

CHALLENGE



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Bosses Talk World War



Rulers Can't Back Down

By contrast, Russian gas giant "Gazprom...is experiencing 'no problems' in Iraq," boasted Moscow's RT website (6/19/14). It's not a coincidence that Russia is bolstering the pro-Iran administration of Iraq's sectarian Shiite president, Nuri Kamal al-Maliki. As the New York Times (6/29/14) reported:

Iraqi government officials said Sunday that Russian experts had arrived in Iraq to help the army get 12 new Russian warplanes into the fight against Sunni extremists. The move was at least an implicit rebuke to the United States, where concerns in Congress about the political viability of Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki's government have stalled sales of advanced jet and helicopter combat planes to Iraq.

For the international working class, the stakes in this growing conflict could not be higher. In their determination to control the world's oil production and distribution, U.S. rulers killed more than three million Iraqis in two wars and an intervening decade of child-starving sanctions. But their divide-and-conquer strategy — to fuel murderous divisions between Shiite and Sunni Muslims — has apparently backfired. The prospect of losing Iraq yet again, not to mention the energy reserves of Saudi Arabia, would likely prompt a third, even more lethal Gulf War.

From a global perspective, Iraq is a flashpoint for the intensifying competition among the world's most dangerous, nuclear-armed, capitalist powers: the U.S., China, and Russia. All three are vying for oil and gas supremacy from the Persian Gulf to Crimea to the South China Sea. All three have demonstrated their willingness to slaughter countless workers in pursuit of maximum profit. None of them can afford to back down. In particular, the U.S. bosses — still on top, but in relative decline — will not passively stand by and watch their adversaries overtake them.

Forecasting WW III

Of late, U.S. ruling-class organs have begun to address the inevitable upshot of this inter-imperialist antagonism in more candid terms. In line with Lenin's century-old analysis, they are predicting a third world war in so many words. Consider "World War Next," an essay in Asia Times (6/27/14) written by Michael Vatikiotis, director of the Geneva-based Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue. Among the organization's funders are George Soros and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, two leading financiers for the dominant finance capital wing of U.S. capitalism.

Vatikiotis compares ISIS and al-Qaeda to early 20th-century anarchist groups and the Serbian nationalist

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The so-called Great Powers have long been exploiting and enslaving a whole number of small and weak nations. And the imperialist war is a war for the division and redistribution of this kind of booty.

—Vladimir Lenin, *State and Revolution*, 1917

The escalating crisis in Iraq signals the sharpest threat yet to U.S. control over Middle East oil — to the point where the U.S. ruling class is more openly acknowledging the prospect of the next world war.

The last two weeks have seen the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), an al-Qaeda offshoot, sustain its advance toward Baghdad from northern Iraq. ISIS forces now occupy one-third of the country and are laying siege to Baquba, just 30 miles from the capital. They have obliterated the border between Iraq and Syria and overrun a crossing between Iraq and Jordan, one of the very few reliable U.S. allies in the region. The region's national boundaries, drawn to divide the spoils between imperialist powers Britain and France after World War I, are being erased before our eyes.

"Having taken Mosul and Tikrit," The Guardian reported, "ISIS is now near striking distance of some of Iraq's most strategic sites. It continues to menace the Baiji oil refinery and the Haditha dam and has circled Iraq's largest airbase north of Taji" (6/28/14). Reuters ob-

served that both ExxonMobil and British Petroleum "are pulling foreign staff from Iraq, fearing Sunni militants from the north could strike at major oilfields concentrated in the Shiite south despite moves by the Baghdad government to tighten security" (6/17/14).

Even more alarming to the U.S. ruling class is the growing threat to the vulnerable slave state of Saudi Arabia, the world's largest oil producer and the linchpin to today's inter-imperialist rivalries. According to Fahad Nazer, a former analyst at the Saudi embassy in Washington, ISIS "has vowed to 'conquer' Saudi Arabia after it has 'vanquished' the regimes in Damascus and Baghdad" (Al-Monitor, 6/25/14). The Saudis designated the group as a terrorist organization in March. They recently issued a statement calling for "the defeat and destruction" of ISIS and all al-Qaeda networks in Iraq. Ten days later, the ISIS offensive had "brought it within a few dozen miles of Baghdad and a couple of hours' drive from the Saudi border" (Wall Street Journal, 6/27/14).

Motley Fool, a savvy financial services company, warned in veiled terms of an oil shock if ISIS gets its fingers on Saudi treasure: "The spread of extremist ideology and the mobilization of groups like ISIS to neighboring countries is an even bigger threat ... of supply disruptions in key OPEC-producing countries."

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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

Imperialist End Game: World War

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who assassinated Archduke Franz Ferdinand in 1914, the trigger to what is now known as World War I. "[T]he Sunni insurgents of western Iraq," he writes, "are connected to the sprawling civil war in Syria ... which in turn has allowed the Kurds to carve out with alacrity their proto-state. This risks opening a path for new age Persian adventurism, bringing the counter-threat of Israel's use of nuclear weapons one step closer to reality."

In Asia, Vatikiotis points to China's "wide-reaching territorial claims in the South China Sea" and the resulting tension with Japan, which "may soon shed the constitutional constraints on its armed forces in place since the end of World War II." (On July 1, the cabinet of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe announced plans to "reinterpret" the constitution to ease the use of military force.)

With the U.S. and the European Union preoccupied by the Middle East and East Asia, the writer sees "almost nothing stopping Russia's slow annexation of East Ukraine, which will inevitably embolden Vladimir Putin to roll out his grand design for a greater Russia." Throw in the imploding states of Pakistan and Afghanistan, and it is "no surprise ... that the number of refugees globally has now exceeded 50 million people, the first time the figure has been higher than [in] the

immediate aftermath of World War Two."

Stating the obvious, Vatikiotis believes the United Nations is worthless in dealing with this latest "revival of great power rivalry and interstate conflict." Then he goes one step further: "In this, the 100th anniversary of the start of the war to end all wars, we could be once again on a slippery slope towards what looks like old-fashioned world war."

From War to Revolution

The working class has no control over how or when the bosses wage their next worldwide clash. We hold a different kind of power: the power to transform inter-imperialist war into the fight for communism. The two "great wars" of the 20th century gave rise to the two great communist revolutions. But this sequence of events was neither spontaneous nor inevitable. In both the Soviet Union and China, a dedicated communist party organized masses of workers for many years before hostilities broke out. Communist leadership — and patient preparation — were essential.

