

CHALLENGE



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Cops' Racist Murders

No Justice under Capitalism

FERGUSON, MO., August 11 — "Ferguson police just executed my unarmed son" reads a sign held here by the stepfather of Michael Brown, another black youth who's become the latest victim of racist police murder. At a vigil angry protestors chanted "No justice, no peace" and "Stop police terrorism!"

Soon a rebellion erupted. Hundreds of youth, tired of police terror, smashed cop cars and storefronts in reaction to the blatant murder. "The only good cop is a dead cop" was painted on the walls of businesses. "RIP Mike" and "burn the city down" appeared on the side of a burned-down store. Youth fired gunshots at cops and police helicopters attempting to quell the rebellion. In response, the police have turned the town into a war zone.

We should applaud these black youth for sending a strong, violent message against racist murder. We need more such reactions when the bosses' media, politicians and preachers are telling youth to "be patient" and "wait for answers" from the same people who are responsible for these murders.

No Justice in Bosses' Courts

In NYC, antiracists are reacting in horror to the video of Eric Garner being choked to death by an NYPD officer as Emergency Medical Services stood by, despite Eric's pleas of "I can't breathe." The Brooklyn District Attorney has shown us in the cases of Kimani Gray, Kyam Livingston and Shantel Davis that we need communism. Neither elections nor grand juries will stop racist police murders. Democratic Mayor Bill de Blasio's election didn't save Eric Garner, and it didn't bring killer cops who roam the Flatbush neighborhood or any part of NYC closer to justice.

Brooklyn District Attorney Kenneth Thompson has announced that no indictment will be brought against officer Mourad Mourad who murdered Kimani Gray with eleven bullets and watched him bleed to death on an East Flatbush sidewalk in March of 2013. The same district attorney has told the Shantel Davis family that unless witnesses present themselves at his office the case of Shantel's murder at the hands of racist detective Phillip Atkins will also be closed. And the same authorities have refused to do anything about the murder of Kyam Livingston who was left to die in Brooklyn Central Booking while pleading for medical attention.

Brooklyn's black DA Thompson's actions prove the working class should not rely on *any* agents of the capitalist state.

Members of the Shantel Davis Committee for Justice and Beyond and PLP secured witnesses months ago, but they have been lost in the shuffle of a cynical legal system in which justice is an afterthought at best. On TV, liberal mayor de Blasio tells us to look for justice in the courts. Meanwhile, politicians like Jumaane Williams, Al



Triggered by murder of Michael Brown, masses of youth rebel against fascist police terror



Sharpton, and Charles Barron show up at the scenes of racist murders and in the living rooms of the survivors to deliver the same racist message, attacking black youth. They give the family false hopes of justice while blaming youth for being murdered by cops.

We need More Rebellions

As the frustration mounts with each new message that black youth are — in the words of Kimani's mother Carol Gray — "expendables," more and more rebellions will occur. Their only missing ingredients are communists and antiracists who see the problem as the system of capitalism, not black or Latin youth.

This exploitative system spawns racist unemployment, wars and police murders which no amount of voting or reforming departments can change.

Kimani's friends and family rallied two consecutive nights when the news was announced that his killer would go free. The following Monday a picket line was held at the Brooklyn DA's office. Kyam Livingston's family and supporters confronted the cops outside Brooklyn Central Booking last month on the anniversary of her death, demanding justice and an end to the hellish conditions at that site.

The Shantel Davis Committee organized the

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OUR FIGHT

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

★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

Oil Central to Bosses’ Fight

The competition among imperialists inevitably leads to war. This reality is evident in the conflict over oil that is once again spreading across the Middle East. The forces of ISIS, the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, now command an area larger than Great Britain. They rule a third of Syria and a quarter of Iraq. Their ascendance is a product of decades of U.S. imperialism and the bosses’ increasingly desperate grab for control over the Middle East’s third-largest oil producer, after Saudi Arabia and Iran.

To secure Iraq’s energy resources, U.S. capitalists invaded Iraq in the Gulf War of 1990-1991. After 12 years of death-dealing sanctions, they invaded again in the Iraq War of 2003-2011, producing some unintended consequences, notably the rise of ISIS. The breakaway movement’s leaders were initially financed by Saudi Arabian rulers, who wanted to use them against their Shia enemies abroad. But now ISIS is pursuing its own agenda, helped by the support of Sunnis persecuted by deposed Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri Maliki.

The emergence of ISIS head Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi “has been shaped by the United States’ involvement in Iraq — most of the political changes that fueled his fight or led to his promotion were born directly from some American action” (NYT, 8/11).

Amid this imperialist carnage, the international working class has nothing to gain from supporting any group of bosses. Our class can escape the horrors of capitalism only by overthrowing the entire system. The one solution is a communist revolution to create a world without bosses or profits. We must fight for a society run by and for the working class, the class that produces everything of value. That is the goal of the revolutionary communist Progressive Labor Party.

‘Humanitarian’ Obama Killing Children Worldwide

When Obama launched the U.S. imperialists’ latest air raid campaign against ISIS, he claimed it was a “humanitarian” action to save ISIS victims trapped without food and water. This is the same “humanitarian” whose drones are killing men, women and children in Afghanistan and Pakistan. It’s the same war criminal who puts guns, bombs and helicopter gunships at the beck and call of Israeli rulers to murder the children of Gaza. It’s the same capitalist stooge who ignores the racist cops murdering black youth on the streets of New York and St. Louis (see front page).

Obama says his air war “could last months” but won’t require “boots on the ground,” although 130 soldiers were deployed on August 12. He calculates badly on both counts. U.S. bosses, represented by the two Republican Bushes and Democrat Clinton, have killed 3.3 million Iraqis since 1991 (Global Research, 12/16/12). They have deployed more than 1.6 million troops in Iraq and Afghanistan over 10 years. Yet they still can’t nail down control of Iraq’s oil.

As the James A. Baker Institute (which helped engineer the 2007 U.S. troop surge) noted in 2011, “Iraq has the poten-

tial to increase production from 2.5 million barrels a day to over 5 million b/d or more in the next five to ten years [and] an ambition to reach 10 to 12 million b/d of production.... in line with the productive capacity of Saudi Arabia.” Exports today average 2.4 million barrels a day.

But ISIS, the latest rival frustrating U.S. oil production hopes, cannot be defeated from the air alone. Rapidly conquering territory, winning recruits, slaughtering potential foes, and threatening U.S.-led oil operations, ISIS has U.S. bosses terrified. Many are demanding a stronger military effort from Obama.

ISIS, Greater Threat than al Qaeda

The profit-driven leaders of ISIS, an offshoot of al Qaeda, are mobilizing Sunni religious fanatics to forge a conservative Islamic state. ISIS has significant advantages over Osama bin Laden’s al Qaeda. It now controls territory in Syria and Iraq. It has a formidable military machine, boosted by the capture of U.S. weaponry abandoned by quick-to-run Iraqi forces. ISIS also has huge sources of funding, including captured oil fields. As Patrick Cockburn reported in the London Review of Books, (8/1/14), it may soon be seeking new conquests from Iran to the Mediterranean:

As the attention of the world focused on Ukraine and Gaza, ISIS captured a third of Syria in addition to the quarter of Iraq it had seized in June. The frontiers of the new Caliphate declared by ISIS on 29 June are expanding by the day and now cover an area...inhabited by at least six million people, a population larger than that of Denmark, Finland or Ireland.

Some form of [U.S./EU] military attack, direct or indirect, will probably happen once ISIS has consolidated its hold on the territory it has just conquered....For America, Britain and the Western powers, the rise of ISIS and the Caliphate is the ultimate disaster.

