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THE **COMMUNIST**



ALSO:

**CLASS STRUGGLE IN PALESTINE • TOUGHEN UP!! PLP CONVENTION SPEECH
JAILBREAK! AN INTRODUCTION TO DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM
OBAMA SETS NEW RECORD IN RACIST DEPORTATIONS**

OUR FIGHT:

- ✦ PLP fights to smash 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. Everyone will share in society’s benefits and burdens.
- ✦ Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of “race.” Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit black, Latino, Asian, and indigenous workers; and to divide the entire working class.
- ✦ Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women – sexism – and divisive gender roles created by the class society.
- ✦ Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class one world, one Party.
- ✦ Communism means that the minds of millions of workers must become free from religion’s false promises, unscientific thinking and poisonous ideology. Communism will triumph when the masses of workers can use the science of dialectical materialism to understand, analyze and change the world to meet their needs and aspirations.
- ✦ Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers – eventually everyone – must become communist organizers.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TOUGHEN UP!! PLP CONVENTION SPEECH	1
OBAMA SETS NEW RECORD IN RACIST DEPORTATIONS	3
CLASS STRUGGLE IN PALESTINE	11
AFTER THE FALL: 20 YEARS LATER IN THE FORMER SOVIET STATES	17
JAILBREAK! AN INTRODUCTION TO DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM	40
FANSHEN BOOK REVIEW	49

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TOUGHEN UP!!

The following speech was presented by a transit worker /Iraq war veteran at PLP's Convention in New York City in the Summer of 2010.

Look around and it is easy to wonder: How could we, here in this room, possibly think we can grow to tens of millions and bring communism to the entire world? The state of the Party is that we are small and our enemy is strong. But we have to remember that communists toughen up and grow only one-way: Through STRUGGLE.

Marx and Engels didn't just study capitalism from books to teach workers about revolution. During the working class uprisings of 1848 in Europe Marx and Engels organized fight backs. The workers of Paris fought the bosses with armed struggle in 1871 to create the Paris Commune teaching Marx and Engels about the need to smash, NOT REFORM, the bosses' state. French and Prussian bosses killed 30,000 workers to crush the commune. But what did the communists do? The communists toughened up.

In 1905 the Russian communists, called the Bolsheviks, led workers, soldiers and peasants in revolution using what they learned from the Paris commune. Sailors on the Battleship Potemkin revolted and turned the ships guns on the tsar's repressive Cossack troops to defend the revolutionaries. The Russian revolution of 1905 failed. The tsar's agents killed thousands of suspected revolutionaries in the following years. What did the communists do? The communists toughened up. The Bolsheviks organized underground, continued to lead strikes, and in 1917 the Bolsheviks took power. But it wasn't over. The Bolsheviks fought a civil war against the Russian bosses for three years. Fourteen imperialist powers who fought each other in World War I sent their armies to crush the revolution. Winston Churchill, the Prime Minister of England, said the goal of sending English troops to Russia was to "strangle the baby in the cradle." Well, the baby kicked everybody's ass. The few thousand Bolsheviks of 1905 raised an army of more than three million to defeat the imperialists and create the Soviet Union—the first workers state to last more than two months. And how did the Bolsheviks grow? Through STRUGGLE.

When the Chinese communist army was surrounded and encircled by warlords and fascists for the fourth time in the 1930s, what did the communists do? They toughened up. The Chinese Communist Party made self-criticisms and changed their fighting strategy. Instead of defending their position as they had done four times in the past the communists advanced at the enemy's weakest point. They broke through their enemies' lines with 30,000 "the heart of the Chinese Communist Party" marching. Three years later they were still marching. The communists had to capture a foot bridge, the only bridge for miles, to

reach a communist liberated area in the north. When the communist scouts arrived at the bridge they found that their enemy, the Kuomintang capitalist army, removed every wooden plank on the bridge and set up attack lines across the river. What did the communists do? They toughened up. More than 20 communists volunteered to swing across the chain link span of the bridge by hand while their comrades fired at the Kuomintang capitalist positions. Several of the volunteers died. Do you know what happened? The Communists took that bridge. By the end of that march, what today we call the Long March, there were only 3,000 survivors of the 30,000 that started marching 3 years earlier. Those three thousand went on to lead millions. How did the Chinese Communist Party grow? Through STRUGGLE.

In World War II the Chinese Communist Party pushed the Japanese fascists, their most powerful enemy, into the Pacific. The Soviet Union smashed the Nazis, their most powerful enemy, in Stalingrad and planted the red flag on the rubble Nazi capital in Germany. In Italy communist partisans said that the fascists "killed, killed and killed us until there were two million of us." How did the communists grow? Through STRUGGLE. None of it was easy. All of it came through struggle, pain and repetition. And when the Progressive Labor Party formed in 1964 the Progressive Labor Party was born in struggle.

In 1964 Harlem, New York erupted in anti-racist rebellion against a racist cop that shot an unarmed black young man in the back. New York City's Mayor and cops declared protests illegal. What did we do? We protested. When union leaders turned their backs on striking Kentucky miners who fought scabs and cops with guns, PLP supported the miners, we marched on the picket lines, collected money and shipped goods from around the U.S. When the U.S. state department banned travel to Cuba PLP broke the ban to support and learn from the revolutionary struggle there. When the U.S. movement against the Vietnam War dodged the draft for Vietnam, PLP members volunteered to enlist in the U.S. military and turn the guns around. On one occasion a red troop called a comrade in New York City from the headquarters of the U.S. Army base of Ft. Dix, New Jersey. The red troops said, "We've taken over the base. What should we do with it? PLP had led hundreds on the base to rebel and force the brass out of their own command center. The New York Comrade asked, "Can you hold it?" The red troop said, "I don't know." Then the New York comrade said, "I think you should give it back."

In 1973 PLP's red communist flag flew over the Mac Ave.

Auto plant in the first U.S. sit down strike since the Great Depression of the 1930s. During the 1970s and 1980s the Party led more than 100,000 to physically smash the white supremacists Ku Klux Klan. Early on the Progressive Labor Party built international alliances with revolutionary parties like the Puerto Rican Socialist League and the Canadian Labor Party. But we realized that workers are one class and only need one party, the PLP, around the world. In Mexico's auto factories the international PLP led hundreds to fight fascists and union goons.

The fall of the old communist movement has left us in a dark night. We are small. The bosses divide and mislead the working class. Many workers are trapped in mental prison and believe that workers still need bosses or that the bosses can't be stopped. Capitalism kills millions every year with poverty, lack of sanitation, mass starvation and profits. But the working class can do better. No matter how strong the bosses are, no matter how cynical many workers may be. Capitalism can NEVER, EVER serve the working class. The working class can do better than mass racist unemployment. The working class can do better than constant economic crisis. The working class can do better than putting a price on healthcare. The working class can do better than racism and sexism. WE CAN DO BETTER THAN THE BOSSES BECAUSE WORKERS DO EVERYTHING!

The Progressive Labor Party has made modest contributions to Marxist Leninism. Every advance we have made was through struggle on our own or through the old communist movements'. But the battles the Progressive Labor Party is fighting now are relatively small. Too often we don't fight hard enough. But EVERY battle we do fight, NO MATTER HOW SMALL, is significant. The Stella D'oro strike of just 137 workers inspired thousands of workers around New York City, thousands of Challenge readers around the world and showed the power of multi-racial unity and anti-sexism. Not one worker crossed the picket line. During the strike and now, as the mainly unemployed strikers continue to face pension attacks from Stella bosses, the Party's support of the strikers shows that: With hard work by many comrades over a long time, growth of a fighting revolutionary communist movement is possible. Everywhere we organize we are struggling against the odds.

In Iraq and Afghanistan U.S. military officers order the deaths of hundreds of workers each month. But Communist troops have raised the need to violently smash the bosses state among friends in uniform. Communist troops, have fought to treat Iraqi and Afghans as fellow workers. Communist troops have participated in "hide and avoid" missions. Communist troops have distributed Challenge to friends. Rivalry between imperialists is driving bosses to exploit workers more than their competitors. But in New Jersey, communist students have led walkouts against budget cuts. In Baltimore, communist students have sat-in on City Hall and forced politicians to admit

that they take orders from the banks and corporations. In cities throughout the US, PLP has fought racist police murders of black and latin workers. Every struggle to up the ante against the bosses is an opportunity to distribute Challenge, expose limits of reforming capitalism and show the potential power of communist multi-racial working class unity.

Today the PLP is largest in the US. But we know that the center of the Party will be wherever we challenge the bosses for state power. In Oaxaca, Mexico Party comrades battled police at barricades and fought fake leftists and misleaders in the mass organizations during the uprising of 2006. Comrades in Pakistan organized earthquake relief there in 2007. In Palestine/Israel we have joined fights against racist settlements and fights to unionize childcare workers in order to raise the need for communist multi-racial unity and workers power. And this past May Day PLP continued to hold the communist red flag high under fascist conditions such as in South America and the Middle East. In many of the countries PLP organizes in today, handing out communist leaflets could mean arrest or worse. Yet, AGAINST THE ODDS, our comrades succeed in doing that and much, much, more. We are learning to make friends, distribute Party literature and lead fights internationally under fascism.

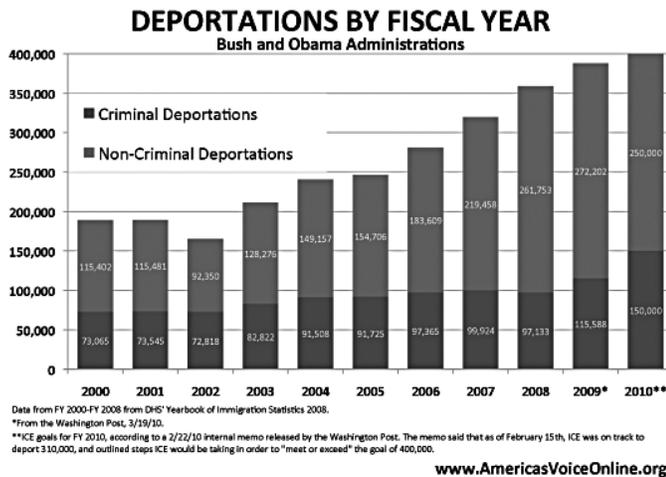
The bosses' culture promotes racism, sexism, cynicism and individualism. Each of us here has a foot in both capitalist and communist camps. However, our fights have succeeded in drawing in youth as PLP members and friends. I want the young people to stand for a moment. Our struggles have brought these young people around the Party against tremendous odds. Communist youth are taking leadership of industrial and military work, of the international work, of the education work, of the *Challenge* work and eventually of all the Party's work. We face many obstacles. But today, in a bleak and difficult period for the communist movement, as long as the Party is standing, fighting and passing the red flag of communism to the next generation we have the potential to lead millions. The bosses can't win workers with 3D TVs, pop music or novels. Capitalism eventually forces the bosses to mobilize the world's workers in the streets for war and fascism. What we do today to increase the distribution of Challenge, to spend time with many workers, to lead fights against racism, sexism, cutbacks, unemployment and profit wars will determine our ability to transform larger more massive attacks from the bosses into larger more massive fight backs against the bosses.

The Party's past and recent struggles have shown that there are no easy roads to revolution. Capitalism cannot last forever. Dark Night shall have its end. But it's up to class conscious workers to build a fighting communist movement. Our Party is small and our enemy is strong. What do we do? TOUGHEN UP! How do we grow? THROUGH STRUGGLE. FIGHT FOR COMMUNISM! POWER TO THE WORKERS!!!

Obama Sets New Record in Racist Deportations

As part of the ruling class' plan to step up racist terror against all workers President Obama, the first President of the so called "post-racial" era, has set a goal of deporting 404,000 immigrant workers in 2011, an all time high. And if all goes according to plan the Obama Administration expects to be able to deport 700,000 immigrants annually by 2013.¹ This increase in ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) terror represents a steady trend over the last eight years that has seen spending on immigration enforcement increase by 132% and deportations increase by 142%. In real numbers that adds up to over 2.6 million racist deportations, two thirds of which (1.7 million) were non-criminal deportations.²

Representing the clearest form of American style fascism these raids are designed to intimidate Latin workers, both documented and undocumented, in order to drive down wages and further disorganize the working class. In one brazen example of the anti-working class nature of these raids ICE thugs raided the Smithfield Pork Plant in 2007 after workers began an organizing drive in the plant. In order to drive the point home, seven months later they raided the local neighborhoods.³



Since then workplace and neighborhood raids have become common events. In 2008 ICE started raiding grocery stores in Latin neighborhoods in Texas checking both workers and shoppers' IDs. In 2010 all the McDonalds Restaurants in the Phoenix area became targets of ICE raids. Local Neo-Nazi Sheriff Joe Arpaio, who regularly does neighborhood immigration sweeps, was responsible for the raids.⁴ Prior to the Washington DC immigration protest in March of 2010 Obama had DC area restaurants and neighborhoods raided by ICE to intimidate the Latin community. Says one worker swept up in the raid, "For five years all I did was work. I came suffering, and I leave suffering."⁵

Deadly Immigration Prisons

ICE holds around 32,000 immigrants in prison at any one time to await deportation. They use 363 detention sites across the country to handle their massive prisoner load. In January of 2009 of the 32,000 inmates 18,690 had no prior criminal conviction. With no judge to appeal to and nothing forcing authorities to press charges, immigrants can remain in these prisons for a very long time. During that same period in January nearly 10,000 inmates had been in prison for more than 31 days (which ICE considers the standard turnaround), 400 had been there for more than a year, 12 for at least three years, and one Chinese man had been there for over five years!⁶

Conditions in these prisons were described by a 2009 Amnesty International report as beyond the bounds of international human rights standards and far short of official ICE guidelines.⁷ Despite the fact that most prisoners are non-criminal offenders inmates are handcuffed and shackled and forced into overcrowded cells. After an ICE raid those slated for deportation could be shipped off to any number of prisons all over the country. Frequently a thousand miles from their homes inmates are not given immediate rights to a phone call or a lawyer sometimes leaving their families not knowing where they are for months.⁸

There have been many complaints filed regarding the virtually non-existent medical care available at these facilities. The *New York Times* reported that between October of 2003 and January of 2010 107 people died in ICE prisons. ICE officials worked overtime to cover up the details and circumstances of these deaths since many were due to abuse and lack of access to medical care.⁹

In 2007 Guinean immigrant Boubacar Bah suffered an unexplained severe head trauma while imprisoned by ICE in New Jersey. Guards left Bah in an isolation cell for 13 hours before finally calling an ambulance. At the hospital Bah slipped into a coma and several days later eventually died. While he was still in a coma ICE officials discussed deporting him back to Guinea to avoid unnecessary questions about his condition. Later that same year an investigation into the death of Salvadoran immigrant Nery Romero revealed that he had committed suicide because of unbearable, untreated pain after ICE guards refused to administer his doctor prescribed painkillers. Hiu Lui Ng, a Chinese immigrant, would die from cancer while in ICE custody in 2008 after being repeatedly denied medical treatment that left his cancer undiagnosed.¹⁰

Many pregnant women rounded up in ICE raids are



Immigrant workers staged a sit-in with striking construction workers in Seoul, South Korea in 2004 (top). After the strike was broken up by police the Seoul Immigration Office was pelted with eggs (bottom).

given no pre-natal care. In Arizona pregnant women are shackled to their beds during and after childbirth. Many don't even find out what happened to their children until days after giving birth and are not allowed to nurse them until many months later. In 2008 Alma Chacón gave birth while both her hands and feet were shackled to the bed. She was unable to nurse or even hold her child for another 70 days after the birth. Another immigrant woman, Miriam Mendiola-Martinez, who gave birth in ICE custody in 2009 reports being shackled and left to wait in a small unventilated room with 20 other women as she awaited her pre-natal appointments. In the final two months of her pregnancy she had to sit on the floor because of the weight of the chains. She reports weeping frequently afraid that her sadness might hurt the baby.¹¹

Secure Communities and the Immigrant Database

The Secure Communities program (SComm) run by ICE represents a significant advance in anti-immigrant

fascism. Created in 2008 the program seeks to create a massive database of information on immigrant workers. The SComm database is fed by local, state, and federal police agencies every time they collect information on a person with non-citizenship status. From 2009 to the first half of 2011 ICE obtained personal and biometric information on 6,618,951 immigrant workers.¹²

Despite promises from the Obama Administration that the program would only target immigrants with criminal records, SComm has targeted more and more non-criminal immigrants every year. In 2011 nearly 40% of people targeted were non-criminal immigrants.¹³ Several state and local governments tried to opt-out of the program beginning in 2010, but in August of 2011 ICE officials acknowledged that local governments could not opt out of the program.

The border fence stands as a visible symbol of the racist nationalism pushed by the U.S. ruling class

In response to the intense criticism that followed the Obama Administration stated that it would review the over 300,000 deportation cases currently pending although Administration officials acknowledged that the number of immigrants deported is not expected to decrease.¹⁴ The promise to review deportation cases is a cynical move by the Obama Administration to provide a liberal cover for the fascist persecution of immigrant workers. Obama hopes this cover will help build support for the DREAM Act and aid him in the 2012 election.

The Militarized U.S.-Mexico Border

The intense drive to militarize the U.S.-Mexico border began with the Liberal Jimmy Carter. With the excuse that he was “protecting American jobs” he proposed to double the size of the Border Patrol and build the “Carter Curtain,” a wall separating San Diego from Tijuana, Mexico. During the Reagan and Bush Administrations the Border Patrol budgets were continuously inflated while Latin workers were demonized. Under Liberal leader Bill Clinton the ruling class launched Operation Gatekeeper which tripled the Border Patrol budget in five years and led to the construction of border walls in key cities.

The increased presence of Border Patrol agents and the creation of no-man's lands in border cities forced Latin immigrants to try and cross through the deserts of the Southwest. According to an ACLU investigation the policies of Operation Gatekeeper led to the deaths of over 5,000 immigrants between 1994 and 2009.¹⁵ Various anti-racist groups have tried to mitigate some of the danger of

this journey by placing water jugs in the desert for traveling migrant workers. Border Patrol agents and Minuteman fascists have aided in the murder of thousands of workers by slashing and emptying these life saving water jugs. During a particularly hot July in 2010 the Pima County morgue had to bring in a refrigerated truck to handle its overflow as it received an astonishing 59 immigrant bodies. It was the worst month for immigrant deaths in Pima County since July of 2006 when they found 68 dead in Pima's deserts.¹⁶

The militarization of the U.S.-Mexico border has rapidly increased under Bush II and Obama. In July of 2010 Obama sent 1,200 National Guard soldiers to patrol the border. A month later he signed a \$600 million bill to deploy 1,500 new Border Patrol agents and other police officers on the border as well as two drone aircraft.¹⁷ In early 2011 under the pretense of fighting the “drug war” the U.S. began flying regular drone missions deep into the Mexican interior.¹⁸



Bodies of immigrant workers stack up in the Pima County morgue in Arizona. In July of 2010 59 immigrant workers were found dead in the desert around Pima County.

In the four years since the Secure Fence Act of 2006 the authorities have built 646 miles of fence along the U.S.-Mexico border. The fence ranges between 15 and 20 feet high and has patrol roads paralleling it for Border Patrol vehicles to cruise.¹⁹ The fence has been criticized by many as a waste of money that does little to stem immigrant traffic across the border, but it should be understood that its real purpose goes far beyond stopping immigration. The fence stands as a visible symbol of the racist nationalism pushed by the U.S. ruling class. Its goal is to impress on workers' minds a mentality of “us vs. them.”

Anti-Immigrant Hysteria Builds Deadly Racism

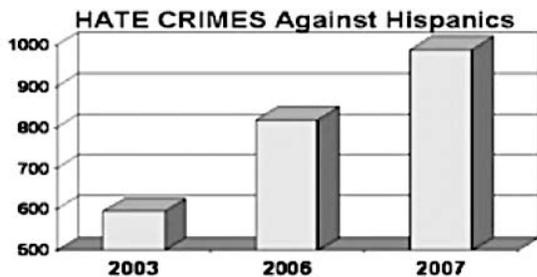
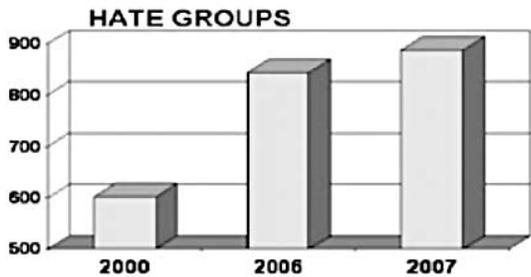
The anti-immigrant hysteria that has been stoked by the media and politicians to support the massive ICE terror operation has predictably led to increases in anti-immigrant, anti-Latino hate groups and violence. The Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) found that between 2003-2007 when CNN's Lou Dobbs began his racist anti-immigrant rants that hate crimes against Latin workers increased by 40%! The SPLC also found that between 2008-2009 that the number of “Patriot groups” in the U.S. increased by 244%!²⁰ These racist hate groups have strong anti-immigrant agendas and count among their more infamous members Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh.

This increase in racism and violence has been encouraged by a racist criminal justice system that does not view the murder of Latin workers as a crime. Four teens who brutally beat to death 25 year old Luis Ramirez in Shenandoah, PA in 2008 while shouting racist slurs only received misdemeanor assault and violation of civil rights convictions.²¹ A month later when Jeffrey Conroy, a Long Island teen who liked to go “Mexican hopping” with his friends, stabbed to death Marcelo Lucero he was acquitted of murder charges and received only a first



Friends and family are separated by the border fence on the San Diego-Tijuana beach (top). Police patrol the fence in San Diego (middle) and Arizona (bottom). The Patrol truck is dragging the sand to make fresh footprints more visible. The rebar at the base of the fence is designed to make it harder to climb.





degree manslaughter conviction.²² During the trial it came out that Conroy and his friends had regularly engaged in racist attacks on Latin workers. Between April and August of 2010 there were 11 different racist attacks on Latin workers in Port Richmond on Staten Island, NY. These attacks were fostered by capitalists who pit poor black workers against poor Latin immigrants and by police who cynically used the attacks to intensify their fascist police presence in Port Richmond.²³

In May of 2010 Seattle police brutally beat a Latino man while shouting racist epithets only stopping when they realized it was not the guy they were looking for.²⁴ Despite the incident being videotaped no charges were filed against the officers. Later that month Border Patrol agents murdered Anastasio Hernandez with a taser in San Diego.²⁵ In June a Border Patrol agent in El Paso, TX shot and killed 15 year old Sergio Huereka while he stood on the Mexican side of the border. INS has shown no intention of investigating or charging any of these officers.

New Arizona Law Connected to White Power Movement

On July 29, 2010 Arizona put its racist immigration law SB 1070 into effect. The law obligates all law enforcement officers to check the immigration status of every person they stop and anyone deemed “suspicious” of being in the country illegally. Given the law’s blatant modeling of American fugitive slave laws and Nazi “race hygiene” laws, it should come as no surprise that it was crafted by a member of the white power movement.

Kris Kobach, the author of SB 1070, is a lawyer for the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) a group that the SPLC classifies as a hate group. FAIR gets its primary funding from the racist Pioneer Fund a group that funds research into “scientific” racism and eugenics.²⁷ FAIR founder and current board member John Tanton has

written that, “for European-American society and culture to persist requires a European-American majority, and a clear one at that.” FAIR president Dan Stein has crudely claimed that immigrants are engaged in “competitive breeding” aimed at diminishing the white majority.²⁸

The racism of FAIR is matched by those who have come out to support the law. Arizona state Senator Russell Pearce who sponsored SB 1070 has a long history with the white power movement. In 2006 he forwarded an email from the Neo-Nazi group the National Alliance titled “Who Rules America?” The article criticized what it saw as anti-racist multi-culturalism in the media and espoused a belief in Holocaust denial. Pearce has also been photographed hugging Phoenix resident and member of the Neo-Nazi National Socialist Movement (NSM) JT Ready.²⁹

JT Ready and his NSM thugs have taken Arizona’s recent legislation as an invitation to heighten their racist attacks on Latin workers. The group has been going on armed patrols of the Arizona border where they hold immigrant workers at gun point. One of the members of Ready’s group, Harry Hughes, has a history of racist violence against Latin



NSM detains immigrants at gun point, continuing in the KKK’s footsteps.

An Immigrant Student's Story

I am a student, unemployed, and undocumented. In High School, I was the perfect dog of the bosses: obedient, afraid, and, worst of all, apolitical. My parents came here because "in America, everyone is equal." So you can imagine the surprise on our faces as we passed the skyscrapers and entered the roach and rat-filled Brooklyn apartment we were to call home. We expected to make enough money to treat my grandparents' illnesses. Instead, we struggled to find jobs, pay rent, and buy grocery and medicine for ourselves. And so, two years ago, my grandmother died without seeing us for 13 years. My grandfather is well on his way.

Keep in mind that this is not an exceptional case, but the norm! A woman in my neighborhood had to decide between paying her rent and sending money "back home" to treat her father's cancer. She was able to keep him in chemotherapy for a month by borrowing money from all of her friends and neighbors.

