

CHALLENGE



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STUDENTS, TEACHERS COMBAT RACIST CULTURE

BROOKLYN, May 21 — Students and education workers in a Brooklyn high school cheered on as anti-racist poems, dances, video interviews and speeches were performed at the school's first ever anti-racist assembly! This event was organized by teachers and friends of Progressive Labor Party.

The idea was to counter an upsurge of racist expression, by students, in particular anti-Haitian, comments. It emerged when one courageous student came forward and spoke about what so many students endure daily. It is no surprise that some students repeat the racist remarks they hear in society. This capitalist system we live under was built on racism. Beyond the billions of super-profits that the bosses make from paying Black, Latin and immigrant workers less, the main way racism hurts our class is by convincing us that we are more different than similar, based on how we look or where we were born.

Students Take the Lead

When workers don't unite, the bosses win. We can't fight for a better society if we are divided. So whenever racism rears its ugly head — whether it's the police beating and killing us on the streets, or budget cuts in schools, or racist comments made in class — we need to speak up, organize and fight back! This was the message of the assembly.

After teachers in PLP made the call for the anti-racist assembly and more than 60 students and staff took it up. A group of young women, anti-racist para-professionals took the lead in involving students. They organized a dance that incorporated music from Haiti, Jamaica and Latin America. It was performed by a group of multi-racial students. They also created a five-minute video clip, interviewing students about what they felt when they heard racist comments made in school and what they thought was the best response. They created posters advertising the assembly and also emceed the event. Without their leadership, this assembly would not have happened.

Speak Up and Fight Back

During the assembly, students marched down

the aisles of the auditorium with their mouths taped over, then ripped the tape off to begin their performances, as a metaphor for speaking up against racism. This led into anti-racist poems, raps and speeches, written and performed by students. A group of drummers from Haiti performed with students, along with a pair of alumni who did a beautiful anti-slavery dance.

Many students and teachers involved are CHALLENGE readers. Some also attended this year's May Day march. They stepped forward and took leadership after the communists' call to fight racism.

It is now our job to continue to win workers

and students at this school to understand that the only real solution to ending racism is the fight for communism. Under communism, racism would be banned. Unlike capitalism which thrives on racism and disunity, communism require workers around the world to unite and collectively organize all aspects of society.

This inspiring event shows the potential for masses to be won to multiracial unity. But this is just the beginning. An international club is now being formed at the school. We will use it to continue to lead with anti-racist ideas and actions. The struggle continues!★



The fight for Shantel Davis continues in its third year. See page 3.
Photo of march to precinct during the one-year memorial.

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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

War-Bent Bosses

From Eastern Europe to the Middle East to the Pacific, sharpening imperialist competition is escalating both regional warfare and the risk of global conflict. In the latest U.S. move to contain Russia, "the Pentagon is poised to store battle tanks, infantry-fighting vehicles and other heavy weapons for as many as 5,000 American troops in several Baltic and Eastern European countries" (New York Times, 6/14/15). Barack Obama has announced plans for more U.S. troops and bases in Iraq. Meanwhile, as CHALLENGE recently reported, the U.S. and China are vying militarily over strategic Pacific and Indian Ocean shipping routes.

These conflicts represent potential imperialist flashpoints for a massive armed confrontation — and a heavy toll on the international working class. While the capitalist bosses create these wars, workers are pitted against each other on the frontlines. Workers suffer the brunt of the racism, sexism, and nationalism that are intensified by imperialist rivalries.

The Progressive Labor Party fights to rid the world of the capitalist system that generates these wars. We fight for a communist society that will end racism, sexism, nationalism, mass unemployment and poverty. We fight to put workers in control of running society.

U.S. Challenged by ISIS, Iran

After murdering more than three million workers and children in Iraq and displacing millions more in two decades of war and sanctions, U.S. bosses and allied imperialists won only shaky control over the country's vast oil wealth. Their weakness created a power vacuum that U.S. enemies seek to fill. Obama's latest move was prompted by ISIS's (an armed capitalist organization also known as the Islamic State) territorial gains in Iraq and Syria, but also by Iran's growing influence in the region. Despite U.S. backing of government and Kurdish forces, Tehran appears to be consolidating its leadership of the anti-ISIS effort (Long War Journal, 6/1/15).

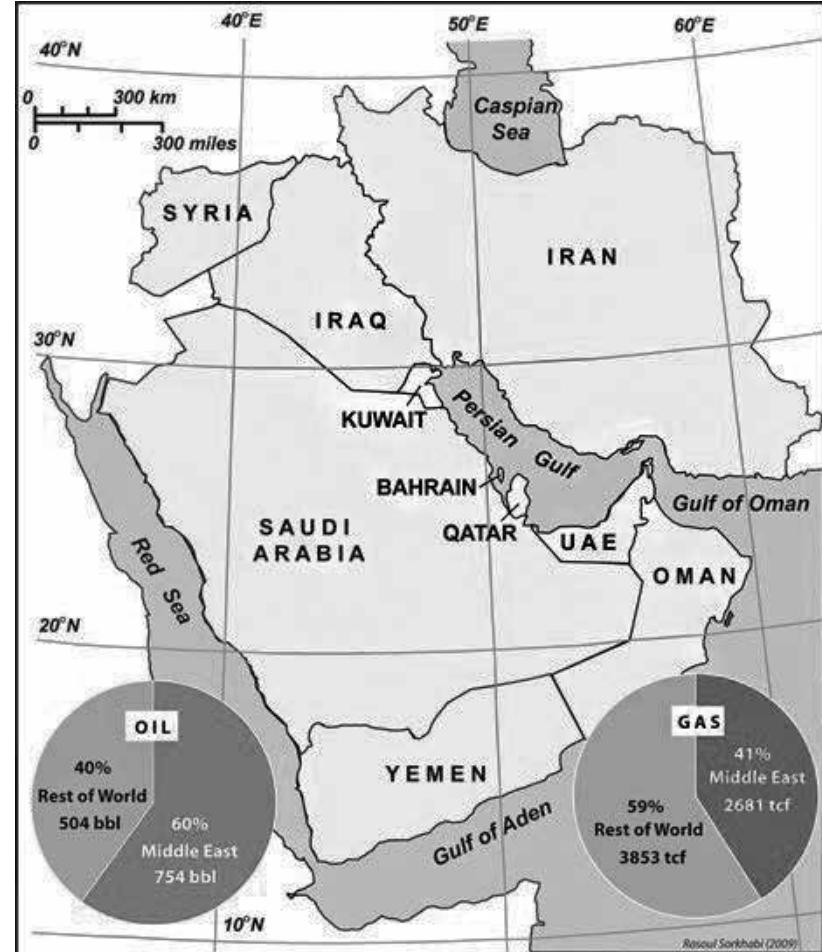
Beyond the immediate challenge to U.S. control over Iraq's oil reserves, Obama and the finance capitalists he serves fear the threat to U.S. control over the world's foremost oil profit center, Saudi Arabia. Nowhere else is oil — the lifeblood of the profit system — more plentiful or cheaper to pump. Since the end of World War II, U.S. have allied with the Saudi royals to run the most lucrative business deal of the modern era. Protected by the U.S. Navy, ExxonMobil (with close to half a trillion dollars in annual sales) and a handful of other major oil companies dictate the terms of crucial energy supplies throughout the world.

