

CHALLENGE



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Nelson Mandela, Traitor to Working Class

As U.S. rulers and international capitalism glorify Nelson Mandela, they have a hidden agenda: to conceal his collaboration with the murderous profit system that controls South Africa and the world. Mandela allied himself with the biggest U.S. and British bosses. Under the cloak of black nationalism, he "empowered" black capitalists and helped create a tiny class of black billionaires. Along with some of the biggest international capitalists, these black bosses continue to exploit workers in South Africa and hold them in abject poverty.

Unemployment today in South Africa is 40 percent, higher than it was under apartheid, the system of legalized segregation that preceded Mandela's rise to power. According to the United Nations, one of four persons tries to survive on less than \$1.25 a day. Millions live in miserable shacks without clean water, electricity or sanitation. In many respects, the country's working class is worse off now than under the apartheid regime of the 1980s.

The international working class carried on a worldwide struggle against this fascist system. As a leader of the African National Congress and a member of the Communist Party of South Africa (which led the movement against apartheid), Mandela was part of a mass movement that waged armed struggle against a brutally racist state. He and others made great personal sacrifices to the cause; Mandela spent 27 years in prison, most of them at hard labor in a rock quarry. He became an international media symbol for the workers' heroic, anti-racist fight.

By the time he got out of jail, however, Mandela was following the liberal politicians' script and sided with the bosses. Soon after he became president in 1994, his phony call for "liberation" was exposed when he stopped workers from striking for higher wages, telling them it would "hurt foreign investment." His legacy lives on in the ANC, whose desegregated police force massacred 36 striking black miners in 2012.

Mandela betrayed the class he pretended to serve. We have no reason to mourn or worship such a traitor. He gained his secular sainthood by delivering millions of militant workers into the hands of their capitalist oppressors. He helped his mine-owning masters misdirect the anti-apartheid struggle into supporting the profit



system rather than destroying it. His ANC continues to back U.S. imperialists who are hell-bent on global war.

U.S. Rulers Backed South Africa's Open Racists

Mandela never changed his stripes. Born into an aristocratic family of the Thembu tribe, his sympathies were always for the ruling class. His evolution from terrorist to capitalist servant, at least in the eyes of U.S. and allied British rulers, reflected a shift in the inter-imperialist rivalry as well as splits among South Africa's bosses.

The nationalist Afrikaners chafed under imperialist British influence in South Africa. In 1948, with Britain still weakened by World War II, they seized political power in an election and established apartheid. During the Cold War, when launched by the U.S. against the Soviet Union in a worldwide battle for spheres of influence, Mandela rotted in prison as long as his ANC leaned toward the Soviet Union, their only source of weapons. For dec-

ades the U.S. stood firmly behind South Africa's openly white-supremacist, Afrikaans-speaking regime despite worldwide opposition to apartheid. Both the U.S. and UK branded Mandela and the ANC as terrorists.

It wasn't until the 1990, when the Soviet threat was receding, that U.S. and UK strategists pounced on the chance to manipulate Mandela and dump the Afrikaners.

Anti-Communist Secret Weapon

British-leaning Harry Oppenheimer, head of South Africa's richest family and despised by the ruling Afrikaners, was Mandela's biggest champion. For more than a century, black workers have perished by the thousands in the Oppenheimers' Anglo-American gold, diamond and platinum mines. Oppenheim kept Mandela on ice

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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.

★Only 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, Latino, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working class.

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

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

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

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

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WHO WRITES FOR CHALLENGE?

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

Mandela’s Legacy: Workers Still Under Apartheid

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for decades as his anti-communist, anti-Afrikaner trump card.

The website for the Nelson Mandela Center of Memory, founded by the Oppenheims (along with David Rockefeller and Bill Clinton), fondly retraces the ANC’s anti-communist history. It quotes Mandela in a 1960 trial: “I strongly supported the resolution to expel the Communists from the ANC.” Then it says, “A small political party formed in 1960. A major sponsor was Harry Oppenheimer, then the Chairperson of Anglo-American Corporation.” This led to formation of the Progressive Federal Party, “the main opposition party in the white parliament.” Helen Suzman, the Progressive Federal party’s sole member of parliament, began meeting with the imprisoned Mandela in 1967.

Post-Soviet Turnabout

But because Mandela’s ANC remained pro-Soviet, Oppenheimer had to wait for the Kremlin’s collapse to play his trump. By 1985, the Soviet military had been defeated in Afghanistan. Its oil revenues tanked after President George H. W. Bush made a price-lowering deal with Saudi Arabia. Meanwhile, U.S. bosses’ backing of Poland’s Solidarity Party and its anti-Soviet miners’ rebellion was sapping the political influence of Moscow’s bloc.

That was also the year that Chase Manhattan Bank, under board chairman David Rockefeller, dramatically stopped lending to the Afrikaners. In October 1985, UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher informed South Africa President P.W. Botha of the coming turnabout. Mandela’s release, she told him, “would have more impact than almost any single action you could undertake.” As the New York Times wrote (12/8/13), “Once the Soviet bloc had disintegrated and China had gone capitalist, the last white rulers of South Africa could no longer pose as necessary allies on the right [U.S.] side of the Cold War. They knew the game was up.”

Mandela’s Phony Communism

A rare disparaging article, “Nelson Mandela, Communist,” by former Times executive editor Bill Keller, ranks among the paper’s best efforts at anti-communist disinformation. Keller accurately nails Mandela’s unprincipled opportunism: “He was at various times a black nationalist and a non-racialist, an opponent of armed struggle and an advocate of violence, a hothead and the calmest man in the room, a consumer of Marxist tracts and an admirer of Western democracy, a close partner of communists and, in his presidency, a close partner of South Africa’s powerful capitalists.”