Today we are faced with a similar challenge. Progressive Labor Party has taken on the historical task of organizing the working class to be ready to turn the guns against the rulers. Our aim is to create a world free of racism and sexism, of exploitation and unemployment, of poverty and war. Join us! ☛

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THE Communist



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It's out! Read the the Summer 2014 issue of *The Communist*, Progressive Labor Party'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

Hospital Workers Gear Up for Contract Fight

BROOKLYN, June 18 — Hundreds of angry healthcare workers, mainly women from Service Employees International Union (SEIU) 1199 East, picketed on their lunch hour outside Methodist Hospital. They were protesting against a proposal by the racist hospital bosses for massive cuts in benefits. Their union contract is due to expire on July 15. Workers came from every department.

They marched around the hospital block blowing whistles and chanting, "Strike! strike! strike!" and "Bosses say cutback, we say fight back!" Patients and workers inside the hospital waved from windows and cheered the marchers. One hundred and fifty CHALLENGEs were distributed by PLers supporting the picket line.

The bosses have been renovating this hospital with the huge profits made off the workers' and patients' backs. They have spent millions on new technology to compete with other capitalist-run hospitals in the drive for profits for themselves, their stockholders and the banks that finance them. Meanwhile, the emergency room is packed with patients waiting hours for treatment. Increasingly, patients are being discharged before treatment is completed. Many workers are completely worn out by shift's end. This capitalist system surely ruins our lives!

Workers at this hospital have a history of fighting back against write-ups and for

better working conditions. PLP has been organizing here for many years. There are many CHALLENGE readers and PL supporters among the workers. We are fighting for political leadership. With communist understanding, workers can cut through the lies of hospital bosses and union misleaders alike. Building a study-action group here can help meet the obstacles we face day-to-day and lead to new recruits to our Party.

The SEIU leadership has consistently refused to lead any fights for contracts or day-to-day struggles. Their outlook is to accommodate the bosses' needs and those of their system. Over the years, they have sacrificed workers' raises to preserve benefits, saving millions for the bosses. Meanwhile, last year, the top five healthcare systems took in over \$20 billion in revenues. Using our pension funds to pay for our raises in past contracts has weakened the fight against the bosses' capitalist healthcare system and has led workers even further down the road to capitalist hell.

Surely, any system based on profit and exploitation cannot produce any security for workers or provide decent healthcare. Workers should join the fight for a system run by workers, the only guarantee of a secure life. That system, without bosses and profits, is communism. ☸



NJ Day of Action: 'Politicians Say Cut Back, We Say Fight Back!'

TRENTON, NJ, June 26 — Over 100 people traveled here today for a Day of Action to demand that any state budget deficit be paid for by the bankers and billionaires, whose capitalist system caused the 2008 crash. The aftermath of that crash has seen permanent racist budget cuts for the working class worldwide, even as capitalists have received trillions of dollars in subsidies and tax breaks.

At the initiative of local legal services workers, a War Against Poverty Coalition (WAPC) was formed earlier this year to spread the struggle against the budget cuts to more workplaces, schools and communities. Workers began organizing for the Day of Action right after May Day. WAPC intensified its efforts to gain more support from several community and union-based organizations, including a caucus in a local teachers' union. There were debates inside the coalition about relying on the masses of employed and unemployed workers instead of on politicians and media coverage.

Two months ago, New Jersey Governor Chris Christie's administration announced that projected revenue for his proposed 2014-15 budget was supposedly \$807 million short. Christie immediately reneged on the 2011 deal he made with Democratic Party leaders to have the state put over \$3.85 billion into the underfunded state workers' pension system. Instead, he slashed the contribution to \$1.37 billion. When angry state workers demanded action by their unions, their leaders chose instead to merely sue the governor. Christie threatened to make further cuts in funding for schools, hospitals and social programs if he lost the lawsuit. The court supported Christie.

Union Leaders Sell Out

When we arrived in Trenton, our multi-racial group marched about a mile from the parking lot to the Statehouse building rally site. Our spirited chants of "The banks got bailed out, we got sold out!"; "Politicians say cut back, we say fight back!"; and "The workers union will never be defeated!" echoed through the streets. As we approached the Statehouse, scores of surprised teachers and other workers already there began loudly applauding us.

At the rally, several speakers (including a teachers'

union vice-president) supported the Democratic Party budget, which included a short-term "millionaires' tax" and a slightly higher tax on corporations, and also made the promised pension payment. This is the same Democratic Party whose leadership collaborated with Christie in 2011 to impose huge increases on workers' contributions to pension and health care payments in return for supposedly guaranteed state pension contributions. Senate leader Steve Sweeney, who engineered the deal, hypocritically asked the Republicans, "What about damn fairness?" Any union leader who leads workers to rely on these tools of the bosses is leading our class over a cliff.

One earlier speaker told the crowd that only "revolution" could solve the problems of the working class. While PLP agrees with that assessment, there is more that must be said. As we see it, no set of reforms can meet the needs of our class. Any reform can be taken away by the bosses. For example, all of the past gains by state workers in pension and healthcare benefits are rapidly being eroded. But even reforms that last longer will not lead to a system where racism, inequality and exploitation are abolished. Only communist revolution can do that.

Legal System Shuts Out Workers

Another speaker told a moving story about a legal services client who had to be turned away because the local office has suffered a 60 percent cut in staff attorneys and is now working a four-day week. This client had worked her whole life. When her unemployment benefits ran out, and she needed help, she was callously told that her niece's payment of her rent made her ineligible for assistance. The speaker attacked a "criminal system" where the bankers have all the best lawyers money can buy, while we have to turn away our mainly black and Latin jobless brothers and sisters who face destitution and homelessness.

There are valuable lessons to be learned from the struggles workers here have undertaken in the past nine months. One is that it is important to have a long-term outlook. Many workers who had been quiet and unassuming have stepped forward in the course of the fight. The collective struggle in our meetings has result-

ed in several workers rising to the challenge of these hard times.