But Iran is challenging Saudi/Exxon supremacy on two fronts: by arming anti-Saudi Houthi rebels in neighboring Yemen, and by pursuing a nuclear arms program. At the same time, the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), the U.S. ruling-class think tank owned by the same finance capital interests as Exxon, worries about ISIS disrupting and then invading Riyadh, the Saudi capital. ISIS's goal is to "ignite a sectarian civil war in Saudi Arabia by targeting the Shia community and provoking them to unleash their anger against the Saudi government" (CFR website, 6/11/15). Any serious fighting within Saudi Arabia will surely draw in U.S. troops.

Bombing Russia

In Europe, Vladimir Putin's "Greater Russia" power plays present U.S. rulers with an equally dire predicament. After the breakup of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact alliance, U.S. bosses opportunistically welcomed ten ex-Soviet countries into NATO. Now they are planning to defend these additions to their empire from Putin's imperialist counterattack — with massive, lethal force.

As the proposal stands now, a company's worth of equipment — enough for about 150 soldiers — would



Ten countries in the Middle East, which account for only 3.4 percent of the area, contain 48 percent of the world's known oil reserves and 38 percent of natural gas reserves (GeoExpro, 2010)

be stored in each of the three Baltic nations: Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia...about 750 soldiers — would be located in Poland, Romania, Bulgaria and possibly Hungary, they said....The amount of equipment included in the planning is small compared with what Russia could bring to bear against the NATO nations on or near its borders, but it would serve as a credible sign of American commitment, acting as a deterrent the way that the Berlin Brigade did after the Berlin Wall crisis [Cold War-era dividing the city into pro-Soviet and pro-Western capitalist camps] in 1961 (New York Times, 6/14/15).

The reference to Berlin reflects the significance of this seemingly modest deployment. As retired Army Colonel John M. Collins noted in Military Strategy (2001):

Tiny tripwires can...serve useful purposes....Soviet armed forces could have swamped the Berlin Brigade any time the Kremlin gave a green light, but doing so would have risked a nuclear war with NATO.

For now, nuclear war is U.S. imperialism's sole trump card. This reflects the rulers' strategic weakness and workers' potential strength. It dates back to the U.S. defeat in Vietnam, when mass anti-imperialist actions of the 1960s and 1970s — in which our Party played a crucial role — undermined the bosses' genocidal campaign. Ever since, U.S. rulers have been unable to implement a draft to field the millions-strong military they need. Shrinking economic power and industrial capacity curtails the rulers' ability to produce conventional weapons in quantities comparable to those of World War II.

(Class-blind militarism is in short supply among U.S. allies in Europe, as well. According to a June 2015 Pew Research poll, "at least half in Germany, France and Italy are unwilling to use military force to defend other NATO members against Russian aggression.")

As a cheaper alternative to conventional warfare, U.S. imperialists have developed the ability to deliver city-obliterating nuclear weapons anywhere on earth.

Islands of War

On June 12, Australia's Sydney Morning Post reported on the growing tensions in the South China Sea:

China has responded to an international outcry over

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Shantel Davis: Three Years Later, the Struggle Continues

BROOKLYN, June 14 — Three years ago, Shantel Davis was murdered by Philip Atkins, a plainclothes detective for the New York Police Department, at the intersection of East 38th Street and Church Avenue in East Flatbush, Brooklyn. In the ensuing weeks and months, Shantel's relatives, neighbors, along with members of PLP, local clergy and elected officials organized a series of marches to the 67th Precinct to demand justice.

Ever since that tragic day, Shantel's sister battled through phases of grief but remained steadfast in her determination to keep her Shantel's memory alive. While misleaders from a phony left group and the New York City Council attempted to derail the struggle away from confrontation with the NYPD and the Brooklyn district attorney's office, the anger of Shantel's family and friends and members of Progressive Labor Party burned even brighter.

A comrade was invited to help open today's commemorative rally by recounting the stages of the struggle, from street closures to rallying at the DA office to motorcades, from confronting ex-NYPD Commissioner Ray Kelly to school-based speak-outs and much more.

Then family members of eleven other brothers and sisters killed by the NYPD over the course of the past twenty years recounted their struggles. Some described their meetings with mayors, governors, others of the need for a Baltimore-style uprising in New York. They have seen fascist disregard for the lives of Black and Latin youth, their sons and daughters, up close.

A comrade was invited by Shantel's sister to close the rally. After attacking the racist policy of meeting youth at predominantly Black and Latino high schools with an NYPD scanning operation and calling for an end to racist policing in



Rally in the streets in September 2012

our schools, he went on to hail the working-class fighters who preceded him on the microphone as the greatest educators in the city. He recounted all the varieties of reforms these families have pursued in search of justice and called it a lesson in our collective education about the true nature of the racist system we live under. He reminded all present of capitalism's origins in racist genocide and slavery and its current trend toward more war. There were many nods and approvals when he suggested that if justice is what matters most,

then revolution might be the only way we will get it.