I was taught the only way to escape the working class is through education. So, I grew up pretending to be a capitalist. I didn't speak up when my teachers depicted the Native Americans as the enemies of "American freedom." Nor did I speak up when the history books told us illegal immigration is a "growing problem in U.S. because it promotes crime." The only crime it promotes is the crime against the working class. KKKops occupy poor neighborhoods and go on shooting sprees while ICE raids and deports "illegals" after imprisoning them as criminals.

I paid and am still paying the price for my crime as an undocumented youth. My college counselor had enough confidence in me (my grades and "well-rounded" character, rather) that he told me to apply to the Seven Sister colleges, Dartmouth, and Harvard. This ate up all my savings through application fees. Being the blood-sucking corporations that they are, they all either rejected me or put me on a waiting list. I was not surprised. By my senior year, I was around the Party long enough to know the social institute of education serves only to justify and perpetuate the sexist and racist system that is capitalism.

I graduated from High School with \$20 towards my tuition that was to be due in a few weeks. And I was one of the lucky ones. It was then I realized that there was only one difference between me suffering as a worker in U.S. and me suffering as a worker in Bangladesh: PLP. Without having a Marxist analysis of the world, I was just another pawn for the bosses. Now, I am a student-worker with class-consciousness.

workers. He has advocated murdering Latinos in order to scare others out of neighborhoods and even shot the dog of his Latin neighbors in order to intimidate them.³⁰

When the Obama Administration challenged SB 1070 in court various hate groups from all over the country began to donate money to Arizona's legal defense fund. Stormfront.org, the oldest and largest white power site on the internet, has even begun a fundraising campaign for Arizona.³¹ Despite the Obama Administration's legal defeat of SB 1070 similar laws have been passed or are being considered by state legislatures in at least 17 states.³²

**Capitalists punish immigrant workers,
but it is capitalists who create the
conditions that require workers to
search the globe for work.
What is called underdevelopment
is not an original historical condition
but a product of imperialism's super
exploitation.**

Obama's defeat of the Arizona law should not be seen as any victory for anti-racism, however. As shown above Obama is as dedicated to the racist ICE system as any other president. The administration's challenge of the Arizona law is a jurisdictional one that hopes to keep the racist immigration terror in the hands of ICE and not the states. The legal challenge also helps to paint Obama as the good guy while he tries to shove through the equally racist DREAM Act.

Capitalism Needs Immigration

Under capitalism money and those that control it are free to travel all over the world to find workers to exploit. Only the working class is bound within national borders and severely punished for moving to find work. Capitalists control national borders as a way to control the working class. Immigration laws are used to super-exploit immigrant workers while creating the deadly racism that pits one worker against another, forcing down all workers' wages.

In the U.S. the first effort to control the border on the part of the ruling class came in the form of the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act.³³ A deliberate act of extreme racism, the law was less effective in stemming Chinese immigration than it was in breeding an atmosphere of hatred around Asian immigrant communities. This law created the conditions that allowed bosses to keep Asian workers in virtual slavery as railroad workers and miners on the west coast.

All over the world capitalists use racist immigration laws for the same purposes. In France the target is workers from Northern Africa, in Germany it is Turkish workers, in China it is workers from South East Asia. In all cases these laws are used to drive these populations further underground and make them easier to exploit. The end result is a divided working class and super-profits for the bosses as they use anti-immigrant racism to drive down all wages.

Capitalists punish immigrant workers, but it is capitalists who create the conditions that require workers to search the globe for work. What is called underdevelopment in the Third World is not an original historical condition but a product of imperialism's super exploitation.³⁴ It was European imperialism that destroyed the economies of Africa with over 200 years of theft and murder. Yet now the European countries complain of the migration of African workers looking to escape mass poverty at home by going to Europe. 500 years of European and American imperialism in Latin America has created the enduring poverty that affects millions of workers there.

Senator Richard Durbin (D-IL) commented in 2007 to the Army Times, "Under the DREAM Act, tens of thousands of well-qualified potential recruits would become eligible for military service for the first time. They are eager to serve in the armed forces during a time of war."

The mass immigration of Latin workers to the U.S. began 30 years ago as U.S. trained and funded death squads terrorized people in Central America and Colombia and U.S. sponsored neo-liberal economic policies destroyed local economies. The 1994 NAFTA agreement that the U.S. crafted instantly destroyed millions of Mexican farmers' livelihoods by dumping heavily subsidized American corn into Mexican markets. The subsequent mass immigration was met with tightening immigration laws under Clinton and a marked increase in anti-immigrant racism.³⁵

Obama's DREAM Act is a Racist Trap for Workers

The Obama Administration has tried to use the controversy over the Arizona law to build support for its own Comprehensive Immigration Reform (CIR). The bill known as the DREAM Act (as presented to the House in 2011) allows for certain students who arrived in the U.S.



500,000 people marched in the March 24th Immigration March in Los Angeles.

before the age of 15 and graduated from an American high school to apply for a new temporary legal status. This legal status may be granted for six years during which time the person must either acquire a college degree, be enrolled in a college pursuing a bachelor's degree for at least two years in good standing, or have committed to at least two years of military service. After fulfilling these obligations immigrant workers may become eligible to receive permanent resident status, and in another three years perhaps citizenship status.³⁶ There is no guarantee in the bill however, that any change of residency status will occur.

Immigrant students typically come from the poorest sections of the working class and with Pell Grants and other federal financial aid cut off for immigrant students and most scholarships requiring proof of citizenship the ability to attend a four year university where the average yearly cost is \$14,000 (at state schools!) is an impossible dream.³⁷ With college cut off as a legitimate option for most immigrant youth the military becomes the only realistic option. This of course is not unplanned. Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL) commented in 2007 to the Army Times, "Under the DREAM Act, tens of thousands of well-qualified potential recruits would become eligible for military service for the first time. They are eager to serve in the armed forces during a time of war."³⁸

The targeting of Latin immigrants by military recruiters dates back to 2003 and the Bush Administration. At that time the Pentagon made a plan to boost the number of Latinos in the military from 10% to 22%.³⁹ Four years

later the Defense Department helped craft the DREAM Act as a conscious bid to boost the military's still sagging recruitment numbers. A 2009 study by the RAND operated National Defense Research Institute again emphasized the recruitment of Latin youth as the key to meeting recruitment goals.⁴⁰

The DREAM Act has other problematic features as well. Anybody wishing to apply to receive possible benefits from the Act will have to voluntarily turn themselves in to authorities permanently marking them as subject to arrest and deportation. The Act also calls for the submission of biometric and biographic data to the Department of Homeland Security for the purpose of tracking immigrant workers.⁴¹ For high school age kids who are seeking temporary legal status to attend college this means exposing the immigration status of their parents and family and making them subject to arrest despite the bill's promise of protection.

Perhaps the least known fact about the DREAM Act is the extremely small percentage of the immigrant population that will even be eligible for citizenship through it. Of an estimated population of 11.1 million undocumented immigrants in the U.S. only 2.1 million (19%) would be eligible for legal status under the DREAM Act according to a study from the Migration Policy Institute. And of that 2.1 million the MPI estimates that only 825,000 would actually be able to achieve full legal status.⁴² That amounts to only 7.4% of the total population of undocumented immigrants!

Anti-Immigrant Laws are an Attack on All Workers

Racist terror has been the preferred weapon of choice for the U.S. ruling class in its struggle to keep workers divided and oppressed. Immigration laws are designed to terrorize not just immigrant workers but all workers of color who now have to fear being beaten or murdered by racist thugs or rounded up by the police. The racist intentions of the new anti-immigrant laws are barely concealed. A new law being discussed in Arizona would target so called "anchor babies" criminalizing children born to immigrant women.⁴³ This law has its precedent in the 1935 Nazi Nuremberg Laws that criminalized human beings for the simple act of being born. Despite all of the "law and order" rhetoric the intention of these laws is clear as news agencies report that Latin workers are "fleeing Arizona" (the spear head of this racist terror campaign).⁴⁴

These laws further institutionalize and intensify the fascist American police state, the most oppressive in the world with over 2.6 million prisoners. The intentions of the Obama Administration to carry out and further this organized terror were made clear when he made fascist former Arizona Governor Janet Napolitano (a staunch supporter of Hitlerite Joe Arpaio) the head of the Department

of Homeland Security. Obama has cleverly used workers' outrage at Arizona's efforts to re-instate Apartheid to build support for his fascist DREAM Act; an act that is designed to force immigrants into the military to be cannon fodder for imperialist wars. The bosses hope that the DREAM Act will both build nationalism among immigrants while maintaining the capitalists' carefully cultivated system of anti-immigrant racism. Obama's actions make it clear that he wants both the DREAM Act and continued and intensifying police terror.

Workers have taken to the streets by the hundreds of thousands in the U.S. to voice their opposition to this new Apartheid, but like Bush, Obama has shown that his allegiance lies with ruling class exploiters not workers. The truth is that racism is capitalism's lifeline, its source of super profits and its primary weapon against the working class. Still American workers could learn from the international fight-back against anti-immigrant racism. In France a multi-racial, multi-national strike lasted longer than eight months as workers demanded citizenship rights and the end to threats of deportation.⁴⁵ Migrant workers in China are leading strikes for higher wages and safer working conditions shutting down a Honda plant in Guandong and two Toyota plants in Tianjin in 2010.⁴⁶ But these reforms will ultimately not solve workers' problems, for workers to survive in dignity and not in fear we need an organized communist party and ultimately communist revolution to destroy the racist capitalist system!



In Bologna, Italy immigrant workers march in the March 1st Day Without Immigrants Protest (top). Immigrant workers on strike in France in October of 2009 (bottom).

¹ *MercoPress*, “US Immigration Target for 2011: 404,000 Deportations, Includes Screening Jails,” 1/2/11; *America’s Voice*, “Obama Administration Immigration Deportations Exceed Bush’s Record,” 5/20/10; Stewart Lawrence, Counterpunch, “Obama Reneges on Key Agreement with Immigration Advocates,” 10/5/10.

² *America’s Voice*.

³ *Center for Immigration Studies*, “Immigration Raids at Smithfield,” 7/09.

⁴ *AP*, “21 People Arrested During Immigration Raids at Area McDonalds,” 3/26/10.

⁵ *Washington Post*, “Raids Throw Shadow Over Immigration Reform Rally,” 3/22/10.

⁶ *Global Detention Project*, “United States Detention Profile,” 3/09.

⁷ *Amnesty International*, “Jailed Without Justice: Immigration Detention in the USA,” 3/09.

⁸ *NPR*, “Fresh Air,” 12/10/09.

⁹ *NYT*, “Officials Hid Truth of Immigrant Deaths in Jail,” 1/10/10.

¹⁰ *NYT*, “Officials Hid Truth of Immigrant Deaths in Jail,” 1/10/10; *NYT*, “Documents Reveal Earlier Immigrant Deaths,” 1/10/10.

¹¹ *New America Media*, “Pregnant and Shackled: Hard Labor for Arizona’s Immigrants,” 1/26/10.

¹² *ICE*, “Secure Communities: Monthly Statistics through April 30, 2011,” 5/23/11.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Democracy Now*, “Obama Administration Criticized for Carrying on Controversial Immigration Enforcement Program,” 8/8/11; “Obama Administration Announces Plans for Case-by-Case Deportation Reviews,” 8/19/11.

¹⁵ *ACLU*, “U.S.-Mexico Border Crossing Deaths are a Humanitarian Crisis, According to Report from ACLU and CNDH,” 9/30/09.

¹⁶ *NYT*, “Water Drops for Migrants: Kindness, or Offense?” 9/26/10; *Phoenix New Times*, “Blood’s Thicker Than Water: As Thousands Die in the Arizona Desert as a Result of U.S. Border Policy, an Army of Activists Intervenes,” 2/25/10; *Seattle Times*, “Ariz. Desert Crossing Lures Migrants, Despite Deadly Risks,” 9/2/10.

¹⁷ *CBS News*, “National Guard Troops Deploying to U.S.-Mexico Border August 1st,” 7/19/10; *Democracy Now*, “Obama Signs \$600M Bill to Increase Militarization of U.S.-Mexico Border,” 8/19/10.

¹⁸ *NYT*, “U.S. Drones Fight Mexican Drug Trade,” 3/15/11.

¹⁹ *AP*, “Fence Alone Can’t Plug Porous Border,” 5/28/10.

²⁰ *NPR*, “All the Rage,” 4/1/10; SPLC, “Patriot’ Groups, Militia Surge in Numbers in Past Year,” 3/2/10.

²¹ *The Leadership Conference on Civil Rights*, “Confronting the New Faces of Hate: Hate Crimes in America 2009,” 6/09.

²² *NYT*, “Guilty Verdict in the Killing of Long Island Man,” 4/19/10.

²³ *Racism Review*, “Mexican Immigrants Target of Hate Crimes on Staten Island,” (updated) 8/5/10; *NYT*, “Attacks on Mexicans Leave Neighborhood in Turmoil,” 7/30/10; *CHALLENGE*, “Black and Latino Workers Unite to Defeat Bosses’ Racism,” 9/8/10.

²⁴ *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, “Videotaped ‘Stomping’ Dominates Seattle Top Cop Selection,” 5/9/10.

²⁵ *NBC San Diego*, “Illegal Immigrant Shot with Taser Dies,” 6/1/10.

²⁶ *MSNBC*, “Mexico Slams Border Patrol Shooting of Teen,” 6/10/10.

²⁷ *SPLC*, “Hate Group Lawyer Drafted Arizona’s Anti-Immigrant Law,” 4/28/10; *PLP Pamphlet*, “Racism, Intelligence, and the Working Class,” February, 1995.

²⁸ *SPLC*, “Hate Group Lawyer Drafted Arizona’s Anti-Immigrant Law,” 4/28/10.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *SPLC*, “Neo-Nazi Official Patrolling Arizona Border Lauds Violence,” 7/29/10.

³¹ *SPLC*, “Hate Groups Donate to Arizona Law’s Defense,” 7/13/10.

³² States include California, Utah, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Texas, Mississippi, Tennessee, Kentucky, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Maine, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, and Florida. *Color Lines*, “Bills Modeled After Arizona’s SB 1070 Spread Through States,” 3/2/11.

³³ See Andrew Gyory, *Closing the Gate: Race, Politics, and the Chinese Exclusion Act*.

³⁴ Confronting the myth of “underdevelopment” social critic Michael Parenti notes, “The lands of Asia, Africa, and Latin America have long produced great treasures of foods, minerals and other natural resources. That is why the Europeans went through all the trouble to steal and plunder them. One does not go to poor places for self-enrichment. The Third World is rich. Only its people are poor—and it is because of the pillage they have endured.” Michael Parenti, *Against Empire*, (San Francisco: City Light Books, 1995), p 7.

³⁵ See David Bacon, *Illegal People: How Globalization Creates Migration and Criminalizes Immigrants*; Mike Davis, *Planet of Slums*.

³⁶ DREAM Act of 2011 (HR 1842), as presented to the House of Representatives on 5/11/11. The “new legal status” offered by the DREAM Act, termed “conditional permanent resident status,” represents a new third tier of resident status below “permanent resident status.”

³⁷ *The Huffington Post*, “The Average Cost of College: How Much Is It?” 8/25/10.

³⁸ *Army Times*, “Bill Would Grant Citizenship for Service,” 7/16/07.

³⁹ *The Independent (UK)*, “Pentagon Targets Latinos and Mexicans to Man the Front Lines in War on Terror,” 9/10/03.

⁴⁰ UCSD Professor Jorge Mariscal quoted in the documentary *Yo Soy El Army*; *RAND National Defense Research Institute*, “Military Enlistment of Hispanic Youth: Obstacles and Opportunities,” 2009.

⁴¹ *CHALLENGE Supplement*, “Racism – Capitalism’s Key Strategy to Maximize Profits and Divide Working Class Then and Now,” 6/23/10; DREAM Act of 2011 (HR1842).

⁴² *Washington Post*, “Number of Illegal Immigrants in U.S. Drops, Report Says,” 9/1/10; *Migration Policy Institute*, “DREAM vs. Reality: An Analysis of Potential DREAM Act Beneficiaries,” 7/10.

⁴³ *Time Magazine*, “Arizona’s Next Immigration Target: Children of Illegals,” 6/11/10.

⁴⁴ *USA Today*, “Hispanics Flee Arizona Ahead of Immigration Law,” 6/9/10.

⁴⁵ *Challenge*, “End Nears for Undocumented Immigrants’ Anti-Racist Strike,” 7/7/10.

⁴⁶ *TV Asahi (Japan)*, “Labor Demands Rising in China After Honda Strike,” 6/15/10; *Business Week*, “Strike Hits Toyota’s China Production as Honda Workers Return,” 6/19/10.

Class Struggle In Palestine

The last two and a half years have brought no peace agreement between Israel and Palestine. Instead, the world has witnessed a brutal massacre in Gaza, Israeli murder of humanitarian activists on the high seas, continued settlement expansion in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, and the growth in influence of Islamic fundamentalists. Here we attempt to summarize the current situation and show why the nationalist programs of the governments and the rank and file activists on both sides are doomed to failure. Keep in mind that the history here presented is an abbreviated one, which simplifies many complex events, but our purpose is to discuss why racism and nationalism must be defeated and what is to be fought for. We propose that only a multi-ethnic egalitarian communist state can satisfy the needs of all the workers, students and farmers of the area, Jewish or Palestinian.

A Historical Recap

This section is an update to the two extensive articles on *The History of Middle East Nationalism* and *A Class Analysis of the Israel-Palestine Conflict* that were published in the Progressive Labor Party quarterly magazine, *The Communist*, in the fall, 2007. These papers contain an extensive historic and political analysis of the region, and the reader is urged to refer to them. Only a brief summary will be presented here.

From the late 1800s onward the Middle East became the target of European imperialists, primarily France and Britain, who hoped to capture it from the Turkish Ottoman Empire. When oil was first discovered before WWI, the struggle for the Middle East assumed much greater importance to Europeans, including Germany, as well as Czarist Russia. During World War I, the British enlisted the Arabs to fight with them against Turkey and Germany by encouraging Arab nationalism and promising them an independent state after the war.

Jews had begun emigrating from Europe to Palestine in the late 1800s. Zionism, in parallel with the growing European nationalisms of the late 19th century, called on Jews to relinquish their group identity based solely on religion for an identity tied to a Jewish state. Many Eastern European Jews had been part of multi-ethnic working class communist movements and were called on instead to support a multi-class solely Jewish state in Palestine. The reasoning was that this state was necessary to fight anti-Semitism, which was seen as an ineradicable, special form of racism. In fact, however,

every ruling class, throughout history, to justify conquest, slavery, and oppression, and to divide and conquer the ruled, has used racism.

The desire of the Zionists to set up a Jewish state populated by European pro-Western Jews appealed to Britain, which saw Zionism's potential for a military and cultural outpost in the area. At the same time as they were promising a state to the Arabs, the British promised a state in Palestine to the Zionists through the Balfour Declaration of 1917. In addition, under the secret Sykes-Picot Agreement, they promised to divide Arab lands amongst their WWI allies. Of course, only the latter two promises were kept. Support for a pan-Arab country was quickly replaced by the creation of smaller colonies: Palestine, Transjordan, Egypt, Iraq, and Kuwait controlled by Britain, and Syria and Lebanon controlled by France.

From the 1930s onward, as more and more oil was discovered in the Middle East, and in the post-war era, when the U.S. became the major imperialist power, many developments (here greatly oversimplified) took place: U.S. oil companies took control in Saudi Arabia, the U.S. engineered coups in Iran and Iraq and made deals with nationalist leaders in Egypt and Syria. In all of these countries, local left-wing nationalists who abandoned class struggle in order to side with pro-US nationalists against the British helped U.S. efforts. In the 1950s, the U.S. also began supporting Islamic fundamentalism as an antidote to socialist, communist, and pan-Arabist movements.

In the decades after WWII, the Soviet Union and its allies, West Germany, and then the French became the major supporters of Israel, with the U.S. becoming the major Israeli backer after 1967. By 1969, the last British troops had left the Middle East, and the U.S. had cemented its support of Israel, which became a supporter of Iran under the Shah, many other U.S. interests in the Middle East and southwest Asia, and a force against Soviet influence. In 1980, President Carter declared in his State of the Union address that the United States would use military force if necessary to defend its national interests, defined as the free flow of oil, in the Persian Gulf region.

Within Palestine, the early Zionists established an economy of Jewish-only jobs and land acquisition and allied themselves with the Ottomans and then the British occupiers. Arab nationalism was encouraged by the British and also grew as a response to the Ottomans and to Zionism and the betrayals by Europeans. In Palestine, as in all the Arab countries, influence, wealth and power were concentrated in a few dozen old notable families, who

later became the leaders of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and Fatah, the current governing party of the West Bank. The majority of the population was increasingly landless peasants or poor workers, as they are today.

The Israeli state was created in 1948 following massive Jewish immigration after WWII, largely because the US and Britain would allow only a trickle of Jews to enter their own countries during and before the War. The Zionists were anxious to build their population and an army to defend the new country. When statehood was granted by the UN in 1948, the Jews were given 55% of the land, although they owned only 6% at the time and comprised about 30% of the population. The Zionist leadership, however, wanted all of the land, and they began a program of terrorization and forced displacement of 700,000-900,000 Palestinians, six out of seven Arabs who had lived in what is now Israel. Many of them became refugees in what is now the West Bank and Gaza, while others fled to neighboring countries. To Palestinians this event is known as the Nakba, or catastrophe. In 1967 Israel launched a war whose main aim was to defeat the pan-Arab movement being built by Nasser, the leader of Egypt. Jordan was driven out of the West Bank and Jerusalem, Egypt out of Gaza, Syria out of the Golan Heights, and the longest military occupation of modern history began in the Golan Heights, West Bank, and Gaza.

Despite this history and many conflicts between Arabs and Jews, there are many instances of Arab-Jewish worker solidarity and trade union struggles from 1920-1947. These struggles were systematically undermined by nationalists representing the capitalists on both sides, who wished workers to side with the bosses of their respective groups. After 1948 the Arab and Jewish populations were much more segregated from each other, including in the work place. Israel did allow Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza to commute daily to work in Israel from 1967 to 1992, but since then, Israel has completely sealed its borders. Employers now import foreign workers from Africa, Asia, and Eastern Europe, whom they pay minimum wage without benefits. This has not only increased Israeli capitalists' profits, but has caused massive unemployment in Palestine and cut off nearly all contact between Israelis and Palestinians.

Current U.S. Policy

Since 1967, the U.S. government has been the major supporter of Israel, even though this policy has antagonized the Muslim world and many Westerners as well. As with the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the impetus remains maintaining a power base to help control the region's vast supply of oil and natural gas. Saudi Arabia and Iraq sit on the world's two largest sources of oil. The greed and corruption of the ruling Saudi family has led to conflict with other rich Saudis, such as Osama Bin Laden, as

well as popular discontent. Iraq is teetering on the brink of chaos after the American's failed attempt at conquest. Afghanistan is the hoped for pipeline route for oil and gas exports from the Caspian Sea on its northern border to the Arabian Sea, thus cutting Russia, China, and Iran out of the loop.¹ However, it is looking less and less likely that the U.S. government will be able to control that country militarily or politically, even with a huge commitment of new troops.

The U.S. would like overwhelming Israeli military power to serve as a major deterrent to Iran and to any Arab state in the region which would wish to support other Muslim states, and hopes Israel will prove able to continue to fulfill this role. Israel has also become a major exporter of military technology² and expertise in the control of subject populations, advising police and security forces from the U.S. to China, from South Africa to Turkey.³ What the U.S. government would like, therefore, is to maintain Israel's dominance and allow Israel to fight openly alongside of the United States throughout the Middle East, while mitigating its policies towards the Palestinians, so as to decrease the hatred of the Muslim world. Meanwhile, the U.S. also tries to control the Palestinians so as to lessen rebellion against the Zionists.

For the last forty years the U.S. has poured money into Israel, the current \$3-5 billion annual package being greater than aid to all other countries combined. Obama is supporting up to \$35 billion in arms shipments to pro-U.S. Arab countries, and \$30 billion in unconditional military aid to Israel over the next ten years, a 25% increase from the Bush administration. However, no mention of this aid is made in the recently announced 2010 budget.⁴ In May 2009, Obama also reaffirmed the 40 year old agreement not to force Israel to acknowledge that it is a nuclear state or open its nuclear program to inspections, while it is widely known that Israel has a nuclear arsenal of several hundred bombs. A 1969 memo from Henry Kissinger to Nixon says, "While we might ideally like to halt actual Israeli possession, what we really want at a minimum may be just to keep Israeli possession from becoming an established international fact."⁵ As it continues this policy, the U.S. is calling for a nuclear-free world and pressuring Iran and North Korea to submit to inspections verifying that they are not nuclear powers, under threat of sanctions or attack.

