

CHALLENGE



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PAKISTAN MAY DAY WOMEN AND FARM WORKERS UNITE VS. BOSSES

SINDH, PAKISTAN, May 1 — More than 1,000 workers marched here today, demanding an end to the anti-labor contract system, to recognize home-based women workers as workers under labor laws, and to implement the labor laws and safeguards for agricultural workers. No law can protect workers from capitalist exploitation. PLP asserted that we need to build a communist movement to defeat imperialism and overthrow capitalism with workers’ power.

The mass May Day was staged by the National Trade Union Federation (NTUF), Home Based Women Workers Federation (HBWWF), and Sindh Agricultural General Workers Union.

One speaker said that workers — from the fields to the factories — were facing brutal exploitation. While there may be labor laws for the industrial sector, they are merely on paper and remain unimplemented. He called the ruling class here an agent of finance capitalists and imperialists, working to privatize and end state subsidies of oil, gas, food and water. The union leaders team up with the bosses to feed workers illusions. The bosses’ laws don’t protect workers. Workers protect

workers. Every fight we engage in exposes the ruling class. What’s more, each fight toughens us up. We build confidence in our ability to fight for communist revolution.

Militant Women Workers

A woman speaker attacked the deprivation of millions of home-based workers who use their homes as factories and produce goods for industrialists. These mostly women workers are part of the production process and make up a 40 percent share of the national economy. These women work two jobs simultaneously, as a waged factory worker and as an unwaged worker in the family. The speaker said those working in this “informal labor sector” are not even recognized as workers by the ruling class government. More than 15 million home-based workers have been demanding their basic rights for the last 20 years, and now they are organizing. This fight against sexism is going to hit the bosses where it hurts. These women had a militant contingent on May Day.

Finally, a leader of the farm workers said that

though technically they are covered under labor law Sindh Industrial Relations Act 2013, the laws are never enforced. The landlords force them into private jails. Forced labor is also common. Agricultural workers are treated worse than animals.

The non-Muslim workers are facing even worse attacks in the name of religion. This includes the Kolhi (descendants of the hunting-gathering population that once subsisted on Thar Desert’s fauna), Bheel (a majority-Hindu tribal community) and Meghwars (the “untouchable” community under the Hindu caste system). Girls are kidnapped, sexually tortured, and forced to change their religion. Religious leaders, the government and the courts are all responsible for this reign of sexist, racist terror.

A mass revolutionary communist PLP will bring this struggle to its logical conclusion — the overthrow of the bosses. The religious and military fascists will be eradicated with communist revolution. For that, we need one international party, not unions. It’s fertile ground and dangerous work, but the harvest will be abundant.☺

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

China Military Growth Sets Stage for War

Recent tensions between the U.S. and China reflect a sharpening battle among imperialists for the world’s wealth. The U.S., top dog since World War II, is struggling to maintain control over resources, markets and exploitable labor. With critical shipping routes and huge oil reserves in the South China Sea at stake, a clash between the U.S. and China looms as a potential prelude to all-out war, the inevitable outgrowth of imperialist competition.

As always under capitalism, the international working class will bear the brunt of this conflict. Imperialist war will end only when the working class, led by the revolutionary communist Progressive Labor Party, seizes state power. Only communism can serve workers’ needs. Only a communist society led by PLP can truly make us free.

Challenging U.S. Supremacy

Over the past 18 months, China has escalated its campaign to claim sovereignty over the South China Sea, a 1.4-million-square-mile stretch of the Pacific. By building two thousand acres of artificial islands as military outposts, China is asserting its dominance over Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, and other smaller capitalist powers in the region. But its main thrust is to challenge U.S. naval supremacy from the Pacific to the Mediterranean.

On May 25, five days after a U.S. surveillance aircraft was warned away from a disputed reef where China is building an airstrip, “a Chinese foreign ministry spokeswoman called on America to end its ‘provocative behaviour.’ Global Times, a state-owned newspaper known for its hardline views, said war would be ‘inevitable’ if America kept complaining about the island-building” (Economist, 5/30/15).

Meanwhile, the U.S. is countering China’s activity in the Pacific and any threat to its military bases in Guam. Under a 10-year defense pact signed in April 2014, the U.S. will have access to eight military bases in the Philippines—including two with ready access to the Spratly archipelago in the South China Sea, the site of China’s chain of island fortresses. As the opposing

imperialist powers fortify their positions, a Philippine military consultant said, “Once one side crosses, then it will be like a tripwire, all hell will break loose” (Straits Times, 5/31/15).

The Next Pearl Harbor?

Island building reflects the Chinese bosses’ long-range planning for the same scenario that led Japan to strike Pearl Harbor and ignite World War II: a U.S.-enforced oil embargo. Beijing is well aware of its vulnerability as an oil importer. Much of its energy supply travels thousands of miles over seas patrolled by the U.S. Navy.

In response, the imperialist generals of China’s People’s Liberation Army (PLA) are undertaking a massive buildup for a potential World War III. On May 26, they released an official “white paper.” According to the Council on Foreign Relations, the U.S. bosses’ leading think tank:

