

CHALLENGE



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University Teach-In How to End Racist violence? COMMUNISM

CHICAGO, February 7 — PLP medical workers club organized a “Racism, Police Violence, and Health Teach-In,” with two public health student organizations at a major university. This teach-in was built on the growing antiracist momentum against police terror. It was developed for participants to draw connections between racism and public health, capitalism and police violence, and to strategize on how to build the antiracist struggle among the masses. The teach-in provided an opportunity to fight anti-communist attacks and sharpen our relationships with friends.

To kick the event off, a panel of five speakers gave a short speech, based on their experience on the subject matter. The panelists came from a diverse professional background, ranging from a public health student, to a history professor, to a leftist reverend. A local PLP leader was also on the panel. He spoke about not only his multiple trips to Ferguson, but also called for communist revolution as the means to end racist police and state violence.

Multiracial Unity and Organized Violence Are Necessary

Following the panel, over 100 participants broke into workshops to discuss tactics, strategies, and reform. Some of the topics discussed in these sessions included: identifying the pros and cons of both identity politics and multiracial unity to fight racism; identifying alternatives to relying on electoral politics and politicians; and making healthcare more accessible and comprehensive to the working-class in an era of increasing racist privatization and soaring costs.

Identity politics offer white, male workers only the only potential to ally with the oppressed groups. It is based on the belief that white workers benefit off the exploitation of Black, immigrant, and women workers. Such an individualist outlook fractures our class and prohibits real solidarity. An attack on one member of our class is an attack, and an indicator of greater attacks, on all of the working class. We should focus our effort on uniting against the cause of racism: bosses’ profits.



Taking Ferguson’s lead, Chicago workers erupt in protest throughout the months following Mike Brown’s murder.

PLers participated in the workshops and raised the need for violence by the working class. While many agreed, some were anti-communist. One individual spoke specifically to the PL panelist afterwards, and condemned the use of violence as a political tactic. A majority of the panel explained that acts of violence are endlessly being committed against our class and that organizing to fight back is, at the very least, self-defense. PLP rejects all acts of individual terror. But, a mass movement to defeat capitalism requires a mass army. Legal slavery in the U.S. was defeated through violence, and wage slavery will be buried with organized violence as well. The participant was so upset, she walked out.

Communism Is “Unprofessional?”

A few of the organizers considered it “unprofessional” to openly call for communism and revolutionary violence at a university-sponsored event. To hide one’s politics because “people aren’t ready to hear that” is utter disrespect. Communism is the best way to organize society — no

cops, no profits, no bosses, no racism, no sexism — and we will say so!

People who say it doesn’t “look good” to talk about communism are the same people who criminalize our kids for what they wear. Politics of respectability pays respect to the bosses and all their anti-working-class ideologies. This attack provided PLers an opportunity to strengthen our relationships by clarifying the difference between fighting for reform, and fighting for revolution. Those who we strengthened our ties with are the ones who can be won closer to communism by fighting racism at its source: capitalism. Diluting politics so as to not offend anyone is a tactic for the phony leftists and organized liberals.

By and large, the event was deemed a success by organizers and participants. We look forward to advancing communist politics with our new friends as well as the masses in the #BlackLives-Matter movement in order to offer the *real* solution to racism.✊

JOIN THE INTERNATIONAL FIGHT FOR COMMUNIST REVOLUTION

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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, Latin, 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

New Defense Secretary: More Troops, More War

Four days after his confirmation by the U.S. Senate, Barack Obama’s new Secretary of War Ashton Carter traveled to Kabul, Afghanistan, and “opened up the possibility of slowing the withdrawal of the last American troops in the country to help keep the Taliban at bay” (New York Times, 2/22/15). His speech was yet another signal that the U.S. capitalist class is accelerating toward the next round of slaughter over oil and gas in Afghanistan and Iraq. The bosses’ urgency to defend ExxonMobil’s profits in Central Asia points to a sharpening rivalry with the capitalists of Russia and China, who are vying to control the same region. A new infusion of ground troops seems inevitable. Once again, the U.S. rulers will send workers to do the fighting and dying—especially immigrant youth who have few other options in an economy with permanent, massive unemployment.

Nearly a century ago, in *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, Vladimir Lenin analyzed the bloodbath of World War I as the unavoidable outcome of capitalist competition over resources. The Russian communists organized workers and soldiers and ended World War I with revolution; Chinese communists did the same in World War II. Today, as inter-imperialist rivalry intensifies, Progressive Labor Party is organizing the working class in 27 countries to turn the next global conflict over profits into a war for revolution, to smash racism and imperialism and to abolish the entire capitalist system with communism!

Bosses Ratchet Up War Plans

U.S. rulers knew what they were getting in Carter, a seasoned military hard-liner who pushed for a preemptive strike against North Korea’s nuclear capability as far back as 1994, during the Bill Clinton administration, even as he noted it could lead to war and a “horrific” loss of life (Politico, 12/2/14). In his recent nomination hearings before the Senate Armed Services Committee, he advocated lethal military aid to Ukraine against Russia’s proxy separatists, a military solution for a “lasting defeat” of the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq, the indefinite maintenance of the Guantanamo Bay concentration camp, and the recognition of Iran as a mortal threat to U.S. interests.

Carter’s Kabul speech borrows almost word-for-word from a new report by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), a bipartisan think tank closely tied to ExxonMobil, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the Council on Foreign Relations—the heart of the dominant finance capital wing of the U.S. ruling class. “Transition in Afghanistan: Losing the Forgotten War?” rejects Obama’s previous withdrawal timeline and calls for keeping as many soldiers in Afghanistan for as long as they are needed. Written by Anthony Cordesman, one of the leading ruling-class analysts on the intersection of military and energy policy, it warns:

The allocation of only some 11,000 US troops at the beginning of 2015, cutting that number in half by the end of 2015, and then removing all... by the end of 2016 – except for a small office of military cooperation – presents serious risks, and should – at a minimum – be cut on a conditions-based level rather than to a fixed schedule.

Bosses Foment Racism

The troops needed by the U.S. ruling class come from working class youth. The capitalist class is working overtime to build nationalism to support their future wars by enticing immigrants and undocumented workers into joining the military. At the same time, they are escalating anti-Muslim and anti-Arab racism. The executions of three students in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, is a call for workers to unite in solidarity with their Muslim working class sisters and brothers.

