
SMASH **RACISM**

PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY ON RACE AND RACISM



A FIGHTER'S MANUAL

PREFACE

Lusting after profits, the world's capitalists stalk the globe, ruling by terror, war, genocide, deception, and "sound business practices", seizing resources like oil, exploiting workers in mines and factories, accumulating ever greater sums of capital. Driven to this behavior by the system of capitalism, and ever alert to methods to disarm the international working class, the capitalists deploy their ideologues and political operatives to spread racist ideology and nationalist dead ends, always urging us to distrust workers of different races and nationalities and to unite with rich people who "look like us".

For as long as oppression has existed resistance has been a constant. Yet the capitalists have been remarkably successful in dividing our class, ideologically and in practice. They have done it with divisive, racist, and nationalist ideology. They have done it by propping up misleaders with their media.

This ruling class strategy has effectively disarmed our class. Even when we fight back, we are segregated. In recent years, millions have marched in admirable shows of opposition to one or another of the rulers' plans. All of these actions have been fatally flawed by racism and nationalism. At the anti-war marches, 95% of the marchers were white. At the immigration marches, 95% of the marchers were Latino. At the Jena 6 marches, 95% of the marchers were African American. So even though millions march, they are in essence marching alone, separated by race and racist ideology, under the leadership of bourgeois forces eager to render these movements impotent and ineffective, and used to advance the careers of a handful of opportunists.

Liberal leadership controls all of these separate movements in the United States and they are reunited in the Democratic Party. But the Democratic Party is simply a ruling class party that rhetorically addresses racism and working class oppression while deepening it on a daily basis, while the Republican Party openly flaunts its racist, anti-working class credentials. Both parties are tools of capitalism. On the issues of racism, war, poverty, sexism, and more, bourgeois politics are a dead end for workers.

Only a violent revolution, smashing the government and destroying the capitalist class, taking back the property created by our labor but stolen from us by the capitalist system, and reorganization of society to meet our class's needs on an international scale, can liberate us from the tyranny of war,

racism, exploitation, and super-exploitation. But that revolution and social reorganization can never occur if our class is split by race and nationality. As long as we march behind celebrities, politicians, and liberal capitalists like Jane Fonda, Dennis Kucinich, Al Sharpton, Jesse Jackson, Andres Jimenez, and Francisco Moreno and organize under the political leadership of boss-led groups like the NAACP, La Raza, Mecha, or United for Peace and Justice, we will never win. We will only demoralize millions as the ineffectiveness of segregated movements and electoral politics become more apparent and no other alternative seems available.

By aggressively removing the fundamental tool of racism from the hands of the bourgeoisie and its state and creating instead a multi-racial, militant movement against racism, we can create the most powerful force on earth—a class conscious international working class capable of defeating capitalism once and for all!

Hard work lies before us. Perhaps our chances appear slim. But if it really boils down to probabilities, then the communists hold all the cards. The probability of continuing US military conflict in the Middle East is 100%-control of world access to energy is too important for US imperialists to relinquish. The probability that rival imperialists, particularly Chinese capitalists, will refuse to play second fiddle to the US forever is also 100%. The probability that inter-imperialist rivalry will spawn another world war, sooner or later, a war that may very well go nuclear, is also 100%. And even after this war the probability that the capitalists will reorganize a world of exploitation, racism and more war is also 100% unless we stop them.

Workers divided by racism have a 0% chance of changing this future. And so we call on you in this fighter's manual to join us as fighters against racism.

In this pamphlet the Progressive Labor Party sets three tasks: to present a brief history of racism, review characteristics of racism today, and analyze the fight against racism by previous movements and our own in order to develop the strategic principles needed to defeat racism with communist revolution. Read on.

INTRODUCTION: KATRINA EXPOSES U.S. RACISM AND THE NEED FOR COMMUNIST REVOLUTION

Images of Katrina are burned into our collective memory. Black working class people waving home-made flags at choppers who won't land, while the elderly bake on a tin roof in the Louisiana sun; a makeshift "HELP US" message scrawled atop a building amid a sea of poisoned water strewn with corpses in the heart of a major American city; these images cry out for an explanation—and vengeance against the system that allowed this horror.

In the late summer of 2005, the entire world was forced to look US racism, updated yet still so much the same, squarely in the eye. Even George W. Bush gave a talk that September condemning US poverty and recognizing a connection between poverty and race. Liberal rulers and their media point to the emergence of Barack Obama more recently as evidence that the US has entered a "post-racial" era.

The main aspect of racism has been the tremendous suffering and point that it has visited upon people of color in the modern era. This racism has murdered millions of blacks, Latinos and indigenous people, through the slave trade, through colonial plunder and through the eradication of peoples who had the misfortune to live on land that European speculators and businessmen wanted to win. Over the centuries, racist inequality and oppression has stunted the lives of blacks, Latinos and indigenous people through lower pay and harder jobs, higher unemployment, inferior housing and education and worse medical care, all of which produce more difficult lives and lower life expectancy. This special oppression is one of the greatest crimes of capitalism, and this oppression will continue to intensify no matter who is elected president.

During Katrina bourgeois politicians, from the black mayor of New Orleans to the white governor of Louisiana to the imperialist president refused to lift a finger to evacuate more than one hundred thousand trapped black workers from New Orleans. When black workers and youth took matters into their own hands and began to provide water, food, diapers, and rescue for their families, neighbors, and fellow workers, the bosses' media cranked up their racist propaganda machine and condemned those workers as looters and violent criminals. New Orleans has been treated as a war zone with military units brought in to protect property and join the police department

in harassing the remaining black population of the city.

After watching in horror on their TV sets as the government let more and more people die, millions of people mobilized their churches, clubs, and other organizations to provide relief and assistance. In the ensuing months and years the Progressive Labor Party sent waves of members into New Orleans to learn by observation and participation in the anti-racist struggle what the shape of developing US fascism looks like. The face of fascism is, like capitalism in general, distinctly racist. PLP'ers rebuilt homes while reaching workers of all backgrounds with our communist ideas. We observed the strong levees that protect the rich and the flimsy ones that failed the poor. To this day residents of the largely black Gentilly neighborhood can expect six additional inches of flood relief in the event of a "one in a hundred year" storm while the white upper middle class Lakefront neighborhood has been assured four additional feet. Our work with evacuees in Texas, Chicago and New York has enriched our knowledge and our practice immensely.

Hurricane Katrina has revealed the vicious racist core of the capitalist system and exposed US rulers as merciless killers. They have destroyed entire cities in Iraq and Afghanistan during the past few years, and they regard the lives of thousands of black workers in US cities as equally expendable.

I. HISTORY OF RACISM

Racism is not just about hating or even killing people who look or believe differently from you. We are after something more precise than this when, as communists, we say "Smash Racism." We are calling for the destruction of the economic, ideological, and institutional conditions and processes that divide, exploit, and superexploit the working class, impede the growth of class-consciousness, and hold back communist revolution. Racism can be thought of as a three-legged stool, including economic super-exploitation of an arbitrarily-defined group of workers, ideologies of inferiority/superiority of one group over the other, and historically –developed institutions that reproduce inequalities and different levels of exploitation among groups of workers. These three processes reinforce each other and, taken together, constitute the key force that facilitates the capitalist process of maximum profit extraction from workers and capital accumulation by the ruling class.

Racism is then, a historically specific phenomenon that emerged with capitalism. Racism has not always existed. It should not be confused with ethnocentrism. For instance, certain isolated regions of Papua New Guinea remained in a Stone Age state until the early 1900s. Anthropologists reported that strangers from tribes over the mountain were at times killed on sight by neighboring groups who spoke another language.¹ Or, in another example, for millennia the ruling Han elite of the China viewed the rest of the world with disdain, and Chinese empires subjugated many ethnic groupings in Central and South East Asia to the service of a Han emperor. Or, in yet other examples, in ancient Sparta only “foreigners” could be held as slaves, and Romans dispersed the Jews from Palestine and crucified Jesus two thousand years ago. But these egregious acts were not examples of racism because they were not part of the systematic goal of maximizing profits in a never-ending accumulation process. Capitalism seizes hold of trivial differences among people and transforms them into racism, a vital political-economic force that divides workers from each other, shatters class-consciousness and class unity, and preserves the system.

History, however, is not limited to forms of oppression and ethnocentrism. It is also filled with a far more common human experience, that of solidarity. Societies can embrace strangers and class struggles can unite workers. Showing hospitality to the weary traveler is common to many cultures. Every runaway slave from Georgia adopted by the Florida Seminole Indians, every strike where “race” is overcome and workers unite to smash the boss must be the points of departure for a new anti-racist and communist understanding of human history.

ORIGINS OF RACISM – PRIMITIVE (ORIGINAL) ACCUMULATION OF CAPITAL

If racism is not part of human nature and it didn't just evolve from ethnocentrism, then where did it come from? Karl Marx, writing in 1867, understood that racism and capitalism were not two separate problems.

The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the indigenous population of that continent, the beginnings of the conquest and plunder of India, and the conversion

¹ We must be careful when trusting the bourgeois anthropologists who trailed the imperialists as they carved up the globe in the late 1800s, but perhaps their reports are true.

of Africa into a preserve for the commercial hunting of [black people for slaves in the America]², are all things which characterize the dawn of the era of capitalist production. These idyllic proceedings are the chief moments of primitive accumulation.

Marx's analysis of the origins of capitalism demonstrates that racism and capitalism were born together. Why did European and U.S. ruling classes become so rich while most other nations remained poor? The answer is not due to some accident of geography or climate.³ Marx noted that:

the veiled slavery of the wage-laborers in Europe needed the unqualified slavery of the new world as its pedestal.

The heart-breaking destitution of white workers on the Gulf Coast rests on the pedestal of even deeper suffering among black workers in New Orleans. The deteriorating status of unionized workers rests on the pedestal of racist prison and migrant labor systems. Capitalist exploitation of white workers succeeds on the foundation of racist superexploitation of workers of color.

From the supposedly "liberal" social democracies of Europe to the aggressive imperialism of U.S. capitalism today, all forms of bourgeois rule, all "successes" in our global economy, are rooted in a fundamental crime perpetrated hundreds of years ago and that actively and systematically is reinforced today in the form of superexploitation. We must confront every defender of today's world order, every liberal, and every reformist on the issue that they dodge the most--superexploitation. Racism arose alongside the rise of capitalism itself. Ruling classes reinterpret and reinvigorate racism today because it continues to be key to the survival of capitalism.

Racism, not democracy, secularism, the "rights of man" or "human rights", is the main ideological innovation of the bourgeoisie. The unparalleled mastery by U.S. capitalists of the bourgeois art of racism has propelled the U.S. ruling class, more than any other factor, into their current (although transient) dominant status over their imperialist rivals. So how did racism get its start in the U.S.?

² Marx used the ironical term "blackskins" in the original, indicating the way slave traders dehumanized Africans.

³ As Jared Diamond argues in his influential *Guns, Germs and Steel: the Fates of Human Societies*. NY: W.W. Norton, 1997.

Marxism: Anti-Racism's Highest Form

Communists from Marx until the present understand racism to be a cornerstone of capitalism. Marx's analysis of racism in the 19th century belongs right along side his analysis of extraction of surplus value from the worker, the alienation of the worker from the product of her labor, the tendency of the rate of profit to fall and the need for the dictatorship of the proletariat in order to smash capitalism. Marx recognized that the conflict between the English and Irish workers in England, like that between whites and blacks in the U. S. was critical to maintaining capitalist rule. He wrote that

“This antagonism [between English and Irish workers] is artificially kept alive and intensified by the press, the pulpit, the comic papers, in short, by all the means at the disposal of the ruling classes. This antagonism is the secret of the impotence of the English working class, despite its organization. It is the secret by which the capitalist class maintains its power. And that class is fully aware of it.”

Marx is sometimes criticized for leaving too little of a blueprint for how workers should fight for communism, or for what communism will look like. He never develops his analysis of racism into a comprehensive independent work, or manual, for future communists either. It is fair to say that he understood that such practical concerns of the working class movement had to be solved in the crucible of practice itself. Marxism provides us with the opportunity to fight racism in the most complete and profound way possible. Through our uncompromising stand against racism from our inception, the Progressive Labor Party is ensuring that the Marxist analysis of racism is magnified, advanced, and popularized among the toiling masses of the earth as a beacon of hope for a brighter future.

RACISM CODIFIED – COLONIAL VIRGINIA

The first Africans arrived in America on a Dutch merchant ship. Like the vast majority of Virginia's population at that early stage, these Africans were sold as indentured servants, contracted to toil on the tobacco plantations

that would one day become the economic powerhouse of England's North American colonies. If they survived rampant disease, both black and white servants were commonly worked to death before they completed their contracts. If they survived their terms of servitude then servants, both black and white, could look forward to the chance to begin their own farm on land recently cleared of Native Americans through genocide and disease. What a start!