Another lesson is that communist leadership is crucial in this period. That leadership extends far beyond the day-to-day organization of the class struggle. More important to our efforts is the confidence PLP has in the working class. Many workers are disheartened by the constant cutbacks faced by our class. They see no alternative to the capitalist system of profit for the few. The small pockets of struggle led by our Party can encourage those workers to join the fight back and expand the number of workers open to revolutionary solutions to attacks by the bosses. As we head into the next phase of the struggle, we plan to increase the circulation of CHALLENGE and to spread communist ideas in our workplaces. ☸



Women Workers Strike Against Poverty Wages



WASHINGTON, DC, June 23 — Hundreds of low-wage women workers of 50 federal subcontractors walked off their jobs today to demand the right to form a union. The one-day strike and rally at the National Zoo was aimed to coincide with President Obama's Summit on Working Families at the White House. "We do not make enough money to survive," said a woman who works at the zoo.

Hundreds of billions of dollars in federal contracts, grants, loans, and property leases go to low-wage companies, fueling the low-wage economy and growing inequality. And women hold over 70 percent of low-wage federal government contract jobs. The vast majority are black, Latin and immigrants.

Today's action, organized by Good Jobs Nation, comes a year after it filed a complaint with the De-

partment of Labor that accused food franchises at federal buildings of violating minimum-wage and overtime laws. They want Obama to sign an executive order requiring federal agencies to contract only with companies that engage in collective bargaining.

The union leaders pulling the strings behind Good Jobs Nation are the same people who got us into this mess in the first place. Most contract jobs used to be full-time union jobs, and the unions did nothing to stop the bosses from eliminating them. Now the unions are trying to rebuild their ranks among low-wage workers who replaced their former members. We need to abolish wage slavery with communist revolution. And the struggle between reform and revolution must be waged within struggles like this one.✪

Movie Review: Racist War on Youth

A small group of CHALLENGE readers traveled to a farming town in California to view *The House I Live In*, written and directed by Eugene Jarecki. There was a mix of young college students, teachers, and older workers. The film's subject was the "War on Drugs."

The "War on Drugs" has never truly been about drugs. It is a racist war on young black and Latin men and a means of filling up the prisons for profit. This film depicts the horrific and devastating effects of this war on the black and Latin working-class communities. The U.S. incarcerates more of its domestic workers than China or Russia, 2.3 million prisoners behind bars. In large part they are there for non-violent and drug-related offenses.

Michelle Alexander, the author of *The New Jim Crow*, makes a clear and poignant point when she states, "There are more African Americans in jail or on probation and parole than were enslaved in 1850." The racist nature of this war on drugs is revealed by these stats: black Americans are 13 percent of the population, 14 percent of the drug users and 56 percent of those incarcerated for drug-related crimes.

During the discussion after the film, one CHALLENGE reader pointed out that capitalism is the culprit and the driving force behind the "War on Drugs." To end this racist war on our black and Latin youth, we must end capitalism. After the discussion, one youth came forward to say he liked what was said about capitalism and that he had been studying Marxism. He gave his contact information.

The prison guard and other principals in the film, who were portrayed as sympathetic, said the prisons needed to be changed but they had no idea of what to do. Under communism all workers will have useful work to do and will divide the products and wealth of society according to their needs. Prisons will be reserved for ex-capitalists who wish to return to a system of exploitation.✪

Birthday Celebration: Fight Racist Killer KKKops



BROOKLYN, NY, June 21 — The first anniversary of Kyam Livingston's death is on July 21. As members of the Progressive Labor Party who work within the Committee for Justice for Kyam, we have to be mindful of what is primary: to build the Party and continual struggle and eventual revolution for a society led by the working class.

Today, a month prior to the anniversary of the murder of Kyam, we held a demonstration to commemorate her death. There were many good speakers, and two hundred CHALLENGEs and hundreds of leaflets were distributed. People were gathering across the street to listen to the speakers as the cops shoved them away. All spoke in one way or another about the

inhuman system of capitalism. Some addressed the shock troops of capitalism, the racist police who bring terror wherever they go.

Kyam was murdered because of racist neglect of a human being suffering behind iron bars in a holding cell. The only words of comfort she heard were from her working-class cellmates. From the police authority all she heard was, "Shut the f... up or we'll lose your paperwork."

While all of the speakers spoke the systemic murder of workers by the system, one from the Progressive Labor Party pointed out that the only way to deal with these murderers is to end their system with a communist revolution.

The demonstration was larger than the one last month. Kyam's mother is determined to keep fighting for justice, even on her birthday. After the demonstration she hosted a picnic on the sidewalk outside her building.

Two close friends of Kyam's sang an upbeat "Happy Birthday" at the picnic. There was much joy mixed with the anger and sorrow of the

moment. As communists become intimately involved with the lives and struggles of our fellow workers, we will gain the numbers and experience needed to overthrow this capitalist system. The road to get there is often difficult. We must never allow the rulers to forget their murder of Kyam Livingston.✪

Capitalist Democracy at Work

India: Mass Murder, Poverty, Racism

India held its general elections in April and May. As the world's second most populous country, its elections caught the attention of mainstream media outlets, many of which heralded "the largest democracy in the world." India has a multi-party system, including some phony communist parties that have posted major electoral victories in the states of Kerala and West Bengal in the post-independence era.

In reality, as in the U.S., the elections were fought between the two mainstream parties, the right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the liberal Indian National Congress, both of which represent the Indian ruling class and have significant links to global capitalist interests. BJP won in a landslide victory — to the delight of the global ruling class, which needs more discipline of the working class during this period of intensified capitalist crisis.

Narendra Modi, the BJP head who became the nation's prime minister, is accelerating the bosses' move towards fascism. Modi was formerly chief minister in the state of Gujarat. In 2002, a train carrying Hindu pilgrims caught fire and sparked violent riots directed at the Muslim inhabitants in the surrounding areas of the Godhra, leading to the vicious slaughter of over 2,500. The police in the areas reportedly stood by and even facilitated the rampage, and strong evidence suggests that Modi allowed the massacres to go on unabated. (As a result, Modi was denied an entry visa to the U.S. in 2005.)

But Modi's role in the massacres did not prevent him from being repeatedly elected in a Hindu region where anti-Muslim racism is strong. Nor did it stop investors from funneling billions into the state of Gujarat. Modi, it seems, will wield a heavy hand to crank the profit-making machine for a handful of millionaires, while hundreds of millions in India live in absolute poverty. In the "largest democratic country in the world," according to a 2010 report by OXFAM, eight Indian

states account for more poor people than the 26 poorest African nations combined.