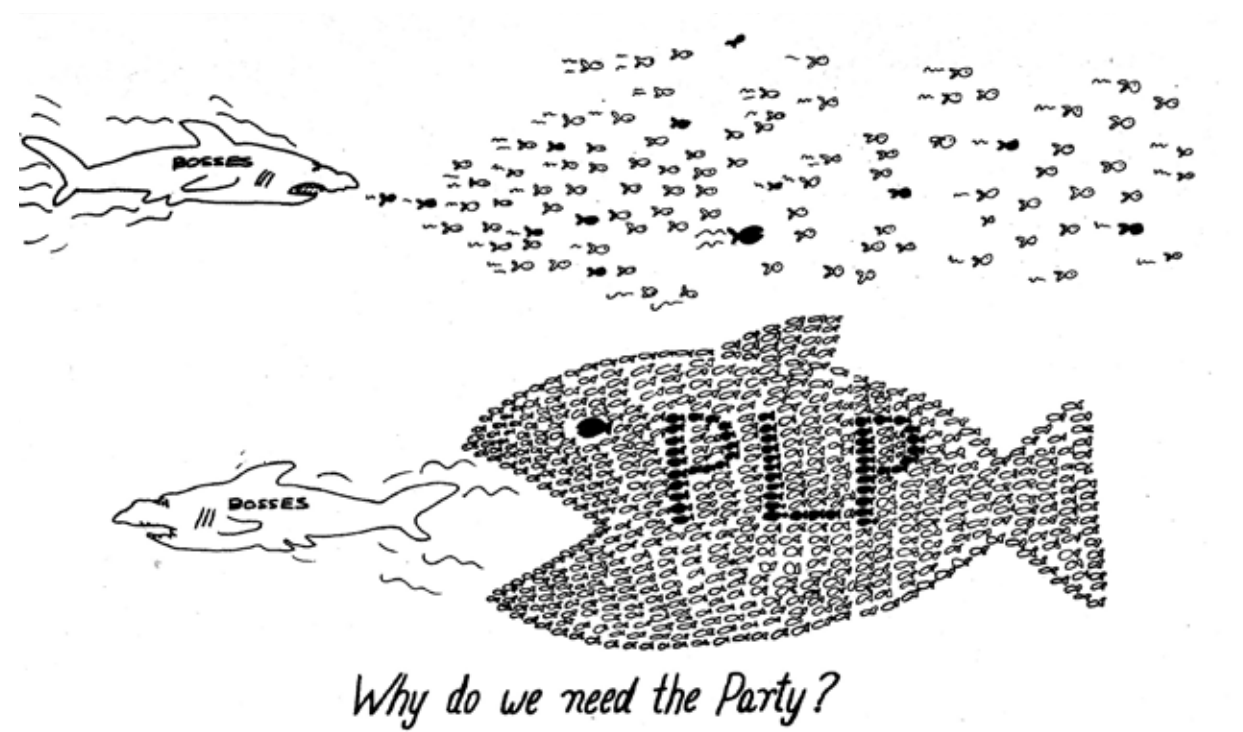
PLP calls on every club and every CHALLENGE reader to organize demonstrations, job and campus actions against the racist Chapel Hill massacre and to help build our international movement. Send letters and articles to CHALLENGE, describing what you have done and how you and your collective plan to build for May Day.

The latest escalation in Afghanistan also reflects the U.S. bosses’ aim to weaken Chinese and Iranian influence in the region. The Asian Development Bank, the prime sponsor of the long-stalled Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline, is controlled by Japan, the U.S. and the European Union. The Diplomat, a Japanese policy magazine affiliated with the CSIS, voiced concern that the TAPI delay has already strengthened Chinese influence at U.S. expense in Turkmenistan, and risks pushing Pakistan further into the orbit of Russia and Iran:

China has turned Turkmenistan into something approaching a client state, with Ashgabat planning on transiting 65 billion cubic meters [of gas] to Beijing by 2020... ..TAPI would create a viable alternative to the proposed Iran-Pakistan pipeline... [and] Pakistan can find a way to meet some of its energy needs without providing Tehran with an economic windfall (The Diplomat, 11/20/14).

Both Pakistan and Turkmenistan are vital to U.S. imperialist control of Central Asia, which the capitalists see as the center of the world’s “grand chessboard” — a game where workers are pawns to be sacrificed as needed. Of late, the U.S. has been losing ground. Turkmenistan’s regime has rebuffed demands by ExxonMobil and Chevron for exploration and property rights in TAPI gas fields. Pakistan has been under threat of U.S. sanctions since 2010 for partnering with Iran on a rival pipeline, already under construction. U.S. rulers need a stronger troop presence in Afghanistan to give them more leverage to protect their profit interests in the region.

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Brooklyn Forums: Building Fighters Against Racism

NEW YORK CITY, January 24 — With the weather snowy and wet, the streets icy and slippery, a forum “Ferguson: Causes, Events, What Happens Now?” took place in the sanctuary of our church. Ten minutes before the beginning of the forum, it appeared that almost nobody would show up, but soon there were almost 100 people sitting in the pews awaiting the start of the forum.

Following the official welcome to the church, a worker sang a song that named and honored many victims of racist police murders. There was tremendous applause for the words and the beauty of the song.

The forum began with introductions of the five speakers: a representative of the New York Civil Liberties Union, a Baptist minister, a mother whose daughter had died in police custody, and two young fighters who went to Ferguson to take part in the struggle. Questions followed.

Ferguson has become a symbol for fighting back militantly against a system which is unequal, corrupt, and racist. Each of the speakers, in their own way, spoke to that. Although there were differences, none of the speakers disagreed about the nature of the system — the main disagreement was on how to fight back.

The lawyer from the NYCLU spoke most forcefully about the fact that the system is not even set up to help us, and that there are many laws that hamstring struggles through the courts. She agreed with direct action on the street, which she said could then be brought to court. She wanted to see equal implementation of laws and improved laws. She is working with others to gain that.

The next speaker briefed the audience on his trip to Ferguson. He started off his talk with a chant for eve-

rybody in the church to recite. “Ferguson means fight back!” “Racism means fight back!” He then spoke to the need for mass struggle on a militant level. He called for more marches, demonstrations, etc. He pointed out that this was the lesson of Ferguson. He also spoke about local struggles to improve people’s living conditions against racist landlords and other oppressors and he insisted that they should be carried out the Ferguson way.

The minister spoke next. He had the same feelings about the terrible, oppressive racism in Ferguson and in different parts of the U.S., but said he still believed in the power of prayer. However, workers can’t pray racism away.

A young student, a member of the Progressive Labor Party who had been arrested in Ferguson at a protest, spoke about the need to make a communist revolution in order to end racism all over the world. He said the many injustices we live under cannot be destroyed until all the aspects of the system are destroyed. This means destroying capitalism.

The last speaker was Anita Neal, whose daughter had been killed by the callous racist system. She brought the people to their feet — between her anger and her tears.

Questions from the audience allowed the speakers to go more deeply into each of their philosophical differences. Despite their differences, they all agreed to the need to stand up and fight evil face on. At the end of the forum people remained to talk to each other. Quite a few went out together to eat and talk some more. The afternoon was a success for community involvement. Plans are being laid to involve the church and community more in the struggle against the racist injustice of capitalism.☺

BROOKLYN, NY, February 22 — This weekend our club organized a community forum on racism, with more than 40 people attending, including members and guests. There were several topics discussed.

Racist Exploitation and Deportations

A young comrade discussed this topic, arguing that Obama’s new immigration law is a dangerous trap for the majority of immigrants because of the increased controls as a result of “registering.” In addition, immigrant youth will be vulnerable to future wars because they’ll be recruited to fight imperialist wars (see editorial, page 2).