The legal record reveals a rich history of multi-racial unity and resistance in the face of this brutal exploitation. John Punch, a black servant ran away in 1640 with two whites from their common owner. They were caught and "brought to justice" by the planter state. While the two white servants were sentenced to an extra year's service, Punch was condemned to enslavement for life. The Punch episode showed the unity between the three rebels, two white and one black, who came together, presumably made a plan to harm the bosses, and executed it. Differential punishment was intended to shatter this unity.

Later laws established that slavery would be a permanent condition passed from mother (not father) to child (1662), that baptism did not exempt an individual from slavery (1667), that no "Negroes or Indians [could] buy Christian servants" (1670) and that it was illegal for any black person to carry any weapon whatsoever (1680).⁴ A 1705 law was the last nail in the coffin—enslaved Africans were officially classified as real estate and the killing of a slave by an owner or his agent was decriminalized. We see a ratcheting up of oppression, a trend, in these laws. Throughout the 1600s terms such as "nation" and "Negro" are used, but the term "white" does not appear in the legal code until 1705.

Early American law reveals to us that the bourgeoisie faced a multi-racial working class that ran away together, intermarried, armed themselves and even built up enough wealth to attempt to buy white servants; these activities were considered a danger by the ruling classes and they were regulated by law.

In 1676 a frustrated planter of the second tier of the Virginia ruling class, Nathaniel Bacon, led a force of servants, ex-servants and slaves in a massive rebellion that burnt Jamestown itself to the ground and looted numerous mansions of the colonial elite. The lessons learned by the ruling classes in

4 Virtual Jamestown,

<http://www.iath.virginia.edu/vcdh/jamestown/laws1.html#1>

the wake of this rebellion remain key to racist ideology and practice today. A united working class must be undercut at all costs.

Halting steps towards a racist classification of black workers as slaves were taken before 1676. Yet the historical record is clear. By 1700, the largest Virginia tobacco plantations were worked by black slaves, not indentured servants.⁵ Slave labor for some was taken to be the most stable basis on which to build an economy in which all labor was exploited. By 1705, with servitude on the decline, white indentured servants (named as “white” in law for the first time) were issued a form of severance pay that included seed, clothing, land and even guns upon completion of their contracts.⁶ The slave owners knew what they were doing. They hoped to win the allegiance of these non-elite whites through crumbs plus an ideology of racial superiority over their black counterparts. This strategy, they hoped, would prevent any further multi-racial rebellions that might threaten their power. Those white workers and farmers of the South deluded by this strategy became the slave-catchers, the Confederate infantry mowed down in battle, the KKK supporters cheering on lynching while in poverty themselves, and some of the unemployed young white men of Appalachia we see today who spill their blood in cities and sands of Iraq, many with their eyes hazed over with racism towards Arabs.

The racial divisions that British planters established in Virginia during the 17th century were matched by similar developments in the British, Spanish, Portuguese and French colonies in the Caribbean and Brazil. Indians were killed off or driven into remote regions, and Africans were permanently enslaved. Whites, and in some places people of mixed race, were to be wage laborers, tenant farmers, or overseers.

Racism in the colonies was perfected over time. It began with halting steps and was subsequently pursued more and more consciously with ever increasing levels of determination as it became increasingly vital to capitalist survival and accumulation. Bacon’s Rebellion, the multi-racial Manhattan rebellion of 1741, and even the threat of integrated pirate vessels at sea revealed the threat of a united working class and gave urgency to the racist course of action in the colonies.

5 E.S. Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia*, NY: Norton Publishers, 1975, Ch 15.

6 PBS documentary, “Africans in America” vol.1 “The Terrible Transformation”

What was the upshot of this strategy that the planter bourgeoisie came to pursue with support from the British Parliament and then from the US government? Slavery became the foundation of the colonial and early national economy. Four of the first five presidents were from Virginia, the center of black slavery. All the shipping, insurance, manufacturing and banking of the North were connected first to the tobacco crop and then to the cotton crop of the slave South. Slavery breathed new life into world capitalism by supplying cotton to early textile mills in Europe and the northern states, ultimately providing the startup capital for the rise of the main wing of the US bourgeoisie after the Civil War. The victorious Morgan/Astor/Vanderbilt/soon-to-be Rockefeller wing of northern capital tolerated ten years or so of Reconstruction (1865-1876) where ex-slaves saw some measure of progress. By the 1890s, however, racism was stronger than ever. Despite the heroic efforts of the brave anti-racist fighters of earlier generations, racism has grown more intense right up to the present day.

RACE IS A MYTH, BUT RULERS KEEP RACISM ALIVE

How do the rulers manage to continually swindle white workers to buy into racist ideology?

For starters, they have been at it for a long time. “Drapetomania” was a psychiatric diagnosis proposed in 1851 by Louisiana physician Samuel A. Cartwright to explain the tendency of black slaves to flee captivity. His prescribed remedies? Whipping and amputation of the toes.

Dr. Cartwright’s brutal theory sounds ridiculous to us today only because the form of class rule that made such “science” acceptable has grown passé. Yet class rule in today’s advanced but decaying capitalism necessitates equally brutal and ridiculous formulations, and the finest universities in the world happily comply. Our task is to expose the Cartwrights in suits and ties as servants of the ruling class whose work perverts science and justifies the most horrific forms of exploitation.

“Race” is a powerful social force, but it is not a biological reality. DNA evidence has proven that “race”, as popularly understood, has no scientific meaning when applied to people.

Claims for deep racial differences continually surface for social rather than scientific reasons. Recent examples:

- In 1994 Charles Murray and Richard Herrnstein published “The Bell

Curve,” Nazi-like racist garbage disguised as social science, arguing that African Americans are genetically inferior in intelligence to whites and Asians.

- In 2001, sportswriter Jon Entine published “Taboo,” hyping pseudoscientific claims for black genetic superiority in athletics.
- The first “race-based” medicine, BiDil, was introduced in 2004, with the shaky but profitable claim that it provides better treatment for African Americans with heart failure than older drugs.
- In 2005, data from human genomic sequencing was abused by Bruce T. Lahn to speculate that African’s brains might be less evolved than those of Europeans and Asians.
- In 2007 the IQ debate revealed its racist essence once again when Dr. Watson (pioneering geneticist who helped discover DNA) used the faulty concept of IQ to back up his perverted assertion that people of Africa, essentially, would never escape poverty.

The key point is that these periodic “flare-ups” of pseudo-scientific racism are periodically thrust into mainstream discussion, rising like Dracula from the grave, despite the fact that not one shred of scientific evidence has ever been discovered to indicate that there is more than one human race. Racist science can have, therefore, only social explanations. Put simply, somebody wants us to believe race exists, and that races differ in qualitative ways from each other. Rulers launch racist offensives to cement their power and continue to create false ideology.

The idea of “race” always meant superior and inferior. It was created to justify slavery, European colonialism, and genocide against Native Americans. The details change with time and the needs of the ruling class but its divisive and ideological role remains the same.

TWENTIETH CENTURY RACISM – AN OVERVIEW

In 1918, the new “science” of IQ testing found Jewish, Italian, and Russian immigrants to be genetically “feeble-minded.” The eugenics movement, fashionable until the 1940s in British and U.S. universities, promoted sterilization of the “unfit” and deportation of immigrants.

The Nazis did not invent the theory of a master race. They built on racial theories developed in Europe in the 19th century that were further advanced by the U.S. eugenics movement. The Nazis borrowed almost verbatim U.S.

racist legislation promoted by the eugenicists. Indeed, one of the defenses offered by the Nazi war criminals during the Nuremberg trials after World War II was that their forced sterilizations, ghastly “experiments” on prisoners, and racist genocide were no different from what the U.S. government had engaged in for decades!

The idea of “race” so permeates our society that it seems natural to classify people by skin color. But individual human variation doesn’t work that way. If “race” applied to humans, it would mean that our species was divided into distinct subgroups along geographic lines, as are many animal species. Genetically, humans differ very little one from another.

In 1974, Richard Lewontin showed that 85% of human protein variation was found within any one population group, such as Finnish Lapps or South African Xhosa, with only an additional 15% of variation being between different population groups. All the molecular (DNA) data of the past 20 years has confirmed Lewontin’s estimate. While it is easy to see big differences in skin color if you compare Icelanders to Nigerians, if you travel northward from Nigeria you would see a gradual, continuous lightening in skin color, not a steep decline at any latitude where “dark” skin color ends and “light” skin color begins. Human populations all have the same set of genes, and usually the same set of gene versions (called “alleles”); populations differ in how common or rare any particular gene versions are. There is no consistent grouping of humans according to one or another genetic trait. Skin color doesn’t correlate well with other geographically variable traits, like hair shape, ability to digest milk sugar, or frequency of sickle cell or thalassemia traits. According to your choice of definition, there could be two, five, or a thousand “races.”

The reason humans don’t sort out into races is that humans constitute a young species. The ancestors of all living humans arose about 150,000 years ago in Africa. All our ancestors lived in Africa until about 80,000 years ago, when some populations began to migrate and populate the rest of the world. The ancestors of indigenous Australians drifted to their continent 60,000 years ago, by boat or raft; humans reached Europe about 45,000 years ago. Humans have left written records only over the last 10,000 years. There has simply not been enough time for human groups to get very different from each other and they have always traveled far and freely intermixed with each other. Compare this short history with that of the dinosaurs, who dominated the planet for 135 million years, 675 times as long as humans have been around.

“Race” is an idea that was invented to divide us and serve the ruling class, yet its meaninglessness as biology doesn’t lessen its force in shaping our lives. Many workers buy into some aspect of the pseudoscientific garbage produced, intentionally or not, in bourgeois universities that reinforces the wrongheaded notion that our one human race is split into different races. PLP has made important contributions in smashing this academic racism but clearly an honest approach to human biology and genetics will only be possible in the context of the general march of the workers toward revolution and state power. Today’s universities exist to theorize and explore matters of concern to the bourgeoisie. The universities we inherit and construct will be turned to the service of the revolutionary working class.



Race – It's Only Skin Deep

For a few variable traits, geography has had a strong impact. As humans moved around the world, they encountered new diseases, climates, and food sources. Changes in genes (mutations), or changes in the particular genes that became active (gene expression), sometimes enabled adaptation to these new environments and allowed those carrying these changes to survive to childbearing age and have many more children than those without the changes.

For instance, people who live in tropical climates have dark skin. This is probably because the vitamin folic acid is very light sensitive, and breaks down while circulating in capillaries beneath the skin. But pregnant women require folic acid for their babies' brains to grow. The melanin pigment in dark skin is a natural sunscreen protecting folic acid. When the African ancestors of modern Asians and Europeans moved to northern climates, dark skin pigment interfered with making vitamin D, which requires sunlight. Vitamin D is needed for strong bones and its absence causes rickets. So mutations decreasing skin melanin were favored. Geographically dependent human variations are few in number and all depend on disease, diet, or climate; these differences are truly skin deep.

Another example of selection for particular gene variations: In areas where water stagnates and mosquitoes multiply, malaria develops. So gene variations that cause some sickling of red blood cells, a process that prevents malaria from overpowering the body, flourish. People who inherit or develop sickle trait (one allele for sickling) are protected from malaria and more of them survive to have children. Unfortunately those who inherit two alleles for sickling get sickle cell anemia and suffer their whole lives from one sickle crisis after another. None of this has anything to do with "race." Rather it has to do with natural selection in particular environments.

RACISM AS A GLOBAL PHENOMENON

Racism is not just a U.S. problem. As capitalist empires have grown and developed, the honing of racist ideology and practice in the Americas have provided ready tools for exploiters throughout the globe. African, Turkish and Latin American immigrants face horrific conditions in European nations where neo-Nazis prowl the streets. The fear of assault is constant. Perhaps most distressing (considering the monumental sacrifices made by Soviet workers to smash the Nazis) is the spread of this type of organized fascism to Russia as well. The genesis and perfection of racism lies squarely at the feet of capitalism. Before Nazism, South African apartheid, or Israeli dominance over Palestinians appeared on the world stage, racist theories, practices, and institutions were invented and developed by capitalist empires as they conquered and exploited workers all over the planet. Today, U.S. popular culture continues to supply the world with some of its most sophisticated racist ideology, extending such global racist crimes as those of the Belgian ruling class in the Congo, the Portuguese rulers in the slave trade hundreds of years before that, Nazi and South African genocide, and Israel's self-promotion as a "Jewish State"—resting on Palestinian oppression. The defeat of capitalism is the necessary precondition for the defeat of racism worldwide.

II. U.S. RACISM TODAY

Racism is not a transgression from a past story on which we must "turn a new page" as Barack Obama has intoned. Rather it is continually revised and updated, given new life by a bourgeoisie bent on preserving their class rule. We now turn our efforts to demonstrate the broad outlines of this process.

