

Democratic Party: Faux Friends of Women

## Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!



Internationalist photo

The fight against racist repression and anti-immigrant attacks is inextricably linked to the struggle for women's liberation. Above: Internationalist contingent at 30 June 2018 protest against separation of immigrant families by I.C.E. Gestapo.

"The extension of women's freedom is the general principle for all social progress." Thus wrote Charles Fourier all the way back in 1808. "In any given society," as we quote this pioneer of the early socialist movement in our pamphlet *Marxism and Women's Liberation* (2017), "the degree of women's emancipation is the natural measure of the general emancipation." By that measure and so many others, today's society is getting more unfree and more oppressive by the day, under both Democrats and Republicans. The

fight for women's liberation is inseparable from the fight for socialist revolution, here and around the world.

In the U.S. today, immigrant kids are ripped from the arms of their mothers and thrown in child prisons; migrant refugees desperately seeking asylum in the "land of the free" are met with tear gas grenades; black and Latino people are subject to racist police repression and murder nationwide; gay and transgender people are the targets of reactionary vitriol from the highest offices of

government. All while Donald Trump and his cabinet of Reagan- and Bush-era war criminals and flunkies openly plot a coup in Venezuela, try to provoke war with Iran, support and fund a brutal war on Yemen and ramp up imperialist sanctions against China and North Korea.

As we go to press, no less than five states (Iowa, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Dakota and Ohio) have so-called fetal heartbeat laws on the books, which ban abortion once a cardiac pulse can be detected in a fetus. This can

be as early as six weeks into pregnancy. In Georgia, Governor Brian Kemp, who has aggressively worked to suppress African Americans' voting rights, is expected to sign a similar bill into law in May. This is a frontal assault on women's elementary democratic right to abortion. Emboldened by sexist pig Brett Kavanaugh's elevation to the Supreme Court last year, the woman-hating Right to Life group, which supports a full-on abortion ban, is banking on the court's reaction-  
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## Spokane Marxist Group and Marxist Student Group Fuse with Revolutionary Internationalist Youth

On March 8, International Women's Day, the Spokane Marxist Group (SMG), based in Spokane, Washington, and the Marxist Student Group (MSG), leadership of the Marxist Student Union at Central Connecticut State University, fused with the Revolutionary Internationalist Youth, youth section of the Internationalist Group (U.S. section of the League for the Fourth

International). The international working-class holiday – sparked by the strikes of immigrant garment workers on New York City's Lower East Side more than a century ago – was chosen as the date for the fusion in honor of the fight for women's liberation through socialist revolution and the Russian Revolution that began with mass strikes on International Women's Day in 1917.

The fusion into a single organization followed a period of common work, a high point of which was RIY's Educational and Organizing Conference, held in January, where members of RIY, SMG and MSG gave presentations on their organizations' political work and perspectives, and an SMG activist was a co-presenter of an educational point on the meaning and

history of the "united front tactic" in the international communist movement. Presentations were also given by RIY members on Democratic Party feminism and the "#MeToo movement" (highlighting the counterposition between the class-struggle program for women's liberation through socialist revolution and feminism, which  
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Revolutionary Internationalist Youth and Internationalist Group at March 16 “U.S. Hands Off Venezuela” demonstration in Washington, D.C.

## Fusion...

*continued from page 1*

calls for “sisterhood” across class lines),<sup>1</sup> U.S. imperialism and the migrant caravan, as well as a history of the communist youth movement going back to German revolutionary Karl Liebknecht’s campaign against militarism before WWI.

Following the three organizations’ unanimous vote to carry out the fusion, forums and celebrations commemorating International Women’s Day were held in New York City, New Britain, Connecticut and Spokane, Washington. Comrades made presentations on the Marxist program for women’s liberation and gave a rousing rendition of Langston Hughes’ poem “Good Morning, Revolution.” They also read speeches and writings by and about such heroes of the class struggle as Sojourner Truth; anti-lynching crusader and black self-defense advocate, Ida B. Wells; Flora Tristan, a courageous early theorist of socialism, trade unionism and women’s liberation; Louise Michel, who was tried and deported for her role in the Paris Commune; Rosa Luxemburg, Alexandra Kollontai and Clara Zetkin;

<sup>1</sup> See “Democratic Party Feminism and the #MeToo Movement” (January 2019), <http://www.internationalist.org/democraticpartyfeminismmetoo1901.html>

gay and transgender rights pioneer Magnus Hirschfeld, and others. A striking aspect of the New York event was the deeply moving talks by three women comrades from Trabajadores Internacionales Clasistas (TIC, Class Struggle International Workers), about the experiences and struggles of triply oppressed immigrant women workers and their vital connection to the fight for socialist revolution.

The Spokane Marxist Group had its roots in the Spokane branch of Socialist Alternative (SAIt), U.S. affiliate of the pseudo-Trotskyist Committee for a Workers’ International (CWI). The high national profile of SAIt and its Seattle city council member Kshama Sawant, combined with SAIt’s status as the only left organization in Spokane until early 2017, led the founding members of SMG into its fold. While in SAIt, comrades who would later found SMG were active in organizing against racist deportations and against fascist groups like Patriot Prayer and the Proud Boys. Of particular note was their leading role in the 7 July 2018 “No More Racist Deportations” demonstration at the Spokane Intermodal Center. The event brought 80 people out in protest against the frequent practice of Border Patrol agents boarding Greyhound buses, where they racially profile suspected immigrants and demand to see their papers. This culminated in a two-hour occupation of the bus station.

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## Revolution



**Newspaper of the Revolutionary Internationalist Youth,  
youth section of the Internationalist Group, and CUNY students from  
the Internationalist Clubs, for the program of Marx, Lenin and Trotsky,  
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Marxist Student Union at January 26 protest against racist police shooting in New Britain, Connecticut.

At the same time, founders of the SMG opposed the increasingly blatant class-collaborationism by SAIt, an organization whose claims to be Trotskyist were always false but were more and more openly exposed by its promotion of and support to Bernie Sanders’ presidential bid. In sharp contrast to the Marxist principle of working-class political independence, Socialist Alternative enthusiastically cheered on electoral victories for “progressive” Democrats and joined the rest of the reformist left in tailing after the Democratic (Party) Socialists of America.<sup>2</sup> The SMG founders’ opposition to this resulted in their further investigating the CWI’s political origins and program, identifying the counterposition between genuine Trotskyism and this social-democratic current. This was summarized in the documents “Revolutionary Marxism Is Based on the Political Independence of the Working Class” (August 2018) and the resignation statement “Socialist Alternative Is No Place for Revolutionaries” (October 2018, reprinted in *The Internationalist* No. 54, November-December 2018).

The Marxist Student Group, leadership of the Marxist Student Union at Central Connecticut State University (CCSU), emerged from the membership of the now-defunct CCSU Youth for Socialist Action (YSA), which was originally affiliated with Socialist Action (SA), another organization misusing the name of Trotskyism. (Emerging in the mid-1980s from the Socialist Workers Party, SA eternally sought to replicate the SWP’s “successes” in building antiwar popular fronts during the Vietnam War.) The SA-affiliated YSA, far from a Leninist youth organization, had a politically heterogeneous membership, winding up with no members actually supporting SA’s program. The young comrades who later formed the Marxist Student Group traveled a considerable political distance from their first engagements with political activism, which ranged from “Marxist feminism” to supporting Bernie Sanders’ 2016 campaign to variants of ostensible Trotskyism.

The CCSU YSA began to investigate the origins and history of the communist movement in the U.S., as well as the need

to reforge Trotsky’s Fourth International (destroyed by the anti-Trotskyist political course that came to be known as “Pabloism” in the 1950s). This led them to move toward genuine revolutionary Trotskyist politics, which had been embodied for three decades by the Spartacist tendency and are upheld today by the IG/RIY. At the same time, organizational issues arose in relation to SA, which treated the YSA in a grossly bureaucratic manner. YSA was renamed Marxist Student Union to reflect the comrades’ Marxist politics and to distance themselves from Socialist Action’s reformism. The leadership of MSU began discussing with the IG and RIY soon after and engaged in a period of joint work, including participation in demonstrations, literature sales and other activities, and a forum on “Marxism, Gender and Sexuality” held at CCSU in December 2018.

The fusion comes at a time when most self-proclaimed Marxist organizations in the U.S. have been thrown into crisis by the growth and prominence of the Democratic Socialists of America following the 2016 presidential campaign of Bernie Sanders and the election of Donald Trump. This has led these groups to jettison just about every remaining pretense of upholding class politics in order to tail after Sanders, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and other “progressive” Democrats, as these bourgeois politicians carry out their function of leading workers and youth back into U.S. imperialism’s Democratic Party. In contrast, RIY is a training ground for young revolutionaries committed to helping forge a revolutionary proletarian class opposition to all the parties and politicians of “our own” imperialist rulers – and to put an end to imperialism (the highest stage of capitalism) through international socialist revolution.

The fusion of SMG and MSG with RIY is a step toward cohering a nationwide Trotskyist youth organization, something that has not existed in the U.S. since 1986 when the Spartacus Youth League (youth group of the then-revolutionary Spartacist League) was disbanded. We encourage young people who want to fight for a socialist future to join us in helping build the next generation of Marxist cadre here and internationally, which is so urgently needed for the task of opening the path for the coming socialist revolution. ■

<sup>2</sup> For an in-depth study on the political origins and development of the DSA, see our 70-page pamphlet “DSA: Fronting for the Democrats” (2018), available to order online at <http://www.internationalist.org/orderhere.html>.



# Full Citizenship Rights for All Immigrants! Break with Democrats, Republicans and All Capitalist Parties!

## U.S. Imperialism and the Migrant Caravan

The following presentations, edited for publication, were given by comrades Kaitlan and Maeve at the Revolutionary Internationalist Youth Educational and Organizing Conference in January. Several other speeches pertaining to vital questions of immigrant defense and the fight for socialism have been printed elsewhere in Revolution. These include “The Workers’ Struggle Has No Borders: Immigrants’ Rights and Revolution” in Revolution No. 15 (September 2018), “Marxism and the Fight for Immigrant Rights” on page 5 of this issue and “Internationalism and Working-Class History: Immigrants in the Fight for Revolution” on page 16 of this issue.

**Kaitlan:** Building a U.S.-Mexico “border wall” was a campaign promise that Donald Trump made in 2016 and pushed hard for this past October. Along with ramped-up racist and xenophobic rhetoric, this came right before the midterm elections. His pretext for aggressively pushing this demand was the caravan of thousands of Central Americans making their way through Mexico to the United States. The group he described as “criminals,” “unknown Middle Easterners” and “bad people” is actually made up of dispossessed families and workers fleeing the impoverished and violent conditions faced in their countries. The Grupo Internacionalista, our comrades in Mexico, sent a reporter to accompany the migrant caravan through parts of their journey. Interviews with refugees about their lives back home and their experiences at the border were moving to read, and I highly suggest people read the article in *The Internationalist*.<sup>1</sup>

The majority of the migrants in the caravan are from Honduras, which is one of the poorest countries in the Western Hemisphere. 65% of the population lives in poverty. Less than 10% have higher education, and opportunities for finding a job are little to none. Honduras also has the second highest murder rate in the world, outranked only by neighboring El Salvador. Many other migrants are from Guatemala and El Salvador, which, like many other countries in Latin America, endured civil wars, coups and authoritarian governments that were imposed, supported and funded by U.S. imperialism. In other words, the conditions they are fleeing were made right here in the USA.

Let’s look at some recent history. Beginning in the late 1970s and early ’80s, but really taking off in the ’90s, many governments in Latin America were forced to adopt so-called neoliberal policies to be able to get loans to finance their economies, leaving the working classes in these countries terribly affected. This period is often praised by the pro-business press as “bringing Latin America into the 20th century,” with the introduction of some fancy

new cars, toasters and other consumer products to their markets.

However, this coincided with the gutting of social welfare programs, the privatization of nationalized industries or services and elimination of thousands of jobs for Latin American workers, plunging them into the dire state of poverty many are in today. The opening up of Latin America’s markets to more foreign investment also further enriched domestic capitalists at the expense of the working people.

If that wasn’t enough, the U.S. used covert and overt warfare in Latin America to prop up governments that would continue to comply with the imperialist agenda against domestic uprisings. For example, in the 1980s Honduras was used as a base for counter-revolutionary war on Nicaragua, with CIA-trained and funded death squads of Nicaraguan “Contras” fighting the Sandinista National Liberation Front that had ousted U.S.-puppet dictator Anastasio Somoza. In El Salvador, the army and death squads murdered over 40,000 leftists, workers and peasants during the civil war against the U.S.-backed terror regime.<sup>2</sup> Thousands of Salvadorans fled to the U.S. during and after the civil war, which ended in 1992. Many came to Los Angeles, where they were subjected to harassment and repression by the police.

Some displaced youth joined gangs like MS-13, often in the hope of some kind of protection against cops and other gangs. The Clinton administration’s immigration “reform” bill of 1996 made it easier to deport immigrants, and so thousands of members of the MS-13 and 18th Street gangs were sent back to Central America. These gangs were able to grow and thrive in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, where in many places they operate with the tacit support of local police and the military. And it’s these violent gangs, known as *maras*, that many refugees are fleeing.

In 2009, Hillary Clinton gave the

<sup>1</sup> See “With the Caravan of International Workers,” *The Internationalist* No. 54, November-December 2018.  
<sup>2</sup> For more on U.S. imperialism’s role in organizing Central American death squads, see “The Bloody Trail of Col. James Steele and David ‘Death Squad’ Petraeus,” *Revolution* No. 10, October 2013 and “CIA at Baruch: A Threat, Not an ‘Honor’,” *Revolution* No. 15, September 2018.



Thousands of Central American migrant refugees fled unlivable conditions of violence and poverty, made in U.S.A.

green light for a military coup in Honduras to oust elected president Manuel Zelaya and replace him with a hand-picked pawn, Roberto Micheletti. His government went on to slash even more public services and government subsidies for social programs, and tens of thousands of workers lost their jobs. This long trajectory of events contributed to the mass migration of Hondurans particularly, as well as other Central Americans, in 2010, 2011, 2014, 2016 and most recently in 2018. This last caravan began after the 2017 Honduran elections. Many were outraged over the reelection of President Juan Orlando Hernández, who is very unpopular and was trailing his opponent by nearly five percentage points when vote counting abruptly stopped. After he was declared the winner, thousands protested this fraud and were met with brutal repression, with 22 people being murdered and 1,300 arrested by state forces.

So let’s bring it back to the present situation with the migrant caravan. After traveling over 2,600 miles from San Pedro Sula to the border town of Tijuana, Mexico, they were crammed into migrant campsites. While many Mexicans supported the refugees with food and clothing, the racist mayor of Tijuana, Juan Manuel Gastelum, channeled Donald Trump, claiming “human rights are only for upstanding humans” while hundreds of national-chauvinist “Mexico first” protestors attacked a migrant shelter in November. On the other side of the border behind a 20-foot fence, thousands of National Guard and Army soldiers with shoot-to-kill authorization from

Trump reinforced the already militarized Border Patrol. When hundreds of desperate refugees tried to enter the U.S. last November, the Border Patrol fired scores of tear gas grenades against the men, women and children.

With the current government shutdown [decreed in late December 2018], Trump says “it’s the Democrats,” they don’t care about the border and “national security” (as the capitalists call it). As we all know, this couldn’t be more wrong. The Democrats’ response has been to say that they are not against border barriers and “protections,” only against how much money they are willing to spend on it. They would rather spend the money on high-tech alternatives because they say a concrete border wall is just too outdated. “Why do we have to build this wall? Why can’t we have something electronic like drones or a fence?” They’re not against keeping out immigrants, they just have a different way they want to do it. They also completely dropped this “conversation” over immigration during the midterm elections, which is no coincidence because their real program is not so different from Trump’s.

Chuck Schumer, the Democratic Senate minority leader, and Nancy Pelosi, the Democratic House speaker, have repeatedly tried to make deals with Trump, like on DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals). In exchange for some degree of increased protection for undocumented immigrants brought to the U.S. as children, who are now working and going to school here, Democrats offered to support im-





**U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) riot cops seal off port of entry in San Ysidro, 25 November 2018. Democrats “oppose” Trump’s wall with calls for more border cops and technology to further militarize the border.**

creased funding for border security.<sup>3</sup> That included hiring thousands more Border Patrol cops and decking the border out with high-tech surveillance and more physical barriers. I always go back to the example of Bill Clinton in 1996, when he signed the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act that established the current fence along the U.S.-Mexico border. Then there’s George W. Bush’s Secure Fence Act of 2006, which expanded the fence and was supported by then-senators Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama.

Obama’s deportation record alone is enough to see where the Democrats really stand on immigration. He deported more immigrants than any president in U.S. history, which is why we call him “deporter-in-chief.” Then there’s this constant “good-immigrant” versus “bad-immigrant” rhetoric that Democrats push, that pits skilled, educated immigrants against those who toil in low-wage jobs. Knowing the Democrats’ policies, the way that they treat immigrants and their response to the current migrant caravan, this makes it particularly striking to see other left groups rally behind these new Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) members elected to Congress and elsewhere for the Democratic Party, like Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Rashida Tlaib. Look at

<sup>3</sup> See “Defend DACA and All Immigrants,” *Revolution* No. 14, January 2018.

what they did on their first day on the job – they voted to make sure Immigration and Customs Enforcement (I.C.E.) cops and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) would continue to be funded throughout the government shutdown.

When we look at how the DSA praises these Democratic “socialist” Congress members, we see which side they are really on. And other groups on the left, if they’re not tailing after the DSA or the Democratic Party, are advocating for liberal, utopian illusions like asking the capitalist state to open its borders or, like the Spartacist League (SL), completely refusing to call for letting the refugees in. When it comes to leftist proponents of “open borders,” they are turning the just sentiment of revulsion and opposition to the U.S. government’s repression of immigrants and channeling it into appeals to the capitalist state to essentially abolish itself, pulling the wool over the eyes of those who must be won to seeing the need to smash the bourgeois state and establish a workers state.<sup>4</sup>

The capitalist system is based on *national* economies and ruling classes. This is one of the main contradictions of modern capitalism, between the increasingly

<sup>4</sup> See “Central American Caravan: The Left Caught Between Chauvinism and Liberal Utopianism,” *The Internationalist* No. 54, December 2018.

international character of production and the fundamentally national character of capitalist property ownership. (Factories owned by Ford in Mexico, for example, belong to the U.S. company, and the wealth created by the labor of their Mexican workers ends up in the U.S.) This can only be overcome by the international working class expropriating the bourgeoisie, planning the economy democratically on an international basis and setting the basis for creating an international socialist society.

So what do we call for? I’m going to reiterate things that we say all the time. We call for **full citizenship rights for all immigrants**, no matter what their reason is for migrating here, and we say **let them in, let them stay**. We call for **workers action to defend immigrants**, for class-struggle mobilizations, not Democratic Party pressure politics. We call for a multi-ethnic, multinational revolutionary workers party to fight for socialist revolution. This is crucial in waging a principled political fight against the biggest enemy of the world’s workers – U.S. imperialism – and in the defense of all the oppressed. That’s why we’re here today.

**Maeve:** I want to elaborate a little more on what Kaitlan ended with. Some of you might have heard that in March 2017, at London’s Stansted Airport, 15 protesters cut through airport perimeter fencing, snuck onto the “airside” area where planes are parked, and used double-layer piping to lock themselves to a Boeing 767. This airplane was booked for a deportation charter flight, set to deliver 60 asylum-seekers back to Nigeria, Ghana and Sierra Leone. The activists were arrested and found guilty of intentional disruption of services at an aerodrome last December, which is classed as a terror-related offense. Now they are facing up to life in prison – the maximum sentence allowed under this charge.<sup>5</sup>

The possibility of throwing these activists in prison for life was condemned by human-rights liberals as “using a sledgehammer to crack a nut” because it’s such a heavy-handed crackdown. Ultimately, the goal of the UK government is to send a message: “Don’t you dare defend your immigrant brothers and sisters.” We defend the Stansted 15 and everyone who courageously defies the capitalist *injustice* system in seeking to protect immigrants from bourgeois repression! And we understand that voting for Democratic Party politicians who pay lip service to immigrant rights, who say that what’s *really* needed is to get votes in the next election, is *not* a program for defending immigrants.

Kaitlan listed a few examples of why Democrats are the enemies of immigrants, like the January vote to fund DHS and I.C.E. by so-called progressives Ocasio-Cortez and Rashida Tlaib. And we should remember how “AOC” favorably compared the defunct Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) agency to I.C.E. Those were the “*migra*” cops conducting immigration

<sup>5</sup> On February 6, Judge Christopher Morgan QC of Chelmsford Crown Court sentenced 12 of the activists to 100 or more hours of “unpaid work” (community service), stating that their “intentions were to demonstrate” and not motivated by “grievous reasons,” while three of the activists were sentenced to 9 months in jail, suspended for 18 months. This relatively light sentencing does not change the danger represented by the fact that the activists were convicted on an ostensibly terror-related charge, and that they were faced with the threat of life imprisonment as a message to anyone who would think of coming to the defense of immigrants as they did.

raids and deportations long before I.C.E. was established in 2003. We can look at how the Democrats disappeared discussion of DACA when it got too hot. We can look at their historic support for the Border Patrol. It should be very clear to everyone in this room that the Democratic Party is not the way to go if we want to defend immigrants. We also understand that it has historically been necessary to go up against bourgeois “law and order” to help protect those the capitalist class is targeting most viciously.

When the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 was the law of the land in the U.S., refusing to help apprehend known or suspected runaway slaves *was against the law*. So was harboring them or helping them escape their captors. During World War II, in countries occupied by the German imperialists, it was illegal to harbor Jews, Roma and Sinti people, homosexuals, communists or anyone deemed to be *Untermenschen* (subhuman or inferior people) by the Nazi regime and destined for extermination or imprisonment in a concentration camp. But we also understand that the action of 15 brave individuals like those who carried out the action at Stansted is not enough to effect change on a system-wide scale. For the capitalists, the subjugation of immigrants is necessary for the accumulation of super-profits, as part of their whole system of exploitation.<sup>6</sup> While the Stansted 15 are an example of real courage and dedication, their trial is an example of the force with which the bourgeoisie can stamp out even the most courageous activism if it is not based on the kind of social power needed to stop them. We need to remember that.

So what is needed to effectively defend immigrants? What do we need to do? What is the revolutionary Marxist program for the defense of immigrants? We are for **workers action to stop deportations and defend immigrants**. 15 individuals, no matter how brave, do not have the social power required to halt the capitalist deportation machine. The workers who have their hands on the levers of production, transport, communications and everything else that makes society run *do* have that social power. How could they carry this out? Together with other defenders of immigrant rights – like students here at CUNY – workers could fill the streets *en masse* and stop deportation vans. They could shut down production and demand that their immigrant brothers and sisters be freed from immigration jails and cages; that refugees and the migrant caravan be let into the country; that there be full citizenship rights for all immigrants. They could shut down the ports, the roads and public transportation. They could tear down the detention facilities, drive I.C.E. out of town, and make the demand *set them free, let them stay* real. These kinds of actions are not unheard of. As one example pointing toward this, there were German Lufthansa pilots who refused to fly deportation charter flights throughout 2017. They stopped 222 deportations.

