



## Capitalist Parties = Enemies of Workers, Blacks, Latinos, Immigrants, Youth, Women...



# The Election From Hell Whoever Wins, We Lose

**Build a Revolutionary Workers Party to Fight for All the Oppressed**

OCTOBER 28 – With under two weeks to go before voting day, millions of people across the country recoil in horror at this “election from hell.” They are given the “choice” between a vile racist, sexist billionaire, Donald Trump for the Republicans, and the sinister war hawk and millionaire senator from Wall Street, Hillary Clinton for the Democrats. Both candidates and their parties are virulent defenders of capitalism and vicious enemies of the working class. Current opinion polls show warmongering profiteer Clinton leading over the immigrant-bashing, woman-hating Trump. But whichever capitalist politician wins, poor and working people, African Americans, Latinos, youth and all the oppressed lose.

There is massive discontent with the candidates and the entire process. Clinton and Trump are the two most reviled candidates since polling began, bar none, running neck and neck with about 60% negative ratings. Back in May, a poll showed 70% of those interviewed said they were frustrated with what’s on offer, over half felt “helpless” and “angry,” barely 10% expressed confidence in the U.S. political system. And that was before the Republican Party’s Nuremberg Rally-style convention confirmed Donald Trump’s seizure of its nomination, and before the coronation of Hillary Clinton as the inevitable Democratic candidate. So with Democratic Party “socialist” Bernie Sanders relegated to his preordained role of rounding up votes for Clinton, a chorus of calls to vote for the “lesser evil” resounds across the land.

Every election cycle, we are told that the stakes could not be higher, and the differences between the parties could not be greater. Yet with every election, under Republicans or Democrats, there is a fundamental political continuity. Whether under the Bush dynasty, the Clintons or the Obama interregnum, banks are bailed out, Middle Eastern countries attacked and workers ground down. By now Americans



Internationalist contingent at April 14 “Shut Down Trump” rally in NYC.

are used to ferocious, mud-slinging electoral cage-matches ending with the losers’ lofty concession speeches urging their weeping followers to accept the “will of the

people.” Policy disputes about how best to serve ruling-class interests at the expense of workers are relegated to the secretive and labyrinthine legislative and judicial system.

So come November a minority of voting-eligible citizens will trudge reluctantly to the polls to vote against the perceived greater

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## Portland, Oregon Painters Union Says To Hell with the Bosses’ Parties – For a Class-Struggle Workers Party

*The following article is reprinted from Bridge City Militant No. 3, Summer/Fall 2016, published by Class Struggle Workers – Portland.*

In a historic decision, the August 17 meeting of Painters and Drywall Finishers, IUPAT Local 10, voted unanimously to reject the Democratic and Republican parties or “any Party of the Bosses,” and to “call on the labor movement to break from the Democratic Party, and build a class-struggle workers party.” The resolution was introduced by CSWP members, the result of years of patient political education and struggle. Union members spoke passionately

ly from the floor about the need to organize and rely on our own power as workers.

Momentum for the resolution grew as members came up against the same bleak reality that people across the country are confronting: as the resolution states, “the 2016 presidential election offers us the ‘choice’ between a raving, bigoted clown and a career representative of Wall Street” (we leave it to readers to decide which is which). The news has been buzzing from member to member, from local to local across the country. Workers are fed up that “the bosses have two parties to represent their class while the millions of working

people have none.” Two days later, as if to emphasize our point, Democratic VP nominee Tim “right-to-work” Kaine jetted into Portland for an exclusive, \$27,000-per-ticket country club fund-raiser hosted by prominent Republican businessmen.

So, Local 10 took a very bold and important stand for working class political independence. What now? Class-struggle militants hope to promote Local 10’s example to encourage initiatives, here and across the country, for labor to do what the resolution says: to build a class-struggle workers party.

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Class Struggle Workers – Portland contingent at May Day 2016 march.

## PDX Painters...

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Throughout the history of this country, the unions have been in political chains, tied to one or another party representing the interests of capital, limited to the hopeless task of pressuring these political representatives of the bosses and seeking the “lesser evil” among them. So when the workers begin to move to break those chains, as we in CSWP hope the decision of Local 10 portends, it opens a whole series of political questions that have never been widely discussed in the U.S. labor movement. What should a workers party look like? What would it do? What do we mean by “class struggle”?

### No to the Greens and Other Bern-outs

One of the factors contributing to the support for our resolution in Local 10, and its growing resonance nationally, is the disillusionment felt by many partisans of Bernie Sanders’ “political revolution.” Millions across the country are realizing that this “revolution” was phony from the start. Many so-called “radicals” and “socialists” showed their true colors by encouraging support for the Vermont senator who is a de facto Democrat. Not us. We told the truth, in issue No. 1 of *Bridge City Militant*, that “Sanders supporters are certainly chumps for Wall Street’s preferred party: ‘energizing’ the ‘base’ – the workers, poor people, oppressed racial minorities, and women – to vote for the ‘lesser evil’ party of their oppressors. It’s a con game.” Let’s not get conned again.

Now that the inevitable has happened, many Bernie supporters are deserting the Democrats for the Green Party ticket of Jill Stein and Ajamu Baraka. But the Green Party is a capitalist party just as much as the Democrats and Republicans. And the

class line is fundamental. While some supposed “radicals” call to “break with the two-party system” or promote some vague “party of the 99%” (which would include most bosses and their hired thugs, the police!), it’s not the number of parties that matters, but which class they represent. Accept no alternatives: we need a party for the workers.

The Green Party platform is a mish-mash of liberal wishful thinking, evidently developed under the influence of healing crystals and homeopathic vapors. Fundamentally, it enshrines the right of capitalist private property. When you start by accepting the basis of the capitalist system, all the various reform proposals in the Green platform, some of which are supportable in the abstract, are just empty talk.

But the Green platform isn’t just misguided good ideas, either. It proposes a future of imperialist war for the U.S., so long as these wars are sanctioned by the United Nations. The UN? The den of thieves that currently provides the fig-leaf for the imperialist occupation of Haiti, and was born in the genocidal U.S.-led war against Korea? The Green Party is for “peace,” of course. Cut the U.S. military budget in half, it says: that would be \$350 billion per year! On those conditions, many a mass-murdering Pentagon general could find a comfortable home in the Green Party. Class-conscious workers, on the other hand, oppose “our own” government in its wars, by seeking to mobilize workers power here and across national boundaries.

Just because the bosses have no need for the Green Party doesn’t make it any less a capitalist party or an ally of the working people. It’s a home for homeless Democrats. But the working class, the vast majority of U.S. society and the class whose labor makes all the wealth of the world, doesn’t need a political homeless camp. We need our own political instrument, one

## No Support to the Democrats, Republicans or Any Party of the Bosses

**Motion passed unanimously by IUPAT Local 10 at 17 August 2016 membership meeting.**

**Whereas** the bosses have two parties to represent their class while the millions of working people have none, and

**Whereas** the Democratic president Barack Obama sent the U.S. Coast Guard to enforce scabbing against the International Longshore and Warehouse Union during the 2013-14 lock-out of northwest dock workers, and

**Whereas** the Democratic governor Kate Brown opposed and undercut the movement for a \$15 minimum wage across Oregon, and

**Whereas** in 2014 Democrats in Congress joined with Republicans to pass a disastrous pension “reform,” allowing the bosses to escape their obligations and cheat our retirees, and

**Whereas** the two presidencies of the Democrat Barack Obama have been eight years of unending war in the Middle East, North Africa and Asia, causing untold human suffering, millions of refugees, and attacks on our democratic rights at home, and

**Whereas** the Democratic Party in power has deported some 5 million im-

migrants, a record, and

**Whereas** across the country, from Oakland to Baltimore, police under Democratic mayors regularly murder black men and women with impunity, and

**Whereas** the 2016 presidential election offers us the “choice” between a raving, bigoted clown and a career representative of Wall Street, and

**Whereas** the Democratic vice-presidential candidate, Virginia governor Tim Kaine, supports union-busting “right to work” laws, and

**Whereas** Democrats and Republicans are and have always been strike-breaking, war-making parties of the bosses, and

**Whereas** so long as the labor movement supports one or another party of the bosses, we will be playing a losing game, therefore be it

**Resolved** that IUPAT Local 10 does not support the Democrats, Republicans, or any bosses’ parties or politicians, and

**Resolved** that we call on the International Union to repudiate its endorsement of Hillary Clinton for president, and

**Resolved** that we call on the labor movement to break from the Democratic Party, and build a class-struggle workers party. ■

that mobilizes and coordinates the power that we have as a class.

### What Should a Workers Party Do?

A class struggle workers party would lead the fight on the picket lines and in the streets: to *shut down the cities in protest against the epidemic of racist police murder*. Build on examples like the Oakland, CA ILWU Local 10 May Day 2015 against racist police attacks.

To *rip up the anti-union laws* like Taft-Hartley and roll the unions on into the unorganized industries, by building massive picket lines that scabs won’t dare to cross. To *tear down the concentration camps* holding thousands of our immigrant sisters and brothers, stop the ICE raids and demand *full citizenship rights for all immigrants*.

How many anti-war movements have we been through? Free our sisters and brothers around the world from the nightmare of imperialist war: *strike against war*, “hot cargo” shut down war shipments. This struggle cannot stop and won’t succeed until the working class is in its rightful place as the rulers of this country. That’s what we in CSWP mean by class-struggle.

Clearly, our perspective is currently a tiny minority in the labor movement. No doubt most workers today still hold illusions in the bosses’ “democracy,” and hope to reform it to make it fairer to the people on the bottom of society. The current leaders of the unions have built their careers on betraying the workers and serving us up as voter-victims for the bosses’ parties. The struggle for a real workers party will be a fight against the sellouts running the unions today.

Nowadays “politics” and “parties” are often thought of as meaning the cynical

game of vote-getting and office-hunting, all within the bounds of what is acceptable to the bosses’ dollar democracy. Most countries in Europe and many other parts of the world, from Brazil to India, have long experiences with “workers,” “labor,” “socialist” or “communist” parties that are important partners in the administration of the bosses’ governments. In this country, there have been a series of half-baked attempts at a “labor party” built on a program designed to be harmless to the Democrats and the bureaucrats. In Oregon and some other states, we have a “Working Families Party,” which is not a party at all, but a cynical fraud committed against the union membership by the labor tops. Its presidential candidate is ... Hillary Clinton. What a joke!

But as Karl Marx remarked over a century and a half ago, “every class struggle is a political struggle.” In this epoch of decaying capitalism, every struggle to defend the most basic interests of the working people runs up against the limits of private property. What’s needed is a workers party that is ready and willing to take that struggle to its necessary conclusion.

The ice is starting to break. Many people can see the writing on the wall. We in the CSWP want to bring the message to working people across the country that we need to fight for political independence. And while the first steps may be partial, we won’t stop advocating for the only kind of workers party that can actually fight for the interests of the working class and oppressed all along the line: a party with a program of class struggle, fighting for a workers government. This fight will require a hard core of class struggle militants in the workers organizations dedicated to this program. The CSWP seeks to build that hard core. Join us! ■

Visit the League for the Fourth International/  
Internationalist Group on the Internet  
<http://www.internationalist.org>

## The Internationalist

A Journal of Revolutionary Marxism  
for the Reforging of the Fourth International

Publication of the Internationalist Group,  
section of the League for the Fourth International

EDITORIAL BOARD: Jan Norden (editor), Fred Bergen, Mark Lazarus, Abram Negrete, Marjorie Salzburg, Ines Young

The Internationalist (ISSN 1091-2843) is published bimonthly, skipping July-August, by Mundial Publications, P.O. Box 3321, Church Street Station, New York, NY 10008, U.S.A.  
Telephone: (212) 460-0983 Fax: (212) 614-8711 E-mail: [internationalistgroup@msn.com](mailto:internationalistgroup@msn.com)  
Subscriptions: US\$10 for five issues.

No. 45



INTERNATIONALIST GROUP  
1162-M

September-October 2016





# “Socialists” Play Ball with Minor League Bourgeois Party Left Green Dream of People-Friendly Capitalism

In the final stretch of this “election from hell,” the crisis of U.S. capitalism’s political system is so glaringly evident that it has become a central preoccupation of bourgeois pundits worldwide. Large numbers of youth and working people are repelled by the “choice” between two of the most unpopular and feared candidates ever. Democrat Hillary Clinton, the likely winner in November with solid ruling-class backing from Wall Street to the Pentagon and CIA, vows ramped-up imperialist brinkmanship. Donald Trump rampages as the all-purpose bigot, spewing racist venom and hatred of women, while demagogically exploiting the failed promises of “hope and change.” Clinton accuses her rival of being soft on Russia and China, while promising continuity with the Obama presidency that’s brought skyrocketing inequality, mass deportations, unending racist police terror and war. Millions of people are scared, angered and disgusted by the whole lurid face-off.

For Marxist revolutionaries, massive disillusionment with the capitalist duopoly poses big opportunities and challenges to argue for the only solution to capitalism’s crisis: a workers revolution that is the only way to get at its root, the system of capitalist private property. In sharp contrast to all sorts of liberals and reformists, revolutionaries expose the farce of capitalist “democracy” as a flimsy screen for the class dictatorship of the bosses. Central to this is the baseline Marxist principle of political independence of the working class, the fight to free the working class from every form of subjugation to the politicians, parties and institutions of capitalist rule.

We are doing our part. The Internationalist



**Supporters of Green Party candidate Jill Stein appealed to supporters of Democratic Party “socialist” Bernie Sanders at Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia in July.**

alist Group, U.S. section of the League for the Fourth International, is a revolutionary Marxist organization with locals in New York City, Los Angeles and Portland, Oregon. In August, activists of Class Struggle Workers – Portland, politically supported by the IG, won a unanimous vote at the membership meeting of the painters and drywall finishers union, IUPAT Local 10, for a resolution opposing “the Democrats, Republicans, or any bosses’ parties or politicians” and “call[ing] on the labor movement to break from the Democratic Party, and build a class-struggle workers party.” We call for other unions to adopt this resolution, which poses a sharp break from the subordination to the Democratic Party which has chained labor’s power for decades.

The bulk of the U.S. left has a very different approach. Far from fighting for revolutionary, independent working-class politics, they are always on the lookout for the latest populist “movement” to tail after on the basis of middle-class politics. At the turn of the millennium, groups like the International Socialist Organization (ISO) and Socialist Alternative (SAIt) plunged into the campaign of Ralph Nader, “an anti-immigrant millionaire who proudly states his support for capitalism,” as we warned at the time. Nader “proclaimed that his goal was to pressure and push the Democrats” (see “Capitalist Nader’s ‘Socialist’ Foot Soldiers,” *Revolution*

*tion* No. 2, October 2004<sup>1</sup>). Like Bernie Sanders in this year’s election cycle, Nader boasted in describing his 2000 campaign that he had helped the Democrats “get many more voters” by pushing them to use “more populist rhetoric.”

In 2008, when “millennials” were swept up in the enthusiasm for Barack Obama, the opportunists joined the cheers. As is so often the case, the ISO set the tone, blazoning “Yes We Can” on the cover of its journal and plastering NYC’s Hunter College with posters bearing the new Democratic president’s catchphrase (see “Yesterday’s ‘Obama Socialists,’ Today’s Bernie Boosters,” *The Internationalist* No. 42, January-February 2016<sup>2</sup>). When the ravages of economic crisis under Obama gave rise to Occupy Wall Street, the whole “left” confraternity adopted the vocabulary of Occupy. With mind-numbing uniformity they called for a “party of the 99%,” even new “movements of the 99%,” and other formulas in which the concept of *class* struggle was blotted out by the classless rhetoric of populism, which reflects and reproduces the bourgeois ideology of “we the people” and American nationalism.

When Occupy fizzled, these opportunists for whom tailism is a political way of life were bereft for a time – but then came “Bernie.” Senator Sanders spun the tropes of Occupy into a populist campaign for a purported “political revolution” *within the governing party of U.S. imperialism*. The Internationalist Group stated clearly and unequivocally that “the central political function of the Sanders campaign is to round up votes from disaffected voters, keep them in the Democratic fold, and deliver them to the eventual nominee” (“Bernie Sanders and the Pressure Politics of the Opportunist Left,” *The Internationalist*

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.internationalist.org/naderfootsoldiers1004.html>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.internationalist.org/bernieboosters1512.html>

No. 43, May-June 2015<sup>3</sup>).

That is, of course, exactly what happened. Yet the spectrum of social-democratic and Stalinist leftists scrambled to cash in on Sanders’ popularity, hailing him as a fellow “socialist” and pleading with him to run as an “independent” candidate while differing only in the degree of shamelessness to display as they ran panting after his bandwagon. While Socialist Alternative staked its bets on being the most gung-ho of all, the ISO coyly feigned “principle” by demurring from an outright endorsement while breathlessly hyping the “breath of fresh air” of Sanders’ so-called “socialism.”<sup>4</sup> Meanwhile, one of the ISO’s most prominent figures, Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, wrote a “Black Votes Matter” column titled “Why Hillary Clinton’s black supporters should feel the Bern” (*Fusion*, 23 February).

## Where Sanders Left Off, the Green Party Picks Up

When Sanders pivoted to openly stumping for Clinton, most Sandernistas were led by their held noses into the Hillary camp. Some held out for some kind of electoral alternative, and are turning to the Green Party, which – with Sanders tirelessly huckstering votes for Hillary – is running a liberal doctor named Jill Stein for president. And, predictably, wherever the young liberal lambs go, the reformist left is sure to follow.

For her part, Stein presented her campaign as “a plan B for Bernie” (NPR interview, 24 July) and called on Hill’s shill Sanders to join the Green ticket. Some “alternative”! Yet the usual characters heap praise on Stein as a “genuine left candidate” (“Build a New Party of the 99% – Support Jill Stein,” at [socialistalternative.org](http://socialistalternative.org), 15 August) and “a genuine left alternative” (“Can You Vote for What You Want in 2016?” [socialistworker.org](http://socialistworker.org), 3 August).

Seriously? If you want to know what Stein and her Green Party stand for, start with their site ([gp.org](http://gp.org)): it features a big picture of Democratic icon Franklin D. Roosevelt and his slogan “We have nothing to fear but fear itself.” Don’t get the picture yet? Stein’s central slogan is for a “Green New Deal.” FDR and his “New Deal coalition” are what solidified the subordination of the U.S. labor movement, African Americans, left and “progressives” to the Democratic Party of U.S. imperialism. Stein is running not as a break from Democratic Party liberalism but its legitimate continuator. As we have repeatedly noted, the Green Party is “a home for homeless Democrats” as their party turned to the right under the Clintons (Bill and Hillary). As former Georgia Democratic Congresswoman Cynthia McKinney, the Greens’ presidential candidate in 2008, stated: “I had a place to go when the Democratic

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.internationalist.org/berniesandersandpressurepolitics1506.html>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.internationalist.org/isofreshairfiends1512.html>



**Internationalist demonstrators at October 20 protest outside U.S. Mission to the U.N. against deportation of Haitians.**



Party left me” (see “Socialists in Bourgeois Electionland” [November 2008] in *The Internationalist* No. 28, March-April 2009).<sup>5</sup>

The purpose of the Greens’ campaigns is, as it was back when Nader was their candidate, to pressure the Democrats in a more populist direction. Confirming this, ISO spokesman Ashley Smith stated at a July 15 Jill Stein event in Burlington, Vermont:

“When you vote for the Democrats as a lesser evil, they take you for granted and take you for a ride, betraying all their promises in the process. With no pressure from the left, they move to the right and implement the greater evil’s program.”

So in calling for votes to the Green Party, the ISO is seeking to pressure the Democratic Party from the left. Logically enough from its standpoint, the ISO has run candidates on the Green ticket, notably in New York and California.

Meanwhile Stein’s Green Party site proclaims that a third party can “Fix Our Broken System,” stating: “The presence of viable alternatives keeps Americans involved in our democratic process.” Just when many young people are starting to see through the tawdry lie of imperialist “democracy,” the Greens aspire to keep them tied into the fraud. So when the Internationalist Group refers to the “red-white-and-blue Greens,” it’s not some empty epithet – for these patriotic also-rans, U.S. “democracy” is “ours.”

A third party does not just “lure voters to the polls,” the Green site notes, they can “force the two major parties to adopt various policies.” It cites the Progressive Party of arch-imperialist Teddy Roosevelt, which in 1912 “helped the Democrats wrest the White House from 20 years of unchallenged Republican supremacy.” What this underlines is the point we have often made, that the Greens are just one in a long procession of thoroughly *bourgeois* third parties seeking a niche in a set-up dominated by the big-league parties of capital. Bizarrely, and grotesquely, the site goes on about third parties providing an “emotional bridge,” citing George (“segregation forever”) Wallace’s racist 1968 presidential campaign as an example!

The Green platform provides a potpourri of proposals to “fix” the unfixable capitalist system. Having nothing to do with socialism or working-class politics (the working class is entirely invisible in the platform), this is an insipid list of liberal nostrums, hobby-horses and suggestions for the prettification of capitalist society. “Ecology” is presented as a recipe for a backward-looking “decentralized” capitalism – whereas the only way to address the environmental destruction caused by capi-

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.internationalist.org/socialist-selectionland0811.html>



Marcus Yam/Los Angeles Times

**From Bernie to Jill: Social democrats back one capitalist candidate after another. Socialist Alternative marches during Democratic convention in Philadelphia.**

talism is by its revolutionary expropriation and an internationally planned socialist economy. On the burning question of racist police terror, the Green platform states with willful vagueness: “We favor strong measures to combat official racism in the forms of police brutality directed against people of color.” As good liberals, they most certainly do not point out that the whole apparatus of racist capitalist repression must be smashed; that *only revolution can bring justice*, as the well-known Internationalist chant insists.

