

THE

The word 'COMMUNIST' is rendered in large, bold, black letters. Each letter is filled with a collage of smaller text and graphics. The 'C' contains 'WORKERS', 'SOLDIERS', 'STUDENTS', 'FOR', 'UNITS'. The 'O's contain 'SOLDIERS', 'STUDENTS', 'FOR', 'UNITS'. The 'M's contain 'WORKERS', 'SOLDIERS', 'STUDENTS', 'FOR', 'UNITS'. The 'M' in the center contains a circular emblem with a star and a figure. The 'U' contains 'WORKERS', 'SOLDIERS', 'STUDENTS', 'FOR', 'UNITS'. The 'N' contains 'WORKERS', 'SOLDIERS', 'STUDENTS', 'FOR', 'UNITS'. The 'I' contains 'WORKERS', 'SOLDIERS', 'STUDENTS', 'FOR', 'UNITS'. The 'S' contains 'WORKERS', 'SOLDIERS', 'STUDENTS', 'FOR', 'UNITS'. The 'T' contains 'WORKERS', 'SOLDIERS', 'STUDENTS', 'FOR', 'UNITS'.

COMMUNIST

SUMMER 2003

PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY



CHALLENGE PERIODICALS

PO Box 808

BROOKLYN, NY 11202

www.plp.org

email: cd188@juno.com

718 630 9440

WHAT WE FIGHT FOR:

⊕ 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. The Soviet Union and China returned to capitalism because socialism maintained too many aspects of capitalism, like wages and divisions of labor.

⊕ Capitalism inevitably leads to wars. PLP organizes workers, students and soldiers to turn these wars into a revolution for communism. This fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat requires a mass Red Army led by the communist PLP.

⊕ Communism means working collectively to build a society based on need. We will abolish work for wages, money and profit. Everyone will share 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 which leads to nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

⊕ Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers, eventually everyone must become communist organizers.

JOIN US!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

U.S. ‘Victory’ in Iraq Intensifies Instability, War Worldwide	3
Iraqi Workers Need Communist Revolution	4
No Blood For Euro or Petro Dollars	5
France’s Global Empire Oppresses World’s Workers	6
Phillipines 1945: Tens of Thousands Of GIs Refused to Fight the Communist Guerrillas that Helped Defeat Japanese Fascism	7
Airlines’ Give and Take: Unions Give, Bosses Take; Workers’ Unity Needed	8
Liberals Weaken Anti War Action	9
Loyalty to Capitalism Has Wrecked Unions	10
Saddam-Baath Fascists Long-Time Love Affair With the CIA	11
Bolivia: Miners Lead 80,000 Fighting Army in Mass Uprising	12

Racism Still Achilles Heel of U.S. Capitalism . . . Page 13

The Fight Against Sexism . . . Page 14

How Religion Was Born to Become a Rulers’ Tool to Exploit Masses . . . Page 24

Jailbreak! An Introduction to the Philosophy of Dialectical Materialism . . . Page 33

Fight to Control Oil Speeds U.S. Down Slippery Slope . . . Page 42

50th Anniversary of The Execution of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg . . . Page 44

U.S. 'Victory' in Iraq Intensifies Instability, War Worldwide

U.S. rulers had hoped that their massacre in Iraq would give them a hammerlock on its oil reserves and, thus, a huge advantage over their imperialist competitors. But although U.S. (and British) soldiers occupy the oilfields, Washington's control of the country is shaky at best. Anti-U.S. sentiment is running sky-high in Iraq and elsewhere, to the benefit of U.S. rivals. And while U.S. forces easily defeated Iraq's small, under-equipped army, the need to project force around the globe is stretching the U.S. military dangerously thin. The real fruits of Bush's victory are sharpening instability and armed conflict.

On April 22, over a million Shiites marched in Karbala turning a religious observance into a massive protest against U.S. occupation. Many came from Iran, with the blessing of the ayatollahs who had booted the U.S. oil bosses from that country in 1979. The London-based newspaper *Al-Hayat* (4/25/03) sees a developing power struggle between the U.S. and Iraq's Shiites. "This is because the Shiites — some 60% of the population — are the only indigenous force able to challenge the American military presence and, conversely, because the U.S. army in Iraq is the only force able to prevent a Shiite seizure of power.... The United States faces a formidable dilemma in Iraq. If it allows Shiite militancy to flourish unchecked it will, in effect, be handing power...to a Shiite Islamic revolution on the Iranian model. Yet if it seeks to repress the Shiites by direct military rule, it could find itself confronting a mass popular uprising with

unpredictable consequences."

One consequence is already being debated in Washington's war rooms: a U.S. invasion of Iran. Gen. James Woolsey of the Defense Policy Board is now engaged in World War IV against Iran and Syria, as well as Iraq (Time, 4/14/03). A U.S. campaign in Iran in forbidding terrain against forces fired by religious fervor would hardly be a cakewalk. Already the U.S. commanders have signed a "cease-fire" agreement with a group which for six years, right up until April 22, it has labeled terrorist, the People's Mujahadeen, which the U.S. bombed just three weeks before. Why? Because, says the *New York Times* (4/29), the "American military...already has its hands full trying to stabilize Baghdad and other areas of Iraq." But it also "raises questions about how consistently the Bush administration intends to apply a policy that had vowed to crack down on terrorist groups worldwide." The U.S. terrorists hope to use this group in any future fight with Iran.

Nor is it a sure thing that the victorious coalition's oil giants, Exxon Mobil, Chevron Texaco, BP and Shell will get immediate and complete access to Iraq's vast oil reserves. That was the stated goal of Iraqi National Congress leader Ahmad Chalabi, whom War Secy. Rumsfeld wants to make puppet ruler of Iraq. But Chalabi, who spent the last four decades living it up in London, has very little popular support. And Iraq's oil bureaucracy, which the U.S. spared in the war — needing Iraqi know-how and manpower — naturally opposes Exxon, Chalabi, & Co. In addition France and Russia are exploiting popular opposition to the U.S. occupation to try to ensure continuing UN management of Iraqi oil sales, which the UN now sends through French and Russian brokers. The latter could probably wind up



at least as junior partners to the U.S. in pumping Iraqi oil.

Keeping 130,000 troops in Iraq to secure the oilfields weakens U.S. rulers militarily as well as among world opinion. Sen. John McCain complained that demands on troops during the Iraq war rendered the U.S. powerless to face down North Korea. "One of the chief problems, he said, is that the United States does not have sufficient active duty personnel. He said the Armed Forces cannot continue to activate reservists at the same rate and expect people to remain in the service. 'Any lingering credibility that America has the capability to fight two wars on two fronts at one time should be laid to rest. We simply don't have it. That's why the North Korean situation was put on the back burner.'" (Associated Press, 4/26) McCain was hinting at restoring the draft. But as the wave of mutinies and rebellions by U.S. troops in the Vietnam War showed, a draft will create even more problems for the rulers.

The war in Iraq was in many ways a setback for U.S. bosses. At the same time thousands of working-class Iraqi soldiers and civilians died. Working-class GIs were turned into the tools of racist butchery. But the war revealed to many that capitalists value oil profits over human life. Workers must use the anti-capitalist feeling the war sparked to build a movement that will eventually eliminate the profit system. ✪

Saddam, U.S. Imperialists, Fundamentalists OUT: Iraqi Workers Need Communist Revolution

The Bush/Cheney/Rumsfeld gang claims to have liberated the Iraqi people from Saddam Hussein but their goal is imperialist conquest. However, we shed no tears for Saddam and his fascist butchers, many of whom abandoned their troops after being bought off by the Pentagon. Over 300,000 Iraqis died in his eight-year war against Iran and 100,000 more perished when he invaded Kuwait. Bush is not the only one who makes war for oil! Saddam cynically used 500,000 Iraqi deaths from U.S.-imposed sanctions as a cover to maintain his regime and luxury. Just as he served U.S. rulers before and during the Iraq-Iran war, now he gave French and Russian oil companies good deals to try to use them as protection against a U.S. invasion.

It's no surprise that angry Iraqi workers stripped clean the palaces, government ministries and stores owned by the ruling class. While workers were dying from lack of medical care, the hospital treating the elite was as good as any treating U.S. bosses. Saddam built 19 new palaces, stuffed with fancy furniture. In one, he had hundreds of millions in \$100 bills stored in

On May Day 1959, the Iraqi CP led a million-strong May Day march in Baghdad, proving it was the leader of the mass movement in Iraq. The ICP might have led a worker seizure of power had they not fallen victim to reformism, to supporting the "lesser evil" capitalists

boxes, more than Iraq spent on medicines in two years.

Arab nationalists like the Emir of Qatar who owns al-Jazeera, shed crocodile tears about those slaughtered in the U.S. invasion. But they never said a word about the thousands Saddam tortured every year, or the 100,000 Kurds he gassed or shot.

These Arab dictators don't care about dead Iraqi workers. They want to oppress Arab workers, and keep U.S. imperialism out!

Some new oppressor will replace Saddam. There is vigorous competition among the various capitalist factions. The U.S. stooges are mostly the old pre-Saddam ruling class. For instance, Ahmed Chalabi, Rumsfeld's favorite and head of the Iraqi National Congress, also heads one of the richest old Iraqi families. His father and grandfather were both cabinet ministers under the monarchy, which was overthrown in 1958. The family is as well known in Iraq as the Rockefellers in the U.S. So Chalabi draws support from those who want a return to the monarchy's pro-Western, free market capitalism.

The Muslim clerics would install a vicious religious fascism like in Iran. There are several prominent families — operating like Mafia families — with power passing from one generation to another. The most powerful is the al-Sadrs. The young family head, Moqtadah al-Sadr, with very little religious training, had the chief of the pro-American family, Abdelmajid Khoei, assassinated in the holiest mosque.

Then this thug's goons surrounded the house of the most respected elderly cleric, Ayatollah al-Sistani, demanding he leave the country. Al-Sadr is working fist-in-glove with the Iranian fascist clerical regime against U.S. rulers. The Iranians have provided him millions in cash and hundreds of militants.

Another of the big clerical families, the Hakims, is also in Iran's pocket. Tehran-based Ayatollah Bakr al-Hakim heads the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq. The U.S. has hopes of working with this group, but Iran seems to be putting more emphasis on al-Sadr's militant anti-U.S. camp.

The pseudo left-sounding pan-Arab nationalists want to restore Baath rule with-



out Saddam, as in Syria. They attack U.S. imperialism's plan to plunder Iraq's oil wealth, but neglect to mention their own plans to grab that wealth for themselves. They attack the clerics who would bar women from public life and discriminate against the million non-Muslims, but they plan to perpetuate the racist system which, for several hundred years, has kept power in the hands of the elite claiming to represent the 20% of the Iraqi population who are Arab Sunnis. These pan-Arab nationalists have strong support from Syria, with quiet support from most of the other Arab rulers.

The Role a Revolutionary Working Class Can Play

Actually, many Iraqi workers have a long history of support for communists in Iraq, through the Iraqi Communist Party which led the oil workers and organized general strikes that helped topple the monarchy there. On May Day 1959, the Iraqi CP led a million-strong May Day march in Baghdad, proving it was the leader of the mass movement in Iraq. The ICP might have led a worker seizure of power had they not fallen victim to reformism, to supporting the "lesser evil" capitalists. The ICP reliance on "a progressive national bourgeoisie" led it to alliance with Generals like Kaseen. Eventually, the "progressive bourgeoisie" (like the Baath Party) worked with the CIA

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NO BLOOD FOR EURO OR PETRODOLLARS!

Oil is not just another commodity. Major industries, armies, transportation and society overall cannot run without it. Most of the world's oil (and the cheapest to produce) is in the Middle East. The power that controls that oil has a major advantage over rival bosses. Oil is also a major source of profits and economic power.

Currently anyone buying crude oil must pay OPEC or any oil producer in dollars. Therefore, such buyers must accumulate dollars to pay for their oil. To do that they must exchange their own currency for dollars or demand dollars for what they themselves produce. Thus, the dollar dominates world trade; it is the world's reserve currency.

Several decades ago, the U.S. became a debtor country. It is now the world's biggest debtor nation, owing \$2.7 trillion. It then prints more dollars which are bought by currency traders to build dollar reserves. The U.S. uses these funds to pay off the \$2 billion a day required to satisfy the debt. In a sense, U.S. bosses are getting a "free ride" through its exclusive control over printing dollars. Since this is the currency in which oil is traded — petrodollars — the U.S. has an edge over its rivals both in economic terms as well as having a stranglehold over the distribution of oil.

The world economic crisis exposed by the dot.com collapse made others bosses wary of playing second fiddle to the U.S. forever. The law of inter-imperialist rivalry (each group of bosses must fight for maximum profits at the expense of rival bosses) impelled the European Union to create the Euro to challenge the dollar. The value of the euro has surpassed the value of the dollar by 17%. Three years ago Iraq began demanding Euros instead of dollars for its oil exports. Iran is contemplating a similar move. As countries are forced to accumulate euros instead of dollars, the value of the euro will rise and the dollar will fall even further. This could conceivably induce the Oil Producing and Exporting Countries (OPEC) — Saudi Arabia, Venezuela, etc. — to ask for euros for their oil. Oil-buying countries would have to stock euros in their central banks to buy their oil. The more euros are used to purchase oil — the world's most important and expensive commodity — the less would oil be traded in dollars. The value of the dollar would drop even further. U.S. corporations

and consumers would have to shell out more dollars to purchase goods. This could severely affect the U.S. economy.

All this is one reason why U.S. bosses have seized Iraq and its oil fields, second largest reserves worldwide. Not only would its military muscle control Iraq and force its oil (controlled by ExxonMobil and ChevronTexaco, etc.) to be paid for with dollars instead of euros, but it would solidify U.S. control in the Mid-East region, the world's largest source of oil. It would also help U.S. rulers maintain the dollar as the world's reserve currency.

Siding with One Imperialist Gang Against Another Is a Deadly Mistake

This is one important reason why EU members France and Germany — two leading traders in euros — opposed the U.S. invasion of Iraq and control of its oil. Some of the leaders of the anti-war movement also tried to turn it into an anti-U.S., pro-European imperialism force. This is a deadly mistake; the cause of war is not Bush or Blair, but capitalism/imperialism.

Russia, which sided with the Europeans in this battle and is the world's second largest oil exporter, is considering the euro as the currency to buy some of its oil. It's an economic fight between petrodollars and petroeuros.

Further pressure on the U.S. is coming from China, which wants its currency, the yuan, to become Asia's reserve currency. Even Venezuela has put pressure on petrodollars by negotiating bilateral deals with 13 countries to pay for its oil in goods — barter — not in dollars. All this reduces the amount of dollars used in world trade, further reducing its value, and nullifying part of the "free ride" the U.S. gets in printing dollars to pay its huge trade deficit.

Thus do capitalists and imperialists fight for maximum profits over the dead bodies of millions of workers. U.S. rivals will strive to equal U.S. military power. U.S. bosses will try mightily to prevent this. We have no crystal ball, but the 21st Century promises to mirror the 20th: constant wars.

Shouldn't such a system be destroyed? Join the communist PLP now. ☺

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to kill thousands of communists. (See article on the CIA-Hussein relationship).

The working class is not impotent. The vacuum created with Saddam's fall would have been an excellent opportunity for a communist-led working class to fight the imperialist invaders, overthrow all the bosses and install a revolutionary dictatorship of the workers. But without a revolutionary communist party with a mass base among the workers, the masses in Iraq will remain under the brutal heel of one capitalist or another.

Our job is to build a strong international revolutionary communist PLP. Building a mass PLP in the U.S., especially among Iraqi and Arab immigrants can help build a sister party in Iraq and the Middle East. Building a communist base among U.S. soldiers can also help. The nationalists and the clerics are no better than the U.S. stooges. The millions marching against war should realize that marching is not enough. They must be won to reject all the war-makers and fascist killers and fight to overthrow all the bosses with communist revolution. ☺

France's Global Empire Oppresses World's Workers

Some people have been impressed enough by the French government's opposition to U.S. Iraq policies to carry "Viva La France" signs in demonstrations against the U.S./British invasion of Iraq. This idea is a big mistake. The French and U.S. capitalists both spread death and misery for workers, only on a different scale and in different places. This article reviews some of the imperialist actions of French capitalists, and the scams they use to cover them up.

The French capitalists emerged from the Second World War in uneasy control over a huge colonial empire. They then held over 4,000,000 square miles of colonial territory including Vietnam, Syria, French Guiana, and nearly half of Africa, including, Algeria, Morocco, Senegal, Cameroon, Gabon, Ivory Coast, etc. Unable to put down bitterly fought anti-colonial rebellions, especially in Vietnam and Algeria, France conceded independence to most of its former colonies in the 1960s. It developed a neo-colonial apparatus to dominate its former African colonies and extend its power over other French-speaking Africans. A key strategy of French capitalists for control of Africa is its recruitment and support of pet dictators, for example, Mobutu in the former Zaire, Bongo in Gabon, Houphouët-Boigny in the Ivory Coast, and Eyadema in Togo. Bribed with French government money in the form of "development aid" or secret funds from Elf, the oil company formerly owned by the French government (now TotalFinaElf), these hatchet men make sweetheart deals with French companies for resources like oil, uranium and other minerals, wood, etc., and stuff billions into Swiss banks while African workers live in miserable poverty.

The French government maintains control of the currency and credit of many French-speaking African countries, but financial power alone has not been nearly enough to maintain domination over Africa by French capital. A network French intelligence agencies, Elf operatives, and

friendly dictators have carried out numerous assassinations of politicians and activists, organized coups, and fomented civil wars. An essential part of French neo-colonial policy has also been repeated direct military intervention. France still maintains military bases in five African countries, and has sent in its troops several dozen times since 1960, sometimes openly, sometimes disguised as mercenaries. As recently as September, 2002, both French and U. S. troops intervened in the Ivory Coast. The most notorious French intervention, however, was its support of the "Hutu Power" mass murderers in Rwanda, an intervention which exposed the murderous nature of French African policy.

Before independence in 1962, Belgium ruled Rwanda as a colony, pitting the minority Tutsi against the majority Hutu. After seizing power in 1973, Juvenel Habyarimana set up a Hutu-dominated regime that organized persecution and ethnic cleansing of Tutsi. From the mid-70s, France armed and trained Habyarimana's military, and sent French troops in the early 1990s to protect his regime from a Tutsi-controlled guerrilla movement, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (FPR). When Habyarimana died in a plane crash in 1994, his "Hutu Power" government started a previously organized massacre of Tutsi, killing nearly a million over a three-month period.

France sent more troops, but instead of stopping the mass murder, they helped protect Europeans and the Hutu organizers of the genocide, getting them out of the country ahead of the FPR. The U. S. government helped the massacre, too, by opposing U. N. Security Council intervention, even after the reality of genocide had become widely known. Why should these imperialists bother to stop the killing? As French Pres-



Paris, May 2003—Workers march against attack on their pensions,

ident Mitterrand said to an associate in the summer of 1994, "In those countries, a genocide is not too important." (Le Figaro, 1/12/1998)

After being embarrassed by its role in the Rwandan genocide, the French government tried to polish up its image by cutting back its military forces, but continues to intervene to prop up its African puppets. Of course, it isn't always successful, being disappointed when in 1997 the U. S.-backed Kabila family ended up running the former Zaire, now the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

French capitalists are acutely aware of their rivalry with the U. S. business empire, in Africa and elsewhere. In his recent trial for bribery of French and African politicians, the former CEO of Elf justified his actions by the need for his company to compete with "an Anglo-Saxon world." "We are David against Goliath. The politicians must support us everywhere." (Le Monde, 4/2/03) Leading the newly strengthened European Union, French capitalists have recently overcome—temporarily, at least—their traditional rivalry with German bosses in order to challenge the U.S. over Iraq. This E.U. challenge to the U.S. will certainly not go away, whether the U.S. and France are able to make deals over Iraq or not.

French capitalists are particularly worried that U. S. oil companies are challenging them in West Africa, which the French

continued on page 7

bosses have regarded as their “backyard,” where there has been a huge expansion of oil exploration. When the government of Congo-Brazzaville was going to do business with Exxon and Occidental, Elf helped the “Cobra” militias of Denis Sassou Nguesso conquer power in 1997, killing thousands. In other areas, however, the big US oil companies are making important inroads. ExxonMobil, ChevronTexaco, and Petronas (a Malaysian company) are building a big project in Chad (a former French colony), without TotalFinaElf participation. In non-French speaking Africa, TotalFinaElf and ExxonMobil have both paid huge “signing bonuses” to the government of Angola to develop major new fields there. Chevron-Texaco, BP Amoco, and Royal Dutch/Shell to are also active in Angola.

As David to the U. S. Goliath, the French government often presents itself as anti-

imperialist, advocating “North-South cooperation” of rich and poor countries. Since the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, the French government has posed as a friend of the Arabs, embargoing arms sales to Israel for many years, while doing business with countries under U. S. sanctions, like Iran, Iraq and Libya. The widely read French magazine *Le Monde Diplomatique*, which is published in many languages and subsidized by the French government, is quick to denounce CIA crimes, and features liberal critics of U.S. policy, like Noam Chomsky and Edward Said. It has only mild criticisms, however, of France’s imperial crimes in Africa. *Le Monde Diplomatique*, is one of the main sponsors of the World Social Forum, a big conference held yearly in Porto Alegre, Brazil, and also subsidized by the French government. Claiming to be anti-imperialist, the Forum opposes “neo-lib-

eral globalization,” (i.e, the WTO and free trade) and advocates “returning control” of the movement of capital to nation-states, instead of U. S.-dominated organizations like the World Bank and the IMF. In other words, the Forum wants to reform capitalism, not end it, and do so in ways that would benefit capitalist powers other than the U. S.

Whatever fig leaves it puts on, the naked truth is that France is an imperialist state, driven by its corporations’ drive for profits to exploit millions of workers, and led by racist killers. Its imperial interests make it resist its rival, the U. S. empire, but that does not make it an ally of workers. Instead of “Viva la France,” the slogan for workers of all countries should be “Death to all imperialists.” ☸

Philippines 1945: Tens of Thousands of GIs Refused to Fight the Communist Guerrillas that Helped Defeat Japanese Fascism

For U.S. imperialism to rule the world, it must have a loyal army. There have been several major examples of soldiers — especially those who were drafted — rebelling against their orders. In Vietnam, mass desertions, rebellions, sabotage and shootings of officers helped force an end to U.S. aggression. Another example occurred during the U.S. Siberian invasion of the fledgling Soviet Union in 1918 (the subject of a future article). Still another occurred following the end of World War II.

The war in the Pacific ended on August 14, 1945. The GI’s who helped defeat Japanese fascism had done their job and were ready to return to their families and resume normal lives. But the rulers had other plans.

In 1942, a ruling-class strategy meeting sponsored by the National Industrial Conference Board began mapping plans for the post-war world. U.S. rulers wanted to establish themselves as the dominant force in Asia and exploit the colonies of the for-

mer Dutch and French imperialists, from Indonesia to Indo-China, with all their oil, rubber and other valuable resources.

China, led by Mao Tse-Tung’s Chinese Communist Party, was the major challenge to U.S. hegemony and inspired billions of oppressed workers and peasants throughout Asia. The bosses plotted to encircle China by controlling Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and the Philippines (a U.S. colony since 1898) down to Vietnam. Many of these areas contained potential nationalist and/or communist challenges.

In the Philippines, the People’s Anti-Japanese Army (a communist-led peasant guerrilla army known as the “Huks”), had cleared central Luzon (the largest of the Philippine islands) of the Japanese invaders and threatened to become the dominant force in the country. U.S. GI’s were grateful to the Huks. Their defeat of the Japanese occupiers saved thousands of GI’s lives, leaving U.S. soldiers very little to do militarily.