SUPEREXPLOITATION

Superexploitation is the crucial word that distinguishes a Marxist analysis of racism. Capitalism exploits all workers, but it exploits workers of color more viciously and has done so historically and globally. This super-exploitation has an economic foundation. The profits generated by lower pay for black and Latino workers in the US alone amount to one-third of all

corporate profits, and the disunity and weakness of the working class as a result of racist divisions accounts for much more.⁷

A Google search reveals that while from July 2007 to July 2008 unemployment figures among white workers moved from 4.3% to 5.1% the figures for black workers in the same time period rose from 8.9% to 9.7%. Additionally the gap between white and black family income has increased, rather than decreased since the 1970s. Racism is getting worse, not better! “In 2004 a typical black family had an income that was only 58% of a typical white family’s. In 1974 median black incomes were 63% of those of white families” (Associated Press, 11/13/07). Poverty rates across the white, Latino and Black sectors of the population not only mirror this racism but indicate an intensifying racism. Plenty of other evidence fills out the picture. For instance, 75.8% of whites own their own home, compared to only 47.9% of blacks. One of the most shocking statistics involves net wealth – the difference between the value of family assets and what they owe. This is different from annual income. In 2000, the median net worth of white households averaged \$67,000, ten times the median net worth of black households, \$6,166.

The litany of abuse goes on and on. Sociologists sometimes split up society into five chunks of 20% (quintiles) in order to make broad comparisons (see illustration below). Forty-five percent of black children whose parents were middle class in 1968—a stratum with a median income of \$55,600 in inflation-adjusted dollars—grew up to be among the lowest fifth of the nations earners, with a median family income of \$23,100. 16% of whites, one in every six, experienced similar downward mobility. At the same time, an eye-popping 48% of black children whose parents were in the second quintile—an economic bracket with a median family income of \$41,700—sank into the lowest income group.

7 In 2003, each full-time African American worker earned, on average, \$7,362 less than his or her white counterpart and each Latino, \$10,220 less. Multiplying by the number of Black full-timers (11,887,000) and Latino full-timers (13,634,000) yields a total of \$226.8 billion out of after-tax profits of \$693.7 billion. This calculation only scratches the surface of economic disparities, but illustrates the power of racist superexploitation at its simplest formulation. This statistic is based on a simple formula, regarding full-time workers: $\{[(\text{Median White income} - \text{Median Black income}) \times (\text{Number of Black workers})] + [(\text{Median White income} - \text{Median Latino income}) \times (\text{Number of Latino workers})]\} / \text{Total business profits, after taxes.}$

What we have, then is downward mobility—the exact opposite of the “American Dream”—for masses of black youth and those at the bottom are kept there: 54% of black children born into the bottom income quintile stay there, compared to 31% of white children.

US Income Quintiles, 2007 (Census Bureau)
\$90,000 +
\$60,000-\$90,000
\$38,000-\$60,000
\$20,000-\$38,000
\$0-\$20,000

Racist ideology today serves the same purpose today that it did for the planter elite in Virginia hundreds of years ago. It opens the entire working class to intensified exploitation on all fronts as it weakens our capacity to unite and smash our common enemy—the capitalists. Racist inequalities and ideology are woven into society and create institutions, including systems of education and scholarship, criminal justice, and employment standards that reproduce and justify superexploitation at every level in society.

The Marxist recognition of superexploitation stands in stark contrast to the liberal line of “discrimination.” Discrimination implies an imperfection in need of reform. Superexploitation implies a reality so integral to capitalism that only revolution can solve it, and when combined with communist consciousness, superexploitation creates capitalism’s most fearsome gravediggers. The superexploited worker has the most to gain from communist revolution. Black and Latino workers are concentrated in the key areas of industry and the military. Black and Latino workers, soldiers, and youth can lead the entire working class to bring urban centers to a standstill given the proper organization. Our party seeks to provide just that organization as we fight for working class political power.

RACIST POLICE BRUTALITY AND THE CRIMINAL (IN)JUSTICE SYSTEM: STATE TERROR TO PRESERVE CAPITALISM

Policing as an institution in the US dates back to slave patrols, citizen militias on the frontier that launched raids on Native American villages, and state-sponsored gangsterism in the major cities to keep immigrant workers in line. Police today carry on this role of controlling the masses through terror and intimidation. Some workers believe the ruling class propaganda in shows like “Law and Order” that the police, the courts, and the prisons

2005 rebellions in France

The 2005 rebellions in France, which continued to simmer in 2007, demonstrated the opportunities for revolutionary action by a united working class if only the racist divisions between native and immigrant workers can be overcome. In hundreds of cities throughout France, the super-exploited immigrant youth, mainly Arab and North African, rebelled in the thousands against authorities, attacking police stations and other symbols and centers of capitalist authority. The French ruling class didn't know how to react. The Interior Minister (and now Prime Minister Sarkozy) branded the rebels "thugs", the same term used by the U.S. ruling class to describe black and Latin rebels, and finally after two weeks of unchecked rebellion, mobilized the paramilitary police force (the CRS) to violently suppress the rebellion. At the same time that this violent anti-government uprising was spreading throughout France, transport workers went on strike. The French government attacked the strikers for furthering the instability in France, and used the rebellion as a wedge against the strikers. The labor leaders, unfortunately, failed to ally with the young rebels, either joining in the general racist attack on them or dismissing them as irrelevant to the workers' struggle. Even supposed leftwing organizations did little to advocate unity between organized industrial workers and the youthful rebels. And so an opportunity to develop a united working class was lost due to well-cultivated racist sentiment among the workers' leadership and even among some rank and file workers. The exception was in Marseilles, where there has been a long history of multi-

ethnic unity, and the youthful rebels weresomewhat united with the strikers. But Marseilles was the exception.



defend the population as a whole. The ruling class must control the working class, and it prefers deceiving the masses about the criminal justice system when it can get away with this lie. But while the ideological defense of the criminal justice system is non-stop, policing remains startlingly racist and constitutes another aspect of superexploitation. This brutality also aims to terrorize any worker who dares to intensify struggle against the ruling class.

A vivid case in point was demonstrated during the 1960s when tens of thousands of cops were used to gun down, beat, arrest, and intimidate millions of urban workers who rebelled in the cities against racist oppression. Even the military was brought in to regain control. This 20th century brutality was honed in the early 19th century practice of slave patrols, the semi-official KKK nightriders, and the Pinkertons' organized murder of strikers in the period of heightened class struggle and industrialization between the Civil War and World War I.

The main reason for harsh, racist, imprisonment is political intimidation of the working class and a reinforcement of racist oppression and ideology. Jail time pulls potential fighters and leaders of anti-racist struggle out of the most oppressed communities. The "War on Drugs" was largely aimed precisely at incarcerating thousands of young black men who might otherwise become a force for change. The War on Drugs weakened communities that historically have resisted exploitation in many ways.

The extra profit made by the capitalists from prison slave labor is frosting on the capitalist cake. A booming and lucrative prison-industrial complex that involves both government and private-run prisons exploit cheap prison labor to generate superprofits for private industries while depressing the wages of "free" labor.

U.S. bosses, unable to provide youth (especially black and Latin youth) with decent jobs, either entice them into the military or drive them into prison where they are "hired" at slave "wages." There they become part of the inmate population making products that undersell those made outside the walls, leading to thousands of layoffs and the lowering of the overall wage scales of the entire working class.

Today, hundreds of thousands of prisoners, possibly even half a million — over two-thirds of whom are black and Latino — are being forced to work for as little as 20¢ an hour, some as low as 75¢ a day! They produce commodities including clothing, eyewear, furniture, electronic cable assemblies, aircraft

The Racist Prison-Industrial Complex

- There are now over 2,000,000 inmates in U.S. prisons and jails.
- The U.S. has incarcerated more people than any other nation, a half million more than China, which has over four times the population of the U.S.
- California alone has over 160,000 inmates—more than France, Germany, Great Britain, Japan and the Netherlands combined. These five countries have a total population eleven times that of California.
- Seventy percent of all prisoners in the U.S. are black or Hispanic. One of every four black men in the U.S. is likely to be imprisoned at some time during his lifetime.
- Black men are imprisoned at more than four times the rate of black men in South Africa, where they constitute 75% of the male population!
- US rulers have “welcomed” Hispanics to the US by plugging them into this racist prison system as are the fastest growing sector of the prison population, having increased from 7% in 1980 to 14% in 1992 to 20% currently.
- Slave-labor prison “jobs” at twenty to seventy-five cents a day offer US bosses a way to compete with the most exploited workers in the world.



parts, computer circuit boards, mattresses, vehicle parts, and work at printing, data entry, “shrink-wrapping” Microsoft software, meatpacking, and telemarketing. In an era of sharpening economic rivalry the ability of US bosses to subject a captive labor force to China-level wages helps them compete.

Private prisons are the fastest-growing sector of the prison-industrial complex. There are 18 such corporations guarding 100,000 prisoners in 27 states; the stocks of some of the largest private prisons, such as Corrections Corporation of America (CCA) and Wackenhut, are publicly traded on Wall Street every day.

The racist police state engenders a deep and implacable hatred for the class enemy among black and Latino youth. The black and Latino youth who join the military often carry this hatred with them and the rulers find themselves in another risky situation: the same youth they oppress so viciously are among the ones the rulers must arm in service of U.S. imperialism. They can become the leaders of our red working class army, and, like their predecessors in Vietnam, lead thousands of GIs in rebelling against imperialism. But the rulers are working hard to win these youth to carry out the orders of the imperialists in the Middle East. A key role of the party is to build internationalist and revolutionary consciousness among all youth who are being drawn into the military, especially among black and Latino youth so that imperialist war can be turned into class war for communism and an end to racism.

CAPITALISM’S RACIST HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE SYSTEMS

Karl Marx revealed the essence of the bourgeoisie’s approach to public health when he discovered the law of surplus value. Workers produce all value yet receive what Marx termed “subsistence pay”: just enough to keep the worker alive and well enough to come to work the next day and to produce the next generation of workers. The limited health care under capitalism is part of this “subsistence” with vast sectors of the working class – especially black and Latino workers – relegated to a “reserve worker” status, and hence (from the cold capitalist viewpoint) needing less health care than others. In short, superexploitation includes racial health disparities.

A few facts and figures paint a damning picture of US racism. Black men, on average, live 6.3 fewer years than white men, and the difference for black women is 4.5 years. Meanwhile black infant mortality rates are double the

white rates while blacks also suffer higher rates of diabetes-related mortality (60%), cardiovascular mortality (30%) and cancer mortality (25%) than whites.

The availability and distribution of health services is extremely uneven, not only within the U.S. but around the world. Most rural areas and inner cities have limited access to modern health care. What primarily determines access, as with all other aspects of capitalism, is not need or even proximity of facilities, but rather ability to pay.

Just as with the wage scales discussed above, when health conditions for black and Latino workers worsen, so too do the health conditions for white workers. It's not as if there's a fixed amount of health care that is rationed so that whites get what blacks don't – rather, given capitalist motivations to reduce health care to the lowest level for all while allowing the working class to survive enough to keep capitalist profits rolling in, racist attacks on health care pave the way for general reductions in health care for the entire working class. The bosses' closure of public hospitals in Los Angeles and Chicago and similar threats nationwide are good examples of how racist cuts damage access to care for white workers as well as workers of color.

Access to even rudimentary health care is a challenge for about 50 million people in the U.S. (disproportionately black and Latino--especially immigrants) who lack health insurance. This shameful condition is due in part to the destruction of employment-based health care for current and retired workers, along with draconian cuts in hospital services and unaffordable prescription medicines.

Health levels goes well beyond the delivery of health services, however. Among the most serious aspects of racist health disparities is the exposure of black workers to the sickening conditions of poverty, stress, and environmental dangers, which lead to unequal mortality and morbidity even when access to care is available. Segregation of urban blacks in distressed neighborhoods often means that healthy and nutritious foods are simply not locally available, and fast food and processed food, high in salt, sugar, and unhealthy fat are the only items readily and easily available. Impoverished neighborhoods likewise result in unsafe neighborhoods, leading to high levels of homicide and injury. These factors have all caused an epidemic of obesity and other health declines for much of the population, producing racist epidemics of heart disease, diabetes, homicide, and other deadly conditions. The current crisis of capitalism associated with the relative decline of U.S.

imperialism in the world is making the environment we live in increasingly sickening and dangerous, unleashing epidemics. Among the most insidious is the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

HIV/AIDS

Among the most racist assaults by imperialism is the AIDS epidemic in Africa and its parallel epidemic in many U.S. cities. This disease can be prevented, and its symptoms held off for many years by proper public health, education and treatment. Yet drug companies and indifferent African ruling classes conspire to do little about this modern plague.