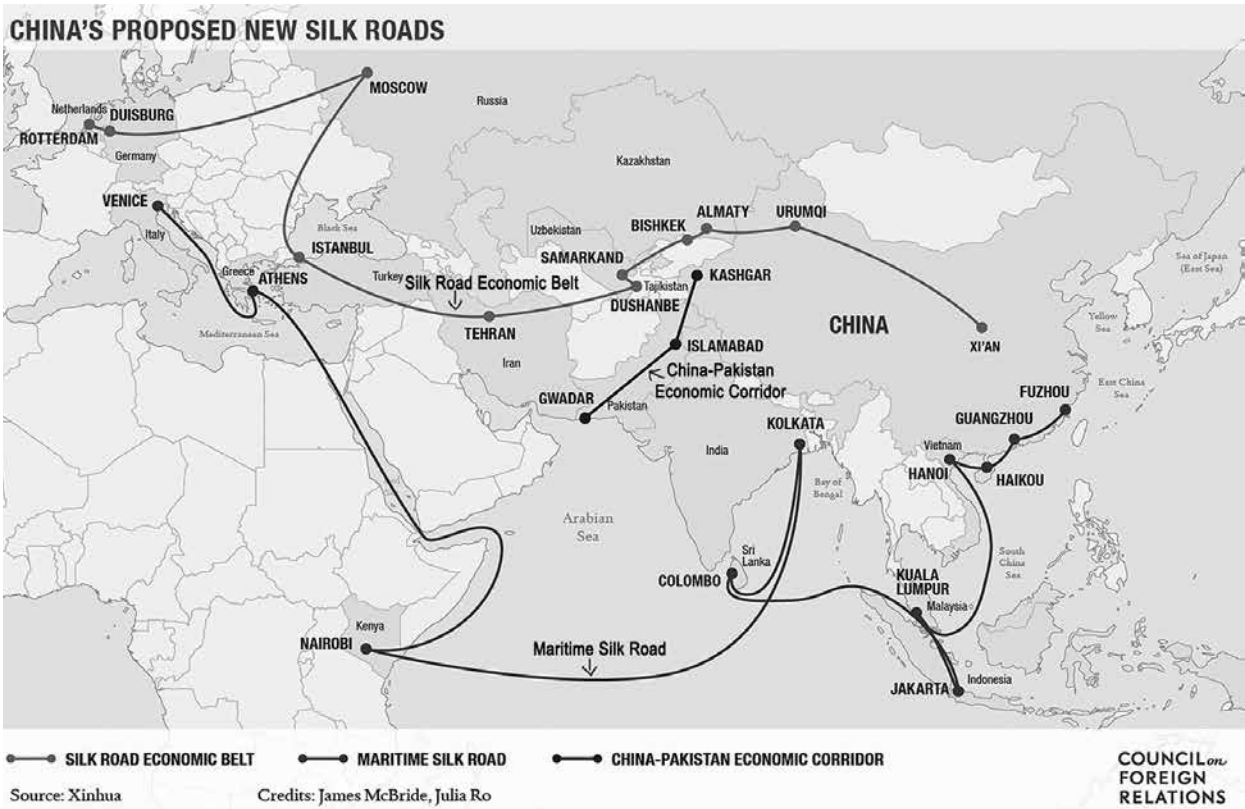
China is building a military to fight and win wars. The Chinese military is focused on ensuring recent investments in the PLA translate into genuine warfighting capability. The white paper clearly states that the PLA intends to “endeavor to seize the strategic initiative in military struggle, proactively plan for military struggle in all directions and domains, and grasp the opportunities to accelerate military building, reform and development” (CFR, 5/27/15).

Beijing’s anti-U.S., blue-water push dovetails with its Maritime Silk Road project. It aims to extend its maritime influence through Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, India, Pakistan, and Kenya—and, via the Suez Canal, to Greece and Italy in the Mediterranean Sea, a U.S. lake since the Soviet implosion of the 1980s.

As Foreign Affairs, the CFR’s journal, reported:

On May 21, Russia and China concluded ten days of joint naval exercises in the eastern Mediterranean, which included live fire drills. China and

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Unite Against Racist Murders

BROOKLYN, May 21—Today marked the 22nd monthly anniversary of Kiyam Livingston's death while held in a Brooklyn holding cell and denied medical attention. Led by her mother, neighbors, friends and PLers, demonstrations against the racist murder of Kiyam at the hands of her NYPD jailers have been held every month since.

In this struggle, as well as in the campaigns for justice for Shantel Davis, Kiki Gray and too many more, our message has been consistent. We have called for working-class unity — for men and women, Black, Latin and white — to join this fight against racist police terror. We have brought this message into unions, churches, schools and other organizations, securing support for the struggle and bringing out members of those organizations to participate in the demonstrations and other activities. Our message that we all have a stake and obligation to fight back has been well received.

We have explained that racist murders by the police are not the actions of "a few bad apples" but are caused by the capitalist system's need to terrorize working-class communities and dampen fightback against the exploitation all workers face. This occurs most often in Black, Latin and immigrant neighborhoods. The systemic nature of this violence is shown by numerous cases where no charges are brought against the kkkops, or they are simply let off by a judge.

We've drawn two lessons: capitalism must be overthrown with communist revolution if we want to end this police terror, and we must build working-class fighting unity to do this. At the rallies, hundreds of CHALLENGEs are distributed to workers on their way home and or those stopping to listen to the speeches. Our 2015 May Day March through the heart of this Flatbush neighborhood was well received, as thousands of CHALLENGEs were distributed and thousands saluted our march and joined in our chants.

But even within a positive struggle, bad ideas can



surface. Today's rally was attended by a group from "Black Women's Lives Matter." They argued that white men shouldn't have spoken at this rally, and that they benefit from their white skin and gender. They also said that fighting sexism is more important than fighting racism. In fact, they spent more time attacking the white male committee members than they did attacking Kiyam's murderers. The "identity politics" of this group divides the working class. After they spoke, Kiyam's mother spoke, saying she was heartened by support, but felt the need to name and thank the members of the Justice for Kiyam Committee after the verbal attack by this group.

Many people are drawn to the fight against police terror. This is a good thing. Each brings their understanding of the world to this fight. PLP and CHALLENGE have been fighting this issue since our birth, 50 years ago. "Police War on Harlem" was the headline of our first edition! Our members walked the walk and talked the talk in the Harlem Rebellion, as we have in countless struggles since. We welcome the exchange of ideas. Communist revolutionaries have long said we have nothing to lose but our chains, we have a world to win!✊

Politicians Can't Fix Racist Gentrification

NEW YORK CITY — A group of PLers recently went with a coalition of community groups to call on New York State legislators to save a "rent stabilization" law at risk of being gutted by the local bosses in favor of "mixed"-income neighborhoods. The current law limits rent increases for workers on short-term leases (one and two years) to those determined by a Rent Stabilization Board, with a cap on how much landlords may increase rent.

Landlords and others who support throwing poorer workers out to attract wealthier tenants insist that "mixed"-income neighborhoods are necessary to bring in services. These filth use racist code words, like making Black and Latin-majority neighborhoods "cleaner," or "safer," or "reducing crime." They support changing the laws to better suit their profit agenda. Liberal rulers would like to put power into the hands of the Warren Buffets who can "take care of poor people" while pretending that the reality of this racist capitalist dictatorship over the working class doesn't exist.

Mayor Bill de Blasio has promised to find or build 200,000 "affordable" housing units. "Affordable" is out of reach for many families whose annual income is \$16,000 to \$23,000. For example, new buildings will be built in East New York, Brooklyn. The city will provide incentives and tax breaks to the developers so that 20 to 30 percent of the apartments will be "affordable," with around 10 percent meeting the definition of "low" income. This will guarantee swollen profits for the real estate industry, dramatically increasing overall rents by squeezing out low-rent apartments.

