charlottesville - then punched a trans woman and another woman, both from the sit-in. Quickly, he got a taste of his own medicine. Our feeling was that this racist provocateur may have been sent there to start a fight, to attack Tawanda, and to create an excuse for the police - who were stationed nearby in force - to lock some of us up. If that was their plan, they didn't succeed!

Tomorrow, there will be another West Wednesday rally. Steps have been taken to be mindful of safety, and the united strength of the sit-in and West Wednesday has not been stopped!🇺🇸



## RED EYE ON THE NEWS . . .

Below are excerpts from the capitalist press that may be of use for our readers.

NYT = New York Times  
GW = Guardian Weekly

### Capitalism still ravages South Africa

GW, 5/3 — In Khayelitsha...rolling power cuts...have been widely blamed on corruption at the national electricity provider....

South Africa is deeply troubled, and...the ANC [governing African National Congress] is dogged by repeated corruption scandals and a continuing failure to deal with a flagging economy, collapsing public services, [and] soaring unemployment....

"These guys don't get it. Nothing has changed. Mandela sold us out to the whites, and this ANC with their big cars and their houses aren't going to change anything," said Lucy Sithole, a 23-year-old student in Cape Town....

...South Africa's performance on a range of social, economic and governance measures...deteriorated more in the past 12 years than that of any other nation not at war.

### Another racist outcome: pregnancy-related deaths

NYT, 5/9 — African-American, Native-American and Alaska Native women die of pregnancy-related causes at about three times higher rate than those of white women, the Center for Disease Control...reported....

The racial disparity has persisted and even grown for years....Sixty percent of all pregnancy-related deaths can be prevented with better health care, communication and support, as well as access to stable housing and transportation....

"The bottom line is that too many women are dying of largely preventable deaths associated with their pregnancy...Racial bias is contributing to the disproportionate number of pregnancy-related deaths among minority women...."

The United States has an abysmal record on maternal health....Even as maternal death rates

fell by more than one-third from 2000 to 2015 across the world, outcomes for American mothers worsened....

The C.D.C....found that black women were more likely than white women to suffer pregnancy-related death; Native-American and Alaska Native women were 2.5 times more likely to die than white women....

...Often death occurred after childbirth. More than half of pregnancy-related deaths occurred after the day of the delivery....

### Red flags fly over Paris, hit billionaire Notre Dame donations

NYT, 5/2 — French police...at the traditional May Day rally in Paris...fir[ed] tear gas and charg[ed] protesters with truncheons raised....

Paris...counted about 40,000 demonstrators made up of union members [and] "Yellow Vest" protesters....

...Demonstrators chanted anti-capitalist slogans [and] brandished flags with the Soviet hammer and sickle....

Around 200 demonstrators had been arrested....

...Violence has become a feature of Paris life...underscores the persistent social and economic tensions...which the government's efforts have failed to quell....

"Who got the advantages that [President] Macron promised? I don't know any," said Omar Koucha, a 57-year-old factory worker....

"We asked...that they fight against tax fraud,...for higher taxes on the rich, and we've got nothing," Mr. Koucha said.

Nicole, Courte, 56, a maid...said Mr. Macron's response...had been: "I've heard you but, shut up, I won't change anything...."

Ms. Courte, who said she earned minimum wage...criticized the millionaires...who had donated to restore Notre-Dame cathedral, gutted by

fire last month....Donating for a building and not for the poor was "indecent, shameful."

"How much housing for the poor and the homeless could we build with a billion euros?" she asked, referring to the amount raised for Notre Dame in 10 days.

Cedric Topical, a 42-year-old baker [said]... "I've got two daughters, and I'm demonstrating for them....By the 15th of the month I've got to tighten my belt and I only eat one meal a day."

### Capitalism: How the government helps the rich get richer and workers get poorer, via Obama and Trump

NYT, 4/30 — Akron, Ohio — Colin Robertson wonders why he pays federal taxes on the \$18,000 a year he makes cleaning carpets, while the tech giant Amazon got a tax rebate....

At a gathering discuss[ing] Karl Marx and corporate greed,...talk turned to...how the government helps the wealthy avoid taxes....