Modi's BJP is in fact the political wing of the racist extreme right-wing Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), a Hindu nationalist organization founded in 1925 and openly modeled on Mussolini's National Fascist Party. RSS members regularly participate in ethnic cleansing against Muslims and Sikhs and played a major role in the massacre of Muslims in Gujarat. As the crisis in global capital spirals out of control, the ruling class aligns itself with fascism to smash working-class resistance to free-market exploitation. This is clearly the case in India, which has seen a widening resistance movement against privatization and a flaring gap between haves and have-nots.

One of the biggest headaches of the Indian ruling class is the Maoist insurrection in the Central and Eastern parts of the Indian subcontinent. With a legacy dating to 1968, the rebels have built a substantial base among the tribal populations and the historically dispossessed "untouchable" castes. Since they staged a rebellion in Naxalbari in the Darjeeling district of West Bengal, a revolt brutally crushed by the State in conjunction with the mainstream Communist Party of India (CPI), the Maoists have followed the "Chinese Path" of armed struggle in the countryside while focusing effort on political organizing in the tribal communities. Additionally, there has been a slow-developing but rigorous campaign in the urban centers, led mostly by students and intellectuals, to gain support for the militant struggle in the rural areas.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, despite splits within the Maoist movement, their focus has continued to revolve around issues of food and land, along with caste inequality and sexism. In 2004, the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) merged with the Maoist Communist Centre to form the CPI (Maoist), which continues to advocate "seizure of political power by armed

struggle" through a People's War combined with political agitation of tribal communities with the aim of overthrowing the Indian State. While the immediate aim is to establish "compact revolutionary zones" that extend from India's Southeast to Nepal, the Maoists' stated goal is to achieve a socialist state by "accomplishing the new democratic revolution and continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat."

Prefacing the most recent military campaign to root out "the greatest threat to India's security" was the 2005 signing of hundreds of memorandums of understanding between the government and multinational corporations. A terror campaign ensued by the ultra-nationalist Salwa Judum against tribal people who refused to give up their lands for multinational development. The vicious campaign only deepened internal resistance to the state and resulted in the formation of grassroots organizations backed by the Maoist insurgency.

Although both the political right and the institutional left in India criticize the Maoists for the use of guerilla violence, the insurgency offers a glimmer of hope for workers' anger at the system and their willingness to smash it. The mainstream phony communist parties in India, which ran numerous candidates in the recent elections, channel their energy into creating reformist alliances that leave capitalism in place.

With the crisis in capital spiraling out of control, the ruling class needs to turn to movements like the RSS and to racist demagogue like Modi.

We must fight directly for communism through the armed struggle of a mass workers' party. The struggle of the working class in India is a symbol of continuing resistance as we build stronger ties among the international working class in creating a communist future. The beginning is now.✪

Detroit Water Shutoffs

'Every Day We're Shown that Black Lives Don't Matter!'

DETROIT, MI June 25 — "There are people who can't cook, can't clean, people coming off surgery who can't wash. This is an affront to human dignity...Every day, we're shown that black lives, black quality of life, black communities, don't matter." That's how an organizer of the Detroit People's Water Board described the latest case of mass racist terror as the Detroit Water Department shuts off water to those who owe \$150 or are two months behind on their bill. More than 150,000 customers (as many as 300,000 mostly poor and black residents), are late on bills that have increased 119 percent in the last ten years. They are targeting as many as 3,000 homes every week!

Denying water to almost half the population of Detroit in a blistering summer comes after almost 170,000 homes with children and the elderly went without heat during the brutal winter of 2013-14. To add to the racist terror, state welfare authorities can take children from any home without running water.

Meanwhile, more than half of the city's factories and office buildings, including the Detroit Lions' Ford Field, the Redwings hockey arena at Joe Louis Arena, and the Palmer Park Golf Course owe a total of \$30 million. No one is shutting their water off.

This is not about unpaid bills. The shutoffs are intended to drive people from their homes so developers can buy up the land dirt cheap, while making the Water Department more attractive to a private investor. Privatizing the Water Department has been on the agenda for the past two decades.

These attacks are the result of the decline of the U.S. auto bosses, the UAW's (United Automobile Workers) total submission to their billionaire masters, and a financial crisis that left millions jobless and homeless. The racist character of these attacks is stark and indisputable.

People are parking their cars over water valves to prevent shut-offs and teaching each other how to turn the water back on. Community groups even filed a human rights complaint at the United Nations, demanding an end to the shutoffs. The Detroit Water Brigade, an Occupy-type group, is collecting supplies and trying to serve those in need.

Just weeks ago, the UAW held its national convention here with more than 2,000 delegates. The water shutoffs was even mentioned. Instead of a brief photo op at a nearby hotel organizing drive, the UAW could have led thousands out on strike and seized the Water Department, ending any shutoffs and demanding that the auto billionaires pay the bill. But it didn't. And it won't.

As home to millions of industrial workers, Detroit was once a center of communist-led, anti-racist struggle. In 1932, after six workers and youth were killed by company thugs at the Ford Hunger March, 100,000 workers marched behind the red-flag-draped coffins singing the Internationale. Five years later, workers seized the GM factories in Flint, Michigan and established the UAW. And in 1967, the armed uprising against racist police terror shook the bosses and was probably the greatest single act of solidarity with the Vietnamese in defeating U.S. imperialism.

Today, as Detroit workers face winters without heat and summers without water, they are organizing mass militant actions against the water department. What we win is temporary as long as the bosses hold power. The main lesson of the Detroit water shutoff is that we need to build a mass PLP to destroy wage slavery, with communist revolution. Then, "dark night will have its end!"✪



BECAUSE CAPITALISM IS A BOSSES' SYSTEM BASED ON GREED, EXPLOITATION OF WORKERS, MIS-USE OF HUMAN & NATURAL RESOURCES, WAR, & THE CEASELESS THIRST FOR PROFITS BY A HANDFUL OF SUPER-RICH CAPITALIST RULERS, IT WILL STUMBLE FROM CRISIS TO CRISIS, LEAVING A TRAIL OF DEATH & MISERY IN ITS WAKE...

LETTERS

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

Working-Class Pride Over Individual Pride

The June Gay Pride parade is organized as a tribute to the fightback against the abuse suffered by gay people at the hands of the police, restaurant and bar owners and landlords in New York City. The parade encourages pride, freedom and self-expression. The rulers are in favor of this “freedom” as long as it is not an expression of resistance against their class.