Typically for this kind of political formation, the Green platform calls to reduce the military budget by 50%. That would leave \$300 billion per year for U.S. imperialism’s war machine. The platform endorses “humanitarian” intervention by the United Nations, stating, “The U.S. is obligated to render military assistance or service under U.N. command to enforce U.N. Security Council resolutions.” U.N. Security Council resolutions provided the fig leaf for launching U.S. imperialism’s genocidal war against Korea in 1950, and currently it is the cover for the imperialist occupation of Haiti, among innumerable other imperialist crimes through the years.

The Greens are a worldwide phenomenon, but as a collection of nationally focused bourgeois reformers, the “Global Greens” is a ceremonial confederation of parties. The Green parties share their political origins in radical middle-class protest. That these are bourgeois parties is shown not only in their platform and orientation, but in their actions when they get a bit of power. If you want to know where the Green Party would go if it made it into the big leagues, just look at the German Greens, which provided the ideological cover for the 1999 NATO war

on Yugoslavia. U.S. Greens disclaim responsibility for their European colleagues’ participation in war cabinets, but the fact is that where Green parties have made it in bourgeois politics they have become junior partners in administering what they view as “our” capitalist states.

Currently the ISO is hailing the Green Party’s Platform Amendment 835, passed as the Greens’ convention in August, as supposedly “making the Greens an explicitly anti-capitalist party.” The amendment calls for “decentralization of power” while condemning the “old models” of capitalism and “state socialism” (a standard Cold War phrase aimed at equating the bureaucratically deformed workers states under Stalinism with the revolutionary expropriation of the bourgeoisie by the Russian Revolution led by Lenin and Trotsky).

Anti-capitalist? Who are they kidding? The Green Party platform calls to “re-design corporations to serve our society, democracy and the environment,” to “change the legal design of corporations so that they generate profits, but not at the expense of the environment, human rights,” and so on and so forth. This cretinous liberal idyll of nice corporations and a decentralized bourgeois state “for the people” is the *opposite* of Marxism’s proletarian class program for smashing capitalist class rule, seizing the means of production and centrally planning the economy to meet humanity’s needs worldwide through the proletarian democracy of workers councils (the dictatorship of the proletariat).

### Pseudo-Socialist Little Leaguers

So after their doomed spring fling with de facto Democrat Bernie Sanders, the larger left opportunist groups returned to an old flame, the Green Party. What of the rest? Though their various campaigns are devoid of anything approaching a revolutionary program, they all share a laundry list of demands to reform capitalism. This year, seeking to cash in on the massive discontent with Democrats and Republicans, quite a few of the reformist outfits are presenting presidential candidates, among them the Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL), Socialist Action (SA) with support from the Freedom Socialist Party (FSP), Socialist Equality Party (SEP), Socialist Workers Party (SWP).

Reading these reformist election platforms with their low-level electoral appeals is enough to drive any genuine Marx-

ist to distraction, or to fall asleep out of boredom. Certainly none deserves a vote from class-conscious workers or revolutionary-minded youth. By and large they share election planks of liberal/reformist calls on the capitalist state to fix things up. Their wish lists include enacting full employment through public works (naturally no mention of workers control, as called for in Trotsky’s Transitional Program). Instead of fighting for the expropriation of capital through socialist revolution, they tout “publicly owned enterprises.” Health care for all, housing for all, education for all round out their lists, yet there is no mention that all of this cannot be accomplished without overthrowing the capitalist system.

In response to the racist police murders there are calls to “jail the killer cops,” for “community control of the police,” to “disarm the police” or even “abolish the police,” as well as calls for “abolition of the U.S. war machine,” to “abolish the war on terror” and “abolish imperialism” – all presented as calls on the present capitalist state. This flies in the face of the Marxist understanding that the bourgeoisie will never surrender its state apparatus of repression, which is vital to maintaining its class rule. What’s required is a program for the working class to smash that state in a socialist revolution and set up its own workers state that expropriates the capitalist class and helps spread proletarian power worldwide.

The alphabet soup includes some particularly absurd and indigestible ingredients. The PSL’s gimmick is to propose amendments to the capitalist U.S. Constitution. Meanwhile, its ANSWER Coalition echoes Bernie Sanders’ rhetoric and tips the hat to those “voting for third-party candidates” in an appeal for an Inauguration Day protest, stating: “All of us organizing together can expand the existing grassroots movements for social change and a real political revolution.” Others range from cookie-cutter reformism to the SWP’s increasingly eccentric blend of Castroism and social democracy, and the downright sinister SEP with its propaganda against unions and systematic minimization of the reality of black oppression.

The Workers World Party (WWP) has a somewhat more leftist program on sale this time around, saying “We are running to expose the election” and even calling for socialist revolution. But it’s all in the service of pressure politics as shown in their articles on protests over the police murder of Keith Lamont Scott in Charlotte, North Carolina. Under a subhead “Taking on state by pressuring ruling class” WWP argues that “the capitalist ruling class can be forced to tell their servants to pull back” (*Workers World*, 13 October). And do not forget the WWP’s long record of tailing after “progressive” Democratic politicians, particularly black Democrats, from Jesse Jackson to Barack Obama. When support for Obama was at high tide, the WWP hailed “the millions who took to the streets in celebration of an historic event” (*Workers World*, 13 November 2008) and joined in “Harlem’s joy over President-elect Obama” (13 November 2008).

What’s urgently needed today is not the kind of “leftism” that endlessly tails the cycles of bourgeois electoralism, nor a pale pink alliance with bourgeois Greens – but red revolution. For workers and all the oppressed, that is the only way out of the bourgeois political system in crisis. ■



Michael Nigro

**Liberal Greens appeal to Democrat Sanders at Philadelphia convention in July.**



## “We Need a Workers Party”

# Challenging the UFT’s Love-Fest for Clinton

By Class Struggle  
Education Workers

The October 19 Delegate Assembly of the United Federation of Teachers, with 120,000 active service educators the largest union in New York City, was an election rally for Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton. UFT president Michael Mulgrew gave an hour-long report centered on a pitch for Clinton, asking people to sign up for phone banking at the union hall (free dinner included) and praising the big UFT retirees chapter in South Florida for its efforts in that swing state.

When the floor was finally opened for the “question period” (15 minutes), delegate Marjorie Stamberg rose to say that the union should oppose both the racist misogynist pig Trump and Wall Streeter Clinton and asked to open up more time to discuss this. Naturally, this was met with a chorus of boos, shouts of “sit down,” etc. from the 600+ supporters of the bureaucracy’s Unity Caucus. Ever since the UFT was founded in 1960 by the arch anti-communist Al Shanker it has been bound hand-and-foot to the Democratic Party.

Four years ago when Stamberg (a member of Class Struggle Education Workers) sought to present a motion to repudiate the national AFT endorsement of Barack Obama and calling for “no vote for Democrats, Republicans or any party or politician representing the interests of capital against the working class,

poor and oppressed,” she was ruled out of order. The UFT leadership even refused to allow her or anyone else to speak against its motion calling to vote for Obama, a Unity hack called the question, debate was cut off, its motion was voted up, and that was that (see “UFT Censors Opposition to Obama Endorsement,” *The Internationalist* special issue, November-December 2012).

But this time around Mulgrew was in an oh-so-democratic phase, explaining to the new delegates how the union has diverse political views, ranging from far left to far right, and said that if someone wanted to put up a motion about the elections, that would be appropriate. So in the motion period, after some wrangling over whether a motion from the floor could be no more than three lines or three sentences, Stamberg presented her motion:

“We in the UFT should not support either candidate of the Democratic or Republican parties of capitalism. Donald Trump is a racist misogynist xenophobe. Hillary Clinton is beholden to Wall Street, and the Clinton Foundation bears major responsibility for the \$5/day starvation wages in Haiti’s sweat shops. We need a workers party.”

When the chair asked for someone to second the motion, there were a number of takers. Since no discussion is allowed on such motions, there was an immediate vote. Significantly, several dozen delegates raised their hands to vote “yes.” Then, as usual, the Unity machine went into action and the motion was duly voted down. After the



CSEW at May Day 2016 march in New York City.

meeting, people came up to say thank you for putting up the motion, reflecting significant discontent among teachers over the endorsement of Clinton, the former Wal-Mart counsel and board member who has been a supporter since Day One of corporate “education reform” to gut public education.

While some leftists in the Movement of Rank-and-file Educators (MORE) voted for the motion, this liberal/reformist caucus did nothing to oppose the union’s support for Clinton. After MORE and the New Action caucus won all seven executive board seats

for the high school division in UFT elections last Spring, these would-be union reformers are settling in as a tame house “opposition” whose program doesn’t go beyond simple trade-unionism (and sometimes not even that). Class Struggle Education Workers, in contrast, distributed hundreds of leaflets at the door for a protest it co-sponsored the next day calling for an end to the deportation and exclusion of Haitian immigrants.

For over a century, labor in the U.S. has been chained to the Democratic Party. Even at the height of the sit-down strikes in the 1930s, reformist leftists led militant unionists to embrace Democrat FDR. The current labor bureaucracy is the product of the Cold War purges that threw out the reds who built the unions. The AFT/UFT is a product of this purge under Shanker and other supporters of the anti-communist Max Shachtman, playing a prominent role in the machinations of the “AFL-CIA” from Chile to Poland. Today the labor fakers still have a stranglehold on the unions, and will continue to throttle class struggle until they are defeated by an opposition that fights the pro-capitalist bureaucracy politically.

As shown by the challenge to the AFT/UFT endorsement of Wall Street war hawk and corporate education defector Clinton, this task falls to the CSEW which has uniquely fought for class-struggle opposition to the “labor lieutenants of the capitalist class.” ■

## Election Hell...

continued from page 1

evil while tightly holding their noses.

In reality, the policy differences between the partner parties of American capitalism are mainly rhetorical and tactical. On immigration, Republican Trump grotesquely denounces Mexican immigrants as “rapists,” “criminals” and drug dealers, calls for banning Muslims from entering the U.S., advocates building a wall along the Mexican border and wants to deport 11 million undocumented immigrants. Democrat Clinton poses as the friend of immigrants, praising a Muslim family whose son died on duty in the U.S. imperialist army occupying Iraq, while Hillary’s husband Bill Clinton during his administration built one of the first sections of the border barrier, near San Diego, and the Obama administration has already deported upwards of 5 million immigrants, far more than any predecessor.

Meanwhile, the wanton murder of unarmed civilians, particularly African American men, continues unabated (944 people killed by police so far in 2016). In July there was Alton Sterling, executed by two white Baton Rouge, Louisiana cops while they had him pinned to the ground. The very next day Philando Castile was shot dead by a cop in Falcon Heights, Minnesota during a traffic stop while he was following instructions to put his hands up. Then in mid-September, a black music student and church choir member, Terence Crutcher, was shot dead with his hands up by police in Tulsa, Oklahoma. And four

days later, 43-year-old African American Keith Lamont Scott was gunned down by police while waiting to pick up his son at a school bus stop.

When the wanton murders by police last July led to revenge attacks killing cops in Dallas and Baton Rouge, the response of Donald Trump was to denounce Black Lives Matter demonstrators as “divisive” and cast himself as the “law-and-order candidate.” Hillary Clinton, in turn, called to “do much more to protect and respect the police” and to “listen to the fears of our police officers.” Where Republicans vituperate against demonstrators protesting racist police murder, the Democrats seek to placate BLM activists, telling candidates to “listen to their concerns” but “don’t offer support for concrete policy positions.”<sup>1</sup> While Democrats pose as friends of labor, blacks, the poor and downtrodden, and Republicans campaign as the voice of racist reaction, they are both parties of Wall Street, racist repression and imperialist war.

While liberal and reformist demonstrators chant “no justice, no peace,” as communists, the Internationalist Group warns that there is no justice for the oppressed under capitalism, that “only revolution can bring justice.” Against racist government attacks we demand *full citizenship rights for all immigrants* and call for *black liberation through socialist revolution*. Against U.S. military intervention we fight for workers action to *drive the imperialists out of the Middle East*. To lead this struggle,

<sup>1</sup> See leaked Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee memo at <https://guccifer2.wordpress.com/2016/08/31/pelosi/>.

it’s necessary to *break with the Democrats, Republicans and all capitalist parties*, including the minor league Greens, and *build a revolutionary workers party* that champions the cause of all the oppressed.

### The Fraud of Imperialist “Democracy”

The 2016 elections are an object lesson in the fraud of bourgeois democracy. As usual, in the buying of the presidency, money votes – and big money votes big. Overall spending on the 2016 presidential vote already exceeds \$1.2 billion, on track to equal the \$1.6 billion price tag for the 2008 campaign and surpass the \$1.3 billion spent in 2012. If Democrat Clinton is ahead, that is in good part because she has outspent Republican Trump by 2 to 1. In ’08 and ’12 Obama outspent McCain and Romney by roughly the same margin. The difference this time is that Hillary Clinton has gotten eight times as much from big donors (\$2,000 and up) as Donald Trump. This reflects widespread nervousness in ruling-class circles over the Republican standard-bearer.

Big chunks of the Republican Party establishment are worried that Donald Trump is too blatantly racist and misogynist, and too erratic, to put in the Oval Office with his finger on the nuclear button. The multi-billionaire ex-mayor of New York City Michael Bloomberg spoke at the Democratic convention to denounce Donald Trump as a “dangerous demagogue.” In reality, Clinton and her team of Cold Warrior advisors seem hell-bent on provoking Russia, and are far more likely to launch a military ad-

venture that could explode in regional or world war, in Syria, Ukraine or elsewhere. The complaint of key ruling class sectors against Trump is that he is a threat to their profits with his populist opposition to free trade and unreliable as a CEO of American capitalism and commander-in-chief of U.S. imperialist interests.

This is very different from the fear and loathing at Trump’s overt racism, xenophobia, misogyny and all-round megalomania felt by many who are also repelled by Clinton’s cynical bourgeois politics as usual. Over the past five years huge social protests have brought hundreds of thousands into the streets against inequality (Occupy Wall Street in 2011) and racist police murder (Black Lives Matter from 2014 on). Yet the mass demonstrations petered out after a few months and then disappeared in election years because they had no program beyond pressuring the capitalist politicians. And the protesters had zero impact on the electoral process other than being denounced as criminals by the likes of Trump and having a few leaders co-opted by Clinton.

The campaign of Bernie Sanders, who posed as a “democratic socialist,” just served to rope discontented young people and “progressives” back into the Democratic Party. Faced with “choosing between cholera and the plague,” there has been unusual interest in third party candidates ranging from right-wing Libertarians to the Green Party. These are just shelters for homeless Republican conservatives and Democratic liberals respectively. Aside from those supporting the capitalist



Greens, a bevy of reformist left groups are running candidates on near-identical platforms appealing to discontented liberals and Sandernistas on a platform of warmed-over New Deal liberalism.

The road to break out of this stranglehold was shown by the Portland, Oregon Painters union, which adopted a motion declaring that it “does not support the Democrats, Republicans, or any bosses’ parties or politicians,” and calling on labor “to break from the Democratic Party, and build a class-struggle workers party” (see article this issue). The groundbreaking motion was put forward by members of Class Struggle Workers – Portland, a tendency in area unions that is politically supported by the Internationalist Group. And in New York, Class Struggle Education Workers put forward a motion for a workers party in the United Federation of Teachers which won an unusual degree of support even as it was overwhelmingly rejected by the bureaucracy.

People try to choose the least worse of bad options all the time. For that matter, if adequate health-care facilities and sanitary conditions were available (unlike in Haiti today), cholera actually would be a lesser evil than bubonic plague. But neither Democratic and Republican parties of big business nor the Green and Libertarian parties which act as pressure groups on them, are a lesser evil for the exploited and oppressed, because they all represent the rule of capital. Recall that those who voted for Democrat John F. Kennedy in 1960 as a lesser evil to stop sinister Republican “Tricky Dick” Nixon got the Vietnam War in return. Workers must oppose all these major and minor capitalist parties on principle. Reformist leftist “independents” only aspire to make it into the big time of bourgeois electoral politics. Revolutionary Marxists fight instead for politically independent working-class action leading to socialist revolution.

## Trump Flunks “Presidentiality” Screen Test

In the weirdly prophetic 1998 movie, *The Siege*, Brooklyn is locked down under martial law following terrorist attacks. Muslims are locked up in make-shift detention camps. When the protagonist (Denzel Washington) asks the president’s aide why the president doesn’t put a stop to the military marauding from house to house, kicking in doors and torturing Muslim suspects, he is told, “The president is being presidential.” This election, we are told, is like no other because Donald Trump is not sufficiently “presidential.” One might think that a racist billionaire, real estate con-man and reality TV celeb would be welcomed into the club. But Trump is too unreliable, untested, and obvious. Unlike Hillary Clinton, he can’t be completely trusted.

This is the refrain, from President Obama to *USA Today*, that Donald Trump is “unfit to be president.” In the contradictory and bizarre word salads Trump serves up he is liable to say just about anything. In his speeches and tweets, he often starts with “a lot of people say,” followed by looney tunes claims and ending with, “you can look it up on the Internet.” But it is not Trump’s overall nuttiness that scares so much of the ruling class. After all, Ronald Reagan used to cite movie incidents as his own biography, had his daily schedule determined by horoscope, raved about biblical prophecies of Armageddon/apocalypse, and joked on camera about starting a nu-

clear war with the Soviet Union. Their problem is that Trump fails to fully grasp the U.S. president’s role as chief executive and spokesperson of U.S. imperialism, and to discipline what comes out of his mouth accordingly.

Liberal and conservative pols and mainstream pundits are horrified by Trump’s loose-lipped disregard for near-religious pieties of U.S. capitalist ideology. They are embarrassed by Trump’s undisguised racism, while many of the savvier ones were thrilled to have Obama as the deceptive face of U.S. imperialism. They complain that Trump undermines NATO, the increasingly aggressive U.S.-led residual Cold War military alliance;

that he has wondered aloud about a commitment to go to war for the Baltic states and extending the U.S. “nuclear umbrella”; and worst of all, from their point of view, he seems soft on Russia. While U.S. rulers demonize Putin, Trump has praised him (because Putin praised Trump), even saying he would “look into” recognizing Russian Crimea.

Trump says things aloud that are supposed to be kept quiet. Obama does “presidential” in the approved fashion. He goes to Hiroshima, site of the U.S. first-strike nuclear holocaust, and spins seemingly heartfelt lyrics about the dangers of nuclear destruction and pious hopes for a nuclear-free world – even as he builds up and modernizes U.S. nuclear systems that can blow up the world many times over. Trump, on the other hand, talks of “bombing the shit out of ‘em” (the Islamic State). He doesn’t rule out using nukes in the Middle East and Europe. In a March 30 MSNBC interview, Chris Matthews tried to explain to him that “presidents don’t talk about use of nuclear weapons.” Trump asked, “Then why are we making them?” Why indeed?

When Joe Scarborough on MSNBC asked about violations of human rights by Putin, Trump retorted, “I think our country does plenty of killing, also.” Pressed about civil rights in other countries by David Sanger of the *New York Times* (21 July), Trump said: “When the world looks at how bad the United States is, and then we go and talk about civil liberties, I don’t think we’re a very good messenger.” Compare that to Obama’s down-home dreadfulness – “we killed some folks” – in justifying drone attacks on civilians. But this is Donald Trump, whose campaign is centered on being an imperialist “strong man,” an “America First” who attacks Clinton and Obama for being “sooo weak,” who openly advocates CIA torture and familial assassinations.

The more Trump talks, the more traditional Republican pols and Chamber of Commerce types cringe. When Trump threatened in the second debate to arrest Clinton (and his supporters wear t-shirts saying “Jail the Bitch”) over her e-mails,



**Hillary Clinton with cutthroat Libyan “rebels” in Tripoli, 18 October 2011. After victory of these imperialist-backed mercenaries, the ground troops of NATO’s air war on Libya, the country split into fiefdoms as warring Islamist gangs feuded over oil wealth.**

they got really nervous: she learned the trick of using a private e-mail server for official business from the George W. Bush administration, which using this subterfuge “lost” 22 million e-mails during its time in office. After the release of the 2005 video clip of Trump bragging that he can molest women with impunity – and has done so – because he is a “star,” Republican candidates in fear of going under in an anti-Trump tsunami started abandoning his campaign in droves (though some later returned).

In August, 50 “national security” officials from Republican administrations issued a letter warning that Trump would be “the most reckless President in American history.” Conservative newspapers – including the *Cincinnati Enquirer*, the *Arizona Republic*, the *Dallas Morning News* and *Columbus Dispatch*, which have exclusively endorsed Republicans for the last 76-126 years – have come out for Clinton. Now the guardians of ruling-class probity are saying that Trump is besmirching “American democracy” by refusing to say he will accept the “verdict” of the polls and complaining that the vote is rigged. But bourgeois elections are always rigged, not by mythical “illegal immigrant” voters as right-wingers complain, but by the power of capital.

## Warmonger Hillary: Cheney in a Pants Suit

According to a rogue’s gallery of war criminals and neo-conservative militarists, Hillary Clinton is the candidate qualified to be imperialist commander-in-chief. A 30-year career agent and former Deputy Director and Acting Director of the CIA, Michael Morell, took the unusual step of writing a *New York Times* (5 August) opinion piece, “I Ran the C.I.A. Now I’m Endorsing Hillary Clinton,” proclaiming that Trump is a dangerous “threat to national security.” Morell said he was often in the Situation Room with Hillary where she was the leading hawk. Whether it was invading Libya, killing Bin Laden, sending in the drones or escalating military intervention in Syria, she pushed for it, hard.