With the war over and U.S. soldiers ready to go home, they were told there “weren’t enough boats” to transport them, as if boats could only sail in one direction. Pressured by the GI’s about being forced to remain after the defeat of the enemy, an Army Colonel blurted out that they were staying to put down the Huks!

A GI on the U.A. Armed Forces newspaper managed to get this story past the censors and into the paper. In early January of 1946, United Press International (UPI) published the story worldwide. At that very time, Truman’s Secy. of War Porter, holding an unrelated press conference, was asked if the story was true. Unprepared for such a question, Porter spilled the beans — the troops would stay, according to the point system established for them during the war.

When that news reached the Philippine capital of Manila, “democracy’s army” filled the bars, dejected at being forced to stay long after the war’s end. On Sunday morning, thousands entered Manila carrying

their weapons. Their mood was ugly. The MPs disappeared and the brass vanished. The GI's formed two huge columns and snaked their way through the city. That evening some soldiers met and published a leaflet, exposing the government and sending friendly greetings to the Huks. The next morning, 15,000 met in a big field in the city and selected a leadership committee. They then called up General Stier, the Commanding Officer in the Western Pacific. He agreed to meet with a committee of five.

The 15,000 GI's formed a column led by the five-soldier committee, and crossed the Pasay River, moving towards military headquarters. The committee was ushered into a room full of generals, who urged

them to call off the scheduled evening meeting. The committee made it clear there was no way they could.

That evening, 35,000 GI's showed up for a mass "go home" demonstration. The soldiers applauded when an enlisted lieutenant read greetings to the Huk guerrilla force.

By the end of the week, GI delegates came from all over the Philippines to an abandoned theatre on the outskirts of Manila and formed a committee of about 100. They represented tens of thousands of GI's whose backgrounds cut across all lines, from cities all over the U.S., with but one goal in mind: the desire to go home.

The next day the brass flew the five-man

committee back to the U.S. and gave them immediate honorable discharges. Soon the needed transport ships were "found" and the troops were sent home.

The "go-home" movement spread throughout Asia and Europe. The GI's refusal to obey orders was a major blow and set-back to U.S. imperialism's timetable. It demonstrated once again that if the rulers cannot maintain the loyalty of the troops, they can not wage their imperialist wars. ☛

Airlines' Give and Take: Unions Give, Bosses Take; Workers' Unity Needed

The current crisis in the airline industry shows that in such times the unions' role is to deliver the workers to their exploiters. The entire industry is either in, or threatening, bankruptcy, mainly to void their union contracts. Since 9/11, over 100,000 jobs and billions in wages and benefits have been lost, with no end in sight.

The current crisis dwarfs Reagan's firing of thousands of air traffic controllers during the 1981 PATCO strike. The AFL-CIO's passivity in the face of that attack opened the door to two decades of union-busting and strike-breaking. Then, as now, the AFL-CIO leadership is worse than useless.

On April 25, American Airlines (AMR) workers surrendered \$1.62 billions in give-backs. AMR bosses threatened to eliminate employee pensions by declaring bankruptcy if the workers didn't agree to these give-backs, while the top five executives voted themselves million-dollar bonuses and a special trust fund to guarantee the obscene pensions of the top 45 bosses.

In the past, when bankruptcy threatened,

executives had to "get in line" behind other creditors to collect any retirement money. Now, through "secured trusts," these big shots own the pension funds, no matter what happens. The pensions of 70,000 Motorola workers are under-funded by \$1.4 billion while the company socked away \$38 million into a special pension trust for the top executives.

UNION FLIP-FLOPS

AMR workers were furious and, bowing to an outcry from the rank and file, union leaders refused to sign the concessionary contracts. "Good for them!" said one Boeing inspector. "Somebody had to put an end to this management arrogance." But the union leaders then reversed themselves and agreed to the give-backs after American CEO Donald Carty resigned.

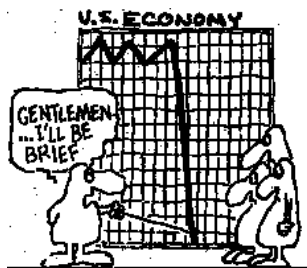
To add insult to injury, the New York Times (4/26) ran an article claiming the "unions have been taking such a pounding ... because they have been so successful." By that logic, if we worked for nothing, we wouldn't have to give concessions!

"Will [airline] worker wage cuts become a model for other companies?" asks this same article. "The airline unions, like the steel and auto workers, are far weaker....But like the others, the airline unions hope to avoid the scrap heap by cooperating with employers, perhaps by granting concessions..."

We saw this cooperation at our last union meeting when we were told to lobby our state legislators to do "Whatever It Takes" to get Boeing to build its new jet plane in Washington State. What will it take? Boeing wants state college tuition increases to be free of any limitations imposed by state government. They also want a freeze on unemployment benefits. Attack our kids and the 35,000 laid-off Boeing workers!

We must reject the rules and laws of capitalism and set our sights on a communist alternative. Our class will not spontaneously learn this lesson, no matter how hard things get. Only resolute work by our Party over a long period will drive this home for the vast majority of our class. This means increasing the sale of CHALLENGE, patient long-term building of ties with workers and initiating class struggle, from within the union if possible, or outside it if necessary. We can't let the unions' capitulation hold us back.

We should do "Whatever it takes" to support the airline workers' fight against concessions: flyers, picket lines, demonstrations and ultimately a general strike in aerospace. Initiating class struggle, prepared for with increased CHALLENGE sales and personal ties, can open the door for more recruitment to PLP. "Whatever It Takes" to pave the road to revolution! ☛



Liberals Weaken Anti-war Action

Liberal “anti-war” analysts of U.S. Mideast policies are busy persuading their audience that the Administration is “making mistakes.” By mistakes they mean policies which will leave “our country” weaker, not stronger.

Of course they refer to “our country” instead of the ruling class or the working class. And the “mistakes” turn out to be things which indeed hurt the working class, but which ruling-class leaders believe will help the big U.S. capitalists.

It’s very popular among egotistical liberal columnists and academics to criticize policies as mistakes — but this criticism actually helps the rulers, because it suggests that no attack on the capitalist system is needed, that everything can be fixed by electing some “smarter guys” (like Kennedy or Roosevelt or even Clinton). Liberal writers have been pointing out serious “mistakes” for centuries. We might ask: “If you’re so smart, how come the rich keep getting richer?” Their “mistake” kind of criticism gets us nowhere.

The three main “mistakes” which the liberals, including the most active of the anti-war liberals, pin on the U.S. in the Iraq war are:

- The Bushies (actually, the imperialist ruling class — including the Powell types) don’t understand that invading Iraq will inflame Arab and Muslim masses against the U.S. and lead to more terror attacks, not less.

- The imperialists have a “mistaken” notion that U.S. armed forces can get in and out of the Mideast quickly, thus avoiding a big backlash.

- The U.S. could pursue its noble aims in the Mideast with much less opposition if it leaned on Israel to make a reasonable accommodation with the Palestinians.

But before smugly agreeing that these are really blunders, we should at least investigate the possibility that these policies

are well understood by the ruling class and that the “mistake” theories merely serve to confuse the opposition — the working class and its sympathizers. So, here goes.

The most dangerous cloud on the ruling-class horizon today is its increasing inability to control various turbulent oil regions, most of which are in Arab and/or Muslim-dominated areas. The old system of buying off a family of sheiks is breaking down. And in newer areas of oil exploration and delivery (Central Asia, including Afghanistan) there never were any rulers the U.S. could rely on. Therefore, for many years, but especially beginning in 1997, U.S. think-tanks endowed by big money have been developing plans to use the U.S.’s powerful military to insure its influence in the most crucial areas. The Project for a New American Century, founded in 1997 and including Cheney, Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz among its leaders (New York Times, 3/23) has been working vigorously on hard-line plans. This is not a sudden Bush brain-storm!

Although Clinton had already called for bombing Iraq in 1998 (NYT, 3/23), the 2000 election maneuvers brought to Washington a team better suited to carry out active military imperialism. However, as Vietnam demonstrated, it’s dangerous to make a big, long-term U.S. military commitment unless it can be sold to the people here. If the rulers really wanted to go “quickly in and quickly out,” they could have carried it off almost any time. But this was—and is — a LONG-RANGE plan. They need broader support.

The September 11 attacks gave them the rallying-point they needed for such a long-term commitment. Considering how much information about flight-trained terrorists was gathered by U.S. agencies before September 11, one might even suspect that the failure to frustrate the event before it happened was partly due to Washington intentionally looking the other way. At any rate, 9/11 came, and the road to long-

term commitment of U.S. armed might for imperialist adventure became much smoother.

If this analysis is correct, then “mistake” number one disappears. That is, although it is true that the invasion of Iraq will help Al-Qaeda types to recruit, still more terror attacks in the U.S. will be useful for the ruling class to keep rekindling the flame and maintain at least partial support of U.S. workers for Mideast wars. The ruling class is not stupid. To them a terror incident is a pinprick. But it disarms some working-class resistance to war and fascism. It helps their plan.

“Mistake” number two — that U.S. rulers think they can get the army in and out of the Mideast quickly — is untrue to begin with. The U.S. has no intention of getting out quickly. However, in the attempt to sell the Iraq war here and in the UN, quickness was made a virtue by the spin doctors. People who say the rulers are making a mistake on this are, unfortunately, merely swallowing their lie.

The Cheney-Rumsfeld-Wolfowitz think-tank (Project for the New American Century) in a September 2000 confidential report said that removing Saddam was the beginning, not the end of the strategy. “While the unresolved conflict with Iraq provides the immediate justification, the need for a substantial American presence in the Gulf transcends the issue of the regime of Saddam Hussein.” The wider strategic aim, it insisted, was “maintaining global U.S. pre-eminence.” (Guardian Weekly, 3/26)

“Mistake” number three is supposed to be that the U.S. should have first gotten a deal for the Palestinians (or should hurry up and get one). But from the point of view of a long-term U.S. imperialist commitment in the Mideast, an alliance with Israel is a big asset. Israel already bombed Iraq’s nuclear plants over a decade ago. When the time comes to put extreme pressure on Iran to cancel its nuclear program, who could be better than Israel to have in your corner?

And many other missions can be imagined where Israeli expertise in certain kinds of warfare would be necessary. Israel's willingness to actually engage in important missions, and in spying and relaying local knowledge, etc. are a big plus for U.S. imperialists. The so-called big minus — that U.S. alliance with Israel angers Arabs — is really of little importance once you've committed yourself to a Mideast imperialist agenda, because the Arabs and/or Mus-

lims are going to increasingly resent you under any circumstances.

Ruling classes do make mistakes. But in the case of the Iraqi war, events are well-explained by examining the real long-term aims of the imperialist ruling class. We gain nothing by lamenting the "stupidity" of the Administration. A clear look at their plans takes events out of the "mistake" category and puts them into an analysis which confirms that stopping such wars depends

upon fighting to smash the imperialist ruling class — not mocking it. This fight, in turn depends on the growth of communist organization among the working class — and finally on revolution.

Meanwhile, we can't rely on liberalism. ☸

Loyalty to Capitalism Has Wrecked U.S. Unions

U.S. union membership has been declining for 45 years. In the late 1950s, 35% of private industry was unionized. Last year it was down to 8.5%, a drop of 75%! Over the last 20 years there have been massive layoffs, huge wage and pension cuts, workers forced to pay for their health benefits and outsourcing to low-wage areas here and abroad and to slave labor in U.S. prisons. This is fascism in the workplace.

The union leadership's response has been a combination of give-backs in all areas ("until times get better"), collaborating with the bosses against foreign competition ("buy American"), relying on Democrat Party politicians and supporting the U.S. imperialist invasion of Iraq. That is one helluva losing strategy — except for the bosses.

Capitalism is driven to strive for maximum profits. Capitalist production for ever-larger market share inevitably leads to overproduction. This forces the capitalists to reduce labor costs through mass layoffs and give-backs. This also reduces the capitalists' ability to sell their products and leads to a downturn in the economy.

Over the past 20 years, these downturns have produced market pressures that have forced corporations to revamp their business practices. In steel and auto this led to "lean" and "modular" production efficiency, automation, increased productivity, outsourcing, and large-scale layoffs.

The 1978 deregulation of the airlines produced low-cost competing airlines and huge losses among the unionized section of the industry. Pan Am and Eastern airlines

went under, some merged or were absorbed by others. To stay in business they have demanded huge "voluntary" concessions from the workers or threatened to file for bankruptcy in order to break union contracts.

Sect. 1113 of the U.S. Bankruptcy Code gives the court the right to void union contracts if the company can prove it "seriously hampers business." This has already happened at US Airlines, and is being threatened by United and American Airlines (world's largest carrier) unless the unions agree to \$1.8 billion in concessions. The capitalists use the state to crush the workers — the legal road to fascism - while the CEOs rake in millions in salaries, bonuses and stock options.

In comparing the leverage on both sides, a New York Times article (4/17) noted, "The unions were driving a Volkswagen Bug and the company an 18-wheeler."

The bosses try to force the working class to pay for the crisis of capitalism. The AFL-CIO operates like a business, functioning within the rules of the capitalist market and the bosses' laws and state apparatus. The "labor leaders" act as junior partners of the ruling class, telling workers to surrender to the bosses' demands or lose their jobs and union contracts. They urge workers to join with their bosses against "foreign competition" and "Buy American" or "Stand Up for Steel," rather than uniting with workers overseas against all bosses. As the final icing on the capitalist cake, Sweeney's AFL-CIO supports the U.S. rulers' imperialist slaughter in Iraq.

Could red leadership of the unions change this picture? To a limited extent. Communists fight to sharpen the class struggle, resist the bosses' demands for concessions; break the bosses' laws and organize class-wide solidarity whenever one group of workers is under attack or out on strike; general strikes of workers, city-wide and industry wide; and no support for the bosses' adventures abroad, rather unity with our brothers and sisters worldwide — "workers of the world unite!"

The bosses' would not sit idly by and watch a communist-led working class take the offense. They would (and do) use the full power of their state apparatus to jail and shoot rebelling workers, calling out the National Guard and the Army to break strikes (as was threatened on the West Coast docks). But in the course of these battles, communist leadership can emerge and workers can learn how to eventually seize state power with communist revolution.

Building a mass PLP among the workers is the only way out of the ravages of capitalism. Communist leadership of unions can raise the stakes to challenge the system itself, but the unions cannot defeat the profit system. Capitalism cannot be reformed. Wiping out this system requires a communist party. Communists in the labor movement organize struggles to produce more and more communists, building our strength to where capitalism can be destroyed. ☸

Why Many Are Skeptics About U.S. Military 'Victory' in Iraq:

Saddam-Baath Fascists Long-Time Love Affair with the CIA

While Rumsfeld, Bush and the embedded U.S. media consider the rapid U.S. victory in Iraq proof that the U.S. military is "the best in the world," others aren't quite so sure. Many skeptics are wondering why, after so much initial resistance to U.S. and British forces in southern Iraq, suddenly Baghdad, Basra and the entire country fell without much of a fight. Some believe a deal was made between top Iraqi leaders and the Pentagon, with the help of Russian President Putin. The vaunted Republican Guard basically didn't fight. Most of Iraq's military weaponry was not used. Before dismissing these as conspiracy theories, consider that for decades the Baath Party and Saddam Hussein worked closely with the CIA. During the Cold War, Pan-Arab nationalism (the Baath and Nasserite movements), like Islamic fundamentalism, served the anti-communist interests of the U.S. imperialists quite well. The following excerpts from an April 10 analysis distributed by United Press International and written by UPI intelligence correspondent Richard Sele, exposes the reactionary role played by the Baath-Saddam-CIA trio.

"...in the past Saddam was seen by U.S. intelligence services as a bulwark of anti-communism and they used him as their instrument for more than 40 years, according to former U.S. intelligence diplomats and intelligence officials... (Saddam's) first contacts with U.S. officials date back to 1959, when he was part of a CIA-authorized six-man squad tasked with assassinating then Iraqi Prime Minister Gen. Abd al-Karim Qasim.

"In July 1958, Qasim had overthrown the Iraqi monarchy in what one former U.S. diplomat, who asked not to be identified, described as 'a horrible orgy of bloodshed.' According to current and former U.S. officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity, Iraq was then regarded as a key buffer and strategic asset in the Cold War with the Soviet Union.

"Little attention was paid to Qasim's bloody and conspiratorial regime until his sudden decision to withdraw from the (anti-Soviet) pact in 1959... Washington watched in marked dismay as Qasim began to buy arms from the Soviet Union and put



During the Reagan Administration, Rumsfeld went to Baghdad to support Saddam Hussein.

his own domestic communists into ministry positions of "real power," according to this official... (This) prompted CIA Director Allan Dulles to say publicly that Iraq was "the most dangerous spot in the world."

"...Saddam, while only in his early 20s, became a part of a U.S. plot to get rid of Qasim. According to this source, Saddam was installed in an apartment in Baghdad on al-Rashid Street directly opposite Qasim's office in Iraq's Ministry of Defense, to observe Qasim's movements.

"Adel Darwish, Middle East expert and author of "Unholy Babylon," said the move was done "with full knowledge of the CIA," and that Saddam's CIA handler was an Iraqi dentist working for CIA and Egyptian intelligence. U.S. officials separately confirmed Darwish's account.

Darwish said that Saddam's paymaster was Capt. Abdel Maquid Farid, the assistant military attaché at the Egyptian Embassy who paid for the apartment from his own personal account. Three former senior U.S. officials have confirmed that this is accurate.

"The assassination was set for Oct. 7, 1959, but it was completely botched. Accounts differ. One former CIA official said that the 22-year-old Saddam lost his nerve and began firing too soon, killing Qasim's driver and only wounding Qasim in the shoulder and arm. Darwish told UPI that one of the assassins had bullets that did not fit his gun and that another had a hand grenade that got stuck in the lining of his coat. "It bordered on farce," a former senior U.S. intelligence official said. But Qasim, hiding on the floor of his car, escaped

death, and Saddam, whose calf had been grazed by a fellow would-be assassin, escaped to Tikrit, thanks to CIA and Egyptian intelligence agents, several U.S. government officials said. Saddam then crossed into Syria and was transferred by Egyptian intelligence agents to Beirut, according to Darwish and former senior CIA officials. While Saddam was in Beirut, the CIA paid for Saddam's apartment and put him through a brief training course, former CIA officials said. The agency then helped him get to Cairo, they said.

One former U.S. government official, who knew Saddam at the time, said that even then Saddam "was known as having no class. He was a thug — a cutthroat." In Cairo, Saddam was installed in an apartment in the upper class neighborhood of Dukki and spent his time playing dominos in the Indiana Café, watched over by CIA and Egyptian intelligence operatives, according to Darwish and former U.S. intelligence officials.

One former senior U.S. government official said: "In Cairo, I often went to Groppe Café at Emad Eldine Pasha Street, which was very posh, very upper class. Saddam would not have fit in there. The Indiana was your basic dive."

But during this time Saddam was making frequent visits to the American Embassy where CIA specialists such as Miles Copeland and CIA station chief Jim Eichelberger were in residence and knew Saddam, former U.S. intelligence officials said.

Saddam's U.S. handlers even pushed Saddam to get his Egyptian handlers to raise his monthly allowance, a gesture not appreciated by Egyptian officials since they knew of Saddam's American connection, according to Darwish. His assertion was confirmed by former U.S. diplomat in Egypt at the time.

In February 1963 Qasim was killed in a Baath Party coup. Morris claimed recently that the CIA was behind the coup, which was sanctioned by President John F. Kennedy, but a former very senior CIA official strongly denied this.

"We were absolutely stunned. We had guys running around asking what the hell had happened," this official said.

But the agency quickly moved into

action. Noting that the Baath Party was hunting down Iraq's communist, the CIA provided the submachine gun-toting Iraqi National Guardsmen with lists of suspected communists who were then jailed, interrogated, and summarily gunned down, according to former U.S. intelligence officials with intimate knowledge of the executions.

Many suspected communists were killed outright, these sources said. Darwish told UPI that the mass killings, presided over by Saddam, took place at Qasr al-Nehayat, literally, the Palace of the End.

A former senior U.S. State Department official told UPI: "We were frankly glad to be rid of them. You ask that they get a fair trial? You have to get kidding. This was serious business."

A former senior CIA official said: "It was a bit like the mysterious killings of Iran's communists just after Ayatollah Khomeini came to power in 1979. All 4,000 of his communists suddenly got killed." British scholar Con Coughlin, author of "Saddam:

King of Terror," quotes Jim Critchfield, then a senior Middle East agency official, as saying the killing of Qasim and the communists was regarded "as a great victory." A former long-time covert U.S. intelligence operative and friend of Critchfield said: "Jim was an old Middle East hand. He wasn't sorry to see the communists go at all. Hey, we were playing for keeps."

Saddam, in the meantime, became head of al-Jihaz a-Khas, the secret intelligence apparatus of the Baath Party.

The CIA/Defense Intelligence Agency relation with Saddam intensified after the start of the Iran-Iraq war in September of 1980. During the war, the CIA regularly sent a team to Saddam to deliver battlefield intelligence obtained from Saudi AWACS surveillance aircraft to aid the effectiveness of Iraq's armed forces, according to a former DIA official, part of a U.S. interagency intelligence group.

This former official said that he personally had signed off on a document that shared U.S. satellite intelligence with both

Iraq and Iran in an attempt to produce a military stalemate. "When I signed it, I thought I was losing my mind," the former official told UPI.

A former CIA official said that Saddam had assigned a top team of three senior officers from the Estikhbarat, Iraq's military intelligence, to meet with the Americans.

According to Darwish, the CIA and DIA provided military assistance to Saddam's ferocious February 1988 assault on Iranian positions in the al-Fao peninsula by blinding Iranian radars for three days.

The Saddam-U.S. intelligence alliance of convenience came to an end at 2 a.m. Aug. 2, 1990, when 100,000 Iraqi troops, backed by 300 tanks, invaded its neighbor, Kuwait. America's one-time ally had become its bitterest enemy. ☹

Bolivia: Miners Lead 80,000 Fighting Army In Mass Uprising

The working class has shown repeatedly that it is a force for revolutionary change against capitalism. Events in Bolivia last February are a dramatic example.

Pitched battles between tens of thousands of rebellious workers and the Bolivian army shook this country to its heels. Militant workers attacked government buildings and sacked the offices of the parties comprising the government coalition. The army murdered twenty demonstrators.

Workers, students and peasants were protesting the latest austerity measures imposed by President Gonzalo Sanchez de Losada, a multi-millionaire businessman. To meet the demands of the International Monetary Fund, Losada imposed a 12.5% tax on the already low wages of workers. Even the cops protested — their wages will be taxed also. Several were killed by Military Police.

On Feb. 12, shots rang out just a few blocks away from the Executive Committee of the Labor Federation (COB) meeting. Tear gas streamed through the windows

and three women entered shouting, "The Army is killing us, shooting at our husbands!" Two delegates from the Miners' Union reported, "The Alto [shantytowns bordering this capital city] is rising up. Workers are leaving their factories and the Army is beginning to shoot. Several have been injured."

One union leader said, "Enough discussion. We must be with the people." A miner from Potosi exclaimed, "It's hard to reach Plaza Murillo, the area is militarized," but then he shouted, "Let's go!" responding to the unanimous feeling at the meeting.

Despite the fear of military snipers, twenty union representatives lined up behind the labor federation's red flag and marched to the Plaza to join those already fighting. A military policeman watching through binoculars from the nearby Air Force building warned that the COB was marching. As they neared the Plaza, the demonstrators cheered.