At the end of 2007, 33 million people throughout the world lived with HIV/AIDS, of whom 22.5 million are in sub-Saharan Africa. 5 million live in Asia, primarily India and Thailand, and 2 million in Latin America and the Caribbean. If current trends continue, nearly all these people will die within 10 years, and the eventual toll will exceed all deaths in 20th century wars. Thirty million African orphans are predicted by 2010. Women are hit hardest: 58% of all HIV-infected African adults are women and 75% of infected youths are girls. Nearly 30% of pregnant women at South African prenatal clinics have HIV.

The enormity of this genocide must be grasped. The AIDS crisis is among the greatest calamities confronting the international working class today. AIDS preys on those least able to resist it--those who reside in lands most completely ravaged by racism and imperialism. Observers who charge that HIV/AIDS is spread by racism and poverty, not individual choices, are on the right track. In the U.S., where a million people live with HIV/AIDS, the disease is concentrated in black and Hispanic communities: 49% of those diagnosed with AIDS in 2003 were African American and 20% were Hispanic. The AIDS rate for African Americans is over ten times that of whites. African American women in 2003 represented 67% of new AIDS cases among U.S. women. The failure to prevent this holocaust and to save its victims will be reckoned one of capitalism's greatest crimes and is inextricably tied to racism.

PUBLIC EDUCATION AND RACISM

No set of institutions does more to entrench racist ideology among workers than the school system, which is a very big statement considering the tsunami of hackneyed trash produced yearly by the Hollywood/entertainment

apparatus.

And over fifty years after the Supreme Court’s *Brown v. Board of education* decision US schools are growing more segregated and doing a terrible job of educating nearly everyone—especially black and Latino youth. Paul Street’s *Segregated Schools* has revealed that the percentage of black public school students in the Northeast US who attend highly segregated schools (defined as having from 0%-10% white students) rose from 49.8% in 1991 to 51.2% in 2001. In the Midwest the figures are 39.9% in 1991 and 46.8% in 2001. In 2000 54% of black public school students in Chicago attended schools that did not have a single white student enrolled, 274 schools were 90% or more black and 173 of those schools, 30% of all Chicago public schools, were 100% black.

These patterns of segregation lay the groundwork for all manner of attacks on black and Latino youth, from fascistic policing of schools to underfunding.

School District	% White	Median Household Income	Per-student spending
Lake Forest (Affluent Suburb)	94	\$136,142	\$20,000
Harvey (Working class Black/Latino Suburb)	7	\$31,958	\$7621

Again, a case from the Chicago area:

Free public education and its myth of meritocracy allow the capitalist class to pretend that anybody can make it in America. If you don’t succeed it must be your fault, since we all had an equal chance, right? When combined with the pervasive racism of American political discourse, this insidious argument takes on fascist proportions. The conclusion that flows from this line of reasoning is that there must be “something wrong” with all these black and Latino families who are “dragging down” achievement in our school systems. This kind of thinking lays the basis for at best ignoring the resource needs of public schools and at worst justifying a militarized and repressive atmosphere that insures poor educational results for working class children, especially black and Latino children.

The bourgeois press calls the discrepancy between black and Latino

students and their white counterparts on standardized tests an “achievement gap.” This gap is no surprise, and has two competing bourgeois and racist explanations. One says that something is wrong with the culture or the genes of these black and Latino families and that it is therefore a waste to put more money into trying to improve education where these families live. Harvard University professor, Howard Gardner, for example, has a theory of “multiple intelligences” that recycles the old lie that “some people” simply “can’t learn” complex mathematical, scientific or literary material.

Droves of young teachers have been taken in by Gardner’s theory and unwittingly have signed on to Harvard’s latest foray into racist biological determinism. Many of these young teachers quit teaching after just a few years, hating racism and knowing that their students deserve more. Others acquiesce and settle for handing out markers and poster paper to teenagers whose spelling they will not correct, or what’s worse, who will just draw how they “feel” about a mathematical, historical, literary or scientific problem. And so the “achievement gap” becomes insurmountable.

The second response to the “achievement gap” says that nothing is inherently wrong with black and Latino children—it’s their parents that are the problem. What these children need, according to this argument, are reformed schools that will immerse them more fully in white middle class habits and curriculum and wash away the bad habits they bring from home. This liberal racist view underlies today’s movement towards charter schools, school vouchers, and private schools and away from attacking the fundamental role of education in the U.S.—reinforcing capitalist inequalities. The Gates Foundation with many collaborators has even argued in favor of a system that ends universal schooling at the 10th grade and creating a far more fragmented and stratified class schooling system than exists today.⁸

School reform efforts today do not challenge the fundamental capitalist character of the schools, nor do they challenge the pro-capitalist content of the curriculum. Regardless of the reform, the school system, however modified, will still serve the function of ideologically reproducing capitalist individualist thinking. Therefore, it is vital that communist teachers and staff work overtime at introducing revolutionary ideas and practices into their lessons and activities in the schools to win these youth to a revolutionary

8 National Center on Education and the Economy, *Tough Choices or Tough Times: the Report of the New Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce*, 2007.

outlook and to guiding other teachers, parent, and students away from reform schemes that ultimately deepen racist oppression. Anti-racists in the schools must lead fights against racist cutbacks and militarization of schools. We don't want a more effective indoctrination of our youth in the values of individualist meritocracy and imperialism. We do want our youth to know history, both of the world and of the communist movement, should they be called upon to serve as fighters for and guardians of revolution. They must learn math and science to defeat the man-made and natural plagues that capitalism has unleashed on their class and rebuild a war-torn world. They must master languages so that they may capture the urgency and beauty and power of our vision in words that will grip our class with the necessity for revolutionary action. These goals are impossible to achieve systematically in the capitalist schoolroom. Our goal of communist revolution will make the world into a classroom where education is a lifelong pursuit and the youth will lead the way. This is a communist vision of working class, anti-racist education.

RACISM AND HOUSING

During slavery, slave families lived in rude, one-room slave quarters with dirt floors and no stove for heating. Rural housing during the sharecropping period was scarcely better, since most of their crops went to the landowners through various tricks, deceptions, and violence, both official and unofficial. Even today in many parts of the U.S., particularly in the rural South and for migrant farm workers all over the U.S., similarly meager and oppressive housing conditions are the norm.

With the migration to the cities, working class housing especially for black families continued to be poor. Rigid racial segregation allocated the worst housing in the least desirable land to African Americans. As the saying went, if you were looking for the black community, look downwind and downhill. As the Katrina-related flood demonstrated, black communities in such low-lying areas as the lower 9th Ward and Mid City were devastated even more than other areas because the flood waters – which seek their own level – were far deeper in black areas than in the rest of the area. But Katrina also illustrates that racism leads to devastation for white workers as well. Racist neglect of the levees on Lake Pontchartrain allowed the flood to engulf hundreds of thousands of white working class homes as well.

Public housing, beginning in the 1930s, has had a similar racist history,

with frequent exclusion and segregation of African Americans in the early years and, as public housing deteriorated, federal and city agencies concentrated neglect and poverty.⁹

The Civil Rights movement produced the Fair Housing Act of 1968 that for the first time allowed blacks to purchase homes in previously white-only areas. Many blacks, especially from the emerging middle class moved to the suburbs where they often gained somewhat better housing. But low income prevented the majority of blacks from enjoying this new opportunity, and the increasing concentration of poverty in black neighborhoods created some of the most challenging living arrangements for black workers. Today, as many affluent whites (and blacks) are returning to city neighborhoods (often called gentrification), these working class communities are being forced out to now-deteriorated inner suburban neighborhoods. Predatory lending has added insult to injury. Those blacks have been forced to pay higher rates for their mortgages and in some cases have lost their homes due to outright criminal behavior by lenders.

Far worse than substandard housing, however, is complete homelessness. Perhaps more than any other oppressive feature of capitalism, homelessness is the most visible proof that capitalism is a system that simply cannot provide the necessities of life for the working class as a whole. The rate of homelessness for black people in the U.S. and for darker skinned peoples around the world is far greater than for whites.

For the capitalist class, housing for workers is a source of profit through interest on loans. By keeping wages low through racist pay differences, capitalists keep decent housing unaffordable for many families, in fact creating a market for substandard housing since so many workers can't afford anything better, while segregating workers into separate neighborhoods, undermining working class solidarity and fostering racial distrust instead. In 2007, this underlying pattern of racism in housing reached a new peak with the subprime lending crisis, which hit black and Latino first-time homebuyers extremely hard, accounting for a disproportionate share of the more than 2 million subprime borrowers. Citicorp and other financial parasites have gorged themselves by extracting every extra dollar they can get out of the predatory lending practices of Countrywide and their ilk.

9 M. Coulibaly, R. Green, & D. James, *Segregation in Federally Subsidized Low-Income Housing in the United States*, Westport, CT: Praeger publishers, 1998.

RACISM, BORDERS AND IMMIGRATION

Borders define the boundaries between different capitalist powers, and artificially separate workers from each other. Like all borders, the US-Mexico border is in no way natural and is simply the result of capitalist conquest through war. A brief history is instructive.

The indigenous inhabitants of today's Southwest US who survived the ravages of smallpox and other diseases in the 1500s were forced to "share" the land they lived on with Spanish speaking settlers. Slavery's expansion from Virginia and the Carolinas across Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana in the early nineteenth century made Texas and the rest of the Southwest the next logical target for the southern planter oligarchy. Racist anti-Mexican hysteria stirred up by U.S. capitalists and their newspapers in the 1840s gripped the nation and gave moral cover for a land grab that stretched from Texas to California. As the U.S. economy grew after the Civil War, Mexican and later a wider stream of Latin American workers began flowing to the United in a constant and accelerating movement of people.

Mexican workers arrived in a racist society. From the 19th century until today, workers born in Mexico receive lower pay and constitute a uniquely captive labor market due to immigration laws such as the "bracero" programs of the 1950s aimed at providing cheap, vulnerable labor to work in the fields and factories of the Southwest, from Texas to California. Today's immigration debate is merely an extension of this effort to provide a tightly controlled labor supply for these industries. Farm workers absorb pesticides that deform their babies and give them cancer. Meat packers lose fingers only to have their cynical bosses blame them for carelessness. Garment workers are threatened with deportation if they organize. And immigrant workers are denied pay when bosses call on the Migra (ICE) to deport them just before payday. The summer of 2008 saw a sharp intensification of such fascist attacks in Iowa and Mississippi to name just two. Latino workers today represent the fastest growing workforce in the fastest growing area of U.S. industry—non-union subcontracting plants that supply corporate giants such as Boeing and General Motors with parts produced by workers to whom no benefits and minimal wages are granted.

US rulers have a very precise sense of the kind of "contribution" Latino workers can make to the imperialist project, and the DREAM Act under discussion in Congress makes it clear that industrial production isn't enough. This act provides for rapid citizenship for immigrants willing to join the

U.S. armed forces that have been severely depleted through recent wars in the Middle East. It is beyond dispute that the numbers of black volunteers for the military has plummeted since the Iraq war began in 2003. The Latino recruits the DREAM act is after will be used as cannon fodder in U.S. imperialists attempt to secure U.S. control of Middle East oil and maintain U.S. hegemony throughout the world. At the same time, the DREAM Act places significant financial burdens on immigrants seeking to work and receive legal status in the U.S.

The ruling class is also working overtime to build tension and hostility between black and Latino workers, just as it has done for decades between black and white workers, thus crippling the working class's potential for a unified struggle against racism and capitalism. The fascist Minuteman organization, which apes the old KKK and is dedicated to chasing out immigrants in the U.S., has actually won some black supporters because



of the illusion that Latinos are taking away black jobs. The capitalists are constantly seeking ways to reduce labor costs, and immigration is merely one more way of doing this.

“Migrant Rights Movement” – Danger and Opportunity

In response to a particularly nasty round of laws proposed by Congress, demonstrators poured out in millions in opposition to racism. A May 1st 2006 boycott of work, school and spending was the biggest May Day event in the United States since the Second World War. Things are changing, but are things looking up?

Since Vietnam War mass murderer John McCain told us to keep on marching, maybe we should think twice--not about staying home, but about what workers are marching for. This “Migrants Rights Movement,” as some have dubbed it, represents the largest outpouring of pro-US political sentiment since Bush squandered the post-9/11 patriotism US rulers held so dear with his bungling, inept yet still vicious and deadly Iraq war.

The Minutemen have yet to organize a coordinated series of pro-America demonstrations of this scale. Minuteman types are useful to the bourgeoisie, but their utility pales in comparison to the millions of new bodies liberal US capital sees inching closer to being ground up in the industrial and military wheels of US imperialism. The smartest of the bosses are salivating over these Latino workers and their children.

Millions of Latinos are being won to some pretty bad ideas. “None of the 9/11 hijackers were named Martinez, Lozada, or Colon but brave young soldiers returning from Iraq are named Martinez, Lozada and Colon,” boasted one speaker at an LA rally. Alarm bells should be going off in the minds of anti-imperialist workers around the world.