Along with former CIA and NSA Direc-

tor Michael Hayden who appears in Clinton ads, Morell is a vocal defender of the CIA’s most brutal secret activities, particularly the drone attacks in and out of “war zones.” Morell argued for torture, particularly waterboarding and sleep deprivation, despite the U.S. Senate report based on hundreds of thousands of CIA internal documents that concluded that torture was ineffective. The drone assassins and torturers of the CIA are quite comfortable with Hillary the hawk. A PBS *Frontline* special on “The Choice 2016” (27 September) documents how she planned the U.S. intervention to overthrow Muammar Qaddafi in Libya, as an opportunity to “shape” the 2011 uprisings known as the “Arab Spring.” She grooved on the brutal and sadistic lynch-murder of Qaddafi, saying with a chuckle: “We came, we saw, he died.”

Clinton pushed for massive support to the imperialist-backed Islamist gangs seeking to overthrow the Syrian government of Bashar al-Assad in a war that depended from the outset on arms and financing from the U.S. and its Middle Eastern allies (Saudi Arabia, Qatar, etc.). For the last several years and during the current campaign, she has advocated establishing a “no-fly zone” in northern Syria, supposedly to protect refugees and actually to provide a base for the cutthroat “rebels.” While the U.S. was able to pull off its imperialist aggression in Libya, in Syria today it means going up against the Russian air force, which can and will react. Trump was able to sound like a voice of sanity when he warned, “You’re going to end up in World War III over Syria if we listen to Hillary Clinton.”

The 50 Republican “security experts,” including top-level officials from the Bush-Cheney war machine, who issued the open letter against Trump and for Clinton are mainly the same neo-con militarists who lied their way to war in Iraq. Besides Hayden, signers included former “Homeland Security” secretaries Michael Chertoff and Tom Ridge, and the former undersecretary of defense John Negroponte, infamous throughout Latin America as the godfather of death squads in El Salvador and Honduras and the contra cutthroats that the Reagan administration used

**The Internationalist**





**Bloodied body of Libyan nationalist strongman Muammar Qaddafi moments after his torture and murder by sadistic rebels. Upon learning the news, U.S. Secretary of State Clinton chuckled, "We came, we saw, he died."**

against Sandinista Nicaragua in the 1980s. Clinton's main ally in the infighting within the Obama administration was Gen. David Petraeus, the former CIA director and head of U.S. occupation forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, who imported Negroponte's Murder Inc. to the Middle East<sup>2</sup>.

Columnist Maureen Dowd, in her typically snarky fashion captures the irony of these "never Trump" Republicans as she explains to all those "woebegone whining Republicans who can't get behind their candidate; that they should stop looking for an alternative to Trump":

"They already have a 1-percenter who will be totally fine in the Oval Office, someone they can trust to help Wall Street, boost the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, cuddle with hedge funds, secure the trade deals beloved by corporate America, seek guidance from Henry Kissinger and hawk it up — unleashing hell on Syria and heaven knows where else.

"The Republicans have their candidate: It's Hillary."

—*New York Times*, 15 August

So U.S. voters get to choose between nutty Trump who claims Obama is the founder of the Islamic State, or Hillary Clinton who repeated the Bush-Cheney lies when she voted for the Iraq War. "And that's how Republicans prefer their crazy," quips Dowd, "not like Trump, but like Cheney."

This embrace of Hillary by Bush-Cheney militarists has allowed the Democrats to position themselves where they have wanted to be since Harry Truman, as the party of patriotism and militarism. Chants of "USA, USA, USA" rang out at their convention as they defaulted to their stance of Cold War liberalism, whipping up hysteria against the Kremlin, even though Russia today, after the destruction of the bureaucratically deformed Soviet workers state, is a capitalist country. Clinton asserts without proof that Moscow is trying to muck around in the elections to get Trump elected. Meanwhile, the vice-presidential debate between Democrat Tim Kaine and Republican Mike Pence turned into a nuke-rattling contest over who is tougher on the Russkies.

The whole campaign has overtones of the anti-Soviet Cold War. As Truman launched the Korean War in order to attack the Soviet Union, Hillary Clinton is itching to spark a war in Syria to go after Russia. On the other hand, Trump proposes to set up a "commission" on immigration to

test for ideological conformity to "American values" that sounds like a version of the 1950's red-hunting House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC). The Donald's affinity for McCarthyism is not just abstract. The PBS documentary on "The Choice 2016" documents his long and close association with Senator Joe McCarthy's chief

witch-hunter, Roy Cohn, who acted as Trump's legal hit-man, intimidating potential critics with threats of libel suits.

### Bipartisan Racist Attacks

The African American and Latino vote will be decisive again in this election. In mid-August, black potential voters were reportedly 99% opposed to Donald Trump.



**Violent racist attacks by Donald Trump supporters at rallies: Black Lives Matter activist Mercutio Southall Jr. was called "n---r" and "monkey," kicked, punched and choked by members of crowd at Trump rally in Birmingham, Alabama, 21 November 2015. Trump justified the assault, saying the protester was a "troublemaker" who "should have been roughed up."**

Americans aren't even 99% opposed to a meteor landing that destroys life on earth. (A survey at the end of June by Public Policy Polling showed that 13% of Americans say they would prefer a giant meteor to the election of either Trump or Clinton.)<sup>3</sup> But given Trump's virulent racist rhetoric and violent attacks on black protesters in particular at his rallies, it is hardly surprising that African Americans and immigrants are near unanimous in detesting and fearing a President Trump.

At the core of the Trump campaign is a vicious, nativist anti-immigrant mobilization. From the first moment of his campaign when he came down the escalator of his marbled lobby to vilify Mexican immigrants as criminals and rapists to his speech in Arizona (August 31) calling for a mass "deportation task force," Trump has sought to whip up racist anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim xenophobia. More recently he figured out that the feds already have a massive deportation force under Homeland Security called ICE (Immigration and

<sup>3</sup> The poll was of 853 registered voters, with a margin of error of 3.4 percentage points. See "Poll: 13 percent prefer meteor hitting earth over Clinton, Trump" in *The Hill* (1 July).

Customs Enforcement) whose cruel raids on families have deported *more than 5 million immigrants under Obama*, more than any previous president and *more than all the administrations in the 20th century combined*.

So Donald Trump now says that he will continue those ferociously racist policies. And so will Hillary Clinton. Trump tried to drive this home in the third (October 19) presidential candidates' debate, remarking: "President Obama has moved millions of people out.... They've been deported. She doesn't want to say that, but that's what's happened, and that's what happened big league." Moreover, Clinton's campaign promises of immigration reform with a "path to citizenship" are likely to remain a dead letter, just like Obama's identical promises in 2008 and 2012. The Internationalist Group calls for full citizenship rights for all immigrants, and we warn that it will take a revolution to get it.

Many liberal Democrats have noted that Trump's unconcealed racism, xenophobia, and misogyny are the logical culmination of decades of Republican racist "dog whistling." The Republicans played to the racist vote in the Deep South with

sociopathic rants and taunts, have drawn some of the most sinister fascistic elements into the political mainstream.

Donald Trump is engaged not only in the usual cynical mobilization of the ever-present racist vote, he is the genuine article with a long pedigree. His millionaire father was a supporter of the Ku Klux Klan. Trump's real-estate history has included racist "steering" by marking rental applications with a "C" for "colored." He has been allowed to settle many suits for housing discrimination. In 1989, Trump used his millions to whip up racist hysteria in New York in the frame-up of the Central Park Five, black youth railroaded to prison by the police (see box, page 20). No wonder he is the darling of fascist and KKK groups: he flirted with ex-"Grand Wizard" David Duke's endorsement and has the support of just about every neo-Nazi group across the country.

Well before his election reality show took shape, Trump led the wacko "birther" campaign, an obvious stand-in for racist resentment at the election of the first black U.S. president. Insisting that Barack Obama's election was illegitimate because he was not a "real" U.S. citizen, the "birthers" sought to humiliate him and by extension all black people by forcing him to produce his long-form U.S. birth certificate. This is the same racist ploy being used to suppress the African American and Latino vote with voter ID laws. It recalled apartheid South Africa and Jim Crow segregation in the American South, when police or any white person could demand, "Show me your papers, boy." When the president produced his birth certificate, a first in U.S. history, Trump issued a non-apology taking "credit" for humiliating Obama.

Lately Trump has engaged in fake "black outreach." Black liberals get upset when Trump summons up racist stereotypes of inner-city violence and squalor in order to appeal to suburban white Republican voters. "You can't walk down the street without getting shot," he says. "Your schools are lousy.... Your kids don't have jobs." Middle-class blacks are quick to point out that his portrait of an unyielding dystopian landscape of abject poverty and misery does not reflect their experience. Yet that experience is vastly different from that of the great numbers of African Americans compacted into the hyper-segregated ghettos of U.S. cities, with decrepit schools, astronomical joblessness for black youth and an occupying army of police terrorizing residents.

Many black people are not shocked by the blatant racism from Trump, because unlike white liberals they come up against it every day. They also know that his inflammatory rhetoric can inflame lynch mobs and embolden racist cops. So millions of African American voters will cast their ballot for Clinton. Yet Michelle Alexander, the critic of racist mass incarceration that she dubbed "the new Jim Crow," noted how black people have been "played" by the Clintons and the Democrats: "[Bill] Clinton mastered the art of sending mixed cultural messages, appealing to African Americans by belting out 'Lift Every Voice and Sing' in black churches" even while signaling that "he was willing to be tougher on black communities than Republicans had been" (*The Nation*, 29 February).

In terms of racial policy, Hillary Clin-

<sup>2</sup> See "The Bloody Trail of Col. James Steele and David 'Death Squad' Petraeus" in *Revolution* No. 10, October 2013.





**Hillary Clinton joins Wall Street gang of thieves in groundbreaking for Goldman Sachs headquarters building in 2005. From left: NY Assembly speaker Sheldon Silver (since convicted on corruption charges), billionaire NYC mayor Michael Bloomberg, Goldman Sachs CEO Hank Paulson (U.S. Treasury Secretary who designed bank bailout in 2008), NY governor George Pataki, and U.S. senator Charles Schumer.**

ton is hardly a “lesser evil.” Her campaign ads and supporters present Hillary as a life-long, heroic defender of children’s rights and interests, particularly of black and poor children. Yet in the 1990s along with husband Bill she campaigned for legislation to “end welfare as we know it.” The Clinton “welfare reform” law shredded the flimsy federal “safety net,” throwing several million black moms and kids into deeper poverty.

The grotesquely misnamed “Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act” of 1996 ended AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children) cash payments, placed a time limit on benefits, and shifted responsibility for welfare to the states. This led to a huge jump in the numbers of single mothers living in shelters, surviving on less than \$2 a day. Some did find work, but in the large majority of cases they remained mired in poverty, and they soon lost those jobs as recession hit in 2000 and depression in 2008. Feminist author Zoe Heller wrote that the Clinton welfare bill “has probably done more to immiserate the lives of poor women – particularly poor black women – than anything else over the past 25 years.”<sup>4</sup>

Early in her primary campaign, Hillary Clinton was confronted by some Black Lives Matters activists over her support for the Clinton administration policies that led to mass incarceration. Amid the “get tough,” law and order, “lock ‘em up” hysteria aimed at black youth, she famously said that “super-predators must be brought to heel,” like dogs. The Clintons pushed the 1994 “Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act” that militarized local police, imposed harsh minimum sentences and weaponized the racist war on crack. This legislation has become infamous for fueling mass incarceration. Bill Clinton also enacted the “Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act” of 1996 which greatly expanded execution on federal charges and made it far more difficult for inmates to appeal death sentences.

Add to this litany the “Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act” of 1996, which made it possible to deport immigrants for minor offenses such as shoplifting or a speeding ticket, introduced the Section 287(g) program allowing local cops (like Arizona sheriff Joe Arpaio) to arrest people for their immigration status, and banned public colleges from offering in-state

<sup>4</sup> *New York Review of Books*, 7 April.

tuition to undocumented students.<sup>5</sup> Donald Trump may outdo the Clintons in racist rhetoric (though they are prepared to stoop to it), but “Hill and Bill” have made it their specialty to push through legislation victimizing Africans Americans, Latinos, poor people and immigrants that would have raised a storm of protest if a Republican president tried it.

### Trump, Clinton and the Working Class

Hillary Clinton’s campaign has amassed much more money than Trump’s, collected through relentless fund-raisers in the Hamptons, Manhattan, Martha’s Vineyard, Hollywood and Silicon Valley. She has wrapped up most of the Wall Street fat cats. She has the endorsement of liberal and conservative newspapers alike. Democratic Party “socialist” Bernie Sanders brought some energized youth back into the fold. But for all of Trump’s trampling on U.S. political pieties, his racist and sexist rants, the alienation of his party’s traditional big wigs, his pants-on-fire lies and incoherence, a few weeks ago he was nearly even with Hillary in national polls. This put liberals in a panic because they cannot understand the sources of Trump’s support.

Some are inclined to simply write off half the country as irredeemably racist and sexist. Of course, there are plenty of all-round reactionaries among Trump supporters. A poll of his primary voters in South Carolina showed 38% percent wished the South had won the Civil War, 80% wanted a ban on Muslims and 31% would support a ban on homosexuals entering the country (*New York Times*, 12 September). But this does not explain the support Trump has won in rust belt towns like Youngstown, Ohio and in Appalachia. The fact that this billionaire who has spent his business career stiffing workers has won the support of some sectors of white workers with his fake populism is a direct result of the anti-working-class policies of the Democrats.

Trump’s campaign appeals to three populations that sometimes overlap. There

<sup>5</sup> In November 2001, the Internationalist Group organized a campaign at the City University of New York over CUNY officials’ attempt, as part of the post-9/11 “war effort,” to throw out undocumented students by drastically raising their tuition under this provision. Partly in response to the protests, a few months later the state legislature largely undid this exclusion. See the IG pamphlet *Defend Immigrant Students, Stop CUNY’s “War Purge”!* (December 2001) available online at: <http://www.internationalist.org/intCUNYtoc.html>



**The fact that Donald Trump (shown here speaking at the Republican convention in Cleveland Ohio in July), a billionaire who has spent his life stiffing workers can win significant support among white poor and working people is a direct result of the anti-working-class economic policies of the Democrats.**

are the traditional conservative Republican Party loyalists and Hillary haters; there are the xenophobic nativists and misogynists who groove on bashing immigrants and “pushy” women; and there is a third group that supports Trump out of fury over the Democrats’ “free trade” policies that have devastated them and often their communities. (Several studies have shown that many of the latter voted for Obama in prior elections and feel betrayed by the results.) Poll analysts generally classify the last group working-class, but they make this classification on the basis of income levels. What this misses is the large number of ruined petty-bourgeois included in this sector – small business owners and professionals who lost out in the economic crises, particularly the financial crash of 2008.

These forgotten people constitute a big chunk of Trump’s supporters. Some are industrial workers whose jobs disappeared in the last recession/depression and as a result of “free trade” policies. Trump directs their anger at China and Mexico and free-traders in Washington (among them the top Republican leaders). But the ruined petty bourgeois are the base of the right-wing populist Tea Party movement, which is now calling to “fire the GOP.” Elsewhere, fascists have recruited from such layers, but contrary to some leftists who equate “Trumpism” and fascism, the U.S. bourgeoisie does not now need a fascist mass movement to smash a working-class threat to capitalist rule – and the premature retirees living in trailers are not about to become shock troops. At the same time there are real fascists out there who are a threat to the working class, such the white supremacist gang that killed a black youth, Larnell Bruce Jr., in the Portland, Oregon area last August.

Trump appeals to angry and dispossessed middle-class and working people who hope he will “stick it to Washington.” They are enraged as “limousine liberals” enjoy spectacular economic recovery and stock market speculators have made out like bandits. Many direct their rage at immigrants and Mexicans (supposedly responsible for “stealing American jobs”) as well as bankers. The country is ripe for a rightist populist movement that is easily manipulated and always contains a large element of know-nothing, nativist racism. What Trump offers them is the usual Republican “trickle-down” fare, an economics program that makes the rich richer and the poor poorer, plus protectionism, pitting workers in the U.S. against their class brothers and sisters abroad. But that won’t stop such a movement from growing.

Right-wing populism fills a political vac-

uum left by the absence of sharp class struggle. The lack of a radical working-class challenge to capitalism has led to the ubiquity of identity politics that has taken hold on college campuses and among liberals. Predictably this has produced a backlash of “white identity” political resentment. So Trump and his gang may be looking beyond the election in a bid to mainstream their brand of “blood and soil” racist identity politics. That is certainly the meaning of naming Steven Bannon of Breitbart as the head of the Trump campaign. Bannon, a media-savvy fringe right-winger, runs a propaganda machine that has built an Internet following of millions with its provocative racist, anti-Semitic and sexist rants and lies.

So these two media provocateurs – Bannon and Trump – see their chance to build a media-fueled post-election movement, cooking up a toxic soup of anti-immigrant, white-supremacist revanchism, with Trump as the TV and social media front man. Bannon, who has had this project all along, no doubt imagines either toppling the Republican “establishment” and capturing the GOP or building a U.S. version of the European anti-immigrant parties that have become a major force in Denmark and the Netherlands, are growing in Germany, and played a key role in the victory of “Brexit” (British exit from the European Union) in the June UK referendum. In this view Trump could be an American Nigel Farage (head of the United Kingdom Independence Party).

Trump advisers point hopefully to the “Brexit syndrome.” They talk about a “hidden vote” for their candidate. In Britain all the polls and establishment figures were for “Remain,” but the voters did not heed them. The Brexit vote caught the pundits by surprise. As we have written, “the Brexiteers were able to mobilize a layer of mainly older, white, conservative English workers,” but like the Trump campaign the Brexit vote was viscerally anti-immigrant, and also infused with reactionary “little England” chauvinism.<sup>6</sup> In the British referendum, Marxists would not have voted to “Leave” or to “Remain” in the imperialist European Union, but campaigned instead for full citizenship rights for immigrants.

So how did it come about that substantial numbers of poor and working-class white people in the U.S. are prepared to vote for the candidate of the Republican Party of the country club and the Chamber of Commerce?

<sup>6</sup> See “The ‘Brexit’ Trap: British Left Caught Between ‘Leave’ and ‘Remain’ in European Union” and “British EU Referendum: Who Voted for What, and Why” in *The Internationalist* No. 44, Summer 2016.





Internationalist photo

**Portland Painters and Drywall Tapers Union (IUPAT Local 10) passed motion in August against Democrats, Republicans and all bosses' parties, calling for a class-struggle workers party. Above: Painters marched in "Labor Against Racist Police Murder" contingent along with other area unions on May Day 2015.**

Thomas Frank, a loyal Democrat, points in *Listen Liberal: Whatever Happened to the Party of the People?* (2016) to the decision by the Democrats under the Clintons and Obama to abandon even their empty gestures toward labor, their working-class constituency, and their FDR New Deal tradition. Increasingly, the modern Democratic Party looks like the party of liberal elites of Wall Street, Silicon Valley, fancy college campuses, and glittering city centers – a highly educated, privileged professional and managerial caste.

The Democrats' electoral strategy includes dragging along African Americans, Latinos and youth as "captured constituencies" whom they allege have "no place to go." This helps to explain the New Deal nostalgia in the Bernie Sanders anti-establishment "revolt." In response to the Republicans' message at their convention of mounting bleakness in the heartland, the Democrats reply that things are just fine, you're just too ignorant to know it. Obama said he hoped that people appreciated that "the birds are chirping ... folks are going to work." But they do not chirp for vast numbers of working people, many of whom are not going to work or are working part-time at multiple low-wage dead-end jobs that don't pay enough to live on.

Part of the reason the Democrats can't grasp the depth of this rage is that they have blinded themselves with their own bogus statistics. Back in the 1990s, Bill Clinton changed the unemployment index to exclude those who had been without work for two years or more. These really long-term unemployed were simply written out of the workforce altogether: they don't count. Supporters of the Obama administration hail the fall of the official unemployment rate to a little over 5%, down from double that a decade ago. But when you take account of the entire working-age population able to work, the actual numbers of jobless are far, far higher. Following the 2008 crash this real unemployment rate shot up to 23% and has stayed there.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> For a useful comparison of official and real unemployment rates see the web site Shadow Government Statistics ([www.shadowstats.com](http://www.shadowstats.com)). Note that the Clinton administration used this kind of statistical flimflam on all sorts of data, notably the consumer price index (which was reformulated to exclude fuel and food, leading to sharply lower inflation estimates, and thus to smaller rises in Social Security checks).

The Democrats are congratulating themselves over the recent report that shows median household incomes rose in 2015. Yet despite all the talk of economic "recovery," this is the first significant increase in eight years of the Obama administration, and it's still significantly below income levels of 1999. Nearly 44 million people are scraping by on food stamps (now called SNAP). On health care, while the number of uninsured has fallen and insurance companies are raking in billions, under Obama's "Affordable Health Care Act" health care for workers has become increasingly unaffordable, with ever-mounting insurance premiums, deductibles and co-pays. No wonder why so many working people can't hear the birds chirping.

The lives of tens of millions of working people were ruined by the 2007-8 economic crisis, and also by the long-term deindustrialization of the "rust belt" in the Midwest and in coal-mining areas of Appalachia, directly related to the "free-trade" policies of the Democrats. The bailout of the banks was not only the initial \$700 billion but rose to over \$29 trillion by 2011 including loans and asset purchases by the Federal Reserve. Then came the policy of "quantitative easing" by the Fed which added another \$4.5 trillion in free money in the form of bond purchases. The result was an enormous post-recession transfer of wealth and income to the already wealthy, contributing to even greater inequality and the ruin of the economic lives of working people.

