

## Post-Traumatic Election Shock

### Defeat Trump ... And the Democrats

### Fight for Workers Revolution

The following article was issued as an Internationalist Group leaflet on November 10, two days after the U.S. elections.

The effect of Tuesday's election was a thunderbolt in the night sky. After all the media happy talk, even into the early evening, that Democrat Hillary Clinton was a shoo-in – the first woman president following the first black president – suddenly it was clear that Republican Donald Trump was elected. The racist, sexist, immigrant-bashing, woman-molesting Trump would be the next CEO of the United States and commander-in-chief of U.S. imperialism. By the next morning tens of millions were asking, in deep shock and disbelief, how could this happen? And in Muslim, Latino, African American and immigrant families there was raw fear.

So what is to be done? The big business media are all praising the “orderly peaceful transfer of power.” President Barack Obama says of Trump, “We are all now rooting for his success.” In her concession speech, Clinton said, “We owe him an open mind and the chance to lead.” That tells the billionaire bully he can walk all over opposition. We say *hell*

no! Those who are targets of the victorious race-haters and labor-haters must fight them down the line, or else we will pay “big

league.” The Democrats hand over the reins of power “graciously” because they and the Republicans all represent the same capitalist

away.” But Trump is the victor in the bourgeois elections – always rigged to ensure *continued on page 2*



Internationalist contingent in 2015 May Day march in NYC.

class against us, the workers and oppressed.

For many the election result was like a horror film, a scene out of *The Night of the Living Dead*. The message: Be afraid, be very afraid. In school Wednesday, Latino students fearfully asked their teachers: what will happen to me, will my parents be deported? Immigrants rights activists reported a torrent of phoned death threats. Groups of racists yelled “time to get out of this country” at random Middle Easterners. Muslim women feared to wear the *hijab*, the Islamic head scarf. A prominent African American spokesman, former Obama advisor Van Jones proclaimed it was the #Whitelash, recalling the racist backlash against the civil rights movement.

Soon protests began: thousands of young people across the country have been marching. The most common slogan was “Not My President,” along with “Dump Trump” and “Racist, sexist, anti-gay, Donald Trump go

**Fight Back – But How?**  
**For Workers Action to Stop Deportations –**  
**Build a Revolutionary Workers Party!**

## Cops, Feds, Pipeline Companies – Get Out of Indian Lands!

### The Battle Over Standing Rock



Protesters face off with police near site where pipeline is slated to cross the Missouri River next to the Standing Rock Indian Reservation.

JANUARY 7 – The struggle over the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) in North Dakota is not just against a profit-greedy consortium of oil companies. It poses a battle against a ruling class which established its sway through enslavement of African Americans and genocide against the Native American peoples, and has persecuted them ever since. The 1,172-mile pipeline would cross the Missouri River just north of the current boundaries of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation, potentially polluting the water supply to the population in case of a spill. With country sheriffs and state police acting as guard dogs for the oil companies, the standoff quickly became a conflict over Indian rights facing powerful corporations and the racist repressive forces of the capitalist state that does their bidding. In this battle, class-conscious workers and revolutionaries must stand squarely on the side of the Standing Rock Sioux.

Now, with winter storms and the election of DAPL investor Donald Trump as U.S. president, the battle continues. The announcement by the U.S. Department of the Army on December 4 that it would not grant the pipeline builders a necessary easement (permit) to drill under Lake Oahe, a dammed section of the Missouri River, was met with elation in the three camps of several thousand Native American and other protesters who had gathered near the site at the mouth of the Cannonball River. People shouted “Mni wiconi” – water is life – the watchword of the protest. Standing Rock Sioux tribal authorities declared that they and “all of Indian Country will be forever grateful to the Obama Administration for this historic decision.” They also urged protesters to return home as soon as possible. Other tribe members *continued on page 10*





Internationalists at April 14 "Shut Down Trump" protest.

## Defeat Trump...

*continued from page 1*

the selection of a defender of capital – and he isn't going away because thousands or tens of thousands chant it. The slogans showed a yearning for Clinton (sometimes explicit, like numerous signs in New York, "Still Stronger Together"). And they expressed patriotic liberal democratic illusions – the idea that this is "our country" when in fact it belongs to the capitalists.

So the issue is posed: *it is urgently necessary to fight back, but how?* With right-wing Republicans in control of all three branches of government (executive, legislative and judicial) – from the White House to both houses of Congress, the Supreme Court and most state houses – even staid Democratic politicians and pundits are talking about electoral "disaster," "apocalypse" and "resistance." But here there is a fundamental *class* difference: for working people and the oppressed it is necessary to oppose *all parties of capital*, to dump both the Democrats and The Donald. So in order to resist, we must first *understand what happened, and why*.

Ask yourself: would there be this traumatic shock, would there be these mass protests if the Democrat had been elected? Of course not, because for many of those marching, even if they didn't vote for her, Hillary Clinton was in some way a "lesser evil" than the consummately evil Donald Trump. Not so. As the Internationalist Group said on our website, it was "the 'choice' between the candidate most likely to set off a racist pogrom (Donald Trump for the Republicans) and the candidate most likely to start World War III (the Russia-phobic Democrat Hillary Clinton)."

So why was Trump elected? Liberal commentators portray it as simply the victory of rampant racism, particularly of

white workers. No one could miss Trump's blatantly racist appeals, and the 50% of voters who voted for him at the very least went along with that. The Ku Klux Klan and various Nazi outfits enthusiastically backed him. But the hard-core racist vote is much smaller – maybe a quarter of the electorate – and has been violently attacking Obama since 2008. Trump also won the votes of better-off middle class sectors (the average Trump voter had a family income of \$72,000), as the Republicans generally do.

But what put Trump over the top were the others, residents of rural towns whose youth are leaving because they have no future there, and workers who have seen their industries decimated and their cities devastated. The rage against Washington comes from victims of the 2008 crash and continuing economic depression thrown into permanent unemployment or reduced to part-time jobs at Walmart wages. This revolt by small town America and Rust Belt workers is against "free-trade" policies of both Democrats and Republicans. They are not all racists: in fact, millions of them, 12% of all Trump voters, also voted for Barack Obama. They are victims of *capitalism*.

To the high-flying "neo-liberal" elite, these are "forgotten people," the residents of "fly-over" country between Wall Street and Hollywood whose money men finance Clinton and Obama Democrats. The arrogant policy wonks of Bill Clinton Inc. see those who voted for Trump as the "losers" in the globalization of "modern" capitalism, while the "winners" are the Silicon Valley venture capitalists. Having lost their jobs, their homes repossessed by the banks, makes them easy prey for demagogues selling the fool's gold of anti-immigrant racism. The fact is that the Democrats pushed millions of workers into the arms of Trump.

The Democratic politicians won't and

can't admit this, writing off white blue-collar workers as racist, because it is their policies that are responsible. Liberal pundits like Thomas Friedman who pushed these policies are thrown into despair: "I am in anguish, frightened for my country and for our unity. And for the first time, I feel homeless in America" (*New York Times*, 9 November). Pseudo-radical leftists who spout theories of "white skin privilege" likewise seek to make white workers responsible for black oppression, when it is this racist capitalist system that profits from dividing white against black workers.

While the "neo-liberal" liberals are in despair, various reformists and liberal "progressives" are arguing that the problem is that Hillary Clinton was the wrong Democratic candidate. They say it should have been Democratic Party "socialist" Bernie Sanders, who posed as a "friend of labor" and in early opinion polls did far better against Trump than friend of Wall Street Clinton. But Sanders (who fulsomely supported Clinton) didn't have a very different economic program because "*neo-liberalism is not a policy it is the current phase of decaying capitalism*, in which driving down wages is dictated by the same falling rate of profit that set off the 2008 crash.

Various reformist left groups pushed Green Party candidate Jill Stein, whose eco-capitalist program offered nothing to workers, spelling calamity for steel and coal workers in the name of supposedly fighting climate change. Others put forward their own candidates with a laundry list of illusory demands on the capitalist state (see "Left Green Dream of People-Friendly Capitalism," *The Internationalist* No. 45, September-October 2016). The Internationalist Group uniquely fought in the unions to break with the Democrats, Republicans and all capitalist parties and build a class-struggle workers party.

This program, supported by the Painters union in Portland, Oregon is what could offer a real answer to Trump demagoguery. It should be fought for in the labor movement throughout the country. But now we are going to face the attacks of the triumphant Trump forces, which pose an ominous threat to oppressed sectors in particular. To fight the impending attacks, it is necessary to put forward a program to mobilize the *power* of the workers movement. If the new regime seeks to reinstitute raids in the urban centers, there should be *workers mobilizations to prevent deportations*, including blocking them by flooding the area with defenders of immigrant rights.

As violent racist and outright fascist forces are emboldened by Trump's victory,

Muslims and Middle Eastern immigrants in particular may be singled out for attack. Class-conscious militants should begin the work now of building *workers defense guards*, based on the mass organizations of the working class and oppressed, to counter this threat. Police killings of African Americans and Latinos should be met with *massive labor mobilizations against police terror*, such as that led by the ILWU dock workers in Oakland, California on May Day 2015 (and the example of the Labor Against Racist Police Murder contingent in Portland that same day).

Education workers should prepare to stop any attempt to seize undocumented students and their families. If a school should shut down, and be backed by others, in response to the seizure of an immigrant family, it would send shock waves across the country. And Marxists not only defend the right of free speech and assembly, we stand for the *right of black self-defense* against racist attacks, in opposition to liberal gun control advocates. In the present atmosphere, African Americans and others would be well-advised to prepare to exercise their Second Amendment rights.

All of these practical steps for resistance against racist reaction on the march can only be a partial answer and point to the ultimate solution: *workers revolution*. Whether a Donald Trump or a Hillary Clinton (or Barack Obama) is in the Oval Office, the capitalist system will inevitably continue to generate racism, poverty *and* war. We denounced Clinton's policies in Syria and Ukraine for threatening military confrontation and even full-scale war with Russia. Trump is making nice with Putin, but at the same time threatening trade war and worse against China. As Trotskyists, we emphatically *defend the Chinese deformed workers state against imperialist attack*.

The upset election of Donald Trump has shocked many opponents of racism, sexism and anti-immigrant chauvinism to the core. It has dealt a body blow to the Clintonite Democratic Party. It has not only thrown the capitalist political establishment into disarray, it has led many to question the whole political structure (including the Electoral College, a bastion of the slavocracy up to the Civil War, due to which Trump can lose the popular vote but still end up president). But what this shock to the body politic poses is not a phony "political revolution" like Bernie Sanders and his acolytes preached, but full-blown *international socialist revolution*.

That is the answer to Trump ... and to Clinton, the Democrats and all the bosses' parties and politicians! ■

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. 46



January-February 2017



Class Struggle International Workers at immigrant NYC march, December 8.

The Internationalist



# Democrats and Bureaucrats Lament Their Defeat

## The Myth of a “White Working Class”

As the Democratic Party licks its wounds in the aftermath of the elections, it has sought to pin responsibility for defeat on sinister forces from the FBI to Vladimir Putin and Russian hacking. Another of its pathetic attempts at self-justification is to blame the “white working class” for Trump’s victory. With smug condescension the liberal media dispatch reporters to Ohio and Iowa to find out why the “rubies” voted for the Donald. Union bureaucrats, meanwhile, who tried to force Hillary Clinton with her “free-trade” policies down the throats of their members, blame the Democrats for ignoring the “white working class.” Now the labor tops want to work with Trump pushing protectionist economic policies which set U.S. workers against their class sisters and brothers abroad.

But there is no specific “white working class.” There are not a multitude of working classes identifiable by race, gender and ethnicity. There is a single multiracial working class in the United States, defined by its economic and social relationship to the means of production rather than by racial or cultural identity. You can see this in nearly every worksite and particularly in the cauldron of class struggle – on the picket line and in labor action. Furthermore, the working class is inherently international, a unique and revolutionary social development in human history. The working class today is about 60% non-Latino white, but according to projections in a study by the Economic Policy Institute, it will be “majority minority” in a decade and a half.

What is behind the sudden concern for the “white working class”? Two words: Hillary lost. The Democrats’ vaunted electoral “blue wall” crumbled “bigly” in what were once Democratic strongholds of Michigan, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and Ohio – the so-called “rust belt.” The response of the labor bureaucracy, which since the 1930s has chained workers to the Democratic Party, was summed up in the headline of *The Chief* (18 November), the New York City weekly for public employees: “Union Officials, Dreading Trump Presidency, Say Clinton Disregarded Discontent Among White Working-Class.” The sordid and reactionary conclusion of bureaucrats and Democrats is to woo white workers by adapting to Trump’s racism.

In the post-mortem blame game, as they seek to refurbish their party’s appeal, they are opposing struggles against racism, homophobia and xenophobia. The columnist Nicholas Kristof summed up the liberal faction fight: “One faction argues that the left became too focused on ‘identity politics,’ fighting for the rights of Muslims, gays, blacks and Latinos but neglecting themes of economic justice that would appeal to everyone, working-class whites in particular” (*New York Times*, 8 December). The same theme is echoed by Bernie Sanders.

Their common assumption is that most Trump-voting white workers are solidly racist. By projecting the working class as just another identity, the Democratic politicians imagine that they can compete for racist votes. The lesson they have drawn from defeat is that the Democratic Party has become too associated with its African American, Latino and gay/lesbian constituents. While criticizing “identity politics,” they

### “Identity Politics” at a Dead End



Postal workers in New York City struck in March 1970 and won despite no-strike law and over objections of pro-capitalist union tops.

hope to add white identity to their rainbow of constituencies. But white identity in the U.S. is always necessarily racist. Historically there was and is no white race. The myth of a “Caucasian” identity was a social construct, in contrast to black oppression under slavery and Jim Crow segregation.

On the other hand, some black liberals, such as MSNBC commentator Joy Reed, have reached the second stage of electoral grief – anger – and directed it at the “white working class.” Her article in the *Daily Beast* (December 9) is titled, “Hey, White Working Class, Donald Trump Is Already Screwing You Over.” With barely concealed *Schadenfreude*, she ticks off many of the ways the Trump regime will hurt working-class Trump voters while protecting her own more privileged economic position. Trump will gut your Medicare, she says, privatize your Social Security, pollute your air and water, lower your wages and bust your unions, outsource your jobs. Ha! Then you’ll be punished for not voting for Hillary.

This arrogant petty-bourgeois rant is positively delusional. Trump will be “screwing over” the entire working class, not only white Trump voters in Pennsylvania, and will also be coming after black journalists.

Opposition to identity politics can come from two radically different directions. When “color-blind” liberals and Democrats like Bernie Sanders attack it they are resisting raising any special demands against black oppression. This is also the case with some pseudo-socialist groups like the Socialist Equality Party (a/k/a the World Socialist Web Site) which vituperates against “Black Lives Matter” marches. In contrast, when revolutionary Marxists (Trotskyists) oppose identity politics we are opposing the bourgeois liberal notion that a person’s politics are directly derived from their individual identities rather than class, dividing different oppressed groups into competing sectoral “identities.” And as Leninists, our answer is to call for *class* struggle against racism, sexism and all forms of social oppression.

Identity politics have become the default position in the U.S. in the absence of sharp class struggle. Choose your group: are you a worker or African American? A

woman or an immigrant? Etc. Of course, for a black woman immigrant worker, for instance, this makes no sense. So in an effort to preserve identity-driven politics in the face of such absurdities, academics have invented “intersectionality,” adding up the identities. Instead, it is necessary to overcome the poisonous divisions that make it easier for the ruling class to prevail by setting one group against another in their unrelenting class war.

Identity certainly matters in life and political struggle. In a society as racist as the U.S., those who are designated as outsiders are singled out to face endless oppressions in the routines of daily life, as well as existential terror. An African American, Native American, Latino or immigrant may be unable to hail a taxi, or be stopped, frisked and arrested on trumped-up charges, and sometimes shot by killer cops. The question is how to fight back. A black subway worker in New York City has real power when she acts as part of the union and in concert with other workers to fight against racist cop killings.

### For Revolutionary Class Struggle Against Trump ... And the Democrats

For all the talk of an upset in an election like no other, the aftermath has followed a familiar script. A fake populist promises to shake things up and bust up the Washington establishment. Once in office, the new regime implements the program of the Chamber of Commerce, the Fraternal Order of Police, Wall Street, imperialist militarists, and anti-immigration racists. Americans always vote for change, and always get the same class domination and oppression. Neither capitalist party has anything to offer the working class but continued exploitation and misery. Trump, who promised to “drain the swamp” of special interests, has dredged up the most hideous creatures from the white lagoon for his military-billionaire complex – the most right-wing cabinet in U.S. history.

The idea that the Democratic Party has abandoned the “white working class” has long been the preoccupation of liberals (like filmmaker Michael Moore) who yearn

nostalgically for a return to Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s 1930s New Deal. The Democrats didn’t abandon working-class interests *because they have never represented them*. Like the Republicans, Democrats have always represented the interests of the capitalist exploiters of workers. Since FDR’s New Deal coalition, workers mainly have been bound to their class oppressors through the treachery of the Democratic Party-loyal labor bureaucracy. But with deindustrialization and the dramatic loss of union jobs through sellouts and defeats, that bond has weakened.

In the 1950’s one in three workers was in a private-sector union. Today it is one in twenty. Even with the decline in union membership overall, public-sector unionism gained and now has about half of the 11% of union workers in the U.S. workforce. Blue-collar black and white male workers have disproportionately lost their jobs as American industry has been gutted as a result of “free-trade” policies and the global capitalist economic depression following the 2008 crash. Today, it is mainly through the unionized public sector that black people, after the civil rights movement, have managed to gain and hold on to some bargaining power and improve their lives.

Now public workers nationwide stand to lose the right to collective bargaining, whether through a Supreme Court decision or a national “right-to-work” law. Yet it is possible to defeat anti-union legislation, as was demonstrated in the powerful and successful 1970 postal strike led by black workers which defied federal state power. The walkout was illegal from the outset, as postal workers were banned by law from collective bargaining and from striking. Beset by low wages and benefits and subjected to unhealthy and unsafe working conditions, workers in New York City struck in defiance of their union leaders. It was the largest wildcat strike in U.S. history.

After two days, Republican president Richard Nixon, just as reactionary as Donald Trump, ordered strikers back to work. Instead, angry postal workers in hundreds of locations around the country joined the strike. After six days, Nixon declared a national emergency and threatened to have troops distribute the mail. Over 18,000 Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine and National Guard active-duty and reserve personnel were dispatched to NYC post offices. But Nixon hesitated to arrest strike leaders because the strike was so popular. After eight days the strikers went back, without a single firing, and winning the right to collective bargaining. They didn’t win the legal right to strike, but that hadn’t stopped them from waging a successful “illegal” strike.

Defeat is pretty much assured if the capitalist oppressors wage class war while workers are divided by identity-driven politics. Victory is possible when those divisions are overcome on the basis of a revolutionary program and leadership that champions and organizes all the oppressed. The power of the working class must be the driving force of the fight against racism and sexism and all social oppression in capitalist society. To mobilize the power of the multiracial working class requires a multiracial revolutionary workers party to lead the struggle for socialist revolution so we can achieve liberation for all the oppressed. ■

Neal Boenzli/New York Times



# Donald Trump, the “Alt-Right” and Fascism

Is Donald Trump a fascist? Quite a few liberals have said so, on web sites such as The New Republic, Slate, and Salon.<sup>1</sup> So do some establishment “neo-conservatives” like Robert Kagan,<sup>2</sup> who quit the Republican Party in order to become a Hillary Clinton advisor. You can hear the same thing from reformist leftists, such as the misnamed Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) of Bob Avakian, which has launched a web site, [www.refusefascism.org](http://www.refusefascism.org). Another Stalinist outfit, the Progressive Labor Party (PLP), treats Trump as a fascist, just as they did with Democrat Barack Obama (even as PLPers participated in Obama’s election campaign!).

In labeling Donald Trump a fascist, these varied political tendencies recall the horrors of the dictatorships of Benito Mussolini in Italy and Adolf Hitler in Germany, including the mass murder of six million Jews in the Holocaust (as well as gypsies, Slavs, homosexuals and communists). Since Trump was elected, does that mean we have concentration camps around the corner? Actually, the U.S. already has lots of concentration camps – hundreds of detention centers holding over 400,000 immigrants. During the Cold War witchhunts of the 1950s a whole network of prison camps was set up to jail tens of thousands of communists and other leftists on lists of people to be picked up in a “national emergency.” It was all under capitalist “democracy.”

The election of Trump is a threat to African Americans, Muslims, immigrants, organized labor and democratic rights generally. It is important to note that, while those who voted for him were well aware of his repulsive statements, this does not mean that all Trump supporters are primarily motivated by racism, as Hillary Clinton suggested with her remark about his voters as a “basketful of deplorables.” In Midwestern “rust belt” states quite a few workers voted for him as a protest against the anti-worker “free trade” policies of the Democrats (and Republicans) that have led to the wholesale destruction of industrial jobs. Certainly much of the hardcore racist sector of the electorate voted for Trump, and racist forces were emboldened by his victory. But fascism is far more: it is the mobilization in the streets of desperate shock troops for the bourgeoisie to smash the workers movement, obliterate oppressed groups labeled the “enemy within,” and destroy every vestige of bourgeois democracy.

It’s important to be clear: being a vicious anti-Mexican, anti-Arab, anti-black race-hater, a sexist and national chauvinist, a union-basher and advocate of unfettered police power, does not in itself make Trump a fascist. Some throw around the term as an all-purpose epithet meaning “very bad.” Others use it to mean “very repressive.” But there are plenty of repressive regimes that are not fascist. Fascists helped bring the junta to power in Chile in the bloody Santiago coup d’état in 1973 with the backing of the U.S. government, but the

Pinochet regime was a classic Latin American military dictatorship, resting on army bayonets, not fascist mobs rampaging in the streets. Defining fascism just as repressive actions actually prettifies bourgeois democracy, that is, the “normal” class dictatorship of the capitalists, which is and always has been based on racism, imperialist conquest and police violence in defense of private property.

Using characterizations loosely and imprecisely can lead to political disorientation. Analysis is often driven by policy. Thus Stalinists frequently label all sorts of regimes and forces “fascist” in good part in order to justify building an “anti-fascist popular front,” as Stalin’s henchman Georgi Dimitrov called for in 1935, seeking to tie the workers to a political alliance with supposedly “anti-fascist” capitalist forces. This marked the definitive passing over of Stalinism to reformist support for capitalist rule, openly rejecting the program of international socialist revolution of the Bolsheviks led by Lenin and Trotsky. The result was a disaster for the working class in the Spanish Civil War and since.

You can see the popular-frontist policy in protests on Inauguration Day, January 20, as various reformist leftists call for “unity against Trump” (or “Trumpism,” or “Trump’s agenda”). This is an implicit – and sometimes explicit – call for an alliance with bourgeois “progressives,” like supporters of Democratic Party “socialist” Bernie Sanders. Revolutionary Marxists and class-conscious workers call instead for *class* opposition to Republicans *and* Democrats, and all capitalist parties, and for a workers party to fight for a workers government. The answer to Trump, and to genuine fascism, is not allying with “anti-fascist” bourgeois politicians – who defend the same *class* interests as the fascists, and consequently block any real fight against capitalist attacks – but to fight for socialist revolution.

As Trotsky wrote in the Transitional Program, the founding document of the Fourth International: “People’s Fronts’ on the one hand – fascism on the other: these are the last political resources of imperialism in the struggle against the proletarian revolution.”

So what is fascism? Some reputed “fascism experts” say Trump may be fascist because of an “authoritarian personality,” or a “jutting jaw” like Mussolini! They even have a 14-point checklist of “fascist traits” from the Italian writer Umberto Eco.<sup>3</sup> All this shows is the inability of bourgeois academics to understand the

<sup>3</sup> From his essay on “Ur-fascism,” *New York Review of Books*, 22 June 1995.



“Hail Trump! Hail Victory!” Participants at “alt-right” conference chant Nazi slogans, give Hitler salute.

social roots of the phenomenon they are analyzing. As opposed to such trivia, in his prophetic warnings to the German working class facing the rise of Hitler’s Nazis, Leon Trotsky, the co-leader of the Russian socialist revolution, described fascism and its relation to the “normal” functioning of the bourgeois state apparatus:

“At the moment that the ‘normal’ police and military resources of the bourgeois dictatorship, together with their parliamentary screens, no longer suffice to hold society in a state of equilibrium – the turn of the fascist regime arrives. Through the fascist agency, capitalism sets in motion the masses of the crazed petty bourgeoisie and the bands of declassed and demoralized lumpenproletariat – all the countless human beings whom finance capital itself has brought to desperation and frenzy.

“From fascism the bourgeoisie demands a thorough job; once it has resorted to methods of civil war, it insists on having peace for a period of years. And the fascist agency, by utilizing the petty bourgeoisie as a battering ram, by overwhelming all obstacles in its path, does a thorough job. After fascism is victorious, finance capital directly and immediately gathers into its hands, as in a vise of steel, all the organs and institutions of sovereignty, the executive, administrative, and educational powers of the state: the entire state apparatus together with the army, the municipalities, the universities, the schools, the press, the trade unions, and the co-operatives. When a state turns fascist ... the workers’ organizations are annihilated ... the proletariat is reduced to an amorphous state ... a system of administration is created which penetrates deeply into the masses and which serves to frustrate the independent crystallization of the proletariat.”