The evening closed with the blocking of traffic, a prayer and release of balloons in Shantel's memory as a dozen of her friends from a local motorcycle club revved their engines in solidarity. It was a night to remember, with the unbeatable combination of communist politics and mass anger that will not die. It was not the last time we will gather and call for revolution in Shantel's name.★

Homeless Workers Occupy Buildings, Confront Bosses



BOLOGNA, ITALY June 7 — Bologna, a city of about one million in northern Italy, suffers from the same economic crisis affecting all of Italy and Europe. Unemployment, especially among young and immigrant workers, is huge (officially 12.6 percent overall, 40.9 percent for youth). At least 48,000 nationally and 7,500 in Bologna are awaiting housing. Unknown numbers of others are

living on the streets; beggars can be seen on many corners. In response to these conditions, many of the homeless have occupied empty buildings, from a hotel in Florence and a farm in the countryside, to a deserted Telecom building in Bologna.

Since last September, 300 citizens and immi-

grants, including whole families, have lived in this empty tech building, with facilities paid for by a support group of workers and students called Social Log. Forceful eviction has been delayed because the building is private property, but the squatters know it is coming, and they are prepared to resist.

Two visiting U.S. comrades were invited to a demonstration in Bologna by a friend who is one of the leaders of the large housing movement. Hundreds of occupiers and their supporters marched down a main street for several miles, from the Telecom building to police headquarters in the center of the city. They sang and chanted all the way, waving red banners from various unions, and were accompanied by their own brass band. One chant connected their struggle to those of in Gaza and Mexico. We met one young man from Benin in West Africa who had arrived eight months ago and has slept on the street since. He gets food from church charities.

The evening after the march, there was a barbecue in the building courtyard. We talked with several organizers who agreed with us that capitalism is the underlying problem. They work to unite workers and students from across the country. Like several other fighters we have met throughout Italy, they were eager to read CHALLENGE, exchange contacts and continue to have a dialogue with us.★

De Blasio vs. NYPD: A Fight Between Workers' Enemies

NEW YORK CITY, June 15 — In the wake of the decision not to indict the cop who murdered Eric Garner on Staten Island, an obvious rift opened between the New York Police Department (NYPD) and Mayor Bill de Blasio. It might be encouraging for workers to see the boss of New York City having trouble with his foot soldiers, but a class analysis can help us to put this event in context.

It only appears that the NYPD and New York's bosses (represented by de Blasio) are having a conflict that threatens to disrupt the city. In essence, both parties are on the same side — for the capitalist ruling class and against the workers. It is important to examine history to understand how integral the police are to maintaining ruling-class power.

The development of police forces in the U.S. was uneven and sporadic, from late 1700s and early 1800s. The models varied from torch-wielding "watchmen" to slave-chasing "posses," which make it very clear that police were created to protect the ruling class's power and property. The rulers also recognized that overt reliance on the military to enforce labor, property and other capitalist relations would not suffice. While police were forces developed control and put down workers' rebellions, it was done in a way that appeared to be in workers' best interests. (Hence the slogan: "To serve and protect.")

Up until the early 1800s, there were few enough numbers of independent workers (outside slavery and indentured servitude) to limit the numbers of people allowed to gather at night. The protests and marches that took place during the U.S. war for independence had the blessing of the rulers — they saw them as a way to agitate against British control of the colonies.

The rise of urban factories and mills in the wake of the Industrial Revolution, along with increasing population and a growing economy, led to large number of workers becoming concentrated in cities and towns. Racist riots against Black and Irish workers were permitted by the rulers from time to time. Even before the development of a regular police force, the watchmen routinely targeted the same workers being attacked.

The Pinkerton Model

Once formal police forces developed in the U.S., it was the Pinkerton National Detective Agency that gained traction. A private security force, the Pinkertons contracted out for President Abraham Lincoln's security during the Civil War and served as the foot soldiers of capital against labor strikes and movements in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Steel workers in Homestead, Pennsylvania, and railroad workers in Illinois were viciously attacked by Pinkertons at the behest of capitalists. Municipal and regional police forces modeled their structure on the Pinkertons, adopting their focus on serving the interests of the ruling class. This was manifested in cops breaking strikes and assassinating or imprisoning communists and other workers.

Police forces have only existed in their current form for the last century, having developed and sharpened into a weapon against the workers. The bottom line — the police are not here to serve and protect workers, in New York City or elsewhere. They are the capitalist system's muscle, serving and protecting the bosses while killing and arresting workers with impunity.

The NYPD is looked to by police departments around the world as a model for examples of successful working-class control. Commissioner William Bratton recently created the Strategic Response Group, made

up of heavily armed and trained officers to deal with "disturbances" — as defined by the police. In justifying this new unit, Bratton raised examples of recent shootings in Paris, claiming that extreme quick-reaction cops are needed as an anti-terror unit. Bratton has lately called for the misdemeanor offense of resisting arrest to be a changed to a felony, seeking to further terrorize workers who are singled out by police.

The Racist PBA

The Patrolman's Benevolent Association (PBA), the cops' union in New York City, has a racist history, one mirrored by the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) of Chicago. Both have organized legal defenses lasting years for cops charged with misconduct and murder and orchestrated police riots through Black and Latin neighborhoods to protest budget cuts that would shrink the police force. The FOP regularly opposes efforts to memorialize Fred Hampton, the Black Panther Party leader murdered by Chicago police in 1969.

In New York City, any suggestion by de Blasio or other government officials that police officers acted inappropriately regarding Eric Garner or Akai Gurley results in bombastic, combative vitriol by PBA president Patrick Lynch (fitting name). Expect the rhetoric to grow with the recent re-election of Lynch. His main challenger, Brian Fusco, accused Lynch of "udderless leadership." He criticized Lynch not because he disagreed with his racist rants, but because he sought to best him in intimidating workers. The public relationship between the NYPD and de Blasio will remain the same as long as NYPD continue to be without a contract, the status quo

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FIFA: Playing Ball with Imperialism

The workers are in constant competition among themselves as the members of the bourgeoisie are among themselves. — Frederick Engels, The Condition of the Working Class in England, 1844

The capitalist media is working overtime to hype a factional dispute within the Fédération Internationale de Football Association, or FIFA, the sport's international governing body. Days before one of the most contested FIFA presidential elections in its history, the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) revealed its investigation into a series of alleged bribes to various capitalist governments for hosting rights for the immensely profitable World Cup.

The international working class cannot be fooled by the FBI's sudden interest in FIFA or the capitalist media's new mission to expose corruption in sports! The FBI discovers and jails FIFA crooks but can't investigate or jail a single Wall Street criminal responsible for stealing billions from the working class in the 2008 Great Recession. The FIFA scandal is another step toward an inter-imperialist war that will kill hundreds of millions of workers.

