

Break with Democrats, Build a Revolutionary Workers Party

All Out on May Day! Strike in Defense of Immigrants And All Workers

For Worker/Immigrant Mass
Action to **STOP** Deportations!



Class Struggle Workers – Portland and Painters Local 10 at “ICE Out of Oregon” protest, March 6.

Since the moment Donald Trump took office on January 20, a wave of raw fear has swept across immigrant communities that has not abated. The fear is justified, but the vicious offensive against immigrants has also produced another effect: anger and a determination to fight, for immigrant rights, for their rights as workers and for the better life for their children that millions have risked all to achieve. People who have braved incredible hardship, waded through rivers, trekked across deserts avoiding snakes, criminals and the Border Patrol, who keep an eye out for danger as they walk down the street, are not meek victims who just give up in the face of a racist bully. Immigrants can play a key role in bringing down the Trump regime, but they urgently need the active support of all workers and the oppressed in a sharp class struggle

After an election campaign fueled by xenophobia (hatred of foreigners), Trump immediately issued three decrees: to ban immigrants and refugees from Muslim countries, to build his wall along the Mexican border, and to criminalize and deport any undocumented immigrant the Immigration and Customs Enforcement police can get their hands on. Rumors quickly spread of *migra* cops grabbing immigrants off the street. Shopping areas would empty if someone spotted an I.C.E. van. The new administration is stoking this fear, trying to sow panic so that people would “self-deport,” and it has had some success. But there was also the reaction in Phoenix

when on February 8 immigrants and their supporters courageously blocked a van for hours seeking to stop the deportation

of Guadalupe García de Rayos. That’s the spirit we need on a mass scale.

This May 1, there will in effect be a

strike by hundreds of thousands of immigrant workers across the United States, perhaps upwards of a million as in 2006. In fact, immigrants brought May Day, the international workers day, back to the U.S. (Anti-communist union bureaucrats instead created Labor Day in early September as a day when capitalist politicians parade as phony “friends of labor.”) There will be walkouts on a huge scale, far more than on the “Day Without Immigrants” last February that was organized mainly on social media. The talk on the Internet of a “global general strike” is pure illusion, redefining strike to mean any protest, or even not shopping, rather than an act of workers power. But what would be major is for key sectors of U.S.-born workers to walk out in solidarity with immigrants, protesting the assault against them.

This can happen, but it requires the effort of class-conscious militants. In 2008, the West Coast International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) struck on May Day to stop the U.S. war in Iraq and Afghanistan and to defend immigrants. In 2015, ILWU Local 10 in the San Francisco Bay Area shut down the Port of Oakland and led a march of thousands to demand “Stop Police Terror.” That same day in Portland, Oregon, activists from several unions marched in a contingent of “Labor Against Racist Police Murder.” This year, Portland Painters Union Local 10 has called for “All Out on May Day For Immigrant and Worker Rights.”

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Defend North Korea Against Crazy U.S. War Threats

APRIL 17 – As we go to press, the United States has dramatically escalated its military provocations against North Korea. The actions of President Donald Trump and his erratic regime could at any moment touch off a war, which would rapidly escalate. This should make it clear to all that North Korea’s nuclear arsenal is its main deterrent against the crazy nuclear warmongers in Washington. It is crucial to **defend North Korea** and uphold its **right to develop nuclear arms for its defense** against predatory U.S. imperialism.

Currently a battle group around the aircraft carrier USS *Carl Vinson* is

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Defend Syria! Drive U.S. Imperialism Out of the Middle East

APRIL 7 – At around 4 a.m., Friday, April 7 Middle Eastern time (Thursday evening in the U.S.) the United States carried out a missile attack on a Syrian air force base. This strike, personally authorized by President Donald Trump, was billed as punishment for a supposed Syrian chemical weapons attack in the town of Khan Sheikhun that reportedly killed as many as 100 people on April 4. There is no proof that the Syrian government launched this attack, and considerable circumstantial evidence that strongly suggests otherwise. Pentagon officials say they are considering further military action against Syria.

This morning’s missile strike is a blatant act of imperialist aggression that must be protested worldwide. The Internationalist Group and League for the Fourth International call for **defense of Syria against**

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Part of Internationalist contingent in April 7 NYC protest against U.S. missile attack on Syria.

Internationalist photo

Defend Syria...

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U.S. attack, and to kick the U.S. and its NATO imperialist allies out of the Middle East. The U.S. imperialists are the biggest mass murderers on the face of the planet, having slaughtered over 3 million people in Korea in the 1950s, over 2 million in Vietnam in the 1960s and '70s, and are responsible for the deaths of over 1 million Iraqis since invading and occupying the country in 2003 (plus another million due to "U.N." sanctions in the 1990s).

This is the kind of incident typically used by the imperialists to launch their wars, from the explosion of the USS *Maine* touching off the U.S. invasion of Cuba (1898) to the Tonkin Gulf incident (1964) used to justify U.S. bombing of North Vietnam. More recently there was the hoax about Iraqi soldiers killing babies in Kuwait that was used to build support for the 1991 Persian Gulf War, and the non-existent "weapons of mass destruction" used to sell the 2003 invasion of Iraq. The same ploy was tried in 2013, accusing the Syrian government of using chemical weapons in Damascus, but it failed due to widespread public resistance to going to war.

Now the attack ordered by Donald Trump has united Democrats and Republicans for imperialist aggression. The Democrats' complaints about Russian interference in last year's election will be drowned out by the drums of war. Earlier on Thursday, Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton, speaking at a "Women in the World" summit in New York held to honor her, called to destroy the Syrian air force. Clinton is a vicious war hawk and representative of Wall Street, who is responsible for the destruction of Libya, has been pushing for years to attack Syria and is itching for a military confrontation with Russia.

Previously, the Trump regime had stated that removal of Syrian president Bashar Assad was not a priority for it. Now, the racist, misogynist, immigrant-basher and "America First" in the White House claims to be morally outraged at the sight of dead children, and the U.S. is pushing for "regime change" in Damascus. On Wednesday, Trump's ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley made war threats against Syria at the women's "summit." The next morning the Internationalist Group and Internationalist Clubs at the City University of New York protested there with signs including, "Warmonger Hillary and Trump Rep Nikki Haley: Not My 'Sisters'."

The war hysteria against Syria is being whipped up in unison by the imperial-

ist media, retailing propaganda from *jihadi* groups in Syria and echoed by an array of Democratic and Republican capitalist politicians. Some liberals are "conflicted" but will soon fall in line. Their social-democratic leftist camp followers make a pretense of separation, calling on the imperialists to aid the Syrian "rebels," including providing them with heavy weapons and even anti-aircraft missiles. Their "Syrian Revolution" is a myth, consisting of bloodthirsty Islamist killers. This chorus of imperialist warmongers and their stooges are all enemies of the working class and oppressed peoples.

It is too early to say with certainty what exactly transpired in Khan Sheikun on April 4. Imperialist spokesmen like the *New York Times* (7 April) claim "Independent evidence continued to suggest that the Syrian military was to blame." Yet no such evidence has been presented. Moreover, it makes no military or political sense for the Syrian regime to launch a chemical strike when it is well aware from past experience that this could lead to full-scale imperialist attack on it. And the Syrian army has been winning the war military, retaking Aleppo and pushing back both the Western-backed Islamists and the Islamic State on several fronts.

The U.S. story doesn't add up, and appears to be a staged scenario. The claim that sarin was used is highly unlikely for several reasons, including the color of the victims' bodies and the fact that the "rescuers" are shown handling them without gloves (or even face masks). The bodies shown in photos have clearly been transported from elsewhere to a base of the Syrian White Helmets, which has provided many of the photos. Lionized in the Western media, this outfit (financed by the U.S. and other imperialist governments) is directly tied to the Jabhat Fatah al-Sham, formerly the Al-Nusra Front, the Syrian affiliate of Al Qaeda, which holds that town.

One must first ask in such unclear circumstances *cui bono*, who benefits? Damascus turned over its entire chemical weapons arsenal in 2014 to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), which supervised and certified their removal. A chemical attack is the last thing the Syrian regime would want. But the armed opposition which is weakened militarily, desperately needs increased imperialist backing, which it has now received. It's also noteworthy that the attack occurred just as another round of "peace" talks between the Syrian government and opposition was to begin, leading to their (predictable) breakdown.

Various alternative explanations are possible, including a "false flag" operation

North Korea...

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reported headed toward the Korean peninsula in a "show of force." This comes after the U.S. launched a missile strike at a Syrian air force base ten days ago. And last week the Pentagon made a show of terroristic force by dropping its largest conventional weapon on an Islamic State cave complex in Afghanistan.

The bomb is the GBU-43/B Massive Ordnance Air Blast, or MOAB, a/k/a the "Mother of All Bombs." This was clearly a threat to destroy North Korea's nuclear installations located in caves. Today U.S. vice president Mike Pence warned the North Korean government to take a lesson from U.S. actions in Syria and Afghanistan.

A month ago in Seoul, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson was even more explicit, threatening a "pre-emptive" U.S. military strike against the North. That would be truly demented, as there is no chance that the U.S. could destroy all of the North's atomic weapons, and Seoul, the capital of South Korea with 25 million inhabitants, would surely be devastated in retaliation.

The imperialist press portrays

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un (who inherited his position from his father and grandfather) as some kind of madman, but he is far saner than the blustering Trump and Pence. Moreover, the entire North Korean population has vivid memories of when bloodthirsty "democratic" U.S. imperialists leveled every city in the North during the Korean War, and killed over 3 million Koreans.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is a bureaucratically deformed workers state, which Trotskyists unconditionally defend against imperialism and internal counterrevolution. We fight for revolutionary reunification of Korea through socialist revolution in the South and a proletarian political revolution in the North to replace the Stalinist/nationalist Kim bureaucratic regime with an internationalist communist leadership based on soviet democracy.

It is also crucial to defend the Chinese deformed workers state against imperialism. The last deployment of the Carl Vinson, on orders of Barack Obama, was to provoke the Chinese navy in the South China Sea.

P.S. to Trump: Russia has the FOAB (Father of All Bombs) with four times the firepower as your MOAB. ■

such as in August 2013, when Islamists launched missiles with chemical warheads on a rival rebel-held Damascus suburb and then blamed the Assad regime, in order to provoke a U.S. attack. Another possibility, raised by Russia, is that a Syrian airstrike on a Fatah al-Sham weapons storage site touched off an explosion of highly toxic precursor chemicals stored there. The *jihadis* have used chemical weapons on several occasions in Syria, and the Syrian government has sent official complaints to the OPCW about the armed opposition bringing in such chemicals from Turkey.

The imperialists' response to this is to portray Syrian strong man Assad as a comic-book ogre and personification of evil, a modern-day Hitler who delights in killing babies. In reality, however, Assad is an authoritarian bourgeois ruler who has been able to stay in power through six years of an imperialist-backed uprising because of support from his Alawite base, from other ethnic and religious minorities, and from sectors of the Sunni Muslim bourgeoisie who fear the collapse of Syria in the sectarian civil war. The IG and LFI are for the defeat of all sides in this communal conflict, while calling to defeat and drive out the imperialists.

The Pentagon has been escalating its military forces in Syria, now over 1,000 troops. The U.S. is dispatching assassination squads, dropping assault teams by helicopter and commanding a force of Arab and Kurdish troops closing in on the Islamic State capital of Raqqa. While opposing the ultra-reactionary Islamist holy warriors of the I.S., we recognize that any military blow against the imperialist marauders is in the interests of the world's workers. We call to defend Raqqa (and Mosul in Iraq) against the U.S. attack and to defeat the Kurdish YPG attackers who are acting as mercenary troops for the U.S. and NATO.

In Washington, the attack on Syria marks the ascendancy of the military and intelligence establishment and the Democrat and Republican leaders in Congress who have been pushing for years for a showdown with Russia in Syria. Spurred

on by the Israeli Zionists, they want to oust Assad in order to counter Iran and lock in U.S. imperialist domination of the region. Now that Trump has been lined up, these leftover Cold Warriors are gunning for the "Russkies." Russian leader Vladimir Putin is playing for time, calling for an "objective investigation" of the deaths in Khan Sheikun. But having become the *casus belli* (excuse for war) that all factions in Washington now want, any investigation will just be an excuse for escalation.

Meanwhile, the U.S. (which A-bombed Japan) is threatening North Korea with "overwhelming" force for its nuclear tests. We defend North Korea, as well as China and the other remaining deformed workers states against imperialism and internal counterrevolution.

The Internationalist Group and League for the Fourth International have insisted in the overlapping wars of the Syrian imbroglio that the only progressive outcome for the oppressed in this region of a myriad of interpenetrated peoples and ethnic/religious communities is the struggle for proletarian revolution throughout the Near East. The fundamental forces that can put an end to the communal bloodletting and expel the imperialist invaders lie in the millions-strong working classes of Turkey and Egypt, which must first and foremost bring down their own capitalist rulers. The fight for a socialist republic of united Kurdistan, and for an Arab/Hebrew Palestinian workers state, can only come about in a socialist federation of the Middle East.

Workers in the imperialist centers have a key role to play by mobilizing their power to stop the bloody warmongers who would launch yet another Middle East slaughter. To put an end to the endless wars that have torn apart the region, it is necessary to smash imperialism through international workers revolution. That requires above all the leadership of internationalist communist parties, built on the program of Lenin and Trotsky's Bolsheviks, in a re-forged Fourth International that is truly a world party of socialist revolution. ■

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Milo Yiannopoulos, Free Speech and the Assault on Universities

The election of Donald Trump marked a renewed push by reactionaries waging a “culture war” to cleanse America of “foreign” elements. One of Trump’s main campaign slogans was his promise to “drain the swamp” of Washington D.C., a euphemism for expunging the federal government and inside the Beltway political establishment of elements deemed too liberal, or insufficiently patriotic or loyal to the president. This talk had Christian conservatives, right-to-lifers, Tea Party activists and alt-rightists of every stripe giddy with excitement. And with them, professional witch-hunters are revving up a drive to purge leftist and liberal professors from academia, salivating at the prospect of returning to the McCarthy era of the 1950s.

A February 1 appearance by Milo Yiannopoulos, then a senior editor at the far-right Breitbart web site, at the University of California at Berkeley was part of this operation. It was the final stop of a national speaking tour of college campuses by this self-styled “libertarian, gay, Trump-supporting provocateur,” his grotesquely named “Dangerous F***t Tour.” Yiannopoulos joined with the David Horowitz Freedom Center to “take down the growing phenomenon of ‘sanctuary campuses’ that shelter illegal immigrants from being deported,” Breitbart (31 January) reported on the eve of the event. The stated aim was to get Trump to “withdraw federal grants from so-called Sanctuary schools” and prosecute “disloyal” administrators for this “seditious movement.”

Targeted by name for prosecution was U.C. president Janet Napolitano, the former secretary of Homeland Security who was for years the boss of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement police, the hated *migra*. Napolitano, who as Obama’s former deportation chief was personally responsible for expelling millions of immigrants from the U.S., has refused calls to designate the University of California a sanctuary (“we don’t use that word”). At most, a U.C. statement said, campus police would not cooperate with I.C.E. arrests “except as required by law” – which is to say that university authorities *will* collaborate if the *migra* produces warrants.

Over 1,500 protestors gathered in Berkeley’s Sproul Plaza in the late afternoon of February 1 to protest the right-wing demagogue. After a while the anarchist Black Bloc showed up, threw some police barricades through windows, toppled a police spotlight and tossed fireworks. Thereupon the university administration, which earlier rejected calls to cancel Yiannopoulos’ speech, shut down the scheduled event. Within a couple of hours, Trump tweeted from the White House: “If UC Berkeley does not allow free speech and practices violence on innocent people with a different point of view - NO FEDERAL FUNDS?”

This set off recriminations from liberals and in the mainstream media about free speech and whether Yiannopoulos’ rights were violated. The *New York Times* (3 February) disingenuously called his planned appearance a “lecture.” That is a white-



Self-described provocateur Yiannopoulos aims to provoke repression against immigrants, universities. Above: At University of New Mexico, January 28, where he put I.C.E. hotline number on screen, urging people to finger immigrants.

wash of what was planned. The day before the event, the university administration delivered a letter to the Campus Republicans (who sponsored it) saying, “Milo’s event may be used to target individuals, either in the audience or by using their personal information in a way that causes them to become human targets to serve a political agenda” (*The Independent*, 3 February). There were Twitter reports that he planned to “out” undocumented students, as he had done earlier with a transgender student.

Such actions are not exercising free speech but deliberate provocations, targeting individuals and groups with the intent of causing injury to them. If an undocumented student were publicly identified in such an event, it could lead to them being seized and deported, as the I.C.E. attempted to do when it grabbed a young woman in Mississippi, Daniela Vargas, who was part of the DACA (Delayed Action for Childhood Arrivals) program after she spoke at a press conference. In fact, at an appearance at the University of New Mexico a few days earlier, Yiannopoulos, wearing a police vest, threw an image on a giant screen in the auditorium with the I.C.E. hotline number saying, according to Breitbart (28 January), that it “can be called if you suspect anyone of being an illegal alien.”

Milo Yiannopolis is not expressing a viewpoint here, not even the vile racist, misogynist, homophobic opinions he spews out in order to get a reaction. He is acting in conjunction with the U.S. government, specifically as a finger-man for its black-shirted immigration cops. And this was surely coordinated directly with the White House, no doubt through Yiannopoulos’ former Breitbart boss, Steve Bannon, now Trump’s top political advisor. The U.S.

president’s Twitter response, at 3:13 a.m. Eastern time, threatening to cut off funds to the University of California, confirms it: this was a sinister operation to trigger action against immigrants and “sanctuary campuses,” just as the January 31 Horowitz/Yiannopoulos announcement proclaimed.

The entire Yiannopoulos tour had the purpose of provoking outrage and victimizing at-risk individuals and groups. It was directly linked to Trump’s political operation. The tour was financed by Glittering Steel, LLC, which operates out of the same Beverly Hills address as Breitbart News and other companies supported by hedge fund billionaire Robert Mercer. The media company received close to \$1 million from the pro-Trump super-PAC (political action committee) “Make America No. 1,” which employed Steve Bannon and received \$15 million in donations during the recent election campaign from Mercer, who has also invested \$10 million in Breitbart News.¹ The campus events were almost always sponsored by Republican clubs.

At the University of California Davis campus on January 14, Yiannopoulos was shut down as hundreds of protesters denouncing him as a racist walled off the event. At the University of Washington in Seattle on January 20, Inauguration Day, a Yiannopoulos supporter shot and gravely wounded a protester, a member of the Industrial Workers of the World. At the University of Colorado at Boulder on January 25, the College Republicans and Turning Point USA boasted that they had hired security by bringing in police, who set up barricades as protesters burned a Confederate flag. At the University of New Mex-

¹ Muckrock.com, 24 March.

ico in Albuquerque, sheriffs deputies in riot gear and on horses broke up a protest, threatening to use “chemical munitions” on demonstrators.

Yiannopoulos repeatedly denounced Islam, and particularly “mainstream Muslim culture.” When a student wearing a hijab protested at the UNM event, Yiannopoulos supporters started chanting “U.S.A., U.S.A.” He made a practice of personally harassing individuals. On Twitter he incited “trolls” to inundate black actor Leslie Jones with racist tweets. At the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee on December 13, Yiannopoulos publicly humiliated a transgender student (who was in the audience) who had filed a Title IX complaint against the University for access to the women’s locker room. He put a picture of her up on a giant screen, which was livestreamed on the Breitbart website, making slurs against transgender people and continuing to vilify her.

To single out, ridicule and publicize someone in this way could have grave consequences. Last year, according to a count by the *Advocate*, some 28 transgender people were murdered, overwhelmingly black people. So far in 2017, there have been eight transgender murder victims, seven of them African American and one Native American. There are no statistics on how many have been subject to violent attack. And Trump’s smearing of Mexican immigrants as “rapists,” drug dealers and criminals, even forming an “Office of Victims of Immigration Crime Engagement,” has made immigrants and Latinos prime targets of racist attacks. According to the *Guardian* web site “The Counted” every year close to 200 Hispanics are killed by the police.

By threatening to go after undocumented immigrant students and others he would like to set up for attack, Yiannopoulos posed an imminent threat, and it was correct to seek to drive him out. We are for mobilizing mass action – by students, workers, immigrants and all defenders of democratic rights, including the right to free speech – to thwart such provocations and defend those who would be victimized. But we do not call on the university to ban them. Campus administrations are agents of the ruling class and its state – epitomized by University of California chancellor Napolitano, the former head of Homeland Security – which exists to repress the working class and oppressed. University codes restricting expression will be used above all to try to silence communists and revolutionaries who seek to bring down this system of injustice.

But the Yiannopoulos campaign aiming to bring down cop repression and reprisals by the federal government is only one prong of a broader repressive assault. Leftist student groups are being harassed, in particular those critical of Zionism, in a drive to squelch protest on American campuses. Simultaneously, rightist witch-hunters are gearing up a sinister offensive to get student fink squads to record, harass and turn in leftist professors. And this goes hand-in-hand with the escalation of de-



Over a thousand protestors come out to shut down racist provocateur Milo Yiannopoulos at University of California Berkeley, February 1.

portations of immigrants and plans to step up racist police repression against black people and Latinos. To defeat them what's needed is militant defense of the oppressed through powerful working-class action.

Fascists, Provocateurs and Campus Speech Codes

The UC Berkeley protests against Milo Yiannopoulos sparked a debate over whether this self-described professional provocateur is a fascist. At first sight, it's immediately clear that he is a raving sexist and racist reactionary, and he does traffic with fascist images. There is a photo of him on-line posing with a biography of Adolf Hitler. Another has him sporting an Iron Cross, which after the outlawing of the swastika in Germany became a de facto symbol for Nazis and their supporters. Yiannopoulos has ominously called to criminalize Black Lives Matter. With police gunning down on average one African American a day, such calls can be deadly.

Liberals and many leftists throw around the term fascist loosely, as an all-purpose epithet for an extreme reactionary or particularly repressive regime. On that basis, Stalinists and other reformist pseudo-socialists call for the formation of an "anti-fascist popular front" with supposed "democratic" sectors of the bourgeoisie – who, in order to defend their class interests, then turn around and aid the fascists. But fascism is more than extreme reaction and repression. As Trotsky analyzed it in the 1930s, fascism appears when in conditions of crisis "capitalism sets in motion the masses of the crazed petty bourgeoisie and the bands of declassed and demoralized lumpenproletariat" (*What Next? Vital Questions for the German Proletariat* [1932]).

Fascism can take the form of an electoral movement or armed gangs. It whips up nationalist hatred against an "enemy within," whether communists, Jews, Muslims, immigrants or black people. It can parade in uniforms with black shirts (Italy) or brown (German Nazis), don white sheets like Ku Klux Klan nightriders or appear on TV in suit and tie. Its hour comes when "the 'normal' police and military resources of the bourgeois dictatorship, together with their parliamentary screens, no longer suffice to hold society in a state of equilibrium," and capital must resort to the methods of civil war to ward off the threat of revolution. In power, it replaces the façade of bourgeois democracy with the bonapartist rule of finance capital. Everywhere, its ultimate aim is to smash the

workers' organizations and atomize the working class.