The ruling class would like us to believe that the oppression of gay people is totally separate from the oppression experienced by others in the working class. Gay pride is often encouraged by the rulers, who exploit it to win workers to their policies and encourage them to vote for one set of politicians. They sell workers the idea that the bosses “care” about issues of discrimination. In fact, it is the ruling class that is responsible for the sexist and racist ideologies that lead to unbearable conditions for the whole working class.

While seemingly harmless, identity politics such as gay pride, or black or Latin pride, isolate workers by emphasizing differences. The differences are not as important as our similarities. For instance, the working-class gay community is hurt by sexism as much as working-class straight women and men. This is a strategy of our enemy — the capitalist ruling class — that wants us to feel separate from one another, instead of uniting to fight them.

People should be proud of their accomplishments, but capitalist culture encourages people to be proud of their sexual orientation, race and ethnicity, or where they were born — things that occur by chance, that require no action. Oppressed groups have been urged to seek liberation in isolation from others and from the class struggle. They organize around issues for “their people,” thinking this will lead to a more equal society. But by excluding themselves from class war, these groups must rely on the paternalism of the bosses. History tells us that the rulers take back whatever “rights” they were forced to grant as soon as it serves their interests to do so.

Identity politics emphasizes the unity of a self-identified group, regardless of political ideology or class. The truth of the matter is that we are in class warfare. We cannot win the fight against our oppressors if we are divided. Only through a unified, international working-class struggle will we be able to truly overthrow the bosses and celebrate the one true culture: working-class culture.

Fighting Sexism through Class Struggle

Socialism Essentially Flawed

In CHALLENGE (July 2), Saguaro Rojo very correctly writes that human nature is not inherently selfish and that a corrupt leadership in China “forced conditions to deteriorate back to capitalist competition and individualism” in the late 1960s. But I think that he underestimates the continuation of capitalism after the 1949 revolution.

As early as 1926, in his *Analysis of the Classes in Chi-*

Continued on page 7



Memoirs of Antiracist Struggle

The following two letters have been written by a comrade, a longtime member of PLP. It is part of a memoir of struggles on the shop floor, against the fascists, and in building PLP's fight for communism.

How to Greet A Racist: A Fist to the Face

In October 1999, the Ku Klux Klan came to demonstrate on a Saturday in Foley Square, New York City. Mayor Rudolph Guiliani gave them the okay to march, but not with their hoods on. Thousands of outraged people came out that day to protest the racists. More than 100 Progressive Labor Party members were in the crowd, selling CHALLENGE and trying to move the barriers aside to enable a large attack. Since my two friends and I realized it was unlikely people would be able to break through the barriers and rush the Klan, we tried to find a more creative way to complete our mission.

We had to find out which part of Foley Square the Klan would come from. As we scouted around, it became clear they would be led from behind one of the courthouses. We went back to an area where no one was gathered. Pretending to be workmen, we walked down the middle of the street. On one side were barriers to contain thousands of anti-Klan demonstrators. On the other side, where the Klan members would enter, there were three lines of barricades. Police were inside two of them. The Klan was to demonstrate inside the third set.

The three of us approached the corner and told the police we were there to support the Klan, and that the mayor had announced over the news media that anyone who wanted to support the Klan could come to demonstrate with them. The police didn't want to listen, but we refused to leave the spot. When they told us to go back with the crowd, we said we supported the Klan and were afraid the crowd would beat us up.

There was a five-minute wait while the five-star commander, who was 50 yards from us, spoke on the phone — probably to the mayor — to get the okay to let us inside the perimeter. They let us in — we could hardly believe it! We were nervous, excited, and very determined to carry out the attack. The cops escorted us through the first barrier, and then the second barrier. The news media began taking pictures of us as Klan supporters. We felt committed to carry out our plan, no matter what.

As we passed inside the third barrier, two skinheads — fellow Klan “supporters” — came out to shake our hands. It was hard for us to resist punching these racists out, but we had bigger fish to fry. So we swallowed our revulsion and shook these vermin's hands. Sometimes it's necessary to use working-class guile.

Just then the police escorted the Klan directly into our pen, straight toward us. Wasting no time, we started punching the Klan leader, then his fellow-racist.

The newscast of our attack on the Klan was literally a shot heard around the world. The BBC and CNN, among other networks, beamed it worldwide. The three of us had been friends and comrades for a long time. We trusted each other. What we had to do was difficult and we did it together. We were united to make sure this scum would not demonstrate in this multi-racial city without paying a price.

The Polishook Factory

This story started when I had worked in the Polishook jewelry factory in New York, doing mass production. During my six years there a strong base was built. There were 40 factory workers and 10 office workers. I was a shop steward. Many struggles happened during the 6 years. In February of 1969 our union was involved in a bitter, five week strike during which the people in the factory became tight friends. After the strike the workers realized that the increase was too small.

We decided on the job that we would demand that the union ask for an additional 10-cents-per-hour raise. Eighteen of us went to the union office and asked the executive board to reopen the contract for an additional 10 cents. The union polled the shop stewards, who agreed that we needed the money. Within a few weeks, it was agreed to by management. The whole trade got a ten-cent raise, which was a significant amount of money then. Then an article was printed in the union newsletter to say that our shop was the spearhead group.

At the time I was getting out 17 CHALLENGES every issue, bringing some people to demonstrations and Party cultural events, and had close family relationships with some of the workers, and two workers had joined the Party. We had a study group going at work with attendance between one and six people weekly. We also considered ourselves to be a union within the union, a caucus. When Martin Luther King was killed in 1968, we refused to work and the whole factory walked out for a day.

Many of us looked for a demonstration, supposedly in Central Park. We didn't find it, and spent the day talking revolution. We were not paid for the day. We didn't care. One of the things we discussed was that the union newsletter should have something about the struggle of black workers for equality. A few days after King's death, 20 of us went to the union office and demanded they publish a full-page anti-racist article, and they did.

December 7, 1971 was the start of a major struggle. There were always layoffs, but usually after the Christmas holiday. Joaquin, one of the polishers, was laid off four weeks before Christmas. This meant he wouldn't get his Christmas bonus. This incident led to a wildcat sit-down strike in the factory. That night I was fired and told not to report to work on Monday. I asked my club for advice, and they suggested a picket line. My family came and set up a picket line on Monday. The workers walked on the line for us — knowingly supporting a communist.

