

Democrats Pave the Way for Trump

What Next, After The “Election from Hell”?

Defend Immigrants, Muslims and the Rights of Us All!

Yes, it really happened – despite pollsters’ predictions, the raging racist, anti-immigrant and anti-woman bigot Donald Trump got himself elected president of the United States. Young people at CUNY and throughout the country reacted with shock, disbelief, horror, fear ... and outrage. From coast to coast, tens of thousands protested. Many – especially those from Muslim and immigrant families, together with young women, African Americans and Latinos – experienced it as a brutal slap in the face, a kick in the teeth. In classrooms and cafeterias, students talked about friends or relatives, including young children, facing acute fears of deportation. People that this racist society makes vulnerable every day in “normal” times felt doubly and triply so now.

Right now, racists, together with police and other repressive forces, have the wind in their sails – and abuse and attacks broke out across the country. But workers and the oppressed, and young people determined to fight racist reaction, are *not* powerless. Across New York City, teachers vowed to defend their students, come what may. Here at CUNY, if racists or anti-immigrant or anti-Muslim forces try to go after our class-

mates or their families, they can be damn sure that we will fight to smash and defeat such attempts through mass mobilization and protest, bringing in the enormous power of NYC’s multiracial working class.

If kids in any NYC school, or their families, are targeted or threatened with deportation, teachers, students and campus workers should *shut down* the school, and that should spread throughout the city. Powerful forces of the working class in this largely immigrant, African American, Latino and Asian union town should be brought out in *workers defense guards* to put a quick and decisive stop to attacks on our immigrant or Muslim sisters, brothers, classmates or co-workers.

So how did a sinister TV clown and mega-con artist billionaire, tweeting a stream of venom, ignorance and anti-woman hatred, get elected? *The Democratic Party paved the way for Trump* and the other repulsive demagogues and bandits crowding the Republican bandwagon. Eight years of phony promises of “hope and change” brought despair. Presiding over a spectacular growth of inequality, unending war and economic crisis, while deporting a record 5 million im-

migrants, Obama was slated to be followed by the godmother of mass incarceration, Hillary Clinton.

Colin Kaepernick, the San Francisco 49ers quarterback known for his courageous stand against racist police terror (see article in this issue), caught flak for stating publicly that he did not vote for either Clinton or Trump, whom he accurately called a couple of liars who seemed to be trying to “debate who’s less racist.”

With Trump’s election, liberals “grieved” or repeated pious phrases like “Love Trumps Hate.” Quite a few young people will draw a different lesson, wanting to become more hard-core about the fight against racism and all forms of oppression. The ones we want to win over to Marxism and the fight for a revolutionary workers party are those determined to seek out, and pull out, the roots of that oppression, which lie in the whole capitalist system. That system lives off oppression, because it is based on exploitation – and a society based on class exploitation needs all forms of racial, national and sexual oppression to help keep it in power.

Many young people know that capitalist America’s *political system is in crisis*, and does not represent their interests or

needs. What is crucial to understand is that what it does represent, and was created to defend, is the power and profits of the ruthless owners of capital who make up the ruling class of this country. The crisis of that political system is an expression of the *crisis of the social system of capitalism*, which is visibly decaying before our eyes. Look around you, who believes in the fairy tale of the “American Dream” any more? How could they? As Malcolm X warned, it is a nightmare.

Donald Trump’s slogan was “Make America Great Again,” yearning to go back to the “good old days” of Jim Crow segregation, McCarthyite witch-hunting, women confined to the home and immigrant workers massively deported to Mexico in

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Internationalist photo

CUNY Internationalist Clubs at April 14 “Shut Down Trump” protest in NYC denounced Democrats, Republicans and all capitalist candidates and parties.



Internationalist photo

Internationalist contingent at New York City May Day march, 2016.

Fight for Workers Revolution!

"On Strike, Shut It Down": On the Picket Line with the Verizon Workers

For 45 days in April-May 2016, Verizon phone workers went on strike in a battle to stop the profit-stuffed company's attack on their healthcare, labor rights and unions – the Communications Workers of America and International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. Almost 40,000 workers walked off the job, in the largest strike in the U.S. since the last time Verizon struck in 2011. *The Internationalist* covered the strike and its aftermath in two articles ("Verizon Strike: A Fight for All Workers," and "Verizon Strike Beats Back Company Assault, But with Big Healthcare Givebacks," *The Internationalist* No. 43, May-June 2016). Below are brief contributions from a few of the many Club members and friends who participated.

Dan: The CUNY Internationalist Clubs got heavily involved, picketing with CWA workers in Manhattan and Brooklyn repeatedly each week throughout the six-week strike. This started at 5:55 a.m. on the first day, as our contingent drew loud cheers from the 1,000 strikers lined up on West 36th Street as we marched in, chanting, "Victory to the Verizon strike! You win, we all win!" Over the next weeks we joined marches and pickets of thousands of workers, who made a sea of red union shirts on the streets. We helped picket everything from huge switching offices and a Brooklyn Verizon building where 2,000 operators and technicians usually work, to truck garages, Verizon Wireless stores and hotels housing scabs brought in from out of town. We learned the strikers'

chants, and contributed a few of our own that were picked up and became part of the strike, like "On strike, shut it down, New York is a union town" and "Picket lines mean: *Don't cross!*"

For many Club members and supporters, it was their first experience on a picket line. The discipline and militancy involved – listening to the picket captain, following instructions to help beef up a picket where needed, refusing to be cowed by company rent-a-cops – made for valuable lessons in the class struggle. Seeing the same group of workers on these picket lines, getting to know them, showing our solidarity and introducing them to the Marxist program put forward in the *Internationalist* press – this was all part of learning to be revolutionaries, which is central to the purpose of the Internationalist Clubs.

Dannie: The Verizon strike was the first I've ever been to. I was part of a contingent we organized to go the Nevins Street Verizon location, where we were met by hundreds of chanting workers. I was in shock; it was amazing to see all the support for the workers from the public passing on the street. I had never expected a protest to be this proud and lively, but the Verizon workers were determined and stood firm in their demands. Given what we're taught, I had sometimes been skeptical about the police, security guards or store managers being seen as enemies of the workers – but this was very apparent to me when I saw police escort scabs past the picket line and "security" hassle strikers. Managers, who I'd previously thought were workers too, laughed in the face of these men and women protesting to defend their rights to health care, a living wage, job safety, etc.

However, it seemed to me some of the workers needed more class consciousness, when they said security guards were "just doing their job" by keeping strikers away from entrances – the guards' "job" was to make the picket line less effective. We in the Internationalist Clubs chant "Picket lines mean don't cross" because the picket line is not meant to be just some symbolic gesture, as has become a commonplace idea, but a stronghold in the struggle. It is supposed to forcefully stop all business until the demands of the strikers are met. "Security" intervenes in direct opposition to the workers by protecting the property of the bourgeoisie.

I'm glad for the experience of being there not just as a witness but as a part of the picketing against the oppression of the Verizon workers. It was an eye-opening experience to how the capitalist system sup-



Students from CUNY Internationalist Clubs were on the Verizon strike lines twice weekly throughout. Strikers cheered when students arrived.

ports bourgeois owners and stands in direct opposition to the worker looking to secure his or her rights. We in the Internationalist Clubs call on more students to come out and show solidarity in workers struggles.

Rose: The Internationalist Clubs' involvement in the Verizon strike was an experience to be remembered. My own experiences at work and supporting other union struggles paved the way for me to feel strongly about the Verizon strike from the beginning. Though the conditions the phone workers worked in were not as extreme as in past struggles I was involved in, like at Bröd Kitchen/Hot and Crusty and B&H Photo, creating and defending unions is essential for working-class people, helping build a wall between workers and bosses, so workers can collectively resist exploitation.

Club members went to at least two strike sites a week to picket and march alongside Verizon workers. It was interesting to see how much workers appreciated CUNY students coming out to support them; it's one thing to go out because something is directly affecting you and another to go out on the streets to support other workers' struggle. The Internationalist Clubs came out as Marxists who understand the power of the working class, and how important solidarity is as a building block for workers revolution. Having this in mind, it was natural to go out after classes or work and chant in favor of the strike alongside other workers.

Sometimes passers-by would come up and ask us why we were shouting about Verizon workers when we were students. They assumed our petty-bourgeois "identity" as students would deter us from caring about other struggles. But we see the effects of capitalism raining down on CUNY on a daily basis, with tuition rising every year, and financial aid for us ever dwindling; crumbling infrastructure and bureaucratic barriers that constantly need to be jumped in order to get anything done. It hits close to home for politically conscious students.

Overall the Verizon strike had a huge impact on my political development; I learned

to talk to workers who were so different from me, and converse with them about capitalism and systematic oppression, and how all of these things made us more alike than different. It created stronger feelings of solidarity with the working class. Just hanging out with workers at pickets and having them update us how things were going really brought me into the details of the strike that other people reading about it in the news can't experience. It took work and time, which we're always short of as students and workers, but it was absolutely worth it. Solidarity forever!

Steph: Participating in the Verizon strike was very influential on my political consciousness. This was not my first protest, but it was a strike I felt very involved in. While the strike was going on we kept hearing reports on how terrible Verizon's scab-run services were, all the accidents that were occurring, and the money the company was losing. Seeing workers stand together in the fight for a contract was eye-opening: workers actually do have the potential to shut things down. Though I knew this to be true, it was different to see it first-hand. I remember hearing some of my friends, coworkers and family members who had Verizon phone service complain.

The company had gotten court injunctions to limit the number of picketing workers and how close they could stand to entrances. As students, those didn't cover us, so we were able to stand with our picket signs right in front and try to prevent potential customers from going in. One time when the police were called, they tried to trick us, saying that some legal paper said anyone involved in a strike had to be a certain distance from the door. We asked the officer to show us where it said that, and he couldn't, because they just made that up. The workers were always thanking us for our participation. When a big strike march was held on May 5, many workers were pleased to buy our papers. Some other left groups were there but not once did I see them at the picket lines with the workers. Workers here and around the world need to realize their power. ■



"Picket lines mean don't cross!" CUNY students at Verizon picket, May 26.

Visit the League for the Fourth International/
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Women's Liberation Will Come Through Socialist Revolution (Not Feminism)

Learning from *Salt of the Earth*

By Sarafina and
Stephanie

Thelma and Louise, *Erin Brockovich*, *The Color Purple* – these are iconic feminist films. But while they may be good films showing strong women as protagonists, they do not point to the core of women's oppression the way Herbert Biberman's *Salt of the Earth* does. *Salt of the Earth* is not a feminist film, it is a film about women's liberation and its relation to class struggle. And everyone should see it! (It's available as a video from Amazon and elsewhere, and the Internationalist Club at Hunter shows it.)

Salt of the Earth (1954) is based on the 15-month strike carried out in 1950 in Grant County, New Mexico against the Empire Zinc Company, by miners who were mainly Mexican Americans.

(In New Mexico the traditional term is *Hispanos*.) The company unsuccessfully tried to break the strike, using the Cold War red scare – together with racism, police terror, vigilantes and evictions from company-owned housing – to go after the strikers and their union, the leftist-led Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers.

When the male workers were hit with an anti-strike injunction, as shown in the film, the women took up the picketing and were crucial to the strike's victory. Significantly, except for five professional actors, all the others who appear in the film were members of the union and local residents reenacting the dramatic struggle they had participated in.

The independent film was directed by Biberman, written by Michael Wilson, and produced by Paul Jarrico, all of whom were already blacklisted under the accusation of supporting the Communist Party. Biberman was one of the "Hollywood Ten" banned from working in the industry for refusing to "name names" when called before the notorious House Un-American Activities Committee. The film came out at the height of the McCarthyite witchhunt. HUAC denounced it, liberal critics labeled it "communist propaganda" and anti-communist vigilantes fired rifle shots at the set while it was being filmed. Until the 1960s, it was only shown briefly at a dozen movie theaters. But it won prizes elsewhere, was widely shown in Europe and is now considered a film classic.

