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FLORES FRIDAYS

COMMUNISM WILL END RACIST POLICE TERROR



Antiracists protest in front of DA Lacey's house and expose him as a ruling-class servant.

Los Angeles, May 23—"DA Lacey, you can't hide, we charge you with genocide"

"How do you spell racist? LAPD"

"How do you spell murderer? LAPD"

Over two consecutive days, these and other chants rang out all over a working-class neighborhood in South LA, and an upscale neighborhood of Granada Hills, where Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie ("Lackey") Lacey lives. It was a fighting commemoration of the life and untimely death of Alex Flores, a young Latin worker who was mowed down by racist killers from the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) in South LA six months ago.

Alex is another in a long line of working-class victims of police murder. Cops are the armed assassins of a capitalist system which must use force to make the growth of PLP our primary goal and bacontrol the working class, especially super-exploited Black and Latin workers. This racist terror can only be smashed with a communist revolution organized by an international working class Progressive Labor Party (PLP).

Build a base to build a mass party

In 55 years of organizing, PLP has learned that the fight for reforms, even if militant, can never by themselves lead to revolution. All the reforms in the world (body cameras on the cops; police review boards; electing Black and Latin mayors, District Attorney's or police etc.) have not stopped continued racist murders by the cops and their minions, like those who executed Ahmaud Arbery in Georgia.

Police terror is essential to capitalism because the ruling class knows that an organized working class will see through their racist lies and rebel against this exploitative system. While we must participate in reform struggles to build a base and use them as schools for communism, we must also rometer of success.

Fight racist killer kkkops and their henchmen

Alex was gunned down on November 19, 2019.

Almost immediately, his family, together with PLP members organized daily marches to and rallies at the "Shootin" Newton Police Station. Since January, the family has organized weekly Flores Friday marches. The Justice for Alex Flores Committee, which includes PLP, Alex's family, and others, organized an additional action this week. After a particularly militant Flores Friday, where we confronted two racist cops outside "Shootin" Newton, an integrated group of 60 antiracists travelled 25 miles to Granada Hills and marched to DA Lacey's lair.

During Democrat Lacey's eight year tenure as LA County DA, the LAPD, the County Sheriff's Department and other local cops have murdered over 500 workers (Mother Jones 3/2), most of them Black and Latin, including numerous workers with mental health issues. Not one indictment has even been sought by Lackey Lacey. So it is no surprise that the Flores family has never been given an autopsy report, never received Alex's belongings, or any of the

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OUR FIGHT

☆ Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to destroy capitalism and the dictatorship of the capitalist class. We organize workers, soldiers and youth into a revolutionary movement for communism.

☆The dictatorship of the working class — communism—can provide a lasting solution to the disaster that is today's world for billions of people. This cannot be done through electoral politics, but requires a revolutionary movement and a mass Red Army led by PLP.

Worldwide capitalism, in its relentless drive for profit, inevitably leads to war, fascism, poverty, disease, starvation and environmental destruction. The capitalist class, through its state power — governments, armies, police, schools and culture — maintains a dictatorship over the world's workers. The capitalist dictatorship supports, and is supported by, the anti-working-class ideologies of racism, sexism, nationalism, individualism and religion.

☆While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions worldwide. Capitalism returned to Russia and China because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system, like wages and privileges. Russia and China did not establish communism.

*Communism means working collectively to build a worker-run society. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. While capitalism needs unemployment, communism needs everyone to contribute and share in society's benefits and burdens.

**Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of "race." Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit Black, Latin, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working

☆Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women— sexism—and divisive gender roles created by the class society.

*Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

☆Communism means that the minds of millions of workers must become free from religion's false promises, unscientific thinking and poisonous ideology. Communism will triumph when the masses of workers can use the science of dialectical materialism to understand, analyze and change the world to meet their needs and aspirations.

☆Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!

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WHO WRITES FOR CHALLENGE?

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

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

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Editorial

'Reopening' exposes Big Fascists in disarray



The Big Fascists, the international finance capital wing of the U.S. ruling class, is in disarray—and the working class is paying the price. With more than 350,000 workers killed by the pandemic, including more than 100,000 in the U.S. alone, the capitalist bosses are pushing forward with a chaotic "reopening" of the economy that may kill millions more. Meanwhile, capitalism has plunged into a severe international economic crisis that rivals the Great Depression of the 1930s. As imperialist rulers fight for their threatened profits on the road to fascism and World War III, hundreds of millions of workers worldwide are faced with joblessness, hunger, and a siege of preventable illness. Racist inequality has murdered untold numbers of Black and Latin workers, from Detroit to Tanzania to Ecuador.

In the U.S., many of the domestically oriented Small Fascists are going bankrupt. Their racist front man, Stooge in Chief Donald Trump, has called for an immediate reopening of worksites, churches, schools, and other public places, even though most states are failing to meet basic public health benchmarks. Trump has censored recommendations by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and ignored the watered-down guidelines that the spineless agency finally released.

The governors, both Republicans and Big Fascist Democrats, are falling in line as they send workers to their deaths. As he reopened New York City's stock exchange, the bosses' blood-money headquarters, Governor Andrew Cuomo called for "supercharging" the economy (New York Daily News, 5/26). He also acknowledged that the rate of positive test results in some New York communities is as high as 40 percent, and at 20 percent in New York City (cnbc.com, 5/26)—which means that not nearly enough testing is being done to control the virus' spread. (The Trump administration's own benchmark is 10 percent.) Case rates are rising in much of the South and Midwest. According to Imperial College London, the easing of lockdown regulations could lead to another 100,000 Covid-19 fatalities in the U.S. by July: "[T]here is strong evidence that the epidemic is not under control" (imperial.ac.uk, 5/21).

How would communists handle this pandemic differently? To begin with, we would win the population to a scientific approach to healthcare and economics. As communists, we believe in science. We know that an important aspect of revolution is smashing anti-scientific ideas. After the Chinese communist revolution of 1949, "barefoot doctors" were able to wipe out medical plagues from syphilis to schistosomiasis to drug addiction (Away with All Pests, by Joshua Horn).