The union leaders came down to tell everyone (except me) to go back to work. The Latin leader talked to the Latin workers, the black leader talked to the black workers, and the Jewish leader spoke to the Italians, Jews, and other white workers. The workers eventually went in. That day five additional workers were fired. By this time we were a tough team. The following day, the six of us who had been fired held a sit-in at the union headquarters demanding the union fight for all of our jobs. A group of us from work picketed the boss's home in Dobbs Ferry, singing him Christmas carols, especially “The Working Class is Coming to Town.” We leafleted the town to let people know he was a “scrooge”.

We petitioned jewelry workers at other factories throughout New York City, and leafleted and talked at union meetings. Some of us sold CHALLENGE wherever we went. The ongoing developments often appeared in CHALLENGE. All the workers got our jobs back through the union's lawyer. After all this, the executive board of the union voted me out of the union. They attacked me as “a trouble-maker” and “a communist”.

The motion to throw me out had to be brought to the membership for a vote. We kept leafleting, selling CHALLENGE, and some of my friends spoke on the floor of the union. I lost the vote to stay in the union by a very narrow margin after an exciting fight on the union floor. I had to walk out of the union meeting. My brother and sister workers walked out with me. It was a very difficult moment.

An election for union officers soon followed. Our caucus ran a slate of candidates against the leadership. I couldn't run or vote because I was out of the union. We got about 20 percent of the vote. When I was expelled from the union, PLP got me a lawyer who wanted to take the case on pro bono because he said it would fill a gap in the law on workers' defenses on the job. Eventually, after a year of putting pressure on the union by continuing to leaflet and petition union shops, a member of the caucus stood up on the union floor and stated, “We should bring him back. He's never going to give in.”

Through the support of my union comrades, my lawyer won the case in April 1973, thus setting a legal precedent which has been used in many cases since. The union leadership never appealed this decision because there was too much pressure on them. This battle was fought not only in the courts, but also in the streets, the factories, and the union hall. This is what basebuilding can do. It is our best and strongest defense, along with winning people to see that the only really effective way to fight the bosses is to join the Progressive Labor Party.

Capital in the 21st Century

Workers Still Have Nothing to Lose but Their Chains

When all the mainstream and conservative columnists in the bosses' press go out of their way to tell you a new book on economics — one that most people won't even read — is no good and full of lies and all wrong and please pay no attention to the man behind the curtain ... well, you know the book must have something going for it. And in this case, it does. The French economist Thomas Piketty's *Capital in the 21st Century* shows that capitalism can never end poverty because capitalism needs poverty. Unfortunately, the author's idea is to put reins on capitalism, not to end it.

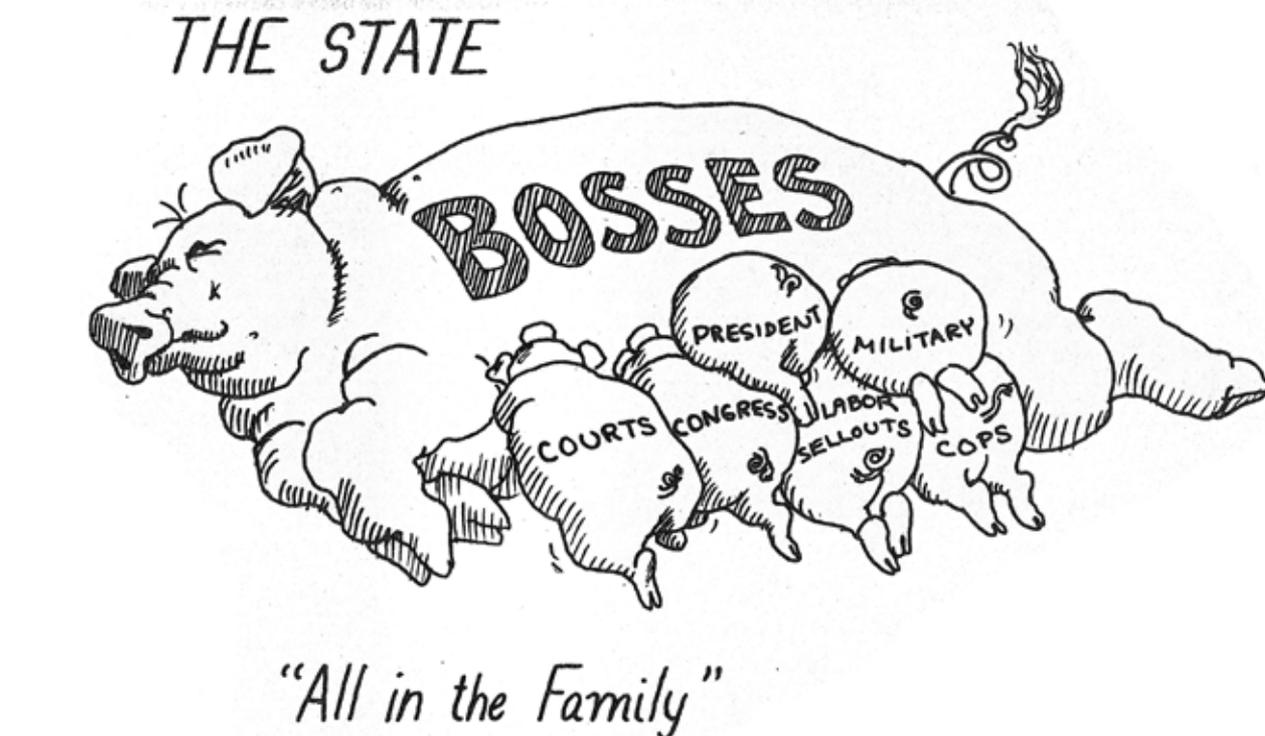
Piketty has angered the ruling class and gotten an astounding amount of space in the business press for a 700-page book dense with statistics. The Wall Street Journal labeled it a "bizarre ideological screed" (4/21). Fox News claimed it was "based on economic lies" (4/15). Bloomberg's Megan McArdle panned it after admitting, "I have not read it yet" (4/22). Forbes' Keith Weiner proudly stated, "I didn't read this book, though you don't have to in order to understand why it's mostly wrong" (5/31).

London's Financial Times has gone the furthest to try to discredit Piketty's work. In a long feature article (5/23), they claimed to find flaws in the French economist's assertion that capitalism creates wealth inequality. Soon, however, it was revealed that Financial Times editor Chris Giles had deceptively compared old wealth estimates based on taxes with new estimates based on surveys that understate the wealth of the capitalist class. This data manipulation naturally underestimated the growth of capitalist inequality over time (New York Times, 6/1). Despite this exposure, the business press has continued to cite the Financial Times' fabrication as if it were true!