Racism is a tool to intensify capitalist exploitation of the whole working class for use as cheap labor by dividing some groups of workers against others, and allows the bosses to both control the workers and gain “super profits.” Many in the audience were asking, how can we trust this president, who has already deported more than two million immigrants? We cannot. The only people to have confidence in are workers worldwide.

Racism and Police Brutality

Another comrade spoke about this issue and called out the names of all those murdered by the police: Eric Garner, Kimani Gray, Kyam Livingston, Shantel Davis, Michael Brown, and so many more. Names were read of victims from New York, Ferguson, Missouri, Los Angeles, Cleveland, and more.

Racism in the form of police brutality means the jailing of more than two million workers and youth here in the U.S. for slave labor, 70 percent of which are Black and Latin, who have to work for private companies at the miserable wages of \$0.08 an hour.

Racism – The Struggle Against Imperialist War and Imperialism

For this topic we discussed the motives and justifications used by the biggest capitalists — the imperialists — to expand their wars to control land and wealth, especially oil in the Middle East. The imperialists impose their wars to terrorize and control the world. Iraq was mentioned as an example, which the U.S. destroyed using the lie it possessed weapons of mass destruction.

Imperialist powers build and sell modern weapons to other countries, like the thousands of chemical weapons Iraq legally purchased from the U.S. during the 1980s. Then the imperialists invade these countries, destroying them so that later their own companies “rebuild” them in exchange for long-term debt.

We also discussed Cuba, which suffered an economic blockade for more than 50 years. Now Cuba is being re-engaged by the U.S. as part of a fake “peace” plan and hopes Cuba can be used as a backyard in future wars, much as how the U.S. has always viewed Latin America as its backyard since the Monroe Doctrine in the 1820s.

There were some comments from the audience, which illustrated racism in the wages they received, discrimination, and exploitation at work. Some detailed kidnappings and abuses when they came into this country, and the miserable housing conditions they confront as they fight eviction efforts. We confirm what we read in CHALLENGE, that Black and Latin families experience racism in all its forms: lower wages and benefits — lousy health care, housing and education — twice the rate of unemployment and wholesale murders at the hands of racist police.

After the forum, we held a small demonstration and chanted militant slogans. We distributed CHALLENGE, and people greeted us as we went by. Everything was well organized, and with the support and presence of experienced Party members, we had a successful forum and demonstration. Now, we are planning our next event before May Day, because people want to know what’s going on with ISIS, France, China, Cuba, and Ukraine.☺

Kyam Livingston: Struggle for Justice Continues



BROOKLYN, February 21 — “What do we want? Justice. When do we want it? Now!”

“No justice, no peace! No racist police!”

“We want justice for Kyam Livingston killed in a prison cell.”

And so the chants continue now for 18 months. Kyam Livingston’s mother, along with many church members, teachers, union members, activists and PL’ers, have stood strong fighting for justice. Kyam was left to die in a holding cell in Central Booking in Brooklyn on July 21, 2013. As the family continues its struggle, Kyam’s mother has forged ties with the families of other victims of racist police murder. PL’s strategy and tactics have helped lead this fightback. We will not stand aside under any circumstances whatsoever. The Justice for Kyam Committee speaks against systemic racism of the criminal justice system.

We seek change the whole system. We don’t rely on elected officials or politicians or others in high places. Our power is generated by the activities of working people enraged by the ongoing murders from Ferguson to Staten Island to Flatbush. When we chant “Fight like Ferguson,” we salute the leadership given by the mainly

young Black workers of Ferguson. They refused to back down in the face of a highly militarized police terror campaign instituted to stop them from the murder of Mike Brown.

For 18 months, whether at Central Booking or in front of racist liar District Attorney Ken Thompson’s office, we have stood through snow, rain and heat asking simple questions. Still no answers. We have confronted Ken Thompson’s office, but still no answers. We have confronted Central Booking as they laugh at death through their windows. We have the names and we have the tapes of the murder. We will continue to fight.

One thing is very clear. The only solution is communist revolution and only through the Progressive Labor Party can we smash a system that doesn’t deserve to exist, and build a system for all working class people.

One theme becoming more apparent with Kyam’s mother’s leadership is she does not want to see this happen ever again to other workers’ children and she will stand out here fighting until this system is gone and begins anew. We in the Progressive Labor Party stand with her. Join us on the 21st of every month in solidarity, as the working class stands strong.☺

Vaccination Wars: Capitalist Mysticism vs. Science

Because of the recent outbreak of measles among some children who visited Disneyland, the mass media have focused on parents who are afraid to have their children vaccinated. Measles can kill, but many parents have been fooled by widespread disinformation that measles vaccinations may lead to autism. This is a blatant lie. No one knows what causes autism, but we have voluminous proof that vaccines do not.

The lie was raised to prominence by Andrew Wakefield, a British surgeon who profited hugely by submitting a fraudulent paper in 1998 to the leading medical journal *Lancet*. Beforehand he had been hired by lawyers trying to sue vaccine companies to prove their case, and the journal paper was the result. His paper reviews the cases of 12 children, claiming that they all developed autism within two weeks of receiving the MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) vaccine. It was later shown, however, that some of these children had signs of autism prior to the vaccinations and others never had autism. Wakefield's medical license was subsequently revoked.

Every study since then has rejected Wakefield's attribution of autism to the vaccine, any vaccine. But his murderous lie lives on through self-serving celebrities like Jenny McCarthy, the *Playboy* model, who refuses to vaccinate her children. Wakefield himself has built a following in his adopted home of Texas, where he continues to claim he is the victim of government collusion with vaccine manufacturers. One doesn't have to support either government or vaccine makers to conclude that Wakefield is responsible for crimes against the working class.

When unvaccinated children catch the measles, or

other potentially deadly contagious diseases, they expose other children. When too few children in a community (less than 90 percent) have been vaccinated, all are at risk of epidemics, even those who have been vaccinated. Measles was once virtually eradicated in the U.S. and Europe, even if not everywhere in the world, *due solely to the vaccine*. Of every thousand children who contract measles, one or two will die. But no children will develop autism from the vaccine.

Laws passed by pandering and ignorant politicians in many places allow vaccination exemptions for parents on the grounds of religious or simply "personal" beliefs. But what if someone has a "personal" belief that it's all right to steal? Stealing, though enforced by capitalist conditions, is still a violation of working-class morality. And incidentally it's against the law, unless committed by huge banks and corporations. The stunning hypocrisy of vaccine exemptions in turn supports the spread of anti-scientific mysticism and superstition — useful tools for the reigning capitalist class to keep workers divided and subjugated.

Most parents who fail to vaccinate their children out of fear are simply trying to protect them. But it's not the motivation that counts; it's the effect. Despite opposition by the American Pediatric Society, some pediatricians refuse to accept children as patients whose parents won't have them vaccinated, on the grounds that exposure to unvaccinated children raises the disease risk for their other patients. Likewise, some school districts refuse to allow children to attend school until they are vaccinated. Both of these measures represent a scattered approach that does not solve the problem for the children or their parents.