Yiannopoulos is more self-promoter than fascist, and the actual fascist movement hates him. The Daily Stormer, whose name is taken from the Nazi weekly *Der Stürmer*, is the main openly fascist website of the "alt-right."² Like its namesake, the neo-Nazi Daily Stormer is virulently anti-Semitic. Last August, Andrew Anglin, its mini-Führer, called Yiannopoulos "a subversive and a disease. A homosexual Jew, he jumped on the movement a few months ago and was promoted by the entire media, propelled as the representative of the 'official movement'." This is from the favorite web site of the white supremacist who traveled to New York to murder a black man, and of the racist gunman of the South Carolina church massacre.

Yiannopoulos' career came to an abrupt end in late February, when he was disinvited as a speaker at the Conservative Political Action Conference and forced out as an editor at Breitbart News over remarks he made about consensual sexual relationships between teenage boys and adults. What Yiannopoulos said was that older men and teenagers can have consenting sexual relationships, and that "age of consent laws" are "arbitrary and oppressive." As Marxists, we oppose "age of consent laws," which are mainly used to criminalize teenage sexuality, especially of African American, Latino and gay and lesbian youth. The only legitimate standard in sexual matters is whether there is real, effective consent between the individuals.

Yiannopoulos' unobjectionable comments on teenage sex put him beyond the pale for traditional "family values" Republican conservatives and the "alt-right," while the neo-Nazis hate him for being gay and the fact that his mother is Jewish. He is not a fascist, but he is still a dangerous racist, sexist demagogue who posed an imminent threat to those he targeted.

Meanwhile, there are copycat provocateurs running around campuses, some of whom are actual fascists, like the former Marine corporal at the University of California Stanislaus, Nathan Damigo, who was head of the now-defunct National Youth Front, affiliated with the American Freedom Party founded by skinhead racists in Southern California (*Los Angeles Times*, 7 December 2016). On April 15, Damigo was videotaped sucker-punching a woman

² See our article, "Donald Trump the 'Alt-Right' and Fascism," *The Internationalist* No. 46, January-February 2017.

protesting against a "Patriot Day" event in Berkeley

Whether it is correct to mobilize to shut down racists, on campuses or elsewhere, is not simply a function of whether or not they are bonafide fascists. In cases where there is or may be a concrete threat to oppressed groups and individuals, such as Yiannopoulos' announced intention to go after undocumented immigrants in his scheduled UC Berkeley performance, there is ample reason to bring

out hundreds and if possible thousands to put a stop to such provocation. In other cases, such as the talk at Middlebury College in Vermont by Charles Murray (author of the 1994 book *The Bell Curve*, which claims intelligence and socio-economic status are genetically linked to race), it is more appropriate to demonstrate to protest and expose this craven racist.

Even in the case of outright fascists, we do not call on the university to ban them, or to ban "hate speech." We do not recognize the administration's "right" to decide who can and cannot appear on campus, or what can and cannot be said. That doesn't mean tolerating the "n-word," for example. This is not just a vile insult or epithet but a threat of racist terror against black people. It stands for lynching, no matter what is in the head of the individual who spews it out of their mouth. But it is up to us, to the oppressed and working people, not the racist rulers, to shut down those who scream such racist threats.

We do not agree with campus "political correctness" speech codes, and all the touchy-feely liberalism surrounding them. The notion that language is the source of special oppression is pure bourgeois idealism. The existence of "gendered" pronouns, or of gendered adjectives in languages other than English, is not the source of transgender or female oppression! Inventing gender-neutral pronouns will do nothing to get rid of it. Nor will all the PC claptrap about "trigger warnings," "safe spaces," norms against "microaggressions," etc., which all look to university authorities as the arbiter. It is up to students, faculty and workers to combat discrimination, racism and sexism and ensure that the entire campus is safe for those at risk.

Marxists recognize that oppression is not based on bad ideas that can be eliminated by sensitivity training, "checking your privilege" or speech codes. Giving the administration veto power will only make matters worse. Racism and sexism reflect the material reality of the historical and actual subjugation of oppressed racial and ethnic groups and women, which is rooted in capitalism. To get rid of discrimination, violence and the endless forms of aggression against African Americans, Native Americans, Latinos, women and gay, lesbian and transgender people will take nothing less than socialist revolution to overthrow the capitalist system which engenders myriad forms of social oppression.

Meanwhile, there have been a lot of pious pronouncements from liberals and re-

formist leftists about "freedom of speech" for a racist provocateur like Milo Yiannopoulos. *New York Times* columnists like Frank Bruni and Charles Blow criticize demonstrators as being intolerant of ideas different from their own. Much of their ire is directed at the Black Block for supposedly instigating "violence" (whereas Yiannopoulos' aim was to trigger violence by the state). The social democrats of the International Socialist Organization (ISO) sought to present themselves as the "good demonstrators," while "This small group of adventurists was doing about as much to provoke the police to attack as I've ever seen" (Derek Wright, *Socialist Worker*, 8 February).

The anarchists in the crowd carried a banner proclaiming "This Is War." Well, it's a small part of the *class war* being waged by all wings of the bourgeoisie, against poor and working people and the oppressed here and around the world – as Republicans and Democrats are now united in supporting the bombing of Syria. While the ISO complains that their tactics "put the rest of us in serious danger," our point is that tossing firecrackers and smashing windows is utterly inadequate, and even counterproductive, in terms of taking on and defeating the most powerful imperialist ruling class in the world.

At best this is simply acting out in powerless frustration – not to mention the undoubted presence of police provocateurs. To defeat Yiannopoulos & Co., whose connections go straight to the White House, it is necessary to summon a far greater force to action. That force is the organized working class, which really has the power to *shut it down*, not just some city streets, tunnels or a few Interstate highways, but the capitalist system that spawns this racist, sexist, homophobic and xenophobic scum.

21st Century McCarthyite Witch-Hunters

The other prong of attack on the universities is the escalating offensive against left-wing students and professors. The latter have been a longstanding target of right-wingers going back to Cold War witch hunts. Under Reagan there was Accuracy in Academia set up by ultra-rightist Reed Irvine to root out campus Sandinistas. (Irvine notoriously alibied the military dictatorship of El Salvador for its 1981 El Mozote massacre.) After the 11 September 2001 attack on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, Campus Watch began harassing professors of Middle Eastern studies. In 2006, David Horowitz published *The Professors: The 101 Most Dangerous Academics in America*. Horowitz's magazine *FrontPage* continues to go after leftist academics.

The offensive against student groups has focused on Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) and others who support the "boycott, divestment and sanctions" (BDS) movement calling for universities to divest stocks in Israeli companies and to boycott Israeli academics and universities. The drive to combat BDS on campus has been amply financed by the Israeli government (which included \$25 million in anti-BDS funding in its 2016 budget), right-wing Zionists like Sheldon Adelson (the casino mogul and huge Trump donor, who raised \$20 million at a Las Vegas conference specifically to fight BDS in universities) and the powerful American Israel Public Af-

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The Internationalist

SL's "Alternative Facts" in the Service of Social-Chauvinism

Spartacist League vs. Refugees

FEBRUARY 27 – The 10 February issue of *Workers Vanguard*, the newspaper of the Spartacist League (SL), has a front-page article titled "Trump Escalates Obama's War on Immigrants." While raising slogans including "Down with the Anti-Muslim Ban!" and "For Full Citizenship Rights for All Immigrants!" there is a notable absence: the SL raises *no demand to let refugees in*. Yet banning refugees was a main focus of Trump's decree. This is no inadvertent oversight. Since 2015, *the SL and its misnamed International Communist League (ICL) have been pushing a chauvinist line of opposing calls for asylum for those fleeing the depredation wrought by U.S. and European imperialism.*

The article notes that "Iraq, Syria, Libya, Somalia and Yemen are among the countries devastated by U.S. imperialism's wars, occupations, drone strikes and other military assaults. Hundreds of thousands have been killed and millions more displaced as desperate refugees." Very true. So what should become of those seeking refuge from the imperialist slaughter? Donald Trump's executive order excluded Syrian refugees indefinitely and barred all refugees for four months. As the measure went into effect on January 28, leaving countless travelers stranded, thousands rushed to airports to demand: "Let them in!" What does the Spartacist League say? *Nothing*. It raises *no* call to admit refugees, and all its article has to say about Trump's would-be wall along the Mexican border is that there already is one.

Today when *WV* mouths the call for full citizenship rights for all immigrants, it pointedly restricts it to those who have "made it to this country." Back when the Spartacist League stood for revolutionary Trotskyism, its statements that all those here should have the rights of citizens, no matter how they got here, underlined that this meant *all* immigrants ... and went together with calls for asylum for refugees, from Haiti, Central America, Sri Lanka and elsewhere. The now-centrist SL/ICL has turned this into an exclusionary formula so if you're Central American moms and



JFK Airport, midnight, January 28. Internationalist Group and CUNY Internationalist Clubs joined thousands of protesters who rushed to airports to protest ban on travelers from Muslim countries and demand that authorities let refugees in. Spartacist League refuses to call for asylum for refugees from imperialist wars and occupation.

kids who haven't yet set foot on U.S. soil, if you're a Syrian family stuck in refugee camps in Turkey or Jordan, tough luck.

The Internationalist has documented the shameful line of "'Communists' Who Oppose Calls for Asylum for Syrian Refugees" that came out of a "correction" inside the ICL (see "Strange Encounters with the ICL," *The Internationalist* No. 44, Summer 2016). In its internal discussion, a leading Spartacist spokesman declared that "those fleeing 'the dislocations of war' are not refugees in any politically meaningful sense, but rather 'displaced persons,'" and therefore had no "right to asylum in ... the country of one's choice." Another argued cynically that adopting a line of "let them in" would "replace the necessity of proletarian revolution and working-class power with social-work do-goodism." We noted that the ICL's vile "no right to asylum" line is a "capitulation to anti-immigrant chauvinism." Today it is a

capitulation to the racist Trump.

While the latter-day SL/ICL emphatically restricts calls for immigrants' rights to "those who have made it here," the Internationalist Group and League for the Fourth International uphold the historic Spartacist position of full citizenship rights for all immigrants and the right to asylum for refugees. And we have undertaken action seeking to make such demands a reality. Last October 20, in response to the Obama administration's exclusion of thousands of Haitians marooned at the Mexican border, the LFI (of which the IG is the U.S. section) initiated coordinated protests in New York, San Diego, Tijuana and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil demanding "Stop Exclusion of Haitians! Stop All Deportations! Occupation Troops Out of Haiti!" (see *The Internationalist* No. 45, September-October 2016).

Although specifically invited, the Spartacist League did not show up at any of the protests. SLers no doubt found themselves in a political pickle: their spokesmen opposed calls to admit refugees at Europe's doorstep, justifying the refusal by saying they were "simply seeking a better, safer life." But here were several thousand Haitians who fled the Caribbean island nation after the devastation of the 2010 earthquake clamoring at the U.S. border, many saying they were only "seeking a better life." Moreover, following the quake, the SL/ICL grotesquely *supported* the U.S. invasion, which included ships patrolling the Windward Passage to prevent Haitian refugees from reaching the U.S. The SL propagated the lie that Washington was engaged in disaster relief, railing against the Internationalist Group only to later admit its line was a betrayal.

The IG/LFI wrote in 2010 that we demand that the U.S. get out of Haiti and "*stop blocking the entry of Haitian refugees.*" The SL/ICL *did not call to admit Haitian refugees* even as U.S. Navy ships and Coast Guard cutters were picking up Haitians at sea and taking them to the infamous Guantánamo detention center. Six

years later, after abstaining from the protest actions to defend Haitians against exclusion and deportation, *Workers Vanguard* (4 November 2016) ran a front-page story titled "Obama Slams Door on Haitian Migrants," calling to "Let Them In! No Deportations!" Clearly, the SL felt pressured by the LFI-initiated protests, which it pointedly did not mention. But an observant reader of *WV* would notice the SL's flip-flops, from no call to admit Haitians in 2010 to "let them in" in 2016, and now no call to let in refugees in 2017.

In order to mask its refusal to call to let refugees into the U.S., and in its frenzy to attack the Internationalist Group, the 10 February *Workers Vanguard* published a polemic, "IG Peddles Dems' Sanctuary Scam." The article reprinted the remarks of a Spartacist supporter at a speak-out initiated by the Internationalist Clubs at Hunter College, part of the City University of New York. *WV* writes that the call for the protest "included the demands 'Defend sanctuary cities – Make CUNY a "sanctuary university",' while not containing even a word of criticism of New York City mayor Bill de Blasio, the cops or the campus administration." So the SL *opposes resistance to Trump's reprisals* against cities that don't fully cooperate with the I.C.E. police, and thus *doesn't give a damn whether it is easier or harder for the I.C.E. to deport immigrants.*

What's more, in order to hide its betrayals, the SL shamelessly resorts to "alternative facts."

Thus the call for the February 2 Hunter speak-out denounced "Democrat Obama's record deportation numbers (over 5 million)" and "Wall Street militarist Hillary Clinton." It emphasized the need for "a sharp break from the Democrats, as well as Greens, and all parties of this rotting capitalist system, and building a revolutionary workers party." The leaflet for another protest called by the CUNY Internationalists earlier that week, on January 30, under the title "Smash Racist Ban on Muslims, Refugees: LET THEM IN!" stated: "Rather than reliance on the Democrats (who paved the way for Trump), what's needed is to bring out the enormous power of the multiracial working class together with the immigrant, black, Latino, Asian and student population of NYC and across the U.S. to stop deportations, bans and racist attacks."

At the February 2 protest, there were CUNY Internationalist and IG signs saying "Clinton + Trump, Police Terror, Imperialist War, Mass Deportations, Racial Oppression, Wall Street"; "No to Clinton, Trump, Cruz, Sanders – For a Workers Party," "You Can't Fight Trump with Democrats – Build a Workers Party!" and "Cuomo, De Blasio, Clinton, Sanders, Obama, Democratic Party = Fake Promises, Real Exploitation and War." Speaking there, a member of the Internationalist Clubs said:

"Bill de Blasio, the Democratic mayor of New York City, says he's on the side of immigrants, Governor Cuomo says he's on the side of immigrants, but right here in New York City they are locking up our immigrant brothers and sisters."

A spokesman for the Internationalist Group, in turn, noted that:



Internationalist Group at January 29 Los Angeles protest at LAX against racist anti-Muslim, anti-Mexican decree.

March-April 2017

No Ban, No Wall – Full Citizenship Rights for All! Smash Racist Ban on Muslims, Refugees

The following Internationalist Group leaflet was distributed at January 29 demonstration in New York, the day after the Trump administration's immigration and refugee bans went into effect.

On Wednesday, the White House let it be known that President Donald Trump would sign an executive order to ban Syrian refugees as well as those from other predominantly Muslim countries, and to begin building his infamous border wall with Mexico. That evening there were mass protests in New York City and elsewhere. On Friday, Trump issued his decree, prohibiting entry of anyone, even permanent U.S. residents, from those countries. As the Border Patrol began implementing the order on Saturday, stopping travelers returning home, thousands rushed to the airports, from JFK in New York City to LAX in Los Angeles. Huge crowds stayed for hours chanting “Refugees are welcome here” and “LET THEM IN!”

These are the seeds of popular revolt against the brutal xenophobic (anti-foreigner) policies of the Trump regime. Democratic politicians tried to climb on the bandwagon. But it was the policies of the Democratic Party that pushed people into the arms of Republican Trump. Trump wants to build a wall – Bill Clinton began construction of the wall in the 1990s. Trump threatens to deport millions – Barack Obama deported over 5.5 million during his two terms as president, earning him the nickname of “deporter in chief.”

On Saturday night, as hundreds protested outside the federal courthouse in Brooklyn, a federal judge issued an emergency stay of Trump's decree. This may temporarily let in scores of travel-



Internationalist contingent in January 29 New York City march that brought out tens of thousands to protest Donald Trump's Mexico border wall and ban on refugees and travelers from Muslim countries. Democratic Party bigwigs try to cash in on outrage, Trotskyists call to break with Dems and all capitalist parties.

ers held at the airports, but it will not stop construction of the wall or the raids of the hated Immigration and Customs Enforcement (I.C.E.) cops. All working people, all potential targets of racist, sexist, homophobic and xenophobic attack, and all defenders of democratic rights must come out now. **First they came for the Muslims!**

Expressions of popular outrage are vital, but they are not enough. Occupy Wall Street brought out thousands to protest against inequality – and achieved nothing. Black Lives Matter protests had tens of thousands in the streets denouncing racist police murder – and the killer cops keep on killing. It is necessary to **bring to bear the enormous power of the multiracial working class**, including millions of immigrants (documented and undocumented), together

with African Americans, Latinos, Asians and students.

The Internationalist Group, which since its inception has organized immigrant workers, calls to prepare concrete **workers action to stop deportations and racist attacks**. There are secret, unmarked immigration jails in various locations in NYC and other cities. The IG calls for mass action to **drive I.C.E. jails out of NYC and all major urban areas**. We need to set up phone trees, social media networks and other measures for rapid response to **flood the streets to block I.C.E. raids and deportations**.

Class Struggle Education Workers (CSEW) has called for committees in every school to defend immigrants and all threatened students. Any deportation attempt

should be met by calling an ongoing assembly shutting down the school and **mobilizing union-led action citywide**. On Saturday, the Taxi Workers Alliance in New York declared it would not pick up passengers for an hour at JFK in solidarity with the protests there. This is the first taste of the kind of action we need.

Above all, we must fight politically. Today, Trump is the CEO of American capitalism, yesterday it was Obama who ordered U.S. troops to bomb Syria, return to Iraq and continue the occupation of Afghanistan – all in the name of “fighting terrorism.” Yet the bloodiest terrorist of all is U.S. imperialism, which has slaughtered millions from Korea to Vietnam and the Middle East. On Wednesday, NYC public advocate Letitia James called on the crowd to “resist, resist, resist!” The population of every major city in the U.S. is strongly opposed to the racist gang that now holds complete

sway in Washington. But to **defeat** the racist Trump it's necessary to **break with the Democrats, Republicans and all capitalist parties**.

As the Trabajadores Internacionales Clasistas (TIC – Class Struggle International Workers) say: “*Ni ilegales, ni criminales, somos obreros, internacionales!*” (“We are neither illegal nor criminal, we are international workers”). Our watchword is: “**Asian, Latin, black and white – workers of the world unite!**”

The IG, CSEW, TIC and CUNY Internationalist Clubs say: **You can't fight Trump with Democrats**. We call for: “**NYC Labor: Use Your Muscle NOW to Smash the Racist Ban!**” We need to **Build a revolutionary workers party!** ■

“Bill de Blasio wants to expand the list of offenses to work closely with the immigration cops. The ‘broken windows’ policy of his infamous police commissioner Bratton is used to criminalize untold numbers of black and Latino youth, and immigrants. We call for smashing the ‘broken windows’ policy. I want to also say that our struggle, too, is a struggle in solidarity with the Native American people at Standing Rock. We are with Standing Rock, unlike a few people here.”

The latter was in response to the Spartacist League's shameful refusal to support the demand of the Standing Rock Sioux that the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) not cross the Missouri River right next to their reservation. The SL, echoing the DAPL's capitalist owners, argues that the land has not belonged to the Sioux for the last century and a half – after it was stolen by the U.S. government! (See “Spartacist League: Land Surveyor Socialists,” *The Internationalist* No. 46, January-February 2017.) In response to Trump's threat to send U.S. troops to Mexico, the IG speaker said “we will side

with Mexico against U.S. imperialism,” and as “the psychopathic white nationalist Bannon and Trump say there is going to be a war against China, we will defend China against U.S. imperialism, because we are for the defeat of U.S. imperialism.”

Thus the claim that we build illusions in liberal Democrats in general and Bill de Blasio in particular is utterly and demonstrably false. The Internationalist Group more than any other organization on the left has protested against the Democratic Party for its record-breaking deportation of immigrants. We note in passing that the SLer who raised this dirty smear is the same one who at a 2013 protest against CUNY's hiring of the war criminal David Petraeus claimed that the CUNY Internationalist Clubs had “said not one word opposing the Democrats for most of the semester.” We exposed this pathetic lie by publishing photo after photo showing Internationalist signs denouncing the Democratic Party from six different anti-Petraeus demonstrations (see “See With Your Own Eyes How They Lie,” *The Internationalist* No. 36, January-February 2014).

As for WV's attack on the Internationalist Group for calling to “defend sanctuary cities,” *the fake-Trotskyist SL is saying that workers should do nothing against the threat to slash billions of federal dollars from education and social service funds* going to localities that limit cooperation with the I.C.E. cops. In his January 25 Executive Order on “Enhancing Public Safety in the Interior of the United States,” Trump declared that “Sanctuary jurisdictions across the United States willfully violate Federal law in an attempt to shield aliens from removal from the United States.” The order goes on to say, “jurisdictions that willfully refuse to comply with 8 U.S.C. 1373¹ (sanctuary jurisdictions) are not eligible to receive Federal grants.”

¹ 8 U.S. Code § 1373 declares: “Notwithstanding any other provision of Federal, State, or local law, a Federal, State, or local government entity or official may not prohibit, or in any way restrict, any government entity or official from sending to, or receiving from, the Immigration and Naturalization Service information regarding the citizenship or immigration status, lawful or unlawful, of any individual.”

The SL's claim that “sanctuary cities” are just a “scam” means there's nothing to defend – so do nothing about it.

As we have written, “Defenders of immigrant rights, and the rights of all the oppressed, must fight tooth and nail against all attacks whether from the state or racist individuals or gangs, and the sentiment to create ‘sanctuaries’ for the persecuted, as many churches did in the 1980s, is positive.” Typically, the 400+ sanctuary cities and counties have been targeted by the Trump administration for instructing local police not to honor federal requests to keep undocumented immigrants arrested on low-level charges in jail as a “courtesy” to I.C.E. (which courts have ruled unconstitutional), and for telling government employees not to inquire about or pass on information about individuals' immigration status. That minimal prohibition (often ignored by the cops) can be very significant for undocumented immigrants.

While admitting that “[t]he sanctuary designation may slightly impede the cops,”

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The Internationalist

May Day...

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Beyond marching on May 1, it is necessary to *mobilize workers power* in the struggle to *defeat* the government's escalating war on immigrants. The Internationalist Group has called for *mass labor-led mobilizations in defense of immigrants*, to *drive I.C.E. jails out of the major urban areas*, to *turn schools into sanctuaries* and "to set up phone trees, social media networks and other measures for rapid response to *flood the streets to block I.C.E. raids and deportations*" ("Let Them In!" on page 7 of this issue). In New York, members of Class Struggle Education Workers have initiated committees to defend immigrants in hospitals (page 20) and schools (page 21). The Internationalist Clubs at the City University (CUNY) initiated a Committee to Defend Immigrants and Muslims at Hunter College (page 22).

It is also vital that the struggle to defend immigrants and all workers be waged independently of the Democratic Party. Since Trump's upset election victory in November, sections of this capitalist party have begun pretending to be an opposition force for the first time in many decades. They're getting an assist from opportunist leftists eager to be gofers for the latest mass "movement." Liberal Democrats, notably those who supported the populist candidacy of Bernie Sanders but also Hillary Clinton supporters, have been pushing for protests against Trump by women, immigrants, students and other "constituencies." Thus the January 21 "women's march" in Washington, D.C., hailed by almost all the left, was in reality a Democratic Party operation, as was the March 8 "women's strike" in good part.