Although many hoped that the election of Obama would change American policy in the Middle East, the strategic interests of the U.S. have not changed. In December 2008 a policy statement entitled *A Last Chance for a Two-State Israel Palestine Agreement* was drawn up by Zbigniew Brzezinski, Brent Scowcroft and eight other old Washington foreign policy experts.⁶ They see an early negotiated Israeli-Palestinian state as important to decrease anti-Americanism, especially in the Muslim world, and thereby weakening anti-U.S. insurgents. These advisors also believe that this is key to decrease Iran's

growing influence in the area. A 6-12 month time line was suggested so that increased Israeli settlements do not make an agreement impossible. The paper suggests four basic points: two states based on a 1:1 land swap to allow Israelis to remain in areas in the West Bank settlements and towns they already populate; no right of return for Palestinian refugees, instead providing financial compensation and resettlement assistance; a divided capital in Jerusalem; and a non-militarized Palestinian state with "security mechanisms that address Israeli concerns", to be enforced by a U.S.-led multinational force which would even include Israeli soldiers. While espousing inducements to Hamas, the Islamists who currently control Gaza, to cooperate, the paper demands that Hamas accept a national unity government under Abbas, the pro-American head of Fatah, and agree to a ceasefire with Israel. One-fifth of the entire document is devoted to considering Israel's security concerns, but no mention is made of Palestine's. Israel is not seen as having any responsibility for the violence in the region.

Meanwhile, as the U.S. flounders in Iraq and Afghanistan, its military adventures in the area have proven a huge boost to Iran. Iran now has stronger relationships with and influence over leaders in western Afghanistan and much of Iraq than it did before the American invasion. It also controls Hezbollah in Lebanon, and has made great inroads into Hamas in Gaza and the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Jordan, who see Iran as a much more reliable ally than Saudi Arabia or any other Arab states.⁷ Should the U.S. foolishly decide to attack Iran or allow Israel to do it for them, Iran would not be obliterated, even by a nuclear strike. Doubtless they would retaliate against Israel, probably touching off a major world conflict. If under this or some other scenario, Israel were to become a liability to the U.S., aid might be cut and Israel left weak and vulnerable. Some American foreign policy strategists, particularly Walt and Meirshiemer in the recent book, *The Israeli Lobby*, already question America's total support of Israel. The 2006 war between Israel and Lebanon showed that Israel is also no longer invincible on the ground. The attack on Gaza was partly an attempt by Israel to prove to its American sponsors that it still is militarily powerful and is brutal enough to be worthy of support, although despite the slaughter, Hamas was not dislodged from power.

Fascism Grows in Isreal and the Occupied Territories

As Obama was coming into office and hoping to moderate the Israeli/Palestinian situation, a right wing government took power in Israel, led by Netanyahu. He formed an alliance with Avigdor Lieberman's overtly racist Yisrael Beiteinu Party, now the third largest in Israel's parliament. It calls for either expelling Arab-Israelis, who are about 20% of the population, or denying them citizenship rights. Even former Israeli Foreign

Minister Tzipi Livni, of the centrist Kadima party, says she supports a two state solution and will tell Israeli Arabs "your national solution lies elsewhere". According to the Israeli Association of Civil Rights, anti-Arab incidents and sentiments have risen sharply. 55% of Israelis say the state should encourage Arab emigration, 78% support excluding Arab parties from government, 75% think Arabs are inclined to be violent, and 75% will not live in the same building as an Arab.⁸

Both within Israel and in the West Bank the Israeli government is implementing ever more fascist policies. On December 27, 2008, Israel swooped down on Gaza, attacking the trapped population with unimaginable force for 22 days. The Israeli military killed 1,440 people, including about 430 women and children, wounded 5,000, and made 50,000 Gazans homeless, while only thirteen Israelis were killed. President-elect Obama refused to even comment. The UN's recent Goldstone report⁹, among others, has documented the use of banned weapons, such as white phosphorous, and attacks on sites known to be sheltering only civilians. Most of the weapons used were supplied by or paid for by the U.S. Since then, the wounded seeking to leave Gaza for medical care, even minors, have been interrogated first by Shin Bet, the Israeli security service. Many are refused exit unless they agree to become informers.¹⁰ Over 35 deaths of those refused permission to leave Gaza have been documented.¹¹ Currently, the conditions there are horrendous: 80% of Gazans are unemployed and require assistance to live, 96 % of all local industries have been shut down, and the only goods getting in are through tunnels from the Egyptian side. The sea is polluted with untreated sewage, as all water treatment plants are nonfunctional. Gaza is essentially a huge concentration camp, where residents cannot leave or survive safely, and where conditions are steadily deteriorating.¹²

In the West Bank and East Jerusalem, about 450,000 Israelis live in settlements that take up 30 % of territory allotted to Palestinians after the 1967 war. The Separation/Apartheid Wall surrounding the West Bank, which is now almost completed, cuts off 9% of West Bank territory by encroaching inside the 1967 border to surround settlements. In addition, this route of the Wall excludes the main aquifers that supply water to the West Bank and transfers them to Israeli hands. As a result, each Israeli uses nine times as much water as does a Palestinian. A system of modern roads for Israelis-only connects the Israeli settlements, towns, and cities in the West Bank, while Palestinians drive on old tortuous ones. Over 700 manned checkpoints or barriers dot the West Bank, which cannot be crossed without a pass. Many Palestinians are confined to their towns or villages, not even being allowed to leave for medical emergencies, and travel is very slow even for those allowed to do so. Since 1967, over 19,000 Palestinian homes have been demolished to make way for Israelis, with a great recent acceleration in East Jerusalem.¹³ The many peace plan proposals to

set up Jerusalem as the divided capital of two eventual states will no longer be tenable, because Israel will have actually taken over nearly all of it. Unemployment is at least 50% in the West Bank, and access to health care and other services is severely limited. Right wing settlers have attacked and killed local Palestinians without consequences and even attempted to assassinate an Israeli peace-activist professor, Ze'ev Sternhell.¹⁴

Within Israel political repression is also growing. The Israeli government has banned public commemorations of the Nakba. Foreign workers imported into Israel are not only severely exploited, but are being increasingly attacked.¹⁵ Gay Israelis have also been beaten in the streets. Young Israelis who refuse to serve in the military are also being treated more harshly. About five years ago, up to 20% of youths were trying to avoid service, many simply faking medical excuses. This caused the government to increase the penalties for avoiding service, and now only those politically opposed to military service are still refusing. Whereas alternative service was once possible, especially for young women, prison is now the penalty for all. Recently, the government arrested nine members of the feminist-pacifist group New Profile, raided their homes, and confiscated their computers on "suspicion of incitement and assisting draft dodgers".¹⁶ A new decree, illegal under international law, bans those who have traveled in the Occupied Territories from entering Israel, although to date it has been used only against those of Palestinian descent. Inter-religious marriage is banned, and a commission has been set up to "rescue" young Israeli women who are dating Arab men.

American "Efforts" For Mid-East Peace

The major concession that the Obama administration hoped to win from Israel as a start to the peace process was a freeze on settlement building. However, Netanyahu has not only refused this demand, but has insisted that settlements be allowed to expand to accommodate natural population growth. \$250 million has been allocated in the West Bank for settlement building and security in the 2009-10 Israeli budget. Despite the repeated efforts of the veteran diplomat George Mitchell and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, the administration has won almost no concessions from Israel, and, most recently, Clinton switched her position to no longer oppose settlement expansion.

Since 2003, the U.S. has been trying to increase its control over Fatah, which it hopes will negotiate a lopsided peace settlement with Israel that will end the conflict. The former leader, Yassir Arafat, made the decision in 1988 to negotiate with Israel and accept the U.S. as the major power broker. However, the U.S. never was willing to pressure Israel to cede land or power to Palestinians. The real bargaining power of the U.S., to condition or cut its massive aid, has never been used or threatened. This stalemate, plus the overt corruption of

Fatah and the steady deterioration of life for ordinary Palestinians, led to the Hamas election victory in 2006. The U.S., in collusion with Israel and several other Arab countries, drove Hamas out of the West Bank and tried to engineer a failed coup against Hamas in Gaza in 2007. Subsequently Gaza was placed under a devastating siege, and then attacked.¹⁷

The world may have expected a rebellion in the West Bank against the massacre in Gaza, surely a more dramatic event than had set off the large-scale Intifadas (rebellions) of 1987 and 2000, but little occurred. Ever since the Oslo Accords of 1993, the Palestinian Authority has taken responsibility for policing its own citizens, discouraging internal and external dissent, protest, and rebellions. At this time there are about 70,000 police and security forces loyal to Fatah, largely doing the work the Israelis used to do to control the population. Furthermore, since 2005, the Pentagon has appointed Lt. General Keith Dayton to be U.S. Security Coordinator, whose job is to assist the Palestinian Authority in building their security forces and "to take on Hamas." He has also stated that many security measures in the West Bank are coordinated with the Israeli army, so much so that Israel was able to rely on PA forces to suppress dissent and to withdraw troops in order to use them to attack Gaza.¹⁸

The recent Fatah convention, the first in 20 years, was also heavily influenced by the U.S. and pro-American Palestinians. Most of the delegates were appointed, and 51% came from the PA's military apparatus. Less well-controlled party members, from Gaza and abroad, were hardly represented as they could not enter the West Bank. Even some Fatah members who oppose Abbas's policies boycotted the conference, calling it unfair and manipulated. Abbas and his American-backed cronies remained firmly in control, and the next step was elections in January 2010 to consolidate their power.¹⁹ So firmly is Abbas in U.S. hands that he even tried to delay consideration of the Goldstone report until an international uproar forced him to change his tune.

Who Is Resisting?

Within Palestine the level of resistance has declined since the brutal repression of the 2nd Intifada in 2000. There has been a decline in suicide bombings partly because of the Separation/Apartheid Wall and mostly because they were seen as counterproductive. Scattered primitive rockets were launched from Gaza after 2007, but only 13 Israelis were killed in an eight year period. In a few West Bank towns, most notably B'ilin there is weekly activity against the wall, where Israelis, international activists, and Palestinian villagers face Israeli soldiers in increasingly violent confrontations.²⁰

The major recent effort has been the BDS (boycott, divest, and sanction) movement against Israel. This campaign, which emulates the international boycott

of South Africa (SA) was initiated by Palestinian civil reformers. It has served to mobilize various groups of students, churches, and workers around the world, and is popularizing the use of the word apartheid when speaking of Israel.²¹ However, the realization of major companies that doing business with SA was more costly than profitable is not likely to occur in the case of Israel, both because of its geopolitical importance to the West and the lesser significance of its exports. Another major weakness of BDS is that it provides little action for Palestinians in the Occupied Territories to take – they have limited choice of what goods to buy. The campaign does not address building a mass movement in Palestine, and overlooks the fact that a mass popular movement and the threat of violent rebellion in SA was the main thing that frightened the ruling whites and external investors, not the boycott.

BDS also calls for an end to apartheid, depicting the end of apartheid in SA as a victory for Africans. What is ignored is that despite the winning of certain civil rights for the majority black population of SA, conditions for most have remained the same or worsened. As Naomi Klein points out, while the African National Congress (ANC) negotiated the end to discrimination in one room, the capitalists in the next room were insuring that their power and right to exploit cheap labor would remain intact.²² The ANC and their ally, the South African Communist Party, completely discarded the struggle to change the economic system, which is what mainly determines the distribution of power and the quality of life for workers.

In Palestine, a similar danger lurks. Although communist and socialist parties once existed, the struggle for national independence has become the sole agenda of every party today, secular democrats and religious fundamentalists alike. Whether striving for a viable independent Palestinian state, which many now recognize is impossible, or rights within a single multi-national state, the economic structure is presumed to largely stay the same. The West Bank is governed by a small elite controlling a capitalist economy, with workers sinking into ever deeper distress.²³ Fatah is riddled with incompetence and corruption, which led many to vote for Hamas more as protest than because they favored its policies. Hamas, who rules in Gaza, has split into two factions. The larger group is willing to accept a settlement with Israel if the 1967 borders are accepted, and the smaller group calls for strict Islamic law and no deals with Israel. Whether the secular parliamentarians or the religious fundamentalists become ascendant in the Occupied Territories, the capitalist economic system will not change. Whether in one state or two, Palestinian workers will be the lowest paid, super-exploited for profits by both Israeli and Palestinian bosses, as well as the foreign investors behind the scenes. They will continue to suffer the highest unemployment and lowest standard of living, the worst health and housing, and the poorest education.

In Israel the resistance to government policy is based on various factors --humanitarian outrage at the treatment of Palestinians and the militarization of Israeli society, or just fatigue from living in fear. Although many Israelis oppose the extremist acts of settler violence or anti-civilian acts in Gaza, few actually want to cede East Jerusalem to the Palestinians or give up territory or water rights in the Occupied Territories. Even the most active opponents of the occupation, however, who criticize the effect of militarization on Israel, do not question the economic system in their country.²⁴ Like Palestine, Israel is dominated by a small group of wealthy families and conglomerates linked to outside corporations, governments, and private investors. Six families control 40% of the Israeli stock exchange and 12 of 17 Israeli conglomerates. Poverty in Israel is about 25%, 1/3 of which is Israeli Arabs with a recession and massive military spending making matters steadily worse.²⁵

A Struggle For Communism Is Needed

The world is engulfed in an escalating struggle between imperialists for control of the world's resources. The U.S. has been militarily and economically dominant since the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, but that era is coming to an end. Russia and China are rebuilding their economies and militaries, and Iran, India and the European Union are strengthening. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and even the little war in Georgia, are attempts to win control of oil, gas, and pipeline routes not only for domestic consumption, but to control its allocation to the world. The inability of the US to establish control in these areas, along with the near-collapse of its economy, has bolstered US rivals. The consequence, whether it be five, or ten, or fifty years hence, will be a massive inter-imperialist world war, which will dwarf previous world wars.

No worker in any country has anything to gain from an imperialist war between the capitalist states. They will be killed and maimed as the imperialist governments and the capitalists they represent fight for supremacy. Workers will be won to fight by nationalism (patriotism) and racism, the two most deadly ideologies in history. These ideas are particularly virulent in Israel, where the analysis of the Holocaust is that it is just waiting to happen again, and that only a strong Jewish state can guarantee the survival of the Jews. The irony is that nowhere in the world are Jews less safe than in Israel, and the policies of Israel have fueled a resurgence of anti-Semitism worldwide. The Zionists are so imprisoned in their view of history that they fail to see that the racist policies they have perpetrated against Palestinians mimic many of the injustices they have endured and fuel the hatred that endangers them. Many truly believe that Palestinians are inferior beings with an inborn hatred of Jews. So wrapped up are they in their nationalist passions that they fail to see that Israel is a pawn of Western powers, who have no

concern for the welfare of Jews except to serve their own interests.

Many Palestinians are anti-Zionist and not anti-Semitic, while others have developed a hatred of all Jews. But they, too, are so overwhelmed with resentment at their oppression that most fail to look beyond national liberation. Palestinian independence, be it in one state, two states or some form of regional federation, will not bring equality or quality of life to fruition. Even if some of the daily humiliations of passes and checkpoints are gone, the prison of exploitation will remain. One has only to examine the history of liberation movements of the recent past to see the truth of this. Despite the civil rights movement in the U.S. and the end of Jim Crow laws, the gap in standard of living between Blacks and whites in the US has continued to grow. Be it in Algeria, South Africa, Congo, or Haiti, national liberation does not liberate workers from poverty or oppression as long as international and local capitalists maintain control.

In Israel and Palestine, as in the U.S. and all other countries, the only way to achieve a society where human needs come first and where inequality and oppression, racism and sexism cease to exist is to fight for a communist society. Communism means that production is based on need, not profits; people work collectively and share in

society's bounty according to their needs; nations are abolished and international workers unite for one world. In order to achieve this, we must repudiate nationalist struggle that replaces class struggle with loyalty to a particular group of exploiters. We must prepare to fight for such a society by organizing soldiers to turn the guns around and workers to unite with each other against the capitalist class. This may sound difficult, but it is necessary. It may not happen in the immediate future, but this goal must guide our current struggles to those that fight racism, nationalism, and sexism and encourage militancy against all capitalists in all nations.

The Progressive Labor Party understands that only communist revolution can ultimately solve our problems, even if it may not happen in the near future. We cannot predict just when events will spur millions to action, but that action will not be revolutionary without years of action and study by many beforehand. In our immediate struggles, we always attempt to bring out the contradictions in capitalism and win workers and their allies to understand their own power. We cannot build a revolutionary consciousness at the same time as we promote reliance on reformists. To rebuild an international movement with these ideas, to recapture the inspiration that communist ideas once gave workers all over the world, this is our work. Join us!

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³ Gordon, N, WPIII, The Political Economy of Israel's Homeland Security/Surveillance Industry, <http://www.israexport.co.il/hls/art.asp%3FId%3D208&cd=2&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=us>

⁴ <http://www.fpif.org/fpiftxt/5923>

⁵ Lake, E, Obama Agrees to Keep Israel's Nukes Secret, The Washington Times, 10/2/09

⁶ http://www.usmep.us/bipartisan_recommendations/A_Last_Chance_for_a_Two-State_Israel-Palestine_Agreement.pdf

⁷ For a full discussion of Iran's current role in the world and to US policy, see Baer, R, The Devil We Know, Dealing with the New Iranian Superpower, New York, Three Rivers Press, 2008

⁸ Hallinan, C, Ethnic Cleansing and Israel, <http://www.counterpunch.org/hallinan03032009.html>

⁹ Human Rights in Palestine and Other Occupied Arab Territories, http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/specialsession/9/docs/UNFFMGC_Report.pdf

¹⁰ Sarig, M, Gaza Patients "Forced" to Help Security Services in Exchange for Israeli Medical Treatment, BMJ2009;338:b1879

¹¹ Press Release, Infant Dies as Israel Prevents Him from Leaving Gaza, Al-Mezan Center for Human Rights, www.mezan.org/en

¹² Fafo Institute for Applied International Studies, Living Conditions in the Gaza Strip, <http://www.fafo.no/pub/rapp/10092/index.html>

¹³ The Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions, Resisting Occupation, Constructing Peace, <http://icahd.org/eng/publications.asp>

¹⁴ Hallinan

¹⁵ Selengut, S, Israel's Economy Today, <http://www.ujc.org/page.aspx?id=203418>

¹⁶ Levy, G, IDF Draft dodgers are Heroes, Not Criminals, Haaretz, 03/05/09

¹⁷ For a brief historical update see Giacaman, R, Health Status and Health Services in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Lancet 3/7/09;837:837-49.

¹⁸ Al-Amin, E, What Actually Happened in Fatah's Elections, <http://www.counterpunch.org/amin08142009.html>

¹⁹ idem

²⁰ <http://www.bilin-village.org/english/articles/press-and-independent-media/Soldier-who-fired-in-Naalin-incident-arrested>

²¹ <http://www.bdsmovement.net/>

²² Klein, N, The Shock Doctrine, New York, Picador, 2007, pp 251-65

²³ See A Class Analysis of the Israel-Palestine Conflict, The Communist, Fall, 2007, pp20-33, <http://progressivelabor.890m.com/index.php/publications/pl-magazine-the-communist/38-pl-magazine-the-communist/827-a-class-analysis-of-the-israel-palestine-conflict-from-qthe-communistq-fall-2007>

²⁴ For links to many resistance groups in Israel, go to <http://jfffp.com/>

²⁵ Selengut and see footnote 23

AFTER THE FALL: 20 Years Later In The Former Soviet States

The 2009 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall marked the beginning of an orgy of self-congratulation among capitalists across Europe and the United States. For the capitalist class the collapse of the Soviet Union marked the “end of history,”¹ the complete and total victory of capitalism over the working class.² The *New York Times* declared that “the emptiness of the [communist] system had been exposed.” The “calculations of power and politics” were “overwhelmed by a single minded quest. Call it freedom.”³ In Germany there was a huge celebration. A row of giant dominos was set up with former Polish president and anti-Semite Lech Walesa pushing over the first one as the American band Bon Jovi played “We Weren’t Born to Follow.”⁴

For workers around the world the collapse of the Soviet Union marked a monumental setback. While Western capitalists congratulated themselves the working class mourned. An East German steel worker commented, “I do not know if there is a future for me, and I’m not too hopeful. The fact is, I lived better under communism.” Shortly after the collapse a doctor at a Moscow hospital stated, “Life was different two years ago – I was a human being.” When he was asked whether he was grateful for his new “freedoms” he responded, “Freedom for what? Freedom to buy a pornographic magazine?” Even ardent anti-communist academic Angela Stent had to acknowledge, “Most people are worse off than they were under communism.”⁵

The Progressive Labor Party has long acknowledged the political weaknesses that doomed the Soviet Union (and communist China) to revert to capitalism,⁶ but for all the Soviet Union’s weaknesses it was its monumental accomplishments that made its defeat so heartbreaking. The creation of the first workers’ state was an attempt to fundamentally change the economic and political basis of an entire society. Like any pioneers embarking on such a grand mission the Soviet communists made many mistakes, mistakes that we can learn from today.⁷ But people remember the Soviet Union for its great accomplishments, the elevation of the rights of women, the struggle against racism both in the Soviet Union and abroad, the creation of a massive social safety net to protect workers, the creation of the world’s first free education and health care systems, and the gargantuan effort and sacrifice of the Soviet people that smashed the Nazi beasts in the Second World War.

When the Soviet Union collapsed it marked a qualitative shift in the economic and social relations that had been

changing since Nikita Khrushchev first attacked Soviet communism in 1956.⁸ The Soviet leadership of the 1980s was completely rotten and revisionist, a point evidenced by the fact that many of these bureaucrats would go on to form the post-Soviet Russian capitalist class (notably Boris Yeltsin and Vladimir Putin). Still the institutions that were built through the 1930s remained, albeit in an admittedly degraded state. The collapse of the Soviet Union, which began in 1989 and lasted until 1991, marked the complete destruction of the old Soviet state and a transition towards total free market capitalism.

This qualitative shift dramatically changed the lives of the people in the former Soviet bloc. Life expectancies were shortened, unemployment skyrocketed, racism and sexism returned in their most virulent forms, and mass political repression became the lot of the working class. Here twenty years after the collapse of the Soviet Union we evaluate the effects of capitalism on what was once the world’s first workers’ state.

The Destruction of the Soviet Economy

According to Western propaganda capitalism was supposed to liberate markets in Eastern Europe and rejuvenate a stagnant and unnecessarily bureaucratic Soviet economy. For decades the West had used CIA controlled media outlets like *Radio Free Europe* to convince workers in the Soviet Union that capitalism would end shortages and lead to unending prosperity. The reality was quite the opposite.

“The vipers, the bloodsuckers, the middlemen – that’s what needs to be rehabilitated in the Soviet Union. That’s what makes our kind of country click!”

Within the first few months of the open transition to capitalism in Hungary the price of basic goods went up 30% instantly dropping most people into poverty. This dramatic drop in living standards was part of a trend that dated back to the Hungarian Communist Party’s decision to aggressively pursue market reforms (so called “Goulash Communism”) in order to grow the economy. During the



Construction and Industry statue in Vilnius, Lithuania. Pro-working class public art could be found everywhere in the Soviet bloc.

transition to a market economy in the 1980s the number of men working two jobs leapt to 70% and the average daily hours worked went from 8 ½ to 14 ½. With 20% of the population living below the poverty line by 1990 the only thing growing was the number of poor people.⁹

In Russia unemployment jumped from less than 1 million to 8-10 million within the first two years of entering the “free market paradise,” by 1993 the number had reached 15 million.¹⁰ By 1996 the standard of living in Russia had fallen by half, the wealth gap had increased from 4:1 under the Soviet Union to 13.5:1, and the life expectancy for men dropped to 57 years old. The privatization of agriculture led to declining production and in 1995 Russia had the worst harvest in 30 years.¹¹ By 1998 the number of abandoned children in Russia had increased from nearly zero in 1990 to more than 2 million. The Russian Association of Psychiatrists estimated that the suicide rate among this growing population of homeless children was an astounding 10%!¹² Six years into full blown capitalism the Director of the Institute of Economic Analysis in Moscow summed up the feelings of the general population, “Most people live far worse than they ever did... There is no stability right now. People are scared.”¹³

In East Germany, a country that had become the symbol of communism’s “defeat” with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, people panicked as rents that had been between \$25-50 per month sky rocketed. Adding to the problem, restitution claims filed by West Germans who claimed

to be the rightful pre-1945 owners of various properties in East Germany threatened the homes of many East Germans. Many of those filing claims had been Nazis or were the heirs to Nazis. When East Germans tried to file claims against stolen West German property they were told that the time limit for filing claims had passed. As a result over 2.2 million claims were filed against property in the East while not one was allowed to be filed against the West.¹⁴

People grew uneasy as they traveled through West Germany and saw that mass poverty and homelessness were not inventions of Soviet propaganda.¹⁵ The German paper *Der Spiegel* quoted an East German worker in 2009 who “thanked god” that he was able to experience living in the German Democratic Republic (“GDR” – East Germany), noting that it wasn’t until after the West German annexation of East Germany that he witnessed people who feared for their existence, beggars, and the homeless.¹⁶

Shortly after the West German annexation sociologists in East Germany began to notice a disturbing trend. “Joy” over entering the free market paradise had caused the crude birth rate in East Germany to drop from 12.0 births per 1,000 people in 1989 to 5.1 per 1,000 by 1993. It was the largest drop in crude birth rate ever seen in the industrialized world surpassing that of Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan following their defeat in World War II. One researcher noted that such a decline in child bearing is only seen during “times of catastrophe, desperate privation, and widespread loss of life.” One aspect of the downward trend in birth rates was the upward spike in the rate of women choosing to have abortions. In East Germany abortion had been both legal and less stigmatized than in West Germany meaning that the sudden spike in abortions was not due to “increased freedoms” but rather increased cynicism amongst East German women.¹⁷

Ten years after the collapse of the Soviet Union former Soviet states saw the number of people living in poverty increase from 14 million to 168 million, 12 times the number in 1990! Children made up 50 million of those



A new sight for Soviet workers, an unemployment line stretches into the distance in Moscow. (2009)



City-Hochhaus, the tallest building in Leipzig, Germany. Under the GDR it was part of the University of Leipzig, after it was privatized in the 1990s it was purchased by Merrill Lynch. Going from school to bank the tower symbolizes the move to capitalism.

living in poverty. In Kyrgyzstan 88% of the population lived below the poverty line by 2000 and between 60 and 66% in Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Moldova.¹⁸

The destruction of the East European economies was not simply a natural result of states being in a period of transition, but was the result of conscious planning amongst Western capitalists seeking new imperialist markets and Eastern capitalists (mostly former party officials from the revisionist communist parties) who sought to

expropriate Soviet industry from the working class who built and owned it.