At the same time, however, Keller attributes the current misery of South African workers to Mandela’s ties with phony leftists, rather than his abject service to capitalists. The columnist says, “[Mandela’s] Communist affiliation... helps explain why South Africa has not made greater progress toward improving the lives of its large underclass.” But the writer’s real grievance with Mandela is rooted in his own family’s history; Keller’s father chaired Chevron in the 1980s and made millions off the apartheid regime. It’s true enough that the global outcry against Chevron and other apartheid business partners endangered their profits. But it’s also true that Mandela was a die-hard capitalist. After Harry Oppenheimer died in 2000, he eulogized his guardian angel: “His contribution to building partnership... [with] big business... can never be appreciated too much” (Independent Online, 21 August 2000).

A broader war now looms between various capitalist coalitions, including China and Russia, versus the U.S. South Africa holds immense strategic importance for this coming conflict, both for its minerals and its location astride the Cape of Good Hope, a shipping chokepoint. Mandela’s last service to his U.S. and UK imperialist masters was his endorsement of the Oppenheims’ Brenthurst Foundation, also funded by the Rockefeller Foundation. Brenthurst urges all Africa to follow “the example of Australia” in how to deal with China. In other words: Sell China raw materials for now, but forge military alliances with the U.S. to prepare for a clash.

Lessons for Our Class

There is much to learn from the Mandela/South African experience:

- To emancipate the international working class, we must never ally with one capitalist faction or another. Which-ever side wins will exploit us all the more. Only by organizing and relying ourselves can workers destroy capitalism.
- Voting in capitalist elections can only produce more capitalism. In South Africa it produced a small class of black billionaires who have joined forces with their white counterparts.

War-Bent U.S. Rulers Militarize Disasters

Once upon a time, U.S. bosses made the International Red Cross the face of help during devastating storms and earthquakes overseas. Domestically they sent firefighters and ambulance crews as first responders. But no more. When a typhoon recently devastated the Philippines, “The George Washington carrier strike group arrived..., signaling the start of full-scale typhoon relief operations in the Philippines by the U.S. military, Navy officials said” (Stars and Stripes, 11/14/13). U.S. Marines landed, World War II-style, soon after.

When a commuter train derailed in the Bronx, New York, on December 1, killing four passengers, an eyewitness told CHALLENGE that dozens of NYPD cops — incapable of helping the afflicted — showed up first. The gangsters in blue held off rescuers for crucial minutes as they practiced crowd control. They were practicing for future rebellions.

In both cases, U.S. rulers can be seen to implement the war-and-fascism agenda they sorely need. In the Philippines, the point was to warn China’s rising imperialists of U.S. naval capabilities in contested seas. In the Bronx, fascist police boss Ray Kelly (on liberal Mayor Bloomberg’s orders) showed that capitalists respond to crises as they do everything else — to protect their own interests.

• Non-violence protects the violence perpetrated by the bosses. When the black Marikana miners struck the mining billionaires in 2012, the “non-violent” ANC government called out the cops and slaughtered 36 strikers. Whenever the bosses see their profits threatened by an organized working class, they do not hesitate to use their state power. What is it but racist violence when South Africa’s black and white rulers subject workers to slave-like conditions? What is it but racist violence when these bosses cause countless deaths through poverty, lack of health care, malnutrition and massive unemployment?

• Finally, what does “liberation” entail? Masses of workers and youth in South Africa aspired first to national liberation and then, later, to communism. (Or socialism, as they saw it.) They were betrayed because this two-stage theory enabled the anti-apartheid capitalists to maintain the profit system and continue to exploit the working class. This nationalist strategy was a great weakness of the old communist movement in the Soviet Union and China. South Africa’s Communist Party (SACP) followed the same political line. Equally damaging, the SACP submerged its politics into the mass reformist, anti-apartheid movement that pledged to “normalize” capitalism. By allying with “progressive capitalists,” the workers only got more capitalism. The biggest winners of the smashing of apartheid were U.S. and British bosses.

Liberation for the working class means to be free from the wage system that creates profits for bosses and misery for workers. The heroism of communist leaders like Joe Slovo and of thousands of youth in the 1976 Soweto Uprising, when over 700 were slaughtered, cannot be questioned. But their movement was undermined and effectively destroyed from within because they followed the wrong politics.

When Mandela and the ANC took power and were unanimously praised as “liberators” of the working masses by every pseudo-left group in the world, as well as by all the liberal capitalists, only the Progressive Labor Party exposed the fallacy of uniting with “progressive” capitalists. PLP was denounced by every one of these forces. But the proof of the pudding is in the eating. Mass poverty and racist brutality continues to afflict South Africa. Billionaires — black and white — still profit by exploiting workers. The lesson of South Africa is clear: Nationalism spells death for the working class.

While mass anti-racist struggle can squeeze and disrupt the ruling capitalist class, there is no liberation for workers while capitalism flourishes. We cannot follow the Mandela path of exchanging one group of exploiters for another. As the celebrations of Mandela’s capitalist legacy flood the world, we must bring our communist message to the international working class.

The real lesson of the fight against apartheid is: Join and build the PLP!☛

DC Transit Workers Applying The Brakes on Privatization

WASHINGTON, DC, December 9 — As communists, we must be involved in all aspects of the class struggle — on the job or in the community — always sharply struggling against the bosses' tool of racism and advancing our vision of a future communist society run by the international working class. By sharpening the struggle against the bosses who oppress us, we hope to demonstrate the necessity of the longer-term struggle to permanently secure a better life for us and our children.

Recently an opportunity to do this took place here at a meeting of the Amalgamated Transit Union Local 689 at its union hall. The meeting was called by the union to develop a plan to fight the privatization of the public transit system here. The union leadership had not developed a serious plan, so I was able to get the members to discuss a report written by several rank-and-filers, including a PL'er.

We showed how privatization is part of a broader racist attack on Metro workers and the riding public. Mass transit is growing in the Washington region, but most of that growth involves private contractors who pay workers low wages and offer few benefits. This puts downward pressure on the wages and benefits of the public transit workers.

To facilitate this attack, the Metro management has expanded its criminal background checks of workers. It hopes to portray us workers as criminals. Rising fares are blamed on "greedy" Metro workers who supposedly show no consideration for the riding public — another lie.

The report emphasized how Metro uses racism to divide transit workers from the riding public.