As activists of the Revolutionary Internationalist Youth, youth section of the Internationalist Group, and together with our comrades of the Trabajadores Internacionales Clasistas (Class Struggle International Workers), we call for workers action to defend immigrants and we understand that in order to smash the capitalist deportation machine, we have to smash capitalism itself. ■

<sup>6</sup> See “Internationalism and Working-Class History: Immigrants in the Fight for Revolution” on page 16 of this issue.



**An important step forward: transport workers in the Los Angeles area take up the fight to mobilize workers action to stop raids and deportations, demanding full citizenship rights for all immigrants and calling to unionize undocumented workers. L.A. could be a hotbed of resistance to the bipartisan capitalist attack on immigrants.**



## The Workers' Struggle Has No Borders!

# Marxism and the Fight for Immigrant Rights

On February 7, the CUNY Internationalist Club held an open meeting at Hunter College to discuss the Marxist strategy for defending immigrants' rights, emphasizing our call to let Central American refugees in and for workers action to stop deportations. The backdrop was the recent month-long government shutdown over Trump's demand for a border "wall," and Democrats' insistence on "smart" border security over "low-tech" barriers, while posturing as immigrants' last and best hope for salvation. These events are a vivid new example of the urgent need to break with all parties of U.S. imperialist capitalism and to forge a revolutionary workers party. We publish below an edited presentation by comrade Maeve at the meeting on this topic.

On Tuesday, February 5, Donald Trump delivered the annual State of the Union Address to Congress, where he extended a fig leaf to Democrats, before biting into a vicious, fifteen-minute-long anti-immigrant tirade. He immediately followed up by noting that 100 years after the passage of the Voting Rights Act, there are now more women members of Congress than at any point in history. Right on cue, Democratic House speaker Nancy Pelosi directed the white-clad cohort of women Representatives to rise, and in unison the entire chamber reverberated with chants of "USA, USA," in celebration of the racist, blood-soaked legacy of U.S. imperialism. All joined the chorus, from the arch-reactionary "America First" crew to Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Rashida Tlaib – both members of the Democratic (Party) Socialists of America (DSA).

On January 25, after the longest partial government shutdown in U.S. history, clocking in at 35 days, the government reopened. The shutdown began on December 22 last year, after negotiations on whether Congress would allocate \$5.7 billion to the construction of a large, steel wall on the U.S.-Mexico border fell apart. Since then there has been a stalemate be-

tween Trump and his supporters in Congress, who seek to deliver on his campaign promise of a racist border wall with Mexico and the Democrats, who try to paint themselves as "the resistance" to Trump in their supposedly more "humane" and "moral" approach to immigration and border security.

But what exactly does the alleged moral superiority of the Democrats look like? On closer inspection, their proposals are not so different from Trump's wall. Reiterating their usual alternatives, the Democrats have proposed beefed-up border security, including heavier surveillance, more border police and reinforcement of the border fencing that *already exists* and was *signed off on by Democratic president Bill Clinton* and *expanded under Republican president George W. Bush with the consent of Democratic lawmakers* (including then-Senators Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton).

This has dangerous implications for undocumented immigrants on both sides of the border. Because border security can be enforced up to 100 miles into the U.S., beefed-up security means increased policing of heavily immigrant cities like San Diego, California and El Paso, Texas. It means more murders and arrests of immigrants at the border. It means more Clinton-era tactics of purposely making the journey to the U.S. as dangerous as possible, by diverting immigrants through treacherous desert environments where survivability is low. It means Border Patrol dumping out water supplies left by



Internationalist contingent at May Day march in New York City, 2018.

immigrant-rights activists for people making the trek, all but ensuring their deaths.

The efficacy of these tactics has historically been measured by *how many people die* – like the "kill counts" aired on nightly news during the Vietnam War to show how good U.S. imperialism is at mass murder. The Border Patrol sees death as a deterrent to "illegal" immigration, so the more immigrants die on their journey – the higher the "kill count" – the better for the "Fatherland Security" immigration Gestapo, which has the full support of the Democratic and Republican parties.

### Bipartisan Border Hawks

A group of Congressional Democrats sent a letter to Pelosi (23 January) pleading with her to negotiate with Trump and to "seek bipartisan solutions" on the border wall. Representative Collin Peterson of Minnesota said "give Trump the money," and insisted that building the wall is inevitable. Pelosi, however, understands the importance of posturing as Trump's polar opposite, galvanizing the so-called "resistance" – which consists of everyone from DSA "progressive" Democrat Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez to war criminal James "Mad Dog" Mattis, the butcher of Fallujah – against Trump in the hopes of getting a Democrat elected to the White House in 2020. In reality, comparing the program of Democrats and Republicans on immigration is less like apples and oranges and more like rotten apples and stale meat – neither are in the interests of immigrants nor the working class as a whole.

During the shutdown, Democrats in the House of Representatives, who hold the majority of seats, passed spending bills and resolutions while insisting no money be allocated to Trump's wall. One of these resolutions, passed on the first day of the new Congressional term, allocated funds to the Department of Homeland Security

(DHS), under which Immigration and Customs Enforcement (I.C.E.) operates. That same day, a bill was passed appropriating \$20 million in funding for the U.S.-imperialist engineered coup in Venezuela to "promote democracy and the rule of law." In both instances, *every Democrat in the House voted for it*, including the patriotic "progressive" heroes of the pseudo-socialist left, DSAers Ocasio-Cortez and Rashida Tlaib.

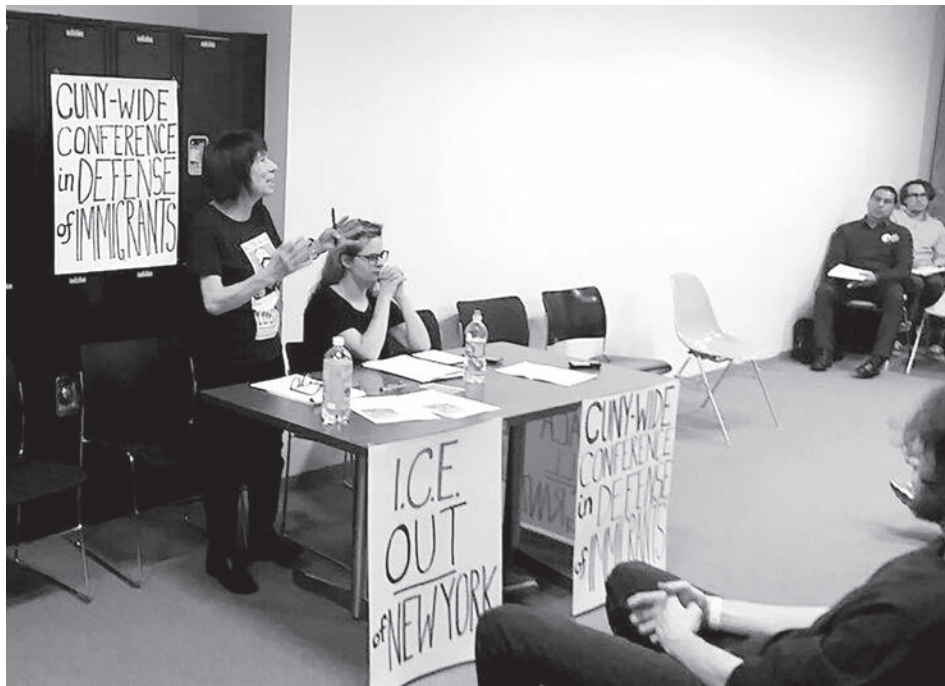
As revolutionary Marxists, we understand that I.C.E. is part of the armed fist of the bourgeoisie, the capitalist state, enforcing racist immigration laws, terrorizing immigrants and their families. Central American immigration to the U.S. is largely a result of U.S. imperialism's legacy of bloody coups and CIA-trained and funded death squads in Latin America, set loose on everyone from indigenous peasants to leftist activists and students, from trade unionists to dissident journalists. The most recent caravan of migrants started in Honduras, where in 2009, feminist icon and then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton orchestrated a coup against democratically elected president Manuel Zelaya Rosales.

Even the notorious MS-13 gang first arose in Los Angeles, and was later deported to Central America where it often has a symbiotic relation with the police, operating under their auspices and patronage. One of its former leaders, Ernesto Dera, is a U.S. special forces-trained death squad assassin who, in the '80s, fought in the Salvadoran Army's notorious Ramón Belloso Battalion during Raegan's bloody "contra" war, in which, as Dera admits, he participated in mass murder (*Los Angeles Times*, 26 December 2005). That's what imperialist money for the promotion of "democracy and the rule of law" means for the people of Central America. Remember that when self-



Democratic Party politicians Nancy Pelosi and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (of the DSA) hug during swearing-in of members of Congress, January 3, May 2019





At the CUNY-Wide Conference in Defense of Immigrants, March 2018.

proclaimed socialists claim that Ocasio-Cortez's vote is "no biggie."<sup>1</sup>

### Fool Me Once...

All in all, this year's government shutdown looks eerily similar to the last one. In 2017, after Trump rescinded the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, which offers minimal protection for undocumented immigrants brought to the U.S. as children, allowing them to semi-legally work and attend school, Nancy Pelosi and Chuck Schumer made a show of "defending" DACA recipients ... by using them as a bargaining chip in negotiations with Trump over "border security" and immigration enforcement. The deal, which fell apart and led to a government shutdown, would have granted DACA recipients more protection in exchange for money to beefed-up enforcement and Trump's wall.

In effect, this would have given the Trump administration the green light to viciously target *all* undocumented immigrants not covered by Pelosi's deal, further legitimizing his racist border wall with federal money and on increased raids by I.C.E. cops in immigrant neighborhoods and places of work. It also threw the parents and families of DACA recipients under the bus by creating a dichotomy of "good" and "bad" immigrants – those who were brought here as children and those who came "by choice."

While giving a speech at California State University in September of 2017, Pelosi was shouted down by a group of "Dreamers," as DACA recipients are sometimes referred to, and others who were furious that immigrants were being used as fodder for a "bipartisan" deal. Protestors chanted "all of us or none of us" and "we are not your bargaining chip." When the shutdown became too hot to handle,

<sup>1</sup> See "Imperialist Feminism and the Democrats," *The Internationalist*, February 2019: "To be sure, after taking a lot of flak for her vote to fund I.C.E., while tacking between Democratic unity appeals and burnishing her 'woke' image, 'AOC' subsequently voted against a continuing resolution which funded the DHS, saying 'our community felt strongly about not funding' the hated *migra* cops. But meanwhile she praises House speaker Pelosi as the 'strong woman we need right now' to face down Trump over the government shutdown, and follows that up by cheering and chanting 'U.S.A., U.S.A.' when Trump praises the election of more congresswomen. And don't forget Ocasio-Cortez's support for "border security" or her praise for racist imperialist war criminal and warmonger John McCain as 'an unparalleled example of human decency and American service.'"

Democrats, Pelosi and Schumer included, dropped the pretense of "helping" Dreamers, worrying that "moderate" voters would turn on them in the midterm elections. When Republican Speaker of the House Mitch McConnell proposed an open-floor debate on the subject, Democrats didn't even show up, because they feared the Republicans would use it to portray them as "too pro-immigrant" and that this might cost them votes. The government then reopened, with no deal on immigration.

We repeatedly warned "Beware Trump/Democrat Deal" (see *Revolution* No. 14, January 2018) on immigration, as it would inevitably have further life-threatening implications for undocumented immigrants. The real debate isn't between supposedly pro-immigrant Democrats and anti-immigrant Republicans, *it is between two anti-immigrant capitalist parties trying to decide which program for racist "border security" suits the ruling class's interests best.*

The Democrats are the oldest and most experienced capitalist political party in the world, and the super-exploitation of undocumented immigrants is a big part of what U.S. capitalism relies on for its profit system to work – for the capitalists. They use the constant threat of deportation, relegating these workers to the status of social pariahs, to impose poverty wages, dangerously long hours and terrible conditions, which means big profits for the owners. *Capitalism cannot offer a solution to immigrants' oppression, because the capitalist system, here in the U.S. and internationally, relies on that oppression.*

Only the multi-ethnic, multi-racial working class, composed of immigrants and non-immigrants like, has the social power necessary to smash the deportation machine. We call for **workers action to stop deportations**. Masses of people should fill the streets and stop I.C.E. vans cold. In the face of immigration raids, deportations and the locking up of their class brothers and sisters, and their children in cages, workers should shut down production. Against the I.C.E. and Border Patrol Gestapo, workers should shut down major ports and roads and refuse to fly deportation charter flights. The workers should **tear down the detention facilities and make the demand to "set them free, let them stay" a reality**. This is the social power of the working class, and this is what revolutionary Marxists seek to mobilize.

## Working-Class Independence Is Key

This is not some pipe dream, as various fake socialists claim. In 2017, German pilots for Lufthansa refused to fly deportation charter planes. Through these actions they stopped 222 deportations. Here in the U.S., Teamsters union Joint Council 16 in New York passed a resolution to become a "sanctuary union" after one of their brothers, Eber García Vásquez, was deported in September 2017. They vowed not to cooperate with I.C.E., and to provide legal assistance to their immigrant union sisters and brothers. That's a glimpse of what working-class solidarity looks like.

In Los Angeles, union militants and supporters of the Internationalist Group (IG) have initiated contingents of "Transport Workers Against Deportations" marching in 2018 protests against Trump's attacks on DACA and Temporary Protected Status (TPS, which grants temporary refuge to immigrants from countries affected by natural disasters, "armed conflict" or "other extraordinary and temporary conditions"). Also in L.A., health care workers at the Clínica Oscar A. Romero declared that it is a "sanctuary clinic," stating that "if agents come in storming, our providers are prepared to act as human shields" (See "L.A. 'Sanctuary Clinic' Defends Immigrant Patients," *The Internationalist* No. 48, May-June 2017). These are just a few concrete examples pointing toward workers using their social power to defend immigrants. That power must be brought to bear on a massive scale, from New York to L.A., Minneapolis to Detroit and anywhere the threat of *la migra* is present.

In the campus context, we call for **student-teacher-worker action to stop deportations and defend immigrants**. As a step toward preparing the way for that, the CUNY Internationalist Club initiated the Committee to Defend Immigrants and Muslims at Hunter College, which we invite you to join. It was formed following Trump's first "Muslim ban" in early 2017, which banned travel from the majority-Muslim countries Iraq, Syria, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen. One of the committee's most important goals has been to form a rapid response network that could quickly mobilize students, teachers and workers against the threat of detainment, deportation or racist attacks on immigrants and their families on or near CUNY campuses. The committee demands:

- That CUNY not give any federal agency any information that directly or indirectly reveals immigration status.
- That no immigration authorities be allowed on any CUNY campus – whether they claim "legal" sanction or not.
- That CUNY personnel engage in no collaboration with immigration authorities – whether they claim "legal" sanction or not.
- CUNY must provide lawyers for emergency contact for all immigrant and international students.

While stating these demands here at CUNY, we always make it clear that we have no confidence or illusions in the administration. Time after time, the CUNY administration has made clear that its bottom line is not keeping immigrant students safe from the threat of deportation, but ensuring the satisfaction of its bourgeois patrons and the city and state rulers, who appoint and are represented by the Board of Trustees. The CUNY Internationalist Clubs grew out of the struggle against the anti-immigrant "war purge" that the CUNY trustees and administration

launched in Fall 2001 as part of the post-9/11 lead-up to the Afghanistan war. The campaign largely succeeded in rolling back CUNY tops' attempt to charge discriminatory tuition against immigrant students to drive them off campus. (See *The Internationalist* pamphlet "Defend Immigrant Students, Stop CUNY's 'War Purge'!" December 2001.)

Instead of relying on the CUNY administration or begging capitalist politicians, we seek to mobilize, students, workers, and teachers to defend our immigrant brothers and sisters independently. To that end, the Committee to Defend Immigrants and Muslims played a key role in organizing the March 2018 CUNY-Wide Conference in Defense of Immigrants, which was held at the Graduate Center and brought over eighty students, faculty and staff from many campuses together with immigrant-worker organizers, immigration-law specialists and activists to organize across the CUNY system and beyond. Among other things, this resulted in the creation of a rapid response committee at the College of Staten Island, and we call for the formation of similar committees to defend immigrants on every CUNY campus.

The CUNY Internationalist Clubs, and the Revolutionary Internationalist Youth (RIY, youth section of the Internationalist Group), fight for **full citizenship rights for all immigrants**. This is a demand that starkly poses the need for socialist revolution. History shows that full citizenship rights for all immigrants has only been won when the working class has taken power. When the working classes of Paris took power in 1871 during the Prussian invasion of France, the Paris Commune granted full citizenship rights to all Parisians, regardless of national origin. Then the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, which established history's first workers state, granted full citizenship rights to all "foreign-born" workers in Soviet territory and sanctuary to refugees. (See "The Workers' Struggle Has No Borders: Immigrants' Rights and Revolution," *Revolution* No. 15, September 2018.)

Like all forms of oppression, the racist demonization, repression and super-exploitation of immigrants arises from the material conditions created by class society – in this case, capitalist class society. A socialist revolution that puts the working class in power, here and internationally, will unchain society from the capitalist motive. Seizing and collectivizing the capitalists' wealth and property, a workers state (what Marx called the dictatorship of the proletariat) will use workers democracy to plan the economy in order to satisfy the human needs of all. Only in this way can the promise of liberation be fulfilled, by clearing the path for a classless, socialist society on a world scale.

The Paris Commune and Bolshevik Revolution extended this promise to *all* workers, based on the internationalism of Marx and Engels, encapsulated in the watchwords we rally around today: "**The proletarians have no country – Workers of the world, unite!**"

To fulfill this promise today, the working class must first break the chains that bind it to the bosses' political parties. We call to **break with the Democrats, Republicans, Greens and all capitalist parties** and to **forge a revolutionary workers party**. Anything less would be a betrayal of our immigrant brothers and sisters. As the Revolutionary Internationalist Youth, we say **la lucha obrera no tiene fronteras! The workers' struggle has no borders!** ■



# Massive Class Struggle Needed to Win “7K” for CUNY Adjuncts

Over the past year and a half, since the expiration of the union contract covering faculty and many staff members at the City University of New York, the struggle against CUNY’s multi-tier academic labor system has reached a boiling point. This divide-and-conquer system pits tenured and tenure-track faculty against the majority of academic employees – adjunct instructors hired on a “contingent” basis – and relegates the latter to poverty pay, job insecurity and the lack of most benefits. As of fall 2017, CUNY employed 15,000 adjunct faculty compared to 7,000 full-time faculty.

Going back well over a decade, CUNY Internationalists have played a key role in this struggle, linking it with our call for no tuition, open admissions, abolition of the Board of Trustees and student-teacher-worker control of the university.<sup>1</sup> These are key demands at the largest urban public university in the United States, whose students are mainly daughters and sons of New York’s multiracial, largely immigrant working class. Growing out of this history, we have built student/adjunct contingents at union rallies and marches highlighting the demand to raise minimum starting pay per course to \$7,000 (“7K”) for adjuncts, who do most of the teaching at CUNY but are paid half that amount.

## The “7K” Demand

CUNY faculty – both the upper tier composed of 7,500 tenured/tenure-track faculty and the 15,000 adjuncts – are represented by the Professional Staff Congress (PSC) union, whose membership also includes some parts of the university staff. In addition, a range of different unions represent thousands of clerical, maintenance, janitorial, cafeteria and other sectors. To overcome this fragmentation, which helps CUNY management divide the workforce, we advocate the formation of a single union representing all university employees.

As the most militant defenders of labor’s cause, revolutionary Marxists call for a class-struggle leadership instead of the labor bureaucracy that sits atop the unions subordinating them to the bosses’ rules, institutions, politicians and parties (first and foremost the Democrats). Since 2000, when it won elections against the PSC’s conservative old guard, a liberal/reformist grouping called the New Caucus has run the union, combining leftist rhetoric with support for the capitalist Democratic Party and the signing of one contract after another that actually deepen the systemic inequalities of CUNY’s labor system. This highlights the need, in the PSC and throughout the labor movement, to oust the sell-out bureaucracy and forge a class-struggle leadership.

The “7K” demand was initiated by comrades active in Class Struggle Education Workers and CUNY Contingents Unite (CCU), an organizing group within the PSC that was founded in 2008 by adjuncts who waged a major campaign against the sellout contract signed that year. A key step came in August 2014, when the international Coali-

tion of Contingent Academic Labor conference, held in New York, overwhelmingly approved the CCU’s resolution for:

“achieving or surpassing a MINIMUM starting salary of at least \$7K per 3-credit course (or its equivalent) for all contingent academic employees in the U.S., combined with real job security and a seniority system; that this objective, despite being modest, is long overdue and needs to be implemented now, and that we support the struggle for this to be achieved in current contract negotiations.”

What followed were three more years of struggle and agitation that led to the PSC formally adopting the 7K demand for the present contract campaign. Over the subsequent period, a range of activists have popularized the slogan “7K or Strike.” In addition to the CCU, this has included some participants in the PSC Committee for Adjuncts and Part-timers (CAP), and a grad student-based grouping called “CUNY Struggle,” which has received favorable media attention in *Teen Vogue* and other liberal-left media. Beginning in Spring 2018, resolutions reflecting the “7K or Strike” demand have been passed by members at a growing number of PSC campus chapters.

## What Now in the Fight to Win 7K?

This is a question that many CUNY activists are asking, and rightly so. It is addressed in an extensive *Bulletin on CCU Perspectives and the Fight for “7K”* published this April, calling for “a class-struggle perspective in the fight to end adjunct poverty and defeat CUNY’s divide-and-conquer labor system.”

The CUNY Contingents Unite bulletin begins with the proposal that CCU members made at a special meeting of the PSC Delegate Assembly in February, that as an immediate step the union call a mass march and rally for \$7K and “intensively build this both on the campuses and through outreach to NYC labor, immigrant-rights, student and community organizations.” The proposal was subsequently endorsed for official presentation to the union by a vote of all but one of the large number of attendees at the April 5 special PSC CAP meeting on “cross campus contract actions.”

We reprint below some excerpts from the 58-page CCU bulletin.<sup>2</sup>

## For a Class-Struggle Strategy

Facing unending and growing inequality, poverty pay, job instability and lousy work conditions, with crucial benefits lacking but disrespect and overwork more abundant than ever, years of struggle gave rise to the “7K” demand in 2014, and then its formal adoption by the union as part of the “bargaining agenda” in 2017. Today, “7K or Strike” has become an important banner of struggle.

To hammer out a strategy and tactics to **win** this struggle requires a systematic and serious evaluation of the social forces confronting each other in such a fight, the

<sup>2</sup> If you would like to receive the CUNY Contingents Unite bulletin on the 7K struggle, or find out more about the CCU, write [cunycontingents@gmail.com](mailto:cunycontingents@gmail.com).