FIFA: Tool of Imperialism

Men's football, called soccer in the United States, is far and away the most popular sport among workers. Teams in almost every country on the planet are organized into national and regional federations, governed by FIFA. Recognized by the United Nations, FIFA is a powerful instrument of international capitalist rule. Despite football's British origins, the body's headquarters is strategically based in Zurich, Switzerland, a center of U.S. and European finance capital.

Founded on corruption, FIFA is as shady as any bank on Wall Street. Given the sheer amount of profit a World Cup host country can exploit from workers in construction, advertising, tourism, entertainment and other sectors, the top FIFA brass wield tremendous power in global finance capitalism. While bribery for hosting rights is merely business as usual, the current scandal represents a new battleground for U.S. and Russian bosses in their escalating competition for global dominance. The U.S. ruling class has indicted top FIFA brass

to further isolate Russia, both to damage the Russian rulers' political standing and possibly to deprive them of a needed economic windfall in hosting the World Cup in 2018.

Blatter Allies with Russian, Chinese Bosses

Along with other high-ranking officials, Sepp Blatter, the longtime FIFA president who announced his resignation six days after seven associates were arrested in Zurich, is being hounded for his failure to play ball with U.S. and European imperialists. In 2005, one year after a kickback of \$1 million Swiss francs to a FIFA official was exposed (with no repercussions), Blatter defied U.S. pressure to bar Iran from competing in the 2006 World Cup. Then he publicly endorsed Palestine's admission as a full FIFA member, another move in line with Russian and Chinese interests. Beyond helping Russia secure the World Cup for 2018, Blatter went on record to say that China's rising influence had created an "irresistible trend" toward China hosting the event as well (Time Magazine, 8/4/2010).

Stung by Blatter's continued support from the vast majority of federations comprising FIFA, U.S. Senator John McCain called for Blatter's removal from FIFA "for his continued support of Russia" (The Wire, 5/31/15). In the same online article, Thiago Cassis, a Brazilian sports writer, said: "All this talk about corruption is an attempt by Europe and America to bring the game back into their sphere of influence. There is a lot of corruption in European football too. They do not talk about it. This whole game is not about tackling corruption, but regaining control."

Sports and Wage Slavery

People have played games since the dawn of our species. Class society perverted physical culture into "sport," an instrument of class domination. Under capitalism, sports became riddled with racism, sexism and nationalism; they are one of the bosses' top ideological weapons against the working class. Imperialist nations like Great Britain and Nazi Germany used sports to showcase their pseudo-scientific notions of racial and imperial superiority. Sports also provide a vehicle for the profit system's core illusions: fair competition,

equality under the law (or rules), the capacity of individual talent to triumph over all.

Football came to world dominance during the rise of the first capitalist state, Great Britain. As the factory system developed and workers spent up to sixteen hours a day in shift work, new cultural institutions arose to promote a sexist glorification of the male body. Amateur sports were designed to enable British workers to vent their rage at one another, rather than the bosses who exploited them. One early capitalist-financed group of this stripe was called the "Muscular Christians." As it attracted more workers and opened numerous clubs, it adopted a new name: the "Young Men's Christian Association," or YMCA. The organization soon spread internationally.

Professional sports flourished with the rise of imperialism. Football, which prohibits hand contact with the ball, required leisure time to master that working-class amateurs did not have. The British exported this sport to its colonies, and it wasn't long before it captured the attention of bosses in other imperialist powers. Football became a global phenomenon of tremendous importance to capitalism, a tool to build nationalism while distracting workers from their daily exploitation.

Whatever the outcome of FIFA's current crisis, workers have no dog in this fight. Rival bosses are fighting for control over FIFA because of its usefulness in misleading the working class.

A Communist Vision of Physical Culture

The Progressive Labor Party fights to build a mass movement of millions to turn the bosses' imperialist wars into class wars for revolution. It will also take millions to build a new, communist culture. We can look to an example from Christmas Day, 1914, when British and German soldiers defied their generals' orders and played a game of football on the strip of land between their trenches. This expression of internationalism inspired workers and soldiers in every army.

PLP fights for communism and the aspiration of billions: an egalitarian society dedicated to the physical and mental development of every worker.♦

Capitalist Allies: Here Today, Gone Tomorrow

Recent actions by U.S. allies suggest rapid deterioration in the strength and influence of U.S. capitalism. This increasing weakness is the result of intensified inter-imperialist rivalry driven by a continuing crisis of overproduction. Last fall, after Russia began operations in Ukraine against a U.S.-sponsored coup, the U.S. rallied its allies to impose economic sanctions against Russia. But the French still wanted to deliver two ships they were building for Russia.

Although the French delayed the ship deliveries, the most important sanctions agreed to by the U.S. and its allies in 2014 were refusals to make new capital loans to Russia, both short-term and long-term. But again the French and German ruling class did not want to disrupt their growing economic relationships with Russia. The most important loans to be cut off were loans to refinance existing long-term loans, which did not even require renewal until 2015. This meant that the major sanctions seemingly imposed on Russia by the U.S. and its "allies" last fall were, in fact, NOT fully imposed.

Consider also the cease-fires demanded by the U.S.-led alliance to stop the Russian operations in the Ukraine. After refusals by the Russians to fully comply, the U.S. demanded that its allies impose new sanctions and make stronger military threats. However, French and German bosses ignored the U.S. demands and went separately to Moscow to negotiate a cease-fire with Vladimir Putin. Later, pushed by the U.S., the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) engaged in some military posturing but Secretary of State John Kerry has been shut out of cease-fire talks in Ukraine. The U.S. faces reduced influence in the Middle East as well. The Saudis and other players now act without deference to U.S. interests.

NATO, World Bank, IMF Under Siege

In addition, Britain, a longtime ally of the U.S., announced that it would not continue making its specified annual payment to NATO. It also announced general cutbacks in military funding with the intention of reducing its level of engagement as a U.S. ally in Iraq

and the Middle East.