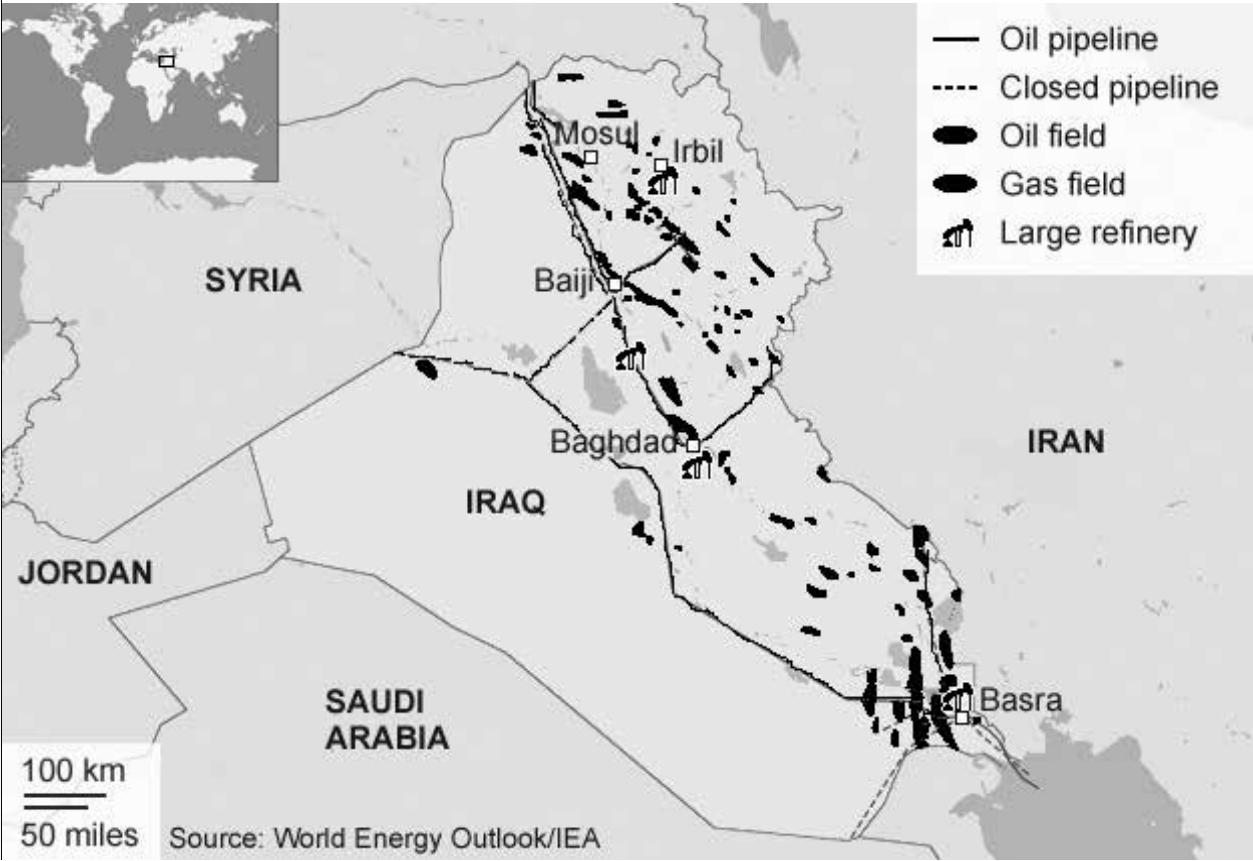
ISIS’s commanders turn out to be shrewd, ruthless capitalists, rather than devout clerics. Oil has proven a lucrative source of funding for ISIS bosses. As ABC News reported on August 9:

ISIS reaps \$1 million per day in Iraq in oil profits and if they get the Syrian fields the total would be \$100 million per month for both Iraq and Syria combined. They sell it for \$30 a barrel because it’s a black market. It’s not pegged to international standards for oil prices, which are over \$100 a barrel.

Oil’s at the Root of It All

The U.S. and its Big Oil allies dream of reaping \$1.2 billion a day (at current prices) from Iraq. That’s why Obama vowed to defend Erbil and Baghdad. Erbil is the capital of Kurdistan, from which ExxonMobil pumps crude through Turkey in an effort to win it to the U.S. side in a larger global conflict. Losing Baghdad to an ISIS southern march would destroy what’s

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Gaza: U.S.-Israeli Rulers Plot Ethnic Cleansing

"Operation Protective Edge," Israel's latest invasion of Gaza, is now in its final stages, as politicians of both sides hammer out a long-term cease-fire agreement. This war saw sporadic rocket and mortar fire from Gaza (mainly by Hamas) and massive bombing and shelling of Gaza by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). The latest death toll: 67 Israelis (three of them civilians) and 1,948 Palestinians (1,402 of them civilians). In addition, 11,855 homes were destroyed in the impoverished Gaza strip, and 425,000 Gazans are now homeless (United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 8/10/14). For the most part, the victims were ordinary working people.

The goals of Israel's racist rulers are simple, though often kept hidden behind a wall of lies. They desire as many Jews as possible on as much land as possible, and as few Arabs as possible on as little land as possible. Their land-grab objective hasn't changed since the inception of Zionism in 1882. Moshe Feiglin, deputy speaker of the Knesset (Israeli Parliament), spilled the beans on Israel's plans for ethnic cleansing by calling for the deportation of Gaza's population into concentration camps on the Egyptian border, pending deportation to other countries. Then Gaza would be re-

constructed as an Israeli (Zionist) city on the ruins of Palestinian Gaza (Mail Online, 8/4/14). This prime piece of coastal real estate, which sits on huge natural gas deposits, would generate super-profits for Israeli tycoons and contractors.

But Jewish workers in Israel will never profit from such racist schemes. Under misleaders like Minister of Economics Naftali Bennet, who has a net worth of \$25 million (The Times of Israel, 9/3/13), Zionist bosses are attempting to abolish overtime pay and force workers to work long hours at base rates (Calcalist, 9/1/13). The Israeli ruling class claims that it fights to defend the south of the country from Gaza rocket attacks, which are virtually harmless. Then, it uses the rockets as a pretext for mass killing in Gaza.

Hamas Profiteering

Hamas claims they are fighting to defend the Palestinian residents of Gaza from Zionist aggression. But in reality, they are content to see the Gazan working class starve from the siege or die from Israeli bombings, while Hamas rakes in massive profits from exploitation. Khaled Mashaal, head of the Hamas political wing, has an estimated net worth between \$2.5 billion and \$5 billion, much of it invested in real estate through-

out the Arab world. Ismail Haniyeh, until recently the Hamas Prime Minister of Gaza, is worth an estimated \$4 billion. How did these fat cats make their fortunes? From the Israeli-Egyptian siege. To help feed the starving population and provide for their necessities, Hamas buys goods cheap in Egypt, smuggles them into Gaza through tunnels, and sells them at a much higher price to the starving locals (Asharq Al-Awsat, 8/31/12). From this misery, they have grown monstrously rich. The death of more than a thousand unarmed workers doesn't faze them — it's just the cost of doing business.