In the realm of immigrants' rights there are a number of groups including (in NYC) the New York Immigrant Coalition, Make the Road and New York Communities for Change, all linked to the Democrats, with counterparts in most major cities. For May Day, these groups are saying that their aim is to "change the narrative" about immigrants supposedly "stealing American jobs" and to "increase pressure in the long term for immigration reform"! No, what we need is action to **STOP the deportations NOW!**

The bottom line for the Democrats is that basically nothing can be done, or not much, because "it's the law." That's *their* law, the capitalist law which they helped write and enforce. *Every law that Trump is now enforcing was written by Democrats*, particularly the Clintons' (Bill and Hillary) 1996 "Illegal Immigration and Immigrant Responsibility Act." Working people, whether born here or in another country, need to fight for **no ban on Muslim immi-**

grants, no Mexico wall, let the refugees in and full citizenship rights for all immigrants. That means going up against the capitalist state, and we need the power of the working class to do it.

When the time comes to mobilize mass action to block the I.C.E. Gestapo, to bring out tens of thousands to actually shut down Wall Street, the ports and industry, there will be mass support from the population of the urban centers, who in their vast majority oppose Trump and even despise his reactionary regime. Just look at how thousands streamed to the airports to oppose his Muslim ban. But even as liberal Democrats now talk of "resistance," at the crucial moment they will do everything to block the action that's urgently needed.

While Trump is the immediate enemy, the Democrats are the key strategic enemy whose stranglehold on labor, black and immigrant organizations and populations must be broken. The resolution of Portland Painters Local 10 last August showed the way forward, saying that it "does not support the Democrats, Republicans, or any bosses' parties or politicians" and "we call on the labor movement to break from the Democratic Party and build a class-struggle workers party."

Break with the Democrats, Mobilize the Working Class

In his first 100 days in office, the billionaire president has increasingly turned his back on the phony populism he pushed in order to get elected, and has governed as a typical right-wing Republican. On one thing, though, the new administration has remained consistent: from Day One it has viciously attacked immigrants. Trump built his campaign railing against "Islamic terrorists" and accusing Mexican immigrants of being rapists, drug dealers and criminals. On April 11, his racist attorney general Jeff Sessions went to the Arizona-Sonora border to denounce undocumented immigrants as "criminal aliens" and "filth," who bring "drugs and death," "depravity and violence."

Yet leaving aside the Republicans' immigrant-bashing rhetoric, and Democrat Obama's bogus talk of "immigration reform," what the Trump administration is doing is to escalate the anti-immigrant policies of its predecessor, if that. Look at the statistics. The number of deportations is nearly the same: 35,600 in January-February 2017, compared to 35,250 in the same period last year (*Guardian*, 3 April). Obama greatly expanded the guidelines for deportations, deporting more people than any other president, earning him the title "deporter-in-chief."

Take note as well about what has happened with Trump's anti-immigrant decrees. His ban on immigrants and refugees from seven Muslim countries was immediately contested in the courts by attorney generals of several Democratic state governments. But little notice was paid to the executive order on internal security, which declares "removable aliens" anyone convicted of *any* criminal offense (including smoking in the park); anyone *charged with* a criminal offense (even if they haven't been found guilty); anyone who has "committed acts" that could be a criminal offense (who decides that?); anyone who misled *any* government agency ("no match" Social Security number?) or "abused" public benefits (children's health programs?); or who "in the judgment of an immigration officer"



Internationalist contingent marches with B&H workers against union-busting, February 12.

might pose a "risk" to "public safety."

Being an "unauthorized" person present in the United States *is not in itself a crime*; in many cases it is only a civil offense. Yet Trump's decree not only makes almost every undocumented immigrant in the U.S. subject to deportation, *it is blatantly unconstitutional*. Under the Fifth Amendment to the Constitution *all* persons have the right to due process. Under the Fourteenth Amendment (won through the Civil War) "equal protection of the laws" is also supposedly guaranteed to *all* persons present in the U.S. This was confirmed in an 1896 Supreme Court ruling and numerous rulings ever since. But even though Trump's January 25 executive order egregiously denies due process and equal protection, *there has been no court challenge*. Why not? Because it would go against the immigration laws the Democrats wrote and enforced.

So defending immigrants will require fighting the Democrats as well as Trump. In New York City, the claims to be a "sanctuary city" run up against the "broken windows" police strategy which has been pursued by mayors from Republicans Giuliani and Bloomberg to Democrat Bill de Blasio. That practice leads to huge numbers of arrests for minor offenses, and a lot of things that aren't any sort of offense, and that information is routinely transmitted to federal authorities in Washington. To really prevent such data on immigrants (overwhelmingly youth) being used for deportations, it should not exist in the first place. How? By abolishing these supposed "criminal offenses." But despite calls by immigrant rights groups, clergymen and others to junk "broken windows," de Blasio refuses. Why? A key reason is because he is afraid of losing the white liberal vote.

Leading up to a frontal confrontation with the government there should be a fight over all the ways it feeds the voracious appetite of its deportation machine. This includes demanding that any information indicating immigration status not be supplied to any federal agency by schools, hospitals and universities. A fight to shut down immigration detention centers can raise public awareness that the I.C.E. Gestapo¹ has a vast network of concentration camps. Currently a hunger strike is underway at the Northwest Detention Center in Tacoma, Washington run by the private contractor GEO (whose stock has doubled since election day). In Orange County, California the Theo Lacy jail where over 500 immigrants

¹ *Geheime Staatspolizei*, the Nazi secret police.

are held has had two hunger strikes in the last year while the Department of Homeland Security's Inspector General issued a horrific report on abysmal conditions there.

But the fundamental struggle must be to raise the class-consciousness and militancy of the workers. In the New York area, as elsewhere, the February 16 "Day Without an Immigrant" was largely the result of restaurant and small business *owners* shutting down. However, in two places workers actually organized strike action: at the Hunts Point produce market, where hundreds of workers gathered outside refusing to go in, and at recently unionized B&H Photo and Video, where "workers organized a collective stay-away action to protest against raids and deportations."² In addition, for the past month workers at the Tom Cat Bakery in Long Island City have mobilized to resist the company's threat to fire 31 immigrant workers because an I.C.E. investigation of I-9 (work authorization) forms.

May Day will be an opportunity to unite the struggles of B&H and Tom Cat workers, and inspire the more than 500,000 undocumented immigrant workers in the New York City area to fight for their rights. But to win against the forces of employers intent on breaking the union and a federal government gearing up for mass deportations will require mobilizing the entire workers movement. Above all, it's necessary to fight politically against both Republicans and Democrats and all capitalist parties. (Even minor bourgeois parties like the Greens have run immigrant-bashers like Ralph Nader for president.) As comrade Antonio, speaking on behalf of Trabajadores Internacionales Clasistas (Class Struggle International Workers), said at a rally outside the I.C.E. jail in Manhattan on February 16:

"Today we are in a police state for all immigrants, which will be extended to the rest of the population. These deportations are the result of the policy of the Democratic Party, which under Obama deported 5 million immigrants. Today the Republicans want to deport more and more. As a worker, I call to mobilize the power of the working class to end once and for all the racist raids and to demand full citizenship rights for all immigrants." ■

² B&H is trying to break the immigrant workers' union by shutting down the warehouses, with the connivance of the Democratic city government. See "De Blasio Administration Complicit in Closing of B&H Warehouses," *The Internationalist*, March 2017.



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Break the Corporatist Shackles to Unleash the Power of the Proletariat!

The Mexican Steel Workers Strike and the Struggle Against Corporatism

The following article is translated from *Revolución Permanente* No. 7, April-May 2017, published by the Grupo Internacionalista, Mexican section of the League for the Fourth International.

A year ago, at noon on 4 March 2016, the more than 3,600 members of Section 271 of the National Union of Miners, Metal Workers, Steel Mill Workers and Allied Trades of the Mexican Republic (SNTMMSSRM, or Mine and Mill union) at the ArcelorMittal steelworks in Lázaro Cárdenas in the state of Michoacán began a strike that was not authorized by the government labor board. The main reason for the strike was the workers' effort to reverse the announced layoffs of some 300 steel workers from the coke plant that the management had already begun to implement. (Currently, the threat of layoffs of more than 2,500 additional workers at the steel slab plant still hangs over the heads of workers in this port city.)

The strike broke out when the Federal Conciliation and Arbitration Board (JFCA) "pulled a fast one," as the leaders of the SNTMMSSRM put it, declaring that the strike notification¹ was "inadmissible" and "sending it to the files" an hour before the walkout was to start. This step by the labor board, which the Mine and Mill leaders didn't expect, laid the basis for the Secretary of Labor and Welfare's subsequent pronouncing the strike "nonexistent," i.e., declaring it illegal. Everyone was well aware that this could lead to a violent attack to drive the workers out of the factory, as happened ten years earlier, in April 2006, when two workers were killed by police.

The truth is that this is a strike that the SNTMMSSRM leadership didn't want at all, and did everything to avoid. The strike notification dated from June of 2015. As *La Jornada* (5 March 2016) pointed out, "in July of that year, the workers were on the verge of walking out, but they gave in to the appeals of the management and of the national union" to hold off, due to warnings about a crisis in the steel market. As a SNTMMSSRM press release states (6 March 2016), "in just over eight months the strike has been postponed 16 times [!] along with the strike notification, by agreement between management and the union, with the approval of the JFCA, for conciliation negotiations in order to avoid a strike."

At the beginning of March 2016, the union once again sought to postpone the strike, but ArcelorMittal – the world's biggest steel producer – refused to negotiate. The JFCA ratified management's refusal of

¹ Under Mexico's corporatist labor laws (see "Corporatism in Mexico's Mining and Steel Sector" in this issue), labor organizations are required to have legal title to the contract and give official notification of a strike six to ten days in advance, and then it must be declared "procedente" (admissible) by the JFCA in order for a strike to be legal.



Thousands march in solidarity with steel strikers in Lázaro Cárdenas, Mexico, 12 March 2016.

a 17th postponement, citing a doctrine that a union cannot postpone its strike notification without the consent of the management. And thus, as the head of the federal Labor Department complained, "Faced with these circumstances, certain workers decided to occupy this workplace" (*El Universal*, 10 March 2016). Trapped between the sword of the capitalist state and the wall of workers' anger, the Mine and Mill union had no choice but to give its stamp of approval to the strike. At the same time, it begged president Enrique Peña Nieto to "return to the conciliatory road of dialogue between the parties as a solution."

On Saturday, March 12 the strikers called a massive demonstration in Lázaro Cárdenas. The Grupo Internacionalista sent a team of comrades from Guadalajara and Mexico City to be present in the march and distribute revolutionary literature among the striking workers. Thousands of steel workers in red shirts marched at a quick pace from the Monument to the Miner to the main gate of the steelworks (formerly known as Sicartsa). There they held a rally in which representatives of different trades, including municipal workers and members of Section 18 of the National Coordination of Education Workers (CNTE). A spokesperson of the GI spoke emphasizing the importance of extending the strike to other sectors, particularly the teachers, in order to prepare a nationwide strike against the murderous government.

That same day, the eighth day of the strike, as a result of negotiations held in the Department of Labor in Mexico City, "presided over at all times by the President and General Secretary of the National Union of Miners, Napoleón Gómez Urrutia," who participated via teleconference from his exile in Canada, an agreement was reached to end the strike. In addition to paying for time lost while on strike, management agreed to relocate 125 coke plant workers elsewhere in the mill, while the SNTMMSSRM accepted the layoff by "voluntary retirement"

(with ridiculously low compensation) of 80 other workers. The remaining 100 out of 300 coke plant workers on the original layoff notice were simply dismissed, not being members of the union.

Immediately after the strike ended, the Secretary of Labor, Alfonso Navarrete, described the agreement between the union and ArcelorMittal as "very good." Moreover, he pointed out that with the Mine and Mill union's promise of cooperation with management, ArcelorMittal had agreed to invest millions of pesos in renovation of the factory. Empty promises! Six months after signing the agreement with management, only 37 of the 125 workers who were supposed to keep their jobs had been relocated (*La Voz de Michoacán*, 23 September 2016).

A year after the strike ended, management continues to harass the workers. The promised investments have not materialized and threats of massive layoffs continue to hang in the air. With the pretext that China, Brazil and Russia are practicing "unfair competition" by "dumping" steel products, management has repeatedly posed the need to "cut costs." That is, the elimination of labor rights, massive subcontracting and firing of "troublemakers." With the constant threat of "technical shutdowns" (i.e., lockouts by the bosses), the general manager of the multinational steel company, Victor Cairo, threatens to starve into submission the plant workers and the tens of thousands who depend on them.

Out of the 8,000 workers at the enormous steel plant, less than 3,500 are now unionized. Overall, wages and working conditions at ArcelorMittal have gone to hell since the privatization of the Lázaro Cárdenas-Las Truchas steelworks in 1991. To put a decisive end to the infernal cycle of layoffs and repression, the bosses must be defeated. The social power of the steel workers, who are a key sector of the Mexican industrial proletariat, and their willingness to struggle, are clear to everyone. The Lázaro Cárdenas

steel plant is a fortress of the working class. However, rather than hard *class struggle*, the national leadership of Mine and Mill union seeks the opposite: *class collaboration* with the bosses.

Thus when in August 2015 negotiations were going on over the planned layoff of 300 workers due to closing of the coke plant, the response of the union leaders, with the participation of Gómez Urrutia, was to *provide management with a list of 120 union workers who could be fired*, supposedly for being "considered 'troublemakers' and low-productivity." But when the layoffs began in mid-September, the workers blockaded the plant gates. Management retreated and reversed the layoffs. A member of the national executive committee of SNTMMSSRM explained: "the union offered a list of workers who could be fired and the company did not choose the most delinquent workers" (ReportAcero, 17 September 2015).

In the framework of "conciliation" with the government and the bosses, the Mine and Mill union made huge concessions. Months after the strike, Local 271 leader Ricardo Torres Obregón said that the union "has accepted all requests that the company has made for higher productivity." He added: "Our labor body has allowed the reduction in staffing of mine workers in ArcelorMittal, all for the good of the company. We even accepted the closing of the coke plant." Torres Obregón concluded: "Members have done their part and more, and have redoubled their efforts to make the steel industry productive" (Michoacán Public Radio and Television, 10 November 2016). Thus the SNTMMSSRM agreed that the workers would work harder, under worse conditions, "*all for the good of the company.*"

This is the outlook of "corporatist unionism," which was born during the 70-year rule of the PRI-government, subordinating and integrating the unions to the machinery of the capitalist state.² Even after the end of the PRI's uninterrupted rule at the federal level in the year 2000, corporatism remained, given the bourgeoisie's need to prevent the formation of genuine workers unions independent of state control. The SNTMMSSRM was historically a classical corporatist body. For many decades, under its leader-for-life Napoleón Gómez Sada, and later under his son and heir Napoleón Gómez Urrutia, it administered layoffs, wage cuts and the brutal expulsion of dissidents. It continued this way until, in 2006, "Napito" crossed his masters in the government and management, to such an extent that he had to flee into exile abroad. But despite official harassment, he has done everything possible to return to the fold.

² The Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), including its prior incarnations (PNR, PRM), governed Mexico from 1929 to 2000, effectively as a one-party state in which the government and the ruling party were essentially identical.



Aging ArcelorMittal steel plant in Lázaro Cárdenas.

Although today the SNTMMSSRM is a semi-corporatist union, as we have noted “Gómez Urrutia has invariably insisted to the miners that they stay within the narrow limits proscribed by federal labor law and the corporatist mechanisms embodied in the Arbitration Boards.” This has produced fissures with traditionally militant sections, like the miners of Cananea (Section 65) and the steel workers of Lázaro Cárdenas (Section 271). Against the sabotage and resistance of the national leadership of the SNTMMSSRM to these strikes, the GI has always supported the struggles of those combative sectors. Thus in the Cananea strike that began in 2007, we called to “Bring Grupo Mexico to its Knees With a National Miners Strike!” (see “Mexican Miners Strike for Safety, Against Anti-Worker Attacks,” *The Internationalist* supplement, January 2008).

The steel workers strike at Lázaro Cárdenas, Michoacán makes amply clear the potential to unleash a real class battle against the incessant attacks on the workers. It also shows that the industrial proletariat must break out of the straitjacket represented by the corporatist apparatus of labor control, and forge revolutionary leaderships in struggle against all wings of the bourgeoisie, including those who falsely pose as friends of the workers, like the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) and the Movement for National Regeneration (MORENA) of Andrés Manuel López Obrador. As we have stressed, to take advantage of this potential it is essential to form workers committees, independent of the capitalist state and of the bosses’ parties. Moreover, it is essential that this effort be an integral part of the formation of a revolutionary workers party, capable of turning the necessary defensive struggles into a full-scale proletarian counteroffensive, on the road to international socialist revolution.

Forge a Revolutionary Workers Party!

Corporatism consists in the *organic integration* of all types of organizations, in particular those claiming to represent workers, into the bourgeois state apparatus. This was the mechanism of social control that sustained the regime of the PRI-government during its seven decades of rule. It corresponded to a one-party system with a heavily state-owned capitalist economy. At its height, from the 1950s to the ’70s, there was a revolving-door for apparatchiks passing from the corporatist “unions” to management of state-owned enterprises and to the governing party, from city councils and mayors to federal deputies, senators, governors and the upper levels of the bureaucratic and military/police hierarchy. But in an increasingly privatized economy

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beginning in the late 1980s, the abundant wellspring of money that lubricated this machinery began to dry up.

Despite the political “alternation” inaugurated in 2000 when Vicente Fox Quesada of the clerical-conservative National Action Party (PAN) entered Los Pinos (Mexico’s White House), the weak Mexican bourgeoisie could not do without the mechanisms of corporatism. Trapped between a powerful industrial proletariat and the demands of the rapacious U.S. imperialist bourgeoisie, of which it is a junior partner, the Mexican ruling class requires reliable instruments to impose its dictates. Thus, Fox and his PAN successor Felipe Calderón made use of the “union” leaders – once PRI loyalists, but always “institutional” – to carry out their counter-reforms in education and energy, and to supply scab labor when they moved to destroy independent unions, like the Mexican Electrical Workers Union (SME), or to break strikes as they did in Cananea.

The Mexican working class has suffered an almost unbroken chain of defeats in its struggles in recent decades. In almost every case, the fundamental reason has been the lack of preparation to prevail in a confrontation with the state. It is essential to have a clear understanding of the class character of the corporatist labor federations and labor bodies in order to win. Time and again, union oppositions have raised the banner of an impossible “democratization” of these labor police in the service of capital only to see their struggles crushed by the leaderships, structures and laws imposed by the capitalist state. Whether they were expelled and imprisoned, like the railroad workers in the 1950s and the electrical workers in the ’70s, or tried to infiltrate the state apparatus, like the Maoists in

the SNTMMSSRM in Monclova and Lázaro Cárdenas, their policy ended up in defeat for the worker rank and file.

The various pseudo-socialist organizations in Mexico demonstrate an utter lack of understanding of corporatism, if they recognize this phenomenon at all. They do not fight for the *independence* of the unions from the state, but instead, at most, for “autonomy” – allowing for capitalist government interference in the affairs of the labor movement. Pseudo-Trotskyist organizations like the MTS (Socialist Workers Movement) and Stalinists like the PCM(m-l) call for the election of more democratic slates, or “less charro”³ ones. The case of the ex-Maoists of Liberación Sindical in Lázaro Cárdenas is very illustrative in this respect. Calling for the removal of Napoleón Gómez Urrutia as secretary-general of the SNTMMSSRM, they ended up as allies of Elías Morales, the pawn that the Fox government used to carry out a *charrazo* against the *charro* Napito. This is what every brand of reformist “people’s politics” ultimately leads to.

One particular species of the flora and fauna of the pseudo-left is the Grupo Espartaquista de México (GEM, the Mexican section of the misnamed International Communist League, or Spartacist tendency), which in recent years has made “CTM socialism” its trademark.⁴ Abandoning the revolutionary program of Trotskyism in the mid-1990s, the GEM revised its former Marxist program that warned of the bourgeois character of the corporatist labor bodies integrated into the capitalist state apparatus. Now it treats them as unions like any other. When the reformist outfits do this, it is in order to sidle up to “democratic” union tendencies that trail after bourgeois populists like Andrés Manuel López Obrador and his MORENA party. In the case of the latter-day Spartacists of the GEM, this reflects not having the least interest in struggling within the working class for a revolutionary leadership.⁵

In an article on the strike in Lázaro

³ State-controlled “unions.” In 1948 the government sent hundreds of police and army troops to take over the historically militant railroad workers union, expelling and jailing the previous Communist Party leadership, and installing a puppet president, Jesús de León, known as *El Charro* (the Cowboy). This takeover became known as a *charrazo*.

⁴ The CTM (Mexican Labor Federation) is the main corporatist labor group in Mexico.

⁵ See “SL on Corporatism in Mexico: Games Centrists Play,” *The Internationalist* No. 35 (Summer 2013)



For a Nationwide Miners’ Strike!

In February 2008, the Grupo Internacionalista called for a national mine strike in defense of the heroic Cananea miners.

Cárdenas, under the headline “Mexican Steel Workers Win Strike” (*Workers Vanguard* No. 1090, 20 May 2016), the GEM presents the struggle as “a refreshing show of power [of] Local 271 of the Mexican mining and steel workers union”. The article in question presents not a word of criticism of the leadership of the SNTMMSSRM, nor does it raise to the workers of this important proletarian sector the need to struggle to smash the shackles of corporatism. The GEM also fails to present any perspective for extending the struggle beyond the limits of economic demands. As for the outcome, despite the admirable militancy of the rank and file during the strike, this was far from “refreshing,” nor did the workers “win” the strike. It was instead a standoff: as was put to us on a subsequent trip to Lázaro Cárdenas last December, “they strung the workers along.”

Presenting the strike in Lázaro Cárdenas as a victory, the GEM prettifies the leadership of Gómez Urrutia, parroting the affirmations of the bureaucracy (and the government). They don’t mention the 16 postponements of the strike by the national leadership of the Mine and Mill union, or its failed efforts to avoid the strike that were rejected by the bosses and the state labor board. They don’t mention that this leadership gave ArcelorMittal a list of 120 workers who could be fired. They don’t indicate that, with the agreement to end the strike, the SNTMMSSRM accepted the closure of the coke plant. And they pass over in silence the fact that 100 of the 300 workers threatened with layoff lost their jobs, “all for the good of the company.”

Along with embellishing the outcome of the strike, the GEM’s article revives its defense of the infamous “exclusion clause.” Far from being a stipulation that all workers in an establishment must be unionized (a “closed shop”), this clause has been used by the bosses and the corporatist leaders almost exclusively to purge dissidents. This was the case in Local 271 in Lázaro Cárdenas when various local leaders were fired at the instigation of the “union” boss Gómez Sada. What’s more, in Lázaro Cárdenas as in the oil workers “union” and many other sectors, the heads of the corporatist labor bodies (who use the exclusion clause to rid themselves of inconvenient “reds”) support the use of “casual” *non-union* labor and are even paid to supply them. The Grupo Internacionalista fights to impose the closed shop and the union hiring hall, and at the same time *we oppose all government regulation of union activities*, including this clause of the corporatist Federal Labor Law (see our article “ICL Supports Anti-Union Exclusion Clause in Mexico,” *The Internationalist* No. 11, Summer 2001).