New York City has long been in a major housing crisis. It has lost 400,000 "low" and "moderate" rent housing units, including 55,000 rent-stabilized apart-

ments where rents rose above \$2,500 a month and were de-regulated by the law. Working-class tenants, including the elderly, already pay 50 percent or more of their income for rent. Gentrification of working-class communities in all five boroughs has progressed rapidly, displacing thousands of families and changing entire communities.

Landlords routinely flout the law and ignore repairs, leave buildings in dangerous conditions, and commit deliberate criminal acts and harassment to force tenants to move. Government-owned housing projects languish for lack of repairs, such as the building where the NYPD murdered Akai Gurley. Small buildings and private houses for rent are not covered by any rent laws at all, and rents rise almost overnight and transform entire blocks into upper-income housing. Working-class tenants have nowhere to go, so some leave the city to face long and difficult commutes to work. Tenant success stories in the courts, welcome as they are, are extremely few in number.

PLers at the rally argued that the working class needs to understand that bankers, bosses and the real estate industry hold class power. Politicians who thrive on the cheers while chanting empty slogans don't have a magic wand to change "bad landlords." Their bosses are the capitalists! It is dangerous for workers to be lulled by the liberal politicians into having false hopes about capitalism. We argued for moving beyond short-term limited reforms, however necessary, to overthrow capitalism and fight for workers' power under communism. United by an international PLP, we can build real housing for all, in a system based on workers sharing what we have so that we can meet the needs of the working class worldwide.✊

Today's Modest Gains Will Lead to Revolution

Fightback on Indiana campus has a solid foundation with potential for growth.

INDIANA — A group of students got together and organized an anti-police terror rally on campus. The rally was organized by three student organizations, Students for Social Change, Black Student Union, and the Latin Cultural Club, where PL has a solid base.

The aim of the rally was to show solidarity with Walter Scott in Charleston, South Carolina, Justus Howell in Zion, Illinois, and Freddie Gray in Baltimore. PLers and friends gave speeches detailing the injustices of capitalism and how it needs racism and police terror to sustain itself. Connections with the struggle in Ayotzinapa and Palestine were made as well.

Building Leadership

In the initial planning of the rally, there were some questions as to how the university, which is very bureaucratic, would respond to an unplanned protest. Despite this uncertainty, we continued with having the rally and dared the administration to stop us. They never did.

The number of students at the rally was small. Initially there were about seven, but that number grew to fifteen after some students passing by decided to join.

We managed to get out about 30 CHALLENGEs even though the area we selected (mistakenly) wasn't as highly trafficked as we had at first thought. Even though we didn't find as many passersby as we wanted, friends who are new to giving leadership were strengthened and politicized by organizing the event.

After the rally, they were already saying, "When are we organizing the next one?" and "The next one should be at City Hall, so we can call out the mayor."

Communism: A Long-term Struggle

Campus work in Indiana is very modest and is rebuilding itself. But even with these slow gains, the work is solid and has a sound foundation. We have learned first-hand that quality is primary over quantity, and that students can be won to multi-racial unity. We are continuing the struggle to win our base to communism, not just in theory or practice, but in both.

This takes a long-term outlook on revolution, because even after the eventual seizure of state power, the actual revolution is just beginning. Taking power will be a hard task to complete, but reorganizing society will be an even harder one. However, it is what is to be done if we wish to have a world free from exploitation, wars, racism, sexism, and any other obstacle that oppresses the working class.✊

Hospital Workers Need Unity with Patients

BROOKLYN — Medical care for working people, and the jobs of the workers who provide it are under attack in Brooklyn, as elsewhere. The good news is that workers are fighting back against layoffs, cutbacks and hospital closings.

At Downstate Medical Center, part of the State University of New York, workers are now suffering layoffs in every department, even as the state spends tens of millions on an outside consultant, PITT Management, hired to orchestrate the layoffs. Despite the construction of two big new buildings, the administration claims there's no money!

No money for workers' health, that is. In an area that's heavily populated by Black and Latin working-class families, where racist cops have killed young Black workers including Shantel Davis and Kiki Gray, and where more, not less, health care is needed, Governor Andrew Cuomo has cut funds for this safety-net hospital. Long Island College Hospital has been closed. Interfaith and Brookdale workers are fighting to stop closings.

Inside the remaining hospitals, conditions are deteriorating due to the layoffs. The cleaning department is so depleted that workers are exhausting themselves with mandated overtime. Other workers have also been loaded with more work, including nurses. Large areas of maintenance have been contracted out. And yet, despite having three unions, the only advice these bosses give workers is to keep their heads down and hope that lawyers can get them reinstated! The unions hide the number of layoffs and collaborate openly with the bosses to keep us pacified.

But workers and neighborhood residents are far from pacified. In the past, we organized protests outside of the hospital with many community members joining hospital workers against layoffs and the closing of the hospital. That's the spirit of struggle that we need to re-awaken now to stop the racist layoffs. The bosses use us as pawns for profit; only a communist system can take us out of the chaos of the capitalist system. And only the working class, united and led by its communist party, PLP, can win that future for our class.✪

Workers' Lives Matter

INDIANA — Progressive Labor Party's political work here has become immersed in the Black Lives Matter Movement. We have begun to merge our campus and community bases in Indiana to focus collectively on organizing in the Black Lives Matter (BLM) struggle. The political line in the BLM movement is very nationalist at times and reformist in nature, but it is filled with many workers who want to fight against injustice. Moreover, it is our job to win these workers. If Black workers are a key revolutionary force, then the Party must organize in these struggles and provide revolutionary leadership to them.

In our local BLM movement, Party members provide key leadership. We struggle within the organization to pull it further to the left, and to keep the focus from becoming sucked into an electoral campaign. We fight against reactionary ideas like "Black Lives Matter" or "All Lives Matter" and instead assert that "Workers' Lives Matter," regardless of whether they are Black, Cambodian, or Palestinian. Being involved in this mass organization has given us the opportunity to unite workers in north-west Indiana, with the focus being the

economically devastated and super-oppressed workers there.

'Stop These Racist Sweeps'

Black workers here, like others in majority Black cities in America, are targets of traffic "sweeps" which have resulted in predatory fines, and mass stop-and-frisk tactics. Indiana police target youth for jaywalking. This has become a moneymaking tool in a number of cities, and Black Lives Matter, with leadership of PLers, has fought these policies.