This analysis enabled us to propose a strategy for fighting privatization. The bosses plan a fare increase in July. We need to join with the riding public to oppose it. The local business community and the federal government who profit from the system should be forced to pay more of the operational expenses. Instead, they try to shift costs onto the backs of the riding public. We agreed to plan a major rally in March to oppose any fare increase.

Unity must be built by Metro workers with their brothers and sisters who work for the private contractors so we can fight together for one wage and benefit package for all transit workers in the region. Eliminating the financial incentive to privatize will help stop the process.

The power to accomplish these goals comes from our ability to shut the transit system down. The unity of all transit workers and the riding public in support of a transit strike is a force the bosses cannot ignore.

After the report and strategy discussion, several rank-and-file workers indicated their support for the class-struggle approach it advocated. Most of these supporters are regular CHALLENGE readers. The union leadership called for "further investigation" before we decide on our strategy. Given the support for class struggle at the meeting, the conservative union leaders were unwilling to even present their losing strategy of lobbying the politicians and preparing for the April primary elections in DC.

The plan is to discuss our strategy with more workers and win them to come to the January meeting and to build this movement. Even more importantly, several

Transit Bosses' Profits Murder Riders and Workers

One topic not stressed in the media is the five derailments that occurred (four in less than seven months) on the same track as the December 1 Metro North derailment that killed four and injured 63 out of 100 passengers, 11 critically. The day after the tragedy, a freight train with tanker cars full of toxic materials and flammable liquids derailed near homes in New Jersey. Because the federal government is spending trillions on thousands of military bases worldwide, transit subsidies to states have been drastically cut. Bond holders who own transit systems have cut back on preventative maintenance in favor of making repairs only after breakouts and derailments, which threatens the safety of every transit rider and worker. Transit owners know that preventative maintenance come out of their profits but if their whole system becomes endangered, the state and federal governments will be forced to step in and aid them with taxpayer funds. Transit will only be safe when workers run the system to serve our class instead of profits.

of our CHALLENGE reader-supporters will be brought into PLP study groups. With more intense work, the Party group at Metro will grow and help lead the long struggle for revolution and communism.✊

Imperialist 'War is Terror' Forum Aims to Expand CUNY Fight

NEW YORK CITY, December 4 — A forum organized by professors and grad students called "The War Here & Abroad: CUNY and U.S. Empire" drew a packed audience of 60 in a room meant for 40 today, a sign that the fight against CUNY's complicity with the imperialist war machine is on many people's minds. There were no communist panelists but many key points were raised and debated. PLP's ideas were summarized in a flyer.

Grad student/adjuncts, undergrads and some senior professors united in the desire to research CUNY's involvement in "defense" research, to oppose any more ROTC chapters, and to challenge the hiring of war-criminal generals like David Petraeus. Teachers asked how they could teach Arabic language or International Relations classes from an anti-imperialist point of view; how they could reach students who are drawn to security-state or police jobs out of economic need; and how organizers can reach beyond the mostly left-wing folks already active. One young student challenged a famous Marxist professor to dig deeper into his Marxism and expose the main contradiction underlying the capitalist drive to war — social production vs. private expropriation — and not simply claim that a lot of capitalists profit from war (a secondary factor).

PLP's stress on inter-imperialist rivalry as the main manifestation of that principal contradiction in capitalism was our flier's main point. We will have to fight for this perspective, which seems to come up rarely in discussion. Many are limited in opposition to unipolar U.S. imperialism as the only focus of anti-imperialist struggle. But imperialism is now multipolar (as it has always been, in fact). All imperialisms are our deadly enemy, and international proletarian solidarity our strength and our hope.

There is great potential to widen and deepen this struggle, but as two of the panelists said we have to link it to other workers' struggles, especially to the social movements in other lands which imperialist armies are designed to crush. One called New York City's stop-and-frisk "counterinsurgency before the insurgency," to underline our common fate facing such armies overseas and militarized police here. "War IS Terror" was the striking slogan of the forum. How can we dig deeper and show how capital is terror, how capitalism drives war? PLP study groups and expanded CHALLENGE sales are crucially needed in this moment of honest searching and political desire.✊

2013: Fight Against Racism



Protesting the racist killing of Shantel Davis (above) and Trayvon Martin (below).



PL'er Tells Conference: Need Party to Smash Racism

WASHINGTON, DC, November 20 — Over 100 students and workers from four local universities and many job sites jammed a Howard University conference room today to hear a panel discussion entitled “A Conversation on Racism and Capitalism.” The conference was organized in conjunction with the annual meeting of the American Studies Association.

The panel was brought together by a sociology professor from the University of California. She initiated this conference because she was concerned that university discussions of racism had become disconnected from racism’s source: the capitalist exploitation of the working class. The seven panelists included historians, economists, political scientists and sociologists who discussed the many aspects of the indelible link between racism and the capitalist system.