Latino pundits squawk on FOX News about becoming a new “model minority” occupying some strange nether-world between blacks and Asian Americans on the scale of bourgeois “socio-economic status.” This is dangerous ideology!

The “green card” millions are after is really a ticket to updated indentured servitude and military service. The fact that this may be better than the life back home in their native lands must fuel the fires of hatred for US imperialism. Many know but perhaps forget how US imperialism has raped the lands of their birth. Communists must find a way to tap into the internationalism that smolders deep inside these workers and causes them to take up our chant, “Las luchas obreras no tienen fronteras” (the struggles of the workers know no borders”) whenever we raise it.

ANTI-ARAB RACISM: KEY TO “SUCCESS” IN OIL WAR

Because wars are so wrenching to the working class--with so many killed, injured, put in harm's way, wrecked mentally and emotionally--ruling classes must use lies and myths to promote them. Racism is a powerful tool. Demonizing the enemy, considering their people less than human, has been an important ideological tactic.

During the Korean and Vietnam Wars, Americans were told that Asians had no regard for human life, and so could be butchered like so many animals. The Nazi war machine worked the same racist “magic” to field the most dangerous capitalist military in history. German and US racist ideology was no match for the internationalist ideology that motivated the Soviet and Vietnamese people in their struggles against imperialism. Despite their weaknesses related to nationalism, these communist-led armies dealt stunning defeats to the supposedly most advanced military machines of their day. Mass heroism moved entire societies, and this heroism was inspired by anti-racism and internationalism. The monumental achievements of these red-led armies prove that anti-racism can match and defeat the forces of fascism and imperialism blow for blow.

Today, racist myths abound about Arabs and Muslims and some U.S. soldiers willingly carry out wanton slaughter in Iraq and Afghanistan. A powerful foundation for these racist ideas and actions by US forces has been the half-century of Israeli oppression and demonization of the Palestinian Arabs. With the full backing of the U.S. ruling class and government, Israel has stripped the Palestinian workers of their land, their jobs, and their dignity in a manner that recalls the systematic destruction of Indian tribes in U.S. history and the rigid segregation and oppression of Africans under apartheid in South Africa. Now Israel is building a wall to cut off Palestinians from their homes and their access to jobs, just like the fence the U.S. is building on its southern border!

Anti-Arab racism makes possible the dehumanization of prisoners at Abu Ghraib and the collective punishment at Fallujah. Veterans of the Iraq war tell how the chain of command consistently dehumanize Arabs by calling them “hajjis” just like the chain of command called Vietnamese “gooks”.

Unfortunately, many of those resisting US imperialism have been won over to their own narrow forms of nationalism rather than to multi-racial international unity against capitalism. In the case of Bin-Laden and Al Qaida, their own brand of out-and-out racism sanctions terrorist attacks against non-Muslims as well as Muslims who dissent from their version of

Islam. Iraq itself has deteriorated into a land poisoned by racist ideas setting Sunnis against Shiites. The divisions among the Iraqi people serve the needs of capitalist classes, both in the US and locally. Imagine for a second the situation for the US in Iraq if a unified movement such as the one it faced in Vietnam was afoot. Any drop off in violence in 2007 should be chalked up to the fact that it took several years of ethnic cleansing to rip apart Iraq's many integrated Sunni/Shia neighborhoods. This forced segregation of Iraqi society can only serve the interests of capitalist classes in Shia Iran, Sunni Saudi Arabia and of course for the US imperialists overall, and may well be but a lull or a prelude to more deadly civil wars and invasions that will engulf the greater Middle East.

After 9/11, dehumanization of the Arab people on the part of US policy makers and the US media led to increased violence against Arab-Americans in the US. Mosques have been vandalized and people have been attacked. Many Latinos and South Asian people have been attacked by confused racists who thought they were attacking Arabs.

But the worst crime of all has been that the racism perpetuated by the US ruling class has blinded the American people to the extreme suffering going on in the Arab world at the hands of US imperialists. Since 1991, when the United States first went to war against Iraq, over 2 million Iraqis have died from this aggression. This includes over 100,000 Iraqi troops killed by the US military in 1991 (many as they were in retreat, burned alive by US firebombs, and in some cases buried alive by huge U.S. earthmoving machines) and more than 1.5 million Iraqi civilians (500,000 of them children) who died as a result of the 12 years of bombing operations and economic sanctions. Since 2003 over 650,000 Iraqi civilians have died (compared to 4,000+ U.S. troops). In the US war against Iraq—whether during the administration of Bush I, Clinton or Bush II—the US has targeted the facilities necessary for daily life, including sanitation and irrigation facilities, the electrical system, food processing plants and in at least one case a hospital. It has destroyed entire cities (most dramatically the city of Fallujah) with bombs, leaving thousands homeless in order to “protect” them.

GIs in theaters of war have a tremendous opportunity to deal a blow to US imperialism by building the anti-racist movement. GIs must make opposing anti-Arab racism the core of their organizing against the war. This internationalist posture and militant action around it could effectively hobble the war makers.

In and out of uniform, workers must not turn a blind eye to the racism that

perpetuates the U.S. war machine. The workers of the Middle East are not “backwards” people” in need of “democracy” brought by US thugs! Arab and Muslim workers need communism just as badly as the rest of us. Workers in the US have a greater objective connection to the working people of Iraq than we do to the billionaires that instigate and perpetuate these imperialist wars. As we defeat racism by joining hands with Arab workers and other oppressed ethnic workers we will open the phase of struggle where smashing imperialism and ending the wars that take so many of our friends and family members becomes the order of the day.

Fascism, War and Racism

For the past 30 years or so, world-wide capitalism has been racked by intensifying crises. In fact, capitalism is mired in a general, increasing, socioeconomic crisis. These crises are driving the dominant contradiction in the world today, which is one of sharpening inter-imperialist rivalry (between China, U.S., Japan, Russia and Europe). As the socioeconomic crises and inter-imperialist rivalry become severe, fascism develops.

Fascism is increased terror and attacks on workers, youth and professionals because monopoly capitalism is in crisis. The growth of fascism means ruling class capitalists using state power to increase control over other capitalists, restriction of civil liberties (e.g., the Patriot Act), crushing working class dissent, increased racist police terror and increased racism. A central feature of fascism is the transformation of society to serve the imperialist power and its preparation for war.

The U.S. ruling class has fostered racist attitudes toward foreigners to justify its imperialist wars from the Vietnam war to the Iraq war today. In particular, today, the U.S. ruling class uses racist ideas to portray all Muslims as terrorists and dehumanize them in order to win U.S. soldiers to kill them in the Middle East or Central Asia. In order to justify the disproportionate imprisonment of black and Latin men, racist ideas are used to portray them as violent and lazy. In the 1930s, the German ruling class was able to win support for fascism and imperialist war by winning middle class and working class people to believe racist ideas of Jewish and non-German inferiority. The ruling class convinced workers to blame other workers for the problems of capitalism. Ultimately, the German ruling class used racism and nationalism to win ideological support for mass murder, genocide and war throughout Europe.

III. THE FIGHT AGAINST RACISM

Oppression breeds resistance. The fight against racism is as old as racism itself. Slave revolts, the Underground Railroad, united action by black slave and white bondservants, abolitionism, civil war, and today's continuing struggle have attacked racism in the U.S. since the 17th century.

Bold uprisings planned by Nat Turner, Denmark Vesey, Gabriel Prosser, and thousands more directly attacked slavery.¹⁰ Though misguided by various forms of religious, liberal and even racist notions, the early abolitionists, black and white, were a courageous minority who risked life and limb to spread their anti-slavery message and organize bold defenses of runaway slaves and militant fighters. Black abolitionists such as David Walker and Nat Turner are relegated to footnotes in the dominant discourse of U.S. history, but their brave actions paved the way for all, and foreshadowed the John Brown/Harriet Tubman multiracial assault on a federal arsenal in Harper's Ferry (West) Virginia which had the initial goal of launching armed struggle in the Shenandoah mountains against slavery.¹¹ Racist leaders like Jefferson and Lincoln pretended to be opponents of racism, but in actuality used anti-slavery sentiment to steer slavery opponents into the colonization movement to send blacks to Africa. Lincoln voted to prevent free blacks from settling in Illinois when he was a legislator there and only promulgated the Emancipation Proclamation as a military tactic in the Civil War to undermine the southern economy. The anti-racist impulse has a proud and largely hidden history, which the Progressive Labor Party and the communist movement continue today.

BLACK NATIONALISM AND COMMUNISM

Black workers have frequently seen communism as the road to liberation. In one of the two graves flanking that of Karl Marx in London's Highgate Cemetery rests Claudia Jones, a Trinidadian Communist. Jones was born in Trinidad and raised in Harlem where she joined the Communist Party USA (CPUSA) and became a leading Communist in the 1930s. Later she

¹⁰ See Herbert Aptheker, *American Negro Slave Revolts*, for a detailed account of these uprisings.

¹¹ Harriett Tubman helped plan the raid and failed to bring her contingent of fighters only because she was bedridden with pneumonia.

was exiled to London under the Smith Act where she spent her last years, a communist until the end.

Capitalist history asserts that communists have failed the black members of the working class. Reactionary black nationalist movements also fervently deny the connection between black people and communism that the Jones-Marx grave symbolizes. Yet the role of communists in the fight against racism has been crucial over and over in the 20th and now the 21st century U.S.

The Bolshevik Revolution in October 1917 helped spark the flames of black working class militancy. In 1919 alone, tens of thousands of black workers inspired by Russia in the Caribbean, the United States and throughout Africa rose up against intensified colonial exploitation, racial repression and lynch law. Black soldiers who returned from fighting in World War I readily joined them. Even Marcus Garvey initially hailed the Bolshevik Revolution as inspirational.

The history of the communist movement's analysis of racism and the strategy for black liberation in the U.S. and for colonized people the world over is filled with contradiction. On the one hand, Marx clearly called for white working class support of the fight against slavery, and in fact members of the Workingmen's Association (the First International) traveled to the United States to help fight slavery in the Civil War. Several of these communists, usually hailing from Germany, became officers leading black regiments against the Confederacy. Marx similarly noted that in order for the English working class to advance, they had to unite with the colonized Irish. At the same time, in the Communist Manifesto, he referred to "barbarian" countries, indicating the limited potential for revolution in "backward" lands. Much of the 19th century Marxist movement focused almost exclusively on Europe, where capitalism had first emerged and which had come to dominate the global economy. The argument made by early Marxists was that such "advanced" nations would be the site of socialist revolution and thus lead the liberation of the entire world. The idea of a "backward peasantry", especially in non-European countries, continued to reverberate in the communist movement.

But in 1913, the European-based world communist movement (the Second International) seemingly disintegrated when the vast majority of the social democratic parties in Europe joined their own bourgeoisies in fighting World War I. Something was wrong with the traditional Marxist theory! V.I. Lenin, Joseph Stalin, Rosa Luxemburg, V.I. other communist leaders

split from the Second International's nationalist perversion of socialism and attempted to restore revolutionary internationalism to the communist movement. This time, these revolutionaries recognized the critical role that the colonized world of subjugated nations and nationalities would play in the revolutionary transformation of the world. Joseph Stalin and V. I. Lenin addressed these issues, called the "national question", in important works calling on international alliances between European workers and the rest of the world's oppressed populations. And yet, while leading to improvements in strategy, even these analyses contained significant errors.

One product in the U.S. of the recognition of the "national question" was the "Black Belt Thesis" developed during the 1920s by black communist Harry Haywood and adopted by the Third International. This analysis argued that a potential "Negro Nation" existed in the six southern states where blacks were the majority. This potential nation had, in principle, the right to secede and create a separate nation. While no significant independence movement for the "Negro Nation" developed, the outcome of this theory for the communist movement in the U.S. was increased attention to all aspects of the superexploitation of black workers, including lynching, Jim Crow, denial of basic rights, as well as oppression in jobs, wages, and working conditions. The CPUSA took up the battle against lynching and Jim Crow and sent organizers to the South to organize black workers in industrial unions and in sharecropper unions in rural areas. Despite these impressive practical actions, the theory underlying this initiative was fundamentally flawed, even though it had the positive effect of making the fight against racism central to communist strategy. Instead of viewing the fight against racism in all of its forms as central to welding a unified working class to overthrow capitalism, the CPUSA offered various intermediate and ultimately reformist solutions.

Where did this weakness in the line of the old movement come from? The genesis of the line that Harry Haywood was expressing was in the inability of the old movement, starting with Marx, to consider the struggles of the laboring people of the colonies in the same light as the struggles of laboring people in Europe. This represents an early form of incorrect, economic determinism. Because industrial capitalism was more advanced in Europe than elsewhere, Marx and Engels (and following them, Lenin, Stalin and the Third International) made the error of thinking that the colonies had to "advance" to full-fledged capitalism ruled by their "own" national bourgeoisies before the fight for socialism would be on their historical

agenda, i.e., before the laboring people of these societies would be open to communist ideas. This line of thinking, in addition to promoting nationalism, also relegated the political and ideological struggles going on in the colonies to a “lower” stage of development in the eyes of communists, especially those in Europe and the US. It resulted in the communist movement not considering the lessons of those struggles on the same plane with the lessons of the struggles of European and North American workers.