Covid-19 and racism

Covid-19 has disproportionately killed Black and Latin and immigrant workers, the same people who are forced by racism and capitalism to live in overcrowded households throughout the world. Available data shows that "on average, the rate of fatalities for Black workers is 2.4 times that of white workers with Covid-19. In states including Michigan, Kansas and Wisconsin and in Washington, D.C., that ratio jumps to five to seven black people dying of Covid-19 complications for every one white death" (New York Times, 5/25).

In the U.S., Black and Latin workers are also at

greater risk for infection because they're concentrated in job sectors with high exposure to the virus: cleaners, groceries, hospitals and nursing homes, slaughterhouses, and food processing plants.

As Trump rallies his swastika-badged racist base to lay siege to state capitols with automatic weapons, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell is paving the way to free businesses from any liability for the workers they're about to slaughter. Meanwhile, the Big Fascists are offering no coherent plan to keep workers eating while saving their jobs and protecting their health. From racist nitwit

Joe Biden, very possibly the next president, to lifelong hack Nancy Pelosi, the House speaker, the Democrats are following in the footsteps of Barack Obama and his craven bank bailouts of 2009. They're presenting the same profit-driven, corporate-friendly, and pathetically inadequate "relief" to workers today.

With the federal bosses both incompetent and divided, workers' lives depend on small-time stooges like Cuomo or Florida Governor Ron DeSantis, both of whom resisted sheltering people in place until it was too late.

The true fascists: Congressional Progressive Caucus

In April, Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal and her social fascist compatriots, Senator Bernie Sanders and Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, introduced the Paycheck Recovery Act to have the federal government keep workers on the payroll, as bosses are doing in several European countries to make their reopenings more efficient (vox.com 4/17). They understand the necessity of a loyal and patriotic working class to fight the next global war. But Pelosi and Senate Minority Leader, Chuck Schumer, ever loyal to their Big Fascist corporate donor base, refused to include this provision in the Heroes Act (theintercept.com, 5/19). Instead, they are supporting an extension of unemployment benefits and another one-time stimulus check, leaving workers unemployed and at the mercy of the fractured state unemployment systems.

Republican or Democrat, liberal or right-wing or phony "socialist," all bosses need to mislead workers away from the communist understanding that the profit system can never meet our class needs. Or that fighting racism is a class question, and that only by eliminating capitalism can we truly eliminate racism.

China on the rise

With both sections of the U.S. ruling class in disarray as they flounder in response to the pandemic and resulting economic crisis, inter-imperalist rivalry between China and the U.S. has intensified (Yahoo Finance, 5/14). Richard Haass, a Big Fascist mouthpiece as president of the Council on Foreign Relations, said that China should be held accountable for its role in causing the pandemic, while warning that the U.S. and China were heading toward a new Cold War (Wall Street Journal, 5/7).

Where the Small Fascists would be content with a smaller white military, the Big Fascists know they need to win more workers to believe in a multiracial U.S. that can sacrifice and go to war when needed. Most of all, they need to deceive workers into thinking they have a stake in U.S. capitalism, and into fighting for the rulers' profits. But China is winning the Covid-19 war with a unified ruling class, a top-down government, and full-blown fascism to discipline both bosses and workers.

No matter which group of bosses comes out on top, workers will be sickened by the disease of capitalism until they rise in revolution and seize state power. Fight for communism! Join Progressive Labor Party!

Lock up criminal bosses, free workers



INDIANA, May 16—Progressive Labor Party (PLP) played an active role against racist incarceration during a rally and car action at Indiana State Prison (ISP).

The racist disregard of workers in prison is not new and continues to be a tool for capitalism. Mass incarceration profiteers have long used racism and sexism as their primary ways to keep incarcerated workers separated from one another. They are also used to keep the wider public from empathizing with the class struggles inside of the prisons.

The number of Covid-19 infections and deaths among prisoners continues to rise, with no illusion of concern among bosses. The only solution to ending this capitalist-caused cycle of systemic exploitation and victimization is to smash capitalism with an armed communist revolution, led by an international PLP.

Putting the line on the line with workers

The PLP collective arrived early to the rally, giving us an opportunity to talk with other workers about our connection to the prison and other struggles against capitalist violence.

We discussed how the coronavirus and the state government's mishandling of the pandemic are affecting our base . PLP comrades shared that if society were under control of the workers under communism, operating in the best interests of the working class instead of capitalist gain, there would be a drastic reduction in the loss of lives.

Workers talked about issues their family members in the prison have been going through long before the Covid-19 crisis. Abuse at the hands of guards in the form of food tampering, forced isolation, suspension of visits in all forms, physical abuse, and unwarranted, harassing searches all made the list.

All these result in worsening conditions for workers, specifically their physical safety as well as their mental and emotional health. This is proof that rehabilitation is far from the goal of incarceration under capitalism. Brutalization of the working class, control, and profit is the bottom line under this system.

The fight against capitalism includes all workers

When the featured speakers arrived, they gave comments about their organization's platform and the current demands laid out for the well-being of inmates. During open comments, a former guard of the prison spoke about the shared hazardous conditions for employees and inmates.

Their point was that the risks were related, and everyone had an interest in pushing back against the refusal of prison administrators to initiate safety precautions. Some in the crowd were surprised to hear how the lives of guards were also endangered by their money-hungry bosses. The shared interests of workers, incarcerated or not, to demand change and improvement in conditions from administrators to increase the safety of all was made clear.

The speaker quit their job due to how great of a

risk they all faced, and due to the clear intention of their bosses to do nothing about it. After the invited speaker read a list of reformist demands, a PL'er shouted out that there's no negotiating with the prison bosses. The PL'er said real justice for incarcerated workers means smashing capitalism and their system of for-profit torture.

Speaking on the bullhorn, the comrade expanded the conversation by saying that workers coming together and showing opposition in events like these is important. It steels us for the fight that the whole working class must wage against this deadly system that would rather see us all caged and broken than free. Smashing the capitalist system is the only key to freedom for us all.

The comrade led the crowd in Party chants after they showed an interest in the revolutionary line she delivered. PLP distributed CHALLENGE newspaper and made contacts. When the main speaker took to the mic again, they agreed with what the PL'er had stated and added ending imperialism to their group's list of demands.

No reformist retreats!