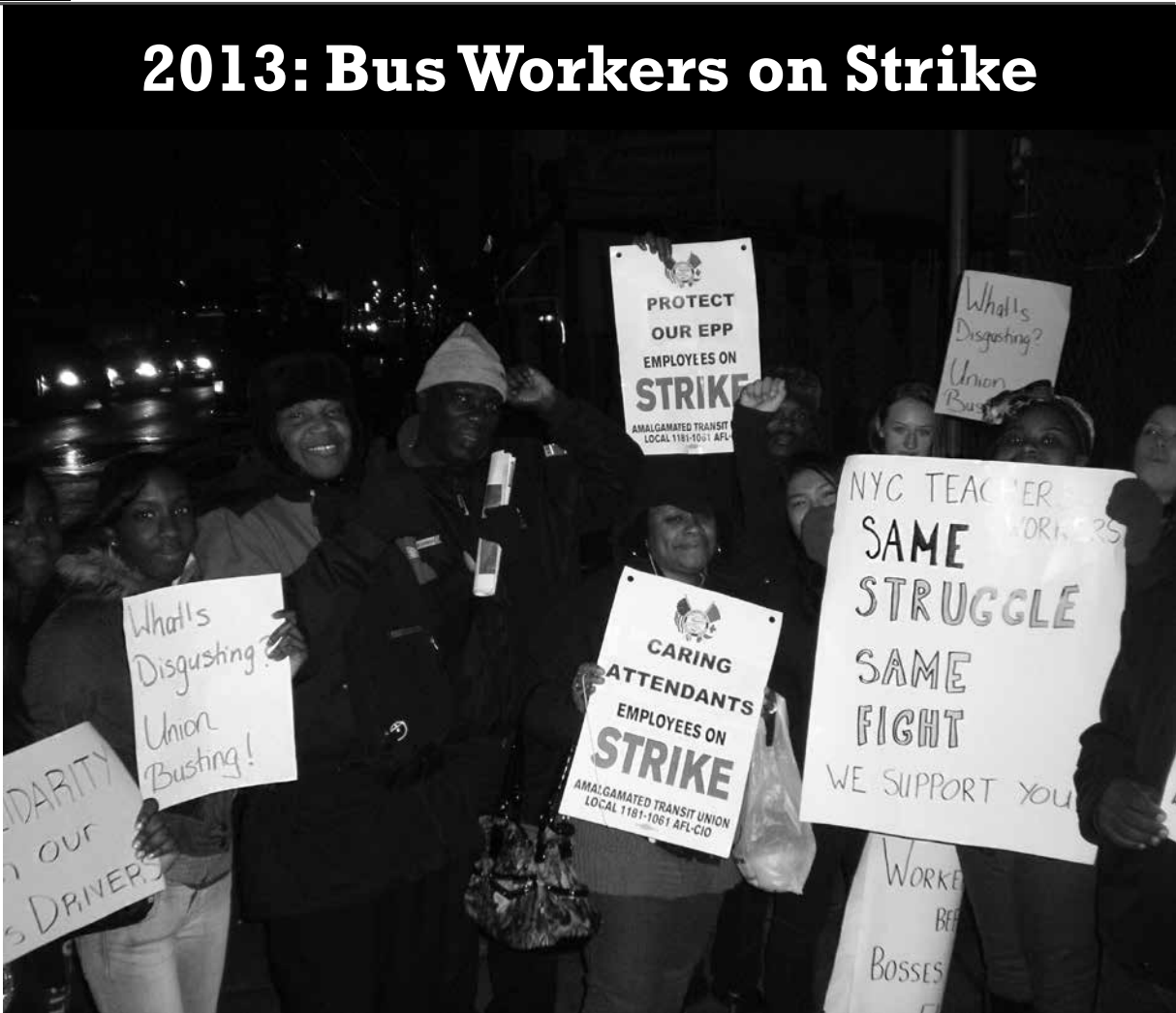
The fact is the bosses reap several hundred billion dollars in super-profits from the racist and sexist difference in family income between white workers, as compared to that of black, Latino, and Asian workers, as well as women workers.

During the question-and-answer period, an engineering professor asked whether a party was needed to overthrow racist capitalism. The panel members generally danced around this question, leaving it to a PL'er in the audience to carefully explain why, in fact, a revolutionary party was needed to unify all sectors of the working class and its allies around the goal of communism and the elimination of racism, sexism and the wage system.

The participants expressed great appreciation to the panel. Several said that capitalism’s drive to maximize profit by minimizing wages for workers was helped by racist divisions and oppression. They said that now they had much better understanding of how capitalism requires racism to work for the very rich.

The next step is the launching of a Marxist Study Circle in January. Over 25 conference participants said they would join such a group. Preparations are well underway. Anyone in the Washington-Baltimore area who is interested may sign up by completing a short survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/WS8LD5J>.

2013: Bus Workers on Strike



‘It’s Not Just Governor Christie. It’s Capitalism’



NEWARK, NJ — Over 200 rallied against attacks on students, parents and education workers. PLP carried signs which read, “It’s not just [Governor] Christie. It’s Capitalism.” See next issue!

Wal-Mart Workers Protest



On November 29, “Black Friday,” one of the busiest shopping days in the U.S., masses of workers nation-wide protested and struck against Wal-Mart, the country’s largest retail store, second largest corporation and largest private employer, with over 1.4 million workers.

By pioneering tactics to cut labor costs and avert union organizing, using intimidation among suppliers, subcontractors and competitors across industries, Wal-Mart has reaped billions in profits and is hastening a transformation toward a future of

low-wage, non-union jobs.

The Waltons comprise the richest family in the world, their wealth inherited from company founder Sam Walton. Collectively the Waltons own over 50% of the company and are worth a combined total of \$150 billion. In 2011, six members of the Walton family had the same net worth as the bottom 30% of U.S. families combined. Meanwhile, Wal-Mart workers’ wages are low enough to qualify them for public assistance.

Youth Clash with Cops over Israeli Rulers' 'Ethnic Cleansing'



NEGEV, November 30 —Striking back against the Israeli government's Praver Plan for "ethnic cleansing" of Bedouins in the Negev, thousands of Palestinian-Bedouin workers and peasants, as well as Jews and Palestinians from the rest of the country, rallied near the poverty-stricken Bedouin town of Hura. The multi-ethnic protestors stood for two hours, facing heavily-armed cops and mounted police and demanded justice, as well as recognition of all Bedouin villages.

Then the cops charged in, attacked the unarmed workers and peasants with clubs, tear gas, concussion grenades, water hoses and horses. Dozens were arrested and brutally beaten, including a 10-year-old child. In response, local youths threw stones at the cops and blocked the road with burning tires. The fighting continued for two more hours. Then some of the protestors drove to the police precinct to demand the release of their arrested comrades.

Two PL'ers joined the protest standing together with their Bedouin comrades against the racist plan. Further demonstrations are scheduled around the country in the following weeks

The plan, also called the Praver-Begin Plan, would deport 40,000 Bedouin workers and subsistence farmers from the so-called "unrecognized" villages (unrecognized by the government) where they have lived for many generations. They would be moved to crowded (mis-)planned towns where unemployment reaches 50% and over 60% are below the poverty line. The stolen land would then be handed

over to real-estate tycoons, including New York City's billionaire Ronald Lauder, to build housing for the rich. The state calls the Bedouins "squatters," but the real "squatters" are the Zionist regime and its fat-cat U.S. patrons, who now want to repeat the 1948 deportation of 750,000 Palestinians.