To smash CUNY’s multi-tier labor system and win the demand for \$7K, it is crucial to unite with campus workers and broad sectors of New York City’s multiethnic, multiracial working class.

obstacles to be overcome, and how to build up the power and organization we need to do this. These tasks, in turn, can only be addressed through the fullest discussion and debate, that is, within the framework provided through the exercise of workers democracy.... To prepare the way for actually winning 7K, we need to have a clear assessment of what forces will face off in this fight, all the more so when discussing the need for a strike that would be “illegal” according to New York State’s vicious Taylor Law.

Against us are powerful opponents: the capitalist rulers and their hand-picked Board of Trustees and administration, their courts and repressive apparatus, and their politicians, who – Democrats and Republicans alike – have repeatedly enforced the Taylor Law against public-employee strikes. Appeals that they “do the right thing” or be “fair”; cloying Valentine’s Day appeals to “show CUNY some love”; or other kinds of empty, liberal/reformist happy talk won’t cut it. To the contrary, smoothing over the real clash of class interests, this kind of thing can only politically disarm, delude and disorient the union ranks. The same goes for poorly-conceived individual or small-group symbolic actions or publicity stunts, sometimes presented as a stand-in for effective, mass-based militancy.

The CUNY Board of Trustees and their Wall Street godfathers don’t care about, and won’t be moved, by any of that. When it comes to upholding and enforcing their class interests, as we said at the DA: they don’t play. They won’t be budged by moral suasion appeals or flash-in-the-pan symbolic tactics when it comes to something so “big and expensive” as 15,000 adjuncts getting \$7K per course, which their kept media will doubtless rail at as a “whopping 100% raise” – despite the fact that it still would only begin to approach something akin to a

living wage.<sup>3</sup>

To get them to disgorge some of the millions, billions and trillions they’re sitting on will take much more than ostensibly clever mottos, memes and jingles about love, fairness, “investing” in CUNY, and so forth. Again, it is a question of power. This reality cannot be evaded by those serious about a strike. Without telling it like it is, on this and other fronts, we will never convince the majority of the union, let alone others, and of CUNY students and their families, to join us in struggle. They have a lot at stake and can’t afford to mess around, and neither can we.

For the union bureaucracy, the real obstacles that do exist serve as fuel for arguments against actually preparing for a strike to win 7K. For those committed to fighting to win 7K, it is necessary to systematically explain that a solid, massive, militant and well-prepared strike **can** win, even when up against a vicious anti-strike law repeatedly applied by the courts and cops under both bosses’ parties, if sufficient mass power is mobilized from **our** side.

## So Where Do We Get the Power to Win?

Adjuncts certainly can’t do it on it our own. Winning over tenured/tenure track faculty, HEOs and other sectors is necessary and crucial – if there is to be a strike, it must be of the whole union – but not sufficient: we **also need to win** over our fellow CUNY em-

<sup>3</sup> The Modern Language Association “Recommendation on Minimum Per-Course Compensation for Part-Time Faculty Members” (May 2018) now actually calls for a minimum of \$10,900 for a standard 3-credit-hour semester course. That would be a 240% increase from \$3,200. What this proves is not that our demand for \$7K is “nuts,” “unrealistic” or anything of the kind, but that expecting us to continue living on 29% of the recommended **minimum** is nuts, unrealistic and intolerable. And don’t even try telling us the money isn’t there, in the world center of finance capital, with the ruling class rolling in dough.

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, “CUNY Adjuncts Won’t Take No for an Answer” and “What’s What at Walmart U,” *Revolution* No. 5, September 2008.



ployees who are members of DC 37 (clerical, maintenance, janitorial, etc.), of UNITE HERE (cafeteria workers), and of other unions, thousands of whom work at the City University. If there is a strike, we will need to **shut CUNY down**. If you can't or won't do that, you lose. To do that, you need mass picket lines that no one crosses.

And that, at a huge university where we face the Taylor Law, requires solid, active backing from the rest of city labor, on those picket lines. It requires telling the truth that New York's capitalist rulers can get along for quite some time without lectures and exams being given and papers graded – but the center of finance capital *can't* get along without the transport and communications, power and sanitation, warehouse, food, tourism, healthcare, construction (like the 10,000 "Count Me In" protesters who took over Seventh Avenue last year) and other sectors with the power to shut the city down.

These are some of the reasons why it's imperative for us to see and state clearly that a strike must break through economic, craft-union-style barriers that separate "our" fight as adjuncts from other job titles, "our" 7K demand from the burning needs of our sisters and brothers throughout the university, and "our" fight at CUNY from the rest of labor and the oppressed.

**Thus, uniting with the power of NYC's workers and oppressed is ABC practical sense and necessity for any serious strike strategy.** Without this basic sense of class forces as part of a perspective for "7K or Strike" grounded in social reality, this powerful and important slogan would be denatured, emptied out and boiled down to little more than hot air and play-acting. The first step in mobilizing the workers power needed to win is to recognize this – organizing, starting now, with an eye both to key unionized sectors and the vast sectors of immigrant workers, largely still not unionized, whose super-exploited labor keeps this city running in a thousand ways; with youth fed up with racist oppression (like what we just saw at the Metropolitan Detention Center in Brooklyn), and so many others with increasingly urgent and pressing reasons to join together in an upheaval breaking down divisions between those "inside" and "outside" CUNY.

So we need to tell it like it is on this topic too. The basic perspective outlined above continues to be ignored, dismissed or resisted, in practice, by the official union bureaucracy. Why? Above all because it clashes with their obeisance to the Democrats, especially of the so-called "progressive" ilk. (As the New Caucus leadership boasted back in 2013, the PSC was the first public-employee union to endorse Bill de Blasio for mayor.) Yet not only adherents of the leadership's standpoint, but some of those critical or oppositional toward it, also view the fight from a narrow, inward-looking perspective, which can only serve to confine it within bounds that would, if maintained, lead to defeat. This too is among the obstacles that need to be overcome by those seeking to hammer out an effective strategy, a process in which forthright debate and discussion of contrasting views is always essential....

### Working-Class Perspective vs. Ivory-Tower Worldview

People sometimes ask why there are different adjunct organizing groups at CUNY. As in most kinds of organizing that involve significant challenges, obstacles and stakes, there are contrasting and sometimes counterposed strategies, outlooks and perspectives. Under conditions of workers democracy, these can

and should be debated in order to clarify the issues and chart a way forward. One of the biggest obstacles in organizing on university campuses is the ivory-tower, academic-centered worldview encouraged in academia. Not infrequently, this is accompanied, when academics seek to organize themselves for collective goals, by animus against "outside" forces and agitators.

This outlook reproduces important aspects of bourgeois ideology, reflecting capitalist society's division between manual and mental labor. This, in turn, overlaps (very notably at CUNY) with multi-tiered hierarchies of social status within the academic population itself. That is even more the case when it comes to academics' relations with non-academic sectors, in which job title divisions strikingly overlap with racial/ethnic and gender oppression, immigration status, etc.

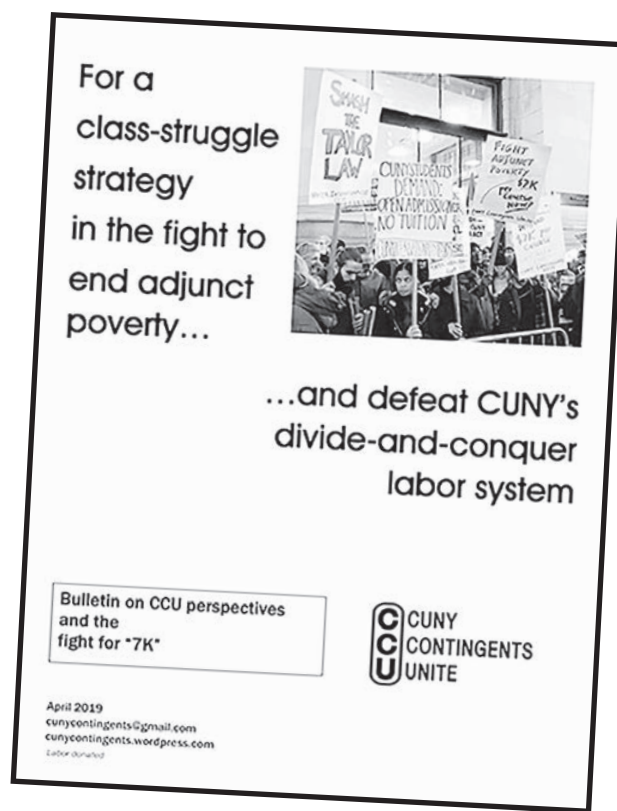
No struggle by adjuncts can win without taking this on and overcoming the insularity that capitalist academia encourages among education professionals who – though presently downwardly mobile and often driven into penury – are nonetheless awarded a much higher social status than those who clean the floors, change the light bulbs, do the typing and filing, cook and serve the food, etc. To even begin to overcome such obstacles is not possible without the hard work of assimilating and consistently practicing the principles of real working-class solidarity and the fight to bring the power of the multiracial working class, including its crucial immigrant component, into the struggle to uproot all forms of oppression.

In contrast, recent developments have given a stark object lesson of what happens when "organizing" work is carried out on a basis that disdains clear principles gained through the hard-won experience of the workers movement, and lacks any real orientation to the working class that makes this city run. The principle of workers democracy, for honest debate to hammer out a strategy to win, is, moreover, counterposed to the kind of unprincipled factionalism whose guideline is that anything goes in the service of "getting" those who dare to disagree.

### "CUNY-Wide Conference" Wrecked by Anti-Red Ban

As John Jay College's ban on "7K or Strike" signs [proclaimed by the campus administration in late March] vividly exemplifies, censorship of CUNY activists' materials is an attack on the rights of us all.

Yet as noted, an outright *ban on leftist literature* was imposed on the "7K or Strike" organizing conference held on March 2 (a conference we had originally initiated and intensively built). When, at a February 1 "Adjuncts for 7K" meeting devoted largely to conference plans, a motion was voted to uphold the right of all in the left and labor movement to express their views at the conference, including through their literature, CUNY Struggle, joined by a few other red-literature-ban enthusiasts, found itself de-



April 2019 bulletin of CUNY Contingents Unite highlighting a class struggle perspective on the adjunct struggle at CUNY.

feated in the vote. It went on to push hard for embracing and imposing the literature ban anyway.

The means to achieve this end were as flagrant as they were absurd from the standpoint of the most basic practices of labor-movement democracy. When the ban was then imposed on (against) the conference, the CCU and others unwilling to go along with this censorship, and the terrible precedent it would set for organizing at CUNY, were forced to withdraw from the conference.

Pushing through the anti-communist ban on leftist literature was connected to narrowing and denaturing the conference. As a now safely leftist-literature-free zone, it would better serve as a venue for liberal happy talk avoiding serious discussion of strategy; of how to overcome the real obstacles faced in the struggle and what happens (e.g. in the [2005] NYU strike) when that is not achieved; evasion of the question of the Democratic Party; promotion of illusions that the Taylor Law is little more than a paper tiger; etc. It was to be walled off from the hard but essential debates needed for working out a serious strategy to mobilize the union ranks and CUNY students, linked with the power of the city's working class, oppressed and immigrant communities, in order to be able to confront and defeat CUNY's hardline management, the city and state bosses that stand behind them, and their Taylor Law, in order to win.

What does the embrace of (and in the case of CUNY Struggle and bloc partners, gleeful enthusiasm for) such bans, censorship and prohibitions show? Selling out the rights of CUNY adjuncts and undergrads for a pittance – a "nice space" to hold a conference – is the action of union bureaucrats in training. Yet more than that was displayed by reactions to those who challenged or questioned the ban on leftist literature, notably the seven immigrant workers signing a letter on behalf of Trabajadores Inmigrantes Clasistas that explained, on the basis of their own experience and struggles, why they could not accept being censored at the conference, which they had previously agreed to attend

and speak at.<sup>4</sup>

Wielding social attitudes and methods that are inimical to working-class democracy, struggle and class consciousness, "CUNY Struggle" is an aggressively anti-communist, middle-class liberal organization. What that means in the fight for 7K is reinforcing practices, illusions and outlooks that stand in the way of achieving the class-struggle mobilization needed to *win* the 7K demand in conjunction with those of the rest of the CUNY workforce, and workers and oppressed throughout NYC....

### La lucha educa

The CCU bulletin highlights the motto of the militant mass strike waged by the Puerto Rican Teachers Federation a decade ago; and in the series of combative student strikes and campus occupations at the University of Puerto Rico: "*La lucha educa*" – struggle educates. The same slogan was raised in the series of combative student strikes and campus occupations at the University of Puerto Rico. In Mexico, *El maestro luchando también está educando* (roughly: The teachers struggle is part of education) is one of the most popular chants. Our comrades of the Grupo Internacionalista have been heavily involved in the heroic strikes and struggles of education workers, as well as mass protests against the abduction of the Ayo-tzinapa 43 teachers college students.<sup>5</sup>

Today in the U.S., the bulletin notes, "the ongoing wave of teachers strikes (Arizona, Colorado, Los Angeles, North Carolina, Oklahoma, West Virginia...) not only shows the willingness of education workers to struggle, but provides crucial experience, both positive and negative, that must be studied and – as genuine solidarity demands – critically assimilated." It goes on:

"It is very important that in our present struggle we collectively learn from education strikes not just here in the U.S. but internationally, like that 2008 strike of the Puerto Rican teachers; those of militant education workers in Brazil, in Mexico, particularly in Oaxaca; and elsewhere. This experience also includes large-scale university student strikes, such as those at the University of Puerto Rico (UPR) in 2010 and 2018; in Quebec in 2012; and at the National University of Mexico (UNAM), where students together with campus workers occupied the huge 'University City' for 10 months in 1999-2000, and, with the aid of 'workers defense guards' from Mexico's City's electrical power workers union, defeated the attempt – ordered by the World Bank – to impose tuition. "The lessons of all this broad experience are there for us to learn and use. The last thing we can afford to do would be to think that we can go it alone. Who will educate the educators? This is something we must do ourselves, but not on our own; *en la lucha*, inseparably from the struggle of all the exploited and oppressed, if we really want to win – which we must." ■

<sup>4</sup> Letters from Trabajadores Inmigrantes Clasistas, CUNY undergrads and others are reproduced as an appendix to the CCU bulletin on 7K, but when faced with explanations by black and brown activists of how the prohibition of leftist literature directly affected them, the only color the ban enthusiasts saw was red.

<sup>5</sup> Among the many *Revolution* articles on these struggles, see "Victory to University of Puerto Rico Strike!" in *Revolution* No. 7, April 2010; "University of Puerto Rico Students, Faculty and Workers Under Siege," *Revolution* No. 14, January 2018; and "Oaxaca Teachers Speak at Hunter College" and "CUNY Activists' Forum at UNAM: In Mexico, Revolutionary Internationalism Up Close," *Revolution* No. 13, November 2016.



# How They Rammed Through Anti-Red Ban

## Editorial Note

The plan to hold a CUNY-Wide “7K or Strike” Conference was initiated by CUNY Contingents Unite members last fall, to “build, deepen and broaden support” for the “7K or Strike” slogan. Our adjunct comrades put in dozens of hours working on the conference, together with others, including those with whom we have significant political differences. Given that no strike at CUNY could win without massive support and participation by undergrads, students from the Internationalist Clubs and Revolutionary Internationalist Youth made building the conference a high priority in our work.

The event was originally designed for discussion, debate and organizing focusing on “linking up with undergrads; lessons from education workers’ strikes, labor, and immigrant-worker struggles in NYC and beyond; and how to overcome obstacles posed by New York State’s Taylor Law and CUNY’s multi-tier labor system, in order to build the kind of power and unity needed to win.”

### Literature Ban Imposed

However, as noted in the accompanying article, these efforts so crucial for winning the 7K demand were stymied by imposition of an outright ban on any kind of leftist literature at the conference. This was carried out through insistence that the event be moved from the CUNY Graduate Center, where rooms had been obtained, to a venue (The People’s Forum) where, it was suddenly announced, distributing “outside” fliers and literature was prohibited, and anyone doing so would be “removed from the space by staff immediately.”

After a motion was passed at the “Adjuncts for 7K” organizing meeting, where the conference plans were voted, to uphold the right to distribute leftist literature at the event, the prohibition was reiterated via text message: “We do not allow for left political formations to distribute their newspapers or literature in our space regardless of where they fall on the left spectrum.” The contradiction with the previously approved motion to uphold workers democracy was “resolved” by a CUNY Struggle organizer administering an instant on-line “vote to amend” it into its opposite. How? With procedures for making amendments *in meetings* found on – the Oregon School Board Association website. Faced with the ultimatum to “accept” anti-communist censorship, those committed to workers democracy withdrew from the conference, while continuing to struggle and organize for 7K.

Among the labor, immigrant and student activists that had accepted invitations to participate in conference panels were Trabajadores Internacionales Clasistas (TIC – Class Struggle Immigrant Workers), the Laundry Workers Center, CUNY Internationalist Clubs, among others. Faced with the literature ban, they withdrew. Seven TIC activists – restaurant, construction, house-cleaning and taxi workers – sent a letter to those now in charge of the 7K or Strike Conference. It powerfully explained

how bowing down to such a ban would be impossible given the importance that “leftist literature,” including their own, has played in their years building unions, fighting wage theft and sexual harassment, demanding full citizenship rights for all immigrants, supporting women laundry workers in Harlem, building solidarity with Ayotzinapa, and other struggles, in which many of them have been fired by racist and sexist bosses.

### Anti-Communist Filth

After a week went by without the TIC’s letter being mentioned, let alone distributed, on the “Adjuncts for 7K” listserv, an activist opposed to the ban posted it. In response, the founding organizer of CUNY Struggle dismissed it with a post stating that “TIC is a group composed of members and affiliates of the Internationalist Group.” A few minutes later, another CUNY Struggle spokesman responded by posting an anti-communist song by an English-nationalist skinhead band called “Cock Sparrer,” which rails against leftists who try to sell “your press” to promote the “party line.” Titled “I Got Your Number,” the song is one of eight by Cock Sparrer featured on the “Rock Against Communism” Spotify list. Rightist, racist and outright fascist bands and songs on the same list feature names like “White Warrior,” “Stormtrooper,” “Patriotic Voice,” “British Pride,” “U.S. for Us,” “This Is America,” “Ultra Violence,” “Deutschland,” “Rocking the Reds,” etc.

The use of such a xenophobic and virulently anti-communist band as a response to the immigrant workers’ letter should, to say the least, have set off alarm bells. On the Adjuncts for 7K listserv, the activist who had posted the TIC letter noted Cock Sparrer’s fan base in the violent “football hooligan” milieu, a major recruiting ground for fascist groups in Britain and elsewhere. He cited the band’s xenophobic anthem “England Belongs to Me,” with its lyrics about “fighting all the way for the red, white and blue” (the song was released during British imperialism’s bloody Falklands War); and others like “Take ‘Em All” (“put ‘em up against a wall and shoot ‘em”), “Secret Army,” “Droogs Don’t Run,” etc.

He also pointed out connections between Cock Sparrer and fascist violence here in New York City. In February 2017, outside a “Cock Sparrer After Party” celebrating a concert by the band in Brooklyn, two Columbia grad students were brutally beaten by 6-7 skinheads from the far-right “211 Crew.” The attack occurred outside the Clockwork bar on

the Lower East Side, where the after-party was DJed by a white-supremacist 211 Crew member, after one of the students was seen with a “NYC Antifa” sticker on his phone. Shortly thereafter, the students were doxxed and vilified on line by the founder of the fascist Proud Boys, Gavin McInnes. This past October in New York, Proud Boys violently assaulted antifascists outside an appearance by McInnes.

How did CUNY Struggle react? Raging against *the posting of these facts*, its founder and best-known organizer declared himself a “life-long Cock Sparrer fan,” upheld the English-chauvinist group as a “beloved fixture of working-class street culture,” and called for the adjunct who had dared to raise these points to be “removed” from the Adjuncts for 7K listserv. And that was that: nobody objected or said anything further about it on the listserv. No wonder they were so intent on ramming through the anti-communist literature ban. For anyone genuinely committed to defense of the oppressed, this repulsive episode speaks volumes.

### Enter “Left Voice”

With the anti-Internationalist hate campaign having done its work in the service of the anti-red ban, the conference – now transformed into a leftist-literature-free zone – was held on March 2. Forcing the class-struggle left to withdraw helped “free” reformist and liberal organizers from serious discussion of the real tasks and obstacles facing the struggle for 7K. Instead, the conference was to center on self-congratulatory happy talk avoiding real debate over how to mobilize the PSC ranks and CUNY students, linked with the power of the city’s working class, oppressed and immigrant communities; the question of the Taylor Law-enforcing Democratic Party; etc.

One of the panels scheduled for the 7K conference was supposed to address what would be needed to defeat this anti-strike law, and was to have been chaired by a CCU member and include a presentation by a Class Struggle Education Workers speaker. In the face of the leftist literature prohibition, they withdrew. At the March

2 conference, joining CUNY Struggle founder Jarrod Shanahan on the stage was a speaker representing “Left Voice” (part of the international media “network” of the “Fracción Trotskista”). Purveying a brand of left tailism inoffensive to the tastes of languid hipsters organically hostile to “vanguardism,” Left Voice had no problem with the anti-communist ban on leftist literature imposed on the conference. Indeed, one of the most vocal ban supporters, a regular contributor to its site, is now joining its editorial board; and Left Voice has been promoting CUNY Struggle with increasing avidity, a favor the latter has been happy to return.

Giving a presentation on New York State’s Taylor Law, Left Voice’s speaker at the conference laughingly portrayed the vicious anti-labor law, under which striking subway and bus workers were heavily fined and their union president jailed in 2005, as essentially a paper tiger – seen by the ruling class as “so ineffective at stopping strikes” – that can be broken with ease. What’s actually needed to take on the law and *win* a strike at CUNY – of this not a word. Flattering to adjunct-centric fantasies, such trivialization obscures the most urgent requirement for winning: *bringing in the mass working-class power needed to defeat and shred the Taylor Law.*

Virtually every real step in winning strikes, building fighting unions and advancing the cause of the working class in this country has been led by reds. Scorning attempts to silence and censor their revolutionary views, this legacy of struggle goes from the “Haymarket martyrs” whose frame-up gave rise to May Day; to Lucy Parsons; the “free speech fights” waged by Joe Hill, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, Frank Little and other “Wobblies” (Industrial Workers of the World members) during World War One; the general strikes and factory occupations of the 1930s; the Trotskyist Teamsters imprisoned for their internationalist opposition to FDR’s imperialist war, and many others. Reviving this tradition of intransigent class struggle is essential to winning today. ■



At Union Square protest in defense of migrant caravan, November 2018.

Internationalist photo



# Revolutionary Marxism Is Based on the Political Independence of the Working Class

By Alice M. and Andrew C.,  
Spokane

The following document addresses aspects of Marxist politics that are particularly important today, when most of the left is tailing bourgeois politicians like Bernie Sanders and other “Democratic (Party) socialists.” It was submitted by Alice M. and Andrew C. when they were still members of Socialist Alternative. A subsequent resignation letter, “Socialist Alternative Is No Place for Revolutionaries,” was published in The Internationalist No. 54 (November-December 2018). The comrades founded the Spokane Marxist Group, which undertook a period of common work with the Internationalist Group and Revolutionary Internationalist Youth, culminating in a fusion with RIY on March 8, as reported in article on the front page of this issue.

