Texas power outage death by capitalism...p2

ChICAgO Transit workers expose cheating CTA, deserve worker run system...p4

HISTORY Langston Hughes, a major poet of the communist movement...p6

IWWD Only communism can eradicate sexism...p8

**EDITORIAL**

"No good landlords in a capitalist system!" This and other antiracist chants rang throughout neighborhoods here during a car caravan against racist gentrification and displacement of mainly Black and Latin residents.

Fighting for a communist world requires having confidence in, and relying on, the working class. It means developing collective planning, organization and discipline so that it becomes second nature to our members and our class. And, it means giving bold, communist, political leadership in the class struggle.

In a small way, the struggle by a local tenants’ union and a non-profit organization to reclaim a house by and for an evicted family has become a political training ground for Progressive Labor Party (PLP) members and our fellow working class fighters.

**JOIN THE INTERNATIONAL FIGHT FOR COMMUNIST REVOLUTION**

**HISTORY** Langston Hughes, a major poet of the communist movement.

**EDITORIAL**

"No good landlords in a capitalist system!" This and other antiracist chants rang throughout neighborhoods here during a car caravan against racist gentrification and displacement of mainly Black and Latin residents.

Fighting for a communist world requires having confidence in, and relying on, the working class. It means developing collective planning, organization and discipline so that it becomes second nature to our members and our class. And, it means giving bold, communist, political leadership in the class struggle.

In a small way, the struggle by a local tenants’ union and a non-profit organization to reclaim a house by and for an evicted family has become a political training ground for Progressive Labor Party (PLP) members and our fellow working class fighters.

**Racist gentrification attacks all workers**

With the building of So-Fi, a brand new football stadium, and starting construction of an arena for the Los Angeles Clippers basketball team, the predominantly Black and Latin city of Inglewood has become a center of gentrification in the Los Angeles area. Since 2016, skyrocketing property values have led to huge rent increases that preceded a 2019 rent control law. Even with the law, the city administration’s complete failure to enforce housing code regulations has continued to allow blood-stucking landlords to force tenants to move and then jack up rents.

Another aspect of racist gentrification has been the appearance of small-time crooks like Trojan Capital Investments, buying up “distressed” mortgages, evicting working-class homeowners and then selling to make a bundle on their blood money investments. The need for multiracial, working class unity in this city could not be more evident.

**Connecting past struggle to present**

The caravan planning committee, made up mostly of young Latin members of the tenants’ union, drew enthusiasm from a community-building workshop held the prior weekend. That event highlighted the historic role of the Communist Party-led Unemployed Councils, which led the 1930s Depression-era fight against evictions, houselessness, unemployment and racism.

That presentation, given by a PLP member, displayed pictures of the conditions faced by the working class, and how our class fought back then They highlighted the similarity of those conditions to...
Texas power outage: Death by capitalism

The ongoing fallout from the Texas power collapse, in the wake of the January 26 Capitol insurrection and the grim milestone of 500,000 lives lost to the coronavirus pandemic, shows the world that the rot of U.S. capitalism extends to infrastructure, liberal democracy, and health care. Devastated parents found a perfectly healthy 11-year-old boy frozen to death last week in his room (Chronicle 2/18). He died because the deprived power bosses value maximum profit over the most basic human needs of the working class.

For workers in and around the Gulf Coast, the bosses’ callous negligence led to massive misery and untold dozens of deaths. As many as 17 million workers lived under “boil water” orders in Texas alone. After a few days to press, three weeks after a winter storm broke the state’s fragile electrical power grid (CNN, 3/1). Facilitating the rising global power of China, the U.S. rulers have a big problem. U.S. workers will be less than eager to fight and die for a ruling class that cannot provide drinking water or heat in brutal winters. Capitalism cannot be “regulated” into serving workers’ needs. As imperial capital power arrangements date back over a century. They were a move to more regulation and higher rates of corporate taxation. Beyond funding for war, the finance capitalists—to prepare for war with China. That translates “sacrifice”—most of all from their fellow capitalists—towards preparing for war with China. That translates from profit every step of the way, from energy resource extraction to power generation to its delivery to people’s homes, the grip displayed by Texas Public Utility Commission in the wake of the January 6 Capitol insurrection, to the need to see the bosses’ reform efforts for what they are: fascist preparations for wider war.

The Texas power disaster is above all a lesson in the anarchy and原子ity that lie at the core of capitalism. Because the bosses are driven to gain profit every step of the way, from energy resource extraction to power generation to its delivery to people’s homes, the grip displayed by Texas Public Utility Commission in the wake of the January 6 Capitol insurrection, to the need to see the bosses’ reform efforts for what they are: fascist preparations for wider war.