Mass incarceration remains a valuable weapon for the ruling class. The reasons, and many of the methods, remain unchanged in the U.S. since the era of post-Civil War Reconstruction. Black workers, newly "freed" from one form of enslavement, were thrown into another form in jails and prisons. Racism and sexism are clearly used by poverty and prison profiteers as tools of control, separating workers on both sides of the wall.

Workers in prisons are waging fights for basic humane treatment against capitalists who continue to profit from withholding it. Being a part of collectives that support that fight is an important area of mass work for our comrades to engage. Actively leading with our line will win us supporters, who will become our base, and then our comrades. It all starts with putting our line on the forefront of the struggle.

We push people past the point of asking for kinder abuse from capitalists. This is the essential difference between reform and revolution. PLP comrades must build for the latter everywhere we are present. It is through personal and political relationships that we will win others away from reform and revisionist movements, to fight directly for revolutionary communism. \bullet

Flores fightback: cops serve the ruling class

Continued from page 1



video footage or other evidence of the cops' criminal acts. Further proving that Black capitalists are still capitalists.

Pushing the limits of reform is revolutionary

As we were marching, one cop told us that if anyone "trespassed" we would be immediately arrested by one of the three armed sheriff's deputies guarding Lacey's house. We were not intimidated. One of Alex's sisters gave an impassioned, militant speech on the sidewalk while we held signs, banners, and PLP red flags. She called out Lacey for green-lighting racist cop terror, and vowed not to stay quiet nor to stop the struggle for justice for Alex and so many other victims. She recited our demands, and then continued leading militant,

anti-racist chants.

A member of PLP traced the history of police in the U.S., starting with slave-catchers in the U.S. South. He exposed the current role of the cops globally in protecting the capitalist class and their exploitation of workers in the factories, sweat-shops, and maquiladoras (See CHALLENGE, 3/13) of the world. He foretold the demise of the cops and their racist masters at the hands of their future gravediggers, workers and their children. He said that only an organized, international, revolutionary, communist party can lead the overthrow of the capitalists by the working class. That party is Progressive Labor Party!

Before we left Lackey Lacey's house, Alex's mother and father, who could not contain their anger, built up over the last six months, spoke out.

Alex's father asked the cops protecting Lacey if they really protect the working class, or just cover for criminals who kill the working class.

Cheers for CHALLENGE Chants against killer kops.

As has happened the last several weeks at Flores Friday, our May 22nd march and rally got a tremendous reception from the South-Central LA community. We distributed over 150 issues of CHALLENGE to passing cars and pedestrians while maintaining discipline in light of Covid-19 precautions. Over and over, a cacophony of car, truck and bus horns filled the night with audible support for our campaign. When we caught two pigs from Newton Station standing outside the fire station across the street from us, we quickly organized a short march surrounding them, following them, and chanting "Killer Kops", to give them the send-off they deserved.

Beginning with a visit by three comrades to Alex's neighborhood the day after his murder, through hard work and patience, this campaign against racist cop terror has grown into a mass local phenomenon. We want to expand the campaign to reach other working class struggles in the neighborhood. We have started a study group to bring our communist ideas to some of those active in the campaign, which they have welcomed with open arms. Given the response to our politics so far, the future looks bright for the growth and development of PLP.

Mexico: capitalism is the deadliest disease

is horrible...I am demanding a public apology from Smith Medical and they must assume responsibility for destroying my family...They are scoundrels," said Juan, a Tijuana worker, who was tearful, who lost his wife and 25-year-old daughter, both to coronavirus. Mother and daughter both worked in the company and did not receive adequate and timely medical attention. Despite having all the symptoms of COVID-19, the doctor at the plant told them it was a simple flu. He only prescribed pain relievers to get them back to work. Until, both worsened and died in a Social Security hospital, just over a week apart. This news was released weeks before the peak of the pandemic and shows that neither companies nor the government care about the lives of workers.

No solutions under a profit system

On March 31, the General Health Council of the Mexican government decreed a health emergency because of COVID-19. Therefore, non-essential activities in the public, social, or private sectors should have been suspended. Many businesses did not comply with that provision and the government let it be. In the state of Baja California, largely due to worker protests at some plants, some 50 companies that were not performing essential activities

MEXICO, May 27—"I no longer have faith, this were successfully suspended. But, the governor infected. and businessman Jaime Bonilla, who is a member of the ruling party Morena, reopened them on May 4 saying that they were part of the supply chain of essential products.

> The Progressive Labor Party mourns the death of our working-class sisters and brothers. We also mourn the deaths of all the workers who have died from the inability of this criminal capitalist system to care for their lives and health. We honor their memories with courage to fight this murderous system and build a new society where no worker dies for the profits of a few. We fight for workers like Juan N. to regain confidence in their own class and in a future of social equality.

> Unfortunately, the case of Juan N, his wife and daughter are not isolated. As of May 16, in Baja California, 519 people had died from COVID-19, of those 432 were maquiladora workers. At the national level, the State ranks second in deaths and third in infections. While the maquilas hide the outbreaks, the workers are the ones who report their health and that of their colleagues. A worker at the U.S. subsidiary Breg, Inc., which manufactures medical supplies, said she contracted the virus at the plant where she worked. Although there were positive cases within the company, the bosses did not apply any measures to prevent the workers in the factory and their families from becoming

Communism is the cure

Under capitalism the lives of the workers do not matter; we have no value; we are disposable. The only thing that matters is the bosses' profits. The bosses use their state power to appropriate the wealth workers produce when they transform raw materials into merchandise.

Under a communist society led by the working class, our lives and needs will be the main social interest. Under communism, if necessary, all activity to protect the lives of workers would be stopped; social organization and the strength of the communist state would guarantee that this would be the

This was the case when workers in the Soviet Union and China faced and eliminated many diseases that continue to plague millions of people in the world today and others that re-emerge such as tuberculosis and leprosy.

Even in the current pandemic, there are workers organizing collectively to face the virus. Lessons from this period are nuggets for building a new communist society. We encourage all workers to read CHALLENGE and build social ties with workers on the basis of fighting for a better world. •

Oakland Caravan fights racist rent profiteering



OAKLAND, CA, May 22—The 73-car caravan to cancel rent and mortgages was loud and militant involving hundreds of members of the National Day of Action, the Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment and the Progressive Labor Party (PLP). The workers arrived with signs on their cars and flags flying with messages, "Rent Strike Today, Cancel Rent Tomorrow!" The PLP contingent exposed capitalism. "Workers Build Houses, Capitalism Creates Homelessness" - "Capitalism is Killing Us" - "Communist Equality, Not Capitalist Inequality."