The story centers around Esperanza Quintero, the pregnant wife of an Hispano miner, Ramón, who is played in the film by real-life local union president Juan Chacón. When unsafe work conditions lead to a fellow worker being seriously injured, the bosses respond that "accidents are costly, to the company most of all" ... and then they try to send the miners back to work. This leads Ramón and his fellow miners to strike in an attempt to improve the terrible situation on the job, which includes not only unsafe working conditions but wage discrimination against the Hispano miners



A scene from the film: women raise their own sign as miners begin walkout.



as well. Early in the film we see managers repeatedly demean them. We see how their being treated worse than "Anglo" (white) miners is part of the bosses' tactics to pit workers against each other.

Drawing the Class Line

From the film's introductory scenes, we learn the mine was carved into land the Hispano workers' families lived on from long before New Mexico was forcibly annexed to the United States. The lesson is further dramatized during a party at Esperanza and Ramón's house, where the men are playing cards and talking over the way the sheriff uses phony charges to lock up strikers. The conversation takes a turn when Hispano union leader Sal Ruiz chides Ramón for "your attitude towards Anglos – if you're going to be a leader... You lump them all together, Anglo workers and Anglo bosses."

Stung, Ramón tells union organizer Frank Barnes, one of the few "Anglos" at the party, that he needs to learn some Mexican history, like the name of the man whose picture is on the wall: the indigenous 19th-century Mexican president Benito Juárez. In the period after the U.S. took half of Mexico in 1848, Juárez led the civil wars to defend Mexico against attempts by the Church and the French empire to destroy democratic rights and the independence of Mexico. Barnes agrees that he's "got a lot to learn."

An Hispano union organizer tells Barnes, "If it makes you feel any better, he's got even less use for women." Barnes'

wife Ruth jumps in to tease her husband for talking about women's rights, including women's participation in the union's struggles, but doing nothing concrete to help organize it in practice. (Ruth is played by Virginia Jencks, who plays herself under a different name in the film, as do her husband Clinton Jencks, women's picket leaders Clorinda Alderette, Ángela Sánchez and Henrietta Williams, local union leaders Ernesto Velásquez and Joe T. Morales, and many others.)

This scene is a key one in how the film shows the centrality of the class line as well as how racism and sexism are some of the tools of oppression used by the bosses, the capitalists. Esperanza is shown in the next room listening intently while nursing the baby. As the story progresses, she will fight her way past Ramón's resistance, and her own internalized oppression, and become a central organizer in her own right. Later in the film, she faces down a sexist outburst from Ramón, who – humiliated by racist cops and the bitter hardships of trying to "provide" for his family – erupts in rage. Esperanza asks him:

"Have you learned nothing from this strike? Why are you afraid to have me at your side? Do you still think you can have dignity only if I have none?... The Anglo bosses look down on you, and you hate them for it. 'Stay in your place, you dirty Mexican' – that's what they tell you. But why must you say to me, 'Stay in your place'? Do you feel better having someone lower than you?"

"Whose neck shall I stand on to make

me feel superior, and what will I have out of it? I don't want anything lower than I am. I am low enough already. I want to rise and push everything up with me as I go. And if you don't understand that, you are a fool, because you can't win this fight without me, you can't win *anything* without me!"

The scene is very powerful – and very different from what we are told about "male privilege" or "white privilege" supposedly benefiting all male or white workers, when it actually cripples them in the fight against their real enemies.

The film helps us see and understand how the experience of common struggle is crucial in helping battle the backward ideologies that hold the workers' struggle back. In doing so it makes us see, and feel, the wrenching process in which someone like Esperanza, from doubly and tri-

ply oppressed (as women, workers and discriminated-against ethnic minorities) layers of the working class, learns in hard-fought struggle to become a workers leader.

By the end of the movie, when the women's militant picketing, the strikers' determined resistance and solidarity from their working-class neighbors finally make the company back down, Ramón has learned a vital lesson. "Thanks, sisters and brothers," he tells a crowd that has stopped the sheriff's goons from evicting his family. "Esperanza, thank you for your dignity. You were right: together, we can push everything up with us as we go."

Yes, it is a happy ending, but one drawn from real life, not Hollywood fantasy.

"We Want Sanitation Not Discrimination"

How does it happen? When the strike begins, not only do the male miners have demands, their wives do too. These include the installation of running water and proper sanitation in the workers' homes. Here as well there is blatant racism at work, since the Hispano miners are denied even the hot water and proper sanitation that the white miners have in their family homes. While the men picket for better working conditions, some of the wives start raising a sign on a nearby hill saying "We Want Sanitation Not Discrimination." Symbolically, their initially quiet protest, shown off to the side at the beginning, becomes increasingly vocal and is at the very core of the strike, and its hard-won victory, by the end.

The key point here is that at first the men and women see their struggles as separate instead of inextricable. Early in the film Esperanza asks Ramón, "What's more important than sanitation?" Ramón replies: "Safety of the men. That's more important.... You're a woman. You don't know what it's like up there. First we have to get equality on the job. Then we can work on these other things." In this exchange, we clearly see the men and women of the working class divided. They each believe their "own" issue is more important. They still cannot see that their struggles are linked.

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What Next...

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“Operation Wetback.” Wall Street Democrat Hillary Clinton replied “America Is Already Great,” denying the mass unemployment, poverty and racist police murder. Many protesters chanted that for the tens of millions of poor, oppressed and working people, “America Was Never Great.” All the flag-waving is a cynical diversion. The only realistic perspective for defending our basic rights and needs today is one that is based on a program to overthrow the capitalist system in a *socialist revolution* of the international working class.

As revolutionary Marxists, the CUNY Internationalist Clubs warn that *you can’t fight Trump with Democrats*. Leading into the elections, we warned that calls to back the Democrats (or the Greens or any other bourgeois politicians) meant chaining workers and youth yet again to those who rule society on behalf of decrepit capitalism. To unchain the enormous power of labor, and bring it into struggle in defense of all the oppressed, it’s urgent to fight for the political independence of the working class. That is why we stand for building a *revolutionary workers party*.

Protests Spread – Obamas & Co. Make Nice with Trump

The need for this radical break from the all-sided rottenness of bourgeois politics was highlighted by the latest displays of its bankruptcy, hypocrisy and fraudulence. Clinton won the popular vote, but Trump won the Electoral College, whose origins lie in anti-democratic structures set up by American capitalism’s “Founding Fathers.” (In particular, they gave the states directly governed by slave owners special means to uphold their preponderance in the federal government.) With Trump on the path to installation as CEO of U.S. capitalism, Democrats rushed to show fealty to the “institutionality” of the office and make nice with the Bigot-Elect.

Barack Obama was first in line, meeting with Trump at the White House and gushing that “we’re all now rooting for” Trump’s “success in uniting and leading the country,” later adding that “it’s important for us to let him make decisions.” If she were a student at CUNY, Melania Trump would have gotten an automatic F for her blatant plagiarism of a speech by Michelle Obama – but that’s no obstacle to tea for two first ladies of U.S. imperialism. Naturally, the celebrity-obsessed media gushed about their dresses.

But what of Senator Bernie Sanders, supposed scourge of the “billionaire class”? After dutifully saying he was “distressed” to hear “stories of Americans being intimidated and harassed in the wake of Mr. Trump’s victory,” Sanders vowed to “see what ideas Mr. Trump offers and when and how we can work together.” This groveling before the billionaire bigot, whose “ideas” come largely from the ex-Wall Streeter and guru of the racist/white nationalist and anti-Semitic website Breitbart, Steve Bannon, should turn the stomach of young people who bought into Bernie’s blather about a “political revolution.” Will it lead them to draw political lessons from the fact that Sanders’ “movement” was a big fat scam in the service of the Democrats, as we said all along? His offer to “work together” with Trump came in an op ed for the *New York Times* (11 November) titled “Where the

Democrats Go From Here,” devoted to his latest proposals to “re-invigorate the Democratic Party.” In other words, Sanders’ job for the bourgeoisie is to do his best to stop workers and youth from drawing the lessons of experience.

Despite the displays of bourgeois togetherness, anti-Trump protests spread from New York to Portland, L.A. and San Francisco. High-school students staged walkouts from Brooklyn to Seattle. Indignation and a desire to resist the outrages Trump vowed to perpetrate doubtless motivated most demonstrators. In New York, LA and Portland we sold many copies of *The Internationalist* and distributed the new leaflet “Post-Traumatic Election Stress: To Defeat Trump...and the Democrats, Fight for Workers Revolution” (on line at internationalist.org). However, we did not march in what amounted to pro-Clinton demonstrations, awash with a sea of signs like “Still with Her,” “Still Stronger Together” and others echoing the Democratic campaign slogans. We do not make a political bloc with Democrats against Republicans – we strongly oppose both of these pillars of U.S. imperialism, and all capitalist parties, and instead call for a revolutionary workers party.

“Not my president,” chanted many of the marchers. Again, the idea is that Clinton would have been their president. For Marxists, *no* capitalist president, most definitely including former Walmart board member Clinton, has been or ever could be “ours.” Marchers’ liberal chants echoed patriotic ideology about “our” country. (The Democratic Convention chanted the same “U.S.A., U.S.A.” that Trumpsters did on November 8.) But the owners of capital, who stole this land from native peoples and built a bloody system of exploitation out of slavery and imperial conquest, know full well that it is *theirs*. Revolutionaries state forthrightly that “the workers have no country,” as Marx and Engels declared in the *Communist Manifesto*, calling for workers of countries to unite. This revolutionary internationalist outlook is all



Pablo Martinez Monsivais/AP

Trump and Obama meet in the White House on November 10. Obama said “we’re actually all on one team.” Republicans and Democrats both represent the interests of the bourgeoisie.

the more crucial today in the fight against jingoistic flag-waving and attempts to turn U.S.-born workers against immigrants and workers overseas.

Answering a Liberal Myth

We publish below a synthesis of presentations at the forum that the Hunter Internationalist Club gave shortly before the elections. But it is important to first answer a liberal myth that has significant influence on campuses like CUNY and has been voiced by many since Trump’s election. Quite a few campus leftists who push variants of “people of color nationalism” join rich white liberal opinion-makers in selling the line that blame lies not with this rotten racist system but with something they call “the white working class.” This view is widely pumped out by academic pundits who make a profession of pro-capitalist identity politics. Some Sanders-type liberals respond with the ridiculous and hypocritical claim that “race was not the issue” at all in the election of a blatantly racist candidate.

Marxists have a completely different understanding, which is crucial in a capitalist country where racial oppression and class exploitation have been intertwined from the beginning.

First of all, there is no separate “white working class” but a single working class of all races and ethnicities – black, white, Latino, Asian, immigrants from around the world (many of whom are denied the vote completely because they don’t have

the right piece of paper). Racial oppression, and the racist ideology it gives rise to, serves the bourgeoisie to divide the proletariat and impede the growth of the class consciousness necessary to transform it into a force able to wield its enormous emancipatory power. Second, the political message the purveyors of anti-working-class nationalism are actually sending is that workers had a duty to vote for the millionaire white *liberal* candidate of racism and attacks on workers, Clinton.

Third, there is a significant hard-core racist voting bloc in the U.S., calculated at perhaps a quarter of the electorate. No surprise, they voted for Trump. On the other hand, the fact is that in 2008, in key industrial states of the Midwest, huge numbers of white workers voted *for* a black man named Barack Hussein Obama, who promised “Hope and Change.” If their politics were really determined by racism, that would have been unthinkable. In 2012, most of these traditionally Democratic Midwest voters *again* supported Obama. But by 2016, the idea of voting once again for Democratic Party continuity was too much for a significant number of those voters in swathes of the “rust belt” facing unending job losses and misery. Many – rightly disgusted by the “choice” presented to them – stayed home (as 43% of people eligible to vote did not do so). And some – knowing full well that he is a swinish bigot – decided to give Trump a try. Again, *it is the politics of the Democratic Party that led to Trump’s victory*. To fight back, it is essential to break from the Democrats and all forms of bourgeois politics, and fight for workers revolution.

