The Internationalist
March-April 2017
No. 47
50¢

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!

Defend
North Korea
Against Crazed
U.S. War Threats

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

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 invisible 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.

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 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.”

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

Defend North Korea
Against Crazed
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 crazed 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 continued on page 2

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

For Worker/Immigrant Mass Action to STOP Deportations!
Defend Syria... continued from page 1

U.S. attack, and to kick the U.S. and its NATO imperialist allies out of the Middle East. The U.S. imperialists, led due to 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 in a recent invasion. Having become 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, on the basis of the invasion of the USS Macon 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 in 2003, used in 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 play 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 are conveniently brushed aside by the leadership cut out by the drams 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 administration had stated that removal of Syrian president Bashar Assad was not a priority for it. Now, the racist, misogynist, immigrant-basher and “America Firster” in the White House claims to be morally outraged at the sight of dead children, and the U.S. has been pressure 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, “Warmerong Hillary and Trump Rep Nikki Haley: Not My ‘Sisters’.

The war hysteria against Syria is being whipped up in union by the imperialist 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-democrat “democrats” by the “peace” talkers, 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, a combination of blood-thirsty Islamist killers. This chorus of imperialist warmongers and their stooges are all enemies of the working class and oppressed peoples.

It is too easy to say with certainty what exactly happened in Khan Sheikhoun. As in the case of the mainstream media after the recent attacks during the anti-government protests, they are following the lead of the imperialists, who 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 regime that 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 Syrian society and the eruption of a工人

The Pentagon has been escalating its military forces in Syria, now over 1,000 troops. The U.S. has dispatched anti-insurrectionation 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 attackers who themselves need an imperialist-backed uprising for the U.S. and NATO.

In Washington, the attack on Syria marks the ascendancy of the military and intelligence establishment and the Democratic and Republican leaders in Congress who have been pushing for years for a showdown with Russia in Syria. Sapped by the Israeli Zionists, they want to oust Assad in order to counter Iran and lock in U.S. imperialist influence in the region. Now that Trump has been lined up, these leftover Cold Warriors are running for the “Russkies.” Russian leader Vladimir Putin is playing for time, calling for an “objective investigation” of the deaths in Khan Sheikhun. 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 in 1945) is choking 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 that the “united front” against imperialism is the only way for the world party of socialist revolution. We fight for a socialist republic of united 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 are the destructive engines of imperialism, there is a clear need to smash imperialism through international worker revolution. That requires above all the leadership of international communist parties, built on the program of Lenin and Trotsky’s Bolsheviks, in a reformed Fourth International that is truly a world party of socialist revolution.
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 reviving 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 “seditionous 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, they would not cooperate with I.C.E. arrests of undocu-mented 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, as he had done earlier with a transgender student, is arrested, the I.C.E. attempt- ed 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 Yiannopoulos 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 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 reviving 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 Yi-annopoulos, 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 “seditionous 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, they would not cooperate with I.C.E. arrests of undocu-mented 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, as he had done earlier with a transgender student, is arrested, the I.C.E. attempt- ed 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 Yiannopoulos 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 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 reviving 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 Yi-annopoulos, 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 “seditionous 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, they would not cooperate with I.C.E. arrests of undocu-mented 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, as he had done earlier with a transgender student, is arrested, the I.C.E. attempt- ed 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 Yiannopoulos 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 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 reviving 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 Yi-annopoulos, 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 “seditionous 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, they would not cooperate with I.C.E. arrests of undocu-mented 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, as he had done earlier with a transgender student, is arrested, the I.C.E. attempt- ed 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 Yiannopoulos 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 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 reviving up a drive to purge leftist and liberal professors from academia, salivating at the prospect of returning to the McCarthy era of the 1950s.
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 ravishing 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 running 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 regressive 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 declasse 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 whipping up nationalist hatred against an “enemy within,” whether communists, Jews, Muslims, immigrants or black people. It can parade in uniforms with black shirts (Italians, immigrants or black people. It can make matters worse. Racism and sexism reflect the material reality of the historical and current subjugation of oppressed racial and ethnic groups and women, which are rooted in capitalist relations 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 social 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 reformist 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 Socialists have presented 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 latter has 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 a 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 numbers. It’s not just some city streets, tunnels or a few Interstate highways, but the capitalist state that spawns this racist, sexist, homophbic 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. It was a revival of the anti-communist witch hunts during 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 latter have 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 products. 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 and nationalist groups that finance the neo-Nazi blog VDARE.com. The money has been raised by huge Trump donor, who raised $20 million at a Las Vegas conference specifically to fight BDS in universities and the powerful American Israel Public Affairs Committee continues on page 17.