Even if the plan is defeated, the Bedouin workers and peasants who live in the "unrecognized" villages lack basic infrastructure and amenities, and have inadequate education and healthcare. The government claims it can't provide services to small "scattered" villages, but that's exactly what it does for dozens of well-off kibbutzim, moshavim and individual farms owned by upper-class Jews.

Capitalism, especially in its Zionist form, is hell for all workers in Palestine, but experience from South Africa and Zimbabwe shows that replacing colonialist (in this case, Zionist) capitalism with national boss capitalism will solve none of the workers' problems. In both of these countries, racist apartheid was replaced by local capitalist rule, in the service of U.S. imperialism, which oppresses workers and murders striking miners.

As in these countries, capitalist "national liberation" holds no promise to the impoverished workers of all ethnicities and "races." The only real solution is communist revolution under the red flag of Progressive Labor Party and establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Under communism we will share all land and resources, and smash all remnants of racism. Join us!✪

'Racist Israel, You can't Hide, We Charge You With Genocide!'

I was on my way to our biweekly CHALLENGE sale when one of my comrades informed me about an event Hillel was having in conjunction with the Italian club. "Israeli ambassador on campus at 1pm. SJP [Students for Justice in Palestine] is planning to disrupt." He needn't say more. Hillel, the largest Zionist campus organization in the world admitted, "Israel is at the heart of Hillel's work." It was bringing in an Israeli diplomat Gideon Meir to speak. I gathered my CHALLENGEs and met with SJP and other student organizers on campus. In a classroom of fifteen people, eight of us entered and sat in the back row. We were a group of , North African, Palestinian, brown and white students. While waiting for the racist Meir to arrive, I read the CHALLENGE article (11/27) "Jews, Arabs, Africans Unite: Rip Israeli Rulers' Racist Neglect, Segregation." I then passed a stack of CHALLENGEs. "Turn to page five. Pass it down," I said.

As soon as diplomat Meir began speaking, one didn't need any background information on the Israel-Palestine conflict to realize what a racist this Israeli politician is. His first sentence was an attack on Palestinians, declaring them terrorists in a land that was given to the Jewish people as "the biblical promise of god." I wanted to yell at this man who used religion and nation-building language to justify an apartheid system. I had just met these SJP and organizer friends. So, I passed a note asking to chant, "Racist Israel, you can't hide. We charge you with genocide." Half of the group agreed, "but later," they wrote back.

During the Question-and-Answer period, those of us who questioned him were labeled propagandists and Palestinians. When asked about racism and displacement of families, he yelled, "This is the way of your people. That's why we don't have peace." The Jewish and Italian students first tried to ignore our presence and then tried to silence us. He refused to call on me and when I began speaking, "Israel is system based on racism. It is a watchdog for the United States —"

He called us Arabs. I continued to chant raising my brown fist in the air. Our group finally walked out and I began the Israel-Genocide chant. My new comrade chanted with me. When I later asked why didn't we simply expose the racist for what he is, one organizer told me, "We are playing the game of who is the biggest a**hole." They were hesitant to chant so as not to appear militant and dismissive.

Earlier the diplomat Meir said, "We do everything according to democracy and laws." The truth is Israel's actions reflect the bosses' laws. The very existence of a nation and a discourse based on ethnicity is racist. Borders are meant to protect the exploitative class in power and screw those who fall outside that imaginary line. That's what a state does: consolidate power to manage and ensure the flow of capital.

While at the Zionist event, I wondered, how do I expose the Israelis while refusing to legitimize Mahmoud Abbas, the president of the Palestinian state? By showing how nations and racism hurt all workers: Jewish, Arab, and North African, as written in that CHALLENGE article. No worker benefits from a nation state or racism. We must struggle with these new friends to win them away from a "progressive nationalism" discourse to a communist one.

After having a conversation with SJP, I invited them to our rally at the Board of Trustees the following Monday (see CHALLENGE 12/11). It will be awesome if we can build with these new friends to join the anti-militarization campaign and bring them to May Day!

College Red

2013: General Strike in India



LETTERS

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

Annual Thanks-for-Fighting-Racism Feast

The 28th Annual Thanks-For-Fighting Racism Feast in the Washington, DC area started with a burst of energy from the younger comrades. Developing such young comrades into leaders is important for our Party to grow. They helped move furniture, mash potatoes (10 lbs) and carved turkeys (2). Most of all they brought many friends.

Our program included a report from the struggles at the Boston meetings of the American Public Health Association against the racist stop-and-frisk policy in New York City and imperialism's racist exploitation of workers in Haiti. A Metro transit worker told of the ongoing struggle against privatization and racist criminal background checks, supported by public housing residents at Stoddert Terrace in Northeast DC. A leader of the Peoples Coalition of Prince George's County gave a stirring account of the many struggles against racism carried out by that group over the past year, including the 20-year-old fight for justice for Archie Elliott III and the 10-mile-march denouncing the Zimmerman verdict.

The program also featured students from a Baltimore high school cultural club who sang and gave powerful spoken word against racism. Then a woman from the Peoples' Coalition performed a dramatic piece about Trayvon Martin and the movement that grew up around his murder that brought tears to the eyes of many. A young comrade delivered a passionate speech about the need for a revolutionary party to defeat racism, sexism, and capitalism. She called on people to join the Progressive Labor Party to help smash the system.

A raffle was won by a woman involved in Stoddert Terrace which is fighting the racist criminal background checks at Metro. Positioning a person at the door meant more consistent donations. We raised over \$700 for the End Cholera in Haiti Organization (ECHO). The Party has been working with them since the earthquake devastated the island nation. The comradely, multi-racial, multi-generational crowd bodes well for the future of our Party.