The army was shooting with rifles and machine guns. Tear gas flooded the area. Marchers chanted, "The people won't be shut down by machine guns," as they entered the Plaza. The army shot several demonstrators and the workers fired back, forcing the President to withdraw the troops.

The next day, 80,000 miners, teachers, students and indigenous peasants faced

armored vehicles and tanks as they prepared to march. The previous day's injuries and 17 deaths didn't scare the masses. They chanted, "The People, United, Will Never Be Defeated," and "Goni [the President], assassin, hanging from a lamppost awaits you!" The army opened fire murdering several demonstrators and injuring many more. The protestors fought back attacking government buildings, despite the army's advantage.

Several days later, the President spoke to the nation, saying he "is doing his part to help the economy" and won't collect his salary. This from a man worth \$200 million is an insult to the impoverished workers and their families. The masses responded magnificently, burning and sacking offices of the government's coalition parties.

A pre-revolutionary situation has arisen, with some cops joining the demonstrators, creating divisions within the repressive arms of the ruling class. But, like similar uprisings in Argentina and Ecuador, there is no revolutionary leadership to guide these struggles. From all this, the workers and their allies must learn that now is the time to build a revolutionary communist movement to fight for a society without any bosses. ☹

Racism Still Achilles Heel of U.S. Capitalism

Racism remains the Achilles Heel of U.S. capitalism. Black workers, and youth in particular, see the hypocrisy of the U.S. bosses. While the ruling class wages war for oil under the guise of "Operation Iraqi Freedom," bringing "democracy" to the Middle East, for most black workers "democracy" and "freedom" at home are one gigantic racist joke.

Fascist U.S. Prison System: Black/White Ratio is 7.5 to 1

With a U.S. prison population of 2,019,234 last year, the Bureau of Justice Statistics calculated that 28% of all black men will be imprisoned sometime in their lifetime. Right now, 12% of all black men between 20 and 34 are in jail, compared to 1.6% of white men in the same age bracket.

The largest number of convictions stem from drugs, two-thirds of which are non-violent crimes. (In Texas, possession of 4 ounces of marijuana gets up to two years in prison.) Federal law mandates five years without parole for possession of 5 grams (one-sixth of an ounce) of crack cocaine. But for POWDER cocaine, 500 grams — one hundred times as much — is required for a 5-year sentence. The overwhelming majority of crack users are black and Latino. The overwhelming majority of powder users are middle- and upper-class whites. This "war on drugs" is an essentially a racist war on black and Latino workers and youth.

This combination of long prison terms for non-violent offenders possessing an ounce or two of crack cocaine, the zeroing in on the predominantly black areas of big cities by racist police forces, and the framing of tens of thousands of black youth by corrupt racist cops (as in LA and Miami) has resulted in HALF the inmates in this country's prisons being black (although they constitute only one-tenth of the total population).

Illegal drug use among white men is

approximately the same as for black men. Yet because of the above racist factors, "black men are five times as likely to be arrested for drug offenses" as are white men. (Atlantic Monthly, Dec. 1998, p. 57)

Black men — 10% of the male population in the U.S. — are imprisoned at more than FOUR times the rate of black men in South Africa, where they constitute 75% of the male population! And once in prison, inmates — half of them black — are subjected to slave labor, producing goods for big corporations at "wage" rates of 23¢ an hour.

The Civil War presumably ended slavery for black people in 1865. Now U.S. capitalism has succeeded in re-introducing slavery into the largest prison system in world history. (For a complete analysis of this slave labor prison system, see PLP

The government reports — themselves suspect — 108,000 jobs were lost in March. That's 2.4 million jobs gone in the last two years, the longest stretch without job growth in 20 years.

pamphlet: "Prison Labor: Fascism U.S. Style," available on our website — www.PLP.org)

Capitalist Killer on the 'Home Front' — Racist Mass Unemployment

While U.S. imperialism is killing workers in Iraq, capitalism is killing workers' jobs here. The government reports — themselves suspect — 108,000 jobs were lost in March. That's 2.4 million jobs gone in the last two years, the longest stretch without job growth in 20 years.

While the unemployment rate "remained" at 5.8%, that figure (conveniently) omits five million jobless workers who have given up looking for non-existent jobs but are

NOT counted as unemployed.

Add those 5 millions to the 8.5 million "officially" unemployed plus:

- the several million working part-time who want but can't find full time jobs;
- those on welfare who also would work if there were jobs available;
- the one million in prison for non-violent crimes who in most other countries would not be incarcerated.

If all these were correctly counted as unemployed, the amount of jobless would approach 20 million and the rate would more than double, to about 14%.

Meanwhile, black and Latino workers suffer double the jobless rates of white workers because of racist discrimination — first fired, last hired.

All sectors of the economy showed job losses. For manufacturing it was the 36th consecutive month. And the March figures do not include recent airline layoffs nor state and city cutbacks like the 5,400 getting the axe in New York City. Businesses have shown increased sales but have cut jobs anyway because they can get the remaining workers who fear layoffs to work harder, increasing productivity — for the boss.

Why the continued job losses? "Businesses simply aren't sufficiently profitable to fuel new hiring," says Richard Yamarone, New York economist for Argus Research. "Why would you," he answers, "when you have slipping demand, skyrocketing productivity and global overcapacity?" (New York Times, 4/5)

So there it is. Capitalism in crisis "solves" its problems on the backs of the working class, again and again. To Iraq's workers and all workers we say, if this is the "democracy" U.S. rulers plan for you, watch out! Only international working-class unity to dump this inhuman system can solve perpetual unemployment. ☪

The Fight For Communism Is the Fight Against Sexism

Sexism means that, on a personal level:

*a 35-year-old Los Angeles textile worker, a wife and mother of three, works a 50-hour-week for \$200 and then labors another 30 hours a week in her home without pay as cook, laundress, and nurturer;

*a 20-year-old single Indonesian woman earns a wage of \$40 per month in an electronics factory that hires only women;

*a 60-year-old Mexican grandmother rises early six days a week, makes tortillas for her family, and then puts in another ten hours making tortillas and selling them in downtown Taxco;

*a 42-year-old New Jersey homemaker and mother of four finally leaves her husband after repeated beatings, but loses her house and ends up with her children in a welfare motel full of drug dealers and prostitutes;

*a 10-year-old Sudanese girl shrieks in pain as her aunt, wielding a razor, cuts off her clitoris;

*a 35-year-old Canadian accountant snaps at her underpaid El Salvadoran nanny while she angrily ponders how her own boss shrugged off her suggestions at work;

*a 58-year-old Russian agricultural worker mumbles her resentment that she has to do heavy manual labor while her male co-workers have been trained to operate tractors and receive considerably more pay;

*a 24-year-old pregnant Chinese agricultural worker, having just learned that she is carrying a girl, wonders whether her in-laws, in need of a male grandchild to help support them in old age, will pressure her to have an abortion and try again for a boy;

*a 40-year-old Haitian immigrant to the U. S. , recently divorced, realizes that he never took the time to get to know his children, and that now it is too late to build a relationship with them;

*a 50-year-old waitress, exhausted after eight hours on her feet, wearily fixes dinner while her husband, also just home from an exhausting day, puts up his feet and has a beer. She could be from any country.

On the statistical level, sexism means that:

*female Korean workers make 51% of men's wages;

*of the 188 workers killed in the May 1994 Thai Kader Industrial Toy Company fire, most were young women;

*between three and four million women in the U. S. are battered by their partners every year;

*1.2 million women die every year in the world from illegal abortions;

*largely because of prostitution and polygamy, over 8% of the population of Uganda—some 2 million people—is dying of AIDS.

*in 1991 and 1992, 6.7 million female fetuses were aborted in India when it was learned that they were female.

From the above examples, we can conclude that sexism comprises both practices and ideas. It relates to the work women do—



whether they're paid a wage or not. It is present in a range of societies—capitalist, socialist, formerly socialist. It signifies women's inferior status in relation to men and, at times, their violent victimization by men.

Sexism is both the practice of superexploiting women workers and the ideology of gender dualism and male supremacy that justifies this practice.

In this article PLP will present a communist analysis of sexism. We shall argue that sexism, while often felt in the most intimate aspects of our lives, is rooted not in "human nature" but in capitalism's drive to benefit from the grossly underpaid, and often unpaid, labor of women. We shall point out that sexism hurts working- and middle-class men, both materially and psychologically, and they have a direct interest in fighting it. We shall also argue that only communism—the abolition of classes—can put an end to sexism. The fact that socialist societies have failed to emancipate women is proof not that sexism is not based in class society, but, on the contrary, that only the complete eradication of wages and classes can lead to equality between women and men.

WHAT ARE THE ORIGINS OF SEXISM?

Ruling elites would like us to believe that men's possession of superior social status is a function of their innate superiority. Various patriarchal religions—Islam, Christianity, Judaism—teach that God has ordained men to rule over women. Right-wing social "theorists" argue that women's subordination is derived from men's greater strength and aggressiveness.

Sociobiologist E. O. Wilson, for example, argues that child-rearing is not a role socially assigned to women but a "natural" function.

Anthropological evidence, however, indicates that women's oppression is not a function of "nature" but is instead closely

linked with the rise of market societies and class divisions. Hunter-gatherer societies—the types of social formations in which practically all humans originally lived, and do so for tens of thousands of years—are largely egalitarian. There may be a division of labor based upon gender: among the Inuit of the Arctic, men conduct the seal hunt, whereas women make clothes from skins; among the Mbuti of Zaire, hunting is carried out largely by women beating the bushes and men holding the nets. But because the entire social unit is engaged in labor that is necessary for the group's survival, there is no devaluation of "women's work." Indeed, often the tasks undertaken by women—gathering nuts and fruits, hunting small game—are more crucial to the group's survival than the big-game hunting undertaken more exclusively by men.

Moreover, in most hunter-gatherer societies, the division of labor is not rigid. Among the Mbuti, women and men can change roles in the hunt. Among the Innu (also known as the Montagnais-Naskapi) of Canada, women would work for hours without interruption smoking deer hides while their husbands cared for the children. While women in such primitive communalist societies carry out biological reproduction, there is no separation of "home" and "work," and all labor is seen as productive activity. Furthermore, power is shared on a gendered but egalitarian basis. When Iroquois warriors wished to carry out raids, they had to get the approval of the women, who could supply or not supply food for the expedition as they chose. Women routinely have enjoyed full respect in communalist societies, which have been organized along matrilineal lines (that is, in which kinship is determined by descent on the mother's side).

Communists do not want to romanticize the life of hunter-gatherers: a life close to nature is harsh in many ways. Moreover, the model of "separate but equal" characterizing gender relations in many communalist societies is foreign to modern notions of social equality. (In many hunter-gatherer societies, gods are Great Hunters and goddesses are Great Mothers.) But it is important to be aware that most of human history has been lived in an egalitarian mode. The vast social gaps between classes, genders and races in present-day society—which to many of us seem as "natural" as the air we breathe—are actually of relatively recent appearance and short duration.

As societies become more settled and capable of producing surpluses, however, the differences between "men's work" and "women's work" become more significant. In times of scarcity one tribe raids another and carries off its surpluses—and its women, who take on value by virtue of both their gathering and their child-bearing (and hence labor-producing) capacities. In most societies the first slaves were captured women. Moreover, the kinds of surpluses typically amassed by men—herds, pelts—are more readily exchanged in trade. As a society moves away from the production of use values for subsistence, then, and toward the production of exchange values for trade and profit, the gendered division of labor previously based upon mutual agreement becomes increasingly coercive. Women work for men—whether husbands or owners—rather than for a group in which they are equal participants. As Engels pointed out in *On the Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*, class society becomes patrilineal, then patriarchal (that is, characterized by male rule), as wealthy men come to insist that their assets be passed on to their own children.

The link between women's subordination and class hierarchy

emerges most dramatically in places where colonizing powers encountered societies that were either communalist or at least less rigidly stratified. Anthropologist Eleanor Peacock, for instance, notes that the fur traders and Jesuits were shocked by the sexual egalitarianism of the Innu and instituted patriarchal order by issuing payments only to male members of the tribe; it was only then that cooking and cleaning became institutionalized as women's work. While previously the Kung San women of South Africa had spaced their children widely and foraged freely, after their families were settled on profit-producing cattle stations they became economically dependent on their wage-earning husbands and homebound by large families.

Colonizing Europeans, accustomed as they were to women's subordination, clearly viewed equality between women and men as a threat to the "brave new world" they wished to establish around the globe. But we should be aware that in many places they encountered class societies where sexist inequality was already firmly entrenched. In India, for example, women performed unpaid domestic labor long before the arrival of the British. Among the Yoruba of West Africa, it was not just Europeans but also local male entrepreneurial capitalists who displaced women traders and undermined their authority. It was the growth of class society, and not just the arrival of European colonialism, that deprived women of economic autonomy and social status.

Sexist inequality in precapitalist societies, while pervasive, has taken quite different forms. In Islamic countries, most women have been kept behind the veil and in the home; men do not even permit them to go to the market. Among the Yoruba, by contrast, women have for centuries functioned as traders—even though the commodities and trade routes they control have become increasingly less central to the economy. In Vietnam, women have traditionally performed heavy work in the fields, whereas in Cuba their agricultural work has generally been light and sporadic. What the range of tasks grouped as "women's work" reveals, then, is that the sexual division of labor has little to do with the intrinsic nature of any kind of work. It is the fact of the label "women's work" that matters, for this dismissive categorization enables the superexploitation of vast numbers of female producers.

SEXISM AND CAPITALISM

While sexism clearly predates capitalist society, capitalism reinforces—indeed promotes—sexism every day because it profits enormously from sexism. And while certain aspects of male dominance in various countries—e. g. , India, China—can be traced to survivals from earlier modes of production, the main reason for women's continuing subordination here as everywhere is their continuing subordination to capital. Some college-educated women in industrialized countries may have gained greater economic and personal independence in the past century. But for the vast majority of the world's women capitalism has meant more degradation and harder work. The liberation of women is inseparable from the destruction of capitalism.

Women as Waged Workers

Since the beginnings of capitalism women have worked for wages as part of what is known as the "formal sector" of the economy. The "dark satanic mills" of the textile industry in England and

the United States were originally staffed by women (and children) laborers working up to 16 hours a day under horrific conditions. In recent decades, however, there has been an explosion in the use of women workers in factories all around the world. Some 70% of the workers in the Mexican maquiladoras (factories close to the U. S. border) are women, as are some 80% of the workers in the Asian electronic industry. In Indonesia and the Philippines, women workers—usually young unmarried women—work for pay that is often less than subsistence. In Java, young women jute workers, even if they live at home, do not make enough to cover lunches, clothes and bus fare to and from work. Korean women in electronics factories in a few years often wear out their eyes peering into microscopes and have to return home or seek other jobs. Haitian garment workers can earn as little as 14 U. S. cents per hour, with no fringe benefits. Governments throughout Asia and Latin America ban unions and legislate the terms of women's employment, effectively acting as pimps to the johns of international capital.

Capitalist corporations justify their superexploitation of the

“While sexism clearly predates capitalist society, capitalism reinforces—indeed promotes—sexism every day because it profits enormously from sexism.”

world's women by arguing that these women's wages are marginal to their families' earnings. Never mind that more than half the male workers in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, are unemployed or underemployed, or that one-third of the families are in fact headed by women garment workers: the view of women's waged work as secondary to their “real” function as housewives permits, indeed justifies, the gross undercompensation of women's work. Moreover, corporations invoke stereotypes of women's presumably “feminine” essence to rationalize women's assignment to routine, exhausting tasks. A Malaysian government advertisement to international corporations boasts of the “manual dexterity of the oriental female”; INTEL in Malaysia proclaims that its female employees are “more disciplined and easier to control” than men. Exploitation of the labor power of young women of color offers higher yields than any other industrial investment in the world today. The conjunction of racism and sexism is, from the standpoint of capital, unbeatable.

There has also been a global explosion in sex tourism; somewhere between 200,000 and 700,000 young women from desperately poor rural families sell their bodies to wealthy male tourists in Bangkok alone. Many young female landless peasants driven to the cities in China's brutal return to “free market” capitalism can make a living only through prostitution; international and local businessmen are happy to hire their services. For millions of women around the world, capitalism means selling not only their labor power, but their bodies, in order to survive.

Women as Unwaged Workers

Important as the superexploitation of women's waged labor is

to the contemporary capitalist economy, this is only one facet of women's profitability to capital. For the majority of the world's women work hard but receive no wages at all. More than half of the world's work is currently expended in the “informal sector” of the economy, that is, the self-employed production of handicrafts and foodstuffs for the market. In Latin America, 60% of urban workers are not proletarians (wage-earners), but peddlers, traders, and craftworkers. Most rural laborers are in fact “semi-proletarians” who work for wages but also have to farm the land and engage in petty craft production to eke out a livelihood. But informal-sector female employment is not restricted to the so-called “Third World.” Many U. S. women workers supplement their meager wages by working many extra hours as “representatives” for Amway or Avon. The “family wage” (the wage one worker earns to support an entire family) has always been more of a myth than a reality for most of the world's male workers. But in recent decades capital has paid below-subsistence wages to more and more workers, both male and female. It is understood that non-wage-earning members of these workers' households—overwhelmingly women—will find a way to supplement the family income: hence Guatemalan women's production of purses and tablecloths, Indian women's weaving of lace mats, U. S. women's door-to-door hawking of soap and perfume.

From capital's point of view, such production is simply an extension of a woman's household tasks, undertaken in her “leisure” time. And, given the “housewife-ization” of women, many women also see their own work in this way. Peasant women in Oaxaca, Mexico, refer to their petty commodity production as an extension of their householding activities: not “trabajo” (work) but “ayuda” (helping out). That such a use of women's “free” time results in a 16 to 18 hour workday is conveniently overlooked. From a technical standpoint, capital does not “exploit” these nonwaged workers, since they—or their husbands—usually market their product themselves, either to a consumer or to a middleman. Clearly, however, the existence of these “invisible” nonwaged informal sector workers—who, often working with their children, can bring in more than half of the family's annual income—allows capitalists to pay waged workers much less and thus increases the surplus value they gain.

Women's work is profitable to capitalists not just in the formal and informal sectors of the economy, however, but also in the home itself. For the great majority of the tasks that can be classed as “housework”—cleaning, shopping, cooking, laundering, mending—are essential to producing, on a day-by-day basis, the labor power (of both female and male workers) that creates surplus value for bosses at the point of production. Moreover, the various functions associated with child care—from help with homework to visits to the park to plain old “babysitting”—are, while often pleasureable, clearly “work” that is necessary for producing the next generation of laborers. Since most housework and childcare tasks are performed by women, in their status as housewives women actually work for free for the capitalists as daily and generational producers of labor power. But because this work is done in the home and is seen as part of a woman's “natural” function, it is not, in fact, usually seen as productive work. It is in fact invisible.

Women's work in the home is, then, productive activity, and not simply an extension of their “reproductive” role. Or, to put it another way, reproduction is production, insofar as both modes of activity

create value. Again, as with women's nonwaged work in the informal sector, it cannot be precisely said that capital "exploits" women in the home, insofar as housework and childcare do not create surplus value. But it is capitalism that turned the definition of "work" into "wagedwork" to begin with: throughout most of human history work has had nothing to do with money. Clearly capital would have to pay waged workers a lot more if all the tasks involved in producing labor power were turned into wage-earning jobs! That wealthy people themselves have always viewed housework and childcare as "productive" tasks is shown by the willingness of the rich to pay workers to cook, launder, shop, and clean house for them, as well as to take care of—even "mother" and at times breastfeed—their children. What is apparently a "natural" expression of "reproductive" femininity for working-class women is apparently not required for the bourgeois woman in her "reproductive" role.

It is relatively useless to debate whether women are paid low wages because they are viewed as housewives or whether they are treated as housewives because they receive lower wages than men outside the home. The main point is that capitalism, building upon developments in earlier forms of class society, has managed to destroy the domestic economy in which men and women together contribute use values toward the community's survival. Around the globe capitalism has created dual spheres: a "public" world of work, where proletarians, both male and female, exchange labor power for wages; and a "private" world of the home, where women—regardless of how many hours they have worked in the formal or informal sectors—presumably fulfill their biological and spiritual destinies as nose-wipers and floor-scrubbers.

Women and the Welfare System

Particularly in the U. S. , there has recently been a vicious sexist (and racist) assault on welfare recipients. Women without partners who are trying to raise children are stigmatized as irresponsible, stupid, and sexually promiscuous. The "problem" of welfare is seen as the "problem" of the welfare recipient.

What is obscured in the fascist attack on poor mothers is that it is capitalism that has created the welfare system. AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children) is a way of getting that sector of the workforce which is employed to pay for sustaining—and raising the children of—that sector of the workforce which is condemned to be unemployed. When the government designates 7% unemployment as "normal" and the Federal Reserve continually raises interest rates (and thus cools down the economy) whenever unemployment goes much below this level, it is pretty clear that many millions of U. S. residents are meant to be unemployed. The problem is not that welfare recipients lack the drive to work; the problem is that there are no jobs—much less the kinds of supports (decent health insurance, day care, etc.) that single mothers need if they are to raise their families.

The bosses set up, and still need, welfare. Originally it was a way to enable a certain sector of the employer class to hire very poorly paid male workers (e. g. , hotel, restaurant, and other service workers) and have their children—sometimes born out of wedlock—supported through other workers' taxes. Until fairly recently, the U. S. economy has had jobs of one kind or another available to the largely marginal work force coming out of these welfare families. Recently, however, with the fluid movement of capital across national borders, U. S. capitalists have no real need for this sector of the pop-

ulation. They can hire workers in Indonesia for much less. They would just as soon most welfare recipients dropped dead. Hence the current drive toward welfare "reform," by which is meant cutting and eventually eliminating welfare.

While the bosses no longer need welfare recipients or their children as workers, however, they still need them as scapegoats. At a time when millions of U. S. workers are losing their jobs, their benefits, and their former wage levels, welfare recipients supply a convenient target for the anger and frustration of that segment of the working class which is still working. The sexist and racist stereotypes that have been pouring out of the mass media are rooted in this effort to deflect workers' hostility from the bosses to mothers who are without partners and without waged jobs. Lies are spread that welfare recipients stay on welfare for many years (whereas the average stay is two years); that they have large families (whereas the average welfare family size is 1.9 children); that they are mainly black (whereas about the same number of white and black families are on welfare). It is no accident, moreover, that one of the main targets of Charles Murray's and Richard Herrnstein's recent racist pseudoscientific tract *The Bell Curve* is welfare recipients.

Welfare recipients are not "pathological"; capitalism is.

Sexism and Men

Some people might grant that women are superexploited under capitalism. But they might still object that men and women just "are different" in fundamental ways that go far beyond the obvious anatomical differences between the sexes. They might also say that men benefit from sexism.

Communists disagree. We think that it is not male "nature," but the way that both men and women are socialized in a society based on maximizing profit, that leads some men to oppress women. We think, moreover, that men do not benefit from women's subordination, even though some men enjoy certain advantages that function as bribes to bind them to the existing class system. Communists see sexism as a class question and argue that it is directly in the interest of men and women of the working and middle classes to fight sexism.

Violence Against Women

Some would cite male-against-female violence as proof of an intrinsically aggressive—and oppressive—male nature. There is no doubt that violence against women is one of the most grotesque features of human interaction in class society. In traditional Vietnamese society, men could take concubines, but unfaithful wives were trampled by elephants. Chinese women for centuries had their feet bound to signify their subordination to men. To this day millions of adolescent girls undergo cliterodectomies (that is, removal of external genitalia) in parts of Moslem Africa to guarantee that they will experience little or no sexual pleasure, and thus be "faithful" to their husbands when they marry. But again, violence against women is not just a "Third World" problem. In the United States, domestic violence is rampant: the single most common cause of women's ending up in hospital emergency rooms is battering by a spouse or partner.