Like all capitalist wars, the latest conflict in Gaza is a war for the rich that is fought by workers. For the international working class, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his Hamas counterparts are all enemies. Zionism is a death trap for Jewish and Palestinian workers alike. For workers, the only way forward is communist revolution. Tyrants and profiteers must be eliminated and replaced by workers' rule, the dictatorship of the proletariat. We call all oppressed people in Israel-Palestine to unite and rise up against war, exploitation and racism, and to build a mass communist movement for a better future.✊

Rebel Against Racist Cops

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second annual Hoops for Justice basketball tournament in both Shantel's and Kimani's memory in these recent weeks. Players waiting to compete looked through CHALLENGE as announcers mixed in play-calling with political consciousness. Teachers determined to see their students as more than suspects united with Shantel's sister and local coaches to pull off the event. Young people in attendance wanted to know the date of the next demonstration at the 67th precinct.

CHALLENGE is not only connecting the dots of racist, senseless murder — from Gaza to Ukraine to New York City to Missouri. It's also become the news source for many youth. The youth are listening. Families stricken by racist cop murders are forming new bonds with each other. We refuse to forget our working-class brothers and sisters taken from us. PLP will carry the call for justice forward to the only solution that can put a stop to racist cop murders: communist revolution.✊



Families, friends, and Progressive Labor Party protest at the District Attorney's building in Brooklyn



Over 150 workers and youth release white balloons in tribute to Shantel Davis and Kimani Gray at the second annual Hoops for Justice tournament



Obama, Netanyahu, ISIS, Hamas: Murderers All

As American bombs began falling on Iraq, Obama shedding crocodile tears, declared that he cannot stand by while the lives of children are threatened by ISIS: "When we face a situation like we do on that mountain — with innocent people facing the prospect of violence on a horrific scale,...when we have the unique capabilities to help avert a massacre, then I believe the United States of America cannot turn a blind eye." He was referring to 10-40,000 Yazidis, a religious minority, driven from their homes in northern Iraq. Of course, he had no remorse for the slaughter of 2,000 (and counting) Gazans over the past month, including about 450 children, and instead armed their Israeli murderers. And when U.S. sanctions led to the death of an estimated half million children in Iraq prior to 2003, then Secretary of State Madeline Albright under President Clinton said, "We think the price is worth it."

The Israelis and their U.S. backers justify the slaughter of innocents by blaming Hamas for using civilians as human shields. Of course, the 1.8 million residents in Gaza have no place to run. The entire area is about the size of Manhattan, and 44 percent of that has been made a no-go zone by Israel. Whether armed resistance is a good tactic or not, Hamas has no place to go that is not near civilians. Israel, which has precise U.S.-supplied weapons capable of focusing on single individuals, has chosen to destroy a third of Gazan hospitals, 144 schools (many sheltering refugees), a home for the disabled, the only power water/sewage plant, and has displaced 25 percent of the people. Clearly the wholesale massacre and intimidation of workers in Gaza is their strategy, with the "transfer" of as many Palestinians by rapid or slow death as their goal.

The utter hypocrisy of the Israelis is made clear when one examines their history. Before the establishment of the state of Israel, when Zionist Jews were fighting against the British colonialists and the local Arabs, they used all the "terrorist" tactics they now decry — the tactics of the weaker party. In 1946, the Irgun (a Jewish paramilitary group) blew up the King David Hotel which housed the British administrative offices, killing 91 people. The leader of the attack, Menachim Begin, later became Prime Minister. In that same year, Tel Aviv's largest synagogue was used to store weapons, and a plaque is displayed there today to memorialize

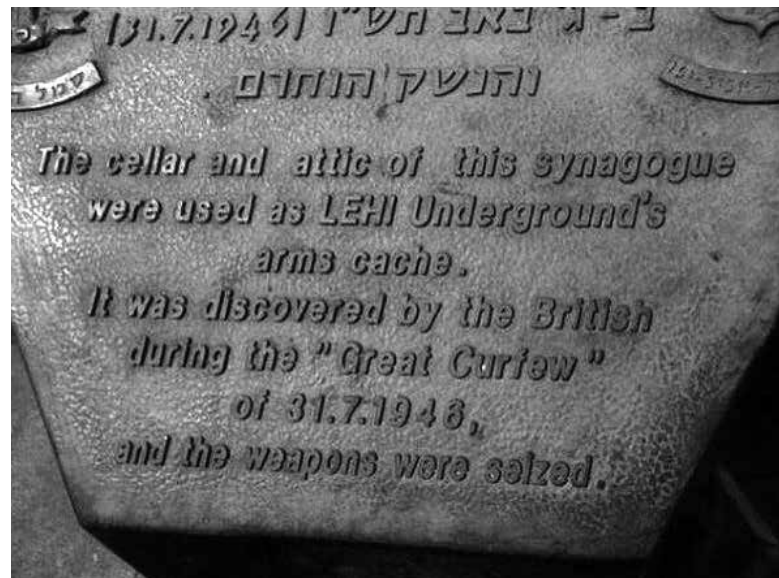
this action (see photo). The leader of that group, the Stern Gang, was Yitzhak Shamir, who served two terms as Prime Minister in the '80s.

During the Israeli war on Lebanon in the 1980s, the Israelis approved the attack on the Sabra and Shatila camps for Palestinian and Lebanese Shiite refugees, which killed 1,800 to 3,500, mostly women and children. Ariel Sharon, the military leader at the time, also became Prime Minister.

We must however not fall into the trap of siding with the weaker parties as conflicts rage in the world today. Though besieged on every side, Hamas does not rule in the interests of workers in Gaza. Elected in 2006 over the corrupt Fatah party that runs the West Bank, Hamas had to fight Fatah to take power. Since then they have not been able to institute their ultimate goal of fundamentalist Islamic rule, but they have increased inequality and corruption in their besieged territory.

No opposition groups are allowed to protest or meet openly, and their members are frequently arrested; no opposition press exists. Imports of goods through tunnels, nearly everything necessary for life, is heavily taxed, as are all licenses, permits and administrative functions, which has allowed Hamas leaders to live at a much higher standard than others. In a place with near 50 percent unemployment, all government and associated jobs go only to Hamas supporters. If the situation permits, they would like to severely curtail the rights of women and insert conservative Islam into all areas of life.

All capitalist rulers, be they secular or fundamentalist, superpower or colonized state, aim to enrich themselves at the expense of workers. The large powers, the U.S., Russia, and China, are fighting over control of the resources of the world — oil, gas and minerals. Their



The arms belonged to LEHI, also known as the Stern Gang, a self-proclaimed terrorist Zionist group

smaller proxies, like Saudi Arabia and Iran, are competing to sell their resources to the highest bidder. Proxy wars are raging in Syria, Palestine, Ukraine, Iraq and Afghanistan, but we workers have nothing to gain no matter who the victors are. We are only deceiving ourselves if we think that the rulers of the weaker parties, be they ISIS, Hamas or the Ukrainians, have any more interest in the well-being of their own workers than do the rulers of the larger powers. Like the U.S. bosses, they all lie about their own humanity while vilifying their competitors, but they are all mass murderers. They are fighting for the oil of northern Iraq, the gas under Gaza, the pipelines of Ukraine — not to save any children.

Our job is to fight for international unity of all workers and to defeat nationalism and patriotism, which try to lure us into support of one exploitative leader or another. Together we must build a society where all workers share the world's resources in order to provide the best possible lives for all and where racism, sexism and nationalism are forbidden. That society is a communist one.☺

Oil Central to Bosses' Fight



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left of the Iraqi government and imperil Exxon's access to much richer oil regions.

In Iraq's Shiite-dominated south lie the mega-fields, including Qurna and Manjoun. Exxon and its allies have large but disappointing operations there. With no viable army, Iraq's governing Shiites are without an effective counter to ISIS, which has enlisted skilled veterans of Saddam Hussein's army which the U.S. disbanded. The U.S. bosses have eagerly dumped the disastrous Iraqi Prime Minister Maliki.