The Texas power collapse reflects a widening split within the U.S. ruling class. The Texas energy model is essentially unregulated, a capitalist “free market” in all its glory. Independent Texas power providers were given a free ride back over a century. They were a move to more regulation and higher rates of corporate taxation. Beyond funding for war, the finance capitalists—to prepare for war with China. That translates “sacrifice”—most of all from their fellow capitalists—towards preparing for war with China. That translates from profit every step of the way, from energy resource extraction to power generation to its delivery to people’s homes, the grip displayed by Texas Public Utility Commission in the wake of the January 6 Capitol insurrection, to the need to see the bosses’ reform efforts for what they are: fascist preparations for wider war.

The Texas power collapse reflects a widening split within the U.S. ruling class. The Texas energy model is essentially unregulated, a capitalist “free market” in all its glory. Independent Texas power providers were given a free ride back over a century. They were a move to more regulation and higher rates of corporate taxation. Beyond funding for war, the finance capitalists—to prepare for war with China. That translates “sacrifice”—most of all from their fellow capitalists—towards preparing for war with China. That translates from profit every step of the way, from energy resource extraction to power generation to its delivery to people’s homes, the grip displayed by Texas Public Utility Commission in the wake of the January 6 Capitol insurrection, to the need to see the bosses’ reform efforts for what they are: fascist preparations for wider war.
Transit workers expose cheating CTA, deserve a worker-run system

CHICAGO, February 23—Members of Progressive Labor Party (PLP) joined with Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) workers for a multiracial “Hour of Power” rally today at the 95 Street transit station to protest the sellout union leaders. These workers work hand in hand with the transit bosses, helping them stay in control. Transit, when run in the interest of profit, can never function to sustain the working-class necessities. PLP members call for communism, working-class power, where transit workers will not only keep move the city but also steer the world.

The power of a militant and united transit workforce can hardly be understated. If more workers were to reject both the bosses and their collabo- rating unions and organize on behalf of our class interest, we could shut both the rails and the roads down and bring the capitalist system to its knees. As conditions become evermore untenable and communist ideas grip our class, this level of class struggle will rise again.

In spite of these attempts to shut them out, workers have bravely pushed back against the rac- ist working conditions. Many have organized meet- ings to address concerns, defying CTA and the union’s attempts to retaliate against them for doing so (see CHALLENGE letters, 4/16/20). PLP have sup- ported these efforts to build multiracial, rank-and-file solidarity as the way for our class to grasp our potential power outside the limits of the bosses’ institutions.

A route to workers’ power
The power of a militant and united transit workforce can hardly be understated. If more workers were to reject both the bosses and their collabo- rating unions and organize on behalf of our class interest, we could shut both the rails and the roads down and bring the capitalist system to its knees. As conditions become evermore untenable and communist ideas grip our class, this level of class struggle will rise again.

But in PLP we’re not just about shutting the profit system down; we’re about wiping it out es- sentially. A worker-run communist society would make our class’ s needs as the determining factor of all decisions. With that, we will rebuild and ex- pand mass transit in a way that meets our collective needs and that operates in the most environment- tally healthy ways possible.

The finance capital wing of the U.S. ruling class is more and more worried about their worldwide imperialist empire. Represented by President Joe Biden, they are ramping up their calls to rebuild a failing U.S. infrastructure (see editorial, page 2), but only to better prepare their country and the working class for future imperialist war.

PLP calls on workers to reject both wings of the U.S. bosses and fight for a future where our power and safety always comes first. That’s communism. Join us!

PLP and friends gathered virtually for our annual Black and Red Celebration, giving tribute to the leadership of Black communists. CHALLENGE readers are invited to view the event online at www.tinyurl.com/redandblack2021
On February 25 U.S. President Joe Biden bombed Syria taking only 36 days to join the list of U.S. Presidents whose bloodied hands have killed workers across the Middle East. The airstrike on a base in Syria used by an Iranian backed militia to launch rocket attacks against U.S. forces in Iraq came out of the increasing weakness of the U.S. ruling class. Across the Middle East the U.S. bosses are in retreat. The latest bombing in which 10 were killed at least 17 people and wounded dozens more (NY Times, 2/26), highlights how, as the U.S. ruling class grows weaker, direct war between the imperialists becomes more and more likely.