A revolutionary party can only be based on the genuine ideas of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Trotsky. That’s not being “dogmatic,” it’s what we have learned from history.

However, it is clear that this is not the case with the political line put forward by Socialist Alternative. This has become more and more clear recently, but in our reading we see that it goes way back. Therefore, the intent of this document is to express fundamental disagreement with that line, first and foremost on the question of the political independence of the working class.

Political independence of the working class is a core principle forming the very basis of revolutionary Marxist politics. Without it, all talk of Marxist “tactics” is a deception. This point goes back to the resolution from Marx and Engels that was passed by the First International, stating that against the “collective power of the propertied classes,” the working class must constitute a “political party distinct from, and opposed” to bourgeois parties – that is, to “all” the parties of the propertied class, it stated (our emphasis). Marx made the same point in his speech on this subject, emphasizing that the workers must never be “the tagtail of any bourgeois party.” (Resolution on Working Class Political Action and speech by Marx at September 1871 conference of the First International.)

It is on the basis of the struggle for genuinely working-class, revolutionary politics that the Bolshevik-Menshevik split took place. Without that, the Russian Revolution would not have happened. It was on the basis of this same principle that the Trotskyist movement was formed in the fight against Stalinism’s subordination of the Chinese workers to the bourgeois nationalist party, and subsequently the fight against popular fronts of class collaboration with “progressive” bourgeois politicians.

Evaluating documents from internal discussions and disputes in SA over the question of Bernie Sanders, it is clear to us that the “Bern Turn” was a betrayal of working-class political independence. It is also clear to us that it was not an isolated incident. Instead, it was a bold, naked manifestation of a fundamentally tailist and anti-Marxist perspective. This was even theorized in the 2016 perspec-

tives document calling for a so-called new, mass party that it openly states would not in fact be any kind of workers party in any way, shape or form but one which would have a “populist multi-class character.” Didn’t Trotsky have something to say about that?

The “Bern Turn” has, in our view, set Socialist Alternative on a trajectory of ever more blatant expressions of an orientation and perspective actually counterposed to revolutionary Marxist politics. This is conveyed well by the myriad of recent articles in SA’s newspaper on the subject of various “left-Democrats,” including some members of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), running in, and sometimes winning, Democratic primary elections.

## Where the Logic of the “Bern Turn” Keeps Leading

The “Bern Turn” and its whole logic led deeper and deeper into building illusions in capitalist politicians. The policy of courting of liberal Democrats in Seattle, in California, etc. was being expressed more and more blatantly with SA’s politics nation-wide. As time went by, the “Bern Turn” kept pulling SA ever deeper into Democratic Party politics.

But far from pulling back, or drawing Marxist lessons from all this, the logic and momentum of this have drawn SA further and further into the most flagrant political support to and collaboration with Democratic and other capitalist party politicians.

This summer SA campaigned for, sponsored an event with, and effectively endorsed Democratic Party candidate Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. SA proclaims that it is “proud to have worked with the Ocasio-Cortez campaign,” while Ocasio-Cortez herself, the capitalist media and the head of the DNC all state that she seeks to rejuvenate and bring new blood to the Democratic Party. Are SA members supposed to believe that “socialism” actually does mean building this party of U.S. imperialism, capitalist war and murderous police repression? We don’t.

Now SA is hailing the campaign of yet another Democrat: Cynthia Nixon (while making various suggestions to the DSA to “get a stronger commitment from her”). This is not only a bourgeois candidate but one notorious for anti-union statements. Following the example of Ocasio-Cortez, Nixon started calling herself a “democratic socialist.” Instead of unmasking the gross identification of “socialism” with bourgeois politics, NYC SA wrote (July 11) “It’s positive that Cynthia Nixon has embraced socialism.” This is yet another stark example of how far SA’s politics are from revolutionary Marxism. How far are SA members willing to go along with this? Where will it end?

## It Didn’t Come from Nowhere

All of this did not come out of nowhere, and it is important for others in SA to see this as well. The fight for the political independence of the working class means opposing *all* bourgeois politicians and parties, like Marx said. Not just the Democrats, but the Greens and any other



Members of Socialist Alternative who went on to found the Spokane Marxist Group played a leading role in the 7 July 2018 protest against U.S. Border Patrol detentions of immigrants at the Intermodal bus station.

minor capitalist parties too. What part of “all” isn’t being understood?

James P. Cannon made the point crystal-clear in his speech against supporting the Progressive Party campaign of Henry Wallace back in 1948: “Our specific task is the class mobilization of the workers against not only the old two parties, but any other capitalist parties who might appear.”

But SA has most certainly endorsed and worked in favor of minor-party bourgeois candidates like the Greens. The biggest example of all was SA’s support to Ralph Nader in the 2000s, even though Nader was not only a capitalist candidate but an immigrant-basher. (Nader’s “play for the right,” as *American Conservative* magazine called it, even gained him support from ultra-rightist Pat Buchanan and the Reform Party.)

Campaigning for Nader and other candidates of minor bourgeois parties like the Greens was not in fact politically counterposed to SA’s eventual open embrace of Democratic candidates. As Cannon said in the same 1948 speech, there is “no principled difference” between supporting a Democratic or Republican candidate and supporting one from a minor bourgeois party, “And by principled difference I mean a class difference.”

In fact, the one thing paved the way for the other. Supporting Greens, etc., paved the way for supporting Democrats. It is very important for others in SA to see this, especially those opposed to or critical of recent policies like the “Bern Turn,” support to Ocasio-Cortez, etc. Supporting Nader et al. meant betraying political independence of the working class. That paved the way for the “Bern Turn,” which has paved the way to supporting Ocasio-Cortez, and hailing Cynthia Nixon’s run (and even giving the stamp of approval to her supposed socialism). And this will pave the way for more and more class collaboration.

This same type of opportunist politics is behind SA’s latching-on to and tailing

the renewed push for “gun control” laws, which are a weapon of the racist ruling class against black people above all. SA has recognized the racist, anti-labor nature of gun control, and yet tails after protests, hailed by the Democrats, carried out by youth after the Parkland mass shooting, through *advocating* gun control, on the basis that “the only areas where there are forcible attempts by the police to disarm people are public housing projects in the inner cities.”

It must be again emphasized that the question of fighting for the political independence of the working class in the U.S. is part of the *international* program of Marxism. But in Mexico, SA’s sister organization Izquierda Revolucionaria has tailed bourgeois populist Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador in a similar fashion to what SA is doing here.

As relatively new members and supporters of SA, comrades in Spokane did not personally take part in the faction fight in SA over the question of Bernie Sanders. We studied this disagreement around the same time that members of the former Lowell/New Hampshire branch of Socialist Alternative resigned and constituted themselves as the Class Struggle Education League (CSEL). While a number of SA branches had left the organization prior to CSEL, we saw these groups as generally moving *rightward* from SA in many respects, towards the amorphous, movementist, and near-apolitical approach embodied in the emergent “Marxist Center” tendency. CSEL, on the other hand, moved sharply in a leftward direction, towards revolutionary Marxism in the Trotskyist tradition.

Political clarity is essential. The working class can only win its real independence from capitalist politics if it is guided by a *revolutionary* program. This means counteracting all forms of bourgeois ideology and fighting for the workers to bring their power as a class into the fight against all forms of oppression. The revolutionary program

Revolution



# CUNY Internationalists and RIY Speak Out Against Trump's Wall and Phony National Emergency

On February 15, Donald Trump declared a “national emergency” to buttress his deployment of troops to the U.S.-Mexico border and to override Congress by shifting billions of dollars of military funds to build his racist border wall. At the same time, he signed a bipartisan spending bill that beefed up border security and budgeted \$1.37 billion to construct additional border fencing. On February 21, the Internationalist Clubs at the City University of New York (CUNY) and Revolutionary Internationalist Youth responded by holding a speak-out at Hunter College, calling for “No Wall! No Phony ‘National Emergency! Defeat Trump/Democrats’ War Against Immigrants!”

Trump’s declaration came just weeks after the longest government shutdown in U.S. history, during which Trump ranted and raved over an immigration “crisis” at the border. *The only crisis is the one faced by thousands of refugees languishing in border cities like Tijuana or Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, desperately seeking asylum after fleeing the devastation and violence wrought by U.S. imperialism in Central America. And both Democrats and Republicans have done everything in their power to keep them out.*

The protest welcomed students, faculty, staff and anyone outraged by this latest attack on immigrants, encouraging people to speak out against it and make their voices heard. Significantly, cafeteria workers from Hunter College, who recently fought back an attempt by the administration to gut their jobs, showed up in solidarity. Speakers emphasized over and over that enough was enough, and something had to be done to defend our immigrant brothers and sisters.



Internationalist Club and RIY at protest outside Hunter College against racist “wall,” phony “emergency.”

In their speeches and chants, the CUNY Internationalist Clubs and RIY called to “Let them in, let them stay, full rights for immigrants,” “Hunter students say – no wall, no way,” “Only revolution can bring justice,” “Trans rights, immigrants rights, same struggle same fight” and for student-teacher-worker action to stop deportations. A speaker from the Internationalist Clubs noted that the Democrats couterpose “high-tech” border security – drones, motion trackers, “smart” fences – to Trump’s “low-tech” wall, in order to more effectively hunt down immigrants at the border.

A RIY comrade stressed that relying on Democrats to protect immigrants is a dead end, as it was the Democrats who built the deportation machine up in the

first place (first under Clinton, then under Obama) and who today cheer yet another attempted coup in Latin America – this time in Venezuela. Rather than putting our faith in Democratic Party “socialists” like Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, who serve the interests of the ruling class, we need to *break with the Democrats and build a class-struggle workers party.*

Other representatives of the CUNY Internationalist Clubs, R.I.Y. and the Internationalist Group connected the bipartisan war on immigrants to U.S. imperialist domination of Latin America, which has bled so many countries dry to feed finance capital’s insatiable thirst for profits, expressed solidarity with members of the migrant caravan, and emphasized the need to mobilize the power of the working class in

the defense of immigrants.

A speaker from Trabajadores Internacionales Clasistas (Class Struggle International Workers), an immigrant workers organization born from the struggle to unionize B&H warehouse workers, emphasized the need for socialist revolution to end the oppression of immigrants once and for all, and highlighted the struggle for black liberation as key to fighting for revolution in the U.S., in this society built on the bedrock of slavery and racism.

The CUNY Internationalist Clubs and Revolutionary Internationalist Youth call for *full citizenship rights for all immigrants* – a basic democratic demand that can only be realized through social revolution. ■

starts from the real needs of the workers and oppressed, not the existing consciousness, since as Marx said, in bourgeois society the ruling ideas are those of the ruling class.

In contrast, SA’s political approach seeks by and large to tail and compromise with existing political consciousness, justifying this by saying Marxists must “meet people where they’re at.” But what is meant by this is not actually using Trotsky’s Transitional Program to show the need for workers’ revolution, but using the claim of “meeting” existing consciousness as a pretext for building reformism and outright bourgeois politics.

The real connections with the present-day burning concerns and struggles of the workers and oppressed must be made on the basis of a forthright, patient, and steadfast explanation of the *genuine* perspective and program of revolutionary Marxism. As Leon Trotsky wrote in *The Transitional Program*:

“All methods are good which *raise* the class consciousness of the workers, their

trust in their own forces, their readiness for self-sacrifice in the struggle. The impermissible methods are those which implant fear and submissiveness in the oppressed before their oppressors....To face reality *squarely*; not to seek the line of least resistance; to *call things by their right names*; to speak the *truth* to the masses, *no matter how bitter it may be*; *not to fear obstacles*; to be true in little things as in big ones; to base one’s program on the logic of the class struggle; to be bold when the hour for action arrives....” (emphasis added)

These are “the rules of the Fourth International,” Trotsky wrote. We want to start by calling things by their right name, and what we see in Socialist Alternative’s political line is class collaboration. In contrast, those rules of Trotsky’s Fourth International, together with its genuine program, are more urgently needed than ever in the fight to build a revolutionary Marxist party for socialist revolution here and around the world.

P.S. (August 14): In the document above, it was asked how far SA members are willing

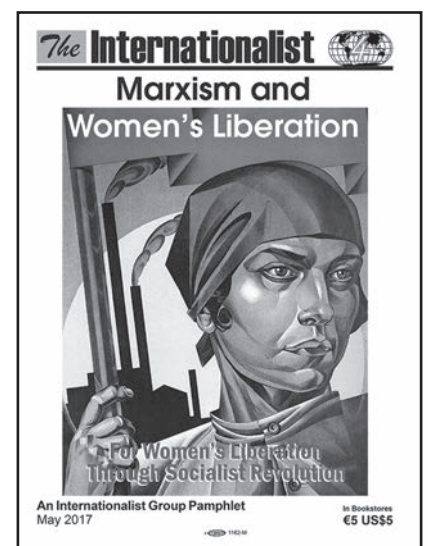
to go with the leadership’s class-collaborationist course, where it will lead, and where it will end. As the document was about to be submitted, the news came that Kshama Sawant has voted in favor of confirming the new chief of the Seattle police, armed fist of the class enemy. It is the responsibility of all SA members to stand against this horrific violation of class principle, which is derived from deep-going violations of Marxist politics discussed above. ■

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# Liberation...

continued from page 1

ary majority striking a death blow to what's left of abortion rights in this country: "if [the heartbeat law] ends up being a good vehicle to overturn *Roe v. Wade*," they declare, "we would be thrilled about that" (*Vox*, 19 April).

Meanwhile, the Democrats pretend to be friends of women's rights, lauding the recent "blue wave" of women elected to Congress. This is supposed to be an exemplar of women's empowerment. We are told that the halls of Congress, where imperialist wars are declared and funded, where laws criminalizing immigration are passed, where the systematic gutting of social welfare programs takes place, is what all "sisters" should aspire to. This cynical fraud was exposed in a recently-published presentation by comrade Yari of the Revolutionary Internationalist Youth (youth section of the Internationalist Group) at RIY's Educational and Organizing Conference in January:

"An electoral victory for one of the two big parties of U.S. imperialism is no victory for working-class, black, Latina and other doubly and triply oppressed women. Capitalism and its parties and politicians, both men and women ones, are the enemies of women's rights and women's liberation."

– "Democratic Party Feminism and the #MeToo Movement," *The Internationalist* No. 55, Winter 2019

The CUNY Internationalist Clubs and Revolutionary Internationalist Youth, along with our comrades in the Internationalist Group and Class Struggle International Workers (TIC), call for **free, safe abortion on demand** and **for mass mobilizations to defend abortion clinics**. This includes upholding the right to self-defense against anti-abortion thugs, who in 2015 shot up a Planned Parenthood clinic in Colorado. To wage an effective fight against the escalating attacks on women's rights, Marxists look to mobilize the social power of the multiracial, multi-ethnic working class, which can bring the capitalist economy to a screeching halt in defense of the oppressed and the rights of us all.

One of the key insights that the early, "utopian" socialists like Fourier and Flora Tristan made, built on by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in particular, is how women's oppression – the oldest form of social oppression – is an integral part of bourgeois class society as a whole. The nuclear family is the institution centrally responsible for maintaining and reproducing that oppression, tying women to the burdens of child rearing and housework. Even as younger women are working more hours and "millennial" households are reportedly more willing to split

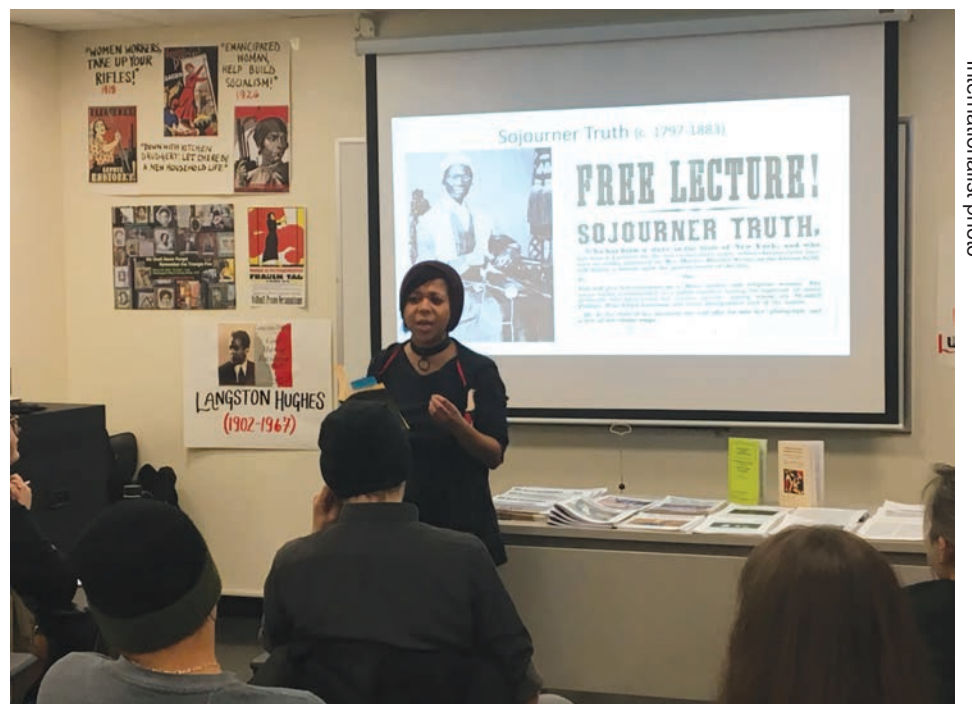
housework, the burden still falls mostly on women (*CNN Business*, 26 December 2018). As Marxists, we understand that women's oppression is rooted in the material structure of society. To overcome that oppression, and the sexist ideology that reflects and reinforces it, a thorough-going social revolution is required to pull up those material roots. Crucial for this is the widescale establishment of collective, social institutions to replace daily servitude that imprisons women in the bourgeois family's kitchen drudgery, housework, child-rearing, etc.

This issue of *Revolution* consists in large part of presentations made at RIY's Educational and Organizing Conference and at the March 8 forum that the CUNY Internationalist Clubs organized at Hunter College, titled "International Women's Day and Immigrant Rights: From the Origins to Today." This is particularly appropriate given the breadth and depth of the presentations, and the enthusiasm this year's Internationalist event on International Women's Day aroused among our comrades and other participants, who brought their own experiences, observations and questions into the discussion highlighting the communist program for women's liberation.

Internationalist Club and RIY members brought their creativity to bear to make the forum a vibrant, colorful and thought-provoking celebration of the real revolutionary content and history of International Women's Day, as a working-class holiday of *class struggle* for women's emancipation. This is a far cry from, and counterposed to, attempts to transform it into a festival of class collaboration celebrating feminist "sisterhood" between exploiters and exploited. Fighting for the real liberation of women – one of the most radical and revolutionary tasks of all – means forthrightly opposing such efforts to "unite" proletarian women with those of the ruling class whose system lives off their exploitation and oppression.

Prominent among such faux friends of women are leaders of bipartisan U.S. imperialism such as Nancy Pelosi and Hillary Clinton, infamous for sponsoring Haitian sweatshops that pay women workers \$5 a day and her role in designing the 1996 bill to "end welfare as we know it," which threw millions of black, Latina and white poor women off AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children).<sup>1</sup> Fighters for women's liberation must fight against Democratic Party feminism's drive to reinforce the chains binding us to the old-

<sup>1</sup> See "Bourgeois Feminism vs. Women's Liberation – Democratic Party: Faux Friends of Women," *Revolution* No. 11, December 2014; and "Imperialist Feminism and the Democrats," *The Internationalist* No. 55, Winter 2019.



Reading a speech by Sojourner Truth at International Women's Day celebration.

est capitalist party in the world, and those Democratic "socialists" working hard to refurbish, renew and rejuvenate it, like Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez.

Speakers at the Hunter forum brought the audience into helping recite the poem "Good Morning Revolution" (1932) by Langston Hughes (one of the best-known "black, red and gay" leaders of the Harlem Renaissance, as he was described at the forum); they read speeches by abolitionist Sojourner Truth; Paris Commune leader Louise Michel and Clara Zetkin, a pioneer of Socialist and Communist work among women; gave presentations on heroic black women crusaders against slavery and racist lynching like Harriet Tubman and Ida B. Wells; recited original poems, discussed the working-class history of International Women's Day and highlighted some of the earliest work on gay, lesbian and transgender rights, and its connection with the socialist movement and the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. A particular highlight of the event was the moving talks by immigrant women workers from *Trabajadores Internacionales Clasisitas* detailing the inhuman conditions imposed on them by capitalist society and exhorting youth to take up the banner of revolution.<sup>2</sup>

The overarching theme was that women's liberation can only be won through socialist revolution, coloring the event with

<sup>2</sup> For an extensive history of International Women's Day, see "International Women's Day Sparked the 1917 Russian Revolution," *The Internationalist* No. 47, March-April 2017.

revolutionary optimism. We print below presentations, edited for publication, given by participants at the International Women's Day event that highlight some of the main points of discussion.

## International Women's Day: A Call to Working-Class Action

**Kaitlan:** The first working women's day celebration, which became International Women's Day, was celebrated in 1908 and initiated by immigrant needle trade workers right here in New York City on the Lower East Side. 15,000 garment workers crowded the streets, demanding the eight-hour day, the end of child labor and equal suffrage for women. I would like to emphasize that these were immigrant women workers, largely Jewish, Italian, Russian, German and Hungarian, who, like immigrants today, worked under the most abhorrent conditions and were doubly and triply oppressed. Immigrants have historically been among the most militant members of the working class, fighting for better working conditions and the rights of their class as a whole.

This action in 1908 sparked a movement throughout the garment district, where there was a series of strikes against the biggest garment companies at that time, like the Rosen Brothers and the Triangle Shirtwaist Company. Although these struggles were prompted by different incidents, these women shared similar grievances over wages, hours, workplace safety, sexual harassment, threats and invasions of privacy by the bosses. The strikes culmi-



Preparing posters for the International Women's Day event at Hunter College.



**HARRIET  
TUBMAN  
(1822-1913)**

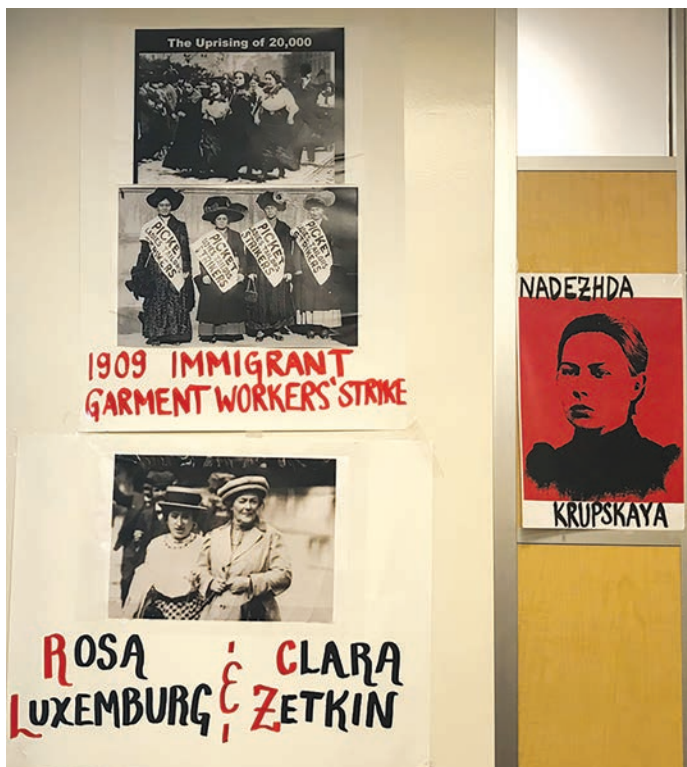
Poster of radical abolitionist Harriet Tubman.