In East Germany the 1990 currency union changed the exchange rate from 4½:1 (4 ½ GDR marks was equal to one West German mark) to 1:1 overnight creating a 450% price inflation for East German goods. The increase in prices destroyed the GDR's export market which made up 39% of the overall GDR economy, therefore bringing the whole economy down with it. A trusteeship was then set up to manage the publicly owned infrastructure of East Germany. The trusteeship sold the property as cheaply and as quickly as it could, selling some factories for as little as one mark. All of the industry and infrastructure of East Germany had been owned by the working class, but after the trusteeship's fire sale 85% of it was owned by West German capitalists, 10% was owned by miscellaneous foreign capitalists, and 5% was purchased by East German capitalists.¹⁹

In total 3,400 factories, 520 large construction companies, 465 cooperatives, and thousands of small businesses were all privatized. Tired of competing against East German industry the West German capitalists closed many of the factories and businesses that they purchased. Those that weren't closed saw their workforces reduced significantly. The Zeiss optics factory in Jena saw its workforce reduced from 20,000 to 2,000 almost overnight. 720,000 agricultural workers (80% of the total under the GDR) were laid off as collective farms were dismantled and privatized.²⁰ As a result of this attack on GDR industry

East Germany went from being the 10th largest industrial nation in the world to being only the 40th largest industrial area.²¹ The unemployment rate in East Germany 15 years after the annexation remained at 18%, twice the rate in West Germany.²²

Similar policies were pursued throughout Eastern Europe. Western European states opened up markets to the former Soviet Union only where Western goods maintained a competitive advantage using protectionist measures to block more competitive goods (steel, farm produce, and textiles). The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development spent more on lavish offices and furnishings than on development projects in its first year. After that it funded only East-West joint ventures in order to help European imperialists gain a foothold in Eastern Europe. USAID and Europe's Phare assistance program gave money almost exclusively to American and West European companies. 90% of Western aid was taken up by Western firms. The end result was that the \$1 billion dollar trade surplus that Eastern Europe had with the West in 1989 turned into an \$8 billion deficit by 1993.²³



Capitalists in Eastern Europe were schooled by the West in the proper exploitation of the working class. The AFL-CIO's Free Trade Union Institute (which has deep connections to the CIA) set up offices in the various former Soviet states. There they trained bosses in the proper methods for smashing labor movements. Strikers were undermined, subverted, beaten, arrested, and even killed. Bruce Gelb, head of the United States Information Agency in 1990 commented on the expert training the U.S. was providing the former Soviet Union, "The vipers, the bloodsuckers, the middlemen – that's what needs to be rehabilitated in the Soviet Union. That's what makes our kind of country click!"²⁴



Workers on break at a machine shop in Riga, Lithuania (1976). In the Soviet bloc jobsites were community and social centers.

Under the tutelage of Western capitalists the Russian bosses were able to cut the average income of workers by 30% in the first five years after the Soviet collapse. By 1996 unpaid back wages in Russia exceeded 40 trillion rubles (\$7.5 billion) amounting to an average of one month of unpaid labor for every worker in Russia. An autoworker at the Moscow Zil plant lamented, “I was raised in a country that cared about its workers.” A textile worker commenting on the state of affairs in Russia said, “They have taken away our dignity and one cannot live without that.”²⁵

The Decline in Health and Living Standards

The repercussions of returning to full blown capitalism were felt immediately by the Soviet working class. By 1995 the declines in life expectancy across the entire former Soviet Union led to an estimated additional 500,000 – 1 million deaths per year. The British medical journal the *Lancet* noted, “The magnitude and steepness of the fluctuation in mortality rates and life expectancy reported here for Russia are without parallel in the modern era.” One medical journal attributed the sudden drop in life expectancy to the abrupt replacement of a socialist command economy with a free market capitalist economy.²⁶

The *New York Times* noted in 1990 that a decade of market reforms in Hungary had led to a significant increase in instances of heart disease among men.²⁷ And it took only a few years of living under capitalism for the suicide rate to climb by 50%.²⁸ By 2009 the five highest suicide rates in the world were all found in former Soviet states (Belarus, Lithuania, Russia, Kazakhstan, and Hungary).²⁹

By 1996 in Russia the death rate was twice that of the birth rate. In 2009 the Russian government undertook steps to try and stem this downward demographic trend that has reduced the population by 12 million people in the last 20 years.³⁰ The U.S. foreign policy think tank the Atlantic Council even released a report in 2006 that

Conditions Deteriorate Under Capitalism in China and Vietnam as Well

In Vietnam the transition to capitalism in the 1980s meant the rapid widening of the gap between rich and poor. Quality of healthcare and education for the poor have all deteriorated significantly under capitalist rule and prosperity has come only to a privileged few leaving most to slave away in the country’s vast new sweatshop industries.

Sociologist Weng Feng notes that the transition to capitalism in China has quickly turned China from one of the world’s most egalitarian societies to one of the least. There has been a particular rise in the wage discrepancies between men and women as women have been forced out of lead and managerial positions. Migrant workers, particularly women, have “become the cannon fodder of China’s industrial revolution.”

-Michael Parenti, *Blackshirts and Reds*

-Weng Feng, *Boundaries and Categories*

stated that the population crisis in Russia was so severe that soon it would not be able to support its Soviet era military.³¹ This demographic reality has led Russian imperialists to pursue an increasingly aggressive foreign policy aimed at extending Russian influence particularly in resource rich Central Asia.³²

In East Germany mortality rates for men and women rose dramatically. Between 1989 and 1991 the mortality rate for East German women ages 35 to 44 rose 20%, for men 35-44 it rose 30%, and for girls 10-14 it rose an astonishing 70%!³³ One significant factor for this astounding rise in mortality rates was the increased stress brought on by the new capitalist economy.³⁴

This absolute collapse in the health standards in the former Soviet States was due in part to the dismantling of the Soviet health care system. This system gave every person in the Soviet Union free medical coverage. Western medical observers who visited the Soviet Union in the 1930s as it was being built remarked on what an amazing feat the workers of the Soviet Union had accomplished in building the world’s first universal health care system.³⁵ The impact of this new medical infrastructure was immediate. Between 1938 and 1965 life expectancies for Russian men rose from 40.4 to 64 and for women rose from 46.7-72.1. Life expectancy numbers did not begin to decline until 1965 in the midst of the free market reforms brought on by the Khrushchev revisionists.³⁶

In 1995, due to the development of the Soviet health system, Russia had more physicians per capita than any other industrialized country (one for every 259 people).³⁷

Yet the number of visits people made to doctors and other health professionals dropped in half because of the steep new fees that came attached to capitalist medical care. What was left of the Soviet medical infrastructure was allowed to decay as many hospitals were closed and others were purposely underfunded in an effort to increase the profitability of the health care system. Diseases that had long been eradicated like polio, tuberculosis, cholera, diphtheria, and dysentery became resurgent in the new capitalist Russia.³⁸

“The magnitude and steepness of the fluctuation in mortality rates and life expectancy reported here for Russia are without parallel in the modern era.”

Workers in the former Soviet states had naively believed that the stories of medical care for profit and the tragedies it produced was mere Party propaganda, but the years immediately following the collapse brought the brutal reality of capitalist medicine home. In East Germany 65% of people believed the West German health system was superior in 1990, but after five years of capitalist medicine 57% wanted to return to the East German system.³⁹ For East Europeans who immigrated to the U.S. the experience of the even more brutal American health care system was shocking.



Children in line at a soup kitchen in Moscow (1998). Children were hit the hardest by growing poverty under capitalism.

The elimination of other state services has had equally profound effects on worker health. The removal of fuel subsidies and a growing homeless population have made winter deaths from people freezing to death a regular occurrence in Russia.⁴⁰ Privatization of utilities companies has seriously impacted people's ability to access clean water, heat, and electricity. In a particularly crass example the American energy company AES-Telasi that purchased the power grid in Georgia shut off the power to the Tbilisi airport while a plane full of passengers was

trying to land in order to induce the airport to pay their power bill.⁴¹

The elimination of state services has affected public health in other more unexpected ways. While some have blamed arid conditions caused by global warming for the massive wild fires that have engulfed Russia over the summer, Russian insiders point to the dismantling of the Soviet era forestry service. In 2007 Putin passed the Forest Code that placed the care of Russia's massive timberlands into the hands of private logging interests and corrupt local bureaucrats. The previous centralized forestry service that had 80,000 park rangers and 11,000 air-dropped firefighters was cut down to a mere 2,000 people who served a strictly monitoring function. At the time Russian environmentalists claimed the law would spell disaster. Since its passing the number of forest fires has doubled.⁴²

At the height of the fires the smoke and ash doubled the daily summer death toll in Moscow adding an additional 350 deaths per day. Moscow health chief Andrei Seltsovky reported that the city morgues were nearly overflowing.⁴³ Embarrassed by the mounting death toll, state authorities told Moscow doctors not to diagnose heat stroke as a cause of death in order to obscure the actual human cost of the fires. One group estimated the total summer deaths attributable to the heat wave and wild fires could be as high as 15,000 people.⁴⁴

After the Putin-Medvedev government received harsh criticism over the fires and the 2007 Forest Code a Putin spokesman continued to defend the failed system stating, “This is a well functioning system which only needs some minor adjustments.” Russian workers who were forced to suffer through the effects of the fires were not as generous. One worker from the village of Tver remarked bitterly that under the communists “there were three fire ponds in the village, a bell that tolled when a fire began, and – guess what – a fire truck.”⁴⁵

The final piece of the health catastrophe in the former Soviet Union is the impact of capitalist economic and social relations on the psyche of the working class. The



“NO!” Soviet anti-alcohol abuse poster (1954)



RJ Reynolds to the Rescue

As West European and American markets became more inhospitable to tobacco sales in the 1990s the collapse of the Soviet Union was seen as a lifeline to the tobacco industry. American companies quickly bought up all the newly privatized cigarette manufacturers in the Eastern bloc and set about an advertising blitz. Eastern Europe was flooded with cigarettes and images of the Marlboro Man.

The chairman of RJ Reynolds Co. said of the new East European market, "We have enormous opportunities to use the tobacco industry as a powerful force for improving the economic and social well-being of this part of the world."

The result of this move has been a dramatic increase in the number of smokers across the former Soviet states. The medical journal *Annals of Oncology* notes that this has already led to a significant rise in cancer rates and that the numbers will only continue to rise over time.

-*Washington Post*, "In Ex-Soviet Markets, U.S. Brands Took on Role of Capitalist Liberator," 11/19/96.

-*Wall Street Journal*, "Philip Morris Readies Aggressive Global Push," 1/29/08.

-"Cancer Mortality Up, Life Expectancy Down in Eastern Europe," *Annals of Oncology*, 2000, p 1073.

daily stress and alienation of capitalism has led to more than just increased heart disease. Drug addiction and alcoholism have reached epidemic proportions all across Eastern Europe. Within two years of entering the free market paradise the Russian military reported that deaths from drug overdoses had risen by 80%.⁴⁶

Alcoholism in Russia has reached crisis levels. After the collapse of the Soviet Union Russian capitalists, eager to capitalize on workers' misery, ended the Soviet era anti-alcohol programs and flooded the market with cheap liquor. As state controls were lifted on alcohol production and sales the price of vodka plummeted faster than workers' wages. This flood of cheap alcohol meant that

relative to the price of vodka wages actually increased three times. By 1994 the average adult male in Russia was consuming 52.2 liters of pure alcohol per year, by far the highest consumption rate in the world.⁴⁷ Recently the Russian Public Chamber reported that 500,000 Russians die every year from alcohol abuse.⁴⁸ The combination of alcohol abuse and suicide has helped to lower the life expectancy of Russian men to 59, causing Pravda to remark that Russian men are becoming "extinct."⁴⁹

The Attack on Women and the Roll Back of Women's Rights

When English doctor Sir Arthur Newsholme visited the Soviet Union in the early 1930s he was shocked to see that "sex differences do not count" in the lives of Soviet workers. He reported that women were working in "men's jobs" like mining and factory work. While visiting Soviet hospitals he met more female doctors than male doctors.⁵⁰ American journalist Anna Louise Strong, a frequent visitor to the Soviet Union in the 1930s, wrote that "The Revolution gave women legal and political equality" and that centuries old practices like spousal abuse and even spousal murder were now being combated and eradicated by liberated women endowed with communist ideas.⁵¹ While the Soviet Union never completely eliminated sexism it did take giant strides towards gender equality that remain unmatched in the capitalist world.

The victory of the Russian Revolution was a tremendous victory for women all over the world and likewise

the collapse of the Soviet Union represents a major defeat. Within the first few years under capitalism the unemployment rate for women jumped dramatically. In Hungary it went from 0.4% in 1988 to 9.2% by 1993, in Poland it jumped from 0.6% to 9.6%, and in Bulgaria it leapt from 0.6% to 12.5%.⁵² In Russia by 1996 women made up 80% of the unemployed. Those that were employed held only the lowest paying, lowest skilled jobs, and were the first to be fired and the last to be hired at any company.⁵³

“Women are robbed not just of day care and income, but of their social life, friendships, and communities of solidarity which were all centered in the workplace.”

All the rights granted to women under the Soviet Union were removed, paid pregnancy and maternity leave, equality with men in wages and promotions, special training opportunities, and special safety considerations in the workplace. Women workers were subject to rampant sexual harassment at work.⁵⁴ One Polish woman lamented that economic demise comes earlier for women now since to get a job “you must be young, childless and have a big bosom.”⁵⁵

A recent U.S. State Department cable on the state of Russian women notes that the decline of women’s rights has come as a result of the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Stating, “The social pressures imposed by economic difficulties since the fall of Communism have pushed many women into the position of focusing more on survival than on defending their rights.” The cable goes on to state that the capitalist freedom to exploit workers left women with little recourse to resist sexism in the workplace. Fear of being fired or even suffering physical abuse keeps many women from fighting



**Soviet poster from 1926.
“Women you are free — Now defend Socialism!”**



Workers at the VAZ Plant in Togliatti, Russia (1976). The largest auto-plant in the Soviet Union, roughly half of its 111,000 workers were women.

back. A 2007 survey found that 100% of Russian women respondents reported being sexually harassed at work. Job advertisements routinely include age and gender requirements. The female director of the Association of Women Journalists told U.S. embassy officials that in Russia “job applications are like a beauty contest.”⁵⁶

In East Germany 88% of people remarked that conditions for women were better under the GDR after experiencing just five years of capitalism.⁵⁷ One East German woman commented, “Women are robbed not just of day care and income, but of their social life, friendships, and communities of solidarity which were all centered in the workplace.” She added that most East German women are “extremely apprehensive about the isolation they face and a newfound dependence on men.”⁵⁸

The sexism that comes part and parcel with capitalism has shocked the women of Eastern Europe. Under the communists in East Germany pornography and prostitution were “serious taboos.” But immediately after the Wall fell the West German sex industry invaded East

Germany in order to “sexually liberate” it. Caravans of prostitutes were brought in from West Germany and while Soviet industry was dismantled pornography shops were set up all over the country. All this “liberation” did little for the women of East Germany who report that their love lives were far better under the East German system when they were treated as human beings rather than objects.⁵⁹

The “sexually liberated” West also made it more difficult for women to obtain contraception and once again stigmatized abortion, a crucial right that women had under the Soviet regime. Obtaining a divorce also became more difficult as women were forced back into traditional roles as housewives.⁶⁰

As unemployment for women skyrocketed and sexist exploitation became the norm the illicit sex trade began to boom. Tens of thousands of women were forced into prostitution across the former Soviet bloc. A Russian woman highlighted the economic roots of the boom telling the *New York Times*, “If I could work as a nurse and be paid decently, then believe me, I wouldn’t work as a prostitute.”⁶¹ Russia has now become the epicenter for the trafficking of women for the illegal sex trade.⁶² Unfortunately in Eastern Europe it is not only women who are being victimized by the sex trade. In 1996 Newsweek noted that “Prague and Budapest now rival Bangkok and Manila as hubs for the collection of children to serve visiting pedophiles.”⁶³

The return of sexism with capitalism has also led to a disturbing increase in violence against women. Five years after the collapse of the Soviet Union the rate of sexual assaults in Russia skyrocketed to 11,000. And even this number greatly understates the problem since it is estimated that only 5-10% of women ever report being assaulted (that means that the actual rate is potentially as high as 220,000!).⁶⁴ In Russia alone the rate of women murdered every year (primarily by husbands and boyfriends) went from 5,300 to 15,000 in just the first three years under capitalism!⁶⁵ A woman in Moscow who was asked by a reporter how her life had changed under capitalism responded, “It’s not life, it’s just existence.”⁶⁶

The Racists Crawl Out of the Gutters and into the Government

Under the Soviet Union Moscow used to host thousands of students from all over Africa. They were treated as welcomed guests, but now they suffer routine racist harassment and attacks. One student commented, “Even on the metro I’m scared. I can’t even go out anymore. Russia is no longer safe for us blacks.”⁶⁷ The shocking reemergence of extreme racism and racist violence in the former Soviet Union proves the PL line that racism is a necessary weapon that all capitalists employ against the working class.⁶⁸

A 2002 report from Amnesty International stated that,

“Fear of racist attacks among Russia’s minority population is not confined to fear of ‘skinheads’; they have almost as much to fear from officials... Police and law enforcement officials routinely subject racial and ethnic minorities to harassment and intimidation and often respond with indifference to racist attacks.”

In one example, when Ethiopian refugee Adefers Dessu and his wife were beaten by racists armed with chains in 2001 the medical report recorded that their injuries were the result of a “fall” and the police worked to kill the investigation by misreporting the description of the suspects. Racist statements by public figures in Russia have been allowed to go without comment and anti-Semitic publications are once again openly sold in the streets of Moscow just as they had been under the Tsar.⁶⁹ Despite efforts by authorities to obscure the real figures in the first six months of 2007 alone 47 people were murdered in 300 racist attacks. Skinheads, unheard of in the Soviet Union, are estimated to number around 70,000 in capitalist Russia.⁷⁰

“The fall of communism opened a Pandora’s Box, from which all demons escaped, among them anti-Semitism.”

The rise of the Solidarity Movement in Poland during the 1980s demonstrated that the ideology of racism was critical to the Western capitalists’ attack on the Soviet Union and the eventual Soviet return to capitalism. Solidarity has been the darling of Western politicians and intellectuals who credit the organization with the defeat of “totalitarian” communism in Poland. In reality Solidarity was made up of the remnants of the WWII fascists and to this day remains steeped in anti-Semitism.

When Solidarity was formed in 1981 it was made of groups like the KPN and ROPiCO⁷¹ that had long histories of anti-Semitism.⁷² Many of Solidarity’s older members had been supporters of the fascist leader Josef Pilsudski who ruled Poland from 1926 to 1936 and many had participated in the pro-fascist, anti-communist Home Army which operated out of Britain during the Second World War. In 1942 as the Jews in the Warsaw ghetto were being transported to the Treblinka death camp the Home Army issued a bulletin urging Poles not to save “Jewish brats” and “curly Benjamins.” They argued that the liquidation of the ghetto would be a good thing since it would weaken the communists.⁷³

On November 11th 1981, a day that marked the creation of Poland in 1918 after WWI,⁷⁴ Solidarity renamed the



Soviet Poster for March 8th International Women's Day (1961)

Lenin Shipyards the “Pilsudski Shipyards” and hung a picture of Marshall Pilsudski over the gates. Under Pilsudski’s rule pogroms were launched against Jews in Poland and after a visit with Josef Goebbels in 1934 Pilsudski set up concentration camps in Poland for Jews and labor leaders. On that day in 1981 Solidarity wished to show its “solidarity” with the fascist Pilsudski and everything that he stood for.⁷⁵ After the collapse of the Polish communists Solidarity elevated the fascist Pilsudski to a national hero, the fascist father of the new capitalist Poland.⁷⁶

From its very inception Solidarity endorsed the Nazi platform that linked anti-communism with anti-Semitism, calling communism a Jewish conspiracy. At their 1981 summer congress leaflets were handed out attacking Jewish figures within Solidarity. During meetings questions were raised about the role and influence of Jews within the union.⁷⁷ In October of 1981 Marian Jurczyk, a prominent leader within Solidarity, delivered a speech in which he asserted that three quarters of the communist leadership were Jews. The next month another Solidarity official claimed in a radio broadcast that the communist party leaders were “either Russians or Jews from Russia who changed their names.”⁷⁸

Anti-Semitism remained at the core of Solidarity’s political ideology even after the collapse of Polish communism. When Solidarity leaders Lech Walesa and Tadeusz Mazowiecki went up against each other in the 1990 Polish elections Walesa’s campaign spread a rumor that Mazowiecki was secretly Jewish. Walesa repeatedly claimed during the campaign that there were Jews in politics that were hiding their origins in order to corrupt Poland. The *New York Times*, one of Solidarity’s staunchest defenders, excused and even legitimated Walesa’s

disgusting racism writing, “One historical fact may contribute to the current debate over hidden Jews. In the early years of Communism, the Soviet Union relied on Jews in key positions, including in the top posts of the Polish secret police. Some changed their names.”⁷⁹ According to the American “paper of record” apparently communism is a secret Jewish conspiracy after all.

In 1995 Henryk Jankowski, a highly influential priest within the Solidarity movement and who’s St. Brygida’s Church is where Solidarity was founded, gave a sermon that said Jews were responsible for both Nazism and communism stating, “The Star of David is implicated in the swastika as in the hammer and sickle.” When he was criticized for the statements he said the actions of Jews “in banking and finance circles” had led to “many human tragedies.” He later clarified, “This was not an attack against all Jews, but criticism of some of them, those who are doing harm to Poland’s interests.” Walesa, a friend and congregant of Jankowski, refused to admonish the priest for his blatantly racist remarks choosing instead to remain silent on the issue.⁸⁰

The increasing influence of Solidarity and their infusion of anti-Semitism into the Polish political system led to an immediate resurgence of anti-Semitic hate crimes and vandalism in Poland. One Polish parliament member remarked, “The fall of communism opened a Pandora’s Box, from which all demons escaped, among them anti-Semitism.”⁸¹ This year the European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) released a report that admonished Polish authorities for continuing to do nothing to stem anti-Semitism in Poland and in many cases encouraging it. The report states that anti-Semitism is particularly prevalent at soccer games where Polish nationalists taunt opposing fans by calling them “Jews” and issue death threats “with crude references to the gas chambers.”⁸²

The victory of capitalism and the racism that it breeds has also allowed Polish capitalists to rewrite the shameful role of Polish nationalists in World War II who actively collaborated with the Nazis and helped send millions of Jews and other Poles to the death camps. The release of the 2009 film *Defiance* that depicts the Bielski brothers’ attempts to hide Jews rescued from the Warsaw ghetto from the Nazis was met with uproar from many in Poland. Theaters across the country banned the film claiming that it is “rewriting history.” In the new Poland history has been turned on its head and apparently now it was the Jews who attacked and victimized the Poles.⁸³

One of the Polish historians who has helped to rewrite and ultimately try to erase the history of the Holocaust is Marek Jan Chodakiewicz. He argues that anti-Semitic pogroms in Poland both before and during the war were okay because they were not about racism since the Jews were all communists. He has also argued that the murder of Jews returning to Poland after the war by Polish nationalists was justified because the Jews had collaborated with the Soviet Union; he then weeps for the execution of Poles who collaborated with the Nazis as travesties of justice. In 2005 he was rewarded for his despicable deeds by being made a member of the oversight board of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial and Museum in Washington D.C., a move that demonstrates U.S. capitalists' longstanding mission to rewrite the history of the Holocaust.⁸⁴

The elevation of former Nazis and their collaborators to key political positions was critical to the West's anti-communist bulwark in West Germany as well. During the Yalta and Potsdam Conferences at the end of the Second World War it was agreed that zones of occupation would be created in Germany for the purpose of de-nazification and the creation of a new German state devoid of militarism. After the fascist influence had been purged from the various occupied zones there would be elections and Germany would be re-unified under a new government. That was the original agreement, but the Western capitalists, under the leadership of the U.S., would immediately go about violating the conference agreements.