---

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

[See our article, “Donald Trump the ‘Alt-Right’ and Fascism,” *The Internationalist* No. 46, January-February 2017.]

---

The Internationalist
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 an inadverent 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 articles have 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 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 “capitalization 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.” 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 Guantanamo detention center. Six years later, after abasing themselves from the protest action 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 the 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’s easier or harder for the I.C.E. to deport immigrants.

That’s more, in order to hide its betrayals, the SL shamelessly resorts to “alternative facts.” This Sunday for the February 2 Trump speaker-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!” decried the “shameful line of ‘Communists Who Peddle the Demands of 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 the 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’s easier or harder for the I.C.E. to deport immigrants.

That’s more, in order to hide its betrayals, the SL shamelessly resorts to “alternative facts.” This Sunday for the February 2 Trump speaker-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!” decried the “shameful line of ‘Communists Who Peddle the Demands of 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 the 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’s easier or harder for the I.C.E. to deport immigrants.

At the February 2 protest, there were CUNY Internationalist and WV 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 spokesperson for the Internationalist Group, in turn, noted that:...
No Ban, No Wall – Full Citizenship Rights for All! 
Smash Racist Ban on Muslims, Refugees

The following International- 
alist Group leaflet was distrib- 
uted at January 29 demonstra-
tion 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 Pres-
ident Donald Trump had signed 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, thou-
sands rushed to the airports, from New York City to LAX in Los Angeles. Huge crowds stayed for hours chant-
ing “Refugees are welcome here” and “LET THEM IN!”

These are the same popular rev-
et 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 deport-
ed over 5.5 million during his two terms as president, earning the nickname of “deporter in chief.”

On Saturday night, as hundreds protested outside the federal courthouse in Brooklyn, a federal judge issued an emergency temporary restraining order blocking Trump’s ban. This may temporarily let in scores of travel-
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, homo-

The Internationalist Group, which since its inception has organized immi-
grant 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 re-

First they came for the Muslims! Expressions of popular outrage are vi-
tal, 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 work-
ing 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 immi-
grant 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 re-

First they came for the Muslims! Expressions of popular outrage are vi-
tal, 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 work-
ing 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 immi-
grant 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 re-

First they came for the Muslims! Expressions of popular outrage are vi-
tal, 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 work-
ing 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 immi-
grant 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 re-

First they came for the Muslims! Expressions of popular outrage are vi-
tal, 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 work-
ing 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 immi-
grant 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 re-

First they came for the Muslims! Expressions of popular outrage are vi-
tal, 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 work-

The SL, echoing the DAPL’s pathetic refusal to support the protest 

Ni ilegales, no capitalistas, nooro, internacionales! (“We are neither illegal nor criminal, we are international workers!”). Our watchword is: “Asián, Lat-
in, black and white – workers of the world unite!”

The IG, CSEW, TIC and CUNY Interna-
tionalist Clubs say: You can’t fight Trump with Democrats. We call for: “NYC Labor: Use Your Muscle NOW to Smear Trump! The time to Build a revolutionary workers party!”

As for IV’s attack on the International-
alist 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 edu-
cation and social service funds going to lo-
calities 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. 1373 (sanctuary jurisdictions) are not eligible to receive Federal grants.”