Our fightback led to a town hall meeting with the community, where many workers told their stories of racist police encounters. The mayor and police chief were in attendance and spoke. People in the audience, however, saw through their lies and called them out. A comrade gave a speech that called out capitalism as the culprit, and ended with, "stop these racist sweeps." A criticism was that there was no open PLP speech made. However, some contacts were made and two young Black women workers have been invited to a study group.

We must lead the struggle

With the recent struggle in Baltimore heating up, it can only make us wonder: Could places like Detroit and other super exploited cities be next? Building a base in high-unemployment areas is a critical task for the Party. Ferguson and Baltimore are great examples of this.

When we get involved in these mass struggles, the Party becomes stronger. Younger comrades learn how to lead and veteran comrades are sharpened as well. We also get a glimpse of communism. Through organizing rallies, marches, and events, we see how workers can and will eventually organize a society where everyone has a say and uses their skills to contribute to the collective need.

But with this look at collectivity, we also get a glimpse of fascism. The continued militarization of police shows us that the bosses in the U.S. are getting workers ready for complete fascism. But it also shows that workers are ready to fight against it. The Progressive Labor Party must be ready and in position to lead this fightback.✪

Students, Profs Fight Back Against Racist College Cuts



BOSTON — Chants rang out across the Roxbury Community College (RCC) campus "Hands off RCC, this is our community," and "No more top down management, no more lies, we want a college where students thrive."

It was the day after faculty and staff voted "no confidence" in the new administration, and 25 faculty, staff, and students rallied in front of the administration building.

The strong statement was the latest step in the battle by students and teachers to keep alive an idea that grew out of the Civil Rights Movement, specifically the struggle to win higher education for Black students who had been excluded by inferior schools and poverty. Now the rulers' agenda for community colleges is to "vocationalize" them to serve area businesses' need for workers. Just

like K-12 education reform, this bosses' reform is a response to an intensifying capitalist crisis.

RCC President Valerie Roberson's job is to carry out this agenda. In 16 months, the administration has forced out 55 workers, increased class size, forced teachers to teach classes outside their field, and cut back on support services. The teaching of critical reading, writing, and thinking is being sacrificed and policy changes are allowing fewer students into four-year colleges.

Although RCC was plagued for decades by dysfunctional administration and underfunding, it became known as a socially conscious community that empowered students to achieve their aspirations. Now, as U.S. capitalism declines, the rulers need the public schools and colleges to help them improve our

competitiveness with rival capitalists. This development is part of growing fascism when the bosses must rule with an iron fist, clamping down on workers as they militarize society and prepare for world war.

Although we may not be able to stop this development, by fighting back we can slow it down, building unity and a spirit of resistance for the bigger struggles to come. This requires a long-term outlook, which faculty, staff, and students need to develop. Their fear was offset by the unity we built between the two unions and students as well as their anger at how they are being treated. The biggest weakness was our failure to mobilize students. As of today, the vast majority of RCC students remain in the dark about why they need to fight back. Their passivity is a weakness in our class, created by decades of ruling-class strategy to depoliticize youth and win them to individualism and patriotism.

Worried that activism and dissent will deepen at RCC and spread beyond it, the Department of Higher Education has stepped in to negotiate with the unions. For us, these on-going meetings are an opportunity to maintain momentum and win some gains — but the real gain is the growth of the revolutionary communist movement. PLP has played a crucial role sharpening up the class struggle, but we need to do more. More young people reading CHALLENGE, more meeting with us, and more workers and youth understanding our struggle—those are the steps we need to build a communist revolution.✪



Women Workers Strike at Detention Center

Anti-sexist struggle against U.S. imperialism held back by reform. Women workers need communist revolution.

DILLEY, TEXAS, May 21 — On May 8, a federal judge in Texas refused to protect hunger-striking immigrant mothers from retaliation by jail guards at Karnes County Residential Center. Strike leaders had been placed in isolation, fired from jail jobs and accused of insurrection.

The 78 women on hunger strike are leading the fight for freedom by thousands of immigrant women and children who have crossed into the U.S. since last summer. Obama's sexist and racist Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) lawyers claim that the women pose a significant "threat to U.S. national security" by their mass migration. Therefore all were held initially without bail.

In support of the women's release, 1,000 marched on the new jail here. PLP led the strikers with anti-racist and anti-capitalist chants, but the strikers were sometimes misled by others chanting to improve U.S. democracy. Nevertheless, dozens protested yesterday at the ICE office to deliver petitions demanding freedom for all jailed women and youth. Liberal church groups call the mass incarceration of women and kids an immoral act by the U.S. government. Civil rights lawyers in the federal court action argued without success that the women's hunger strike was an exercise of free speech.

PL members and friends attended the court hearings and worked to support the strikers. But no reform group leaders are willing to identify the real cause of the problem — U.S. imperialism's fight to maintain the profits of the ruling class worldwide. Racist and sexist prison guards are only one symptom of U.S. imperialism.

Mass Incarceration for Profit

The mass incarceration of Latin women and youth in Texas is part of the mass refugee crisis affecting 50 million people around the world. U.S. drone attacks force millions to flee their homes in Syria, Yemen, and other countries. City police from Ferguson to Baltimore incarcerate millions. In almost every case, the underlying cause of the displacement, incarceration or murder of millions of working class people is the fight to defend or expand markets and resources by the United States. The U.S. bosses will stop at nothing to maintain dominance.

Legalistic fights for "asylum" and inmate "free speech" for women fleeing U.S.-funded oppression in their original countries are well-meaning dead ends. The U.S. government doesn't readily grant asylum to people fleeing U.S.-backed fascist regimes. Nor will it allow hunger strikers to shut down prisons under court-ordered First Amendment free speech doctrines.

Striking women must expand their fight. We should not physically weakening our forces through a hunger strike, which runs on the incorrect assumption that our oppressors will be pressured



or moved to act by witnessing our suffering. As the 2,000 rebelling immigrant prisoners in the Willsey, TX prison demonstrated earlier this year, physical destruction of prison facilities and attacks on guards by inmates are an even more serious threat to the U.S. fascist immigration system. When prisoners strike at once, with strikes in solidarity by industrial workers who can shut off profits to the ruling class, the system will be more seriously threatened.