– “What Next? Vital Questions for the German Proletariat” (1932)

This scenario is *not* a description what is happening in the United States today. What is happening is plenty dangerous, a

drive toward increasing *bonapartism*, that is military/police rule. Moreover, the ominous expansion of police powers has been promoted by the Democratic administrations of Bill Clinton and Barack Obama no less than by the Republican Bushes. It is the product of decaying capitalism which increasingly discards its “democratic” trappings.

Donald Trump is no Mussolini, but in many respects he is similar to another right-wing billionaire and media magnate, Silvio Berlusconi, who governed Italy off and on between 2001 and 2006. Like Trump, Berlusconi is not a fascist but a dangerous demagogue who was not wedded to a particular policy. Sinister forces flourished under his regime, from Northern League racists to fascistic soccer gangs, fascist skinheads and groups nostalgic for Mussolini’s rule. Likewise, Trump’s campaign and his surprise victory in the November elections greatly emboldened all sorts of racists, “white nationalists” and outright fascists. In order to combat and defeat them, it is necessary to have a clear understanding of the various forces in the Trump “camp.”

There is a coterie of unvarnished militarists soon to be at the helm of the Pentagon and intelligence agencies. There are the Wall Street bankers from Goldman Sachs who are now in charge of Trump’s economic policies. You have token Republican Party establishment figures, like Republican National Committee chairman and White House chief of staff designate Reince Priebus, whose job is to keep the Congressional majority in line. And there’s Trump’s chief ideologist, Steve Bannon, who ran the presidential campaign during the final months. Bannon, a millionaire former Wall Street investment banker and Hollywood movie mogul, is an utter reactionary and rabid right-winger.

As soon as Bannon took charge of Trump’s campaign, there was an uproar over his anti-Semitism, quoting his ex-wife and other informed sources. Bannon supporters responded by asking how could he be promoting hatred of Jews since he is a big supporter of Israel. Actually, there are plenty of supporters of Israel who are virulent anti-Semites: the Republican Party is full of right-wing evangelical zealots who would love all Jews to go to Israel where, they claim, the Anti-Christ would annihilate most of them, prior to the Rapture. The Zionist rulers of Israel long ago learned to live with pro-Israel anti-Semites in the U.S. Congress, whose votes are needed to get billions in Pentagon military aid that they depend on to suppress the Palestinians.

Trotsky warned decades ago that Zionism was a reactionary dead end, and emigrating to Palestine could become a bloody trap for Jews seeking to escape fascism, which sought the extermination of the Jewish people.<sup>4</sup>

That Bannon is an anti-Semite, there can be no doubt. He produced a final (November 6) national television campaign ad, in which Trump rails against the “global special interests” and “political establishment” who have “bled our country dry” as images stream past of billionaire George Soros, Federal Reserve chair Janet Yellen

<sup>4</sup> Leon Trotsky, “On the Jewish Problem” (1937-40).

Daniel Lombroso / The Atlantic



# Portland Union Calls to Mobilize Against the Ku Klux Klan and Other Racist Forces

Following the victory of the racist, anti-immigrant, woman-hating Republican Donald Trump over the warmongering representative of Wall Street Democrat Hillary Clinton in the November 8 U.S. presidential elections, the hooded fascists of the Ku Klux Klan announced that they would hold victory rallies. As rumors spread that the KKK intended to stage such a provocation in the Portland, Oregon/Vancouver, Washington area, Local 10 of the Painters and Drywall Installers Union (IUPAT) unanimously approved a motion calling for a working-class mobilization to stop the KKK lynchers and other racist forces in their tracks.

The resolution (reprinted below) was put forward by members of Class Struggle Workers – Portland, which works fraternally with the Internationalist Group. Note that the same union last August called on workers to oppose the Democrats, Republicans or any party of the bosses, and to build a class-struggle workers party. In

2015, Local 10 joined together with several other unions and dozens trade-unionists in a contingent initiated by the CSWP of “Labor Against Racist Police Murder.”

Since this resolution was passed, similar motions were approved by IATSE (Stagehands) Local 28, Carpenters Local 1503, and the Seattle branch of Industrial workers of the World (IWW).

## Mobilize Labor to Stop the KKK

Whereas, there has been a sharp increase in racist and anti-immigrant attacks across the country in recent days, and Whereas, the Ku Klux Klan has announced it would stage menacing provocations in many areas, and

Whereas, the KKK and other racist organizations represent a deadly threat to African Americans, Latinos and immigrants, as well as to Muslim, LG-BTQ, and Jewish people, among many others, and directly to the members of

this Union and the labor movement as a whole.

Whereas, the white supremacist forces are related to the origins of anti-labor “right to work” law in order to destroy unions because they believed unions would lead to “race mixing” among workers, and

Whereas unions are considered a threat to the KKK and other racist organizations because they are a working class defense organization for all workers in the community.

Therefore be it resolved that the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades Local Union 10 stands ready to join with the community in mobilizing against the clear and present danger that the KKK and other racist organizations provocations pose to us all.

*Resolution approved by the membership of Local 10 at the monthly membership meeting on November 16th, 2016 at Portland, OR.*

and Goldman Sachs CEO Lloyd Blankfein, all of whom happen to be Jewish. (Bannon, who happens to be Catholic, made his millions as a mergers and acquisitions banker at Goldman Sachs.) Meanwhile, as editor of the Breitbart News website up until last August, Bannon published numerous articles denouncing critics of Israel, which were gobbled up by virulent anti-Semites, as you can see from comments from the site’s devotees.

Bannon is a hard-right national chauvinist who rails against “illegal immigration.” As such he has affinities with, and has given a platform to, “white nationalists” and other brands of white supremacists, including out-and-out fascists like former KKK “imperial wizard” David Duke, the “Klan in a suit” who repeatedly ran for political office in Louisiana. Trump hesitated for some days before renouncing the endorsement of his campaign by Duke, and also by the Ku Klux Klan, pretending to “know nothing” about Duke or even white supremacy. But Trump’s father Fred was arrested in a Klan riot in Queens, New York in May 1927.

But while neither Trump nor Bannon are fascists, actual fascists are crawling out of their holes and looking forward to the Trump years. Some are open Nazis, like the website the Daily Stormer of one Andrew Anglin, which called for an armed march against Jews in Whitefish, Montana on January 15. The town’s handful of Jewish residents reported anonymous death threats. Their photos, including of children, were posted on the Internet superimposed with the Star of David patch that Hitler required Jews to wear. Local police said they would allow the march in the name of “free speech.” Yet the fascist provocation was not an exchange of views but a staging ground for murder of Jews, blacks, immigrants, homosexuals, leftists and union activists. Stormer Anglin later postponed it for lack of a special event permit.

Why Whitefish? This mountain resort town near Glacier National Park is the residence of Richard Spencer, the wan-

nabe Goebbels of American fascism. It is the site of the corporate office of Spencer’s National Policy Institute (NPI), an “academic” front for racist pseudoscience. Spencer disclaimed responsibility for the threatened Nazi march in his hometown, but when he was interviewed by David Duke on the latter’s December 26 radio show, he had a different line. On the air with his political mentor, Spencer called on Whitefish residents to renounce “Love Lives Here” (a locally based anti-racist organization targeted by the Nazis), singled out local rabbis by name and demanded that residents denounce them, in exchange for cancellation of the march he claimed to have no part in.

Spencer came to national media attention when he gave a keynote address to an NPI conference last November, ten days after the election. Reveling in the growth of his movement and its prospects under a Trump administration, Spencer concluded with appeals to “Hail Trump! Hail our people! Hail victory!” mimicking Nazi salutes of “Heil Hitler!” and “Sieg heil!” Many attendees responded with stiff-arm Nazi salutes. The political objective of Spencer’s movement is the creation of what he calls a “white ethno-state” to replace the United States. This would require the smashing of all democratic institutions, particularly the integrated organizations of the multiracial working class, which could only be accomplished through genocidal mass murder.

This is exactly what Richard Spencer and his ilk are aiming for. Spencer is the guru of the so-called “alt-right,” a term he coined several years ago to give political cover to the Islamophobic, homophobic, xenophobic, anti-Semitic, white-supremacist ideology of his so-called “white nationalism” movement. As editor of Breitbart, Trump ideologist Steve Bannon bragged that he had made the web site into “the platform of the alt-right.” But where Bannon traffics in fascistic rhetoric, Spencer’s movement are actual fascist propagandists linked to paramilitary action units, such as

the Nazi gangs that threatened to march on Whitefish or the KKK hooded lynchers – terror squads drawn from the decomposition products of decaying American capitalism.

While Bannon and Trump are willing to court the fascist vote, their power rests on the established institutions of American capitalist “democracy,” namely the deadliest military and police forces on the planet. In fact, this only makes them even *more* dangerous to the workers and oppressed people the world over than the fascist scum who fantasize about holding state power. As the Internationalist Group emphasized throughout the spectacle of the 2016 presidential election, Trump’s “border wall” and “deportation force,” the nuclear weapons at his command and his belligerent threats against China were prepared for him by his Democratic predecessors (including the “socialist” Bernie Sanders). As for American racism, that was born with American capitalism as the ideology of a ruling class that established its rule through genocide and slavery.

In the United States today, the “normal” means of bourgeois rule are not immediately threatened, as happened in Italy in the 1920s and Germany in the ’30s. This is not due to any internal vitality. On the contrary, the “two-party system” by which a small number of capitalist firms have selected their government for over a century failed spectacularly in 2016 when Hillary Clinton’s coronation was bungled and an unreliable demagogue outmaneuvered the Republican establishment. The hysterical whining from the “intelligence community” and the kept media over “Russian hacking,” i.e., over the leaking of the Democrats’ dirty secrets of conniving with Wall Street, testifies to the bourgeoisie’s self-conscious senility.

The only force that could clear away this dead wood, the working class, is kept in such a state of disorganization and political subjugation by its pro-capitalist leaders that the ruling class does not feel immediately threatened by it. Mainly for this reason, the fascist gangs remain marginal in the U.S.

They are semi-tolerated, rotating in and out of prison, kept in reserve for when the unstable equilibrium inevitably breaks down. On January 20 and 21, there will be some ritual protests against Trump’s inauguration, either directly or indirectly linked to the Democratic Party. Thus they cannot fight Trump even though he lacks any kind of “mandate,” having lost the popular vote by almost 3 million votes. Meanwhile, racist forces from KKK nightriders to immigration police are feeling emboldened.

It will take hard class struggle to defeat Trump’s attacks on the workers. Revolutionists should seek to organize mass labor-centered mobilizations to crush the fascist provocateurs as they attempt to make forays into urban centers of the multiracial working class. In the Pacific Northwest, Class Struggle Workers – Portland sparked a “Labor Against Racist Police Murder” contingent of several unions and scores of unionists in the 2015 May Day march. Now, as rumors have circulated about a planned Klan march, CSWP members are organizing to “Mobilize Labor to Stop the KKK.” Already three unions in the Portland-Vancouver area (Painters, Stage Hands and Carpenters) as well as the Industrial Workers of the World in Seattle have passed resolutions to use their power together with others “against the clear and present danger that the KKK and other racist organizations’ provocations pose to us all” (see box this page).

In the context of such a mobilization, a squad of demonstration marshals could become the nucleus for labor-based defense guards that can effectively disperse the lynchers and Nazi scum. This is a very different perspective from that of those who seek an “anti-fascist” adventure while avoiding the hard political struggle in the unions against sellout bureaucrats, phony “friend of labor” Democrats and the opportunist leftists who tag along after them. Waging that struggle means organizing the power of the working class to take on the labyrinth of anti-labor laws which both the partner parties of American capitalism support to the hilt. It means defeating the poisonous racism that paralyzes working-class solidarity.

While the AFL-CIO leaders strained mightily alongside their masters on Wall Street to elect Clinton, many union members didn’t buy it. Seeing no alternative representing the workers, some stayed home, others voted for Trump. Now the union tops seek to outdo Trump in pushing nationalist protectionism – that is, protecting the corporations’ profits and dividing the workers against each other. Against this bankrupt program which has produced nothing but defeats for decades, Portland Painters Union Local 10 last August called for no vote to the Democrats or Republicans, or any party of the bosses, and for labor to build a class-struggle workers party. That together with real labor action against the attacks on African Americans, Latinos, immigrants and all working people, is what it will take to defeat Trump ... and the Democrats.

Of course, none of this will fall from the heavens or come about spontaneously. Someone has to lead the fight. It’s up to the most conscious militants to orient the class struggle against the entire capitalist system, all of its parties and politicians, and every form of oppression that it generates. That’s the task the Internationalist Group and the League for the Fourth International have taken on. Make it yours. ■



# Turn Protests into Workers Revolt Leading to the Struggle for Power For Workers Mobilization to Smash the *Gasolinazo*!

Starting on New Year's Day, the Mexican population has been hit by a 20% increase in fuel prices, what has become known as the *gasolinazo* (gasoline coup). Our comrades of the Grupo Internacionalista issued the following leaflet that is being distributed in Tijuana, Guadalajara, Mexico City and Oaxaca.

JANUARY 6 – “The country is in flames,” was the headline of an article in *El Universal* (5 January). Various websites of the national newspapers have included “minute by minute” coverage of the protests. “Interactive” maps show how the mobilizations spread day by day. Major highways have been severed by barricades for long periods. From Tijuana in the north to Chetumal in the south, truck drivers, peasants and workers give free passage at the toll-booths, while at some gas stations protesters pump the gas free of charge.

Meanwhile, there are reports from various localities of clashes between residents and police: Guadalajara, 2 January; the impoverished municipalities of Naucalpan, Ecatepec and Acolman in the state of México<sup>1</sup> on January 3; the districts of Gustavo A. Madero and Iztapalapa in Mexico City, along with Ixmiquilpan, Hidalgo, Monterrey and Nuevo León, January 5; in Rosarito, Baja California protesters who had blocked gas pipelines supplying this city and Tijuana were driven out by federal police in the early hours of January 6; and the list goes on.

TV news flashes images of looting as representative of the protests against the surge in gas prices; they suggest that “shadowy interests” are behind the “acts of vandalism.” But in spite of the spin, what we see is the mounting rage of the people, seemingly slipping out of the control of the government of imperialist puppet-president Enrique Peña Nieto. This Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) politician rules in concert with the “opposition” parties of the Pact for Mexico to impose precisely the counter-reforms that today show their results in the starvation attack against the workers and their families. Even “expert” pundits closest to the regime admit the “unpopularity” of Peña Nieto’s latest move, and while they exalt the doctrine of the “free market” they are apprehensive that the protests might get out of control.

Reports in the bourgeois press note with certain alarm that the “looters” of gas stations come from neighborhoods and housing complexes where riot police have been driven out by the residents under a hail of rocks. In Ixmiquilpan (Hidalgo state) the population detained various state riot police, demanding an exchange for protesters arrested in the course of a police assault on the highway to Nuevo Laredo. In Monclova (Coahuila state), the infamous special police unit “Fuerza Coahuila” also attacked protesters, but the crowd freed those who were arrested.

Defenders of bourgeois order are scandalized by the looting, wailing that the poor

<sup>1</sup> The central region around the capital (Mexico City).



**Demonstrators in Ixmiquilpan detained riot police, demanding protestors arrested during a police assault on a highway to Nuevo Laredo be released.**

are violating the sanctity of private property. The popular unrest, caused by a system that only produces hunger and oppression, is utterly justified. We in the Grupo Internacionalista call to direct this anger at the root of the problem, the capitalist system. What’s needed is a socialist revolution to seize from the bosses the enormous riches that they expropriate from the workers. The means of production and distribution should be in the hands of the working class. As Karl Marx said: expropriate the expropriators!

Workers at Pemex (the state oil company), under siege by the bosses, not only have an interest but also the power to enter the fray and transform the situation. Since Pemex workers literally control the gasoline pumps, they should decide how it is to be distributed to the population and at what price. But this would require a real class struggle, which would break once and for all the shackles of corporatism that have kept the oil workers under the control of the bourgeois state for decades. Only complete independence from the bosses’ state, and from the capitalist parties and politicians, can open the way to victory against the starvation offensive.

Since every class struggle is a political struggle, the key is to build a revolutionary, internationalist working-class leadership which the situation requires. We need to forge a revolutionary workers party!

## **The Energy Counter-Reform Leads to Impoverishment**

The panorama of protests that rang in the new year is the answer to the brutal increase in gasoline prices (the *gasolinazo*). 2017 did not begin well for the workers and their families. On December 27 the federal government of Enrique Peña Nieto of the PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party) announced an initial increase of between 15

and 20 percent in prices for gas and diesel fuel, which went into effect on the first of the year. The government also announced that beginning on February 18 the price of these fuels would change daily. These increases come on top of a cumulative 38 percent increase in fuel prices since the beginning of the president’s six-year term.

Ever since the massive privatization of the Mexican National Railways under the auspices of presidents Carlos Salinas and Ernesto Zedillo, the bulk of the country’s goods are transported by road. This means that any increase in fuel prices puts direct pressure on the prices of other basic commodities. What’s more, the price of electricity and cooking gas is going up all across the country, and in many regions the price of drinking water is rising. Therefore, the gas price increase represents a direct attack on the living standards of the working people.

In some areas the situation is even worse. For the population of Baja California it’s not just the *gasolinazo*: on December 19 the National Action Party (PAN) majority in the state legislature, along with its allies of the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) and the Citizens’ Movement (MC), approved the privatization of water, which will lead to a price increase of almost 300 percent for this indispensable resource. Add to this the increase in public transportation fares. The bus companies are calling for an increase to 18.50 pesos on their routes, since a 100-pound tank of cooking gas now costs more than 676 pesos. Like elsewhere along the northern border, this comes on top of the brutal devaluation of the peso against the dollar, leading to a 30% overall increase in housing and food prices. Clearly, the situation has become untenable.

If the consequences of the *gasolinazo* are clear, little has been said of its causes.

The government claims it is a simple technical matter of “freeing up” the price of gasoline to conform to international oil prices. In televised messages transmitted throughout the country during the past two days, a nervous Peña Nieto has insisted that this measure is necessary to guarantee the “stability” of the economy (which if it were true, would have led to a fall in fuel prices, as many have pointed out). In reality, the *gasolinazo* is a direct result of the two-decade-long privatization of the energy sector. One of the great “reforms” pledged by the Pact for Mexico was the energy reform, accelerating the pace of privatization in Pemex at the demand of the imperialist financial institutions.

One of the most obvious effects of the privatizing assault is the beginning of mass layoffs at Pemex. Just today, hundreds of Pemex workers in Salina Cruz, Oaxaca and Poza Rica, Veracruz, to cite two representative examples, are getting pink slips. The National Union of Oil Workers of the Mexican Republic (SNTPRM), a corporatist institution that imposes the dictates of the bosses and their government on the oil workers to the letter, has accepted the mass layoffs so long as they are done “legally” ... and so long as the top “union” officers get their share of the privatization payout through their own companies.

The fact that oil workers are under attack is a key element in planning a class-struggle strategy to roll back the *gasolinazo*, along with the anti-worker “reforms” that have smashed the living standards of the workers. So far, the mobilizations against the *gasolinazo* have fundamentally been led by sectors of the petty bourgeoisie of the countryside and the cities: organizations such as El Barzón<sup>2</sup> and various truckers organizations (owners of tractor-trailer rigs, buses and even taxis) have been at the head of protests in the highways and at the gas stations.

<sup>2</sup> A lobby of medium and large farmers, whose politics are exemplified by its slogan *debo no niego, pago lo justo* (I don’t renounce my debt, but I only pay what’s fair).

*continued on page 9*

**Forge a Workers Party to Fight for International Socialist Revolution!**



# CLASS STRUGGLE EDUCATION WORKERS

## Betsy DeVos: Trump's Voucher Vulture

Who is Betsy DeVos? Trump's pick for Education Secretary is an extremely wealthy former head of the Republican party in Michigan who is a zealot of vouchers and privately run, publicly financed charter schools. Her goal is to abolish public education outright.

She is married to Dick DeVos, heir to the family fortune derived from the totalitarian Amway Corporation. Amway (for the American Way) is a giant Ponzi scheme which uses its sales force as a private political-religious army and funds far-right groups, making the Koch brothers look like bleeding-heart liberals.

Betsy is from another wealthy Michigan family, the Princes, whose money came from their auto parts corporation. Her brother, Erik Prince, is the founder of Blackwater, the mercenary killer-elite "contractors" notorious for gunning down Iraqi civilians with reckless abandon. Along with extreme right-wing ideology, Betsy and Erik both seek to finance privatization schemes with public money.

DeVos bases her philosophy on Milton Friedman, the apostle of "free market" capitalism, who declared: "Vouchers are not an end in themselves; they are a means to make a transition from a government to a market system." Friedman was an advisor to Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet and first implemented his education policies under that bloody regime.

Hearings start next week on Trump's Ed Sec nominee. Confirmation is guaranteed. With Republicans in control of the Senate, the House of Representatives and the White



Donald Trump and Betsy DeVos have declared war on public education.

House, the Betsy DeVos agenda will soon determine national educational policy.

Betsy DeVos was central to the near-destruction of public education in Detroit. The schools were taken over by the state and starved of money so that their physical condition was marked by broken windows, rats everywhere. They treated the schools like landlords trying to drive out tenants. Then they were massively taken over by for-profit charters, and have sunk into chaos.

DeVos also played a key role in pushing through a union-busting "right-to-work" law.

Donald Trump's voucher vulture De-

Vos represents a mortal threat to teachers unions and to public education overall. The leadership of the American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association know this. But like a deer staring at the headlights of an onrushing car, they are paralyzed.

The politics of the AFT and NEA tops, like almost all union leaders in the U.S., are summed up in the phrase *class collabora-*

*tion*. They chain the unions to the parties of capital, particularly the Democrats. But like the tango, it takes two to class-collaborate, and the Trump Republicans aren't interested in that dance.

What it will take to defeat DeVos, Trump and the rest of the privatizers and union-busters is hard *class struggle*. Last month United Federation of Teachers president Mulgrew predicted that in 2017 "it's going to be war." He got that right. In recent editorials Mulgrew warned that NYC schools stand to lose half a billion dollars

in Title I federal funds which the Republicans have their eye on to finance vouchers.

But it's not just the Republicans. "Democrats for Education Reform," is a powerful lobby bankrolled by Wall Street financiers. Hillary Clinton has been closely tied to the corporate education "reformers" since she was on the board of the anti-union Walmart corporation in Arkansas. And Barack Obama's administration has used billions in federal money to push charters, standardized testing and punitive teacher "evaluations."

All in all, Betsy DeVos is a fitting successor to the Democratic charterizers, from Obama's basketball pal Arnie Duncan to John King. And don't forget Obama's former chief of staff Rahm Emanuel, who got to be mayor of Chicago by bashing the teachers union and has kept it up ever since. The difference is that while the Clinton/Obama Democrats want to undermine public education from within with corporatizing "reforms," the Trump Republicans want to tear it down altogether.

Efforts to outright privatize the public schools have repeatedly failed, from the Edison Schools (which went bankrupt) to DeVos's campaign from Michigan to Pennsylvania and Indiana using their millions to promote vouchers by hook or crook. But we have to defeat *all* the schemes to milk public schools for private profit, which threaten our children's education and working people everywhere.

Corporatizing and privatizing "education reform" is backed by both parties of capital. To defeat the bipartisan *capitalist* assault on public education we need to take the schools out of the hands of Republican and Democratic politicians. Class Struggle Education Workers fights for teacher-student-parent-worker control of the schools. To accomplish this we need to oust the labor bureaucrats, who have sold out hard-won union gains, and break with the Democrats to build a class-struggle workers party. ■

## NYC Schools Must Be A Sanctuary For Immigrant and All Students

The day after last November's elections, a wave of fear swept through the schools over the threat to undocumented immigrants. "Will I be deported?" students asked teachers. School administrations and teachers unions issued statements of support. But much more is needed. We need to prepare now to defend our students and actively resist the threat of deportations with action. The following resolution was raised at the December UFT Delegates Assembly. While the Unity Caucus voted it down, we urge teachers everywhere to take the initiative to form school-based committees to defend immigrant and all students.