As we can now see, with the advent of colonialism, the world’s economies became interconnected and interpenetrating. It does not make sense to say that the economy of England was capitalist, while the economy of its colonies (in effect an extension and integral part of England’s economy) was at a qualitatively different (feudal) stage of development. Just as the textile factories which ground out the lives of workers and their children in England were capitalist, so were the slave plantations in the US that ground out the lives of African workers and their children, and so were the mines in Africa and plantations in Asia. The struggles of the colonial workers (whether “free” labor, slave labor, or a more complicated traditional labor relationship) were just as much a part of the capitalist class struggle as were the struggles of the British textile workers. And yet the understanding of capitalism and how to achieve its eventual overthrow was based on a view that put the struggles of those workers in a qualitatively different category and suggested that their consciousness could not be as rapidly elevated to communist consciousness as that of European workers.

This fundamental error was the basis of Marx’ incorrect expectation that the workers of the then most advanced industrial nation, England, would be the first to throw off the yoke of capital. The Second International’s bankruptcy on the question of revolution that was revealed in its failure to rally around the Bolshevik seizure of power was based in this same error. And we would be naïve if we sought to divorce this error from the virulent racism that dominated mass consciousness in the industrialized imperial centers as they moved from the nineteenth to the twentieth century. The Chinese communists and their realization of the peasantry as a revolutionary force represent, in this connection, a huge advance in the history of the Left.

What lessons have we learned from those struggles? Our Party has said, in part on the basis of the experience of China, that today all the world’s laboring people are part of the working class, that capitalism holds sway world-wide and there is no need any longer to speak of feudal or semi-feudal

relations playing an important role in the development of consciousness.

The “national liberation” struggles of the 1950’s and 1960’s were huge, powerful movements that mobilized millions of workers. The leaders of these movements were ideologically mixed, but in many cases included people who considered themselves communists and were following the incorrect “fight for national liberation” (as opposed to fighting for communism) line of the international communist movement. How would history be different had the old communist movement regarded colonial workers as full-fledged members of the international working class, who, just like the workers of Europe, needed nothing less than workers’ power? These errors held back our class internationally!

Nationalism is an ideology that emerged with and serves capitalism, and only capitalism. Stalin failed to understand that throughout his lifetime, using nationalism rather than the fight for communism as the basis for many of his speeches during World War II. Black nationalism and the nationalism of the national liberation struggles against colonialism are equally bourgeois ideologies. However, it is a bourgeois ideology that was conceived and built in large part by the communist movement!

We can’t turn back history. We do stand on the shoulders of all freedom fighters, including those communists who felt that “national liberation” was a necessary step in the revolutionary process, rather than a direct fight for communism. But we must criticize their errors, for only by having a true understanding of both the successes and failures of our past can we achieve success in the future.

The CPUSA leadership of many black workers in the US offered a bold alternative to various liberal and seemingly militant forms of bourgeois black nationalism, from Marcus Garvey’s UNIA, the NAACP of W.E.B. Du Bois and Walter White, and the Harlem Renaissance. But the CPUSA did not lead the majority of the black masses. Marcus Garvey’s UNIA was targeted by Mitchell Palmer’s anti-communist and racist federal police as a dangerous black political phenomenon. His movement had captured the imagination of thousands of black Americans, but he ultimately was more of a threat to the black workers of Harlem than to the U.S. ruling class. Garvey’s decision to abscond with the hard-earned dues of his membership indicated, in capsule, the essentially bourgeois, individualist and politically bankrupt strategy of his pro-capitalist “Back to Africa” movement worldwide. His betrayal encapsulates what is wrong with nationalism—it is just capitalism

that benefits someone who was born where you were, instead of a capitalist who was born far away.

Despite the limitations of their line, the CPUSA waged a mass campaign to fight lynching (e.g., the Scottsboro case) and organize black workers in the years of the Great Depression from Harlem to Chicago to Birmingham, on the shop floors and in the agricultural fields. The CIO was born out of these struggles and it was the first national union federation to include black workers since the Knights of Labor was smashed back in the 1880s.¹²

By 1935 the Comintern's "Popular Front against Fascism" mobilized black workers in the US and around the world in the international fight against fascism and the domestic battles against racism and colonialism, yet it made the all-important concession that black workers, like other workers, should unite with national bourgeoisies in the fight against fascism rather than building international working class solidarity against all ruling classes. Richard Hart, a pioneering Jamaican communist, asserted that the communist nucleus of the People's National Party of Jamaica made Stalin's position on the "Colonial Question" the cornerstone of its long-term strategy of building socialism in Jamaica. At the close of WWII, Stalin had led the Soviet Union in a victory over the world's most racist dictator and won the unconditional allegiance of black Communists such as Harlem Councilman Ben Davis and acclaimed activist Paul Robeson. But the CPUSA's own mounting commitment to nationalism—black-nationalist "self determination" and later American patriotism—only impeded its fight for communism and compromised its base of support from black workers in particular and more generally the entire working class in the country.

A dramatic example of the bankruptcy of nationalism as a strategy for liberation comes to us from the heroic struggle against apartheid in South Africa. Black nationalists were active alongside communists in the South African Communist Party (SACP) for the whole period of anti-racist struggle in South Africa from the 1960s forward. Communists commanded greater respect and built up the most effective organization of struggle, the African National Congress and its military arm, the Spear of the Nation. But the SACP advocated the theory of "colonialism of a special type" (meaning the particularly vicious nature of white settler colonialism) to justify the

12 Several black unions, especially A. Philip Randolph's Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, were important forces in labor history, but they were not admitted into the American Federation of Labor.

complete separation of the fight for “black majority rule” from the fight for socialism. They were extremely successful, and today workers are paying the price for following this incorrect strategy. With the ANC now in power, CPSA leaders hold offices today in a country where poverty is at least as bad as it was during the dark days of apartheid. What a demonstration of the dangers of fighting for a stage of “national liberation”! Black and white communists maintained unbreakable unity in the face of one of the world’s most viciously racist regimes, despite torture, assassination, and repression. This experience should give pause to any who think that unity between black and white workers is impossible. And, at the same time, the CPSA’s embrace of nationalism with its fundamentally unaltered capitalist core demonstrates the error of all forms of reformism and accommodation to capitalism.

Today, black and Latino nationalists in the U.S. continue to advocate a theory of liberation that cannot succeed. Ironically, nationalist strategies were popularized, and implemented by the old communist movement. National liberation has, in every case, led to the consolidation of capitalism. A new generation of communists refuses to make the same mistake.

LIBERALISM AND THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

While black nationalism and communism vied for leadership of the most advanced and militant elements of the anti-racist movement, the civil rights movement and the liberal tradition are the legacy of the more moderate and reformist elements of the anti-racist movement.

The US ruling class had, prior to World War II, actively supported some of the most virulent forms of racism and nativism. Major U.S. industrialists had supported Hitler’s rise to power and looked to Nazism as the antidote to the international sweep of communism with its militant anti-racist character. By the end of World War II, the US ruling class realized that it needed to project a different image of itself overseas if it were to struggle successfully for the allegiances of nations in what the capitalists called the “Third World”. Similarly, it needed to take further steps to co-opt sections of the black population whose anger at their second class position was growing even as their willingness to fight back increased. Many black workers and intellectuals were drawn to the communist movement, and many more were alienated from and distrustful of the ruling class and its government.

Some forward-thinking rulers had commissioned the Myrdal Report in the late 1930s to create greater black patriotic loyalty for the coming war

and to argue against the communist view of the economic basis of racism by focusing on racial attitudes, not superexploitation, as the source of racism. The Myrdal report provided the prescription that the main wing of the ruling class followed, from Harry Truman in the 1940s and 50s through Lyndon Johnson in the 1960s. The Myrdal report also made clear the key dividing line between liberal pro-imperialist Cold War supporters and Paul Robeson, W. E. B. Du Bois, and other internationalists who refused to support imperialism in return for limited civil rights reforms. Purveyors of the Cold War against communism, like those who pursue the Global War on Terror today, are at times willing to make some modest domestic reforms in exchange for total allegiance to imperialist aims. But such a deal with the devil will keep us all in capitalist hell, and never lead to liberation.

The emerging Civil Rights Movement (CRM) induced the liberal, globally-oriented wing of the government and business elites to hedge their racist bets by softly encouraging reformist steps towards less racial hatred and inequality while maintaining high levels of racism so necessary to their profits. The reactionary southern-based capitalists rejected any conciliation however modest, and dug in their heels. The overall heroism of the CRM can never be denied, as organizations with diverse agendas from the communist-led Civil Rights Congress, the religiously based Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and the youthful, bold Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee battled Jim Crow from buses to lunch counters to Selma and the Pettus Bridge. However, the erroneous line of march that these organizations followed led the CRM straight into the hands of the liberal ruling class, disarming a significant portion of the working class in its confrontation with capitalism.

The ruling class enlisted prominent anti-communist African Americans to serve as poster examples of the advances possible for people of color in a nation bent upon overcoming its shameful racist past as part of its strategy to win the emerging insurgent leadership of the post-colonial world away from communism and to lead U.S. blacks onto the electoral path.

For instance, Martin Luther King, Jr. dedicated a good portion of his moving “I’ve Been to the Mountaintop” speech to an effort to distance his movement from communists in Russia and China and to congratulate America on the freedom of speech he had enjoyed over the previous years of political activity. But for him, it was too late. He had spoken out connecting Vietnam to the anti-racist struggle at home and had marched with unionizing

black sanitation workers in Memphis who militantly took on the Memphis bosses. The eleventh hour anti-communist overtures of his speech fell on deaf ears. King was shot the next day on a Memphis hotel balcony (for more on the King assassination refer to William Pepper's *An Act of State*).

Those civil rights leaders who had followed King, including today's Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton, adopted his most accommodationist positions, and have continued to tie anti-racist efforts to reformist illusions about elections, pacifism, and a place at the capitalist table.

MULTICULTURALISM AS RULING-CLASS IDEOLOGY

In the wake of the Civil Rights Movement, and gathering steam in the 1980s, the ruling class encouraged a new initiative--multiculturalism--in education and society at large. Multiculturalism says society should be based on democratic principles of pluralism and inclusion of all self-identified groups, including race/ethnic and gender groups. Multiculturalism (and its parallel concept of "diversity") draws our attention to the ways self-defined groups seem "culturally" different from each other, emphasizing what makes workers different from each other (e.g., musical heritage and taste, different holiday traditions, differences in family structures) rather than what makes them the same -- being wage slaves of capitalism!

Many people who have embraced multiculturalism have done so out of anti-racist motivations. In fact, in part multiculturalism was a response of the antiracist movements of the 1950s-1970s—to such racist notions that "white" equals "beautiful" and "European" equals "civilized." Anti-racist activists who gradually gained positions of influence in education and mass media sought to get past the old racist assumptions and stereotypes and to promote the role of previously ignored or excluded groups in making history. But the ruling class shaped these worthy impulses into tools to keep the working class divided.

Ruling-class forces have cultivated multiculturalism. Multiculturalism obscures class antagonisms. It is passive in the class struggle. It substitutes "celebrating diversity" for multiracial unity in the fight against racism, highlighting cultural iconography, holidays, and music and downplaying vast inequalities and unequal oppression. It highlights successful "role models" for every race and culture, obscuring the truth that ruling classes throughout the world are overwhelmingly "white". Contrary to multicultural thinking, capitalism is still a globalized apartheid system and will remain so until

revolution destroys it. Multiculturalism sneaks patriotism in the back door by venerating the “contributions” of groups neglected by the earlier openly racist and elitist historical narratives about the U.S. Multiculturalism thus suggests that things aren’t so bad in the U.S., they’ve just been overlooked in the past, and that history can be rewritten. Meanwhile, superexploitation thrives in this non-struggle environment.

WHITE SKIN PRIVILEGE: ANOTHER DIVERSIONARY RULING CLASS IDEA

“If you stick a knife in my back nine inches and pull it out six inches, there is no progress. If you pull it all the way out that’s not progress. The progress is healing the wound...and they haven’t even begun to pull the knife out, much less heal the wound. They won’t even admit the knife is there!”

-Malcolm X

Malcolm X was addressing the subject of progress for black people in America in the mid-1960s and not the matter of white skin privilege. But his ideas provide a useful jumping off point on what has become quite a contentious issue, usually on university campuses.