The assertion that has so upset the bosses' press is that the past 250 years of capitalism in the West has led to a concentration of the world's wealth in fewer and fewer hands. Only state intervention in the form of progressive taxation and other redistributive policies — a phenomenon that Piketty says starts in 1910, at the beginning of the Progressive Era, and ends with the rise of neoliberalism in the 1970s — has ever been able to curb this widening inequality, even temporarily. In order to prove his thesis, Piketty marshals an unprecedented mountain of statistical evidence, dating back to the 18th century. His conclusion seems irrefutable.

Capital in the 21st Century exposes the lie promoted by neoliberal market fundamentalists, who have long claimed that deregulation and "free" markets — free for capital while enslaving labor — would lift the living standards of workers everywhere. Of course, most people are aware that the reality of capitalist development has been quite the opposite. Today the poverty rate is growing faster than the population. Millions of workers fall into the ranks of the poor every year.

Piketty's book has its own problems, however. While many have rushed to call it a replacement for Marx's *Capital*, *Capital in the 21st Century* is anything but Marxist (Economist, 5/3; Time, 5/8; Forbes 5/31). Piketty has actually denied having read Marx's *Capital*, although that has not stopped him from disparaging it and thereby pass as a "responsible" academic (New Republic, 5/5).



It turns out that Piketty is most accurately described as a Keynesian, one who believes in increased spending to stimulate the economy during recessions — much like Paul Krugman, Joseph Stiglitz and others who have published similar works. At the end of his book he offers ways to fix capitalism, not transcend it. For Piketty, the problem with capitalism is one of inefficiency; its tendency toward wealth inequality creates low growth rates. His solution — which he fairly describes as "utopian" — is for the state to manage capitalism to ensure that workers can buy enough of the product of their own labor to maintain a desirable rate of economic growth, which most economists put at 3 percent per year.

What Piketty misses is the question of politics. Along with pro-capitalist thinkers like Adam Smith and David Ricardo, Marx belonged to the 19th-century tradition of political economy, where politics and economics were understood to be intertwined. Piketty considers the period of relatively greater social democracy, roughly 1910 to 1970, as the capitalist ideal. He ignores, or is ignorant of, what brought about reformist policies like progressive taxation and the welfare state in the first place, namely working-class movements.

The early- and mid-20th century had certain particularities. In the U.S. and Europe, in the face of a massive and militant labor movement, highly influential communist parties, and the threat of spreading Soviet communism, the capitalist class was willing to give back some wealth in order to avert what seemed like imminent revolution. But from the beginning, the welfare state was undermined by the capitalist ideologies of racism, sexism and, above all, anti-commu-

nism. In the U.S., the New Deal framework was rooted in the maintenance of racial apartheid. The wages of white workers were increased at the expense of black workers. By the 1970s, with the Soviet Union on the capitalist road and communist politics collapsing at home, the U.S. bosses found it easy to pit white and black workers against one another and dismantle the U.S. welfare state. Piketty misses this point because he is interested in reforming capitalism, not destroying it.

Ultimately, Piketty's work is positive

in that it once and for all disproves the myth that capitalism can end poverty. But while Piketty reveals one aspect of capitalism — its intrinsic tendency toward growing inequality — he fails to examine how the system actually works. His book is an interesting piece of the puzzle. But if you want to understand the fundamental dynamics of capitalism as a political-economic process, Marx's *Capital* remains required reading. And the struggle Marx called for, a communist-led revolution of the world's working class, remains what we in Progressive Labor Party are fighting for.✪

LETTERS

Continued from page 6

nese Society, Mao wrote that "as for the vacillating middle bourgeoisie, their right-wing may become our enemy and their left-wing may become our friend." This was the theoretical basis for the continuation of capitalism under socialism.

In his 1953 book *Clefs Pour la Chine*, Claude Roy writes:

No, the united front of four classes is not a decorative façade in China. No, the role confided to the bourgeoisie by the proletariat is not a rhetorical formula.

And he quotes Lee Feng, a big businessman he met in Shanghai, who told him:

The class struggle can be carried on even in the government committees. Who says that the presence of representatives of the national bourgeoisie, of Chinese capitalism in the people's councils, is not useful...? (303).

Lee Feng went on to say:

Let me talk to you as a businessman. Take a fact: the agrarian reform. What consequences did it have for us industrialists and merchants? First, it opened up an immense domestic market for us. We can satisfy this national market thanks to government aid. Work contracts and the status of private industry relations with the trade unions and workers have been

established. The government provides us with loans and raw materials, orients production and stimulates it with a system of orders. ... Private industry [in the Mukden region] grew by 30.2% between 1949 and 1950. ... One day, all these companies will melt into the socialist economy and will change their character. OK. But until then, there's work and money to be made for everybody in China (304).

In her 1965 book *A Chacun Sa Chine*, Catherine Van Moppès describes a member of the bourgeoisie who tried to pick her up in a Shanghai restaurant:

This seductive gentleman ... is wearing a red carnation, a plaid waistcoat with a matching hat, and a blue-and-yellow striped suit. He is carrying a cane with a silver pomme (261).

Van Moppès continues:

He used to own 'his' business. Now, 'they' have taken everything, but 'they' give him a private income, an annual interest on his former capital, and he doesn't seem to be living poorly at all.

While Saguro Rojo is right about the gains in conditions made by hundreds of millions of Chinese workers and peasants under socialism, it is important to see that the return to full-blown capitalism was facilitated because the worm was in the apple from the beginning.

A friend in France

Student-Parent-Teacher Unity Needed Fight Racist Education Reforms

"One Newark," Superintendent Cami Anderson's blueprint for the city's schools, comes straight from the tiny minority of super-rich profiteers who rule the U.S. While some Democratic Party politicians have criticized how Anderson imposed her plan on Newark's students, parents, and teachers, there is general agreement about its objectives. One Newark aims to educate the children of the largest and one of the poorest cities of New Jersey to better serve the needs of the ruling class. The beneficiaries will be JPMorgan Chase, Bank of America, Wells Fargo, and ExxonMobil.