* * *

Revolutionary Marxists on the Election from Hell

The following is based on presentations by comrades Jacob and Yari at the Hunter Internationalist Club’s October 25 forum, titled “Revolutionary Marxists on The Election from Hell: Whoever Wins, You Lose.” Discussion was lively at the well-attended event. Questions focused mainly on basic issues of Marxist politics, particularly in relation to our policy of revolutionary working-



Fabrizio Costantini for the New York Times

U.S. industrial heartland turned into “rust belt” by “free-trade” policies of Democrats and Republicans.



Shaken liberal anti-Trump demonstrators yearn for Hillary Clinton.

class opposition to the Bernie Sanders and Green Party campaigns, but also what led to the Stalinist degeneration of the Soviet Union, what a socialist society would look like, and how to link struggles against different forms of oppression.

We truly are in the midst of “the election from hell.” “The supposedly realistic options presented to us are either Donald Trump or Hillary Clinton. But the idea that the interests of most people in the United States could be represented by a racist misogynist billionaire rip-off artist or by the Clinton Foundation is flat-out ridiculous.

As revolutionary Marxists, we are not here to regurgitate the same liberal or conservative spiel that has been spoon-fed to us all throughout this election period. Marxists have a fundamentally different way of approaching politics. We constantly hear that political action means making a so-called choice between this and that bourgeois candidate. No. We say “No” to the Democratic and Republican parties of imperialism, war and exploitation. “No” to the Green Party and other bourgeois “third parties” whose objective is to channel disillusioned left-liberals back into the rightward-moving Democratic Party fold.

We say that the working class needs its own *independent revolutionary proletarian politics* that does not capitulate to what is “possible” within the existing system, and stands firmly for the interests of the entire working class. We call for the expropriation of the bourgeoisie through a proletarian revolution that will put an end to capitalist rule. To do this, we call for the formation of a revolutionary workers party to lead, organize, galvanize and agitate among the working class for the liberation of all the oppressed.

Marxists Stand for Working-Class Politics

What does this mean? The majority of people in this country don’t make their living from profits and exploitation. The majority of people have to actually work for a living in order to sustain themselves, provide a roof over their heads and put food on the table. Most of us sell our labor power to generate profits for capitalists in exchange for measly, unlivable wages. This is something that we feel in our everyday lives. But what is to be done about this? How do we mobilize against this exploitation, against the oppression of women and black people and immigrants, against deportations, against the discrimination faced by

gay, lesbian and transgender people?

We say, build a party that really does express our class interests – a revolutionary workers party. Marxists educate and agitate for this program. And Marxists organize – like we did in 2012 to support the immigrant workers at the Hot and Crusty bakery just seven blocks from Hunter College. Last year and early this year we mobilized to support the immigrant warehouse and store workers at B&H Photo – and guess what, they won a union. We picketed with the phone workers who went on strike against Verizon this spring and helped defend their picket lines against scabs. And this fall we were out there in Brooklyn with the teachers locked out at Long Island University. It’s called class struggle.

The reason Marxists call for the formation of a revolutionary working-class party is not simply because we “really like workers.” The proletariat is the fundamental class for revolution because it is the only class with the ability to bring the production that this society depends on to a halt and to strip the capitalists of ownership of the means of production.

The proletariat has an objective interest in ending *all* forms of oppression. Racism and sexism are ideological reflections of the material oppression that class society produces. These and other backward ideologies drive a wedge in the unity of the working class. Bourgeois politics seek to hide the counterposition of the workers’ interests to those of the owners in this society.

“Less-Evil” Guilt Trips, Grotesque Debates

Quite a few people have approached our literature table here at Hunter College and attempted to guilt-trip us into voting for Wall Street candidate Clinton as the way to “stop Trump.” Some even tell us it’s an expression of “privilege” (!) to not vote for Hillary. They say you are personally responsible for Trump unless you vote for Clinton, whose sanctions and wars from Iraq to Afghanistan and beyond killed hundreds of thousands; who wants to escalate U.S. imperialist involvement in Syria; who has helped start or supported all U.S. wars in recent history; whose supposedly charitable foundation trains political figures for U.S.-led coups and has siphoned off earthquake relief money to build sweatshops in Haiti where women workers make less than \$5 a day.

Marxists do not succumb to the politics of lesser evilism. Who really *is* responsible

for the rightward trajectory of American politics, including the rise of Trump? The bourgeoisie and their entire political system are responsible. The Democratic Party and the Clinton dynasty and Obama are responsible. *They* have promoted ever-increasing inequality. *They* are responsible for militarism and war. *They* are the bosses of the racist police that shoot down black people day after day, week after week. *They* are responsible for mass deportations and the persecution of immigrants. And you want to chain us once again to that and call it a lesser evil?

Let’s be clear: Marxists do not have a principle against voting per se. We could vote for a candidate that represented the political independence of the working class from the bourgeoisie. We would vote for a revolutionary workers party, a party that would use the platform to call on the working class to mobilize independently and form the nucleus of its own state power.

Many liberals warn of the future unraveling of “Obama’s legacy,” promising Hillary Clinton would continue it. But what is the legacy of the Democratic Party after eight years of Obama? Many thought that the first black president would provide a solution to the oppression of black people that is rooted in the foundations of a society built on slave labor. Instead, both his terms in office have been plagued by police murder against black people. War in the Middle East rages on, drone strikes continue to rain hellfire on people in one country after another.

Immigrants who thought they had a friend in Obama because of illusions about the DREAM Act have seen him deport more immigrants than any president in the history of the United States, an estimated 5 million! And now we see Haitian refugees put into camps and detained at the border. Just the other day we participated in the united front that the Internationalist Group and Haitian activists initiated, protesting outside the United Nations against this racist exclusion and all the deportations.

Now we have an open bigot who plays on fear and the anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim and misogynist ravings of the American right. He’s taken all the things the regular Republican politicians say in semi-code language and pushed them out there with no filters on the hate. Then if you watched the grotesque debates, you saw Trump boasting of how he used tax loopholes that Hillary Clinton and her crew helped create. He presents himself as a super-businessman savior who says he got rich from being “smart” like by not paying taxes, while ripping people off left and right and running one scam after another.

Meanwhile Hillary Clinton was shown making one promise after another to Goldman Sachs and other Wall Street bankers, who also told Obama whom to put in his cabinet. (Of course he did what they told him.) Trump talks about the loss of workers’ jobs, and the Democrats’ responsibility for this, but uses this to push right-wing populism and trade protectionism against workers in other countries. Trump reminds Clinton about her votes for the Iraq war while lying that he had opposed it from the get-go, saying “we should’ve taken the oil,” goading her on emails and accusing her and Obama of being soft by “giving warnings” about where they would bomb. Then Hillary and her supporters say that Trump is supposedly a puppet of the evil Russkies – while both candidates compete

as to who can be tougher against China...

It all shows the glaring reality of the U.S. political system: whichever bourgeois candidate you “choose” will represent the interests of the capitalist class which attacks the interests of the workers and oppressed.

Sanders Scam, Green Charade

Some claimed Bernie Sanders would provide a viable solution, even as he went from supposed independent to running openly within the Democratic Party. They presented him as an anti-war candidate supportive of civil liberties. But Sanders supported U.S. intervention in Somalia and Bill Clinton’s 1999 war on Yugoslavia, voted twice for “regime change” in Iraq, and repeatedly voted to fund the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. While he did not support the notorious USA PATRIOT Act in 2001, he co-sponsored the USA FREEDOM Act in 2014, which “extends the USA PATRIOT Act for years and opens up new avenues for more invasive forms of government spying” (*The Hill*, 21 May 2015).

Neither the Democratic nor the Republican parties represent the workers and oppressed, nor do Bernie Sanders or the Greens or any bourgeois “third party.” That leaves us with the only real alternative: independent working-class politics. That means explicitly opposing capitalist exploitation and all forms of U.S. imperialist aggression. And that means recognizing that the only way to right the wrongs committed under capitalism is to organize a revolutionary workers party that will seize state power and abolish capitalism.

Some people see smaller parties like the Greens as a solution. To them, the issue is the monopoly held by the Democrats and Republicans on electoral politics, the two-party system which serves to “shock-proof” the capitalist class. This system absorbs public discontent toward one party, one candidate, and then shifts it in favor of the other. Americans are continually knocked back and forth between the Democrats and the Republicans.

But while the Green Party paints itself as a friendlier alternative to the big-business politics of both the Democrats and Republicans, it is still a bourgeois party through and through, and openly functions as a pressure group on the Democratic Party. The Greens are calling to make capitalism “accountable to our communities” and to “decentralize” bourgeois state power – upholding bourgeois private property while spreading blurry liberal illusions that it can be reformed to serve “the people.” They present imperialism as a question of mistaken policies that could change rather than a system, the decaying capitalist system under the heel of the dominant powers no matter who the rulers are. They propose to cut military spending with the intention of using that money to fund social programs, a nationalist position, which does not fundamentally oppose imperialist war but objects that too much is being spent on it when some of the money could be spent on American citizens. In fact, their proposal to reduce the military budget by half would leave \$300 billion for the U.S. war machine.

Some on the left who had eagerly jumped on the Bernie bandwagon came out to back Green Party candidate Jill Stein – the International Socialist Organization (ISO) being one of them. Earlier this year, the opportunists of the ISO were just an inch away from fully endorsing Bernie, la-

Revolution

menting only that he hadn't chosen to run as an independent. Whereas Marxists, *on principle*, oppose voting for any party or candidate that represents the class interests of the bourgeoisie, groups like the ISO have an extensive track record of supporting bourgeois candidates. They supported Ralph Nader when he ran on the Green Party ticket in 2000 and as an independent in 2004, despite the fact that Nader openly expressed hope that his candidacy would aid the Democratic Party in winning back the voters it lost after the Clinton-Gore regime. Although the ISO admitted that Nader "did not call for the immediate withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq," this did not stop them from praising him as an anti-war candidate. Nader also accepted the endorsement of the anti-immigrant right-wing Reform Party. According to the ISO, he was a viable alternative to Bush.

The ISO likes to tail after bourgeois politicians almost indiscriminately, not only fawning over fake socialist Sanders but also praising a raft of other Democratic politicians – particularly Obama – as a "breath of fresh air." This goes from writing in 2002, when George Bush was president, that "Even mild criticisms of the White House are a breath of fresh air these days," to hailing Obama and his budget as a "breath of fresh air," to swooning that Bernie Sanders' campaign was "a breath of fresh air and a fantastic opportunity for everyone on the left." (See "ISO: 'Fresh Air Fiends' of Class Collaboration," at www.internationalist.org/isofreshairfiends1512.html.) These political positions are anything but fresh. They are actually stale leftovers of the most reformist kind of politics.

Unlike the reformists looking for new opportunities to hitch themselves to the coattails of the bourgeoisie, we look to the working class as the force that can use its power to fight imperialism, and ultimately overthrow capitalism. An example of what we mean by this can be seen in the ILWU shutdown of all 29 ports on the West Coast on May Day 2008 to demand an end to the war and occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan. The General Union of Port Workers in Iraq shut down two of their own ports in solidarity, and sent this message:

"The courageous decision you have made to carry out a strike on May Day to protest against the war and occupation of Iraq advances our struggle against occupation to bring a better future for us and for the rest of the world as well.... We in Iraq are looking up to you and support you until the victory over the U.S. administration's barbarism is achieved."