DC Red

Colonialism At City College

Students, community supporters and local residents took to the streets during a recent protest against the City College of New York (CCNY) administration's stealing of the Assata Shakur-Guillermo Morales Student & Community Center in October.

But before the action began, students held an open mic session outside the school's North Academic Center, where they gave the fascists in charge a well-deserved mouthful.

"It is pretty obvious that my college never cared about consent," said Alyssia Osorio, the center's director, referencing how the school took the space without consulting any student governments. They violated an agreement between Students For Educational Rights and CUNY that the center remain under autonomous student control.

"It's a problem of colonialism, and neo-colonialism, when they can take what's yours, what you deserve as a human being, and tell you that it's for your own benefit, or not even give you an excuse at all," said a speaker. "That's colonialism!"

As I covered the march, I overheard Osorio revealing

2013: U.S. Fastfood Workers Strike



in an interview that the administration told her to pick up the property it stole from the center the Monday of the attack. That was reportedly her only chance to pick up the items.

Before long, the group began marching down Convent Avenue to spread word about the center. This drew a lone NYPD cruiser, but the group ignored the pigs' demands to go on the sidewalk, a small example of working-class power! They eventually stopped outside the Adam Clayton Powell, Jr building, where they spoke out once more before dispersing. Though our turnout could've been better, it felt empowering. And when we take state power for the working class, it will only get better from there.

New PL'er

Free Speech Fights Are Necessary

The strong front-page article Dec. 11, "No Free Speech Under Capitalism," is certainly correct that we live under capitalist dictatorship. The only rights we have under that rule are those we fight to get and keep through the power of the workers and students, and even then they will always be limited and often taken away by the state.

"Free speech" in the sense of being able to put forward communist ideas without being beaten, prosecuted, and jailed is, however, necessary to our class and our Party, and "free speech fights" have been part of workers' struggles and communist organizing from the get go. A famous U.S. example was the Wobblies (Industrial Workers of the World) in the 1920s, fighting for public speaking rights as they organized miners and loggers.

At City University of New York (CUNY) the fight against the Administration's and the NYPD's crackdown on political organizing is a classic free speech fight and communists should be (as we are) front and center in

that fight. Fighting fascism is often fighting for the public space to speak freely for revolutionary ideas. When they show their contempt for their own laws or change them to fit their needs (CUNY is now doing both), we have to fight that and expose the underlying dictatorship beneath their prattle about the rule of law.

If we call it an attack on First Amendment rights, however, we fall into the liberal illusions about the rule of law. But if we attack it as a crackdown by the capitalist ruling class to prevent anti-war, anti-imperialist organizing on the campus, this becomes a teachable moment and brings to our friends the class analysis of the state that there is No Free Speech Under Capitalism. The article also points out that these attacks on organizers hope to derail the struggle. We should have been picketing ROTC offices all this time, as well as defending the students facing suspensions and criminal charges. Expanding the struggle has to accompany any free speech fight.

When 60% of all university research in electrical engineering in the country is funded by the Department of Defense, they have too much invested in the university as a war machine to tolerate effective organizing against them without a sharp reaction. If we want a chance to speak freely about this we will have to fight for it.

CUNY Prof

College Bosses Clamp Down on Campus Protest

The City University of New York (CUNY) Board of Trustees is planning to vote on a set of regulations to control "expressive activity" of students and faculty. On December 3, over 80 people attended a town hall meeting at my community college. They were quite upset to hear the CUNY Board of Trustees is planning to vote on these new regulations. The CUNY Board of Trustees plans to tell us when and where on campus we would be allowed to leaflet and demonstrate, assuming we applied for permission.

During the Question and Answer period, students wanted to know who are these "trustees" and can their decisions be overturned. One professor explained that on our campus we had a history of protesting about many issues, including tuition hikes, run down buildings, the preservation of adjunct health care, the war in Iraq, and the support of cafeteria workers. We had never asked for permission and we never will!

The only way to stop repression is to organize and break the laws.

A student from City College was a guest speaker and explained the militarization of CUNY that was taking place across the city. We promised to support him and other students who had been arrested for fighting back. A number of CHALLENGES were distributed and plans are being made to step up the struggle next semester.

Professor Red



Students protest the seizure of Morales/Shakur Community Center

Honoring A Fallen Comrade

We just attended a memorial service for a fallen comrade. This inspired us to write about him because his life embodies what it means to be a communist in the Progressive Labor Party (PLP). Hundreds of workers attended his memorial. All friends: from his family, from his childhood, coworkers and fellow church members, from many struggles in which he was involved, and from comrades in PLP.

He attended a local college where he met his wife and PLP. His road to communist consciousness took a turn when he began supporting a strike of immigrant workers. He and his family immersed themselves in that fight. They built relationships that lasted beyond the strike, building bonds of working-class solidarity and friendship.

For those of us around during that period it was a learning moment. We all gained a clearer understanding of what it means to organize for the PLP, to build a communist base and to serve the working class, particularly during a time of class struggle and fightback. It was clear he loved his working-class brothers and sisters.

The strike changed him. He saw how the workers fought hard, faced racist attacks and demonstrated bravery in the face of possible deportations. They emerged from the strike with a short-term reform victory. This

reality shook him. He realized that despite the victory, the workers would still be wage slaves, earning very little. They would still live in a world where the working class is divided by capitalist borders and subject to deportation at any time.

It was through this practice of supporting the strike, building the class struggle and a base that he discovered the only way workers could be freed was through overthrowing the capitalist system with communist revolution. It was then that he joined the PLP. We had spent years talking to him about communism and the need for the Party, but what transformed him was engaging in class struggle and becoming part of the fight.

In his two-and-a-half year battle with cancer he continued to be active in the communist movement. Two weeks before he died, he attended a communist leadership school.

His family and the working class have suffered a great loss. Our class will miss his leadership, his commitment and his dry, biting sense of humor. In his honor we must all do more to engage in the class struggle with the goal of serving the working class and building a base for communism. It is the least we can do for a comrade who loved the working class until the end. We pledge to stand by his family and pick up the struggle.