Whereas, in his election campaign, Donald Trump vowed to deport all 11 million undocumented immigrants, after the Obama administration already deported more than 5.5 million immigrants in its first seven years, and

Whereas, in the wake of the election there

has been an unprecedented upsurge in racist attacks of all sorts, including at universities and in schools, as well as taunting of immigrant students in New York City schools, and

Whereas, Muslims, African Americans, Latinos and immigrants from Mexico, Central America and the Near East have been singled for attacks, which also threaten Jewish, gay and lesbian individuals and communities, and

Whereas, immigrant communities have been swept by fear of deportation and all manner of victimization, and

Whereas, putative president-elect Trump has threatened to cut off funds to "sanctuary cities" that refuse to cooperate with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) police, while majorities in both houses of Congress have threatened to cut off funding to "sanctuary campuses," and

Whereas, under the Constitution of the State

of New York (Article XI), all children must be provided free public schools and the Supreme Court has ruled that education cannot be denied to students on the basis of immigration status, and

Whereas, 40% of the population of the City of New York are immigrants, and

Whereas, under local laws and executive orders (Nos. 34 and 41) New York City employees, including police, have long been instructed not to provide information on individuals' status to ICE and other immigration authorities except in limited circumstances, and

Whereas, Chancellor's Regulation A-101 states that students are not required to present documentation of immigration status, and that reference to such status shall not appear on any school records, and

Whereas, Mayor de Blasio has stated that the City of New York will not participate in deportation proceedings and

would not hand over information on immigration status from the municipal ID cards to federal authorities, but

Whereas, a judicial injunction has been issued to prevent NYC from destroying information on immigration status from municipal data bases, therefore be it

Resolved, that working people, immigrants and all oppressed sectors can only rely on our own strength; and be it further

Resolved, that our union **issue a statement that we will stand by our immigrant students, faculty and staff**, as well as their families, who are at risk of reprisal due to their status; and be it further

Resolved, that the UFT **call on the NYC Department of Education to publicly restate that it does not collect information on students' immigration status**, and that it will **refuse to hand over to federal authorities and will immediately delete any such**  
*continued on page 9*



# You Can't Fight Trump with Democrats – For a Class-Struggle Workers Party!

## NYC Transit Workers: Fight for Track Safety and Free Mass Transit!

As we go to press, on January 16, NYC transit union president John Samuelson announced a tentative contract with “solid raises ... well ahead of inflation.” The TWU website boasted of a “concession-free” contract. Many members will be rightly skeptical.

D-Day is January 15. That's when the contract for New York City subway and bus workers in Transport Workers Union Local 100 expires. The Metropolitan Transit Authority bosses are sure to raise a carload of giveback demands. At a mass rally last November 15, Local 100 president John Samuelson vowed, “If we don't come to work, this city can't move.” In 2012-2014 transit workers went for two years without a contract. Instead of hinting, Local 100, the powerhouse of NYC labor, should draw the line: *No contract – no work!* And to make it stick, the TWU must begin gearing up for battle now.

A mass membership meeting is called for January 7. For starters, a *strike committee* should be elected. Picket schedules should be drawn up, demonstrations begun. Have thousands of transit workers tie up traffic on the Brooklyn Bridge and then *jam Wall Street*. Raise demands to win the support of riders and all NYC labor. Not only should the union oppose a fare hike, it should revive the TWU's historic call for *free mass transit*. And with workers being killed on the tracks and injured at an alarming rate, Local 100 should make *track safety* a top demand.

If the union raised such demands, NYC working people would overwhelmingly and enthusiastically back transit workers in their contract fight. Remember that in 2005, when the big business press was calling transit strikers “rats” and demanding union leaders be jailed, a solid majority of city residents continued to support the strike. But to make that support count, the entire NYC labor movement must come out. **Transit workers must not stand alone!**

### Safety First

At the November rally, Samuelson talked a lot about safety. There was a moment of silence for workers who died on the job. Two weeks earlier, track worker Louis Gray was pinned and killed by a G train while setting up lights to warn train operators of track work ahead. His partner, Jeffrey Fleming, was also struck and suffered serious injuries. In October, signal maintainer Monique Braithwaite fell onto the third rail while on the job. Nerve damage was so bad that her right arm had to be amputated: a catastrophe for anyone, let alone a single mother raising four children.

Samuelson said that *every day* an average of five transport workers are injured badly enough that they have to miss work. So where are the union's safety demands? None of the announced contract demands relate to worker safety on the tracks. Louis Gray died because he and Jeffrey Fleming did not have enough time to get into separate cubbyholes. They had no warning that



NYC transit workers rally outside MTA headquarters, November 15. TWU must break with the Democrats and build a revolutionary workers party to win.

there was an oncoming train about to round the corner, and the operator had no idea they were there. Bloc signals prevent a train from entering a bloc occupied by another train, but do nothing to protect flaggers. CBTC signals only increase the risk by letting trains operate closer together.

There is no reason workers have to die on the tracks. Technology that can greatly increase track worker safety already exists. The Canadian rail equipment manufacturer Bombardier, which delivered the latest (R-179) train to the MTA in September for testing, has developed a system called Tracksafe that would virtually eliminate all such incidents. Workers walking along the tracks have an RFID chip embedded in their badge which notifies the system of their presence. Sensors detect where trains are, so that when they are a certain distance away workers are alerted by a siren and flashing strobe lights. Tracksafe has been tested on Atlanta's transit system, MARTA. But management consistently undercuts safety in the name of “efficiency.”

In response to Louis Grey's death, Samuelson said “the NYC Transit Authority can't protect us so they damn well better pay us.” Yes, the MTA damn well better pay ... and it **damn well should be forced to ensure worker safety!** The union should demand **worker safety committees with the power to shut down the system** for unsafe working conditions and that the MTA **install track safety technology** to ensure no track worker would die on the job again!

### Rip Out the Turnstiles and Refuse to Pay Wall Street

Currently the TWU leadership is demanding raises above 2%. This is only slightly over inflation. The MTA typically juggles its books to produce a deficit so it can cry poverty at contract time, but this time it admits to having a surplus. The demand for a **full cost-of-living adjustment**

(COLA) should be non-negotiable, along with **a big raise** on top of that.

Transit bosses say they need the money to pay off debt due to the capital program, so they can build a Second Avenue subway which stops short of Harlem, and the 7 train extension to the Javits Convention Center and the new Hudson Yards high-end office and residential district. In short, the MTA board runs the system in the interest of capital.

The capitalists only need mass transit to take its wage slaves to and from work. That is a key reason why service on Saturday and Sunday is so lousy. Local 100 should demand a **doubling of train service on the weekends**. Meanwhile, fares take a huge bite out of everyone's pay. In 2015, police arrested almost 30,000 people for fare beating, the vast majority of them African American and Latino. But if there were no fare to beat, there wouldn't be any “evasion” arrests to make. We say **rip out the turnstiles and make public transit free!**

A main reason fares keep going up is because the MTA is paying off a massive debt to Wall Street bankers. As of 2015, the debt amounted to a whopping \$34 billion. That's bigger than the national debt of 30 countries. The debt is decades old. In the mid-1970s, NYC was placed under the control of a Municipal Assistance Corporation, headed by investment banker Felix Rohatyn, and an Emergency Financial Control Board. The EFCB stopped infrastructure maintenance on bridges, tunnels and of course the public transit system. In 1981 the MTA was allowed to issue bonds to raise money for repairing its infrastructure, and has been borrowing ever since.

The capitalists who started this mess are the ones profiting from it. When New York was first subjected to the dictatorship of the EFCB, it was because the banks junked the city's credit rating and drove it to near bankruptcy. Republican president Gerald Ford

famously told the city to “drop dead” and said he would veto any bailout. But it was Democratic Party NYC officials who carried out Wall Street's *diktat*. The banks raided the city – and they're still collecting today. Local 100 should call to **open MTA books to union inspection**, and to **stop paying the debt**.

### Shred the Taylor Law – Break with the Democrats – Build a Workers Party!

In order to win, the union has to go up against New York's no-strike Taylor Law. But the union leadership plays by the bosses' rules. In 2005, Local 100 president Roger Toussaint didn't want the strike. When the membership voted to walk out, he called off the strike on the third day. The union was hit with a \$2.5 million fine and removal of the dues checkoff, while members were fined two days' pay for each day of the strike. Despite his services to the ruling class, Toussaint was jailed anyway. Toussaint came to office together with the New Directions caucus. These “reformers” crossed the class line by suing the union in the bosses' courts. Once they got into office, the government owned them – no wonder they collapsed.

Now Samuelson is calling the shots after being elected in 2009 on the Take Back Our Union slate. At the November 15 rally, he bragged about making the “smart decision to bargain past the end of the contract,” citing “an economic crisis that was very real.” The result was a contract with all kinds of givebacks – increased healthcare contributions, an additional two years for new hires to reach top pay, and pay “raises” below the rate of inflation. Since last year, Samuelson sits on the MTA Board thanks to Governor Cuomo, no doubt as a reward for playing ball by working without a contract. If a strike is in the offing, you can bet he won't defy Cuomo.

Union workers are under the gun across the country. But in order to *bust the union-busters*, labor must throw off the ties that bind it to the Democratic Party. In Philadelphia, TWU transit workers struck at the beginning of November, but settled on the eve of the November 8 election to avoid embarrassing Hillary Clinton (see “Victory to the SEPTA Strike! Mobilize All of Philly Labor to Win!” (*The Internationalist*, 5 November 2016). In July 2013, Bay Area Rapid Transit workers walked out in a strike that was 100% effective. But after four days, the Amalgamated Transit Union tops called it off at the request of Democratic governor Jerry Brown (see “Lessons of the On-Again, Off-Again BART Strike,” *The Internationalist*, 10 November 2013).

Everywhere the biggest obstacle to a successful strike is the labor bureaucracy that is bound hand-and-foot to the Democrats. This is true both of the old-line bureaucrats and reformers: Samuelson hangs with Cuomo, Toussaint hobnobbed with then New York senator Clinton. In last year's presidential election, the TWU endorsed Clinton. Now they are facing mega-

Rose Abuh/Daily News



capitalist Donald Trump and rabidly anti-union Republicans who control Congress. In order to wage a successful fight against these labor haters, it is necessary to *break with the Democrats and oust the bureaucrats* who chain labor to this party of capital.

The way forward was shown last August by the International Union of Painters (IUPAT) Local 10 in Portland, Oregon which voted to “not support the Democrats, Republicans, or any bosses’ parties or politicians,” and instead to “call on the labor movement to break from the Democratic Party, and build a class-struggle workers party” (see “To Hell with the Bosses’ Parties – For a Class-Struggle Workers Party!” *The Internationalist* No. 45, September-October 2016). If TWU Local 100 were to take up and pass IUPAT Local 10’s motion, it would set off a firestorm in the labor movement locally and nationwide. It would show the bosses that the workers are getting ready for a knock-down, drag-out fight.

As we wrote on the eve of the 2005 NYC transit strike, a walkout would be met with the full might of the capitalist state.

“To defeat this threat, it is necessary to go beyond simple business unionism and place New York transit workers at the head of all working people, poor, oppressed minorities and immigrants facing relentless attacks by the ruling class.... ***If the Taylor Law is used against the TWU, all public employees unions should walk out.***”

What’s needed is “a program to mobilize labor’s power. That means, no more capitalist politicians on labor platforms, and no more representatives of police or detectives’ ‘unions’ either. We say: cops out of the unions – they are the armed fist of the bosses. And that means getting the revenue and ‘property protection’ cops out of the TWU.” The next time police gun down an innocent person, we added, “unions should mobilize their power and the TWU should shut down mass transit against police terror” (“Shut Down NYC with an All-Out Transit Strike!” *The Internationalist*, 10 December 2005).

Today, the war on working people continues, as does the plague of racist police terror. Now more than ever, it is necessary to fight politically, putting labor squarely in the forefront of the struggles of the oppressed. This is what a class-struggle workers party would do, and NYC transit workers have the power to wage that fight. What’s needed is to forge a leadership with the determination and revolutionary program to fight to win. ■

## NYC Schools...

*continued from page 7*

**information** that may exist in school records; and be it further Resolved, that **ICE police and immigration authorities will not be allowed on school premises under any circumstances**, and be it further Resolved, that the United Federation of Teachers will seek to mobilize **mass labor-immigrant action to defend those threatened and to stop deportations** and call on other unions and all opponents of racism and defenders of democratic, minority and immigrants rights to do likewise; and be it further Resolved, that a **representative union-wide committee** be set up to **monitor all threats and indications of action by immigration authorities** against members of our community; and be it further Resolved, that the union take the initiative

**to set up committees in every school including faculty, staff and parents, to establish phone trees, social media networks and other measures for rapid response** and outreach; and be it further resolved Resolved, that **if immigration authorities detain any NYC school students or their families** for deportation proceedings, such **school-based committees should immediately call an ongoing assembly**, including teachers, students, staff and parents, to **shut down the affected school**, and other schools in solidarity, and that the **UFT shall mobilize mass action citywide in support of such protest action.**■

## Gasolinazo...

*continued from page 6*

In the cities, various bourgeois parties, especially MORENA (Movement of National Regeneration) led by Andrés Manuel López Obrador (known by his initials, AMLO), the PRD and the “Labor Party” (PT),<sup>3</sup> have sought to organize “symbolic” occupations of gas stations and government offices. MORENA promises that AMLO will lower fuel prices as soon as he becomes president in 2018 (!). For its part, the PRD, a co-signer of the Pact for Mexico, is directly responsible for the privatizing counter-reform in Pemex. Now it wants to pass itself off as an “ally” of the workers that it has attacked so many times, whether on its own or in alliance with the PRI and PAN. All these forces and political personalities put forward nothing more than various bourgeois currents that agree on the fundamentals: the defense and strengthening of capitalism, an all-embracing system of exploitation and oppression that can only bring more poverty (we are now into the ninth year of a global capitalist crisis from which there is still no way out).

The ongoing crisis of capitalism is no anomaly, it is an integral part of a system that impoverishes the masses while accumulating fabulous riches for the few. In these moments of struggle we must drive out all those bourgeois politicians who want to derail the protests to their benefit by presenting themselves as supposed opponents of the PRI government. It is truly absurd, disgusting and cynical that PAN and PRD politicians – who voted for the energy reform (and the other reforms) – have the gall to “unite” with the protests, such as in the city of Ensenada, Baja California. Meanwhile, MORENA would like to play fireman for the bourgeoisie, saying that the solution is to vote for this bourgeois party (partners of those who ordered the murder and kidnapping of the students of Ayotzinapa), to sign petitions and perpetuate the capitalist system of exploitation and death, as various pseudo-socialist groups (some of whom even call themselves “communist”) do in tailing after the bourgeoisie.

For this reason *a complete shift in the class axis of these protests* is needed. To achieve this, the workers of the energy sector, and particularly the oil workers, must play a key role. To defend their own jobs and turn back the effects of privatization in the sector, the oil workers *could sell fuel directly to the population at five pesos per liter*. This is utterly realizable at the big storage and distribution centers that Pemex

<sup>3</sup> A thoroughly bourgeois party that was formed as an adjunct to the PRI, and has since become a satellite of the PRD.

has in every state. The proceeds should go directly to a strike fund, indispensable for the struggle to break the shackles of corporatism in the industry and for the simultaneous organization of genuine instruments of proletarian struggle bringing together not only the employees of Pemex but also of the various private companies active in the industry. Along with the urgent need to *open the accounting books of Pemex* and the other companies in the sector, this points towards *workers control of fuel production and distribution across the country*.

To finally begin a counteroffensive of the exploited and oppressed against decades of bosses’ attacks, we need a working-class, revolutionary program. First of all, it is necessary to understand the *bourgeois* character of the corporatist “unions,” which are nothing but labor fronts integrated into the capitalist state that act as real labor cops to quash any attempt at resistance by the workers. To fight corporatism effectively it does not suffice to fight for “democratization” of these outfits: it is necessary to build the kernel of genuine revolutionary leadership for the working class. All reformist perspectives are condemned to defeat: it is necessary to overcome all forms of narrow corporatism and break with bourgeois nationalism, pointing the way to unite the struggle of the Mexican workers with those on the other side of the borders, to the south as well as to the north. Oil workers must look to the dissident teachers of the CNTE as their natural allies, as well as to the health sector workers, who in addition to being under a brutal attack by “structural reforms” at the moment, have already shown solidarity, like the 72-hour hospital strike in Oaxaca last year in support of the teachers strike. Finally, it is fundamental to fight for the fullest political independence parties and politicians of the bosses: the PRI, PAN, PRD, MORENA and their two-bit satellites.

In Oaxaca the dissident teachers of Section 22 can be instrumental in carrying out a joint struggle of the various working-class sectors against the government assault. Key is the political perspective, which must be one of complete independence from the bourgeoisie. Instead of reviving a class-collaborationist organ like the APPO (the Popular Assembly of the Peoples of Oaxaca, which led the struggle in 2006), which included prominent bourgeois politicians like Flavio Sosa (at the time, of the “New Left” current of the PRD), what’s needed is class-struggle action of the workers against the bourgeoisie. Today, Sosa’s group, Comuna Oaxaca, an integral part of MORENA, puts forward a program to subordinate the workers struggle against the *gasolinazo* to the election campaign of AMLO, a bourgeois-nationalist *caudillo* who calls for a “loving republic” together with the Mexican capitalists.

Break with the bourgeois popular front around AMLO!

In the current protests against the government of oppressors and exploiters, revolutionary workers call for intervention with a program of transitional demands, to transform the popular mobilizations into a working-class revolt pointing toward the seizure of power. To fight layoffs and unemployment, as well as to put a brake on the devastating effects of inflation, workers throughout the country should impose a sliding scale of wages (so that every increase in the cost of living is compensated by proportionate wage increases) and a sliding scale of working hours, to distribute the available work among all the workers without any pay cuts. The unions should also begin to organize neighborhood committees to control prices.

The working class is the only social class with the power and interest in sweeping away the rot, the violence and poverty of decaying capitalism. To carry out the necessary tasks what’s required above all is a revolutionary workers party, forged on the Trotskyist program of permanent revolution, which says that today’s democratic demands cannot be satisfied short of the seizure of power by the working class, leading to international socialist revolution.

In short, what is needed is a revolutionary leadership of the working class. Such a leadership can only take the form of a Leninist party of the proletarian vanguard, armed with theoretical-programmatic perspective of permanent revolution. These dark days can illuminate with their fires the path of struggle that the workers must undertake. We in the Grupo Internacionalista dedicate our efforts precisely to the construction of the indispensable revolutionary workers party carrying the Marxist program into the struggles of the workers. Join us in this effort! ■

### League for the Fourth International

**LFI**, Box 3321, Church Street Station, New York, NY 10008, U.S.A. E-mail: internationalistgroup@msn.com

#### Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil

**Brazil:** write to Caixa Postal 084027, CEP 27251-740, Volta Redonda, RJ, Brazil

**Rio de Janeiro:** write to Caixa Postal 3982, CEP 20001-974, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil  
E-mail: lqb1996@yahoo.com.br

#### LVI/Deutschland

**Germany:** write to Postfach 80 97 21, 21007 Hamburg, Germany

#### Nucleo Internazionalista d'Italia

**Italy:** write to Anna Chiaraluce, Casella Postale N. 6, 06070 Ellera Umbra (PG), Italy  
E-mail: it\_internazionalista@yahoo.com

#### Grupo Internacionalista/México

**México:** write to Apartado Postal 12-201, Admón. Postal Obrero Mundial, CP 03001, México D.F, México  
E-mail: grupointernacionalista@yahoo.com.mx  
Tel. Mexico City: 55-3154-7361; Guadalajara: 33-1752-6643; Oaxaca: 951-185-6815; Tijuana: 664-112-5423

#### Internationalist Group/U.S.

**Internationalist Group**, Box 3321, Church Street Station, New York, NY 10008, U.S.A.  
E-mail: internationalistgroup@msn.com  
New York Tel. (212) 460-0983 Fax: (212) 614-8711  
Los Angeles Tel. (323) 984-8590  
Portland Tel. (971) 282-7903



# Hands Off Standing Rock Sioux!

4 DECEMBER 2016 – In a significant (but perhaps temporary) victory for the Native American and other protesters at the Standing Rock Indian Reservation, and their supporters elsewhere, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers today announced it would not grant an easement (permission to build) for the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) to cross the Missouri River at the Reservation. Instead, it said the builders should “explore alternative routes” – which Energy Transfer Partners (ETP), the main owner of the DAPL, has refused to do.

The Standing Rock Sioux tribe has opposed the Missouri River crossing at that site as endangering water supplies and violating Indian land rights. The pipeline was originally planned to cross the Missouri north of the state capital of Bismarck, but when politicians objected, the route was moved south to cross at Standing Rock in a blatant case of environmental racism. In response, thousands of Native Americans (including representatives of more than 300 tribes) and others have traveled to the reservation to support the “water protectors.”

The federal action may stop the pipeline for now, but the battle is far from over. Many protesters and tribal leaders focused on pressuring the

Obama administration into blocking the pipeline crossing. But ETP has powerful support not only from North Dakota’s Republican government, which is entirely in the pocket of the oil companies, but also from putative president-elect Donald Trump, who is an investor in the DAPL and has called for it to be built at that site. A new administration in Washington next January could easily reverse the Army Corps of Engineers ruling.

Moreover, there could still be a confrontation at the construction site on December 5 or in coming days as police have threatened to arrest anyone who crosses a bridge. Local police have been openly racist, calling the Indian protesters “evil” for violating sacrosanct private “property rights” of the pipeline company – on land which was granted to the Sioux in an 1851 treaty and subsequently stolen from them.

State and local police and sheriffs deputies from as far away as Minneapolis, Wisconsin, Indiana and Cincinnati, Ohio have participated in the brutal cop attacks on the Standing Rock protesters. In opposition to the vicious repression, hundreds of veterans from across the country are presently gathering to “take a stand with Standing Rock.”

While liberals, environmental activists and many leftists have opposed the



Richard Tsong-Taatar/StarTribune [Minneapolis]

**Cops attack demonstrators protesting Dakota Access Pipeline next to Standing Rock Indian Reservation on November 20, blasting them with water cannon in sub-freezing weather.**

pipeline as such, meaning that much of North Dakota oil would continue to be shipped by rail which is far more dangerous, the Internationalist Group has taken the position of supporting the Standing Rock Sioux – and solidarizing with their courageous resistance to the forces of racist repression – in opposing the construction of the pipeline at the reservation as an attack on Native American rights.

At a November 3 protest in Los Angeles, IG signs called for: “Hands Off Standing Rock Sioux,” “Cops, Feds, Pipeline Companies – Get Out of Indian Lands!” and “Pipeline? Run It Thru the Golf Courses of N.D. Power Elites!” We also demand that all charges be dropped against the more than 500 protesters who have been arrested during the course of the struggle. ■

## Standing Rock...

*continued from page 1*

objected that they did not trust the government and would not leave until the pipeline was definitively stopped.

Liberals were jubilant. “This Is What Victory Over The Dakota Access Pipeline At Standing Rock Looks Like” gushed the Huffington Post (4 December). A “historic victory,” proclaimed *The Atlantic* (5 December). The action by Obama-appointed top brass at the Pentagon – which commands the Army Corps of Engineers, with jurisdiction over the Lake Oahe federal flood control project – put a crimp in the drive to complete the DAPL at break-neck speed by January 1. But the effect will likely be temporary (see “Hands Off Standing Rock Sioux!” in box above). Trump’s support for the pipeline was quickly reaffirmed by his transition team. The incoming chief executive officer of American capitalism has vowed to “unleash” unfettered production of oil and gas and has holdings of stock in ETP, the main

owner of the pipeline, and in Phillips 66, which holds a quarter of the DAPL stock.

Moreover, Kelcy Warren, the CEO of ETP, was a major donor to Trump and gave \$3 million to the Republican campaign. North Dakota governor Jack Dalrymple, who threatened mass arrests of pipeline protesters, was a Trump campaign energy advisor. Trump’s nominee for energy secretary is former Texas governor Rick Perry, a wholly owned asset of Warren. Perry sits on the board of directors of ETP and on the board of Sunoco Logistics Partners, the two main owners of the DAPL, both controlled by Warren, who also bankrolled Perry’s failed presidential bid.<sup>1</sup> Rex Tillerson, CEO of ExxonMobil, will be secretary of state; Scott Pruitt, a creature of Oklahoma’s Devon Energy and Continental Resources, the biggest producer in North Dakota’s Bakken oil patch, will run the Environmental Protection Agency;<sup>2</sup> and former Alabama senator Jeff Sessions, a hard-line pro-cop racist, will be attorney general. An administration of Big Oil and unbridled police power ensures that the battle over Standing Rock will reignite after January 20.

It was the vicious repression of protesters that made Standing Rock national news in the first place. A boiling point came in late August when Republican governor Dalrymple declared a state of emergency. On September 3, security guards hired by ETP brutally attacked

<sup>1</sup> See “In Money Race, Rick Perry’s Campaign Shows the Power of Few,” Bloomberg, 31 July 2015. The article quotes Donald Trump saying, “When you have people giving you millions of dollars, when they call up, even if it’s not the best interest of the United States, you do what they tell you to do. Who knows it better than me? I give to everybody, they do whatever I say.”

<sup>2</sup> See “Energy and Regulators on One Team,” *New York Times*, 7 December 2014.



John L. Mone/AP

**Kelcy Warren, CEO of Energy Transfer Partners and Sunoco Logistics, the main owners of DAPL.**

Indian and other demonstrators at a construction site near the Sacred Stone Camp near Cannon Ball. Vicious dogs were set on the protestors and pepper spray used against demonstrators, including children. TV footage on Democracy Now viewed by more than 13 million people recalled scenes of the 1963 police attacks on civil rights marchers in Birmingham, Alabama. The response of the state of North Dakota was to issue a warrant for the arrest of Democracy Now producer Amy Goodman in a blatant attempt to intimidate media coverage. At least seven journalists have been arrested during the protests, deliberately targeted by the county sheriff.

In response to widespread outrage over the repression, the Obama administration revoked authorization for pipeline construction on federal land on September 9, and asked ETP to temporarily stop building where demonstrations are ongoing. The company refused. A week later,

a federal court ordered a brief halt on construction. But on October 9 a federal appeals court denied the request for an injunction. Two weeks later a militarized force of state and local police beefed up with riot cops from Wisconsin, Indiana, South Dakota, Minnesota, Wyoming and Nebraska launched an assault on the 1851 Treaty Camp, trying to drive out protesters. Using pepper spray, tear gas, rubber bullets, LRAD sound cannons producing ear-splitting noise, helicopters overhead and armored Humvees and Bearcat personnel carriers, provided courtesy of the Pentagon, the “forces of order” arrested more than 140 people.