But in this period of capitalist crisis caused by long-term decline, bosses have little ability to reform the system, even temporarily. When the working class in Baltimore rebelled last month with violent attacks on the cops, Obama panicked, calling the Black youth of Baltimore "thugs." Obama, Baltimore's Black mayor, and the new U.S. Attorney General then followed the ruling-class script by mobilizing cops, troops, and sell-out community programs. The rulers brought a few charges against Baltimore cops and declared the crisis over. In fact, the rulers can recover quickly from any crisis short of working-class revolution to destroy the capitalist system once and for all.

Liberal Pals: Capitalist Flunkies

No demands for reform can fix the problems created by capitalism. A few racist cops do not cause the mass incarceration of Black and Latin workers. Likewise, the mass deportation of families is not the byproduct of a "broken" immigration system. These are the products of U.S. imperialism in a period of decline. This system, actually controlled by bank owners and corporations through their money and their military, depends on racist super-exploitation to survive. To foster the illusion that reform is possible, the capitalists use the media to spread the illusion that elected politicians control the system. Thus, liberals proclaim

that voting is key to reform. But Democrat and Republican flunkies all take their orders from the capitalist class.

In this period of impending imperialist war, the electoral circus will serve only to revive faith in reform and get people

ready to fight on the side of their country. History has shown that reforms are always taken away and that world war is inevitable. Don't be suckered. The only solution is to fight for communist revolution based on multi-racial unity of the working-class of the entire world!✪

China Military Growth Sets Stage for War

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Russia both see opportunity in a weakened southern Europe. In 2008, the China Ocean Shipping Company (COSCO) invested 4.3 billion euros to operate one of the three terminals at the Greek port of Piraeus and rebuild a second terminal there, a venture that would give China's Maritime Silk Road an important outlet in the Mediterranean. Meanwhile Gazprom, Russia's state-owned gas company, is seeking to develop a new gas pipeline via Turkey and Greece, bypassing Ukraine (5/26/15).

Back in the Pacific, the U.S. is beginning to marshal its own potential World War III alliance, using China's expansionism as a lever to hasten Japan's remilitarization. Last July, it backed a Japanese resolution to end the longtime ban on deploying its military overseas (Washington Post, 5/23/15). For the first time, Japan will join the U.S. and Australia in a major military exercise, "a sign of the growing security links between the three countries as tensions fester over Chi-

na's island building in the South China Sea" (New York Times, 5/26/15). In addition to its military build-up in Asia, the U.S. is pushing the Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement (TPP) as an economic front against China's ambitions. But the U.S. capitalist media is openly acknowledging that these tensions may be headed toward military conflict:

The debate in Washington is over whether Chinese restraint should be encouraged through diplomacy and appeals to legal principles and international norms, or imposed by force. Either way, restraint is not assumed (Wall Street Journal, 6/2/15).

Workers Will Pay the Price

As the U.S.-China rivalry escalates, the ruling class will use anti-Chinese sentiments to rally U.S. workers to fight for the capitalists' spoils. Likewise, workers in China will make and man the guns to kill their working-class brothers and sisters. Our party fights to rid the world of ruling-class wars for profits. Join PLP today!✪

LETTERS

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



The following two letters are written by high school students in Baltimore who led walkouts following the racist police murder of Freddie Gray.

The First Walkout

The first high school walkout was on Friday, April 24. It was liberating to take a stand with many other like-minded students, leaving school to protest and march for all the lives unjustly and brutally snuffed out by the racist cops. Some students and I met in the basement of the school to discuss what we would do and how we would do it. I told them that we had to be quiet and disciplined when exiting the building. We discussed the importance of walking out against racism. Anyone who just wanted to avoid going to class was dismissed.

We all walked out of the front entrance of the building. Many began chanting and marching around our school's campus and holding up CHALLENGE newspaper ((see photo).

Along with other students, I helped lead the chants. We made two stops so that everyone could talk and say how they felt. At each stop, I gave a speech about racism, sexism, corruption and hate crimes that are bred by the capitalist system. At the last stop, a student led everyone in a prayer to finish off the protest. Before they went back in the building, I told everyone what PLP was about and invited them to May Day!

The expansion of the Progressive Labor Party will continue, and this unjust system will crack!

The Second Walkout

The following week, I heard students were planning to protest the PAARC exam, which is part of national Common Core standards.

I felt it was my responsibility as an elected student leader at our school to support my fellow classmates in a fight against an unfair school system. The test was postponed after a number of students refused to take it. An administrator lied, claiming the test was being postponed for "technical reasons." It was the bold refusals that were the real spark.

The next day, Friday May 1, students walked out again for Freddie Gray, and also against injustices in Baltimore City Public Schools. Before walking out, we chanted boldly while marching through all four floors of our school's main building.

On our minds was the thought of "productive protesting." Once outside, after we stopped the first time, we told the students that we needed to take our protests to the next level. I reminded students that the administration knows we can take the power out of their hands and into ours! But they don't stop us because they think we don't have the ability to articulate our demands.

I reminded us that even if the school system refuses to teach us those skills, there are other places and organizations where we could go to learn how to fight! At the end of the protest, the group of about 40 decided to make demands — in addition to our solidarity struggle for justice for Freddie Gray — that related to educational, emotional, and productive issues. Now, we move forward to write-ups, petitions, conferences, and much more. On the initiative of two young Black male students, a club named Students Taking Action was born out of the march.

The events in Baltimore during the earlier citywide uprising have sparked the beginnings of an unstoppable long-term rebellion. It was not a "riot," as the capi-

alist media, politicians, and some clergy have falsely characterized it. We will continue to fight back!

★★★★

Struggle and Learn

At the meeting of my retirees union chapter this month, a labor leader from the AFL-CIO came in to give us the general picture of labor and politics. His position was that politically the labor movement was in terrible trouble and that we have to ensure that the next time that democrats were voted completely in — but Democrats who completely support the positions of labor. In other words, same old, same old. But in laying out his position and talking about all the problems in the country for working people, it became a dirge that upset many of the members. During the question time for him, the questions clearly illustrated their concerns and what could be done. In each case it came down to getting out the vote.

In the "Good and Welfare" part of the meeting, I put together a picket line chant to start a song I wanted to sing. I chanted the chant "The bosses can't profit when the workers unite. Shut it down. Shut it tight," and then sang "The men and women on the line." I normally get a good response from the 200 or so members who attend these meetings. But this time the applause was thunderous, and I was surrounded by people who wanted to talk to me. There was a line of them. I was given some telephone numbers and I gave the song sheet to someone and was asked to send a song sheet to someone else. I was a little overwhelmed. People sitting in the seats around me pointed to their CHALLENGE and told me they had it.