Another important example of workers organizing independently around their own interests is the resolution recently passed by the Painters and Drywall Finishers Union Local 10 in Portland, Oregon. The resolution reads in part:

"...Whereas the two presidencies of the Democrat Barack

Obama have been eight years of unending war in the Middle East, North Africa and Asia, causing untold human suffering, millions of refugees, and attacks on our democratic rights at home, and "Whereas the Democratic Party in power has deported some 5 million immigrants, a record, and "Whereas across the country, from Oakland to Baltimore, police under Democratic mayors regularly murder black men and women with impunity, and "Whereas the 2016 presidential election offers us the 'choice' between a raving, bigoted clown and a career representative of Wall Street, and "Whereas so long as the labor movement supports one or another party of the bosses, we will be playing a losing game, therefore be it "Resolved that IUPAT Local 10 does not support the Democrats, Republicans, or any bosses' parties or politicians, and "Resolved that we call on the labor movement to break from the Democratic Party, and build a class-struggle workers party."

The Painters' Union resolution is so important because the union is recognizing the fact that working people have been and will continue to be exploited and oppressed so long as we put our faith in bourgeois parties, and that the struggle is international. The racist capitalist system that disappeared 43 Ayotzinapa *normalista* (teachers college) students in Guerrero, Mexico in 2014 and murdered 11 teachers strike supporters in Oaxaca, Mexico last June, is the same racist capitalist system that murders black and Latino people with abandon on the streets of the United States.

That step by the Portland Painters really is a breath of fresh air, because it is something fundamentally different: it points to what we mean by independent working-class politics. It is only through the extension of these kinds of actions that exploitation and oppression can be overcome. The Internationalist Club organizes to support the struggle of the working class, to win students to the program of revolutionary Marxism. ■



Sanders is no socialist, his campaign was "a big fat scam." For a revolutionary workers party!

Speak-Out...

continued from page 3

was shattered. The Tigris and Euphrates River, those cradles of civilization, flowed with blood. That's on Hillary Clinton for voting for that war. More than ten years later, she has not given up. She orchestrated the overthrow of Muammar Gaddafi in Libya, which is now in civil war. Syria and Iraq are in civil war as a result of the invasion of Iraq. Intervention and murder of brown and black people has to stop."

In her speech, comrade Rose of the Internationalist Club pointed out:

"So as senator, Hillary Clinton voted in favor of bigger barriers between the United States and Mexico, a policy Trump is accurately deemed racist for advocating, but they want people to forget what Hillary did. Feminists advocate for Hillary Clinton because she is a woman. But Hillary Clinton is no friend to women. She has sweatshops in Haiti where black women workers make about 31 cents per hour. As president, her husband escalated the 'war on drugs' and signed the largest 'crime bill' in the history of the United States, which gave \$9.7 billion for prisons [and \$6.1 billion for 'crime prevention' programs which ramped up mass incarceration]. Bill Clinton destroyed 'welfare as we know it,' and slashed public housing funding by \$17 billion. These are all policies that Hillary Clinton backed. And we know that she is a warmonger. Some 'lesser of two evils'!"

Also speaking for the Internationalist Club was Yuri, who pointed out:

"Clinton and war criminal General David Petraeus pushed for a United States attack on Syria, and U.S. intervention is heightening there. Almost every major war in the United States has been under the Democratic Party. We are for the defeat of U.S. imperialism. Throughout history, whenever the ruling class launches a war abroad, they always find an enemy at home. Just one example is how in WWII, they created internment camps to imprison the Japanese American population.

"Alton Sterling, Philando Castile, Freddie Grey, Michael Brown, Trayvon Martin, Sandra Bland, Rekia Boyd, these are all people that have died in the war against black people. The war also means war 'at home' and discrimination against blacks, Latinos, Muslims and immigrants. We cannot reform the police, absolutely not. What we need to do is build a revolutionary workers party. We cannot rely on the Democratic and Republican parties. These are bourgeois parties that represent the class interests of the ruling class, the capitalist class. Workers need their own independent politics. And this is the only way that we are going to finally do away with racism and oppression, not only here but worldwide."

For Revolutionary Working-Class Politics

The need for revolutionary, independent working-class politics was also addressed by Jacob of the Internationalist Club, who focused on the phony nature of the "political revolution" promised by Bernie Sanders:

"Sanders' role was that of the sheep dog, bringing in young voters [to offset] low voter turnout that has been a manifestation of widespread distrust in this political system. That distrust has been shown to be valid time and

again. We should reject all these empty promises and blatant lies. Eight years ago Obama promised to do something about police terror, about the mass deportation of immigrants, to stop predatory wars overseas, and went on about the nuclear danger. We stand here today at the end of a long hot summer of racist police murders. After the bolstering of a teeming industrial prison complex, further entanglement in imperialist wars, and a revamped nuclear arsenal. The Democratic Party is one face of a two-faced beast of the political dominance of the capitalist class. It differs from the Republican Party in the methods of just how to protect their pockets and their property. But both derive their power from the exploitation of workers."

Young people are right to be frustrated with voting for a system that has continuously failed them, leaving them to choose between a Wall Street warmonger and a billionaire bigot (with capitalist Greens and Libertarians tagging along behind). Yet at the rally, two liberal young men got up to disparage and mock protesters for telling it like it is about this dismal "choice." Internationalist Club member Stephanie gave a sharp response:

"You're talking about change, right? What was President Obama's whole thing – change, right? How much change have we seen from Obama? Obama has deported people and deported people – millions. And you say that Hillary Clinton cares about children. But if the Clintons cared about children, about working-class children, they would not have slashed welfare, which devastated the lives of so many children. You can't ignore these facts. But we're here talking about the police, right? And what are the police? The police are the strong arm of the bourgeoisie – and they work with bourgeois politicians like Clinton, like Obama to keep the interests of the bourgeoisie."

The ruling class expects people to fall in line and support their political parties within the bounds of their electoral system. But whether its representative is Sanders or Clinton, a party which upholds the capitalist system will never serve the interests of the working class and oppressed. The only way to sweep away the brutality of capitalist rule is through international socialist revolution, mobilizing the power of the working class to overthrow and defeat the ruling class here and around the world.

As the rally's opening speaker noted, "the United States is beating its own record in police murders." The website "Killed by Police" reports that 1,207 people died at the hands of the police last year. Up to the moment of the Speak-Out, there had been 753 new victims this year [now up to 1,013 as of November 16]. Their killers walk free because the capitalist class protects its own. There is no justice in racist, capitalist America.

The Speak-Out ended with a chant memorializing the names of some of those whose lives were cut short by this murderous system. For those victims, and the oppressed worldwide, another chant from this and our other protests rings true: "Only Revolution Can Bring Justice!"

Many who joined our Speak-Out got our paper, *Revolution*, and signed up to find out more about the work of the Internationalist Club. This is a first step in learning revolutionary Marxist politics and joining the fight to end the racist system of capitalism once and for all. ■

Internationalist photo

Long Island University Locks Out Faculty, Tries to Bust Union

The article reprinted below was originally published in September as a CUNY Internationalist Clubs leaflet. Club comrades distributed the leaflet on the picket lines that the Long Island University Faculty Federation put up outside LIU's campus in downtown Brooklyn. The tyrannical administration of Kimberly Cline locked faculty out of work because they refused to accept massive attacks on conditions and job rights, as well as a de facto 25% cut in adjunct pay.

As we brought CUNY students and adjunct teachers to the picket line chanting "Knock out the lockout," LIU teachers and students were highly appreciative of the solidarity. We quoted the old labor motto: "An injury to one is an injury to all!" We also made the point that as a public institution CUNY (unlike LIU) is under the New York State Taylor Law, which makes it "illegal" for public employees to strike. A lot of solidarity, especially from key sectors of city labor, will be need for us to rip up that vicious law with mass strike action.

We also had some great discussions with LIU ballet dancers, who were very prominent in rallying student support for the locked-out unionists, including during student walkouts. They told us about the ridiculous acts of "substitute" (scab) teachers, including endangering students by telling them to bend in ways any real ballet teacher would know are harmful.

As reported in the article, Club members put forward key class-struggle politics like the need for massive picket lines that no one crosses, bringing in the power of city labor, and breaking from the parties and politicians of the capitalist ruling class. Hard-hitting speeches by Hunter Club comrade Yari, as well as Sándor from Class Struggle Education Workers, got an enthusiastic reception from the crowd. We look forward to continuing to talk about key issues raised in this struggle with students and faculty we met there.

After a week of protests, the LIU administration agreed to extend the union contract until May 2017. On October 13, faculty representatives and student supporters held a sit-in at an LIU Board of Trustees meeting demanding that the issues be resolved. Some held signs reading "No Confidence" and "Fire Cline." While Cline did not manage to bust the union last September, and faced widespread criticism extending far beyond LIU, the struggle continues. If her administration tries to go after our sisters and brothers again, the massive power of NYC labor should be brought onto the picket lines to decisively defeat the would-be union-busters at LIU and send a message to their capitalist cohorts not to try anything of the kind.

SEPTEMBER 14 – As Long Island University's lockout of unionized faculty at its Brooklyn campus enters the second week, the stakes are clear. The unprecedented move by university president Kimberly Cline is a vicious attack not only against the faculty, students and staff at LIU Brooklyn, but against everyone who works in higher education, and on the entire New York-area labor movement. This is a battle

for the most basic rights of us all – and the power needed to defeat this union-busting assault must be brought into play before it's too late.

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

Moreover, when this "offer" was presented, it was accompanied by a letter notifying faculty that they were being locked out of the school effective immediately. As an LIU professor noted on the picket line, it says a lot about the contract LIU management is trying to shove down the faculty's throats if it locked them out before they even had a chance to vote.

Meanwhile, LIU management was bringing in scabs, and flaunting this in everybody's face in true union-busting fashion. It prepared this plan of attack for months beforehand. Bogus curricula were posted online (on Blackboard) over the summer for the "replacement teachers" to learn. But where did these curricula come from when the real professors who would have taught these classes had no access to any LIU resources? The administration. This amounts to corporate-style skills training – not education – to be spoon-fed by scabs to LIU students paying \$34,352/year.

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

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

Let's get real. What Cline & Co. have undertaken is no routine pressure tactic: all signs point to an attempt to replace the unionized faculty once and for all. So what will it take to defeat it? On the first day of the lockout, unionists picked up the chant initiated by activists from the CUNY Inter-



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

nationalist Clubs and Class Struggle Education Workers: "Picket lines mean: Don't cross!" This bottom-line labor principle is crucial to defeating the union-busting drive at LIU. But hard class struggle is totally alien to the misleaders of American labor, who bank everything on class collaboration. On September 9, American Federation of Teachers head Randi Weingarten spoke to students and faculty gathered outside of campus, saying that the union's answer to the lockout was to tell the administration:

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

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

In contrast, at the teach-in, CUNY Internationalist Clubs activist Jacob emphasized the need to "knock out the lockout," which means teachers standing strong against the administration and students understanding that so long as the lockout continues, "you do not belong on campus." Instead, students and faculty should be helping make the picket lines real ones that nobody crosses. Jacob noted that at the City University of New York, teachers and campus workers are subject to the anti-labor Taylor Law, which makes any strike or job action by New York State employees illegal – and that this is enforced by "the Democratic Party of capital." Break-

ing from support and subordination to the bosses' parties is crucial to winning a serious fight like this, he stressed – and to win, the struggle must be extended beyond the borders of the university.