Most cars had two protesters. From the sidewalks and balconies, workers cheered and raised their fists in solidarity. Many were tenants of real estate racist capitalist Neveo Mosser. The worker's response inspired us. We drove to San Francisco and protested at the home of rent profiteer Mosser. who owns 600 apartment units in Oakland and is 3/18). But until workers take political power and steadily raising rents forcing tenants into homelessness. We placed a notice on his door to quit or be evicted, made speeches, and passed out leaflets. PL'ers sold CHALLENGE, promoting communism, a system where workers would distribute housing based on need.

Community groups around the U.S. have been organizing rent strikes, as the Communist Party did during the Great Depression. "The rent strike is a cry for dignity: We are all deserving of a home, no matter the color of our skin, financial status, or culture," said Donnette Letford, an undocumented immigrant from Jamaica and a member of the group New York Communities for Change (The Intercept, 4/25). Capitalism can never provide what Donnette wants. Communism will eliminate both profits and homelessness.

Homelessness in Oakland, California

To pay the high rents in Oakland requires a fulltime job at \$45/hour. That means with 4,000 homeless in Oakland before the pandemic, 70 percent Black workers, there are four empty units for every homeless person. Land speculators like Mosser hold the empty units, waiting for the higher rents coming with gentrification. In November 2019 four Black mothers occupied an empty home, saying "it is a crime to keep homes vacant while people suffer on the street from the California housing crisis". They won a concession from the landlord but homelessness continues (see CHALLENGE, 2/5). Also, demonstrators took over Mosser's restaurant tion and working class ingenuity. in San Francisco in February (see CHALLENGE, run all of society the struggle continues.

Covid-19 exacerbates exploitation and inequality

Increased homelessness and starvation during the pandemic is inevitable. First, every Federal government since the Clinton administration has closed down public health agencies and barely prepared for the predicted pandemic. Medical personnel and equipment were disorganized as the government and corporations competed instead of cooperating. For-profit privatization had led to multiple hospital closures. During the chaotic state government lockdowns tens of thousands big and small businesses have closed or gone bankrupt. So that 40 million workers have had to apply for unemployment (democdracynow.org, 5/21), not

counting millions of undocumented workers who don't qualify. Over two-thirds of workers live paycheck to pay-check (Forbes, 1/14/19) and can't pay an unexpected expense. Once laid off, many could not and did not pay rent. As the rent strike says, "Can't Pay? Won't Pay". That's capitalism: 1) inadequate racist health care, 2) a racist housing crisis, and 3) racist layoffs. The Progressive Labor Party says join the fight. For housing. For jobs. For healthcare. And for a communist revolution.

Governors Gavin Newsom of California and Andrew Cuomo of New York have declared temporary moratoriums on evictions. San Francisco, Oakland and San Jose temporarily cancelled evictions and rent increases, but refused to cancel rent or utility bills. San Jose said it would be unconstitutional to cancel rents, which are private property. Right! The constitution protects property and

Capitalism is the disease; communism is the cure

The capitalist system caused this pandemic. Communist society would put workers' health and well-being as the first priority through disease prevention and creating a healthy environment. Experiences in post-revolution Soviet Union and China show that when workers control society, disease is prevented. China is now a capitalist country, and initially tried to cover up the outbreak to protect their stock market. But after the revolution in 1949, workers ran China and placed workers' needs as the top priority. All workers were housed, and they eliminated several devastating diseases like syphilis and schistosomiasis using public health educa-

But capitalists put profits first, endangering workers' lives on the job and in their imperialist wars. This is especially true for health care and front-line workers during the pandemic. Internationally they are leaving refugees to die in camps (rescue.org) and in ICE detention and jails, and on indigenous reservations where the Navajo have the highest rate in the U.S. (Wired, 5/23). Capitalists can't change because the laws of capitalism (profits first, exploit to the max) make them the murderers they are.

The blatant racism and inequality of capitalism make building the communist movement more important than ever. At the caravan, one new recruit saw all the people out demanding rent cessation and commented that revolutionary thinking may be awakening. Break the chains of capitalism! We have a world to win!♥

Cut Covid, Not CUNY: Fight Back!



Thousands of adjuncts at the City University of New York (CUNY), who fought hard for a wage increase in the last contract, are now facing imminent layoffs (see interview). CUNY students are facing the prospect of a tuition hike, additional fees, less course offerings and the possibility of overcrowded online classes. These cutbacks will be devastating to the careers and dreams of the working class students and adjuncts of New York City. NYC billionaires and their puppet politicians control CUNY. They don't want to educate the Black, Latin, Asian and white working class students of NYC to run the world. These billionaires want students that are obedient, that can perform the many tasks that keep the capitalist profits flowing, and they want us to fight in their

Rank and file members within the union have been steadily organizing both students and faculty to oppose these pre-emptive layoffs and budget cuts. With the #CutCovidNotCUNY hashtag they have produced a few short videos and held some well attended events. They have organized town halls and virtual meetings to launch a campaign of "grade striking" or withholding grades until the last minute to send a message of strength and solidarity to CUNY. This campaign, along with a campaign called "A for All", has been an attempt to galvanize both students and faculty to draw a line in the sand and not go on with "business as usual."

But stopping "business as usual" is not enough. A CUNY education is meant to reinforce the racist and sexist inequalities of capitalism. Progressive Labor Party (PLP) members have been active in these reform campaigns, but we have been stressing that the entire capitalist system has to be destroyed. These attacks at CUNY are racist and sexist in nature. We need a united, multiracial working class, not only to stop layoffs and budget cuts, but also to fight for communism, a system actually run by and for the working class. We have been promoting these ideas from study groups to mass meetings and town halls. PLP professors have been explaining to students why we are participating in this grade strike, why we need to plan much larger strikes and protests in the fall, and why we ultimately need a communist revolution. We plan to make this a "summer of struggle" whether virtual or on the streets, to build a bigger base for communist ideas and joining PLP.