Chicago Comrades

2013: Teacher Strike in Mexico



2013: Rebellion in Turkey



RED EYE ON THE NEWS . . .

Below are excerpts from mainstream newspapers that may be of use for our readers. Abbreviations: NYT=New York Times, GW=Guardian Weekly, LAT=Los Angeles Times

‘Unimportant’ folk get life in jail, especially black people

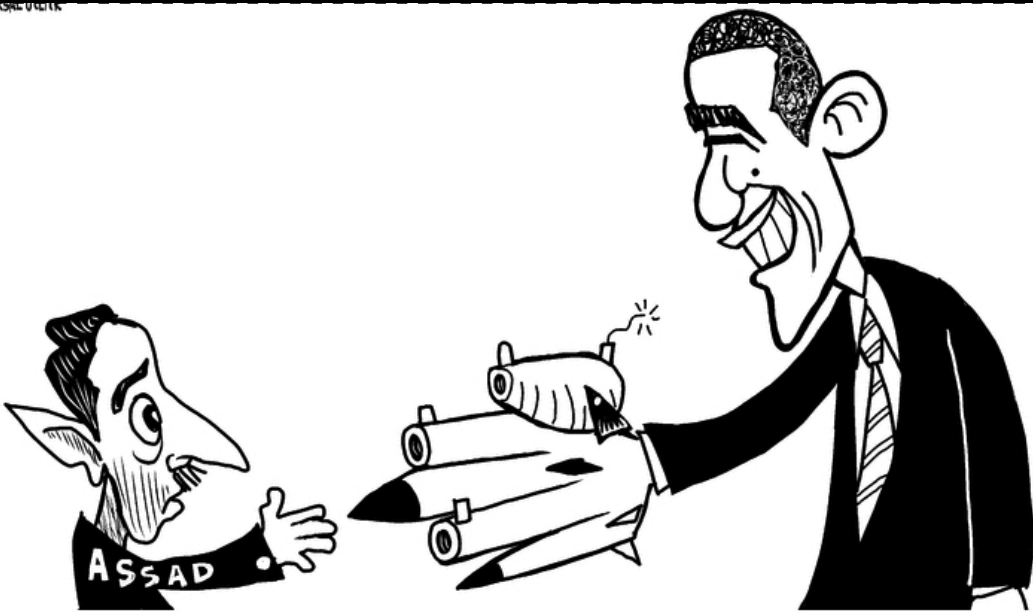
NYT, 11/17 — If this were happening in any other country, Americans would be aghast. A sentence of life in prison, without the possibility of parole, for trying to sell \$10 of marijuana to an undercover officer? For sharing LSD at a Grateful Dead concert? For siphoning gas from a truck? The punishment is so extreme, so irrational, so wildly disproportionate to the crime that it defies explanation.

And yet this is happening every day in federal and state courts across the United States. Judges...are sentencing people away for the rest of their lives for committing non-violent drug and property crimes. In nearly 20 percent of cases, it was the person’s first offense.

As of 2012, there were 3,278 prisoners serving sentences of life without parole for such crimes, according to an extensive and astonishing report issued...by the American Civil Liberties Union. And that number...doesn’t include inmates serving sentences of, say, 350 years for a series of non-violent drug sales. Nor does it include those in prison for crimes legally classified as “violent” even though they did not involve actual violence, like failing to report to a halfway house or trying to steal an unoccupied car....

Four out of five prisoners were sentenced for drug crimes like possessing a crack pipe....[or] for property crimes like trying to cash a stolen check or shoplifting. In more than 83 percent of the cases...federal or state law mandated a sentence of life without parole....

Over the past four decades, these laws have helped push the American prison population to more than two million people,...the highest incarceration rate in the world. As in the rest of the penal system, the racial disparity is vast: in the federal courts, blacks are 20 times more likely than whites to be sentenced to life without parole for non-violent crimes.



Profit motive causes deaths

NYT, 11/26 — A Philadelphia building contractor was charged with murder...in connection with a building collapse in June that killed six people and injured 13 others....

...The excavator operator at the building site...was charged with involuntary manslaughter,...reckless endangerment and...risking catastrophe....

[The contractor] was being paid a flat fee for the demolition and was intent on doing the work as cheaply as possible....

On the day before the collapse...an architect warned Mr. Campbell [the contractor] that the largely unsupported 40-foot-tall western wall of the building was in danger of falling....

“Campbell promised that he would rectify the problem at once, before the next morning, by erecting scaffolding and reducing the west wall by hand,” but failed to do so, because he was “unwilling to pay for enough labor to perform the task....”

Joblessness becomes a deadly trap

NYT, 11/17 — ...No matter the number of resumés she sent out — she stopped counting in the thousands — she could not find work.

“I’ve been turned down from McDonald’s because I was told I was too articulate, [Ms. Barrington-Ward] says. “I got denied scrubbing toilets because I didn’t speak Spanish and turned away from a laundromat because I was “too pretty; I’ve also been told point-blank to my face, ‘We don’t hire the unemployed.’ And the two times I got real interest from a prospective employer, the credit check ended it immediately.”

For Ms. Barrington-Ward, joblessness itself has become a trap, an impediment to finding a job. Economists see it the same way....joblessness lasting more than six months is a major factor preventing people from getting hired.

MORE ITEMS AVAILABLE AT WWW.PLP.ORG

2013: Worldwide Workers' Fight Rips Rulers' Terror

A year that began with a long strike by New York City school bus drivers ended with an even more militant strike by teachers in Mexico, signs that workers around the world are engaging in the kind of class struggle that gives us hope for a future communist revolution. Over the course of the year, workers everywhere showed the power of unity as they fought back against the oppression of capitalism. In Bangladesh, workers once again shut down garment factories to protest starvation wages and deadly working conditions. Students facing violent attacks from their government in Haiti called on embattled New York City university students to stand with them in solidarity, building the international ties we need to destroy the capitalist system.