In discussions with supporters of the Grupo Internacionalista, here and in the U.S., members of the GEM and SLers have pointed to the steel strike as a supposed refutation of our critique of corporatism. In reality it is yet another proof of how the lack of a sharp break with state control over the mine and mill workers union continues to undermine the proletarian class struggle.

That even a fully corporatist “union” may on rare occasions go on strike would not contradict its bourgeois character. There are fractures within the bourgeoisie that are reflected in the labor field. What stands out in the history of struggle in the

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Forge a Leninist-Trotskyist Revolutionary Workers Party!

Brazil: Mobilize the Working Class to Smash the “End of the World” Laws

We print below a translation of the leaflet of the *Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil*, section of the League for the Fourth International, for the March 15 nationwide work stoppage against the government’s anti-union laws.

Under the leadership of the CUT (United Labor Federation), Brazil’s nine labor federations have called a National Day of Work Stoppages and Struggle for March 15. Several key sectors, such as the powerful São Paulo teachers union, the APEOESP, a CUT affiliate, representing the largest teachers organization in Latin America; the São Paulo metro workers, who transport around 4 million passengers a day; and the metal workers of the ABC industrial stronghold have already announced their participation in the movement.

These indications alone, coming from the main components of the working class in São Paulo state, which is still considered the “economic engine” of Brazil, give an idea of the growing dissatisfaction against the government of Michel Temer around the country.

In his bag of dirty tricks, the worst is the feared Pension and Social Security Reform (Proposed Constitutional Amendment, or PEC, 287), which was announced by Temer with the assent of Congress and all the employer groups and state and municipal governments, including: Brazilian Bank Federation, Agricultural Parliamentary Front, National Industrial Federation, World Trade Organization, the São Paulo State Federation of Industries, the Rio de Janeiro state government, the Brazilian Chamber of the Construction Industry, the National Federation of Motor Vehicle Distributors, and various top executives.

It’s easy to understand that for the professional politicians of the bourgeoisie and the reformists, there is only one *sine qua non* condition: that capitalism must not die. In order to save it, any and all means are permitted, including:

- budget cuts;
- social security cuts;
- tariff barriers to limit the entry of the global glut of commodity production;
- nationalist policies that translate into protectionist customs duties for themselves and a globalized market for their goods compared to others;
- increasingly sophisticated arms exports in order to profit from war and keep corrupt allies in office;
- denial of global warming as a result of the emission of polluting gases in the atmosphere and acceptance of ecological crimes on the grounds that they produce value;
- a xenophobic attitude of pseudo-protection of national citizens and deporta-



Unions protest “end of the world” constitutional amendments slashing workers rights imposed by right wing unelected government resulting from impeachment.

- tion of foreigners;
- a posture of racist and sexist discrimination against minorities;
- exacerbating the extraction of relative surplus value translated into the incessant drive to raise productivity per capita based on “only those who produce more, in less time and with less workers” will survive, which is a cause of structural unemployment and the irreversible decline of the global mass of surplus value and the reproduction of value;
- rejection of any policy based on knowledge, enlightenment and humanism, which translates into promoting populist lies promising the heavens while barreling down the road to hell;
- fear-mongering that portrays the effects of the crisis of capitalism as the cause of the crisis (such as existence of mafias, urban death squads and bloodthirsty and repugnant fundamentalists like the Islamic State, Al Qaeda, Boko Haram, etc.);
- maliciously portraying odious political and private corruption with ever-dwindling public funds as the supposed fundamental or sole cause of the systemic crisis (with big media helping out by foisting this baloney on people).

These are only some of the bitter fruits of the process of impeachment of the worn-out popular front led by the reformist Workers Party (PT – Partido dos Trabalhadores), judged to be incapable of carrying out with sufficient rigor the attacks on the working people being demanded by key sectors of the bourgeoisie. This has now been replaced by a government, “elected” by the den of thieves that is the Federal Congress, which is vowing to finish the dirty work begun by PT leaders Lula da Silva and Dilma Rousseff. The outcome fully confirms the policy of the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil (Fourth Internationalist League of Brazil) when

we declared: “No to Impeachment! For Workers Mobilization Against the Rightist Bourgeois Offensive! No Political Support to the Bourgeois Popular Front Government!” (translated in *The Internationalist* No. 43, May-June 2016).

The New York Times Comments: The End of the World? In Brazil, It’s Already Here

The bundle of measures contained in the Temer government’s “budget adjustment” *pacotão* (blockbuster package), focused on “reforming” the social security system, follows another attack which promises to send shivers down the spine of the masses. So much so that in an article signed by Vanessa Bárbara and published in the *New York Times* (5 January) we read that the end of the world has already arrived in Brazil.

The columnist of *O Estado de S. Paulo* writes that “At least that’s what people here are saying. A constitutional amendment passed by the Senate last month is being called ‘the end of the world’ amendment by its opponents. Why? Because the consequences of the amendment look disastrous – and long lasting. It will impose a 20-year cap on all federal spending, including education and health care.”

The government has been justifying its measures as the supposed bitter medicine that has to be administered in order to “bring public spending into order.” (See our article “The Assault Is By the Entire Bourgeoisie Against the Working People,” leaflet of the Comitê de Luta Classista [Class Struggle Committee], April 2016.)

Nevertheless, there have been various demonstrations, all of them met with heavy repression. An opinion survey carried out last month found that only 24% supported the amendment, and around two-thirds of the population is against the “adjustments” (budget cuts). Brazilians went into

the street to express their disapproval, and as always they were met by the police with tear gas and other weapons. High school students occupied the schools in a second wave of such mobilizations – the first and successful wave was in São Paulo at the end of 2015, against the restructuring of the schools sought by Governor Geraldo Alckmin of the right-wing PSDB (Brazilian Social Democratic Party). (See the article by Class Struggle Education Workers, “Student Revolt Shakes São Paulo, Brazil,” *The Internationalist*, December 2015). This time, against the “End for the World” Constitutional Amendment, as it is popularly known, almost 1,000 schools walked out, many of them in the state of Paraná.

Even so, writes Vanessa Bárbara, “The government isn’t backing down. The ‘end of the world’ amendment is just one of many

neoliberal measures being pushed through by Michel Temer, the president.” He is well aware of his unpopularity. Many will not forgive him for having been vice president on the slate of Dilma Rousseff, who in fact won the October 2014 elections. However, Temer, who was one of the architects of the impeachment that overthrew Dilma, has to a certain extent been taking advantage of that unpopularity and using it in order to portray himself to big capital as the only one capable of implementing the undigestible reforms. Temer’s convenient belly-crawling – which he is using as a kind of a bargaining chip, seeking absolution for his electoral crimes in exchange for pushing through approval of the neoliberal budget cuts along the lines of those in Greece – increases every time to the extent he is cited by a suspect as part of a plea bargain deal in the so-called “Operation Car Wash” investigation.¹

Bárbara continues:

“The budget amendment, like many of Mr. Temer’s policies, will harm Brazil’s poorest and most vulnerable citizens for decades to come. This is not just the view of the president’s left-wing opponents. Philip Alston, the United Nations special rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, recently said that the measure will ‘lock in inadequate and rapidly dwindling expenditure on health care, education and social security, thus putting an entire generation at risk of social protection standards well below those currently in place.’

“Mr. Alston added that the law would place Brazil in a ‘socially retrogressive category all of its own.’ Which seems exactly where Mr. Temer and his allies want us to be.

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¹ For more on “Operation Car Wash,” see our article “For Class Struggle Against the Bonapartist Threat in Brazil,” *The Internationalist* No. 43, May-June 2016.

International Women's Day Sparked the 1917 Russian Revolution

International Women's Day was from its inception a working-class, socialist day of struggle, born out of the mass upsurge of women garment workers in New York fighting to unionize. And exactly 100 years ago, a strike and mass demonstration on International Women's Day resulted in the overthrow of the Russian tsar. This historic action set off the convulsive struggle that eight months later resulted in the 1917 October Revolution led by the Bolshevik party of Lenin and Trotsky.

"Red October" led to the establishment of the first workers state in history, which immediately proclaimed women's equality. From its very first days, the Soviet republic made enormous strides toward the social liberation of women and all the oppressed, facilitating divorce, beginning the work of establishing communal childcare, restaurants and laundries, eliminating laws against homosexuality, and enabling free abortion on demand, which we still fight for today.

This year on March 8, the Internationalist Clubs at the City University of New York held a forum on "Women & Revolution, 1917-2017." There were presentations on how women workers started the Russian Revolution and Bolshevik work among women, the role of women in the Mexican Revolution, and revolutionary strategy for women's liberation today.

We print below slightly expanded excerpts from the talk by Irina Langman of Class Struggle Education Workers, on the origins of International Women's Day and the role of women in the Russian Revolution.

International Women's Day is a revolutionary holiday of the working class of the entire world. It's also a holiday of both men and women. It is not a "sisterly" celebration of women, because there can never be a unity of classes under the oppression of the capitalist system. The liberation of women is only possible through socialist revolution. The question is posed to both men and women, and demands the participation of both sexes in the liberation of women.

This year is the hundredth anniversary of the Russian Revolution. It was the first successful socialist revolution in the entire world, that created the first workers state. It is crucial to understand how working women in Petrograd on February 23 (according to the Julian calendar, which is 13 days before the Gregorian calendar we use) started the Russian Revolution. So yes, Russian women started the Russian Revolution.

Before I get to that I want give a brief history. According to a number of reports, on March 8, 1908, socialist women in New York City organized a march of 18,000 women workers demanding higher pay, shorter hours, voting rights.

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Contingent of soldiers' wives at International Women's Day march in Petrograd in 1917 that brought out tens of thousands of women textile workers demanding increased rations and peace. They were joined by Putilov metal workers who launched a mass strike. The strikes and protests led to the overthrow of the tsar, marking the beginning the Russian Revolution.

They also demanded a stop to child labor. They went from the Lower East Side, where women garment workers worked, to Union Square where they had a meeting. Then in 1909, the Socialist Party of America called a National Women's Day for the last Sunday in February, which that year fell on February 28.

Later that year, there was a strike by mostly women workers against the Triangle Shirtwaist factory and other sweatshops that became known as the "Uprising of the 20,000." It was started by young women, some as young as 13, mostly Yiddish-speaking, immigrants from Poland and other parts of Europe. The uprising began in November and ended in February 1910 with a settlement that raised wages and cut hours. But it did not win union recognition.

Triangle Shirtwaist was one of the two biggest factories at the time, located on the top floors of a nine-story building that is now part of New York University. Young women who worked there had horrible conditions, not only overworked and underpaid – they worked about 52 hours a week and more, overtime was never paid – but the doors were locked from outside. They were locked so that workers wouldn't take breaks.

In the strike, women workers marched in very cold weather, some didn't have sturdy shoes. They endured taunts from a crowd, the bosses hired scabs. They were assaulted by police and arrested. And from their fathers and brothers they faced recrimination, because it was considered

"unladylike" to go on strike. There was a meeting in Carnegie Hall to protest police brutality. The women were sent to the workhouse on Welfare Island (now called Roosevelt Island). Many men workers said that the women emboldened them to come out on strike.

Triangle was one of the hardest anti-union employers, and did not sign the 1910 settlement. Then on March 28, 1911, the Triangle Shirtwaist fire broke out. It killed 146 young women and girls working there, who were burned or jumped to their death from the burning building, because the doors were locked and they couldn't escape. At that time in the garment industry there were many shops like that. The outrage over the fire spurred the growth of the International Ladies Garment Workers



Editorial board of Rabotnitsa (Woman Worker) 1917.

Union, the ILGWU.

Earlier, in August 1910, at the International Socialist Women's Conference prior to the congress of the Second International, German left-wing socialists Luise Zietz and Clara Zetkin proposed having an International Women's Day the next year. The central demand was for female suffrage, but the resolution insisted this had to be discussed in the context of the "whole woman's question, according to the socialist conception." They were fighting not just for women's right to vote, but for the overthrow of capitalism, for the abolition of wage slavery and of domestic slavery of women.

That first International Women's Day was held on March 19, 1911. On March 8, 1914 the German Social Democrats held International Women's Day, distributing a famous poster of a woman in black waving a red flag. The poster was seized by the police amid the hysteria leading up to

World War I, which broke out in August.

Russian Women Started the Russian Revolution

Lenin always insisted that the support and active participation of the masses of women workers and peasants was vital for the success of the Russian Revolution. International Women's Day was first celebrated in Russia in 1913. It was publicized in *Pravda*, which was the main organ of the Bolsheviks. After a while, *Pravda* devoted a special section to the woman question. They had so much correspondence that they decided to issue another publication, specifically on the oppression of women workers and peasants. So they decided to put out a journal, *Rabotnitsa*, which means Woman Worker, for International Women's Day 1914.

The editorial board included several famous women revolutionaries: Klavdia Nikolaeva, Praskovia Kudelli, Konkordiia Samoilova, Anna Yelizarova-Ulianova, Alexandra Kollontai, Liudmila Stal and Vera Velichkina (Bonch-Bruевич). They had two meetings before publication, and at the second meeting all the people present were arrested by the police, even though they had special permission from the governor to have a publication. But one person was late for the meeting, and that was Lenin's sister, Anna Yelizarova-Ulianova. So with very little time, under incredibly difficult conditions, she put out the first issue of the journal by herself, on March 8, 1914.

Rabotnitsa played a crucial role in politicizing masses of working women. It had a dual role: propaganda organ and organizer. Because of *Rabotnitsa*, actually, most of the working women came to be around the Bolsheviks and not the Mensheviks. Among the editors were Aleksandra Kollontai, who fought in international antiwar conferences against liberal pacifism and for the Bolshevik policy of civil war against the imperialist war; in 1915 she spoke on a platform in Chicago with American Social-



“For Women’s Right to Vote.” Poster for International Women’s Day 1914 in Germany. Police banned it from being used publicly.

ist Eugene Debs, who was later arrested for opposition to the war.

There was Inessa Armand, a French-Russian Bolshevik who was active in underground work and after the Revolution was a principal leader of the Moscow Bolsheviks and head of the Women’s Department (Zhenotdel) of the Central Committee of the All-Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik). She died in 1920 of cholera.

Larissa Reisner was an educator, a journalist, but also a political commissar in the Red Army. For crucial periods during the Civil War she was the commissar in charge of supervising the general staff of the Red Navy. On the barricades in Hamburg, she witnessed the failed German Revolution of 1923. She died in 1925 of typhus.

And there was Nadezhda Krupskaya, who became a Marxist at an early age, was Lenin’s wife and also secretary and main organizer of the Bolsheviks’ work in exile. She was also a Marxist educator, who wrote a book surveying all the educational reformers of the day in preparation for organizing schools in a post-revolutionary Russia – which she then did working with Antoly Lunacharsky in the commissariat of education, the Narkompros.

At the same time I wanted to talk a



March 8: Emancipated woman, help build socialism (1926)

little about feminism in Russia. Feminism made its appearance in Russia pretty early, around 1905, and there were two major feminist organizations. There’s a very big difference between feminism and Bolshevism. The fundamental social distinction as seen by feminists is the distinction of sex. Most of the demands of feminists were about getting as much political power as men, and then they would enact some reforms. The Bolsheviks said it was not just a question of women against men, and they were not against reforms per se. However, the Bolsheviks upheld the Marxist analysis of women’s oppression, and that the participation of both sexes was important for the liberation of women, which can only be achieved through socialist revolution.

On the role of women in the Russian Revolution, International Women’s Day 1917 is where it all began. It was a very hard time, Russia was already three years into the war. There was terrible privation. Women demanded increased rations, which were already pretty sparse, and there was a rumor that they were going to be cut. So on International Women’s Day women workers, and also soldiers’ wives, went into the streets demanding bread, an end to the war and down with the tsar.

They were joined by male workers, mostly metal workers. An interesting account at the time was by a man at the Nobel Engineering Works, who wrote: “We could hear women’s voices in the lane overlooked by the windows of our department. ‘Down with high prices! Down with hunger! Bread for the workers!’ I and several comrades rushed to the windows.... Masses of women workers in a militant frame of mind filled the lane. Those who caught sight of us began to wave their arms, shouting ‘Come out! Stop work!’ Snowballs flew through the windows. We decided to join the demonstration.”

By the end of the day there were about 100,000 workers on strike, the next day it was 150,000. By March 11, the government was paralyzed. The tsar, who was near St. Petersburg, issued the order for the regiment of reserves to “discipline” the workers. This time, in 1917, three years into the war, the soldiers did not want to go back and fight. They’d had enough, enough of hunger and cold and war. The soldiers turned against these orders and joined the women.

In his *History of the Russian Revolution* (1930), Leon Trotsky wrote:

“A great role is played by women workers in relationship between workers and soldiers. They go up to the cordons more boldly than men, take hold of the rifles, beseech, almost command: ‘Put down your bayonets – join us.’ The soldiers are excited, ashamed, exchange anxious glances, waver; someone makes up his mind first, and the bayonets rise guiltily above the shoulders of the advancing crowd. The barrier is opened, a joyous and grateful ‘Hurrah!’ shakes the air.”

This was amazing. It was really brave, facing those soldiers with bayonets and actually turning them aside.

Soon after, the tsar abdicated. A Provisional Government was installed which consisted of Mensheviks, Social Revolutionaries (SRs) and ten bourgeois ministers. So what we had was an incomplete revolution. The demands of the women, workers and soldiers for peace and bread were not met. The Bolsheviks under Lenin



Women Red Guard soldiers during the Russian Revolution.

and Trotsky became hardened politically. Now you had a different slogan, “All power to the Soviets.” And “Down with the capitalist ministers.”

From February to July, people were realizing that whatever was put in place, it was not their revolution. They tried, and they brought to an end 300 years of the Romanov dynasty, but their broader demands were not met. In the July Days there was a spontaneous uprising. However, it was not planned and conditions were not ripe.

On November 7, 1917, the proletariat seized power under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party of Vladimir Lenin and Leon Trotsky. (It is called the “October Revolution” because it occurred on October 25 according to the old Russian calendar.) Lenin pledged that “the first dictatorship of the proletariat” – that is, the revolutionary workers state that replaces the dictatorship of capital – “is a real pioneer in establishing social equality for women. It is clearing away more prejudices than could volumes of feminist literature.” And it did.

Numerous pieces of legislation after seizing power were directed toward the emancipation of women, far exceeding the reformist demands of the suffragettes. For example, equal education and vocational opportunity; legalizing abortion; marriage contract between two free and equal people, that could be dissolved if one of the two decides to dissolve it; abolition of illegitimacy, and the woman has the right to sue for child support; equal pay for equal work; opportunities for women in industry, the party and government. Women joined the Red Guards and defended the revolution against the counterrevolution.

Rabotnitsa continued to be published, now under the direction of Zhenotdel, the Bolshevik Central Committee’s department for work among women, which had been proposed by Inessa Armand and Konkordiia Samoilova, who was the founding editor of *Pravda*. Women were often among the more backward sectors of society, because they had been denied rights: most of them were illiterate. So it was necessary to create special institutions to take account of the special oppression of women. Zhenotdel put the Bolshevik program of women’s liberation through socialist revolution into practice. They organized conferences, published leaflets, pamphlets, weekly bulletins and monthly journals – a lot of work –and they were represented on the Bolshevik Central Committee.

Some of women’s social gains con-

tinued, and were extended to remote regions, notably in the Soviet East, even after Lenin’s death in January 1924. Yet capitalist encirclement and intervention, poverty, and the ravages of WWI and the Civil War, led to the rise of a conservative nationalist caste under Josef Stalin. This led to the loss of some important gains, as well as the dissolution of Zhenotdel in 1930. The Bolshevik-Leninists led by Trotsky defended the Soviet workers state, despite its bureaucratic degeneration, while fighting for a proletarian political revolution to revive workers democracy and the program of world revolution. You can read more about all this in the Internationalist pamphlet *Bolsheviks and the Liberation of Women*.

The Bolshevik program for women’s liberation, and the heroic example of those who fought for it under the most difficult conditions of tsarist repression, underground work, imperialist war, revolution and civil war, continue to inspire us today. At the end I would like to finish with this quote from Alexandra Kollontai, in her 1920 article on the origins of International Women’s Day: “Down with the world of property and the power of capital! Away with inequality, lack of rights and the oppression of women – the legacy of the bourgeois world! Forward to the international unity of working women and male workers in struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat of both sexes!” ■



Early Soviet poster: “March 8 is a day of working women’s revolt against the tyranny of the kitchen. Down with the oppression and philistinism of household life!”

Italian Trotskyists on International Women's Day

Revolutionary Struggle for Women's Liberation Not (Capitalist) Welfare State Feminism

This article is translated from the upcoming issue of L'internazionalista, the newspaper of the Nucleo Internazionalista d'Italia, section of the League for the Fourth International.

International Women's Day, March 8, was from its inception in 1909 a proletarian day of struggle, initiated by socialists and born of the bitter strike and unionization struggles waged by women garment workers in New York City. A century ago this year, an uprising that began on International Women's Day brought down the Russian tsar and led to the October 1917 Bolshevik Revolution and the founding of the first workers state in history. Red October led not only to a vast expansion of the rights of women but to a planned economy that began to lay the basis for overcoming the material basis of women's oppression. It remains the beacon showing the way forward to achieve the emancipation of all the oppressed: **For women's liberation through socialist revolution!**

The "global women's strike" called by feminist groups this past March 8 had a very different character. This varied from country to country. In the United States, protests were marked above all by opposition to the Republican president and notorious sexist Donald Trump, as the Democratic Party hides behind the screen of women's protests. Elsewhere in the world, there were marches and protests in more than 40 countries inspired by the Ni Una Menos (Not One Less) movement in Argentina, which organized mass protests in 2015 and 2016 following grisly gang rapes and murders of young women. This movement has been hailed by many on the left as the beginning of a new wave of radical feminism.

In Italy on March 8, the Casa delle Donne (House of Women) centers promoted demonstrations of over 20,000 marchers in Rome, 10,000 in Milano and thousands more in other major cities. In Rome, a number of leftist "rank-and-file" unions struck (USB, Cobas, SLAI-Cobas, etc.), as did the teachers union affiliated to the CGIL labor federation, and some mass transit shut down. Like the huge demonstration of over 100,000 protesters in the capital last November 26, the main focus was on individual "masculine violence against women," and the appeal was to the capitalist state. Non Una di Meno, affiliated with the Argentine Ni Una Menos, called on the United Nations and the European Court of Human Rights to protect women, and organized meetings with bourgeois women politicians.

Naturally, bourgeois forces sought to make the most of this. The president of the Chamber of Deputies, Laura Boldrini, had the Italian flags at Montecitorio (the seat of parliament) lowered to half-mast; the ex-Forza Italia¹ president of the Republic, Sergio Mattarella, uttered pious words against violence against women; and the Democratic Party mayor of Milano declared that "pink quotients [of women] are no longer enough." The police in Bologna even got

¹ "Go Italy," the party of rightist former prime minister, media mogul and owner of the A.C. Milan football (soccer) team Silvio Berlusconi.