This latest bombing, like all the wars between the capitalists, was an example of worker killings. The bosses continually pit us against our sisters and brothers in the working class. The bosses use racism and nationalism to turn us against each other. Workers in one country are ordered to kill workers in another. Whether we live in the U.S., Iran, Syria or anywhere else, we have to reject siding with any boss or international against workers across the globe as one class united. The future for the working class lies in turning the bosses’ war into a class war against the bosses for communist revolution and building a society that serves the needs of the internation al working class.

U.S. bosses are no longer calling the shots in the Middle East

Biden dropped the bombs out of weakness. Over the last 10 years the U.S. has been losing in the Middle East. The U.S. military was forced out of Iraq and Syria and is on the verge of leaving Afghanistan, which would give the Taliban nearly complete control of that country. Then, just this week, Biden declared the U.S. was in a position to punish Saudi Arab ia’s crown prince Mohammed bin Salman for killing the U.S. reporter Jamal Khashoggi, who was dismembered on the order of the Prince (The Hill, 2/27).

Biden and company are trying to portray themselves as somehow being in control of the back and forth between the U.S. war machine and the Iranian backed militias. Nothing could be further from the truth. The U.S. bosses have no more ability to control the tides of war rumbling across the globe than they could control the spread of Covid-19.

The U.S. bosses have lost (Brooking Institute, 7/27/20). With the 20-year war in Afghanistan coming to its end, the U.S. is losing its only backing for its Afghan puppet government, a government run by the Afghan warlords and drug lords who brought an extended civil war to Afghanistan.

Prior to losing in Iraq and Afghanistan the U.S. bosses, backed by their gigantic military, controlled the region. That is no longer the situation and has created a free for all between the various ruling class groups trying to take control. The increasing volatility driven by the decline of the U.S. empire and the rise of competing capitalists has created an extremely unpredictable and volatile situation.

As the U.S. ruling class has weakened, Iran and Russia are asserting themselves across the Middle East. Biden is faced with trying to reinstall U.S. power. This latest rain of death was the U.S. bosses trying to contain the Iranian bosses who have taken advantage of the U.S. defeat in Iraq to become the largest power there, with Turkey and Syria also vying for control (Middle East Institute, 3/12/20).

Volatility in the Middle East increases as U.S. bosses position weakens

For the last 60 years, since the 1958 Marine invasion of Lebanon, post World War II (WWII) U.S. ruling class strategy has revolved around military control of the Middle East. For the last 30 years the U.S. has been in almost continual war in Iraq and Afghanistan on 20 years now in Afghanistan, wars the U.S. bosses have lost (Brooking Institute, 7/27/20). The U.S. imperialists, with an army that has grown a dominating imperialist power to a declining empire being challenged in every corner of the globe it once dominated.

To prior losing in Iraq and Afghanistan the U.S. bosses, backed by their gigantic military, controlled the region. That is no longer the situation and has created a free for all between the various ruling class groups trying to take control. The increasing volatility driven by the decline of the U.S. empire and the rise of competing capitalists has created an extremely unpredictable and volatile situation.

As the U.S. ruling class has weakened, Iran and Russia are asserting themselves across the Middle East. Biden is faced with trying to reinstall U.S. power. This latest rain of death was the U.S. bosses trying to contain the Iranian bosses who have taken advantage of the U.S. defeat in Iraq to become the largest power there, with Turkey and Syria also vying for control (Middle East Institute, 3/12/20).

Specifics are unpredictable, big picture is clear

The specifics of how all this will play out are hard to predict. The U.S. ruling class is being challenged by the rise of competing capitalists and by Iran and Russia in virtually every other corner of the globe, including Latin America, the U.S. bosses’ backyard. Other

Infrastructure of imperialism

If the working class can be won politically to fight a major war, Russia and China, and deliver the goods and deliver are key. Domestic infrastructure has always been key to war fighting from advantage.

In 1860 the U.S. The North enjoyed an advantage over the Southern Confederacy in rail road miles. The AutoBahn system built by the German ruling class was a major 1930s infrastructure project which laid the basis for the Nazi army’s capacity to wage war to the east in Poland in 1939, to its west in 1940, and back to the east against the USSR in 1941.

Calls by president Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris for infrastructure development serve both purposes in an era of intensifying inter-imperialist rivalry with China (see editorial, page 2). Biden pitched Congress an economic recovery package that includes huge investments in infrastructure, job creation, and manufacturing as a bulwark against Chinese advancements in transportation and technology.