Hundreds of millions, perhaps billions of people in the world accept such manifestations and levels of violence as normal. Some men, attempting to justify their own or their friends' brutal

practice, argue that it's "natural" for a man to beat "his" lover or wife—even that doing so makes the relationship sexier. Some women, while hating men for what they do, cynically agree that violence is intrinsic to men. The fact that male violence against women occurs in all segments of society, moreover, is sometimes cited as proof that this practice is not based in class oppression, but in "maleness" as such.

Communists argue that men's violence against women—while often apparently unrelated to economic issues—is in fact inseparable from men's perception of women's subordinate social positions as both waged and unwaged producers. If women, no matter how hard they work, are viewed and valued as second- or third-class contributors to a family's welfare, then men can assume that their superior earning power entitles them to power and authority. The primary models for human relationships in class society, moreover, are models of dominance and hierarchy. Bosses—whether Chinese landlords, African heads of state, or Italian capitalists—relate to "their" producers as masters to underlings. In dominating women within the family, men simply reproduce the main form that "difference" takes in society at large.

Furthermore, while men's violence toward women creates disruption and instability in many homes, it is a source of great stability to capital, insofar as it encourages male producers, however exploited and oppressed, to think that there's someone they too can kick around, that "a man's home is his castle." Domestic violence is a safety valve for capital, siphoning off vast amounts of middle- and working-class men's frustration and anger at their own subordination and alienation. Moreover, it reciprocally strengthens capitalism by teaching children very early that inequality and brutality between their parents, they grow up expecting to find these in society at large.

The main form of human relationship in class society is possession, and the dominant mode of interaction is coercion. While slavery is out of date in all but a few places in the world, wage slavery is the order of the day. At least for the time they labor in the office or factory, workers are essentially "owned" by their bosses. Moreover, they are essentially coerced into labor; if they do not work, they are "free" to starve. Small wonder, then, that love—or what is called love—so often takes the form of possessiveness, and that struggle manifests itself as force. Men may take advantage of their (generally) superior upper-body strength and higher energy hormones when they brutalize the women they live with. But male anatomy and hormones are not the causes of present-day male violence; capitalism is.

How Men Are Hurt by Sexism

Some might concede that male violence against women both reflects and strengthens a hierarchical and coercive social order. But they might nonetheless maintain that men benefit from women's subordination. After all, they generally make higher wages than women. While it is true that in different parts of the world women make somewhere between 50% and 75% percent of what men earn, this does not mean that men gain from that differential. Men's wages are held down precisely because women's are especially depressed. If a woman makes \$3.60 a day sewing baseballs for Rawlings in Haiti, it makes it all the easier for other U. S. -owned Haitian industries to hire men at, say, \$4.50 a day; the few elite



In Juarez, Mexico since 1993, over 320 women have been found raped and killed in this bordertown. A man above looks at some of the posters of the missing.

families who own 44% of Haiti's wealth laugh all the way to the bank. The differential between male and female wages serves mainly to divide the working class and hurts all workers. If male workers buy into the notion that women's work is worth less than their own, they are not only making it easier for bosses to superexploit women; they are also making it easier for the bosses to exploit them.

But, some might argue, even if men do not benefit from sexist pay differentials on the job, many husbands, fathers, and brothers still have someone to do housework for them. If a man and a woman both stagger home from work, and if she then starts cooking and doing laundry—and helping kids with multiplication tables at the same time—while he flips on the TV and has a beer, isn't he gaining from the situation?

In one sense, yes: there's nothing enjoyable or fulfilling about washing sheets and scrubbing pots. To the extent that husbands or fathers shoulder such tasks off as their wives' or daughters' "natural" domain, they get more leisure time for themselves. (In fact, the average husband adds about five hours a week to a wife's domestic workload.) By treating the women they live with as domestic servants, men become complicit with capitalism's systemic inequality and, in particular, with the ideological rationalization for paying women so little for the work they do. The few privileges that a man gains from having a woman perform various personal services for him are thus greatly outweighed by the losses he experiences from the fact that (1) his daughter earns less than a subsistence-level wage as a maquiladora worker; (2) his wife earns so few dollars for all the hours she puts in as a "self-employed" Amway distributor; (3) he himself has just been reclassified and taken a big pay cut because his boss now assumes that every adult in the modern family of the 1990s is working. Men's entrapment in the notion that women's work is less valuable than their own—and that much of it should be performed for free, for "love"—is one of the principal barriers to their understanding their own exploitation.

There needs to be an out-and-out struggle against sexism in the ranks of the working class. Without such a struggle, it will be impossible to make a revolution. Men workers must recognize that women are and have always been leaders in the struggle for emancipation of the dispossessed—from the abolitionist Harriet Tubman to the Bolshevik Alexandra Kollontai to the many women currently leading garment factory organizing internationally as



New York shirtwaist-makers march during 1909 strike. 30,000 women beat bosses and sellout union leaders, and succeeded in organizing the union.

members of PLP. Sexist behavior will not be tolerated in the ranks of the revolutionary movement we are building. Any man who considers himself a fighter for the working class is practicing complete hypocrisy if he does not participate fully and equally in the domestic production taking place in his own home every day. To lift a hand in violence against a female member of his class is, moreover, to commit a counterrevolutionary act.

Sexist Culture as a Reinforcement to Male Supremacy

While men should be struggled with sharply around issues such as domestic violence and domestic labor, violent and oppressive male behavior is reinforced daily by the mass culture of capitalist society. Our world is full of images that reinforce the notion that women are inferior and should be owned and dominated by men. Take the typical liquor ad gracing an urban billboard: a woman in an evening gown with a deep cleavage smiles seductively next to a bottle of vodka. Some might contend that displaying the half-clothed body of a young woman beside a bottle of liquor does not signify her inferiority. But this use of the woman's image objectifies her sexuality. She is—visually at least—made “available” to all who gaze upon her. She is, moreover, linked to the vodka as an object of possession: if you buy the vodka, you also get the woman, or at least a happiness comparable to what her actual presence might bring. (The “you” here is assumed of course to be male; women join in the gazing game by narcissistically identifying with the model.)While male images are also commodified—that is, turned into objects for sale—by advertising, rarely are men reduced to their bodies, or body parts, the way women are. If this is not inferiority, what is?

Mass culture barrages men and women with negative representations of gender that shape sexual desire along the lines of oppression, violence and possession. Pornography brutally objectifies women, much of it associating the most satisfying sexual intercourse with rape and other forms of violence. Some music videos feature half-naked women gyrating and crawling at men's feet. Male

rappers frequently link asserting masculinity with insulting women. Many movies promote highly stereotyped images of male toughness and female passivity; even movies featuring supposedly emancipated women characters allow the camera plenty of shots lingering on the female anatomy. Stores sell Wonderbras for women and “I hate bitches” T-shirts for men—and find plenty of buyers for both. Romantic songs depict the highest happiness as either possessing or belonging to the “loved” one.

Both women and men are constantly being urged to objectify themselves along the lines of gender dualism, that is, the notion that women and men are fundamentally different, and in fact defined in opposition to one another. How often do we hear the phrase, “the opposite sex”? To be female is to be not-male, and above all to be male is to be not-female. Capitalist corporations make big profits from consumer items devoted to reinforcing gender identities—from G. I. Joe and Barbie dolls to sports cars and fur coats. Moreover, capitalism as a system is ideologically shored up by the dissemination of the notion that women and men are just plain different—and that women are inferior to, and dependent on, men.

Women clearly bear the brunt of this sexist dehumanization. Women who enter into relations with men often encounter violence, abuse, and endless labor; women who are celibate by choice or circumstance are often derided as “old maids” and seen as “not real women.” Sometimes women even internalize notions of inferiority to the point of damaging themselves and other women. It was women who bound their daughters' feet in traditional China and who to this day wield the knife cutting off the young girl's clitoris. Many women tell their friends and daughters to accept male violence as part of woman's lot in life. But men are also hurt, psychologically as well as materially, by the assumption that they should assume the “dominant” role. If women are stereotyped as natural nurturers, men are supposed to be involved with their children's upbringing as rule-makers and rule-enforcers. The average father of a newborn, it has been shown, hold his baby less than one minute per day. Some men may feel relief that their wives take responsibility for helping kids with their homework; actually, they are missing a valuable opportunity to be close to their children. The emotional isolation from their children that many men experience—and that they often come to regret too late in their old age—is directly traceable to dichotomized notions of what mothers and fathers “ought” to be and do. Furthermore, many men are repelled by the grossness, even violence, of locker-room banter and wish to talk about their emotions—with the women in their lives, with male friends—but have not learned the most basic vocabulary for doing so. The rigid categories of gender into which men and women are pigeonholed in capitalist society inhibit full human development in men and women alike. The great majority of men and women have a common interest in doing away with a society that produces such barren and alienated human relations.

Sexism and Fascism

Under “ordinary” capitalism, we have been arguing, women and men have a vital common stake in fighting sexism. As capitalism moves deeper and deeper into fascism, however, the fight against sexism becomes a matter of life and death.

The Nazis used sexist ideology as a crucial component in solidifying their political base. “Male” and “female” were rigidly dich-

tomized in Nazi propaganda. The Nazis preached “Kinder Küche Kirche” (“Children Kitchen Church”) as women’s proper domain; established stud farms in which especially “beautiful” young women were chosen to bear the children of officers of the Reich; and—for German women—criminalized abortion. The Nazi high command was notorious for their bisexual carousing, but, as a matter of public policy, gay men and lesbians—who clearly did not fit into the official Nazi gender categories—were declared enemies of the state and exterminated in huge numbers. As part of the Nazis’ biological doctrines of race and nation, women and men were reduced to their biological “essences” and, when found wanting, wiped out.

It is important, however, not to view fascism as a past historical phenomenon restricted to Italy and Germany of the 1930s and 1940s. Fascist regimes have thrived on almost every continent in the twentieth century, and most formerly “liberal democratic” countries have entered into a fascist phase. While anti-black and anti-immigrant racism are in some ways the “cutting edge” of the contemporary U. S. movement into fascism, sexism is playing a crucial role. The attack on affirmative action portrays both women and people of color as leeches on the body politic—when actually these programs, in giving a certain limited “advantage” to some women, blacks, hispanics, etc. , have helped to sustain—or at least halted the slide—of the wage levels of all workers. The current promotion of “family values” and the attack on abortion rights are bald-faced attempts to reinforce male supremacist ideology and subdue women’s demands for equality on the job. The “family values” campaign—sponsored by the Republican right, but catered to by the Clinton Democrats—supports an increasingly authoritarian state by claiming as its model the “natural” patriarchal family. Those who do not conform to this model are not “real Americans.”

Moreover, the recent rise in homophobic assaults—which are rarely punished—and the various moves to rescind homosexual civil rights are part and parcel of the almost hysterical gender dualism fostered by fascism. The climate of fear and prejudice built up around AIDS, and the drive to reduce spending on AIDS—conveys the Nazi notion that some people—sexual “others”—are spreading disease and unworthy of life. Homophobia here supplements racism: while most “second wave” AIDS cases involve not white homosexual men but blacks and latinos of both sexes, the homophobic disgust whipped by the Pat Buchanans and Jesse Helms blends into a racist disregard permitting and justifying massive neglect. Clearly the placement of gay men and lesbians in the economy of capitalism is different from that of women as a group, insofar as the former are not as such subject to sexist superexploitation. “Homophobia” and sexism” are related but by no means equivalent phenomena: the former is ideological, whereas the latter is both ideological and material. Nonetheless, capitalism in its fascist phase does all it can to encourage workers to think in terms of categories that divide them from other workers: race versus race, nation versus nation, gender versus gender. To the extent that homosexuals call into question the dichotomous gender categories dualism that sustain sexist ideology, they are the targets of increasingly vicious sexist attack.

SEXISM AND SOCIALISM

Some would argue that, even though women are clearly oppressed and exploited under capitalism, societies which sup-



The bold role of women in organizing the garment unions and confronting the bosses and cops shows that they are not the “weaker sex.”

posedly emancipated workers from class exploitation did not free women from various forms of exploitation and subordination. Women cannot and should not look to communist parties to free them in the future, it can be argued, because communist parties have not freed them in the past. Women are oppressed by both capitalism and patriarchy—that is, male rule—and any movement for women’s liberation cannot rely exclusively upon the eradication of class.

Communists in PLP do not agree with this position. We think that women’s subordination is caused by class society, and class society alone. While socialism failed to emancipate women, it also failed to emancipate the working class: the two failures are inseparable.

This is not to deny the very real initial achievements of socialism in the arena of fighting sexism. In China, Vietnam, and Soviet Asia, socialist revolution meant that practices such as foot-binding, bride price, child and contractual marriage, polygamy, wife-beating, and veiling were immediately made illegal. According to the 1950 Chinese marriage law—which coincided with the Land Reform Act—women attained equal rights to own property. In the USSR, divorce became readily available after the Bolshevik Revolution (and some millions of women flocked to take advantage of it!). Tens of thousands of women in the Soviet East took part in ceremonies to burn the foul, hot, heavy horsehair veils that symbolized their possession by their husbands. In Cuba, the 1970 marriage law stipulated that men and women equally share child-rearing and domestic labor. In all socialist countries, abortion was—at least for a while—made legal and free, and prostitution was almost entirely eliminated. Under socialism, in other words, centuries-old oppressive practices were instantly wiped out by law. Many “rights” for which women were—and in many cases still are—struggling in capitalist “democracies” were treated as women’s unquestioned human inheritance.

In addition, some important steps were taken toward reorganizing the economies of socialist societies so that women could enjoy in practice the freedoms and rights guaranteed by law. In the USSR, day care centers were established at factories, offices and collective farms so that women could breastfeed and care for their children during the workday. In some places community dining halls were set up, and certain domestic chores—e. g. ,laundry—were social-

ized. The most dramatic steps toward eliminating “women’s work” in the home were taken during the commune movement of the late 1950s in China, when 90% of rural women joined the waged work force because nuclear households were for a time essentially dissolved and virtually all household tasks were socialized. During the Great Leap Forward, 4,980,000 nurseries and kindergartens were set up in rural China, along with 3,600,000 public dining rooms.

Yet socialism ultimately failed women. Women never participated fully in political life in socialist countries. While active on the local level and significantly present in secondary leadership, women numbered fewer and fewer the higher the level of political responsibility. In 1976 there was a total of some 197 Politburo members from the Eastern European countries, Albania, and China; of these, only 10 were women. In the same year, the USSR had 75 top government posts; none was filled by a woman.

Despite women’s shouldering guns and undertaking many

“The payment of unequal wages to women and men for comparable work in socialist countries was compounded by a retreat from the commitment to socializing domestic labor.”

“men’s” tasks during the period of insurrection, moreover, work quickly fell back into being ordered—and compensated—along gendered lines, even if the content of the gendered categories at times altered. In the USSR, older women were streetsweepers, and heavy manual work in the fields was done by women, whereas men tended to drive the busses and operate the tractors. The popular Soviet image of the smiling young woman driving the tractor was a myth: females never totaled more than 4% of the total number of tractor drivers. Perhaps not surprisingly, Soviet male agricultural workers earned on the average 25% more than women. At the same time, the health care professions—including the job of doctor—became highly feminized. As a consequence, however, being a physician in the USSR became no great shakes: by the 1970s doctors (mostly women) started at wages only 2/3 those of skilled workers (mostly men).

The payment of unequal wages to women and men for comparable work in socialist countries was compounded by a retreat from the commitment to socializing domestic labor. At the height of collectivization in the USSR, no more than 30% of worksites had day-care centers and dining halls. These were attacked only to the most profitable enterprises: the primary purpose of such facilities was to maximize production, not to lay the basis for new relations between women and men and new forms of the family. The Chinese experiment in socialized domestic labor collapsed along with the rest of the commune movement in the early 1960s. The argument advanced in defense of the cutback in socialized domestic

services was that it had proven too costly to pay wages to workers to produce the labor power of other workers—that is, to do what women had previously done for free. Besides, it was said, grandmothers were available for child care in the home. But these cutbacks inevitably meant that women were increasingly given mixed messages under socialism. On the one hand, they were urged to participate as waged workers in the formal economy. On the other, they were not being given the support systems necessary for such participation. Women were essentially being told that they should work full-time for pay and then part-time for free.

Even the equal wages paid to women and men in a few lines of work did not establish full equality, for women were not paid when they took time off work—as they routinely did—to tend to necessary domestic tasks. Women’s domestic labor in the home became once again uncompensated and therefore invisible. While cooking a pot of borscht for a neighborhood dining hall had been viewed as productive—that is, waged—labor in the USSR of the 1930s, by the 1950s this was seen not as a public productive task but a private reproductive one. Not surprisingly, the inequality in men’s and women’s earnings was accompanied by an inequality in the amounts of leisure time they enjoyed in socialist countries. In Czechoslovakia of the 1970s, women were reported to have eleven hours a week less leisure time than men.

Gender inequality persisted after socialist revolutions partly because sexist assumptions were deeply rooted, especially in men. “A hundred women are not worth a single testicle” was a Vietnamese saying many hundreds of years old. Some men reacted violently to the prospect of losing control over the domestic services of their wives. After 100,000 Bukharan women burned their veils on International Women’s Day in 1927, hundreds were murdered by their husbands or fathers. In 1950-51, tens of thousands of young Chinese wives who demanded equality in their marriages either were murdered by their husbands or committed suicide after being socially ostracized.

Another reason why socialist countries never eradicated sexism is that none ever undertook a concerted campaign to call upon men to shoulder their part of the burden of domestic labor. Revolutionary movements from Mozambique to Vietnam featured the poster-figure of the young woman bearing a baby in one arm and an AK-47 in the other; none, however, promoted the icon of a young man in the same posture. During the period of socialist construction in Vietnam, “new cultured families” were held up as models, but they were praised for their harmonious relations and their commitment to raising socialist-minded children rather than for setting examples in sharing household tasks equally. In the USSR of 1944, women who had ten children or more were honored by entry into the “Order of Motherhood.” In 1974, a Soviet study announced that women’s presence in the home with children under the age of four was an absolute necessity—a “finding” that, needless to say, called into question the nation’s entire network of daycare centers.

But the main reason for the persistence of male dominance in socialist societies was not feudalistic survivals or the recalcitrance of men. The primary reason sexist attitudes could not be rooted out was that women’s productive work was not being valued equally with that of men. Cuba could legislate till the cows came home that men and women were to be equal partners in domestic labor. But as long as Cuban men worked in “men’s” jobs and earned substantially more than their wives or daughters, it was

impossible to convince them that they “ought” to wash shirts and do dishes. The Chinese government can proclaim against female infanticide; but as long as a male child promises to be a better compensated earner than a female, and thus a better support for his parents in their old age, the murderous practice will persist.

Moreover, as socialism moved away from egalitarianism and back toward market capitalism, women’s unwaged labor in the revived informal sector of the economy became increasingly important to the subsistence of the working class. In agriculturally based socialist economies, the private plots that provided families with food for subsistence—and, increasingly, with commodities for petty exchange on local markets—were tended almost exclusively by women. In villages following ujamaa (communalization) policies in socialist Tanzania, for example, married women still tended plots owned by individual families, while their husbands received wages for work on the communal farms and even marketed the surplus product of their wives’ domestic labor. Under socialism, in other words, Tanzanian wives saw little change in their position in the relations of production.

It could be said, indeed, that socialist accumulation—that is, the production of the surplus needed to jumpstart socialist economies—took place largely off the backs of undercompensated women working in the formal economy and uncompensated women working in the informal economy and in the home. Even under socialism women continued to experience sexist exploitation. It was not failures in governmental propaganda or the tenacity of traditional attitudes, but continuing material inequalities between the valuation of men’s and women’s labor, that guaranteed women’s continuing subordination to men.

Socialism failed women, then, not because proletarian revolutions did not address “patriarchy” along with class oppression, but because they did not eradicate inequality. Bent upon above all developing the productive forces and committed to eliminating wages and producing for use only in an ever-receding communist future, socialism places primacy upon accumulation over the social relations under and through which accumulation takes place. Because of this tragically mistaken priority, socialist societies have not simply slowed in their advance toward, but have in fact at this point entirely backtracked away from, the movement toward communist egalitarianism. Retaining wages as a means of compensating workers for the work they have done and of motivating them to do more, socialist societies have lapsed into the essentially capitalist practice of equating productive work with waged work in the formal sector. While they have made attempts to exhort men to view women as their equals, these societies have never recognized all necessary human labor as labor that is equally productive and equally valuable. The consequences of this failure have been devastating, for men and women alike.

COMMUNISM AND THE FIGHT AGAINST SEXISM

Socialism failed to emancipate women, but communism will succeed. Women do not need separate organizations to guarantee that their interests will be safeguarded in revolution—after all, the Bolsheviks and Chinese Communists had such organizations, and women still got the short end of the stick. What is needed is an international, multiracial party consisting of women and men that is

uncompromisingly committed to communism—that is, complete equality. PLP is that party.

Communism Versus Socialism

Through a critical analysis of how twentieth-century socialist movements have been derailed and destroyed, primarily through their own internal weaknesses, PLP has determined that fighting for socialism is a waste of time and effort. It is necessary to fight from the outset for nothing less than a society in which women and men work not for wages, but out of commitment to the collective—that is, for communism. They will produce not for exchange, for there will be no money: they will produce for use. While this program may sound utopian, we should remember that throughout most of human history people have in fact lived in this way—although in primitive, undeveloped societies that were at the mercy of nature. It is only class society that has destroyed people’s incentive to work voluntarily and cooperatively in ways that fulfill the needs of both the individual and the group; it is only class society that has made money the sole means of compensating and motivating labor. The great majority of the world’s people have it in their interest, however, to live without wages and without social hierarchy. We don’t need the bosses or their money.

No matter what skeptics may say, only communism can abolish sexism. Women’s superexploitation and subordination are directly linked to the predominance of exchange-production over use-production under capitalism. Much of the work women currently do consists in creating things and performing services that people need—but never getting paid for doing so. Women will continue to be domestic slaves, superexploited workers, and second-class citizens as long as capitalism lasts, for capitalism is happy to have them just where they are.

It is only under communism that all production will be for use, and all socially necessary labor recognized as productive labor—and therefore that the stigma currently attached to “women’s work” will be removed. This is not to say that, in the first stages of communism, there will not have to be rigorous ideological struggle to break down the traditional sexual division of labor. Both women and men will be used to doing things in the old way. We will have to use all available aspects of the cultural apparatus—movies, videos, books, the visual arts, sports, social clubs, and of course the schools—to demonstrate how poisonous sexism is for the entire working class. But—unlike the comparable ideological struggles sporadically undertaken under socialism—this struggle will be materially sustained by the abolition of any difference in compensation—that is, in any different payment for men’s and women’s work. All work will be unwaged. As communism develops, then, there will be no material basis for differentiating between “women’s work” and “men’s work”; there will only be human work, divided between the sexes in egalitarian and creative ways that we can only



Soviet image of a woman over a city.

begin to imagine. There will be no more division between “public” and “private” spheres. And, as a consequence, there will be no dualistic conceptions of “male” and “female” that set the mold for human development—no superiority and inferiority, no dominance and submission.

Communism Versus Feminism

The feminist movement, while attracting to its ranks many energetic and honest people committed to ending women’s subordination, does not effectively fight sexism. Indeed, because it posits that not capitalism but something in men is the cause of women’s oppression, it usually turns women and men against one another. Lacking a class analysis, it proposes that all women have more in common with one another than bourgeois women have with bourgeois men, and working-class women with working-class men. Feminism only leads anti-sexist fighters back into the arms of capitalism.