Saudi Arabia, a major funder of ISIS, is the oft-unmentioned gorilla in this room. Cockburn quotes Richard Dearlove, ex-head of MI6, Britain's CIA: "Saudi policy towards jihadis has two contradictory motives: fear of jihadis operating within Saudi Arabia, and a desire to use them against Shia powers abroad."

Saudi Faction Financed ISIS

Financing for ISIS's successful summer offensive came in the form of "private donations" from Saudi Arabia, Dearlove said. The donors are disgruntled capitalists frozen out by the Saudi royals, who are keeping a tight hold on both state power and oil revenues. The bin Laden clan belong to this class of ultra-rich but disenfranchised and power-hungry Saudis. Today they are led by the al Rajhi family, who own the biggest Saudi bank and bankroll jihadis like Ayam al-Zawahiri. By May, once ISIS started winning, this al Qaeda chief sought reconciliation with the breakaway movement.

Obama is taking heat from both imperialist Republicans and Establishment policy think

tanks. "Sen. Lindsey Graham... sharply criticized President Obama's limited military response to ISIS" (New York Times, 8/10/14). On July 29, Max Boot of the Council on Foreign Relations testified before Congress that the U.S. needed at least 10,000 soldiers on Iraqi soil. That will be but a small down payment if ISIS forces ever reach Saudi Arabia. U.S. access to Saudi Arabia's unsurpassed oil production capacity, guaranteed by U.S. military might, is an indispensable cornerstone of U.S. imperialism. A genuine threat to Saudi oil could trigger an all-out U.S. invasion, with all-out opposition from Iran, China, and Russia.

But to mount that kind of offensive, the U.S. ruling class must win the working class to a now unpopular military draft. Worker support for the Afghan-Iraq wars wouldn't have happened without the 9/11 attack on the homeland. U.S. bosses would exploit a similar attack in order to use workers' anger to build patriotism and war.

The dominant finance capitalists, who control both the White House and mainstream Republicans, will exert more fascist control to discipline wayward capitalists who balk at their war plans. The dominant bosses will also use racism to further oppress and divide the working class, which will pay for the next war in taxes, increased poverty and the lives of their sons and daughters.

Join, Build PLP Now!

That is why PLP is organizing in the bosses' mass organizations to win workers away from the Democratic Party. Our goal is to build a revolutionary communist party that will smash capitalism and its mass racist unemployment, racist police murders, the super-exploitation of women, and unending imperialist wars. Now is the time to join and build PLP.☺

Ebola: A Racist Imperialist Disease

The thousand people — and counting — killed by the latest outbreak of the Ebola virus are victims of capitalism and its racist neglect of longstanding health concerns in Africa.

Ebola has been around for nearly four decades. Past outbreaks, at the rate of more than one every two years, were concentrated in Gabon, Republic of the Congo, Zaire, Sudan, and Uganda. This time the lethal virus has struck western Africa: Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Nigeria, the continent's most populous country. Once again, the capitalist healthcare system is unprepared to deal with it.

The virus is believed to originate in animals, from fruit bats to the wild animals butchered by impoverished Africans for “bush meat.” It spreads through the racist inequalities of capitalism, from substandard sanitary conditions to an inferior healthcare infrastructure. Despite its forty-year track record, capitalist medical science has yet to find a way to treat the disease, which kills up to 90 percent of those who are afflicted. Nor has it come up with a protective vaccine. As the New York Times noted (8/10/14), “Many drug companies have little interest in devising treatments or vaccines for Ebola because the potential for profit is small.” Instead, drug companies focus mainly on developing immensely profitable drugs, such as statins (to lower cholesterol) and anti-depressants.

Racist Neglect

According to the latest report of the Global Funding of Innovation for Neglected Disease (G-FINDER), an independent non-profit, only \$3.2 billion was invested in 2012 to create new drugs for 31 neglected tropical diseases (NTDs), including Ebola. Only \$527 million — or 16 percent of the total for NTD research and development — came from the pharmaceutical industry. While most Ebola funding comes from the public sector, led by the National Institutes of Health in the U.S., “some experts believe the federal government has not shown enough urgency to push these programs ahead” (NY Times).

That’s an obscene understatement. It generally takes at least \$1 billion and a decade or more to get a single drug to market. By chronically underfunding the battle against diseases that afflict black people in Africa, capitalism guarantees research won’t get anywhere fast.

By contrast, consider the investment by U.S. capitalists in an area where the bosses’ oil profits are at stake. Since 2003, they have spent \$1.7 trillion and killed at least half a million civilians in their invasions of Iraq (Reuters, 3/14/13) — not counting the current air assault against the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria.

A History of Oppression

From a historical perspective, capitalism and its centuries-long imperialist devastation of Africa have created conditions that make Ebola and other epidemics severe and very difficult to contain. After the enslavement of millions of Africans for profit in the Americas, beginning in the 16th century, 93 percent of Africa

was divided into colonies by the main European imperialists: Britain, France, Belgium, Germany, Holland, and Portugal. In the 20th century, U.S. imperialism intensified this conquest. In addition to the destruction wrought by slavery, the imperialists have exploited labor, plundered natural resources, and propped up a long string of corrupt African rulers who have lined their own pockets while preserving the capitalist status quo (see Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*). President Barack Obama’s recent summit with 40 African leaders was just the latest example of efforts of rapacious U.S. corporations to exploit African workers by cutting deals with capitalist African leaders.

Despite the bold, socialist-inspired liberation movements of the 1950s and 1960s, political independence has done little to change the impoverishment and oppression of the African masses. Those movements ultimately failed because they never made a complete break with capitalism (see “Smash Racism: A Fighter’s Manual,” p 35-40 at plp.org). Today, imperialism still holds sway. The result? As Ibrahima Toure, a Guinean official declared, “The poor living conditions and lack of water and sanitation in most parts of Conakry [the capital of Guinea] poses a serious risk that this [Ebola] epidemic will become a crisis. People don’t think to wash their hands when they don’t have water to drink.”

Imperialist instability sparked numerous deadly civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone, which ended about a decade ago after killing close to 300,000 people. After a 2008 military coup in Guinea, more than 200 protesters were killed or wounded in contested elections in 2013.

Workers Distrust Capitalist Medicine

In such a setting, it is virtually impossible to establish a public health infrastructure that might help contain the Ebola outbreak. Workers understandably do not trust the governments, and the governments put a low priority on public services. Well-intentioned efforts by groups like Doctors without Borders cannot possibly substitute for an indigenous, well-structured public health system.

There is also a shameful, racist history of pre-approval drug trials by U.S. and European pharmaceutical companies, which have used people in African and other less-developed countries as guinea pigs. Three years ago, the CIA made covert use of a vaccination campaign in Pakistan to cover the hunt for Osama bin Laden. These racist actions have rightfully made work-

Ebola Factsheet

Ebola is a virus that typically has originated in rural African areas from species-to-species contact, often through human consumption of infected bush meat.

Initial symptoms can include a sudden fever, intense weakness, muscle pain and a sore throat. Subsequent stages are marked by vomiting, diarrhea and internal and external bleeding.

The disease kills 50 to 90 percent of those infected. No current vaccine or curative drug is available, although experimental therapies are being developed in Canada and the U.S. and were used to help two U.S. health workers who were treating Ebola victims in West Africa.