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 immi-
grant rights, and the rights of all the op-

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 immi-
grant rights, and the rights of all the op-

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 immi-
grant rights, and the rights of all the op-

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 immi-
grant rights, and the rights of all the op-

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 immi-
grant rights, and the rights of all the op-

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 immi-
grant rights, and the rights of all the op-

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 immi-
grant rights, and the rights of all the op-

The SL’s claim that “sanctuary cities” are just a “scam” means there’s nothing to defend – so do nothing about it.
May Day... continued from page 1

Beyond marching on May 1, it is necessary for working people 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 ICE jails out of the major urban areas, to turn schools and workplaces 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!” 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 2016, the parliamentary left has been 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 heart of the Democrats is the lie 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 Immigration Responsibility Act.” Working people, whether born here or in another country, need to fight for no ban on Muslim immigrants, 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 popo and other urban centers. In one 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 nothing 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 all organized workers to break from the Democratic Party and join the struggle of working people.”

**Break with the Democrats, Mobilize the Working Class**

In his first 100 days in office, the billionnaire 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. He is, however, one thing, though, the new administration has remained consistent: from Day One it has viciously attacked immigrants. Trump built his campaign railing against “Islamic terrorism” 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 the Bush and Reagan eras, and to put them on a new plane.

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). The deportations expanded the guidelines for deportations, deportation more people than any other president, earning him the chief title “deporter-in-chief.”

Take note as well about what has happened with Trump’s anti-immigrant decrees. His ban on immigrants from seven Muslim countries was immediately contested in the courts by attorneys general of several Democratic state governments. But little notice was paid to the exceptions 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, which 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”

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 supposed to be 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 from 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, clergy 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. Gestapo 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

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 actions: 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.” In addition, for the first part 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 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 and the 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 bourgeoisie 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.*

---

1 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.
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 steel slab plant 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 government labor board, which the Mine and Mill leadership didn’t expect, laid the basis for the Secretary of Labor, Alfonso Navarrete, to pronounce 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 4 workers were killed and dozens wounded.

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 union1 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 “pending a fast one,” as the leaders of the SNTMMSSRM put it, declaring that the workers in this port city of Lázaro Cárdenas, Mexico, 12 March 2016.

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 notification2 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 to declare 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 4 workers were killed and dozens wounded.

A strike was the only means available to this people to protest this kind of treatment and to vindicate the rights of workers. Thousands of steel workers in the Lázaro Cárdenas area have a 17th postponement, citing a doctrine that a strike 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, Napoléon 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 lay-off notice were simply dismissed, not being members of the union.

Immediately after the strike ended, the Secretary of Labor, Alonso 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 Jornada, 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, Víctor 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 the 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 including the captain of the company, 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 and the company did not choose these “troublemakers.”

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 agreements 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 closure 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, instead of 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. 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 Napoléon Gómez Sada, and later under his son and heir Napoléon 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.

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 one copy to workers, cut in 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.

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

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

Although today the SNTMSSRM is a semi-corporatist union, as we have noted “Gómez Urrutia has invariably resisted to the miners that they stay within the narrow limits prescribed 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 SNTMSSRM to these strikes, the GI has always supported the struggles of these 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 leadership 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 for the seven decades of its 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 beginning in the late 1980s, the abundant wellbeing of money that lubricated this machinery began to dry up. Despite the political “alternation” inaugurated in 2000 when Vicente Fox Quezada 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 SNTMSSRM 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 control of the movement. Pseudo-Trotskyist organizations like the MTS (Socialist Workers Movement) and Stalinists like the PCM (m-n) call for the election of more democratic slates, or “less chanty” ones. The case of the ex-Maoists of Liberation Struggle in Lázaro Cárdenas is very illustrative in this respect. Calling for the removal of Napoleón Gómez Urrutia as secretary-general of the SNTMSSRM, they ended up as allies of Elías Morales, the pawn that the Fox government used to carry out a charroazo against the charro Napo. 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 Es-partaguista 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. Abandoning the revolutionary program of Trotskyism in the mid-1990s, the GEM has been used by the bosses and the corporatist labor bodies (who use the exclusion clause to rid themselves of 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 “unaligned” with the bosses, the local 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 Internaciona-lists fights to close the 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,” 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 succeed to 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 Continued on page 18
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 (Unified 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 in the context 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, São Paulo State Federation of Industries, the Rio de Janeiro state government, the Brazilian Chamber of 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 protectionism for domestic consumption;
~ economic integration that seeks to turn Brazil into an agricultural colony;
~ military integration that seeks to turn Brazil into a major arms market;
~ privatization of goods and services;
~ the destruction of public education and health;
~ centralization of the decision-making process into the hands of the center.