Feminism takes up important issues, but in a counterproductive way. Anti-pornography feminists like Catherine MacKinnon and Andrea Dworkin, for example, legitimately point out how pornography degrades women and fosters violence against them, but they build the illusion that capitalist governments can pass laws that will safeguard women—even though, as we have pointed out, violence against women is one of capitalism’s most important safety valves for channeling and controlling working- and middle-class men’s alienation. Moreover, some anti-pornography feminists—e. g. , Dworkin—demonize all male desire for women and treat all heterosexual intercourse as rape. Pro-choice feminists, while legitimately resisting the fundamentalist religious right’s attack on abortion, treat the issue of abortion in individualistic and middle-class terms as a woman’s “right to control her own body.” This strat-

If the great majority of the world’s women are to be freed from the massive sexist exploitation and oppression that they face, their slogan must be not “women of the world unite,” but “workers of the world unite. “

egy separates abortion rights away from other aspects of reproductive health care of equal importance to working-class women—contraception, prenatal care, maternity benefits—and turns a working-class public health issue into a right-of-privacy issue. It is perhaps no accident that the logo of NARAL (National Abortion Rights Action League) is the Statue of Liberty! Finally, equity feminists—that is, feminists such as those in NOW (National Organization for Women) seeking equal legal and economic treatment for women—ignore capitalism’s systemic need to superexploit women’s labor, both paid and unpaid. Equity issues often turn out to be “glass ceiling” issues concerned with the small percent-

age of middle-class women who face discrimination in professional and middle-management jobs. The millions of women who toil in mostly-female garment and electronics factories are untouched by the demands of equity feminism. Even the demand for “comparable worth”—that is, equal compensation in female-coded jobs—leaves untouched the vast arena of work performed by women in the home for free, as well as women’s participation in the unwaged “self-employed” (informal) sector of the economy.

Feminists may come away from United Nations-sponsored conferences abuzz with celebrations of global sisterhood. But all the “women of the world” do not have the same interests. New Jersey Governor Christine Todd Whitman, who is presiding over vicious welfare cuts to unemployed women and lay-offs of women state workers, has nothing in common but biology with the women whose lives she is helping to ruin. The woman president of Turkey who recently sent in the Turkish army to destroy Kurdish “strongholds” is the enemy of all oppressed Kurd workers and peasants, women as well as men. The list could go on.

If the great majority of the world’s women are to be freed from the massive sexist exploitation and oppression that they face, their slogan must be not “women of the world unite,” but “workers of the world unite. “

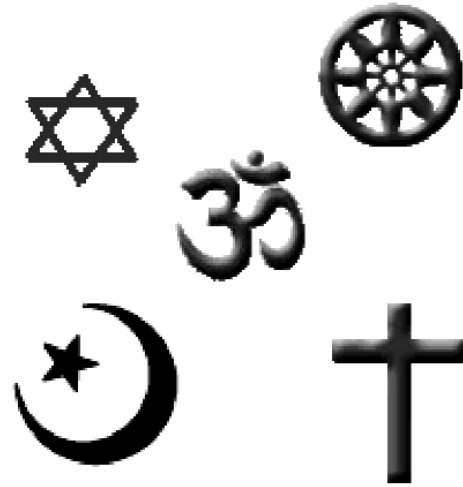
Join PLP to Eliminate Sexism

Progressive Labor Party, which is organizing around the world, stands for complete equality between women and men. In the area where we are most developed, the United States, women and men occupy positions of equal importance and influence within the organization, at all levels. In areas where we are less developed but growing rapidly, such as India and Mexico, we carry forward an uncompromising struggle to bring women into all levels of leadership. Knowing that no one in capitalist society comes to the communist movement free of sexist ideas and attitudes, we struggle around issues of sexism in a collective way. But the struggle is sharp; communists do not tolerate sexism in word or deed.

PLP works hard to organize women workers, who, as both females and proletarians—and often as people of color as well—are frequently the most class-conscious and militant fighters. PLP’s international concentration in the garment industry is largely a concentration among women workers; this organizing will not succeed unless garment workers and their families understand the nature of sexism and fight it tooth and nail—both on the job and in their personal lives. But we do not call upon women to form women’s caucuses, nor do we have any special women’s groups within our own ranks. As the foregoing analysis shows, we believe that sexism hurts men and women alike, and that therefore it is best fought by women and men together.

The great majority of women and men have only their chains to lose, and a world to win. ☸

Religion — Tool of Bosses, Enemy of Workers



After 9-11, Bush called for a crusade against the enemies of U.S. capitalism. Al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden constantly call for a jihad (holy war) against the “infidels” (meaning U.S. and Israel). Rightwing Christian fundamentalists like Jerry Falwell and Franklin Graham have called Islam a “wicked” religion. Sam Huntington has called the post- 9-11 period a “clash of civilizations.”

All these calls for religious holy wars try to hide the fact that it is basically a fight over the control of the oil supplies and profits (particularly in the Persian Gulf area, which has the biggest oil reserves in the world, and the cheapest to produce). All rulers use honest people with religious beliefs to wage their fight for more profits and political control.

The real truth is that the working class is horribly exploited by the ruling class in every country in the world. Why don’t the workers organize, smash the bosses, and create a better world?

The answer is: ideas. For thousands of years ruling classes have known it is essential for them to put false ideas in the minds of the people they exploit and kill.

For an idea to serve the interests of the ruling class it must teach the exploited classes that it would be either impossible, or wrong, or, preferably, both, for them to organize, defeat their exploiters, and create a society run in their interests. The general rule for such ideas is that they should keep the masses passive and loyal, divide them against one another and lead them to identify with, and unite behind, one or another section of the ruling class.

Ideologies — sets of ideas — that aim to keep the exploited classes passive, loyal, or divided, and teach them to support the rulers, we call ruling-class ideologies, because they originate in, are pushed by, and serve the class interests of, the ruling class. In today’s world, the exploited classes are the working class, the proletarianized peasants or farmers, and the sections of other classes, including most “white-collar” workers, whose fate is tied directly to that of the working class. Ideas that serve the interest of the exploited classes we call proletarian or working-class ideas. In today’s world, the only working-class ideology is that of communism.

The general rule for ruling-class ideas today is “A.B.C.” — Anything But Class, Anything But Communism. Ultimately, any ideas other than those of violent revolution and a communist society will

serve the rulers’ interest. Religion, racism and nationalism are the main forms (the most common and successful) ruling class ideas take.

Religion Is Ruling Class Ideology

Religion is the oldest of the ideologies pushed by ruling classes to mislead workers. Its value to the bosses has always been, and is today, its universality. Religions claim to stand above the conflicts between bosses and workers, landlords and peasants, exploiter and exploited. They foster the illusion that these conflicts — in fact the basic forces moving human history — are secondary, temporary, relative, unimportant. According to religious thought, what’s most important is that “we are all children of God.” In other words, religion teaches that there is more uniting exploiters and the exploited than dividing them. Religion teaches a lie.

“How Can You Raise Children Without a Religion?”

Many people have been persuaded that good values cannot be taught except through religion. They think only belief in a “supreme being”, a god, can provide the authority they think is necessary to get people to live productive, cooperative lives.

But what are these values? They’re ruling-class values — ideas that help the exploiters and harm everybody else. Religions brain-wash workers and others into accepting exploitation. No religion can ever serve workers’ interests.

NO religion is neutral! Religion serves the interest of the ruling classes. That’s why religion is promoted and pushed avidly by every ruling class in the world. The values taught by every religion keep workers from uniting around the material demands that serve their interests, that save their lives.

The most important of these demands is that for an end to exploitation, the creation of a society based on production to serve the needs of the working class — in other words, for communism. No religion ever tolerates this demand! All religions support inequality and exploitation. A few must be rich and many poor because “that’s the way God wants it.” Try to bring about equality and you’re “fighting against God.”

Every religion excuses violence by the ruling class against workers on the job, and ruling-class violence in war. But no religion tolerates working-class violence against the bosses. And every religion condemns working-class revolution.

Religions blame workers for the faults of the bosses and of capitalism. Without demanding an end to exploitation, religion spreads in the working class the illusion that a happy, productive life is possible for workers under capitalism. And while religious workers fail to have that kind of life, religion tells them: "It's your own fault", instead of blaming the exploitation of capitalism that ruins our lives.

Religion teaches the falsehood that "human nature is evil." This idea was dreamed up to justify the brutal oppression of the Roman Empire. We're supposed to blame ourselves or "our fellow man" for the evils in the world — which lets the exploiters go right on robbing and murdering us!

Religion teaches workers to be passive. The values of religion sound good: don't steal, rob, have respect for others, etc. But in fact they are ruling class values. The "religious" ruling classes never obey them! So in reality religion teaches workers to honor, love, not to steal from, lie to, kill — the bosses! Religion teaches workers to let themselves be exploited, in the hope of reaching a happy life "in heaven." Meanwhile, the bosses are free to exploit and kill us here on earth.

Idealism vs. Materialism

Religion is a form of idealism. Idealist philosophies begin with the assumption that a non-material world (and, therefore, a non-material creator) exists which is superior to the world of matter accessible to the senses.

The opposite of idealism is materialism. Materialist philosophy begins with the assumption that the material world exists prior to any mind that thinks about it and that, in fact, thought and "mind" are simply properties of highly organized matter.

Idealism and materialism, religion and science, arose as a result of the class struggle. This article will outline how this happened in ancient Greek philosophy, from which European philosophy derives. This kind of investigation should be undertaken to understand the development in other civilizations as well.

However, a materialist critique of the role of religion in the West should be of some interest to all workers and communists. The imperialism of European and American ruling classes has spread western culture and religions throughout the world, so that its effects are felt everywhere.

Class Struggle and the Struggle of Ideas

In the 7th century B.C.E. the kingship had been overthrown in Athens by an alliance of the urban mercantile classes and landowners who opposed the arbitrary rule of an all-powerful king (always the dangerous aspect of one-man rule, even for the aristocracy).

This was a momentous event for the development of philosophy. Class struggle had showed that social change was possible. Political institutions, therefore, were not "natural" or inevitable. Class struggle also revealed that what was "good" was relative. What was "good" for the aristocracy, that is, was not absolute, but was bad for other classes. The Greeks had discovered that "the good" was not an eternal value, set by the gods, but depended on what class you were in.

The urban, mercantile, anti-aristocratic classes of the ancient Greek city-states developed a philosophy based upon recognizing the universality of change in the world. This was pre-scientific

thought of a high order. Heraclitus and other "pre-Socratic" philosophers were dialectical, recognizing that the world was made up from contradictory forces, just as human society was composed of classes with contradictory interests.

In their struggle against the powerful aristocracy, the urban classes developed materialism as a critical philosophy. The implications of materialism are critical and democratic. Materialist philosophy states that knowledge can be gained by studying change in the natural world, and ultimately in the social world as well. Evidence from the material world can be studied and theories built up to account for it.

In short, there is a method for discovering the truth which anybody can learn. No one has to "believe" what some authority says. A person can use their senses and reason and decide for themselves. Armed with these ideas, Greek materialists attacked aristocratic ideas and justified the rearrangement of social institutions to suit their own class interests.

Just as materialism was the ideological expression of the class interests of the urban mercantile classes, so idealism was the ideological expression of the class interests of the aristocracy. According to idealist thought there is a realm of existence beyond that available to the senses, and much more important than the material world.

Knowledge of this world can be gotten only by some kind of revelation from beyond the material world, and this revelation is given to only a few. Since only these few have knowledge, they must rule. The vast majority, who are incapable of knowing the truth, must simply obey. Naturally the wise are identified with the aristocracy!

There are other elitist implications of idealist thought. Since knowledge cannot come from studying the natural world (it only comes from revelation), then studying the changes that can be observed in the natural world can't lead to any real knowledge. Real knowledge comes from contemplation, not from active engagement with the material world. Of course, only the wealthy have the leisure to "contemplate."

Furthermore since, according to idealism, change is generally bad, a static society is the best society. The oldest political arrangements known to the ancient Greeks were aristocratic ones. These, therefore, are the only "good" ones, those most pleasing to the gods. Attempts to change society — for example, by the urban mercantile classes to oust the aristocracy from power — are morally wrong.

The materialist philosophers sharpened their analysis in criticism of idealism and the aristocracy. In science, they developed early versions of the theory of evolution and the first atomic theory. These achievements were remarkable for their time, although they were speculative, not based upon experiment. It took Western philosophy, mired in Christian religious idealism, more than two thousand years to surpass them.

The Greek materialists were sharp and merciless in their critique of religion. Xenophanes, about 500 B.C.E., wrote:

The Ethiopians made their gods black and snub-nosed; the Thracians say their gods have blue eyes and red hair... If oxen or lions had hands and could draw with their hands as men can, horses would make their gods in the shape of horses, and lions like lions — each making the gods in their own image.

By observing the customs of different peoples of his day, this

materialist philosopher deduced correctly that human beings make the gods, not the other way around. Xenophanes used arguments like this to attack aristocratic power, which justified itself by “the will of the gods.” No wonder ruling classes have made tremendous efforts to suppress materialism and stifle its proponents ever since!

In politics, materialist philosophy expressed itself in the theory of “democracy,” which meant, in effect, rule by the majority of free male citizens. The “sophists” (literally “wise men”) directed the weapon of reason and observation against existing political institutions, politicians, and ideas, but always in defense of democracy and against the power of the wealthy aristocrats.

Early materialist thinkers arrived at many brilliant insights about the natural and human world. In fact, early materialism was a primitive form of scientific thinking. But materialism could not develop into full science. It was held back by the primitive level of social and economic development of ancient society. Based upon slave and super-exploited peasant labor, materialist thought was chained within idealist limits. The material basis for the idea of human equality to flourish did not exist. Here is why:

Because work was regarded as essentially slavish and ignoble, even the brilliant achievements of ancient scientists were regarded as curiosities. If work is slavish, then only “contemplation” can be “noble.” Thus the slave system caused ancient materialists to shrink from the whole experimental basis on which science must rest.

Archimedes was the greatest scientific mind of antiquity. He discovered parabolic mirrors and the famous principle that bears his name — that the apparent loss in weight of any object submerged in a liquid is equal to the weight of an equal volume of that liquid.

And yet Archimedes possessed such a lofty spirit, so profound a soul, and such a wealth of scientific theory, that although his invention had won for him a name and fame for superhuman wisdom, he would not consent to leave behind him any treatise on this subject: regarding the work of an engineer and every art that ministers to the needs of life as ignoble and vulgar, he devoted his efforts only to those studies, the subtlety and the charm of which are not affected by the claims of necessity. (Plutarch)

Archimedes’ ideology was limited by that of the society of his day, in which work of whatever kind was considered ignoble. Contemplation and passivity, not experiment, were thought by idealists, the philosophers of the aristocracy, to be the only activities appropriate for gaining wisdom. No science could develop under these conditions.

Materialism Suppressed

Alexander the Great conquered the Greek city states in 333 B.C. and put an end to Greek democracy. With the social base for ancient materialism gone, idealism triumphed. Aristotle, the greatest idealist philosopher of all time, was Alexander’s tutor. Naturally an enemy of materialism and democracy, Aristotle originated the first thoroughly developed justification for slavery, the notion of ‘nat-

ural slavery.’ With very little change, this idea became the basis of all idealist philosophies that justify inequality. It directly inspired the racist and idealist notions of “genetic superiority” pushed by apologists for exploitation today like Arthur Jensen or, more recently, Herrnstein and Murray in *The Bell Curve*.

The idealists and their aristocratic bosses declared war on materialism. All of the writings of the ancient materialists were thrown out or destroyed. They exist in fragments only, while the voluminous writings of the idealists — Plato, Aristotle, and even their later pupils — exist in many copies.

Plato, the wealthy aristocrat who became the first and most famous idealist philosopher, sided with the aristocrats against democracy. He also hated materialism. One ancient story states that he deliberately bought up and destroyed all the copies he could find of the works of Democritus, the most famous ancient materialist, originator of the first atomic theory of matter. True or not, the story does show that even ancient writers understood the antagonism between materialism and idealism, the class struggle in the realm of ideas.

“Early materialist thinkers arrived at many brilliant insights about the natural and human world. In fact, early materialism was a primitive form of scientific thinking. But materialism could not develop into full science. It was held back by the primitive level of social and economic development of ancient society.”

Materialism went underground. The only materialist work surviving from Roman times, Lucretius’ *de rerum natura* (*On the Nature of Things*), exists in only one manuscript, and nothing is known about the author. No wonder: it is an extended attack on religion as the main cause of human misery! But Lucretius was an upper-class Roman. Cut off from contact with the masses, ancient materialism never developed an experimental basis, becoming speculative and

undialectical (i.e. not able to account for change by examining the contradictions in all things that make change possible).

Materialism remained stifled for 1800 years until the emergence of modern forms of class struggle in the Renaissance. In fact, in its most developed, scientific form — dialectical materialism, the working-class philosophy of communism — materialism is still stifled and underground in every country in the world, since they are all dominated by capitalist ruling classes.

The rest of this essay outlines a materialist history of how religion began in the West. We examine how religion was used by the ruling classes of Egypt, ancient Greece and Rome, and the Jews to help keep the exploited classes down. It concludes with an outline of the development of Christianity as an imperialist religion.

Origins of Religion — in Class Society

For 90% of its existence, the human race lived under primitive communism — collective, more or less egalitarian societies characterized by a low level of development of productive technology. Since there was no exploitation or inequality, there was no need to justify it. In pre-class societies most myths and beliefs were pre-scientific attempts to understand and control nature by magic, since it could not be mastered through science.

Usually, all members of the society could appeal to the spirits or gods. Certain persons normally became “specialists” in handling these spirits. Modern researchers call these specialists “shamans.”

They were considered skilled craftsmen like the makers of baskets, pots, stone implements, or clothing. In such societies there was no cult — no priesthood set apart from and above the masses, who monopolized access to the gods, and used this monopoly to exploit the working masses.

The Agricultural Revolution

Class society was born with the “agricultural revolution”, that began in Europe and Asia somewhere between 20,000 and 10,000 B.C.E. “Hunting and gathering” societies, the mode of production which preceded agriculture, generally did not allow accumulation of a large enough surplus to support a class of non-productive persons who live by exploiting the rest of the population. The “productivity of labor” in such societies is very low, because of the low level of technology (tools), so the labor of almost every individual, children included, is needed to ensure the community’s survival.

Agricultural production permitted the accumulation of a large surplus for the first time in human history. (The “surplus” is that amount of goods over and above the amount necessary for a population to reproduce itself). Existence of a large surplus for the first time in human history made possible the evolution of a class of persons removed from the production of essential social goods.

It took thousands of years for a ruling class to evolve in the earliest agricultural societies. Some ruling classes seem to have originated when a militarily more powerful group, often from a nomadic, or hunting/gathering society, conquered a more settled, less warlike people and set themselves up as rulers.

But it’s just as likely that the origins of the first ruling classes are the same as those of the first religions. Grain (which, if kept dry and away from pests, may be stored for a long time) was often kept in an area devoted to earth or vegetation gods. Both a priesthood — a group that monopolized access to the wealth-bestowing gods — and a ruling class may have evolved from the group of shamans who specialized in guaranteeing that the nature gods kept giving good harvests.

Class Ideologies

Class divisions in society led to a corresponding split in the concept of the world. The world was “turned on its head.” Instead of humans as the maker of the harvest and of the gods themselves, the gods, products of the human mind, were said to have made humans! Though the gods resembled humans (and still do), they were said to have made man in their image, rather than the reverse.

The gods/humans, or heaven/earth split mirrored the class division on earth between the rulers — the landowners and warriors, including the king and priests — and the working masses. The gods become the “great bosses in the sky”, to whom everything belongs. They can be approached only by the ruling classes, and respond only to them. Sometimes the rulers are imagined to be gods themselves, like the Pharaohs of ancient Egypt, or the descendants of gods, like the Caesars of Rome. Religion is born.

Religion Provides Divine Sanction for Ruling Class

By time that the first written documents appear and some chronological record of history (at least of the history of the rulers) can be attempted — about 3000 B.C. in the Near East — religion

is already serving what has always been, and still is, its main purpose — to justify the domination and exploitation of the working people by a ruling class.

In agricultural societies, where the main source of economic wealth is farming the soil, the ruling class is the class of landowners. Throughout human history, the main form the political rule of landowners takes is monarchy, the king beginning as simply the largest and most powerful landowner. In ancient Egypt the whole religion was centered on the worship of the king as a god. This legitimized not only the rule of the Pharaoh (king) but of the whole Egyptian land-owning class.

Despite fierce class struggles by Egyptian peasants and craftsmen — rebellions never mentioned by most history books — the Egyptian religion always retained the idea of a divine king, and the power of the landlord class. The different conquerors of Egypt saw the wisdom of using the Egyptian religion to justify their power as well, and so supported it when they took over.

Greece

Greece made the transition from primitive communist — nomadic, hunting-and-gathering, tribal society without classes — to agricultural, class society much later than the Near Eastern kingdoms, and under their influence. Furthermore, Greek society developed around many separate cities, divided from one another by mountains and the sea. Strong merchant and craftsman classes developed alongside the landowners and peasantry. This led to a qualitatively different kind of class struggle within the Greek cities.

By 600 B.C. many Greek states had overthrown their kings, representing the dictatorship of the landlords, and established “democracies.” Democracy was a form of government that corresponded to a coalition, or armed truce, between the various powerful classes: landowners, or “aristocrats” (as they called themselves; the term means “the best men rule”), and merchants and craftsmen, the “demo” or “people”. But women, foreigners, and slaves were not considered to be part of the “people.”

Corresponding to the many Greek cities were the many Greek gods. In the “myths”, or stories about them, they were more or less equal, and often quarreled among themselves, as did the cities. Different cities, naturally, had different favorite gods.

Within a given city, different classes favored different gods. In Athens of the fifth century B.C.E. the merchants and craftsmen favored Hermes and Hephaestus. Hermes was a kind of messenger-god; Hephaestus, a blacksmith. These were gods of activity, corresponding to the industry of the democratic classes. The aristocrats expressed their different class interests by favoring Apollo, warrior, aristocrat, the god of “reason”, and an aristocrat himself. The temples of Apollo were not in the city at all, but out in the countryside, where the aristocracy dominated.

In the mid-fifth century B.C., when the power and wealth of Athenian democracy was at its height, the greatest temple built was the temple of Hephaestus. It was even larger than that of Athena, after whom the city was named and who represented the hope of all-class unity within the city — a hope never realized.

Small statues of Hermes, the messenger/merchant god, stood all around the town. During Athens’ war against Sparta, an aristocratic state, and other Greek states which wanted to break away from her grip (the Peloponnesian War), these statues of Hermes were suddenly mutilated. This was taken as a sign that the aris-

tocrats of Athens were really siding with Athens' enemies, in the hopes that, if they won, they'd overthrow the democracy and set up an aristocratic oligarchy, or "rule by a few". This is, in fact, exactly what happened eventually.

The Social and Economic Basis of the Origin of Monotheism

Democracy — the rivalry of different classes, and the coexistence of many Greek city states, represented the social basis of "polytheism", the worship of many gods. But by 333 B.C. the Greek city states had all been conquered by Alexander the Great, and 10 years later the whole eastern Mediterranean was under his power.

At the same time, Greek religion began to undergo a change. Less attention was paid by the ruling classes to the many gods. One god, "Father Zeus", was said to be the most powerful. Later he was even said to be the only god; the others were his servants, or even just Zeus himself in different form.

The evolution of monotheism is logical to the growth of empire building. Polytheism did not provide a good justification for a strong empire with one all-powerful ruler. Plurality in the world of the gods might appear to justify plurality in the political world. "One god" in heaven provided a better justification for "one emperor" on earth.