After the event, when I was walking with one of my retiree friends, I tried to think through, and talk through, what had happened. I have been an activist in the union for 29 years and have been involved with struggles on the union floor during meetings and in my workplaces. I often brought members from my workplaces to the meetings and I usually get out 100 or so CHALLENGEs at all of the meetings. I have had limited success at winning people into the PLP from amongst the workers. I have often had raw anticommunist comments thrown at me and I have been threatened on numerous occasions, but I have always carried on. Especially at May Day or at the month of May, I would make a special project of insuring that May Day (the workers' holiday) was well understood.

Between the discussion and thinking over what had happened, it became clear to me that this was a perfect storm. I had done consistent work for 29 years. I have been singing at the retirees' meetings for almost 3 years now, while raising issues of the working class — among them racism and sexism. The world in the last 29 years has been changing dramatically for the working class. Things are getting a lot worse, and workers have become somewhat confused. But over the last two or three years, the different struggles against racism and inequality have been growing in people's minds. Then a well-known labor leader made a speech telling people that all we can do is vote and organize other people to vote while the politicians fritter away the lives of the working class, things begin to happen.

In our pamphlet, "Build a Base in the Working Class" there is a point in the early pages where we are told that we should constantly raise the line and struggle with people. It may seem like we're not getting anywhere, but we can never tell. In fact, we are getting somewhere. The consistency of raising the ideas and

getting to know people and the changing world situation (Ferguson, Baltimore, unemployment, wage disparities, the fight to raise the minimum wage) will make people more ready to listen. The lines to the song I sang at the end say, "This song is for the workers of the world. Their banners come unfurled. Sisters, brothers break your chains — let the fight begin. We have the whole wide world to win". Some of the working class are beginning to see light in the dark night. The battle is long, but the end is clear. We have a communist world to win!

★★★★

CHALLENGE Error

There's an error in the picture caption "May Day in France" (CHALLENGE, page 6, 5/20). According to the caption, "The Time of the Cherries" refers to a revolutionary song about the Paris Commune of 1871. The "Time of Cherries" was referred to as a metaphor for what life will be like under a communist society, but the story is more complex.

"The Time of the Cherries" was originally a popular love song written in 1866. In the original lyrics, a broken-hearted man warns young men to avoid beautiful women, if they fear the cruel pain of breaking up. He adds that he will always cherish cherry-picking time because it reminds him of the memory he stores in his heart, which is like an unhealed wound. Several years later, after the author participated in armed revolution, new verses were added.

In 1871, workers in Paris staged the first working-class revolution and established the first dictatorship of the proletariat: the Paris Commune. The song's author, Jean-Baptiste Clément, fought for the Commune against the combined armies of the French and German bosses.

During the final stage of the bosses' victory over the world's first proletarian government, during the "bloody week" of May 21-28, 1871, the bosses murdered 20,000 to 30,000 members of the Commune after they had surrendered. In particular, they slaughtered the nurses, who were supposedly recognized under capitalist law as "noncombatants" by the bosses. Then as now, when threatened with revolution, the bosses broke their own law. Killing noncombatants was explicitly forbidden by the bosses' first Geneva Convention of 1864, which the French bosses had signed, and established the Red Cross. On May 28, the very last day of the Commune, a young woman and ambulance nurse serving with Clément's group somehow became separated from them, never to be seen again.

In 1882, Clément published a book of his songs and dedicated "The time of the cherries" to this young ambulance nurse. He wrote: "All we knew was that she was named Louise and that she was a working class woman. ... What became of her? Was she shot down, with so many others, by [the bosses]? Wasn't it to this obscure heroine that I had to dedicate the most popular of all the songs that are in this book?"

Ever since then, the working class in France has associated "The Time of the Cherries" with the Paris Commune. It is less about "what life will be like under a communist society" than it is about unforgettable sorrow and anger at the bosses' crimes against the working class. Crimes that the international working class will one day avenge.

★★★★

Borders Kill



What an image of the misery of the world's working class under the rule of imperialism: the unseaworthy boat abandoned or sinking, with thousands of migrating workers left to starve or drown, and hundreds of thousands lined up to follow them.

The boat pictured above was in the Mediterranean Sea, where African and Middle Eastern workers seek in Europe work and refuge from war and famine. It could also be in the Andaman Sea, where workers flee Myanmar and Bangladesh for work in Malaysia or Indonesia. And earlier, it could have been in the Caribbean Sea, where starving workers sailed in rickety boats from Haiti to find work in Florida.

Even Basic Necessities Impossible Under Capitalism

This year alone, 25,000 have crossed the Andaman Sea from Myanmar and Bangladesh. In the Mediterranean, that "moat" protecting the European castle, 170,000 migrants were rescued from the sea in 2014, and nearly 500 have already drowned in the first quarter of 2015. Meanwhile, Malaysia has found 28 illegal trafficking

camps where the workers were brutally managed like caged animals. Mass graves were also found in these sites. The cruelty of labor migration shows the reality of capitalist terror against the working class.

As of May 27, Indonesia and Malaysia have reluctantly agreed to take in up to 7,000 migrants for up to a year. Thousands are now being held detention centers and camps. The workers

from Bangladesh who are considered "economic migrants" will be deported back to Bangladesh, where their punishment for trying to flee poverty awaits them. Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina degraded those seeking to flee the country as "mentally sick" and blasted them for "tainting the country's image in the international arena," declaring they "should be punished." The Rohingya migrants from Myanmar are considered to be seeking asylum and may be settled in a different country.

While the capitalists were busy with their war plans (see editorial, page 2), it was the working class who stepped up to help the migrants at sea. Workers in an Indonesian village provided food and water to hundreds of migrants. "We treated them like family," said one villager.

Communists work for the day when workers throw off their chains and win power, knowing their duty is to make a civilization which outlaws forever capitalist exploitation and all its cruelties. Those migrating workers now abandoned to the sea are the very ones who will become the gravediggers of imperialism.

Workers migrate at such peril to their lives from their original countries, devastated by imperialism, knowing what racism and repression await them at their destinations. Ultimately, labor migration profits the capitalists, who welcome the surplus of labor to keep racist wages driven down. For the bosses, the migrant families dead at sea or at camps are just "business as usual."