The stunning hypocrisy of vaccine exemptions in turn supports the spread of anti-scientific mysticism and superstition — useful tools for the reigning capitalist class to keep workers divided and subjugated.

Only a centrally planned cooperative system, based on the best that science can offer — i.e., communism — will be capable of stemming the effects of mysticism and disinformation and be able to protect children as well as adults. Communism is a system that will encourage families, friends, and neighbors to help each other with childcare and other needs. Communism raises science to a premium while eradicating mysticism and superstition. Under communist leadership, with the Progressive Labor Party having grown to include millions of workers, the working class will see to it that all parents have the wherewithal to feed, clothe, and shelter their children, and to be guided only by science rather than be confused by superstition.✶

LEGAL SERVICE STRIKE



NEW YORK CITY, February 18 — "A Little Cold, A Little Pain, That Won't Stop This Justice Train!" That was the chant today as about 150 workers and professionals held a very spirited picket line on the coldest day of the year, in support of the 56 attorneys, paralegals and secretaries who are on strike at Mobilization For Youth (MFY) Legal Services. They are represented by the Legal Services Staff Association (LSSA)/UAW Local 2320. After almost four weeks on strike in record-breaking cold weather, on February 24, MFY's union signed a new contract with their bosses.

The strikers demanded increased staffing with affirmative action to reduce workloads and better reflect the they serve, and family leave and pay-equity for the lowest-paid workers.

The millionaire Wall Street lawyers who sit on the Board had basically told the strikers, "We can afford to meet your

demands. We just don't think it's worth it!" The bosses also brought in scabs, a temp clerical worker and some contract attorneys.

What they don't think is "worth it" is quality legal help for the poor, mostly Black, Latin, immigrant and women workers who need help with housing and family court, bankruptcy, benefits for the elderly and many other issues. They want to turn MFY and all legal services for the poor into a McDonald's type operation, cheap and fast, and a workforce with a huge turnover.

PLP salutes the MFY strikers. Their militancy and solidarity during the bitter cold weather is a model for all workers to follow! But the struggle has only begun. Under capitalism, the living conditions of those MFY serves will only worsen and become more desperate. We call on the MFY strikers to take it to the next level and join PLP!✶

More Troops, More War

Continued from page 2

Mosul: Flashpoint of the Next Oil War

As Ashton Carter beat the war drums in Afghanistan, the Pentagon announced plans for a near-term U.S.-led invasion to retake the northern Iraqi city of Mosul from the Islamic State — an attack by big terrorists against smaller ones. Top U.S. military brass are weighing whether they "will need to deploy teams of American ground forces to...advise Iraqi troops on the battlefield" (NYT, 2/22/15).

Accordingly, the Brookings Institution, bankrolled by the same capitalists as the CSIS, claims there is growing U.S. popular support for war against ISIS. In "The American People to Its Leaders: Ground Troops Against ISIS and a Stronger National Defense" (2/20/15), it reported:

According to today's CBS Poll, the American people...favor the use of American ground forces to combat ISIS. As recently as last September, only 39% favored that course, while 55% were opposed. Today, 57% favor ground forces; only 39% remain opposed.... Last fall, fully 64% of the people already believed that ground troops would be necessary...ISIS's horrible torture and execution of innocent civilians...has increased Americans' sense of urgency about confronting this threat.

The bosses' hope is that these poll numbers will translate into a surge of working-class youth enlistment in the U.S. military in order to fortify the "ground forces," a euphemism for cannon fodder. U.S. rulers cannot afford to cede Mosul to a small-time capitalist gang like ISIS, which is using the city as a base to attack Exxon's operations in northern Iraq and, by extension, the broader U.S. strat-

egy to enlist Turkey as an ally in a possible World War III. "ISIS militants have attacked Peshmerga [Kurdish/ northern Iraq] forces... north of Mosul, with the aim of seizing equipment and machinery belonging to U.S. oil company ExxonMobil. Peshmerga forces have been guarding Exxon's equipment since the company pulled its team from the area in June" (Iraq Business News, 2/12/15). The prize, for both ISIS and the U.S. and its corrupt Iraqi partners, is the area with the richest source of oil profits in Iraq.

The Only Solution is Communist Revolution

The working class across the Middle East and Central Asia has a proud history of fighting back for workers' power, a history the world's capitalist bosses would like to bury. After the Russian revolution of 1917, Turkmenistan, a Soviet Republic, immediately outlawed racism and declared women and men equal, with universal education and healthcare. Iraq's Communist Party, which at its height united one million Sunni and Shia, organized the country's railroads, oil industry, and dockworkers while leading massive strikes and uprisings during the 1940s. In Afghanistan in the 1980s, masses of workers backed the socialist PDPA government when it came under siege by U.S.-backed mujahideen terrorists, the forerunners of ISIS. But the weaknesses of the old communist movement — including nationalism and the preservation of wages and inequality — led to its own defeat.

The road to communist revolution is to organize anti-racist battles, using CHALLENGE to share news and analysis of workers' struggles around the world, and ultimately to build our own mass Red Army and liberate our class. We need a movement of millions of working class leaders. Join us!✶

Mexico: Workers, Students Sharpen Class Struggle

From the moment the vicious murders of the Ayotzinapa teachers took place, PLP members in Mexico have participated in the massive protests. At these protests, we distributed flyers criticizing the Mexican government, and every reformist and electoral “alternative” group being promoted among workers. The attack, which took place in Iguala, Guerrero State last September 27, is a reflection of the violence that the ruling class is willing to use to enforce its plans against the working class as the bosses consolidate and assert their power. Six other people, three of them students, were killed in a police and paramilitary attack. To this day, 57 youth are still missing.

Events like this become more frequent as the global capitalist crisis deepens and imperialist rivals, the U.S., Russia and China, get ready to fight World War III. We place all blame for the murders on the capitalist system, and call for the working class to organize for communist revolution.

A group of Party members participated in a demonstration of striking IPN (National Polytechnic Institute) teachers and students, who are fighting the consequences of the Mexican bosses’ education reforms. They distributed 2,000 flyers.

Ruling Class Needs Behind Ayotzinapa Massacre

The Mexican ruling class needs to discipline the workers’ and other ruling class rivals in controlling tax revenue and educational policy.

Energy reform allows the U.S. to have more control over energy resources like oil, which is vital to the U.S. military in the event of war. The education and labor reforms are designed to a cheap labor force. They represent more oppression and exploitation for workers.

The changes that the bosses are trying to put in effect at IPN are part of the education reforms, which are designed to suppress political participation in the polytechnic community, to make higher education more technically oriented and to reduce teachers’ benefits. These reforms respond to the needs of the capitalist system to reduce enrollment in public education to benefit the business of private education. It also turns public schools into cheap labor factories, where trained and docile workers don’t require the training of a highly qualified technician.