The first appearance of monotheism, the worship of only one god (in Greek, monos = "one", theos = "god") had been in the Persian Empire, where monotheism, at first suppressed, quickly became the official religion. An Egyptian Pharaoh, Ikhnamen, had tried to replace traditional Egyptian polytheism with the worship of one god, Aten (a sun god, like Apollo) in the 12th century B.C. But the Egyptian ruling classes were never won to this innovation, and returned to polytheism after his death.

The Hebrew God

The Hebrews originated as one of many nomadic peoples. Little is known for sure about their origins. The stories in the Old Testament are certainly not accurate history, like bourgeois theologians and misguided religious people think they are. The ancestors of the Jews may have come from Egypt at some time between 1600 - 1300 B.C.; the name of the legendary founder of Judaism, Moses, is Egyptian. Or the story of Egyptian slavery may be a much later reflection of a struggle between a Jewish temple in Egypt and another in Jerusalem, and have never happened at all!

The Old Testament myths relates that the Jewish upper classes, the landed aristocracy and royal house, were constantly oppressing and exploiting the peasants and city population. They naturally intermarried with aristocratic women from surrounding kingdoms, who brought their gods and goddesses with them. Even in the book of Genesis, stories like that of the "Sons of God" lying with the "daughters of men" show that Judaism was at first poly-theistic.

The Hebrews had until recently been a nomadic, hunting, gathering, and herding people. The stories about Abraham and his descendants in Genesis show that memories about the more-or-less egalitarian past were valued highly by the common people. They told of better times in the past, when there were tribal leaders but no kings or aristocrats, before the appearance of agriculture with the attendant exploitation of the peasantry.

The Hebrews lived "between the hammer and the anvil" — right between the huge Egyptian empire and a series of other empires: Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, Syrian. As a result the Hebrew kings suffered catastrophic defeats. It was easy for the "prophets," the religious spokespersons of the exploited classes, to lay the blame for the Jewish kings' defeats on their polytheism, and tie this to their oppression of the poor. They were "unfaithful to the true god."

In this way monotheism became, among the Jews, the watchword of the social critics who opposed exploitation. The Pentateuch, or first five books, were written up from older stories so as to date

the origins of the Hebrews to a time when there were no kings, no private property in land, and no priesthood. This was a standing contradiction and reproach to the contemporary state of affairs, with exploitation and injustice abounding, and with a temple cult presided over by aristocratic priests who were essential for the major religious rituals.

After the death of Alexander the Great in 323 B.C. the Jewish upper classes adopted Greek language, culture, and many philosophical and religious ideas. Meanwhile, among the exploited

classes of town and village, the center of Jewish religion moved away from the temple and priestly cult, presided over by these increasingly foreign-seeming aristocrats, and towards smaller, decentralized "synagogues" or meetings.

Christianity, therefore, drew on both traditions of monotheism — that of the Greek world, where it was a mainstay of a horribly oppressive, slave empire; and that of the Jewish world, where it was the symbol of resistance to ruling-class decadence in a world where materialism had never really developed.

Christianity: A Brief Outline

Sometime between the years 20 and 30 A.D. a Jewish teacher who called himself Joshua[1], after one of the great military leaders of Hebrew mythology, began to preach two interrelated ideas. He preached a war of the exploited peasants and the urban poor against both the Roman occupiers and the collaborationist Jewish upper classes. He saw this as a part of a religious reform, an effort to bring Judaea back to the "kingdom of god," that is, in conformity with god's wishes.

He first attached himself to the major religious reformer of the time, John the Baptizer, and continued on his own after John's imprisonment, probably taking some of John's followers with him. After much preaching and organizing work, Joshua entered into Jerusalem with his forces, greeted by a demonstration of popular

After the death of Alexander the Great in 323 B.C. the Jewish upper classes adopted Greek language, culture, and many philosophical and religious ideas.



support for his anti-Roman goals. He was announced as the Messiah, that is, the “anointed” political/religious leader, and occupied the great temple.

This act was an unmistakable challenge both to the Jewish upper classes (who comprised the temple priesthood), who exploited the masses as landlords and as collectors of the temple tax, and to their Roman masters, whose military garrison overlooked the temple. Upon the failure of the revolt its leader, Joshua, was captured and executed in the way the Romans reserved for rebels, by crucifixion.

Whether or not his followers believed that he had been resurrected from the dead, they continued his movement. His brother, James “the Just”, who succeeded Joshua, was a respected rabbi mentioned by the Jewish historian Josephus. The Acts of the Apostles, which survives in the New Testament in a heavily re-written version, concedes that the Christian movement after Joshua’s death was a part of Judaism, not a separate religion. It survived as such for at least several hundred years thereafter under the name of “Ebionites”, or “the Poor.” Apparently this was the real name of Joshua’s movement, since Paul refers to it by that name too.

However, Christianity as we know it is descended, not from Joshua, called Jesus in Greek, but from Paul. Paul, who admits he never met Jesus personally, was the devotee of a Greek otherworldly, mystery religion which modern scholars call Gnostic.

Religions of Imperialism

The Gnostic religions were strongly elitist and escapist. They originated as a result of the evolution of class society.

With Alexander the Great’s conquests, democracy ended for two thousand years. One oppressive, slave-holding empire succeeded another. Civil wars and slave revolts never succeeded in freeing the slaves, peasants or urban poor from exploitation.

Under these conditions, resistance seemed futile to many, and they sought escape in an afterlife. The vegetation religion of the early, communal society became a peasant religion of escape. Under the influence of wine, the peasants sought union with their god in spirit. Ceremonies were closed to outsiders; only the “initiated” could take part, and really achieve oneness with the Bacchus. Like many other gods and goddesses of vegetation, Bacchus was said to be killed and then reborn, just as people believed a seed had to “die” in the ground in order to be “reborn” as a new plant many times more splendid.

These religions were acceptable to the ruling classes because they laid the blame for suffering on human sin, not on exploitation. They were elitist and anti-egalitarian, since they taught that only a select few could really know what the god wanted. The educated middle classes were attracted to them because the violence of class struggle terrified them and they were repelled by elitism from uniting with the exploited poor and the slaves. “Gnostic”, or “wisdom” religions added a special role for the educated; only they could be the elect and really achieve unity with the god.

By the time of Jesus’ birth, Gnostic, otherworldly religions were everywhere in the Greek world. This is the immediate background for Christianity.

Paul may have been a Jew (as he claims in his own writings) or not; he was certainly a Gnostic. The earliest Christians had foreseen a better world in this life. Some of Jesus’ sayings can only be explained in this way. In addition, the fragments of Papias, the

earliest quotations (about 120 A.D.) from any Christian leader, make it clear that he thought in terms of a this-worldly paradise.

But Paul was already putting this off to the next world. Life on earth, then, became a punishment for inborn sin. This meant a severe, repressive government was needed to hold human sin in check, and Paul’s writings state in no uncertain terms that the government must be obeyed. This world also became a test; only those who were “good” — passive and obedient enough — would gain union with god after death.

Every aspect of Pauline Christianity marks it as a religion whose doctrine evolved to suit the needs of an oppressive slave-holders’ empire. Gone was the relative egalitarianism of the early mystery religions. In Christianity, the masses could only interact with the god — for forgiveness, for union (“communion”), for happiness (“blessing”) — through an authorized priest. To guarantee control over the priests who dealt with the common people, they were put into an authoritarian structure controlled by aristocrats, who alone were chosen as high officers of the church (bishops, archbishops, — the word “bishop” means “overseer” or “supervisor” in Greek, and was also one term used for the foremen who forced gangs of slaves to work faster). God was depicted as simply the greatest of all the slave owners and landlords, the “king of kings”, “lord of lords.”

The early Christian leadership mounted a sustained campaign to make Christianity acceptable to the Romans. The second century theologian Tertullian made the veiled threat: Christianity was spreading rapidly everywhere; if Christians wanted to return evil for evil, they could create tremendous disruption in the Empire. Yet, under the doctrine of the church “fathers,” Christians remained passive and obedient to the Emperor even when they were tortured to death in large numbers.

The message was clear: Christianity was an ideal religion for an oppressive empire. Any exploiter would love to have his subjects accept this highly authoritarian ideology, every aspect of which suited the interest of the land-owning ruling class. It was only a matter of time before some emperor recognized this.

Uses of Religion by the Roman Ruling Class

The Roman aristocracy had learned the importance of religion in controlling their own lower classes. The aristocratic historian Livy, in his history of the Roman republic, wrote thus about the (mythological) origins of Roman religion:

Numa Pompilius [an early king of Rome, 6th century B.C.E.] decided upon a step which he felt would prove more effective than anything else with a mob as rough and ignorant as the Romans were in those days. This was to inspire them with the fear of the gods.

He then made up a story about his meeting at night with the goddess Egeria, by whose authority he set up Roman religion practices. According to Michael Grant, “almost every educated Roman . . . held precisely this view of his national religion and mythology, that it was something to keep the people quiet . . .”

The historian Polybius (2nd century B.C.E.) “expresses the belief that the ruling class arranges matters in such a way on account of the masses, who need to be impressed and ‘restrained’” (Grant, 226; cf. Polybius VI, 56). Scaevola, the chief priest, wrote a few years later that

it is expedient that populations should be deceived in the matter of religion.

Scaevola's own father, also a priest, had put together some of the chief religious myths of Rome. The famous aristocratic apologist Cicero, noted for his hatred of any Roman who sided with the lower classes, stated in his Laws (II, 12) that

the people's constant need for the advice and authority of the conservative upper classes is what holds the state together.

The significant thing about this is how deliberately and consciously this use of religion for political purposes by the Roman upper classes was. It was the Roman emperor Constantine who declared toleration for Christianity and then made sure he controlled the myths that embodied it.

However, this was not basically any different than was done in ancient Greece and by the Hebrew ruling classes during Old Testament times. In Genesis, for example, Solomon is made to descend directly from Esau the Edomite and Heth the Canaanite because Jewish kings wanted to claim these lands. The whole story of the Egyptian Captivity of the Jews may well be due to an attempt by the Jerusalem priesthood to make a rival Jewish temple in Egypt look illegitimate. Certainly the Old Testament is no more "historically accurate" than the new.

Roman Rulers Adopt Christianity

Before acceding to the throne in 307 AD, Constantine had been "Caesar" (adopted son and successor) to the emperor Diocletian (284-305 AD). He had participated in the last, and the largest, attempt to wipe out Christianity. Diocletian was trying to keep the empire together. It was a massive system of class exploitation that had outgrown the technical ability of the emperors to unite. Constantine declared toleration for Christianity about the same time he built Constantinople and divided the Empire in two sections, East and West, in order to try to hold it together, while in reality recognizing the inevitability of division.

Under Diocletian, Christianity had been attacked because it challenged traditional Roman religion. On the ideological level, the Romans had tried to enforce loyalty among the different peoples in the empire by demanding that the local ruling classes, whom the Romans manipulated and through whom they ruled, make the Roman emperor one of the gods in their religion. The Jewish lower classes refused, and the Romans crushed them in two massive rebellions (66-73 and 132-5 AD).

When the Christians also refused to sacrifice to the emperor, the Romans persecuted them as followers of a Jewish rebel, as they knew well Joshua/Jesus had been. The four New Testament gospels were composed largely to rewrite history and convince early Christians and the Romans themselves that Joshua/Jesus had not in fact been the rebel the Romans had killed him for being.

Constantine's acceptance of Christianity as a favored religion represented his recognition that Christianity was an ideal ideology for the empire. Since Jesus belonged to no ethnic group — Paul had made Jesus' Judaism irrelevant to his message — he was the ideal "abstract man" for all peoples. Christians were not pacifists — the imperial army contained one legion made up entirely of Christian soldiers — but were so loyal to their bishops, or "overseers", that they would never fight back against oppression even when their families were tortured to death before their eyes.

Constantine demanded the Church leaders get together in a number of Church Councils to hammer out a unified "line" or doctrine. If the Church were to help unify the empire, the differences in doctrine that had grown up over time, and which reflected the relative autonomy of the bishops in different parts of the huge empire, had to be done away with and ideological unity imposed. The Emperor controlled the outcome of all of the church's Councils.

Orthodoxy

This marks a qualitative step in ruling-class control. For the first time in Western history, an empire of many diverse ethnic and language groups was united under one ideological institution that claimed god-given rights. The international ruling class of the late Roman Empire had a single religious ideology that supported the bosses regardless of where or who they were.

The emperor called together the church leaders (the "overseers", or "bishops") to work out a common set of teachings and a monolithic leadership. If Christianity was to be of any use to the Empire's ruling class, it had to serve as a force for unity behind the emperor.

Since Jesus belonged to no ethnic group — Paul had made Jesus' Judaism irrelevant to his message — he was the ideal "abstract man" for all peoples.

But during the 275 or so years of its existence, the Christian church, like the Empire itself, had developed into a poly-centric organization. The different bishops in the major urban centers of the Empire — Christianity was mainly a religion of the cities; hence the Latin word *paganus*, or "country-dweller", became synonymous with "non-Christian" — were more or less independent of one another, and had their own differences in doctrine and interpretation of the Jesus story. There was no agreement on what "books" or stories should be considered divinely inspired ("canonical") — that is, there was no agreement on what a "Bible" should be made up of.

Most important for the Empire were the questions of Church leadership and the nature of God. There was no one Church leader whose decision was binding and final. Any bishop was free to teach his own version of the religion in his area. Also, the question of whether Christianity was a religion of several gods, or of one god only, had not yet really been decided.

These issues were crucial because the Church's poly-centrism mirrored the poly-centrism that was tearing the Empire apart. Since 66 A.D. most emperors had come to power not from Rome, but by gaining a power base in a distant province and overthrowing the current emperor.

The rival leaders and teachings of the church, if left unchanged, would be a threat to the unity that Constantine wanted, since they would legitimize regional conflicts of interest and multiple leaders. Constantine demanded that the authority of the bishop of Rome be recognized as supreme; he wanted the leader in Rome where he could control him.

The question of the nature of god was even more important. Following late Greek religions, Christianity had developed a notion of at least three “divine beings” — a father (identified with Yahweh, the God of the Israelites), a son (Jesus), and a “spirit of god” somehow different from the other two. A plurality of divine beings in heaven would surely legitimize the existence of a plurality of political rulers on earth.

However, if Jesus the “son” were not really a human being but only god the father in human form, then his sacrifice never really took place, since a god can’t really die. So urging the exploited to “be like Jesus”, suffer meekly, “turn the other cheek,” — to submit without protest to the injustices of the rulers of this world — would make no sense, because a mere mortal cannot imitate a god. For the religion to help unify the empire and strengthen the authority of the emperor, there had to be one and only one god. But for Christianity to appeal to the exploited and teach them to love and obey their exploiters, Jesus had to be human.

Constantine demanded that the Church leaders solve this logically insoluble problem. They came up with the doctrine of the “Trinity” — there really are three distinct entities, and yet there is only one god. Since this makes no sense, it was called a “mystery”, a term meaning “believe it and don’t ask questions.”

The authoritarian nature of the Church, and through it of the Empire, was thereby doubly reinforced. “One god in heaven” meant there should be “one emperor on earth.” Rebellion against the emperor was therefore “heresy”, a religion offense as well. And, since Church doctrines were no longer logical, they could not be questioned. All the thinking was to be done by the Church leaders, helped, of course, by the Emperor. The role of the masses was simply to obey without understanding.

So the idea of “orthodoxy” — Greek for “correct teaching” — was created. This was a qualitative step forward in ruling-class ideological control. There was to be one set of carefully-defined beliefs inculcated into everyone from birth. These teachings were the same regardless of ethnic group, language, and social class.

No questioning them was allowed, no means provided whereby they could be legitimately questioned. All deviation from them was a sin, punishable by condemnation to an eternity of torture in Hell, compared to which the life of the most oppressed slave was a paradise. Deviation from these ideas was at the same time a political crime, punishable by the state through torture, imprisonment and death. The word “heresy” in Greek means “choice”, something the masses must never have.

Progressive Aspects of Christianity for its Time

Christian ideology suppressed ancient scientific thought, sup-

pressed ancient ideas of toleration towards religious and cultural differences. Ancient learning and literature was suppressed and even destroyed as sinful. To the bourgeois atheist, all this appears to be the depths of ignorance and backwardness.

But as dialectical materialists we must recognize the progressive aspects of Christianity as well. Christianity was universal, transcending the ancient tribal religions based on one ethnic group, just as the Empire united the Mediterranean, Western Europe and North Africa into a single political and economic unity.

Christianity encompassed the notion that all human beings were equal, at least in the sight of god. In so doing it provided the germ of a criticism of inequality on earth, even while guaranteeing the security of that inequality as part of the inscrutable will of god. Christian orthodoxy established the idea that there is only one truth, though it displaced the search for that truth from the material world to the realm of ideas.

Christianity gave concrete recognition to the reality of the class struggle in another way — by recognizing the age-old desire of the exploited masses for a classless society free of exploitation, a return to the “golden age” or “the garden of paradise,” and promised this

to the masses, though relegating it to a realm after death. It recognized the class struggle, even while designed to control it in the interests of the ruling class.

However, other ancient religions which competed with Christianity for recognition by the Empire’s ruling class contained these ideas also. And several of the Christian “heresies” gave far more recognition to the poor than did orthodox



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God was the great slave-owner, a god of fear, who had his own son tortured to death by crucifixion and who did not shrink from inflicting the worst punishments imaginable on humans disobedient to his will. He demanded absolute obedience not only in act but even in thought.

In order to justify the slave-camp of horrors that the Roman Empire was for most of its inhabitants, Christianity borrowed from Gnosticism the notion of fallen human nature. Human beings were declared to be naturally evil, deserving only torment and death. They could be saved only by god’s “grace”, which only the church could dole out. And the church only gave this “grace” in return for strict obedience! The constant threat of disobedience, even in thought, was hell, an eternity of the worst tortures.

This also justified the unrelieved brutality of the ruling classes. Harsh government was needed to keep vicious human nature from running amok. As for exploitation, torture and slavery — well, they were no more than fallen human nature deserved, and anyway the patient slave would be rewarded in heaven for a life of suffering on earth. As Joe Hill, an American working-class leader of the early

"The job of revolutionary minded workers and youth is to make sure that millions are won to the ideology of communism . "Workers of the Unite to Break All the Chains that Oppress Us!" can only be achieved fighting for communism. All religions, just like capitalism and all class societies, are essentially elitist and undemocratic."

20th century, sang, the church offered the exploited "Pie in the Sky When You Die."

The pagan Roman emperors had only required their subjects to take an oath, and perform a symbolic sacrifice to a Roman god or to the emperor. This form of ideological control was obviously weak and ineffective. A person could perform these rites and speak the right words while inwardly remaining disloyal. Under Christianity Roman subjects were supposed to constantly search their innermost beings to rid themselves of disobedient thoughts.

The Church was run by the ruling classes, who filled virtually all the top positions. It also became a large landowner itself, exploiting slave, and later serf, labor. This direct ruling-class domination was necessary, of course, to guarantee that Christianity continued to embody the ideological values of the ruling classes.

Heresy

Under these conditions, any criticism of social and economic conditions had to express itself as a disagreement with the orthodox theology that justified the status quo. The ideology of the exploited took the form of "heresies," deviant versions of Christianity that rejected some of the ruling-class ideas. Since the Church hierarchy reflected the class structure of society, low-ranking priests from or close to the exploited classes were usually involved.

The sexism of the ruling classes — always an important aspect of ruling-class ideology, an attempt to blame women for their super-exploitation — reflected itself in the second-class status the Church forced on women, who were blamed as the cause of sin in humankind and a constant threat to male virtue.

Pre-Christian beliefs, usually more egalitarian and hostile to the oppressive church and relying on traditional magic, persisted among peasants, especially women. They were termed "witchcraft," and by the 18th century nine million women and children, more or less, had been tortured to death as "witches" by Catholic and Protestant churches alike.

The Protestant Reformation took place in the 1500s as the qualitative culmination of many social and political changes that had been developing for several centuries, and these were due to the growth of a money economy and production for a market. Capitalism in its early stages undermined the "feudal" economy, and the bourgeoisie — the banking, merchant, and craft classes in the cities — became more important economically and politically in relation to the landowning aristocracy upon whose class rule feudalism was based.

Protestantism preserved most of the traditional doctrines of Catholicism, but adapted the ideology to suit the new rule of the capitalist classes organized into centralized nation-states, the political form taken by capitalist rule. Today mainstream Protestantism is mainly confined to Northern and Western Europe, and

those areas of the world like North America colonized by it. Fundamentalist Protestantism is being promoted aggressively among the working classes as a violently anti-communist and anti-working class ideology, especially among super-exploited workers in the formerly colonial world.

Communist Struggle Against Religion but Organize Among Workers with Religion Beliefs

We communists fight for the working class. Workers cannot be free of exploitation and the miseries of capitalism until they have overthrown the ruling classes and run society by themselves. History has shown that no capitalist has ever given up power peacefully. Workers need to organize their own revolutionary forces under a communist Party to fight for a society without any bosses, racism, war, wage slavery, The goal of PLP is a communist world where production be for need not for the profits of a few capitalists.

Even though communists wage ideological and political struggle against religion and the bosses who use it to preserve their profit system, we do organize workers and their allies, no matter what their creed, nationality, gender or skin color might be. Even though Bush, Osama bin Laden, Blair; etc. are doing all they can to promote religious warfare as a guise for the fight for control of the Persian Gulf oil flow and profits, millions worldwide (Christians, Moslems, Jews, Buddhists and non-religious workers and youth) joined together in mass international protests against the war in Iraq. Many are beginning to see that capitalism and religion mean endless wars for profits.

The job of revolutionary minded workers and youth is to make sure that millions are won to the ideology of communism . "Workers of the Unite to Break All the Chains that Oppress Us!" can only be achieved fighting for communism. All religions, just like capitalism and all class societies, are essentially elitist and undemocratic. Communists are materialists. We must use science to unmask these backwards ideas that hold back the progress of humanity..

Throughout the ages, nothing has held back the struggle of the exploited for justice, nothing has caused as much passivity, as religion. We encourage all comrades and friends to criticize this article and write further articles exposing how religion keeps oppresses us all and serves the bosses. ☺

JAILBREAK! An Introduction to Dialectical Materialism

You're already in jail!

Not a jail with bars, but another kind. Our minds are imprisoned by capitalist ways of thinking. The schools, the cultural outlets like TV, the press, books, music, movies - you name it - bombard us with anti-communism, racism, patriotism, male chauvinism (sexism), and lots of other rotten ideas. Bad as that is, it's not the worst.

The real jail is that the system trains us to think very little, to think superficially, or not to think at all. Capitalist training leads us to a shallow view of what's real, what's affecting our lives, and to make one-sided, very personal and narrow judgments about news events or historical facts. We are not encouraged to understand the fundamentals about how economic systems develop - and how to challenge the capitalist system when it threatens us.

The result: The best of us make too many mistakes. And we don't necessarily learn from our mistakes or those of others. Even when we recognize the evils of capitalist society, we're often not prepared to fight it on a long-term or life-long basis.

Jailbreak! is a short introduction to dialectical materialism - the method used by committed communists to understand reality. It is the way to make clear the reasons and powers behind events we read about in books and newspapers and hear about on TV. And we then use dialectical materialism to figure out what actions to take as communists to change what needs to be changed. We use dialectical materialism again to identify what went right, what went wrong, and what is the next step.

Appearance and Essence

Over thousands of years, many people have learned the hard way that things aren't always as they seem. Appearance is not total reality. Yet, TV, advertising, music, fashion, and other cultural powers train us to focus on the superficial.

To break out of jail we must first learn how to go from the outer appearance to the inner essence of events we are involved in. We must stop taking things at face value.