Twenty thousand march in Rome starting at the Colosseum on International Women's Day, March 8.

in on the "anti-violence" act, organizing an initiative called "This is not love." Nondasola (12 March), a web site associated with Non Una di Meno, wrote: "It is a serious responsibility of the state to put into play everything that is necessary to prevent, watch over and protect women from violence."

Rather than putting forward a program for revolutionary struggle *against* the capitalist state – that machinery of the ruling class for the violent imposition of its rule on workers, women and all the oppressed – these feminists seek to *work with* the state. The platform of Non Una di Meno, "Eight Points for 8 March," calls for a "self-determination income," that is, a guaranteed income to enable women to escape from violent relationships, and "welfare for all, based on women's needs, which frees them from the obligation to work more and more."

When in the "Eight Points" they call for public schools to be "a crucial nexus to prevent and combat male violence against women," and when they call to eradicate "misogynist, sexist, racist stereotypes" in the media, they spread the illusion that this could be realized under capitalism as a matter of education. How would that be done? Here is what they say: "We demand of the government immediate action to set up a Media Watchdog capable of intervening and preventing sexism in the media" (Non Una di Meno, "It's Not (Just) the RAI," 24 March). So they are calling on the government to exercise feminist censorship of the media! All of these calls look to the bourgeois state as a friend or ally, a partner of women rather than the main enemy.

In short, what the organizers seek is a kind of capitalist welfare-state feminism. While raising some correct and necessary demands, such as for free abortion on demand and an end to the "conscientious objector" clause in Law 194 (which allows

doctors and hospitals to subvert the right to abortion), the platform places this in a purely bourgeois-democratic framework. Theirs is a utopian reformist and social-democratic program that would subordinate the struggle for women's rights to the capitalist state, the biggest enemy of women. And it ignores basic economic demands which go beyond the limits of capitalism, including collectivization of housework, childcare and food service, which are crucial to liberating working women from all-sided social oppression.

Unsurprisingly, the welfare state feminists of Non Una di Meno are viscerally anti-communist, demanding that unions and parties not bring their symbols and banners on the marches (i.e., no red flags or hammers and sickles). But this hasn't stopped opportunist left groups from hailing them. The Partito dell'Alternativa Comunista (PdAC, Communist Alternative Party, part of the international current of followers of the late Nahuel Moreno, the LIT) emphatically "welcomed" Non Una di Meno, although it called the leadership "feminist" and "reformist," and considered the banner a "step backward." But the Morenoites are themselves feminists and reformists, and class collaboration is their stock-in-trade.

The Partito Comunista dei Lavoratori (PCL – Worker Communist Party, until now linked to Jorge Altamira's Argentine Partido Obrero) adopts a slightly more left posture in the feminist framework. On the eve of last year's demonstration in Rome against male violence, the PCL put out a declaration (21 November 2016) calling "For the construction of a radical, anti-capitalist and anticlerical feminism." Although their women comrades reportedly were undemocratically treated at a February 2-3 national meeting of Non Una di Meno, the PCL's response was to issue a parallel "Eight Class Points for March 8," trying to put a working-class veneer on

feminism by adding calls for abolishing the Jobs Act (which has led to the spread of short-term employment contracts), restoring Article 18 (against mass layoffs) and the like.

In the media, the word "feminist" is often loosely used to refer to anyone who supports women's rights – or who falsely claims to do so. But feminism is a political program, which by its very nature is *bourgeois*, as are all forms of "identity politics." It is counterposed to the *revolutionary working-class* politics of Marxism. Posing gender as the fundamental dividing line in society – in some places underlining this by excluding males from March 8 protests, or ordering them to march at the back – it diverts the struggle from the source of women's oppression, *capitalism*.

And this is true of all "feminisms." Tacking a few "pro-worker" reform demands and the adjective "anti-capitalist" (or "proletarian" or "socialist") onto a feminist program, even throwing in a reference to an eventual "radical transformation of society," at most makes it a formula for reformist class collaboration. By focusing on demands to make capitalism more palatable, especially for certain layers of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois women, *feminism is counterposed to the genuine liberation of women, and of poor and working women in particular.*

The focus on what is being called "femicide" is not because women are murdered more often than men (the opposite is the case: the murder rate for men is more than twice as high as for women in Italy, five times as high in the U.S. and six times as high in Argentina). Nor has there been a sudden increase in murders of women (in Italy and the U.S. they have fallen in the last decade). On the other hand, one place where the murder rate – including notably of women – has gone up is in Mexico, where



Thousands of low-paid, on-call cafeteria and cleaning workers, mostly women, struck across Italy on March 31. To defeat outsourcing and win a real national contract requires united action by all workers in hospitals and universities backed by industrial unions.

it more than doubled from 2005 to 2012. The reason is the deadly “war on drugs,” in which women have been wantonly mowed down by army, police and drug traffickers alike. Even so, men are *ten times* as likely as women to be murdered in Mexico.

The campaign about “femicide” is a feminist political choice. It focuses on one important aspect of women’s oppression where the direct oppressors *are* individual men, namely domestic violence. While far fewer women are murdered than men, women are more likely to be the victims of violent attacks, particularly in the home. But even at that level, the feminists have no real program to fight it. Calling the police against an abusive companion in Mexico could be suicidal, as police might well side with the perpetrator and have notoriously been implicated in sexual abuse, rapes and murders of women. For black people in the U.S., it often leads to police murder of the man, and sometimes of the female victim.

For similar reasons, women in anti-violence centers in Italy don’t want the police showing up there. The bourgeois courts that manage “family rights” can even take the children away from both mother and father to place them in foster care (as happened with a poor couple of Casale Monferrato, solely for being “too old”). The same “justice” system condemns the poor to life imprisonment and absolves the mega-thieves in coat and tie.

The locus and source of domestic violence is *the institution of the family*, the fundamental social unit of bourgeois society. But most feminists don’t want to call for replacing the family, and these days are even leery of challenging “family values.” For one thing, that means directly taking on the Catholic church, which is a prime perpetrator of women’s oppression, for centuries counseling women to submit to abusive relationships. Yet the first Ni Una Menos demonstration in Argentina was not only endorsed by bourgeois politicians *but also by the Church*, the same clerical hierarchy (including the current Pope Francis) which covered for the military junta’s theft of children of leftists it murdered. But most importantly the issue of domestic violence against women poses the need for a socialist revolution to provide the material basis for overcoming the economic dependence inherent in the family under capitalism.

Marxists fight for replacement of the family by socializing household tasks, child-rearing and food service. Feminists

do not call for this. If they talk of a “patriarchal family” it is because they hold that “another family is possible,” so to speak, an equitable, non-patriarchal family, just as the anti-globalization protesters declared “another world is possible” *under capitalism*. These are fatal illusions. Even such palliatives as the “self-determination income” (a/k/a “citizenship income” or guaranteed income such as is being talked about in the European parliament) is no answer. Like reformist schemes of “wages for housework,” if implemented this would not only reinforce women’s traditional roles and subjugation to household labor, but likely further remove women from social labor, *blocking* emancipation from domestic confinement.

Capitalist Economic Crisis Takes Toll on Women

The world capitalist economic crisis has eroded the living conditions of working people in Italy and elsewhere, and increased the number of unemployed, poor and elderly people without economic resources, and the scarcity of health care. The bourgeoisie’s decades-long policies of “blood and tears,” of brutal “austerity” for the poor and working class and obscene enrichment for the bosses, has worsened since the onset of the depression in 2007-08. There have been cuts to pensions and welfare and increasing restrictions on the right to abortion. The progressive dismantling of the health-care system and social services means that most of the burden for the care of the infirm, elderly and children falls on the shoulders of women.

When there are setbacks for the working class, women are hit the hardest. Childcare facilities have been reduced and are increasingly unaffordable. Unemployment is massive, especially for youth, but it is even worse for women who are often the last hired and first fired. Wages have been lowered overall, and are even lower for women; pensions are increasingly hard to obtain, but this is even more difficult for women, especially given their greater family burdens; the Jobs Act together with other measures have made job insecurity almost universal, but it is worse for women. Women make up a disproportionate share of part-time workers, and are over half of those receiving “vouchers” (low-paying job “contracts” limited to a few hours).

Thus while female workers earn on average 17% less than their male counterparts for the same jobs, overall women make

42% less than men, because they make up a disproportionate share of involuntarily part-time workers who would like a full-time job. A significant number of them are single mothers, and many lost full-time jobs when they became pregnant: just in 2008-2009, some 800,000 mothers reported being fired after becoming pregnant. At the time of hiring, many are asked to sign resignations, to be activated in case of pregnancy. Or they are not hired at all. Meanwhile, divorce and litigations over alimony, child support or custody cause great tensions in families, especially the poorest. Moreover, domestic abuse increases sharply in times of economic distress. And then women pay the greatest price as victims of domestic violence.

How to resolve this is no mystery. In the 1930s Great Depression, Leon Trotsky put forward the demand for a *sliding scale of wages and hours*, to reduce the workweek with no loss in pay, to provide work for all. But this will not come through “enlightened” legislation in the bourgeois parliaments or amicable negotiation with employers. Even the modest reduction of the workweek in France from 39 to 35 hours (the Loi Aubry enacted in 2000) is now being undone as the profit-bloated bosses cry poverty. That law hardly made a dent in mass unemployment, but slashing the workweek to 25 hours with no pay cut would be quite different. Naturally, the bosses oppose it: they need what Marx called a “reserve army of the unemployed,” to keep wages down.

Trotskyists also fight for *free, 24-hour childcare and laundries*; for *low-price, high-quality dining facilities* serving the poor and working people; for *massive programs of public works under workers control*; for the *right to public housing*, with adequate bedrooms for children; for *free, high-quality medical care* (socialized medicine) and *free mass transit*. Such demands are key to genuine liberation of working women. They point to a centrally planned, collectivized, socialist economy in which production is determined by social need, not profitability in the capitalist market. That is why such demands can only be won by hard class struggle leading to socialist revolution. That was the point of Trotsky’s 1938 Transitional Program which we fight for today.

For Free Abortion on Demand – Eliminate the “Conscientious Objector” Clause

The question of abortion is a key issue for women, and a lightning rod for the forces of reaction who would keep them in thrall.

The grim reality for working-class and oppressed women in Italy has fueled widespread anger and indignation over how the “conscientious objector” clause reportedly caused the death of 32-year-old Valentina Miluzzo at the Cannizzaro hospital in Catania, Sicily. Pregnant with twins, Valentina was at the hospital last October 15 with a high fever, pain and low blood pressure and was suffering a spontaneous abortion. In two interviews Valentina’s husband said, “That doctor told me that he was an objector and couldn’t intervene as long as there was life in those fetuses, he told me this while my wife screamed in pain. He said this to me and other people....” She died some hours later.

Over 70% of gynecologists and almost half of anesthetists and non-medical personnel are “conscientious objectors.” These figures are much higher in the south of Italy, while less than two-thirds of hospitals with

gynecology departments nationwide provide any abortion service at all. The capacity of these medical “conscientious objectors” to overcome their “moral scruples” to practice abortions in private clinics for large sums of money is well known. In the 1970s this capacity earned them the name of “*cucchiai d’oro*” (golden spoons).

Hospital directors and others in positions of power in the health system are often chosen on a political basis under the patronage system. A key criterion is willingness to wage anti-abortion crusades. A highly visible example of this is Roberto Formigoni, president of the Lombardia region from 1995 to 2013 and also a leader of Comunione e Liberazione (Communion and Liberation, a major clerical-reactionary lobby). Formigoni’s CL followers at the Mangiagalli hospital in Milano persecuted doctors who performed abortions. This led to a long trial with criminal charges being brought against six doctors. The message was very clear: doctors and medical staff who refuse to declare themselves to be “conscientious objectors” can seriously risk their career, maybe their job, and could even end up in prison.

The present Law 194 which regulates abortion was approved in May 1978 in a tumultuous period when the working class was demonstrating some real social power and large parts of society were in open revolt. The “conscientious objector” clause, along with other restrictions sharply limiting the right to abortion, were the result of the class-collaborationist betrayal of the Stalinists of the Communist Party (PCI). At the time, the PCI was supporting the government of Christian Democrat Giulio Andreotti. It also backed the “anti-terrorist” Reale Law that threw hundreds of leftist militants into prison, and called on PCI members to act as government spies. All of this was done in the name of its “Historic Compromise” with capitalism, which meant conciliation with the Christian Democrats, the Vatican and NATO. Women and many others are still paying the price of this betrayal.

Three years later, in 1981, the PCI opposed the referendum proposed by the bourgeois Radical Party that would have significantly extended access to abortion. Authentic Trotskyists called to vote “yes” but various feminists and the Lega Comunista Rivoluzionaria (present-day Sinistra Anti-Capitalista [Anti-Capitalist Left], Italian followers of the late Ernest Mandel), tailing after the PCI, opposed the referendum. In this country of the Vatican, the elementary principle of separation of the church and state, raised by the bourgeois-democratic revolutions, is rejected by the constitution. The PCI of long-time Stalinist leader Palmiro Togliatti insisted that the infamous Lateran Treaty agreed to by Mussolini and Pope Pius XI in 1929 be incorporated into the constitution, thereby guaranteeing widespread privileges for the state religion, which still very much exist today.

The reality is that getting an abortion in Italy today is very difficult or impossible for working-class and poorer women and most minors. Those who can afford it can travel to Britain, but many others have died as a result of clandestine abortions that put their very lives at risk. We demand: **Church out of the hospitals, schools and bedrooms! For complete separation of church and state! Down with the Lateran Treaty and the Concordat with the Vatican! Abolish the “conscientious objector” clause! For free abortion on demand!**

The Internationalist

The Material Basis of Women's Oppression ... and Liberation

The utopian socialist Charles Fourier commented in the early 19th century that the level of progress of a society can be measured by the degree of freedom that women have in it. The struggle for women's liberation is an integral and inseparable part of the struggle for socialist revolution. The defense of even basic democratic rights like abortion, childcare and maternity leave necessarily means a confrontation with the capitalist state and the entrenched power of the Vatican and requires a class-struggle mobilization. Only the overthrow of capitalism by workers revolution will guarantee these rights and lay the material basis for the full emancipation of women.

As Friedrich Engels wrote in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1883), the material roots of women's oppression are inextricably linked to the early division of human society into classes. Women's oppression began with the beginning of class society and private property, particularly with agriculture and the domestication of animals, when there was an accumulation of wealth for the first time. The new patriarchal families were economic units established in order to assure a certain line of descent to pass on wealth through inheritance. There was a division of labor in the family: men were the owners and women would do the childrearing and domestic chores and be the means of reproduction – hardly a free loving relationship.

Over the centuries, as the mode of production changed from slavery to serfdom to mercantile capitalism, the nature of the family changed. As a money economy spread, the formation of families became an economic transaction, with dowries and bride prices. Under industrial capitalism, the family ceased to be a unit of production and began to break down, especially among the proletarians. But it continues to be upheld as a standard today by reactionary forces seeking to foist stultifying bourgeois morality on the “lower orders.” Thus, even as women entered the workforce, engaging in social labor which represented an enormous step forward, they still bear the burden of domestic labor, the infamous “double shift” which drives many to distraction.

True emancipation of women is impossible in a society based on the oppressive institution of the family. The precondition for the liberation of women is replacing of the family as an economic unit with the socialization of domestic work. As Bolshevik leader Alexandra Kollontai wrote in “Communism and the Family” (1920):

“Instead of the working woman having to struggle with the cooking and spend her last free hours in the kitchen preparing dinner and supper, communist society will organize public restaurants and communal kitchens.... Communism liberates woman from her domestic slavery and makes her life richer and happier....

“The family is withering away not because it is being forcibly destroyed by the state, but because the family is ceasing to be a necessity.... In place of the old relationship between men and women, a new one is developing: a union of affection and comradeship, a union of two equal members of communist society, both of them free, both of them

Italy's “Fertility Day”: Mussolini-Style Campaign Revived

The following article is translated from the upcoming issue of L'internazionalista, published by the Nucleo Internazionalista d'Italia, section of the League for the Fourth International.

The Italian minister of health Beatrice Lorenzin declared last September 22 to be “Fertility Day,” in which women were exhorted to have more children. Its declared purpose was to counter “the danger of falling birth rates in our country.” An ad showed a woman with an hourglass symbolizing the “biological clock.” The slogan read, “Beauty has no age limit. Fertility does.” In addition to being ludicrously ineffective, the whole business recalled campaigns in Mussolini's fascist regime for women to produce more babies for the fatherland. Meanwhile, it provided ideological support and justification for capitalism's endless attacks on women and women's rights.

The Mussolini-style propaganda in the ministerial document produced for the occasion included such statements as: “What can be done, anyway, when faced with a society that has escorted women out of the house and opened the doors of the world of work to them, but driven them toward masculine roles that have distanced them from the very desire of maternity?” Or “The increased educational level for women has had the effect of both delaying the formation of new nuclear families and of putting less psychological investment into them.” So the Democratic Party-led government (and its ex-Forza Italia minister) want women ignorant and pregnant!

Mussolini's regime deliberately kept women from public life and relegated them to the family and motherhood. It railed against “decadent” liberal and foreign (especially Bolshevik) cultures which removed women from “their place” in the family and gave them “masculine” roles (like jobs and other activities

independent and both of them workers. No more domestic bondage for women. No more inequality within the family. No need for women to fear being left without support and with children to bring up.”

Today there is a widespread awareness that the oppression of women is not simply due to the individual attitudes of sexist men but is a social question that is deeply ingrained in society. Even so, a sectoralist view predominates in the Italian left that women must fight for women's rights and minorities and gays and others for theirs. As a result of being marginalized in leftist organizations, many women feel it necessary to organize separately in order to fight against their oppression. This may be understandable, but it is inimical to genuine liberation for women, which requires the common struggle of all oppressed and working people.

In Italy, immigrant women are triply exploited and oppressed: as workers, as immigrants and as women. With the notable and honorable exception of the SI Cobas union, which has been fighting to organize



Twitter/FertilityDay

“Fertility Day” throwback to Mussolini.

outside the home). The fascists completely banned abortion, calling it a “crime against the state,” and also banned contraceptives in 1926. Lately, Italy's governments have put increasing restrictions on abortion and recently reclassified contraceptives (from category A to category C), thereby making them much more expensive.

Moreover, the cover for the ministerial pamphlet for “Fertility Day” was blatantly racist. Titled “Correct life styles for the prevention of sterility and infertility” it showed two groups of people. The first was all smiling white people frolicking at the seashore, captioned “good habits to emulate.” The second group included blacks and people apparently smoking marijuana, with the caption, “bad ‘companions’ to abandon.” This filth is implicit propaganda against “race mixing.” In fact, the whole campaign was shot through with racism: they blame Italian women for not producing enough white babies.

Like Mussolini, Hitler held that women should be devoted to “Kinder, Küche, Kirche” (children, the kitchen and the church), a formula dating back to Kaiser Wilhelm. All three wanted more soldiers (cannon fodder). Today, European bourgeoisies are in a panic about low birth rates leading to an aging population, where lack of young workers could spell economic collapse. European rulers had

the same concerns in the 1930s Great Depression, and not just the fascist regimes. Sweden's social-democratic “welfare state,” including childcare and maternity subsidies, goes back to that time. Its aim: to supply future wage slaves for Swedish capital.

The demographic frenzy of the Italian bourgeoisie reflects the economic realities of crisis-ridden European capitalism. The reason is simple: working people can't afford to have children. Unemployment for young people (under the age of 25) is over 40%; those who have jobs only have short-term contracts, or vouchers; social programs are constantly being cut back, and pensions have been pulverized. In France, with a more extensive social safety net, the birth rate is near replacement levels. In Germany, when the government tripled the number of daycare centers in the East, the number of babies shot up.

But it is precisely those kinds of programs that are on the chopping block as the Eurobankers tighten the screws on Italy, just as they did before on Greece. And that would also be the case if Italy left the European Union: whether under the euro or the lira, Italian and European capitalism is bankrupt. Even should some social programs be miraculously restored, working women will still be oppressed by wage discrimination, housing shortage, and the double shift inherent in the family, the social unit of the bourgeois order. The fiasco of “Fertility Day” underlines that, crisis or not, in “good times” or bad, women will always bear the brunt of capitalism's ills.

It will take nothing short of the overthrow of the capitalist system of production for profit and the institution of a planned economy based on fulfilling human needs to socialize household tasks and lay the economic basis for emancipating all the oppressed. For women's liberation through socialist revolution! ■

brutally exploited logistics and agricultural workers, nobody else on the left talks much about this. The Nucleo Internazionalista is the Italian section of the League for the Fourth International, which has concentrated much of its work in immigrant and minority milieus. Last August, a transitional organization of immigrant workers linked to the Internationalist Group, Trabajadores Internacionales Clasistas (Class Struggle International Workers), was formed in New York which included a section of its program titled “Women's Liberation: Duty of All Workers”:

“March 8 is International Women's Day, commemorating the deaths of over 100 immigrant women workers in the Triangle Shirtwaist factory fire in New York in 1911, which was the spark for the unionization of the garment industry. Women workers shoulder a double workday, on the job and both before and afterwards at home, where they are burdened with the responsibility for domestic labor in the family. They are constantly hounded by sexual harassment and unequal treatment. They are even denied control over their own

bodies. Trabajadores Internacionales Clasistas fights for equal pay for equal work. Around the world, we fight for free abortion on demand, at the sole decision of the woman. We demand free, 24-hour child care. Along with machismo, homophobic prejudices are a weapon of the exploiting class: every class-conscious worker is duty-bound to defend the democratic rights of gays, lesbians, transgender people and all the oppressed.”

The fight for women's liberation is an integral part of the class struggle. To lead this class struggle, a Leninist vanguard party of the proletariat must be built which can act as a “tribune of the people.” As Lenin wrote in *What Is To Be Done?* it must put itself at the head of and be the defender of all the oppressed and exploited. In a genuinely Leninist party the entire organization is mobilized to fight against women's oppression. Only by fighting for the liberation of women, for genuine equal rights for gays and lesbians, for full citizenship rights for all immigrants with or without “papers,” can such a genuinely communist party lead the fight for workers power. ■

The Italian Left and Abortion in Poland: A Case of Self-Amnestying Amnesia

The following article is translated from the upcoming issue of *L'Internazionalista*, published by the our comrades of the *Nucleo Internazionalista d'Italia*.

The entire Italian left hailed the large-scale strike and protest by Polish women last October 3 against a bill that would have outlawed abortion in virtually all cases. The massive demonstrations brought hundreds of thousands into the streets in Warsaw and Lodz and effectively shut down a number of establishments. The clerical-reactionary Law and Justice Party (PiS) government backed off and the Sejm (Poland's parliament) overwhelmingly voted down the draconian legislation. But that still leaves in place the existing law, one of the most restrictive in Europe, which bans abortion except in the case of rape or incest, danger to the woman's life or severe fetal malformation.

The October 3 mobilization was an important, though limited, victory against attempts to further roll back women's rights. It was hardly radical: called by the petty-bourgeois "progressive" party Razem (Together), the protest only took off when it got the backing of the Christian Democrats of the Civic Platform of European Union president Donald Tusk, which ruled Poland from 2007 to 2015, and of the new liberal (conservative) bourgeois Modern Party.