The reality is that U.S. capitalism can't provide sustained growth, adequate employment and rising incomes. Unemployed workers in Youngstown have a better grasp of current economic realities than the liberal politicians and economists: there are not enough jobs. And despite the Democrats' talk of fighting inequality, this is the lifeblood of capitalism, which lives off the surplus value extracted from the workers' toil. Salvation will not come from legislative tinkering, like bringing back the Glass-Steagall Act (repealed by the Clintons in 1999) limiting speculation by banks, as advocated by liberals and reformist leftists, nor Trump's reactionary economic protectionism. The road for working people must be revolutionary class struggle to bring down the capitalist system.

Since the 1930s Roosevelt coalition that tied labor to the Democratic Party, the Democratic Party has broken workers'

struggles by binding them to their capitalist oppressor mainly through the union misleaders who tout their Democratic "friends of labor." Hillary Clinton's campaign can still summon big-time labor bureaucrats for rallies, like AFL-CIO chief Richard Trumka and the AFT's Randi Weingarten. Every election, the sellout bureaucrats open union treasuries and supply foot soldiers to the Democratic Party. So do the official leaders of movements defending black and immigrant rights. Once in power the capitalist Democrats defend capital against labor, back the police against black protesters, and leave millions of immigrants in poverty as a low-wage labor force without rights.

Many workers, African Americans, Latinos and others are sick of being "captured constituencies" for the Democratic Party, but see no alternative. Some go to Trump in the hopes that he will "shake things up," even though his policies only spell continued misery for poor and working people. Few are attracted to the Greens, a minor league capitalist party supported by some reformist leftists that simply pushes liberal New Deal politics and acts as a pressure group on the Democrats. The Green Party's talk of "socially responsible business" and "shareholder democracy" won't save the planet from environmental devastation by putrefying capitalism, and it certainly can't provide a direction for working-class struggle.

The answer for working people and the oppressed to this "election from hell" must be to oust the sellout bureaucrats sitting atop the labor movement, break the stranglehold of the Democrats and Republicans, oppose all capitalist parties and build a workers party fighting for a workers government, for socialist revolution to undertake the construction of an egalitarian society based on an internationally planned economy producing to fulfill human needs rather than profits. And that is why the call of the Portland, Oregon Union of Painters and Drywall Finishers (IUPAT Local 10) in August to oppose Democrats, Republicans and all parties of the bosses and to build a class-struggle workers party is so important.

The Portland Painters' motion did not call for a nondescript "third party," nor for some kind of electoral "labor party" on the British model, which would serve to divert workers from militant struggle in the plants and the streets into the safe channels of parliamentary politics where they will have

zero impact. In the U.S. from time to time dissident labor bureaucrats have called for "labor parties" when the Democrats became too discredited or in order to head off a workers revolt. These stillborn parties have been incapable (at best) of providing any real program in defense of immigrants and the struggle for black rights. The Portland painters called instead for a workers party to lead all the oppressed.

A century and a half ago, Karl Marx put forward the guiding principles for working-class political action. Addressing the First International in September 1871, only a few months after the Paris Commune, the founder of modern communism declared, "Our politics must be working-class politics. The workers' party must never be the tagtail of any bourgeois party; it must be independent and have its own policy." As Leon Trotsky insisted in discussions on a workers party in 1938, that policy must be a revolutionary policy, not some reformist pablum but a program of transitional demands leading to "one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat." This program would include demands for:

- a shorter workweek with no loss in pay, to provide jobs for all;
- for massive public works, under workers control;
- for workers defense guards to defeat strikebreakers and fascist gangs;
- for free high-quality public education at every level;
- for free, high-quality medical care for all;
- for free abortion on demand;
- asylum for refugees and full citizenship rights for all immigrants, and
- defeat U.S. imperialism in the Middle East and everywhere on the planet.

In fighting to build a workers party based on such a program, the Internationalist Group, U.S. section of the League for the Fourth International, emphasizes that these demands cannot be won by pressuring the bourgeoisie, but only through the mobilization of the working class to break the dictatorship of capital and establish the liberating rule of the working class. ■

Charles Brover contributed to this article.



# Tens of Thousands Fired in Massive Purge Defend Kurdish and Turkish Teachers!

*The League for the Fourth International intervened with a leaflet containing the following article, in Italian and English, at a national demonstration for Kurdish rights of over 3,000 people held in Rome on September 24.*

An all-out assault on teachers in Turkey was launched on September 8, when 11,285 were suspended by the authoritarian government of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and his AKP (Justice and Development Party). It's imperative that class-conscious unionists and all defenders of workers' rights come to the defense of Turkey's teachers and the embattled Education and Science Workers' Union, Eğitim-Sen. The leftist union, the largest in Turkey, has been under constant attack by the rightist, Islamist AKP regime for over a decade, and before that under the military-backed government. Now, it appears Erdoğan wants to finish it off, by wholesale dismissals.

The government has already been using the failed coup of July 15 to purge perceived political opponents and those deemed not loyal enough to the would-be Sultan Erdoğan. The botched coup was blamed on supporters of Islamist rival and former ally Fethullah Gülen, who since 1999 has been in self-imposed exile in Pennsylvania. Gülen runs a network of charter schools in the United States and an empire of over 1,300 private "Hizmet" schools and religious academies (madrassas) in Turkey and in Islamic countries from Bosnia to Somalia and former Soviet Central Asia, where he has been accused of working closely with the CIA. But the government has used the crackdown on Gülen supporters in order to eliminate all other opposition forces, particularly Kurdish and some leftist organizations.

Within two days of the coup attempt, the Education Ministry fired 15,000 education workers and revoked the teaching licenses of another 21,000 educators in private schools, as well as arresting thousands of military officers and police. On



**Teacher arrested during brutal repression of demonstration in Diyarbakir, Turkey, September 9, protesting dismissal of over 11,000 educators under state of emergency decree.**

September 19, the first day of school, a deputy prime minister announced that in the last two months the government had fired 27,715 teachers and another 9,465 remain suspended. Altogether over 80,000 government employees have been sacked and tens of thousands jailed by the AKP regime, which not only targeted alleged Gülenists but also picked up some Kemalists<sup>1</sup>, purging the state apparatus with relative ease, and which is now going in for the kill against Kurdish groups and militant trade unionists.

The September 8 suspensions, ordered by the Education Ministry under a state of emergency decree, were for supposed "connections to a terrorist organization," by which the government means the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK). The dismissed educators were largely from Turkey's southeast, where a majority of the population are ethnic Kurds. The region has been a theater for brutal government repression against the Kurdish

<sup>1</sup> Followers of the secular tradition of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the bourgeois Turkish republic.

population since July of 2015, including cordoning off entire neighborhoods under police occupation. On the eve of the assault, the government ordered thousands of teachers from western Turkey to leave Cizre and other cities under attack. In the ensuing months there was virtual urban war with residents raising barricades. Now, as punishment for this resistance the government is threatening to fire Kurdish teachers.

In conjunction with the latest teacher suspensions, Erdoğan proclaimed "the largest operations against the PKK terrorist organization in its history, both within and across our borders." The PKK has for over four decades waged a guerilla struggle originally for independence, and more recently for autonomy for Turkey's Kurdish population. With over 40 million native Kurdish speakers, this is the largest national group in the world without a state. At the end of August, Erdoğan ordered the invasion of northern Syria by the Turkish Army. While ostensibly directed against the Islamic State (I.S.), it was actually to prevent the extension of

an autonomous Kurdish region in Syria and to smash Kurdish resistance in Turkey.

In its full-court press against the PKK, Erdoğan has given the Gülen treatment to a vast array of Kurds. Those who do not distance themselves from the militant group will have their careers destroyed at the very least. Under a series of decrees issued on September 1 firing up to 50,000 civil servants, those affected cannot be employed by any government agency, will be thrown out of public housing and have their passports invalidated (*BİRGün Daily*, 2 September). Many could languish in prison for years. Teachers in Diyarbakir province, in the heart of the Kurdish region, where over 4,500 education workers were dismissed, protested by the thousands on September 9. They were brutally dispersed with water cannon and 30 arrested. More recently, the

teachers petitioned educational department officials to rescind the firings, but their petition was dismissed (*Evrensel*, 21 September).

Going back to the 1970 labor law, Turkish governments have taken aim at teachers unions. The militant TÖB-DER teachers solidarity association was dissolved after the 1980 coup, and a number of its members tortured and killed. The current teachers union, Eğitim-Sen, part of the KESK (Confederation of Public Employees' Trade Unions), has long been targeted by state repression. Founded in 1995, it has some 200,000 members and is one of Turkey's largest trade unions. In 2004, the AKP government attempted to ban the union for defending the right of students to receive education in their native language (i.e., Kurdish), outlawed under Article 24 of Turkey's constitution. While the European Court of Human Rights ruled in favor of Eğitim-Sen in 2009 and again in 2012, that year 25 leading members of the union were sentenced to prison terms of over six years on trumped-up terrorism charges.



**Turkish teachers union Eğitim-Sen participated in one-day strike against repression, December 2015. Now lists of strikers are being used to fire teachers.**



**Turkey invades Syria, August 25. Turkish workers should mobilize to demand the army get out of Syria and an end to repression in Turkish Kurdistan.**

Evansel

Bulent Kiliç/AFP



## Vote No on the Constitutional “Reform” Referendum

# Italian Capitalists Push Toward Institutional Bonapartism

The following article is translated from *L'Internazionalista* (No. 1, September 2016), publication of the *Nucleo Internazionalista d'Italia*, section of the *League for the Fourth International*.

The rapacious EU bankers and IMF are demanding never ending lowering of living standards and the gutting of basic services and rights. Their demand for “governability” is a push to sharply curtail any semblance of democratic control in order to ram through brutal anti-working-class measures. This is at the heart of the referendum proposed by premier Matteo Renzi for this autumn, saying he would resign if it fails.

The Democratic Party government sponsored “constitutional reform” is part of the push towards institutional Bonapartism to avoid “bothersome” democratic controls. This proposed “reform” goes hand in hand with the government majority’s complete takeover of RAI, Italy’s public broadcasting network by appointing the majority of the directors; the education “reform” that centralizes the power over education and attacks trade union rights; and the Porcellum (now Italicum) electoral law which makes a mockery out of the right to vote.

It should not be forgotten that the last three premiers: Renzi 2015-2016, Giovanni Letta 2013-2014, and Mario Monti 2011-2012 were never elected. Now the Italicum gives a 53% majority of parliamentary seats to the first slate with the most votes, even if it wins only 25% or so of the votes on the first round. The fact that the Constitutional Court ruled the Porcellum electoral law unconstitutional because it “damages the right



Italian premier Matteo Renzi has threatened to resign if his constitutional referendum to increase executive power fails.

to vote”, has had no practical consequences. The unconstitutionally elected parliamentarians carry on as before.

The “constitutional reform” would reduce the Senate from 315 members to 100 (of which five would be appointed by the president of the Republic) and stripped of most of its powers. The Camera would pass the national laws, vote confidence in the government and represent the nation while the Senate would represent the local and regional governments. The 95 Senators would no longer be voted for by the citizens, but picked by mayors and local politicians behind closed doors, giving the party bosses even more power.

Local governments would also be stripped of most of their powers, which would be transferred to the central government. Also local politicians could be removed from their posts if the local government has a large deficit. Since the national

government drastically cuts these funds every year, this is almost a certainty. The proposed “reform” would also give the government the power to speed up the vote on its newly proposed laws simply by declaring them essential.

Historically, Trotskyists have favored a single chamber bourgeois parliament, as Senates usually have higher voting ages and less democratic methods of representation in order to exercise a conservative influence. But in Italy the voting system is so rigged that eliminating the Senate would be a step toward increasing institutional bonapartism. In fact one of the reasons for the “reform” is to eliminate the situation in the recent past

where the PD had a majority in the Camera but not in the Senate

While communists are not insensitive to bourgeois democratic and working class rights and we call for a No vote on this referendum, we know that the democratic trappings of the bourgeois state mask the role of capital, and under imperialism the dictatorship of finance capital. Mario Monti’s unelected Banca d’Italia government was the norm, but perhaps too crude and obvious, so the rulers want to hide behind the facade of the PD. Thus in Italy the banks name the premier, while in Greece they have a referendum that says “No” and the government decrees “Yes” to austerity.

While much of the reformist

left is obsessed with the rigged bourgeois electoral game, revolutionaries seek above all to mobilize working class power in the factories and in the streets. In this epoch of imperialist decay (which the insolvency of the Italian banks once again clearly shows) genuine lasting reforms in the interests of the working class are no longer possible and past gains are being systematically ripped up. Workers and revolutionaries in Italy and throughout Europe must undertake the fight to sweep away all the exploiters in a Socialist United States of Europe. ■



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This time around, the government is making up its purge list from names of teachers who participated in a work stoppage last December (Sendika.org, 8 September). That strike protested the October 2015 bombing of a rally where over 100 demonstrators were killed as they called for peace in the southeast and an end to the anti-Kurdish repression. The October 10 rally was organized by the KESK, the DISK (Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions) and the HDP (People’s Democratic Party), a pro-Kurdish bourgeois liberal party that the government labels an extension of the PKK. HDP deputies have since been stripped of parliamentary immunity and their leaders face five years in jail for calling for autonomy for the Kurdish region and allegedly spreading pro-PKK propaganda. Now, at the same time as the teacher firings, two dozen democratically elected HDP mayors were ousted over alleged links to the PKK and replaced by government flunkies (“Ankara hardening anti-PKK

September-October 2016



Students arrested on first day of class, September 19, for wearing t-shirt saying “Don’t touch my teacher!” to protest removal of tens of thousands of teachers.

strategy,” *Al-Monitor*, 12 September).

Erdoğan’s war on the Kurds and unions has shifted into high gear. The League for the Fourth International has since its inception called for a socialist

dependence, not only autonomy (which would still leave Kurds under the heel

<sup>2</sup> See “Free Abdullah Öcalan Now! Down with the Ban on the PKK!” *The Internationalist* No. 7, April-May 1999.

republic of united Kurdistan. The LFI defends the PKK against the Turkish state and calls for the release of its leader, Abdullah Öcalan, from Turkish prison<sup>2</sup>. We do so from the standpoint of proletarian internationalism as opposed to the nationalism of the ex-Maoist PKK. As Leninists and Trotskyists, we defend the right of Kurdish in-

of the Turkish state). We call on class-conscious workers in Turkey to mobilize their power to demand that the Turkish army get out of Syria and end the murderous police and military repression in Turkish Kurdistan.

Today it is urgent that militant trade unionists in Turkey and internationally come to the defense of Turkish and Kurdish teachers. While the Erdoğan regime is notorious for its dictatorial measures, the assault on Eğitim Sen is a flashpoint in the attack on educators and public education worldwide, from Mexico and Brazil to the U.S. and Europe, precipitated by decaying capitalism. In France, Germany, Greece and Italy in particular, teachers should stand in solidarity with their sisters and brothers in Turkey, calling for concerted labor action to challenge the international offensive against teachers and the entire workers movement. ■

To contact and send solidarity statements to the Education and Science Workers Union, Eğitim Sen, write to: bilgi@egitimsen.org.tr



# Stop Exclusion and Deportation of Haitians! Full Citizenship Rights for All Immigrants!

# Haiti Hurricane Disaster: Workers Revolution the Answer

On September 21, the Department of Homeland Security announced that it was resuming deportations of Haitians. (Since the 2010 earthquake, Haitians arriving in the U.S. were granted Temporary Protected Status.) Less than two weeks later, a category 4 hurricane struck the impoverished Caribbean island nation, leaving hundreds dead, houses flattened, bridges collapsed and the whole southern peninsula cut off from ground transportation to bring in supplies. Nevertheless, DHS chief Jeh Johnson announced that the new policy of “removals of Haitian nationals ... has not changed in light of Hurricane Matthew.” This cruel policy is a distillation of the racist treatment meted out to Haiti by U.S. rulers for over two centuries.

While some “removal flights” were temporarily suspended, the policy of rounding up Haitians for deportation “remains in effect.” In the meantime, well over 1,000 Haitians are waiting just across the border in Tijuana, Mexico. Husbands have been separated from wives and children among the 5,000 admitted to the U.S. prior to the policy change. Those arriving at border checkpoints are now being locked up in detention camps until they are deported. Thousands more are reportedly making the 7,000-mile journey from Brazil, where they were brought following the 2010 earthquake, employed as cheap labor until losing their jobs as economic crisis hit last year.

For decades, the U.S. has been stopping desperate Haitian refugees in rickety boats on the high seas. Until the mid-1990s they were held in the U.S. naval base at Guantánamo, stolen from Cuba as booty from after the 1898 war with Spain at the dawn of the U.S. imperialism. (More recently, the Guantánamo base has become infamous as a torture and detention center for “terror suspects” picked up by the U.S. in its Middle Eastern wars.) After the earthquake six years ago that destroyed the Haitian capital of Port-au-Prince and towns to the south such as Léogâne, Haitians reaching the U.S. were granted Temporary Protected Status. Now that has ended.

Immediately after the new U.S. policy was announced, the Internationalist Group and League for the Fourth International called for internationally coordinated protests against the racist deportations and exclusion of Haitians. In New York, an Ad Hoc Committee to Defend Haitians Against Deportations including, along with the IG and fraternal groups, the Batay Ouvriye Solidarity Network, student, solidarity and left groups, has called a demonstration on October 20 for the demands: **“Stop Exclusion of Haitians! Stop All Deportations! Occupation Troops Out of Haiti!”** Protests are also being held in San Diego, Tijuana and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Many Haitians wondered if the U.S. policy change was an attempt to influence elections in Haiti, which had been slated for October 9. (The voting has now been re-

scheduled for November 30 due to the effects of the hurricane.) What is certain is that the resumption of deportations of Haitians was a cynical election ploy in the U.S. to bolster the chances of Democrat Hillary Clinton. The Obama administration, in which she was secretary of state, saw the spectre of the 2014 Central American refugee crisis when tens of thousands of women and children sought asylum in the U.S. A repeat, they feared, would benefit Republican Donald Trump in whipping up anti-immigrant hysteria.

In fact, both capitalist parties are enemies of immigrants. As a leaflet of the Ad Hoc Committee noted, “Republican Donald Trump wants to deport 11 million undocumented immigrants and build a wall along the Mexican border,” while “Democrat Hillary Clinton was responsible for building the first segment of the wall (in San Diego), and represents the Obama administration, which has already deported more than 5 million.” Against the phony talk of “immigration reform” and a “path to citizenship” which Obama promised eight years ago, the IG and LFI call for **full citizenship rights for all immigrants**, whether in the U.S., Mexico or Brazil.

After the 2010 earthquake, the U.S. imperialists’ prime concern was to prevent

“disorder” in its Haitian neo-colony, invading the country with thousands of troops in the guise of providing disaster relief. This time as well, Washington responded by sending an aircraft carrier and the amphibious assault ship USS *Iwo Jima* with 700 Marines aboard. In contrast, Cuba sent a brigade of doctors specialized in disaster situations (in addition to the 600 Cuban doctors serving in Haiti since the earthquake).

Also purporting to provide “security” for “humanitarian relief,” the Dominican Republic Haiti’s neighbor on the island of Quisqueya (Hispaniola), dispatched over 1,000 troops, settling in at a Haitian navy base. Last year, Dominican authorities ordered the expulsion of up to half a million

people of Haitian origin, many of them born in the D.R. In addition, some 5,000 “U.N.” troops and police have imposed an imperialist occupation of Haiti since 2004. The mandate of this MINUSTAH mercenary force was renewed on October 13, scheduled to remain at least until next April to ensure that the next rigged election would take place under U.N. guns.

The endless disasters besetting Haiti are not the result of “natural” causes but of capitalism and the subjugation of the island by colonial and imperialist overlords going back to the birth of the first black republic in the world. The Haitian Revolution of 1791-1804 was the first successful slave revolution in history. It inspired slave revolts throughout the Americas, notably in the southern U.S. This led the slaveholders government in Washington to impose an economic boycott that lasted for more than half a century. Then came the occupation of Haiti in 1915 by a U.S. expeditionary force that stayed for two decades.

Ever since, U.S. imperialism has treated Haiti as a neo-colony, installing and removing presidents, using and disposing of Haitian workers as cheap labor, arming war lords and death squads. In particular, Hillary and Bill Clinton (who spent their honeymoon in Haiti, after having their first date crossing a union picket line at Yale University) have made Haiti a test-lab for their “public-private” profiteering. During his time in office, Bill Clinton “aided” Haiti by supplying subsidized rice that had the effect of wiping out Haiti’s rice-growing industry. This “Miami rice” actually comes from Arkansas, where Clinton had been governor. So he aided Arkansas agribusinesses and destroyed Haiti’s ability to feed itself.

After the 2010 earthquake, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton siphoned off millions of dollars of relief and reconstruction funds to

*continued on page 14*



**Destruction after Hurricane Matthew in Jérémie on Haiti’s southern peninsula, October 6.**



**Hillary and Bill Clinton (center) celebrate opening of the SAE-A factory in Caracol Industrial Park, October 2012. The sweatshop garment factory, owned by a notorious Korean union-buster, pays women workers less than \$5 a day. It was built with millions of dollars siphoned by Hillary’s State Department and Bill’s Clinton Foundation from disaster relief funds, even though the site is far from the quake zone. Hillary’s former chief of staff is now a business partner with the owner of SAE-A.**



# Protests in U.S., Mexico and Brazil Demand: **Stop Exclusion of Haitians!**

## **Stop All Deportations!**

## **Occupation Troops Out of Haiti!**

On October 20, coordinated demonstrations were held in New York City, San Diego, California, Tijuana, Mexico and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil denouncing the decision of U.S. immigration authorities to exclude and resume deportation of Haitians, and demanding an end to the imperialist occupation of the hard-hit Caribbean island nation. Not only are large parts of the Haitian capital still marked by the devastation left by the 2010 earthquake, now there is more massive destruction and hundreds of deaths in Hurricane Matthew which hit Haiti at the beginning of October. Despite these catastrophic conditions, U.S. Homeland Security secretary Jeh Johnson declared that “removal flights” will be resumed “as soon as possible.”