We can learn to see, for example, that what is going on in the Middle East, which appears to be a war on terrorism is, in essence, a fight for oil and imperialist control. The important, underlying truth is that U. S. capitalists are trying to maintain their dominance of the Middle East, and fighting off rival capitalists who want a bigger piece of the pie. Dialectical materialism uses the categories of "appearance" and "essence" to make this crucial distinction, between what is superficial and misleading, and what is the not-so-obvious underlying truth.

Philosophy: The Study of Something Real

Communists recognize that capitalism trains us to be

blind to the true social basis of the real world, not to see clearly and be objective. So, a simple definition of philosophy from a communist's point of view is the study of a process in its depth, its inner nature or essence. That is our goal in studying dialectical materialism: To develop an unbiased, objective understanding of the world.

This definition at least picks philosophy out of the clouds and puts it in the real world. Communists learn to use the philosophy of dialectical materialism to understand any process taking place in the real world - from making cars, delivering health care, and educating children to making revolution. We want to understand not the superficial outer facts, but the inner basics.

Laws and Universality

How does the philosophy of dialectical materialism help us understand the essence of things? First, it focuses on change. To really understand any reality, we must study how it changes.

By studying the way many processes develop, we begin to understand that certain things are common to all of them. We begin to see that there are laws governing all developments - not the kind of laws that politicians make up, but laws in the sense of patterns that all processes naturally must follow. When you drop a ball, it goes down, not up. We know this as the law of gravity. When you put fire under water, it boils. By studying many processes throughout history and in our everyday lives, we begin to understand that certain laws are universal; they apply to all processes.

Universal is the crucial word. There is real similarity between boiling water and making a revolution.

Ideas Come from the Real World

We all get ideas. The question is how do we actually get them? Obviously, you are not born with them. Genes or inborn traits do not produce ideas. Correct ideas come out of our own experiences, our friends' and family's experience, what workers around us do or don't do, as well as from those who lived before us and the books that describe their experiences. A scientist can make a breakthrough, but a breakthrough by any one individual comes as a result of the efforts of others, both good and bad, in that field of study. Your ideas do not come simply from what goes on in your head. Your mind must work with material from the real world, a world that exists independently of you. That material comes into people's thinking through practice - practical work in the real world, to change it. The practice of work, sports, class struggle, scientific experiments, war, etc. connects us with the material reality outside ourselves and lets us learn how it works.

Basically all correct ideas come from practice and our attempts to explain practice. The main source of incorrect ideas, however, is the capitalists' attempts to get us to buy

wrong points of view, ideas that would help them if they can fool us. Ideas that say "races" exist and are unequal, that capitalism is good for workers, that God wants you to obey the government, etc., would have died out long ago if they weren't mighty useful to capitalists. These lies are their ideology, that is, ideas that they defend because they benefit from them, not because they are true.

Dialectical materialism not only provides tools for exposing and rejecting capitalist ideology, but also is the effective way for oppressed people to search for the truth. In mature capitalism, which is ripe for revolution, the working class vitally benefits from the truth, while capitalists are vitally harmed by it. So, considering who needs truth today and who stands behind efforts to seek it, truth today becomes a weapon for the working class, which helps us break out of the capitalists' jail.

Materialism vs. Idealism

To break out of this jail, we need plans based on sound theory. While theory is very important, a correct theory is not carved in stone, but changes as it is put into practice by taking political action as communists. We must draw lessons from our practice: What succeeded? What failed? Was there a surprise? Could it have been anticipated? Based on these evaluations, theory is corrected and it advances - followed by further practice, further evaluation, and so on. Practice makes perfect, you might say.

This is what it means to be a materialist. The real world comes first, and correct ideas come from practical experience with that reality.

The ruling class pushes a different philosophy: Idealism. This isn't idealism in the moral sense, where it generally means generosity and selflessness. These are the last things on the bosses' minds. What they encourage in schools, cultural institutions or in the media is philosophical idealism. This is the belief that events in the real world are determined primarily by ideas, by the minds of individuals or by supernatural powers. Idealists see ideals or spiritual forces as primary. They claim that ideals like justice, freedom, and reason, or "God's plan" for the universe, dominate material reality and make it conform to those ideals. These false ideas would make revolution impossible.

One of the most important kinds of philosophical idealism is religion, which is one of the bosses' primary weapons to confuse and control our minds. Religious leaders are used to take advantage of people's desire to understand and improve the condition of their lives. They tell us we can control our own destiny through prayer and ritual. They encourage us not to struggle but to use spiritual methods and to focus on personal change, to follow God's laws or "eternal truths" about moral and ethical behavior. These mystical ideas are the core of religion. They encourage respect for the status quo, which means the rich continue to hold power. "Eternal truths" are a way of denying the constant change, which is the real-world truth of dialectical materialism. The promise of change gives us the energy to take matters into our own hands.

Religious leaders are mouthpieces used to convince us

to give up struggle in this life and comfort ourselves with the idea of a better "afterlife." Islamic fundamentalists, for instance, say that they want to overthrow "Western" capitalism, but they do not support the alternative that will benefit most people - worker control of society, production, and distribution under communism. Catholic and Protestant leaders mainly ally themselves directly with the wealthiest and most powerful capitalists. Others promote "liberal" offshoots that focus on persuading the poorest believers to turn away from a struggle for real power - communist power - and try instead for a few more crumbs and a more "spiritual" life.

Religion is one of capitalism's ideological weapons. But when the brutal reality of a system run for the profit of a few becomes clear to more and more people and they begin to resist more effectively, bosses are ready to use other weapons to keep things working their way. Fascist terror is, has been, and will always be capitalism's last resort. When the chips are down, cops and troops will try to jail and shoot rebels, and defend the bosses' property, banks, and factories. But this hard line is not their first choice. They try to keep us hooked as long as possible on their ideological drugs.

That is why we must learn how to break out of their jail.

Besides religion, other kinds of idealism also provide powerful ways for capitalism to prevent people from challenging ruling-class domination. Along with many other countries, U. S. capitalism claims to represent the ideals of freedom and democracy. According to the idealist way of thinking, the system should be judged by this ideal, not by the fact that reality shows a political system completely dominated by the rich, who grab the wealth created by the labor of millions of workers and send armies of working-class youths to protect capitalist assets overseas. No matter how much wear and tear the ideal shows, the idealist will tell you to polish it up by electing a "better" or "more intelligent" president and a few more liberal senators. Their bottom line: There is no need to make a revolution because ideals will eventually realize themselves!

The ruling class pushes idealism because it is a way of thinking that they hope will do the impossible. Those now in power want to stop the wheel of history - the inevitable evolutionary process of practice/ideas/practice that is shown to us by dialectical materialism. In today's era, that dialectical process leads to the smashing of capitalism. They want to confuse us about this truth.

The downfall of the old international communist system has given the rulers further ammu-

JAILBREAK!

dition to support their idealist philosophy. Now they can say (and they do) that even if a communist revolution successfully challenges the capitalist ideal, it won't work. But we say we can examine and learn from faulty practice - and do better.

The More Things Change, The More They Change

Despite the cynical and defeatist motto of the ruling class that the more things change the more they stay the same, things do change. When human beings developed, the first kind of society was communalism or primitive communism. Then there were slave societies. That gave way to feudalism, which was conquered by capitalism. Then came socialism in Russia and China, when the working class took power in countries for the first time. Due to the mistaken politics of the Russian and Chinese communists, workers' power did not lead to a communist classless society, but was reversed and returned to capitalism long before the USSR collapsed. But if we learn from these mistakes and failures, and draw the correct lessons from them, they set the stage for communism.

Throughout history society has made fundamental changes in the way it is organized. And technology continually creates new possibilities for society. All these changes are based on the step-by-step accumulated practice of masses of people. This often means that change comes more slowly than we might like.

Who wouldn't like things to move faster in a revolutionary direction? Often fundamental changes take a long time from the viewpoint of one individual. That is why a long-range perspective is crucial. We must be able to combine urgency with patience. With such a perspective, we can see that the Russian Revolution of 1917, the most profound development of the 20th Century, occurred only 85+ years ago. This is just a blink in the eye of history! Previous changes of social systems have taken centuries, even thousands of years. Today the opportunity for our Party for more vigorous practice and for party growth increases as the bosses' system becomes increasingly sick and decadent.

Understanding Limits

All human life and struggle are bounded by limits. People do not live to be 300 years old. We cannot go for weeks without sleep. There are limits at each stage of a process. As we struggle toward communism, our Party must correctly identify the limits to its practice - while constantly working to broaden those limits. There is mortal

danger in either recklessly ignoring limits or in snuggling comfortably within those limits.

Our Party line is based on building a mass party - the revolutionary development of millions of workers. But suppose the next Central Committee meeting calls on every party district to take to the streets, capture City Hall and seize political power. You don't like that one? Why? Because such a move would be suicidal. We are too small and our base is still limited. We would call such an action reckless, even though all-out power is one of our long-term (strategic) goals. Tactics that go too far ahead of our base's limited size and development would lead to destruction - to the end of our Party as a part of a process.

Now let's look forward to the time when the Party really has millions of members and tens of millions in its base. The Central Committee then calls on its members and base to go to the polls and elect the editor of Challenge-Desafio president. A bad idea! This parliamentary strategy would also end the process of developing as a revolutionary party. It is too conservative, too timid.

In the mid-1960s, Indonesia had the largest communist party outside the USSR and China, with millions of followers. But its leaders followed a parliamentary line rather than develop workers' understanding of the need for armed struggle. The U.S. and other Western powers built up the Indonesian military and then encouraged the military leaders under General Suharto to slaughter hundreds of thousands of communists and their followers.

Too reckless, too timid - both are dead-ends. These errors have brought about the failure and the decline of many revolutionary groups. That is why we oppose terrorism and why we also attack playing everything safe. But finding the best answer to each reckless-or-timid question requires experience, based on dialectical materialist leadership.

Political Practice Broadens the Party's Limits

The limits of a small party are different from those of a large party. The Party now circulates about 10,000 Challenge-Desafio newspapers. This cannot be the limit forever. It shouldn't be the limit even now. But let's say this is the best we can do at the present. However, continued Challenge-Desafio sales and Party growth will expand the current limits.

Every time we carry out successful political work, our practice changes the limits of what we can do next. That influences the limits of the entire Party. We have to be ever on the alert, scrutinizing, investigating circumstances internal and external to the Party, keeping ourselves rooted in basics, so that we can take advantage of a situation and expand our limits. Sometimes the opportunity can be right under our noses. Often events off the job can be a spark used to widen our work on and off the job in a revolutionary direction.

Imperialist nationalist wars such as World War 1 that started in 1914 and the Vietnam War of the 1960s have historically been the events that sharpen people's sense of the fundamental conflict between their governments and the wel-

fare of the general public. Those are the times when the struggle for communist ideas makes the most progress.

But these great events don't come along often. So we must learn how to take greatest advantage of opportunities as they unfold, such as the dramatic worldwide opposition to the U.S. drive to invade Iraq. And not only the threat of imperialist war. For instance, the notorious neglect by Catholic bishops and archbishops - the shepherds of the church - in caring for the weakest members of their flock, children under attack by predatory priests, has created a major crisis in the church. The disappearance of living-wage jobs, as globalization drives work to the poorest-paid workers around the world, can open workers' eyes to the need for international solidarity. The stock market collapse and revelations of corporate dishonesty in recent years shake the confidence of even the best-paid workers that they can safely provide for themselves and their families and ignore the greed of millionaire corporate thieves who control their conditions of work. And then there are the repeated attacks of the police, racist attacks, attacks on strikers and demonstrators.

Of course, bosses handle these exposures by the "Rotten Apple" theory: Clean out a few bad guys and keep the system. But Party members must be able to analyze on the spot whether the Party has moved quickly and vigorously in unison to draw the real lessons for the masses from each of these developments. Can we expand our limits as a party by reaching out to well-meaning Catholics upset by the split between the church's promises and the reality of its practice? Can we elevate people's hate for the individual cops they face day by day and build an understanding that cops mainly function as capitalism's shock troops, keeping a lid on strikes, protests and rebellions? Can we bring anti-war action to the higher level: anti-capitalism?

Bosses Ideas and One-Sidedness

The ruling class trains us, with some success, to be one-sided and only focus on part of the big picture. One way of dividing and weakening the working class is to make differences among workers primary. In fact what workers have in common is primary. For example, the bosses push the concept of "race" to brand us and to break us up. The racist bosses say: "Black students and workers are never the equals of whites. Immigrants (unless they are white) are robbing us blind." Thus, other workers and students are supposed to hate blacks or immigrants, rather than bosses, our real enemies.

Bosses also encourage the idea that men and women are vastly different in their outlook, emotions, and values. They use this lie to foster male chauvinism (sexism) and to exploit women workers even more than they exploit men. Then the bosses try to convince women to view their exploitation in a non-class way: Women are pushed to view men, not the ruling class, as their main enemy. To the extent that workers and others go along with rulers' racism and male chauvinism, capitalism rakes in huge profits and the fight-back is split up.

These days the bosses are particularly anxious to push nationalism. They want us to think that workers and bosses

have common interests just because they live in the same country or share a language or ethnic background. The media's patriotic frenzy in the aftermath of 9/11 is a perfect example of promoting this idea. The bosses need nationalism and patriotism to recruit soldiers for their oil wars and get the families of those soldiers to accept their killing and being killed in a war for oil. But the U. S. military doesn't fight for workers' interests, only for bosses' profits. The truth is that workers don't have a country, since bosses own them all, and workers of all countries and ethnic backgrounds are truly allies against imperialist wars and the other evils of capitalism.

Reality: Regardless of sex, color or nation, all workers are much more alike than different. When we think objectively about sameness and difference, it is clear that workers' interests as workers are pitted against those of their bosses.

Learning to understand whether sameness or difference is primary is an important part of getting to the essence of things.

Dialectics' First Law is Contradiction and the Unity of Opposites

Workers and bosses are locked in class struggle. In reality, this is a fight to the death, whether we recognize it or not. The workers can win only if they destroy the ruling class, its armed power, its state apparatus, its culture, and its philosophy. What do we mean by the unity of opposites when we have a fight to the death like this? Workers and bosses are not united by politics or philosophy, but by the social relationships of capitalism. They are the opposing sides in a battle: Capitalists try to exploit workers, and workers resist. They are locked together - united - in battle.

The unity of opposites is the most important idea of dialectical materialism. It means a unity in which the two sides struggle against and interfere with each other. Opposites which can't be separated, but which struggle against each other, make a dialectical contradiction. This is different from contradiction in the ordinary sense of saying one thing and then saying something else that is inconsistent with it

There are dialectical contradictions in every process, from the attraction and repulsion inside an atom to the conflicting political ideas in the Party. These contradictions make everything change. Opposites, while united in struggle, create change or motion because of that struggle. Finally one side wins out, and a new stage is reached. But struggle never ends, since the new stage will hold a new contradiction.

All material things and conditions are - simul-

JAILBREAK!

taneously - a unity and a conflict of opposites. The unity represents the thing's ability to persist, to remain recognizable as such a thing during its life, which is temporary. The conflict describes the partial changes always going on within the thing and the eventual destruction of the unity, the end of the thing's temporary life. Unity is temporary, limited. Conflict (struggle) is never-ending, absolute. As Lenin noted (in Philosophical Notebooks): "The unity (coincidence, identity, equal action) of opposites is conditional, temporary, transitory, relative. The struggle of mutually exclusive opposites is absolute, just as development and motion are absolute."

The Party understands the real, objective nature of the class struggle and brings into this struggle the idea that revolution is necessary. The ideas of Marxism-Leninism do not fall from the sky, nor do they arise all by themselves from the class struggle. If they have never heard it before, workers will never wake up one morning saying: "We need the dictatorship of the proletariat. We need to build a new state that serves our interests." Communists bring these ideas to the working class because we know - from scientific study and from practice - that only the working class has the need and the power to do away with capitalism. In this sense we are the fire under the water. The hotter we make it for the bosses, the sooner things will boil up and the revolution will prevail. Class struggle is a contradiction, a struggle between linked opposites.

Resolve Contradictions by Sharpening Them

The way to resolve a contradiction is to intensify it, to make the struggle of the opposite sides stronger. If we want to speed up progress in class struggle, we need to expose the class contradiction and make it more intense by arousing the workers' side. This includes sharpening the contradiction between revolution and the false hopes of reform. Increasing the flame makes the water boil faster, which leads to the creation of steam. Building the Party through increased class struggle leads to revolution.

But things are far more complex than they seem. For example, if we place a flame under a rock, the rock will take far longer than the water to change in composition. You can snap a twig with your fingers, but you can't snap a branch of a tree barehanded. You can break a wooden pencil with your fingers but you may not be able to break a pen that is just as thick.

The Internal is Primary

Contradictions in a struggle are neither all equal nor all the same. Their internal make-up is

stronger than their external contradictions. If a chicken sits on a fertilized egg long enough, a chick will hatch. That chicken can sit on a rock forever, and it won't produce a chick. The internal structures of the egg and the rock make the difference; their internal contradictions are primary in determining how they will change and develop. Today, at this stage of the struggle, the ruling class is stronger than our Party. The bosses dominate the working class. We could decide that because the ruling class is too strong, we should give up. Some people do give up, and many more think about it, fall for the idea that you can't fight City Hall.

Another way of giving up is misdirecting your efforts - falling for the trap of the "lesser evil." Instead of attacking the wage/profit system and control of the means of production by capitalist profiteers, people try to make examples of "good" bosses and the "bad apples." Though deep down most of us realize that politicians won't deliver on their promises, we often "give up" by finding some reason to support the least bad or the more "intelligent" candidate, or the candidate who appeals to nationalism or ethnic pride.

We must be convinced that we not only can fight City Hall but must destroy it, because we understand that communism will never be voted in while the ruling class holds power. We struggle to make ourselves stronger so the bosses cannot defeat us or break us. We don't rely on their laws or elections.

While the external pressures from the ruling class are important, these attacks are not primary. The Party will go under only if it is too weak internally to withstand attacks. The Soviet Union went under, but not mainly because of U. S. imperialism. The decline of the international communist movement and ultimately the total collapse of Soviet socialism can be traced ultimately to ideological weaknesses. In the USSR, the Communist Party built a nation vigorous enough to fight off the combined armed forces of Western capitalism during the early days of workers' power and then to achieve victory over Hitler's fascist forces. But the Party also allowed the corrupting influence of money, wages (material incentives), production for the market, nationalism, and special privileges to remain strong. The inevitable result was the revival of capitalist relationships and the growth of a new capitalist class that eventually took over, reversed workers' rule, and restored capitalism in Russia, long before the '90s collapse of the USSR.

Although intense pressures from the outside started immediately after the 1917 revolution in Russia, the eventual downfall of the Soviet Union some 70 years later was due essentially to weaknesses within the old communist movement, and ultimately, to contradictions within socialism itself, as opposed to communism.

Why We Can Win

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

We must take the enemy into full account tactically (short-term), but realize our own strategic (long-term) strength. Societies do change, and when they are ripe for change, the people in power cannot prevent it. The internal contradictions of the capitalist system drive it toward war, fascism, and economic and political crises. The strengths of capitalism are temporary and superficial. Its weaknesses run deep and increase over time. Potentially the working class is the most powerful class and the communist PLP can galvanize it to realize this potential in the long run.

Contradiction is Everywhere but Friends are not Enemies

One word of caution. Contradictions arise not only between opposing classes but also among friends. All contradictions have to be intensified in order to resolve them and move to a new set of more advanced contradictions. However, we must use different tactics to struggle with friends than we use to fight the enemy. The goals are different. When comrades struggle with one another, our aim is to reach a higher level of unity. In fighting the bosses we want to sharpen differences in order to smash the enemy and establish workers' power (the dictatorship of the proletariat). In struggling with comrades and friends, we aim to defeat wrong ideas and attitudes. Both kinds of struggle require making the contradictions more intense, but the methods are different because the goals are different.

Determining tactics for our struggles is very difficult and complex. A struggle among comrades when some think of abandoning the dictatorship of the proletariat as a goal of communist revolution should lead to a more intense contradiction than arguing over the choice of a street corner for a Party rally. There are differences and differences. A good deal of judgment must be used to determine the tactics for all internal struggles. Figuring out for example how to sharpen the class struggle and build the Party within the mass movement is complicated.

In the final analysis a Party collective must decide what is the right thing to do. A collective that acts together and tests its ideas in practice will be able to find the truth better than individuals can. The old saying is right: Two heads are better than one.

Capitalist society trains us to believe that what an individual thinks is actually true and that "my" ideas truly explain the real world. In fact, in most cases the real world can be seen more clearly by the many, not the one or the few. Individualism, in the capitalist sense, is negative.

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

One final note on contradiction. It used to be thought that inanimate objects had no life or contradictions of their own. The development of inorganic chemistry showed otherwise - chemical compounds break down because of their internal contradictions. Book collectors and libraries have learned that books and paper disintegrate with age, so they preserve them by encasing them in glass. Paper is now treated chemically to last longer.

Even a desk has an inner life - molecules constantly colliding with one another. The desk is vulnerable to the atmosphere, which can influence the rate at which it deteriorates. There are contradictions in everything - no exceptions. Everything changes. When we understand this law of motion, we become more able to do better political work. And we are also better equipped to deal objectively with contradictions in our thoughts and actions.

Dialectics' Second Law: Quantity Can Turn Into Quality

Suddenly it's spring! Yesterday the branches were bare. Today green leaves are all over. Parents worry that their child is two years old and hasn't yet said a clear word. Suddenly the speechless child starts spouting sentences. You age with your friends and hardly notice changes. Then you go to a class reunion and suddenly realize how old everyone looks.

Get the idea? Often we see only the big change that appears to arrive "out of nowhere." We haven't noticed the earlier small, cumulative changes. It's somewhat the same way in the Party and with making communist revolution.

Just prior to the large anti-Vietnam War movement that developed in the 1960s, the media and "experts" characterized young adults as the Silent Generation. Within a short time, the "silent" ones were marching among the millions against the war. Unless you are very careful, you risk writing off millions of allies and potential members. If you make judgments based on superficial temporary evidence, you can easily miss chances to build the Party. Or, as many have done and continue to do, you may drop out of the Party because you make subjective, wrong estimates of what is possible.

What all these cases have in common is an important relation between two kinds of characteristics that things and processes have. A quantity is property that can be measured in numbers, like temperature, speed, number of Challenge-Desafios sold, etc. One feature of quantities is that when they change, they usually go through intermediate stages. If the temperature falls from 90 degrees at noon to 50 degrees at midnight, it has to go through all the temperatures in between 90 degrees and 50 degrees. So change of quantity doesn't usually happen in an instant, even if it happens fast. A quality is a property that cannot be measured with numbers — being beautiful, or being green. Change of quality can happen in an instant, without going through intermediate stages. When you heat water, its tem-

JAILBREAK!

perature (a quantity) gradually increases. At a certain temperature bubbles suddenly appear and boiling starts. The change from not boiling (liquid) to boiling (vapor) is a change of quality in the water.

It is a general law of dialectics that persistent change of quantity, either an increase or a decrease, eventually leads to a qualitative change, like the cases mentioned above. If we fail to recognize how quantity changes to quality, we often may under-evaluate our own efforts or the Party's struggles. Admittedly, the old international communist movement's defeat has slowed the class struggle everywhere. That's the real world. We can only draw lessons from the collapse and apply these lessons, positive and negative, in our own work. Becoming discouraged is a poor answer. Like all other processes, class struggle ebbs and flows. Long-run reality favors us. Persistent efforts around the line of our plan — Road to Revolution IV — will sooner or later weaken and smash capitalism.