At a very well attended Solidarity Town Hall meeting for Bronx CUNY campuses, over 220 people attended and discussed issues such as how to build the worker student alliance, how to fight these cuts and layoffs, how to address the racist inequities at CUNY and how to keep our-

selves strong during the ongoing pandemic. We talked about how the Bronx has been so hard hit by Covid-19, pointing out that Lincoln Hospital had the highest numbers of coronavirus deaths, how the subway system is totally inadequate and still crowded during the pandemic, and that Bronx politicians have basically abandoned the community.

Two PLP members spoke at the town hall, one pointing out that while some folks think Governor Andrew Cuomo is "doing a great job" he is the politician who closed hospitals and has helped to starve CUNY. He pointed out that militant collective action with students and faculty together is the best strategy. He also commented that the stress that adjuncts live with, not knowing if they will have employment (and health insurance) can be deadly.

Another PLP member spoke, suggesting that our demand be that the Chancellor (who earns \$7,000,000 a year not including his exorbitant free rent) and the members of the Board of Trustees take salary cuts. She pointed out that there had been over 200 strikes and job actions since the pandemic, so we should be inspired and follow their lead.

The union leadership, meanwhile, has continued where they left off in the last contract campaign, prioritizing dead-end legislative tactics and demobilizing the membership. At a recent union meeting, the union president called the struggle "the fight of our lives" and then spent the next two hours explaining why we can't break the Taylor Law (state law outlawing strikes). It's clear that the union leadership has no plan to save the jobs and healthcare of potentially thousands of adjuncts.

PLP members have been focused on organizing with students and other rank and file activists. We are experiencing modest success during these difficult times. We have a few weekly study groups where students discuss both communist theory and practice. In one group, students read the editorials and discussed how to apply those ideas to the struggles around them- it has a solid core of enthusiastic participants. In another group, we have discussed how students have been dealing with the pandemic as well as reading CHALLENGE articles and evaluating our participation in mass work.

This struggle will be ongoing – join the Summer of Struggle 2020. We must continue the mass virtual meetings, local caravans and protests in the street and more. We will fight hard against the attacks on our working class students and adjuncts, but always with a vision of the communist world we fight to build! Join PLP!

Interview with adjunct

The The following is an interview with an adjunct instructor at CUNY

1. How long have you been an adjunct instructor? What kind of salary do you earn?

Since 2005, I started making \$53 an hour and now after three contracts it's \$92. It took me twelve years to have an increase of \$10. It's unfair that adjuncts have to also fight with the administration at times to get our raises - full timers automatically get their raises.

2.What are your working/teaching conditions like?

My wage from one college is not enough. I have to commute from one college to another . I have been in three different colleges at one time, one in Brooklyn, one in the Bronx. Over the years, I have taught at eight colleges out of the fifteen [CUNY] colleges. I did have two semesters when I didn't have enough classes to have health insurance (adjuncts need six credits of teaching hours to get coverage). But, even when I have a full program, it's not enough to earn a living wage.

We are always cramped into unventilated adjunct rooms where we have to scramble for chairs and computers. At the last campus, NYC Technical College, there was no paper for months and we had to buy our own. Adjuncts are not respected by CUNY. We are seen as second class citizens. We do the same work, but we get less respect. Actually, we are over 60 percent of the teaching faculty.

3. How well do you think the union has done in addressing the inequities?

They have maintained the two tier system. It took me twelve years to get into the top level. In your first year you cannot get health insurance. You must maintain two classes. We are still getting crumbs and facing difficult working conditions. In terms of the dire living and working conditions, we must also emphasize the bloated salaries of administrations, The President receives \$200,000, they don't even play a role in the teaching and learning conditions of students. It's outrageous I think the union is just reactive and not pro-active about these austerity cuts.

4. Do you support the "wild cat grade strike"? Why?

Yes, I think it's a good step. I haven't seen enough concrete action in how you can fight the system and show them we are a force to be dealt with. Even if its one day, it's a big deal It's a way of dealing with tuition hikes and massive layoffs This is one way of trying to force the CUNY administration's policy of pre-emptive strikes against both adjuncts and students

5. How have you been impacted by the austerity measures/cutbacks at CUNY?

For the first time in 15 years, I have not been reappointed at any colleges in CUNY. The cut throat austerity measures mean me and potentially thousands of others will lose their positions. There are 435 adjuncts at John Jay who have already received "pink slips". All adjuncts are now dealing with the anxiety and uncertainty of not knowing if they will have work. We may not be killed by the Covid-19 pandemic, but we are being ravaged by the cutthroat austerity measures.

6. What do you see as the possible solutions, both immediate and long term?

Organizing. Mobilizing. Networking. Coalition building. Unions must make themselves part of the grassroots struggle. In the short term, the unions must provide a lifeline to vulnerable adjuncts. The union should divert funds from their legislative agenda and protect the workers.

We should threaten to strike if adjuncts are not reappointed. What will put pressure on CUNY? Striking is still the strongest weapon workers have. We need to confront both the neo-liberal capitalists and the sellout union leadership in all of our unions. I have had enough of the dictatorship of the profit system which only serves the few. Workers like me have the capacity to lead and re-imagine a better world.

LETTERS

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

Making inroads towards communism with transit co-worker

I've had discussions in recent months with my Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) train operator classmates about the bosses' racist attacks against us on the job. For some time, I was not confident my efforts were bearing fruit. My colleagues oftentimes laughed me off as just some crazy anarchist guy rambling. It felt like a hopeless endeavor. Though I still kept trying.

But recently, a classmate texted me that he was seriously interested in becoming a union representative because, "[L]ike you said, stand up for the little guy," referencing a conversation we'd had around late January.

During the aforementioned talk, I spoke with him about how the MTA blames its workers for fare hikes during contract negotiations, and how the racist media parrots the same lies. He was amazed to discover this information.

He asked me a question later that same day: "Would you rather be the corporation going up against the little guy? Or the little guy going up against the corporation?"

"I'd rather be in a collection of little guys (and gals) teaming up against that corporation and this system," I responded.

Though we as communists know that bosses have today's unions under their boots and use them as campaign vehicles for their stooge politicians, this worker's shift shows his rising class-consciousness.

He sees how capitalism is devastating workers at the MTA, with over 120 of us dead from Covid-19, within a two-month time span, because Transit bosses didn't give a damn about safeguarding us from the virus.