Anti-fascist demonstration attacked by neo-Nazis in Bialystock, Poland (2009). When the racist thugs were repelled the police came in and attacked the anti-fascist demonstrators; a common theme in capitalist countries.

Soviet Union Defends Jews Against Capitalist Nazi Beasts

During the Second World War the Soviet Union did much to fight the racist tide of anti-Semitism and saved millions from the horrors of the Nazi death camps. After the Soviet Red Army moved in to Poland in 1939 Jews, Gypsies, and other minorities subject to "special persecution" were moved to safe locations behind Moscow.

While many Jews were moved far from the Nazi frontlines many others chose to join the Red Army. All told there were at least 100 Jewish Generals in the Red Army during the Second World War. The lower ranks were filled with over 600,000 more. When the Red Army finally marched into Berlin they had crushed Hitler's armies with a multi-racial, multi-ethnic, multi-national, multi-gendered army of millions.

All this was done while the West actively aided Hitler's legions, refused port to ships filled with Jewish refugees, refused to bomb rail lines that fed prisoners to concentration camps, and even refused to acknowledge the existence of the Holocaust until 1945.

-Anna Louise Strong, *The Stalin Era*

-Albert Axell, *Russia's Heroes*

-Debra Kaufman, Gerald Herman, James Ross, and David Phillips, eds., *From the Protocols of the Elders of Zion to Holocaust Denial Trials*

At the will of the Western capitalists the Nazi regime would retain firm control of West Germany. In 1949, in direct violation of the wartime agreements, the U.S. and Britain created the West German state (Federal Republic – FDR). The West feared that any election that included East and West German voters for re-unification that was overseen by the Soviet Union would lead to a sweeping victory for the communists. So they created their own state in their own image.⁸⁵

The Nuremberg trials which enjoyed mass support in the U.S. and Europe represented a significant stumbling block for those who sought to reinstate the Nazi leadership in West Germany. Already by 1947, one year into the trials, U.S. politicians were claiming that the trials aided the communists and were a "red plot" to eliminate top German leadership. By April of 1949 the U.S. dismantled the war crimes tribunal, a year later a clemency board was set up to pardon convicted Nazi war criminals, and by 1958 every war criminal had been released from prison.⁸⁶

The first Chancellor of the FDR was Konrad Adenauer, a man who had close associations with and was funded

by Nazi war criminal Friedrich Flick. Shortly after being elected he granted amnesty to 792,176 Nazi war criminals. Adenauer's chief of staff was Hans Globke a top official in the Nazi Party who played a direct role in the Holocaust. The first chief of the FDR Foreign Office was Herbert Blankenhorn a former Nazi propagandist and member of the SS. Adolf Heusinger was chief of the Operations Division of the Nazi army and oversaw war planning for Hitler. Naturally he was made the top commander of the illegally formed West German military in 1957.⁸⁷

While prominent Nazis filled top positions the lower ranks were replete with Nazis who made up two thirds of the foreign services and military as well as much of the West German police infrastructure. By 1957 there were 46 political associations, 30 newspapers, 68 magazine and book publishers, 120 publicists, and 50 youth organizations all with ties to right-wing Nazi organizations in West Germany.⁸⁸ Even as these old Nazis died the companies that funded and built the Reich while profiting off of the war remained the most prominent companies in Germany, ThyssenKrupp, IG Farben, Siemens, BMW, etc.⁸⁹

By contrast the East German government was made up of anti-fascist fighters and an entire state culture was built around the idea of anti-fascism and anti-racism. It should come as no surprise then that at the time of the FDR annexation of East Germany West Germans were four times as likely as East Germans to describe themselves as openly anti-Semitic.⁹⁰

The dissolution in East Germany of the anti-fascist bulwark from WWII has led to a dramatic shift to the right in German politics. In an address to members of the Christian Democratic Union Party (CDU) on October 17, 2010 German Chancellor Angela Merkel declared that the German "experiment" in multiculturalism had "utterly failed." She went on to state that non-Germans, particularly Arabs and Muslims, were incapable of "living side by side" with the German people.⁹¹ This came only two months after the release of German central banker Thilo Sarrazin's racist book *Germany Abolishes Itself* in which Sarrazin argues that immigrants are lowering German IQs.⁹²

A study released days before Merkel's speech showed that 13% of Germans would welcome a "fuehrer" to run the country with a "firm hand." Over a third felt the country is "overrun by foreigners," 60% would "restrict the practice of Islam," and 17% think Jews have too much influence.⁹³ This anti-Semitism was repeated by Sarrazin who stated during his book promos that all Jews share a unique genetic heritage and therefore represent a single race separate from European whites.⁹⁴

Police Repression in Paradise

Much has been made in the West about the "totalitarian oppression" that all people faced in the Soviet Union. We

are told that we should rejoice that Eastern Europeans have escaped their various prison states. The reality is that the emergence of capitalism in the former Soviet Union has led to a massive increase in both the number of police and the violence the police visit upon the working class.

In 1991 the *New York Times* noted that the police force in Prague had grown many times larger than it had been under communism when "relatively few police were needed." To which social critic Michael Parenti responded, "How odd that fewer police were needed in the communist police state than in the free market paradise."⁹⁵

While Western capitalists have never been able to locate the "masses" of political prisoners that supposedly existed in Soviet prisons the newly capitalist Eastern European states immediately began to publicly amass political prisoners of their own. In Latvia and Georgia political dissidents who opposed the move to market economies, mainly communists, were rounded up and imprisoned without trial. In Lithuania communist leaders were imprisoned and then tortured.⁹⁶

"In this atmosphere the obvious lesson is: just don't involve yourself in politics at all."

In Russia the state apparatus of repression grew far larger than that during the Soviet period, eventually outnumbering all the branches of the military. "The regime's real enemy is inside after all." By 1996 the private security forces that were built by the new Russian capitalist class numbered around 800,000. Political activity became a dangerous game as Russian workers were brutally and viciously attacked for opposing the new regime.⁹⁷ The murder of political dissidents by the Russian government remains commonplace.⁹⁸

A 1997 report by Amnesty International stated that police torture was a regular part of life in the new Russia. After being tortured by Russian police one inmate told Amnesty International, "Several times I felt so bad that I prayed to God to let me die. I somehow believe that hell cannot be as terrible as this man-made one." The new police force had acquired such a frightening reputation that 43% of Russians said that they would not open the door to police under any circumstances.⁹⁹ A decade later things were dramatically worse with 67% of Russians saying that they fear the police.¹⁰⁰

Under the GDR the East German Stasi became the boogeyman of all Western anti-communists who warned of Soviet totalitarianism. After the annexation of the GDR, West German officials poured over the Stasi archives and

began collecting dossiers on all East Germans. The plan was presumably to bring about a series of show trials to discredit the East German state. When the “masses” of political prisoners and “long records” of Stasi abuse never materialized the project was scaled down. Over 300 GDR officials were tried and less than 100 were convicted with most receiving only probation. GDR president Erich Honecker and a few border guards were tried for

the deaths of people along the Berlin Wall, but the other defendants could only be brought up on the ridiculous charge of “treason.”¹⁰¹

The trials were a direct violation of the Unification Treaty and of Article 103 of Germany’s Basic Law (its constitution). The treason charge was based on the ridiculous assertion that the GDR was not a legitimate state despite the fact that it was formed only after the U.S. had violated every term of the Yalta and Potsdam Agreements and formed an independent West German state. The treason charge also ignored the fact that East Germany was recognized by the U.N. as well as every country in the world with the exception of West Germany.

The trials quickly devolved into a horrifying reversal of the post WWII Nuremberg Trials of the Nazi leadership. Hans Reinworth and Helene Heymann had been prisoners in Hitler’s concentration camps, as judges in the GDR they presided over several cases that convicted CIA agents of sabotage and other crimes. Both were sent right back to prison by West German courts. In reading Heymann’s verdict the judge felt it necessary to point out that Heymann had been trained by a Jewish attorney and



The capitalist media constantly talks about the Soviet “police state” versus capitalist freedom. Yet most in the former Soviet bloc say the police under capitalism are far more invasive and brutal.

German police brutally attack a protester at the G8 meeting in 2009 (top). Russian police attack a protester in St. Petersburg in 2007 (bottom).

The Myth of the Soviet Police State

Under capitalist education we are all told about the great Soviet police state. And according to the myth at no time was this police state more invasive and repressive than under capitalism’s favorite boogeyman Josef Stalin. The actual numbers tell a different story however.

In 1939 the NKVD (Soviet police forces) numbered only 366,000. This number consisted of political police, regular police, prison guards, border agents, internal military forces, firefighters, various inspectors (building, grain, etc), road crews, secretaries, and other office staff.

Even if we assumed that all 366,000 were police, which greatly overestimates their number, this would mean that there was one police officer for every 536 persons. This was not a large presence. Most cities and towns had less than a dozen NKVD members stationed in them and many rural villages had only one or none.

By contrast the U.S. in 2004 had 883,000 federal, state, and local police officers with the power to arrest, or one officer for every 332 persons. Far higher than even the grossest exaggerations of the Stalin era.

-Robert Thurston, *Life and Terror in Stalin’s Russia*

-Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Census of State and Local Law Enforcement Agencies, 2004; Census of Federal Law Enforcement Officers, 2004.*

The Berlin Wall Myth

The Berlin Wall that divided East Berlin from West Berlin has long been cited by Western capitalists as proof of Soviet "totalitarianism." Yet in the 28 years of the wall's existence 136 people died trying to cross it while in the year 2006 alone 432 immigrant deaths were reported along the U.S./Mexico border including 205 just in Arizona.

This is not to diminish the deaths along the Berlin Wall, but the ultimate sign of Soviet brutality, according to Western academics, killed in 28 years less than one third of the amount of people that died on the U.S./Mexico border in just one year! And instead of being outraged American capitalists want to further militarize the border! The outrage over the Berlin Wall has never been about humanitarianism, but has always been about anti-communism.

So why did the East Germans build the Berlin Wall in 1961? The first reason was an economic one. West German capitalists had decided that instead of building up their own education system they would hire technical workers that had been trained in East Germany by the GDR. By offering higher wages they created a brain drain in East Berlin in particular where 60,000 highly skilled technicians commuted daily to work in West Berlin (note that the GDR technical workers' West German wages were higher in large part because they continued to live in highly subsidized GDR housing, received free GDR medical care, bought highly subsidized GDR goods, etc., all while not paying into the GDR system).

Another problem was that West Berliners had taken to going into East Berlin to purchase state subsidized goods, particularly superior East German cameras, and then returning to West Berlin to sell them at an extreme profit.

The second and biggest reason for building the wall was that it was an effort to slow the entrance of Western terrorists and spies that were pouring from West Berlin into the East. Western historians have mocked the GDR name for the wall, the "Anti-Fascist Protection Wall," as a propaganda sham, but the history of Western terrorism in East Germany suggests otherwise.

As historian William Blum details in the period between 1948 and 1961 Western terrorists used explosives, arson, short circuiting, and other methods to damage power stations, shipyards, canals, docks, public buildings, gas stations, public transportation, bridges, etc; they derailed freight trains, seriously injuring workers; used acids to damage vital factory machinery; put sand in the turbine of a factory, bringing it to a standstill; set fire to a tile-producing factory; killed 7,000 cows at a co-operative dairy through poisoning; added soap to powdered milk destined for East German schools; were in possession, when arrested, of a large quantity of the poison cantharidin with which it was planned to produce poisoned cigarettes; carried out attacks on participants of the World Youth Forum in East Berlin with explosives, firebombs, and tire-puncturing equipment; and much more.

-*Deutsche Welle*, "At Least 136 People Lost Lives at Berlin Wall, Study Shows," 8/8/08.

-*Border Network for Human Rights*, "2006 Report on Migrant Deaths at the U.S.-Mexico Border," 11/2006.

-*NYT*, "Berliners Live With Reality of Communists' Wall in City," 6/27/63.

-William Blum, "Another Cold War Myth: The Fall of the Berlin Wall" *Counterpunch*, 10/2/09.

-William Blum, *Killing Hope*.

-*People's Weekly World*, "Another View of 'Lives of Others,'" 5/26/07.

that this attorney had defended communists. The chief prosecutor of the East German politburo made his name as a defense attorney for Nazi war criminals, many of which he helped evade justice.¹⁰²

After the annexation the people of East Germany began to complain that the West German police were far more brutal than the Stasi. The paperwork that the West German bureaucracy demanded for every little thing (health insurance, pension, taxes, etc) was considered incredibly invasive and led many in East Germany to comment that they felt more spied on now than under the GDR.¹⁰³

An extraordinarily invasive questionnaire was sent

out to East Germans after unification that asked for intimate details on people's relationship to the GDR and the communist party. Nothing was said about possible uses for the questionnaire. However, information from the questionnaires was leaked to the press to slander prominent East German leaders. The questionnaires were also made public to employers, but were concealed from the population at large, helping to create an employment blacklist.¹⁰⁴ One East German resident commented, "In this atmosphere the obvious lesson is: just don't involve yourself in politics at all."¹⁰⁵ Another East German worker told *Der Spiegel*, "As far as I'm concerned, what we had in those days was less of a dictatorship than what we have today."¹⁰⁶

Phony Elections and the Making of a New Ruling Class

In 1990 with the Soviet Union falling apart, East Germany annexed by West Germany, and the head of the Bulgarian Communist Party facing corruption charges the Bulgarian Communist Party reformed as the Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP) and did the unthinkable, won the first multi-party election in post-Soviet Bulgaria. Western leaders considered the victory to be a huge setback in their plans to roll back Soviet communism. U.S. Secretary of State James Baker was immediately sent to Sofia to publicly meet with opposition leaders and the National Endowment for Democracy (NED - an organization created by the U.S. ruling class to rig elections) dumped \$2 million dollars into opposition campaigns.

When a delegation from the Council of Europe declared the election to be legitimate the U.S. responded saying that fear and intimidation arising from “the legacy of 45 years of totalitarian rule” had produced “psychological” pressures on Bulgarian voters. Apparently the reason for the BSP victory was phantom repression. In reality the BSP had over one million members and won 47% of the vote because they opposed dismantling the command economy and endorsed only limited market reforms (a revisionist position itself).

A general question that kept coming up over and over again, “If your government listens to you, will you be able to control the workers’ movement for economic demands.”

The NED funded fake student groups and other opposition forces that led rallies and protested against the BSP in Sofia. Caving in to the pressure President Mladenov resigned less than a month after the election. The U.S. front groups continued protesting, however, burning books and Soviet memorabilia in the streets and eventually burning down the BSP headquarters. Finally the head of the opposition forces was made President by a special vote of the Parliament. After the opposition assumed the presidency a U.S. funded right-wing, evangelical group, the Free Congress Foundation (FCF) came in and began working as official advisors to the opposition. The leader of the FCF in Eastern Europe was Laszlo Pasztor, a former Nazi.

Eventually the BSP would collapse and the opposition would take over the government. The American capitalists praised it as a great victory for democracy. Three years later the virulently anti-communist *LA Times* was



Palace of the German Republic. The seat of the GDR Parliament as well as a cultural center it was built in 1976. In 2006 it was demolished despite mass protest in order to make room to rebuild the Prussian Stadtschloss, a monument to German militarism and empire.

forced to admit, “Living conditions are so much worse in the reform era that Bulgarians look back fondly on communism’s ‘good old days,’ when the hand of the state crushed personal freedom but ensured that people were housed, employed, and had enough to eat.”¹⁰⁷

All across the former Soviet bloc similar victories for “democracy” were occurring. In 1991 the communists won in multi-party elections in Albania. Again the NED came in and funded opposition forces that eventually toppled the government.¹⁰⁸ In the 1996 election Albanian strongman Sali Barisha and his party had a sweeping victory after they banned the communist party from participating, used the police to intimidate voters, and engaged in massive election fraud. Again the West applauded this victory for democracy. Barisha knew who to thank for his victory proclaiming, “We won because we enjoyed the powerful support of our great friends in Europe and the United States.”¹⁰⁹

In Poland supporters of Lech Walesa began to worry that he might not win the 1990 election. Walesa’s backers began making excuses that might justify a future power grab by the dictatorial leader. They argued that the Polish people’s inability to fully support Walesa showed their lack of democracy, “If we can trust the polls, this means we are not a society mature enough to accept democracy.” Others argued that Walesa’s lack of a clear mandate demonstrated Polish people’s “distaste for politics” that they developed under communism.¹¹⁰ Any vote that resulted in Walesa not being elected was automatically considered to be “undemocratic.”

It should be no surprise that Walesa had trouble finding popular support. All the way back in 1982 *Time Magazine* noted that Walesa did not live like a “man of the people,” he has a fancy apartment and earns three times the average Polish workers’ wage.

Solidarity’s counter-revolution was not a mass movement of the working class but rather an act of class

war on the part of the capitalist class against the working class. When Time met with Walesa to interview him they brought with them Philip Caldwell, president of Ford, Robert Tirby, president of Westinghouse, David Lewis, president of General Dynamics, and Thomas Watson, ex-president of IBM, among others. A French newspaper reports that they asked Walesa a barrage of questions: “Are you (Poles) ready to give up your Saturdays off? Do Polish workers know how to work, and are they ready to do so?” and a general question that kept coming up over and over again, “If your government listens to you, will you be able to control the workers’ movement for economic demands?”¹¹¹

In Russia the Yeltsin government faced immediate challenges. During the aborted August Coup in 1991, when some communist officials tried to retake the government, Yeltsin called on the workers of Russia to put down the coup. Most Russians remained passive during the coup choosing not to support either side. One observer, a stock trader, was shocked at how few workers heeded Yeltsin’s call. One group that did hit the streets



Built in 1935, the Moscow Subway demonstrates the different aesthetics of the Soviet Union. Soviet architects and artists tried to beautify the everyday environment of the working class.

in support of Yeltsin en masse was the burgeoning Moscow finance community who left the stock exchange to repel communism in the streets. These yuppies funded the defense of the parliament buying them food and other provisions. Artyom Yegorov, a broker who participated in the events noted,

“Up until the coup, we were just interested in making money. Politics was like a game, and we did not want to become involved. But after the coup, we realized that we risked losing everything that we had won. There was no way we were going to allow things to go back to the way they were.”¹¹²

After the Russian Parliament began opposing Yeltsin’s “shock therapy” economic reforms in 1993 Yeltsin began trying to circumvent the legislative body. The Parliament then moved to impeach Yeltsin. After the Russian Constitutional Court agreed with the Parliament that they could go ahead with impeachment proceeding over Yeltsin’s objections Yeltsin dissolved the Parliament. After the Parliament refused to dissolve itself Yeltsin had the Parliament building shelled by Russian tanks and then soldiers were sent in to take the building floor by floor. The tens of thousands of people in the streets of Moscow who were out in support of the Parliament holdouts were brutally attacked by security forces. In the end 150 people were killed and hundreds more were seriously wounded.¹¹³ The *New York Times* praised Yeltsin’s bold defense of “constitutional democracy.”¹¹⁴

By the 1996 election Yeltsin began to get himself together. Bolstered with \$14 billion in no-strings attached aid from the U.S. Yeltsin began engaging in a campaign of mass election fraud.¹¹⁵ Yeltsin used his monopoly control over Russian media outlets to launch a media blitz of campaign ads while freezing out his opponents. Yeltsin appealed to his supporters by giving anti-communist speeches. Referring to the collapse of the Soviet Union Yeltsin declared, “The repression of the former regime could not break the intelligentsia (a code word in Russia for “capitalists).”¹¹⁶

American Imperialism with a Democratic Face

In 1992 the U.S. passed the Freedom Support Act. The Act funded American government agencies and non-profits that went into the former Soviet states with the goal of propping up pro-Western leaders.

Groups like the National Endowment for Democracy, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), Freedom House, and ruling class agent George Soros’ Open Society, to name a few, flooded the Eastern bloc in the 1990s. These groups openly funded election fraud and the creation of anti-democratic opposition movements aimed at overthrowing elected governments that did not support U.S. interests.

These groups were responsible for rigging elections and propping up unpopular dictators in Bulgaria (1991), Albania (1991), Russia (1996), Georgia (2003), the Ukraine (2004), and Kyrgyzstan (2005), again to name a few.

NED co-founder Allen Weinstein noted, “A lot of what we [NED] do today was done covertly 25 years ago by the CIA.”

-Gerald Sussman, “The Myths of “Democracy Assistance,”” *Monthly Review*, Dec. 2006.



A new sight in the Soviet bloc, homelessness was considered by many to be a myth of communist propaganda. Unfortunately they were wrong. (Prague, 2010)

and banned the Communist Party if it appeared that they might win. Still U.S. President Bill Clinton praised the sham election as another victory for democracy.¹¹⁷

In 2006, worried over the electoral victories of resurgent Soviet era communist parties, the Council of Europe's parliamentary assembly moved to condemn the "crimes of totalitarian regimes" in an attempt to link the Soviet Union with Nazism. They complained that communist parties are still legal and active in some European countries. Journalist Seumas Milne wrote of the event, "Paradoxically, given that there is no communist government left in Europe... the attacks have if anything become more extreme as time has gone on." The Swedish MP who proposed the resolution highlighted the importance of anti-communism to the capitalist class saying the resolution was necessary because "different elements of communist ideology such as equality or social justice still seduce many" and "a sort of nostalgia for communism is still alive."¹¹⁸ After all ideas of equality and social justice are dangerous in a Europe that is steeped in economic crisis, mired in racism that keeps workers divided and passive, and fully intent on putting the current capitalist crisis on the backs of the working class.

Reeducating the Population

After East Germany was annexed by West Germany the West German officials launched a campaign to purge all GDR official documents, libraries, and school texts of "non-West approved ideas," meaning anything that was not completely anti-communist. The Otto-Suhr Institute was closed and its 230,000 volume library was auctioned off to various private interests. Police raided and temporarily closed the Central Party Archive at the Institute for the History of the Workers' Movement in Berlin. Alternative bookstores likewise were raided by West German police and threatened with prosecution for distributing "subversive" publications. Public and factory libraries in the GDR were emptied of books

Despite going to extraordinary lengths to rig the election Yeltsin still came perilously close to losing to the Communist Party candidate Gennady Zyuganov. Worried over the polls prior to the election Yeltsin had ordered decrees drawn up that would have canceled the election, closed down parliament,

pertaining to GDR history, Marxism-Leninism, etc. the books were eventually burned or otherwise destroyed. In one instance the authorities buried 50,000 freshly printed books in a dump.¹¹⁹

Journalist Patricia Brodsky notes that the destruction of East German archives and libraries is "part of a larger pattern, both in Germany and worldwide."¹²⁰ The goal is to rewrite the history of the Soviet Union in order to make the population more amenable to the exploitation and indignities of capitalism. In 2009 German political scientist Klaus Schroeder emphasized the need to put anti-communism front and center in German school curriculums. He lamented that after 20 years of reeducation "not even half of young people in Eastern Germany describe the GDR as a dictatorship, and a majority believe the Stasi was a normal intelligence service."¹²¹

Upon annexation the West Germans immediately dismantled the East German school system and reorganized it in a way that would promote pro-capitalist political orthodoxy. The GDR schools had been far more advanced than the West German schools and GDR school children experienced a "lost year" as they now had to wait for West German students to catch up to them.¹²² Before annexation only 11% of East Germans believed the GDR school system was better than the West German system, but after five years of experience that number shot up to 64%. After years of enduring intense Western anti-communism in schools and the media an astonishing 97% of East Germans agreed that "Only those who experienced life in the GDR had the right to talk about it."¹²³

In Russia capitalist restoration meant the removal of Constitutional guarantees of a free secondary education. Huge numbers of schools, summer camps, and youth clubs were privatized and dismantled.¹²⁴ State resources dedicated to education and science fell as much as 90% in the rush to destroy the education system.¹²⁵

Theatres were privatized and either destroyed or made so expensive that workers could no longer attend. Book publishers were closed down. During the communist era the Soviet Union produced 60% of the books in the world, but after five years of capitalism



A woman digs for food in the trash in Moscow. A common sight in capitalist countries like the United States, workers in the former Soviet bloc were shocked by the growing population of the homeless and desperate.