Internationalist photo

Internationalist photo

Internationalist photo





Posters displayed at our International Women's Day event highlighted revolutionary women leaders.

nated in what was known as the “Uprising of the 20,000” in 1909, the largest strike of working women to date in U.S. history.

The strikers were predominantly young women in their teens and early 20s who fought tenaciously and courageously for their demands. Although they only won a part of those demands, the 1909 strike and those that followed in the subsequent five years forced the needle-trade union leaders to revise their prejudices against organizing women. The strike wave was a major educational experience that shaped the strikers’ political consciousness, and influenced that of working-class women around the U.S. and in other parts of the world. In 1909, the Socialist Party of America officially declared the first National Women’s Day, to be observed on February 28. A year later, the holiday was taken up by the Second (Socialist) International, after German revolutionary Clara Zetkin proposed an International Women’s Day, the idea of which was for every worker in every country to celebrate on the same day and press for their demands.

The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory was the largest manufacturer of blouses in 1909 and was one of the companies most stridently opposed to the strikers’ demands in the Uprising of the 20,000. The women who worked in this factory were crammed into small spaces, worked long hours and under incredibly hazardous conditions. They were surrounded by flammable materials with no water supply and only one working exit (the other was locked to “prevent theft”). This all created a perfect mixture for the tragedy that occurred on March 25, 1911, in which 129 women and 18 men were killed in the Triangle Shirtwaist fire. Hundreds of pounds of cotton scraps, tissue, paper patterns and wooden tables helped spread the fire rapidly. With over 500 workers in the facility and only one exit, it was guaranteed that large numbers would die. As for the fire escape, it buckled under the weight of workers scrambling to escape, resulting in further deaths. Others simply jumped from the ninth and tenth floors.

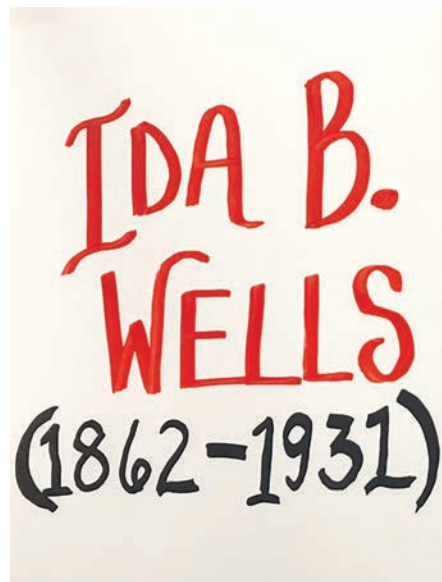
In the weeks following, family members of workers had to come and identify the bodies of those who died. Most were burnt beyond recognition. As for the company, its owners were charged with man-

slaughter but were later acquitted. Go figure. And they were able to cushion themselves financially with insurance payouts. The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire was remembered throughout the following International Women’s Days, and in the 1912 strike of men and women textile workers in Lawrence, Massachusetts – known as the “Bread and Roses” strike. That strike, which broke out after the workers, many of them immigrants, had their hours cut, was carried out under the leadership of revolutionaries from

the Industrial Workers of the World.

By 1914, on the eve of World War One, International Women’s Day was widely celebrated throughout Europe, including in tsarist Russia. I have spoken a lot about workers’ strikes and the historical context. Why? Because International Women’s Day was initiated by working-class women to put forth their demands, and eventually became a conduit for agitation by revolutionaries. For proletarian women in the process of their political development, International Women’s Day helped organize them in their industries and sharpen their class consciousness – to show how real gains can and must be made through class struggle.

Rather than exclude men, International Women’s Day was meant to build solidarity between working women and men, to demonstrate the strength of their class as a whole and further the fight for socialism. Its revolutionary character is demonstrated by the strike of women textile workers that took place in Russia in 1917, which sparked the February Revolution that overthrew the tsar and laid the groundwork for the October Revolution later that year. Women had gained the right to vote after the Tsar’s overthrow, and the October Revolution brought major gains for women like free abortion on demand, the abolition of all discriminatory laws, the beginning of building social institutions for childcare,



Poster honoring anti-lynching crusader and advocate of black self-defense Ida B. Wells on display at International Women’s Day event.

public laundries and restaurants, etc.<sup>3</sup>

International Women’s Day began as a struggle for women’s political rights as well as their struggle for equality at work. As Clara Zetkin said, capitalism demanded the participation of women in the economy while at the same time denying them the vote. Women’s suffrage was an important step for strengthening the power of the whole working class, because, Zetkin said, women’s votes could be a weapon and tool for class struggle. So the struggle for political rights became part of the struggle for women’s liberation, a struggle we continue today and one that can only be won when the working class unites to smash the system that oppresses it.<sup>4</sup>

That means the goals of working-class women are counterposed to those of feminists. Women’s liberation is not the same thing as feminism, which is a specific bourgeois ideology of the supposed sisterhood of women of all social classes. Feminists then and now want to achieve the same advantages, the same power and the same privileges within capitalist society as bourgeois men, seeking this kind of equality within the existing social framework. Feminism does not conceive of women’s oppression on a material basis. It looks at the sexist ideas and attitudes held by many men and concludes that they are the cause of women’s oppression. In reality, sexist ideas come from and reflect the material, social oppression of women. Therefore, feminism draws a gender line and directs the fight for women’s equality against men. By doing so, feminists group different classes of women together as though they have common interests. This class collaboration ends up harming working-class women, as their bourgeois “sisters” will always betray

<sup>3</sup> See materials on women and the Russian Revolution in Internationalist Group pamphlets, Bolsheviks and the Liberation of Women, March 2005, and *Marxism and Women’s Liberation*, May 2017.

<sup>4</sup> See Clara Zetkin, “Only with the Proletarian Woman Will Socialism Be Victorious” (1896) and Rosa Luxemburg, “Women’s Suffrage and Class Struggle” (1912), in *Marxism and Women’s Liberation*.



Reading a speech by Paris Commune leader Louise Michel.

them. Feminists believe that just having more women in congressional seats will make conditions better for proletarian women. But we know that’s not the case.

Let’s look at what more female representation of bourgeois parties in the halls of bourgeois power has achieved. The current director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) is a woman. This is the agency that trained and funded death squads throughout Latin America, and whose current director oversaw a secret “black site” prison in Thailand where torture was routinely carried out. The women in those countries were not treated as sisters. Then there’s Hillary Clinton, who set up sweatshops in Haiti that pay women less than \$5 a day. Most recently, we have “AOC,” Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, supposedly a “sister,” who voted funds for preparing the way for Trump’s coup in Venezuela. The reason for all this is that these women serve the interests of the ruling class and subordinate the question of women’s rights and equality to the framework of capitalist society.

But women’s oppression cannot be eradicated under capitalism, which relies on the nuclear family as the main institution through which wealth and property are transmitted from one generation to the next. While the institution of the family is older than capitalism, it plays an important role in maintaining bourgeois class rule. Because property is transferred through the familial line through men’s children, institutions and supposed ideals like bourgeois marriage and monogamy (for women) hold society in thrall, as part of the subjugation of women. Meanwhile the nuclear family is where the next generation of laborers are reproduced, brought up, trained to obey the existing society’s rules, etc. These are key aspects of the material basis of women’s oppression, and out of this arose the ideological reflections or justifications for that oppression, like male chauvinism, also called sexism.

Moreover, the eradication of women’s oppression cannot be achieved through the exclusion or without the active participation of working-class men. To achieve women’s emancipation, it must become the cause of the entire working class, in revolutionary struggle, which requires a revolutionary party. International Women’s Day was not intended to be a male-exclusionist day of empty ritual, where we glorify the traditional role of women and family or mobilize for more women CEOs. This is actually the image organizations like the U.N. and others paint to



blur and distort the purpose of International Women's Day. That is not what International Women's Day was born to be. We refuse to let it be coopted by this bourgeois, feminist outlook; women like Alexandra Kollontai and Clara Zetkin used International Women's Day and publications like *Rabotnitsa* (Russian for "woman worker") to explain the material oppression of women and put forward the program of liberating women through socialist revolution.

Alexander Kollontai, in her article "International Women's Day" (1920), said "the shackles of the family, of housework... still weigh heavily on the working woman." Despite the gain of women's suffrage and various reforms benefitting women, which we defend, these do nothing about the root of their oppression, which lies in the nuclear family and class society as a whole. Those shackles cannot be reformed away. Shackles do not wither. Shackles must be broken and will be broken with the smashing of capitalism, through a social revolution that will liberate women and all the oppressed. As Lenin stated in his article "On International Women's Day (1920)", "The working women's movement has for its objective the fight for economic and social equality, not merely formal equality of women and men." Our task is to organize women around the slogan and goal of women's liberation through socialist revolution.

### Immigrant Women Workers in the Fight for Revolution

*The following presentations were given in Spanish and translated into English at the forum.*

**Beth:** Good evening, some of you know me, I am a member of *Trabajadoras Internacionales Clasistas* (Class Struggle International Workers). March 8th, the International Day of Working Women: I think this is a great day, thanks to socialist women like Clara Zetkin, Rosa Luxemburg, Alexandra Kollontai and Nadezhda Krupskaya, who is my favorite. At home I have a photo of Krupskaya that shows her with a group of Red Army soldiers, giving them her message.

We are thankful to her and the others for their work and efforts in establishing International Women's Day. We also owe a debt to the immigrant seamstresses of New York, who worked in garment factories, also known as sweatshops, and who launched the "Uprising of the 20,000" in 1909. These courageous women workers launched a bitter struggle to try and win a union.

Among them were the seamstresses of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory, who died a couple of years later in the factory fire of March 25, 1911. I want to mention that men also died in that fire, a smaller number than the women, but men were also working in that sweatshop. I wanted to mention this because the feminists, including radical feminists, omit this important part of the story, that men also died in that fire.

The woman question is important for us as revolutionaries, because the woman worker is doubly oppressed. She is oppressed as a worker; and if she is a black woman worker, she is triply oppressed; and if she is a black immigrant woman worker, she is quadruply oppressed. What I want to say here is that I am not a feminist; I am fighting for equal rights and equal pay for equal work; I believe in the diversity of qualities of every individual; and we are fighting to emancipate the working class as a whole, so that we can in fact really emancipate women.

I believe it is also important that we re-

member this: in every struggle that has occurred, there have been martyrs. One of the most recent examples of that of Marielle Franco, a black woman activist in the *favelas* of Brazil. She was murdered last year by the bourgeois state.

There is also the situation of women agricultural workers in San Quintín, in Baja California, Mexico, who have fought together with the men workers, their *compañeros*, for improvements at work. These are women who have to work from very early in the morning until the sun goes down, bring their children with them and feeding them there in the countryside, in the fields. These women work and live in a place where they really have nothing – nothing at all – building their homes in places where the bosses own everything. They make starvation wages, there are no benefits, no hospitals, and in many cases they are physically abused by the foremen. It is not only the mothers who are exploited, but also the little children, who have to go into the fields to pick the fruits or vegetables as part of their work.

For these reasons and others, the struggle for women's emancipation continues. Let's also not forget the fact that Violeta, Lizette and I have several jobs in order to survive in this country and give our children a better life. I don't want this to sound like a complaint, because we are working to make all of this better. I am not so old, but a little bit older, and it is very important for us to see young people like you, because in the future, in a revolution, we need students like you, who are well-educated, together with people like us.

What I am about to say has to do with the routine that we, and many other women like us, go through every day in this country. Usually we wake up at 6 in the morning. Our work ends at 2 or 3 in the afternoon. We work for minimum wage. Then we go home to clean the house, to take care of the kids, we have to feed them and take them to their medical appointments, to school, etc., and we are also the psychologists for our kids. We don't have a degree, nor do we receive any pay for it, but at the end of the day they come to us. And after all that we need to have everything ready to go on and continue the next day. Our workday usually ends at 9 or 10 at night.

Since we don't have immigration status, or in other words, are undocumented, a lot of the social programs the government might "offer" are either limited or denied to us. We are women who carry out many different jobs in one single day. So why not fight for childcare centers, restaurants or cafeterias, and laundries open 24 hours a day, seven days a week? For single mothers and married mothers, and for single and married fathers too. That way many more mothers could really work or study and participate in political life. And maybe also just have a little bit of fun on the weekends. As the immigrant women strikers in Lawrence, Massachusetts said in 1912, in a phrase you all know: "We want bread, but we want roses too."

Our struggle must continue, internationally, demanding full citizenship rights for all immigrants, whether that be in Mexico, with the migrant caravan or here in the United States. To end, I would like to mention one more important thing: that everybody have full free medical insurance and also that every woman have the option to freely decide, without any religious or moral prejudice, whether or not she wants to be a mother. We want this right to decide, to decide about our own bodies. We want the right to safe, free abortion on demand. And as Nadezhda said:

## She Cried Liberation

by Maeve

When woman took her quick moving hands off spinning looms and textile machines, she picked up steel or aluminum and that was the day she cried liberation.

Naysayers in lily white or in protected chateaus or holding locks and keys to rusted chains centuries entangled and interlocked covered eyes and cried, "save the children!"

Woman, with her own child to her breast with her own chains hammer-smashed to negligible fragments opened eyes, drew new breath and knew she had done so.

Where it was dry, there was milk. Where there were crumbs, there was bread. Where there were thorns, there were roses. The day she cried liberation arms held apples, not fig leaves.

Woman, with her own body beneath her clothes, it was not the sway of her hips nor the curvature of her waist. It was her fist through the window and the mirror.

Where there was white, it was red. Where there were symbols, there were words. Where there was chaos, there was truth. The day she cried liberation bound hands became weapons.

One ought not to confuse the days she stood on two feet with this day, nor the days that she succeeded in her pleas for more milk or more bread.

One ought not to conflate the days she ate the flesh of another woman, or when her child suckled from the breast of another with this day.

The day she cried liberation was the day the river ran red with rose petals, was the day the blood pumped strong with sustenance, was the day that cold steel collarbones turned so many links to forgotten junk.

The day she cried liberation was the day we were all set free.

"That which unites working women with working men is stronger than that which divides them. They are united by their common lack of rights, their common needs, their common condition, which is struggle and their common goal.... Solidarity between working men and working women, common activity, a common goal, a common path to this goal – such is the solution of the 'woman' question among workers."<sup>5</sup>

Long live March 8, International Working Women's Day! Full democratic rights for gays and lesbians! Free abortion on demand! For women's liberation through workers revolution! Asian, Latin, black and white, women and men: Workers of the world, unite!

**Lizette:** Good evening, my name is Lizette; I'm a bit nervous because this is the first time I've done this. I'm going to tell you a little about my own life. I started working at the age of six. My mother took me to work for a lady and I never got a single cent from that work. Two years later, I went to the state of Sinaloa in Mexico to work there, cutting tomatoes and chiles.

On one occasion, my brother got sick on a Sunday when they were giving out the pay. He couldn't go collect his pay, so I asked the person paying the workers if they could give me my brother's pay. They said no, and I said that was not right.

<sup>5</sup> Article by Nadezhda Krupskaya in the first issue of *Rabotnitsa*, published on International Women's Day, 1914.

I went back to our town, with my mother and my brothers, and life went on in the same way. When I was 12 I decided to leave home. I went to another town to work and later came here, to this country, so that I could send money back home to Mexico. And here too I found there were people who would have us work for them but when it came time for us to be paid, they would fire us.

Because of this sort of thing, I used to see a friend of mine always going someplace on Friday nights, and I used to ask him where he was going. He'd say he was going to some meetings. *[Laughter.]* I kept asking him about it, and one day he asked me, "Would you like to go?" I said yes, I do want to go; and from then on, I keep on going. It's been about a year now that I've been participating in the study group. I like to go, because I free myself there; and when I go to protests I yell out the slogans and blow off some steam about everything I feel.

What I say now is that we have to keep fighting so that other women don't have to keep suffering as we have. Like my comrade said here, we need communal kitchens and laundries to help women who can't manage. Thank you.

**Violeta:** My name is Violeta, I'm a member of TIC: *Trabajadoras Internacionales Clasistas*. What we're commemorating and remembering tonight is March 8th, International Working Women's Day. We are commemorating the women we see here [in



# Magnus Hirschfeld: A Pioneer in the Struggle for Gay, Lesbian and Transgender Rights

**Jacob:** Like most of the historical figures we have been discussing tonight, the story of Magnus Hirschfeld is not widely known. It is not because of people's ignorance, it is not because of historical oblivion. It is because this history has been suppressed; and it has been suppressed because these were heroic figures in the struggle against all forms of oppression.

Magnus Hirschfeld was a German sex researcher, a medical doctor and a fearless proponent of the rights of women and of gay, lesbian and of transgender people. People might be surprised by the things he said and did, considering the historical context of his life. Hirschfeld was pulled into activist work when one of his patients committed suicide the day before his wedding. In the suicide note, Hirschfeld's patient pleaded with him to publicize the struggle that gay people went through. To make that plight known to the public.

So Magnus Hirschfeld dedicated himself to this and in his words, he lived by the maxim "Through science to justice." Through scientific education and research he sought to teach people that sexual and gender variance is common across all cultures. That homosexuality is a natural manifestation of human sexuality and that gender is intrinsically fluid. In 1897 Magnus Hirschfeld founded the first homosexual rights organization in history, the Scientific Humanitarian Committee. The main activity of the Committee was to petition for the removal of Paragraph 175 from the German penal code, which outlawed homosexual acts between men.

August Bebel, a founder of the social-



Magnus-Hirschfeld-Gesellschaft

## Magnus Hirschfeld

ist movement who had worked closely with Karl Marx, presented the petition of the Scientific Humanitarian Committee to the German parliament. In 1911 the Committee opposed an attempt to "reform" the penal code which would have made homosexual acts between women illegal. Although no laws formally persecuted transgender people, they were liable to be prosecuted under public nuisance and disorderly conduct laws.

Hirschfeld had limited legislative success. He also established a system providing a kind of documentary protection against police harassment for trans people in the city of Berlin. In 1919 he took up the objective of linking different forms of oppression and fighting for broader social reforms. He established the Institute for Sexual Research, which had the objective of pushing broad reforms in addition to academic research

and education advocating gay rights and women's rights to contraception. The institute provided counseling services, treatment for venereal diseases and sex reassignment operations.

Hirschfeld's work was done in the context of the rise of the Nazis. He was frequently demonized for advocating gay rights and for being a Jew. He was once beaten so brutally that he had the surreal experience of reading his own obituary in the newspaper. In 1933, Hitler took power and the Institute for Sexual Research was plundered by Nazi students who were part of a physical education fraternity. The materials they stole were set alight in a book burning. Hirschfeld was out of the country at the time on a world tour. He never returned to Germany, dying in France in 1935.

Unlike many of the figures we spoke about tonight, Hirschfeld was not a political revolutionary. He was a member of the German Social Democratic Party, as was August Bebel. In fact, they went to college together. But Hirschfeld was not in the party's radical wing. However, his work had an impact on policy and scientific study in the Soviet Union, and this is something that as Marxists we are quite proud of. The October Revolution of 1917 gave way to the decriminalization of homosexuality and extended the right of women to free abortion on demand, provided by the state. Women in Russia had gained the right to vote, which women did not have in the United States at the time. And women still don't have the right to free abortion on demand here.

The October Revolution led by the Bolsheviks brought these gains and many

others. (The Soviet Union later pioneered sex reassignment surgery.) In 1923, the director of the Moscow Institute of Social Hygiene explained that "Homosexuality, sodomy and various other forms of sexual gratification set forth in European legislation as offences against public morality are treated by Soviet legislation exactly as is so-called 'natural' intercourse."<sup>1</sup>

Some people have asserted that the Bolsheviks' decriminalization of homosexuality in the Soviet Union was some kind of accident. But it is quite clear, when you read the policy statements, that it was intentional and part of the revolution itself. The same year the director of the Moscow Institute made that statement, the Soviet Commissar of Health visited Hirschfeld's Institute for Sexual Research. In 1926, Hirschfeld reciprocated by accepting an invitation to visit Moscow and Leningrad, and in turn the Soviet Union sent delegates to Hirschfeld's World League for Sexual Reform. There was fruitful collaboration between Hirschfeld and the Soviet government over the course of several years. And so, Magnus Hirschfeld is a figure to be remembered today. Though he himself was not a Marxist, he is very important to our movement and to us as Marxists, in the struggle against all forms of oppression. ■

<sup>1</sup> For more on this, and how the Stalinist degeneration of the Soviet workers state was reflected regarding these and other issues, see "Gay Rights and Socialist Revolution," *Revolution* No. 4, September 2007, reprinted in *Marxism and Women's Liberation*.

the photos and posters] for their struggles against oppression, remembering their bravery, and continuing the struggle that they began, as they had no other option but to demand their rights. We continue to struggle because we continue to feel the oppression of capitalism, as men and as women. We proletarian women continue and will continue in this struggle for equality, for the same rights. We do this as domestic workers.

We feel this oppression every day, dropping our children off at school, and then running to make it to work on time. Then we spend the day worrying if we'll be able to make it back in time to pick them up from school. On top of that, we need to make sure they get fed and do their homework.

To be a housewife, to be a proletarian woman is to be triply oppressed. Because of these burdens of work and responsibilities we have as mothers and as women workers, for these reasons and more, we demand equal rights.

This morning I was at work. I clean apartments. The woman I work for, the lady of the house, she was worried because she didn't have a babysitter. We see the big difference between the women below and the capitalist women above. We have to clean their houses and take care of these things for them, while they look for a babysitter. This is our struggle, our work. We will always be here, and the moment will come when that change will come. ■

May 2019

## Hunter Cafeteria Workers Backed by Internationalist Campaign

At the end of the Spring 2018 semester, the Hunter College cafeteria and dining room were shut down, and the unionized cafeteria workers were thrown out of their jobs. The Internationalist Club responded by initiating a petition campaign in support of the cafeteria workers. The campaign was launched by unanimous vote at the Club's September 20 forum on "Socialism: What It Is (and Isn't)," which began with a presentation on their situation by the cafeteria workers, more than a dozen of whom attended.