The approval of these reforms was framed by terror against the working class by the army, the police and the crime cartels. Against this terror, all of the electoral political parties to encourage passivity of the working class, while helping build unity of the most powerful ruling class groups in Mexico and the U.S. Due to their deep unpopularity with the workers, the bosses resort to using terror to blunt the workers’ resistance, which has a rich history in Mexico, especially in 1968, when IPN students played a key role in the anti-imperialist student movement.

Under capitalism, education is a business, and one of the most important means to indoctrinate youth with nationalist, sexist, individualist, and racist ideology. The attacks confronted by IPN teachers and students will not end as long as there is a capitalist system. It is essential for capitalism to destroy the living conditions of the working class because that’s one of the ways they maximize their profits. Capitalists will try, by any means, to cut salaries, retirement pensions, health and education services.

Growing Worker-Student Unity Key as PLP Strengthens

Under these conditions, the massive protests of the IPN students against changes to administrative regulations and curriculum is very significant. This struggle is part of the entire working class resistance to the reforms imposed by the ruling class.

The struggle of the Polytechnic students is developing unity with workers and students in other schools like UNAM (National Autonomous University of Mexico), UAM (Autonomous Metropolitan University), and UAEM (Autonomous University of Mexico State). This unity will be crucial to defeating attacks by school authorities and the ruling class.



We need to keep organizing the international revolutionary communist PLP, not an electoral party, to lead millions of workers in a communist revolution to abolish the oppressive capitalist system and build a new communist society. Workers’ power is the goal that in the last century inspired millions of workers around the world, including many of those who were part of the worldwide 1968 movement against imperialism. We honor their memory by renewing our commitment to the fight for a just and egalitarian society.

Our flyers were written collectively among our comrades and friends following lively debates about the causes of these attacks and their relation to global imperialist rivalry. Our friends participated in the discussion and helped distribute literature during the demonstrations.

One of our weaknesses was not quickly developing a plan for this struggle, which has already lasted months. We could have involved our friends in more than just passing our flyers. We plan to organize a group to participate more actively in the demonstrations with banners and flags, and organize conferences to put forward PLP’s position. From Ayotzinapa to Ferguson, the struggle of the working class for its liberation will put an end to capitalist oppression!✊

Workers’ Power in Greece? Not So Fast, Says Socialist!

Our club recently discussed the election of Syriza (Coalition of the Radical Left) to lead the government of Greece. In the last few years, Greek workers have been hit with a 25 percent unemployment rate, and a one-third average reduction in household income. It therefore isn’t surprising that many supported a party that promises to lessen the pain — reduce austerity conditions by raising the minimum wage, shifting property taxes to the wealthy, and beginning a jobs program.

To be able to afford these social programs, the Greek government must convince the other European Union (EU) capitalist governments and their institutions (the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund) to allow Greece to reschedule payment of the \$373 billion it owes. (A relatively better demand, for debt cancellation, was never on the table.) Many of our friends are optimistic that Syriza will win the battle over the debt, allowing it to improve conditions a bit for Greek workers.

The situation in Greece is a study in contradictions. The other European capitalist nations, led by Germany, have tremendous leverage over Greece, as they have the power to bankrupt the Greek banking system and cause an economic collapse. Yet a collapse of the Greek economy would deepen the recession in Europe and lead to political chaos, which they dread. The Syriza-led government, aware of this dilemma, is hoping to negotiate some flexibility in debt payments so that it can finance a government stimulus program.

Yet EU leaders are playing hardball, because they don’t want to set a precedent that other debtor countries will jump to take advantage of. They have taken steps to weaken Greece’s ability to borrow money, and ultimately they have the power to cut off loans altogether. The capitalist rating agency, Standard & Poor’s,

has already downgraded Greek bonds to junk status (high-risk because there is little to back them up), making it harder for the country to borrow.

Besides the contradiction within European capitalism, there is also the contradiction within Syriza. Although it is a coalition of left parties, including those that call themselves communist or socialist, the leadership has made it very clear that they are not trying to implement socialism, but are instead trying, in their words, to “stabilize capitalism.” The second most powerful leader of Syriza, after Prime Minister Tsipras, is the Minister of Finance, Yanis Varoufakis, who refers to himself as a Marxist. Varoufakis wrote an essay last year in which he set out the goals of Syriza:

... it is Left’s historical duty, at this particular juncture, to stabilize capitalism; to save European capitalism from itself and from the inane handlers of the Eurozone’s inevitable crisis.

He goes on to say that if Greek capitalism is not stabilized, it will likely lead to a rise in support for the Golden Dawn fascists, who in alliance with the police and the military will seize power as similar forces did in Europe in the 1930’s, and as they did in Greece in 1967. This fear of fascism and the violence it would unleash upon the working class, is used by Syriza to justify proping up a capitalist system that is abhorred by most of the radical coalition’s members!

However, even if Greek capitalism were to rebound and experience new growth, it would not put an end to destructive economic crises, which occur regularly and are intrinsic to capitalism. It would not put an end to the exploitation of workers, or the gross inequality we see in every capitalist country, or the vile racism endemic to capitalism, or the mistreatment and abuse of immi-

grant workers, or even the rise of fascism, which develops out of capitalist decay and can only be crushed by an armed working class. Moreover, if the EU capitalists do agree to restructure Greek debt, it will demand significant concessions in return, including a continuation of austerity policies and new rules making it easier to fire workers.

It is certainly true that revolution is not on the immediate horizon, either in Greece or the U.S. But as we actively take part in a thousand reform battles, we remember what Marx and Engels wrote in *The Communist Manifesto*:

The Communists fight for the attainment of the immediate aims, for the enforcement of the momentary interests of the working class; but in the movement of the present, they also represent and take care of the future of that movement. ... The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions.

Taking “care of the future” means building a revolutionary communist party with the understanding that capitalism needs to be replaced, even if it takes decades.

We are hoping to have many conversations with our friends, including those from Greece, about the struggle against capitalist austerity and the need for revolution rather than just reform. We hope to make contact with Greeks who share our anti-capitalist vision. We’ll begin by urging all our friends and students to march on May Day to celebrate the fighting spirit of workers from Greece to Ferguson and call for the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism.✊

LETTERS

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

ISIS Beheadings and U.S. Lynchings

Compare these two stories: First, on video tape ISIS beheads a Japanese journalist, Kenji Goto, while it murders thousands in the Middle East, unfilmed. Second, thousands of racist whites travel hundreds of miles to watch and cheer while a Black man is suspended from a rope and at the same time slowly roasted over a fire for hours. ISIS is labeled “barbaric” by the U.S. media — and they are — but lynching was an everyday thing in the U.S. until the early 1900s, when lynching finally became a federal offense and the frequency of such unspeakable outrages fell off.

And while the frequency of lynchings did eventually diminish — despite the best efforts of liberal politicians like President Woodrow Wilson to prevent the passage of anti-lynching legislation — lynching has never died out completely, and the racist attitudes behind it persist and flourish among many white workers and others as a result of cop activity and the media. Many readers will recall the 1998 dragging of a 49-year-old Black man, James Byrd, Jr., for 3½ miles behind a pick-up truck by three white men in Texas, resulting in Byrd’s fatal decapitation. The leader of this atrocity, Lawrence Brewer, was affiliated with the Ku Klux Klan.