Statue at the Palace of Culture and Science in Warsaw, Poland. The book in the worker's hand reads Marx, Engels, Lenin. Stalin's name was plastered over in the Khrushchev period.

readership had dropped to Third World levels. At first people were eager to get access to the Western literature that Western propaganda had told them was being withheld from people in the Soviet Union. But after being flooded with “second-rate” trash novels that consisted of primarily mysteries and romances, people began to lament the loss of the Soviet publishing apparatus.¹²⁶

In Bulgaria and Romania educators have seen a massive resurgence of illiteracy after it had been virtually eliminated in the Soviet era. The reason? The school system has become woefully underfunded. Of 7,616 kindergartens that existed in Romania in 2003 only 1,731 were left by 2007. The project coordinator for the Save the Children project in Romania says that this is a result of the “excessive politicization of the education field.”¹²⁷

MPs in the Council of Europe demanded in 2006 that the anti-communist campaign in education be intensified. The new campaign would include new textbook revisions, official anti-communist memorial days, and museums dedicated to slandering the Soviet Union.¹²⁸ During a recent speaking tour American historian Penny von

The goal is to rewrite the history of the Soviet Union in order to make the population more amenable to the exploitation and indignities of capitalism.

Eschen described the creation of these museums as proof of the East Europeans hatred of “totalitarian” communism. When asked why the museum gift shops only sold items in Western languages (primarily English and German) she was forced to admit that the museums were privately funded, built far from town centers so as to be inaccessible to locals, and were created primarily for Western tourists.

Anti-fascist memorials and concentration camp museums in East Germany became victims of this anti-communist crusade to rewrite history. One whole wing of the museum at Buchenwald, dedicated to such topics as international solidarity in the camp, the war crimes tribunal, and “the well-documented continuity between the Third Reich and the political and industrial leadership” of West Germany has been dismantled. In its place there is now a special memorial to postwar internees—who were for the most part Nazi collaborators implicated in Holocaust crimes.¹²⁹

In the towns of Gori and Tkibuli, Georgian authorities had statues of Stalin removed in 2010. The government of Mikheil Saakashvili (who are agents of U.S. imperialism¹³⁰) claimed that a “young generation” demanded that the statues be removed. But contrary to their claims of popular support the government officials had to remove the statues in the middle of the night with a large police guard. The Gori statue was originally slated for destruction, but fearing mass protest Saakashvili gave the statue to the



Demonstration in Georgia on Stalin's birthday. (2004)

The West Vindicates the Nazis to Attack the Soviet Union

Immediately after the end of the Second World War the Western capitalists, with the U.S. taking the lead, began to rewrite the history of Nazi Germany. The project was designed to attack and defame the Soviet Union while absolving fascism of crimes against humanity.

In 1947 the U.S. created the Operational History (German) Section, a collection of former high ranking Nazi officers charged with writing the history of the Eastern Front. This deliberate white-wash of Nazi atrocities became the basis for Western histories of WWII. Nazi collaborators from Eastern Europe that had fled to the West to avoid war crimes charges were also encouraged to write their own histories of the war that attacked the Soviet Union. In 1953 a group of Ukrainian collaborators wrote *Black Deeds of the Kremlin*. This book, still widely cited and used today, counts among its authors a Treblinka death camp guard, several members of the SS, and a Nazi minister of propaganda.

The West German university system became a hub for Nazi apologists. Ernst Nolte, a professor emeritus at the prestigious Free University of Berlin, has long argued that Nazism and the Holocaust were "natural" and "understandable" reactions to "Bolshevik aggression." He argues that the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union was a defensive war and the round-up of Jews in concentration camps was necessary since they had "communist sympathies." His thesis is identical to the excuses made by the Nazi propaganda machine and forms the basis for how WWII is taught in many Western schools and universities.

As part of the effort to erase the history of the Soviet victory over the Nazis many Nazi atrocities have been re-branded as Soviet war crimes. The Katyn Massacre in Poland is the most famous example. Modern historians like Anna Cienciala, Inessa Iazhborovskaia and Valentina Parsadanova have set about rewriting the history of this event with deliberately misrepresented evidence.

First credible evidence is ignored, the German shell casings in the graves, the Russian forensics tests, the testimony of American observers to the Russian investigation, the similar Modus Operandi to other Nazi atrocities, the personal effects of the victims that place the crime during the Nazi occupation, the testimony of an SS officer and several concentration camp inmates that describe how the Nazis committed the act and then set about covering it up.

Then the "real" evidence, Nazi propaganda, is deliberately misrepresented. Goebbels propaganda radio broadcasts are innocently referred to as "German radio." The Nazi investigative team which was made up of members of the SS, Gestapo, and propaganda ministries is innocuously referred to as the German field investigators. In fact they are careful to almost never mention the word Nazi while throwing all manner of venom at the Soviet Union. The end result is that Nazi propaganda is vindicated as "legitimate" evidence while the Soviet investigation and evidence collected during the Nuremberg Trials is either not addressed or dismissed out of hand as obvious "propaganda."

Today Polish visitors to Katyn are treated to a new monument that memorializes the fictional Soviet atrocity against Poland. This same remaking of history has occurred in Vinnytsia, Ukraine and in many other places. It is becoming a trend in popular Western histories to not only claim that the Soviet Union forced Hitler's hand in the Holocaust, but to advance the amazing claim that the Soviet Union somehow planned it! This attack on the Soviet Union is a conscious plot to make workers cynical while legitimizing fascism.

-Ronald Smelser and Edward Davies, *The Myth of the Eastern Front: The Nazi-Soviet War in American Popular Culture*

-Douglas Tottle, *Fraud, Famine, and Fascism: The Ukrainian Genocide Myth from Hitler to Harvard*

-Ernst Piper, *Forever in the Shadow of Hitler?: Original Documents of the Historikerstreit*

-Anna Cienciala, "The Katyn Syndrome," *Russian Review*, No. 65, January 2006.

-Yuri Mukhin, *Katynsky Detective*

-NYT, "Soviet Blames Foes in Killing of Poles," 1/27/44; "Katyn Graves Story Declared Grim Fraud," 6/29/45; "Light on the Katyn Murders," 6/30/45; "Hitler Apologist Wins German Honor, and a Storm Breaks Out," 6/21/00.

-CHALLENGE, "PBS Anti-Stalinism is Based on Nazi Lies," four part series, 1990.

-Edvins Snore, *The Soviet Story* (documentary), 2008.

Stalin Museum, a museum dedicated to Stalin in Gori that is funded by worker donations. Responding to the theft of the statue one Gori resident stated, “How could they remove it?.. Stalin was a great individual and the most famous Georgian in the world.” The Saakashvili government plans to replace the monuments with memorials to the 2008 war with Russia in an effort to build anti-Russian sentiment in Georgia.¹³¹

Ostalgie

Ostalgie is the term that West Germans gave to the growing bitterness of East Germans over the destruction of the GDR (Ost is “East” in German). All over Europe the capitalists both lament and fear the growing nostalgia for the Soviet Union among Eastern Europeans. Norwegian political scientist Joakim Ekman warns that capitalists should “not underestimate the potential danger of ‘communist nostalgia.’”¹³²

Most disturbing of all for capitalists is that the more workers in the former Soviet Union experience capitalism the less they seem to like it. By 2001 the number of people who viewed the Soviet Union in a positive light in Bulgaria increased by 26% over 1991 levels, in Latvia it increased by 15%, in Hungary 16%, in Slovakia 17%, in Slovenia 26%, in Poland 27%, and in Romania 29%. In all these countries the majority of people held positive views of the Soviet Union.¹³³ In East Germany the number of people who said that they preferred life under the GDR increased from 40% in 1999 to 57% ten years later dispelling West German assertions that ostalgie was just “a fad.”¹³⁴

A 2008 Gallup International poll found that people in the former Soviet Union were the most discontented people in the world. Of the ten most discontented



A young girl marches on May Day in Moscow. (2005)

countries six were former Soviet states. Pollsters noted that disenchantment with “democracy” (a code word for capitalism) is widespread in Eastern Europe and mistrust of “elites” (the capitalist class) is “staggering.”¹³⁵

In Bulgaria over 60% of the population believes that they lived better under the Soviet Union. One woman worker fondly recalled her days under soviet “tyranny” stating, “We went on holidays to the coast and the mountains, there were plenty of clothes, shoes, food. And now the biggest chunk of our incomes is spent



Georgian, Jamil Ziyadaliev, makes his living as a Stalin impersonator in Gori. Part of the growing nostalgia for the Soviet Union. (2008)

on food.” In the Ukraine support for the transition to capitalism had fallen to 30% by 2009 down from 72% in 1991. In Lithuania support fell from three quarters to less than half.¹³⁶ The Polish government, worried over growing nostalgia for the Soviet past, made the display of communist symbols illegal in 2009.¹³⁷

Fifty-five years after Khrushchev first attacked Stalin in a secret speech to the 20th Party Congress in order to set the Soviet Union on the road to capitalism both Russian and Western capitalists are still baffled at workers continuing admiration for Stalin.¹³⁸ In July of 2008 a TV station poll to name history’s “greatest Russian” was halted when it became clear that Stalin would receive the number one spot and Lenin the number two spot. Russian capitalists threw a fit over the results and when the poll was relaunched a month later the station manipulated the numbers to ensure that Stalin would not win.¹³⁹

What does this Mean for Eastern Europe?

The return of capitalism to the Soviet Union has decimated the working class in that area. For all the promises of a free market paradise that Western propagandists pumped into the Soviet Union for years, the workers there got only misery and death. But despite their temporary victory the capitalists have much to fear in Eastern Europe. The population there grows

increasingly discontent. Hatred of capitalism and what it has wrought is rampant.

The 2009 economic crisis set off a strike wave throughout Russia. The strikes were happening at a rate of three or four a day, but were largely wildcat strikes with little organized leadership. A worker at the Molot factory in Kirov summed up the desperation of the situation, "The children need to be fed and clothed. And when I die, how will they be able to bury me? I am ashamed for our country and for our factory. How can the state abandon us like this?"¹⁴⁰ As if to answer her plea in early 2010 there was a series of large protests in cities all over Russia where communists, anarchists, and reformers demanded the resignation of the entire Putin/Medvedev government. Despite mass police repression 2,000 marched in Vladivostok in Siberia, 10,000 in Kaliningrad, and 4,000 gathered under the Lenin statue in Arkhangelsk to rally against the government.¹⁴¹

After the fall of the Berlin Wall neo-Nazi organizers from West Germany flooded East Germany in an attempt to prey on the misery of the newly impoverished East German working class. These gutter fascists' efforts have been aided by the police forces of capitalist Germany. Much as the FBI helped to build the Klan in the U.S. the German intelligence services have used undercover agents to organize and build neo-Nazi groups in East Germany.¹⁴² In early 2010 on the 65th anniversary of the bombing of Dresden, a small city in former East Germany, 6,400 neo-Nazis poured in from all over Germany to lead a march through the city. 15,000 anti-racist protesters formed a human barricade on the bridge across the Elbe River that separated the train station from the city center. 5,700 German police were brought in to break the barricade and make way for the Nazis assault on the city. After a heroic effort both the racist police and the Nazis they protected were forced to turn back.¹⁴³

All over the former Soviet bloc workers have turned out en masse to vote for the various communist parties. The



Police try to break up a barricade created by 15,000 workers seeking to prevent a neo-Nazi march in Dresden (2010). With the police unable to break the barricade the march was canceled.

victory of communists in Bulgaria and Albania in 1990 and 1991 forced many of the capitalists to ban the communists from elections. Yet in countries where they could still run they have recorded surprising victories. Despite open elections tampering in Russia the communists regularly gain the second most votes in elections. In Poland in 2001 communists won a majority in Parliament while Solidarity failed to gain a single seat. In Germany the SPD, the successor to the communist Party in the former GDR, regularly wins local and regional elections in East Germany. Moldova shocked Europe when communists won half the votes in parliamentary elections in 2009.¹⁴⁴

These parties are all the successors to the communist parties of the former Soviet bloc. Without exception every one of them is even more rotten than their revisionist predecessors, they believe in phony capitalist elections, they promote deadly nationalism, and they have no real intention of rolling back market reforms. But people are not voting for these misleaders, rather they are voting for the memory of the Soviet Union.

This is both an amazing and important reality, but it has limits. People are upset and pine for life under the Soviet Union, but that does not mean that revolution is around the corner. The workers of the former Soviet bloc lack revolutionary leadership. Without this leadership they are likely to either collapse into cynicism or back the same bankrupt communist parties that led them so haphazardly down the road to capitalism in the 1980s. The leadership of a revolutionary communist party with a program that does not rely on the bosses' phony elections but on the power of the working class could be the spark that ignites the powder keg of class hatred in Eastern Europe.



Workers protest evictions in Budapest. (2010)

- ¹ “The end of history” became a popular victory cry after the release of U.S. ruling class stooge Francis Fukuyama’s book *The End of History and the Last Man*. In the book Fukuyama declared that humans have reached the end of their socio-cultural evolution and that capitalism would go on unchallenged forever. “What we may be witnessing is not just the end of the Cold War, or the passing of a particular period of post-war history, but the end of history as such that it is, the end point of mankind’s ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government.”
- ² For the pseudo-Left the collapse of the Soviet Union also marked a time for celebration. The British Trotskyite group the Socialist Workers’ Party (SWP) dedicated a significant amount of their Marxism 2009 conference to celebrating the demise of Soviet communism. Referring to the collapse as a great “revolution” they seemed to have little concern for the crushing poverty, intense racism and sexism, and millions of excess deaths that capitalism has brought to the Soviet working class. Of course this is not surprising since the destruction of the Soviet Union has been the goal of Trotskyites since 1928.
- ³ *NYT*, “A Fateful Day, and the East Tasted Freedom,” 11/8/09.
- ⁴ *Der Spiegel*, “Berlin Celebrates the Day the Wall Fell,” 11/9/09.
- ⁵ Michael Parenti, *Blackshirts and Reds: Rational Fascism and the Overthrow of Communism*, (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1997), p 116-117; *NYT*, “Tracherous Transition,” 12/20/93.
- ⁶ See *PLP*, “Road to Revolution III,” available on the website, www.plp.org
- ⁷ The Party has written extensively about the history of the Soviet Union and what lessons can be learned, see website.
- ⁸ The enacting of market reforms on the part of the Khrushchevites, an act that they claimed was necessary to grow the economy, actually marked the beginning of the stagnation of the Soviet economy. It was the continuing introduction of capitalism piece by piece that deteriorated the Soviet economy from within.
- ⁹ *NYT*, “Many Living on the Edge from Hungary’s Inflation,” 2/27/90.
- ¹⁰ *NYT*, “Soaring Unemployment is Spreading Fear in Russia,” 5/8/94; Vladimir Bilenkin, “Russian Workers Under the Yeltsin Regime: Notes on a Class Defeat,” *Monthly Review*, Vol. 48 No. 6, January 1996.
- ¹¹ *NYT*, “Russians Choosing Today, Either Reforms or the Past,” 6/16/96.
- ¹² *People’s Weekly World*, “People Before Profits: Capitalist ‘Democracy’ – Life in the Former Soviet Union; Wages, Pensions, Public Health, Education are all Devastated,” 12/23/05.
- ¹³ *NYT*, “Russians Choosing Today, Either Reforms or the Past,” 6/16/96.
- ¹⁴ John Green and Bruni de la Motte, *Stasi Hell or Workers’ Paradise: Socialism in the German Democratic Republic – What Can We Learn From It?* (London: Artery Publications, 2009), p 41.
- ¹⁵ Patty Lee Parmalee, “Learning to Live With Capitalism in East Berlin,” *Z Magazine*, Vol. 5 No. 7-8, July/August 1992.
- ¹⁶ *Der Spiegel*, “Homesick for a Dictatorship,” 7/3/09.
- ¹⁷ Nicholas Eberstadt, “Demographic Shocks After Communism: Eastern Germany 1989-1993,” *Population and Development Review*, Vol. 20 No.1, March 1994.
- ¹⁸ *BBC*, “Child Poverty Soars in Eastern Europe,” 10/11/00.
- ¹⁹ John Green and Bruni de la Motte, *Stasi Hell or Workers’ Paradise*, p 38-40.
- ²⁰ *Ibid*, p 39-41.
- ²¹ *People’s Weekly World*, “Another View of ‘Lives of Others,’” 6/1/07.
- ²² *Der Spiegel*, “The Price of a Failed Reunification,” 9/5/05.
- ²³ *The Guardian*, “When the East’s Dreams Evaporate,” 11/19/94.
- ²⁴ Michael Parenti, *Blackshirts and Reds*, p 105.
- ²⁵ Vladimir Bilenkin, *Monthly Review*.
- ²⁶ “Death Rates in Russia Rise Dramatically: Worse than Under Stalin,” *Annals of Oncology*, Vol. 8, 1997, p 926.
- ²⁷ *NYT*, “Many Living on the Edge from Hungary’s Inflation,” 2/27/90.
- ²⁸ Michael Parenti, *Blackshirts and Reds*, p 107.
- ²⁹ *WHO*, “Suicide Rates per 100,000 by Country, Year, and Sex,” 2009. Sri Lanka would be 4th highest but was omitted because the most recent numbers were almost 20 years old (1991).
- ³⁰ *NYT*, “Russians Choosing Today, Either Reforms or the Past,” 6/16/96; *AFP*, “Crisis Bad News for Russia’s Shrinking Population,” 5/16/09.
- ³¹ Col. Jeffrey Holachek, “Russia’s Shrinking Population and the Russian Military’s HIV/AIDS Problem,” *Atlantic Council of the United States*, 9/2006. The Atlantic Council is a foreign policy think tank that was founded in 1961 and focuses primarily on NATO related issues. Obama National Security Advisor James Jones was chairman of the Atlantic Council. Obama’s UN ambassador Susan Rice and Special Representative to Afghanistan and Pakistan Richard Holbrooke were also former Council members.
- ³² *Stratfor*, “Russia’s Dwindling Population Ensures Rigid Foreign Policy,” 4/13/00; *CHALLENGE*, “Rulers’ Battleground Becomes Workers’ Bloodbath,” 7/21/10.
- ³³ Nicholas Eberstadt, “Demographic Shocks After Communism: Eastern Germany 1989-1993,” *Population and Development Review*, Vol. 20 No.1, Mar. 1994.
- ³⁴ Regina Riphahn and Klaus Zimmermann, “The Mortality Crisis in East Germany,” *Institute for the Study of Labor (Germany) Discussion Paper No. 6*, May 1998.
- ³⁵ See Sir Arthur Newsholme, *Red Medicine: Socialized Health in Soviet Russia* (1933); and for communist health care in China see Joshua Horn, *Away With All Pests: An English Surgeon in People’s China, 1954-1969*.
- ³⁶ William Cockerham, “The Social Determinants of the Decline of Life Expectancy in Russia and Eastern Europe,” *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, Vol. 38 No. 2, 6/97.
- ³⁷ *Ibid*.
- ³⁸ Michael Parenti, *Blackshirts and Reds*, p 107.
- ³⁹ *German Life*, “Five Years After Re-unification Easterners Discover Themselves,” December 1995/January 1996.
- ⁴⁰ *Doctors Without Borders*, “MSF Launches Campaign to Prevent Winter Death Toll of Homeless on Moscow Streets,” 1/15/03; *BBC*, “Dozens Die in Russian Cold Snap,” 1/19/06; *Global Post*, “Freezing to Death in Russia,” 1/3/10.
- ⁴¹ See the documentary film *Power Trip* (2003).
- ⁴² *The Hindu* (India), “Russia: Forests Up in Flames,” 8/23/10.
- ⁴³ *AP*, “Moscow Deaths Double Amid Smog to 700 People a Day,” 8/9/10.
- ⁴⁴ *BBC*, “Moscow ‘Hiding Heatstroke Cases’ After Death Rate Jumps,” 8/12/10; *Bloomberg*, “Russia Heat Wave May Kill 15,000, Shave \$15 Billion off GDP,” 8/10/10.
- ⁴⁵ *Reuters*, “Opposition Says Putin Law Cripples Russia Fire-

Fighting,” 8/4/10; *NYT*, “Russian Response to Fire Does Little to Calm Anger,” 8/7/10.

⁴⁶ Michael Parenti, *Blackshirts and Reds*, p 107.

⁴⁷ William C Cockerham, M Christine Snead, and Derek F Dewaal, “Health Lifestyles in Russia and the Socialist Heritage,” *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, Vol. 43 No. 1, March 2002.

⁴⁸ *Ria Novosti*, “Alcohol Abuse Kills 500,000 Russians Annually,” 6/16/09.

⁴⁹ *The Guardian*, “No Country for Old Men,” 2/11/08; Pravda, “Russian Men Become Extinct,” 11/3/05.

⁵⁰ Sir Arthur Newsholme, *Red Medicine: Socialized Health in Soviet Russia*.

⁵¹ Anna Louise Strong, *The Stalin Era*, (Altadena, CA: Today’s Press, 1956), p 48-51.

⁵² Tanja van der Lippe and Eva Fodor, “Changes in Gender Inequality in Six Eastern European Countries,” *Acta Sociologica*, Vol. 41 No. 2, 1998.

⁵³ Vladimir Bilenkin, *Monthly Review*.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ Michael Parenti, *Blackshirts and Reds*, p 109.

⁵⁶ This cable from Ambassador John Beyrle of the U.S. embassy in Moscow was leaked to Wikileaks and published in full by *Counterpunch*. Israel Shamir, *Counterpunch*, “US Ambassador John Beyrle: ‘Feminism’ is a Dirty Word in Russia,” 3/8/2011.

⁵⁷ *German Life*, “Five Years After Re-unification Easterners Discover Themselves,” December 1995/January 1996.

⁵⁸ Patty Lee Parmalee, “Learning to Live With Capitalism in East Berlin,” *Z Magazine*, Vol. 5 No. 7-8, July/August 1992.

⁵⁹ *Telegraph* (UK), “Women’s Love Lives Were Better in East Germany Before the Berlin Wall Fell,” 10/19/09.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*; Michael Parenti, *Blackshirts and Reds*, p 115; Vladimir Bilenkin, *Monthly Review*.

⁶¹ *NYT*, “With Prostitution Booming, Legalization Tempts Russia,” 3/3/98.

⁶² *CNN*, “Russia’s Sex Slave Industry Thrives, Rights Groups Say,” 7/18/08; *AFP*, “Authorities Turn Blind Eye on Far East Russia Women Trafficking,” 2/12/05.

⁶³ Michael Parenti, *Blackshirts and Reds*, p 115.

⁶⁴ *Human Rights Watch*, “Too Little, Too Late: State Response to Violence Against Women,” 1998.

⁶⁵ Michael Parenti, *Blackshirts and Reds*, p 115.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ *BBC*, “Moscow Race Hate on the Rise,” 9/4/01. For a report on the experiences of African-American students in Moscow during the 1930s see Harry Haywood, *Black Bolshevik: Autobiography of an Afro-American Communist*.

⁶⁸ See PLP pamphlet, *Smash Racism: A Fighter’s Manual*.

⁶⁹ *Amnesty International News Release*, “Indifference to Racism Must be Addressed,” 4/19/02.

⁷⁰ *ABC News*, “Violence ‘in the Name of the Nation,’” 10/11/07; *Washington Post*, “Moscow Killings Blamed on Racism,” 4/8/08.

⁷¹ The Confederation for an Independent Poland (KPN) and the Movement for the Defense of Human Rights (ROPiCO).

⁷² *Wall Street Journal*, “Poles Plant the Seeds of the Party System,” 10/26/81.

⁷³ *CHALLENGE*, “Fascist Anti-Semitism in ‘Solidarity,’” 2/24/82;

Washington Post, “Crackdown in Poland Raises Fears of Increased Anti-Semitism,” 12/26/81.

⁷⁴ This day was not celebrated by communist Poland since after WWI Poland almost instantly went down the route of fascism. The communists recognized Polish independence as coming in the aftermath of WWII.

⁷⁵ *CHALLENGE*, “Fascism, Anti-Semitism and the Catholic Church,” 3/3/82.

⁷⁶ Harold Segel, “Culture in Poland During World War I,” in *European Culture in the Great War: The Arts, Entertainment, and Propaganda, 1914-1918*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p 60.

⁷⁷ *CHALLENGE*, “Fascist Anti-Semitism in ‘Solidarity,’” 2/24/82.

⁷⁸ *CHALLENGE*, “Western Bosses Cover for Solidarity Anti-Semitism,” 3/10/82; *NYT*, “Polish Aide Accuses US of ‘Immorality,’” 1/7/82.