The multi-state police force was assembled under the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC), which was signed into law by Democratic president Bill Clinton in 1996. Supposedly intended to enable states to cooperate in the face of national disasters, it also au-



Rob Wilson Photography

**Multi-state police force used LRAD sound cannon mounted atop armored personnel carriers to blast demonstrators with ear-splitting noise.**



thorizes a cobbled-together paramilitary police force in the face of “community disorders, insurgency, or enemy attack.” EMAC has been used only twice against protests: first in Baltimore, Maryland following the police murder of Freddie Gray, and now in Standing Rock. While this was largely ignored by “mainstream” bourgeois print and broadcast media, it provoked protests in Minneapolis, Cincinnati and Madison, Wisconsin demanding recall of police. But North Dakota authorities and police forces around the Midwest see Standing Rock as Baltimore West or Ferguson North, a “civil disturbance” to be suppressed at all costs.

The scene was surreal: hundreds of police strung out in a line in the prairie, writing numbers on the arms of arrested protesters and holding them in pens resembling dog kennels; sophisticated police communications vehicles trucked in from hundreds of miles away, and sound cannons blasting away in the middle of vast open spaces. The sheriff of Cass County (Fargo), with no jurisdiction in the area, accused demonstrators of using “very dangerous means” ... like horses.

Then at the beginning of Thanksgiving week, cops launched an even more vicious attack on the water protectors at Standing Rock. Police water cannon drenched protesters in sub-freezing (23° Fahrenheit) weather, injuring 300. They justified this potentially lethal tactic by claiming the praying Indians were engaged in an “on-going riot.” Protesters were severely injured, including a woman who lost the use of her arm after it was nearly blown off, and another who is now blind in one eye after being hit in the face by a tear gas canister.

Standing Rock Sioux tribal chairman David Archambault II appealed for federal intervention against the “militarized law enforcement.” So the Army Corps of Engineers regional commander in Omaha (who in July approved DAPL plans to tunnel under Lake Oahe, and was being sued by the tribe) decreed the Oceti Sakowin (Seven Council Fires) camp must shut down by December 5 in order to “protect the general public from the violent confrontations” with police, with protest confined to a “free speech” pen. Corps commander John Henderson said he acted from “concern for public safety and the fact that much of this land is leased to private persons for grazing and/or haying purposes.” Governor Dalrymple ordered the area cleared because it is “not zoned for dwellings suitable for living in winter conditions.” The Morton County sheriff (who ordered the water cannon attack) said protesters must not subject themselves to “life-threatening conditions.”

The stage was set for a showdown. Several thousand Native American and other veterans mobilized to converge on Standing Rock to protect the water protectors. The potential clash between two trained military forces was defused by the decision by the Department of the Army – not by the Corps of Engineers, as was widely and erroneously reported in the press. The Corps was ordered to engage in “a robust consideration of alternative locations for the pipeline crossing the Missouri River,” including the alternative crossing north of Bismarck, and “detailed discussion of potential risk of an oil spill” at the lake. But the Corps is viscerally hostile to



**Unlicensed security guards hired by ETP used dogs to attack protesters, including women and children.**

the Indian population (whose lands they submerged in damming the river and creating Lake Oahe in 1958), and the political echelon of the Pentagon will soon be replaced by a Trump administration that is beholden to the oil companies and an eager proponent of police power.

The brutal repression dealt out to protesters at Standing Rock, North Dakota in 2016 – using paramilitary forces just as were used against black demonstrators in Ferguson, Missouri in 2014 and Baltimore, Maryland in 2015 – is directly related to the fact that the protests have been led by, and the bulk of the protesters are, Indians. The placement of the pipeline and the ferocity of its paramilitary guards against peaceful protesters is, as Standing Rock chairman Archambault put it, “not at all surprising given the last 500 years of the mistreatment of our people.” While African Americans, brought here in chains, have had to endure four centuries of oppression, from chattel slavery to Jim Crow segregation and now mass incarceration and wanton police murder, Native Americans subjected to genocide are still under siege over five centuries later.

You couldn’t miss the contrast between the October 28 acquittal of the Bundy brothers, the white ranchers who led an armed takeover of the Malheur federal wildlife refuge in Oregon (a former reservation stolen from the Paiute people after they rose up in 1878) and the relentless persecution of unarmed Indians in North Dakota protesting a pipeline being built on reservation land stolen from the Dakota Sioux as part of an 1868 land grab (“Fake Cowboys and Real Indians,” *New York Times*, 2 December). Anti-Indian racism is endemic among North Dakota’s rulers. Last year the Republican-controlled legislature passed a voter registration law that would disenfranchise thousands of Native Americans who don’t have a street address – a deliberate attack on the reservation population, whose ID cards lack street addresses since most receive mail at post office boxes. A federal judge threw out the racist law.

The whole battle over the Dakota Access Pipeline at Standing Rock is a blatant case of environmental racism. The original route plotted in May 2014 would have crossed the Missouri ten miles north of the state capital, Bismarck. However, this was rejected by the Corps of Engi-

neers because of “public input” (i.e., politicians’ objections), more “desktop evaluation” and proximity to populated “high consequence areas.”<sup>3</sup> Danger to an Indian reservation and its water intake in case of a leak was not deemed “high consequence.” In fact, objections from Standing Rock about a river crossing a half mile north of the reservation were not even mentioned in the 983 pages of the November 2015 Army Corps Draft Environmental Assessment (written entirely by Dakota Access). So to shorten the route and avoid the need for new easements, the pipeline was routed in the same corridor as the existing Northern Border natural gas pipeline.

The parallel is inescapable to the now infamous Flint water crisis, where the largely black and working-class Michigan industrial city had its water supply poisoned by state officials’ decisions to switch the supply source as a budget-cutting measure (see “Flint Water Crisis: Capitalism Is Poisoning Us,” *Revolution* No. 13, March 2016). As the December 5 showdown in Standing Rock loomed, a carload of veterans made the 17-hour drive from Flint to show their solidarity. “We know in

<sup>3</sup> See “Pipeline route Plan First Called for Crossing North of Bismarck,” *Bismarck Tribune*, 18 August; and “Why a Previously Proposed Route for the Dakota Access Pipeline Was Rejected,” ABC News, 3 November.



**Internationalist Group at November 3 demonstration in Los Angeles protesting attempt to run pipeline through Standing Rock Indian Reservation, potentially endangering water supply and violating Native American rights.**

Flint that water is in dire need,” said one. “In North Dakota, they’re trying to force pipes on people. We’re trying to get pipes in Flint for safe water” (Associated Press, 4 December). Serious ecological and environmental issues under capitalism have an often dominant content of class and racial oppression. So to fight off the attacks by a rapacious ruling class, you need a revolutionary program of class struggle.

While the protests at Standing Rock have emphasized the tribe’s opposition to routing the Dakota Access Pipeline through Sioux lands, elsewhere (and particularly on the East Coast) demonstrations against DAPL have focused on ecological issues and opposition to the pipeline as such and oil production overall. Some signs say, “Keep It In the Ground.” We are not for or against the pipeline, but we support the right of the Dakota Sioux to keep it out. If they objected to a project to grow petunias (or more likely, sunflowers), we would also support the right of a dispossessed Native American people to defend their lands. The call for an immediate end to the production of oil, on the other hand, is a petty-bourgeois anti-working class demand that would shut down industry. Those who raise it should hand over their iPhones, iPads, MacBook Air laptops, air conditioners, and their electric-powered Toyota Priuses (or gas-guzzling SUVs).

In focusing on pipelines, eco-radicals and Democratic Party liberals are in effect promoting a potentially far more dangerous method of transporting petroleum products: the oil trains that today carry the majority of the Bakken oilfields production. Pipelines are safer, but where they go and what safety measures are required is a class question. An Internationalist Group sign at a November 3 Standing Rock protest in Los Angeles read: “Pipeline? Run It Thru Golf Courses of N.D. Power Elites!” As a modest proposal, since the governor is so hot for DAPL, we suggest running the pipes smack through the middle of the Apple Creek Country Club (“the only private club in the Bismarck-Mandan area”) where the Friends of Jack Dalrymple hold the governor’s cup golf tournament. Meanwhile, we say: “Cops, Feds, Pipeline Companies – Get Out of Indian Lands!” ■



The push to ram through the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) reflects the frantic pace of the oil boom over the last decade. In the space of six years, production in the Bakken oil fields more than quintupled to more than 1.2 million barrels per day, making sparsely populated North Dakota the second-largest oil producing state after Texas. But shortage of pipeline capacity has led to bottlenecks. So after fast-track approval by the compliant state Public Utilities Commission in January, the DAPL got a rubber-stamp OK from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in May. On July 25 the Army Corps of Engineers issued a “Mitigated Finding of No Significant Impact,” overriding 23 objections by the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe (and another 16 by the Environmental Protection Administration) to decree that “no Environmental Impact Statement was required.” Construction began in January (and in North Dakota on May 23). Proceeding at breakneck speed, DAPL sponsors vowed to finish the \$3.8 billion project by the end of the year.

Following the oil boom came the oil bust. Prices for the U.S. benchmark oil West Texas Intermediate Crude fell from \$107 per barrel in June 2014, when the Dakota Access Pipeline was launched, to under \$27 by February 2016, since then rebounding to a little over \$50. The price collapse, mainly due to Saudi Arabia’s decision to ratchet up production to grab market share, is particularly problematic for higher-cost shale oil producers such as the Bakken field in North Dakota. But with advances in hydraulic fracturing (fracking) technology the marginal cost for new production is still below price levels, so that North Dakota’s production has only fallen to around 1 million barrels per day.<sup>1</sup> Mean-

<sup>1</sup> Will Oil Price Collapse Hit Bakken Output? Don’t Count on It,” *Institutional Investor*, February 2016.

# Pipelines, Oil Trains, and Capitalism



**Oil train near Wolf Point, Montana in November 2013. Rail transportation of Bakken crude oil is far more dangerous than pipelines. So why are environmentalists protesting DAPL but not BNSF? Clue: pipeline owners are right-wing Republicans while BNSF is owned by Warren Buffet, the darling of environmentalists and liberal Democrats.**

while, Kelcy Warren, boss of Energy Transfer Partners, which is building the pipeline, and of Sunoco Logistics, which will operate it, is hell-bent on pushing through DAPL.

Warren, a high roller in the mergers and acquisitions (M&A) game, has been snapping up hard-hit pipeline companies<sup>2</sup> left and right. So residents of an impoverished Indian reservation are struggling to protect their water supply against a pipeline cowboy who has been playing fast and loose in the casino-like energy industry. One reason for the ETP chief’s urgency may be worry about some of his M&A deals going up in smoke amid con-

<sup>2</sup> See “Pipeline Billionaire Kelcy Warren Is Having Fun in the Oil Bust,” *Bloomberg*, 19 May 2015, and “Oil’s Wild Ride,” *Dallas Magazine*, June 2016.

cerns about funny money maneuvers. After all, this is the industry that gave rise to the 2001 Enron accounting scandal and bankruptcy, which Warren fed off. There have been frictions in the \$37 billion bid by Energy Transfer Equity (ETE), a “sister company” of ETP, to buy out the Williams Companies, owner of the Transco pipeline. And a planned sale of a minority stake in DAPL to Canadian pipeline giant Enbridge and oil independent Marathon could fall through.

But clearly a major reason for ETP’s urgency is that it has contractual agreements for up to ten years for 90% of its capacity with major producers, whose terms were negotiated at the height of the boom when oil prices were double today’s levels. Those contracts expired on 1 January 2017, and the producers could demand a renegotiation of prices or pull out.<sup>3</sup> In this boom-bust industry, if oil prices and production fall, a pipeline that was rushed to completion could end up sitting idle, a “stranded asset.” Or alternatively, with friends in high places in a Trump administration, Kelcy Warren & Co. could luck out and rake in billions. Either way, the indigenous peoples and farmers that Dakota Access Pipeline’s owners rode roughshod over will not benefit – and could reap disaster.

The oil boom has

<sup>3</sup> See Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis, “The High-Risk Financing Behind the Dakota Access Pipeline” (November 2016).

transformed North Dakota from an agricultural state – mainly producing hard winter wheat for pasta, beans, sugar beets and canola, flax and sunflower oil – to a major player in the U.S. energy economy. Correspondingly, its politics have been transformed from a pale reflection of the prairie populism of yore into a kind of Texas North. Shale tycoons buy politicians who run state regulatory agencies as subsidiaries of the industries they are supposed to watch over. A celebration of state oil production topping a million barrels a day was catered by Halliburton and featured the theme song of *Dallas* – the TV series of intrigue, skullduggery and unbridled greed. Presiding over the pit of corruption has been Republican governor Jack Dalrymple, also a member of the North Dakota Industrial Commission. In his 2012 election campaign, Dalrymple took in \$550,000 from big oil executives, lawyers and political action committees.<sup>4</sup>

In addition to such naked “pay to play” practices, the companies and state government are in cahoots to suppress information about environmental damage caused by the oil boom frenzy, and to minimize any cost to the industry. A *New York Times* investigation documented that more than 18 million gallons of oil and chemicals were spilled in North Dakota in almost 8,700 incidents from 2006 to 2014, mostly during the last two years as the drive to raise production reached a fever pitch. Yet state officials “do not release even summary statistics about environmental incidents and enforcement measures.”<sup>5</sup> Much of the damage is avoidable. Some producers have a far better record than others, and *Warren’s Sunoco operation is the absolute worst in the industry*, with over 200 spills since 2010.<sup>6</sup> Such environmental damage is not the inevitable result of using fossil fuels but a result of the relentless capitalist drive to maximize profits.

Most environmental activism in recent years has focused on pipelines and fracking. But in North Dakota, with its small population (750,000) and low population density (11 people per square mile), there has been less concern about the dangers of fracking than in states like Pennsylvania (population 12.8 million, density 286 per square mile) and New York (20 million, 420 per square mile). Since North Dakota now has the lowest unemployment rate in the U.S., with family incomes rising by 20% over the last decade to well over the national average while in the U.S. overall income levels fell from 2005 to 2015, outright opposition to oil and natural gas production is limited. Yet the real safety issues in this industry run by swashbuckling rough riders, for whom dangers to human life are just a dollar figure on their bottom

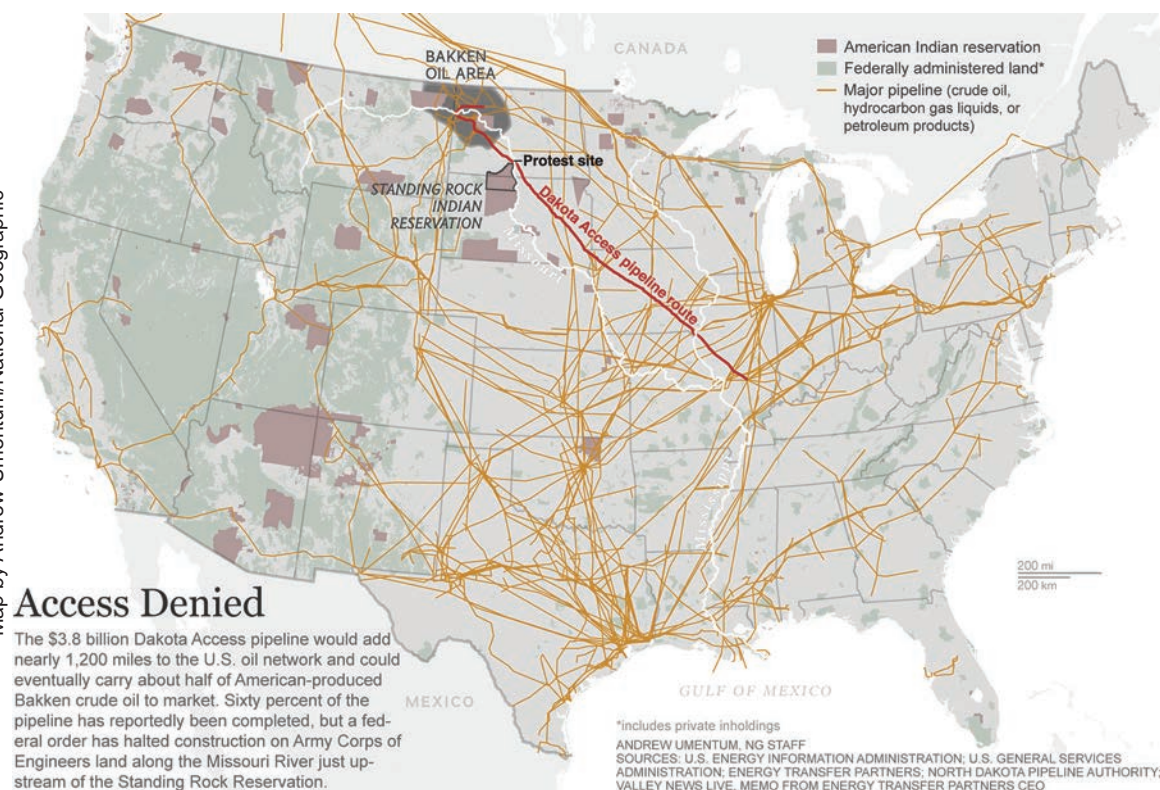
<sup>4</sup> “Where Oil and Politics Mix,” *New York Times*, 24 November 2014.

<sup>5</sup> “The Downside of the Boom,” *New York Times*, 23 November 2014.

<sup>6</sup> “Sunoco, behind protested Dakota pipeline, tops U.S. crude spill charts,” *Reuters*, 23 September 2016.

*continued on page 16*

**The Internationalist**

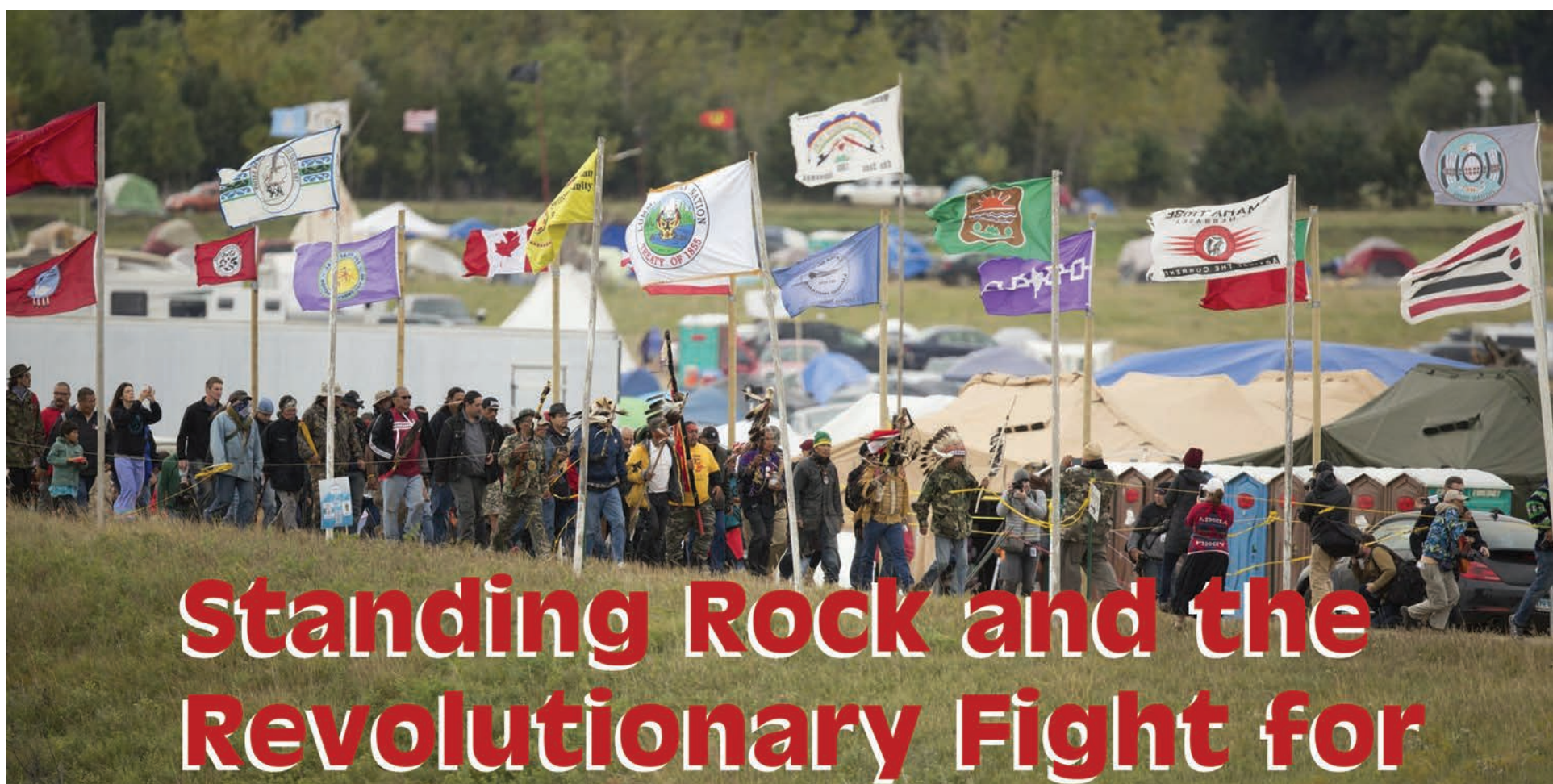


## Access Denied

The \$3.8 billion Dakota Access pipeline would add nearly 1,200 miles to the U.S. oil network and could eventually carry about half of American-produced Bakken crude oil to market. Sixty percent of the pipeline has reportedly been completed, but a federal order has halted construction on Army Corps of Engineers land along the Missouri River just upstream of the Standing Rock Reservation.

**There are more than 2.6 million miles of oil, natural gas and petroleum products pipelines in the United States.**





# Standing Rock and the Revolutionary Fight for Native American Rights

Over the past nine months, hundreds and then thousands of Native Americans from around North America converged on the Standing Rock Indian Reservation to stand with the Sioux “water protectors” in resisting the attempt to push the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) through their lands. More than 300 of the 567 federally recognized tribes were present, signaled by the rows of tribal flags at the Oceti Sakowin (Great Sioux Nation, or Seven Council Fires) camp. It has been the largest mobilization to defend Indian rights since Sitting Bull at the head of several thousand Lakota Sioux, Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes smashed the U.S. Seventh Cavalry under General George Custer at the 1876 Battle of the Little Bighorn (known as the Greasy Grass River by the Lakota). The battle at Standing Rock is not just over a pipeline, it

is over centuries of oppression.

Elsewhere in the U.S., the issue has often been posed as an environmental fight over building pipelines. But as an article on the *New York Times* (7 November) blog Dot Earth headlined: “The Core Issue in the Dakota Pipeline Fight is Sioux Rights, Not Oil.” The author, Arnold Revkin of the ProPublica website, wrote about calls to “keep it in the ground” that this “might work symbolically and energize progressives, but oil is a global commodity and will find a path from wells to markets as long as demand persists.” Rather than a fight over fossil fuels, the battle of the Standing Rock Sioux is about confronting the systematic dispossession of the Indian peoples dating back to the first European settlement of the American continent. The unparalleled Native American solidarity

and widespread public support for their cause may spark a broader struggle for Indian rights. But to win this must be a *class* battle against all the capitalist rulers.<sup>1</sup>

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe rightly insists that the U.S. must deal with it not as subjects but through negotiation between governments. Since Native American peoples were classified as nations in the modern system of nation-states, their relations with the United States have been set down in treaties. These agreements have repeatedly been ripped up, but the treaties themselves only codified the land theft as American capitalism marched across the continent, whether in the form of settlers, gold miners, railroads or pipelines, backed or spearheaded by the U.S. Army. The history of broken treaties goes back to the foundation of the republic, and continues to this day. The owners of Dakota Access, the state of North Dakota and the Army Corps of Engineers all hold that the pipeline does not cross the territory of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation, and therefore the tribe has no right to veto the project. But in fact it’s on stolen Indian lands.

A century and a half ago this was all formally recognized by Washington as Indian country. As the Tribe asserts in its suit against the Corps, “the 1851 Treaty of Fort Laramie included extensive lands that would be crossed by the proposed pipeline.” While a second (1868) Treaty of Fort Laramie established a Great Sioux Reservation covering all of western South Dakota, the lands to the north were declared

“unceded Indian territory ... [that] no white person or persons shall be permitted to settle upon or occupy.” Soon enough, in 1874 Custer announced the discovery of gold in the Black Hills of South Dakota, and then launched a war to drive out the Sioux. Despite Sitting Bull’s stunning victory over Custer, the war resulted in an 1877 treaty seizing the Black Hills. In 1889 the U.S. broke up the Great Sioux Reservation into five small tracts, and the next year tribal police on the U.S. payroll killed Sitting Bull at Standing Rock.

The reservations, while a last toe-hold of Indian territory, are a historical injustice, meant to confine the survivors of the American bourgeoisie’s destruction and displacement of the native population. The birth of industrial capitalism in this country required the exploitation of vast tracts of land that indigenous people formerly inhabited and used for hunting grounds and agriculture. The little parcels today inhabited by various tribes are the end product of a string of crimes – and the violation of the land rights of Native Americans continues. In 1958, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers seized nearly 200,000 acres of land from the Standing Rock and Cheyenne River reservations, removing the people in order to build the Oahe Dam as part of a Missouri River flood control program. Now the Corps and the DAPL claim the right to put a pipeline across Sioux lands.