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

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

And to hit the administration union-busters hard, *the unions should shut down the LIU C.W. Post campus of LIU*. Back in May 2015, the faculty union at Post negotiated a three-year contract extension, a year before the contract was due to expire, without notifying the Brooklyn campus union, with which they traditionally negotiate together (both contracts end on the same date). The Brooklyn LIUFF was livid, and rightly so, especially as one of its main demands has been to match pay with that at the Long Island campus. Evidently the faculty at Post are beginning to see that the administration's divide-and-conquer tactics mean that they're next on the hit list, as

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Kaepernick Protest Inspires Youth Defying Racist Repression

By Steph and Jean

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

The names of Alton Sterling, Philando Castile and so many others were no doubt on his mind. And how little time would pass before the world was stunned yet again by the images of police murder. On September 16, Terence Crutcher was killed in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Four days later came the wrenching images of the disabled Keith Lamont Scott being gunned down in Charlotte, North Carolina. It never stops. As protesters chant “say their names,” the list is unending of those killed for the “crime” of being black in the racist U.S.A. No wonder what the media call the “Kaepernick effect” keeps spreading.

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

Whipped-up flag-waving outrage followed fast and furious. Racists booed Kaepernick, the head of the San Francisco Police Officers Association railed against him. So did many capitalist politicians and media mouthpieces, as well as some fellow sports figures. The Santa Clara police that patrol the 49ers’ home stadium threatened to withdraw their “protection” – their way of menacing violence against Kaepernick and all who might back his protest. However, the threats backfired as other sports figures and anti-racist youth around the country took up his cause.



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

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

Defying Backlash, Protest Keeps Spreading

Among the sports stars emulating Kaepernick’s action were his teammate Eric Reid, the Seahawks’ Jeremy Lane, and many players for the Miami Dolphins. Megan Rapinoe, a professional soccer player for the Seattle Reign, joined the protest too. Rapinoe, who came out as a lesbian in 2012 and

is known for her work with the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network, accurately denounced the backlash against Kaepernick as “overtly racist.” Soon enough, she too was targeted for denunciations.

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

The whole football team, players and coaching staff of Seattle’s Garfield High School showed solidarity with Kaepernick’s protest. This is the same high school that fought against standardized testing back in 2013. In Worcester, Massachusetts, a courageous high-school football player named Mike Opping resisted blowback from the administration, telling the press: “I’m standing up for the injustice that happens to black people every day, not just cops killing black people. We are disrespected and mistreated everywhere we go on a daily basis because of our skin color and I’m sick of it.” In Beaumont, Texas, an 11-year-old player was threatened with death for leading a Kaepernick-inspired protest.

In Lower Lake, California, high-school freshman Leilani Thomas was punished with a “C” in mid-September for sitting out the national anthem. The punishment was a direct response to the “Kaepernick effect,” since Thomas, a member of the Pomo indigenous people, has declined to stand for the pledge ever since second grade, as a way of protesting the oppression against Native American people that – like slavery – underlies the very origins of this society and its red, white and

blue banner. At Lely High School in Naples, Florida, the principal told students: “You will stand, and you will stay quiet.” But the school district was forced to back down by the resulting uproar.

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

game.” In fact, there is a whole group called #VeteransForKaepernick.

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

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

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

The Olympic action was partly inspired by Muhammad Ali’s famous protests against racism, and the boxing great’s denunciation of U.S. imperialism’s war against Vietnam:



Hunter College Internationalist Club held Speak-Out Against Racist Repression, August 30. November 2016

"I ain't got no quarrel with the Viet Cong.... No Viet Cong ever called me n---r." It helped set a pattern of protest followed by some – even amidst the big-business world of professional sports. In 2012, LeBron James and the Miami Heat set an example for a new generation of athletes by wearing hoodies in tribute to Trayvon Martin after his assassination by a racist vigilante. Two years later, at a game with the Knicks in Brooklyn LeBron wore a t-shirt with the words "I can't breathe" to protest the NYPD chokehold murder of Eric Garner.

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

A "Tradition" of Pentagon Patriotism – and Slavery

Many people are unaware that the supposed "tradition" of NFL players standing for the national anthem did not exist before 2009. Up until then, the custom was to stay in the locker room while the "Star-Spangled Banner" was played. In the words of the Daily Snark (14 September), "NFL teams got patriotic" with the national anthem displays in recent years "because it was good for business." As the article notes, a 2015 Congressional report "revealed that the Department of Defense had paid \$5.4 million to stage on-field patriotic ceremonies; the National Guard shelled out \$6.7 million for similar displays."

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

So what about that national anthem? The BBC story on the Camden high-school football team and its coach Preston Brown reports:

"When he saw Kaepernick's protest, Brown thought about the fact that 2016 marks the 100th anniversary of President Woodrow Wilson's order that The Star-Spangled Banner be played at military and other official state events – the same pro-segregation president for whom his high school is named."

The stone racist Wilson purged African Americans from federal jobs, praised the 1915 KKK propaganda film *Birth of a Na-*



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

tion (originally called *The Clansman*) and showed it in the White House, while ordering Marines to occupy Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Panama and Nicaragua and intervene against the Mexican Revolution.

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

Discussion on this verse has led some to dig out their American history books to brush up on how the "Star-Spangled Banner" got written in the first place. To make a long story short: like most of what gave rise to this country, it's about slavery. It was written by the slave owner and pro-slavery politician Frances Scott Key. Key was also the mentor and brother-in-law of Roger Taney, who became Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and handed down the Dred Scott decision in 1857. That decision infamously stated that blacks had no rights that whites were bound to respect. It criminalized aid to escaping slaves.

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

"Despite angry American insistence that the peace treaty mandated the return of all property (i.e., former slaves), Cockburn bluntly refused to hand them over.... Most eventually settled in Canada, but the Colonial Marines accepted an offer of land in Trinidad. Settled in villages, each under the command of their company sergeants from the old regiment, they were known as the Merikens. Their descendants live there to this day." – Andrew Cockburn, "Washington Is Burning: Two Centuries of Racial Tribulation in the Nation's Capital," *Harper's*, September 2014

The verse cursing slaves and hirelings (workers) for daring to disobey their masters has rightly drawn the attention of lots of

young people. The more we dig into the matter, the more we see that racial oppression is in the DNA of the "red, white and blue" and the bourgeois republic for which it stands, under the almighty dollar, with oppression and injustice for all – except the tiny minority who live from the labor of others.

So we need to go farther than a critique of

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

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

Or as a very different often forgotten verse says, from the miners' song "Which Side Are You On": "The bosses ride fine carriages, while we walk through the mud / Their flag, it is red, white and blue / But ours is red as blood."

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

LIU Lockout...

continued from page 8

they just passed a motion of no confidence in Cline. But to actually win this battle, students and faculty should *shut down* not only the Brooklyn campus but also the Post campus – and the bosses' rules be damned!

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

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

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

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Women overcome resistance to picket after court order banned miners from picketing.

Salt of the Earth...

continued from page 4

It is not until the working-class men and women come together in struggle that both the men and the women win their demands, which in fact are crucial to them all.

The film vividly shows the brutality of the owners and those who do their bidding. First they try to defeat the strike by hiring scabs – men hired to cross the picket line and take the strikers' jobs. Ramón is jailed under the accusation that he assaulted a worker who betrayed his brothers by going over to the bosses' side of the class line: the scab sneaks in past the pickets and goes to work at the mine while the men are on strike. His excuse is the well-being of his kids, but he cannot see that their future is tied to the success of the strike. We see the sheriff's deputies sadistically beating Ramón for his leading role as picket captain. His cries of pain are juxtaposed to those of Esperanza, who is going into labor at the same time. The sheriff won't even call an ambulance so she can give birth with the help of a doctor, saying "You take me for an ambulance driver? ... Company doctor won't come to no picket line." It is while Ramón is in jail that Esperanza gives birth to their baby son Juanito.

A turning point comes in the seventh month of the strike, as Esperanza explains in her voice-over narration: "We couldn't buy food at the company store. By now the strike funds are long gone." Strikers who find other jobs give half to the union to divide up "so the rest of us might eat.... Even so the mine owners might have starved us out if it were not for the help" from unionists all around the country, which arrives in the form of "messages of solidarity and crumpled dollar bills of working men." Esperanza goes on:

"We women were helping, and not just as cooks and coffee makers. A few of the men made jokes about it, but the work had to be done, so they let us stay. 'No one knew how great a change it was until the day of the crisis. The sheriff was smiling so we knew he brought bad news. The company got a court injunction ordering the strikers to stop picketing.... It meant heavy fines and jail sentences for the strikers if they disobeyed. A decision had to be made at once.'"

The women notice that the injunction makes no mention of the wives, so, in a scene of high dramatic tension, they go

to a union meeting to propose that they take charge of the picket lines. The way that male chauvinism stands in the way of winning the class struggle becomes clearest as, at first, the men dismiss the women's clever proposal. But the logic of the struggle forces its way into their consciousness: the women win the right to vote on the issue, with the argument that, after all, it is about what they will or won't be doing. In the tumultuous discussion, male workers start standing up to support them, while others oppose the idea as supposedly shameful, inappropriate or injurious to their pride. When the vote is taken on the motion for the women to take over picketing, it wins by 103 to 85. And so, the women take up a decisive role in keeping the strike going.

Even so, some husbands still believe the picket line is not a "woman's place." Ramón is one of those who at first "forbid" their wives to participate on the picket lines. After much conflict and turmoil, Esperanza eventually does join the line. However, she and other women still have to take care of the children because, for the time being, most husbands refuse to do "a woman's job."

Fighting "Two Kinds of Slavery"

Why do the men, including the hard case Ramón, eventually change the way they think about the women? In large part, because the strike itself teaches them that they *need* to. It is in seeing women stand militantly on the picket line, shoulder to shoulder with their fight, that the men

come to realize the women's active participation is essential to victory. The women do not give in to the sheriff's intimidation tactics, even after mass arrests in which 62 women are jailed, along with Esperanza's newborn baby who needs his formula. The women's resilience is seen as they continue to chant "*Queremos fórmula, queremos comida, queremos camas, queremos baños*" (We want formula, we want food, we want beds, we want bathrooms). When Ramón finally comes to take the baby out of jail, their chants are enlivened as they see the husbands' support in the common struggle against the bosses.

It's not until the struggle forces the men into the women's shoes that they begin to empathize with the burden of domestic labor which normally falls on the woman in the family. Towards the end of the film, while Esperanza is on the picket line, a harried Ramón finds himself watching the baby while hanging laundry on a clothesline with another male worker. Ramón says:

"Three hours just to get enough water to wash this stuff. I'm telling you something, if this strike is ever settled.... I'll never go back to work for that company unless they install hot running water for us. It should have been a union demand from the beginning."

The other worker responds, referring to one of the leftist union leaders: "Like Charlie Vidal says, there's two kinds of slavery: wage slavery and domestic slavery. The woman question, he calls it."

This is one of ways the film addresses vital questions from a Marxist-influenced standpoint. This too contradicts things we are frequently taught, like the claim that Marxists traditionally ignored issues of racial or sexual oppression. And remember the film was made back in the early '50s! The radical women's movement didn't appear until almost a decade and a half later. While by this time the Soviet-line Communist Party had degenerated under the sway of Stalinism, Biberman, like key organizers involved in the strike itself, still knew enough basic Marxism to bring key points home in a hard-hitting way. And *Salt of the Earth* can help teach us much more about actually fighting against women's oppression than a shelf full of feminist textbooks.

We Trotskyists uphold the historic Marxist program to replace the oppressive nuclear family that is at the core of women's oppression with social institutions to replace domestic servitude. This is the necessary material basis for liberation. To do this requires the working class taking power in a socialist revolution and creating a society based on human needs, not profit.



Alexandra Kollontai

Women's Liberation Does Not Equal Feminism

Often anything dealing with the woman question is conflated with feminism. But the Marxist program for women's liberation is infinitely more radical than any variant of feminism because it gets to the roots of women's oppression. In her article "The Social Basis of the Woman Question" (1909), Bolshevik revolutionary Alexandra Kollontai points out that the oppression of women is not a natural condition, nor the result of individual attitudes, but the result of the historical, material changes that gave rise to class society. These social and economic conditions created the nuclear family as the means the ruling class passes on its property as well as having women of the exploited classes bear the burden of raising, feeding and clothing the labor force. As Kollontai notes:

"Only the complete disappearance of these factors, only the evolution of those forces which at some point in the past gave rise to the subjection of women, is able in a fundamental way to influence and change their position. In other words, women can become truly free and equal only in a world organized along new social and productive lines."