The petition stated: "The cafeteria workers need their jobs back. Hunter, students, faculty and campus workers need the cafeteria and dining room back. Let's join together to tell the Hunter administration: no union-busting, no more stalling, bring the cafeteria/dining room and the unionized workers back now!" Over the course of several weeks, members of the Internationalist Club intensively circulated it among students, faculty and workers. An especially positive response came from Hunter clerical workers (who, like the cafeteria workers, are largely African American and Latino). Over



### Voting to launch campaign at 20 September 2018 forum.

two thousand signatures were then delivered to the Hunter College president's office. After a prolonged individual re-interview process and delays to the eventually scheduled re-opening, the cafeteria did open its doors again, and all but two of the workers were rehired.

The attempt at wholesale dismissal was not the first attack on their rights that the cafeteria workers have braved. In 2009, the management of the previous contracted food provider moved to slash employee healthcare and

pension plans. Then too, the Internationalist Club initiated a campaign to help ward off the bosses' offensive. (See "Hunter Cafeteria Struggle – Workers and Students Unite," *Revolution* No. 7, April 2010.) As the bipartisan capitalist drive against public education and workers' gains continues, building solidarity between students, faculty and campus workers is part of our perspective of bringing out the power of the working class in defense of the rights of us all. ■

Internationalist photo



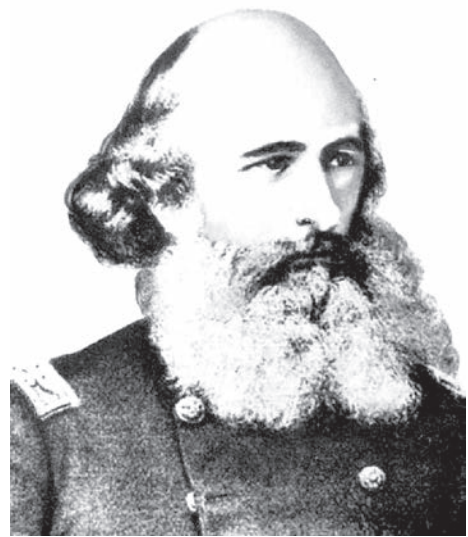
# Internationalism and Working-Class History: Immigrants in the Fight for Revolution

The following article is based on a presentation given by comrade Maeve at an 8 May 2018 CUNY Internationalist Clubs and Revolutionary Internationalist Youth forum at Hunter College titled “The Workers Struggle Has No Borders: Immigrants’ Rights and Revolution.”

Since Donald Trump took office in 2017, attacks on immigrants by the capitalist government have been ceaseless. But it goes back further than Trump. Family separations, mass deportations and border “wall” construction all predate the current anti-immigrant racist occupying the White House. It was the administration of Democrat Bill Clinton that began construction of the border wall along the U.S.-Mexico border, which was expanded under the administration of Republican George W. Bush with the approval of Congressional Democrats, including then-Senator Hillary Clinton. We call Barack Obama the “deporter-in-chief” because he expelled more immigrants from the U.S. than any president before him. And it was his Democratic administration that vigorously pursued the practice of family separations in 2014, when thousands of Central American migrants were fleeing the hellish violence in their countries wrought by the depredations of U.S. imperialism.<sup>1</sup>

Many people are rightly disgusted and outraged by Donald Trump’s anti-immigrant tirades and policies, like the “Muslim ban” that bars people from seven majority-Muslim countries from entering the U.S., or the family separations that have left thousands of migrant children traumatized and torn away from their parents, or Trump’s vile racist comment about black immigrants from “shithole countries.” But the mainstream liberal press wants to portray him and his policies as simply an aberration, as being fundamentally out of sync with how “normal” presidential administrations treat immigrants, because of how virulently and openly xenophobic he is. The truth is quite the opposite. While racist and national-chauvinist ideology is always used to justify attacks on immigrant populations, the underlying cause is mate-

<sup>1</sup> See “Defeat the War on Immigrants, Set Them Free, Let them Stay!” *Revolution* No. 15, September 2018.



Joseph Weydemeyer was a close collaborator of Karl Marx, participated in the 1848 revolution and was a Lieutenant Colonel in the Union Army during the Civil War.

rial. It’s about money, and Trump is the most recent iteration of a long history of anti-immigrant attacks by the government in this country.

In capitalist society, the pursuit of profit is the driving force, and persecuting immigrants to keep their wages low is key to many parts of the capitalist economy. To keep immigrant workers in a state where they can be paid starvation wages, the capitalist government carries out a reign of terror meant to intimidate and regiment the immigrant population. Immigration raids, family separations and border walls are all part of that. Since immigrants are treated as disposable labor without rights, the capitalist class can easily get rid of them when the economy goes bust and labor costs must be cut, as well as make them into convenient scapegoats to deflect attention from the real cause of economic crises – the capitalist system itself, where production is done for profit instead of human need.

But there is another reason the ruling class as a whole is the enemy of immigrants. It has to do with the long history of immigrant workers’ militancy and their participation in and often leading role in many workers’ struggles in this country. From fighting in the Union Army in the Civil War to helping organize massive general strikes, from helping found trade unions to agitating for socialist revolution, immigrant workers have repeatedly been in the forefront of the labor movement. This is one of the reasons why immigrants have been particularly targeted for repression by Democratic and Republican administrations alike.

As Marxists, we fight to expose the pretensions of “progressive” Democratic politicians, who despite their rhetoric serve the interests of the ruling class. The only way to effectively fight against the anti-immigrant onslaught is through independent working-class action, overcoming the divisions built up by the many-sided oppression of this racist society, in order to unite the exploited and oppressed in common struggle against the capitalists, culminating in international socialist revolution.

## Immigrants Fought to End Slavery

The year 1848 marked a major upswell of revolutions in Europe. These were what Marxists call bourgeois revolutions, aiming to unify various countries and states based on shared nationality under bourgeois-democratic governments on the basis of the capitalist system which was then on the rise. Historically, this sort of unification was one of capitalism’s progressive contributions to the development of society. These revolutions sought to overthrow the vestiges of the old feudal system that had dominated Europe for many centuries – the system where kings, queens and landowning nobles had the property, wealth and power. The rise of capitalism eventually clashed with this old set-up, and while capitalism was unspeakably brutal and ruthless – and today is a reactionary system in deadly decline – it nevertheless played a progressive historical role in the 18th and 19th centuries insofar as it vastly raised the



Many volunteer regiments of the Union Army in the Civil War were composed of immigrants. The 39th New York Volunteer Infantry Regiment, illustrated above, was known as the “Garibaldi Guard” because many of its members had fought alongside Italian revolutionary Giuseppe Garibaldi in the 1848 revolutions.

productivity of labor based on technology, and brought about the concentration of production into vast industrial centers, giving birth to the working class as we know it today.

Germany, at the time a collection of independent feudal-derived states, was one of the places where a bourgeois revolution broke out in 1848. When the revolution was defeated and reaction (the backlash of the old ruling classes) took hold, thousands of revolutionaries and their supporters emigrated to the United States. These immigrants came mainly from Germany, but many also came from areas which today are part of Italy and Hungary, where bourgeois revolutions had also been defeated. Bringing their radical democratic ideals with them across the Atlantic, these political refugees of the 1848 revolutions came to be known as the “Red 48ers.” Founding gymnastics and rifle clubs, they sought to maintain their revolutionary discipline in their new home through sustained political activity and military training. These clubs would comprise what became known as the Turner movement (from the German word for gymnastics), which played an important role in the U.S. Civil War, what Marxists call the Second American Revolution.

As radical veterans of democratic revolutions, the Red 48ers fiercely opposed the institution of slavery. One of their newspapers, *The Turner*, agitated “against extension of slavery to the free territories” and regarded “this institution as definitely unworthy of a republic and contrary to all concepts of freedom.”<sup>2</sup> The extension of slavery to the newly acquired territories of the U.S., such as Kansas and Nebraska, in the lead-up to the Civil War, was an existential question for the slave-owning sector of the ruling class. The Southern plantation owners relied on chattel slavery (in which human beings were “chattel,” which means “movable property”) as the foundation of

<sup>2</sup> This position was also adopted in their platform at the 1855 National Convention held in Buffalo, New York (“American Turners Records, 1853-2004,” on line at ulib.iupui.edu).

their immense wealth and social system, which by then mainly centered on production of cotton for export to industrialized England. On the other hand, the Northern capitalists had mercantile and industrial businesses and ambitions of their own, and required the existence of a massive pool of “free” labor, i.e., workers that were paid wages, that could be concentrated into massive industrial enterprises. Territories such as Kansas and Nebraska became, in a real sense, early battlegrounds for these systems of labor, which were increasingly incompatible and were linked to increasing political power struggles over which section of the exploiting classes would dominate the country as a whole.

In Kansas, Red 48ers joined John Brown’s multiracial fighting force that beat back racist “Border Ruffian” gangs from neighboring Missouri. These pro-slavery thugs waged a campaign of terror in the lead-up to Kansas’ election that would decide whether it entered the Union as a “free” or “slave” state. Their role was to attempt to intimidate the mostly anti-slavery population of the territory into submission. Under John Brown’s military discipline, 48ers were among those who sent the racists packing after a series of pitched battles, liberating slaves in their wake and ensuring Kansas would join the Union as a free state. When war broke out in 1861 between the so-called Confederate states of the South, which had seceded from the U.S. to wage a pro-slavery rebellion, and the Union (the U.S.), Red 48ers enlisted in the Northern army. By some estimates, German-born soldiers comprised nearly 10 percent of Northern enlistees. Red 48er troops played a key role in the early days of the war, defending the U.S. arsenal in St. Louis, Missouri, and the city itself, from Confederate capture.

## From Fighting Slavery to Mass Labor Struggles

The slave-owners’ bloody “Confederacy” was defeated in the Civil War, to a large degree as a result of the arming of





**Chinese immigrant workers in the Sierra Nevada mountain range building the Central Pacific Railroad. Together with the Union Pacific Railroad, which was built largely with Irish immigrant labor, the combined line became the First Transcontinental Railroad in 1869. This was followed by a series of racist prohibitions on immigration from China, with the Page Act of 1875 banning Chinese women from immigrating to the U.S. and the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act banning all immigrant laborers from China.**

slaves by the Union forces, which occurred late in the war and only as a result of Union defeats, insistent demands by radical abolitionists and above all the heroic fight of escaped slaves themselves demanding to take up arms to crush the slavery system. This decisive step gave the war a revolutionary character, undermining the very foundations of the slaveowners' rule. When the war was over in 1865, labor in the U.S. was changed forever. For the first time, the formation of a national working class was possible. This coincided with an explosion of capitalist production that at first centered around, and was later facilitated by, the construction of the first transcontinental railroad. The backbreaking labor for this was done mainly by Chinese and Irish immigrants, and African American former slaves. The establishment of a rail network connected the major productive centers of the country, laying the basis for an organized labor movement on a national scale. The dust had barely settled on the Second American Revolution when, in 1866, the National Labor Union was founded – the first nation-wide trade union in the U.S. At the same time, a new influx of immigrant

workers was entering the country, many of whom brought with them the radical ideas about labor organizing that were growing in several parts of Europe.

The first major class battle in the post-Civil War U.S. came with the Great Railroad Strike of 1877. On July 14, after enduring massive wage cuts amid an unprecedented economic depression, railroad workers employed by the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad company went on strike. The strike started in West Virginia but extended outward to industrial centers in Maryland, Pennsylvania, Illinois and elsewhere, developing into a general strike in St. Louis, Missouri – the first of its kind in the U.S. Black, white and Latino workers stood shoulder-to-shoulder in defiance of bourgeois repression and took over the city. Trade-union leaders joined with the St. Louis local of the Workingmen's Party, a Marxist political party composed largely of German immigrants, and the strike committee headquarters was none other than Turner Hall, out of which Red 48ers had operated during the Civil War. For the bourgeoisie, the St. Louis general strike raised the spectre of what had occurred in Paris

just six years earlier, when the working masses established the Paris Commune of 1871 – the world's first workers revolution. The construction of armories across the country (like the one across the street from Hunter College) was part of the capitalist rulers' response to these events.

Like the Commune, the St. Louis general strike was defeated. Terrified by the spectre of 1871, the capitalist government sent thousands of National Guard troops, who along with deputized police officers, murdered and arrested scores of strikers. This would foreshadow the infamous Haymarket Massacre of May 4,

1886. At its October 1884 convention, the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions (founded at a Turner Hall in Pittsburgh) set a deadline of May 1, 1886 by which the eight-hour workday should become the national standard. By May 4, 1886, 350,000 workers were on strike demanding an eight-hour workday. In Chicago's Haymarket Square, thousands gathered to hear speeches by strike leaders, many of whom were anarchist immigrants from Germany and Britain. When a bomb mysteriously exploded at the feet of police gathered nearby, after most demonstrators had left, the cops used the pretext to fire on the crowd and arrest the strike leaders, four of whom were executed after a notorious frame-up trial. On May 1st every year, workers and leftists around the world celebrate May Day, International Workers' Day, commemorating the Haymarket martyrs and celebrating the cause of working-class emancipation.

Haymarket was far from the last time labor militants would be murdered on frame-up charges by the bourgeois state. Joel Emmanuel Hägglund, also known as Joe Hill, was a Swedish immigrant and union organizer. In the 1910s he was a leading figure and revolutionary songwriter in the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), which sought to organize all workers into "One Big Union." Founded by socialist and anarchist union militants opposed to the pro-capitalist program of the American Federation of Labor (AFL) leadership, the IWW opposed the AFL's narrow "craft" unionism based on the top layer of "skilled" workers, and worked to bring in immigrant, black and women workers as part of the vast "unskilled" labor force in agriculture, textiles, timber and other industries.

In 1914, while in Salt Lake City, Utah, Hill was framed up on a murder charge; he was executed by firing squad in November 1915. The state wanted to make an example of Hill, with Utah's strike-breaking governor William Spry vowing to cleanse Utah of "lawless elements," including "IWW agitators" that had been organizing key sectors of Utah labor. With his last words made into the labor slogan "Don't Mourn, Organize," and his songs learned by generations of unionists, Joe Hill is one of the most beloved heroes of the working-class movement.

The IWW also played a leading role in organizing immigrant workers in the mines of the Southwest and was the target of state repression because of its fight for workers' rights and free speech during WWI. When the IWW launched a strike at the Phelps-Dodge copper mine in Bisbee, Arizona in 1917, they were called "aliens" and "traitors" by the big-business press. A significant percentage of the strikers were of Mexican origin and paid lower wages than other employees. On 12 July 1917, over a thousand strikers, their supporters and other "undesirable residents" of Bisbee were herded into box cars by police and company-organized vigilantes and deported to the middle of the desert where they were left to die.<sup>3</sup>

### Organizing for Revolution

In the same year as the Bisbee deportation, amid the fratricidal slaughter of millions of workers in World War One, the most significant event in the history of

<sup>3</sup> See "'Reds' and Immigrants," *The Internationalist* No. 2, April-May 1997.



**IWW songwriter Joe Hill (1879-1915).**

the international labor movement erupted in Russia. On March 8, 1917 (February 23 in the old-style Julian calendar), on International Women's Day, striking women garment workers in the city of Petrograd sparked the Russian revolution that overthrew the tsar – the head of the Russian monarchy. The Russian empire was considered a "prison house of nations" as the tsar ruled over his multi-ethnic subjects with an iron fist, brutally repressing national and religious minorities. But while Russia – with its feudal-derived monarchy, its huge peasantry downtrodden by aristocratic landlords, its absence of even the most elementary democratic rights – still faced many of the basic issues taken on by the European "bourgeois revolutions" of prior centuries, the democratic tasks of the Russian revolution could not be carried out by the Russian bourgeoisie.

By 1917, capitalist society as a whole had reached its highest stage, what Bolshevik revolutionary V.I. Lenin called imperialism. In the epoch of imperialism, the most advanced capitalist countries reached a point where they economically and militarily dominate the world. In places where capitalism began to develop later, the ruling classes relied on imperialist countries for technology and investment, and for protection against "their own" workers and peasants. These local capitalists have had to rely on despotic regimes to maintain domestic order and function as the junior partners of imperialist domination. Thus, in the era of imperialism, only the working class, leading the impoverished peasantry, can carry out the democratic tasks of the bourgeois revolution, in a revolution that establishes working-class rule, expropriating the bourgeoisie and opening the road to socialism by extending internationally.

This is the program of "permanent revolution" developed by Leon Trotsky, who, along with Lenin, would lead the workers to power in November 1917 after six months of Russia's bourgeois Provisional Government. The establishment of the world's first workers state through the Bolshevik Revolution served as a beacon of hope for workers and oppressed people around the world. Significantly, many prominent Bolshevik leaders were immigrants or members of national minorities or other oppressed peoples in the Russian empire. For example, Trotsky, who led the revolutionary Red Army, was from a Jewish family in what is now Ukraine. Felix Dzerzhinsky, a key figure in the fight against internal counterrevolution during the civil war that followed the revolution, was from Poland. Moreover, the Bolsheviks ensured that the right to vote and run



**National Guard troops shoot down strikers in Baltimore during the Great Railroad Strike of 1877.**



for positions in the workers government was afforded to all working people, regardless of national origin.<sup>4</sup>

After the Russian Revolution, the bourgeoisie in the United States feared the spread of its influence to the working class, the doubly oppressed black population and immigrants in this country. The presidential administration of Democrat Woodrow Wilson, infamous for his admiration of the Ku Klux Klan and heralded as a liberal hero by so-called progressives, authorized brutal repression of immigrants by his Department of Justice. Under the leadership of Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer, the government carried out raids against radicals. Known today as the Palmer Raids, they mainly targeted Eastern European, Jewish and Italian immigrants and other non-citizens made more vulnerable by the Immigration Act of 1918, which was a weapon used to deport socialists, anarchists and anti-war agitators. In an anti-immigrant tirade that reads like Donald Trump with a Ph.D., President Wilson had pushed for this law in Congress in his 1915 State of the Union address:

“There are citizens of the United States, I blush to admit, born under other flags but welcomed under our generous naturalization laws to the full freedom and opportunity of America, who have poured the poison of disloyalty into the very arteries of our national life.... Such creatures of passion, disloyalty, and anarchy must be crushed out. They are not many, but they are infinitely malignant, and the hand of our power should close over them at once.”

In addition, the Espionage Act of 1917 gave the Department of Justice the ability to put anyone viewed as an obstacle to the imperialist war effort in prison or to execute them, and this was also used against radicals and immigrants. It was through this legislation that Socialist Party leader Eugene Debs was imprisoned for speaking out against World War One. And it was in this climate of national-chauvinist, patriotic fervor that Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, two Italian immigrant anarchists, were framed for the 1920 killing of a security guard in Boston. The two were given an openly xenophobic trial, overseen by a judge who made no bones about detesting anarchists and communists and supporting the censorship of radical speech and publications. On the basis of a hideous frame-up, and despite a worldwide campaign in their defense, Sacco and Vanzetti were convicted and executed in the electric chair in 1927. We remember them today among so many heroic workers from all around the world who have died for the cause of the exploited and oppressed.<sup>5</sup>

### Workers of the World, Unite!

The fight against anti-immigrant repression is as urgent today as ever. With Trump ratcheting up Immigration and Customs Enforcement arrests in workplaces, courthouses and public spaces, it is essential for defenders of immigrant rights to understand what is and is not a winning strategy. In 2017, Teamsters Joint Council 16 in New York declared itself a “sanctuary union” after one of its members, Eber García Vásquez, was deported. According

<sup>4</sup> See “The Workers’ Struggle Has No Borders: Immigrants’ Rights and Revolution,” *Revolution* No. 15, September 2018.

<sup>5</sup> See “The International Struggle to Save Sacco and Vanzetti,” *The Internationalist* No. 27, May-June 2008.

## USW Local 5114: Two Years on the Picket Line Solidarity with Striking Idaho Silver Miners

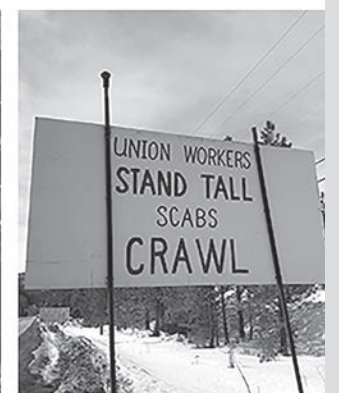
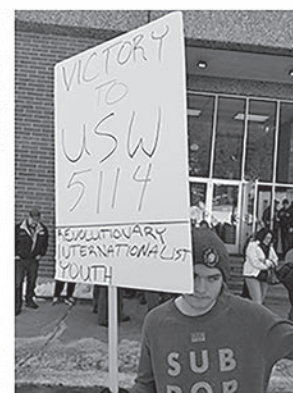
MARCH 16 – Chanting “Mullan is a union town, we won’t let you tear us down!” and “One year longer, one year stronger!” members and supporters of United Steelworkers Local 5114 rallied as the union enters its third year on the picket line, making it the longest miners strike in the history of the Silver Valley. Local 5114 represents 230 silver miners at the Lucky Friday mine in Mullan, Idaho, on strike against Hecla Mining Company. Hecla’s concession-filled “final offer” to the miners during contract negotiations in March 2017 proposed to gut union safety provisions, namely the seniority-based “team bidding system” previously in place at Lucky Friday. The company also aims to raise miners’ health insurance payments and cut silver premium and bonus payments.

Hecla, which brags about being a “leading low-cost U.S. silver producer,” has an abysmal safety record. In April 2011 a miner at Lucky Friday, Larry Marek, was killed in a cave-in caused by the company’s removal of a pillar supporting the ceiling of the excavated area (a stope) where ore was being mined over a mile below ground. That November, another miner died at Friday, and a month later seven more miners were injured. Federal investigators ruled that mine management “engaged in aggravated conduct constituting more than ordinary negligence” by eliminating the pillar, but only fined the company \$360,000 for this *industrial murder* (Northwest News Network, 10 July 2012).

Members of the Revolutionary Internationalist Youth traveled to Mullan in the Coeur d’Alene mining district to support the miners’ struggle for the two-year commemoration. We were warmly greeted by striking miners, their families and supporters of the union. Also present at Local 5114’s rally were members of the ILWU dock workers from Tacoma, Washington, members of the Washington State Nurses Association and members of Spokane Democratic Socialists of America.

to the *New York Daily News* (10 February 2018), the declaration puts “union solidarity first.” This is a modest but significant indication of the potential for the kind of mass working-class action against deportations and anti-immigrant attacks so desperately needed.

Immigrant workers have historically been some of the most militant and class-conscious, often helping to bring a key element of radicalism to labor struggles. Because of their vulnerability, they are often the first to face repression in government crackdowns on revolutionary activity. To defend our brothers and sisters and the future of the workers movement as a whole, we must break with Democrats, Republicans and all capitalist politicians, whose interests are fundamentally opposed to ours, and forge a revolutionary workers party based on the program of international socialist revolution. ■



The rally, numbering 100 or more, was held at the Mullan Pavilion and was followed by a march to the picket line. Union members expressed their determination to continue the strike, and condemned the smears of the local bosses’ press against Local 5114, including accusations that union members have set fire to vehicles or been involved in physical altercations. Nurses from Sacred Heart hospital in Spokane, Washington, currently in contract negotiations with Providence Health Services, delivered messages of solidarity to the miners, as did a member of the ILWU. Striking miners said repeatedly that the bosses, such as Hecla CEO Phillip Baker, were cheating the workers who created their wealth in the first place.