China is leveraging military modernization, infrastructure, and economic reforms to coerce neighboring countries to reorder the Indo-Pacific region to their advantage. As China continues its economic and military ascendance, asserting power through an all-of-nation long-term strategy, it will continue to pursue a military modernization program that seeks Indo-Pacific regional hegemony in the near-term and displacement of the United States to achieve global preeminence in the future. (2018 National Defense Strategy).

Biden’s bombs kill workers and increase Middle East chaos

Continued from page 1

Workers’ caravan hits bosses’ racist gentrification

Workers in one apartment complex have organized a tenant and homeowner unity to help energize our class struggle. About 25 people at the caravan took our call for revolution. The campaign organizers had previously canvassed the area and knew many of the families there. Workers responded enthusiastically to our signs and messages, taking literature, raising their fists and even joining our militant chants. The caravan ended at an apartment complex directly across from SoFi. One of the tenants at the complex spoke and exposed the lousy, mold-ridden conditions that the landlord there refuses to repair.

From the chants to the warm solidarity shown to the tenant and homeowner speakers, the energy and spirit of the growing people who organized the caravan was on full display. One speaker attacked the role of local poli-tricksters in promoting racist gentrification, and vowed to keep up the fight to defeat this scourge to the working class. Another called for ridging the world of a system where housing remains a commodity. All of the speakers have been working closely with members of PLP on this campaign. They have been extremely open to our call for revolution.

Communists will lead the working class to victory

Going forward, we have great opportunities to build our Party. About 25 people at the caravan took the latest copy of CHALLENGE. The campaign to reclaim the family’s home will continue. Mass evictions, temporally put on hold by the bosses’ phony state “moratoriums”, will inevitably raise their ugly head again.

Meanwhile, inter-imperialist rivalry between U.S. and Chinese bosses will lead to world war. Those bosses who have been working closely with members of PLP on this campaign. They have been extremely open to our call for revolution.

The “hard knocks” experiences of the working class will validate the slogan that “the only solution is communist revolution.” Through the small struggles of everyday life, we can educate ourselves and the working class how to seize and hold power, and build a world where decent housing and everything else, which workers will collectively produce, will be shared according to need.
1930s: Langston Hughes, major poet of the communist movement

The previous issue of CHALLENGE (3/3) remembered Langston Hughes as a writer sharply critical of Jim Crow segregation during World War II and as a poet for the U.S. working class—particularly Black workers. Now we’ll flash back to the 1920s and 1930s, the period when Hughes became an advocate for multiracial, anti-capitalist revolution.

A tradition of antiracist fightback ran deep in Hughes’s family history. In 1858, his maternal grandmother, Mary Langston, married Lewis Leary, an abolitionist who died in John Brown’s 1859 raid in Harper’s Ferry. Her second husband, Charles Howard Langston, was an educator and ardent abolitionist.

Hughes’s influences

According to his biographer Arnold Rampersad, young Langston Hughes was influenced by the poetry of Walt Whitman, Carl Sandburg, Paul Laurence Dunbar, and Claude McKay, along with the work of W.E.B. Du Bois, the antiracist, pro-communist writer and historian. In June 1921, Hughes’s poetry was published for the first time in a professional journal. “The Negro Speaks of Rivers” came out in The Crisis, the journal of the NAACP.

In September 1921, Hughes moved to New York to attend Columbia University. Not yet ready for college, he withdrew before the year was out. He plunged into Black cosmopolitan New York and met Du Bois and Jessie Fauset, both writers at The Crisis, and the poet Countee Collins. By 1924, after a journey to West Africa and Paris and an extended sojourn and the poet, communists took leadership positions in major labor unions. They had an explanation for the Depression and a solution for racist inequalities and capitalist exploitation. They called for multiracial unity and revolution. Hughes was drawn to these ideas in New Masses, and he put his art at the service of revolution.

The Scottsboro Boys

For Hughes and millions of others, a political turning point came on March 25, 1931, when nine young Black teenagers were falsely accused of raping two white young women in a railroad boxcar in Alabama. The arrest and trial of the Scottsboro Boys galvanized communists and antiracists throughout the world. Eight of the teenagers were quickly tried by the racists and sentenced to death; a mistrial was declared for the ninth because he was underage. The Communist Party USA sent in lawyers to challenge the case. The Supreme Court overturned the convictions; one of the women recanted her accusations and even went on tour to defend the defendants. Yet they languished in jail, many of them for decades. Hughes responded with a terse four-line poem, “justice,” for New Masses (July 1931), which accompanied a drawing of a lynching by artist Phil Hard.