The united-front protests demanding “Stop Exclusion of Haitians! Stop All Deportations! Occupation Troops Out of Haiti!” were called by an Ad Hoc Committee to Defend Haitians Against Deportations initiated by the Internationalist Group and Batay Ouvriye Solidarity Network shortly after the new deportation policy was announced. Additional endorsers included a number of student, immigrant/worker rights, Haitian and left groups (see below).<sup>\*</sup> In NYC the demonstration was built by intensive leafleting in the Haitian area of Brooklyn over a period of two weeks. On October 20, more than 75 people came out in a loud and spirited protest outside the Permanent U.S. Mission to the United Nations, where they chanted “Stop the deportations, Stop excluding Haitians, Stop

the occupation!” Protesters’ signs also protested racist terror from Mexico to the U.S. and denounced Democrats and Republicans as enemies of immigrants.

In Tijuana, Mexico the demonstration took place in front of the cathedral, only a few blocks from where several thousand Haitian immigrants are camped out seeking admission to the U.S. and now facing the threat of deportation. During the week beforehand, protest organizers visited the camp and spoke with some of the Haitians. They recounted their harrowing 7,000-mile journey from Brazil, where tens of thousands of Haitian workers had been imported as cheap labor to build facilities for the 2014 World Cup and this year’s Olympics, but were now jobless. The day before the protest a poster announcing it was displayed at a restaurant that gained fame for adding popular Haitian dishes to its Mexican fare.

Banners in Tijuana carried the slogans of the protest, called for “Workers Solidarity Against the Imperialist Occupation,”

and proclaimed “Neither Illegals Nor Criminals, International Workers,” a slogan that was spray-painted on the original border wall nearby. The Grupo Internacionalista, Mexican section of the League for the Fourth International, had an additional banner calling for “Full Citizenship Rights for All Immigrants!” and “For Workers/Immigrant Mobilization to Stop the Deportations!” In the face of chauvinist hostility from some bourgeois politicians, the

GI demanded not only that the U.S. let the Haitians in but also that the many African and Central American immigrants should have the same rights as Mexican citizens.

A few hours later, just across the border in San Ysidro, San Diego, another demonstration was held, organized primarily by the new Los Angeles local of the Internationalist Group and endorsed by other leftist and immigrant rights groups in the area. The protest drew Haitian activists from San Diego and Los Angeles who led chants together with the Internationalist Group in Haitian kreyòl, English and Spanish, including “Eske Kristof Kolon te gen alyennkat?” or “Did Christopher Columbus have an alien (green) card?”, “An injury to one is an injury to all -- Let the Haitians through the wall!”, “U.S. imperialism: Hands off Haiti!” and “For Haitian-Dominican workers revolution!” A Haitian activist addressed the crowd in kreyòl and English, demanding: “Release our Haitian brothers and sisters! We’re not criminals, we’re just looking for a better life!”

In Brazil, comrades of the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil, section of

<sup>\*</sup> Endorsers of the October 20 protests included: Batay Ouvriye Solidarity Network; Class Struggle Education Workers; Caribbean Student Union, Hunter College; CUNY Internationalist Clubs; Haitian Students Association, Hunter College; Haiti Liberté; Internationalist Group; Laundry Workers Center; LIU Student Coalition; NY Socialist Workers Party; Socialist Action; Trabajadores Internacionales Clasistas. In San Diego the protest was endorsed by Unión del Barrio and MECHA of San Diego City College.



Haitian immigrants line up at shelter in Tijuana. Over 3,000 are blocked at the U.S. border.



October 20 protests against U.S. exclusion and deportation of Haitians and for occupation troops out of Haiti. Clockwise from upper right: San Diego-San Ysidro border crossing, Rio de Janeiro and New York City.

September-October 2016



# Protests...

*continued from page 13*

the LFI, and the Class Struggle Caucus (CLC) linked to the LQB, held a protest outside the Mexican consulate in Rio that same day. The demonstration was endorsed by and announced on the site of the Rio de Janeiro state teachers union, the SEPE-RJ. Participants included municipal workers, metal workers, postal workers and representatives of the black movement and an indigenous group. A CLC banner proclaimed: “Down with Police Murders in the U.S. and Ayotzinapa – Police Out of the *Favelas* of Haiti and Rio.” Military police take tactics they have used in the Brazilian-led occupation of Haiti and use them in the *favelas* (poor neighborhoods) at home.

Back in Mexico, there was a 90-minute special program during the protests for Haitian immigrants broadcast by the GI program “Frecuencia Obrera Internacionalista” on Radio Plantón, the station of the combative Section 22 of the CNTE teachers union in the state of Oaxaca. As in the August 17 tri-national demonstration of solidarity with Mexican and Brazilian teachers,<sup>1</sup> the GI made telephone links so that listeners in Oaxaca – where teachers heroically struck for four months earlier this year in the face of murderous repression – could hear from the protests in Rio, NYC and Tijuana. During the program, text messages were received from teachers saying that these international protests gave them tremendous encouragement.

In New York, speakers started off with Mario Pierre of Batay Ouvriye Solidarity Committee, who denounced Obama as the “black face of a savage system of capitalism and imperialism,” that together with the local bourgeoisie destroyed production in Haiti and created the conditions forcing large numbers of Haitians to emigrate in search of work. He noted that Bill Clinton, when he was president, single-handedly destroyed rice production in Haiti by importing heavily subsidized rice grown in Arkansas. Mahoma López of the Laundry Workers Center (LWC) emphasized the need for solidarity not only with the Haitian people but also students from Ayotzinapa, teachers in Mexico and Brazil and all the sectors in struggle.

Jorge of Trabajadores Internacionales Clasistas (TIC – Class Struggle International Workers), also speaking on behalf of the LWC and recently unionized workers at the B&H photo and video supply company, said they were there in solidarity with their Haitian brothers and sisters waiting on the other side of the border. “As immigrants, we know what it’s like to live in fear of being deported. But in order to change, we all have to unite.” A notable aspect of the New York mobilization was the active participation from the start of Spanish-speaking workers in the TIC, which works fraternally with the IG, including a number of B&H workers, in planning and building the action.

Yari from the Hunter Internationalist Club noted that “Barack Obama campaigned on a platform of hope and change for black people and Latinos. But it’s under the Democratic government that Haitians are being put into concentration camps, detained at the border and their temporary status revoked. What we actually need is a socialist revolution of Haitian and Do-  
<sup>1</sup> See “Tri-National Day of Action: Solidarity with Mexican and Brazilian Teachers,” *The Internationalist* No. 44, Summer 2016.



October 20 protest in Tijuana: “Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!”

minican workers together. And that needs to start right here in New York. *¡La lucha obrera no tiene fronteras!*” (Workers struggle has no borders). Marty Goodman of Socialist Action noted the irony that we were demonstrating in front of a building named for Ron Brown, “who lobbied for the Duvalier family dictatorship” in Haiti.

Gordon of the Internationalist Club at the City University of New York Graduate Center noted that Haitians rose up against slavery “and they have been paying for it ever since. U.S. imperialism has propped up various dictators against the Haitian workers and peasants. There’s the 1915 invasion, another invasion in 1994 and now under the auspices of the U.N. another occupation. We need a socialist revolution in Haiti, in the Dominican Republic, and across the Caribbean, which would be very different than the previous federations, that always served the interests of imperialism.” As for asylum for refugees and full citizenship rights for immigrants, “not the Democrats, nor the Republicans nor any of the lesser capitalist parties will support” this.

Antonio Tizapa, the father of one of the Ayotzinapa 43 students kidnapped and disappeared in 2014, said “Ayotzinapa is here with our Haitian brothers. We know what our Haitian brothers and sisters are going through at the U.S. border. We need to find a way to help them from here.” Marjorie Stamberg of Class Struggle Education Workers and a delegate in the United Federation of Teachers, asked: “What is the main thing that the U.N. did for Haiti? It brought an epidemic of cholera.” She noted that at the UFT assembly the day before she presented a motion against Trump and Clinton, underlining that in Haiti “the Clinton Foundation set up hideous sweatshops after the earthquake where workers get only \$5 a day, living in shacks without plumbing.”

A spokesman for the Internationalist Group noted that the IG and League for the Fourth International took the initiative to organize demonstrations on October 20 to protest the U.S.’ new deportation policy. In the U.S., Mexico and Brazil we call for full citizenship rights, which historically has only been won by revolutions. He added, “The fight for a revolution in the United States starts by fighting against all capitalist parties and for a class-struggle, revolutionary, internationalist workers party. The Portland painters union passed a motion for ‘No to the Democrats, no to the Republicans, no to all the bosses’ parties, for a class-struggle workers party’. That is what in this horrible ‘election from hell’ we need to fight for.”

The demonstration also heard from Jacob Perasso, a candidate of the Socialist Workers Party running for U.S. Senate in New York. Notably absent from the endorsers and the demonstration itself was the

Spartacist League, which had been invited to participate in the united front. Its absence doubtless had much to do with the fact that after the earthquake in 2010, the SL supported the U.S.’ imperialist invasion of Haiti in the guise of disaster relief, while loudly denouncing the IG (and others) for demanding the U.S. get out. After three months of defending this shameful line, the SL formally repudiated its social-imperialist position but never seriously investigated its roots.

Given the declared intention of U.S. authorities to start up deportations to Haiti again, the October 20 demonstrations should be a spur to further action when they resume. Since its inception, the LFI has made a particular effort to organize concrete solidarity with Haiti, which as the first (and only) successful slave revolution in history inspired slave revolts throughout the Americas, notably in the U.S. South, and has been subject to racist colonial and imperialist economic boycott and military occupation over two centuries. At the end of the protests in all three countries, demonstrators chanted “Asian, Latin, black and white, workers of the world unite!” ■

## Hurricane...

*continued from page 12*

set up an industrial park in Caracol, on Haiti’s north shore, far from the disaster zone. The mainstay of the complex was a sweatshop operated by the Korean company Sae-A Trading, which pays its women workers less than \$5 a day. Sae-A Trading is notorious for using violence in union-busting in Guatemala. Subsequently, the Sae-A chairman became a donor to the Clinton Foundation and set up an investment company with Hillary’s chief of staff Cheryl Mills to operate in Africa and the Caribbean.

The 2011 election that installed singer Michel (“Sweet Mickey”) Martelly, a defender of the dictatorship of “Baby Doc” Duvalier that ruled Haiti for U.S. imperialism in the 1980s, was essentially decided in e-mail messages between Hillary’s top aide Mills at the State Department and Bill’s top aide Laura Graham at the Clinton Foundation. The secretary of state visited Haiti in person to ensure that Martelly was included in a run-off election even though he got less votes. Earlier this year, after Martelly fled the island, the U.S. tried to impose its preferred flunkie in a one-candidate run-off vote. But after protests Haitian authorities finally annulled the vote.

Beyond the endless abuses and invasions by U.S. imperialism, the torment of Haiti is the result of the relentless workings of imperialist capitalism in its semi-colonies. The shantytowns in Haiti resemble the *favelas* in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and the belt of misery surrounding Mexico City. The residents are former peasants forced off their lands by free-trade policies and the expan-

sion of giant agribusiness corporations. The shoddy construction that led to the collapse of houses in Port-au-Prince in 2010, producing up to half a million deaths, reflected the same practices in Mexico City where tens of thousands were killed in the 1985 quake.

The fact is that it will take a revolution to put an end to the impoverishment and wanton destruction of human life that fuels the capitalist profit machine. For comparison one need only look at the effect of Hurricane Matthew next door, where it spread a trail of destruction across southeast Cuba. Estimates of the number of dead in Haiti range from the government’s figure of a little over 500 to unofficial estimates of over 1,000. But according to the *Miami Herald* (19 October) “no loss of life was reported in Cuba.” The reason: first, that disaster-prone ramshackle homes which are the norm in Haiti are far rarer in Cuba; and second, Cuba’s exemplary disaster mobilization system evacuated more than 1 million people to safe shelters in schools and other public institutions.

This is the difference that a revolution can make, along with Cuba’s free, high quality medical care that is a model internationally. Cuba is a bureaucratically deformed workers state, whose leaders seek illusory “peaceful coexistence” with U.S. imperialism. With its Stalinist program of building “socialism in one country,” the ruling bureaucracy opposes the Bolshevik-Leninist program of international socialist revolution. Even so, because the Cuban economy is not based on the drive for profits, Cuba has been able to protect the population against the tropical storms which beset the region (and whose growing intensity has been linked to capitalist-induced climate change) in a way that no Latin American capitalist state has.

The real solution to Haiti’s poverty and tragic loss of thousands of life in massacres and man-made “natural” calamities is to fight for workers revolution – not only in this impoverished half of an island, but also next door in the Dominican Republic and in the imperialist heartland of the U.S. Dominican and Haitian rulers have long stoked nationalist hatreds, yet working people on both halves of the island are exploited by the same bosses and repressed by the allied murderous police and military repressors. The League for the Fourth International, upholding the program of *permanent revolution* of Leon Trotsky, co-leader together with V.I. Lenin of the 1917 Russian Bolshevik Revolution, fights for *Haitian-Dominican workers revolution* in a *voluntary socialist federation of the Caribbean*.

The October 20 protests demanding an end to the exclusion of Haitian immigrants and a stop to *all* deportations point to the need for struggle for socialist revolution to overthrow capitalism from the Latin American neo-colonies to the imperialist centers. In New York City, Dominican and Haitian immigrants toil in low-wage jobs, often at the same workplaces, and are beset by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) cops, the hated *migra*. This could lay the basis of common struggle to overcome the decades of murderous hatreds instigated by the bosses, spurred on by imperialist politicians like Democrat Clinton and Republican Trump.

International protests from Brazil to Mexico and the United States point to the struggle to build internationalist revolutionary workers parties, as part of a re-forged Fourth International, the world party of socialist revolution. ■

**The Internationalist**



# Democrats and Republicans Push Reactionary Response

## Horrific Anti-Gay Massacre in Orlando

JUNE 21 – On June 12, a deranged and hate-filled gunman murdered 49 people at the gay Pulse nightclub in Orlando, Florida. An additional 53 people were wounded in the attack at Pulse – “Orlando’s Premier Gay Nightclub” – which was holding a Latin music night. The scene of bloody anti-gay violence and mayhem caused shock waves of grief and horror around the country and the world. Fifty thousand attended a vigil in Orlando in remembrance of the dead, and commemorations were held from Barcelona and London to Hong Kong and Sydney, Australia.

For many across the U.S., it was a deeply painful reminder that despite official trumpeting of the idea that gays and lesbians “have finally made it into the mainstream,” virulent homophobia has deep roots in this profoundly violent and irrational society. Historians called it the worst anti-gay massacre in the United States since the arson attack against New Orleans’ Upstairs Lounge which killed 32 people in 1973. Now in 2016, what was supposed to be a “safe space” – in the soothing language of Obama-era “inclusiveness” – became the scene of a bloodbath.

Virulent homophobia was clearly a central motive for the 29-year-old assailant, Omar Mateen, who was killed by a police SWAT team. Much else, however, remains murky. He accumulated selfies in NYPD gear, and had a history of domestic abuse. He apparently called 911 from the Pulse bathroom on June 12 to “pledge allegiance” to the Islamic State (I.S.), but had claimed in the past to have connections to Hezbollah (a Shiite group counterposed to the Sunni I.S.). For some time he was “on the radar” of the FBI, but still worked as a security guard for G4S, which describes itself as “the leading global integrated security company” and provides mercenaries for the “war on terror.”

The media jumped on the purported links to what the presidential candidates went out of their way to dub “radical jihadists” (Clinton) and “radical Islamic terrorism” (Trump). Yet *The Politico* (17 June) web site observed: “Based on the accounts of his acquaintances and family, Mateen ... appears to have been a deeply conflicted and possibly self-loathing homophobic who drank heavily, took drugs, dated men, frequented the same club he later attacked, Pulse, and used a gay dating app.” This was “not the sort of behavior one would expect” of a “faithful” jihadist. It went on to note that Mateen had no known connection to ISIS or Al Qaeda, had not gone overseas for training and “wasn’t getting operating orders from abroad”:

“Mateen appears, in fact, to have been less a soldier than yet another deeply disturbed American (born in Trump’s own home borough of Queens), who was full of hatred and uncontrollable anger....”

The capitalist politicians saw the events as grist for their mill of hypocrisy and repression. Predictable pat phrases against violence and discrimination came from President Obama. He is commander in chief of a country whose police forces gun down black people every day, and that



On June 13 thousands gathered outside the Stonewall Inn in New York City in remembrance of the victims of the Orlando massacre the night before.

rains death from the sky in bomb and drone strikes (that Obama signs off on for every attack, as Hillary Clinton did when she was secretary of state) against people around the world. His administration has deported over 4.5 million immigrants, far more than any other president in U.S. history, while carrying out what undocumented transgender activist Jennicet Gutiérrez denounced as the “torture and abuse of trans women in detention centers” when she interrupted the president’s rainbow-tinted White House “Pride Month Speech” one year ago.

Presumptive Democratic presidential nominee Clinton seized the occasion of the Pulse massacre to make a stump speech for increasing police-state measures (“hardening our defenses”) at home and ramping up wars abroad ostensibly aimed at “defeating international terror groups.” Most sinister and ominous was her reference to the September 11, 2001 attacks, in which she called to “get back to the spirit of those days, spirit of 9/12” – the prelude to the USA PATRIOT Act and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Clinton – whose party sees gays and lesbians as a reliably supportive voting bloc – boasts on her campaign site that

she “has spent her life fighting for equality for all” (quite a claim for this Wall Street mouthpiece), “and has been a vocal advocate for LGBT rights throughout her career.” Brazen chutzpah from the candidate who openly opposed something so basic as same-sex marriage in her 2008 campaign, and didn’t come out for it until 2013 after she resigned as secretary of state.

As for the open, raving bigot who is now the official Republican contender, the Orlando events provided a platform for Donald Trump to strike a pose as a friend of gay rights – despite the GOP’s blatant and ongoing history of stoking anti-gay bigotry. “LGBT is starting to like Donald Trump very much lately,” he gabbled days after the attack.

Trump’s central theme, of course, consisted of shamelessly exploiting the massacre for his anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim demagoguery. The attack was the result of “a failed immigration system,” he ranted, unfazed as always by facts – like the fact that Mateen, the son of Afghan parents, was born in the U.S. Viciously inciting attacks on Muslims in particular, Trump claimed the U.S. Muslim population “know[s] what’s going on” regarding possible at-

tacks, and vowed “big consequences” against those who do not “cooperate.”

The cynical calculus of bourgeois politics means that for the professional traffickers in fear and deception, every tragedy has a potential “up” side. For Trump it feeds the flames of his call to ban Muslim immigration and “build the wall” on the Mexican border. Democrats see it as a golden opportunity to push through more stringent gun control. On-line petitions have proliferated in tandem with the filibuster by Senator Chris Murphy (D-Conn.) and statements from Bernie Sanders and New York governor Andrew Cuomo that Orlando shows the need for “gun reform.”

This is a popular stance in the liberal milieu, including much of the U.S. gay population. And here, as on a whole range of key issues, the revolutionary outlook and program of Marxism stand counterposed to bourgeois liberalism. By far the biggest armed threat to the people of the world, and the rights of the working class and oppressed in the U.S., is the racist American capitalist state. While Marxists uphold the right of self-defense – notably for black people, and most definitely for gay and lesbian people in a violently homophobic society – liberals have confidence in the capitalist state, which seeks to maintain its “monopoly of armed force.” As we have explained in some depth (see, for example, “Who Controls the Guns?” *The Internationalist* No. 34, March-April 2013), present-day gun-control laws derive from the backlash against Malcolm X, the Black Panthers and other advocates of armed black self-defense.

Liberal gun-control advocates would have us believe we would all be safer if only the cops and armed forces had access to guns. They leave aside the fact that Pulse assailant Mateen was himself a member of the licensed U.S. security apparatus (and an avid fan of the New York Police Department). Students of gay history should be aware that the most notorious massacre of gays in New York City was the “West Street Massacre” of 1980, carried out by a former transit cop who mowed down gay men with an Uzi. In San Francisco, another former police officer, the raging homophobe Dan White, assassinated gay-rights campaigner and liberal politician Harvey Milk, as well as the mayor of San Francisco, two years previously.

While Clinton make a ritual obeisance to “inclusiveness” by using the letters “LGBT,” the truth is that the police forces she and the other Democrats (and Republicans) champion routinely harass, beat – and kill – lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

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At the June 19 Portland, Oregon Gay Pride march the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades Local 10 marched with banner declaring “Hard Hats for Gay Rights.”



# Class Struggle International Workers Founded

On August 12, Trabajadores Internacionales Clasistas (Class Struggle International Workers) was founded in New York City. The TIC set as its central task winning the most conscious immigrant workers to the program of internationalist class struggle, not only fighting for labor and immigrants rights but also encompassing the major issues confronting workers and oppressed sectors today. It is similar to other “transitional organizations” including Class Struggle Education Workers in New York and Class Struggle Workers – Portland, which work together with the Internationalist Group. Like them, the TIC aims to be an organization of study and struggle, growing out of the IG’s regular weekly Spanish-language study group, work in union organizing campaigns and mobilizations in solidarity with Mexican teachers and against racist cop terror, from Ayotzinapa to police murders of black people in the United States.