RIY members, carrying signs saying “Victory to USW 5114!” and “Break with the Democrats and Republicans – Build a Workers Party!” joined in the march to the picket

line, which was followed by a group lunch. Comrades introduced themselves to rally participants as members of a revolutionary socialist organization who were there to support the miners’ struggle, drawing a connection between the fight in Mullan and the struggles of the international working class, and pointing to the need for a class-struggle workers party.

RIY wholeheartedly supports the miners of Local 5114 in their fight against Hecla. The union has hit the company where it hurts, with Hecla consistently reporting losses each quarter. Over the past two years, the miners have led a determined struggle. Unfortunately, Hecla’s scabs have been able to cross picket lines and maintain some production at Lucky Friday. In order to win, it is desperately necessary to build picket lines that no one dares cross – period. ■



Bartolomeo Vanzetti (left) and Nicola Sacco (right).



“March Separately, Strike Together”

# The United Front: What It Is and What It Isn't

“Why can't left groups just get together?” is a question often posed by those getting interested in radical politics. The counterposition between revolutionary Marxism and “reformism” (that is, politics that spread illusions that capitalism can be reformed away) is a key theme of our press. When the need arises for a common action among organizations with counterposed programs, the term “united front” is often used – but confusion on its meaning abounds among would-be leftists. To help clarify this topic, we print below presentations on the united front, edited for publication, given by comrades Jacob and Alice at the Revolutionary Internationalist Youth Educational and Organizing Conference in January. Understanding the united front tactic and its antithesis, the popular front, is vital for anyone wanting to fight against capitalist reaction and for socialist revolution.

**Jacob:** I'm going to speak about the “united front,” which is the specific name for the tactic used by revolutionary Marxists when the need arises for carrying out a joint action with other forces. It's an important tool in our arsenal that can be used to expand our base of support among the working class and oppressed. The tactic of the united front was formally codified by the Third Congress of the Communist International (CI or “Comintern”) in 1921.<sup>1</sup> However, its origins trace back to the Russian Revolution of 1917. Leon Trotsky, who co-led the revolution with V.I. Lenin, also discussed the question of the united front extensively as part of his struggle against the Comintern's eventual Stalinist degeneration.

Rooted in the capitalist encirclement and poverty of Soviet Russia, the bureaucratic degeneration of the workers state led to the rise of Stalin's nationalist bureaucracy, which usurped political power under the anti-Marxist banner of “socialism in one country.” The CI was transformed from the world party of proletarian revolution – whose national sections, the Communist parties in different countries, fought to overthrow capitalism internationally – to an organization chaining the workers to supposed “progressive” capitalist politicians in line with Stalin's illusory attempt to achieve “peaceful coexistence” with imperialism. One of the ways this was justified was by systematically distorting what the united front tactic means. The Stalinists used this to justify one unprincipled alliance and bloc after another. As we will discuss, this culminated in the proclamation of the “popular front” in 1935, a full-on coalition with capitalist parties in France, Spain and elsewhere,

<sup>1</sup> The Communist International (also known as Comintern or Third International) was the world revolutionary party founded in 1919 under the leadership of V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky. Communist parties formed in the wake of the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 were national sections of the Comintern. After the bureaucratic degeneration of the Soviet workers state under Joseph Stalin, the Comintern became an instrument of Stalinist class collaboration and was finally dissolved by Stalin in 1943.



V.I. Lenin (left) and Leon Trotsky (right), co-leaders of the Bolshevik Revolution that established the world's first workers state.

which led the workers to bloody defeat.

Similar types of distortion are repeated today by many organizations that misuse Marxist terms and expressions while emptying them of their real meaning and content, as “orthodox”-sounding verbiage dressing up their programs of class collaboration. Instead of a tactic for a common *action*, they project the united front as being tantamount to an entire political program. Their objective in doing so is to provide the basis for ongoing political blocs on an opportunist basis, usually with “progressive” capitalist politicians or groupings that represent liberal bourgeois politics.

Against this, our tendency upholds the original, genuine Leninist conception of the united front. To appreciate the significance of this question and these distinctions, we have to understand what the united front is and what it isn't, and examine the historical context in which the united front tactic was put forward.

## A Tactic in the Struggle Against Reformism

As World War I ended in 1918, Europe was swept by a wave of revolutionary upheavals, in Germany, Italy, Hungary and elsewhere. With the barbarity of capitalism laid bare by the mass slaughter of the imperialist war, the workers and oppressed were inspired by the victorious Russian Revolution. Unfortunately, lacking a tempered and experienced revolutionary leadership, they were not able to repeat the Bolshevik victory. A period of reaction followed during which a general offensive was carried out by the capitalist class against the past gains made by the labor movement. The tactic of the united front was formulated largely as a means of working-class defense against this capitalist attack.

Although the objective conditions for socialist revolution existed, the majority of workers in advanced capitalist countries were still loyal to reformist labor and social-democratic parties that worked to keep the lid on the class struggle and block the path to revolution. For the newly-formed Communist parties, the question was posed of how to unchain the social power of the proletariat, restrained by its reformist misleaders, and lead it toward the overthrow of

capitalism and the conquest of state power by the working class. The Comintern resolved that it would be necessary to carry out common actions between the Communist vanguard and reformist parties, based on specific demands.

Baptised “the united front,” this was not a long-term or open-ended strategy, let alone a political “non-aggression pact” to blur the counterposition of reformist and revolutionary politics. To the contrary, it was a specific tactic that expressed the need for joint action in defense of the workers' common interests, while advancing the struggle *against* the reformist betrayers of the workers' struggle, setting the “base” or ranks against the tops. The tactic was encapsulated in the slogan “March separately, strike together.” In other words, while striking against the common enemy together with workers still following reformist leaders and organizations, the revolutionary party never liquidates its own politics and program. Marching under its own banners and slogans, it maintains its independence at all times, including its right and duty to criticize temporary allies in the common action.

Thus the united front tactic would serve not only to rally the workers to united struggle, but to demonstrate, through collective experience, the resolution and discipline of the communists, in contrast with the half-hearted efforts of the reformist leaders and the betrayals they would inevitably commit when the struggle intensified. Through participation in joint action, the Marxist and class-collaborationist programs would be contrasted side by side, and the question of reform or revolution would be posed squarely. So again, the purpose of the united front is not to liquidate the politics of a revolutionary party for some supposedly greater good of illusory “left unity” or because, “in the end, we're all socialists” and so forth. In reality, the people that a revolutionary party sometimes needs to carry out united-front actions with can often be the most effective peddlers of illusions, our most unscrupulous interlocutors and most bitter opponents in the political struggle for leadership of the working class and oppressed.

By rallying the workers to united and militant action, we seek to make abundantly clear, to render incontrovertible, the con-

tradition between the class interests of the working class and the reformists' authority in and over the labor movement. We will be discussing some key historical examples. Ultimately, we're working to tear the base of support in the working class away from the labor-faker demagogues that, for the moment and to one degree or another, retain their confidence. In this sense too, it is important to understand that the united front is a tactic, not a program or strategy.<sup>2</sup>

## Class Struggle vs. Class Collaboration

So the united front is *our* tactic. We wouldn't call on pseudo-socialist organizations to establish one among themselves. And it is not its own sphere of work that a revolutionary organization must engage in routinely or in an obligatory way. There is no such thing as “united front Fridays.” And unlike opportunists, we do not smooth over our political differences with other organizations to make common action in a united front more palatable to them. Instead, we anticipate the sharpening of political struggle. In advocating class unity, we aim to discredit and expose those who act as a brake on the struggle. Under no conditions can common action mean that the political and organizational independence of the revolutionary vanguard are compromised. Moreover, the parameters of a united front are limited, typically to negative demands. (Examples of such demands from our work here include “Military recruiters out of CUNY” and “CUNY must not be a war college.”) This is a far cry from attempts to put out joint manifestos with a laundry list of “points of unity” obscuring real differences in order to constitute a “propaganda bloc,” creating the illusion of political agreement where it does not exist. We have our own publications, speeches, etc., to put forward our own views and program without mixing the banners and causing confusion – since clarity is key to effective action.

In contrast, opportunist left organizations elevate the blocs they form above their own supposed socialist program, staking everything for “unity.” They then use such agreements to justify their own reformism, since after all, the bourgeois allies they have made, or are angling for, would not accept anything “too radical.” A prime example of this kind of class collaboration disguised under the false label of a united front was the National Peace Action Coalition (NPAC), formed in 1970 during the Vietnam War by the ex-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP). The political basis of NPAC was fit to the requirements of the liberal capitalist politicians gracing the stage at its rallies, who had come to consider the Vietnam War as strategically bad for U.S. imperialism. In

<sup>2</sup> Among materials providing important historical background on these questions, see the classic bulletin *On the United Front*, published in 1976 by the youth group of the then-revolutionary Spartacist League, the Spartacus Youth League. Dissolved in 1986, the SYL is a predecessor of today's Revolutionary Internationalist Youth, youth section of the Internationalist Group.





Women played a key role in securing victory over U.S. imperialism in Vietnam. Above: young Vietnamese women soldiers of the National Liberation Front, 1967. While reformist U.S. leftists built popular front with Democratic “doves,” Trotskyists stood for labor strikes against the war, defeat of U.S. imperialism and victory to the heroic Vietnamese fighters.

other words, the reformist SWP unified with a “defeatist” wing of the same class that was waging the genocidal war against the workers and peasants of Vietnam. Against this, revolutionaries called for victory to the heroic Vietnamese, the defeat of U.S. imperialism, and workers strikes against the war.

This is a particular example of what Marxists call a “popular front” of class collaboration (see below). Subordinating mass protest to capitalist politics and politicians, some of whom were open strike-breakers, it was an obstacle to working-class mobilization against the war.

The absence of bourgeois politicians in a political bloc isn’t necessarily an assurance that any given instance of joint activity is a united front. Take, for instance, the Frente de Izquierda y de los Trabajadores (FIT – Left and Workers Front) in Argentina. This is an electoral bloc made up of the Partido de los Trabajadores Socialistas (PTS – Party of Socialist Workers, aligned with the “Left Voice” website in the U.S.) and other organizations that all claim to be Marxists or even Trotskyists of some kind, but the FIT’s program is completely reformist, echoing the classless, populist call for a government “of the people.” Moreover, underlying the bloc are major points of contention that its constituent parties have attempted to paper over.

As comrades know, a key part of how our tendency was formed was the bitter 1996 struggle led by our comrades in Brazil to expel cops from the Municipal Workers Union in Volta Redonda, Brazil’s “Steel City.” The question of the police is the question of the armed fist of the capitalist state. The question of the state is the central dividing line between reform and revolution. What happened when the groups making up the FIT electoral coalition in Argentina were confronted by this question? One of the PTS’ allies in the FIT is a group (Izquierda Socialista – Socialist Left) that supported the police “strike” or what can more accurately be called a mutiny in Córdoba, Argentina in 2013. Another of the groups in the FIT (the Partido Obrero – Workers Party) said it opposed the action of the police but nonetheless called on the labor movement to follow their example. When cops go on “strike” they do so demanding more pay and resources to help do their job, which is to repress workers and oppressed people. So on this key question of the capitalist repressive apparatus the groups in this FIT

coalition had counterposed views. The PTS opposed the police “strike,” but maintained the coalition.

And the question of whether to support police is not their only point of contention. But among other things, keeping the FIT coalition in place has been key to them receiving funding from the government (\$2.5 million in 2017).<sup>3</sup>

### A Bolshevik Tactic for Revolutionary Victory

I would like to return to the origins of the united front tactic, which I said go back in important ways to the Russian Revolution. This connection was emphasized by Trotsky in his crucial writings appealing to the German workers to form a united front to smash Hitler’s fascist movement in the early 1930s.<sup>4</sup> Trotsky repeatedly referred to the “Kornilov Affair” that occurred in late summer 1917, in which the tactics of the Bolsheviks helped prepare the way for the workers to seize power in the October Revolution. At that time Russia was still being run by the capitalist Provisional Government, set up in March (February in the Julian calendar) of that year after the tsar was overthrown. Led by Alexander Kerensky, the Provisional Government was a coalition between bourgeois politicians and parties that still had mass support among many workers and peasants: the Menshevik social democrats and the populist Socialist Revolutionaries (SRs). At the same time, those parties were still mainly the top leadership of the soviets (the Russian word for councils) of elected deputies of workers, peasants and soldiers, which were centers of working-class power and organization.

In late August 1917, the forces of counterrevolution grouped around general Lavr Kornilov, commander-in-chief of the Provisional Government’s armed forces, launched an attempted coup aimed at destroying the soviets and installing a military dictatorship (which would also mean liquidating the Provisional Government). The Bolsheviks knew that for the workers to defend themselves and see the revolution through to the end, to the victory of their slogan “All Power to the Soviets,” Kornilov

had to be defeated. What did the Bolsheviks do? They mobilized to defeat Kornilov’s counterrevolution, in what Trotsky characterized as a “united front struggle” together with Mensheviks and SRs. At the same time, they gave absolutely no political support to Kerensky and his Provisional Government. Instead, they exposed them for having conspired with Kornilov against the workers and peasants, which showed yet again the need for the soviets to take power under Bolshevik leadership. Trotsky summed up the tactic as follows: “Use Kerensky as a gun-rest to shoot Kornilov. Afterward we will settle with Kerensky.”

The central role of the Bolsheviks in mobilizing the workers and soldiers against Kornilov, their boldness and discipline as the foremost defenders of the workers’ interests during this episode, while relentlessly exposing the role of Kerensky and his fake-leftist coalition partners, were a big part of winning over workers, soldiers and peasants who up to that point had still followed the opportunist parties. This was a key part of preparing the way for Red October.

I would like to now give a negative example, an example of the consequences of not forming a united front when one is called for. The starkest case is what happened in Germany in the early 1930s. The great crisis that followed the First World War and the failure of the German revolution of 1919 led to the emergence of the fascist movement. The threat that Hitler’s Nazis posed to the workers and oppressed grew increasingly acute during the Great Depression that began in 1929.

Germany had one of the largest industrial proletariats in the world, which was highly politicized and had a long tradition of organization. The Communist Party of Germany (KPD) was a mass party but lagged significantly in influence behind the Social Democratic Party (SPD). In the 1930 elections, the Communists got 4.6 million votes while the SPD got 8.6 million. Meanwhile the Stalinist degeneration of the Soviet CP had, as discussed earlier, spread to the whole Comintern, including the KPD. In the face of the fascist threat, the social democrats relied on parliamentary legalism, while the KPD, as part of the Comintern’s “Third Period” of empty “left” phrase-mongering, called the SPD “social fascist” and adopted the abominable perspective of “After Hitler, us.” In reality, this reflected despairing defeatism.

Trotsky and his co-thinkers in the International Left Opposition, despite having been expelled from the Comintern, still considered themselves a faction of the Third International. Given the threat of Hitler’s rise to power in Germany, they insistently agitated for the KPD to form a united front with the SPD for workers action to smash this mortal threat to the working class. This was part of the struggle to win over the social-democratic workers to the program of socialist revolution. Instead, the KPD and SPD allowed Hitler to take power without a shot being fired. From this historic defeat for the proletariat Trotsky drew the conclusion that the Third International had degenerated so completely that it could not be reformed, and he launched the fight to form a new, Fourth International as the world party of socialist revolution.

In the “Transitional Program,” the Fourth International’s founding document adopted at its first congress in 1938, Trotsky wrote that “the historical crisis of mankind is reduced to the crisis of the revolutionary leadership.” The united front is a tool for use in particular circumstances in forging that leadership, helping to expose and politically defeat the opportunists, to effectively intervene with the class-struggle program and open the way to revolutionary victory.

### Some Examples from Our Own Work

**Alice:** I would like to address two main topics. First, the united front in practice and second, the counterposition of the united front to the popular front. In examining the first, attention must be drawn to the 2013 campaign against the hiring of imperialist war criminal David “Death Squad” Petraeus to teach at the Macaulay Honors College at the City University of New York (CUNY). When Petraeus’s hiring was announced in April 2013, the CUNY Internationalist Clubs issue a leaflet the next day titled “War Criminal Petraeus, Out of CUNY!” (reproduced in *Revolution* No. 10, October 2013, together with other key materials from the campaign). That summer, an intensive organizing process led to the formation of the Ad Hoc Committee Against the Militarization of CUNY, which called a series of united-front actions in the campaign against Petraeus. At the same time, counterposed to what happens in the reformist political coalitions we know all too well on the left, the Ad Hoc Committee was the site of intensive struggles for political clarity, which were carried



<sup>3</sup> See “The Left Front in Argentina: A Reformist Electoral Cartel,” *The Internationalist* No. 55, Winter 2019.

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, “For a Workers’ United Front Against Fascism” (December 1931) and “What Next? Vital Questions for the German Proletariat” (January 1932).



out by the Internationalist Clubs against a Maoist group that existed at CUNY back then, called the Revolutionary Student Coordinating Committee (RSCC).

Much of the ostensible left did not participate in the protests called by the Ad Hoc Committee, with the International Socialist Organization notably boycotting the struggle. But the Maoists of RSCC did participate, allowing our comrades as Trotskyists to gain experience in politically confronting the Maoist/Stalinist distortion of Marxism, and for the programs to be contrasted in practice. The Internationalist Clubs were able to expose RSCC's Maoist line, such as its classless "people's power" rhetoric, studentist orientation peddling illusions in making the universities "base areas" for "the peoples' struggles for liberation," and "community control" of campus security forces, and the general Stalinist practice of falsifying history. A polemic titled "The Struggle at CUNY: A Trotskyist View" (*Revolution* No. 10, October 2013) posed the question of how to fight the militarization of CUNY sharply and also served as an educational tool on the broader political context of Marxism versus Stalinism, particularly proletarian opposition to popular fronts, which I will get into later, and on how Mao's national variant of Stalinism led to his open alliance with U.S. imperialism under Nixon. Unfortunately but not surprisingly, RSCC never published a response.

The political debate within the Ad Hoc Committee Against the Militarization of CUNY contrasted sharply to the staleness of the opportunist "coalitions" that the reformist groups constantly form, which see debate over political differences as an obstacle to "unity." However, carrying out principled united-front actions was far from an effortless process during the campaign against CUNY's hiring of Petraeus. Not only did comrades struggle against RSCC's Maoist line polemically, they repeatedly had to prevent RSCC from turning the Ad Hoc Committee into a propaganda bloc. The CUNY Internationalists also had to defend the elementary principles of workers democracy against the Maoists' attempts to censor other leftists.

This necessitates a brief explanation of what "propaganda blocs" are and why revolutionaries oppose them. Whereas the united front is a tactic of joint action maintaining organizational independence and recognizing the elementary right of free, open debate among the participating organizations, a propaganda bloc is effectively a political coalition. It means organizations with real political differences papering these over to join in putting out propaganda that presents a false picture of general agreement. This can only sow confusion. For revolutionaries to establish such a bloc would mean to obfuscate the clear programmatic differences and to subordinate the revolutionary program to a lowest common denominator with reformists and centrists. In *The Third International After Lenin* (1928), Trotsky wrote:

"Temporary agreements may be made with the reformists whenever they take a step forward. But to maintain a bloc with them when, frightened by the development of a movement, they commit treason, is equivalent to criminal toleration of traitors and a veiling of betrayal.

"The most important, best established, and most unalterable rule to apply in every maneuver reads: you must never

dare to merge, mix, or combine your own party organization with an alien one, even though the latter be most 'sympathetic' today. Undertake no such steps as lead directly or indirectly, openly or maskedly, to the subordination of your party to other parties, or to organizations of other classes, or constrict the freedom of your own agitation, or your responsibility, even if only in part, for the political line of other parties. You shall not mix up the banners, let alone kneel before another banner."

The Maoists of RSCC had the opposite conception of a united front – the kind of Stalinist distortion that Trotsky was polemicalizing against. Accordingly, RSCC made conscious steps toward converting the Ad Hoc Committee into a political bloc, attempting to include its own propaganda and slogans like "CUNY for the people" in Ad Hoc Committee fliers. Comrades of the Internationalist Clubs had to wage a constant political struggle against this drive, insisting on the Marxist understanding of the united front and ensuring that the political line of demarcation was maintained. This also meant ensuring that programmatic differences were freely expressed at every united-front action, which RSCC had to learn to – well, at least tolerate. Likewise, this meant not only allowing but ensuring that RSCC was able to express its own views, and very actively defending them in the face of repression.

On the subject of the expression of differences, it is important to mention an incident at one of the first protests called by the Ad Hoc Committee. Being political heirs of Stalin and Mao, RSCC recognized no such right. The Spartacist League had ventured forth from their office and came to the demonstration, and they too were provided a chance to speak. Though by 2013 the SL had long ago become just a shell of its former self, they, like other participants in the protest, had a right to speak and distribute their propaganda. Of course what brought them to the rally was our leading role in the struggle; they were not interested in the struggle against militarization of CUNY but saw as a chance to get up and spew smears and slanders against the Internationalist Group and Internationalist Clubs.<sup>5</sup> Later, a member of RSCC tore up a copy of the SL's newspaper and said they should be banned from participating in actions called by the Ad Hoc Committee.

Upholding the principle of workers democracy, comrades of the Internationalist Clubs denounced this – as revolutionary Marxists, we're against censorship and violence within the workers movement, unlike the reformists (like the Democratic Socialists of America, which called the cops on Internationalist comrades at their convention in Chicago in August 2017).<sup>6</sup> The incident resulted in a big political blowout and fight over the question of workers democracy, with the Internationalists militantly defending the right of the SL and any other left group to participate and sell their press at the protests – a political fight that our comrades decisively won at the next Ad Hoc Committee meeting.

<sup>5</sup> For a vivid example of the numskull school of falsification the SL displayed at such protests during the campaign against Petraeus, "See With Your Own Eyes How They Lie," *The Internationalist* No. 36, January-February 2014.

<sup>6</sup> See "The ABCs of the DSA," *The Internationalist* No. 50, Winter 2017.



Demonstration against war criminal Petraeus outside CUNY's Macaulay Honors College, 9 September 2013.

## Our Experience in Spokane

I would like now to discuss some of our experiences in Spokane, Washington, as the Spokane Marxist Group (SMG) and previously as members of Socialist Alternative (SAIt), which comrades may find useful in developing a better understanding of the united front. Two events in particular come to mind, both protests we organized at the Spokane Intermodal Center, a joint Amtrak-Greyhound station, against the Border Patrol and racist deportations.

The first of these occurred on July 7, 2018. It was a demonstration against Border Patrol agents boarding Greyhound buses and asking people they think are immigrants for papers. Around 80 people attended the protest in defense of immigrants, which culminated in a two-hour-long occupation of the bus station. We initiated the protest as members of what was then the Spokane branch of SAIt who were moving towards authentic Trotskyism. It was a united-front action that included a wide array of organizations, from the DSA to Veterans for Peace, a local anti-racist religious group called Bridges Not Walls and others. Centrists and reformists of different shades, including SAIt, like to portray the IG/RIY's Marxist understanding of the united front as abstentionist or abstract propagandism. They say the only way to mobilize for the kind of action we held at Spokane Intermodal is to bend over backwards making sure other organizations participating "feel comfortable."