That Justice is a blind goddess Is a thing to which we poor are wise: Her bandage hides two festering sores That once, perhaps, were eyes.

For the November 1931 New Masses, Hughes wrote “Scottsboro, Limited: A One Act Play.” The cast roster includes “Red Voices,” who counter racist “Mob Voices” and shout out: “We’ll fight! The Communists will fight for you.” Not just black—but black and white.” At the end of the play, the “Red Voices” declare: “Rise from the dead, workers, and fight!” For the finale, Hughes directs that “Here the International may be sung and the red flag raised above the heads of the black and white workers together.”

To Hughes and others in the communist movement, the trial of the Scottsboro Boys was both the cutting-edge antiracist fight of the day and a huge opportunity to unite Black and white workers. For the June 1932 issue of New Masses, Hughes wrote the poem “An Open Letter to the South.”

White workers of the South: . . . I am the black worker.

Listen: That the land might be ours, And the mines and the factories and the of- fice towers At Harlem, Richmond, Gastonia, Atlanta, New Orleans; That the plants and the roads and the tools of power Belong to us.

Let us become, instead, you and I, One single hand That can united rise To smash the old dead dogmas of the past— To kill the lies of color That keep the rich enthroned

Let us get together, say: “You are my brother, black or white. You my sister—now—today!”

. . .

We did not know that we were brothers. Now we know! Out of that brotherhood Let power grow.

We did not know That we were strong. Now we see In union lies our strength.

. . .

White worker, Here is my hand.

Today, We’re Man to Man.

Good Morning, Revolution

As Hughes wrote the poem, in the spring of 1932, he was preparing to join a group of 22 writers, journalists, and actors to travel through the Soviet Union. He mailed back from the USSR to New Masses his rousing poem “Good Morning Revolution,” which was excerpted in the last issue of CHALLENGE. After writing a number of commissioned pieces for Soviet journals and a short book, A Negro Looks at Soviet Central Asia, Hughes returned to the U.S. in the summer of 1933. It was a pivotal period in U.S. politics, when communists played a big role in the fight against rising fascism, both in Europe and inside the U.S.

For the remainder of the 1930s, Hughes continued writing his radical poetry. He also traveled to Spain to report on the Spanish Civil War—the topic of our next CHALLENGE article.

The work of Hughes shows that a capitalist understanding of art as being from and for the individual is used to divorce workers from the material world. Hughes is an example that art from and for the working class can advance our fightback. Let’s celebrate Langston Hughes as part of our communist legacy. His antiracist work and writing gave us a model for working class unity and revolutionary optimism.

Meisha Porter, new face of liberal racism

Bad News! Meisha Porter has been appointed as the first Black woman to lead NYC’s chancellor of the country’s largest public school system, effectively becoming the face of liberal racism.

While Porter has been promoted as an anticop Black woman leader, and champion for “equitable schools,” her history proves otherwise.

Three years ago, she was the Superintendent of Distric

i 1 in the Bronx. This is the same district where my child previously attended a New York City Public school. This community, composed mainly of working-class Black and Latinx workers, has always been terrorized by racist cops and decaying schools. This is also the same neighborhood where racist cop Richard Haste murdered 18-year-old Ramarley Graham for existing while Black.

Three years ago, a white teacher, and known Trump supporter, committed an openly racist act against two Black teachers. During a small after-school training, he made a noose in front of the teachers.

Knowing this teacher wanted to make his racism clear to everyone, the two teachers immediately filed a complaint. The next day, anticop members from the community distributed a flyer within the neighborhood and in front of the school. The leaflet displayed a photo of the racist teacher and demanded he be fired.

One of the women who was targeted had asked for the racist to be reassigned until an investigation was complete. However, instead of firing the teacher, Porter allowed the racist to continue teaching while she conducted a perfunctory investigation.

To seem as if she addressed the racism, she mandated that school staff attend “anti-bias” trainings. The racist teacher and demanded by the community was a good start, Porter managed to keep the press away, and pacify any other form of fightback from parents, students, and teachers. To this day, the racist teacher continues to teach at the same school.

There have been many liberal misleaders claiming to fight for “equitable schools” throughout New York City and continue to pacify while pitting workers against each other. The racist got off scot free! Although the leaflet from the community was a good start, Porter managed to keep the press away, and pacify any other form of fightback from parents, students, and teachers.

To this day, the racist teacher continues to teach at the same school.