He wants to bring change, but just needs nudging in a more communist direction. Before this discussion, he may not have seen much reason for us to organize. We plan on going to union meetings when they reopen again, and I'm looking into books about the TWU Local 100's communist roots for us to read together.

I'll continue talking with him whenever I can.

Eventually, I want to give him CHALLENGE as well. But for now, baby steps. I'm taking this as a lesson well learned. NEVER give up on workers, and never assume they'll never be able to get it.

You just might be surprised.



CHALLENGE is essential news

Around the world, workers are finding creative ways to continue to fight back amid the Covid-19 Pandemic. Progressive Labor Party knows that an important way of fighting for the working class is spreading communist ideas with CHALLENGE newspaper. In order to do this many have been encouraging people to check out www.plp.org or sending their contacts the newspaper in the mail.

Another approach used recently in NYC, the center of the pandemic, was to build a portable CHALLENGE stand and place it near a line of folks getting food as well as a protest against racist ICE incarceration. It was then possible to offer it to people "hands-free" and many eagerly took the

paper as they passed. Let's keep creating new ways to resist and spread our important message.



Sanitation workers on strike

I have been working in New Orleans testing folks for HIV and Covid-19 in a Federally Qualified Health Center. We serve workers like the sanitation workers who have been collecting trash without safety equipment. These front-line workers are subcontracted by People Ready and paid \$10.25 an hour with no benefits or health insurance. They work long hard hours starting at 4 AM sometimes until 6 PM. As summer heats up in New Orleans their job gets even harder. Between the heat, the increase in people doing yard work—disposing of tree branches and such in the trash—there is even more to do. They are not provided with masks or gloves and work closely with others. On May 5 some "hoppers" (those who jump on and off the truck collecting trash) went on strike with these

- PPE for all workers each day starting NOW
- Fix broken trucks that leak toxic hydraulic fluid on workers every day
- Provide hourly pay of \$15/hour
- Provide weekly hazard pay of \$150/week

The first day on strike a boss told them they were fired and some returned to work the next day. A week later they received a letter saying they weren't fired, and they are hoping that will motivate others to join them. The company (Metro Services Group) has started bringing in prisoners on work release to scab during the strike. Those on work release were threatened with being sent back to jail if they did not comply. These workers are paid about half of what the sanitation workers were making - definitely forced slave labor. As of May 21, the bosses were still not meeting with them. The workers are trying to form a union—the City Waste Union- and have gained support, including solidarity with striking baristas and a large rally at City Hall on May 18.

The worker's signs say I AM A MAN, a reprise of the slogan of the famous Memphis sanitation workers strike that brought Martin Luther King Jr to the city where he was assassinated. I have been talking with the strikers and put support signs in my apartment windows in the gentrifying area of Bywater, New Orleans.

I will be bringing revolutionary ideas and CHALLENGE to the picket line. This fightback has inspired other workers to donate nearly \$60,000 to support the strikers through a Go Fund Me page: https://tinyurl.com/y7duxffg. Workers of the world unite!

Communism: news bosses too scared to print

The New York Times, mouthpiece of the main wing of the U.S. ruling class, proclaims itself as reporters of "All the news that's fit to print." But that "All" doesn't seem to include the truth about communists

Greetings from Ecuador

I walk the streets looking At life passing through the pain The streets are witnesses of the bodies in decay Thousands have died without means or options Hundreds of bodies end up in containers Their family's pilgrimage breaks my heart They tell us we live in democracy That we have dignity What we really have Is repression, tragedy and pain But, let's not despair the best is yet to come We distributed food baskets Protective equipment and supplies Our neighbors in solidarity Shared with us We talked about ways to organize There was a call for revolution For multiracial and multigenerational unity To put an end to capitalism

The editorial in its April 29 issue is headlined, "Another Way the 2020s Might Be Like the 1930s." What "way"? In alluding to current strikes by Amazon workers and others protesting the rulers' ignoring the unsafe effects of the coronavirus, it recalls "The consequential strike wave of 1934...a year of unrest in workplaces across the country," when workers could "look to President Franklin Roosevelt as an ally."

It fails to mention that this "unrest" was a product of massive sit-down strikes led by communists in the auto plants and among basic industries like electrical and steel. Six of the seven members of the strike committee that organized the 1936-37 44-day Flint sit-down strike that smashed the open shop and established the auto union at General Motors were communists.

That strike sparked scores of others across the country, battling the National Guard and U.S. Army troops. It was part of a red-led movement that championed the eight-hour day. Communists organized 800,000 workers into the National Unemployment Councils which forced Roosevelt to quell the workers' protests and establish the Unemployment Insurance and Social Security systems and the 40-hour work-week. Somehow the Times' editorial writer didn't feel that this news about these communist-led movements in the 1930s was "fit to print."

Just below that editorial was an op-ed piece by Thomas Friedman in which he labeled the coronavirus a "war," asserting that "wars are fought and won by humans." So who were the humans that won the Second World War? That happened, says Friedman, because "We" — meaning the U.S. — "could out-mobilize the Nazis and Japanese to win World War II." (!)

Somehow he "forgot" that the working-class in the communist-led Soviet Union was squaring off against 80 percent of Hitler's armies on the 2,000-mile-long Eastern Front, from the Arctic to the Crimea, smashing them at Stalingrad, which was universally viewed as the turning point of WWII. It was their heroism that greatly reduced the number of Nazi divisions that the U.S. and Britain had to face in the West, enabling them to open up the Second Front in France in 1944. This, after the Soviets had fought alone for three years.

Perhaps Friedman never read what the U.S. General Douglas MacArthur told the Associated Press on February 23, 1942: "The hopes of civilization rest upon the worthy banners of the courageous Russian Army." Their heroic "resistance to the heaviest blows of a hitherto undefeated enemy, followed by a smashing counterattack which is driving the enemy back into its own land" is "the greatest military achievement of all time."

Now THAT is "news that's fit to print."

Racist bosses ride roughshod over transit workers' health

everywhere are witnessing this typically, insidious "boss move." The billionaire capitalists wait and continue accumulating billions until the deaths of workers affect their profits. This is true of the transit system in New York City. Capitalism is the real disease. Workers' power with communist revolution is the only cure.