...Mr. Robertson...25, compar[ed] his minimal income to the roughly \$15 billion net worth of Jeff Bezos, Amazon's chief executive and the world's richest person.

"He could be taxed at 99.9 percent and still have millions left over," Mr. Robertson said, "and I'd be homeless...."

For decades, profitable companies have been able to avoid corporate taxes. But the list of those paying zero roughly doubled last year as a result of...[the] 2017 tax bill that expanded corporate tax breaks and reduced the tax rate on corporate income....

Both parties have sought to lower the top corporate tax rate...— President Barack Obama proposed lowering it from 35 percent to 28 percent — Republicans...pushed it down to 21 percent....

General Motors...idled a large plant near Youngstown...even as GM paid no federal taxes on \$4.32 billion in income.



# In the name of Tyrone and antiracism, workers shut down Johns Hopkins U



**BALTIMORE, May 7**— The inspiring sit-in at Hopkins University’s Garland Hall – the building in which the university president has his office – is now in its 36th day. Ever since May 1, the occupation has been on an even bolder level. It’s no longer a sit-in with university offices still functioning. The building is now locked down and under the full control of the sit-in, adding muscle to the three demands, all strongly anti-racist!

The Progressive Labor Party is involved in the struggle and also in sharpening the antiracist politics through CHALLENGE, especially in fighting for the understanding that liberalism cannot defeat racism (see next issue for update).

### Three antiracist demands

One student demand is against Hopkins establishing its own private, armed police force. Currently, Hopkins has a 1,107-member unarmed security force. During one recent year, 97 percent of the people detained as “suspects” by these security guards were Black. This police force was created by the wealthy bankers and business owners who sit on the Hopkins Board of Trustees.

Baltimore itself – with a mayor, city council and city state’s attorney, virtually all of whom are part of the liberal Democratic Party – is no better. From 2014 to 2017, 96 percent of the people arrested in Baltimore for marijuana possession were Black, while the city is 66 percent Black, despite drug use being statistically the same across the entire population, and regardless of racial background.

A second demand of the sit-in – in support of immigrants – is to end the millions of dollars in contracts that Hopkins has with ICE. As is well-known, Trump is using this issue to build racism – calling immigrants “invaders,” “criminals” and “rapists” – much like the Nazis did when they said Jewish people were “born criminals.”

The third and final demand of the sit-in is justice for Tyrone West, who was unarmed, yet maced, tased, severely beaten, and killed by a dozen Baltimore city cops – together with

a Morgan University officer – in July of 2013. At that time, racist Greg Bernstein was the City State’s Attorney. He gave those kops immunity before they even completed their testimony.

### Liberals show capitalist allegiance

On the other hand, liberal politicians have been no better. Catherine Pugh came to a West Wednesday rally (weekly demonstrations against police brutality that have been going on for five years now), pretending to care about justice, when she was running for mayor. But since then – until recently forced to resign due to corruption – she acted as if she didn’t even know who Tyrone West was. Marilyn Mosby, who was elected as City States Attorney after Bernstein, told the West family – during her campaign – that she would be helpful. Five years later, she has refused to reopen the case and prosecute the killer cops who took Tyrone’s life.

When Democrat Obama appointed Loretta Lynch as his new Attorney General, she met with the West family. Nevertheless, even after large numbers of signatures were sent to the Department of Justice calling for prosecution of Tyrone’s killers, the long-delayed reply finally came back,

from a low-level official, saying that the kkkop’s murder of Tyrone is “un-prosecutable.”

Progressive Labor Party (PLP) says that liberalism and the Democratic Party help perpetuate the oppression of capitalism. For this reason, PLP organizes the working class for revolution and communism.

### Building our own working class leadership

The bold sit-in, at Johns Hopkins university President Ronald Daniels office, is inspiring many people, and helping to sharpen the understanding that liberalism is not the solution, and that it cannot end societal racism.

The last four West Wednesday rallies have been organized and held in conjunction with students and community members from the sit-in, starting at locations off the Hopkins campus, and marching boldly, right into the sit-in. These rallies have been large, involving as many as 300 people. At one of the rallies, a member of PLP gave a speech, arguing that liberalism can’t accomplish what we

*Continued on page 7*

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