Anti-racist fighters often find efforts to build multiracial unity attacked by the promoters of identity politics and the idea of “white skin privilege (WSP).” WSP promoters build on observable realities of racist superexploitation like those laid out in the first portions of this pamphlet to assert that all whites actually benefit from racism. According to this theory, all whites have “privilege” in the form of wealth (whether the billions of the Rockefellers or the sub-prime mortgage debts of white working-class families) and in the form of the supposed psychological benefit of having a boss or a landlord that “looks” like them. They mistakenly confuse different levels of oppression experienced by racial/ethnic groups with privilege for the less exploited group. If we accept the notion that white coal miners in unsafe mines are privileged, what does that mean? Does it mean that unemployed black youth should aspire to such a future in the battle for equality? Is the Mexican autoworker privileged because he can buy his family plastic slippers for \$1 due to the even sharper exploitation of labor in China? Where does it all end? From New Orleans to Iraq, white workers are feeling the attacks of capitalism. The bourgeoisie has managed to drive the standard of living so low across the board that our notion of what constitutes “privilege” has been

skewed. Put simply, exploitation in any form must not be allowed to parade as privilege.

Promoters of identity politics and WSP insist that reform organizations set up separate caucuses for “people of color” (to build their self-esteem and voice) and for white “allies” (so they can recognize and shed their “white skin privilege”). Yet these actions reinforce separation and suspicion between groups with objectively similar interests, weakening the struggle against racism. WSP ideology must be understood as another divide and rule strategy. The ruling class fears that people will always fight back against oppression, and by promoting identity politics and the notion of “white skin privilege” they are offering workers and students a phony anti-racist agenda that protects rather than challenges the power of the capitalist class. And make no mistake—ruling class foundations such as the Mott Foundation are in the forefront of paying for “white studies” and organizations that “train” other groups in this divisive ideology.

Counteracting the white skin privilege argument can best be done by intensifying the fight on campuses and elsewhere against racism, and by building a worker-student-community alliance. Erroneous theories like WSP grow best in a non-struggle, middle class environment. In struggle, workers are often quick to reject nationalism and separatism and can help students and others see the divisive error of separatism when engaged in struggle against the class enemy, when there is a concrete need for trusting, multi-racial unity against racism and capitalism.



“White Skin Privilege” Theory Blown Away By Katrina

The city of New Orleans, with a pre-Katrina population of nearly 500,000, was about 70% black. Half of the black workers lived below the official poverty line. They sent their children to what the New York Times



called the worst and most corrupt public school system in the country. Their segregated neighborhoods were surrounded by environmental toxins from the petrochemical industry that—along with tourism—dominates the Louisiana economy. The region between New Orleans and Baton Rouge, populated by workers black and white, has come to be known as “cancer alley.”

A key and little-understood feature of racism emerges here. Katrina blew the lid off of the main aspect of racism with its exposure of the segregation and superexploitation of black workers in America. Yet many white workers were also devastated by the storm and its aftermath. Nothing duplicates the horror of the Superdome and the Convention Center in New Orleans but the storm did not skip over the largely white St. Bernard, Jefferson and Tammany Parishes either or the white working class communities along the Mississippi coast like Biloxi. Racism institutes a difference in the level of exploitation the worker experiences not the fact of being exploited and considered expendable by the ruling class. We will return the matter of “white skin privilege” later on but the Katrina episode with its ongoing neglect of all workers in the affected area lays bare the essential weakness of white skin privilege theory as a tool for combating racism.

IV. THE PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY IN THE FIGHT AGAINST RACISM AND CAPITALISM

Bourgeois and revisionist strategies will not defeat racism. PLP emerged in the 1960s as a new strategic force in the fight against racism, building on the strengths of the old communist movement on this question while learning from its many mistaken strategies. Our goal in the following section is to show the modest steps forward that we have made so that we can move the anti-racist struggle to ever higher and more effective levels on the road to communist revolution.¹³

IN THE COMMUNITY: THE HARLEM REBELLION AND POLICE BRUTALITY

Organizations such as the NAACP and the Urban League try to improve living and working conditions for African Americans but do so within the framework of capitalist exploitation that keeps black workers on the treadmill of reform with no fundamental progress. From its inception, PLP sought to break through the reformist framework in the anti-racist struggle. For instance, PLP embraced and strengthened the ghetto rebellions of the 1960s, recognizing the subterranean fire of revolutionary aspirations reflected in these dramatic insurrections, where reformist organizations joined with the ruling class in trying to dampen this militancy.

In July 1964, NYPD cop Thomas Gilligan murdered 15-year-old James Powell, a black Harlem teenager. This vicious racist murder ignited the fuel of longstanding racist oppression in that community. PLP's Harlem branch, which had been agitating in street rallies against police brutality and unemployment for months, immediately swung into action, distributing thousands of posters proclaiming, "Wanted for Murder, Gilligan the Cop." PLP's Harlem storefront was filled with local residents taking stacks of

13 A cautionary note: we have a long way to go before we can hold a candle to the anti-racist movements that inspired men like Nat Turner, John Brown, and Paul Robeson. The Party's historic contribution to the struggle against racism extends this great and proud struggle; there is much to be proud of. But we are not in the business of congratulating ourselves. Much has been required of our predecessors and even more will be required of us and our class in the future to finally put the revolutionary stake through the heart of racism.

leaflets to distribute at the many demonstrations, rallies, and other events supporting the rebellion.

Thousands of CHALLENGES (PLP's newspaper launched only the month before the rebellion erupted) flooded Harlem. Rebels marched through the streets, defying the cops, holding high the paper's front page as their flag. Bill Epton, Harlem PLP chairperson, played a leading role in rallying the community against the racist police. There were many street battles, injuries, and arrests as the rebellion continued over several days. Ultimately, Epton was found guilty of "criminal anarchy" for a fiery speech in which he declared, "We're going to have to kill a lot of cops, a lot of the judges, and we'll have to go against their army."

It was the power of communist leadership in the fight against racism by the fledgling PLP, however, not simply the speech, which terrified the ruling class! All the reformist organizations, including the "Communist" Party, tried to help the rulers extinguish the fires of rebellion. Only PLP supported it and, because of that, was subjected to an injunction barring it from a 45-block north-south area from river to river — the first such ban in the city's history. PLP supported such rebellions throughout that decade and into the early 1970s nationwide, in Detroit, Chicago, Los Angeles and dozens of other cities.

PLP continues to fight against racist police brutality and in support of black rebellions wherever they occur in response to racist super-exploitation and police brutality. We raise each KKKop killing on the job, in the schools and in the barracks as a demonstration of anti-racist working-class solidarity. We push our unions and churches to take a stand against police murder and in so doing open the possibility of showing a wider audience the necessity and benefit of the communist path.

In the same vein we organized a militant march on LAPD headquarters in the midst of the rebellion in Los Angeles that happened after the racist cops who beat Rodney King were acquitted. We travel to places where the fires of class hatred flare up. PLP organizers were warmly greeted by community insurgents in Cincinnati during a 1999 rebellion against police brutality; by angry residents in Toledo who rebelled against police murders in their community; in New York City in 2006 around the fatal shooting of Sean Bell; and in the killings of black and Latino youth in Los Angeles.

The Party's work in tying racism to the horrific effects of Katrina on the workers of New Orleans was notable in the many trips members and friends

made to that city — bringing our revolutionary ideas to those workers; assisting in their efforts to restore their homes and apartments; and fighting the nationalism and racism used to divide black, white, and Latino workers. We showed how capitalism uses years of racism to turn a natural phenomenon into the death and displacement of tens of thousands.

ANTI-RACISM IN THE LABOR MOVEMENT

The Progressive Labor Party struggles in the shops and unions because industrial workers have the economic power and potential political consciousness to be the key force for revolution. Early in the history of our Party we sought to reinvigorate militant multi-racial unity in the labor movement. One particularly bold action was the 1973 wildcat strike that PLP and its Workers Action Movement (WAM) led at Chrysler's Mack Avenue stamping plant in Detroit. Two PLP members — one white, one black — led 200 mostly black workers in stopping the assembly lines over safety issues in the first sit-down strike in auto since the 1930s (which was also led by communists). PLP and WAM organized outside support, bringing food to the workers through plant gates. The action brought 8-column headlines to newspapers as far away as Los Angeles. The ruling class and their junior partners in the auto union leadership so feared that communists would take leadership of these basic industrial workers that they organized 1,000 union officials, including KKK members from UAW Local 22, to violently break the workers' strike!

In other struggles from the 1970s to the 1990s the party led sharp struggles that united construction workers in Wisconsin, hospital workers in Chicago and Philadelphia and aerospace workers in the Seattle area. In recent years, PLP has confronted capitalists' increasingly racist attacks on Latino and African American workers. In Washington, D.C.'s transit system, the bosses have systematically attacked black workers through the steady increase in "wage progression" (i.e., lower wages for new workers for longer time periods) and these workers responded by electing a PLP'er union president. The lengthening of wage progression — the number of years of service needed to achieve the top rate of pay — coincided with the transition of the labor force from all white to majority black. PLP has grown as a new group of young workers have stepped forward to lead battles on the job there. Anti-racist reform battles can, when properly conducted, move workers' consciousness to the left, energize those who have lost hope, and bring to the

masses a glimmer of future revolutionary change.

In California, the struggle against racism was particularly pronounced among agricultural workers. Here the Party espoused militancy as opposed to liberal pacifism in order to advance farmworker union struggles. Similarly, super-exploited garment workers in Los Angeles joined the PLP in substantial numbers, conducting numerous walkouts at small shops and other actions to militantly attack the capitalist exploiters. Here as well our anti-racist orientation on the job is winning respect for, and members to, our Party.

The anti-racist struggles by these predominantly Latino workers have brought the racist super-exploitation of immigrant workers to the forefront. As the rulers have attempted to divide the working class between immigrants and native-born, PLP has led the multi-racial fight for unity under the banner of “Smash All Borders!” Linking the struggle against racism to international unity of our class, PLP has pointed out that anti-immigrant racism is used to lower the wages and conditions of all workers, while terrorizing immigrants with the threat of deportation. We have shown that “borders” and “countries” were created by capitalists through wars to exploit as many workers as they can. PLP’ers have led workers’ battles in LA garment shops against U.S. immigration agents’ raids and prevented some deportations through this aggressive strategy.

More recently, as the bosses have farmed out manufacturing work to non-union subcontractors, which hire many immigrant and black workers at substandard wages, PLP’ers have fought to unite them with white workers in daily battles against the bosses.

Hundreds of PLP students and others joined in the California struggles in the fields and factories during Summer Projects which brought the message of revolutionary struggle to thousands of workers throughout the San Joaquin Valley and the shops of East Los Angeles. In many ways, these Projects steeled Party members in the need for disciplined work, and helped educate youth to the conditions of the most exploited sections of the working class.

FIGHTING RACISM IN THE MILITARY

When the PLP was founded in 1964, the military included both direct draftees and economic draftees (workers forced to enlist due to unemployment and poverty) who were mainly working class and disproportionately black. These black soldiers and sailors frequently led the resistance to the brass and

the Vietnam War.

PLP'ers refused to seek deferments for which they might be eligible and either joined the military or allowed themselves to be drafted to organize against racism and the war. This decision was and remains a thunderclap amid the timid squeaks of pacifism uttered by various groups on the "Left." In the GI movement, PLP fought vigorously against racism towards black soldiers and the Vietnamese people and continues such struggles today within the military as the Iraq War continues.

PLP GIs seek to bridge the gap between black and white GIs in resisting the military and its war. During Vietnam, black soldiers frequently took the lead in attacking the brass (such as during the soldiers' rebellion in Darmstadt, Germany and the sailors' rebellion on board the Kitty Hawk aircraft carrier) and through fragging attacks, using grenades to kill their own officers (such as the one allegedly carried out by GI Billy Dean Smith).

PLP GIs fought hard to defend black rebels against military repression, building multi-racial coalitions against the racist brass. It organized substantial multi-racial, anti-racist actions, especially around the Billy Dean Smith court-martial, with a major demonstration at the Military Court of Appeals in Washington, D.C. Because of these Party-led mass actions and broad mass pressure from antiwar activists, Billy Dean Smith was finally found "not guilty" despite the fact that he may have been one of the thousands of soldiers who had fragged their officers rather than kill their Vietnamese sisters and brothers.

RACISM AND THE STUDENT MOVEMENT

One early PLP strategy was building the student-community alliance. In 1968, Columbia University bosses, like in many other major institutions, wanted to expand into the surrounding community, grabbing housing and giving nothing back. In fact, Columbia built a new gymnasium on the stolen property and then barred the community from using it! Columbia students, with leadership from the PLP, made this a fundamental issue that complemented their opposition to the war.

Students occupied campus buildings for weeks, renaming these structures for revolutionaries and fighting off police attacks. The Columbia bosses made some concessions but finally called in the NYPD to brutally attack many students and suspended and expelled others for supporting the largely black community. But victory here came in a coalition between white and

black students and the mainly black community residents. This included a major march on Columbia that shook the rulers, who feared the kind of worker-student unity that had convulsed France earlier that year.