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

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” pacoteço (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 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. Pau-lo 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 “keep the public spending in order.” (See our article “The Assault Is By the Entire Bourgeoisie Against the Working People,” leaflet of the Comité de Luta Clasista [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 fired 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 Interna-tionalist, December 2015). This time, against the “End for the World” Constitutional Amend-ment, 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 being the candidate of 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 undegivable reforms.

Temer’s convenient belly-crawling – which he is using as a kind of a bargaining chip, seeking absolution for his electoral crimes by selling out the masses for the glory of big capital – is where Mr. Temer and his allies want us to...
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 International 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 Bolshevok 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 revolution, and revolutionary strategy for women’s liberation today.

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.

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 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 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 Union, the ILGWU.

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.

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 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 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 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 rights 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 said, “Women of the World, Unite!唵 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 Kudelii, Konkordia Samolova, Anna Yelizarova-Ulianova, Alexandra Kollontai, Liudmila Stal and Vera Velichkina (Bopch-Bruievich). 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 Kolontai, who fought in international antiracist conferences against liberal pacifism and for the Bolshevok 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 underground 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 society, because they had been denied education. 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 in the Red Guards, who were also soldiers, “wag two fingers 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: “Some members of the Red Guards were a bit too aggressive, and 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!’ And several comrades rushed to the windows. ‘More 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 soldiers to “discipline” the workers. This time, in 1917, three years after the revolution, 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 the street.

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可靠的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, wave; 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. Under the orders of workers, soldiers and workers for peace and bread were not met. The Bolsheviks under Lenin 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 Konkordia 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 continued, 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!”

Women Red Guard soldiers during the Russian Revolution.

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!”

The Internationalist
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.

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 in over 60 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 not only by the vanguard of 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 Milan 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 the Chamber of Deputies, Laura Boldrini, had the Italian flags at Montecitorio (the seat of the Chamber of Deputies, Laura Boldrini, had the Italian flags at Montecitorio (the seat of the Chamber of Deputies, Laura Boldrini, had the Italian flags at Montecitorio (the seat of the Chamber of Deputies) lowered to half-mast; the ex-president, Milan football (soccer) team Silvio Berlusconi.

While raising some correct and necessary issues, such as for free abortion on demand and the adjective “anti-capitalist” 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
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 bourgeoise 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 the patriarch and have notoriously been implicated in sexual abuse, rapes and murders of women.

The grim reality for working-class and oppressed women in Italy has fueled widespread anger and indignation over how the “conscientious objector” clause reportedly helped tens of thousands of gynecologists and medical staff who refuse to declare formal abortions. This led to a long trial with Dr. goni’s CL followers at the Mangiagalli hospital in Milan, a key case for attack on 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. By 1970s this capacity earned him the name of “cucchi d’oro” (golden spoons).

The reality is that getting an abortion in Italy 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 were illegal and dangerous. Thus women are forced to look for third parties.

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.

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

The grim reality for working-class and oppressed women in Italy has fueled widespread anger and indignation over how the “conscientious objector” clause reportedly helped tens of thousands of gynecologists and medical staff who refuse to declare formal abortions. This led to a long trial with Dr. goni’s CL followers at the Mangiagalli hospital in Milan, a key case for attack on 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. By 1970s this capacity earned him the name of “cucchi d’oro” (golden spoons).

The reality is that getting an abortion in Italy 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 were illegal and dangerous. Thus women are forced to look for third parties.

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

The grim reality for working-class and oppressed women in Italy has fueled widespread anger and indignation over how the “conscientious objector” clause reportedly helped tens of thousands of gynecologists and medical staff who refuse to declare formal abortions. This led to a long trial with Dr. goni’s CL followers at the Mangiagalli hospital in Milan, a key case for attack on 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. By 1970s this capacity earned him the name of “cucchi d’oro” (golden spoons).