- The incubation period is approximately 20 days, allowing the virus to be spread through travel.
- Ebola is transmitted through contact with bodily fluids, but not through the air.
- At present, isolation is the only way to break the chain of transmission.
- As with most viruses, the epidemics are self-limiting, usually after a few months. (AIDS is the notable exception.) But outbreaks are known to recur.
- Healthcare workers can be effectively shielded with masks, goggles, gowns, and gloves.

ers and farmers throughout the world deeply suspicious of any Western-related health initiatives. As a result, imperialism has made it virtually impossible to effectively contain Ebola in current conditions.

As air travel has increased, the threat of worldwide dissemination is greater than ever before. When the UN’s World Health Organization labeled the Ebola outbreak an international health emergency, it was one more reminder that the world’s working class must move swiftly to overthrow the perversity of capitalism and its profit incentive system by building revolutionary movements for communism. Communism will empower the masses, build social infrastructure to cope with any challenges, and crush the racist structures that murder and demobilize the working class. Africa has a rich anti-imperialist history. With the leadership of Progressive Labor Party, it is time to build on that history and smash capitalism once and for all!✊

Capitalism Kills — Must Kill Capitalism

During the PLP Summer Project, we marched to Murrieta, CA, to oppose the racist position of some of the residents in the area, particularly those who had set up an encampment across the street from Murrieta’s immigrant detention center.

Our chant was very bold and confrontational: “Death, Death, Death to the Racists! Power, Power, Power to the Workers!”

During a study session the following day, someone shared with the group that a few friends who were a part of the march found our chant too violent. “They don’t wish death on anyone!” the comrade said, expressing the sentiment of those who disagreed with the chant. This opened up a conversation on PLP’s stance on the use of violence to destroy capitalism.

So, why do we say “fight back?” Why do we wish for the death of the racist, fascist, capitalist class? Because capitalism kills! Every day, millions of workers die because of this inhumane, violent system, whether because of racist murders by the police, war, starvation, lack of health benefits, poverty-driven

crimes or unsafe working conditions.

We are not in love with violence. Surely if there were a way to bring about an egalitarian society by fighting only with our words, we would pursue it. I grew up as a pacifist. A born-again Christian, I was taught to love my enemies, to do good to those that hate me and to pray for my persecutors. But, there’s no way our class will survive following such an idealist philosophy!

The ruling class will never abdicate its power. History has shown that the capitalists have no problem murdering anyone who stands in the way of what they see as “progress.” From the extermination of Native Americans, to the lynching of black slaves, to the assassination of leaders who won’t play the game, to the annihilation of thousands of members of the working class in times of war — the capitalists are unflinchingly violent in their pursuit for profit.

The capitalists want us to admire those who promote non-violence. These so called “peacemakers” are often used by the rulers to

squench the anguish of the working class to suppress any militant responses and to coax the workers into passively accepting violence while “turning the other cheek.”

During the meeting, one of our comrades emphasized the callousness of capitalism by sharing some of the horrors of the Salvadoran Civil War. “And when they came,” the comrade explained, “they would kill the mother, the father, the grandmother, baby... if there were a dog they’d kill the dog too... it didn’t matter!” The Salvadoran government terrorized and targeted civilians with death squads unrelentingly trying to maintain power.

The defeat of capitalism is a matter of life and death, and the capitalists will surely kill before they relinquish their power. The working class must and will fight to defend and protect our lives, the lives of all children and our only home: planet earth. It is natural for all living beings to defend themselves in order to survive. Our resistance is our dignity. Even roses have thorns!

A Fighter



LETTERS

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

Class Struggle: Path to Working-Class Liberation

In one of two very encouraging articles on the San Francisco mass transit system (MTA) on p. 4 of the July 2 issue of CHALLENGE, it states at the top right of the page, “We have confidence that the working class can and will fight back. It is our job to make sure that when they do, that more of them choose the road to communist revolution.”

I often find that sometimes something is phrased in such a way that a new realization comes about, even for something that is not a new concept. In this case it happened to me, and it’s one of the reasons that CHALLENGE is so useful, particularly when we encourage as many workers and students and other members and friends of PLP as possible to write articles and letters for the paper. Everyone has a slightly different take on the situation and expresses it slightly differently.

I happen to be a former physics professor, and with those two sentences I had a flash insight into an analogy with the very common phenomenon of resonance. Resonance happens when an intermittent force is applied with the right timing to a system that has a rhythmic motion, such as a child on a swing. Anyone who has ever pushed a child, or even an adult, on a swing knows that in order to make the swing go higher and higher it requires that we push on the swing every time it returns and reaches its backmost point. That is, when the pushing is in synchrony with the swinging itself. When those two processes — the pushing and the swinging — are in sync, the energy in the swing and the height it reaches continue to increase, until we stop pushing.

It happens, as we all know, that workers cannot possibly engage in class struggle on the job continually for very long periods of time. To do so would rob us of our income, and we are less equipped to weather such periods than the bosses are. So we are forced to temporarily end our struggles at some point and go back to work. Therefore the intensification of class struggle, through job actions and strikes, must necessarily happen periodically — when conditions become too horrible to bear. That’s like the swing. So during such periods of intensified class struggle, if communists push in sync with that swing, more and more workers will, in fact, “choose the road to communist revolution.”

Communists push all the time, both during and between job actions and strikes, but the greatest effect is during intensified class struggle. Our participation in the class struggle is the only path to liberation of the working class (including ourselves) from the relentless oppression, exploitation, genocidal wars, racism, and sexism of capitalism. Join PLP to help push.

Saguaro Rojo

Massacres in Palestine, South Africa, Ukraine

Having lived through the rise of anti-communist, fascist, racist movements in the 1930s, the images of hundreds of bloody Palestinian babies and children in Gaza brought back the horror of Nazi genocide against all who resisted their occupation. My tortured sense of humanity said do something, speak out.

I pinned a paper sign to my shirt saying Boycott Israel to see if I could learn the reaction of New Yorkers to the Gaza massacre. To my surprise 95 percent of the first day’s response was positive. One black senior center worker I talked to about it caught up to me later to say that the U.S. also committed genocide and had concentration camps for black slaves. I replied that that’s what the capitalist profit system produces.

Another guy pointed to my sign saying, “You’ve got b*lls, man.” I thought for a few seconds and told him that if people can ignore murdered children and keep quiet, they’re missing something more than b*lls. Later I got some smiles and thumbs up from passersby. Going home a black bus driver asked about “Boycott Israel” and I explained that it was part of a worldwide movement in the 1980’s against the white racist South African apartheid government which got 80 percent of its weapons from Israel to commit genocide against black people. I said Israel has also been making war on the Palestinian people for 70 years, using the same apartheid tactics of territorial prisons like Gaza and the West Bank, settlement expansions and slow extermination of people through blockades that denied basic needs. To my surprise as I left the bus, the driver grabbed my hand, shook it and said “thank you.”

Most opinion polls show there is no support for more wars and we need to expose contradictions like

Obama being “heartbroken” by Gaza images while being responsible for sending the weapons and bombs used to murder civilians not only in Gaza but worldwide. We should challenge the U.S. government’s demand for a “world outcry” over the downed Malaysian plane that flew over a war zone while for months that same government never said a word about 230,000 East Ukraine refugees who have been bombed and shelled daily by the U.S.-financed fascist Ukrainian military.

Sometimes I can bring a discussion around to how capitalist profits are behind all these wars on people and I always have a CHALLENGE newspaper ready to show how PLP is trying to destroy the disease called capitalism with a communist revolution for a system that unites all workers and provides for their needs.

A Comrade

Teachers: Reform or Revolution?