PLP'ers on many other campuses similarly attacked university expansion and formed coalitions with community residents. In this crucible of struggle, the revolutionary goal of communism was raised as the only permanent way to end racism and imperialism. From this combination of militant struggle and clear analysis of capitalism and communism, hundreds of students and workers flocked to the ranks of the PLP and thousands more followed its leadership.

Growing from this successful unity, the Party advanced a more comprehensive approach to building unity between workers and students in the fight against racism. Building worker-student alliances at many campuses meant opposing the racist treatment of campus workers. At Harvard, underpaid painters were supported. At Yale, a cafeteria worker fired for refusing to accept racist insults from her supervisor (she turned a tray full of glasses of juice over his head) was supported despite massive expulsions of students (later reversed) and she regained her job. A black union organizer of campus workers at American University was fired but finally rehired due to students' militancy. The story was repeated in dozens of universities, as the worker-student alliance caucus within the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) grew from the late 1960s to the early 1970s.



The Party-led SDS chapter at Temple University boldly supported the campus-worker strike of mostly black janitors and mostly black women maids for higher wages and equal pay for the women. PLP'ers organized the dumping of garbage on the campus, which, after two weeks, forced the bosses into a settlement favorable to the workers. This outcome had national implications since the contract broke the 3.2% wage freeze imposed by the Johnson administration during the Vietnam War.

At the same time, PLP fought within the anti-war movement for an anti-racist, pro-worker line. Unfortunately, the mass anti-war movement was dominated by revisionist/Trotskyite opportunists and pacifists who gladly licked the boots of liberal politicians to secure their partnership with the liberal bosses. PLP argued that the war was racist on many fronts, an extension of imperialism which relies on and reflects racism in many ways. The portrayal of Vietnamese fighters as “not caring for human life,” as “bestial savages” and even “subhuman” pervaded the media and military indoctrination in boot camps, and was a subtext in official rationalizations for the war.

In addition, the draft (both formal and economic) forced disproportionately large numbers of African Americans into the military, and then into the most dangerous positions as infantry. Their much higher death rate emphasized the racist character of the U.S. military. The drive by U.S. imperialists to control Southeast Asia in order to exploit cheap labor and local resources was yet another racist side to the war, a side which has become glaringly obvious with the current economic invasion of U.S. corporations like Nike and Ford and contracts with sweatshops throughout the area.

The PLP argued forcefully that anti-racism had to be central to anti-war activity, both at home and abroad, and acted accordingly through its focus on workers' struggles globally.

The fight against racist practices and ideology was critical to building class consciousness among students and others infected with the long history of institutional racism and segregation. These included the genetic difference “theory” (blacks are “born with inferior intelligence” compared to whites, argued by William Shockley, Arthur Jensen, Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray), and cultural difference theory (blacks have “become used to freeloading and stealing” — Daniel P. Moynihan, Nathan Glazer, Edward Banfield). These racist scumbags were often supported by right-wing foundations like the Pioneer Fund and the Bradley Foundation. Thus,

the PLP fought hard against racist theories and theorists on campuses. It published pamphlets demolishing these theories, held forums, protests, and not only physically chased many racists off campuses but also disrupted leading racists from having a university forum, all under the slogan, “No Free Speech for Racists!”

Just as Defense Department representatives were kicked off campuses for being purveyors of genocide in Vietnam, so, too, PLP led and inspired students and workers to attack these racist theoreticians on many campuses, driving home the reality that racist ideology had to be smashed as part of building class consciousness and revolutionary struggle. This included battles at Harvard, Northwestern, American University, Staten Island Community College and numerous others.

Since racism is the principal tool of the capitalist class for maintaining its super-exploitation and its power. Therefore, the fight against racism had to be a bedrock principle, upfront and clear, not a tactic or a recruiting gimmick. All workers suffer from the effects of racist attacks on black and immigrant workers, which lowers wages and conditions for the whole working class and making them mistrustful of each other, inhibiting sharp struggle, and so all workers must unite against them.

DEVELOPMENT OF PLP’S UNDERSTANDING OF RACISM, NATIONALISM AND REVOLUTION

PLP has consistently advocated the violent overthrow of capitalism as the only means to destroy racism and all forms of exploitation. In the 1960s, however, the PLP initially fell into nationalist traps like its predecessors. For instance, it offered “critical support” to the Nation of Islam (NOI) for its willingness to oppose racism, and to the Black Panther Party (BPP) for its boldness in fighting the state. Yet the NOI championed black capitalism as the “solution” for black workers while the BPP did not see the necessity for complete unity of the working class — black, Latin and white — in fighting the profit system. The BPP was also virulently sexist. Both groups’ ideologies became nationalist diversions away from defeating racism and capitalism.

Within its ranks, the PLP incorrectly organized a Black Liberation Commission, to which many of its black cadre were assigned (in addition to multi-racial clubs). But life itself challenged these accommodations to nationalism. The 1966 New York City transit workers’ militant and bold

strike featured remarkable unity of black and white workers in struggle, including white Irish workers and, West Indian and southern blacks.

After a careful study of national liberation movements and nationalism, combined with its own practical experience, PLP concluded that all nationalism is reactionary, not only in theory (communists had long accepted this viewpoint) but also in practice; organizationally, nationalism simply cannot lead to the desired goal of communist revolution.

In its publication, "Revolutionaries Must Fight Nationalism," PLP broke decisively with past communist practices of supporting "progressive" nationalism (or the "nationalism of the oppressed") and instead insisted on working-class unity, with a principled fight against all forms of racism in society as the top priority for the movement. We realized that nationalism served only the interests of capitalists of one new stripe or another seeking a bigger slice of the profit pie and continued exploitation of "their own" workers when they come to power. The history of dozens of African and Asian countries that experienced national liberation victories since World War II bears out this analysis.

Amid the Black Power movement, this was certainly a controversial position among revolutionaries of all ethnic backgrounds, but it has proven correct. While never easy, overcoming racist and nationalist impulses henceforth would be fought by the PLP on the basis of multi-racial unity. (See the afore-mentioned campus workers' strike at Temple University.) A separate black movement as an intermediate step in the struggle for revolution was rejected in favor of principled multi-racial unity and a focus on anti-racist struggle at all times.

WORKERS ACTION MOVEMENT AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE AGAINST RACISM

To implement this approach more broadly, PLP and its friends initiated two organizations, the Workers Action Movement (WAM) and later the Committee Against Racism, to become the International Committee Against Racism (InCAR). Initially, InCAR brought together hundreds and then thousands of militant anti-racists from campuses nation-wide (and later in unions and communities). It organized around the fight against racist ideology, expanding soon thereafter to embrace a 10-point program including a shorter workweek, a higher minimum wage, making racism a federal crime and others.

More important than the formal program, however, was the set of



struggles launched by InCAR. In addition to refuting and condemning racist theoreticians in several important publications, InCAR chapters aggressively attacked racist organizations, and became the primary opponent of the KKK, the Nazis, and similar racist scum. Bill Wilkinson, Imperial Wizard of a Klan group, once publicly declared that PLP's and InCAR's bloody attacks against Klan rallies were the major impediment to recruiting more members. While perhaps Wilkinson's dismal recruiting efforts reflected the unpopularity of gutter racism, certainly the fear of attack prevented some would-be racist bullies from openly joining his organization. Similarly, InCAR raided the Nazi Chicago headquarters, putting them out of business, and then led the desegregation of Marquette Park with a bold May Day rally.

In Boston, InCAR held its May Day March in 1975 through the South Boston and Dorchester communities where ROAR (Restore Our Alienated Rights), the local fascist group that opposed busing by attacking school children and intimidating neighborhoods, claimed to have a stronghold. It followed up this bold action with a summer project that smashed ROAR, exposing this racist movement as the work of a small hard-core racist group backed by local racist politicians and the liberal Kennedy Democratic Party

machine. In the last 35 years PLP has led over 100,000 protesters in hundreds of actions against the gutter racists, significantly hindering their growth.

InCAR also vigorously fought apartheid through campus activities and protests, stressing multi-racial international unity. For many years it became the main vehicle for this struggle. InCAR was dissolved in 1993, having served for almost 20 years as the vanguard of anti-racist struggle in the U.S. Now the struggle against racism is central to all aspects of the Party's work.

We dealt a blow to revisionism within our Party over the question of racism when we disbanded InCAR, our anti-racist coalition led by PL members and allies, and forced PLP itself to carry out the dual fight against racism and for communism with every member of our base. Today, although PLP's fight against racism is mainly within the U.S., we are expanding it to PLP organizations in Mexico and Central and South America. We must and will strengthen our movement until we're represented by the striking oil workers in Nigeria, the exploited peasants rebelling in the Philippines and the garment workers of the Dominican Republic.

One of the Party's most important contributions to analyzing racism is tied to our better understanding of capitalism and revisionism. In 1982, the Party concluded — after many years of study and practice — that it was necessary to fight directly for communist economic relations, and not subscribe to any two-stage or transitional processes whereby the Party would lead an economy based, however temporarily, on a wage system. The economy of the post-revolutionary society had to move as swiftly as possible to a “distribution-according-to-need” basis and away from linking work to compensation, the wage-labor relation that characterizes capitalism. Otherwise, the economic system would erode the political gains of the working class, undermining class-consciousness and reinforcing individualism and opening the door to the restoration of capitalist relations.

An important aspect of this understanding is that individualist wage systems foster divisions among workers, especially along traditional capitalist lines, which in our world means racism. The period after seizing power will be difficult enough to confront, given the massive roadblocks of racist, nationalist, sexist and individualist remnants that surely will exist in the minds of the working class at large and within the Party membership. The last thing we need is another outlet for the expression of these capitalist ideas, and wages would become just that.

Despite the political progress against racism that would have been

necessary in order to make a revolution, poisoning the economy by making differential awards according to work, skill and the like, would only continue to foster ethnic and racial divides.

People's willingness to work without wages, then, is inextricably tied to our ability to win workers to a deeply anti-racist worldview. The abolition of racism requires the abolition of the wage system altogether.

CONCLUSION

U.S. rulers, among the most racist ruling class in history, have spent hundreds of billions of dollars of workers' money and killed hundreds of thousands of people since 9/11 in the name of "protecting" us. The continuing neglect and creeping ethnic cleansing of New Orleans more than three years after the devastating hurricane should remind us just how well protected we are!

U.S. bosses remain the dominant capitalist power, yet they are being strongly challenged by the bosses of China, Russia, the European Union, and other countries. To remain on top they are trying to maintain military superiority and control the world's oil. Their efforts are not working out very well, but the solution isn't to wait for some other imperialist to beat out the US. So where do we start?

Altering political conditions worldwide with an urgent yet patient organizational approach will first put the working class back on the offensive in our local areas of work. What does that look like? In the current period we must nurture and fan the flames of even the smallest struggles against the bosses on the job, in the military and in the schools. These fights will often be around some racist attack on our friends and us. Communists must seize political leadership in these fights and use them as opportunities to deepen the class, anti-racist, consciousness of our class brothers and sisters. The new organizers we thus win will help us spread the class struggle far and wide and eventually lead to a stage in the process where we challenge for and seize state power in some areas of the world. We must maintain and expand that state power, all this in the likely context of a third world war. This is the decades-long task for communists today and tomorrow.

Our task requires the raising of a massive Red Army of thinking worker/soldiers. For untold millions of those fighters the first step on their road to revolutionary consciousness will be a step in the fight against racism. This fight is our entry point. It is an inevitable breach in the defenses of the bourgeoisie. Their reliance on racism to preserve their rule must be made

their fatal flaw. What the workers of the world need is consciousness and organization. Members of the Progressive Labor Party humbly believe that ours is the organization to build. With a re-invigorated communist leadership of the working class movement, anti-racist class consciousness can be built and our class can finally come to power and liberate humanity from the exploitation of the many by the few.

Smash racism with communist revolution. JOIN US!

WHAT WE FIGHT FOR

- ★ Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to smash capitalism -- wage slavery. While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim “communism is dead:” capitalism is the real failure for billions all over the world. Capitalism returned to the Soviet Union and China because socialism failed to wipe out many aspects of the profit system, like wages and division of labor.
- ★ Capitalism inevitably leads to wars. PLP organizes workers, students and soldiers to turn these wars into a revolution for communism -- the dictatorship of the proletariat. This fight requires a mass Red Army led by the communist PLP.
- ★ Communism means working collectively to build a society where sharing is based on need. 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.
- ★ Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women workers.
- ★ Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One International working class, one world, one Party.

**Please send inquiries, comments, and updates
on this election pamphlet to the:**

*Progressive Labor Party
P.O Box 808, Brooklyn, NY 11202*

WWW.PLP.ORG

E-MAIL: DESAFIO.CHALLENAGE@GMAIL.COM

PHONE: 718-930-9440



SUBSCRIBE TO

CHALLENGE/DESAFIO

The Newspaper of the Progressive Labor Party