But in hailing it, leftists around the world uniformly leave out an important fact: *up to 1990, Polish women had the right to abortion almost without restrictions* (a clause in the 1956 law permitting abortion if the woman faced "difficult living conditions" was increasingly liberally interpreted). The law was changed as part of the counterrevolution led by Solidarność (Solidarity), the anti-Communist "trade union" that was a vehicle for anti-Soviet Polish nationalism and Catholic reaction. The omission of this crucial fact is not accidental. It reflects the collective amnesia of the opportunist pseudo-socialists who supported Solidarność to the hilt.

Virtually the entire Italian left is responsible for having aided the abolition of Polish women's right to abortion. Their pious declarations today of support for women's rights are belied by that historic crime. Their silence about how abortion came to be banned in Poland is a self-amnesty.

How did this come about? After World War II, the supposedly "democratic" imperialists launched a Cold War against the Soviet Union, which had borne the brunt of the fighting and suffered the largest number of casualties (over 20 million), and whose Red Army smashed Hitler's Nazi regime. Representing the political continuity of the Bolsheviks under Lenin and Trotsky, the Fourth International defended the bureaucratically degenerated and deformed workers states of the Soviet bloc against imperialism and internal counterrevolution, while calling for proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist misleaders, as the League for the Fourth International likewise does today with the remaining deformed workers states, from China and North Korea to Vietnam and Cuba.

Some opportunists fled from the Trotskyist movement in the early stages of the Cold War, refusing to defend the Soviet Union and China during the Korean War that



Workers attend mass in Lenin shipyards in August 1980 strike. When Polish nationalist Solidarność won in 1989, right to abortion was the first casualty.

began in 1950. After the defeat of U.S. imperialism in Vietnam in 1975, following a brief period of "détente" the imperialist masters in Washington launched a new anti-Soviet offensive that culminated in the counterrevolution that from 1989 to 1992 swept through the Soviet bloc, ultimately leading to the overthrow of the USSR itself. The first front was in Afghanistan, where Soviet intervention in 1979 sought to prop up the government in Kabul that had been weakened by reactionary revolts against its modest reforms. Again the opportunists deserted.

In the West, social democrats and "Eurocommunists" and a host of pseudo-Trotskyists joined the imperialists in denouncing "Soviet aggression," although it was obvious at the time – and has since been definitively proven – that the CIA had poured money and arms into the country to instigate the revolt well before the Soviets intervened. Over the next decade Washington mounted its biggest clandestine operation in history, financing, arming and training Islamic fundamentalist *mujahedin*, including one Osama Bin Laden, to wage holy war against the "Communist infidels." While the Soviet-backed Afghan government extended education to girls, the U.S.-backed "holy warriors" shot teachers.

The authentic Trotskyists, then represented by the international Spartacist tendency, proclaimed "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!" Soviet intervention was a rare progressive step by Moscow that could open the way to extending the gains of the October Revolution to the Afghan peoples as had occurred with Soviet Central Asia. But the Kremlin didn't want this intervention, which it saw forced on it by the CIA's intrigues, and eventually Mikhail Gorbachev pulled Soviet troops out in 1989. At that point we offered to send an international brigade to fight on the side of the Kabul regime against the U.S.-backed *mujahedin*. An Italian comrade was dispatched to Afghanistan to report on the struggle, highlighting the resistance of Afghan women.¹ But the offer was turned down.

¹ See "Front Line Afghanistan," *Workers Vanguard* No. 482, 21 July 1989, and also "Eye-witness Kabul: Afghan Women Fight for Their Lives," *Workers Vanguard* No. 477, 12 May 1989.

A second hot spot of this Cold War II came in Poland, with the rise of Solidarność in 1980. By 1981 it had clearly come under imperialist control. Almost without exception, the left in the West flocked to the Solidarność banner. In Western Europe, social-democratic Cold Warriors and "Eurocommunists" (including Italian Communist Party leader Enrico Berlinguer) joined demonstrations with monarchists and fascists calling for "Solidarity with Solidarity." Against this, authentic Trotskyists pointed out that Lech Walesa's Solidarność was union-buster Ronald Reagan's favorite "union" and that it was financed by millions of CIA dollars funneled through the Vatican Bank and West German social democracy.

The Trotskyists, including the founders of the LFI and of the Nucleo Internazionalista d'Italia, showed that Solidarność was not really a workers union but an anti-Soviet Polish nationalist outfit, in which much of the membership consisted of landowning rich peasants (kulaks). We warned that Walesa sported a pin of the Black Virgin of Czestochowa, a key symbol of clerical nationalism in Poland, and was constantly spouting the words of the Polish pope Wojtyla, and that priest-ridden Solidarność was a threat to the right of abortion (see "Solidarność: A Man's World," *Women and Revolution* No. 24, Spring 1982). We called to put a stop to the counterrevolution being plotted by Walesa & Co., closely advised and financed by leading imperialist operatives.

So the results are in. Who was right? Which policy defended women and the interests of the working class?

In Afghanistan, by 1992 the imperialist-backed Islamists had won, the shaky Kabul regime, abandoned by the Soviets fell, its leader hanged, women were forced back into the *burqa*, the head-to-toe veil with a screen to see out of that is like a moving prison cell, and education for girls was virtually abolished. In 2001, the U.S./NATO imperialists occupied the country, including with the participation of Italian troops. A decade and a half later, the occupiers are still there, in the guise of "advisors" and "contractors." In Poland, coun-

terrevolution brought a sharp fall in living standards of working people; factories closed, including the Gdansk shipyards where Solidarność was born; and the right to abortion was largely abolished in 1990.²

In short: opportunists capitulate, imperialists and religious fundamentalists win, workers and women lose.

The responsibility for this is direct. The Gruppo Bolscevico-Leninista (GBL), which included founding members of the Partito Comunista dei Lavoratori (PCL), put out a leaflet in December 1981 headlined "Solidarity with Solidarność." The leaflet equated the Polish Stalinist leader Jaruzelski with the bloody dictator Pinochet in Chile. The GBL also condemned the intervention of the Soviet Army in Afghanistan, even if it later came out against its withdrawal. The international current to which the Partito di Alternativa Comunista (PdAC) is affiliated, the LIT (International Workers League – followers of the late Argentine pseudo-Trotskyist Nahuel Moreno) went even further and hailed the Islamist *mujahedin* fighting the Soviets.

These two tendencies also stood with the forces of counterrevolution at the decisive moment when the fate of the Soviet Union was decided in 1991. And they're still at it. Both the PCL (until now followers of another Argentine pseudo-Trotskyist, Jorge Altamira) and PdAC originally supported the Islamist rebels in Libya, although the former got cold feet after NATO started bombing from Italian air bases. The PdAC had no such qualms, demanded the imperialists give heavy weapons to the Islamist gangs in Syria, and is defending the cutthroat *jihadis* that just got routed in Aleppo, Syria. In earlier incarnations, both propped up popular-front governments in Italy (including as they prepared for war on Serbia and passed anti-immigrant laws).

Meanwhile, both the Morenoite PdAC and the Altamiraite PCL refuse to defend the Chinese, North Korean and Vietnamese deformed workers states against imperialism and internal counterrevolution. The Stalinist bureaucracies have permitted ominous capitalist inroads, but the actual restoration of bourgeois rule has not yet occurred. By echoing imperialist propaganda claiming these states are capitalist, the fake-Trotskyists are refusing to defend them, and thus help prepare the way for counterrevolution. The social gains of these revolutions were paid for with millions of lives, and as in all of East Europe, overturning them would be a body blow to women's rights.

As Trotsky wrote in his "Letter to the Workers of the USSR" (May 1940) on the eve of World War II: "It is the duty of revolutionists to defend tooth and nail every position gained by the working class, whether it involves democratic rights, wage scales, or so colossal a conquest of mankind as the nationalization of the means of production and planned economy. Those who are incapable of defending conquests already gained can never fight for new ones." For women, for workers, from Poland to Italy, in the 1980s and today, genuine Trotskyists stood and stand at their posts. ■

² See "Smash Attacks on Abortion Rights!" *Women and Revolution* No. 38, Winter 1990-91.

Yiannopoulos...

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fairs Committee lobby.³

Part of this drive was the passage by the U.S. Senate last December 1 of the “Anti-Semitism Awareness Act.” This directs the U.S. Department of Education to investigate alleged violations of the Civil Rights Act on campuses using a definition of anti-Semitism which would include “delegitimizing” Israel. Denying the “legitimacy” of the Zionist state founded on the oppression of the Palestinian people has nothing to do with anti-Semitism, meaning hatred of or actions against Jews. In fact, the Republican right wing is shot through with anti-Semites who support Israel. Liberal Jews strongly opposed this legislation as “deeply harmful” to the struggle against Islamophobia, anti-Semitism and “white nationalism” (*Forward*, 8 December 2016).

This issue reached a boiling point last year when the University of California Board of Regents prepared a report, “Principles Against Intolerance,” equating anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism. While that was slightly “softened” in the final text to refer to “anti-Semitic forms of anti-Zionism,” the whole purpose was to restrict political speech criticizing Israel. An academic council coordinator for Jewish Voice for Peace commented, “This is the culmination of a campaign on behalf of pro-Israel organizations to equate criticism of Israel with anti-Semitism” (*New York Times*, 27 March 2016). With Trump in the White House, Zionists are gearing up to restrict or ban student groups defending Palestinian rights.

Already a year ago the hard-right Zionist Organization of America, linked to fascist settlers occupying Palestinian land on the West Bank, got the New York State Senate to slash \$485 million from the budget of the City University of New York, accusing Students for Justice in Palestine of promoting anti-Semitism. As an example they cited a November 2015 Hunter College demo where students changed “Long live the Intifada!” (the Palestinian uprising against Israeli occupation). CUNY Internationalist Clubs participated in that protest and has defended the SJP. In December, Fordham University in New York banned a chapter of Students for Justice in Palestine, and in January brought a student up on disciplinary charges for protesting that ban.

This drive to prohibit Palestinian rights groups on campus is being pushed by a web site, Stop the Jew Hatred on Campus, which accuses the SJP of being “a campus front for Hamas terrorists.” The site is sponsored by the David Horowitz Freedom Foundation, the same outfit that backed Milo Yiannopoulos’ provocation at UC Berkeley. It also hosts Horowitz’s FrontPage web site, which declares that “The Democrats have become a terrorist party” seeking “the overthrow of our government,” and proclaims “A civil war has begun.” Horowitz is an ex-leftist turncoat become raving Zionist, racist and all-round reactionary. His rants may be demented, but these 21st century witch-hunters have clout – and they’re targeting “subversive” professors.

“Exposing” leftist faculty was for

³ While the Internationalist Group does not call for boycott, divestment or sanctions, which is an appeal to mass-murdering imperialists like the United States to pressure their Israeli allies, we defend “BDS” supporters against the Zionists and oppose any measures against them.

years the bread-and-butter of Horowitz’s operation. But since he has expanded into Islamophobia (Jihad Watch) and Palestinian-bashing, a new actor has appeared on the witch-hunting scene: in late November, a web site was launched, Professor WatchList, encouraging students to rat out left-wing professors. The spy site is the creation of Charlie Kirk, who has never been to college but pulled in \$5 million in 2016 for the organization he co-founded, Turning Point USA. TPUSA boasts of having 1,000 chapters in colleges and high schools, a claim that is more than dubious but great for attracting bucks from right-wing donors. Kirk was a campaigner for Trump, working with his children to win support among “millennials.”

These sites spy on, defame, slander and smear faculty with charges of anti-Semitism and “anti-Americanism.” But they do more. In January, the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) issued a statement warning that the increased “targeted online harassment” of faculty is “a threat to academic freedom.” “A website like Professor Watchlist,” it noted, “lists names of professors with their institutional affiliations and photographs, thereby making it easy for would-be stalkers and cyberbullies to target them. Individual faculty members who have been included on such lists or singled out elsewhere have been subject to threats of physical violence, including sexual assault, through hundreds of e-mails, calls, and social media postings.”

And, of course, the aim is to get the professors fired and blacklisted. The AAUP looks to “governing boards of colleges and universities” who “have a responsibility to defend academic freedom and institutional autonomy” by “resisting calls for the dismissal of faculty members.” This reflects and promotes the illusion that administrations and boards are part of a campus “community” and responsible to it. But these are the bodies that actually fire faculty under attack. They are trustees, regents, overseers or governors who run academia *on behalf of the capitalist state, the ruling class and investors who name them*. That’s why there must be a fight for *control of universities and colleges by councils of students, faculty and workers*.

The assault on academic freedom is being orchestrated from the very highest levels of political power, as the Milos Yiannopoulos affair at UC Berkeley shows. The fight against it must be centrally waged by those under attack and their allies. A prime example is the witch hunt against adjunct instructor Eric Canin at California State University Fullerton. Dr. Canin, who has taught there for 20 years, is falsely accused of having attacked College Republicans, of which not a shred of evidence has been presented, while photos and videos show him being harassed and physically assaulted (put in a headlock) by his accusers who had been disrupting a protest against Trump’s immigration ban.⁴ The university immediately accepted the witch-hunters’ accusations, suspending Canin without even talking with him.

Hundreds of Canin’s colleagues at Fullerton have signed a petition demanding that he be given his job back. The local chapter of his union, the California Faculty Association, issued a strong statement of support,

⁴ See “Cal State Fullerton peaceful protest ends in altercation,” *Daily Titan*, 8 February.

saying it was “outraged by the gross injustice” of the universities at the university’s action, noting that he was “the victim of harassment by a crowd carrying signs with racist messages clearly attempting to provoke a confrontation.” It demanded that the university reinstate him. But this response is much less than what’s needed: a vociferous statewide campaign by the CFA and students threatening walkouts if he is fired.

This is not “business as usual.” Eric Canin has received death threats, which campus police dismissed as merely “violent rhetoric” because “the person that is making the statement has to have the ability to carry that out.” Canin also soon made it onto the Professor WatchList, whose sponsor, Turning Point USA, co-hosted Yiannopoulos’ event at the University of Colorado and bragged of hiring police to repress protesters. In short, it’s all connected.

What’s going on, not only in California but nationwide, is a push for a new McCarthyism on campus. And whereas in the 1950s the threat came mainly from state legislatures and Senator Joseph McCarthy’s House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), this time around the well-financed witch-hunters are trying to mobilize squads of student informers, and will have the backing of the White House, both houses of Congress and, soon enough, the Supreme Court. Those who delude themselves into thinking that the Yiannopoulos affair is about freedom of speech for a kooky reactionary are missing the big picture. This is the spearhead of a broader assault and a potentially mortal threat to academic freedom at institutions around the country.

There is no doubt that Donald Trump is solidly behind this drive to “cleanse” the nation’s colleges and universities. His political mentor was none other than Roy Cohn, the red-hunter who helped send the heroic Rosenbergs, Ethel and Julius, to the electric chair, and went on to become Joe McCarthy’s right-hand-man. Cohn organized HUAC hearings across the country, where several hundred academics were hauled in to answer under the klieg lights, “are you now, or have you ever been, a member of the Communist Party.” Cohn defended racist Trumps, father Fred and son Donald, from charges that they refused to rent to black tenants. From Cohn, the apprentice Trump learned “if you say it aggressively and loudly enough, it’s the truth.”⁵

The threat of a new McCarthyism is real. The danger is that, as in the 1950s, the intended victims fail to mobilize and vigorously fight back. At that time, around 100 faculty members were fired, many blacklisted and many more denied tenure. In her book *No Ivory Tower: McCarthyism and the Universities* (Oxford University Press, 1986), Ellen Schrecker wrote of the response of academics, particularly the self-professed liberals: “They did not organize; they did not protest; they did not do anything that reversed the tide of dismissals.” In the first big academic freedom case of the Cold War, at the University of Washington in 1948, the AAUP didn’t publish a

⁵ See “McCarthy Aide Helped Shape Young Trump,” *New York Times*, 21 June 2016.



May 1960 protests uniting students with ILWU dock workers broke HUAC’s grip of fear.

statement until 1956. Worse yet, many collaborated with the red-hunters.

What finally broke the grip of fear instilled by McCarthyism was a militant mobilization of students and workers against the House Un-American Activities Committee when it came to San Francisco in 1960. One of the main targets was the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU), which defied the 1947 Taft-Hartley law banning Communists from union leadership positions. HUAC also subpoenaed teachers and a student. Instead of intimidation, the committee’s hearing galvanized opposition. Professors and students from UC Berkeley and San Francisco State College joined with ILWU Local 10 members and effectively broke up the hearing. The longshoremen were key to resistance because they had power, raw economic power that students and faculty lack. Today, as well, mobilizing the working class will be key to defeating the new McCarthyism. And we have an important advantage over the 1950s, when “reds” were largely isolated and the labor movement was overwhelmingly white. Today the urban centers are virulently opposed to Trump and his crew of white supremacists. Trump got less than a quarter of the vote in most major cities, and barely 4% in Washington, D.C. In urban areas, unions are heavily black and Latino (60% in New York City). And these are also the centers of immigrants (35% of the population of Los Angeles is foreign-born, over 40% in NYC).

It’s entirely possible to organize mass labor/black/Latino/immigrant mobilizations to *smash* the witch-hunters, who are also race-haters, red-baiters, immigrant-bashers and union-busters. It’s a question of leadership, and political program. The Democrats’ talk of “resistance” is phony and impotent. They will side with Trump at every key moment, just as they joined with the McCarthyites in purging the unions and universities, and they have now done in hailing his attack on Syria. It will take a revolutionary vanguard prepared to *defy* the partner parties of U.S. imperialism and mobilize our *class* power to *defeat* them.

What’s needed is a workers party built on a program of intransigent class struggle, to put an end to the dictatorship of capital and replace it with the liberating rule of the working class. That was the program of Lenin and Trotsky’s Bolsheviks one hundred years ago, and it’s even more urgent today with capitalist imperialism in a death spiral, destroying the democratic rights and tearing up social gains won through decades of hard struggle. Such a leadership will not drop miraculously from the heavens nor will it arise by spontaneous generation. It’s up to us to build it. ■



Demonstrators at February 2 speak-out at Hunter College. As for WV's claim that CUNY Internationalists and IG say nothing against the Democrats, who do you believe, the SL or your lying eyes?

SL vs. Refugees...

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WV dismisses this, saying, "it will not stop them from harassing immigrants or colluding with I.C.E." The "slight impediment" is of little interest to the haughty SL. But for vulnerable immigrants who have been given summonses for smoking in an NYC park, or for having their feet up on a subway seat going home from work exhausted after 12-hour days, or for women packing-house workers charged in a traffic stop with not wearing a seatbelt (all actual examples) or any of the other ploys the police use to harass immigrants – and to pad their arrest totals – it makes a huge difference as to whether they may be facing imminent deportation that could rip up their lives. Snotty SLers could care less.

And the SL's opposition to defense of sanctuary cities is its sneering response to Trump's "unleashing" the I.C.E. police, which has sowed panic among immigrant workers and families. The hated *migra* cops are salivating at the thought of swooping down on city jails and carting off vanloads of immigrants picked up for traffic violations, misdemeanors or anything that could be a "chargeable criminal offense," including having a "no-match" Social Security number. An I.C.E. official said its "biggest challenge" is localities "that have vowed to protect immigrants from deportation, known as sanctuary cities."

"In one city alone, the supervisor said, the police once transferred 35 undocumented immigrants a day into federal custody, compared with roughly five per week during the final years of the Obama presidency."

–"Immigration Agents Discover New Freedom to Deport Under Trump," *New York Times*, 26 February

This didn't stop the Obama government from deporting over 5 million immigrants. But that is no reason to refuse to fight attacks on measures limiting cooperation with I.C.E., as the SL does. Rather, it underlines the need to raise a program of workers action to stop deportations, which the SL doesn't.

The call to defend sanctuary cities under attack is one of a series of measures put forward by the IG, CUNY Internationalist Clubs and Trabajadores Internacionales Clásistas (Class Struggle International Workers) to fight the anti-immigrant onslaught. In ad-

dition to calling for *full citizenship rights for all immigrants* and to *let refugees in*, we have demanded that *I.C.E. cops be barred from schools and campuses*, and that *school, hospital and university authorities not turn over to any federal authorities information about students, workers and patients that could single out the undocumented*. We have called for *worker/immigrant action to stop deportations*, for *massive labor mobilization against police terror and racist attacks*, for *forming rapid-response networks to flood the streets in the face of migra raids*, and for the *formation of immigrant defense committees in schools and workplaces*.

Not only do we call for this, IG supporters have undertaken initiatives within the unions, in schools and on campuses to seek to prepare for such measures.

In contrast, the SL's call on paper for "no deportations" is entirely empty, nothing but pious verbiage, as it *puts forward no program for struggle to actually realize this*. It claims that defense of sanctuary cities can only be political support to Democrats because it has no program for "active working-class resistance independent of the bosses' state, parties and politicians," such as the IG has called for. For example of what this could mean, one only has to look to the mass defiance of the "Fugitive Slave Act" in the 1850s, when black and white abolitionists freed captives of the slave-catchers and thousands took to the streets to protect escaped slaves.² While that resistance was defeated by military occupation of Boston, it was a key factor leading to the Civil War, the Second American Revolution, that abolished slavery.

In opposing the call for CUNY to be a "sanctuary university," the SL sagely informs us that "CUNY is a capitalist institution, like all universities under capitalism," and the administration "cannot be looked to to defend immigrants any more than can the campus cops who do their dirty work." We warned of this months before. In a November 2016 leaflet titled, "Defend Immigrant Students: Immigration Police and All Cops Out of CUNY," the IG and CUNY Internationalist Clubs wrote:

"[T]he Trump victory has given rise to the 'sanctuary campus' movement – a push to make college campuses 'sanctuaries' for undocumented students. While

² See Sean Trainor, "What the Fugitive Slave Act Can Teach Us About Sanctuary Cities," *Time* magazine, 7 February 2017.

supporting this demand critically, we warn against liberal illusions....

"As revolutionary Marxists, we support banning I.C.E. from campuses, forbidding campus authorities from cooperating with them, and keeping information about undocumented students secret. But we do not look to the campus administration – which runs CUNY on behalf of the ruling class – as the defenders of immigrants.... *All cops off campuses! I.C.E., hands off our fellow students!*"

Far from promoting illusions in campus administrations or the bourgeois state, fighting to mobilize students and workers to keep police out can build *class* opposition to capitalist rule.

In the wake of the 1917 Russian October Revolution, students in Córdoba, Argentina revolted against tyrannical campus authorities and sparked a movement for *university autonomy* throughout Latin America. Some of the first Latin American communists, including Cuban student leader Julio Antonio Mella, who later came to sympathize with Trotsky, were forged in these struggles. One of their demands was to ban police from campuses, as well as calling for *open admissions* and *no tuition*, as the CUNY Internationalist Clubs do today. While police and military forces often violate university autonomy to put down student protests, these basic democratic demands are linked by revolutionaries to the socialist revolution it will take to win free, public education for all.