In the same neighborhood where racist cop Richard Haste murdered 18-year-old Ramarley Graham for existing while Black, Latin, and Caribbean families, has always been terrorized by racist cops and decaying schools. This is also the same neighborhood where racist cop Richard Haste murdered 18-year-old Ramarley Graham for existing while Black.

I’m no scientist…I am a communist

I am no scientist. But what I know of climate change is that it is a real world crisis that affects every aspect of our lives, from our ability to grow food to our health. It is a crisis that requires a radical change in the way we live, and the way we think about the world.

To fight this crisis, we need to fight for the transformation of society itself. This means fighting for a communist society, where the means of production are owned and controlled by the working class, and where the interests of the working class are the only interests that are important.

To fight for a communist society, we need to fight for a communist party that is truly representative of the working class, and that is committed to the fight for communism. This means fighting for a party that is not just a mouthpiece for the capitalist class, but a genuine expression of the interests of the working class.

We need a communist party that is not afraid to take on the ruling class, and that is not afraid to fight for the rights of the working class. This is the only way that we can win the fight for communism.

Rest in Power, Elizam Escobar

On January 15, 2021, Elizam Escobar passed away, a former member of the Liga Socialista Puertorriqueña and of the Progresive Labor Party (PLP).

Elizam was a great cartoonist and artist whose politi
cal commitment was expressed through his art work in CHALLENGE during the early 1970s. They are of lasting value and a tribute to the communist spirit he showed during these years. We have reproduced one of them here (see cartoon).

Unfortunately, Elizam quit PLP and joined the terrorist FALN independence group. He was arrested in 1980 and spent almost 20 years in prison for plan
ing terrorist acts to gain Puerto Rican independence.

After his release he became a well-known art teacher in Puerto Rico.

A friend remembers him this way:

Elizam and I were roommates for a num

ber of years. I still remember us attending the Saturday morning rallies in New York’s Upper West Side, selling CHALLENGE, the PLP revolutionary communist newspaper. Back then, we were arrested several times. I remember one particular occasion when the New York Police Department police beat the crap out of us - they thought that they could beat us into submission, but our fighting communist spirit was greater than our fear, we were placed in two separate cells next to one another.

We were trying to keep our spirits lifted so we started to sing from the TOP OF OUR LUNGS pro

singing loud and proud: “Bella Ciao, Bella Ciao, Bella Ciao, Ciao, Ciao!”

Long live Communism! La clase obrera no tiene frontera! (The working class has no borders!)
**Book Review**

“Agent Sonya,” Heroic Communist

In Agent Sonya: Moscow’s Most Daring Wartime Spy (2020), Ben Macintyre describes the evolution of Ursula Kuczynski, from an incipient revolution- ary into a career of one of the most successful Soviet agents during and after World War II.

**Time of great conflict & revolution**

Between two world wars, fascism was on the rise throughout Europe and Asia. Germany was rolling with street battles between fascists, the German Communist Party, and the Social Democratic Party. A wide gulf existed between the ultra-rich and everyone else. The Weimar Republic, 1919-1933, was characterized by mass unemployment, economic insecurity, and savage political conflict. In one year alone, 1918-1919, roughly 900,000 German men died of hunger. In 1920, the Nazi Party was founded. A year later Adolf Hitler came to its leadership. On January 1, 1919, Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht founded the German Communist Party but were captured and assassinated by right-wing German army officers, possibly sanctioned by leaders of the anti-communist Social Democratic Party.

In July, 1921 the Chinese Communist Party was organized in Shanghai. In 1927 a leader of the Nationalist Party, the Kuomintang (KMT), Chang Kai-shek, broke with the communists. In one day, on April 12, 1927, KMT military forces allied with local criminal gangs, killed 5,000 - 10,000 students and workers loyal to the communists.

The capitalist world after World War I, from Europe to Japan, was dominated by militarists, fascist heads of state, and their financial backers, all of whom espoused various forms of racism, anti-Semitism, xenophobia, jingoism, militarism, and imperialism.

The critical difference between the 1920s-'30s in Europe and today was the existence of an international communist movement. The result of the Bolshevist revolution in November, 1917, was that the working class, led by the Bolshevik (communist) Party, held sway in the largest country in the world. And the Bolshevik's goal was to create an anti-racist society of equality rather than one based on private property and profit.

During the 1920s and early 1930s revolutionary communist movements in Germany, Hungary, Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, and China were battling the fascists for state power. The Comintern and the Soviet Union gave material and ideological support to these struggles.