Teacher union comrades, like many of you, we are thrilled with the possibilities of change opening up in the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), as teachers’ anger and concern for students butts up against the Weingarten machine. But which direction should a new teacher movement take: reform or revolution? We want to talk with you about that.

Some of you are weary of contrasting the two concepts so starkly. You fight for reforms like winning a raise or changing our union or saving a neighborhood school or defending kids from deportation. You hope that out of such fights a movement will develop that will go much further than such reforms. We think that to go further you need more than hope — you need to aim consciously at a revolution that will replace capitalism with a communist society of sharing. You need a Party like ours that trains us for a lifetime of struggle. And you need to join that Party, learn the lessons of communist history, and help to expand and develop that Party internationally.

Our analysis takes off from the critique of social-movement unionism in the CHALLENGE article on the AFT convention (July 30). You saw at a convention panel how a militant woman teacher from the Black Caucus responded seriously to the call for revolution — and at the same time how excited she is to be running for City Council to carry her radical reform politics into a larger arena. At almost every turn, the new movement is facing choices between reform and revolution, whether we’re conscious of it or not. To run for the council seat or the mayoralty is to run away from a revolutionary movement.

From PLP’s point of view, the appeal of reform electoral politics to the new leadership and the masses of new teacher reformers could seriously sidetrack direct-action politics again as it has in the past. People dropped anti-war work to campaign for Obama, and the result is not only what Obama did as commander-in-chief but the fact that the anti-war movement evaporated. De Blasio’s election took whatever fight there was out of the New York City unions. Campaigning for the first woman president, or for an outspoken black woman strike leader for mayor of Chicago, will have the same effect.

But the main problem with electoral politics is not that radical reformers think it is revolutionary — you don’t. You too think it’s a big step forward, that to make a big difference, we have to work creatively within the system. That appeal is precisely what the system counts on to turn radical teachers away from thinking revolution.

We don’t expect you to agree now, and we want to listen to your arguments. If classroom teachers start running for city council, we will accompany you in the campaign and we will both learn from the experience, but you should know that we think that is not the way “to take power,” as one such new teacher-candidate put it. This is the old argument between socialists, who think we can elect socialists who will abolish capitalism by

making new laws, and communists, who believe we will need armed revolution to take power from a capitalist class who keeps it by force of arms. But change is in the air. We can feel a teacher movement struggling to be born. We are engaged in building it together.

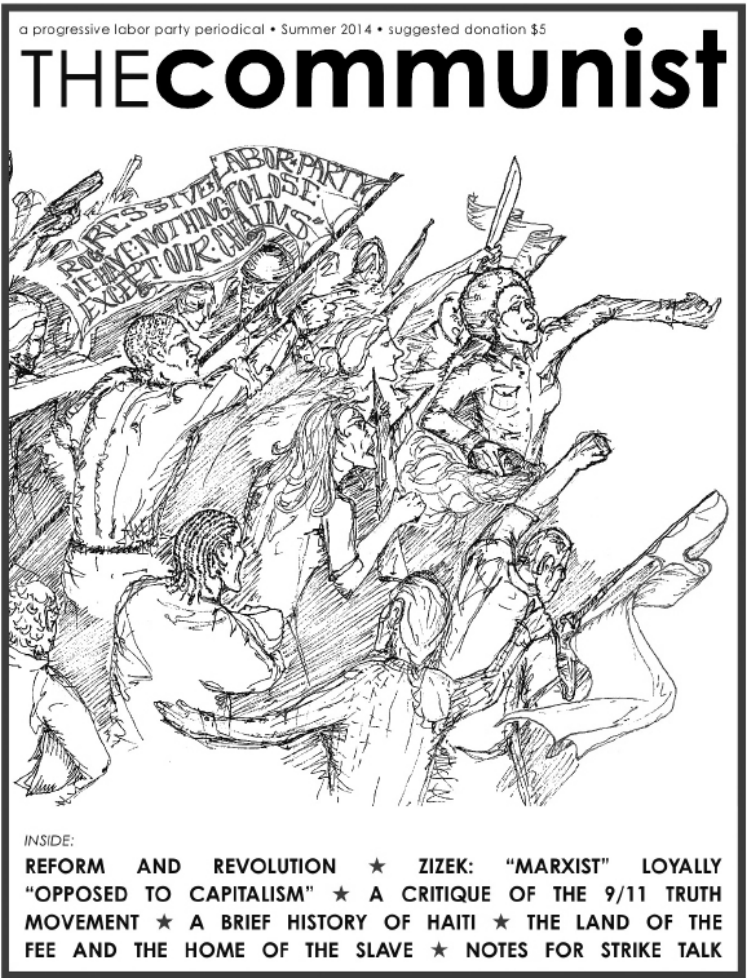
Capitalist education is ruinous for us. We both agree the school system is racist to the core. We heard together the testimony of researchers and classroom teachers at the Peace & Justice panel that segregation of schools is now so bad that the research has a new category called “intensely segregated.” All the gains in school integration in the South since the Civil Rights Movement have been wiped out, while New York State schools are among the most segregated in the country. Even new school diversity in residential neighborhoods is not showing up as more integrated, because incoming wealthier white or Asian parents often don’t send their children to local public schools.

The fixes are not working. Black and brown children who are bused to white suburbs are often met by racism. The 320,000 K-12 teachers thrown out of work and the hundreds of schools closed in the last few years are disproportionately black and brown. At the City University of New York, new research shows that new teachers are increasing in numbers, but not racial or gender diversity. In addition, admissions barriers increase the segregation of students in community colleges as compared to four-year colleges (it is now easier for a black student to be admitted to Harvard than to CUNY’s Baruch College).

Can such racism be reformed out of existence? We think it will take a revolution. So let’s talk more about reform and revolution. The need for communism is newly discussed these days among radical academics (e.g., Jodi Dean’s *The Idea of Communism*), and some younger poets and writers also see their work as inspired by communism — though, unlike Jodi Dean, they do not agree with the idea of a communist party and look more to Occupy-style forms. PLP would like to invite you to form study groups with us around this new thinking and the best “old” thinking about communism.

Can reformism rise to the challenge of a failed capitalism? If we accept that we need communism, what does that mean for our action as unionized teachers in the short, medium, and long terms? What does it mean to join PLP and be a communist teacher? What do we want education to be as communists? What would a modern communism look like, going beyond the advances of the first great wave of revolutions in the last century?

Retired Professor



It’s out! Read the the Summer 2014 issue of *The Communist*, PLP’s magazine. Get a copy online at plp.org, contact your local PL’er, or request a print copy at CHALLENGE Periodicals, GPO Box 808 Brooklyn, NY 11202

The Purge: Anarchy Revenge Isn't Enough — Workers Need Revolution!

This summer the Progressive Labor Party concentrated efforts to fight anti-immigrant racism and build communism in the cities of Los Angeles and nearby Murrieta. As we drove through LA, billboards advertising the newly released movie *The Purge: Anarchy* loomed overhead “United We Purge” read one billboard featuring a black youth in frightening make-up reminiscent of the anarchistic Joker in *The Dark Knight*.

The Purge: Anarchy is the sequel to last summer's *The Purge*. Set in near future Los Angeles, the Federal government, under a group called the New Founding Fathers, has been granted unlimited power in order to bring stability to a crisis-ridden system. An epidemic of crime and unemployment has been reduced to nearly zero due to a national “purge” holiday. One night a year citizens are permitted to commit all crimes, including murder, in order to blow off pent-up violent urges and remove otherwise unemployed portions of the population. *The Purge* takes viewers through the streets of LA as the annual purge commences.