And all over the U.S., the KKK and other racist and fascist organizations are very much alive today, even though the growth of the KKK’s various wannabe chapters has been stalled significantly over the years by numerous PLP-led physical attacks by workers and students against occasional demonstrations and marches by these fascists. But virtually no one has ever paid at the hands of the law for participating in a lynching party, which says something about the U.S. criminal injustice system.

While ISIS resorts to videos, U.S. lynchers relied on live cheering crowds of hundreds or thousands. The racists also lynched many hundreds, if not thousands, of equally innocent white men and women who dared to side with their class brothers and sisters in one way or another and were called everything from “n____r lovers” to “race traitors.” In fact, from 1882 to 1968 it is estimated that more than a quarter of some 4,000-plus lynching victims were white. See, for example, <http://www.chesnuttarchive.org/classroom/lynchingstat.html>.

And the new form of lynchings, of both Black and white workers, continues to this day in the form of daily murders by cops (estimated at some 1,000 per year, or 2-3 per day). Contrary to the claims of both conservative and liberal commentators, racism in the U.S. has not diminished. It has just changed its form — from slavery to Jim Crow to chain gangs to segregation to drug addiction to job discrimination to poverty to homelessness to mass incarceration to daily murders by cops.

The history of this legacy of slavery in the U.S. has been downplayed or completely omitted from textbooks and the media, which clears the way for hypocritical crocodile tears by U.S. politicians over current

events in the Middle East. Those with sin — the capitalist class and their bought-and-paid-for elected and unelected officials — are among the first to cast stones. The slightest inkling of the indescribable horrors of U.S. lynchings, over the last few hundred years can be gained from a book of actual photos by James Allen, titled *Without Sanctuary*.

There are barbarisms and barbarisms, atrocities and atrocities. The profit motive trumps all other considerations for that class that is economically and politically powerful enough to run every country in the world today: the capitalists. They need to apply and encourage racist divisions within the working class mainly to retain their hold on power. As long as we remain under their “iron heel” we will continue to be subject to barbarisms and atrocities from all sides. Capitalism must die so that the world’s working class can live.

★ ★ ★ ★

Unemployment Is Capitalist Policy

The “Unemployment NOT Bosses’ Policy” letter (CHALLENGE, Feb. 11) makes the error of equating the anarchy of capitalist production with a ruling-class inability to control unemployment and subject it to the needs of capitalism. When U.S. bosses moved millions of jobs, factories and whole industries overseas for cheap labor and fewer safety restrictions, it was a planned policy to eliminate living-wage jobs and lower workers’ standard-of-living to be competitive with poverty wages and conditions overseas. Today many workers slave at two jobs and live in such poverty that other workers must support them with food stamps and other aid just to survive.

Over the last 30 years workers’ productivity and bosses’ profits have constantly increased while workers’ wages have remained stagnant, reducing them to poverty. The bosses have used union-busting campaigns, anti-labor legislation and cop violence against strikers to prevent workers from getting a share of the increased profits they (workers) had created. Of the world’s 35 most highly industrialized countries, the U.S. is the second highest with children in poverty (WBAI radio, 2/6/15). Many young workers unable to find jobs, afford college or health care were forced into the military and the so-called “poverty draft.” Through such policies planned and created by ruling-class power and control, poverty and unemployment have grown to assure profits and send workers to fight in bosses’ wars against their capitalist rivals.

Because U.S. rulers needed to prevent workers’ revolution during the 1930s Great Depression and wanted a share of World War II’s redivision of colonial profits, the U.S. planned an entrance into that war (see “Day of Deceit,” Robert B. Stinnett). Fourteen million unemployed workers suddenly all had “jobs” in the military and millions of women were suddenly employed in industry. After a short period of post-war reconstruction production, U.S. workers were forced back into

the present planned poverty/unemployment capitalist policy because profits drive society. Full employment and a good life for all workers can only be assured with a communist planned society where workers’ needs drive society.

★ ★ ★ ★

Black Workers, with a Capital B

After considerable discussion within the CHALLENGE-DESAFIO collective, we have decided to change “black” to “Black” when referring to the designation assigned to individuals, communities, or populations of sub-Saharan African descent. The pseudo-scientific concept of “race” is the primary weapon used by the capitalist class to divide and exploit the working class. While racism is a brutal, daily reality for Black, Latin, and Asian workers, “race” is purely a social construct. It is a ruling-class fiction with no genetic basis.

Furthermore, the false choices that the bosses present to workers dictate how workers utilize upper-case and lower-case terms. Most of the terms we use such as Latin, Asian, etc., were influenced by the bosses hold of state power. Not until the Party takes state power can we change words!

The lower-case “black” is defined in one of the bourgeoisie’s dictionaries as, “the opposite to white: colourless from the absence or complete absorption of light” (Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, 2002). Outer space is objectively black. Coal can be described as black, and also pots, kettles and a number of animals.

None of the hundreds of millions of Black people fit this definition. They come in a spectrum of shades and hues, but none are colorless. In the Western Hemisphere in particular, to be Black is to trace one’s family history to institutionalized slavery.

Our switch to the upper-case “Black,” in referring to “Black workers” or “Black students,” acknowledges the word’s social and political context, not its literal meaning. Decades ago, the upper-case “Black” was popularized by some anti-communist Black nationalist groups, along with the slogan of “Black Power.” We cannot allow the nationalists or any bourgeois group to decide how we use language. It is our job to fit words to describe science as we know it, and to our communist understanding of the world.

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By Rail or Pipeline, Oil Deadly for Workers

Continued from page 8

Tar sands are hazardous at all phases from mining to refining. Many studies have shown elevated levels of cancer, cardiovascular and respiratory problems near mines and refineries. And communities near refineries are usually of poor people of color. Communities living near a spill are also at risk. After the Kalamazoo spill, the Michigan Department of Public Health determined that 320 people suffered adverse health effects, including cardiovascular, dermal, gastrointestinal, neurological, ocular, renal, and respiratory impacts.

Pipeline spills are increasingly common. In January, there were at least four major pipeline incidents nationwide, including a gas pipeline explosion in West Virginia; a pipeline spill that saw up to 50,000 gallons of crude oil spilled into the Yellowstone River, and a gas pipeline explosion in Mississippi.

And these mishaps are the ones we hear about. North Dakota seems to have spills on an ongoing basis. An Associated Press investigation in 2013 revealed nearly 300 oil pipeline spills in ND that occurred over a two-year period and were not disclosed to the public.