The system's deep crisis was apparent in sharpening inter-imperialist rivalry in 2013. The U.S. and China seemed to be fencing with each other in smaller disputes around the world. Tensions between the U.S. and Russia seemed dangerously close to exploding over Syria's civil war. U.S. bosses railed against the dangers posed by North Korea and Iran. Wars continued in the Middle East and Afghanistan as U.S. rulers tried to maintain control over the world's oil supply.

We must all try to link our struggles with workers suffering capitalist oppression in the Central African Republic, Somalia, Yemen, Libya, Egypt, and Mali. Students and faculty at City University of New York are showing the way to support our sisters and brothers in Iraq and Afghanistan by exposing U.S. General David Petraeus' murderous role there on behalf of U.S. imperialism.

Meanwhile, the bosses' economic crisis showed no sign of abating. Massive unemployment and "austerity measures" plague Europe and Latin America. In the U.S., the city of Detroit declared bankruptcy. The entire U.S. government was shut down over disagreements between segments of the ruling class over how to pay for the wars the rulers need to compete on the world stage.

In every part of the world, the bosses sought to use racism to divide workers and prevent them from uniting against the capitalists' cuts to services and wages. But the international working class — and the Progressive Labor Party — was having none of this. Workers fought tooth and nail against hospital closings in working-class neighborhoods in Brooklyn, NY. Legal workers in New Jersey protested cuts in food stamps. Health care workers in Los Angeles fought to unionize. Transit workers in the Bay Area went on strike. Workers in Colombia struck against the imperialist demands of U.S. agribusiness. Workers near Mexico City continued an ongoing battle to force the government to provide usable water to their region.

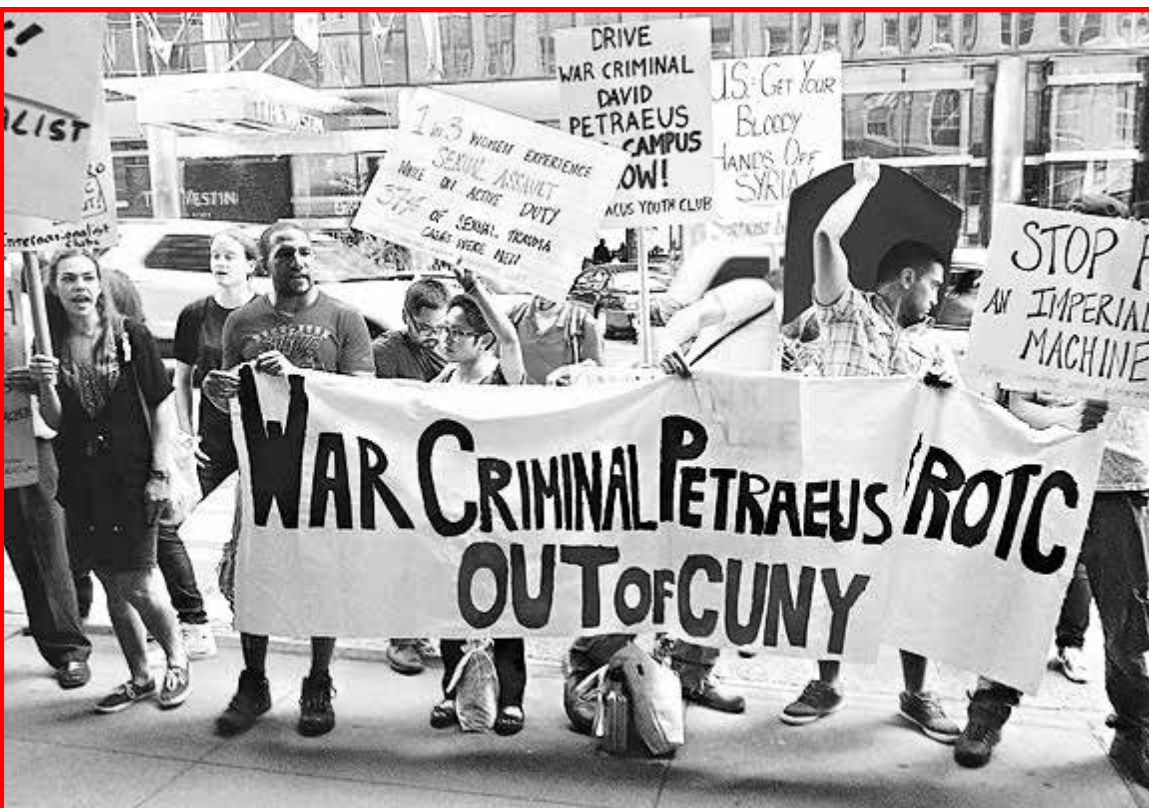
The true criminal nature of the capitalist system was laid bare by outrageous, racist police murders that seemed on the rise everywhere, be it the of black youth in the UK and Italy or of Romanis all across Europe. Workers in Brooklyn openly rebelled after the assassination of tenth grader Kimani Gray in East Flatbush, the same neighborhood where Shantel Davis was murdered last year. Monthly protests mark the death of Kyam Livingston, a 37-year-old mother of two, in Brooklyn's Central Booking jail. PLP led protests in the DC area after the cops' racist murder of Miriam Carey, an unarmed black dental hygienist. The fact that the system cannot and will not serve the workers was made brutally apparent when the court systems refused to provide justice for Ramarley Graham and Trayvon Martin. When Zimmer-



man was found not guilty, Trayvon's justice came in the form of militant protests around the country. (In an unsurprising epilogue, Trayvon's killer George Zimmerman was recently arrested for domestic violence.)

Although the rulers want to lull workers into the belief that we can rely on liberal politicians from Barack Obama to incoming New York City Mayor Bill DeBlasio, communists offer other ideas, making it especially important to use CHALLENGE as an organizing tool.

To have the future we want for our children, workers must rely on each other in collective struggle against the bosses. We cannot wait for the capitalists to throw us crumbs of reform they can take back at any moment. We cannot turn aside and ignore their murders of youth in the streets and in their wars for oil. Our New Year's Resolution must be to fight back against capitalism in all of its manifestations, and to build the revolutionary movement that will some day emancipate the working class.✊



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