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Editor's Note: Every day of our lives the capitalist class suffocates us with their ideology - either through their schools, their media, or their churches. In order for the working class, through the Progressive Labor Party, to smash the capitalist system we must fight to smash these poisonous ideas by spreading the philosophy of dialectical materialism. By struggling to study and objectively apply dialectical materialism to every aspect of our lives, we will begin to understand the real world process of change in nature, society, and human consciousness. About 15 years ago the leaders and members of PLP wrote Jailbreak! While it may not answer every question about dialectical materialism, this is an attempt to introduce the philosophy to millions of workers worldwide. We urge all comrades and friends to organize Jailbreak! study groups to help spread the ideas of dialectical materialism.

December, 1995

JAILBREAK!

AN INTRODUCTION TO DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM

You don't know it, but you're in jail!

Not a jail with bars, but another kind, in which our minds are imprisoned by capitalism. Capitalist ways of thinking surround us. The schools, the cultural outlets, like TV, the press, books, music, movies, you name it, bombards us with the wrong ideas. All ruling class media push anti-communism, racism, patriotism, male chauvinism (sexism), and a host of other rotten ideas. But as bad as it is, the toothpaste ad culture is not the worst. The worst is not so obvious.

Basically, the system trains us to think very little, superficially, or not at all. Capitalist training leads us to have a shallow view of things, to make one-sided, subjective, narrow judgments, and not to understand the essential nature of developments or processes. Therefore, the best of us make too many mistakes and don't necessarily learn from our mistakes or others'.

The drug culture and, of course, drugs themselves are more weapons in the rulers' arsenal in case we act to break the chains that bind us to capitalism. Even if we recognize the evils of capitalist society, we are often not prepared to fight it on a long-term or life-long basis.

Religion remains one of the rulers' primary weapons for controlling our minds. Taking advantage of people's desire to understand what society and life are all about, religion tells us we can control our own destiny through prayer and ritual. This mystical idea is the kernel of religion. Religion's role is to make sure that we respect the status quo. What is belief in the status quo? The ruling class holds power and should keep it. Basically,

the bosses want us to accept our fate and not question it. Surely, they don't want us to do anything about it, like take matters into our own hands. The rulers and their Holy Men want us to console ourselves with the prospect of a better "hereafter."

Philosophy and Bosses' Dictatorship

All ruling class philosophy, whether it be religion or anything else, works to maintain ruling class political power. Most college students who are forced to study philosophy in school think it's bullshit. Many students know that what they are taught in school under the heading of philosophy has little if any relation to the real world. The bosses don't want us to understand the real world.

They don't want us to realize that the wrong class is in power and should be destroyed along with its state apparatus. The last thing the rulers want is for us to understand that workers should hold power through the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. The bosses want us to believe that the misery of capitalist oppression is our own fault, that something is wrong with us and not with their system of profits and exploitation.

The rulers do everything they can to keep things as they are. Consequently, they work overtime to prevent workers from developing an objective outlook and seeing the real world. By "objective," we don't mean neutral. As the old song about striking coal miners, "Which Side Are You On?" says, there are no neutral ideas.

The ruling class opposes changes and resorts to mass terror in order to keep things their way if all their horseshit fails. Fascist terror is the logical consequence of capitalism. In the final analysis, the mailed fist is all the bosses have to offer. But they try to keep us hooked as long as possible on their philosophical drugs.

Appearance and Essence

Over thousands of years, many people have learned the hard way that things aren't always as they seem. What is the first thing you see when you look at an object, a person, any process? You got it! You see the outer, the surface. Now the outer appearance of a thing is very important. However, if you stop at the outer, you haven't seen the whole. Most often, you haven't grasped the most important truth about a person or an object. So you must go further. Where? You know the answer. To the inner.

What do some people say? "You can't judge a book by its cover." Or occasionally, "I'm going to get to the bottom of this." Have you ever heard someone say: "I'm you going to see what makes that person tick"? Many of us have learned from hard experience that appearance is not total reality.

In the food industry, the packaging often costs more than what's in the package. Packaging is a multi-billion dollar industry. Now, it's nice to see a shiny new or used car. Naturally you want the car to be nice looking. But if you don't evaluate many things, like the springs, the shocks, and of course the engine, you probably won't end up with the car of your dreams.

Yet don't the movies and other cultural forms train us to view the superficial? In the past it wasn't unusual to hear the expression: "Clothes make the man." It's good to be neat and clean, conditions permitting. But the fashion industry has emerged into the relatively big time. Fashion is another step along the road of superficiality. The fact is that clothes don't make the person. What really makes people is not their looks but their ideology and the ways they apply it. So appearances have some importance. But we must learn to go from the outer to the inner. Don't take things on face value.

Philosophy: The Study of Something Real

If capitalist philosophy is bad, what then is philosophy? We say capitalism trains us not to see the social basis of the real world, not to be objective. So a simple definition of philosophy from our point of view is the study of any process in its depth, its inner nature. This definition at least plucks philosophy out of the clouds and puts it in the real world. The study of any process. Now we are addressing real things. A process, ranging from shoe making to making revolution, is real. That is what we want to examine. Not the superficial outer, but the inner, the basics.

If philosophy is this kind of study of any process, then what the hell is dialectical materialism? Do you put it on your cereal? You are in PLP. You're at work. You are eating lunch with friends. You have told some of them you believe in dialectical materialism. One of them -- the nasty one -- asks you, "What is dialectics?" Now you may be in trouble.

Laws and Universality

Let's see. By studying many processes, you begin to understand that certain things are common to all of them. Ultimately you begin to see that there are LAWS governing all developments. In your limited experiences, you have noticed that when you drop a ball it goes down, not up. We know this is the law of gravity. By studying many processes we can begin to understand that certain laws are UNIVERSAL to all processes. Universal is the magic word to know. It helps explain dialectical materialism. For example, is there any similarity between boiling water and making a revolution? What are the laws in each process? Later on in this booklet we will go into the laws and try to explain them. But before that we will cover a few more things.

Ideas Come From the Real World and Practical Experience

A popular love song in the 1950s was called "I Get Ideas." We all get ideas. The question is how do we actually get them? Sometimes you hear people describe someone as the smartest person alive, a "genius." Usually this idea is followed by the explanation: "He/she was born that way." Occasionally we hear someone describe a person as "cerebral" (brainy). Or people exclaim: "What a head on his/her shoulders!"

You don't just dream up ideas. Obviously, you are not born with them. Genes or genetic traits don't produce ideas. Ideas come from practice, from the world around us. All our ideas come from our own experiences, our friends' and family's experiences, other workers' practice; from those who lived before and their books. A scientist can make a breakthrough, but the breakthrough by an individual effort comes as a result of tons of efforts, good and bad, by others in the field. You may be smart, but you can't do it on your own. So your ideas come not only from what goes on in your head. They mainly come from the real world, which exists independently of your own mind.

Materialism vs. Idealism

While theory is important, very important, practice is primary. Theory is dependent on practice. Practice always precedes theory. You may have heard someone say: "You can't suck it out of your thumb." Practical experience takes place. It has to be evaluated. Lessons should be

drawn from practice. Based on evaluation, theory then advances until further practice is done and evaluated, and so on.

The ruling class basically practices idealism. We don't mean in the moral sense. Obviously, generosity and selflessness are the last things on the bosses' minds. We mean idealism in the philosophical sense, the belief that the real world is determined primarily by ideas and the mind. Why are the rulers' idealists? To maintain things as they are. Often we are told: "Don't rock the boat." Or "This is the best of all possible worlds." The logic of all this capitalist claptrap is that you can't improve things, so why try? Depending on circumstances, reforms are put forward to make the system better. The bottom line is: don't try to make revolution, because it is futile. The demise of the old international communist system has given the rulers another tool in their idealist philosophy. Now they can say, and they do, that even if communist revolution is possible, it doesn't work anyway.

The ruling class is not materialist. Here again, we're not talking about moral materialism. No one is greedier or more selfish than the big bosses. We mean materialism in the philosophical sense, the belief that the real world exists independently of the mind, and that ideas ultimately depend on and come from reality outside the mind. The ruling class is idealist because it seeks to do the impossible. The rulers want to stop the wheel of history. Holding power is their goal, and they will tell us--and themselves--all sorts of lies to keep it.

The More Things Change, The More They Change

Despite the cynical rulers' notion that the more things change the more they stay the same, things do change. The bosses want us to believe that fighting for change is useless. But what is the fact? First there was communalism, or primitive communism. Then there was slave society. This gave way to feudalism, which was superseded by capitalism.

Then there was socialism, which was reversed, but which set the stage for communism, if we draw the correct lessons from socialism's failure. Society has made fundamental changes. So, of course, has technology. Things don't change? Let's see you live in a cave or take a covered wagon to California. All changes take place based on the cumulative practice of masses of people. Perhaps you would like things to move faster in a revolutionary direction. Who wouldn't? That is not the point. Often fundamental change takes a long time when viewed from an individual slant. That's why a long range perspective is crucial. We must be able to combine urgency with patience. But from such a perspective, we can see that the Russian Revolution, the most profound development of the twentieth century, occurred only 75 years ago.

This is just a wink of history's eye. As they say, practice makes perfect. Previous changes of social systems have taken centuries, in some cases thousands of years. The opportunities for our Party for more vigorous practice and Party growth increase as the boss's system becomes increasingly sick and decadent.

Limits

"Well now, that's the limit." Have you ever heard someone say that to a naughty child? Or have you ever heard that idea expressed about someone who has done something beyond the norm? Years ago Bill Klem was the chief umpire of baseball. Klem drew the original line in the sand. When a player argued with Klem about a call and started to get porky, Klem drew a line in the dirt with his foot between himself and the angry player. If the player crossed the line, Klem threw him out. The player had gone beyond the limits.

So what? Lets take another example. If you weigh over 400 pounds, you will probably drop dead or at least get very sick. If you're an adult over six feet weighing 75 pounds, you will suffer the same fate as the heavy person. Too fat, too thin. The human body develops within strict limits. Did you ever hear of someone living to three hundred? Of course not. All human life is circumscribed by limits.

Not too long ago, only maximum speed limits were posted on highways. Over the years those concerned with highway safety realized, based on statistics, gleaned from practice (driving), that overly slow drivers were also dangerous. So too fast and too slow were the limits put on highway driving. What are the political limits within which our Party operates? Take a guess!

Our Party line is based in part on the revolutionary development of millions of workers. We think in terms of building a mass party. Presently, our Party has under a million members. Well, now you know our size. Suppose the next Central Committee meeting calls on every Party district to take to the streets, capture City Hall and thus seize political power. You don't like that one. Why? Because this would be suicidal, because we are too small, and our base is still very limited. An action like this could be characterized as left adventurism, even though in a general way this is one of our strategic goals. Tactics too far to the left of our base's size and quality would lead to our termination. To the end of our Party as a process.

Let's change the scenario. The Party really has millions of members and tens of millions in its base. The CC then calls on its members and base to go to the polls and elect Luis, the editor of *Challenge-Desafio*, as president. A bad idea. It would also end the process of our development as a revolutionary party. Parliamentary strategy would be too far to the right, beyond the limits, of a revolutionary party. Too left, too right are both dead ends for the Party. But these errors have brought about the demise of many

revolutionary groups. Thus we oppose terrorism and we attack right opportunism.

Political Practice Broadens The Party's Limits

But do the limits stay the same? The limits of a small party are different from those of a large party. The Party now circulates about 10,000 *Challenge-Desafios*. This can't be the limit forever. It shouldn't be the limit even now. But let's say for argument's sake that this is the best we can do at present. However, continued *Challenge-Desafio* sales and Party growth will expand the current limits. Every time we carry out political work, our practice changes the limits of what we can do next, and consequently influences the limits of the entire Party. We have to be ever on the alert, scrutinizing, investigating circumstances internal and external to the Party, keep ourselves rooted in basics, so that we can take advantage of a situation and expand our limits. Sometimes the opportunity can be right under our noses. Often events off the job can be used to widen our work on and off the job in a revolutionary direction.

Usually imperialist war or nationalist war are among the biggest influences that can move our efforts forward. Sometimes we get unexpected opportunities. Take the O.J. Simpson trial. The emergence of the Mark Fuhrman tapes, proving him to be the fascist monster that he is, opened up political possibilities for us. We could show that Fuhrman isn't unusual, that capitalist police departments and cops are by nature racist killers. The rulers realized what had happened and moved fairly quickly to say that Fuhrman isn't the average cop. Even the LAPD police ran full page ads disassociating themselves from the fascist Fuhrman.

Did we move quickly, vigorously, and in unison to draw the lesson for the masses that, among others, the police are a significant force for the rulers? The police help the bosses hold power. While some people realize this, most don't, even if they hate the police. The cops represent an important part of the rulers' armed forces. They police are capitalism's shock troops. They confront the workers on a day to day basis. Anyway, did we expand our limits by taking advantage of the Fuhrman opportunity?

Nothing's Simple

By now it may be a little clearer that all processes are complex. The political process is especially complex. Complexity is a universal feature of all developments. When I worked in a machine shop some years ago I operated a Blanchard Grinder. My workmates and I were required to use a micrometer. This measuring device helped us determine sizes invisible to the eye and too small to be measured by a ruler. Every job had a tolerance. The tolerances were always above or below the final size of the

object being ground. So every job had its specific limits of "plus" or "minus." We were required to check many times the object we were grinding to see if it remained within the tolerance-limits assigned to the job. Usually, we were given a blueprint of the object with the tolerances noted.

To the naked eye each piece looked the same. But if the objects went beneath or beyond the limits, they would be thrown away. In other words, the process had to be terminated. But, gee, each piece looked exactly the same. The machine was the same. The initial pieces were the same. The grinding stone seemed the same. But things were not the same. Every time the grinding stones engaged the object, the stone wore down a bit. Every grind, in the most minute way, changed the size of the piece being ground. Those of you who have operated a punch press know that every time a die in the press bangs out another piece, it wears the die. If the job lasts long enough, you know that the die will eventually change in size, that the new piece will come out the wrong size.

Sameness And Difference

No two processes are exactly 100% the same. So what? What does this mean to you and me? You are in a PLP club. Everyone is somewhat committed to fighting for communist revolution. But we all know from experience that eventually some of the older members or even some of the newer members will drop out. So while all the members seem the same, in reality they are not. Sometimes too many battles will wear out a person. In some cases certain members will weaken in the course of various struggles, while similar experiences will strengthen other members.

In other cases, things don't move fast enough for some members. Occasionally a member will draw the conclusion that the reason for sluggishness in the class struggle is that the workers are bad, the bosses too strong, the Party weak or wrong. In other words there can be a myriad of reasons for a member to drop away.

You can never take anyone for granted. In saying this we want to point out that there is a thin line between reality and cynicism. We should always carefully and thoroughly evaluate the many aspects of any process we are involved in. And we should never draw one-sided conclusions.

Socialism Lost - Communism Found

For example, when our Party published *Road to Revolution IV*, some members and friends said that the old international communist movement had always been rotten. One essential difference between RRIV and the old movement was that we advocated skipping the socialist stage and going directly to communism. Important? Sure! However, like the old movement, we advocated the Dictatorship of the Proletariat and the need for mass

armed struggle. We understood the crucial role of the working class and other key concepts of earlier Marxism-Leninism. While we are different in many important ways from the old movement, ours is not entirely different. We say our Party is primarily like the old movement. We have learned from previous experiences, as well as from our own, that communism should be the sole goal of the revolution.

No matter how you evaluate the relative development of sameness and difference, our Party is not totally changed from the old movement. We have tried to learn from the strengths of earlier communists and to discard their weaknesses. This knowledge comes from a combination of practice and evaluation. We don't want to throw out the baby with the bathwater. Things are usually neither all good nor all bad. Snap judgments typically lead to wrong, often dangerous conclusions.

Bosses's Ideas and One-sidedness

The ruling class trains us, with some success, to be one-sided. One way of dividing and weakening the working class is to make differences among workers appear primary. For example, the bosses push the concept of race. This is one way they compartmentalize us. The racist bosses say: "Black is bad; black workers can never unite with white." "Immigrants (unless they are white) are robbing us blind." Thus, we should hate them all and go along with the rulers' attacks on the immigrants. More importantly, we are supposed to believe that immigrants, rather than the bosses, are our enemies.

And, of course men and women are so different that they have different outlooks, emotions, and values. The bosses use this lie to foster male chauvinism and to exploit women workers even more than men. Then the bosses try to convince women to view their exploitation in a non-class way, to view men, not the ruling class, as their main enemy. To the extent that workers and others go along with the rulers' racism and male chauvinism, capitalism rakes in huge profits. The bosses are laughing all the way to the bank as we are suckered in by their racism, nationalism, and male chauvinism.

Regardless of sex, color, and national origin, all workers are more alike than different. As far as their interests are concerned, all are objectively pitted against the boss. Only communism can fully and permanently end divisions within the working class and smash capitalist oppression!

"The Times They are A-Changing" was a popular song in the days of the movement against the Vietnam war. But the bosses don't want real change that would strengthen the working class. They say: "Don't rock the boat; don't make waves." They always throw these ideas at us so that we don't resist their oppression and make revolution. On the other hand, as we pointed out above, the rulers tell

us that the more things change, the more they stay the same. By using this cynical notion, they are just coming at us from another side, but the goal--to prevent us from rocking the boat--is the same. All the rulers' philosophy is based on keeping power. Keeping things as they are means the rulers continue to hold power.

However, we all know, often from bitter experience, that things do change. Under capitalism they go from bad to worse. You think things are bad now? Well, they will get worse, much worse. This trend sums up workers' lives under capitalism.

But the bosses have some smarts. They know that many workers are fed up with capitalism or at least very much disgruntled with their daily lives. So then the capitalists say things will get better if only we allow them to dictate the change. In the last election, Bill Clinton ran as the apostle of change. All the bosses want is to keep power and maintain the status quo. They understand that sometimes they have to pander to our desire to see change for the better. Often they disagree with each other over the best tactics for doing this. Many of us have come to understand that these arguments between bosses' factions have to do only with how to make things better for the bosses and their class.

Boiling Water, Frying the Bosses, and the Unity of Opposites

Well, let's go from these heavy ideas into the kitchen. You want to boil water. You put water in a pot and place the pot over a flame. The water boils. What we have here is the unity of opposites. Or the interpenetration of things. Obviously, the water boils after the heat has penetrated it. What's boiling water got to do with the Party and the class struggle? Plenty!

The workers and bosses are locked in class struggle. Objectively, this is a fight to the death, whether we recognize it or not. The workers can win only if they destroy the ruling class, its armed power, its state apparatus, its culture, its philosophy, and so on. How can we talk about unity within a fight to the death? Workers and bosses are not united on a philosophical or political basis. They're two opposing sides of the same battle. They are locked in battle. We talk about unity in this sense, and only in this sense.

The Party understands the objective nature of the class struggle and brings into this struggle the idea that revolution is necessary. The ideas of Marxism-Leninism do not fall from the sky, nor do they arise all by themselves from the class struggle. Workers never wake up one morning saying: "We need the dictatorship of the proletariat. We need to build a new state apparatus that serves our interests." Communists bring these ideas to the working class because we know that only the working class has the need and power to do away with capitalism. In this sense we are the fire under the water. The hotter

we make it for the bosses, the sooner the revolution will prevail. The class struggle is a contradiction.

There are contradictions in every process. These contradictions make change. The rulers seek to suppress change, the making of waves, revolution. While there is some truth in a personal or coincidental way to the notion that opposites attract, the fact is that opposites, while united in struggle, create change or motion.

Resolve Contradictions By Sharpening Them

Thus, we can begin to understand that the way to resolve a class or antagonistic contradiction is to intensify it. Increasing the flame makes the water boil faster. Building the Party through increased class struggle leads to revolution.

But things are far more complex than they seem. For example, if we place flame under a rack, the rack will take far longer than the water to change in composition. You can snap a twig with your fingers, but you can't snap the branch of a tree bare-handed. You can break a wooden pencil with your fingers but you may not be able to break a pen that has the same pressure and thickness.

The Internal Is Primary

While everything has contradictions, everything isn't the same. Some things are stronger than others. In other words, their internal make up is stronger than the external contradictions. Why did the pencil snap under pressure, while similar pressure didn't affect the pen? As Mao Zedong said, "Put a rock and an egg in the sun. In one case, you get a hot rock. In the other, a chick." We conclude that the internal contradiction is primary. At this stage of the struggle the ruling class is stronger than our Party. The bosses are currently dominating the working class. We could decide from this example that because the ruling class is too strong, we should give up. Some people do give up, and many more think about it, falling for the idea that you can't fight City Hall.

If you can't fight City Hall, then what are we doing? We are trying to make ourselves stronger so the bosses cannot defeat us or break us. While the external pressures from the ruling class are important, these attacks are not primary. The Party will go under only if it is too weak to withstand attacks. A recent look at history might convince you. The Soviet Union went under, but not mainly because of U.S. imperialism. The decline of the international communist movement and ultimately the total collapse of Soviet socialism can be traced primarily to ideological weaknesses. Soviet imperialism went down to defeat without ever taking a shot from the other side. For the first time in a history, a state peacefully gave up power and went off the stage of history with its tail between its legs.

Of course, there were pressures from the outside. But the demise of the Soviet Union was due essentially to weaknesses within the old communist movement and, ultimately, to contradictions within Soviet capitalism itself.

The question sometimes arises: can you eventually win when you appear to be in an overwhelmingly adverse position? Well, it was done in Czarist Russia, when a small group of communists and advanced workers overthrew a seemingly invincible enemy. It happened in China under similar circumstances. History has proved it can be done.

As Mao said, you must slight the enemy strategically but take him into full account tactically. You might say that our line reflects the real world because it coincides with the wheel of history. Societies do change, and when they are ripe for change, it cannot be prevented by the people in power. The rulers try to stop the advance of history and society. As we pointed out, this is the height of idealism.

Contradiction is Everywhere, But Friends Aren't Enemies

One word of caution. Contradictions arise not only between opposing classes but also among friends. All contradictions have to be intensified in order to resolve them and move on to a new set of more advanced contradictions. However, different tactics must be used in struggling with friends and fighting an enemy. Different goals must be sought. In struggling with one another we want to reach a higher degree of unity. In fighting the bosses we seek the opposite. Determining these tactics is very difficult and complex. All contradictions are antagonistic. However, every contradiction isn't primary. Abandoning the Dictatorship of the Proletariat as a goal leads to a more intense contradiction than arguing over the choice of a street corner for a Party rally. There are differences and differences. A good deal of judgment must be used to determine the tactics for all internal struggle. In the final analysis, the collective decides what is right or wrong. Most of the time, the collective is correct. The old saying is right: two heads are usually better than one.

Capitalist society trains us to believe that what an individual thinks is always true and that "my" ideas are identical to the real world. In most cases the real world can best be seen by the many, not the one or the few. Individualism, in the capitalist sense, is negative.

Collective practice and time will eventually determine the best way of doing something. We must evaluate as we practice, and try to come up with the right path to follow.

One final note on contradiction. It used to be thought that inanimate objects had no life or contradictions of their own. The development of inorganic chemistry showed otherwise. Book collectors or libraries have

learned that books and papers will disintegrate with age. So they preserve them by encasing them in glass. Paper is now being treated chemically to last longer.

Everything changes. Even a desk in an office has an inner life. The desk has its own molecular composition. The molecules constantly collide with one another. The desk is vulnerable to the atmosphere, which will also influence its deterioration. There are contradictions in everything, not just in some things. There are no exceptions. If we understood this law of motion, we would not only be able to do better political work. We would also be able to handle our so-called personal life better.

Quantity and Quality

Suddenly it's spring! (Sounds like the title of another popular song.) Yesterday there wasn't a bud on the bush. Today the buds are all over. Some parents worry that their child is older than two and hasn't yet said a word. Instead of worrying, they should count their blessings. Then, miracle of miracles, the speechless two year-old suddenly starts spouting sentences. What about the parents who have been trying for months without much success to toilet train their two year-old? Then one day, the kid suddenly starts jumping on the potty. Have you heard the one about how young someone looked recently, and suddenly that person now looks very old?

Get the idea? Often we see only the big change but can't or don't see the small, cumulative change that appears to arrive full-blown, or least seems unaccountably larger. It's somewhat the same way in the Party and in making revolution. Just prior to the large anti-Vietnam War movement the media and pundits characterized college students as the "silent generation." Within a short time the "silent" ones were marching by the millions against the war. Unless you are very careful, you risk writing off millions of allies and potential members. If you make judgments based on superficial temporary evidence, you can easily miss chances to build the Party. Or, as many have done and continue to do, you may drop out of the Party because you make subjective, wrong estimates of what is possible.

Often we don't appreciate our own efforts or the efforts of the Party. Admittedly, international communist movement's demise has slowed down the class struggle everywhere. That's the real world! But we can't cry over spilt milk. We can only draw lessons from the collapse and apply these lessons, both positive and negative, to our own work. Giving up flies in the face of objective reality. Like all other processes, class struggle ebbs and flows. Persistent efforts around the line of Road to Revolution IV will sooner or later weaken and smash capitalism.

Sometimes you hear people say: "So I sold another *Challenge*. So what?" Or you know this is what they're thinking. On the face of it, the thought's not unreasonable,

especially if you have been mis-trained by capitalist ideas. But suppose every comrade and many friends sold one more C-D. This quantitative development might become a qualitative (important) step towards reaching the next crucial goal.