The July 7 protest, not a mass mobilization but significant in Spokane, was a slap in the face to that perspective. While our political line at the time still showed some confusions and errors, our call for the protest clearly stated that "all parties of the ruling class, including the Democrats, are an obstacle to the class struggle and the defense of immigrants and must be opposed." Emphasizing the need for a class line in fighting against the *bipartisan* capitalist attack on immigrants, this was important in light of the DSA's role of pressuring and supporting Democratic Party politicians. Coupled with our study of the revolutionary Trotskyist program upheld by the IG and RIY, this demonstration was a significant impetus for our decisive break with the social-democratic pseudo-Trotskyism of Socialist Alternative and the Committee for a Workers' International that it is affiliated with.<sup>7</sup>

The second protest at Spokane Intermodal was held five months later, on De-

<sup>7</sup> See "Revolutionary Marxism is Based on the Political Independence of the Working Class" on page 10 of this issue.

ember 17. Whereas the July protest had been organized almost entirely by us as members of Socialist Alternative, the December 17 united-front action was initiated by us and endorsed by the DSA, some of whose members attended. And though the slogans it was called on – "Stop Arrests and Detentions at the Greyhound Station" and "I.C.E. and Border Patrol Out of Spokane" – were principled and correct, in the organizing process we were too worried about not "alienating" the DSA. We remedied this by issuing a leaflet that we distributed at the rally, clearly explaining that Democrats are the enemies of immigrants, that the DSA is not genuinely socialist but a pressure group on the Democratic Party and that only hard class struggle can defeat the anti-immigrant offensive, linking this point to the need for a revolutionary workers party. Our leaflet also made clear what a united-front action means and how revolutionaries approach joint actions with reformist and centrist organizations. These points were amplified at the demonstration, which contrasted sharply with DSA's repetition of broadly agreeable platitudes.

It's also important to understand that in small cities like Spokane, where all the activists seem to know each other personally, there's often the idea that there is a "family of the left" and we're all buddies here, so for revolutionaries to polemicize against other organizations is shocking. While we were in Socialist Alternative we absolutely loathed the patronizing, fake chumminess of the left/liberal milieu, and that we were supposed to go along with not challenging the hegemony of liberal and reformist ideas. Rather than cozying up to liberal and reformist politics, genuine Marxists swim against the stream, call things by their right names, and fight for the revolutionary program.

## Trotskyism vs. the Popular Front

This brings me to the second subject of my presentation, the popular front. Stalinists and other reformists have tried to pretend that it is a form of united front, but it is diametrically opposed to what Lenin's Comintern meant by the term. To paraphrase Trotsky's writings on the Spanish Civil War, the simplistic argument for popular fronts goes like this: self-proclaimed communists, plus social democrats, plus "progressive" bourgeois forces equals a sum greater than its constituent parts, better able to fight fascism, military dictatorships, war, etc. In reality, a popular front is a bourgeois formation: a class-collaborationist political bloc where the working class, through its mis-





**Consequences of a popular front: Chilean soldiers round up supporters of Salvador Allende's Unidad Popular government at the Estadio Nacional after 11 September 1973 coup by General Augusto Pinochet. Thousands of leftists were imprisoned, tortured and murdered by the Pinochet regime.**

leaders, is subordinated to the politics of the bourgeoisie.

Characteristically this involves a political alliance (or hoped-for alliance) with some mythical progressive section of the ruling class; in the case of Spain, Trotsky said the popular front was an alliance with "the shadow of the bourgeoisie." Thus the popular front means subjugating the power of the working class to a political program upholding bourgeois class rule – and that means disarming the working class in the face of capitalist attacks like fascism, military dictatorships, imperialist wars, etc.

In the Spanish Civil War (1936-39), the Stalinists, social democrats and anarchists tied the workers and peasants to the bourgeoisie through the popular front. The anarchist CNT union relegated itself to being an adjunct of the popular front, as anarchist ministers joined the bourgeois government. The centrist POUM (Workers Party of Marxist Unification) served as a left cover for the class-collaborationist coalition. This meant crippling the fight against the military coup and counterrevolutionary onslaught of rightist general Francisco Franco and destroying the Spanish Revolution. In 1937, Trotsky wrote:

"Civil war, in which the force of naked coercion is hardly effective, demands of its participants the spirit of supreme self-abnegation. The workers and peasants can assure victory only if they wage a struggle for their own emancipation. Under these conditions, to subordinate the proletariat to the leadership of the bourgeoisie means beforehand to assure defeat in the civil war." – "The Lessons of Spain: The Last Warning" (17 December 1937)

We know where the road of the popular front led in Spain: death. It led the workers to the same destination of bloody defeat in Chile under Salvador Allende in 1973, and so many other cases.<sup>8</sup>

And popular fronts are not relics of history. We have seen this in Brazil, where the comrades who formed the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil (LQB – Fourth Internationalist League of Brazil) became Trotskyists through their struggle against the popular front that the Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT – Workers Party) of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva established with bourgeois politicians. Unlike all the left groups that

have tailed after the popular front, the LQB has upheld the fight for the revolutionary political independence of the working class, consistently opposing the popular front and calling for no vote to any of its candidates.

Playing a leading role in militant strikes and occupations at Latin America's largest steel plant, the comrades were founders of the PT in Volta Redonda, Brazil's "Steel City," but were expelled from the PT in 1989 because they opposed its establishment of the "Frente Brasil Popular." The road from there to becoming a founding section of the League for the Fourth International (of which the Internationalist Group is the U.S. section) is described in the LFI's press. In the campaign that began in 1996 to expel the police from the Municipal Workers Union in Volta Redonda, which Jacob mentioned, the popular-front city government carried out much of the repression against our comrades.<sup>9</sup> So "leftists" allying with the bourgeoisie meant administering the capitalist state and carrying out repression against the working class, despite popular frontists' claims to represent the workers against the threat of reaction.

And in fact the PT, a reformist workers party, as part of the popular front, governed Brazil from 2002 to 2016, first under Lula as president and then under his successor Dilma Rousseff. Its betrayals, austerity policies and attacks on the workers' interests opened the door to the rampant rightist reaction and militarist danger facing the workers, women, black people and all the oppressed there today. (To open the way for the rightist onslaught, Rousseff was undemocratically impeached and Lula imprisoned in order to prevent him from running and being elected again.) Now this past October the virulently anti-communist, racist, misogynist, homophobic reactionary Jair Bolsonaro was elected.<sup>10</sup>

So the question of proletarian opposition to the popular front, as key to unchain-

<sup>9</sup> An in-depth discussion of this history is presented in "Army Death Squad Targeted Brazilian Worker Militants," *The Internationalist* No. 8, June 2000; and "Trotskyist Steel Worker on Two Decades of Class Battles: Workers Struggle vs. Popular Frontism in Brazil," *The Internationalist* No. 14, September-October 2002. On the campaign to expel police from the Municipal Workers Union, see Internationalist dossier, *Class Struggle and Repression in Volta Redonda, Brazil* (1997).

<sup>10</sup> See "Brazil Elections: For Workers Action Against the Election Fraud and the Militarist Danger," *The Internationalist* No. 53, October 2018.

ing the workers' power to defend themselves against very real reactionary threats, continues to be crucial today, which means learning the lessons of history. This is a living history, and the political questions faced in that history are in many respects the same ones going back to the Russian Revolution, to Spain in the 1930s and Chile in the '70s to Brazil today. Our comrades in Brazil right now are carrying out crucial work in the fight for workers' action against these threats and to forge a revolutionary workers party. In contrast, virtually the whole sea of pseudo-Marxist and pseudo-Trotskyist groups in Brazil voted for the popular front and clamors in one or another way for more popular fronts that chain workers' power to the class enemy.

Something I've realized over the course of having been in Socialist Alternative and interacting with other reformist and centrist groups is that there are a lot of fakes out there. When it comes to the class line, from Berlin to Brazil to Brooklyn, we're going to find ourselves on the opposite side from a lot of self-proclaimed socialists when the class struggle comes to a boil. So we need to be conscious that the united front is one of the means to politically defeat them, because history has shown that otherwise, they will lead the masses to bloody defeat. In carrying forward the revolutionary program, giving living expression to the lessons of history with the "unity of words and deeds" (as the Brazilian comrades say), and in building a revolutionary leadership, we are preparing for the victory of the socialist revolution here and around the world. ■

## Liberación...

*sigue de la página 24*

herramienta fundamental para emprender ese trabajo emancipador. Por lo tanto, tenemos el orgullo de publicar a continuación los discursos de las tres camaradas de Trabajadores Internacionales Clasistas en el evento del 8 de marzo.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Beth:** Buenas tardes, algunos me conocen, soy integrante del grupo Trabajadores Internacionales Clasistas. El 8 de marzo, Día Internacional de la Mujer Obrera: considero que este es un gran día, gracias a las socialistas como Clara Zetkin, Rosa Luxemburg, Alexandra Kollontai y Nadezhda Krúpskaya, que es mi favorita. Tengo una foto de ella en mi casa, en esa foto ella está con un grupo de soldados rojos y ella está dando un mensaje a ellos.

Bueno, gracias a ellas, por su esfuerzo y su trabajo por establecer el Día Internacional de la Mujer. También le debemos a las costureras inmigrantes de Nueva York que trabajaban en las fábricas de costura o talleres de sudor, quienes lanzaron la "Rebelión de las Veinte Mil" en 1909. En ese entonces, estas valientes obreras lanzaron una lucha encarnizada por tratar de ganar un sindicato.

Entre estas jóvenes trabajadoras se encontraban también las costureras de la Triangle Shirtwaist Factory que un par de años después murieron en el siniestro del 25 de marzo de 1911. Quiero mencionar que durante ese incendio también murieron hombres, un grupo más pequeño, pero había hombres trabajando en ese taller de sudor. Y la razón por la que quise señalarlo es que las feministas, incluyendo las femi-

nistas radicales, no mencionan esa parte importante.

La cuestión de la mujer es importante para nosotras las revolucionarias, ya que la mujer obrera es doblemente oprimida. Es oprimida por ser obrera y si es una mujer obrera negra, entonces sufre una triple opresión; y si es una mujer obrera negra inmigrante, entonces sufre una cuádruple opresión. Con esto quiero decir que no soy feminista, lucho por una igualdad de derechos, por pago igual por trabajo igual, creo en la diversidad de cualidades de cada individuo y luchamos por emancipar una sola clase social, toda la clase obrera, para así poder emancipar a la mujer.

Es para mí importante también recordar que con cada lucha que se ha dado, sigue habiendo mártires, como el caso más reciente que tenemos de Marielle Franco, que fue activista mujer negra de las favelas de Brasil. Ella fue asesinada el año pasado por el estado burgués.

También tenemos a las trabajadoras agrícolas de San Quintín, Baja California, no hay que olvidar, quienes han levantado su lucha junto con sus compañeros obreros exigiendo mejoras en sus lugares de trabajo. Son mujeres que tienen que ir a trabajar desde muy temprano hasta que el sol se pone, llevándose con ellas a sus hijos y dándoles de comer en el campo. Estas mujeres trabajan y viven en un lugar donde no tienen nada – absolutamente nada – construyendo sus casas en los mismos lugares donde los jefes son los dueños. Tienen un salario de miseria, no tienen beneficios, no hay hospitales, muchas veces son abusadas físicamente por los capataces. Y no sólo ellas son explotadas, también los niños pequeños deben ir al campo y recoger la fruta o lo que haya que tengan que hacer allí.

Por eso y más la lucha de la emancipación de la mujer continúa. Y no nos olvidemos de nosotras mismas, las tres que estamos aquí. Violeta, Lizette y yo realizamos múltiples trabajos para poder sobrevivir en este país y darles una mejor vida a nuestros hijos. Y no quiero que esto suene como una queja, porque estamos trabajando para mejorar todo esto. Yo no soy tan vieja pero un poquito más de edad y estoy muy feliz cuando yo veo a jóvenes como ustedes, porque en una revolución, más adelante, necesitamos estudiantes como ustedes, preparados, y necesitamos gente como nosotras.

Esto que voy a decir es un poquito de la rutina que nosotras y muchas mujeres hacemos a diario en este país. Usualmente a las 6 de la mañana es que nos despertamos, nuestro trabajo termina de 2 o 3 de la tarde trabajando por un sueldo mínimo. Después, volvemos a casa a limpiar, a atender a los hijos, llevarlos a las citas médicas, a la escuela, y también somos psicólogas de nuestros hijos. No tenemos título, tampoco tenemos una paga, pero al final del día donde vienen es con nosotros. Y después de todo eso, debemos dejar todo listo para continuar el día de mañana. Entonces, nuestro día usualmente termina entre 9 y 10 de la noche.

Para muchas de nosotras, al no tener un estatus migratorio, en otras palabras, al ser indocumentadas, los beneficios que el gobierno "ofrece" son limitados y muchas veces son negados. Somos mujeres con múltiples trabajos en un solo día, entonces por qué no luchar para tener guarderías, lavanderías y comedores abiertos las 24

**Revolution**





Mostrando solidaridad con los trabajadores de B&H Photo en septiembre de 2017.

horas del día, los siete días de la semana para madres solteras y casadas, para papás solteros y casados también. Así muchas más mujeres podrían entrar de lleno a trabajar o estudiar y participar en la vida política. Y tal vez también tener un poco de diversión los fines de semana. Como dijeron las trabajadoras inmigrantes huelguistas de Lawrence, Massachusetts en 1912, y es una frase que todos conocen: Queremos pan, pero también queremos rosas.

Nuestra lucha debe continuar internacionalmente, exigiendo plenos derechos de ciudadanía para todos los inmigrantes, ya sea en México, para los inmigrantes de las caravanas, o aquí dentro de los Estados Unidos.

Y para finalizar, también quiero señalar algo importante: la necesidad de tener un seguro médico universal gratuito y también tener esa opción de decidir, libre de cualquier prejuicio moral o religioso, si una mujer quiere ser madre o no. Queremos tener ese derecho de decidir sobre nuestros propios cuerpos. Queremos el derecho al aborto, libre, seguro y gratuito. Y como dijo Nadezhda:

“Lo que une a la obrera y el obrero es más fuerte que lo que los divide. Los une su falta de derechos, sus necesidades comunes, su situación común, que es la lucha, y su meta común.... La solidaridad entre obreras y obreros, la actividad conjunta, una

meta conjunta, un camino conjunto hacia esa meta: tal es la solución de la cuestión ‘de la mujer’ para los obreros.”<sup>1</sup>

¡Viva el 8 de marzo, Día Internacional de la Mujer Obrera! ¡Plenos derechos democráticos para gays y lesbianas! ¡Aborto libre y gratuito! ¡Por la liberación de la mujer mediante la revolución obrera! ¡Asiáticos y asiáticas, latinos y latinas, blancos y blancas, negros y negras: ¡Obreros y obreras del mundo, uníos!

**Lizette:** Buenas tardes, mi nombre es Lizette y estoy un poco nerviosa porque es la primera vez que hago esto. Les voy a contar un poco de mi propia vida. Yo empecé a trabajar a los seis años. Mi madre me llevaba a trabajar con una señora y yo nunca veía un solo peso de eso tampoco. Crecí dos años más y me fui a Culiacán, Sinaloa para trabajar también, a cortar jitomate y chile.

Hubo una ocasión en que un hermano mío se enfermó en ese tiempo que era un domingo cuando daban los pagos. Él no pudo ir y yo le dije al que estaba pagando que me diera el pago de él, porque no podía venir, y no quiso dar el pago de mi hermano y yo dije que eso no estaba bien.

<sup>1</sup> Artículo de Nadezhda Krúpskaya en el primer número de *Rabotnitsa*, publicado en el Día Internacional de la Mujer, 1914.

Y de allí regresé al pueblo con mi mamá y mis hermanos y mi vida seguía lo mismo. Yo decidí salirme de la casa a los doce años. Salí a los doce años y me fui a otra ciudad, igual a trabajar. De allí, me vine para acá para yo mandar dinero a México. Y acá me encuentro también con personas que quieren que trabaje uno y con tal de no pagarnos, nos despiden.

Por eso, un amigo que yo tengo, yo siempre lo veía que se iba todos los viernes y yo le preguntaba que adónde iba. Y él me decía que iba a unas reuniones. Pero yo siempre le seguía preguntando, y ya un día me dijo “¿Quieres ir?”

Le digo que sí, sí quiero ir, y ya de allí yo seguí yendo. Ya tengo casi un año yendo al círculo de estudios. Me gusta ir porque allí me libero y cuando voy a una protesta, grito y allí desahogo todo lo que yo siento.

Por eso, ahora yo digo que tenemos que seguir luchando para que otras mujeres no sufran como nosotras sufrimos. Como dijo aquí la camarada, necesitamos lavanderías, comedores,

para ayudarnos a nosotras las que no podemos. Gracias.

**Violeta:** Mi nombre es Violeta y soy miembro del TIC: Trabajadores Internacionales Clasistas. Lo que estamos conmemorando, recordando es el 8 de marzo, Día Internacional de la Mujer Trabajadora. Conmemoramos a esas mujeres por su lucha, todas las que vemos aquí [en las fotos y afiches], contra la opresión, para recordar su valentía y para seguir en esa lucha que ellas empezaron, al no darles otra opción para reclamar sus derechos. Porque aún seguimos y sentimos esa represión del capitalismo contra nosotros y contra nosotras. Las mujeres proletarias seguimos y seguiremos en esta lucha por la igualdad, por los mismos derechos, como trabajadoras domésticas.

Nosotras lo vivimos día al día al dejar nuestros hijos en las escuelas y salir corriendo para llegar a tiempo al trabajo. Durante el día, estar al pendiente para recogerlos, llegar a tiempo para recogerlos. Al mismo tiempo, estar al pendiente de sus comidas, revisar tareas.

Ser ama de casa y ser proletaria es ser triplemente oprimida, por todo ese trabajo y esa carga de responsabilidad que tenemos como madres, como trabajadoras. Por eso y por más, exigimos derechos de igualdad.

Esta mañana yo estaba trabajando, yo limpio departamentos. La dueña de la casa estaba preocupada porque no tenía una niñera. Se nota mucho la diferencia de la mujer de abajo y las capitalistas. Nosotras tenemos que limpiar su casa y cuidar esas cosas para ellas, mientras que ella busca niñera, y esta es nuestra lucha, nuestro trabajo. Nuestra lucha, siempre estaremos aquí y en algún momento llegue ese cambio realmente. ■

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El 8 de marzo: Foro-debate del Día Internacional de la Mujer.



## Trabajadores Internacionales Clasistas en la lucha:

# ¡Liberación de la mujer mediante la revolución socialista!

El 8 de marzo, se realizó el foro-debate “El Día Internacional de la Mujer y los derechos de los inmigrantes: Desde los orígenes hasta la actualidad” en el plantel Hunter College de la Universidad de la Ciudad de Nueva York (CUNY). El evento fue auspiciado por los Clubes Internacionalistas de la CUNY y la Revolutionary Internationalist Youth (Juventud Internacionalista Revolucionaria), sección juvenil del Grupo Internacionalista). Uno de los aspectos más impactantes del evento fue la participación de activistas de Trabajadores Internacionales Clasistas, tres de las cuales dieron presentaciones sobre el papel de las mujeres trabajadoras inmigrantes en la lucha de clases.

El propósito del foro-debate fue celebrar la verdadera historia del 8 de marzo, como parte de la concientización revolucionaria de jóvenes activistas que hoy se dedican a la causa de la revolución obrera. Con esta meta se hicieron afiches con imágenes de heroínas revolucionarias como las abolicionistas Harriet Tubman y Sojourner Truth, la pionera socialista peruana-francesa Flora Tristán, líderes de la Revolución Bolchevique como Alexandra Kollontai y Nadezhda Krúpskaya y muchas otras; se leyeron poemas y discursos; y se dieron presentaciones sobre la historia del Día Internacional de la Mujer; el programa marxista para la liberación de la mujer; sobre Magnus Hirschfeld, uno de los primeros estudiosos y teóricos de los derechos de los gays, lesbianas y personas transgénero; y otros temas.

Los orígenes del Día Internacional de la Mujer se remontan a las huelgas y protestas de las trabajadoras de la costura en los “talleres de sudor” de Nueva York



Foto: The Internationalist

Contingente del Grupo Internacionalista y de Trabajadores Internacionales Clasistas el 1° de Mayo de 2017 en NY.

a comienzos del siglo XX. Jóvenes inmigrantes judías e italianas en su mayoría, se rebelaron contra los salarios de miseria, las condiciones de trabajo sumamente peligrosas, la discriminación y los constantes abusos patronales. Es decir: esas jóvenes inmigrantes, que dieron origen a este día de lucha obrera internacional hace más de un siglo, enfrentaban la misma explotación despiadada que hoy en día sofoca y golpea a las y los trabajadores inmigrantes.

De la labor de estos trabajadores doble y triplemente explotados dependen partes importantes de la economía estadounidense, a la vez que la clase capitalista y sus gobiernos de turno los tratan como parias desprovistos de todo derecho. Esta condición no es ninguna casualidad, ni cosa sólo de la administración del odioso racista Donald Trump. Corresponde al funcionamiento mismo del capitalismo, que saca jugosas ganancias de esta “superexplotación”, reforzándola con la constante

amenaza de deportación y el terror de la migra contra los “indocumentados”. Barack Obama se le conoce como el Deportador en Jefe por haber llevado a cabo un número récord de deportaciones, ni el hecho de que Hillary Clinton ha auspiciado su propio sector de talleres de sudor en Haití, en los que a las obreras se les paga US\$5 por día. Los demócratas son “falsos amigos”, es decir enemigos, de los inmigrantes y de las mujeres trabajadoras.

La verdadera lucha por la liberación de la mujer, por el camino de la *lucha de clases* que es el contenido real del Día Internacional de la Mujer, no tiene nada que ver con la ideología feminista de colaboración de clases – promovida también por la ONU – según la cual las explotadoras burguesas son supuestamente “hermanas” de las mujeres explotadoras.

Ganar esta liberación, eliminando una forma de opresión tan arraigada y entrelazada con toda la historia de la sociedad de clases, es una de las tareas más radicales y revolucionarias que hay. Para lograrla se necesita una profunda revolución social que libere a la mujer de la esclavitud hogareña, creando instituciones sociales que sustituyan las labores domésticas de la familia burguesa que encarcelan a la mujer trabajadora.

Tanto para ganar *plenos derechos de ciudadanía para todos los inmigrantes* como en la lucha por la *liberación de la mujer mediante la revolución socialista*, hay que desencadenar la fuerza de la clase obrera, rompiendo con todos los políticos y partidos patronales para forjar un partido obrero revolucionario multiétnico e internacionalista. Hoy como ayer la concientización clasista y revolucionaria es *sigue en la página 22*



Foto: The Internationalist

Manta del Comité de Luta Classista con cita de Nadezhda Krúpskaya en huelga de barrenderos municipales, Rio de Janeiro, 8 de marzo de 2014.