As to rights of refugees (the latter-day SL maintains they have none, saying most are really just "displaced persons"), the *Workers Vanguard* article claims that "the IG pushes illusions that the EU and 'fortress Europe' have been a haven for refugees." We actually say the opposite, calling to "defend immigrants and bring down racist, capitalist Fortress Europe" through international socialist revolution. WV's outlandish claim is a cover for its *refusal to demand asylum for refugees* fleeing imperialist-instigated wars from Syria to Afghanistan. In fact, this single lying sentence is the SL/ICL's *only* response to our detailed article, quoting from their own internal documents, which exposed their line on refugees, which amounts to: let them drown at sea.³

In 2010, the SL/ICL called to support the U.S. imperialist invasion of Haiti, claiming that it was humanitarian earthquake relief. After three months of hyperventilating against the IG, it finally had to agree that its position was nothing less than a *social-imperialist betrayal*. Today the SL refuses to call to let refugees in, and denounces defense of "sanctuary cities" even as the immigrant-bashing Trump regime threatens them with dire consequences. This is blatant *social-chauvinism*: "socialist" in words, repulsive national chauvinism in deeds. Without pretending to be privy to the internal goings-on in the SL, we can only say that coming after its "no Indian land rights" line on Standing Rock, its "no asylum rights for refugees" line ought to turn the stomachs of any would-be revolutionaries who remain in this increasingly rancid outfit. ■

³ In the ICL internal fight, Eibhlin McDonald, leader of its British section, wrote (27 May 2015) of "people in the boats, who were drowning by the thousands" and "those who are waiting to get on boats to try and get to Europe. One of the pressures towards liberalism comes from not wanting to be seen as 'indifferent' to the plight of desperate refugees. But we could do a bit better at withstanding this pressure." When it comes to "indifference," the SL gets top marks.

Mexico Strike...

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SNTMMSSRM is that the strikes, and especially the big ones, almost always represent an effort by militant sectors to break out of the state-tutelage straitjacket imposed by the Mine and Mill tops. This is what happened in Nueva Rosita, Monclova and Cananea, and the same dynamic has been at work in Lázaro Cárdenas ever since the steel plant opened. For revolutionaries and class-conscious workers, these strikes are not an occasion to capitulate to the *charro* bureaucracy, as the GEM and the rest of the left does, but an opening in which to intervene so that the working class can free itself from the death grip that is strangling it.

Consider the question from a broader perspective. Other countries have also had a regime of corporatist "unionism." The streetcar strike in Barcelona in 1951 is illustrative. Faced with poverty and widespread resentment with the dictatorship of Francisco Franco, tensions boiled over between the top Francoist leaders in Madrid and their local counterparts in the "Organización Sindical" (OS – Labor Organization) in Catalonia. With the announcement of a hike in streetcar fares, a boycott movement began. Many members of the rank and file of the state party participated, and the mass arrests that followed produced a rebellion in the corporatist OS. The boycott became a work stoppage. The Communist Party intervened clandestinely in the strike, which gave it for the first time the opportunity to contact the most militant workers. This later resulted in the formation of the Workers Union Opposition, out of which the Workers Commissions⁶ were born. The fact that this corporatist organization struck did not change one bit the fundamental bourgeois character of the Francoist "unions," or eliminate the need to replace them with genuine workers unions.

Another example: the rise of the "new unionism" (*novo sindicalismo*) in Brazil in the final days of the military dictatorship that ruled from 1964 to 1985. The history of the metal workers strikes in the ABC industrial region in the early '80s is well-known. But these began with the strikes of May 1978, which broke out in the verticalist "unions" run by *pelegos* (finks) who were agents of the military. It was rooted in ferment in the Brazilian Democracy Movement (MDB), the phantom bourgeois "opposition" permitted by the military junta. The MDB (among whose members was a metal workers leader, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva) gave its approval to the strikes. It would have been correct to intervene in these strikes, *but fighting against corporatism*.

The success of the 1978 strikes heralded the fall of the dictatorship's corporatist bodies and the rise of independent unions. In some cases existing labor bodies broke ties to the state, while in others a new union was formed to replace the corporatist guild, such as in the case of the SEPE-RJ, the teachers union of the state of Rio de Janeiro. How the break with corporatist "unionism" is carried out is a tactical question. But *not* fighting in 1978 to break with capitalist state control by the labor agencies of the dictatorship would have been a betrayal heavy with grave historical consequences.

⁶ Comisiones Obreras (CC.OO), one of the two main union federations in Spain.

Today, the Grupo Internacionalista fights inside the independent unions, as well as (under very difficult conditions) in the corporatist labor bodies. The corporatist system in Mexico has worn out, and one reflection of this decay is the appearance of dissident sectors and locals that have partially broken with the practices of state-controlled “unionism.” In Lázaro Cárdenas and elsewhere, the GI has intervened to solidarize with these outbreaks of worker militancy at the same time as we stress the need to break the shackles of corporatism. As we wrote on the last big Cananea miners strike:

“While insisting that the SNTMM has not definitively broken away from the corporatist system, we of the Grupo Internacionalista have consistently supported the struggles of the miners of Cananea. Since the strike broke out in 2007 we have called to ‘Bring Grupo México to its Knees with a National Miners Strike!’ as the headline of our special supplement to *El Internacionalista* (December 2007) declared. That same month, the GI played an important role in sending a delegation from the Union of Workers at the Autonomous University of Mexico (SITUAM), which brought with it a symbolic donation of 5,000 pesos (about US\$390) worth of supplies and an enormous banner proclaiming ‘fraternal greetings’ to the ‘righteous strike of the Cananea miners.’”

–“Mexico: Cananea Miners Call for a National Strike,” *The Internationalist* No. 31, Summer 2010

In order to build the necessary revolutionary workers party in Mexico it is key to understand the need for merciless struggle for the destruction of the *charro* shackles. We call for the formation of workers committees inside the corporatist “unions” free from all control by the capitalist state and from all ties to bourgeois parties and politicians. To accomplish this, it is not enough to struggle simply for union democracy. As Trotsky emphasized:

“The trade unions of our time can either serve as secondary instruments of imperialist capitalism for the subordination and disciplining of workers and for obstructing the revolution, or, on the contrary, the trade unions can become the instruments of the revolutionary movement of the proletariat.”

–L.D. Trotsky, “Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay” (1940)

The lessons of the strike of March 2016 in Lázaro Cárdenas are highly relevant today, not only for the steel workers and miners but for the teachers of the CNTE under attack, particularly those of Local 18, who have historic links with steel workers Local 271, and for the oil workers, facing the privatization of the state oil company Pemex which is already in progress. The experience of the state-owned mines with the SNTMMSSRM under Gómez Sada and Gómez Urrutia, whose subjugation to the state owner paralyzed all struggle against the privatizers, underlines the absolute necessity of breaking with corporatism. For us in the Grupo Internacionalista, the Mexican section of the League for the Fourth International, our aim is to forge, in the heat of the struggle, through polemical intervention on the program of permanent revolution, the nucleus of the Leninist party of the proletarian vanguard. ■

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Brazil...

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“In addition to the spending cap, Mr. Temer has introduced a proposal to revamp Brazil’s pension system. His proposal will set a minimum retirement age of 65, in a country where the average person retires at 54. The law will also require at least 25 years of contributions to the social security system by both men and women.”

“There are good reasons Brazil hasn’t passed laws like this before,” adds Vanessa Bárbara in the *New York Times*.

The Melancholy End of the Popular Front As It Joins with the Neoliberals ... And the “Coup Plotters”

The impeachment of Dilma Rousseff, the composition of the “new” Congress and Temer’s rise, and the approval of the counter-reforms without major battles by Brazil’s working class: these are the legs of a tripod on which most vicious attacks on the working class are proceeding.

Looking over the political situation since the election of Dilma Rousseff as president on 26 October 2014, we see that the sordid institutional maneuvers undertaken by the different factions and cliques in the inter-bourgeois struggle that led through the Congress to impeachment have almost all now been accepted by the PT and Rousseff. Thus on January 20, there was the election of the ultra-rightist deputy from Rio de Janeiro Rodrigo Maia as speaker of the federal Congress, and of the agribusiness senator from Ceará, Eunício Lopes de Oliveira, a former minister under Lula and member of the PMDB,² to head the Senate. In both cases, PT Congressmen voted for these “coup plotters,” as the PT denounced them to the four winds only a few months ago. After going through the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff, the PT has been playing hardball relying on the institutional and judicial terrain.

The PT, the PCdoB,³ the CUT labor federation, the UNE student union and political forces organically linked to the popular front have all been chasing after these constitutional illusions. Outside of Congress and the judicial system, they declared that a “coup d’état” was underway, but within the institutional framework they accepted the verdict of the bourgeoisie, the prime example being not calling a serious general strike at the crucial moment, and later, at the beginning of 2017, voting for the “coup plotters” in restructuring the Federal Chamber of Deputies and Senate.

The PT Wants Back Into the Presidential Palace With the Aid of the “Coup Plotters”

As has been increasingly evident, even after holding the office of president for four terms and winning the 2014 elections, the Workers Party has been losing strength and losing prestige every day that passes as they are up to their necks in the quagmire of the organic, chronic and endemic bourgeois corruption which is in the

² Party of the Brazilian Democratic Movement, the main bourgeois component of the popular-front government under Dilma Rousseff.

³ Communist Party of Brazil, an ex-Maoist social-democratic party, part of the popular front around the PT.

very nature of capitalism. Caught in the trap of the so-called “Operation Car Wash” for shoveling billions to bourgeois politicians for election financing via the mega-contractor Odebrecht, skirting current legal norms, the PT is sinking ever deeper in the morass of corruption.

In every deposition, the Odebrecht executives, in exchange for a plea bargain, reveal what everyone already knew: “if you cry out ‘nab the thief,’ nobody would be left” (from the samba classic by Bezerra da Silva about the goings-on in the politicians’ fancy lairs). The maneuvering and game-playing between the Operation Car Wash investigation and the Supreme Court cannot hide the fact that the PSDB, the ultra-rightist DEM, the PMDB and almost all the bourgeois parties left their fingerprints and were caught with their hand in the proverbial cookie jar of electoral corruption. Before the eyes of the whole country it is being proven that the PT is only the youngest brother in this. But the fact of being a rookie hasn’t stopped things from getting progressively worse for the PT, since from its very origins and for the last two decades its bid to come up in Brazilian politics was 70% based on bourgeois morality.

But with the PT’s screw-up, the bourgeois has now – through Operation Car Wash and its sensational media impact, and also because it has no other popular cause – claimed for itself the mantle of bourgeois morality which was the PT’s calling card. This is particularly true starting last year, with daily installments like a telenovela running on the powerful TV Globo network. For that reason as well, morale in the Workers Party has been plummeting. Harried and depressed, the PT is trying to resuscitate a new version of the Brazil Popular Front which won the 2002 elections.

But its ability to do a turnaround is worsening by the day as Operation Car Wash hears from the Odebrecht execs. During the nearly two years that Car Wash has been in operation, the PT has done nothing but repeat the hardly convincing monosyllabic and melancholy refrain that “all election donations were registered with the election commission.” With its agonizing end now inevitable, it has gone crazy, seeking to save itself by hanging onto the lapels of its executioner. In 2017 it voted for the same Congressmen and parliamentary deputies who engineered the “coup” to throw it out of office. Up to its neck in the institutional maneuvering, all it has left is to hold onto the refrain, “It’s Lula in 2018.”

It is in this context that the labor federations have called for a National Day of Work Stoppages and Struggle for March 15. This suggests that they want to

make use of the government’s blanket approval of the budget cuts, social security “reform” and payment of the internal and foreign debt as a kind of anti-program that could serve as a platform for “Lula 2018.” For that reason, potential presidential candidates like Lula don’t want Temer to fall, nor are they unhappy that he is bearing the weight of the unwelcome reforms. The new president will be freed from having to implement such bitter medicine. Against this outlook of putting back together the popular front at the expense of the working people, we Trotskyists of the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil fight to mobilize the working class for revolutionary struggle against the entire bourgeoisie. As we wrote at the time of the political crisis of impeachment:

“We repeat: the struggle against corruption is only a pretext. In Brazil as in Europe and other parts of the world, the rightist and bonapartist offensive is a product of the economic crisis. Its main targets are the exploited and oppressed, and there is no solution to this crisis in the interest of the workers under capitalism. The rulers in Brazil are imposing the same policies as the European central bankers imposed on the Greek people, and that the International Monetary Fund demands of all the countries under its domination. They want unrestricted powers in order to smash any working-class resistance to the “emergency” measures they are preparing to impose, ‘to clean up the state and resolve the economic crisis’ in the interests of capital. To fight this scourge, what’s needed is a powerful class struggle, led by a revolutionary workers party capable of mobilizing the power of the proletariat against the anti-working-class attacks coming from all wings of the bourgeoisie.”

–“For Class Struggle Against the Bonapartist Threat in Brazil,” *The Internationalist* No. 43, May-June 2016 ■

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The Crime of Medical Deportations

The fact that American society is gravely ill is now taken for granted even by its own pundits. Its acute political and social crisis is a symptom of the advanced decay of capitalism, a system long overdue for extinction. Today, political “debate” in Donald Trump’s Washington is focusing on how to ramp up the capitalist assault on health care, while escalating deportations even beyond the record number carried out under Barack Obama.

What American capitalism does to health care is shown by a particularly sinister form of deportations that has been taking place for over a decade. Cynically dubbed “medical repatriation,” the practice involves deporting undocumented immigrants – many of them workers injured on jobs with little-to-no safety standards – to their countries of origin while in a comatose or non-responsive state. While private hospitals “dumping” poor patients onto public ones has led to some widely-reported scandals, this deadly dumping-by-deportation has largely flown under the radar.

A 2012 report shed light on the practice that, at the time of the report’s release, accounted for “more than 800 cases of attempted or successful medical repatriations across the United States in the past six years.” Among the cases it documents are those of:

“a nineteen-year-old girl who died shortly after being wheeled out of a hospital back entrance typically used for garbage disposal and transferred to Mexico; a car accident victim who died shortly after being left on the tarmac at an airport in Guatemala; and a young man with catastrophic brain injury who remains bed-ridden and suffering from constant seizures after being forcibly repatriated to his elderly mother’s hilltop home in Guatemala.”

– Center for Social Justice at Seton Hall Law School and the Health Justice Program at New York Lawyers for the Public Interest, *Discharge, Deportation, and Dangerous Journeys: A Study on the Practice of Medical Repatriation* (December 2012).

The figure of 800 is certainly a vast underestimation, since a single hospital in Arizona, “St. Joseph’s in Phoenix, with a focus on keeping down the rising cost of uncompensated care, repatriates about eight uninsured patients a month,” or about 100 patients a year (*New York Times*, 9 November 2008).

Most instances of medical deportation are carried out by private firms that specialize in colluding with hospital administrators to tear undocumented patients from the long-term care they need, and send them back to their countries of origin where specialized care is either non-existent or out of reach. One company, “Mex-care,” boasts of a network of 28 hospitals south of the border, promising “significant saving to U.S. hospitals” seeking to get rid of “unfunded Latin American nationals.” A social worker at Mt. Sinai Hospital in Chicago reported that “We’ve done flights to Lithuania, Poland, Honduras, Guatemala and Mexico” (“Immigrants Facing Deportation by U.S. Hospitals,” *New York Times*, 3 August 2008).

The Seton Hall/Health Justice report notes that “when critically ill or catastrophically injured immigrant patients are



Josh Haner/New York Times

Chinese immigrant Kong Fong Yu being wheeled into court in September 2008 as NYC hospital sought to deport him over objections of court-appointed guardian.

transferred to facilities abroad, their lives and health are often jeopardized because these facilities cannot provide the care they require and the transfers themselves are inherently risky, resulting in significant deterioration of a patient’s health, or even death.” A particularly horrifying case was that of Quelino Ojeda Jiménez, a 20-year-old construction worker from Mexico who in 2010 fell from a twenty-foot roof on a job site in Chicago. Having gone into a coma for three days, Jiménez woke up paralyzed and on a ventilator.

“The hospital cared for Quelino for four months before deciding it was ‘best to return him close to his family,’ although his family contested his repatriation. Three days before Christmas, hospital staff disconnected him from equipment and rolled him away on a gurney as one of his caregivers pleaded for them to stop. Crying and unable to speak,

their families want them home, and lie to their families, saying the patient wants to return home. All this to extort a consent for deportation. And if there is none? Well, the hospital can just make it up!

The *New York Daily News* (25 June 2013) reported on the case of an undocumented Polish immigrant who, after living in this country for 30 years, “fell unconscious after a stroke in the U.S. and woke up back in Poland” without ever giving consent, after a New Jersey hospital had him dumped “like a sack of potatoes” onto a plane operated by Air Escort Medical Flight.

Juxtaposed to this macabre picture is the practice of “red blanket” or “pavilion” treatment for wealthy patients. This includes “private hotel-like rooms on the top floor, which come with gourmet food, plush bath robes and small business centers,” together with doting attention from hospital

Quelino could do nothing.... Quelino languished for more than a year in a Mexican hospital that had no rehabilitation services and lacked the funding for new filters needed for his ventilator. After suffering two cardiac arrests and developing bedsores and a septic infection, Quelino died there on January 1, 2012.”

Countless more undocumented workers have been left for dead because of the foul practice of literally throwing patients out of hospitals. According to a CBS News report (23 April 2013), some hospitals lie to patients, saying



Quelino Ojeda Jiménez in Chicago hospital in 2010.

staff, according to an indignant op-ed by a young Boston physician (“How Hospitals Coddle the Rich,” *New York Times*, 26 October 2015). The author reports that of the 15 top hospitals, as rated by *U.S. News and World Report*, at least 10 offer such luxury treatment “options.”

In 1894, the French novelist Anatole France wrote with bitter irony that “the law, in its majestic equality, forbids rich and poor alike to sleep under bridges, to beg in the streets, and to steal their bread.” As the horrific stories of the health-care industry’s cruelty for profit illustrate, U.S. capitalism can boast that it gives rich and poor alike the “freedom” to pay up or die.

“DSH,” Deportations and Capitalism’s Death Spiral

Hospitals are legally required to admit and treat patients in need of urgent care, regardless of immigration or insurance status, under the Emergency Medical

NYC Health Care Workers Say: Mobilize the Power of Labor to Defend Muslims and Immigrants

The following motion was adopted by AFSCME DC 37 Local 768 (NYC Health Care Employees) on February 6. The resolution is also available on the Local 768 web page at: <http://www.local768.org/>.

WHEREAS, the crisis of the undocumented in the United States has deep roots in a system of oppression and colonialism in which the U.S. played a major role; and
WHEREAS, some Local 768 members have been given instructions to decrease the population of undocumented immigrants in their facilities by 40%; and
WHEREAS, Local 768 members, like health care providers and other workers, have grave concerns over threats to this desperately needed safety net coverage; and
WHEREAS, Local 768 believes we have a basic ethical obligation to defend undocumented immigrants in need

of health care from round-ups, jail and deportation by ICE; and
WHEREAS, any attempt to have Local 768 members identify patients for such discriminatory treatment would violate not only our professional obligations but NYC law and NYC Health + Hospitals’ stated policy; and
WHEREAS, this situation is made even more urgent by Trump’s attacks on “sanctuary cities” and NYC regulations limiting cooperation with federal immigration authorities; and
WHEREAS, we join with NYC-area building-service, education, Teamster, construction trades and other unionists in standing up for the rights of us all in opposition to attacks on our Muslim and immigrant sisters and brothers; and
WHEREAS, solidarity is a matter of life or death for labor, which is now under attack by anti-union “right to work” legislation and court cases (Friedrichs); therefore be it
RESOLVED, that Local 768 formally and

publicly states the following:

- 1) We will continue to serve all those in need and oppose any attempt to use immigration status against them, or to collect such information.
- 2) We will not go along with demands to cut care to undocumented patients, which would violate our most basic ethical responsibilities.
- 3) We also reject any attempt to undermine the federally mandated right to treatment of all those seeking emergency care.
- 4) Local 768 will establish a committee to defend the rights of immigrant patients, families and staff.
- 5) We advocate that the unions of the NYC metropolitan area come together in a massive protest showing the power of labor to stand up against any and all anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim and other racist attacks in line with the labor motto, “AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL.”

CLASS STRUGGLE EDUCATION WORKERS

NYC Schools Must Be A Sanctuary For Immigrant and All Students Keep I.C.E. Cops Out of Our Schools

By Class Struggle
Education Workers/UFT

The day after last November's elections, a wave of fear swept through the schools over the threat to undocumented immigrants. "Will I be deported?" students asked teachers. School administrations and teachers unions issued statements of support. But much more is needed. We need to prepare now to defend our students and actively resist the threat of deportations with action.

Class Struggle Education Workers have demanded that the NYC Department of Education refuse to hand over to federal authorities any information on students' immigration status, and that they delete any such information as may exist. We demand that ICE police and immigration authorities not be allowed on school premises under any circumstances, period. We call on the UFT and other NYC unions to mobilize mass labor/immigrant action to stop deportations.

Now there are important initiatives to build school-wide committees. Pathways to Graduation, in District 79 has formed a school-wide committee to defend immigrant rights and support our students. P2G is a multi-sited program across the five boroughs, servicing students working toward their TASC high school equivalency diploma,

and increasing literacy skills in English and bilingual programs. P2G has students from 36 different countries. 31 percent of P2G students are English Language Learners. 44 percent of the students were born outside the U.S., and 51 percent of the students speak a language other than English at home.

The UFT P2G Immigrant Students Support Committee can serve to encourage similar efforts in other schools, and will seek to join with initiatives in other unions. DC 37 Local 768 health care workers in city hospitals have likewise a committee to defend the rights of immigrant patients, families and staff. Faced with directives to reduce the numbers of undocumented immigrants in their facilities by 40%, they have declared that they will continue to serve all those in need and will oppose any attempt to use immigration status against them.

At Hunter College, part of the City University of New York, a Committee to Defend Immigrants and Students has been formed at the initiative of the CUNY Internationalist Clubs.

Our perspective is to link teachers, parents, students and all school workers, including counselors, paras, school aides, bus drivers, custodians, cafeteria workers and support staff, with the power of the labor movement to **stop deportations**. Rapid response networks are needed in schools and neighborhoods. If students or their



Internationalist Photo

CSEW at rally outside Panel for Education Policy, February 28.

families are picked up by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (I.C.E.) police, we must be prepared to flood the streets and shut down the schools.

We look not to the administrators but call for worker/immigrant action against the bipartisan capitalist attack on our students and their parents. The deportation of more

than 5 million immigrants by the Democratic Obama administration built up the machinery that the Republican Trump is now wielding against our sister and brother workers from around the world. The CSEW calls to break with the partner parties of capital and to build a class-struggle workers party that will champion the cause of all the oppressed. ■

For further information: E-mail cs_edworkers@hotmail.com

Visit the CSEW web page: <http://edworkersunite.blogspot.com>

Treatment and Active Labor Act of 1986. Facilities categorized as "disproportionate share hospitals" in terms of the percentage of uninsured and low-income patients they treat receive additional funds from Medicaid, known as "DSH" payments. However, hospitals are not required to keep patients after they stabilize. Since most long-term care facilities will not accept uninsured and undocumented patients, hospital administrators are eager to ship these undocumented patients off – out of sight and out of mind.