## A History of Massacres and Broken Treaties

Behind this latest aggression there is a whole history of massacres and broken treaties. To the extent most Americans know anything of the Sioux (aside from romanticized versions of “Custer’s Last Stand”), they may have heard of the Wounded Knee massacre of 1890, when U.S. Seventh Cavalry soldiers slaughtered as many as 300 Lakota Sioux. They were fleeing, fearing reprisal by the state



Soldiers throw bodies of Lakota Sioux Indians killed in the 29 December 1890 massacre at Wounded Knee, South Dakota in mass grave. Twenty Congressional medals of honor were obscenely awarded to participants in this mass murder. Top Photo: Tribal flags at entrance to Oceti Sakowin camp north of Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in September.





**Chief Sitting Bull smashed treaty-buster Custer at the Battle of Little Big Horn in 1877, was murdered by U.S. in 1890 at Standing Rock.**

after some Indian police on the U.S. payroll were killed as they tried to arrest, and ended up assassinating, Chief Sitting Bull. (The U.S. feared he would join the Ghost Dance spiritual revivalist movement.) As the Lakota neared the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, they were surrounded by soldiers who attempted to take their arms. Warriors were shot point-blank and their families mowed down in tipis by Hotchkiss rapid-fire guns. Those who escaped were pursued across the prairie and finished off. Even the butcher General Nelson Miles called it “abominable” and a “horrible massacre of women and children.”

Some may also know of the Wounded Knee siege of 1890, for example from seeing Robert Redford’s documentary film, *Incident at Oglala* (1992). Two hundred Oglala Lakota and supporters of the American Indian Movement (AIM) had occupied the town of Wounded Knee, South Dakota – the same place as the 1890 massacre. They were protesting the U.S. government’s failure to fulfill treaty obligations, and demanding impeachment of the Pine Ridge Reservation president. In response, the FBI put the town under siege for 71 days, killed two demonstrators and disappeared civil rights activist Ray Robinson. Later, AIM activist Leonard Peltier was framed for the 1975 shooting of two FBI agents at Pine Ridge. The feds manufactured evidence against Peltier, hid bullet tests proving his innocence, presented false testimony obtained by torture, and lied to the jury. Forty years later, he is still in jail.<sup>2</sup> We demand Leonard Peltier be freed, now!

The history of the genocidal push to devastate the American Indian population goes back to the “rosy dawn of capitalist production,” as Marx ironically put it. That drive includes erasing the history of dispossession of the Native Americans, and of Indian resistance. Every year, the feast of Thanksgiving is celebrated in November. Schoolchildren are taught that this was a day of brotherhood and gratitude when the pilgrims were saved from starvation by the Indians at Plymouth, Massachusetts. Such a feast did occur in 1621, but the official proclamation of Thanksgiving celebrated a 1637 massacre by English and Dutch mercenaries against the Pequot Indians. In what is present-day Mystic, Connecticut

700 Native Americans were slaughtered by these colonial thugs – and then-governor of Massachusetts John Winthrop proclaimed “a day of public thanksgiving to God for his great mercies in subduing the Pequots.”

American schoolchildren learn of Daniel Boone as an explorer, but not about his role in leading settlers into what is now Kentucky, where they were resisted by Indian nations. This was the start of *Lord Dunmore’s War* (1774), named after the colonial governor of Virginia, which pushed the Shawnee Indians beyond the Ohio River. Such acts of aggression drove many Indian tribes into the arms of the British during America’s 1776 war for independence. In 1779, on the orders of President George Washington, the *Sullivan Expedition* was sent into Pennsylvania and western New York to decimate the Iroquois Confederacy. Their orders were to burn all villages, crops and livestock. The result was starvation for thousands through loss of agricultural land. This marked the definitive subjugation of the Iroquois, whose pre-class society (“primitive communism”) was studied by Lewis Henry Morgan. His book *Ancient Society* (1877) was a main source for Friedrich Engels’ *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1884).

The restless westward expansion of the newly formed United States soon sent settlers and the U.S. Army across the Ohio River. Although the area was ceded to the U.S. by Britain in the 1783 Treaty of Paris, it was populated by tens of thousands of Native Americans. The Western Confederacy led by Shawnee and Miami Indians scored some resounding victories, notably in the Battle of the Wabash (1791) where the U.S. invaders lost almost 1,000 troops. But eventually the Indian forces were overpowered and lost the *Northwest Indian War* (1785-1795). This didn’t stop Native American resistance, however. The next chapter was *Tecumseh’s War* (1811) in the Indiana Territory. The Shawnee leader objected to the Treaty of Fort Wayne, when “moderate” chiefs gave up huge tracts. Despite Tecumseh’s eloquence, calling on Indians to awaken from “the sleep of slavery,” his tactical success (along with the British) in gaining the surrender of Detroit, and future president William Henry Harrison’s dubious claim to have won the Battle of Tippecanoe, Tecumseh failed to unite the tribes and was killed as a British ally in the War of 1812.

Then came Andrew Jackson’s infamous “*Trail of Tears*.” Under the Indian Removal Act of 1830 and precipitated by the discovery of gold in Georgia, the Cherokee, Muscogee, Seminole, Chickasaw and Choctaw peoples were forced to sell their lands east of the Mississippi River and move to present-day Oklahoma. The Seminoles fought two wars of resistance, joined by black slaves who destroyed coastal plantations, lasting from 1832 to 1842. Those Seminoles who were not forcibly relocated to the west of the Mississippi retreated into the Everglades, refusing to sign a peace treaty with the U.S. The Cherokee also refused to leave and were marched at gunpoint in groups of 1,000 on a thousand-mile trek fraught with disease, starvation and exposure to brutal weather. By 1837 some 46,000 Native Americans had been expelled from their homelands in the South, and 6,000-10,000 died on the way.

While Harrison and Jackson were open reactionaries, few know about Abraham Lincoln’s brutal repression of the *Sioux Uprising* of 1862 in southern Minnesota during the Civil War. Provoked by U.S. confiscation of their lands, failure to pay annuities, and famine due to hunting by encroaching white settlers, the Dakota Sioux in the Minnesota River valley rose up in rebellion. This led to a series of battles between the Sioux and the U.S. Army. It ended with the mass hanging of 38 Native Americans in Mankato, Minnesota on 26 December 1862, the day after Christmas. It was the largest single execution in American history. Even so, Minnesota governor Alexander Ramsey wanted to execute 300 Sioux. That same day, the “president who freed the slaves” officially made a national holiday of Thanksgiving, which celebrated the 1637 massacre of the Pequots. An expedition led by ex-governor Henry Hastings Sibley pushed the retreating Dakota Sioux into the Dakotas, where the next year 300 to 400 were killed in the Inyan Ska (Whitestone) Massacre.

In his famous *Custer Died For Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto* (1969), Native American activist and Standing Rock Sioux member Vine Deloria Jr. traces the succession of broken treaties back to the Treaty of Delaware of 1778. Deloria outlines the official promises made by the U.S. to American Indians – to never encroach on land, allow for self-governance,

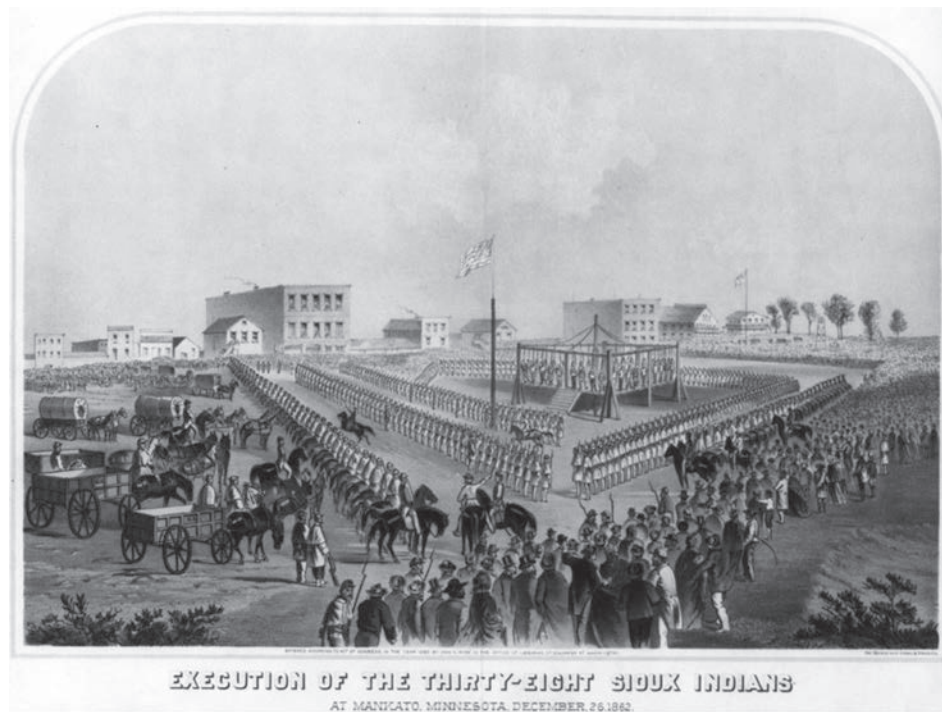
guarantee hunting and fishing rights, etc. – and how U.S. capitalism’s need for resources led to these promises being broken. Then when the reservation system was introduced, the federal Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) instituted brutal controls to “civilize” the Indians. The second (1868) Fort Laramie Treaty called for Lakota children to be given an “English education.” At the end of the 19th century, mission schools on the reservations were replaced by Indian boarding schools, where children were taken from their families, physically abused, prohibited from using their native languages and religion, and forced to learn English and practice Christianity.

The 1887 Dawes Act aimed at breaking up communally owned tribal land by parceling it out in individual “allotments.” It destroyed Indian communities and opened the way for massive land-grabs by white settlers and corporations. The Commissioner of Indian Affairs Thomas J. Morgan in his 1889 report on the BIA spelled out the intent: “The Indians must conform to the white man’s ways, peaceably if they will, forcibly if they must. They must adjust themselves to their environment and conform their mode of living substantially to our civilization. This civilization may not be the best possible, but it is the best the Indians can get. They cannot escape it and must either conform to it or be crushed by it.” In the next year’s report he added: “It has become the settled policy of the government to break up reservations, destroy tribal relations, settle Indians upon their own homesteads, incorporate them into the national life, and deal with them not as nations or tribes or bands, but as individual citizens.”<sup>3</sup>

To top it off, in 1953 Congress passed the Termination Act, seeking to end what few responsibilities the federal government still had to the Indians living on reservations, and insert them into urban populations. In *An Indigenous Peoples’ History of the United States* (2014), Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz noted that during the Termination period, Eisenhower’s Commissioner of Indian Affairs was one Dillon S. Myer – the same official who oversaw the detention of Japanese Americans in U.S. concentration camps during World War II. Then came the Pick-Sloan Missouri River Basin flood-control program which consisted of permanently flooding Indian tribal lands. Native Americans were moved from the food-rich bottom lands, their aboriginal homelands, to the barren plains above the river valley, where clay soils made agriculture almost impossible. Although required by the 1944 law to replace the infrastructure (roads, water systems, schools, community facilities), the Army Corps of Engineers failed to do so.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Gale Courey Toensing, “The Dawes Act Started the U.S. Land-Grab of Native Territory,” Indian Country Media Network, 8 February 2012.

<sup>4</sup> Peter Capossela, “Impacts of the Army Corps of Engineers’ Pick-Sloan Program on the Indian Tribes of the Missouri River Basin,” *Journal of Environmental Law and Litigation*, Vol. 30:1, pp. 143-217. Capossela notes that “The Corps located the dams so as to minimize the impact of the reservoirs on the cities along the river in North and South Dakota. The Corps targeted Tribal lands, which were inundated as the sites of the reservoirs.” According to Michael L. Lawson, *Dammed Indians: The Pick-Sloan Plan and the Missouri River Sioux, 1944-1980* (1982), “The Oahe Dam [affecting Standing Rock and the Cheyenne River reservation below it] destroyed more Indian land than any other public works project in America.”



**Drawing of mass execution of 38 Sioux at Mankato, Minnesota in December 1862. President Lincoln personally selected those to be hung.**

<sup>2</sup> See the International Leonard Peltier Defense Committee for more information.



And now the Dakota Access Pipeline continues the assault on the lands of Native Americans, this time threatening the Sioux at Standing Rock. The company has the enthusiastic support of the North Dakota state government and as usual the backing of the Corps of Engineers.<sup>5</sup> Although the DAPL has temporarily been put on hold by the Obama administration, this will soon be replaced by a new regime of Big Oil and hard cops. Court suits can perhaps delay the day of reckoning, but since time immemorial the law is stacked against the Indians and in favor of the corporations.

## Native American Rights and Socialist Revolution

In any fight it is crucial to know who are your friends, and who is the enemy. For starters, it is necessary to dispel dangerous illusions in the courts and federal government as potential allies. Marxist theory holds, and five centuries of Indian history prove, that the state defends the interests of the ruling class against the exploited and oppressed, no matter who heads the government of the day. The battle over the DAPL shows that whether under Obama or now Trump, Native Americans are up against the full force of the repressive and administrative apparatus which exists to enforce the interests of the capitalist class. To prevail against such a powerful enemy, it is necessary to mobilize an even greater force: that of the multiracial, multiethnic working class which makes this society run, together with doubly oppressed African American, Latino, Asian and Native American people and immigrants, and all defenders of democratic rights.

From the outset, the leaders of the Standing Rock Tribe have looked to the courts and the Obama administration. At the camp on the banks of the Cannonball River, wrote tribal chairman David Archambault II, “Our elders of the Seven Council Fires, as the Oceti Sakowin, or Great Sioux Nation, is known, sit in deliberation and prayer, awaiting a federal court decision” (*New York Times*, 25 Au-

<sup>5</sup> Whether it was building ever-higher levees on the Mississippi River leading to the disastrous Great Flood of 1927; channeling the Mississippi below New Orleans straight into the sea, eliminating wetlands that protected against storm surges; building the Industrial Canal that channeled Katrina flood waters right into New Orleans’ black Lower Ninth Ward, or damming the Missouri River so that it mainly flooded Indian lands, the United States Army Corps of Engineers systematically targeted the poor African American and Native American areas.

gust). When the Department of the Army finally refused an easement to drill under the Missouri River, pending investigation of environmental impact and alternative sites, the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe issued a statement to stress that “we are not opposed to energy independence ... or national security concerns,” and to “commend with the utmost gratitude the courage it took on the part of President Obama ... to take steps to correct the course of history and to do the right thing.” Then Archambault told protesters to dismantle the camp and go home.

But some of the “water protectors” refused to leave. LaDonna Bravebull Allard, on whose land the Sacred Stones Camp was built, declared: “The chairman does not tell us what to do. The chairman is not in charge of the camp ... We came to fight a black snake,” she said, referring to the pipeline. “Until it’s dead, we stand” (*Guardian*, 6 December). This dispute reflected deep divisions on the reservation and among the Native American population generally. The Standing Rock elders declared that the Red Warrior Society, including militant Indian youths who began the protests, should leave. The Red Warriors replied that they were leaving because tribal leaders with their “peace policing” and “constant slinging of arrows ... are not ready to embrace a world view that upholds decolonization and revolution.”

Certainly not. In fact, tribal leaders have close ties to the Obama administration and the Democratic Party. David Archambault II’s sister, Juliette Archambault Gillette, worked at the White House for six years as Obama’s special assistant for Native American affairs. She arranged the annual White House Tribal Nations Conference and also the June 2014 visit of the Obamas to Standing Rock. Another prominent Standing Rock Sioux, Chase Iron Eyes, who called for water protectors to stay, ran for Congress in the November elections, while Marlo Hunte-Beaubrun ran for the Public Service Commission (which approves pipelines), both on the Democratic-NonPartisan League Party ticket. In fact, the only North Dakota counties won by the Democrats were Sioux (Standing Rock Reservation) and Rolette, site of the Turtle Mountain Reservation of Ojibwe (Chippewa). But the Democratic Party represents the interests of capital and U.S. imperialism. It is the class enemy of Native American workers and youth.

Capitalism has fostered class divisions among the 5.2 million American Indians. Some tribal authorities profit from casinos,

which have become a major source of revenue (\$26.5 billion in 2009, although much of that goes to pay off bank loans), and in some notorious cases a history of sweetheart deals with mining companies. As a result of private land ownership, on the Fort Berthold Reservation in the heart of the Bakken oil patch a huge gap has opened up between those who have oil leases or oil-related businesses and those who don’t. The tribal leadership there has been rent by corruption, crime and murder.<sup>6</sup> Meanwhile unemployment on the Standing Rock Reservation is around 60% (compared to 2.6% in North Dakota as a whole) and the official poverty rate around 40%. The rates of methamphetamine addiction, alcoholism and suicide among Native Americans are almost twice as high as for other ethnic groups. While many factors are cited to explain this, one stands out: the lack of jobs.

It will take a revolution to do away with these afflictions, which will continue, pipeline or no. But what kind of revolution? In the 1960s, the rise of the American Indian Movement and struggles for Native American rights reflected the broader radicalization of the civil rights, black power, New Left, antiwar and radical women’s movements. The 19-month occupation of Alcatraz in 1969-71 by AIM and “red power” activists, the 1970 Thanksgiving AIM protest at Plymouth Rock, the 1972 Trail of Broken Treaties caravan sponsored by AIM and others, and the 1973 occupation and siege of Wounded Knee drew attention to the brutal realities of oppression but were not just “Indian” causes. But those struggles ran up against a brick wall, and with defeat came a political degeneration into identity politics and linking up with dissident petty-bourgeois and bourgeois parties, from the left-populist Peace and Freedom Party (Dennis Banks) to the ultra-capitalist Libertarian Party (Russell Means).

The radical American Indian Movement was relatively few in number. The Native American mobilization for Standing Rock is far larger, in the biggest fight for Indian rights in 150 years. But contrary to scaremongering by county and state officials about a dangerous “out-of-state militant faction” that was “escalating their violent tactics,” the politics of the pipeline protests are far from radical. This is one reason why they have broad liberal support, and also why they cannot defeat concerted repression. Yet with their scope, they prominently pose the issue of liberation of the oppressed Indian population, and the need for a program of revolutionary *class* struggle, joined with African Americans, Latinos, immigrants and others behind the power of the multiracial, multiethnic working class. It is the task of the revolutionary Marxists (Trotskyists) to put forward such a program, which alone can point the way to victory over the combined forces of capital.

In the 1960s and early ’70s, radical Native American groups such as AIM, as well as some pseudo-Marxist organizations, put forward a kind of pan-Indian nationalism, a counterpart to the black nationalism they also advocated. Both were and are dead-ends, based on a false analysis of the nature of black and Indian oppression. African Americans are subjugated as an oppressed race-color caste at the bottom of bourgeois society. From the time of slavery, black labor was integral to the overall U.S. economy. For a time after

the Civil War, when freed slaves without land became sharecroppers, tenant farmers and smallholders, there was some possibility of a national development in the “black belt” across the South. But ever since the Great Migration of rural black people to Northern industry in World War I, any talk of a black nation in the U.S. is a myth, serving to divert black workers from their vanguard role in a socialist revolution.

American Indians, on the other hand, were treated as separate peoples, formalized in the term “nations” with whom treaties were “negotiated” at gunpoint. The native peoples were pushed into increasingly marginal regions by military aggression and the relentless expansion of immigrant settler population as the frontier moved westward. After the decimation of the Native American population through massacres, hunger and disease, the remaining small and geographically separated populations are not a nation in the Marxist sense of having a common territory, economy, culture and language. The dream of a pan-Indian nation is just that – a dream, and a product of Native American intellectuals and activists living in urban areas. AIM did not come out of the reservations but was founded in 1968 in a fight against police harassment in the Minneapolis ghetto, inspired by the Black Panther Party.

AIM called for “self-determination for free peoples,” in the words of Dennis Banks. Historically, as Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin insisted, self-determination means independence. But since the material basis for an Indian nation is lacking, the term was redefined to mean “Re-establishment of reservation sovereignty and self determination” – replacing the dictatorship of the Bureau of Indian Affairs with a kind of autonomy. But with very partial exceptions, the reservations are economically unviable, designed to imprison the Native American peoples and ensure tribal dependence on Washington. So in practice, the radical Indian program focused on welfare demands on the structures of capitalist domination. Thus Vine Deloria’s 1969 “Indian Manifesto” called for “the Department of the Interior to redefine its service function” and stated that “The corporation serves as the technical weapon by which Indian revivalism can be accomplished.”

Under capitalist rule, the claims of Indian “nation-building” will have not only a utopian but often a reactionary content. In Arizona, the Navajo Nation has a long, bitter conflict over land use with the Hopi Reservation, which it completely surrounds. In Oklahoma, when the Nixon administration in 1971 cynically called for Indian “self-determination,” the Cherokee Nation reorganized its government and elected W.W. Keeler as chief. Keeler was a top-level capitalist, president of Phillips Petroleum. Based on oil wealth, the Cherokee Nation Businesses holding company owns companies in gaming, construction, aerospace, technology, manufacturing, real estate and health care, with an annual economic impact on the state of over \$1 billion. And this corporate “nation” has acted in typical capitalist fashion. In 2007 it canceled the tribal membership of 1,500 descendants of black freedmen and intermarried whites who had for generations been considered Cherokee.

Meanwhile, already in the 1970s and more so today, a majority of the Native American population lives in urban areas (55% in 1970, 70% by 2010) where they



Indian leaders have strong links to Democratic Party and Obama administration. Above: Standing Rock Tribe chairman David Archambault II with Barack Obama during Cannon Ball Flag Day celebration, 13 June 2014.

January-February 2017

<sup>6</sup> “In North Dakota, a Tale of Oil, Corruption and Death,” *New York Times*, 30 December 2014.





**Leonard Peltier, imprisoned for the last 40 years after being framed by the FBI in its war on Native Americans: “The only thing I’m guilty of is struggling for my people.” Free Leonard Peltier!**

are largely concentrated in poor neighborhoods. But, as a *New York Times* (14 April 2013) article noted: “while many black migrants [in the WWI Great Migration] found jobs in meatpacking plants, stockyards and automobile factories, American Indians have not had similar success finding work.” There are significant exceptions: Mohawk and Iroquois iron workers (“sky walkers”) play a key role in the construction of Manhattan skyscrapers, and Native American workers were on the front lines of the bitter Phelps-Dodge copper strike of 1983. But poverty levels of American Indians in the cities range up to 45% in Minneapolis, where the jobless rate in the only public housing project in the U.S. giving preference to Native Americans is over 65% – as high as on the most impoverished reservation. There are also high levels of gang violence and racist attacks. Native American project administrators respond just as their white counterparts, threatening to expel residents who can’t find a job.

Even so, as AIM co-founder Clyde Bellecourt, remarked, many young Indians “come here [to urban areas] and they get job training and don’t want to go back to the reservation.” Just as you can’t keep rural youth down on the farm no matter how many 4-H or FFA programs you have, they can’t keep Indian youth on the reservation: harsh as the economic realities of the urban ghetto are, the lure of the big city and bright lights prevails. Meanwhile, talk of “empowerment” by increasing “diversity” among the rulers is phony. Minneapolis has a Native American city council member, a Native American state representative, and a part-Indian police chief, Janee Harteau, who presided over the cop murder of Jamar Clark in November 2015. So a program to free the American Indian peoples from poverty, racism and police repression is inseparable from the struggle for the social liberation of African Americans, Latinos, immigrants and all the oppressed.

That underscores the importance of Native American participation in fighting for *labor/black mobilization against racist cop terror*, for example over the cop murder of Jamar Clark in Minneapolis and Philando Castile in suburban St. Paul. In fact, Native Americans have been victimized by police terror at a higher rate than any other ethnic group.<sup>7</sup> No less important is mobilizing in defense of immigrants, particularly in the face of Trump’s threat to deport 11 million (after Obama deported 5.5 million). The demand for *full citizenship rights for all immigrants* should echo among American Indians who did not win

<sup>7</sup> See “The Police Killings Nobody Is Talking About,” *In These Times*, 19 October 2016; and “More Natives Killed By Police Than Any Other Group,” Indian Country Media Network, 18 August 2016.

citizenship until 1924, nor the right to practice their traditional religions until 1978, and who even today are disciplined for speaking native languages in school.<sup>8</sup> A key demand is for *union-scale jobs for Native Americans*, to break out of the vicious cycle of welfare programs, poverty, isolation and despair, the root cause of epidemic levels of alcoholism, drug addiction and suicide.

With a strong labor movement, one could generalize *union training programs for*

*Native American youth*, such as the program hosted by the IBEW electricians union at the United Tribes Technical College in Bismarck, ND. *Free university education* could be provided by vastly expanding initiatives such as Sitting Bull College at Standing Rock, with *open admissions* under *student-teacher-worker control*. A hard-knuckle campaign to *unionize oil workers* could insist on hiring large numbers of Indian workers in focusing on the need for *union safety committees to stop unsafe production* in the deadly dangerous Bakken oil fields. But the labor bureaucracy is incapable of waging such a sharp *class* struggle. Its class collaboration is so ingrained that Laborers Union Local 563, backed by the national AFL-CIO, shamefully sided with Energy Transfer Partners against the Standing Rock Sioux in the fight over the DAPL pipeline.