While we fight here and now against every form of discrimination, this fight can only be effective if our program is based on the understanding that the only way to uproot that oppression is through the overthrow of capitalist class society itself.

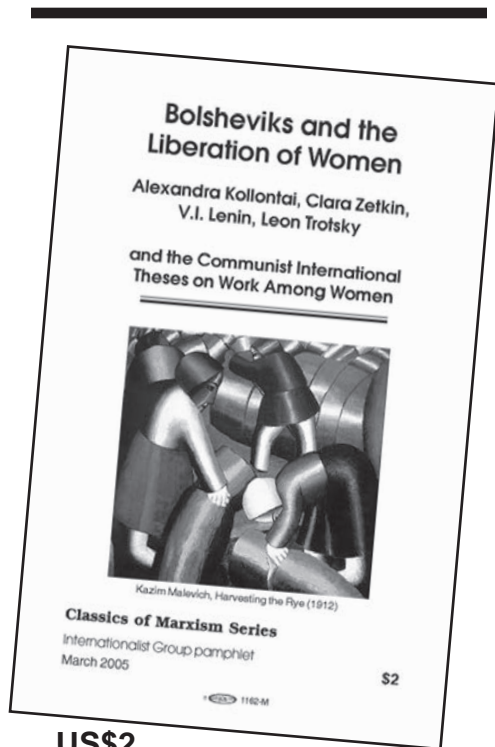
We highly recommend reading Kollontai's article and other materials in the Internationalist pamphlet, *Bolsheviks and the Liberation of Women*. There you will find a concrete explanation of the roots of women's oppression, as well as how the Bolsheviks not only abolished all legal



A key moment in the strike: women jump sheriff's deputy and disarm him after teargas attack, then resume picketing.



Scenes from Salt of the Earth



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discrimination against women and homosexuals, but also “began setting up communal childcare centers, laundries and restaurants for working people, essential institutions if women are to be freed from domestic drudgery.” It also explains how the economic backwardness and poverty of Russia, together with encirclement and invasion by capitalist powers determined to strangle the Soviet workers state, gave rise to the privileged Stalinist bureaucracy that rolled back many of the gains and set the stage for the capitalist counterrevolution that destroyed the USSR in 1991-92.

Far from a synonym for women’s liberation, feminism is a distinct ideology that claims all women are “sisters.” Having “lumped them all together, [women] workers and [women] bosses,” to paraphrase the above-mentioned scene from *Salt of the Earth*, feminism builds its program on that class-collaborationist foundation. But Esperanza is not and cannot be the “sister” of the mine owners’ wives. Such an illusion would be fatal to the struggle. Instead she is fighting, together with Ruth Barnes and Ángela Sánchez, Charlie Vidal and Joe T. Morales and the other most class-conscious activists, to bring home the lesson that “the woman question” is key for real sisters and brothers of the working class to win against the owners. For this to happen, she and the others must also struggle, bitterly at times, to bring that consciousness to Ramón.

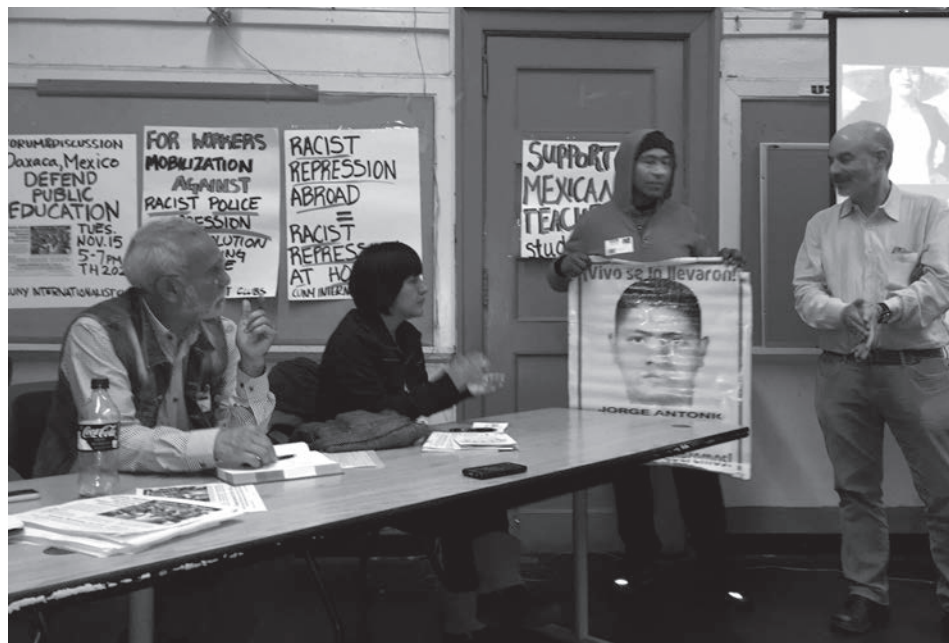
Mainstream feminism believes women can achieve equality within capitalism, and calls for “uniting” with Hillary Clinton & Co. as they pay starvation wages to the women in their Haitian sweatshops. Many think it’s a question not of a *social* struggle to uproot what Marxists call special or double oppression but an *individual* act of contrition to “check your privilege.” Some leftists opportunistically seek to gain favor by talking about a supposed socialist or “proletarian” flavor of feminism, blurring the line between an innately class-collaborationist ideology and the revolutionary program of class struggle. Nor can feminism represent the liberation of African American or Latina women as posed by academics who revere “black feminism,” for example, as a break from an exclusive, “white-washed feminism.” Feminism cannot be made into something it is not. Replacing the class line with the gender line, in all its forms, it separates the woman question from class struggle, which means it actually stands in the way of women’s liberation.

Watching *Salt of the Earth* is a great way of making these issues concrete. Sixty-two years after it was made, it speaks to us as young revolutionaries who bring these lessons into our work supporting union organizing drives by Mexican immigrant workers here in New York, standing on the picket lines with women and men phone workers, fighting for free abortion on demand and 24-hour child care, and other struggles where mobilizing the power of the working class is essential to bringing together and winning fights against *all* forms of oppression.

Given the film’s message and impact, and who made it, it’s no wonder that the government went all out to suppress it. (See James J. Lorence, *The Suppression of Salt of the Earth* [1999].) Actors and crew members were threatened and met with violence so often that they had to walk with loaded guns on the set. The film itself was put on an industry blacklist. Projectionists were told not to show it. The only actual film star in it, Rosaura Revueltas – who plays the role of Esperanza – was arrested by immigration cops, deported, then banned from acting both in the U.S. and Mexico. Today the film is rightly considered a classic. No wonder it is one of the films the Internationalist Club so often shows to commemorate the proletarian holiday that began with mass strikes by immigrant women workers here in New York and touched off the Russian Revolution in 1917: International Women’s Day.

Women’s liberation through socialist revolution! ■

Oaxaca Teachers Speak at Hunter College



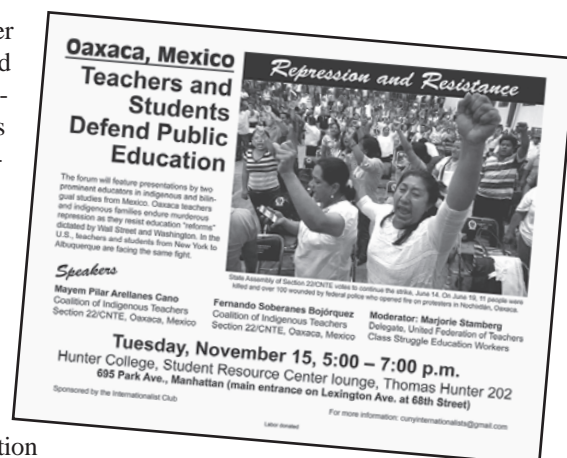
Fernando Soberanes and Mayem Arellanes of Oaxaca Section 22 of the National Coordinating Committee of Education Workers (CNTE) and Antonio Tizapa (with photo of his son, one of the Ayotzinapa 43) spoke at forum sponsored by Hunter Internationalist Clubs and Class Struggle Education Workers.

On November 14, the Hunter Internationalist Club co-sponsored a forum titled “Oaxaca, Mexico: Repression and Resistance – Teachers and Students Defend Public Education.” Moderated by United Federation of Teachers delegate and Class Struggle Education Workers activist Marjorie Stamberg, it featured two leading activists from the Oaxaca local (Section 22) of the Coordinadora Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación (CNTE – National Coordinating Committee of Education Workers) and the Coalition of Indigenous Teachers: Mayem Pilar Arellanes Cano and Fernando Soberanes Bojórquez. Both are deeply involved in bilingual education in Oaxaca, the Mexican state with the highest proportion of indigenous population.

The CNTE is the dissident teachers union movement that for four months this spring and summer faced off against the anti-teacher, anti-student and anti-indigenous education “reform” pushed by Mexican president Enrique Peña Nieto and backed by the official corporatist (government-controlled) teachers “union,” the SNTE.

Over the past period, Internationalist Club members have participated in, and helped organize, several protests and talks to help educate CUNY students and faculty about the courageous CNTE strike, the massacre of strike supporters in Nochistlán, Oaxaca, as well as the forced “disappearance” of the 43 Ayotzinapa teachers college students in September 2014. We raised these issues at our Speak-Out Against Racist Repression (see page 3 of this issue), as well as the Report-Back on the Club’s trip to Mexico, and also participated in a protest outside the St. Regis Hotel in Midtown Manhattan when Peña Nieto made an appearance there shortly after he raised a firestorm of criticism in Mexico for hosting Donald (“Build the Wall”) Trump.

So for Club members, it was exciting to meet Oaxaca teachers in person and host their talk. Arellanes and Soberanes gave a slide-show presentation explaining important aspects of the history of teachers’ struggles and the CNTE, as well as the bi-



lingual education programs they and other teacher activists have developed with the direct participation of indigenous communities. One of the points that led to questions from the audience was how the Mexican government has deprived entire sectors of the indigenous education system of funds, as well as the fact that there are only 10 secondary schools in the indigenous education program (which at the national level only involves primary education). Another point discussed with the audience was the influence of Paulo Freire in Brazil, and of early Soviet educational theorists who sought to put into practice the idea of the “labor school.” Internationalist activists emphasized the efforts of the Grupo Internacionalista in Mexico to spread the teachers strike to powerful sectors of the industrial working class.

Antonio Tizapa, father of Jorge Antonio Tizapa Legideño, one of the Ayotzinapa 43, addressed the participants, linking protest against state repression in Mexico to solidarity with the teachers’ struggle. Among the points that the forum made very concrete was the centrality of international solidarity. Students and an adjunct professor noted that here at CUNY, the international capitalist attack on public education continually affects us (in fact the room where the forum was held was filled with malfunctioning machinery and broken furniture). Mayem Arellanes related this to her own experiences when she was a young university student, and emphasized the importance of fighting to “make a better world, free of capitalism.” ■



Hillary Clinton is no “sister” of working women. Shown here at opening of Haiti sweatshop she financed with stolen relief funds, where women make \$5 a day.

CUNY Grad Center Event on NYPD Surveillance

Defend Muslim Students at CUNY

By Cora

A federal judge recently rejected a settlement between plaintiffs representing Muslims subjected to surveillance by the New York Police Department and the City of New York. The judge gave the reason that the NYPD repeatedly and deliberately violates court orders, and that it was necessary to put some teeth in the settlement. This directly affects us at CUNY, since a prime target of this illegal police surveillance was Muslim students at the City University of New York.