As the film unfolds, it becomes clear that the purge is a form of class warfare that benefits the rich. Crime and unemployment have been reduced by allowing the poor to kill the poor. The rich participate in the comfort of their mansions by buying poor people to slaughter others. The main characters in the film form a multiracial, rag-tag army that fights its way through the murderous streets of LA, and a group of resistance fighters opposed to the purge are organized under black leadership. Despite these glimmers of multiracial unity and black leadership, the movie relies heavily on racist stereotypes to tell its story.

Early on, the film depicts a group of urban black youth preying upon an innocent, middle-class white couple. And later, an extended scene shows a drunken Latin man attempting to rape two women. These racist stereotypes deployed in the film have been and continue to be used by the bosses to justify the mass incarceration of black and Latin men and the mass deportations of Latin immigrants.

While director James DeMonaco's intention was to “smuggle” into his horror-thriller a commentary on U.S. gun violence and class inequality, his critique is crushed by an overwhelming depiction of indiscriminate murder and revenge violence.

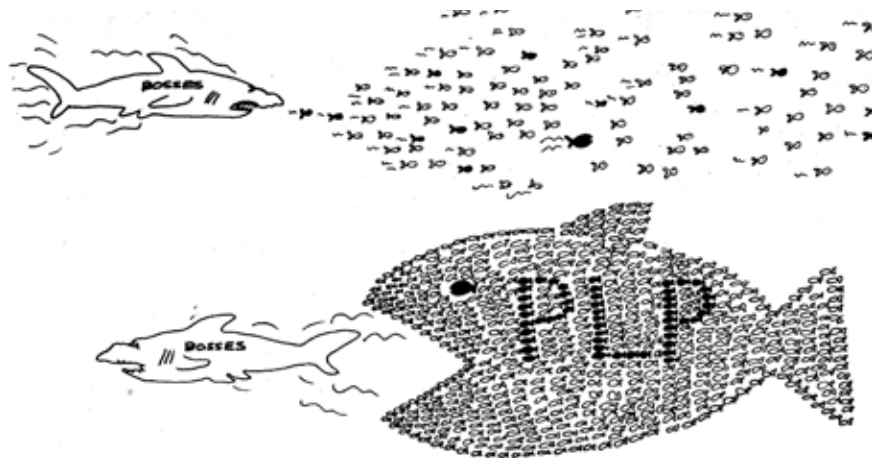
Despite the portrayal of a few good citizens, the foundation of the film rests on one disturbing premise — human nature is ultimately savage and animalistic. In the film, “the purge” is merely the government's way of adapting to the fact that humans are inherently violent and evil.

This view of human nature implies that despite the vast power of the New Founding Fathers, the structural violence of the capitalist state in the form of the police, military and prison system is still necessary to keep violent workers at bay for the other 364 days a year.

With working class consciousness at low level, the implications of the film's message in the current period are dire. This message helps the bosses further divide the working class by reinforcing an “under siege” mentality where workers, instead of uniting, live in fear of one another.

And for working-class youth, the dangers of the film's message are more immediate. The film's premise exploits the extreme individualism and revenge culture entrenched in capitalist youth culture. “Do what you want” no matter the consequences and “an eye for an eye” are the takeaway message for many youth.

Recent news reports of “Purge” Facebook pages and Instagram accounts popping up across social media urging users to post anything and expose anything



Why do we need the Party?

for a 12- or 24-hour period reveal the poisonous ideology of this film. These social media accounts were soon flooded with explicit underage photos and “revenge porn.”

Revenge is an individualistic action taken to correct a real or perceived injustice. Revenge often takes the form of workers seeking retribution against other workers for something ultimately caused by capitalism. A truly revolutionary approach views injustice committed against individuals as part of a larger structure of injustice — capitalism. PLP's view of true justice comes in the form of a communist revolution that requires the participation of masses of workers joined in multiracial unity fighting for a system without wages or borders.

Despite the real life “purging” along the border at the hands of Deportee-in-Chief Obama and the fascist thugs in Murrieta, when PLP marched through the streets of downtown LA and Murrieta, many rallied around our ideas. CHALLENGE and our message of multiracial unity was well received by many, proving that despite the state-sanctioned racism and violence against immigrants, many workers are willing to stand up for and unite with their working class brothers and sisters for a better tomorrow.✪



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

Fascist U.S. prisons shackle, chain pregnant women

NYT, 8/3 — In November 2011, Tina Tinen, a pregnant prisoner...woke with painful contractions. Guards...shackled her wrist to the bar of a gurney — despite a...law against shackling pregnant inmates during and after labor.

Ms. Tinen,...was serving time for a non-violent drug offense....A few weeks earlier, wearing handcuffs and ankle irons, she had slipped and fallen on icy pavement. Although...suffering considerable labor pain, guards refused to unshackle her until...15 minutes before she gave birth....

...In July 2012, Jacqueline McDougall, was shackled...after giving birth....Although Ms. McDougall had undergone an emergency cesarean section and...needed a blood transfusion, her handcuffs were linked to a chain around her waist and clamped together over her sutured incision....She said, “it felt like they were ripping open my C-section.”

...[These] are not isolated cases....Of 27 women...who had given birth in New York prisons since...2009..., 23 reported having been shackled just before, during and after their delivery....

Doctors have called shackling a threat to the health of both mother and child....

...Valerie Nabors...sued the state of Nevada after giving birth in its prison system three years ago....Ms. Nabors was serving a sentence...for stealing...\$250 in casino chips....

...Ms Nabors went into labor...and...was handcuffed....Then officers shackled her ankles together. An ambulance supervisor protested....[but] officers refused

to remove the restraints....

...Ms. Nabors gave birth...through an emergency cesarean section, but within 10 minutes she was placed back in angle shackles and chained to the bed.

...Ms. Nabors...suffered...a separation of her pubic bones. Her physician concluded that her injuries were a direct result of the restraints.

Imprisoned youth brutalized by capitalist ‘culture of violence’

NYT, 8/5 — ...The New York City Department of Correction...systematically violated the civil rights of male teenagers held at Rikers Island by failing to protect them from the rampant use of...excessive force by correction officers....A graphic 79-page report...described a “deep-seated culture of violence” against youthful inmates....[and] a “staggering number of injuries”....

...The department relied...on solitary confinement to punish teenage inmates...for months at a time....

...Nearly 44 percent of the adolescent male population in custody as of October 2012 had been subjected to a use of force...at least once.

Correction officers struck adolescents in the head and face at “an alarming rate”... [and] took inmates to isolated areas for beatings out of view of video cameras....

Officers were rarely punished....

[In one case]...officers assaulted four inmates for several minutes, beating them with radios, batons and broomsticks, and slamming their heads against walls. Another inmate sustained a skull fracture and was left with the imprint of a boot on his back from an assault involving multiple officers....

...In...2013,...inmates younger than 18 sustained 1,037 injuries....

...One teacher... [said] civilian employees know “they should turn their heads away, so that they don’t

witness anything.”

...In one case...an...officer wrapped metal handcuffs around her hand and punched an inmate in the ribs after he had fallen asleep during a class....The officer pulled him out of class and began to beat him. She was joined by other officers who kicked him while he was sprawled on the floor....One officer sprayed pepper spray [sic] directly in his eye from about an inch away....

One...teacher...said he heard “thumping” and “screaming”...and...heard the inmate “crying and screaming for his mother.”

When he looked out the door after the episode...he “saw blood and saliva on the floor.”