Sometimes you hear a comrade or friend say: "So I sold another copy of Challenge. So what?" Or you know that is what the person is thinking. On the face of it, this thought is not unreasonable, especially if you have been mis-trained by capitalist ideas. But suppose every comrade and many friends sold just one more copy. This quantitative development might become a qualitative step toward reaching the next crucial goal — a Party actually leading the working class.

For the most part, our present recruitment efforts are too few, given the true potential for party growth. When we do recruit we still do it mostly by ones and twos. But if we don't recruit more of the ones and twos, we might not reach the stage at which mass recruitment becomes possible.

When you recruit someone, that development is probably a qualitative change in the lives of both you and the new member. In the growth of the Party, however, a single recruitment is only a quantitative change. On the other hand, if you evaluate your recruitment efforts, you will probably note that along the way, certain qualitative developments eventually led the person to join. In other words, there were turning points in your persistent, focused, quantitative efforts—and a new quality resulted.

Dialectical Materialism and a Workers' Battle Plan: Socialism Lost, Communism Found

We should always carefully and thoroughly evaluate the many aspects of any process we are

involved in. And we should never draw one-sided conclusions.

For example, when our Party published Road to Revolution IV in 1982, some members and friends argued that the old international communist movement had always been rotten.

One essential difference between Road to Revolution IV and the old movement was that we advocate skipping the socialist stage and going directly to communism. However, like the old movement, we advocate workers' rule — the dictatorship of the proletariat — and the need for mass armed struggle. We understand the crucial role of the working class and other key concepts of earlier Marxism-Leninism. While we are different in many important ways from the old movement, ours is not entirely different. We say that our Party is primarily similar to the old movement, but differs from it in some important ways. We have learned from previous experiences, as well as from our own, that communism should be the essential goal of revolution.

We have tried to learn from the strengths of earlier communists and to discard their weaknesses. This knowledge comes from a combination of practice and evaluation. Things are usually neither all good nor all bad. Snap judgments typically lead to wrong, often dangerous conclusions.

Summarizing the First Two Laws Of Dialectics

We have, very briefly, covered the first two laws of dialectical materialism.

The first is the law of contradiction: The unity of opposites — contradiction — is the motor of change. The second is that quantity changes into quality.

These laws are not the whole story, however. Every time a contradiction is resolved, further contradictions arise. Every single new member that the Party recruits expands the limits of what the Party can do.

New members of the Party intensify the contradictions between the ruling class and us. But new members bring their own contradictions into the Party. Their commitment must always be examined and strengthened, just as comrades must examine themselves regularly. We must combat the new members and continue to overcome the political weaknesses among veteran members. The struggle for communist ideas goes on constantly both within and outside the Party. But we don't struggle with our friends the same way we struggle with our enemies.

Every time we do something positive as individual members or as a Party, we produce a new quantity, which spurs a qualitative change. The process of building communism is not like a dog running around in circles chasing its own tail; it is a process that moves in a definite direction, but takes a long time. We have to train ourselves to see it that way. Fighting for communism is not for short-term curiosity. It's not a try-out. It must be a life-long pursuit—just like any other important commitment such as marriage, caring for children, or friendship. If our efforts are to succeed, they must be for the very long haul.

The essence of life is struggle. Nothing happens by itself. The unity and struggle of opposites sets things in motion.

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

Our Party has learned many things from the efforts of past revolutionaries. We also learn from one another and from a great deal of experience in the class struggle. We learn virtually everything from other workers, both past and present. The class struggle is our schoolroom and, without being too corny, we say the working class is our teacher.

Was capitalism an advance from feudalism? If nothing else, capitalism created the working class. Capitalist workplaces brought together large groups of workers who had to learn to work together in a somewhat disciplined way. This gave them a better chance to figure out how to fight together in order to improve circumstances. As in other processes, development was highly uneven. You can say this with a vengeance about capitalism.

This unevenness is sharpest in the U. S., one of the most developed capitalist countries. A vast and growing gulf divides the rich from the poor. However, in many parts of the world, capitalism has produced little forward development over the last two centuries. Hundreds of millions of workers lag behind the poorest in the U. S. and the other imperialist nations. Imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism, has impoverished much of the world and left a legacy of violence, conflict and misery.

Dialectics' Third Law: Negation of the Negation

Most technology developed under capitalism has some use. But it is still technology for profit. Selling Windows XP makes more profits for fewer individuals than could be made by building homes for workers all over the world living on the streets or in hovels, or by providing them with basic health care. Communists are not going to throw out airplanes, telephones, computers, etc. We will use these devices to increase production and distribute output in an even way. This means that in the qualitative change from capitalism to communism, some things change and some things remain the same. The development of science and technology will remain and continue, but the capitalists and their drive for profits will be gone.

Qualitative change always has this feature: Some aspects of a process disappear and some carry on. Change that has this dual nature is called dialectical negation. Whenever we can, we make sure that what is preserved in a dialectical negation will be what is beneficial for the working class, and what is lost should be lost. This is the approach learned from the experience of the old communist movement. Defeats can happen. What was good can be lost, and what is new can be worse than before. When capitalism goes into crisis and becomes fascism, more and more negations are like this. But if the Party leads correctly, these setbacks will spark stronger working-class struggle.

The bosses would love it if we said: The lesson from the previous revolutionary movements is that they were rotten; nothing good could be learned from them. That is the attitude behind the unrelenting barrage of lies about Stalin, 50 years

after his death. (Today's "official estimates" of Stalin's "crimes" now exceed those of Hitler, despite the new data from Soviet-era archives that show that these "estimates" are enormously inflated).

The ruling class wants to distort and obscure the important advances made under socialism. They put a lot of effort into controlling what is taught in schools, what is printed in books and newspapers, and what is supported in the arts and popular culture. Their aim is to discourage people from traveling any communist-led road. They want to hide the positive lessons of the Russian revolution. They don't attack Stalin over and over again to help us get it right next time. Their slogan is: Never again! Our goal is: Learn from the past and go forward to the communist revolution, based on Marxism-Leninism.

The dialectical negation of the old communist movement does not mean the end of the process of working-class revolution. Negations are always followed by other negations, but later negations don't take us back to the past. History does not run backwards or in a circle. Feudalism was negated by capitalism, and capitalism will be negated by communism, but communism is not feudalism! When a seed grows into a tree that is a negation. When the tree produces a new seed, that is also a negation, but it won't be exactly the same as the seed that started the process.

This is the law of the negation of the negation: repeated negations don't take a process back to the past, but each negation leads to a situation with some aspects that are new, even if they resemble situations that happened earlier.

As a result of investigation and practice, our Party, the PLP, is the negation of the negation of past international communism and its defeat. We say: "Workers of the world, unite. Abolish wage slavery." We didn't invent these goals or the ideas behind them. We got them by studying Marxism-Leninism and the lessons of previous communist struggles.

If you wanted to apply the law of negation of the negation to this booklet, you would read, study, and apply the ideas presented, negating capitalist philosophy in your thinking with the ideas from the pamphlet. After that evaluation, you should negate the pamphlet's formulations by collectively writing a better one and using it in political work. The only direction to go for communists is forward.

A brief look at the ruling class's views on death and the hereafter may help us further understand the negation of the negation. Doing the work of the bosses, religious leaders say: "You are here for only 70 or 80 years if you are lucky. For the benefit of your eternal life, be a good person." When these preachers speak of being good, they don't just mean being nice to your spouse, children or neighbors. Goodness to them is a class question. Good means: Don't rock the boat. Accept your lot in life. You're only

JAILBREAK!

here for a short time but you are dead forever.

To negate the frightening specter of death, they have invented the dual outlook of Heaven and Hell. If you are “good,” you earn eternal bliss. If you do things against the grain, such as fighting militantly for communism, you go to hell and eternal suffering. Put that way, how bad can it be to put up with 70 or 80 years of oppression? The Hereafter endorsed by rabbis, priests and other preachers leads to maintaining hell on earth.

But communists defeat this lie and rise to a higher negation. They accept death as a reality that negates life. And they recognize that what you do on earth is the only opportunity you have to change bad to better. What really negates death and is eternal are the deeds of people, because these actions live on after them. What you do with your life has an impact not only on the present but also on the future, and that future negates the negation of your individual life. In large measure, that future has to do with what we do with our children now.

A striking historical example is Lenin. He has been dead about 80 years, but his deeds, his vision live on. Our Party could never have come into existence without them.

Fighting for the dictatorship of the proletariat now means fighting for the needs and aspirations of the working class now and for the future. The time to start fighting for it was yesterday!

Freedom is a Class Issue

At some point in a discussion of dialectics the question often arises: “What is freedom?” One young person in a recent class said that freedom to her meant the absence of responsibility to anyone else. It means doing what you want. This is a common idea. And that idea can mess up your head until you are “in jail” for life — in solitary confinement.

You don’t gain freedom by being a lone wolf, acting out of selfishness. Alone, you are weak. Freedom, in fact, is acting on your class needs. Uniting with others is the first step to power. It is the opposite of selfishness and individualism. Knowing what you and your class need is a big step toward gaining freedom. For that reason, freedom is one thing for the bosses and something altogether different for workers and communists.

The idea that freedom is doing whatever you please, no matter who gets hurt, is the capitalists’ philosophy of freedom, and represents how they actually behave. All ruling-class philosophy, whether it is religion or anything else, works to maintain ruling-class political power. Most college students are forced to study capitalist philosophy, and many know that what they are being taught has little if any relation to the real world they will experience. The ruling class doesn’t want us to realize that the wrong class is in power and should be destroyed along with its state apparatus. The last thing they want us to understand is that workers should hold power through the dictatorship of the proletariat. They want us to believe that the misery of capitalist oppression is built into humanity and is our own fault, that something is wrong with us and not with their system of maximizing profits and exploitation. They need workers to keep producing profits and to fight wars for them. When we swallow their rotten ideas and remain passive or cynical in the face of their crimes, they are free to go on ruling over us.

Without communism the workers are at the mercy of the greedy rulers and their profit system. So, how do you get to com-

munist? The answer is by building the Party, in this case, the PLP. The next step is to fight for communist revolution.

Responsibility to the collective—the Party—is crucial to winning freedom. The rulers want you to be selfish and irresponsible to your class. They would rather see you take dope or swallow mysticism and other philosophical drugs.

The working class can achieve freedom only by joining their party — the PLP — and by fighting for communist revolution around the PLP line.

Read, Study, and Work to Master Dialectics

This pamphlet on dialectics only scratches the surface. It is a starter, an eye-opener. By no means does it cover the entire subject. Using the three laws of dialectics in day-to-day practice and analyzing the successes and failures of our struggles is not easy. Using these ideas to enrich our personal and political lives is an uphill battle. Capitalist culture is very skillful at training us badly.

Dialectics can ultimately loosen the capitalist shackles that keep us in jail. This is a long-range process, but it is do-able. Our Party has made a modest contribution to Marxism-Leninism by placing the study of dialectics at the center of our efforts. Even our still-limited understanding of dialectics has unquestionably played a major role in helping us understand what went wrong in the Soviet Union and China, and to stand tall and not abandon Marxism because of temporary defeats. We are here to stay. We have a future.

Marx, Engels, Lenin and others helped advance dialectics. Dialectics is the underlying support of Marxism-Leninism. Ignoring it forces you to fly in the dark. But the old communist movement did not widely study or apply dialectics to its struggle.

Our Party believes that dialectics is not just important or interesting for a handful of high-and-mighty political philosophers. Understanding the laws and applying them is crucial for all active workers. Practice makes perfect.

If it has done nothing else, dialectics has helped our Party develop a long-term outlook: Action for revolution. This is what we are all about.

Passionate revolutionary action can go hand-in-hand with clear thinking. Communists “can, and must, combine the most intense passion in the great revolutionary struggle with the coolest and most sober estimation of the mad ravings of the bourgeoisie.” (Lenin)

Lenin also said: “Nothing great in the world has been accomplished without passion.” But in the struggle against capitalist power, passion must be combined with deep understanding and knowledge, and knowledge must be in command. ☪

Fight to Control Oil Speeds U.S. Down Slippery Slope

The current situation for U.S. imperialism is unstable. Although the economic slide following-9/11 slowed somewhat, millions of jobs are disappearing, unemployment is climbing and the federal deficit is skyrocketing into the hundreds of billions. Overall the U.S. economy is in decline. It has a crumbling foundation and is losing ground to its rivals. The ruling-class response has been imperialist war and increasing attacks on the working class.

The boom of the 1990's was based on speculation rather than on the creation of real value. Corporations played tricks like using capital to buy their own stocks so that they could create an image of increasing value, holding off the inevitable bankruptcies involving Enron, WorldCom and United Airlines. The reality then and now points to a world crisis of overproduction. Significant overcapacity exists in major industries such as auto, steel and aerospace.

This crisis has fueled the contradictions between rival imperialists. In the power vacuum after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the U.S. fought the first Gulf War without any imperialist opposition. But there has been more substantial opposition to the conquest of Iraq. This opposition mirrors the growing relative strength of rival imperialists.

China continues to take a larger market share of many industries worldwide with its cheap labor. China matches this economic power with military power through huge investments in a "blue water" navy in order to further its imperialist ambitions. Middle Eastern oil is crucial to China's growth and plays an important role in the war with Iraq.

The European Union economy is larger than the U.S.'s and the Euro has surpassed the dollar in value. Ruling-class strategists point out that Europe's "natural" drive is to become a superpower, but they are limited by the lack of a capable army. They also don't have the nuclear weapons that Russia uses to command respect.

Saudi Arabia, Iran and others in the Middle East are increasingly influenced by "bin Laden" elements. These anti-U.S. forces have gained ground through the war in Afghanistan and the war against Iraq. The U.S. fears that governments friendly to it will not survive over the long term.

Besides individual rivalries, there is a general economic problem of growing trade deficits to Europe and Japan. The U.S. has massive debts to both. Withdrawing capital from the U.S. due to a shaky stock market or to political motivations could sharpen conflict. How long can the U.S. maintain military dominance while Toyota and Airbus beat GM and Boeing, except through destruction of the formers' productive capacity?

Control of the world's cheapest supplies of oil is essential to dominating these rivals. With a target price of \$13 per barrel, U.S. occupation of the Middle East would give a short-term boost to the rate of profit and jumpstart the world



economy. But this adventure also has its contradictions:

- 1) Instability in Russia and other oil-producing nations would increase due to lack of oil revenue. (Russia needs a price in the twenties.)
- 2) Further alienation of Europe, Japan and China, impelling their military build-up.
- 3) Cheap oil helps Chinese capitalist growth.
- 4) Working-class anger growing out of a long, bloody and expensive occupation.
- 5) The military "victory" in Iraq is creating new and bigger problems. Tens of thousands began protesting as soon as the Hussein regime collapsed, but instead of welcoming the U.S.-UK "liberators," they shouted "No to Saddam, No to America." The Iranian fundamentalist regime seems to be the big winner, particularly among the Shiites (the majority of the Iraqi population).

The imperialist logic of seizing Iraq is clear. But there is disagreement within the ruling class. The "unilateralist" view of Bush/IRumsfeld/Wolfowitz is willing to "go it alone" and wants to show the world that the U.S. can and will do what it pleases. The other section has been using the Democrats and the New York Times to make its case for "multi-literalism" and coalition-building. They've been giving lip service to the anti-war movement and using liberals like Kennedy and Daschle to call for debate and "making a case." This wing worries that the U.S. will galvanize its enemies if it cuts them out of the Iraqi oil deals. It also wants to share the cost of rebuilding the Iraqi oil infrastructure with its multilateral partners. A point of unity between the factions, however, is that U.S. imperialism wants to demonstrate that it has an army that will continue to fight even with massive casualties.

Building Fascism — The War Comes Home

The Hart-Rudman report continues to be critical to the

overall blueprint for fascism. The Homeland Security agency is now a federal department with massive funding and cabinet level leadership. Already there has been movement on consolidating the Border Patrol, Customs and Coast Guard. The Pentagon is now taking bids on the software to be used in the Total Information Awareness program, where all of our electronic records will be consolidated and mined for “suspicious” patterns.

There continue to be other programs initiated by the ruling class that strengthen fascism. These include:

1) Citizen Corps — government program encouraging workers to volunteer in “Weed and Seed” program crime prevention. Workers are encouraged to “weed” their neighborhoods of crime by informing to police and to “seed” good behavior through the community policing.

2) No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 — plans to coordinate education standards and curriculum on national level. This plan was also part of the Hart-Rudman Report and its call for “the U.S. need for the highest quality human capital” so that U.S. imperialism can continue technology and weapons development. Education is seen as important to control and centralize the pushing of fascist ideology. The act also requires that the names of high school juniors and seniors be given to military recruiters.

3) INS registration of Arab and Middle Eastern workers, leading to massive arrests for petty immigration violations and contributing to the racist idea that many of those arrested must be linked to terrorism.

4) The USA Patriot Act allows secret wire taps, Internet spying, spying on college students with the help of the university and permission of the FBI to investigate people or groups that are not suspected of a crime.

5) The classification of U.S. citizens as “enemy combatants” if they are “terrorists” in government eyes. Based on the rulers’ judgment, the Constitutional rights of a citizen can be voided. When one is “an enemy of the state,” it’s clear that the government’s gloves come off.

6) A rise in the visibility of outright fascists such as the National Alliance march in Washington, D.C. last summer. These fascists are also taking a more “liberal” line, like calling on Israel to give Palestinians their own homeland.

On the one hand, these are serious dangers for the working class. However, the ruling class does not resort to such measures out of strength but rather out of weakness, out of an estimate that they can no longer rule in “the old way.”

Where is the Working Class?

The working class is not well organized to repel these attacks. Unions have proven themselves agents of capitalism by selling out on all recent labor struggles. Boeing, ILWU and New York City Transit are visible examples of how union leadership is not willing to fight on principle for the working class. However, in many of these labor strug-

gles, workers are becoming increasingly angry at their leadership. In a number of areas, a gap is growing between the mass of workers and the AFL-CIO honchos who tie themselves to the ruling class and betray the class interests of the working class. Communist organizing of this anger can make a serious dent in the rulers’ onslaught.

The anti-War movement has mobilized massive numbers for a political demand. (On the weekend of Feb. 15-16, an estimated 10 million people worldwide protested the war.) Although an exciting development, the line of the movement had been to either let the UN inspections “work” or to call for “peace.” The rallies have been predominantly white and without a strong worker/union presence. The bosses took the offensive, trying to control the movement. Papers such as the Washington Post and New York Times first attacked the movement for being “communist led” and suggested that the movement be “taken back.” United for Peace, ANSWER and Not in Our Name all have weak politics, mainly being anti-Bush. By not advancing an anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist outlook, become either supporting the multi-lateralists, or backing European imperialism (supporting a UN-sanctioned war) or the Democratic Party.

There is one factor that any movement opposed to U.S. rulers’ war plans must base itself on: the potential strength to be drawn from the working class and its youth who form the bulk of the bosses’ war machine. This is the class without which the rulers become paper tigers, the class that has the power to not only defang its military and its war production but to destroy the bosses’ system altogether.

What Are the Party Opportunities?

All these developments present new contradictions, creating many opportunities lacking a year ago. The war with Iraq affects all workers and youth. It’s being discussed by nearly everyone in our orbit — it is not just a “left” issue. The masses at the demonstrations are a clear sign of this. The ruling class is faced with the contradiction that in order to make war it must cut back on the working class, while also needing working-class support for the war. We can attack the cutbacks as well as the increased racism and link them to the war. Wars increase opportunities to step up our military work with many soldiers on or near the front lines. We can raise CHALLENGE sales and build the Party. The peace marches won’t stop the imperialists’ war drive. Only communist revolution to crush the warmakers and their system of maximum profits will bring peace to the workers of the world. ☪

50th Anniversary of The Execution of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg

On June 19th 50 years ago the U.S. government executed Julius and Ethel Rosenberg for “conspiracy to commit espionage.” Their trial occurred in the midst of the anti-communist hysteria of McCarthyism and the Cold War.

Because the Rosenbergs were communists, the ruling class painted them as “agents of a foreign power,” and communism as something alien to U.S. workers. The rulers claimed that the Soviets had to steal nuclear secrets because they were “too dumb” to achieve what “more advanced” U.S. scientists could achieve. But four years later, when the Soviets were the first to send a vehicle into space (the “Sputnik”), it was U.S. rulers who were struck dumb. Finally, to justify the death sentence, Judge Kaufman blamed the Rosenbergs for the Korean War and the deaths of thousands of U.S. soldiers, helping U.S. rulers to intensify their rampant anti-communism.

The Rosenbergs were accused of “conspiracy” because it is easier to prove than actually committing espionage. Ethel Rosenberg’s brother, David Greenglass, a low-level operative in Los Alamos, lied in exchange for the government not prosecuting his wife. He said that Ethel had typed the “secrets” for Julius. His lies sent Ethel to the electric chair. She refused to testify against her husband in exchange for a life sentence. In a recent book, Greenglass admitted he lied to help convict his sister.

Millions around the world demonstrated on behalf of the Rosenbergs. The couple had two young sons, 6 and 10, and most people felt even if their parents were “guilty,” they shouldn’t be executed. Governments and even the Pope petitioned the Eisenhower administration for clemency. Many scientists pointed out that whatever secrets might have been given the Soviets would eventually have been figured out by them anyway. But the hysteria whipped up in the U.S. helped the ruling class win people here to back it in the Cold War.

It is very possible, even probable, that Julius Rosenberg did try to give information to the Soviets. He knew that U.S. rulers were threatened by the spread of communism because of the example set by the USSR, whose working class and Red Army had just smashed the Nazi war machine nearly single-handedly. U.S. rulers, along with Britain and France, had initially supported Hitler moving east to destroy the world’s first communist-led country. It was no stretch to figure out that the ruling class here, with a monopoly on the A-bomb, would not hesitate to use it on the Soviet Union. So they painted the Rosenbergs as disloyal Red traitors.

Unfortunately the Communist Party U.S.A. fell right into this trap. For several decades before World War II, the CP was part of the most dedicated internationalist organization in world history. They had fought for workers and the exploited everywhere. They were



“This death sentence is not surprising. It had to be. There had to be a Rosenberg Case because there had to be an intensification of the hysteria in America to make the Korean War acceptable to the American people. There had to be

a hysteria and a fear sent through America in order to get increased war budgets. And there had to be a dagger thrust in the heart of the left to tell them that you are no longer gonna give five years for a Smith Act prosecution or one year for Contempt of Court, but we’re gonna kill ya!”

—Julius Rosenberg, as quoted by his attorney, Emanuel Bloch, September 22, 1953.

“disloyal” and “treasonous” to the bosses’ governments, racist police brutality, fascism, the bosses’ frame-up legal system, lynching, mass poverty and to the imperialist governments who killed tens of millions worldwide. Why should any worker or decent person be “loyal” to that?

But by the late 1930s the communist movement began to waver in its commitment to fighting the capitalists and allied itself with the “lesser evil” bosses. They abandoned working-class internationalism and the fight for communism.

By the time of the Rosenberg trial, the CPUSA focused more on the legal defense — framing the question as “were they spies or not?” — rather than on exposing the nature of capitalism and the need to overthrow the ruling class.

But “patriotism” and “treason” are, like all politics, class questions. Every government, every nation, is set up and run by exploiters, against the interests of the exploited. Working people have no nation. Nationalism and patriotism are used to get the working class to fight for the bosses’ class interests.

Communists are internationalists. We and our class owe no loyalty to any boss, including “our own” exploiters. We in PLP, and every class conscious person who opposes exploitation and supports workers’ struggles say, “Good for the Rosenbergs!” We proudly remember them and applaud their internationalist courage. “Loyalty to U.S. rulers” means loyalty to the exploiters and treason to the working class. Workers of the world, unite! ☺