Since it was founded in 1996, the Internationalist Group, U.S. section of the League for the Fourth International, has set as one of its key priorities winning immigrant workers to the politics of Lenin and Trotsky for international socialist revolution. The first leaflet issued by the IG was for full citizenship rights for all immigrants, distributed at an immigrants rights demo in the fall of 1996 in Washington, D.C. Early on, the Internationalist Group cohered a core of immigrant Trotskyist worker cadres that is unique on the U.S. left. All had previously been active in efforts to organize immigrant workers. In November 2001, amid the xenophobic war frenzy following the 9/11 attacks, we initiated a united-front demonstration opposing the attempt to purge undocumented immigrant students from the City University of New York by sharply raising tuition. Partly as a result of this protest, the anti-immigrant tuition hikes were largely rolled back.

Over a number of years, the IG supported day laborers against police harassment, were subject to anti-communist exclusion from “immigrants rights” demos for our criticisms of the Democratic Party,

participated in struggles to stop provocations by the fascist immigrant-bashing Minuteman group seeking to set up shop in NYC, brought immigrants to Black Lives Matter demos and were active in unionization campaigns at Hot and Crusty, B&H and several other locations. One theme repeatedly emphasized in the IG’s work with immigrants is the centrality of the fight against black oppression to revolutionary struggle in the United States. Other founding members of the TIC participated in the nationwide strike by immigrant workers on May Day 2006. Immigrant women workers in the TIC were active in the protests over the disappearance of the 43 Ayotzinapa students. Participating in the IG study group aided in deepening understanding by reading important Marxist texts and discussing current events.

The TIC can play an important role in struggles of immigrant workers, a huge, potentially militant but largely unorganized sector of the proletariat. In New York City alone there are an estimated half million undocumented residents, overwhelmingly workers, and over 3.5 million immigrants overall: some 40% of the city’s population is foreign-born. They work in the lowest-paid, most dangerous jobs, living under the spectre of being detained and deported at any time, and are a constant target for reactionary attacks. Today they face an election (in which they cannot vote) between Republican Trump, a crazed anti-Arab, anti-Muslim and anti-Latino bigot who threatens to deport 11 million immigrants and build a wall to keep Mexicans out, and Democrat Hillary Clinton, a war hawk who continues the policies of the Obama



Trabajadores Internacionales Clasistas joined with Class Struggle Education Workers, Internationalist Group and CUNY Internationalist Clubs in tri-national day of solidarity action with Brazilian and Mexican teachers, August 17.

administration that has heavily militarized the Mexican border and deported over 5 million immigrants over the last eight years. All the talk of a “path to citizenship” has turned out to be a dead-end.

Trabajadores Internacionales Clasistas points to a different path, of intransigent class struggle leading to revolution, which is the only way full citizenship rights for immigrants has been won – from the French Revolution of 1789-99 to the 1871 Paris Commune and the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in Russia. We reprint below a translation of the declaration and program of the TIC.



## Program of Trabajadores Internacionales Clasistas

Today up to 15 million immigrant workers, along with our families, reside in the U.S. without the documents demanded of us by the owners of this country. While lacking basic democratic rights, we carry out difficult and often dangerous work for poverty wages. Truly, we are, as Karl Marx wrote over a century and a half ago, *wage-slaves*.

We international workers are treated as scapegoats for all the ills produced by capitalist society. We are labeled “criminals” and “illegal aliens” when we have committed no crime. We are accused of stealing the jobs of U.S. workers when we do the tasks no one else wants to do. We are accused of taking advantage of welfare programs although we are not eligible for any of them. In fact, undocumented workers pay up to 50 billion dollars into Social Security every year, from which we will never get back a single penny.

What’s more, many of us were forced to emigrate because our liveli-

hood was destroyed by the free-trade agreements and bloody wars unleashed by the U.S. that beset our native lands. But we aren’t just victims. Major sectors of the U.S. economy depend on immigrant labor. We form an integral part of the working class in this country. We have the power to be the champions of our own liberation, and that of all the oppressed!

Various among us have participated in important social struggles, for unionization and against all forms of injustice. We have learned from our own experience that what we need, and what we must organize, is a leadership up to the tasks we face, that is, a class-struggle leadership.

In order to do our part in this great undertaking, we have decided, working alongside the Internationalist Group, to form Trabajadores Internacionales Clasistas (Class-Struggle International Workers) on the basis of the following program:



Internationalist Group contingent in May Day 2011 march in NYC: “Full Citizenship Rights for All Immigrants” and “For a Revolutionary Workers Party!”



## “Neither Illegal, Nor Criminals, We Are International Workers”



The border wall between San Diego and Tijuana in 1997.

### Union, Power, Solidarity! Playing by the Bosses' Rules Is a Losing Game

In 2012, a group of courageous workers at the Hot and Crusty bakery in Manhattan decided that they could no longer bear their ruthless exploitation, and moved to unionize. After 55 days on the picket line, they won. In 2015, tired of miserable wages and dangerous working conditions, hundreds of warehouse workers at the photography equipment retailer B&H, inspired by the example of Hot and Crusty, launched their own union campaign, scoring another win. But we know that all victories in the class struggle are temporary so long as the system of production for profit remains. **Unionize the unorganized! The picket line is the class line – it means don't cross! We seek to build fighting unions with a class-struggle leadership! For total independence of the unions from the state!**

### The Bosses Are Afraid of Us, Because We Are Not Afraid

In 1886, the International Workers Day, May 1, was established when a workers demonstration demanding an eight-hour workday was attacked by the police, resulting in many casualties and leading to the state's execution of the workers leaders, the

Haymarket Martyrs. Today, 130 years later, undocumented immigrant workers are required to work 12-hour days and workweeks of 48, 56 or 72 hours, for starvation wages. We won't take it any more! In 2006 millions of immigrant workers stopped work, reviving May Day in the U.S. We demand a **drastic reduction in work hours along with a whopping raise!** For day-laborers, without any job security, we fight for a **union hiring hall**. We need **free, high-quality comprehensive and universal health insurance and health care**. At the workplace we fight for **union committees with the power to shut down production in unsafe working conditions**.

### Struggle, Win, Workers to Power!

We know that every class struggle is a political struggle. In this election year 2016, the Republican candidate fans the flames of racist hate against Mexicans, Arabs and Muslims while he harasses women. The Democratic candidate wants to launch new wars in the Middle East, and is responsible for the 2009 coup d'état in Honduras. Trabajadores Internacionales Clasistas opposes all capitalist parties and politicians. We who lack the right to vote call for the formation of a **workers party to fight for a workers government**.



Trabajadores Internacionales Clasistas at NYC protest on the second anniversary of the disappearance of the Ayotzinapa students.

### We Don't Beg, We Demand: Full Citizenship Rights!

In his 2008 election campaign, the liberal Democrat Barack Obama promised “immigration reform.” But eight years later we have nothing. Instead, the Obama government has deported some five million immigrants. The hated raids continue, and tens of thousands of immigrants are locked up in what are really concentration camps. We call for **immigrant-worker mobilization against racist attacks, to put an end to deportations, to close the detention camps and win full citizenship rights for all immigrants**.

### Women's Liberation: Duty of All Workers

March 8 is International Women's Day, commemorating the deaths of over 100 immigrant women workers in the Triangle Shirtwaist factory fire in New York in 1911, which was the spark for the unionization of the garment industry. Women workers shoulder a double workday, on the job and both before and afterwards in the home, where they are burdened with the responsibility for domestic labor in the family. They are constantly hounded by sexual harassment and unequal treatment. They are even denied control over their own bodies. Trabajadores Internacionales Clasistas fights for **equal pay for equal work**. Around the world, we fight for **free abortion on demand**, at the sole decision of the woman. We demand **free, 24-hour child care**. Along

with machismo, homophobic prejudices are a weapon of the exploiting class: every class-conscious worker is duty-bound to **defend the democratic rights of gays, lesbians, transgender people and all the oppressed**.

### Black Liberation: Key to Workers Revolution in the U.S.

In this country founded on slavery, the oppression of black people has been fundamental to capitalist rule. We immigrants are well aware of how the ruling class seeks to use us against our black sisters and brothers. We have already seen how police murder of black people goes hand-in-hand with the targeting of all immigrants by the repressive forces. The police are the armed fist of capital, racist to the core. We demand: **Cops out of the unions! Against racist killings, mobilize the working class! Revolution is the only solution!**

### Asian, Latin, Black and White, Workers of the World Unite!

Since the time of the First Workers International, the workers of all countries have had to unite our forces to win. We defend our African, Arab and Asian sisters and brothers against racist hatred! From the Middle East to Latin America, we fight for **workers action to defeat imperialist war!** From China to Cuba, we oppose efforts to reestablish the rule of capital.

**As international workers, we have nothing to lose but our chains. We have a world to win!**

New York, 12 August 2016

## Orlando...

*continued from page 15*

As for America's notorious system of mass incarceration – massively ramped up by the “anti-crime” measures pushed through by Bill and Hillary Clinton – more attention has been drawn over the recent period to widespread violence and sexual abuse against transgender prisoners, largely from the prison guards themselves. The armed fist of the capitalist state – police, prisons, courts – is by qualitative orders of magnitude the greatest danger to the oppressed. The gun control drive is aimed at strengthening its power.

The Orlando massacre of gay people who just wanted to have a night out dancing and were mowed down by a hate-crazed madman was the largest such incident on record. But the deadliest gun massacre in U.S. history occurred not in Florida but in the state of South Dakota, in December 1890. It was carried out not by a lone gunman but by the United States Army, against unarmed men, women and children at Wounded Knee on the Lakota reservation. When the mechanized murder was carried out, between 150 and 300 bodies littered the plains – which capitalism's armed forces were given the task of “clearing” for the expansion of the profit system. Let the advocates of “gun control” by the capitalist state ponder these facts.

As revolutionary Marxists, we point out that the defense of the basic rights of

all is ever more clearly incompatible with the basic set-up of the society we live in. Capitalism is a system of exploitation that feeds off of and continually reproduces every form of oppression, backwardness and bigotry.

As we wrote in “Gay Rights and Socialist Revolution” (published in the CUNY Internationalist Clubs' newspaper *Revolution* No. 7, September 2007):

“Marxists seek to build a genuine revolutionary party that, as Lenin put it in *What Is To Be Done?* (1902), acts as a ‘tribune of the people ... able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression, no matter where it appears,’ mobilizing the *power* of the working class, whose emancipation cannot be accomplished except by uprooting all social oppression.”

A sign of that power was raised amidst the shock and grief following the Orlando massacre, when the building trades workers and supporters of Class Struggle Workers – Portland carried a banner at the Portland, Oregon Gay Pride march reading: “HARD HATS FOR GAY RIGHTS!” To unchain the power of the multiethnic working class and bring it to bear in the fight against oppression, it is crucial to break from the Democrats and all capitalist parties, and join the fight for socialist revolution. That is the crucial beginning for those who want a society without homophobic and racist violence, anti-immigrant bigotry, war, and all the social conditions that breed such endless horrors as the massacre in Orlando. ■



# IBT Self-“Repudiation” Still Alibis Crossing Picket Lines Menshevik Tendency for the Promotion of Scabbing

“Picket Lines Mean – Don’t Cross!” chanted Verizon strikers in New York City through six and a half weeks of their bitter fight against the telecom giant. “Picket Lines Mean – Don’t Cross!” yelled supporters of locked-out faculty as they picketed Long Island University in downtown Brooklyn earlier this month. So did locked-out Bröd bakery workers earlier this year. They picked up the chant from Internationalist activists, but the point it drives home is as basic as it gets: the picket line is the battle line of class struggle. It’s the class line: on one side are the striking or locked-out workers, on the other side are the bosses and those working for and with them. The issue is simple: it’s *which side are you on*, as the famous labor song put it.

Working behind picket lines in a struck facility means stabbing fellow workers in the back, betraying the fundamental solidarity the working class needs if it is to win its struggles – from a strike or resistance to a lock-out to the fight for power. The name for this kind of treachery is as old as the picket line itself: it’s called *scabbing*. “Don’t scab for the bosses, Don’t listen to their lies,” say the lyrics of the Harlan County miners’ song, the answer is to “organize.” And in case you didn’t get, the song adds: “There are no neutrals there.” Young people learning the ABCs of class-struggle politics today can go on-line to find “The Picket Line Song,” which says: “‘Solidarity Forever’ don’t mean just sometimes... You should never walk across a picket line!” (<https://youtu.be/E8K1KTZqp0g>).

What then is one to make of a supposedly revolutionary group that has spent two decades upholding, justifying and promoting scabbing? We’re talking about the grotesquely misnamed International “Bolshevik” Tendency (IBT), which put



What part of “Never cross a picket line” don’t you understand? Striking NYC school bus drivers and matrons got it, IBT won’t. March across Brooklyn Bridge, 10 February 2013.

out a whole pamphlet called *Sectarians, ‘Scabs’ & Socialists* (May 1996). This was to alibi the actions of an IBT supporter, Jim C., who during the 1996 strike by New York City janitors in Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Locals 32B and 32J, daily walked past pickets to work at the *Village Voice* newspaper, where he was a union steward for the United Auto Workers representing *Voice* staff. As denounced in *Workers Vanguard* back when it stood on the program of genuine Trotskyism, Jim C. was *scabbing*. As the then-revolutionary WV put it: “No self-respecting trade unionist, no supporter of the workers movement, and certainly no communist, crosses picket lines, ever.”

The shameful IBT pamphlet was devoted to teaching people that working behind picket lines in a struck building is dandy – so long as you make the usual hypocritical gestures of “solidarity.” The IBT had one proviso: picket-line crossers should please avoid doing the exact work of the employees on the strike pickets outside. This is the logic of labor aristocratic craft unionism, which says it’s fine for unions to scab on each other, crossing each others’ picket lines, so long as they abide by divisions between the various trades. The idea that it’s okay to cross picket lines – and its embodiment, the abomi-

nable oxymoron of a so-called “informational picket line” – is both a key cause and reflection of the drastic weakening of union power over the past decades.

Suddenly last month a two-paragraph statement appeared on the IBT website ([bolshevik.org](http://bolshevik.org)), titled “The 1996 New York City Janitors’ Strike: A Repudiation.” It was the first new item in over three months for these social-democratic Mensheviks whose existence consists essentially of a once-yearly journal. The content of this particular posting, though, was nothing less than a self-condemnation. Here it is in full:

“In 1996, janitors employed by building maintenance companies across New York City carried out a four-week strike against the introduction of a lower tier pay scale for new workers. During the strike, an IBT supporter, Jim C., and other union members at his workplace, the *Village Voice*, managed to prevent the building management employing scab janitors at the *Voice* and raised a considerable amount of money for the striking workers. Jim’s role in the strike was subsequently the subject of a polemic with *Workers Vanguard* (WV, publication of the Spartacist League). Articles from WV and letters to the paper by Jim and another IBT supporter in New York were later published by us in a pamphlet entitled ‘Sectarians, ‘Scabs’ & Socialists,’ in which we defended his actions.

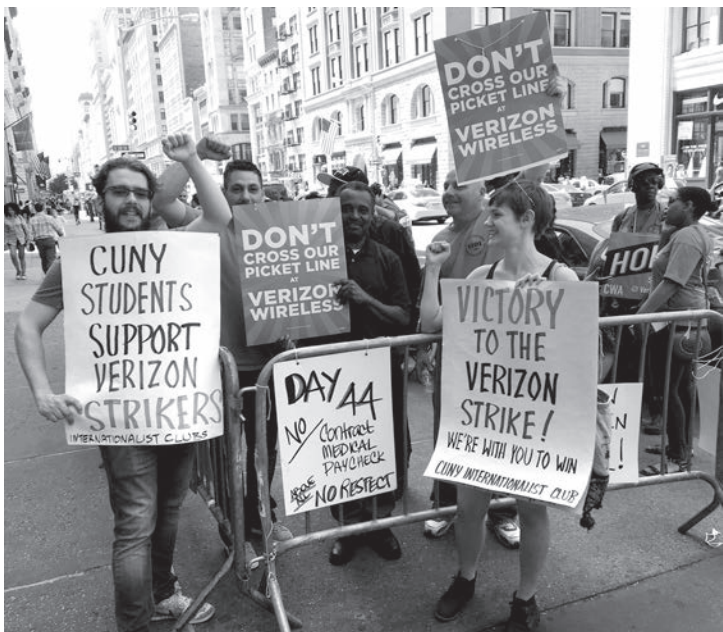
“We have recently become aware that Jim (who is no longer an IBT supporter) and other *Village Voice* employees were removing some trash from their offices during the strike. In his 1996 letter to *Workers Vanguard*, Jim stated that ‘Neither I nor any of

my fellow union members did the work normally performed by strikers....’ This statement was simply not true – they were removing trash. We regard this as indefensible and therefore repudiate our previous defense of Jim’s record during the strike.”

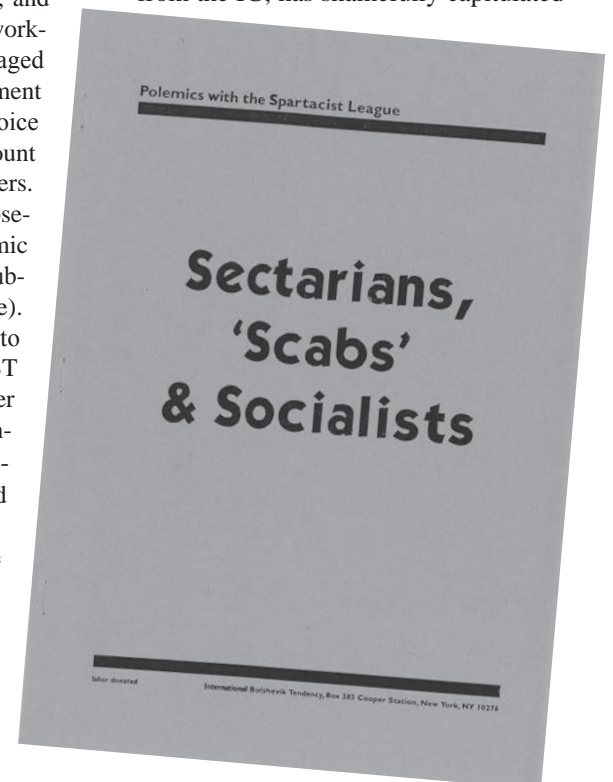
What’s going on here, a reader might ask? Did the IBT all of a sudden “get it” that picket lines mean don’t cross? No way. Note that while it is making this shamefaced admission, all that the IBT is repudiating is the fact that its supporter was doing the specific work normally done by the strikers. It pointedly does *not* repudiate crossing picket lines, and thus continues to uphold the IBT’s longstanding defense of going into a struck, picketed location and working behind picket lines – i.e., *scabbing*.

It is worth noting that the denunciation of the IBT’s scab line back in 1996 came out in one of the last issues of *Workers Vanguard* edited by Jan Norden before he and other long-time cadres of the Spartacist League/International Communist League were purged as part of the SL/ICL’s sharp turn to the right; they went on to found the Internationalist Group that same year. The very first publication put out by the expelled SL cadres, *From a Drift Toward Abstentionism to Desertion from the Class Struggle* (July 1996), includes “A Note on the ‘Bolshevik’ Tendency” by Abram Negrete pointing out: “Now they have published an entire pamphlet in defense of *crossing picket lines*! Any genuine revolutionary can only scorn the BT.”

In response to the 20-years-after-the-fact “repudiation,” the IBT’s former supporter Jim C. circulated a letter charging that “the IBT, apparently under pressure from the IG, has shamefully capitulated

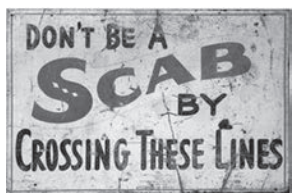


On Verizon strike picket line outside Verizon Wireless store, May 26. It’s the class line: Don’t cross!





to one of Norden's smears." However, in this letter Jim C. confirms that he and others had indeed performed cleaning work normally done by the workers who were on strike at the *Voice* – while stating irately that the IBT has had every opportunity and reason to know this for the past two decades. Moreover, as we learned some years after the episode from a person who worked there, as a UAW shop steward Jim C. called a meeting with the *Voice* staff on the eve of the strike where they were told it was okay to go into work and that they would bag their own garbage. Thus the then IBT supporter not only scabbed, working behind 32BJ picket lines day after day, he was a *scab-herder* and then directly lied about it in his letter to WV.



So why the sudden revelation from the IBT now? The answer is that two youth who were around the IBT approached Internationalist Group comrades at the Left Forum in New York this past May, asking about some of the key differences between the IBT and the IG. After all, they said, both groups claim continuity with the historic Trotskyist program, and specifically with the programmatic tradition going back to the Revolutionary Tendency of the Socialist Workers Party in the early 1960s, which went on to found the Spartacist League in 1966.

There's a world of difference, we pointed out: the IG was formed by left oppositionists expelled for fighting to defend the revolutionary program and bring it into the class struggle, and consistently upholds the revolutionary program abandoned by the now centrist SL/ICL. The IBT, in contrast, coalesced from demoralized quitters moving rapidly to the right, expressing the pressure and outlook of the labor aristocracy and bureaucracy. Just look at the IBT's defense and outright



That was the message a century ago, it's valid today as well. Leafleting in Union Square, New York City in 1916.

promotion of scabbing, we said. This came from a group whose founding publications read like a *National Enquirer* of rank anti-communist smears, while the first issue of the IBT's 1917 went out of its way to rail against "the deranged rantings of MOVE's founder, John Africa." This in an article attacking the SL for not distancing itself sufficiently from the black back-to-nature MOVE commune at a Spartacist forum featuring two relatives of victims of the horrific Mother's Day 1985 incineration of MOVE members in Philadelphia.