Anderson's plan will close a number of elementary and high schools over the next three years, lay off one-third of the staff, and destroy the concept of neighborhood schools. Families will now be forced to apply to all schools, beginning in kindergarten, with students as young as 8 forced to ride public transportation. As in many other cities, this will also accelerate the invasion of privatized charter schools, that stress conformity, strip teachers of union protections, and give the bosses more direct control over curriculum.

The education system in any society is vital to the interests of the class that rules. The Progressive Labor Party stands with students, parents, and teachers in fighting against One Newark while also organizing for a working-class revolution that will smash the entire capitalist system.

No matter how hard we fight, schools under capitalism will never serve working-class youth. Even if the schools were to "work," they would work only for the capitalist bosses. From their content (like the U.S. ruling class winning World War 2, rather than the Soviet workers' Red Army) to their "hidden curriculum" of keeping students obedient and passive, the job of these schools is to keep workers mentally enslaved. This explains the Newark schools' metal detectors, the "no-tolerance" policies and the emphasis on standardized tests.

The working class needs a different kind of education. We need schools that will train our youth to see the world objectively and struggle for a communist society based on equality.

The Struggle Sharpens

The fightback is growing. The Newark Student Union — born out of the 2013 budget cuts that slashed after-school programs and funding for the arts — is one new force organizing against Anderson. Another is the Newark Parent Union. Teachers and administrators are increasingly vocal in their outcry, and local clergy and community leaders have joined the fray. From sit-ins at the Board of Ed to street rallies of hundreds of activists, the struggle has surely sharpened.

But Anderson has done well by the state education officials who renewed her contract on June 27 for another three years, beginning at \$251,500 annually. The bosses are clearly pleased with her iron-fisted rule. After four principals spoke out against the superintendent's school closure plan, they were immediately suspended from their jobs. Another principal was suspended after the head of the school's parent organization posted an

agenda critical of the superintendent and then had an altercation with two of Anderson's assistants. The parent is now barred from entering all Newark public school buildings.

At the end of May, the entire administration of University High School was fired for failing to file enough computerized data on their teachers for the central office to see. More than 200 students walked out of University High School the next school day.

Students the Main Targets

In Newark, as in many other cities with mostly black and Latin workers, this racist system has hit especially hard. The unemployment rate is double the state average. Between 2008 and 2012, the number of children living in Newark below the poverty line increased by 28 percent, and the number living in extreme poverty (under \$11,525 for a family of four) increased by 38 percent! In 2012, 44 percent of Newark's children lived in poverty, nearly triple the state average. To deflect workers' anger at capitalism, the system that creates these savage inequalities, the bosses scapegoat the schools and education workers.

From Michelle Rhee in Washington to Arne Duncan (now Obama's Secretary of Education) in Chicago, school reforms have done nothing to improve the education of working-class students. The template for One Newark was Duncan's Chicago plan, "Renaissance 2010." Its main components were school closures, teacher layoffs, and a move to charter schools. The plan devastated working-class communities. Six years after its implementation, even the bosses' paper, the Chicago Tribune, admitted it had failed to improve the skills of working class youth.

Education workers feel under assault, and they should. The reformers' attack on tenure, teacher layoffs, ballooning class sizes, and overwhelming paperwork has changed the way workers function in these schools. But the main targets of Anderson's administration are the students. Under capitalism, schools are designed to discipline the next generation of workers.

Anderson is moving to force administrators and teachers to discipline students to better prepare them to serve the bosses. At the end of this school year, the principal at Science Park High School, one of the top 500 high schools in the U.S., was slammed with an evaluation of "partially effective." The reason? Most of the Newark Student Union's leadership came from this school, and the administration and teachers had failed to discourage them from fighting back.

Students, and particularly black and Latin youth, are no strangers to the attacks now faced by education workers. By joining together in fighting back for better conditions, students and teachers can create "schools of struggle" to prepare us for the larger, longer-term fight against the bosses' profit system, capitalism.

"One Newark" Fits Rulers' Plans

We all know the public schools have been "failing" for years. Why the urgency now? As CHALLENGE has often noted, it has everything to do with the decline of U.S.

imperialism. China, Russia, and other rivals are threatening U.S. capitalists' status as the top superpower. To protect their position, U.S. bosses need a skilled and docile working class. They need workers, especially black and Latin workers, willing to work long hours for poverty wages and to fight and die in imperialist wars. How can they do that? By promoting fascist ideas: obedience to the state's leaders, sacrifice for the "homeland," and a vicious, blame-the-victim mentality toward all who do not "succeed."

To win workers to these reactionary ideas, the rulers must condition children from a young age. They need to mold students to see greedy business leaders as heroes and education workers as "selfish." They need to train young workers to accept cutbacks in social services, a necessity to fund the bosses' next war and line the capitalists' pockets. The education reform movement is bankrolled by super-rich financial and technology billionaires. It's the creature of right-wing think tanks and Wall Street boardrooms, using a phony humanitarian cover to mask their real purposes.

The vultures behind the school reform movement are out to smash teacher unions and tenure protections. They are imposing business-style "accountability" on school employees. They have friends in very high places. The Obama/Duncan "Race To The Top" initiative is designed to promote charter schools and "performance-based" rating of teachers.

Cami Anderson's One Newark represents one of the bosses' most ambitious efforts to reorganize the public schools to meet the pressing needs of U.S. capitalism. A recent New Yorker article shows how U.S. Senator Corey Booker, the former Newark mayor, allied himself with this racist movement. In 2010, Booker teamed with New Jersey Governor Chris Christie to devise a secret reform plan for Newark schools. Since "real change has casualties," Booker and Christie decided it was necessary to exclude parents and teachers from the discussion. Instead, the goals and details of the plan would be worked out in advance with Mark Zuckerberg, its billionaire backer of Facebook fame.

Meanwhile, the .01 percent who actually rule the U.S. understand the true goals of the school reform movement. Joel Klein, former head of New York City public schools, and Condoleezza Rice, war criminal under George W. Bush, led a Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) Task Force on "U.S. Education Reform and National Security." Their 2012 report makes the bosses' concerns clear: "Educational failure puts the United States' future economic prosperity, global position, and physical safety at risk." It continues, "Human capital will determine power in the current century, and the failure to produce that capital will undermine America's security."

A number of recommendations in the CFR Report, including school choice and common core standards, are the centerpiece of the school reorganization plans in Newark and other big cities. We need to escalate our fightback against Cami Anderson and One Newark. But we cannot forget that the root of these anti-worker reforms is the capitalist system. ☪

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