At a time when the U.S. president-elect made the persecution of Muslim people a centerpiece of his campaign, a recent panel discussion at the CUNY Graduate Center is particularly relevant. Sponsored by the Center for the Humanities, the October 28 forum on “NYPD Surveillance of Muslim Communities” featured Matt Apuzzo, co-author of a Pulitzer Prize-winning Associated Press series on the New York Police Department’s post-9/11 program of massive spying on Muslims. Typically, the secret surveillance squad was given the innocuous-sounding name



Protest against New York Police Department spying on Muslims in 2013.

of “Demographics Unit.” Apuzzo was recently hired by the *New York Times* as one of its top national security reporters.

Also featured were Apuzzo’s former editor, Michael Oreskes, and Linda Sarsour, Executive Director of the Arab American Association of New York. Moderating the discussion was Brooklyn College English professor Moustafa Bayoumi, author of *How Does it Feel to Be a Problem? Being Young and Arab in America* (2015) and *This Muslim American Life: Dispatches from the War on Terror* (2015).

The forum’s topic is of great importance at CUNY. As noted in one part of the series (“NYPD infiltration of colleges raises privacy fears,” AP, 11 October 2011), Muslim student groups at six CUNY colleges were targeted for “infiltration [as] part of a secret NYPD intelligence-gathering effort that put entire Muslim communities under scrutiny.” These were Brooklyn Col-

lege, Baruch College, City College, Hunter College, La Guardia Community College and Queens College, as well as St. John’s University, a Catholic college in Queens. The article noted: “Alarmed professors and students ... say it smacks of the FBI spying conducted on college campuses in the 1960s.” In fact, CUNY’s “Public Safety” director, among others, was previously a special agent with the FBI.

At the October 28 forum, Apuzzo described the beginnings of the AP investigation:

“We started to learn that there were these teams of plainclothes officers who were hanging out in coffee shops, listening to conversations and taking notes on what people thought about politics and the state of the union, and where they bought their groceries.... [The plainclothes officers were] taking pictures of their businesses and whatnot, putting undercover officers, informants in mosques and taping sermons.

“I think for a little while we must have assumed that somebody’s got to have written about this! This is the largest city in the country and this is the largest police department in the country. I think it sort of became an article of faith after 9/11 that we needed to give the police departments and the government this sort of authority, and nobody ever went back and checked, well, what are they doing with that?”

Later in his talk, Apuzzo noted:



CUNY’s own riot squad, the SAFE Team, getting ready to bust students’ heads during 11 November 2011 cop riot. Now the Board of Trustees wants to ram through “expressive conduct” policy to squelch student protests.

“There was a CIA officer stationed inside the NYPD, something which doesn’t exist anywhere else in the country.... The idea of them having an agency that’s not chartered for domestic surveillance sitting inside a municipal police department teaching them how to gather intelligence inside the city ... just that, to us, was a news story.”

But what kept the story alive, Apuzzo told the audience, was the fact that the police flat-out lied about the program, denying that the “Demographics Unit” even existed.

Bayoumi remarked that during the research process for *How Does It Feel to Be a Problem?* (the title echoes a phrase from W.E.B. Du Bois in his book *The Souls of Black Folk* [1903]):

“There was this grand suspicion already happening within the community. I remember one conversation in particular that I had with one young man. He started telling me in great detail how there had been this unmarked police cruiser that just seemed to be following him everywhere throughout Brooklyn for weeks on end. And at that time I thought, maybe this is a little bit exaggerated. I don’t know, is this actually the case? And now, thanks to the [Associated Press] stories, I believe that it’s entirely true.”

Sarsour noted that “What we saw is in places like Hunter College, there were signs saying ‘please refrain from political conversation beyond this door’” posted at the Muslim Students Association. “You have young people who don’t want to organize on college campuses because they’re afraid of being flags for or being targets of NYPD surveillance.”

The police spying on Muslim students at CUNY was not an isolated incident, but part of a broader effort to stifle student activism. The revelations on the NYPD program first came out in the midst of CUNY’s attacks against students protesting tuition hikes. Then in July 2013, the Board of Trustees – the crony capitalists and political flacks the governor and mayor appoint to dictate over CUNY – tried to push through measures to prevent student protests, which they gave the Orwellian name of “Expressive Conduct Policy.” Stymied by widespread opposition from faculty and students, they backed off for a while. Now this loathsome Trustees

junta, which lords it over those of us who actually work and study here, is once again trying to ram this blatantly unconstitutional policy through. To stop it, mass militant protest – in other words, what they are trying to prevent – is just the ticket.

The Internationalist Clubs calls to defend Muslim students and the rights of us all. ■

Internationalist photo



Internationalist Clubs at May 2012 protest against repression at CUNY.

Internationalist Speak-Out Against Police Terror From L.A. to Oaxaca



On September 1, the newly formed Los Angeles local of the Internationalist Group held a successful speak-out against police terror from L.A. to Oaxaca at Cal State L.A. Dozens of students stopped to listen and several stepped up to speak, including a young woman

who spoke about Trayvon Martin, a Chicano studies professor, and an engineering student who emphasized the need to fight against the whole capitalist system. A Latino student read greetings from the parents of the 43 disappeared students from Ayotzinapa.

Internationalist photo



CUNY Internationalists joined in demonstration of solidarity with Mexican teachers against mounting repression on June 18, the day before the Nochixtlán massacre. The protest was addressed by Antonio Tizapa, father of one of the 43 “disappeared” Ayotzinapa students.

Mexico...

continued from page 16

level of political sophistication than tends to be the case in the U.S. at this time.

A big highlight for us was accompanying *brigadas* of strikers to the main campus at UNAM. This is Latin America’s largest university, which had its own huge, 10-month strike in 1999-2000 that stopped tuition from being imposed at the orders of U.S. banks. (All public education in Mexico has been legally required to be free since the Mexican Revolution of 1910-17.) Key to stopping the capitalist drive to impose tuition was the formation of workers defense guards, which the electrical workers union put up to defend the university strike in July 1999, at the initiative of our comrades.

(which they considered an unrealistic call by the Trotskyists). The teachers were decidedly unimpressed by that. In contrast, the crowd was electrified by our comrade Steph giving militant greetings from young activists won to revolutionary politics through the struggle against racist repression in the United States.

We also went to a rally for extending the strike at the CCH-Sur, an UNAM-affiliated “college of sciences and humanities” on the south side of Mexico City. The first thing we saw at CCH-Sur was a bunch of beautiful posters stuck to the entry gates. They advertised the forum we were going to give on the main UNAM campus, where we would be giving participants’ reports on mass protests against racist police terror in the U.S. and the Marxist program to end it through socialist revolution.

The *brigadas* we accompanied had been invited to UNAM by the Grupo Internacionalista, which was fighting to extend the strike to higher education workers and students to help advance the struggle to bring in the key power of the industrial working class. The teachers’ brigades went through University City, the enormous and beautiful main campus, carrying out “lightning rallies” at one *facultad* (school) after another. In the process we saw activists from a Maoist group, En Lucha, try to siphon off groups of teachers to help them pass out a generic “support the struggle” flier which said nothing about extending the strike

After the CCH-Sur rally in support of the teachers strike, we headed to the Comité Internacionalista’s *cubículo*, a kind of club office that was one of the spaces seized by students in one of the campus takeovers there. The activists were as young as 16 years old, and super-political. The door had a huge hammer, sickle and four – symbol of Trotsky’s Fourth International – painted on it. Right outside was a big banner calling to extend the teachers strike. The walls inside were decorated with pictures from the Russian Revolution, Bolshevik posters about women’s liberation through socialist revolution, materials about the teachers strike, as well as signs on the need to break from all the bourgeois parties and build a revolutionary workers party. Internationalism was also embodied in photos and other materials about Mumia Abu-Jamal, the former Black Panther and radical journalist who has carried on a decades-long struggle against the racist injustice system in the U.S., from behind the bars of Pennsylvania’s prisons.

Revolutionary History All Around You

In the short time we were in Mexico, we did many other things as well. This included visiting the house in Coyoacán where Bolshevik Revolution organizer Leon Trotsky was murdered in 1940 by an assassin sent by Stalin. We literally saw the bullet holes in the walls of the bedrooms where gunmen sent by Stalin had previously tried and failed to kill Trotsky, his companion Natalia and their 11-year-old grandson Sieva (Esteban) as they slept. We passed through Trotsky’s study where he wrote some of the works we have read in our weekly Marxist study group. And in the garden we saw where Trotsky’s and Natalia’s ashes are buried in a monument designed by Mexican artist Juan O’Gorman.

In Mexico City’s modern, super-clean Metro (subway) system, we saw a whole series of panels carefully explaining human evolution and stating “Evolution Is a Fact” – whereas the United States now has a vice president-elect who denies evolution, while all sorts of idiotic “public figures” deride the ABCs of science. It was also striking to see the influence of Marxism in museums and archeological sites, where historical materialist explanations often predominate. We visited the unbelievable pyramids at Teotihuacán, monuments to a pre-Aztec state whose agricultural technology (and exploitation of peasant labor) fed many thousands in the Valley of Mexico.

At the National Palace we were blown away by the gorgeous revolutionary murals of Diego Rivera, which depict the whole history of Mexico, pre-Columbian societies, the foods and materials like rubber the world got from Latin America, the violence of the Conquest, the struggles of Zapata and Pancho Villa – and a huge picture of Karl Marx pointing the way towards communist revolution. At a party on our last night we did some impromptu revolutionary rap with comrades of Activistas Revolucionarios del Hip-Hop, whose musical group is called Intifada and who fused with the GI a few years ago.

But one of the most important aspects of the trip was having the opportunity to make presentations at the Grupo Internacionalista forum at UNAM’s Faculty of Philosophy and Letters on August 12 (see page 15). Here, too, we had an example of how revolutionary history is all around you

in Mexico. The forum was held in an auditorium named after the country’s most famous communist novelist, José Revueltas, who at various points in his life sympathized with Trotskyism. (His sister, Rosaura Revueltas, is the female lead in the movie *Salt of the Earth*, which is discussed elsewhere in this issue of *Revolution*.)

Forum on Struggle Against Racist Police Terror

The August 12 forum at UNAM was titled “The Struggle Against Racist Repression in the U.S.” The text for the poster showed some of what we sought to convey:

“From Oaxaca to Baton Rouge, down with capitalism’s police terror! Every week in the U.S., horrifying new murders are carried out by the police. Mass protests against this have posed questions that only revolutionary politics can answer. Both the open racist Donald Trump and Wall Street warmonger Hillary Clinton are candidates of the racist capitalist system. A socialist revolution is needed to make black liberation a reality. Forge a revolutionary workers party!”

The most exciting thing about the forum was the participation of striking teachers from Oaxaca and elsewhere. At several points they broke into chants and shouted “Long live the revolution!” One of them, a long-time activist, Maestro David, sent a greeting in Spanish and the indigenous Mixtec language to workers at NYC’s B&H Photo company, many of whom are Mixtec immigrants from Mexico. (On the B&H struggle, see “NYC: Immigrant Workers Rebel” in *Revolution* No. 12, March 2016.) Striking teachers also told it like it is, in no uncertain terms, to a couple of members of the ex-Trotskyist Spartacist tendency’s Mexican group who tried to defend their grotesque claim that there is no basic difference between the striking union in Oaxaca (called Section 22) and a fake “union” of strike-breakers that supports the government’s anti-teacher “education reform.” In response, teachers at the forum chanted “*Sección 22, la única, no hay dos*” (Section 22 is the only real one).

One of our new comrades from Los Angeles gave a rousing intervention about the class struggle to free the Mexican working class from the “corporatist” system that directly chains large sections of labor to the capitalist state. He was part of the Better-Late-Than-Never Faction that was expelled from the Spartacist League in the U.S. for supporting the positions of the Internationalist Group, and subsequently fused with the IG. (They gave a great historical explanation of the issue of corporatism in their documents, which were reprinted in a special pamphlet, *Back to Trotskyism!* and *The Internationalist* No. 44, Summer 2016.)