For the most part, our present recruitment efforts are too few, given the true potential for party growth. When we do recruit we still tend to do so by the ones and twos. But if we didn't recruit more of the ones and twos, we might not reach the stage at which mass recruitment could become possible. When you recruit someone, that development is probably qualitative for both you and the new member. However, it probably has just quantitative importance for the Party. On the other hand, if you evaluate your recruitment efforts, you will probably note that along the way, certain qualitative developments eventually led the person to join. In other words, there were turning points in your quantitative efforts.

Two Laws...With More to Come

We have, very briefly, covered the first two laws of Dialectical Materialism. The first is contradiction, the unity of opposites; and the second is quantity into quality. This is only wetting your whistle. Be careful, don't get carried away. Things are not so simple. They become more complex. Every time a contradiction is resolved, further contradictions arise, or the nature of the contradiction changes. Every new member that the Party recruit expands the limits of what the Party can do.

New members for the Party intensify the contradictions between us and the ruling class. We want new members, but they bring their own contradictions into the Party with them. Like ourselves, their commitment must always be examined and strengthened. More members must lead to increased political struggle in the Party. We must combat their political weaknesses, and continue our efforts to overcome political weaknesses amongst the veteran members. We could go on, but as you can see the struggle for communist ideas constantly goes on within and outside the Party. As we said before, struggle with our friends can't be the same as struggle against our enemies.

Every time we do something positive as individual members or as a Party, we produce new quantity leading to new quality. Although the process of building communism isn't like a dog running around in circles chasing its own tail, it is endless, and we have to train ourselves to see it in this way. Fighting for communism can't be a short-term fad; it must be a lifelong pursuit. No important commitment--marriage, children, friends, the Party--can be for the short term. If our efforts are to succeed, they must be for the very long haul. Think of another old saying: "In for a dime, in for a dollar." Remember, in every process there are contradictions. Karl Marx said that the essence of life is struggle. Nothing happens by itself. The unity of opposites sets things in motion. Conflict with the class enemy can

bring victorious revolution. A different type of conflict with those near and dear can bring positive development.

As we wrote above, people often say: "Don't throw out the baby with the bath water." People always learn the basic truth of these homilies by experience, sometimes the hard way. Our Party has learned many things from the efforts of past revolutionaries. We also learn from one another and from a great deal of experience in the class struggle. In other words, we learn virtually everything from other workers, dead or alive. The class struggle is our schoolroom and without being too corny, we can say that the working class are our teachers.

Each society learns from previous societies and uses this knowledge to improve upon them. Technology is one of the things carried forward and then advanced from one society to the next. We are already evaluating capitalist society. Was capitalism an advance from feudalism? If nothing else, capitalism created the working class. Capitalism brought together large groups of workers who had to learn to work together in a somewhat disciplined way. Above all, they learned with ups and downs that they had to figure out how to fight together in order to improve their circumstances. As in other processes, development is highly uneven. You can say this with a vengeance about capitalism.

This unevenness stands out like a sore thumb in the U.S., which is supposedly one of the most developed of all capitalist countries. A vast gulf divides the rich from the poor. However, in many parts of the world, capitalism has produced little forward development over the last two centuries. If you think there is poverty in the U.S., Japan, and the industrialized countries of Europe, just look at many places in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Hundreds of millions of workers lag behind the poor of U.S. and other imperialists. Imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism, has impoverished much of the world.

The Third Law: Negation

Most technology developed under capitalism has some use. But it is still technology for profit. Communists will use technology not to benefit the few, the bosses, but rather to improve the living conditions of all workers.

Communists are not going to throw out the hammer, airplanes, telephones, etc. We will use them so that we can increase production and distribute it in an even way. We may throw out PCs and private automobiles but we will not eliminate computers or mechanized transportation. Capitalism produces to enrich the bosses, not for the needs of workers. Today, there more profits to be made by Windows 95 than by building homes for the workers all over the world who live in hovels or on the street.

Using what is beneficial in previous processes to bring forth and improve new ones and discarding what is outworn or harmful is called, "Negation." The bosses would love it if we said: "The lesson from previous revolutionary

movements is that they were rotten; there is nothing good to be learned from them." Hence, the unrelenting barrage of lies about Stalin, 50 years after his death. Present bourgeois estimates of Stalin's crimes now exceed those of Hitler's. I think the current figure for the deaths the bosses attribute to Stalin's leadership is up to 90 million. Before long, it will be said by the rulers that Stalin killed all the Russians, as well as millions of others.

The rulers want to distort and obscure the important advances made under socialism. They don't want anyone else to travel that road. They want to conceal the most profound development of the 20th century, the Russian Revolution.

The rulers want to hide the positive lessons of the Revolution. The rulers don't attack Stalin to help us get it right the next time. Their slogan is: "Never again." Our goal is: go forward to the communist revolution, based on Marxism-Leninism. Thus, you might say, as a result of investigation and practice, that our Party, the PLP, is the negation of international communism. This is when an old process ends and a new one begins or is born out of the old process. We say: "Workers of the world, unite; abolish wage slavery!" We didn't invent this slogan or the ideas behind it. We got them studying Marxism-Leninism.

If you wanted to apply this law to this booklet, you would have to read, study, and apply the ideas presented. After evaluating the pamphlet, you would have the use the evaluation to write a better one. The only direction for communists to go is forward!

The three laws of Dialectics can help us. But they can't give us a blueprint. A brief look at the ruling class's views on death and the "hereafter" may help us understand the negation of the negation. A quote from Shakespeare's Julius Caesar comes to mind: "The evil that men do live after them. The good is often interred with their bones." We might say simply that people's deeds live after them. The rulers' religious men say: "Look, you are here for only 70 or 80 years, if you are lucky! So be a good person." When the preachers speak of being good, they don't just mean be nice to your spouse, children, or neighbors. "Goodness" to them is a class question. Being "good" means: don't rock the boat. "Goodness" means especially being nice to the ruling class. Don't fight them; accept your lot in life. You are only here a short time, but you are dead forever. That is the bosses' frightening specter.

To force us to be good to them, the rulers use their holy roller con artists to give us the dual outlook of heaven and hell. If you are good, you go to heaven and live a beautiful existence forever. If you are bad, that is, if you fight for communism or even less, you go to hell. Hell or purgatory is a horrible place that you occupy for eternity. So what is putting up with class oppression for a brief 70 or 80 years, when the alternative is either eternal joy or eternal horrors?

Our Party is Lenin's Child

But what you do on earth is the only life you have. It can have a lasting impact on the future, as well as on the present. A striking example is Lenin. Lenin has been dead about 70 years. But his deeds, his vision, live on forever. Our Party could never have come into existence without Lenin.

Children represent one of the more common examples of the link between the present and the future. The future of life on earth isn't mystical. In large measure, it has to do with children. Children are the future. The hereafter endorsed by the rabbis, priests, preachers, etc. leads to maintaining hell on earth. Fighting for the Dictatorship of the Proletariat means fighting for the needs and aspirations of the working class, now and for the future. Communism is the future of all workers. The time to start fighting for it was yesterday!

Freedom: A Class Question

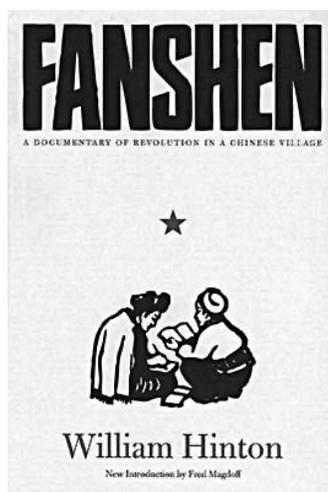
Like the O.J. trial, which seemed to go on forever, this pamphlet is nearing its end. At some point in dialectics' classes, the question often arises: what is freedom? In

almost every case, with some variations, the answer is: doing what you want. One young person in a recent class said that freedom to her meant the absence of responsibility to anyone else. Doing what you want. The absence of responsibility. These ideas put you in jail, much like solitary confinement, and keep you there.

These common ideas are the ultimate expression of selfishness. Freedom, in fact, is acting on your class needs. It is the opposite of selfishness and individualism. Knowing what you and your class need are a big step to gaining freedom. Freedom is one thing for the bosses and something altogether different for workers and communists. The bosses know that they need us to keep producing profits and fighting wars for them. To the extent that we swallow their rotten ideas and remain passive in the face of their crimes, the bosses are free to go on ruling over us.

The working class needs communism. Without communism the workers are at the mercy of the greedy rulers and their profit system. So how do you get communism? The answer to that one is by building the Party, in this case, the PLP. The next step is fighting for communist revolution.





Every revolution creates new words. The Chinese Revolution created a whole new vocabulary. A most important word in this vocabulary was fanshen. Literally, it means “to turn the body,” or “to turn over.” To China’s hundreds of millions of landless and land-poor peasants it meant to stand-up, to throw off the landlord yoke, to gain land, stock, implements, and houses. But it meant much more than this. It meant to throw off superstition and study science, to abolish “word blindness” and learn to read, to cease considering women as chattels and establish equality between the sexes, to do away with appointed village magistrates and replace them with elected councils. It meant to enter a new world. That is why this book is called Fanshen. It is the story of how the peasants of Long Bow village built a new world.

- William Hinton, *Fanshen* 1966

FANSHEN Book Review

It was a bitter cold day in March 1948 when American William Hinton entered the small Northern Chinese village of Long Bow as part of a work team, one of many, which was formed by the Communist Party of China (CPC) to evaluate the process of land reform in the liberated countryside. These work teams were being created to survey the conditions in the villages and ensure that the land reform policies, which abolished feudal relations and the landownership rights of landlords and private institutions, cancelled all debts, and demanded the turnover of all lands, animals and property to the peasant collectives, were carried out (7). Although the process of liberating the peasants had begun in 1945, the Draft Agrarian Law of 1947 was a “political offensive” which worked to strengthen the military offensive that defeated the invasion from Japan, as well as the nationalist Kuomintang led by Chiang Kai-shek.

This was not Hinton’s first trip to China; he had visited in 1937 and on this trip he stayed from 1945 until the end of the Korean War in 1953. Hinton came to China with the UN as a tractor technician, but stayed to join the CPC movement and aid in land reform. He worked as an English teacher at Northern University, a “guerrilla” institution that moved according to the war, in Changchih in the Shansi province. Hinton was very excited by the communist revolution and asked to join one of the work teams so he could be a part of the revolution (12). He spent six months in Long Bow, also in Shansi province, working in the fields, interviewing the local peasants and attending political meetings.

Hinton was not the only one excited by the revolutionary tide which was rolling through Asia and Eastern Europe. For years workers and intellectuals had been travelling

to places like China and Russia to witness and take part in the revolutionary struggle. Bill Haywood, Anna Louise Strong, Edgar Snow were just of the few Americans who traveled abroad to join revolutionary movements; the stories they sent back served as inspiration to millions of workers engaged in struggle throughout the world.

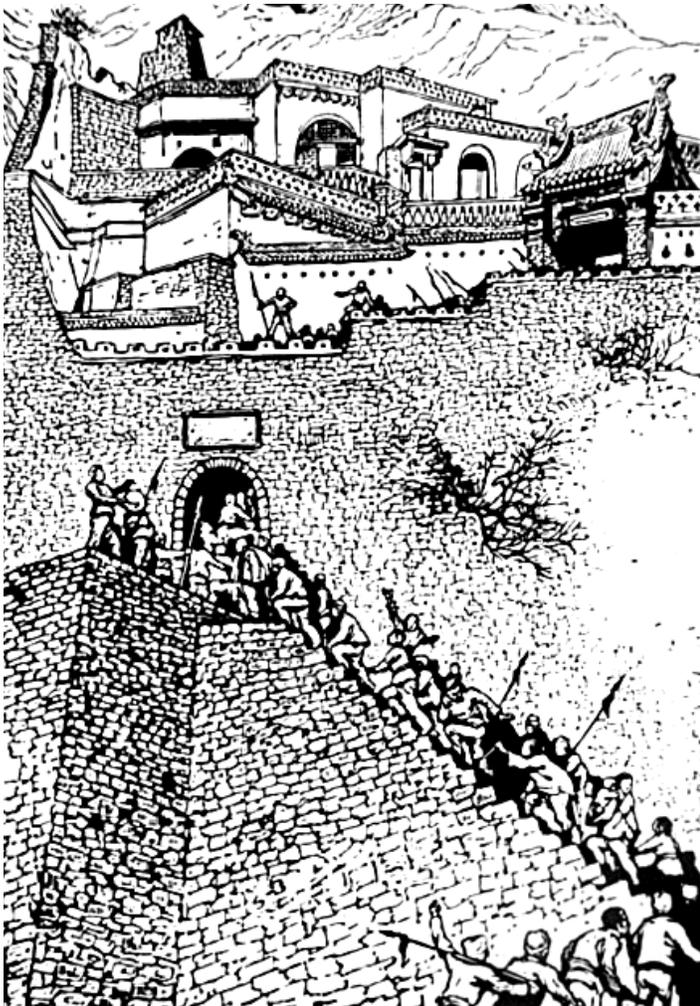
But the working class had to wait over a decade to hear the story of the Long Bow peasants. Upon returning to the US, Hinton’s notes for *Fanshen* were confiscated by the Senate Committee on Internal Security. This was a part of the McCarthy Red Scare which was sweeping the US. It took over a decade for him to win the notes back through litigation, but the permanent damage to his reputation was done. Hinton was blacklisted, first from teaching and then from all work. He survived as a farmer for fifteen years, and continued to take trips to China. In 1966 the book was published by the *Monthly Review* and quickly sold several hundred thousand copies. It was printed in ten different languages and like other books of its kind (like Edgar Snow’s *Red Star Over China* or Joshua Horn’s *Away with All Pests*) had a huge impact on the worker’s struggles taking place at the time.

Fanshen is based on notes taken during his stay in Long Bow through the spring and summer of 1948. Hinton says that the book is the product of his discussions and work with the people of Long Bow. It is not the work of one man, but “the community’s own self-examination;” Hinton makes it clear that this is a book which is self-consciously political (xii). *Fanshen* is grounded in the ideas of theory and practice and aims to show the reader this process as it was in China during the period of land reform.

Fanshen chronicles the continuing land reform which was under investigation by the CPC. Parts I and II give

“Under this stress two main political trends developed: resistance and collaboration.”

the reader the historical context of the region, peasant life and the early days of land reform. These stories were gathered by Hinton from the peasants of the village and serve as background for understanding the nature of the political struggle during the late 1940s. The latter part of the book focuses on the early days of reform in Long Bow which centered on the redistribution of land. These days were characterized by upheaval as many peasants sought retribution from landlords and rich peasants who had abused them. One of the major critiques of this early round of reform was the focus on individual gain, whether it be material (land, draft animals, goods) or psychological (revenge). Many of the peasants and Party cadre had been won to a line that did not represent that of the CPC. Much



Peasants storm a landlord's stronghold as part of the effort to overthrow feudalism.

of the book then focuses on the struggles to right these wrongs through education, criticism and self-criticism, and when necessary removal from the Party leadership. As the elder peasant Tui-chin put it, “For millet alone we spoke before, now it’s reason we rally for.” (423).

Unlike much of the rest of the country which was liberated from the Kuomintang in 1945, Long Bow was still occupied by the Japanese. While slow reforms had been taking place in other parts of China, Long Bow experienced what seemed like an overnight change “from reactionary bastion to revolutionary storm center in the course of a few days.” (x). Hinton believed that these conditions made it easier to tell the story because the contradictions were often heightened, allowing him to better understand the “revolutionary process” and show it to the reader (xi). It is quite clear to the reader what a painful yet moving process this was for the peasants of China. One of the values of this book is the visceral way Hinton brings to us what it meant to wage a communist revolution and fight to protect and expand the Party. The big question that *Fanshen* answers is, to what lengths did the Chinese peasants and the CPC go to remake their world? The fight for politics in rural China, and what it allowed peasant farmers to accomplish is what make this such an inspirational book.

The communist revolution in China grew out of World War II, in particular the Japanese invasion of the continent in 1932 which continued through 1945. The Sino-Japanese War as it is also known was an imperialist war waged by the Japanese on the “Three Alls” policy. The Japanese armies were charged with burning all, looting all, and killing all as they moved from town to town. The “Three Alls” meant creating an atmosphere of absolute terror, but the term is misleading in some ways. In the early days of the war this policy was carried out with little regard for class, but very quickly the Japanese realized that it was in their best interests to first try to build alliances with landlords and even peasants who were willing to betray the people. It was in these days of war that Chiang Kai-shek and the rest of the Nationalists broke with the CPC, and shortly after began collaborating with the Japanese (and later the Americans) to destroy the revolutionary movement. As Hinton put it, “In these times of terrible trial, every person and every human institution was put on the rack, and the quality of the metal from which they were made was ruthlessly tested. Under this stress two main political trends developed: resistance and collaboration.” (72). The fear of reprisal was great, but for those few who joined the imperialist cause of the Japanese, there were many more who resisted the invasion and joined the CPC.

In Long Bow these peasants and comrades threw off the yoke of imperialism and began the struggle to wrest the land from the landlords. This was not an easy struggle and as Hinton mentions, Long Bow had been chosen for evaluation based on the many problems which had

arisen along the way. In particular were problems with peasant violence and the desire for retribution rather than redistribution. In Long Bow as in other villages peasants took this opportunity to visit revenge upon those landlords and masters who had once beaten and starved

“the reader will find here, not one man’s analysis...but the community’s own self-examination”

them. Such had also been the case in Russia before the Communist Party sent cadre in to aid in the process. The anger and frustration of generations poured forth and was in many ways a destructive influence in the communities. Peasants and even cadre took for themselves and as time went by new privileges developed and stunted the work that the CPC was trying to carry out.

The New Draft Law of 1947 outlawed beating, torture, and treasure-hunting for buried wealth. It sought to refocus land reform on building the Party and make criticism and self-criticism of the work the major focus of the cadre. It was a very difficult time for people and the cadre of Long Bow; many meetings and even trials were held to determine the nature of the work and many were found guilty in one way or another of privileging their needs above those of the collective. While the process was painful, the work that came out of this struggle was much better for it. For many of the peasants in Long Bow it was a struggle that showed them their power and strength as a collective and steeled them for the work ahead.

It should come as no surprise to us that Chinese land reform and the CPC had these problems. From our own work we know that one of the biggest fights is the battle against capitalist individualism. As we struggle to build our own world, a new world, we must live in the old. As one of the CPC’s leaders Liu Shao-chi put it,

Our Party is not a Party that has fallen from the heavens; it is a Party that has grown out of the existing Chinese society...Although in general

our Party members are relatively the best Chinese men and women... [they] are still living in this society which is replete with the influences of the exploiters...Is it anything strange that there are muddy stains on a person who crawls out of the mud and who constantly dabbles in the mud?

Shao-chi’s quote is apt, but it is not meant to discourage. Rather it is meant to aid in understanding the weaknesses of the work so that the work can grow. And in this period in Long Bow that is what Hinton saw. In particular he discusses the emancipation of women and their growth in and through the Party. The major issue that the liberation of women was based on was their right to own land and property. Without this women were tied to their husbands

and fathers. In one conversation Hinton heard a woman say, “Our husbands regard us as some sort of dogs who keep the house. We even despise ourselves. But that is because for a thousand years... We were criticized if we even stepped out the door.” The communist revolution and land reform were changing all that. The woman continued, “After we get our share we will be masters of our own fate.” (397)

Women were also taking roles as leaders in the Party. In Long

Bow Hinton worked closely with his translator, a woman by the name of Ch’i Yun. As the struggle became more heated, Ch’i Yun was one of the first to step forward and guarantee that these important meetings took place and were based in objectivity, rather than subjectivity. Hinton also recalls “The women seemed to me to be far less bashful than the men. It was they who sought me out and asked questions about the world outside China... always it was the women who took the initiative.” (398-399).

“For millet alone we spoke before, now it’s reason we rally for.”

Books like *Fanshen* show us what can be accomplished and help us better understand the mistakes and successes of past movements. The history of Long Bow and the



peasants of China is our history and we should embrace and study it as such. We must remember that we are connected through space and time to these Chinese peasants and workers by our belief in one international working class. The more we know and understand the history of workers' struggles and their clashes with the bosses, the more we can grow and share with the working class.

“always it was the women who took the initiative.”

In his last chapter, Hinton sums up his experiences and talks of the optimism for the future. He is quite confident that the land reform movement has set the stage for continued revolutionary change, but he also discusses the problems that still exist. As he says, “land reform only removed the feudal barriers to production.” (603). Productive forces still had to be mobilized and many of those forces still needed to understand the differences between socialist and capitalist production and be won to fighting for the former. Chinese feudalism had been stamped out in Long Bow, and these “victories put land reform on the program of a continent, on the agenda of hundreds of millions.” (613)

At over 600 pages *Fanshen* may seem like more than a little daunting, but is well worth our time to read and understand. The length is in large part due to Hinton's incredible detail which paints a vivid picture for the reader of life and struggle in China during this period. This



Burning of deeds was symbolic of the land reform struggle taking place after the defeat of Japan.



Scene depicts a woman applying for divorce. One of the new rights, along with the ability to own land and property which women gained as part of the CPC's program to emancipate Chinese women.

detail keeps the book from feeling tedious and also serves Hinton's purpose of trying to document the quantitative changes that led to qualitative “leaps” (xii). *Fanshen* is a great book to share with friends and comrades and reading it as part of a study group or book club is great way to get more out of the experience.

If *Fanshen* has only whet your appetite, never fear there are many great books on China and many written by Hinton. Throughout his life Hinton continued returning to China and working to build the revolution there. In his 1970 book *Iron Oxen* he details the revolution in Chinese agriculture that was brought about by mechanization and collectivization. In *Shenfan*, published in 1984, Hinton returns to Long Bow village; the book takes place in the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution Hinton discusses how the great advances of collectivization began to be dismantled in the Chinese countryside. Finally in 1989's *The Great Reversal* Hinton details the tragic results of

China's turn towards revisionism and how privatization erased the gains made since 1949 in agriculture and set China on the path towards capitalism.

The communist revolution in China was creating a new world before Hinton's eyes. One in which people could relate to each other on a deeper level, men and women,

peasant and worker, began to know each other and themselves, not through material interests, but through the politics of the CPC. Neither the line nor the work was perfect, but their monumental struggle changed millions of lives in China and the lessons of their work have the potential to change billions of lives worldwide.

Chairman Mao and the Cult of Personality

Writing in *Away With All Pests* British surgeon and communist Joshua Horn describes the National Day Parade in China, "Block after block" of workers and peasants marched in the parade and "Some of the peasants were a little undisciplined. They had come a long way to see their beloved Chairman...So when they saw him, they stopped, waved and shouted and the Chairman waved back." From the back of the square "tens of thousands of Young Pioneers (a communist youth organization) rushed forward...towards their beloved leader...I felt a painful lump in my throat and looking around me I saw tears in many eyes."

The stunning success of the Chinese Revolution and the liberation of the Chinese working class and peasantry was one of the greatest social achievements in history, a Herculean task that took millions to accomplish it. The revolution lit a spark in working class movements around the world. The Cult of Personality that arose around Mao was a reflection of this mass enthusiasm. Mao became the physical embodiment of the revolutionary upsurge that was changing China.

William Hinton writes in *Fanshen*, "The Long Bow recruits were influenced...by the extraordinary prestige of the Eighth Route Army...and the even more extraordinary prestige of the Party's national leader, Mao Tse-tung, who appeared to them as nothing less than the savior of the nation. They wanted to be communists because they admired Mao Tse-tung and trusted his leadership...It was taken for granted that Chairman Mao, whose name was synonymous with that of the Revolution, was responsible for every facet

of the government, great or small. It was an enormous compliment and an equally enormous responsibility."

Understanding history through the capitalist lens that emphasizes great men over collective struggle it is easy to see how people would fall into supporting the personality cult. The Revolution was the great upheaval that had uplifted the toiling masses of China and Mao was the totem that people used to celebrate this momentous achievement. Still, the cult of personality represents the worst aspects of capitalist individualism; a residual piece of the capitalist culture that worked to rot the foundations of communism in China.

Seizing on the personality cult revisionists and capitalist roaders in China used Mao's image as a weapon to push through counter-revolutionary policies that would eventually undo the great work of the Chinese communists. This is why PLP has long criticized the cult of personality and fought to erase it from the Party ranks. Learning from the great experience of the Soviet Union and China PLP has come to understand the cult of personality as an outgrowth of capitalist individualism every bit as dangerous as racism, sexism, etc. And part of breaking with capitalism means breaking with the ideologies that maintain it.

Still, a book like *Fanshen* has to be understood within the context of its time. Hinton's great admiration for Mao, and that of the Chinese villagers in Long Bow, should be seen as their great admiration of the Chinese Communist Party and its creation of the new China.



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