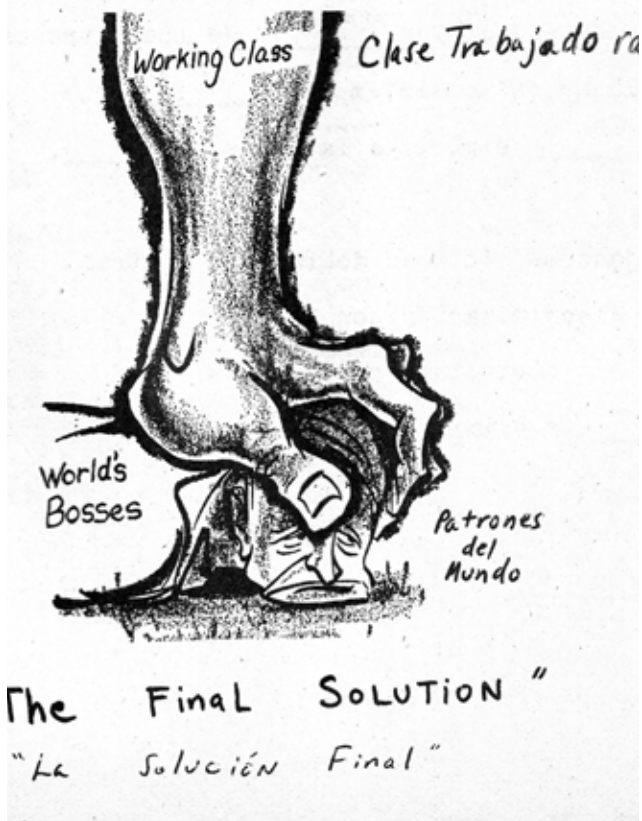
The Path Forward

The week of the triple oil disasters was an example of the extreme weather associated with climate change, with temperatures near zero in the eastern third of the country. The corporate media rarely con-

nects climate change and fossil fuel disasters, though they are closely related. Burning fossil fuels, and a society making almost no efforts toward a sustainable energy path, are the main causes of climate change. How many disasters and extremes of climate will it take to connect the dots, much less change our path? And even if the media and misleaders do connect them, politicians beholden to the fuel giants, like the Koch brothers, are not going to make the change. Oil billionaires fund "research" and candidates who spread the absurdities that climate change is not caused by human activity, or that fossil fuel emissions are not harmful.

The enormous stores of oil and gas from the Bakken fields should be used in moderation, as the U.S. marches on a path to sustainable energy. And there is only one good place for tar sands oil: in the ground. Climate scientists have said that if that oil is burned, it is game over for climate change. This eventuality makes the recent rash of catastrophes only Act I in a much larger, global disaster.

The fact is, capitalists must maximize profits in the short run — that's competition. Such a system can never step back and make the huge investments needed to safely change over to other forms of energy. There will be no end to climate change or the dangers of oil production and transport until we get rid of this system altogether. We must replace it with communism, a system in the interest and safety of the working class. ☸



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

Mexico: armed protesters chase gangs, evict mayors, block highways to disrupt elections in the name of murdered students

NYT, 2/13 — CHILPANCINGO, Mexico — A former cattle trader juggles two cellphones to direct truckloads of armed volunteers who have replaced the meager police forces across a swath of small towns....

Protesters rattle the gates of military bases and have evicted mayors from about half the state's town halls.

As election season begins in Guerrero, what has been at best a tenuous hold on order in Mexico's most violent state is fast disintegrating.

After the disappearance of 43 students from a rural teachers college last September — believed to be the actions of an alliance among gangs, local politicians and the municipal police — activist groups have sworn to disrupt the June elections in the name of the missing students.

"The no-election movement could gather strength," said Juan Angulo Osorio, the editor of El Sur, a Guerrero newspaper. "It's seen as the only way to punish the politicians."

...The frustration with the inability of the authorities to rein in organized crime groups, which traffic heroin and create terror through kidnapping and extortion, is leading a growing number of communities to take control of their own security....

Students from Ayotzinapa and elsewhere have swelled the demonstrations. The state teachers union has expressed solidarity and attached the students' case to their...demands to roll back an education overhaul. And some teachers have burned state government buildings and cars, evicted mayors from about half the state's town halls and continually block the highway that runs from Mexico City to Acapulco, the state's largest city....

Two years ago....community police forces....armed with shotguns,...succeeded in running criminal gangs out of small towns and won the loyalty of many residents who distrust the police and the military.

Obama's Concentration Camps for Immigrants

NYT, 2/8 — The Obama administration's draconian

policy toward female refugees and their children has sown misery on the border.... "It's a jail, and the women and children are being led around by guards"....

L., an asylum seeker in her early 30s, fled Honduras with her young son. After surrendering to U.S. officials at the border, they were detained at the federal facility in Artesia, N.M., for three months. They were made to sleep four families to a room; during their stay the boy became ill first with chicken pox, then tonsillitis and was eventually hospitalized with a high fever....L. and her son are currently...awaiting an asylum hearing.

Uncounted casualties from rulers' wars: 8,030 GI suicides a year

NYT, 2/4 — ...Serving in Iraq, Clay Hunt barely missed being killed...yet he faced what proved to be more powerful foes....depression and post-traumatic stress disorder. Mr. Hunt killed himself four years ago....

According to the latest government data, an estimated 22 veterans kill themselves every day. While many are older veterans, a survey by the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America...found that two out of five of its members knew a recent combat veteran who had committed suicide.

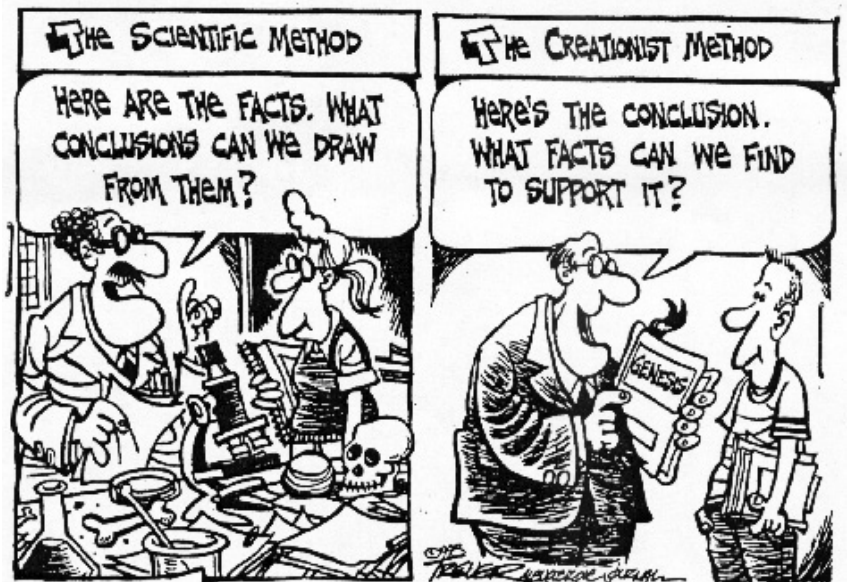
Muslims here long before the 'founding fathers'

NYT, 2/9 — Muslims arrived here before the founding of the United States — not just a few, but thousands.

They have been largely overlooked because they were not free to practice their faith....Islam in America is...a tradition with deep roots here, despite being among the most suppressed in the nation's history....