Migrant Workers: Potential Revolutionary Force

The international working class refuses to accept a world where murder of Black and brown workers is the order of the day. Communists believe that these migrating workers are a key element in abolishing capitalism and that we have a duty to unite them with the workers they leave behind and the workers they find in the new places — to build on them as a base for a newly conscious internationalism among all workers. They are not mere victims but workers who, if they become politically conscious, hold in their own two hands the key to ending not only their own misery but every worker's who is exploited by global capital. PLP's attitude is that labor migration is a seed of international working-class revolution.

These migrant workers have a deep knowledge of the capitalist system from their own experience, and possess deep pride in their own collective power to endure and survive. The militancy and determination they bring with them to the workers they join in their destination countries, and the knowledge they send back with their remittances to those they left behind, is our key to seizing power.

Someday, this reservoir of knowledge and passion in the hearts of migrating workers will flow into the communist philosophy of armed revolution. Our communist Party will grow to become capable of remaking the world in our image. Then we will have the answer in blood and fire to the atrocities we see today. Every new migrant's death impels us to continue the international fight for workers' power. PLP in every region, from Pakistan to Los Angeles to Colombia, should organize solidarity actions with workers in Southeast Asia. ☸



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

U.S. history: war, war, war

WashingtonsBlog, 2/20/15 — America has been at war 93 percent of the time — 222 out of 239 years — since 1776....

[Up to] 2011...since the United States was founded in 1776,...[it] has been at war during 214 out of ...235 calendar years of existence....there were only 21 calendar years in which the U.S. did not wage any wars:...

- No U.S. president truly qualifies as a peacetime president. Instead, all U.S. presidents can...be considered "war presidents."

- The U.S. has never gone a decade without war.

- The only time the U.S. went five years without a war (1935-40) was during the isolationist period of the Great Depression....

... The year-by-year timeline of America's major wars...(1776-2011) [summarized]:

Fifty-one wars against Native Americans [1776-1915]

American Revolution, Barbary Coast, War of 1812, Fiji Islands (1840), Mexican War of 1846-1848), Uruguay (1857), John Brown's raid (1859), Paraguay (1859), Korea (1871), Mexico (1873-1896 and 1914-1919), Hawaii (1893), Spanish- American War (1898), Philippines (1899), Central America (1899-1934), World War I (1917-1918), World War II (1941-1945), Philippines, South Korea, Greece, China (1946-1953), Guatemala (1953), Vietnam (1955-1975), Dominican Republic (1965-1966), CIA in Afghanistan and Nicaragua (1979-1986), Grenada (1983), Panama (1988), Iraq, Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia, Ukraine (2001-2015)

In most of these wars, the U.S. was on the offensive, some were defensive [but] CIA covert operations [are

omitted]....

That means...93 percent of the time American has been at war....

Indeed, most of the military operations launched since World War II have been launched by the U.S.

And American military spending dwarfs the rest of the world together.

No wonder polls show that the world believes America is the number 1 threat to peace.

....And now the war on immigrants

NYT, 5/15 — ...The country's...immigration machinery...is the vast network of jails and prisons where suspected immigration violators are held while awaiting a hearing and possible deportation. Immigrant detainees are not criminal defendants or convicts serving sentences....

...The system breeds cruelty and harm....denies its victims due process of law, punishing them far beyond the scale of any offense. It shatters families and traumatizes...particularly...women and children fleeing persecution in Central America....

...The system has grown immense, from housing 85,000 detainees in 1995 to more than 440,000 in 2013....Reasons for this growth includ[e] state and local immigration crackdowns, federal dragnet programs... and the flood of money from Congress to the private prison operators that have profited so fruitfully from immigrant criminalization....

By the end of March, nearly 442,000 cases were pending before immigration judges, with an average case waiting 599 days to be heard, and delays in some courts of more than two years....

Andrew Jackson, Butcher-in-Chief

NYT, 5/5 — Jackson....before running for president... was a soldier whose exploits changed the map of the United States....His troops massacred Indians. He coerced Native Americans into surrendering land through



unjust treaties. In 1830, President Jackson signed the Indian Removal Act,...to push all natives west of the Mississippi. One result was the Trail of Tears in 1838, when 13,000 Cherokees left their homeland in the Appalachians. Another was a war against Florida's Seminoles, lasting nearly as long as the war in Iraq.

Memorial Day founded by freed slaves

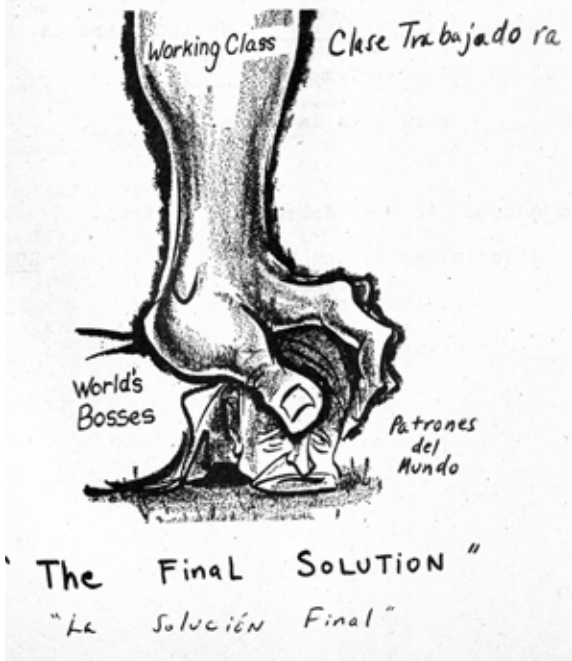
NYT, 5/28 — ...During the final year of the [U.S.] Civil War ...[in] an outdoor prison for Union captives, "at least 257 died...and were hastily buried in a mass grave.... After the Confederate evacuation of Charleston, black workmen...reburied the Union dead..." and the freed people, "in cooperation with white missionaries and teachers, staged a parade of 10,000...."

..."Memorial Day had been founded by African-Americans.... The war, they had boldly announced, had been about the triumph of their emancipation over a slaveholders' republic. They were themselves the true patriots."

MORE ITEMS AVAILABLE AT WWW.PLP.ORG

PL History

Mack Ave. Plant Takeover



This article continues our account of PLP's 50-year history. The Party's concentration among industrial workers, a basic principle in building a communist movement, has helped PLP grow to our current presence in 27 countries on five continents.