Defense of oil workers, pipeline workers and Native American workers requires that we *dump the sellout labor bureaucrats* and *break with the Democrats*. What’s needed is to *build a class-struggle leadership* of labor and *forge a revolutionary workers party* that fights for jobs for all and defends all the oppressed in the struggle to overthrow the dictatorship of capital.

At the same time, life in the Dakotas Indian Country has its own specific character. While Native Americans in the U.S. overwhelmingly live in urban areas, in North Dakota 60% live on five reservations. While nationally, many if not most jobs in “Indian” casinos are held by non-Indians, in the Dakotas 80% of those jobs are filled by Native Americans. Also, a significant minority on the reservations still speak Dakota-Lakota languages. That indigenous ways of life have largely been destroyed as a result of capitalist expansion is a tragic fact. But revolutionary Marxists respect and defend the rights of Native Americans to preserve the cultures that survive. A workers revolution in the U.S., building on the experience of the early Soviet Union, could provide for different forms of autonomy within the framework of the full participation of Native American populations in building a collectivized socialist economy.

Current proponents of “Indian nationalism” put forward the idea that the oppression of native peoples can be overcome through “decolonization,” or some form of separation from U.S. society. But Indian reservations are not colonies, and in fact (as Standing Rock shows) are heavily intertwined with the U.S. economic and political system. The fundamental fact is that U.S. capitalism’s domination of the conti-

<sup>8</sup> In 2012, Miranda Washinawatok was banned from a reservation school basketball team because she was overheard teaching a classmate how to say “hello” and “I love you” in her native language, Menominee.

ment, of which genocide of the indigenous population was a key component, makes “independence” a pipe dream, and a diversion from the task of overthrowing the rapacious capitalist rulers today. Instead of a mythical “return” to a pre-Conquest society, we seek to go forward to a communist future based on the development of modern industry and technology, including energy production. In doing so, the Internationalist Group champions the interests of all of the oppressed, as we strive to build a party that will act, in Lenin’s words, as a “tribune of the people.”

In 2009, the U.S. Congress and President Obama issued an “Apology to Native Peoples of the United States,” saying the U.S. “apologizes ... to all Native Peoples for the many instances of violence, maltreatment, and neglect inflicted on Native Peoples by the citizens of the United States.” This hypocritical apology committed the U.S. government to exactly nothing, and didn’t mention stolen Indian lands. In the case of the Dakotas, the theft of the resource-rich Black Hills has been the focus of a legal fight for decades. The region is of cultural importance for the Sioux and Cheyenne (both of whom claim it as the center of the world), and the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868 had exempted it from white settlement “forever.” In 1980 the Supreme Court concluded in the case of *United States v. Sioux Nation of Indians* that, “A more ripe and rank case of dishonorable dealings will never, in all probability, be found in our history.”

The Court ordered the payment of the full value of the land at the time, plus interest, a sum calculated at over \$1 billion as of 2011 (which vastly underestimates the value of the gold mined there). However, the Sioux have refused to accept the money as they continue to demand the return of the Black Hills themselves. While overcoming the subjugation of the Native American peoples, including the Dakota and Lakota Sioux, can only come about through workers revolution across North America, that would importantly include some symbolic restitution of stolen lands (along with returning some parts of the Southwest seized from Mexico) in recognition of the crimes of American capitalism. This would surely include returning the Black Hills to the Indian peoples, including Mount Rushmore. The Sioux and Cheyenne can then do with it as they see fit, including effacing it entirely (or at least the sculpture of “Big Stick” imperialist Theodore Roosevelt), or charging nostalgic tourists exorbitant Disneyland-level admissions to view this obscene monument to U.S. imperial glory.

In the meantime, Native Americans are once more under attack, and anyone who calls themselves Marxist must defend them. If the Standing Rock Sioux say they don’t want construction on their ancestral land, all defenders of democratic and Indian rights must join them in demanding that the Dakota Access Pipeline be stopped from crossing the Missouri River there. We also call for the immediate *dropping of charges against the more than 500 “water protectors”* arrested at Standing Rock, and for *freedom for Leonard Peltier*, the innocent target of an FBI frame-up in Washington’s unending war on the Native American peoples. *Hands off the Standing Rock Sioux!* ■

## Pipelines...

*continued from page 12*

lines, are of little concern to the “keep it in the ground” environmentalists. A militant labor movement, in contrast, would use its power to shut down unsafe operations, for workers’ lives are on the line.

In terms of industrial safety, North Dakota is “The most dangerous U.S. state for workers,” headlined CBS Moneywatch (8 May 2014). A report by the AFL-CIO, *Death on the Job: The Toll of Neglect* (2014), summarized:

“North Dakota stands out as an exceptionally dangerous and deadly place to work. The state’s job fatality rate of 17.7 per 100,000 [workers] is more than five times the national average and is one of the highest state job fatality rates ever reported for any state. North Dakota’s fatality rate more than doubled from a rate of 7.0 per 100,000 in 2007, and the number of workers killed on the job increased from 25 to 65. Latino workers accounted for 12 of the deaths in 2012, compared with three Latino worker deaths in 2011. The fatality rate in the mining and oil and gas extraction sector in North Dakota was an alarming 104.0 per 100,000, more than six times the national fatality rate of 15.9 per 100,000 in this industry; and the construction sector fatality rate in North Dakota was 97.4 per 100,000, almost 10 times the national fatality rate of 9.9 per 100,000 for construction.”

The number of workplace injuries and illnesses is not even known, since North Dakota is one of only a handful of states that don’t even keep records of this data. Yet in the protests over the DAPL, the dangers to oil industry workers are never mentioned. In fact, pipeline construction crews are sometimes cast as the enemy, whereas energy/transportation workers should be the allies of those genuinely fighting for environmental (and industrial) safety.

The Standing Rock struggle has been taken up by ecology activists including Bill McKibben, who penned an op-ed piece, “Why Dakota Is the New Keystone” (*New York Times*, 29 October. McKibben’s outfit, 350.org (whose \$11 million annual budget is 70% financed by capitalist foundations including the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, heirs to the Standard Oil fortune), calls to “keep carbon in the ground.” The well-financed eco-guru proposes to “Save the Planet From Trump” by “fighting every pipeline and every coal port” (Ecowatch, 4 December). Opposing all pipelines is a recipe to shut down industry, electrical energy and heating, all of which largely depend on oil, natural gas and coal. This is the program of arrogant petty-bourgeois “smaller is better, back-to-nature, love the earth – hate the people” eco-maniacs, backed by a section of the U.S. ruling class (like Democrat Al Gore). They seek to reorder capitalist priorities rather than to overthrow the system of production for profit that threatens environmental disaster.

There are 2.6 million miles of pipelines in the U.S. An article on the web site Inside Energy (18 November) poses the question, “Protesters Say Pipelines Are Dangerous. Are They?” It answers: “According to data from federal regulators, there is actually a low probability of a pipeline accident. But when there is an accident, the impact can be huge.” From 2010 to 2015, significant



pipeline accidents caused 74 deaths, an average of 12 per year.<sup>7</sup> By way of comparison, in the same period, there were over 199,500 traffic fatalities in the U.S., an average of 33,250 a year.<sup>8</sup> So should cars and trucks be banned? Inside Energy concludes that “analysis of PHMSA data showed that, over the years, the risk of an accident has remained steady: roughly 1.2 incidents that included injury, death, substantial property damage or spillage, per 10,000 miles.... But it is exactly that tiny fraction, that rare accident, that the Standing Rock Sioux are worried about.”

The fact that serious pipeline accidents are relatively rare does not mean that nothing can be done. Quite the contrary. The scandalous fact is that the tiny federal Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration has a grand total of 184 “inspection staff” on its payroll, roughly one for every 14,000 miles of pipe. There are *no* PHMSA inspectors stationed in North Dakota (the nearest is in Omaha, 400 miles from Standing Rock). The PHMSA doesn’t even pretend to inspect local pipelines, but as of 2014 there were *zero* North Dakota state inspectors for 18,000 miles of such “gathering lines” transporting water and oil to and from wellheads. So federal and state agencies responsible for overseeing hazmat dangers rely on self-inspection by the industry. Any real concern for environmental safety would demand the deployment of thousands of inspectors, frequent inspections, heavy fines and shutting down dangerous operations.

Inspection of pipelines is generally carried out by means of “pigs,” devices designed to fit snugly into the pipe which can prevent leaks by detecting faulty or weak welds, corrosion, etc. Regular “pigging” is presently only required for “high consequence” areas (which Standing Rock was deemed by the Corps of Engineers not to be). Not only should such mechanical monitoring be greatly increased, on-site inspections are necessary to spot shoddy welding, poor quality pipe, inadequate coating and the like. This is all the more necessary because more than half the nation’s pipeline network is now over half a century old, dating to a pipeline building boom from the late 1940s to the early 1960s. Some lines are a century old. Moreover, new pipelines should be required to have (and older lines should be retrofitted to install) automatic shut-off valves with sensors all along the line to detect a drop in pressure.

According to the Corps of Engineers’ July 25 environmental non-assessment (written by Dakota Access) Standing Rock Sioux concerns about a spill are misplaced because “Dakota Access would utilize a supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) system to provide constant remote oversight of the pipeline facilities” which would ensure “100% reliable remote monitoring/operation of these sites through the SCADA system to the Operations Control Center (OCC) in Sugarland, Texas.” Yet Sugarland, Texas is 1,190 miles from Standing Rock, North Dakota “as the crow flies”! In addition to relocating the pipeline well away from the reservation, any serious response to concerns about spills

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, Pipeline Significant Incident 20 Year Trend (28 December 2016).

<sup>8</sup> National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Fatality Analysis Reporting System Encyclopedia (2016).



**Oil train exploded in Lac-Mégantic, Quebec in July 2013 (above), killing 47 and devastating downtown area.**

would require a resident monitoring team, shut-off valves and spill basins to catch any fluids that escaped. All of this costs money, of course, which the multi-billion-dollar companies naturally object to.

But neither a Republican Bush or Trump administration dominated by Big Oil, nor a supposedly eco-friendly Democratic Clinton or Obama administration has ever or would ever propose such measures because they cut into the sacrosanct profit stream, the lifeblood of capitalism, which both parties represent and defend. Nor has the “green capitalist” ecology movement (or even their “eco-socialist” left tails) demanded such measures. Instead they play around with their “keep it in the ground” sophistry. In fact, both the partner parties of U.S. imperialism are strongly behind the push to develop Bakken shale oil and natural gas, in order to achieve “energy independence” (i.e., no longer depend on oil imports from Venezuela), and to export U.S. gas to wean Europe off Russian gas. This was behind the April 2014 visit of former CIA director David Petraeus to Williston in the heart of North Dakota’s, “oil patch.”

Meanwhile, as ecology activists try to stop one pipeline after another, the oil is being produced, and it is transported to markets – by a far more dangerous means: oil trains. If there is a danger of pipeline spills, the potential outcome of train derailments and tank car explosions is much greater. We have already seen what can happen: in July 2013, a train with 72 loaded tank cars of crude oil from North Dakota en route from Montreal, Quebec to a refinery at St. John, New Brunswick, was parked just outside the town of Lac-Mégantic, Quebec. The brakes failed, and the train rolled down into the center of town where 63 cars derailed, leading to multiple explosions and fires. Forty-seven people were killed, 2,000 were evacuated and the town center was devastated. Investigators concluded that the “light, sweet” Bakken crude oil was more volatile than previously thought.

Then that November another train of 90 cars going from North Dakota to a refinery in Mobile derailed in Alabama, with 26 tank cars sending almost 800,000 gallons of crude into a wetland while a dozen cars burned. Again on December 30, an “Petraeus Fracking Field Trip Reveals ND Government, Oil, Private Equity Nexus,” Desmog Blog, 22 May 2014; and “Petraeus Visits N.D.’s ‘energy revolution,’” *Oil Patch Dispatch*, 29 April 2014.

eastbound train on the BNSF railroad hauling 106 tank cars hit a westbound train outside Casselton, North Dakota: 20 tank cars with Bakken crude derailed and exploded, sending a giant fireball into the air and burning for hours. A week later, on 7 January 2014, five tank cars carrying crude oil from Manitoba and Alberta heading for the St. John refinery derailed and exploded in New Brunswick, burning for days. On January 20, a 101-car CSX train derailed in Philadelphia with a tank car leaning off a bridge over the Schuylkill River near hospitals. The list goes on and on, to last June 3 when a Union Pacific oil train derailed in the Columbia River Gorge, Oregon setting off a major fire.

A Congressional Research Service report on *U.S. Rail Transportation of Crude Oil* (4 December 2014) noted that “The volume of crude oil carried by rail increased by 20-fold between 2008 and 2013.” With the sudden and massive increase in rail transport of oil, more crude oil was spilled from rail incidents in 2013 than in the previous 37 years since the federal government began collecting such data.<sup>10</sup> Statistics from the American Association of Railroads show that oil transportation by train results in almost three times as many spills as by pipeline.<sup>11</sup> A report by the Minneapolis Federal Reserve Bank notes that “Pipelines are by far the cheapest and safest way to move oil and the only practicable method of transporting gas.” Yet by 2012, most crude oil from the Bakken basin was transported by rail due to lack of pipeline capacity. Moreover, 70%

<sup>10</sup> “More Oil Spilled From Trains in 2013 Than in Previous 4 Decades, Federal Data Show,” McClatchy Newspapers, 20 January 2014.

<sup>11</sup> “Quebec disaster spurs rail-versus-pipelines debate on oil,” Bloomberg, 8 July 2013.



**Oil trains pass through downtown Minneapolis, Minnesota, next to apartment buildings**

of oil is moved from wellhead to rail hub or pipeline terminal by truck, an even more dangerous transportation method.<sup>12</sup>

By opposing construction of a pipeline, rather than demanding it be relocated away from Standing Rock and be outfitted with vastly more safety measures, *ecology groups are effectively supporting the far more dangerous alternative of rail transportation.* And the potential for a truly gargantuan tragedy is enormous. Oil trains run through the downtown areas of small towns and big cities all the way from western North Dakota to the East Coast. The BNSF main line runs through the center of Minot and Fargo, North Dakota, then Moorhead and St. Cloud, Minnesota and on to the Twin Cities. In November 2015, the trains were routed through downtown Minneapolis, only blocks from where Jamar Clark was shot to death by police, going past apartment houses (see picture) and literally right next to Target Field where close to 40,000 people regularly attend games of the Minnesota Twins, the Vikings and the UofM Gophers.

With a dozen to two dozen mile-long oil trains passing through every week, it didn’t take much effort to imagine what could happen if some tank cars exploded next to the stadium, particularly with the city in an uproar over racist police murder. So the governor and city leaders had the trains moved back to blue-collar working-class Northeast Minneapolis. The same scenario looms over numerous locations around the country. Every week, 27 trains with crude oil from the Bakken field pass through Buffalo, New York on their way to Albany, a major hub. There the oil is transferred to barges for transport to East Coast refineries, from Philadelphia to New York City and New Brunswick. Some 26 public schools (and 7 charter schools) in the Buffalo area are located within one-half mile of the tracks, i.e., *inside* the Department of Transportation mandated evacuation zone in case of a derailment.

There are obvious steps that can be taken to sharply reduce the dangers of oil trains. Since a 2014 PHMSA report determined that the standard oil tanker cars (DOT-111) rupture too easily in derailments, they should be immediately replaced with cars using heavier steel, ceramic thermal jackets and other safety measures. Rail companies have already introduced an upgraded model, but even those cars exploded in the June 2016 Columbia River Gorge derailment. Yet the Department of Transportation has yet to settle on a design, and only plans to phase in new cars gradually, while the unsafe DOT-111s continue to roll. In addition, oil shippers can be required to use stabilization technology for the gassy Bakken crude, and there could be a ban on running oil trains through cities, requiring railroads to build new tracks to skirt heavily populated areas. But none of this has been done, nor are environmental groups pushing this.

Why not? In part, it’s because the environmental NGOs (non-governmental organizations), which are basically marketing and fundraising operations, always go for the great visuals. For them, pipeline protests are a dream. That’s how the Avaaz lobbying and public relations outfit spun off by hedge fund mogul George Soros organized the September 201 “People’s Climate

<sup>12</sup> “Busting Bottlenecks in the Bakken,” *Fedgazette*, April 2013



# Spartacist League: Land Surveyor Socialists

In the struggle over the Dakota Access Pipeline, the reformist left as usual has tailed along after the environmental groups who are opposed to any pipeline, and in the more extreme cases opposed to using oil or fossil fuels at all. On the other hand, the centrist Spartacist League (SL), in a knee-jerk reaction to the environmentalists, ends up echoing the line of some of the most retrograde, chauvinist sectors of the bourgeoisie. While calling to “Defend Native American Protesters” against state repression, the SL denies that the protesters had any legitimate reason to protest in the first place. They entirely disappear the blatant environmental racism, and argue that the native people have no legal right to control what happens on the pipeline route.

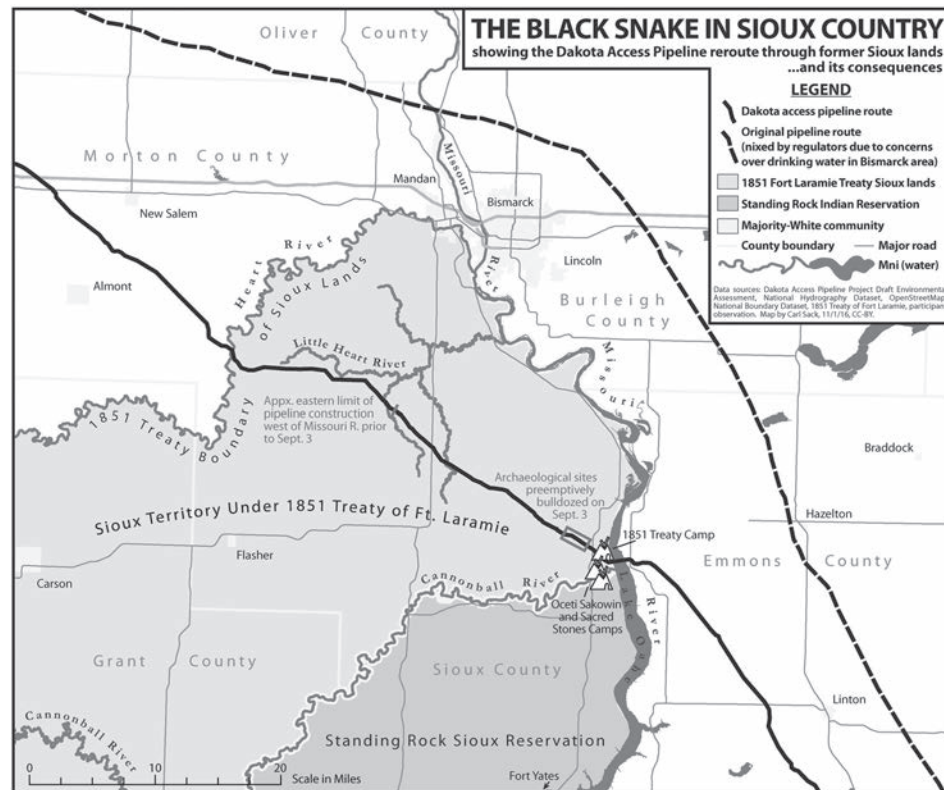
The SL writes that, “As Marxists, we neither oppose nor support the DAPL.” Certainly pipelines in themselves are not inherently bad or good, but this is a subterfuge in order to refuse to oppose the DAPL route at Standing Rock. As Marxists, we defend the oppressed native peoples against this racist capitalist attack. Contrary to the straw-man argument of the SL, the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe is specifically opposing the pipeline river crossing next to their reservation (as one can readily verify from its court suit against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and various tribal statements). The SL’s skewed portrayal of the fight is a smokescreen to hide anti-Marxist indifference to the fate of the Standing Rock Sioux.

Energy Transport Partners, the main owner of the DAPL, insists that “The Dakota Access Pipeline Is **Not** on Standing Rock Sioux Land” (see ETP map). The SL agrees. While piously lamenting the “grave injustice” of the theft of Indian land with the construction of the Oahe Dam in the 1950s, it insists that “the DAPL goes north of land seized in 1958 and does not cross it.” The SL denies that there is “an explicit link between tribal land rights and the pipeline,” writing:

“In the case of the Northern Gateway pipeline in western Canada, our comrades of the Trotskyist League of Canada rightly oppose the project because it brazenly flouts the land rights of Native peoples who are the predominant population in the remote regions that the pipeline would traverse. This is not the case with the DAPL.”

—“Standoff at Standing Rock”, *Workers Vanguard*, 23 September 2016

As for the SL’s assertion that the land crossed by the pipeline “has not been Sioux territory for almost 150 years and is inhab-



**Map by cartographer Carl Sack showing the lands crossed by the Dakota Access Pipeline which were guaranteed to the Sioux in the 1851 Fort Laramie Treaty and then declared unceded Indian territory in the 1868 treaty.**

ited by other people,” this is a preposterous objection. The area between the Cannonball River and Cedar Creek is sparsely populated, inhabited only by a few hundred people (2 per square mile). And even if the entire area in North Dakota belonging to the Sioux under the 1851 Fort Laramie Treaty were returned, which they have not demanded but would have every right to, who says the present residents would have to move? Then there are the treaties. Even under Article 16 of the 1868 Fort Laramie robbery-treaty unjustly imposed on the Sioux, and never ratified by them as required, the land north of the Cannonball River traversed by the pipeline is “unceded Indian territory” on which they continued to have use rights and on which white settlement was banned.

The whole hair-splitting, logic-chopping argumentation by the SL as to why the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe does not have the right to block a pipeline a stone’s throw from their present residence, on land that is historically Indian country, stolen from them by the rapacious capitalist government, is a specious lawyer’s argument. **The Spartacist line reflects the mentality of land surveyors for the bourgeoisie.**

The Corps of Engineers July 25 “Mitigated Fining of No Significant Impact” states that the entry point for crossing Lake Oahe is “approximately 0.55 mile north

of the northern boundary of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation.” So the fact that the DAPL is slated to cross the Missouri at a latitude of N 46 26’ 14” instead of N 46 25’ 42”, according to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Energy Transfer Partners and the Spartacist League, means the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe does not have the right to veto it!

As a point of reference, if the SL has difficulty visualizing it, that is less than the distance between Washington Square and Union Square in Lower Manhattan.

The potential for a serious environmental incident at this point is dismissed with a wave of the hand by these lawyers and unlicensed surveyors. Consider that a natural gas pipeline (the Northern Border line) and an overhead high-tension power line cross Lake Oahe at precisely the same point. Energy Transfer Partners uses this to argue what’s to worry, it’s already an infrastructure corridor. But what if an explosion of the gas pipeline were to rupture the oil pipeline, at most a few dozen feet away (and at points much less)? Impossible? When the pipeline was slated to cross the Missouri ten miles north of the state capital, Bismarck, concerns about possible water contamination got the route changed. The only reason this is not considered sufficient reason to stop the pipeline at Standing Rock is that these

are Indian lands – i.e., not a “high consequence area.” But it has had consequences. Faced with environmental racism to bolster oil company profits, here we have an ostensibly revolutionary organization providing lawyer’s arguments.

This comes on the heels of the new-found arguments of the SL’s misnamed International Communist League *against* the right to asylum for refugees, and *against* the right to free movement for immigrants inside the European Union. Why, that would mean “open borders,” the ICL gasps, sounding for all the world like Donald Trump railing against Hillary Clinton (as he did in their third debate). The SL/ICL doesn’t “get involved in which country immigrants and asylum seekers are sent to,” it says (see “Strange Encounters with the ICL,” *The Internationalist* No. 44, Summer 2016). So with tens of thousands of Syrian refugees being held in inhuman conditions in internment camps, the ICL raises these specious arguments to refuse to demand they be let in. On Standing Rock, it argues that because “we do not counsel the capitalist ruling class on the most effective way to run its economy,” therefore it does not oppose a potentially dangerous pipeline being built right next to an Indian reservation.

Recognizing that “many Indian protesters have argued that the pipeline infringes on what they consider to be sacred, ancestral land” from which they were expelled, *Workers Vanguard* (23 September) responds: “Of course one understands the resentment toward that displacement.” But of course. In the same vein, an ICL leader said of refugees clamoring at Europe’s doors, “We sympathize with their plight.” What is one to make of such Bill Clinton-like “I feel your pain” nostrums when the SL/ICL can’t bring itself to oppose a pipeline at Standing Rock, even as the Sioux residents and Native Americans around the country are protesting it? Of what value are its assurances that a future workers government would “ensure the social emancipation of American Indians, promoting their voluntary integration on the basis of full equality while providing the fullest possible regional autonomy for those who desire it,” when it parrots the propaganda of the bourgeoisie in the present battle, the biggest fight for Indian rights in ages?