Finally, the recent formation of the China-sponsored Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, designed to provide a direct alternative to financing available through the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. The World Bank and IMF are post-World War II structures set up by the U.S. and its allies to guarantee U.S./European capital dominance. At the invitation of the Chinese government, almost every major U.S. European ally became a founding member of this new arm of Chinese finance capital, despite objections from the U.S. and Japan. Britain, Australia and South Korea also joined over U.S. objections. Simultaneously, China delivered a pledge of \$50 billion to Pakistan to fund infrastructure development—far more than the total U.S. investment in Pakistan. Japan countered with an offer of its own of \$110 billion for Asian development.

Workers Suffer as Thieves Fall Out

These recent examples of actions by so-called allies of the U.S. demonstrate that it is highly likely that U.S. finance capital understands that it no longer has reliable long-term strategic allies. The desertion and independent actions of these allies are driving a rapid deterioration of U.S. power and influence politically, economically and militarily. Basically, the so-called allies are all hedging their bets as competition intensifies.

Each imperialist power must ratchet up the exploitation of its own working class and the workers it exploits internationally in order to survive in the inter-imperialist dogfight. As the rivalries intensify, threatened capitalists must extract more profits from the working class. Among the examples: a reduction in living standards worldwide, the refugee crisis in Iraq and Syria, mass incarceration, police killings, the detention of thousands of immigrant women in the U.S., the intensifying exploitation of the working class in Pakistan, and strikes for better living conditions in China and Russia.

At this time virtually all events in the world are driven or influenced by these inter-imperialist contradictions. Inside the U.S., the rulers' inability to agree

on domestic and international policy is also driven by these intensifying international conflicts. When U.S. policy-makers make a move, one or another imperialist rival trumps them. Only increased exploitation of the workers whom the U.S. still controls can compensate for ground lost to rivals. Meanwhile, much of U.S.-based production and domestic assets are owned by international competitors.

Gridlock Marks Decline of U.S. Empire

The troubles facing the U.S. ruling class are not primarily caused by disagreements internal to the U.S. capitalist class or by capitalist competition between sectors of U.S. capitalism. Rather, they result from intensifying inter-imperialist competition. While appearances may suggest that different strategies generated by partisan political or economic viewpoints—from Hilary Clinton and Jeb Bush to Rand Paul and Bernie Sanders—cause congressional gridlock, the driving dynamic and cause of gridlock is the rapid erosion of U.S. as the international power and economic influence in the world. Competition from U.S. rivals, including all its former allies, are causing increasing instability of U.S. financial and political power on a daily basis. That is why no short-term U.S. policy succeeds for more than a few weeks. That is why no new long-term strategy can be agreed on. The politicians and their blathering simply reflect this reality.

Workers in every region can grasp that they are the joint victims of imperialism. As workers increasingly understand the role of inter-imperialist rivalry and its immediate effect in their factories or schools, they will be better able to fight their own local bosses, develop international working-class unity, and destroy preparations for inter-imperialist war. Ultimately, workers can make imperialist war the incubator of revolutionary communism.♦

War-Bent Bosses

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its construction of artificial islands in the South China Sea by accelerating the building program....Australia, the United States and most recently the G7 group of rich nations have all warned China to stop its frenetic sand-dredging activities, fearing that it is creating airstrips, ports and battlements that will dramatically alter the balance of regional military power.

While China's new outposts would pose no problem for a nuclear-armed U.S. in an all-out World War III, they could be significant in preliminary proxy battles. U.S. military strategists worry that the islands will enable China's army to enforce its air and naval power against weak defenses of countries with competing territorial claims, like Vietnam and the Philippines (see CHALLENGE, 6/17).

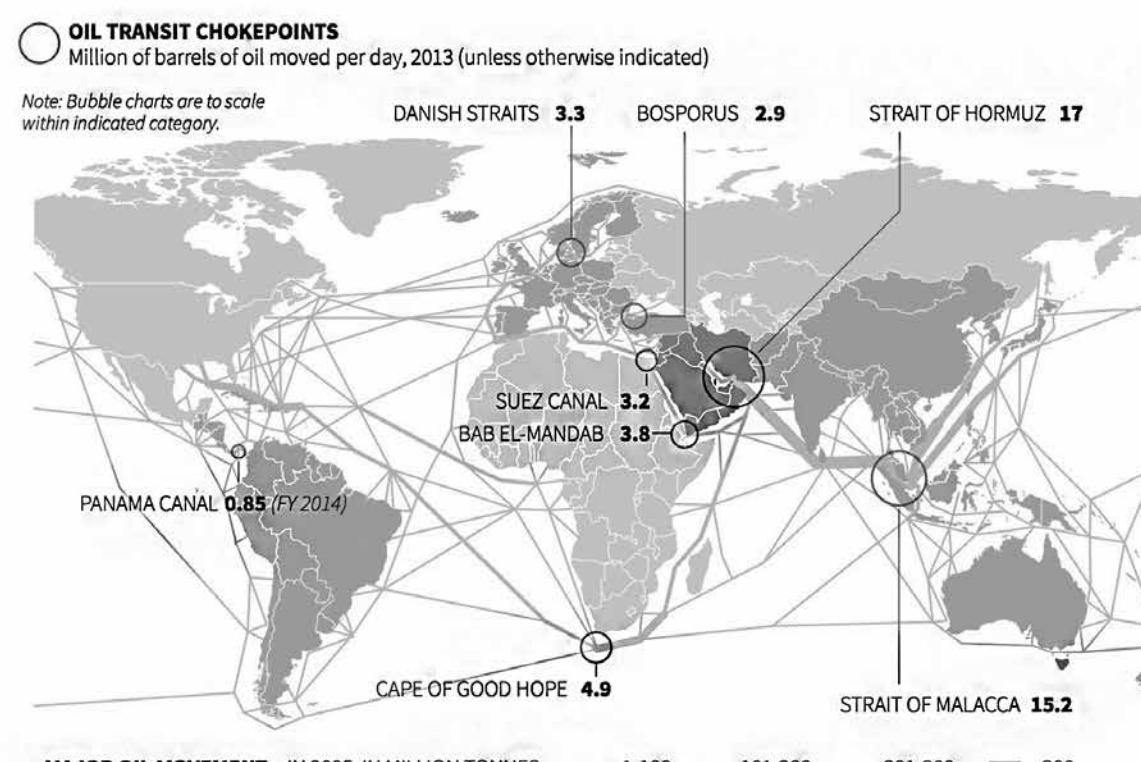
The International Working Class Needs You

In their competition for financial dominance, the bosses in the U.S., Russia and China have killed millions of workers across the globe. As the capitalist gear up for the next stage of imperialist war, workers must resist these mass-murdering plans. We must reject the bosses' nationalist, racist ideas. As U.S. capitalism tries to distract us with another round of presidential elections, we must recognize that voting will never stop inter-imperialist slaughter.