**Ursula Kuczynski**

Into this political and social cauldron, Ursula Kuczynski was born in 1907 to a middle-class Jewish family in Berlin. When she was sixteen she was beaten by the police in Berlin during a May Day demonstration, learning a lesson she would never forget: politics is at bottom a power struggle, most often decided by mortal combat.

Ursula Kuczynski was a professional spy who ran agents and networks against the fascists in her own country, in Japanese-occupied China, in Poland, Switzerland, and, then, during the Cold War period, in Great Britain. She eventually became a Red Army colonel and, among her other espionage successes, ran Klaus Fuchs, the German physicist who enabled the USSR to get the atomic bomb, thus breaking the American monopoly on atomic weaponry.

After the Second World War she continued to spy for Moscow. Often suspected, she was never caught. In 1949 the KGB interrogated said this about her: "If we had five Sonyas in England, the war would be over sooner."

**Forever a communist**

She died in Germany on July 7, 2000, age ninety-three. Her son, Peter, summed up his mother's long life this way: "There were two important things to her, her children and the communist cause."

Ursula Kuczynski was also called Ruth Werner, Ursula Bearton, Mrs. Burton, and Ursula Hamburg-er, but her best-known name, her spy name, was Sonya.

The book Agent Sonya is fascinating because it contextualizes how from the 1920s to her death nearly eighty years later, a young woman born into a rich family became a radical communist and never relinquished her commitment to fighting fascism and trying to bring a socialist world into being.

In February 1950, she chose to live in socialist East Germany rather than England. She believed that, however deeply the flawed it was, East Germany was a more humane place than capitalist West Germany, where thanks to the Western Allies Nazi murderers and criminals were at large, their identity unchallenged.

**Revolutionary optimism**

Even as the GDR was falling apart in 1990, Ursula reaffirmed her basic belief in communist principles. "I have no reason to feel ashamed on moral or ethical grounds."

"My enemy had always been fascism, and for that reason I hold my head up high."

Even as East Germany was about to dissolve, Agent Sonya addressed a huge rally in Berlin telling the crowd not to lose faith: "Go and become part of the Party, work in it, change the future, work as a clean socialist! I have courage. I am optimistic because I know it will happen."

Learning from the victories and mistakes of the old movement, PLP fights directly for communism. We carry with us a revolutionary optimism that re- minds us that however dark the current era of class struggle, we have courage, because we too know communism is the future.

---

**Tipping: A legacy of slavery, enforced by sexism, intensified by coronavirus**

NYT, 2/9 — Tipping was a legacy of slavery... racism and sexism...operating to keep women, especially Black women...shut out of federal protections for wage labor...After the Civil War, white businessmen operated to find ways to continue stealing Black labor, created the idea that tips would replace wages...Restaurant corporations mutated the idea of tips from being bonuses to becoming...the restaurant industry has poured millions of dollars into lobbying elected officials to preserve their exemption from having to pay their workers a fair wage, causing tens of millions of women and men to experience poverty, food insecurity, home insecurity and inequality over generations.

**Fascist D.C. rioters descended from 1920s’ KKK racist attacks**

NYT, 2/8 — [Current] conspiracy theories and QAnon falsehoods...in many ways resemble the culture of the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s, and the group’s march on Washington in 1921...Americans associate the KKK with white hoods, burning crosses and anti-Black racism but are less familiar with its white Protestant ambitions and antipathy towards Catholics and Jews...White churches today have yet to reckon with white supremacy...White Christians...Trump...are definitely not a new combination...this stuff has been remarkably mainstream in American history,....

...The attack on the Capitol [on Feb. 6]...reveals one...of the 1920s Klan, where they are marching in Washington in hoods and robes and carrying flags and crosses...This was the same group that made a始终间elligence...in the 1940s the Soviet intelligence...in 1943 the Director of Soviet intelligence...caught. In 1943 the Director of Soviet intelligence...said this about her: "If we had five Sonyas in England, the war would be over sooner."

---

Red eye on the news...
Under capitalism the education system is driven by individualism, identity politics, and a fractured way of learning. Once a year during International Women’s Month, students learn about women artists, scientists, politicians and millionaires. International Working Women’s Day (March 8) is a holiday originally born from the working class as an anti-sexist celebration of women in the class struggle. Yet, without communist analysis or leadership—this holiday has been reduced to celebrating our oppressors of a different gender—women who are a part of and a proponent of the ruling class and their sexist ideas.