The reality is that getting an abortion in Italy 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 were illegal and dangerous. Thus women are forced to look for third parties.
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 and gender roles. "The family is withering away not because of the development of a science of family life, but because the family is withering away as an institution as a result of the development of the economic relations of production among men. The family is simply a stage in the development of human society."

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 child-rearing 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, except in the nuclear family. But it continues to be upheld as a standard today by reactionary forces seeking to foil stultifying bourgeoisie 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 system of mate selection and family, 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 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.

"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 shouldered a double workload 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. Trabajadoras 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 gay women, for citizenship rights for all immigrants and without "paparazzi," can such a genuinely communist party lead the fight for workers power.

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 Fourth Internationale. 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 of capitalism’s 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 sends 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 produced, 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-Fascist International 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 bourgeois) cultural habits which removed women from “their place” in the family and gave them “mas- cule” roles (like jobs and other activities drastically 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, Trabajadora 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!”

"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 reproduction. In 1926, the fascists 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 reproduction. 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 bourgeois) cultural habits which removed women from “their place” in the family and gave them “mas-cule” roles (like jobs and other activities...
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 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) over-whelmingly voted down the draconian legis-
lation. But that still leaves in place the exist-
ing 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 impor-
tant, though limited, victory against at-
tempts to further roll back women's rights. It was hardly radical: called by the pettybourgeois “progressive” party Razem (To-
gether), 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 in-
creasingly liberally interpreted). The law was changed as part of the counterrevolution led by Solidarność (Solidarity), the anti-Commu-
nist “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 amne-
sia of the opportunist pseudo-socialists who supported Solidarność to the hilt.

Virtually the entire Italian left is re-
sponding to the situation of Polish women's right to abortion. Their pious de-
clarations today of support for wom-
en's rights are belied by that historic crime. Their silence about how abortion came to be banned in Poland is a self-ammesty.

How did this come about? After World War II, the supposedly “democratic” imperi-
alsists launched a Cold War against the Soviet Union, which had borne the brunt of the fighting and suffered the largest number of casualties (over 30 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 bu-
eaucratically degenerated and deformed workers state of the Soviet Union against imperialism and internal counterrevolu-
tion, 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 began in 1950. After the defeat of U.S. impe-
rialism in Vietnam in 1975, following a brief period of “detente” the imperialist masters in Washington launched a new anti-Soviет of-
fensive that culminated in the counterrevolu-
tion 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 interven-
tion in 1979 sought to prop up the govern-
ment in Kabul that had been weakened by re-
actionary 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 de-
nouncing “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 Wash-
ington 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 govern-
ment extended education to girls, the U.S.-
backed “holy warriors” shot teachers.

The authentic Trotskyists, then repre-
seated by the international Spartacist ten-
dency, proclaimed “Hail Red Army in Af-
ghanistan!” 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 interven-
tion, which it saw forced on it by the CIA’s intrigues, and eventually Mikhail Gor-
bachev pulled Soviet troops out in 1989. At that point we offered to send an internation-
al brigade to fight on the side of the Kabul regime against the U.S.-backed mujahedin.

An Italian comrade was dispatched to Af-
ghanistan to report on the struggle, high-
lighting the resistance of Afghan women.1 But the offer was turned down.

1 See “From Line Afghanistan,” Workers Vang-
uard No. 482, 21 July 1989, and also “Eye-

The Stalinist bureaucracies have permitted ominous capitalist intrusions, but the actual restoration of bourgeois rule has not yet occurred. By echoing imperialist prop-
ganda claiming these states are capitalist, the fake-Trotskyists are refusing to re-

dent them, and thus help prepare the way for counterrevolution. The social gains of these revolutions were paid for with mil-
ions 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 revo-
lutionists to defend tooth and nail every position gained by the working class, whether from a setback in the struggle 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.