The ruling class is enforcing fascism through surveillance and racist police terror and murder against mostly Black workers. A transit worker said, "they told us we're essential workers, now get back to work." Under capitalism workers' labor is essential, but workers' lives are never essential. Under communism, not only will workers' labor and health be essential, but as we learn to run all aspects of society, all our abilities and talents will be developed to the fullest. That's the world the Progressive Labor Party fights for!

Only communist organizing can defeat kapitalist killers

Meanwhile, in New York City the death of predominantly Black transit workers has surpassed 100, more than the deaths of cops and firefighters combined. Many workers have been told to work without the proper PPE (personal protective equipment). These numbers are actually much higher. Many workers have posted on social media the deaths of their beloved coworkers that are not mentioned by the bosses or the Transportation Workers Union (TWU).

Progressive Labor Party members have been reaching out to coworkers to provide any help that may be needed as well as discussing on-the-job issues and the world situation. On the job we need a safe work environment for ourselves, and a safe riding environment for workers to get to their jobs. As far as the world goes, we need the working class to run it. That's communism and that means revo-

The capitalist world is crumbling. Workers lution. This whole damn capitalist system has to

The transit union leaders or misleaders are doing very little. They want compensation for the families of the victims of the virus, and for hazard pay. That's it. Governor Andrew Cuomo wants the federal government to pay for hazard pay. He's just passing the buck to President Donald Trump. Meanwhile the transit bosses save money from the deaths of veteran workers who were hired on better pensions. They will be replaced by lower-paid workers, if they are replaced at all.

United workers can halt means of production and transportation

Transit is an essential part of the economy. It's a huge concentration of workers who, with the right leadership can shut this system down like they did in NYC back in 2005, bringing the bosses to their knees. It was transit workers who initially blew the whistle on how dirty the subways are, putting pressure on the bosses and politicians to do something. But instead of shutting down transit for a complete cleaning of trains and stations, the bosses' response was chaotic and weak. They removed the homeless from the trains from 1-5 AM every 24 hours and used underpaid contract workers to do the cleaning. There aren't enough workers to do the work, so they will clean the main stations like Times Square or Grand Central, but ignore local stations, which is pointless. The way capitalism works it will also be racist, as the stations poorly cleaned will be in Black or Latin neighborhoods. This is just another political move by the bosses, and their politicians so they can say they did something to protect the workers.

Profits created the unsanitary and unsafe conditions that caused this disease. A profit-driven health care system left us unprepared for this dis-

ease. And chaotic, capitalist competition has led to an ineffective response to this disease. The high death tolls are the product of capitalism. Capitalism is the pandemic. Capitalism is the real killer. All over the world, the working class is under the same attack by capitalist vermin.

Crisis calls for class struggle and communism

But there is a silver lining. The brutality of capitalism has become clearer to many workers.

In Haiti the Progressive Labor Party (PLP) is leading workers to pressure the rulers to provide proper masks and sanitation. The Party in Chicago joined workers in a caravan supporting imprisoned workers, distributing masks and CHAL-LENGE to arm them with communist ideas. The Party from Mexico to New York City continues to fight for their students, by making sure they still have an education. All over the world workers are fighting back.

But capitalism cannot be reformed; it works only for the capitalist rulers. We need a world where workers are in charge because we are the ones who create what we need! A world that is free from racism, sexism, imperialism, and poverty. A world run by and for the working class. That world is called communism.

But this world that communists fight for will not come from the voting box. It will not come from liberal politicians. It will not come from Fascists Liberals Barack Obama or Bernie Sanders. You will not feel the Bern. The bosses must feel our feet, as we revolt and take state power. Only then will everyone have health, education, shelter and food. Only then will the next pandemic be fought because workers' lives matter. Join the Progressive Labor Party!**◊**

RED EYE ON THE NEWS...

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

NYT=New York Times GW= Guardian Weekly

Healthcare under capitalism = failure

NYT, 5/8 — At least 71,000 dead [as of 5/8], 1.2 million infected and 30 million unemployed, nursing homes, prisons and meat-packing plants that have surance and carries a stigma....Bad for the brand.... become hotbeds of infection....

...The failings and vulnerabilities...were...a direct outgrowth of...[the] market-based system [of] American...health care.

[This] system requires... [that] insurers to hospitals to the pharmaceutical industry to doctors be financially self-sustaining, to have a profitable business model....No...hospitals, not manufacturers of ventilators, masks, tests or drugs saw it as their place to get ready for the Covid-19....That's because in... American health care, tens of thousands of people Profiteers sell donated coronavirus blood dying is not incentive enough....

VENTILATORS: Operated as businesses, hospitals have zero incentive to stockpile. Like hotels, they aim to keep their beds full...with well-paying customers....Supply-chain management dictates they stock for those needs, not for a[n]...epidemic.... TESTING: Commercial and hospital labs that deal with actual blood work...did not. Why would they? There was no market...With requirements...expensive and cumbersome, developing a test was a business non-starter....[With] Medicare price...at \$51, labs complained....The price was doubled....somewhat paltry for labs that often charge \$200 for basic blood tests...But in [a] market-driven system it's

TESTING COMPONENTS AND PROTECTIVE GEAR: Medical manufacturers...have no "incen-

every provider for himself, and there is no efficient

way to connect the new supply with demand....

tive" to produce low-margin items in excess of usual needs....With demand...exceeding supply, prices rose and bidding wars began....So \$1 masks cost \$6....HOSPITAL COORDINATION: In

who need lucrative procedures....They are not eager to deal with infectious diseases like Covid-19, which disproportionately hits people with poor in- milliliter from \$350, while "premium" inventory in-

...A reimbursement system that showers cash on elective and specialty care...discourages hospitals from serving the basic health needs of society...

In a functioning health system, pandemic preparedness and response would be an obligation....

The Covid-19 stress test has laid bare a market that is broken, lacking the ability to attend to the public health....The system need]ed] is one that responds...to illness...[not] to profits.

samples

NYT, 5/2 — Aleacia Jenkins...stricken with the cor- Families with children under 12 are especially hardonavirus...[was told] about an obscure California company...asking for blood donations from people who have recovered, to help researchers develop tests for anti-bodies.... "If my blood donation could help save someone's life...' said Ms. Jenkins, 42, of Shoreline, Wash., "I would be crazy not to do that." But she did not know...that the company, Cantor BioConnect, was selling those donations to laboratories and test manufacturers...from \$350 up to \$40,000....Scientists say...a shortage of the blood samples containing antibodies to Covid-19...are needed to validate the tests.