The only solution is to unite other workers in Progressive Labor Party and organize millions to thwart the bosses' agenda for slaughter. Join us as we prepare to turn the next war for profit into a class war for communist revolution.♦

Oil transit chokepoints

About half of the world's oil production is moved by tankers on fixed maritime routes. The blockage of a chokepoint, even temporarily, can lead to substantial increases in total energy costs. Oil transit chokepoints are therefore a critical part of global energy security.



Sources: U.S. Energy Information Administration, International Tanker Owners Pollution Federation
Staff, W. Foo, 26/3/2015

Map showing world's main oil transit chokepoints and major oil movement routes.

LETTERS

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

30 Years of Fighting for Students and Communism

I have just finished a long run as a delegate to the delegate assembly of the NYC teachers union, the United Federation of Teachers. I am retiring, and the way the union works, only the leadership's friends will be retiree delegates. As a PL member in that assembly, I have never been a friend of the leadership.

Over the years as a delegate, I've helped put forward resolutions against the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. I've called for support for striking workers; raised resolutions against the killing of Trayvon Martin, (the misleaders considered okay to oppose) and the NYPD's killing of Ramarley Graham (not okay to attack their "brothers" in the NYPD at that point) and endorsed PLP May Day marches.

The goals have always been, at the very least, to put class and racism up front, to broaden our "so-called union issues" into broader anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist issues, and win the mass of delegates to see their class interests. The work has often been difficult — the union is controlled by the leadership's caucus ironically called "Unity" and most members of the assembly are in that caucus and are sworn to vote with the leadership. But we've always believed that in the long run, class interest will win workers to see that communist revolution is the answer, not reliance on union misleaders and their politician buddies.

Like many, I've often struggled with my own internal anti-communism. Most times, I didn't openly call for revolution within my speeches. In the last few years, that changed. I began to work with younger comrades, and felt I had to step up my game. And, frankly, my anger at this system began to increase. When we had a resolution last year calling for support for Social Security, I rose to attack the system that keeps us all in poverty,

especially as we age, and explained that my anger at that was why I am a communist.

Tonight was my last night. I spent the first half of the meeting wondering why I was there. I texted my husband, "not sure why I'm here, boring, and nothing is happening." By the time he responded, I had to admit that things were hopping, and I'd been wrong.

A teacher raised a resolution describing the racist conditions that deny team sports for many students, mostly Black and Latin in small schools. He called on the union to make it a mass campaign. The leadership substituted its own resolution — weak and dishonest, implying that if we support the struggle to get sports to Black and Latin students, the city and state would take money from other schools.

The last resolution called for the State Legislature to support rent stabilization, which keeps rents more manageable for working people. I rose to amend the resolution, changing "middle-class working families" to "working-class families." I then explained that I supported the resolution, but that I hated a system which required that we pay for our basic needs of food, housing and clothing. A system that makes us worry that we can't fight racism and segregation without losing funding in some schools isn't one I could support. I explained that I hated this system, and that in my final speech to the assembly, I wanted to make clear that we need a communist revolution.

The amendment passed, along with the amended resolution. After the meeting, a delegate told me, "I agree with a lot of what you said and I don't like capitalism—do you have meetings?" I replied we do, and we exchanged contacts.

Other delegates also thanked me, saying that while they didn't always agree with a lot that I said but that I always contributed to the assembly. A

delegate in the opposition caucus we work in congratulated me, another high-fived me. And, a delegate I've known for years, and who doesn't agree with our politics, told me he voted for the amendment because, if this was my last assembly, that was his gift to me.

I have a feeling that's why the amendment passed. It was a gift from hundreds of people to a communist they don't always agree with, but who they respected.

★★★

Bosses to Movie-Goers: Don't Be Dinosaur Food

I went to see Jurassic World with my family, and one scene stood out in my mind because it illustrated one of the contradictions of capitalism. It's when they discover that the genetically manipulated dinosaur, Indominus Rex, escaped. The viewer sees the contrast between the hero, Owen Grady, and a member of the security staff. Grady is lean, muscular and alert. The staff member is overweight and slouches as he stuffs himself with junk food. When they leave the control room to inspect

the enclosure, the dinosaur attacks. Grady dives under a car while the staff member ineffectually cowers next to a second car, unable to fit under it. Of course, the dinosaur eats him.

This is a classic example of Social Darwinism — the survival of the fittest, with the bosses supposedly being the fittest people in society. But beyond that, it's an example of blaming the victim; the viewer is led to believe that it's the staff member's fault for being overweight.

But obesity is a social disease. In the U.S. for example, the proportion of obese people increased from 13 percent of the population in 1963 to 27.6 percent in 2013. The problem isn't that the proportion of gluttonous people in society has increased — it's that capitalists make super-profits by selling junk food.

And here's the contradiction: to fight the wars that are looming, the capitalists need soldiers who are lean, muscular and alert. Jurassic World does its part in a fitness drive by getting young people to want to be like Owen Grady and like the film's heroine, Claire Dearing. Whether this will be enough to solve the capitalists' contradiction is another matter. What's important for our class is for us to be aware of the many subtle ways that the bosses' media try to manipulate us into adopting the bosses' worldview.

★★★

Black Nationalism Rises Amid Anti-Racist Rebellions

In response to non-indictments of police in the Michael Brown and Eric Garner murders — not to mention ever-increasing fascism against Black youth in the U.S. — some have reissued the idea of black capitalism, or "buying black," to fight back.

This was the idea behind the last Fall's #BlackoutBlackFriday campaign that sprung up after Brown's murder, imploring participants to spend their dollars in black-owned businesses, as opposed to giant corporate retailers, on Black Friday. Proponents argue that because Black people's spending power is \$1.1 trillion dollars, buying in "our communities" is the best way to improve black socioeconomic conditions in the U.S.

The suggestion is nothing new. The Black ruling class such as Booker T. Washington and Robert Reed Church (the latter of founded the U.S.'s first Black-owned bank) touted it during the 20th century. But make no mistake, comrades. Black capitalism will do absolutely nothing to stop racist oppression of Black youth and workers. The idea itself is an offshoot of the Talented Tenth theory, the elitist, sexist idea that only male, ruling-class Black intellectuals could repair material conditions for Black workers.