In 1970, more than 400,000 workers struck General Motors (then the biggest employer in the U.S.) for 67 days to win a big raise and the 30-and-out retirement pension plan.

Three years later, with watershed contract negotiations looming between the United Auto Workers (UAW) and the Big Three automakers (GM, Ford, and Chrysler), thousands of young, conscious, militant Black workers were an emerging force. The auto bosses had hired about 10,000 Black workers as a direct result of the 1967 Black-led rebellions in Detroit and Newark against racist police brutality and for jobs. Many were Vietnam veterans who had rebelled in 1967 and again in 1968 after the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. The Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement (DRUM) and the PLP-led Workers Action Movement (WAM) were gaining strength and credibility by challenging the racism of the UAW leadership and the auto bosses.

PLP was organizing in factories in New Jersey, Detroit, Cleveland and California. In one New Jersey Ford plant, the Party and a Black caucus staged a week-long wildcat strike to stop Ford from using massive overtime to build a stockpile and undermine a possible strike. In the Cleveland Ford plant, we established the first six-hour day committee. Had it been enacted, a six-hour day would have created thousands of new jobs by adding an extra shift.

In Detroit, at Chrysler's Mack Avenue stamping plant, we were waging an anti-racist health and safety struggle, demanding fans where temperatures routinely soared above 100 degrees. (For workers, the bosses couldn't find any fans. But when they later replaced workers with robots, they found money for air conditioning.) It was during this struggle, in August 1973, that a PLP member was fired.

Meanwhile, at Huber Foundry, Chrysler workers walked out over a racist incident involving a supervisor. At Jefferson Assembly, a racist foreman called a Black worker the n-word. The worker climbed to the top of the plant and shut off the power. The other workers carried him out on their shoulders and the foreman was fired.

Historic Occupation

At Mack Avenue, our fired member snuck back into the plant and on the line. When Chrysler security tried to remove him, they were beaten back by 350 workers who seized the factory. It was the first plant occupation in the U.S. in more than three decades, since the

communist-led Great Flint Sit-Down Strike established the UAW in 1937.

As the Mack Avenue workers secured the plant, the PLP organized support from around the city and surrounding community. Picket lines ringed the plant while workers passed bags of groceries to those inside. The following day, with the Chrysler security guards routed, the bosses called on the cops—the capitalists' shock troops in class struggle—to evict the strikers. But the 350 workers surged down to the ground floor and met the police with their fists in the air, chanting, "FIGHT BACK! FIGHT BACK!" The cops retreated, no doubt under orders from Chrysler not to destroy the factory.

A detachment of PLP workers and supporters went to UAW Local 212 offices to demand union backing for the strike. When the local president refused, a scuffle erupted. By the time it was over, his glass desk was in little pieces and many union hacks were injured. Then the UAW revealed its pro-boss colors by organizing a thousand thugs from four states to physically retake the plant for Chrysler. Some were known Klansmen; others were newly elected or appointed Black officials. The strikers' number had dwindled to about 50, too few to repel the UAW hacks and their baseball bats. The fired white comrade and a Black worker who gave crucial leadership to the action were arrested, both charged with felonious assault.

Workers Back PLP

PLP turned to workers and students to wage a political defense in the factories, at Wayne State University, and in unemployment and welfare offices. Many supporters attended the subsequent trial, and many more gave money. The Black worker who was arrested, a Vietnam vet, joined the Party the day he was called to testify. The charges were dropped when the prosecutor was unable to produce a single Chrysler production worker to testify. Not one.

When the plant reopened, UAW officials walked up and down the line with Chrysler bosses, fingering workers who had participated. About 35 were fired on the spot. Most eventually won their jobs back, but our comrades were blackballed from the industry. The UAW and the auto bosses then tried to purge PLP from the auto industry and the union.

From that point on, the UAW functioned as an overt arm of the auto bosses. Six years after the Mack Avenue action, the union entered an agreement with President Jimmy Carter and Chrysler boss Lee Iacocca to bail out the company, closing many plants and wiping out thousands of jobs. The UAW played a similar anti-worker role in 2008, when it accepted Obama's "restructuring" of the industry after the 2007 economic crisis, which closed dozens of more plants and cut starting pay in half.

PLP's leadership and the militancy displayed by auto workers — and especially Black workers — reinforced the Party's concept that the industrial working class can become the heart of a communist revolution.☺

Bosses Gear Up for Next Attack on Auto Workers

2015 is a contract year in auto. This will be the first major negotiations since the contract negotiated after the Obama-UAW-Wall St. bailout of the industry in 2009. That bailout cut starting wages in half, eliminated pensions for new hires and created a second tier of health care.

Ford did not declare bankruptcy in 2009, and will likely be the target company this year. Ford has gone from 36,000 workers in 2011 to 54,000 today, surpassing GM. 17,000 Ford workers are second tier. Huge profits allowed Ford to invest over \$8 billion in plant improvements since 2011, to create even higher productivity from a growing low-wage workforce. And this doesn't include the parts-supplier plants, a third and fourth tier, at 70 percent of assembly plant wages.

The Chicago Ford Assembly plant has over 2300 workers, an increase of 60 percent since the 2009 economic collapse. Two-thirds of these workers are at entry level wages, making under \$15 an hour. with a cap of \$19 an hour. First-tier workers make about \$28 an hour. Work is coming back to U.S. Ford factories due to high productivity and cheap wages in the US.

Many of the delegates at the Special Bargaining Convention in Detroit last March were angry, and the loudest cheers came at any mention of a strike. Senior workers haven't had a wage increase in almost 10 years, and young workers are tired of making half-pay. One young worker said, "90 percent of the workers in my plant are second-tier... We are exposed to dangerous chemicals [which she rattled off] and health and safety violations. We all need equal pay and healthcare."

Another delegate said, "My local marched for Mike Brown in Ferguson and Eric Garner in New York City. The fight against racism on and off the job must be at the heart of who we are." Delegates cheered as earlier that morning, the local news released video tape of Floyd Dent, a Black Ford worker with 37 years seniority, being beaten by racist Inkster police (a Ferguson-style suburb of Detroit).

We work in the unions to fight for the political leadership of the workers, to break them away from the dead-end treadmill of reformism and the Democratic Party. We have been at it for a long time in the UAW, and even though progress is slow, the workers continue to encourage us.

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