The Black communist Angela Davis says to be radical simply means “grasping at the root” and at the root of every worker’s struggle, especially a woman’s struggle, is capitalism. In other words, a network of global bosses committing crimes against workers for the sake of ridiculous amounts of profit. To keep this profit flowing, capitalist-driven schools keep this profit flowing, capitalist-driven schools are designed to train the next generation to be obedient workers or join the ranks of militias to fight overseas in imperialist wars. Under capitalism students will never learn what it means to be a revolutionary—it is only through confidence in the working class and struggle that our Party will grow.

One of the pillars of capitalism is the sexist ideology that family and household responsibilities are “women’s work.” For many women workers around the world this work is unpaid and is expected on TOP of the work that is required at a paying job. Women workers internationally experience the contradiction of a system that tells workers it’s designed to be equal while simultaneously robbing or hiding their labor value from them. Capitalist bosses pump sexist ideology into mass media, schooling and laws to successfully isolate mothers and women caregivers from other workers and their potential to build working-class power.

This same system perpetuates the lie that women’s power is attainted by becoming a better capitalist, maybe a manager or boss or by voting for a woman politician who will somehow represent their collective interests.

Progressive Labor Party declares that in a fight for a world where sexism, racism and exploitation is completely SMASHED, workers need to unite—of all genders—to reject sexist and liberal ideas and resolve these contradictions through communism. A boss—regardless of gender—is still a boss. It is only as a united working-class that we will break our chains.

A woman’s place is in the class struggle

Revolutionary women grow through struggle and the contradictions that working-class women learn become sharper when they unite with other workers around the world. For example, housekeeping for hotels and business offices is one of the hardest jobs in any industry (they have more injuries than coal miners). In 2018, to demand better working conditions, thousands of housekeepers from 26 hotels throughout Chicago went on strike for a whole year! One woman worker stated that while she worked at the Hyatt Regency, out of the 200 housekeepers there, a third were Mexican, a third were Chinese, and most of the women with the highest seniority were Black. Bosses began to divide the department by race, paying the Chinese women to clean extra rooms above the cleaning quote of $5 per room. At first the Black and Mexican women were angry toward the Chinese women but instead of turning on each other, the women organized against the bosses!

“We could win a lower room quota with an hourly raise for everyone if we stayed together” (CPUSA, 3/20). The more workers fight back, the more we learn that we need all workers—Black, Latin, Asian, indigenous and white to win.

In the 1960s, women of the Young Lords, a Puerto Rican revolutionary group, sought to challenge sexist ideologies and practices within Latin American culture and demanded that their male leaders make smashing sexism a priority. Members, such as Connie Cruz and Gloria Rodriguez understood that “machismo” (overly aggressive masculinity) was a result of capitalism and emphasized that to fight it, this capitalist system must be destroyed.

In 1917, Latin workers were ordered to accept toxic “baths” as they crossed the Mexican-American border. Inspectors attempted to pull women off of a trolley on their way to work but the brave fighters refused, knowing some of the workers were photographed nude or previously set on fire. 17-year old Carmelita Torres led the fight with other women domestic workers, demanding a refund of their trolley fare and convinced hundreds more women and men to protest the racist, sexist terror.

All of these women workers were catapulted into their revolutionary potential by making a decision to build a base and fight back against their rotten living and working conditions. Their leadership shows that sustainable change cannot be done alone but manifests when workers organize with other workers who agree that “enough is enough.”

**Women will lead an international communist revolution**

Women workers should be communists because mainstream feminism often fails to consider class analysis and race. PLP is anti-sexist and recognizes that in our fight for communist revolution it is the most super-exploited members of our class that have the sharpest analysis and ability to lead. Women workers internationally who have fought racism, sexism, and capitalism are at the front lines of our fight, united with every member of our class.

The Progressive Labor Party is, and has always been committed to communist revolution and struggling with men and women to fight against dehumanizing bosses around race, sexism, and all forms of exploitation. PLP understands that sexism is one of the exploitative tools utilized by the bosses to divide men and women workers, and to justify assaults, verbal attacks or paying women less.

Organizing with all workers, especially Black and Latin women workers who see these contradictions the sharpest is paramount to smash this system that has us all in a wretched bind. The more hands we can turn into fists in favor of an international working class, the more we can work towards a society free of exploitation and terror. Fight for communism!!!

---

**SUBSCRIBE or RENEW!**

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

One-year subscription: $20 individual $45 for institution

Name __________________________
Address __________________________
City_ State_ Zip_

MAKE CHECK OR MONEY ORDER TO: CHALLENGE PERIODICALS, PO Box 808, Brooklyn, NY 11202

---

**PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY • WWW.PLP.ORG**