No surprise the term originated among Northern white liberals, many of whom were financially backed by arch-imperialist John D. Rockefeller.

"Buying black" says that Black people in the U.S. can rebuke racist capitalist practices such as redlining and housing covenants by...wait for it... starting their own capitalism. Rather than fighting to destroy this system, black capitalism co-opts it in an attempt to assimilate Black workers into something never meant to include them.

Such practices as "keeping it in the community" will retain a super-exploited underclass working to produce profits for business owners. The only difference here is that all the bosses will share the same skin color as their workers.

We cannot defeat capitalism by creating a more race-based, isolated form of it. Only a communist revolution can and will do that.

★★★



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

A Fight Between Workers' Enemies

continued from page 4

for the last five years.

Disagreement Among Thieves

Amid the militarization of the police and racist cop unions, it is important to read the supposed dispute between de Blasio and the PBA for what it is: a disagreement among thieves. Capitalist democracy encourages such misleading appearances. Cops may turn their backs on the mayor at police funerals or join a work slowdown. But, when we look at the essence of police forces and their role in society, we realize that the PBA-de Blasio feud is but another mirage to buttress one of the biggest capitalist lies: "Politicians are fighting for you — the system works."

Liberal Pols Want More Cops

City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito makes general calls for "good policing" and a more transparent justice system. Other City Council liberals propose increased funding for legal Aid access, a bail fund for people who cannot otherwise afford bail for minor offenses, and other small, steam-releasing measures.

City Councilman Jumaane Williams stated that the cop who killed Akai Gurley must have been "well-intentioned" to join the police force,

looking to make a "positive impact on the community." He suggested that if rookie police officers were not patrolling high-crime areas (where police fill quotas with arrests), then such tragedies would not occur. Councilman Williams claims that a little tinkering will right the system.

Yet while decrying the "avoidable" killing of Akai Gurley, Williams and his buddies continue to press for 1,000 new cops, to expand policing, increasing the jail-like monitoring, harassment, assault and murder of endured by workers.

Whenever the kkkops murder a young Black or Latin worker, there are calls for police reform and the ideas are seemingly endless: civilian review boards, federal oversight, sensitivity training, equipping cops with Tasers, body cameras and so on. Some of these calls come from honest workers who hate the racist attacks by the cops and want to protect their friends and loved ones.

Given the long, racist history of police forces and their essential role as protectors of capitalist profit, these calls are doomed to fail. The police have always, and will always, be racist terrorizers of the working class. Only when we get rid of capitalism will we free from police. This is a goal of Progressive Labor Party, and we need your help.❶

Stand Up and Smash Racism

continued from page 8

Protecting profits and serving bosses of today's wage slaves remains the essential mission of today's police forces.

Rebellion Is Justified — and Necessary

President Obama described Black workers in Baltimore who threw cinder blocks at police or "looted" stores in the protest against the murder of Freddie Gray as "criminals and thugs." (CNN, April 28). This from the thug-in-chief whose U.S. or U.S.-financed drones, manned aircraft, and ground troops have terrorized millions of civilians, and killed millions, in Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen, Palestine, Syria, and Somalia, and whose InJustice Department has never once found a killer cop deserving of criminal prosecution. The non-indictment of killer cops conveys a power message: Stay in line or we'll get you too.

If it were not for the uprising in Baltimore, there would have been no speedy indictment of the six cops (three white, three Black, all racist) who killed Freddie Gray. (If history is a guide, these cops are likely to get off or be convicted of minor offenses.) In fact, if not for ruling-class fear of the massive armed struggles that took place in India in the 1940s and of the dozens of U.S. ghetto rebellions in the 1960s, the reforms attributed to the nonviolent

movements led by Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. would never have been granted.

In Ferguson and other cities, some UU ministers have joined other clerics, politicians, and community activists to preach nonviolence to those who are most exploited, most oppressed, and most victimized by police violence. Cornel West, the Ware lecturer at this year's GA, has done the same. (Ware lecturers are "important thinkers the UU invites to speak.) Cornel West is a ruling-class agent.

Black workers are justified to rebel against police murder, and they are giving leadership to the whole working class on how to stand up and fight back against all capitalist attacks, be they in the form of police terror or cuts in health benefits. To preach nonviolence to these workers is a racist insult.

Ultimately, it will take communist revolution to end the racist police terror used to "protect and serve" the capitalist system. Only through fighting back on the job and in the streets will workers forge the multiracial, international unity and develop the confidence necessary to smash the capitalist state, achieve workers' power, and build a communist society based on equality. To read about these struggles and the lessons we can learn from them, subscribe to CHALLENGE.❷



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

Resource control behind canadian genocide of aboriginal children

NYT, 6/3 — Canada's...policy of forcibly removing aboriginal children from their families..."can best be described as 'cultural genocide....'"

...A multi-volume report document[ed] widespread physical, cultural and sexual abuse at government-sponsored residential schools that Indian, Inuit and other indigenous children were forced to attend.

The schools...were in operation...from 1883 until...1988....

...At least 3,201 students died while attending the schools, many because of mistreatment or neglect.... [although] 6,000 or more may have died.... (The accurate figure could be much higher — GW, 6/15 — since the government stopped recording aboriginal students' deaths in 1920.)

The Canadian pursued this policy....because it wished to...gain control over their land and resources....

...The child welfare system for aboriginal children... continues to produce cases of abuse and neglect....

At many...schools, students were addressed and referred to by numbers if they were prisoners.

"In the school I didn't have a name," Lydia Ross, a former student [said]...."I had No. 51, No. 44, No. 32, No. 16, No. 11, and then finally No. 1...."

...The government...blocked criminal investigations of...sexual predators employed at the schools... [amid] widespread bullying and beating....

...Students tried to burn down their schools or died after running away from schools in remote locations....

A disproportionate number of aboriginal people are imprisoned in Canada....

"Students who were treated and punished like pris-

oners in the schools often graduated to real prisons.... For many the path from residential school to prison was a short one."