Plantation owners in Louisiana made it a point to add enslaved Muslims to their labor force, relying on their experience with the cultivation of indigo and rice....

The story of Islam in early America is not merely one of isolated individuals. An estimated 20 percent of enslaved Africans were Muslims....



Islam is part of...[U.S.] history...not just of the enslaved but of Arab immigrants in the late 19th century, and in the 20th century of many African-Americans reclaiming and making it as their own. For generations, its adherents have straddled a nation that jolts from promises of religious freedom to events that give the lie to those promises.

World's bosses don't rate Muslim victims with racist 'Charlie'

NYT, 2/14 — ...There young [Muslim] students [were]...shot and killed....Tuesday afternoon in Chapel Hill, N.C., but most news media in the United States and abroad did not report on it until later the next day....

...People expressed outrage on Twitter at...inconsistent standards when either the suspects or the victims of a crime were Muslim....

...The father of the two slain women...questioned the attention his daughters' killing had received in comparison with crimes committed by Muslims.

"If a Muslim commits a crime, it's on the news 24/7 for two months," Dr. Abu-Salha, a psychiatrist in Clayton, N.C., told the Associated Press. "When we are executed in numbers, it's on the news for seconds...."

Natasha Tynes, a Jordanian-American...wrote on Facebook, "I guess there is no 'Je Suis' hashtag for the three Muslims gunned down in Chapel Hill," and wondered if world leaders would march in the streets to condemn the killings as they did after the attacks in Paris...on the satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo..."

AFTER FERGUSON INDUSTRIAL WORKERS STIRRED UP

LOS ANGELES, February 21 — While 13,000 West Coast dock workers returned to work today, another 1,350 oil refinery workers walked out at the Motiva Enterprises refinery in Port Arthur, Texas, the largest refinery in the U.S.

The dock workers, members of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) have been waging a work-to-rule campaign against the Pacific Maritime Association (PMA), in a nine-month contract fight. Once a communist-led union, the ILWU remains the most militant, left-wing union in the U.S. They struck the docks during the Occupy movement and again over the issue of racist police terror and the killing of Oscar Grant. They also refused to unload Israeli ships during the bombing of Gaza last summer.

The contract covers all West Coast dock workers, leaving the bosses little wiggle room when there is a dispute. A deal was finally reached after Obama ordered U.S. Labor Secretary Thomas Perez to San Francisco to get the docks back up and running. The new contract covers docks at 29 seaports that handle about \$1 trillion worth of cargo annually. The amount of cargo trailers waiting to be unloaded at just the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, if stacked one on top of the other, would reach the International Space Station. U.S. exports are also waiting to reach Asian markets, from agricultural goods to auto parts.

The details of the agreement have not been released, but the PMA's "last, best and final" offer included continuing



fully paid health coverage, an \$11,000 increase in the maximum pension benefit, and a \$1/hour wage increase over each of the next five years.

On Strike!

Meanwhile, the first nationwide oil refinery strike in more than 30 years is growing. The United Steelworkers union represents over 30,000 workers at refineries, terminals, petrochemical plants and pipelines across the country that produce more than 60 percent of U.S. oil. The Unfair Labor Practice strike over health and safety issues began on February 1, at nine strategic sites in Texas, California, Washington, and Kentucky and has spread to sites in Indiana and Ohio. The Motiva refinery is a joint venture be-

tween Shell and Saudi Refining Inc. that produces over 600,000 barrels per day. The walkout there raises the strike level from 10 percent to 20 percent of the workforce, with the rest of the workers poised to go out at any time.

The union called the strike after rejecting proposals from Royal Dutch Shell, the lead negotiator for Tesoro Corporation, Exxon Mobil, Marathon Petroleum, and LyondellBasell Industries. The U.S. oil industry made almost \$90 billion in profit in 2014.

No Blood for Oil

Workers are demanding the hiring of hundreds of new workers for safe staffing levels, an end to the use of outside

contractors on daily maintenance work, and increased time off between shifts to combat fatigue. This strike shows that the slogan "No Blood for Oil," rings true whether in the U.S., Iraq or Syria.

These strikes reflect the potential power of the industrial working class. Nothing moves without workers. The slightest stirring strikes fear among the war makers and strikebreakers, especially coming on the heels of the Ferguson rebellion and nationwide upsurge. As May Day approaches, we fight for the day when that power is unleashed to build a communist world, based on equality and meeting the needs of the international working class.✊

By Rail or Pipeline, Oil Deadly for Workers

The week of February 16 was a banner week for oil catastrophes — oil train derailments in West Virginia and Ontario, Canada, and a refinery explosion south of Los Angeles.

In Ontario, a train carrying Alberta tar sands crude derailed and exploded. In West Virginia, a train carrying light, volatile crude from the huge Bakken oil fields in North Dakota, derailed in the town of Mt. Carbon. At least 15 cars were set on fire, and at least one house burned down. It took five days to put the fires out, forcing an evacuation of many homes, and potentially contaminating a river used for drinking water.

Why are there so many derailments? Authorities point to tanker cars inadequate for volatiles and vulnerable to puncture, limited maintenance of track, and excessive speed as risk factors. But the Ontario train was using newer, "improved" cars, was traveling below the speed limit, and on tracks that had been inspected two days before. We can only expect more derailments. Not only because tanker cars are unsafe, but the number of oil trains in North America has increased by 4,000 percent in the last five years. They are running all over the U.S., through heavily populated communities next to backyards and schools.

Bakken crude is light, volatile and highly flammable and explosive. Derailments are characterized by explosions sending huge balls of fire high into the

sky, one car igniting another in a chain reaction. Since oil trains are often a mile or more long, and each car carries about 30,000 gallons, they have the potential to spread fiery explosions over large areas.

Spills And Leaks Common

Tar sands derailments can also result in explosion, but spills, leaks and derailments are hazardous in additional ways. The crude must be transported heated and under high pressure, because it is so thick and viscous. It also has acidic components. These three factors make it corrosive, leading to frequent leaks and spills. High pressure leaks can spew out

geysers, releasing thousands of gallons in minutes.

TransCanada, owner of the Keystone XL pipeline, had a dozen spills in its first pipeline in less than a year of operation (foe.org). Tar sands spills into water create monumental cleanup tasks, as the heavy crude sinks to the bottom in both fresh and salt water. A pipeline rupture in Michigan in 2010 spilled over a million gallons into the the Kalamazoo River, leading to the most expensive oil pipeline cleanup in U.S. history. As of 2013, more than \$1 billion had been spent, but 40 miles of the river were still contaminated.

Tar sands are too thick to transport through pipelines or on and off tanker cars without dilution and heating. The diluent is a mixture of light weight, volatile hydrocarbons, including benzene, which is associated with leukemia. When a spill or leak occurs, these volatiles are released into the air. Leaks occur at all phases of transport, transfer onto and off of trains, and through refining. When the oil is heated, its high level of sulfur causes emissions of sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides, both associated with smog. Sulfur dioxide can also cause or aggravate heart and lung problems.

Continued on page 7

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