In our correspondence with the two IBT contacts this summer, we systematically explained the class principle behind the picket-line question, highlighting key struggles to defend the bedrock principle that picket lines mean don't cross. We explained how the McCarthyite red purge against leftists in U.S. trade unions paved the way for the anti-communist, pro-Democrat union bureaucracy to dilute and undermine basic labor principles, how the union bureaucrats caved in to anti-labor laws like Taft-Hartley, how employers have increasingly used subcontracting to divide and conquer the workforce, how the notorious "two-gate" system is used by construction companies and other firms during many strikes.

We noted that "Our comrades in Portland were won from a group of construction workers they had formed called Cross-Trades Solidarity, dedicated to promoting and enforcing the picket-line principle against sell-out union bureaucrats who tell workers it is OK to cross each others' picket lines." In another e-mail, we pointed out that the non-union drivers at Fed Ex had more class consciousness than the IBT, since during the '96 32BJ strike they dropped packages on the curb rather than cross the picket lines.

We noted that the struggle of British dock workers in Liverpool came about because hundreds of workers refused to cross a picket line of another group of workers, and were fired as a result. We referred the then IBT contacts to Billy Bragg's song, "Never Cross a Picket Line" (<https://youtu.be/ojPTz4VAOMA>) about the Liverpool dockers' struggle.

The correspondence entailed demolishing the IBT's repertoire of nauseating excuses, pretexts and justifications for scabbing. It was in that context that we wrote that what IBT supporter Jim C. and the others actually did "was bag the garbage and take it downstairs themselves. In other words, they did the struck work themselves" (email communication, 12 June). As for the IBT's 1996 pamphlet, we wrote that the whole point of it "is to justify a union steward, and 'Marxist' no less, going in, and encouraging others to go in, to work in a struck enterprise."

So two and a half months later, the IBT suddenly "discovered" that its factual claims of the past 20 years were false, and that its former member did what even by its narrow definition constitutes scabbing (although they pointedly avoid the word). Given its "repudiation" of its ex-supporter's actions, but not of its shameful political



Spartacist sign in Spanish says, "Carrillo: Sellout Workers Leader Scabs on Yale Strike."

line that crossing picket lines is all right if the sellout bureaucrats approve and so long as you don't do the strikers' work yourself, the IBT may have to do a little editing if it is to issue a post-"repudiation" edition of its pamphlet, *Sectarians, 'Scabs' & Socialists*.

Among the editorial amendments the IBT might make would be to update the title to *How to Scab: A Manual for 'Socialists.'* And how about a subtitle: "An injury to one is not my problem"? As for the text, maybe add an introductory note for the second edition saying, "Refusing to work behind a picket line is sectarian. Socialists from Morris Hillquit to Santiago Carrillo have often conducted their business behind picket lines. If improvised scabbing becomes a political embarrassment, we may have to disavow – a decade or two later, perhaps." For illustrations, may we suggest:

"The Majestic, manned by a reduced crew of strikebreakers, was the first passenger liner to leave Southampton after the beginning of the seamen's strike. It arrived on schedule in New York on 8 September 1925 and was met by angry demonstrators. One of the primary targets of the hostility was Morris Hillquit, a one-time Socialist candidate for mayor who was returning from the Second International Conference in Europe. (In 1901 it was Hillquit's wing of the Socialist Labor Party that joined the Social Democratic Party of America.) Hillquit was greeted with such slogans as 'Stand by Soviet Russia,' 'Hillquit with a Scab Crew,' and 'Down with the Steamship Companies'."

–From Olga Peters Hasty and Susanne Fuss, *America through Russian Eyes, 1874–1926* (Yale University Press, 1988)  
And then the famous photo of Santiago Carrillo,

then head of the Spanish Communist Party, crossing a picket line of striking campus workers at Yale University in November 1977 (see above).

(Full disclosure: when *Workers Vanguard* was the voice of revolutionary Trotskyism, the editor did dispatch a photographer to Yale to take the above picture of Carrillo's betrayal, subsequently used for the cover of the English edition of his book, *Eurocommunism and the State* [1978], just as we did to document Jim C.'s picket line crossing. By their betrayals they shall be known.)

In 1917, Trotsky famously consigned the Mensheviks to "the place where you belong... the dust-bin of history." In truth, any group with the politics and record of the pro-scab IBT should be known as the Menshevik Tendency instead, and really does belong in the garbage. ■

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# Defeat Union-Busting Drive at Long Island University!

After a week of protests and following several student walkouts in support of the locked-out faculty and against the use of scab instructors, Long Island University agreed to extend the contract until next May. But the struggle against the union-busting administration continues.

SEPTEMBER 14 – As Long Island University's lockout of unionized faculty at its Brooklyn campus enters the second week, the stakes are clear. The unprecedented move by university president Kimberly Cline is a vicious attack not only against the faculty, students and staff at LIU Brooklyn, but against everyone who works in higher education, and on the entire New York-area labor movement. This is a battle for the most basic rights of us all – and the power needed to defeat this union-busting assault must be brought into play before it's too late.

Holding signs reading "Let Us Teach," the Long Island University Faculty Federation (LIUFF) has been picketing since the lockout was decreed on September 7. This came a week after the Cline administration presented the LIUFF with a "final offer" clearly designed to be rejected. This includes a 25% *pay cut* for adjuncts to be imposed by reducing the maximum number of credits taught from 12 to 9, while slashing paid office hours for adjuncts and funding used to provide their health insurance. For tenured professors there was the introduction of a "faculty engagement and development" review which could potentially put an end to tenure and faculty autonomy from administration control.

Moreover, when this "offer" was presented, it was accompanied by a letter notifying faculty that they were being locked out of the school effective immediately. As



With LIU ballet dancers at LIU faculty solidarity teach-in, September 9.

an LIU professor noted on the picket line, it says a lot about the contract LIU management is trying to shove down the faculty's throats if it locked them out before they even had a chance to vote.

Meanwhile, LIU management was bringing in scabs, and flaunting this in everybody's face in true union-busting fashion. It prepared this plan of attack for months beforehand. Bogus curricula were posted online (on Blackboard) over the summer for the "replacement teachers" to learn. But where did these curricula come from when the real professors who would have taught these classes had no access to any LIU resources? The administration. This amounts to corporate-style skills train-

ing – not education – to be spoon-fed by scabs to LIU students paying \$34,352/year.

LIU's scab-herding has aroused considerable outrage, as even the *New York Times* reported that a ballet class was to be taught by a dean who is – a botanist. The *Times* quoted the LIU lawyer saying such "errors" had been "corrected" and that courses would be taught by "qualified" instructors. But students reported that another scab "teacher" was so clueless she almost got ballet students injured.

The union responded to the "final offer" with a request to extend the prior contract for five weeks. The administration countered by essentially saying "no way" – pretty much the equivalent of the famous 1975 *Daily News* headline, "Ford to City: Drop Dead." Yet at a teach-in sponsored by the LIUFF on Friday, September 9, the repeated plea was for the administration to go back to the bargaining table. And if the union were to cave in to some variant of the horrific contract "offer," it would merely be the beginning of the end of the union.

Let's get real. What Cline & Co. have undertaken is no routine pressure tactic: all signs point to an attempt to replace the unionized faculty once and for all. So what will it take to defeat it? On the first day of the lockout, unionists picked up the chant initiated by activists from the CUNY Internationalist Clubs and Class Struggle Education Workers: "Picket lines mean: Don't cross!" This bottom-line labor principle is crucial to defeating the union-busting drive at LIU. But hard class struggle is totally alien to the misleaders of American labor, who bank everything on class collaboration. On September 9, American Federation of Teachers head Randi Weingarten spoke to students and faculty gathered outside of campus, saying that the union's answer to the lockout was to tell the administration:

"Let's get back to teaching, and if we can't do it together, let's get a mediator.' That is what we do in America when we care about things. We find common ground, we work together."

Seriously? Like students throughout the U.S., those at LIU have been following

the spread of protests like those launched most recently by Colin Kaepernick, against what the rulers of this society and their police "do in America." As for union-busting, it's as American as the proverbial apple pie. The flag-waving by Weingarten had a political purpose, as the AFT head (who has long hoped for a spot as Hillary Clinton's Secretary of Education) kept shouting about "Trumpism." NYC Public Advocate Letitia James did her bit to make it a virtual Democratic Party campaign event with a pitch about how it was the youth that elected Obama to bring about meaningful change.

In contrast, at the teach-in, CUNY Internationalist Clubs activist Jacob emphasized the need to "knock out the lockout," which means teachers standing strong against the administration and students understanding that so long as the lockout continues, "you do not belong on campus." Instead, students and faculty should be helping make the picket lines real ones that nobody crosses. Jacob noted that at the City University of New York, teachers and campus workers are subject to the anti-labor Taylor Law, which makes any strike or job action by New York State employees illegal – and that this is enforced by "the Democratic Party of capital." Breaking from support and subordination to the bosses' parties is crucial to winning a serious fight like this, he stressed – and to win, the struggle must be extended beyond the borders of the university.

The faculty fighting for their jobs and against this blatant union-busting must demand that *all* the unions at LIU, together with students, respect their picket line. That means that administrative staff, maintenance workers, operating engineers and carpenters should be out there with the locked-out teachers instead of going through the lines. This is the very opposite of claims by one LIUFF spokesman who chided activists that telling students not to cross was "sending the wrong message," and that the line was meant to be an "informational picket line." This is a sure recipe for defeat. The university bosses will not be defeated by appeals for "collegiality" or by playing by some academic version of the Marquis of Queensbury rules of yesteryear in the middle of a brutal knock-down, drag-out fight.

The administration has flaunted its power to lock out the union – it is *power* that must be mobilized to defeat them. NYC labor must show up and *defend the line*. A good place to start would be with phone workers in the huge Verizon building just down the street, who were some of the 39,000 who struck for six and a half weeks this summer.

And to hit the administration union-busters hard, *the unions should shut down the LIU C.W. Post campus of LIU*. Back in May 2015, the faculty union at Post negotiated a three-year contract extension, a year before the contract was due to expire, without notifying the Brooklyn campus union, with which they traditionally negotiate together (both contracts end on the same date). The Brooklyn LIUFF was livid, and rightly so, especially as one of its main demands has been to match pay with that at the Long Island campus. Evidently the faculty at Post are beginning to see that the administration's divide-and-conquer tactics mean that they're next on the hit list, as they just passed a motion of no confidence in Cline. But to actually win this battle, students and faculty should *shut down* not

*continued on page 22*

## Trump and the Central Park Five

Donald Trump is no rookie racist. He has a long history of racist provocations. In 1989 Trump was the cutting edge of a racist campaign in New York City centered on the frame-up of the Central Park Five. Four African American teenagers and a Latino youth were falsely accused by the cops of raping a white woman investment banker who was jogging in the park that April. As the woman lay in a coma for 12 days, the youths were beaten into confessions. Their names were immediately released to the press.

Two weeks after the arrests, Trump paid for full-page ads in the *New York Times* and four other newspapers attacking the youths with the blaring headline: "BRING BACK THE DEATH PENALTY – BRING BACK OUR POLICE." Above his signature, Trump wrote: "I want to hate these muggers and murderers. They should be forced to suffer and, when they kill, they should be executed for their crimes. They must serve as examples so that others will think long and hard before committing a crime or an act of violence" (quoted in the *Guardian*, 17 February).

Trump's ads helped whip up racist hysteria in the city. There were calls for castration. Fascistic pundit Pat Bu-

chanan demanded that the oldest of the boys be swiftly convicted and publicly hanged in Central Park. At trial in 1990 the youths recanted their forced confessions, and although there was no DNA or other evidence against them, they were convicted and imprisoned. The five spent between six and 13 years in prison, for a crime they didn't commit.

In 2002, a serial rapist confessed to the crime. DNA and semen analysis confirmed his confession and thus the racist frame-up of the teenagers was revealed. Later that year all five convictions were vacated by New York's Supreme Court. And Trump? He kept it up. When the city finally settled the case for wrongful imprisonment for \$41 million, Trump squealed that despite DNA evidence the boys were still guilty.

In an opinion article in the *Daily News*, he described the settlement as the "heist of the century." Asked whether he thought supporting such a clear case of racist injustice would hurt him, Trump responded: "I think it will help me." And in this 2016 campaign he is still claiming, most recently on CNN, that the youth were guilty. Like the "birther" campaign, racist lies have a long half-life in the U.S. ■



## Kaepernick Protest Inspires Youth Defying Racist Repression

By Steph and Jean

On August 26, San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick took a courageous stand against racist oppression by refusing to stand up for the national anthem at a pre-season game against the Green Bay Packers. In a widely quoted interview after the game, he explained: “I am not going to stand up to show pride in a flag for a country that oppresses black people and people of color.... There are bodies in the street and people getting paid leave and getting away with murder.”

The names of Alton Sterling, Philando Castile and so many others were no doubt on his mind. And how little time would pass before the world was stunned yet again by the images of police murder. On September 16, Terence Crutcher was killed in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Four days later came the wrenching images of the disabled Keith Lamont Scott being gunned down in Charlotte, North Carolina. It never stops. As protesters chant

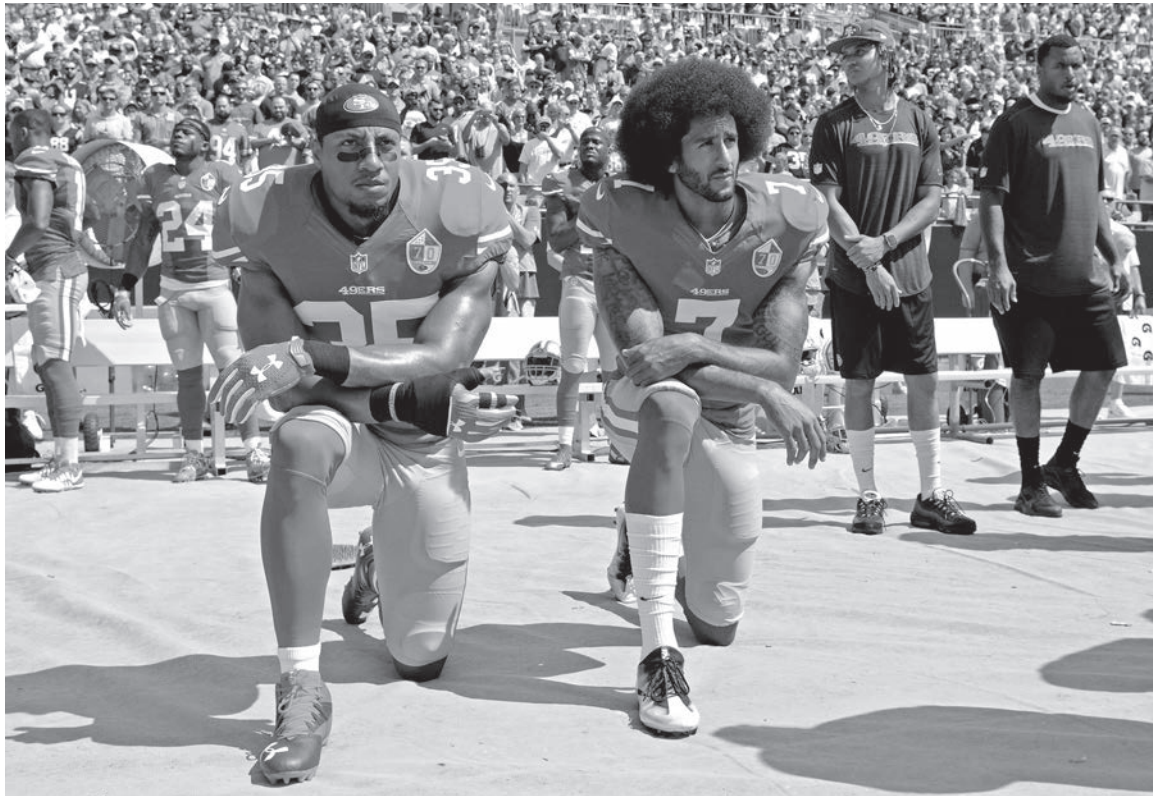
“say their names,” the list is unending of those killed for the “crime” of being black in the racist U.S.A. No wonder what the media call the “Kaepernick effect” keeps spreading.

Colin Kaepernick, who is biracial, took a stand knowing there would be repercussions against him. He did so “because I’m seeing things happen to people that don’t have a voice, people that don’t have a platform to ... have their voices heard.” Predictably, soon after he began his protest, videos of jerseys with his number being burned while the national anthem played went viral, gaining massive media attention.

Whipped-up flag-waving outrage followed fast and furious. Racists booed Kaepernick, the head of the San Francisco Police Officers Association railed against him. So did many capitalist politicians and media mouthpieces, as well as some fellow sports figures. The Santa Clara police that patrol the 49ers’ home stadium threatened

to withdraw their “protection” – their way of menacing violence against Kaepernick and all who might back his protest. However, the threats backfired as other sports figures and anti-racist youth around the country took up his cause.

“**Defend Colin Kaepernick Against Racist Backlash!**” read Internationalist Club signs at the Hunter College Speak-Out Against Racist Repression we organized on August 30. NFL executives were quoted saying they “truly hate” the “traitor” Kaepernick. Like a master giving orders to a slave, sports “analyst” Trent Dilfer said the quarterback should “be quiet and sit in the shadows.” But instead of being cowed into silence, more and more fans and players showed solidarity with Kaepernick to give voice to the outrage of millions. He had told the truth. Black and brown people *are* oppressed in America. There *are* “bodies in the street,” and over and over again, police who do these murders *are* rewarded by the state.



Colin Kaepernick (right) and Eric Reid of San Francisco 49ers kneel during national anthem prior to game in Charlotte, North Carolina, September 18, to protest police murders of African Americans and oppression of black and other minorities in U.S. Two days later Charlotte police shot Keith Scott in cold blood.

disrespected and mistreated everywhere we go on a daily basis because of our skin color and I’m sick of it.” In Beaumont, Texas, an 11-year-old player was threatened with death for leading a Kaepernick-inspired protest.

In Lower Lake, California, high-school freshman Leilani Thomas was punished with a “C” in mid-September for sitting out the national anthem. The punishment was a direct response to the “Kaepernick effect,” since Thomas, a member of the Pomo indigenous people, has declined to stand for the pledge ever since second grade, as a way of protesting the oppression against Native American people that – like slavery – underlies the very origins of this society and its red, white and blue banner. At Lely High School in Naples, Florida, the principal told students: “You will stand, and you will stay quiet.” But the school district was forced to back down by the resulting uproar.

### Defying Backlash, Protest Keeps Spreading

Among the sports stars emulating Kaepernick’s action were his teammate Eric Reid, the Seahawks’ Jeremy Lane, and many players for the Miami Dolphins. Megan Rapinoe, a professional soccer player for the Seattle Reign, joined the protest too. Rapinoe, who came out as a lesbian in 2012 and is known for her work with the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network, accurately denounced the backlash against Kaepernick as “overtly racist.” Soon enough, she too was targeted for denunciations.

Then the protest started taking off among college teams, harking back to last year’s Mizzou (University of Missouri) football team’s strike against racism. (See “Mizzou Football Team Takes a Stand With Mass Protests Against Racism,” *Revolution* No. 12, March 2016). Most recently, Howard University cheerleaders joined the protest. Now it has spread to high-school teams across the country: “Students Are Pulling a Kaepernick All Over America – and Being Threatened for It,” reports The Intercept (23 September).

The whole football team, players and coaching staff of Seattle’s Garfield High School showed solidarity with Kaepernick’s protest. This is the same high school that fought against standardized testing back in 2013. In Worcester, Massachusetts, a courageous high-school football player named Mike Opping resisted blowback from the administration, telling the press: “I’m standing up for the injustice that happens to black people every day, not just cops killing black people. We are

After all, even the capitalists’ own U.S. Supreme Court declared in 1943 that it’s unconstitutional for public schools to force students to salute the flag. For that matter, fielding a question on Kaepernick during a press conference, president Barack Obama replied that the 49ers player was exercising his constitutional rights to express his views on “real, legitimate issues that have to be talked about.” Of course, the Commander in Chief of U.S. imperialism then went on about “the flag and the national anthem and the meaning that it holds for our men and women in uniform who fight Washington’s dirty wars. Yet many of those duped into putting on the military uniform have seen and experienced things that made them get wise to the “patriot game.” In fact, there is a whole group called #VeteransForKaepernick.

What’s striking is that jingoistic appeals to patriotism have *not* intimidated young students into “staying quiet,” and more and more decide to “pull a Kaepernick.” A recent example is that of the Castlemont High football team in Oakland, California. On September 23, the players lay on their backs with their hands up during the national anthem; Colin Kaepernick came out in person to support them.

One of the most inspiring examples is that of the Woodrow Wilson High School Tigers in the desperately poor city of Camden, New Jersey, which was extensively covered by BBC’s on-line news magazine (22 September). Together with their coach Preston Brown, the entirely black and Latino football team has braved an onslaught of on-line abuse, derision, demands that they “get out of this country,” as well as death threats. While racist flag-wavers show “so much hate towards us,” in the words of of-



Hunter College Internationalist Club held speak-out against racist repression, August 30.

September-October 2016





**Camden, New Jersey Tigers and their coach Preston Brown protest during the national anthem by raising their fists in defiance.**

fensive lineman Daniel Medina, the team has continued its protests and has taken to standing with fists in the air.

This recalls the famous 1968 Olympics image of John Carlos and Tommie Smith, who raised their fists on the victory stand to show solidarity with the black freedom movements of their time. For this courageous action they were stripped of their credentials, kicked out of Olympic Village, expelled from the U.S. team and banned from the Olympics for life. (Carlos and Smith were supported by the third man in the famous photo, white Australian sprinter Peter Norman. An outspoken anti-racist who was ostracized and cut from his national team for his solidarity, the eulogy at his funeral was given by Carlos and Smith.)