It is hard to sum up in one article all that we saw and learned on our trip to Mexico. One thing we kept telling our comrades after we got back to New York is how real it made many of the central political and programmatic ideas that we discuss, study and work to put into practice as young revolutionaries.

After returning to New York, the Club sponsored a “Report-Back on Mexico” forum at Hunter. Students who attended were powerfully moved by the participation of Antonio Tizapa, father of one of the “disappeared” Ayotzinapa students, who spoke to us about the struggle against repression in Mexico, and its connection to the life of immigrant workers and students here. ■

Revolution



Comrades of the Comité Internacionalista at the CCH-Sur college with banner: “Students Say: Extend, deepen, radicalize the strike!”

From the U.S. to Mexico, Only Revolution Can Bring Justice!

Below are excerpts from what CUNY Internationalist speakers said at the August 12 Grupo Internacionalista forum at the National Autonomous University of Mexico.

We bring greetings from the Internationalist Clubs at the City University of New York, which is the largest urban public university in the United States. The struggle to defend public education is as vital in the U.S. as it is here in Mexico and in other countries. We get enormous inspiration from your struggles.

We'll start with how some of us became involved with the Internationalist Clubs. It was in the summer of 2014 when Michael Brown, an unarmed black teenager, was murdered by the police in Ferguson, Missouri. Only weeks after Michael Brown was murdered in Missouri, a man named Eric Garner, who was the father of two daughters, was strangled to death by the New York City police. These two murders by the police led to massive protests all across the U.S. and internationally as well.

At CUNY, the Internationalist Clubs organized speak-outs of hundreds of students against these racist police murders. At Hunter College, the Club was the most well-organized and disciplined political organization on campus. Following the speak-outs, we would bring contingents of students to join the massive demonstrations of tens of thousands who marched across New York City. The protests made a huge impression on our political development. We saw concretely how the police would treat protestors; in some cases there were massive arrests.

In the U.S., the majority of activists have liberal politics, and one of the most popular chants was "No justice, no peace." Our organization understands that the bourgeois courts will never give justice, nor do they punish the police who enforce the power of the ruling class.

Capitalism, Slavery and Black Oppression

U.S. capitalism was born of conquest, slavery and the oppression of black people. Chattel slavery was not ended through reforms; it was only ended when black slaves took up arms as part of the Civil War in the 1860s and fought for their own emancipa-



Internationalist Club members protest in NYC against police murders of Philando Castile in Minnesota and Alton Sterling in Baton Rouge, July 7.

tion. But black people in the U.S. could not remain free under a capitalist system, and they were betrayed by the Northern bourgeoisie and its then-leading party which they had fought together with in the Civil War. While they were legally no longer slaves, they were soon forced into Jim Crow segregation and continuously oppressed socially and economically.

The slave patrols, the patrols in the U.S. that were used to control slaves and catch those who escaped, were transformed into what are now the professional police forces in the U.S. The formal legal segregation of black people in the South lasted another 100 years until the 1960s. At that point the Civil Rights movement succeeded in ending legal segregation – but the economic and social basis of the oppression of black people continued.

Last month [July 2016], there were two more high-profile murders of black men. The first was Philando Castile, who was murdered in his car; the video was posted by his girlfriend on Facebook. Following that his girlfriend and his young daughter were taken into custody by the police. The second was Alton Sterling, who was pinned on the ground by three police officers before being shot and killed by the police.

Today, many liberal organizations such as Black Lives Matter call for the reform of the police. They call for putting body cameras on the police, or having the police under the control of the "community." But having body cameras did not work. The murders we just spoke of were all caught on tape, and there has been no punishment of the officers who murdered these men. The call for community control of the police is a call for collaboration with the police. The police are the armed fist of the ruling class, and that will not be changed by any type of "community control." As long as the bourgeois state remains in control, there will be no justice. This is why we do not say "No justice, no peace," but chant that "Only revolution can bring justice."

Mexico Class Struggle a Big Inspiration

I want to thank the teachers for coming to our forum. You guys are such an inspiration to us in New York. The same impe-

rialists are also attacking public education in the U.S. And who is that affecting? In particular it is affecting black and Latino workers and their families. Capitalist imperialists are trying to privatize schools internationally. And so, too, our struggle is and must be international.

Racism is very prevalent in the United States. Every day, another black person is brutally murdered by the police. And we can go so far as to say that every day, millions of black people are being harassed by racist cops. When protests have broken out in one city, they have extended to cities all over the country. And I just want to say that it was the Internationalist Club, at demonstrations about racist police terror, that linked this to the 43 students that were disappeared in Ayotzinapa here in Mexico. It's the same struggle. That's why we fight internationally, and that's why we say: "*De Ayotzinapa a Nueva York, una sola lucha*" (From Ayotzinapa to New York, it's all one struggle).

I got into the Internationalist Club in a different way from my comrade who spoke earlier. Starting at a very young age, I always wondered why black and Latin people are oppressed in the United States. I started researching many things, and even read some of the conspiracy theory-type books that aren't based on facts, let alone providing any method for actually fixing anything. Then I went to college in New York City and I was at a speak-out that was held by the Internationalist Club.

It was a speak-out about Sandra Bland, a woman who was brutally murdered by the police. There was also a group that I didn't know about at the time [and that has since collapsed completely]: Maoists who were covering over our fliers that showed Sandra Bland's face; they were trying to make problems for the speak-out. But the Internationalist Club was very well-organized and successful in bringing out the issues of the struggle against racist terror.

So now what everyone is talking about in the United States are the elections. People are asking which candidate is better for "the people." The fact is, the United States is a bourgeois democracy – that is, it has always been a class dictatorship of the owners of the wealth and property. In his book *State and Revolution*, which the Club

organized a major forum on last year, Lenin quotes Karl Marx saying that "the oppressed are allowed once every few years to decide which particular representatives of the oppressing class are to represent and repress them."

Bernie Sanders was one of these candidates who really had a lot of people fooled. He would claim that he is a socialist, when in fact he is an enemy of the working class. He supports U.S. imperialism one hundred percent. He supported murderous UN sanctions in Iraq which led to a million deaths, including five hundred thousand children. After the September 11, 2001 events, Sanders supported the Authorization for Use of Military Force resolution for war in Afghanistan. People also claim Sanders is for black people when in fact race wasn't even a question in his campaign until Black Lives Matter protesters barged in on one of his demonstrations and he started saying some things about supposedly reforming the police. Some liberals and reformists, including some fake-Trotskyist groups, want Bernie Sanders to run as a third-party candidate. But at the end of the day, the fundamental question isn't how many parties there are, but what class do they represent.

Sanders is rounding up votes for the actual Democratic candidate, which is Hillary Clinton. She is a warmonger who backs and helps organize the imperialist bombing campaigns and ever-expanding wars. She says that because she is a woman, she is for women. Tell that to the women in Haiti whom she is paying less than \$5 a day in sweatshops. Tell that to the women in Libya whose homes and lives she has destroyed. And let's not forget the millions of Latina and African American women she has helped force off of welfare. And the millions of lives that have been destroyed because of the bill her husband put through for mass incarceration.

Donald Trump is known as racist, which of course he is, but what Hillary does and has done is just as racist. She says she carries hot sauce in her bag, she went on TV to do the "Nae Nae" and show she's cool – like we'd forget how she called young black men "superpredators." In her 2008 campaign, she repeatedly stated her adamant opposition to "illegal" immigration and called for "tougher" borders.

So now Trump is the Republican candidate. His rallies tend to be an orgy of racism. He's also openly sexist and has been endorsed by fascist David Duke. But let's make this clear, Trump is a reactionary psycho but he is not a fascist. The United States ruling class doesn't need a mass fascist movement at this time because the labor movement is not threatening its rule. Fascism means a specific thing and cannot be used as if it's just a bad word. Stalinists call Trump fascist as a way to call for backing Hillary Clinton. We call for fighting against class collaboration, for the mobilization of workers power, and a revolutionary workers party that's independent of all capitalist parties and politicians. Marx, all the way back to the Communist Manifesto, points to the working class needing its own revolutionary politics, which are independent, separate and against those of the ruling class, because their interests are counterposed.

In response, teachers yelled out: "*¡Viva la revolucion!*"



NYC protest over disappearance of Ayotzinapa students, September 2015.

CUNY Activists' Forum at UNAM

In Mexico, Revolutionary Internationalism Up Close

This past summer, members of the CUNY Internationalist Clubs traveled to Mexico to learn more about the intense class struggles underway there, and to work with our comrades in the Grupo Internacionalista and the Comité Internacionalista at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM). The August 2016 trip was a huge experience that helped bring home the meaning of revolutionary internationalism, which is at the center of Marxist working-class politics.

Our trip took place in the midst of the truly heroic four-month teachers strike that was braving murderous repression. The strike was waged in opposition to the Mexican government's so-called education reform, which is aimed squarely against public education and the rights of teachers and students. This is part of the international capitalist offensive aimed at making education into more and more of a "profit platform," and like the escalating racist police repression in Mexico, it is literally "Made in USA." It's part of the same anti-education drive that hits us at CUNY, with constantly rising tuition, having to work multiple low-wage jobs, unpayable debt, and so many other ways that make it harder and harder to get through school.

Here in New York City, the Internationalist Clubs at Hunter and the Graduate Center had worked intensely to build protests against the massacre in Mexico that occurred on June 19. That was when police attacked strike supporters in Nochistlán, a



March of striking teachers in Mexico City, July 11.

town in Mexico's southern, largely indigenous state of Oaxaca. Police opened fire on a huge crowd of protesters there, killing 11 and wounding many more. Over the previous two years, at Hunter and elsewhere, we had built events and protests about the 43 *normalistas* (teachers college students) of Ayotzinapa. These students were "disappeared" (abducted) in Guerrero, another heavily indigenous state where this summer's teachers strike was particularly strong.

Now, on the trip to Mexico, we were

getting the opportunity to see aspects of the struggle for ourselves. The trip was organized by the CUNY Internationalist Clubs together with the Internationalist Group (IG). Like the Grupo Internacionalista in Mexico, the IG is a section of the League for the Fourth International, which works to reforge the world party of socialist revolution originally founded by Bolshevik revolutionary Leon Trotsky in 1938. Prospects for proletarian revolution are palpable in Mexico, whose border with the U.S. is the longest between imperial-

ist nations and the colonial and semicolonial countries they dominate and oppress. Where Donald Trump raves about building an imaginary new wall, and Obama has escalated the very real forces of deadly anti-immigrant repression, Marxist revolutionaries see the need and opportunity to unite the workers and oppressed in common struggle, across capitalism's borders.

With the Striking Teachers

Our trip included multiple visits to the striking teachers' *plantón* (encampment) in the middle of Mexico City. It is hard to convey how moving it was for us, on one of our first nights there, to see the Grupo Internacionalista's banner flying high above the mass of tents where teachers were gathered discussing the day's events, cooking, organizing tasks for the next days' marches or *brigadas* (teams of activists) to carry out leafleting

and fund-raising. Some were watching videos about past struggles, or relaxing with a guitar and a group of friends. Also at the *plantón*, a few days after our trip started, comrades of the Grupo gave a dynamic and well-attended forum on the need to extend the strike in order to win a solid victory, by bringing in the power of the industrial working class. Debates and discussion at this forum gave us a taste of the intensity of political activism in Mexico, which is also characterized by a considerably higher

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With striking teachers of the CNTE, and Grupo Internacionalista activists, during visit to University City agitating to extend the strike.



August 12 forum sponsored by the Grupo Internacionalista on "The Struggle Against Racist Repression in the U.S."