The ‘cost of war’: Vietnam vets still dying from PTSD; Jim Crow a factor

NYT, 8/8 — Most veterans who had persistent post-traumatic stress...after serving in the Vietnam War have shown surprisingly little improvement...and a large percentage have died....Members of minorities...were especially likely to develop such war-related trauma....

Dr. Charles Marmar...of...NYU Langone Medical Center [said]:...“A significant number of veterans are going to have PTSD for a lifetime....” More than 18 percent of those with PTSD had died by retirement age, about twice the percentage of those without the disorder....

Each war produces its own mental syndrome, whether the partial paralysis known as shell shock after World War I, or the numbed exhaustion that was called combat fatigue after World War II....

Hispanic veterans were three times as likely as whites to develop the disorder, and blacks twice as likely....The gap was mostly explained by differences in education and combat exposure — minority soldiers and Marines generally had less education...and saw more combat, compared to whites....

[Said Dr. William Schlenger of Abt Associates, a research firm] “These are the costs of war over a lifetime...”

Lesson from the Cultural Revolution

No Cops, No Crime

The Western imperialists have characterized China today as a police state. And it's true. There was a large increase in the number of police following Deng Xiaoping's economic reforms of the early 1980s, and even more so after 1989, when the state capitalist government brutally crushed the mass "pro-democracy" protests in Tiananmen Square. In fact, you might say the police presence in China has grown in proportion to the country's development as a major capitalist power.

But there was a time when the Chinese police presence was almost nonexistent, specifically during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR). Interestingly enough, with few police, there were fewer crimes. When there were no police, there were no crimes. With strong, organized communities, there is no need or place in a society for police.

During the Cultural Revolution, there were nearly a million people in my county, but only about thirty police officers. Our Chengguan Commune included fifty villages, many factories, and businesses in the biggest town of the county. But the commune's dispatch station had only five police officers.

At this time there were about 1,000 people in my village. In middle school, my classmates came from seven surrounding villages. In high school, all fifty villages in the commune and many state-owned enterprises were represented. During the ten years of the Cultural Revolution, I knew of no criminal activity in my village or in any neighboring villages.

Certainly, there were "crimes," but the village government refused to deal with them as such. Village leaders never called the police for investigations; they never punished people involved as criminals. Through mediation, public criticism and economic compensation, villages dealt with these matters without sending anybody to prison. I can remember four cases that illustrate how our rural communities dealt with crime. It was superior to any other model I have experienced since.

The Community Makes Peace

One case involved my best friend and his family. His older brother played with his slingshot after school, like other boys in the village. His uncle raised pigeons as pets, and their daily flights over the village became a notable thing to see. One day, the uncle accused my friend's brother of targeting his flock with his slingshot and slapped him. When my friend's brother told his father about the incident, he went to challenge the uncle, and soon they were embroiled in a fistfight. My friend's father lost the first round; he was older and the younger uncle had studied martial arts. The next morning, my friend and his brother went with their father, but they lost again. Because there were no serious injuries, the community did nothing about the incident.

The second case involved one of my classmates. His family migrated to the northeast following flood-related grain shortages during the Great Leap Forward. After life in our village stabilized, his family returned. But having sold everything, they needed furniture and household utensils, and neighbors and relatives stepped in to help. My classmate's aunt helped the most, partly because her husband had worked for the government granary

and she was relatively well-off. (In 1960, he was killed by lightning while trying to cover grain in a thunderstorm. He was recognized as a martyr of the state, which took care of his family. All of his grown children found good jobs in state-owned enterprises or joined the army.)

My classmate's father argued with his very helpful aunt. In a spurt of anger, the aunt took back the big cooking pot she bought for the family. In our area, one never threatened to take away someone's cooking pot, as this threatened a family's survival. My classmate's father lost his temper and started to push the aunt around. She went home and got her two teenage sons to try to take back all the gifts she gave to the family the year before. At that point, my classmate's father ordered his three sons to beat their cousins with sticks. They beat them very badly, until village leaders came out and ordered them to stop.

The oldest brother of the badly beaten cousins was away serving in the army. After receiving a telegram from his mother, he came home with an officer from his unit to ensure the family was protected and treated fairly. Village leaders explained to them that the fight was a family quarrel that had gone out of control. In the end, the village leader convinced my classmate's father to apologize to the aunt, who accepted and made peace. The dispute was settled without police involvement.

Village Mediation

The third case was between the Huang and Yuan families in the village's first production team. The Yuan family had two daughters and the Huang family had three, all about the same age. They often worked together in the collective field. One day, Yuan Wenyin and Huang Jiashan argued and it soon became a fistfight. All the sisters from both families joined in. Yuan Wenyin hit Huang Meiyun in the head with a shovel. The fight was soon broken up by the villagers, but Huang Meiyun's father claimed that his daughter, one of the village's few high school graduates, suffered brain damage from the blow. The village's revolutionary committee mediated the case and asked the Yuan family to pay the young woman's medical expenses and compensate her for lost work points. The Yuan family accepted the mediation, another case solved without police involvement.

Redeeming an Attempted Killer

The final example was an attempted murder committed by Fu Chengzhen, the only son of a rich peasant woman in the village. When his mother died, the third production team leaders tried to help him by assigning him to an operation that required work in the early hours to get ready for the morning market. There he fell in love with his coworker, Zhou Dihua, from a poor peasant family. Her family disapproved of the relationship and insisted that she stop seeing him. Instead, Fu Chengzhen sold his house and his mother's gold, and the couple eloped. They lived away from the village for two years, giving birth to a boy. When the baby was one year old, they decided to return, assuming that Zhou Dihua's family would now accept them. But upon their arrival, Zhou's father ordered her to stay at home and secretly arranged for the baby to be adopted by a family far away. Fu Chengzhen was now penniless and

Through mediation, public criticism and economic compensation, villages dealt with these matters without sending anybody to prison.

homeless. Village leadership assigned him to work in the forest team, where he'd have access to a house, a kitchen, plenty of grain and firewood.

The Moon Festival is a family reunion holiday in China, with everybody celebrating with their family under the full moon. Each villager received two pounds each of meat, seafood, and a bottle of liquor from the village. But Fu Chengzhen had no family to celebrate with, and the more he thought about it, the angrier he became. He decided to kill himself and Zhou Dihua.

He ate poison and then went to Zhou's home, going straight to her bedroom with a knife. As the poison began to take effect, Fu's vision was blurred and his hands were shaky. He mistook his girlfriend's mother, sitting in the bed, for his girlfriend — and stabbed her. She screamed and her two sons rushed in and restrained him with a rope. The brothers were about to stab him with his own knife when village leaders arrived. They ordered the brothers and others to take both Fu Chengzhen and his victim to the hospital. Fortunately, doctors were able to save them both, which enabled the village leaders to deal with the matter without involving police.

When the two were discharged from the hospital, the village leaders told a mass meeting that the villagers had not helped Fu Chengzhen sufficiently. They decided to give him a lot to build a house. A couple years later, they even helped him find a girlfriend. In 1998, I went back to my village and saw Fu at work in the village's construction company. He told me he was very grateful to the community, and that he would have ended up in prison for a long time had he been sent to the police. He has been working very hard ever since to pay the community back.

I saw all these cases with my own eyes while growing up in my village. I am writing them down to tell the world that the Cultural Revolution empowered China's communities to govern themselves without police involvement. They strived for positive outcomes, even in the most difficult circumstances. Many people who might have been treated as criminals were able to remain productive members of society. The community gained from their productivity while avoiding the costs of keeping someone in prison. It was a win-win situation for all.✪

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