The Olympic action was partly inspired by Muhammad Ali's famous protests against racism, and the boxing great's denunciation of U.S. imperialism's war against Vietnam: "I ain't got no quarrel with the Viet Cong.... No Viet Cong ever called me n---r." It helped set a pattern of protest followed by some – even amidst the big-business world of professional sports. In 2012, LeBron James and the Miami Heat set an example for a new generation of athletes by wearing hoodies in tribute to Trayvon Martin after his assassination by a racist vigilante. Two years later, at a game with the Knicks in Brooklyn LeBron wore a t-shirt with the words "I can't breathe" to protest the NYPD chokehold murder of Eric Garner.

Kaepernick's act of sitting out the national anthem was replaced early on by "taking a knee," which he explained as a way to "show more respect" for armed forces personnel. Showing "support for the troops" is a standard way that the powers that be try to "mainstream" protests and channel them into expressing loyalty to the imperialist rulers who lure youth from the working class and oppressed communities into their armed forces to kill and die for their profits. Fists in the air in the style of Carlos and Smith is a gesture of defiance and refusal to be intimidated – a strong message that players from the Los Angeles Rams, Kansas City Chiefs, Tennessee Titans and other teams are putting forward now as part of the protests Kaepernick touched off.

### A "Tradition" of Pentagon Patriotism – and Slavery

Many people are unaware that the supposed "tradition" of NFL players standing for the national anthem did not exist before 2009. Up until then, the custom was to stay in the locker room while the "Star-Spangled Banner" was played. In the words

of the Daily Snark (14 September), "NFL teams got patriotic" with the national anthem displays in recent years "because it was good for business." As the article notes, a 2015 Congressional report "revealed that the Department of Defense had paid \$5.4 million to stage on-field patriotic ceremonies; the National Guard shelled out \$6.7 million for similar displays."

The Pentagon-paid "measures of public recognition" included "sponsored military displays." While some of the payola was reportedly returned, it's just the tip of the iceberg in the sports industry in which racism and support for imperialism have always been deemed big boosts for the profit margin. In reality, one of the key purposes of sports spectacles has been to whip up patriotism, in order to divert the working class. We just saw that again with the Olympics, when people chant "U.S.A., U.S.A.," athletes like Simone Biles drape themselves in the American flag, and the media count how many medals "our country" has won. Then there are the endless brawls by fans of the British, French, German and other soccer teams, with "soccer hooligans" providing recruiting grounds for rightist goon squads.

So what about that national anthem? The BBC story on the Camden high-school football team and its coach Preston Brown reports: "When he saw Kaepernick's protest, Brown thought about the fact that 2016 marks the 100th anniversary of President Woodrow Wilson's order that The Star-Spangled Banner be played at military and other official state events – the same pro-segregation president for whom his high school is named."

The stone racist Wilson purged African Americans from federal jobs, praised the 1915 KKK propaganda film *Birth of a Nation* (originally called *The Clansman*) and showed it in the White House, while ordering Marines to occupy Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Panama and Nicaragua and intervene against the Mexican Revolution.

Coach Preston Brown "has never been a fan of The Star-Spangled Banner," the BBC reports, "not since his Haitian grandmother taught about the often forgotten third verse." That's the one that has gotten a lot of attention since the Kaepernick protests broke out, as it menacingly gloats: "*No refuge could save the hireling and slave / From the terror of flight, or the gloom of the grave.*"

Discussion on this verse has led some to dig out their American history books to brush up on how the "Star-Spangled Banner" got written in the first place. To make a long story short: like most of what gave rise to this country, it's about slavery. It

was written by the slave owner and pro-slavery politician Frances Scott Key. Key was also the mentor and brother-in-law of Roger Taney, who became Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and handed down the Dred Scott decision in 1857. That decision infamously stated that blacks had no rights that whites were bound to respect. It criminalized aid to escaping slaves.

Frances Scott Key wrote the anthem during the War of 1812, to commemorate U.S. defense of Fort Mchenry against the British. The war had begun as an offensive by the Americans against the British empire (then distracted by the Napoleonic wars in Europe). What for? Mainly it was a campaign of expansion to the North into what is now Canada and westward into Native American territories and to crush the tribal confederacy, which allied with the British. While the Indian resistance was crushed, the American forces were ultimately unsuccessful in expanding to the north, partly because many slaves went over to the British side to gain their freedom. Many became British "Colonial Marines" under the command of Admiral George Cockburn. After the war, as many as 6,000 former slaves had won their freedom. As described by a journalist descended from the British admiral:

"Despite angry American insistence that the peace treaty mandated the return of all property (i.e., former slaves), Cockburn bluntly refused to hand them over.... Most eventually settled in Canada, but the Colonial Marines accepted an offer of land in Trinidad. Settled in villages, each under the command of their company sergeants from the old regiment, they were known as the Merikens. Their descendants live there to this day."

– Andrew Cockburn, "Washington Is Burning: Two Centuries of Racial Tribulation in the Nation's Capital," *Harper's*, September 2014

The verse cursing slaves and hirelings (workers) for daring to disobey their masters has rightly drawn the attention of lots of young people. The more we dig into the matter, the more we see that racial oppression is in the DNA of the "red, white and blue" and the bourgeois republic for which it stands, under the almighty dollar, with oppression and injustice for all – except the tiny minority who live from the labor of others.

So we need to go farther than a critique of the particular words to this anthem and dig into what the whole patriotism business is about. We've all heard liberals say that police terror is the result of a few "bad apples," rushing to say they don't oppose the police forces *per se*. In a similar way right now, quite a few anthem protesters hurry to declare that they are just as patriotic as the next person. In contrast, Marxists stand against capitalism's patriotic flag-waving, period.

As revolutionaries, it's our job to expose the falsehood that workers and the oppressed share common interests with the exploiting class that runs and owns what they want us to call "our country." As Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels wrote in the Communist Manifesto, the workers "*have no country*" – we are an *international* class. Against bourgeois patriotism and nationalism, we stand for proletarian *internationalism*. Our anthem is "The Internationale," the worldwide song of workers revolution that was written for the Paris Commune of 1871.

Or as a very different often forgotten verse says, from the miners' song "Which Side Are You On": "The bosses ride fine carriages, while we walk through the mud /

Their flag, it is red, white and blue / But ours is red as blood."

In our protest contingents we Internationalists are well known for our chant: "Only revolution can bring justice!" So too, only the international revolution of the working class, at the head of all the oppressed, can uproot forever the legacy of slavery symbolized by the "Star-Spangled Banner," and end the present-day nightmare of unending racist repression. ■

## LIU Lockout...

*continued from page 20*

only the Brooklyn campus but also the Post campus – and the bosses' rules be damned!

In this key battle, faculty, staff and students at LIUFF must unite and appeal to all NYC labor. On Labor Day, the United Federation of Teachers, representing 150,000 NYC teachers and paras, marched with signs saying "UFT Stands With LIU Faculty." So instead of the UFT tops' empty words, the Brooklyn campus should be ringed and the doorways jammed with hundreds of UFTers! Bring in the retirees on the morning shift and in-service teachers can spell them after class lets out in the afternoon. The same goes for the Professional Staff Congress at CUNY. And NYC-area students should come too, for an extra-curricular lesson in class struggle!

The haughty would-be dictators running LIU have shown as clearly as could be that "common ground" with the bosses is a dangerous fantasy. Nor can any "mediator" bring about some kind of amicable arrangement with those pushing to bust the union. Weingarten's song and dance for Hillary shows the acute danger that the struggle at LIU may be yet another one sacrificed on the altar of support to the Democratic Party of police repression, imperialism and war.

Add it up: scripted curriculum delivered by disposable faculty, pay cuts for the bottom tier, "performance-based" reviews by management – this is the higher ed equivalent of the teacher-bashing, union-busting corporate "education reform" being imposed on educators throughout the capitalist world. And it is not only pushed by Republican know-nothings like George W. Bush and moguls like Bill Gates and the Walton family, for the last eight years it has been spearheaded by the Democratic administration of Barack Obama and former Wal-Mart board member Hillary Clinton. To defeat it we need to bring out union power, workers power. *We need to bust the union-busters and knock out the lock-out!* ■

## Trabajadores...

*sigue de la página 24*

que sigue la política del gobierno de Obama que ha militarizado considerablemente la frontera con México y que ha deportado a 5 millones de inmigrantes a lo largo de los últimos ocho años. Toda palabrería con respecto a una "vía hacia la ciudadanía" ha desembocado en un callejón sin salida.

Trabajadores Internacionales Clasistas apunta hacia otra vía, la de la intransigente lucha de clases hacia la revolución, que es la única vía en que se ha conseguido derechos de ciudadanía para todos los inmigrantes—desde la Revolución Francesa de 1789-1799, pasando por la Comuna de París de 1871 hasta la Revolución Bolchevique de 1917 en Rusia. Reproducimos a continuación la declaración de fundación y el programa del TIC. ■



# Programa de Trabajadores Internacionales Clasistas

Hay actualmente hasta 15 millones de trabajadores internacionales junto con nuestras familias que residimos en Estados Unidos sin tener los documentos que nos exigen los dueños del país. Carecemos de derechos democráticos fundamentales mientras realizamos trabajos duros y en muchos casos peligrosos, recibiendo una miseria como pago. Somos realmente, como escribió Karl Marx hace más de siglo y medio, *esclavos asalariados*.

Los trabajadores internacionales somos tratados como chivos expiatorios por todos los males que produce esta sociedad capitalista. Nos dicen “criminales” e “illegal aliens” cuando no hemos cometido ningún crimen. Se nos acusa de robar los empleos de trabajadores norteamericanos cuando hacemos faenas que nadie más quiere hacer. Nos acusan de abusar de los programas sociales cuando no somos elegibles para ninguno de ellos. De hecho, los trabajadores indocumentados pagan hasta 50 mil millones de dólares al año al Seguro Social, del cual no vamos a recibir ni un centavo.

Es más, muchos de nosotros fuimos obligados a emigrar porque nuestro propio sustento fue destruido por los tratados de libre comercio y las cruentas guerras desencadenadas por EE.UU. que han acechado nuestros países. Pero no somos meramente víctimas. Grandes sectores de la economía norteamericana dependen de la mano de obra de los migrantes. Formamos parte íntegra de la clase obrera de este país. ¡Tenemos la fuerza para ser los protagonistas de nuestra propia liberación, y la de todos los oprimidos!

Varios de nosotras y nosotros ya hemos participado en importantes luchas sociales, de sindicalización, de solidaridad y en contra de todo tipo de injusticia. Hemos aprendido de nuestra propia experiencia, que lo que precisamos, y lo que debemos formar, es una dirección a la altura de las luchas que nos incumben, es decir, una dirección de lucha clasista.

Para hacer nuestro aporte a esta gran tarea, hemos decidido, trabajando en conjunto con el Grupo Internacionalista, formar Trabajadores Internacionales Clasistas sobre la base del siguiente programa:

**¡Unión, fuerza, solidaridad!**  
**Jugar con reglas del patrón es segura perdición**

En 2012, un grupo de valientes trabajadores de la panadería Hot and Crusty de Manhattan decidieron que no podían aguantar más la explotación despiadada y tomaron la decisión de sindicalizarse. Después de 55 días en la línea de piquete, ganaron. En 2015, cansados de salarios miserables y condiciones de trabajo peligrosas, cientos de trabajadores almacenistas de la tienda de materiales fotográficos B&H, inspirados por el ejemplo de Hot and Crusty, lanzaron su propia campaña de sindicalización logrando otro triunfo. Pero sabemos que toda victoria en la lucha de clases sólo es temporal mientras persiste el sistema de producción por la ganancia. **¡Sindicalizar a los no sindicalizados! La línea de piquete es la línea de clase – significa ¡No cruzar! ¡Luchamos por sindicatos combativos con dirección clasista! ¡Por la total independencia de los sindicatos frente al estado!**

September-October 2016

**“Ni ilegales, ni criminales, somos trabajadores internacionales”**



El muro fronterizo entre San Diego y Tijuana en 1997.

**Los patrones nos tienen miedo, porque no tenemos miedo**

En 1886, se estableció el Día Internacional de los Trabajadores, el Primero de Mayo, luego de una manifestación obrera que exigía la jornada laboral de 8 horas, y que sufrió un ataque policíaco que cobró varias vidas y llevó a la ejecución de los dirigentes obreros, los ocho mártires de Chicago. Hoy en día, 130 años más tarde, se suele imponer a los trabajadores inmigrantes indocumentados una jornada de 12 horas y una semana laboral de 48, 56 o hasta 72 horas semanales, por un salario de hambre. ¡No aguantamos más! En 2006 fue un paro de millones de trabajadores inmigrantes lo que reavivó el Primero de Mayo en EE.UU. Exigimos una **reducción drástica de la jornada de trabajo y un enorme aumento salarial**. Para las jornaleras y los jornaleros, sin ninguna estabilidad y seguridad de trabajo, luchamos por una **sala sindical de contratación**. Necesitamos **seguro médico completo y atención médica, gratuita de alta calidad**. En los lugares de trabajo luchamos por **comités sindicales con el poder de parar la producción cuando hay condiciones inseguras**.

**¡Luchar, vencer, obreros al poder!**

Sabemos que toda lucha de clase es una lucha política. En este año electoral de 2016, el candidato republicano azuza el odio racista en contra de mexicanos, árabes y musulmanes a la vez que hostiga a las mujeres. La candidata demócrata quiere lanzar nuevas guerras en Medio Oriente, y es responsable del golpe de estado de 2009 en Honduras. Los Trabajadores Internacionales Clasistas nos oponemos a todo partido o político capitalista. Los que no tenemos el derecho a votar llamamos a **formar un partido obrero que luche por un gobierno obrero**.

**¡No rogamus, exigimos, plenos derechos de ciudadanía!**

En su campaña electoral de 2008, el demócrata liberal Barack Obama prometió una “reforma migratoria”. Sin embargo, ocho años más tarde no hay nada. En su lugar, el gobierno de Obama ha deportado a unos 5 millones de inmigrantes. Las odiosas redadas siguen, hay decenas de miles de in-

migrantes encarcelados en lo que son verdaderos campos de concentración. Llamamos a la **movilización obrera e inmigrante en contra de los ataques racistas, a poner alto a las deportaciones, a cerrar los centros de detención y lograr plenos derechos de ciudadanía para todos los inmigrantes**.

**Liberación de la mujer: tarea de todos los trabajadores**

El 8 de marzo es del Día Internacional de la Mujer, que conmemora la muerte de más de 100 trabajadoras inmigrantes en el incendio del taller de sudor Triangle Shirtwaist en Nueva York en 1911, que fue la chispa para la sindicalización de la industria costurera. Hoy las trabajadoras cumplen una doble jornada de trabajo, tanto en sus empleos como antes y después en la casa, donde se les impone la responsabilidad de hacer las tareas domésticas de la familia. Están constantemente acosadas por el hostigamiento sexual y un trato desigual. Se les niega hasta el control sobre sus propios cuerpos. Las y los Trabajadores Inter-

nacionales Clasistas exigimos: **a trabajo igual, salario igual**. En el mundo entero, reivindicamos **el derecho al aborto libre y gratuito**, a decisión exclusiva de la mujer. Exigimos **guarderías gratuitas abiertas las 24 horas al día**. Tal como el machismo, los prejuicios homofóbicos son un arma de la clase explotadora: es deber de todo trabajador consciente **defender los derechos democráticos de gays, lesbianas, personas transgénero y todos los oprimidos**.

**Liberación de los negros, clave para la revolución obrera norteamericana**

En este país, fundado sobre la esclavitud, la opresión de los negros ha sido fundamental para el dominio capitalista. Los inmigrantes estamos bien conscientes de cómo la clase dominante busca usarnos en contra de nuestras hermanas y hermanos afroamericanos. Ya hemos visto cómo a la par de los asesinatos policíacos de negros, todos los inmigrantes están en la mira de las fuerzas represivas. La policía es el brazo armado del capital, racista hasta la médula. Exigimos, **¡Policías fuera del movimiento sindical! ¡Contra los asesinatos racistas, movilización clasista! ¡La revolución es la única solución!**

**Asiáticos, latinos, negros y blancos, Obreros del mundo ¡uníos!**

Desde tiempos de la Primera Internacional Obrera, los trabajadores de todos los países tenemos que unir nuestras fuerzas para ganar. ¡Defendemos a nuestros hermanos africanos, árabes, asiáticos en contra del odio racista! Del Medio Oriente a América Latina, ¡luchamos por la **acción obrera para aplastar las guerras imperialistas**! De China a Cuba, nos oponemos a los intentos de restablecer el dominio del capital.

**Los trabajadores internacionales no tenemos nada que perder más que nuestras cadenas. ¡Tenemos un mundo que ganar!**

Nueva York, 12 de agosto de 2016

**The Internationalist**



**A Journal of Revolutionary Marxism for the Reforging of the Fourth International**

**Publication of the Internationalist Group, section of the League for the Fourth International**

**Annual subscription US\$10 for five issues.**

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# Se funda Trabajadores Internacionales Clasistas

El 12 de agosto, se fundó en Nueva York la organización Trabajadores Internacionales Clasistas. Su tarea central consiste en ganar a los trabajadores inmigrantes con mayor conciencia al programa de la lucha de clases internacionalista, luchando no sólo por los derechos de los trabajadores y los inmigrantes, sino incluso por las cuestiones más acuciosas que enfrentan los trabajadores y sectores oprimidos en la actualidad. Se trata de un grupo similar a otras “organizaciones transicionales” como el Class Struggle Education Workers en Nueva York y el Class Struggle Workers en Portland, que trabajan junto con el Internationalist Group. Como éstas, el TIC se propone ser una organización de estudio y lucha que ha crecido a partir del círculo de estudios en español que el IG realiza regularmente, del trabajo en campañas de organización sindical y de movilizaciones en solidaridad con los maestros mexicanos y en contra del terror racista de la policía, desde Ayotzinapa hasta los asesinatos policíacos de personas negras en Estados Unidos.

Desde su fundación en 1996, el Internationalist Group, sección norteamericana de la Liga por la IV Internacional, ha tenido como una de sus principales prioridades ganar a trabajadores inmigrantes a la política de Lenin y Trotsky de la revolución socialista internacional. El primer volante publicado por el IG se pronunciaba por plenos derechos de ciudadanía para todos los inmigrantes, y fue distribuido en una manifestación a favor de los derechos de los inmigrantes en el otoño de 1996 en Washington. Desde sus inicios, el Internationalist Group cohesionó un núcleo de cuadros trotskistas de obreros inmigrantes, algo totalmente excepcional en la izquierda norteamericana. Todos estos trabajadores ya habían estado activos en esfuerzos para organizar a los trabajadores inmigrantes. En noviembre de 2001, en medio del xenófobo frenesí bélico que siguió a los ataques del 11 de septiembre, iniciamos una manifestación de frente unido en opo-



Trabajadores Internacionales Clasistas en conjunto con Class Struggle Education Workers, el Internationalist Group y los Clubes Internacionalistas de la CUNY convocaron la jornada trinacional de solidaridad con maestros brasileños y mexicanos en Nueva York, el 17 de agosto.

sición al intento de expulsar de la Universidad de la Ciudad de Nueva York (CUNY) a estudiantes inmigrantes indocumentados mediante un fuerte incremento en las cuotas. En parte fue como resultado de esta protesta, que el aumento de cuotas antiinmigrante fue revertido en buena medida.

A lo largo de varios años, el IG ha apoyado a los jornaleros en contra del hostigamiento policíaco, ha sido objeto de actos de exclusión anticomunista por parte de organizadores de manifestaciones a favor de los “derechos de los inmigrantes” debido a nuestras críticas en contra del partido Demócrata, ha participado en luchas

para parar provocaciones realizadas por el grupo fascista antiinmigrante de los Minuteman cuando buscaba establecerse en Nueva York, ha sumado migrantes a las manifestaciones del Black Lives Matter y ha participado activamente en las campañas de sindicalización de Hot and Crusty, B&H y varios otros establecimientos. Un asunto que el IG constantemente enfatiza en su trabajo entre los inmigrantes es la centralidad que tiene la lucha en contra de la opresión de los negros en la lucha revolucionaria en Estados Unidos. Otros miembros fundadores del TIC participaron en la huelga nacional de trabajadores inmigrantes el Primero de Mayo de 2006. Trabajadoras inmigrantes del TIC participaron activamente en las protestas por la desaparición de los 43 normalistas de Ayotzinapa. Su participación en el círculo de estudios del IG les ayudó a profundizar su comprensión en virtud de la lectura de importantes textos marxistas y de la discusión de sucesos actuales de la lucha de clases.

El TIC puede jugar un importante papel en las luchas de los trabajadores inmigrantes, un sector enorme del proletariado, potencialmente muy combativo, pero que se encuentra aún muy poco organizado. Tan sólo en Nueva York se estima que hay medio millón de residentes indocumentados, trabajadores en su inmensa mayoría, y



más de 3 millones y medio de inmigrantes en general. Alrededor del 40 por ciento de la población de la ciudad nació en otro país. Los inmigrantes se ocupan de los trabajos peor pagados y más peligrosos, viven bajo el espectro de la detención y deportación en todo momento y son blanco constante de ataques reaccionarios. Hoy enfrentan unas elecciones (en las que no pueden votar) que disputan el republicano Trump, un demente fanático antiárabe, antimusulmán y antilatinamericano que amenaza con deportar a 11 millones de inmigrantes y con la construcción de un muro que mantenga a los mexicanos del otro lado de la frontera, y la demócrata Hillary Clinton, una belicista

*sigue en la página 22*



Contingente del Grupo Internacionalista en la marcha del Primero de Mayo de 2011, luchando por plenos derechos para todos los inmigrantes.