...Companies are seeking to cash in on the shortages, soliciting blood donations and selling samples at huge markups....The higher the level of antibodies in the blood, the higher the price.

...Prices asked by Cantor BioConnect for its cheapest samples...of less than a quarter of a teaspoon rose ...to \$500 from \$350...[and] increased the amount of blood samples for sale for \$3,000.... [a] market-based system, hospitals are primed to Cantor BioConnect relies on a web of middlemen... compete, not cooperate. They compete for patients around the world....Advy Chemical...in Mumbai, is one....In...a single day its price for the cheapest blood samples, more than doubled, to \$950 a creased to \$5,000 from \$3,000. The most expensive blood sample was \$50,000, an increase of \$10,000 over Cantor BioConnect's....It said in [a] statement.

'We had hoped this would help humanity, in a small way, in these trying times....'

Ms. Jenkins... the would-be blood donor after being told [the] money being made from blood donations...said...she wanted "no part of it" and would instead donate her blood to a non-profit in Seattle.

Capitalism = starvation

NYT, 5/8 — The devastation caused by the coronavirus has left many of the world's wealthiest major nations unable to put sufficient food on the table. hit. According to one recent survey, 41 percent of these families are already unable to afford enough to eat. Food banks are overwhelmed, with lines sometimes a mile long.

Worst U.S. economic activity ever, even before pandemic

ShadowStats, 5/18 — April retail sales fell the most in its 73-year reporting history.

Production and manufacturing tumbled the most in their 101-year history....

The U.S. economy already was in trouble before the pandemic, because of intensifying federal reserve policy malfeasance and federal government fiscal malpractice.

Communist caravan vs. kkkiller cops



AHMAUD ARBERY May 8, 1994 - February 23, 2020

BROOKLYN, NY May 12—In response to the murder of 25-year-old Black worker Ahmaud Arbery (25) in Georgia, 20 PL'ers and antiracists organized a caravan for communism. Fists rose in solidarity along a 2.2 mile route that revisited time-honored sites of protest and rebellion against the police murders of Kyam Livingston (37), Shantel Davis (23), and Kimani Gray (16). While maintaining working-class discipline, Progressive Labor Party managed to distribute 100 CHALLENGEs and bring the message of antiracism to this neighborhood terrorized by racist police.

Black workers key

Today, as 400 years ago, Black workers are the most brutally attacked section of our class. The police, descendants of slave catchers, enforce this daily terror. That's because racism, especially anti-Black racism, is part and parcel of capitalism. The profit system cannot function without it.

U.S. history is a chronicle of genocide, slavery, segregation, and enduring racist oppression. Black workers have less invested in this capitalist status quo. Since racism infects all relations within the profit system, they stand to hold fewer illusions about "justice" or "democracy" under the bosses' dictatorship. The ruling class understands the revolutionary and historical role of Black workers as leaders of building an international communist movement. Black workers are a key revolutionary force because of their basis for class consciousness-for class solidarity with all workers and class hatred of all capitalist rulers.

This capitalist world will not cease to terrorize and murder our class's future leaders. Whenever

and wherever they terrorize, workers must rise, under all conditions to fight this system.

Positive neighborhood response

"If you hate this racist system then honk your horn!" "If you feel the power of the workers then honk your horn!"

These chants from a carmounted bullhorn echoed through streets growing less deserted by the day as workers forced to earn a living outside their homes returned home from the job. Bus drivers, FedEx and other postal workers, were



June 5, 1993 - March 13, 2020

hailed and responded with their horns as well.

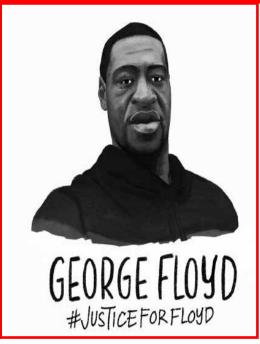
As always, Progressive Labor Party urged the working class to take pride that it is our class keeping this world running and to focus our anger on the ruling class. It's the bosses' thirst for profits that is driving us to early graves by the hundreds and thousands a day. We passed Brookdale Hospital where the heroic efforts of workers, mainly Black women, have kept precious brothers and sisters alive despite Governor Andrew Cuomo's racist neglect over many years.

We contrasted his cynical call for unity since this pandemic commenced with the kind of revolutionary communist working class unity that will sweep misleaders like him and the pestilent system he fronts for into the dustbin of history. Workers can see today more clearly that our class's work is what contributes all that is essential; it is up to communists to build the organization that the workers need to construct a society that abolishes the profit motive and the bosses' need to use racism to divide and conquer the working class. You need a revolutionary communist party to do that.

Multiracial unity

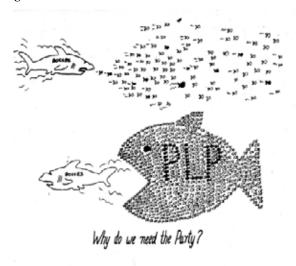
The rulers fear nothing more than a multiracial resistance. For well over three centuries, the ruling class have used their state apparatus—their laws, their courts, their banks, their killer cops—to maintain institutionalized racism and segregate workers. False divisions based on skin tones are exploited to spread fear and distrust between workers. So when we can fight with multiracial unity, all workers stand to benefit.

Our multiracial and intergenerational group of



PL'ers was joined by old friends from Kyam's family, co-workers, new friends active in the rent-strike movement in NYC and we finished our journey in Brownsville, Brooklyn, the epicenter of liberal deBlasio's regime of racist police enforcement of social distancing violations. Of forty summonses given for violating social distancing since the quarantine began in Brooklyn thirty five have been issued in Black neighborhoods (NYT,

Awareness that this pandemic only intensifies the capitalist system's vicious racism ran deep along our 2.2 mile route and fed all of our determination to keep the multiracial struggle for a communist world rolling. Profits will never solve the problems of the workers upon whose backs these problems are created in the first place. Join the fight for an antiracist world, communism.



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