Racist murders mirror jim crow lynchings

GW, 6/12 — For centuries, black communities in America have faced physical abuse and unjustified deadly force....[which] originated in slave patrols and night watches that captured people who tried to escape slavery....Local police kill black people at nearly the same rate as people lynched in the Jim Crow era — at least two times a week. The Guardian's latest count... puts the number at around once per day....

Black Americans are more than twice as likely to be unarmed when killed [by] police as white people.... In the first five months of...this year....32% of black people killed...were unarmed, as were 25% of Hispanic and Latin people, compared with 15% of white people killed....

The figures illustrate how disproportionately black Americans, who make up 13% of the country's population...are killed by police.

Innocent prisoner commits suicide

NYT, 6/10 — U.S. rulers' racist barbarism: jail innocent black youth without trial three years, two in solitary, leads to suicide

...Barbaric abuses...have long dominated [New York City's] Rikers Island jail complex....

Kalif Browder...was held at the jail for three years without trial, starting in 2010 when he was 16. The psychological trauma caused by spending two of those years in solitary confinement...remained long after his release....Mr. Browder committed suicide at his family's home....He was 22.

Mr. Browder was accused of stealing a backpack, a charge he strongly denied....Unable to make bail, he remained at Rikers all that time, only to have the case dismissed....

...At the jail...[he] was brutally assaulted by a guard;...attacked and beaten....His condition was made immeasurably worse by guards who...denied

him meals, medical care and bathing privileges — and fabricated disciplinary infractions to extend his stay in isolation.

Marx told it like it is

NYT Book Review letter, 6/7 — Barbara Ehrenreich's chilling review of..."Rise of the Robots"...(May 17) is the...response...to all the headlines announcing that a recovery is "just around the corner." But if...unemployment and part-time unemployment can only get worse, what can be done? Ehrenreich concludes that "the best that the feeble mind can come up with at the moment" is a guaranteed annual wage.

Actually, one human mind came up with another solution over 150 years ago, and that was to share the work among all able-bodied people, with society making sure that all skills required to serve everyone's needs are widely distributed. In this way, everyone would have a job as well as more free time to do things that most people cannot do until they retire. With[out] the rich's... excessive wealth and taking on productive jobs, this could be done — especially today — without lowering anyone else's living standards.

The person's name was Karl Marx.

Concentration camp for migrants

NYT, 6/3 — 'Liberty, equality, fraternity?': migrants suffer 'catastrophic conditions,' racist French cops bulldoze camp

The French police evacuated [380]... migrants from a camp in Paris....most from East African countries like Sudan, Eritrea and Ethiopia... [they were] led to buses that took them away. Immediately after, the authorities bulldozed through the tents....

Bruno Morel,...general manager [of] an aid association...said living conditions in the camp were "catastrophic."

"When nearly 400 people are living in a public area in the cold, sleeping on the ground and curling up in makeshift tents without water or electricity, these aren't even the most basic living conditions..."

MORE ITEMS AVAILABLE AT WWW.PLP.ORG

Unitarian Universalist General Assembly

Stand Up and Smash Racism

Unitarian Universalist (UU) congregations should join the mass, anti-racist militant, multiracial movement that has taken to the streets in many U.S. cities to protest murders by police of mainly Black men. By doing so in a significant way — not just the minister and/or a few members who “do social justice” — we can serve as beacons of anti-racism in our communities. Congregations should develop plans to join and/or support protests against police murders and terror, and racial profiling wherever they happen, and expose and prevent such activity by local police.

Mass incarceration and police terror in Black and Latin communities are weapons of the ruling class to demand passivity in the face of mass unemployment and underemployment, unlivable wages, and rotten housing, schools, and healthcare. These “substandard” conditions enable the lowering of the “standard” for the rest of the working class. Joining the fight against racism is the critical challenge of the current period.

Many congregations engage in worthy efforts such as protecting the environment, and feeding the homeless, but these cannot substitute for fighting racism. Nor can “sensitivity training.” White workers cannot overcome racism simply by “being” anti-racist. White workers must join other workers, especially Black and Latin workers, to actually fight against racist ideas and practices, which hurt all workers and are central to capitalist competition, division, and inequality.

Do Cops Really Go Where the Crime Is?

Systematic institutionalized racism concentrates cops in Black and Latin neighborhoods. Some say, “That’s where the crime is.” Yet, as Kim Bobo explained at the 2012 UU Justice General Assembly (GA), wage theft is one of the most widespread crimes in the United States. According to a survey of low-wage workers in three cities by the Economic Policy Institute (Sept. 11, 2014), “the average loss per worker over the course of a year was \$2,634, out of total earnings of \$17,616....If these findings...are generalizable to the rest of the U.S. low-wage workforce of 30 million, wage theft is costing workers more than \$50 billion a year.... All of the robberies, burglaries, larcenies, and motor vehicle thefts in the nation cost their victims less than \$14 billion in 2012.”

Wage theft does violence to families — even kills — by depriving them of food, shelter, and medicine. Yet, how many times have you heard of cops rushing into a carwash, restaurant, boutique or construction company and arresting the owners and managers for wage theft, let alone shooting one because, “We thought he had a gun”?

But, some say, police have to be deployed in Black and Latin inner-city neighborhoods to carry out the “war on drugs.” Also at the 2012 GA, Michelle Alexander, author of *The New Jim Crow*, documented that drugs are equally prevalent among all ethnicities and income levels in the U.S. Yet are police dogs sniffing for drugs in Wall Street or California’s Century City offices or in the streets of Beverly Hills?

Racist Terror is Capitalist Police Force Policy

The killing, brutality and racial profiling by police of Black and Latin working-class people primarily results from government policy that allocates cops to impoverished neighborhoods to control impoverished people. (For example, five cops accosted Eric Garner because they suspected him of selling individual, untaxed cigarettes.) It does not mainly stem from racist cops, trigger-happy cops, psychologically unstable cops, or poorly trained cops, although there are plenty of all of these. Therefore video cameras, more training, better



Youth lead the struggle against racist police killings. Join the fight.

hiring, “community policing” and other proposed reforms will not solve the problem.

Despite previous reform campaigns, racist, anti-working-class actions by police have gone on for centuries. In fact, the first police forces in what is now the United States, established in 1704, were the South Car-

olina Slave Patrols. As PLP’s pamphlet, *Smash Racism*, describes it, “By hunting down and punishing runaway and rebellious slaves, these organized terrorists deterred revolts that might threaten plantation profits.”

Continued on page 7

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