Today, as Republicans scramble to "repeal and replace" Obamacare, praising "Obama's signature achievement" is *de rigueur* for Democrats. While Obamacare increased eligibility for Medicaid, it included many regressive measures, including the tax on the better health coverage (derisively dubbed "Cadillac" plans) won by some unionized workers. It also provided a billions-rich trough of new profits for the insurance companies. Meanwhile, employers were not required to offer company health plans to employees working less than 30 hours a week – so in response, many bosses responded by cutting workers' hours (see "Obamacare Screws Workers, Windfall for Insurance Companies," *The Internationalist* No. 41, September-October 2015).

Under Obamacare, hospitals received less from DSH payments: since the number of uninsured people dramatically decreased, the federal government cut the

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DSH funding it gave to the states, which then cut the DSH funds disbursed to hospitals. Public hospitals were hit particularly hard. The result for undocumented immigrant patients? The Seton Hall/Health Justice report predicted that under Obamacare, "the reduced allocation of federal funding ... will lead to more medical repatriations as hospitals, particularly those that provide a disproportionate amount of care to uninsured and publicly insured patients, face additional financial strain."

The anti-immigrant drive ramped up by Obama, now being escalated even further by Trump, has devastating effects on health, as noted in "The Health Implications of Deportation Policy," a study published in the *Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved* (May 2015). Authors Juliana E. Morris and Daniel Palazuelos note:

"Physicians and public health professionals are growing increasingly concerned about the effects of U.S. deportation policy on human health. Children who lose their parents to deportation are at increased risk for behavioral, mental, and physical health problems. Immigrant communities that have experienced raids and deportations have higher rates of stress, fear, and decreased health care utilization."

Immigrants held in detention often face "inadequate medical attention" as well as the effects of isolation and acute stress. Having carried out extensive research in Central America, the authors note that

"the effects of deportation extend well beyond the individual and family unit," often with devastating consequences for entire communities, and for poor countries dominated by U.S. imperialism.

"We Will Continue to Serve All Those in Need"

Today, with Donald Trump vowing to deport people for even the smallest of legal infractions (like smoking in a public park), the ante has been upped. Capitalism in its decaying, imperialist stage throws into sharp relief the disjunction between the vast wealth and luxury of the parasites who exploit workers like Quelino Ojeda Jiménez, and the savagery which is required to sustain that wealth. While hospital administrators cry poverty, billionaire capitalists amass vast profits at the expense of the working class. The only way out of this junction is through a socialist revolution, in which the working class – of all national origins and races, with or without "papers" – seizes the means of production and establishes a planned economy in which production is for *social need*, not profit.

While the crisis of health care is inextricably linked to the crisis of capitalism and the need for revolution, militant workers and defenders of immigrant rights can do something about this *now*. Obstacles to effective action must be overcome, centrally the chaining of labor's power to the Democrats – like NYC mayor Bill de Blasio, who just expanded the number of offenses for which the NYPD will cooperate

with immigration cops to 170. The *social power* of the working class needs to be unchained and mobilized to fight against deportations – medical and otherwise.

With pressure mounting to slash the number of undocumented patients, an important example has been set by NYC Health Care Employees Local 768 of AFSCME DC 37. In early February, the local unanimously passed a motion resolving that it "will not go along with demands to cut care to undocumented patients," but instead will "continue to serve all those in need and oppose any attempt to use immigration status against them, or to collect such information." It also called for NYC-area unions to organize "a massive protest showing the power of labor to stand up against any and all anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim and other racist attacks" (see box on facing page).

As we have repeatedly emphasized, the organized power of the multiracial, multiethnic working class is key to jamming the wheels of the capitalist deportation machine. Health-care workers throughout New York and nationwide should take up, pass and put into practice the kind of motion approved by the sisters and brothers of Local 768, standing in defense of their undocumented patients. And if an emboldened ICE tries to target medical facilities, all defenders of immigrant and labor rights should join with health-care and other city workers to stop the immigrant-hunters – and as part of this struggle, fight to put an end to medical deportations. ■

Join the Committee to Defend Immigrants and Muslims

After calling two speak-outs, held at Hunter College on January 30 and February 2, to protest the racist immigration ban imposed by Donald Trump only days earlier, the Internationalist Clubs at the City University of New York initiated a committee to defend immigrant students and Muslims at CUNY. We print below the committee's March 23 appeal.

The Committee to Defend Immigrants and Muslims was formed in early 2017 by Hunter students and faculty in response to the Trump administration's racist immigration and deportation policies, which seek to escalate even further the record number of deportations carried out under Obama as well as attempting to ban immigrants and refugees from 7 (now 6) predominantly Muslim countries.

Recent Immigration and Customs Enforcement arrests (over 600 in one week alone in February), detentions (42,000 are held in immigration prisons), and deportations are a call to action for all who stand in defense of immigrants, Muslims and the rights of us all.

It is the responsibility of students, faculty and workers to help defend our brothers and sisters who are being targeted by this racist onslaught. The CUNY administration claims that it will protect the student body from I.C.E., unless I.C.E. officers have a warrant or the administration's permission to enter campus. These conditional



Participants in Hunter College speak-out to defend immigrants, Muslims, and the rights of us all!

declarations show once again the need for us to act independently of the CUNY and college administrations. As students, faculty and campus workers we should take the defense of our fellow students and families into our own hands.

At demonstrations in Arizona, protesters sought to physically halt the deportation of Guadalupe García de Rayos. In Los Angeles, organizers at the Clínica Romero health center courageously declared it a "sanctuary clinic," stating their willingness

"to act as human shields" against I.C.E. raids. At CUNY we must join the struggle to stand with and help defend immigrants and Muslims against racism and bigotry.

If students or their families are picked up for deportation, **their school should shut down**, followed by others in solidarity. If a CUNY student or a member of their family is seized by ICE, there should be a city-wide walkout by students, faculty and staff.

In fighting to make the call for a "sanctuary university" real, **we call for the for-**

mation, on every campus, of committees to defend immigrants and Muslims. The Committee at Hunter is already connecting with student groups, faculty, and staff at other CUNY campuses, including Baruch, LaGuardia, Borough of Manhattan Community College and City College. We are also participating in CUNY-wide meetings called by the faculty/staff union (Professional Staff Congress) on topics related to the "sanctuary university" issue, including the building of rapid response networks.

These are some of the most important 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 or not they claim "legal" sanction for their actions.

- That CUNY personnel engage in no collaboration with immigration authorities – whether or not they claim "legal" sanction for their actions.

- CUNY must provide lawyers for emergency contact for all immigrant and international students.

Join us in the fight against racist attacks on our immigrant and Muslim brothers and sisters!

23 March 2017

To get involved, contact: Committee-todefendimmigrants@gmail.com

1° de Mayo...

sigue de la página 24

dencia con respecto al Partido Demócrata. Desde el inesperado triunfo electoral de Trump en noviembre, sectores de este partido capitalista comenzaron a fingir que representan una fuerza opositora por primera vez en muchas décadas. En esto han contado con la ayuda de la izquierda oportunista que está deseosa de convertirse en recadera del más reciente "movimiento" de masas. Demócratas liberales, especialmente los que apoyaron la candidatura populista de Bernie Sanders, pero también partidarios de Hillary Clinton, han impulsado protestas en contra de Trump realizadas por mujeres, inmigrantes, estudiantes y otros "sectores". Así, la "marcha de las mujeres" del 21 de enero en Washington, que fue vitoreada por prácticamente toda la izquierda, fue en realidad una operación del Partido Demócrata, como también lo fue en buena medida la "huelga de mujeres" del 8 de marzo.

En el terreno de los derechos de

los inmigrantes, hay varios grupos entre los que se cuentan (en Nueva York) la New York Immigrant Coalition, Make the Road y New York Communities of Change, todos vinculados a los demócratas, con contrapartes en las principales ciudades del país. Para el Primero de Mayo, estos grupos dicen que su propósito es "cambiar la narrativa" de que los inmigrantes supuestamente "roban empleos" a los norteamericanos y "aumentar las presiones a largo plazo para que haya una reforma migratoria" (!). No: lo que hace falta es movilizarse para **poner ALTO a las deportaciones AHORA!**

En el fondo, los demócratas consideran que básicamente no puede hacerse nada, o no gran cosa, porque "es la ley". Pero esa es *su* ley, la ley capitalista que ellos ayudaron a formular y a imponer. *Todas las leyes que Trump está ahora ejecutando fueron escritas por los demócratas, particularmente la de los Clinton (Bill y Hillary) de 1996 llamada "Ley sobre la inmigración ilegal y la responsabilidad inmigrante".* Los

trabajadores, ya sea que hayan nacido en EE.UU. o en cualquier otro país, necesitan luchar **contra el veto en contra de los inmigrantes musulmanes, contra el muro con México, a favor de que se permita el ingreso de los refugiados y por plenos derechos de ciudadanía para todos los inmigrantes.** Esto implica luchar contra el estado capitalista, y para ello necesitamos del poder de la clase obrera.

Cuando llegue el momento de realizar movilizaciones de masas para bloquear a la migra, para movilizar a decenas de miles para realmente cerrar Wall Street, los puertos y la industria, habrá apoyo de masas de parte de la población de los centros urbanos, que en su inmensa mayoría se opone a Trump, y que incluso odia su régimen reaccionario. Considérese tan sólo el que miles de personas se dirigieron a los aeropuertos para oponerse a su veto antimusulmán. Pero aunque hoy los demócratas liberales están hablando de la "resistencia", en el momento crucial harán todo lo posible para impedir las acciones que

urgentemente se necesitan.

Aunque Trump es el enemigo inmediato, los demócratas son el principal enemigo estratégico, cuyo férreo control sobre los sindicatos y las organizaciones y poblaciones negras e inmigrantes debe ser roto. La resolución del Local 10 del Sindicato de Pintores de Portland aprobado en agosto pasado, mostró la vía hacia adelante al insistir en que "no apoyamos ni a los demócratas, ni a los republicanos ni a ningún partido o político de los patrones" y "llamamos al movimiento sindical a romper del Partido Demócrata y construir un partido obrero de lucha clasista".

Romper con los demócratas, movilizar a la clase obrera

En sus primeros 100 días en la presidencia, el multimillonario presidente norteamericano ha dado la espalda cada vez más al falso populismo que usó para ser elegido y ha gobernado como un típico republicano derechista. En un aspecto, sin embargo, el nuevo gobierno se ha mantenido consistente: desde el

primer día, ha atacado ferozmente a los inmigrantes. Trump orquestó su campaña despotricando en contra de los “terroristas islámicos” y acusando a los inmigrantes mexicanos de ser violadores, narcotraficantes y criminales. El 11 de abril, su racista fiscal general, Jeff Sessions, fue a la frontera entre Arizona y Sonora para condenar a los inmigrantes indocumentados calificándolos como “extranjeros criminales” y “basura”, que traen a EE.UU. “drogas y muerte”, “depravación y violencia”.

Pero dejando a un lado la retórica antiinmigrante de los republicanos, así como las fraudulentas promesas de Obama de una “reforma migratoria”, lo que el gobierno de Trump está haciendo es intensificar la política antiinmigrante de su antecesor. Considérense las estadísticas. El número de deportaciones es prácticamente el mismo: 35,600 en enero-febrero de 2017, frente a 35,250 en el mismo período del año pasado (*Guardian*, 3 de abril). Obama expandió considerablemente las causales de deportación, expulsando a más personas que cualquier otro presidente, ganándose así el título de “deportador en jefe”.

Nótese también lo que ha pasado con los decretos antiinmigrantes de Trump. Su veto contra inmigrantes y refugiados provenientes de siete países musulmanes fue inmediatamente impugnado en los tribunales por fiscales generales de varios gobiernos estatales en manos de demócratas. Sin embargo, poco se dijo con respecto a la orden ejecutiva sobre seguridad interna, que declara como “extranjeros removibles” a cualesquiera que hayan sido encontrados culpables de *cualquier* delito (incluyendo el fumar en un parque); a cualquiera que haya sido *acusado* de un delito (incluso se no ha sido encontrado culpable); a quienquiera que pueda haber “cometido actos” que pudieran ser delitos (¿quién decide esto?); a cualquiera que haya engañado a cualquier agencia gubernamental (¿número *no match* del Social?) o que haya “abusado” de beneficios públicos (¿programas de salud infantil?); o a quienquiera que “a juicio de un agente de migración” pueda representar un “riesgo” para la “seguridad pública”.

Estar en Estados Unidos sin “autorización” *no es en sí mismo un delito*; en muchos casos, se trata tan sólo de una falta civil. Sin embargo, el decreto de Trump no sólo convierte prácticamente a todo inmigrante indocumentado en candidato para la deportación, sino que *es abiertamente inconstitucional*.

Bajo la Quinta Enmienda a la Constitución de Estado Unidos, *todos* tienen derecho al debido proceso. Bajo la Catorceava Enmienda (ganada mediante la Guerra Civil) “la igual protección de la ley” está supestamente garantizada a *todos* los que estén en EE.UU. Esto fue confirmado mediante una decisión de la Suprema Corte de 1896 y desde entonces por muchas otras decisiones. Pero aunque la orden ejecutiva de Trump del 25 de enero niega de manera atroz el debido proceso y la protección igual, *no ha habido ninguna impugnación judicial*. ¿Por qué no? Porque hacerlo iría en contra de las leyes de inmigración que los demócratas elaboraron y ejecutaron.

Es así que la defensa de los inmigrantes exigirá luchar en contra de los demócratas, lo mismo que contra Trump. En Nueva York, las afirmaciones de que se trata de una “ciudad santuario” chocan con la estrategia policíaca de “ventanas rotas” que ha sido impulsada por los diversos alcaldes desde los republicanos Giuliani y Bloomberg, hasta el demócrata Bill de Blasio. Esa práctica desemboca en vastos números de personas arrestadas por delitos menores, y por muchas cosas que distan de ser cualquier tipo de delito. La información así recabada es transmitida de manera rutinaria a las autoridades federales en Washington. Para verdaderamente impedir que esta información sobre inmigrantes (jóvenes en su inmensa mayoría) sea usada para su deportación, ni siquiera debería existir. ¿Pero cómo? Mediante la abolición de estos supuestos “delitos”. A pesar de los llamados de grupos a favor de los derechos de los inmigrantes, religiosos y otros a deshacerse de la política de “ventanas rotas”, De Blasio se rehúsa. ¿Por qué? Una razón fundamental es que teme perder así el voto de los liberales blancos.

Como preparación rumbo al enfrentamiento directo con el gobierno hace falta luchar contra todos los medios que alimentan el voraz apetito de su maquinaria de deportaciones. Esto incluye exigir que escuelas, hospitales y universidades se rehúsen a entregar cualquier información que indique el estatus migratorio a cualquier agencia federal. Una lucha para cerrar los centros de detención de inmigrantes puede despertar conciencia pública de que la Gestapo¹ del ICE tiene una

¹ *Geheime Staatspolizei*, la policía secreta nazi.

vasta red de campos de concentración. Actualmente, está en curso una huelga de hambre en el Northwest Detention Center en Tacoma, Washington, que es administrado por la empresa privada GEO (cuyas acciones han duplicado su valor desde el día de las elecciones). En el condado Orange en California, la cárcel Theo Lacy, que tiene más de 500 inmigrantes detenidos, ha tenido dos huelgas de hambre en el último año, mientras que el inspector general del Departamento de Seguridad de la Patria (Homeland Security) publicó un espantoso reporte sobre las terribles condiciones que imperan en ella.

Pero la lucha fundamental consiste en elevar el nivel de conciencia de clase y de combatividad de los trabajadores. En el área de Nueva York, como en otras partes, el “Día sin inmigrantes” del 16 de febrero fue resultado en su mayor parte de cierres realizados por los *dueños* de los restaurantes y los pequeños negocios. Sin embargo, en dos lugares los trabajadores de hecho organizaron huelgas: en el mercado de abastos de Hunts Point, donde cientos de trabajadores se reunieron afuera y se negaron a entrar a trabajar, y en la recientemente sindicalizada tienda de equipo de video y fotografía B&H, donde los trabajadores “organizaron un paro colectivo para protestar en contra de las redadas y las deportaciones”.² Además, a lo largo

² B&H está intentando romper el sindicato de trabajadores inmigrantes mediante el cierre de los almacenes, con la connivencia del gobierno demócrata de la ciudad. Véase “El gobierno de Blasio, cómplice en el cierre de los almacenes de B&H”, *El Internacionalista*, marzo de 2017.

del último mes, trabajadores de la panadería Tom Cat en Long Island City se han movilizado para resistir en contra de la amenaza de la compañía de despedir a 31 trabajadores inmigrantes debido a una investigación I-9 del ICE (en torno a papeles de autorización de empleo).

El Primero de Mayo puede dar la oportunidad de unir las luchas de los trabajadores de B&H y Tom Cat y de inspirar a más de medio millón de trabajadores inmigrantes indocumentados en la Ciudad de Nueva York para luchar por sus derechos. Pero para derrotar el intento de los patrones de romper el sindicato y del gobierno federal de acelerar las deportaciones en masa, hace falta la fuerza de todo el movimiento obrero. Sobre todo, es necesario luchar políticamente en contra tanto del Partido Republicano como del Partido Demócrata, ambos capitalistas. (Incluso los partidos burgueses menores como el Verde han presentado como candidatos a la presidencia a políticos antiinmigrantes como Ralph Nader.) Como señaló nuestro camarada Antonio, hablando en nombre de los Trabajadores Internacionales Clasistas, en un mitin afuera de una cárcel del ICE en Manhattan el 16 de febrero:

“Hoy estamos en un estado policial para todos los inmigrantes, que se extenderá a toda la población. Estas deportaciones son resultado de la política del Partido Demócrata, que bajo Obama deportó a 5 millones de inmigrantes. Hoy, los republicanos quieren deportar a más y más. Como trabajador, llamo a movilizar el poder de la clase obrera para poner fin de una vez por todas a las redadas racistas, y para exigir plenos derechos de ciudadanía para todos los inmigrantes”. ■

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¡Romper con los demócratas! ¡Construir un partido obrero revolucionario!

¡Todos a la calle el Primero de Mayo!

A la huelga en defensa de los inmigrantes y todos los trabajadores

Desde el momento en que Donald Trump tomó posesión el 20 de enero, una oleada de temor que no cesa se ha extendido por las comunidades inmigrantes. El temor está justificado, pero la espantosa ofensiva en contra de los inmigrantes también ha producido otro efecto: la rabia y la determinación para luchar a favor de los derechos de los inmigrantes, los derechos de los trabajadores y por una mejor vida para sus hijos, por lo que millones han arriesgado todo. Quienes han enfrentado con valor increíbles dificultades, atravesando ríos, cruzando desiertos cuidándose de serpientes, criminales y de la Patrulla Fronteriza, que están alerta al peligro mientras caminan por la calle, no son víctimas dóciles que simplemente vayan a rendirse ante un racista abusivo. Los inmigrantes pueden jugar un papel fundamental en el derribo del régimen de Trump, pero necesitan urgentemente el apoyo activo de todos los trabajadores y oprimidos en una aguda lucha *clasista*.

Tras una campaña electoral azuzada por la xenofobia (el odio por los extranjeros), Trump emitió tres decretos tan pronto como asumió el cargo: impedir la entrada de inmigrantes y refugiados provenientes de países musulmanes, construir su muro a lo largo de la frontera con México y criminalizar y deportar a todos los inmigrantes indocumentados sobre los que la *migra* (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) pueda echar mano. Hay rumores de que policías de la *migra* arrestan a inmigrantes en la calle. Las áreas comerciales se vacían de repente si alguien descubre una van del ICE. El nuevo gobierno está atizando este miedo para sembrar pánico con el propósito de que la gente opte por la “autodeportación”, con lo que ha tenido cierto éxito. Pero también ha

**¡Acciones de masas obreras
e inmigrantes para poner
ALTO a las deportaciones!**



Contingente internacionalista, encabezado por Trabajadores Internacionales Clasistas, en protesta en defensa de los trabajadores de B&H, el 12 de febrero. habido reacciones como cuando el 8 de febrero en Phoenix, Arizona, inmigrantes y sus partidarios bloquearon valientemente durante horas una camioneta del ICE buscando impedir la deportación de Guadalupe García de Rayos. Éste es el espíritu que hace falta a escala masiva.

Este Primero de Mayo, habrá lo que sería una huelga de cientos de miles de trabajadores inmigrantes en todo Estados Unidos, quizás sobrepasando el millón, como ocurrió en 2006. De hecho, los inmigrantes trajeron de vuelta a EE.UU. la celebración del Primero de Mayo, el día internacional de los trabajadores. (Los burócratas sindicales anticomunistas crearon, en su lugar, el *Labor Day*, que tiene lugar a principios de septiembre, como la ocasión para que los políticos capitalistas se paseen como falsos “amigos de los trabajadores”.) Habrá paros a escala masiva, muchos más que los del “Día sin

inmigrantes” de febrero pasado, que fue organizado principalmente en las redes sociales. La palabrería en Internet acerca de una “huelga general global” es pura ilusión, que redefine la noción de huelga para abarcar todo tipo de protesta, y hasta el no comprar nada, en lugar de lo que realmente es, una acción del poder obrero. Pero lo que sería fundamental es que sectores clave de los trabajadores nacidos en EE.UU. paren labores en solidaridad para protestar en contra de la ofensiva antiinmigrante.

Esto es posible, pero exige el esfuerzo de militantes con conciencia de clase. En 2008, el sindicato de trabajadores portuarios de la costa del Pacífico de EE.UU. (el ILWU) realizó una huelga el Primero de Mayo para poner alto a la guerra de EE.UU. en contra de Irak y Afganistán y para defender a los inmigrantes. En 2015, el Local 10 del ILWU en el área de la Bahía de San Fran-

cisco cerró el puerto de Oakland y encabezó una marcha de miles de personas para exigir “Alto al terror policíaco”. Ese mismo día en Portland, Oregon, activistas de varios sindicatos marcharon en un contingente de “Trabajadores en contra de los racistas asesinatos policíacos”. Este año, el Local 10 del Sindicato de Pintores de Portland ha lanzado el llamado de “Todos a la calle el Primero de Mayo por los derechos de los inmigrantes y los trabajadores”.

Más allá de marchar el Primero de Mayo, es necesario *movilizar el poder obrero* en la lucha para derrotar la guerra contra los inmigrantes que el gobierno está intensificando. El Grupo Internacionalista ha llamado a la realización de *movilizaciones de masas encabezadas por los sindicatos en defensa de los inmigrantes*, para sacar las cárceles de la ICE de las principales áreas urbanas, para convertir a las escuelas en santuarios y para “establecer redes telefónicas, de medios sociales digitales y adoptar otras medidas de respuesta rápida **para inundar las calles bloqueando las redadas y las deportaciones del ICE**” (“¡Déjenlos entrar!”), reproducido en inglés en la página 7 de este número, y en español como suplemento de *El Internacionalista*, febrero de 2017). En Nueva York, miembros del Class Struggle Education Workers (Trabajadores de la Educación Clasistas) han iniciado la formación de comités para defender inmigrantes en hospitales (página 20) y escuelas (página 21). Los Clubes Internacionalistas de la Universidad de la Ciudad de Nueva York (CUNY) conformaron un Comité por la Defensa de Inmigrantes y Musulmanes en Hunter College (página 22).

Es también de vital importancia que la lucha por la defensa de los inmigrantes y todos los trabajadores sea librada con completa independencia *sigue en la página 22*