After the SL/ICL’s admitted “social-imperialist” support to the U.S. occupation of Haiti after 2010 earthquake, these ex-Trotskyists now take a social-chauvinist line, from the Greek islands to Standing Rock. For shame! ■

March” and simultaneously pushed for U.S. intervention in Syria.<sup>13</sup> (They tried the same tack lately with soulful pictures and fake blogs by 7-year-olds in Aleppo.) But there’s another factor involved: bourgeois party politics. ETP/Sunoco chief Kelcy Warren, Continental CEO Harold Hamm and the rest of the pipeliners are staunch Republicans, while the owner of the BNSF railway which monopolizes oil transport by rail from North Dakota is Obama backer Warren Buffett, the Democratic Party’s favorite capitalist.

Buffett is a liberal, known for his calls

<sup>13</sup> See “The Great ‘People’s Climate March’ Scam,” *The Internationalist* No. 38, October-November 2014.

to “tax the rich,” and his famous remark that “There’s class warfare, all right, but it’s my class, the rich class, that’s making war, and we’re winning.” Oil “independents” like ETP’s Warren and Hamm are small fry, worth perhaps \$7 billion and \$14 billion respectively; Buffett is the big time, with a net worth of \$73.7 billion, according to *Forbes*. He also is a leading “philanthrocapitalist” and has invested in wind farms and solar energy. His son and designated successor Howard Buffett (who also sits on the board of Coca-Cola) received the 2011 World Ecology Award for launching the Global Water Initiative. Even more specifically, Warren Buffet gave over \$6 million in 2013

to the Tides Foundation of San Francisco, of which \$1.3 million was funneled to two environmental groups (Honor the Earth and the Indigenous Environmental Network) which have been active opposing pipeline construction. Meanwhile, the Buffetts bought the BNSF railroad in 2006, just as the Bakken boom was taking off, and since then have been making money hand over fist moving oil by rail from North Dakota.

Whether fuel is transported by rail or pipeline, or energy produced by wind farms and solar power, environmentalist efforts to promote a “clean” capitalism are doomed to fail, while ensuring that the chaos of production for profit will continue. Governments

from Bismarck to Washington defend the interests of their big business masters, for whom workers’ deaths and ecological disasters are just a cost of doing business. Class-conscious workers should fight for union safety committees and labor action to put a stop to unsafe operations, which requires ousting the pro-capitalist labor bureaucracy. But to counter global climate change it’s necessary to sweep away the capitalist system, embraced by the reactionary oil moguls and “progressive” environmentalist NGOs alike. Only through international socialist revolution will it be possible to establish a rationally planned world economy to deal with the mounting environmental danger. ■



# Mass Mobilization and Workers Action Are Key

# Free Mumia Abu-Jamal

# And All Black Panther and MOVE Prisoners!

On January 3, federal district judge Robert Mariani ordered the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (DOC) to promptly provide Mumia Abu-Jamal the medical treatment he urgently needs to fight a deadly hepatitis-C infection. The ruling, following a year-and-a-half long legal battle, enjoins prison authorities from enforcing a “protocol” denying Mumia the highly effective DAA medication. The DOC refused him treatment even when he was in a coma and near death in March 2015.

Judge Mariani’s decision granting a preliminary injunction is quite strong in determining that the DOC is “allowing Plaintiff’s condition to worsen while his liver function and his health continues to deteriorate,” which in the case of a degenerative disease violates the Eighth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution against cruel and unusual punishment.

This decision offers hope for medical relief for thousands of prisoners across the U.S. There are 7,000 inmates with hep C in Pennsylvania alone. The ruling is welcome but it is reversible and Mumia’s attorneys warn that they expect the DOC to appeal.

When he learned of the judge’s decision, Mumia wrote:

“I thought of thousands of men and women in Pennsylvania prisons, suffering from the unforgiving ravages of hepatitis C - and now, who had new hope.

“I thought of the prisoners who also suffered from Hep C, and were denied treatment by the DOC - and died, choking on toxins that their liver could no longer expel.

“They did not live long enough to see this day.”

December 9 marks the 35th anniversary of the arrest and attempted police assassination of Mumia Abu-Jamal, the foremost class-war prisoner in the United States. For three and a half decades, Mumia has been held behind bars - almost 30 years in solitary confinement on Pennsylvania’s Death Row - convicted on bogus charges of the 1981 shooting death of Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner. The former Black Panther and renowned radical black journalist has been the target of an unrelenting vendetta by the capitalist state. A potential legal opening for Jamal could come from a recent U.S. Supreme Court decision that set a powerful precedent of throwing out a conviction based on prosecutorial and judicial misconduct. But for every legal precedent, bitter experience has shown that there is a “Mumia exception.”

On August 7, Jamal’s lawyers filed a new appeal based on a June Supreme Court decision in the case of *Williams v Pennsylvania*. That ruling held that, “Under the Due Process Clause there is an impermissible risk of actual bias when a judge earlier had significant, personal involvement as a prosecutor in a critical decision regarding the defendant’s case.” Therefore the Supremes threw out the decision of the state supreme court upholding the death sentence against Terrance Williams.

January-February 2017



Internationalist Group marched with hundreds in Philadelphia in May 2007.

Significantly, the prosecutor/judge guilty of “actual bias” in the *Williams* decision, Pennsylvania chief justice Ronald Castille, also played a crucial role in Jamal’s frame-up and conviction. Legally, the two cases are analogous. Politically, there is a huge difference: Mumia is the potent symbol of resistance to racism, imperialism and the mass incarceration of millions.

Even after a federal court ruled for a second time in 2011 that his death sentence was unconstitutional and Mumia was resentenced to what he described as “slow death row” - life imprisonment with no possibility of parole - prison officials are trying to kill him by medical neglect. In August 2015, Mumia’s lawyers filed suit for negligence, malpractice and deprivation of his Eighth Amendment rights to medical care, including hepatitis C medication. This August a federal judge ruled that the state prison “protocol” for inmates with hepatitis C in fact violates the constitutional prohibition of cruel and unusual punishment. But Mumia’s appeal was denied on the grounds that it should have been directed to state prison officials rather than local authorities. On October 6, Mumia’s attorneys filed a new lawsuit demanding hep C treatment.

The ruling class and their enforcers, the cops, are determined to silence Jamal, the eloquent “voice of the voiceless,” who has courageously exposed and denounced their endless crimes. The Fraternal Order of Police, in lockstep with the bourgeois politicians and judicial mafia who vie for the FOP’s support, are determined to see their nemesis die behind bars. Like the decades-long persecution of the Black Panther Party, which continues to this day, and the racist police murder machine that grinds on despite tens of thousands marching in Black Lives Matter protests, the persecution of Jamal can only be defeated by mass mobilization and class-struggle

workers action that doesn’t flinch at taking on the capitalist state. That is what it will take to bring Mumia home to his loving family, friends and legions of supporters.

## Ronald Castille: Prosecutor and Judge, Over and Over

Ronald Castille was the Philadelphia district attorney who signed off on the death penalty for Terrance Williams, convicted of a 1984 murder. In 2012, Williams’ execution was stayed but the state appealed to Pennsylvania’s Supreme Court where Castille was by then the chief justice. Williams’ attorneys moved that Castille recuse himself from the case. Request denied. Instead, the court led by Castille reinstated Williams’ death sentence. This double role, as prosecutor and then judge, is what the U.S. Supreme Court ruled unconstitutional, violating the due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.

Same pattern in Jamal’s case: During Mumia’s 1982 trial Ronald Castille was a senior Assistant District Attorney, and in Mumia’s 1988 direct appeal Castille was the District Attorney who filed the prosecution briefs opposing Mumia’s request to overturn the conviction and death sentence. After running for Philly mayor in the Republican primary in 1991 (where he was defeated by former police chief and mayor Frank Rizzo), Castille was elected to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. When Mumia appealed under the Post Conviction Relief Act (PCRA) in 1995, the case was referred to the same notorious hanging judge, Albert Sabo, who oversaw Mumia’s original trial and who, according to the sworn report of a court stenographer, was overheard saying that he intended to help the prosecution “fry the n...r.”

In Mumia’s appeal to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court of Sabo’s denial of his petition for PCRA relief, he moved for Castille to recuse (remove) himself from

the case because of his prior role as D.A. Castille refused and the state’s top court in 1989 turned down Jamal’s appeal. In 1999, with Castille again participating, the state supreme court again affirmed the denial of post-conviction relief. In 2003, 2004, 2008 and 2012 the court repeatedly refused appeals by Jamal’s lawyers, and, as Mumia’s new petition states, “each of those decisions were [sic] affirmed by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court with Justice Castille participating in the consideration and deciding of each one.”

As for “actual bias,” of this there can be no doubt. Ronald Castille was elected to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court in 1993 (becoming chief judge in 2008) in a campaign where he bragged that as district attorney he “sent 45 people to death rows.” Also as Philly D.A., Castille oversaw the production of a sinister 1986 “training tape” for prosecutors demonstrating how to exclude African Americans from juries (his name appears on the title piece). The number one argument in Mumia’s direct appeal, which Castille as district attorney opposed, was that a black woman was removed without cause and replaced with a white man with ties to law enforcement.

In 2011, the federal appeals court upheld (for the second time) a 2001 ruling that Mumia’s death sentence was unconstitutional. A few months later the state announced that it would no longer seek the death penalty. But at Mahony prison in Frackville, PA the state is now trying to carry out the original death sentence by denying Mumia urgently needed medical attention to treat a life-threatening hepatitis C infection. It’s been almost five years since Mumia tested positive for the hep C antibody. In March 2015, Mumia was hospitalized in critical condition and on the brink of diabetic coma. His attorneys filed for an antiviral treatment which has a 95% cure rate, but prison officials ruled that he wasn’t sick enough to be eligible. Now, while the courts dither over which officials should be sued, the infection continues to ravage Mumia’s body.

## Ruling Class Vendetta Against Mumia

In the *Williams* case, the Supreme Court remanded (sent back to state courts) it for “further proceedings,” and perhaps Williams will get another day in court. Mumia’s legal defense team is seeking this as well. Marxists support using every legal avenue for defense in the bourgeois *injustice* system. At the same time, we know full well that the courts are prepared to shred the Constitution and the state will spit on its own laws to bury Mumia Abu-Jamal. As we have repeatedly stated, “The fundamental fact is, *there is no justice for the oppressed in the racist, capitalist courts*” (“Death Sentence Dropped Against Mumia Abu-Jamal,” *The Internationalist* special supplement, January 2012).

Mumia has been in the crosshairs of the state from the day in the 1960s when, as a teenager, he was “beaten into the



Black Panther Party” by the Philadelphia cops. An award-winning journalist on the radio and in print, he championed the poor, the homeless and the MOVE commune against the Philly cops’ murderous attacks. By the late 1960s, the FBI had declared war on the Black Panther Party. At least 38 Panthers were killed in assaults across the country and hundreds were hounded to prison. Chicago Panther leaders Fred Hampton and Mark Clark were slain in their beds in a police/FBI raid in 1969. FBI chief J. Edgar Hoover might as well have been talking about Mumia, as well as Hampton and Clark, when he wrote in March 1968, “The Negro youth and moderate[s] must be made to understand that if they succumb to revolutionary teaching, they will be dead revolutionaries.”

While racist reactionaries repeatedly denounce Mumia Abu-Jamal as a “cop killer,” the fact of his innocence has been proven over and over. On 9 December 1981, the night Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner was killed, Mumia was shot and then beaten nearly to death by the cops. But his Kafkaesque nightmare was just beginning. At trial, the state’s case consisted of a concocted confession, falsified ballistics and perjured witnesses who were intimidated, promised deals or had reason to lie. The playbook of dirty tricks was on display from the start: black potential jurors were repeatedly rejected by peremptory challenges, and Mumia was denied the right to represent himself and even to be in the courtroom during his trial. All of these were cited in Jamal’s appeals, to no avail. This is the typical *modus operandi* of Philly cops and courts.

Mumia Abu-Jamal was a threat to the racist prerogatives of the tight-knit local ruling class, Democrats and Republicans together, who ran Philadelphia like a Southern city, keeping the black population down through cop terror. In the early 1970s, the federal Civil Rights Commission denounced the Philly police as a “paramilitary institution” that acted like “a law unto itself.” It produced a 271-page list of thousands of people beaten or shot by the police. By the early ’80s, the FBI was investigating. In 1999, a professional hit man, Arnold Beverly, admitted that he had killed Faulkner, contracted by the mob and corrupt police who feared Faulkner was a danger to their system of graft and payoffs to allow illegal gambling, prostitution and drugs. Beverly’s videotaped confession was never allowed into evidence.<sup>1</sup>

But the vendetta against Mumia has never been purely, or even mainly, a local affair. It was part of the government’s continuing war against the Black Panther Party and black militants generally. This was summed up in, but by no means limited to, the murderous COINTELPRO (Counterintelligence Program) masterminded by Hoover. By 1971 Mumia was on the FBI’s Security Index (people considered a threat to “national security”) and in Category 2 of the ADEX (those people to be picked up and put in concentration camps in a “national emergency”). Since the end of chattel slavery, the racist ruling class has held African Americans

<sup>1</sup> See “It Will Take Workers’ Power to Free Muma Abu-Jamal!” *The Internationalist* No. 26, July 2007. Available at [www.internationalist.org](http://www.internationalist.org).



**Former Black Panther and award-winning journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal was sentenced to die by the racist courts and spent almost 30 years in solitary confinement on Pennsylvania’s death row. The state is still trying to kill Mumia through medical neglect in order to silence the powerful “voice of the voiceless.”**

in thrall by terror, from KKK nightriders to unbridled police murder and the “stop-and-frisk” policing of black and Latino neighborhoods that Donald Trump wants to intensify. Mumia was a threat to that system because he talked back and exposed its workings.

The death penalty itself is a legacy of slavery. The unending campaign to kill Mumia recalls the racist pathology that swept the country a century ago when widespread lynching was a punishment for black people who “didn’t know their place.” Today this is continued as police wantonly murder civilians with impunity (current count as of December 6, 1,072 people killed by police so far in 2016), particularly black, Latino, immigrant and poor white people. Time after time, the killer cops’ justification is that their victim “refused to obey” police orders. The killers in blue get away with it, even in the exceedingly rare cases where a cop is actually charged with something, because grand juries are under the thumb of prosecutors, and the law itself provides ample immunity. Police protection societies like the FOP back this up by accusing protesters such as the Black Lives Matter movement of being “cop killers,” just as they do with Mumia.

How can we combat this murder machine which has kept Mumia behind bars for 35 years and continues to rob innocent people of their lives? Liberals and reformist would-be socialists keep putting forward doomed strategies hoping that somehow the system would work for the oppressed, that with enough pressure the “scales of justice” would be righted. For years they kept calling for a “fair trial” rather than demanding Mumia’s freedom, as if any trial in these rigged courts could be fair. Then came the appeals to Attorney General Eric Holder to open a civil rights investigation of Jamal’s case, and later calls on Barack Obama to pardon Mumia as he leaves office. But having a black president and head of the “Justice” Department made no difference. *We are combating a whole system of racist re-*

*pression, and its name is capitalism.*

In this system, Democrats and Republicans are sometimes at loggerheads, but work together as partner parties of American capitalism when its vital interests are at stake. Prosecutor/judge Ronald Castille considered running for Philadelphia mayor as a Democrat in 1991, but then ran in the Republican primary, where he was defeated by ex-Democratic mayor and Philly top cop Rizzo, who himself switched to the Republicans after being defeated by Wilson Goode. Black Democrat Goode ordered the 1985 police bombing of the MOVE commune, torching a whole neighborhood in West Philadelphia. Castille’s predecessor as D.A., Ed Rendell (who ran the frame-up prosecution of Mumia in 1982), was a Democrat, as was Castille’s successor, Lynne Abraham, known as the Queen of Death for putting over 100 African Americans on death row.

Rendell went on to become Philly mayor in 1991 and then governor of Pennsylvania in 2003. As a wheeler-dealer in the national Democratic Party, he has made sure to squelch any moves in favor of Mumia. The whole Pennsylvania Democratic Party is a den of corruption, epitomized by now ex-state attorney general Kathleen Kane – convicted in August of perjury, conspiracy and obstruction of justice – who played a key role in the on-going frame-up of Corey Walker.<sup>2</sup> Democrat Bill Clinton passed the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996 that has blocked Mumia and other death row inmates from presenting new evidence of their innocence. And as we wrote, from city hall to the state house and the White House, “Democrats Are the Bosses of the Racist Killer Cops” (*The Internationalist* No. 42, January-February 2016).

Even so, we still hear calls on Democratic president Barack Obama to pardon Mumia. An article on the liberal/“progressive” web site Count-<sup>2</sup> See “The Frame-Up of Corey Walker,” *The Internationalist*, February 2016.

terPunch (25 October), “President Obama: Before the Empire Falls, Free Leonard Peltier and Mumia Abu-Jamal,” ended with the plea, “Yes You Can, President Obama, Yes You Can!” Actually, he can’t: only the Pennsylvania governor can pardon or commute sentences of those convicted of state charges (as the writer acknowledges). But beyond that, as we have detailed, Obama has repeatedly stated that anyone found guilty of killing a cop “deserve[s] the death penalty or life in prison.”<sup>3</sup>

Today, those who look to the bourgeois state have come full circle and again are looking for salvation in a new trial, foreseeing that an appeal based on the *Williams* decision could provide a path through the courts to overturn Mumia’s conviction, that “if successful” Mumia could then redo his numerous appeals including not only the sentencing but the frame-up conviction itself. But even in the unlikely event that a new trial were ordered, despite all the perjured testimony, phony ballistics “evidence,” recanting “witnesses” and the rest, historical experience and the Marxist analysis of the capitalist state concur: there is little reason to believe that Mumia could prevail

in a judicial system organized from top to bottom to ensure that those targeted by the police are found guilty – the facts and the law be damned!

In short, even as lawyers pursue every legal avenue, we cannot look to the capitalist courts or politicians and parties for justice against the cops, who are the badge-toting hired guns of the capitalist rulers. But that does not mean that there is no hope, that Jamal will inevitably die behind bars. When Mumia was on the verge of being killed in the summer of 1995, with a warrant for his execution signed by the governor, mass, international protests were crucial in saving his life. Now, as judges in the same court that has repeatedly turned down Mumia’s appeals try to figure out a rationale for why the *Williams* decision *doesn’t* apply to Mumia, such mobilizations are again vitally important. Ten years ago, when Mumia’s life was in the hands of a federal appeals court in Philadelphia we wrote:

“The relentless repression against Mumia is proof positive that there is no justice for the poor, blacks and all the oppressed in the capitalist courts. This is particularly true for those seen by the rulers as a revolutionary threat to their system of exploitation of modern-day wage slaves. The Internationalist Group and League for the Fourth International have called to mobilize working-class action to demand freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal. In April 1999, our comrades of the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil initiated a statewide work stoppage by the teachers union in Rio de Janeiro, carried out in conjunction with the International Longshore and Warehouse Union which shut down U.S. West Coast ports, demanding that Mumia be freed. This was only a taste of the kind of class mobilization that will be necessary to win freedom for Jamal and put an end to the heinous system of state murder.”

<sup>3</sup> See “Mumia’s Life Is On the Line: Mobilize Labor/Black Power to Free Him Now!” in *The Internationalist* No. 30, November-December 2009.



# Free the Panthers and MOVE Prisoners!

In demanding that Mumia Abu-Jamal be sentenced to die, the Philadelphia prosecutor pounded on his membership in the Black Panther Party. From the highest levels, the U.S. government had declared war on the Panthers. Not only were at least 38 BPP members killed by the police, hundreds were jailed, 348 in 1969 alone, according to *Po-lice Magazine* (6 September 2012).

Several former Black Panther Party members eventually gained their freedom after decades in jail, including:

**Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt)**, former BPP Minister of Defense in Los Angeles, who was jailed for 27 years after surviving an LAPD/FBI assault four days after the December 1969 Chicago raid that killed Fred Hampton and Mark Clark (see “Geronimo Is Out! Now Free Mumia!” *The Internationalist* supplement, 16 June 1997); Geronimo died in 2011 (see *The Internationalist* No. 33, Summer 2011).

**Eddie Conway**, former Baltimore Panther, who was released after 44 years in prison in Maryland when an appellate court ruled that the jury in his case had been given improper instructions designed to produce the maximum sentence.

**Albert Woodfox**, released from Louisiana’s notorious Angola Prison after 43 years in solitary confinement, one of the Angola 3. Woodfox was a marked man for starting a Panther chapter inside the prison’s walls in 1971 with fellow inmates **Robert King** (who was released after 29 years in solitary) and **Herman Wallace**, who was freed in 2013 after 40 years in prison, 37 of them in solitary, and died three days later.

Other Panthers died in prison, including:

**Hugo Pinell**, the last imprisoned



**Delbert Africa being beaten by cops in 1978 Philly police raid on MOVE commune.**

member of the San Quentin 6 (prisoners framed in a melee following the 1971 assassination of Panther **George Jackson**); Pinell was murdered in jail in 2015 with the connivance of officials at California State Prison at Sacramento.

**Mondo we Langa (David Rice)**, one of the Omaha 2, who died earlier this year after spending 45 years in prison as a result of a frame-up personally orchestrated by FBI chief J. Edgar Hoover to “neutralize” the Omaha Panther leadership.

But numerous Panthers are still behind bars, including:

**Edward Poindexter**, now in his 46th year in Nebraska’s maximum security penitentiary, who like his co-defendant Mondo was targeted by COINTELPRO;

**Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin (H. Rap Brown)**, jailed since 2000;

**Russell Maroon Shoatz**, 44 years in prison, 23 in solitary, jailed in the notorious 1972 mass raid on Panther headquarters in Philly;

**Veronza Bowers**, 43 years in prison; **Kamau Sadiki (Freddie Hilton)**, sentenced to life in 2003;

**Romaine “Chip” Fitzgerald**, jailed in California since 1969 (47 years);

**Robert “Seth” Hayes**, jailed since 1973;

**Sundiata Acoli**, jailed since 1973 (46 years);

**Mutulu Shakur**, jailed since 1981 (35 years) in connection with the daring 1979 escape of his sister **Assata Shakur (Joanne Chesimard)**, who received asylum in Cuba; under the administration of Democrat Barack Obama, Assata was put on the FBI’s Ten Most Wanted list and the U.S. government had demanded she be handed over in negotiations over re-establishing diplomatic relations with Cuba;

and numerous others.

In addition, members of the MOVE 9, seized in the 1978 Philadelphia police attack on their Powelton commune, have been in prison ever since (38 years), including **Delbert Orr Africa**, a former member of the Black Panther Party in Chicago; **Debbie Sims Africa**; **Charles (Chuck) Sims Africa**; **Janet Holloway Africa**; **Janine Phillips Africa**; **Edward (Eddie) Goodman Africa** and **Michael Davis Africa**. The video of Delbert Africa being viciously kicked in the head by Philly cops has become a symbol of police brutality in the misnamed “city of brotherly love.” All nine MOVE prisoners have been eligible for parole since 2008, but their requests have repeatedly been turned down on the recommendation of the Philadelphia district attorney.

The Internationalist Group and the League for the Fourth International call on class-conscious working people and defenders of democratic rights to join in class-struggle defense demanding *freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal, for all remaining imprisoned Black Panthers, the MOVE 9, American Indian Movement leader Leonard Peltier and all class-war prisoners*. And we repeat: *Hands off Assata Shakur!* ■

ridiculous illusions about ‘justice’ from the courts of the enemy. It relies mainly on legal proceedings. It seeks to blur the issue of the class struggle, it shrinks from the ‘vulgar and noisy’ demonstrations of the militant workers and throws the mud of slander on them.”

—*International Labor Defender*, January 1927, reprinted in *Notebook of an Agitator* (1958)

Mumia Abu-Jamal was supposed to die that night of 9 December 1981 when he was felled by a bullet from Daniel Faulkner’s gun and beaten senseless by the police. When he survived, the cops and courts have never rested in their crusade to kill him, whether in the gas chamber or now by denying him medication. Keeping Mumia imprisoned for 35 years and withholding life-saving drugs are a demonstration of the wanton cruelty of the capitalist state power. It is Mumia’s defiance of that power that inspires us and infuriates the state. Mumia is the living symbol of the defiant Black man. Despite every effort to squeeze the life and political spirit out of him, he remains unbroken. Even from death row and “slow death row” Mumia has continued to write and rail against the racism and imperialism of his oppressors.

The history of U.S. racism is the history of social control through criminalization of black defiance. It begins with the “slave breaker,” as Frederick Douglass in his autobiography called his tormentor, who through brutal beatings and gross deception sought to break young slaves “in body, soul, and spirit.” Then came the convict leasing system under Jim Crow segregation and now mass incarceration. A special place in their hell holes is reserved for those who don’t break. That is what binds Mumia and the struggle for his freedom to the resistance to cop terror on the streets all over this country. The common justification by the cops who murdered Eric Garner in New York, Michael Brown in Missouri, Sandra Bland in Texas and Keith Scott in North Carolina is that their victims didn’t obey their orders, or didn’t do so fast enough.

Today Eric Garner is dead, Raymond Orta was jailed in retaliation for filming the police murder of Garner, while killer cop Daniel Pantaleo who choked Eric to death has a cushy desk job where he pulled down \$120,000 last year, including \$35,000 in overtime and “unspecified pay.” The list of those wantonly killed by the police grows longer and longer. And Mumia Abu-Jamal is sick and still in prison, denied the life-saving medication he needs. Mumia is not the only one. Many of his former Black Panther comrades were condemned to life imprisonment. While some managed to get out after decades behind bars, their lives shredded, and others died in prison, a number are still being held as hostages (see partial list below) by a vicious ruling class determined to teach a bloody lesson to all those who dare to rebel.

This is the society we live in, and will continue to live in until a revolution of the workers and their allies, of African Americans, Native Americans, Latinos, immigrants and all those who “have nothing to lose but their chains,” brings down the edifice of oppression and repression, opening the doors of the modern Bastille prisons and the road to freedom and justice denied them by the capitalist exploiters. ■

—“It Will Take Workers’ Power to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!” *The Internationalist* No. 26, July 2007

Mumia has *millions* of supporters around the world. The point, however, is to mobilize an effective force that can win his freedom. Protests defending Mumia have fallen off since he was taken off death row, yet talk of “reigniting the movement” without a strategy to take on the capitalist state is so much hot air. Mass protest combined with an effective legal defense is vital, but it is not enough. In recent years, tens and hundreds of thousands of young (and not-so-young) people have taken to the streets to denounce racist police murder ... and the killer cops keep on killing with abandon. To jam the gears of state repression we must mobilize workers’ *power* not just to block some streets and highways, important as that can be, but to impede the functioning of the capitalist system. And that requires above all a program for revolutionary *class* struggle.

Events may be pushing in that direction. With their all-out defense of killer cops, president-elect Donald Trump and his team of hard-line racists and KKK

apologists could set off mass protests. Cop protection rackets like the FOP and PBA (Patrolmen’s Benevolent Association) do their bit by denouncing every protester and critic, from Black Lives Matter to Mumia Abu-Jamal, as “cop killers.” It’s not as if cops are in danger: police are one of the safest occupational categories in the U.S.<sup>4</sup> Rather, by posing the issue as “cop killers” rather than “killer cops” they put the screws to liberals, who support the capitalist state.

So long as protesters see the issue as a few “bad apples,” they fall prey to the illusion that some “reform” scheme (civilian review boards, “community policing,” etc.) can somehow change the police, which as an institution is racist to the core.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, protests will be derailed, as in December 2014 and July 2016, when a deranged person or a lone avenger out of desperation and despair sets out to even the score. Effective protest depends on understanding that American capitalism rests

<sup>4</sup> See “Whose Life Is On the Line? Cop Stats” in *The Internationalist*, February 2016.

<sup>5</sup> See “Bad Apples, Broken Windows, and Other Myths About the Police,” *The Internationalist*, February 2016.

on a system of racist repression, including black as well as white cops, “soft cops” as well as hard.

From the outset, there have been counterposed strategies over how to defend Mumia Abu-Jamal, as has been true of the Scottsboro Boys, Sacco and Vanzetti and other major defense cases. As opposed to those who seek salvation through the bourgeois state, whether the courts or politicians, revolutionary Marxists look to the workers and oppressed. As James P. Cannon, the founder of American Trotskyism, wrote in 1927 on “Who Can Save Sacco and Vanzetti”:

“One policy is the policy of the class struggle. It puts the center of gravity in the protest movement of the workers of America and the world. It puts all faith in the power of the masses and no faith whatever in the justice of the courts. While favoring all possible legal proceedings, it calls for agitation, publicity, demonstrations – organized protest on a national and international scale. It calls for unity and solidarity of all workers on this burning issue, regardless of conflicting views on other questions....

“The other policy is the policy of ‘respectability,’ of the ‘soft pedal’ and of



**For Mass Labor/Immigrant Mobilization to Stop Deportations,  
Defend Muslims and the Rights of Us All!**

# Defend Immigrant Students

## Immigration Police and All Cops Off Campus!

**By CUNY Internationalist Clubs  
and the Internationalist Group  
(U.S. Section of the League for the Fourth International)**

The election of arch-racist Donald Trump to the presidency of U.S. imperialism has set off a wave of fear of mass deportations among immigrant workers and students in cities across the country. Spouting vile anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim rhetoric throughout his campaign, Trump promised to end the Obama administration's supposed "non-enforcement policies" on immigration in the first days of his term. His nominee for U.S. Attorney General, Jeff Sessions, has been a virulent opponent of the DREAM Act and along with the Republican majority in Congress has vowed to cancel Barack Obama's DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) program. There are an estimated 6,000 undocumented students at the City University of New York who are directly threatened.

*Immigrant and Muslim students and their families must be defended by all CUNY students, faculty and staff, as well as by all defenders of democratic rights.* To do so, we must be clear about who we are fighting against. While Republican candidate Trump vowed to deport all undocumented immigrants (underestimated at 11 million people), the Democratic Obama administration during its first seven years deported over 5.5 million undocumented immigrants (including "removals" and "returns"), in addition to another 2.7 million "voluntary departures." Moreover, the legal basis for the deportations of undocumented immigrants is the 1996 "Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act" enacted by the administration of Bill Clinton. In short, *both the partner parties of American capitalism are enemies of immigrants.*

In the aftermath of the election, there has been a dramatic spike in racist attacks, including on university campuses. This poses an urgent need to organize defense of immigrant students, as well as of African Americans, Latinos, Muslims, Native Americans, gays, lesbians and other targets of violent assaults. Beyond this, the Trump victory has given rise to the "sanctuary campus" movement – a push to make college campuses "sanctuaries" for undocumented students. While supporting this demand critically, we warn against liberal illusions. The Cosecha movement which is promoting this seeks to "claim spaces of resistance and protection for our country's most vulnerable people." It calls for "sustained mass non-cooperation" through such measures as consumer boycotts "of one business at a time" leading to a "general strike" (defined as "not going to work or school for seven days").

At CUNY, the sanctuary campus movement has taken the form of demands on the chancellor and presidents of the 24 campuses to ban Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) police from CUNY campuses, refuse to share information with *migra* enforcers without individuals' consent and forbid CUNY cops from cooperating with immigration officials. It culminates in a call on the administration to "Publicly call on state and federal governments to protect students, faculty, staff, and families from deportation and to provide them a path to citizenship."

As revolutionary Marxists, we support banning ICE from campuses, forbidding campus authorities from cooperating with them, and keeping information about undocumented students secret. But we do not look to the campus administration – which runs CUNY on behalf of the ruling

## ICE Hands Off!



**CUNY Internationalist Clubs at October 20 NYC demonstration protesting U.S. deportation and exclusion of Haitians.**

class – as the defenders of immigrants. We vividly recall how CUNY cops, together with NYPD riot police, viciously attacked student protesters in November 2011 at a Board of Trustees meeting at Baruch College. The police (as well as rent-a-cop security guards) are all part of the repressive apparatus of the capitalist rulers, the backbone of their state, of which ICE, the Border Patrol and other "Homeland Security" officials are an integral part. These enforcers of bourgeois "law and order" must be opposed by those who stand with undocumented students and workers.

Moreover, calling on the federal government – under Donald Trump, no less – to protect undocumented immigrants, or on New York governor Andrew Cuomo (who repeatedly sacrificed the DREAM Act in budget negotiations) to aid immigrant students is not only a diversion, seeking to get the oppressed to rely on their oppressors, it is positively delusional. The CUNY Internationalist Clubs say: *All cops off campuses! ICE, hands off our fellow students!* And contrary to the Democrats' fraud of an immigration "reform" that would provide a "path to citizenship," we call for *full citizenship rights for all immigrants*, underscoring that in this imperialist epoch such a basic democratic demand can only be achieved by a workers government.

Defenders of immigrant rights, and the rights of all the oppressed, must fight tooth and nail against all attacks whether from the state or racist individuals or gangs, and the sentiment to create "sanctuaries" for the persecuted, as many churches did in the 1980s, is positive. But campuses will not be islands of security in a sea of reaction any more than they can be "ivory towers" isolated from the rest of capitalist society. The official assault on immigrants will likely take place outside the halls of academe. The Obama administration was well aware that it could stir up a hornet's nest of opposition by carrying out *migra* arrests in schools, universities, churches and hospitals and issued a

November 2011 ICE memo cautioning about undertaking actions at such "sensitive locations." Even a Trump administration may hesitate to do that.

A statement by the CUNY faculty and staff union, Professional Staff Congress, pledges that "our classrooms, laboratories, libraries, studios and offices will remain spaces where the targeting of students based on their identities, beliefs, appearance, or immigration status will never, ever be tolerated." It's good that the union is stating that, but what about outside of campus? And if students *are* targeted, what then? More appeals to campus administrators? To the city government? New York City mayor Bill de Blasio made a major speech at Cooper Union vowing that NYC would be a national model of resistance, vowing to "protect immigrant families threatened with deportation" and repeating that "we stand by you." But as a comment on his Twitter site noted, "Mayor de Blasio rolled over for the N.Y.P.D. after they did a back-turning protest. You think he won't roll over for Trump?"

Calls on city, state and federal governments as well as campus administrations to "protect" immigrants create dangerous illusions about where the threat comes from. We can only rely on our own power. To that end, the PSC should issue a statement that it will defend immigrant students, faculty and staff *and their families*, as well as all those subject to racist attack, and join in preparing for *mass labor-immigrant action to defend those at risk and to stop deportations*. Other unions and all opponents of racism and defenders of immigrants' rights should do likewise, and students should massively participate in such an initiative to organize active *working-class resistance independent of the bosses' state, parties and politicians*. This should be given organizational form with committees on every campus, setting up phone trees, using social media and forming networks for rapid response and outreach.

Trump has also threatened to cut off funds to "sanctuary cities" which have refused, in different degrees, to cooperate with ICE police, most commonly by refusing to hold those arrested on minor charges for deportation. In his Cooper Union speech, de Blasio vowed that in the face of calls for a registry of Muslims, NYC would "take legal action" to block it; that the city would not "tear families apart" (and single immigrants?), that it would "step in" if the feds try to deport "law-abiding New Yorkers." How? By providing legal counsel. In the case of bias attacks, he counsels "call 911" – i.e., to bring in the racist NYPD! Yet what's needed is to defy the repressive apparatus of the capitalist state, bringing the power of the multiracial, multiethnic working class into the fight at the head of all the oppressed.

It is possible to stop deportations in this city where 40% of the entire population was born in another country. To do so requires using our power to bring the capitalist system to a grinding halt. Unions should be prepared to flood the streets en masse, physically blocking the *migra* thugs. If students' families are picked up for deportation, their school should shut down – followed by others in solidarity. If a CUNY student is seized by ICE, there should be a citywide walkout by students, faculty and staff. And rather than impotent consumer boycotts, New York City has a powerful working class consisting of transportation, education, construction, health and food service workers who together with students can paralyze the center of finance capital with strike action. MTA workers showed the way in 2005 before they were sold out.



As we chanted in mass marches of tens of thousands of city workers and CUNY students a decade ago, “Workers and students, shut the city down!” Defense of immigrant students must be part of a broader struggle for social emancipation. The CUNY Internationalist Clubs were founded in 2001 when we launched the campaign that halted CUNY’s post-9/11 “anti-immigrant war purge” against undocumented students. We fight for open admissions, free tuition, abolishing the Board of Trustees and student-worker-teacher control of the universities. These are all straightforward democratic demands, but in decaying American capitalism it will take a revolution to get them. We – the workers and oppressed – have the power. Facing the prospect of attacks from Trump’s administration, we must use that power, independent of and against the Democrats, Republicans and all capitalist parties, laying the basis for a workers party to lead the struggle for international socialist revolution. ■

## Shock electoral...

*sigue de la página 24*

tas y comentaristas están hablando acerca de un “desastre” electoral, de un “apocalipsis” y de la “resistencia”. Pero aquí hay una fundamental diferencia de *clase*: para los trabajadores y los oprimidos es necesario oponerse a *todos los partidos capitalistas*, echar tanto a los demócratas, como a El Donald. Así, para resistir, debemos en primer lugar **entender qué pasó y por qué**.

Pregúntese: ¿habría este shock traumático, habría estas protestas de masas si la candidata demócrata hubiera resultado electa? Por supuesto que no, puesto que para muchos de los que están participando en las manifestaciones, incluso si no votaron por ella, Hillary Clinton representaba de alguna manera un “mal menor” que el consumadamente malo Donald Trump. Pero no es así. Como señaló el Grupo Internacionalista en su sitio de Internet, se trataba de “la ‘elección’ entre el candidato más propenso a desencadenar un pogromo racista (Donald Trump del Partido Republicano) y la candidata más propensa a comenzar una Tercera Guerra Mundial (la rusófoba Hillary Clinton del Partido Demócrata)”.

¿Por qué entonces resultó Trump electo? Los comentaristas liberales lo presentan simplemente como una victoria del racismo rampante, particularmente el de los trabajadores blancos. Nadie puede obviar los llamados abiertamente racistas de Trump. Para el 50 por ciento de los votantes, esto, al menos no les impidió votar por él. El Ku Klux Klan y varias organizaciones nazis lo respaldaron con entusiasmo. Pero el voto racista duro es bastante menor –quizás un cuarto del electorado– y ha atacado violentamente a Obama desde 2008. Trump también ganó los votos de sectores acomodados de la clase media (el votante promedio a favor de Trump tenía un ingreso familiar de unos 72 mil dólares anuales), como ocurre normalmente con los republicanos.

Pero los que finalmente dieron la ventaja a Trump fueron los otros, los residentes de poblaciones rurales abandonadas por los jóvenes debido a que no tienen futuro en ellas, y los trabajadores que han visto sus industrias diezmadas y sus ciudades devastadas. La ira en contra del gobierno norteamericano proviene de las víctimas del *crash* de 2008 y de la depresión económica que continúa, que los arrojó al desempleo permanente o los redujo a empleados

a tiempo parcial con bajos salarios como en Walmart. Esta revuelta de los pequeños pueblos y del Cinturón del Óxido [las otrora ciudades industriales que hoy yacen en ruinas] en Estados Unidos está dirigida en contra de las políticas “libremercadas” impuestas tanto por los demócratas como por los republicanos. No todos son racistas: de hecho, millones de ellos, el 12 por ciento del total de los que votaron por Trump, también votaron por Barack Obama. Son víctimas del *capitalismo*.

Para la élite “neoliberal” de altos vuelos, ésta es la “gente olvidada”, residentes del paisaje *fly-over* (por la que pasa el avión) cuando se va de Wall Street a Hollywood, cuyos hombres del dinero financian a los demócratas Clinton y Obama. Los arrogantes mercadotécnicos políticos de Bill Clinton S.A. ven a los que votaron por Trump como los “perdedores” en la globalización del capitalismo “moderno”, mientras que los “ganadores” son los capitalistas de riesgo de Silicon Valley. Al perder sus trabajos, al serles arrebatadas sus casas por los bancos, se volvieron presa fácil para los demagogos que venden el oro falso del racismo antiinmigrante. El hecho es que los demócratas arrojaron a millones de trabajadores a los brazos de Trump.

Los políticos demócratas no lo admiten, ni pueden admitirlo, tachando a los obreros blancos como racistas, pues es resultado de la política económica de los demócratas. Comentaristas liberales como Thomas Friedman, quien impulsó esta política, ahora están sumidos en la desesperación: “Estoy angustiado, asustado, por mi país y por nuestra unidad. Y por primera vez, me siento abandonado en EE.UU.” (*New York Times*, 9 de noviembre). Izquierdistas seudo radicales que parlotean teorías acerca del “privilegio de la piel blanca”, buscan igualmente responsabilizar a los trabajadores blancos de la opresión negra, cuando es el racista sistema capitalista el que saca beneficios de la división entre los trabajadores negros y trabajadores blancos.

Mientras los liberales “neoliberales” se encuentran sumidos en la desesperanza, varios reformistas y “progresistas” liberales sostienen que el problema es que Hillary Clinton no era la candidata demócrata idónea. Dicen que debió haber sido el “socialista” del Partido Demócrata Bernie Sanders, quien se presentaba como “amigo de los trabajadores” y que en las primeras encuestas de opinión tenía mucho más apoyo en contra de Trump que la amiga de Wall Street Clinton. Sin embargo, Sanders (quien apoyó obsequiosamente a Clinton) no tenía un programa económico muy distinto al de ella porque *el “neoliberalismo” no es una política, sino que es la actual fase del capitalismo en decadencia*, en la que la caída de los salarios es dictada por la misma tasa decreciente de ganancia que desencadenó el *crash* de 2008.

Varios grupos reformistas de izquierda apoyaron a la candidata del Partido Verde Jill Stein, cuyo programa eco-capitalista no ofrecía nada a los trabajadores, y que anunciaba calamidades para los trabajadores del acero y mineros del carbón en nombre de la supuesta lucha en contra del cambio climático. Otros presentaron a sus propios candidatos con largas listas de ilusorias reivindicaciones que piden al estado capitalista (véase nuestro artículo “Left Green Dream of People-Friendly Capitalism” [El sueño ecologista de un capitalismo amigable con la gente] en *The Internationalist* No.

45, septiembre-octubre de 2016). El Grupo Internacionalista fue el único en luchar en los sindicatos para romper con demócratas, republicanos y con todos los partidos capitalistas, y a favor de la construcción de un partido obrero de lucha clasista.

Este programa, apoyado por el sindicato de trabajadores pintores en Portland, Oregon, es lo que podría ofrecer una verdadera respuesta a la demagogia de Trump. Debe lucharse a favor de esta perspectiva en el movimiento obrero en todo el país. Pero ahora vamos a enfrentar ataques de las victoriosas fuerzas de Trump, que representan una ominosa amenaza a sectores oprimidos en particular. Par luchar contra los ataques por venir, es necesario presentar un programa para movilizar el *poder* del movimiento obrero. Si el nuevo régimen pretende reiniciar las redadas en los centros urbanos, debe haber **movilizaciones obreras para impedir las deportaciones**, incluso bloqueándolos, inundando el área con defensores de los derechos de los inmigrantes.

Dado que violentas fuerzas racistas y hasta abiertamente fascistas se han envalentonado con la victoria de Trump, los musulmanes e inmigrantes de Medio Oriente en particular pueden ser blanco para ataques. Militantes con conciencia de clase deben iniciar ahora el esfuerzo de formar **guardias obreras de defensa** basadas en las organizaciones de masas de la clase obrera y los oprimidos, para contrarrestar esta amenaza. Los asesinatos policíacos de afroamericanos y latinos deben ser enfrentados con **masivas movilizaciones obreras en contra del terror policíaco**, tal como la que dirigió el sindicato de trabajadores portuarios en Oakland, California, el Primero de Mayo de 2015 (y el contingente que marchó en Portland ese mismo día de Sindicalistas en Contra de los Racistas Asesinatos de la Policía).

Los trabajadores de la educación deben prepararse para detener todo intento de detener a estudiantes indocumentados y a sus familias. Si una escuela cerrara y consiguiera el respaldo de otras, en respuesta a la detención de una familia inmigrante, eso galvanizaría a todo el país. Como marxistas no sólo defendemos el derecho a la

libertad de expresión y de reunión, sino que defendemos también el **derecho a la autodefensa de los negros** en contra de ataques racistas, en oposición a los abogados liberales del control de armas. En la atmósfera actual, los afroamericanos actuarían de manera sensata si se prepararan para ejercer los derechos que les concede la Segunda Enmienda a la Constitución estadounidense (que garantiza el derecho de portar armas).

Todos estos pasos prácticos para la resistencia en contra de la reacción racista en marcha sólo pueden ser una respuesta parcial que apunta a la verdadera solución: **la revolución obrera**. Ya sea que un Donald Trump o una Hillary Clinton (o Barack Obama) ocupen la Casa Blanca, el sistema capitalista seguirá inevitablemente generando racismo, pobreza y *guerra*. Hemos denunciado la política de Clinton en Siria y Ucrania por amenazar con una confrontación militar y una eventual guerra a toda escala con Rusia. Trump pretende ser amigo de Putin, pero al mismo tiempo amenaza con una guerra comercial –o algo peor– en contra de China. Como trotskistas, enfáticamente **defendemos al estado obrero deformado chino en contra del ataque imperialista**.

La inesperada elección de Donald Trump ha impactado a muchos que se oponen hasta la médula al racismo, el sexismo y al chovinismo antiinmigrante. Ha asestado un duro golpe al clintonista Partido Demócrata. No sólo ha arrojado al *establishment* político a una profunda confusión, sino que ha llevado a muchos a cuestionar la estructura política en su conjunto (incluido el Colegio Electoral, que sirvió como un bastión de la esclavocracia hasta la Guerra Civil, debido a que Trump pudo perder el voto popular y aun así ser presidente). Pero la alternativa que se presenta ante esta conmoción política no es una falsa “revolución política” como la que predicen Bernie Sanders y sus acólitos, sino una verdadera **revolución socialista internacional**.

¡Esta es la respuesta en contra de Trump ... y de Clinton, los demócratas y todos los partidos y políticos patronales! ■

## 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.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Apt. # \_\_\_\_\_ Tel. (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State/Province \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code/Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Country \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks/money orders payable to Mundial Publications and mail to:

Mundial Publications  
Box 3321, Church Street Station  
New York, NY 10008 U.S.A.

Write the Internationalist Group at the above address, or contact:

Tel (212) 460-0983 Fax (212) 614-8711

E-mail: internationalistgroup@msn.com



# Shock electoral postraumático

## Para derrotar a Trump ... y a los demócratas ¡Luchar por la revolución obrera!

Reproducimos a continuación el texto del volante el Grupo Internacionalista publicado, en inglés y español, el 10 de noviembre, dos días después de las elecciones norteamericanas.

El efecto de las elecciones del martes fue el de un relámpago en el cielo nocturno. Después de toda la cháchara feliz en los medios, incluso hasta entrada la tarde, de que la demócrata Hillary Clinton iba a ser la segura ganadora —la primera mujer presidente después del primer presidente negro— quedó súbitamente en claro que el republicano Donald Trump resultaría elegido. El racista, sexista, antiinmigrante, acosador de mujeres Trump, sería el próximo gerente general de Estados Unidos y comandante en jefe del imperialismo norteamericano. Para la mañana siguiente, decenas de millones se preguntaban con profunda consternación e incredulidad, cómo había podido pasar eso. Al mismo tiempo, las familias musulmanas, latinas, afroamericanas e inmigrantes experimentaban puro miedo.

Entonces, ¿qué hacer? Los grandes medios de comunicación corporativos encomian al unísono la “pacífica transferencia del poder”. El presidente Barack Obama dice de Trump que “todos estamos ahora apoyando su triunfo”. En su discurso de rendición, Clinton dijo “Le debemos una mente abierta y una oportunidad para gobernar”. Esto quiere decir que el abusivo multimillonario puede pisotear toda oposición. Nosotros respondemos ¡Para nada! Los que son blancos de los victoriosos racistas y enemigos de los sindicatos deben luchar contra ellos en toda la línea, pues de no responder lo pagarán caro. Los



Contingente internacionalista en la marcha del Primero de Mayo de 2015 en Nueva York.

**Hay que resistir – Pero ¿cómo?  
¡Acción obrera para detener las deportaciones!  
¡Forjar un partido obrero revolucionario!**

demócratas entregan las riendas del poder “gentilmente” porque al igual que los republicanos representan a la misma clase capitalista en contra nuestra, los trabaja-

dores y oprimidos.

Para muchos, los resultados de la elección fueron como una película de terror, quizás una escena sacada de *La noche de los muertos vivientes*. El mensaje: debes tener miedo, mucho miedo. En la escuela, el miércoles, los estudiantes latinos le preguntaban con miedo a sus maestros: ¿qué me va a pasar, van a deportar a mis papás? Defensores de los derechos de los inmigrantes reportaron un torrente de amenazas de muerte recibidas por vía telefónica. Grupos de racistas empezaron a gritar aquí y allá a personas provenientes de Medio Oriente que “ha llegado el momento de que se larguen de este país”. Mujeres musulmanas temen usar el *hiyab*, el velo islámico para la cabeza. Un prominente portavoz afroamericano, el ex asesor de Obama Van Jones, proclamó que se trataba de un #Whitelash, o contragolpe blanco, en referencia al racista contragolpe en contra del movimiento por los derechos civiles.

Las protestas no tardaron

en comenzar: miles de personas en todo el país han marchado. La consigna más común es la de “Trump no es mi presidente”, junto con la de “Echar a Trump” y “Racista, sexista, anti gay, lárgate Donald Trump”. Pero Trump *es* el que ganó las elecciones burguesas —siempre amañadas para asegurar la selección de un defensor del capital— y no se va a ir sólo porque unos miles o decenas de miles lo coreen. Las consignas mostraban un anhelo favorable a Clinton (a veces explícito, como en numerosas pancartas en Nueva York que dicen (en referencia a la principal consigna electoral de los demócratas), “-Todavía juntos, más fuertes”. Asimismo, expresan ilusiones patrióticas, liberales y democráticas, tal como que se trata de “nuestro país”, cuando en realidad pertenece a los capitalistas.

La cuestión es ineludible: *es urgentemente necesario resistir, pero ¿cómo?* Ahora que los republicanos derechistas controlan los tres poderes del gobierno (ejecutivo, legislativo y judicial) —desde la Casa Blanca, pasando por las dos cámaras del Congreso y la Suprema Corte, así como la mayor parte de los congresos estatales— hasta los más apacibles políticos demócrata-

*sigue en la página 23*



Trabajadores Internacionales Clasistas participó en la marcha del Día Internacional del Inmigrante, el 8 de diciembre, en Nueva York. El TIC abogó por plenos derechos de ciudadanía para todos los inmigrantes. En la marcha gritó, “Ni Trump, ni Hillary, ¡construir un partido obrero!”