The 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 War “Socialists” and “Eurocommunists” (includ-
ing Italian Communist Party leader En-
rico 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 found-
ers of the LFI and of the Nucleo Internazion-
alista 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 sym-

The political continuity of the Bolsheviks under Lenin and Trotsky, the Fourth International defended the bureaucratically degenerated and deformed workers state of the Soviet Union against imperialism and internal counterrevolu-
tion, 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 began in 1950. After the defeat of U.S. imperialism in Vietnam in 1975, following a brief period of “detente” the imperialist masters in Washington launched a new anti-Soviet offens-
""
March-April 2017

Yiannopoulos... continued from page 4

fairs Committee lobby.1

Part of this drive was the passage by the U.S. Senate, as a condition 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. Decreasing the “legitimacy” of the Anti-Semite 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 is shot through with anti-Semites who support the state of Israel. They oppose this legislation as “deeply harmful” to the struggle against Islamophobia, anti-Semitism and “white nationalisms” (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-Zionist antisemitic activities,” 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 by the American Jewish Congress and its partners to legislate and 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.

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 Student 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 the Zionist state) to “CUNY Internationalists Club participated in that protest and has defended the SJ. 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 flying a Palestinian flag.

This drive to prohibit Palestinian rights groups on campus is being pushed by a web site, Stop the Jew Hate on Campus. 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, which 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 for targeting have been the victims 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 the money to push the ruling 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.

While the drive on academic freedom is being orchestrated from the very highest levels of political power, as the Milo 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 professor Marilyn Howitt and the college of her students. In 1947, Dr. Marilyn Howitt challenged her students’ assumption that doctors, nurses, teachers and other professionals were entitled to respect and consideration. She was demoted and the college went to court to get her fired. The court ruled in favor of the professor, who was reinstated. But the college continued to discriminate against her and eventually drove her into retirement.

What’s needed is a workers party built on 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 immigration, where migrants (35% of the population of Los Angeles is foreign-born, over 40% in NYC).

It’s entirely possible to organize mass labor/back/Latino/migrant 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’ call 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 intrasexist class struggle, to put an end to the dictatorship of capitalism 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 the real threat of nuclear war, the war on 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.
SL vs. Refugees... continued from page 6

WV dismisses this, saying, “it will not stop them from harassing immigrants or collud- ing with I.C.E.” The “slight impediment” is of little consequence to the hawks at SL. But for vulnerable immigrants who have been given summonses for smoking in an NY park, or for having their feet up on a subway seat going home from work exhausted after 12-hour days, or for women packing wages down for workers and families. The hated migra- cops are salivating at the thought of swoop- ing down on city jails and carting off loads of immigrants picked up for traffic violations, misdemeanors or anything that could be a “chargeable criminal offense,” including having a “no-match” Social Se- curity number. An I.C.E. official said its “biggest challenge” is localities “that have vowed to protect immigrants from deporta- tion, known as sanctuary cities.”

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


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 de- portations, which the SL doesn’t.

The call to defend sanctuary cities un- der attack is one of a series of measures put forward by the IG, CUNY Internationalist Clubs and Trabajadores Internacionales Cla- sistas (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 schools, hospi- tal and university authorities not turn over any federal authorizations information about students, workers and patients that could single out the undocumented. We have called for worker/immigrant action to stop deporta- tions, 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 for- mation of immigrant defense committees in schools and workplaces.

Not only do we call for this, IG sup- porters 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, noth- ing 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 be- cause it has no program for “active struggle; 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 defi- ance 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.3 While that resistance was defeated by mili- tary occupation of Boston, it was a key factor leading to the Civil War, the Second Ameri- can Revolution, that abolished slavery.

In opposing the call for CUNY to be a “sanctuary university,” the SL sagely in- forms us that “CUNY is a capitalist institu- tion, like all universities under capitalism,” and the administration “cannot be looked to defend immigrants any more than can the campus cops who do their dirty work.” We warned of this months before. In a No- vember 2016 leaflet titled, “Defend Immig- rant Students: Immigration Police and All Cops Out of CUNY,” the IG and CUNY Internationalist Clubs wrote:

[The Trump victory has given rise to the ‘sanctuary campus’ movement – a push to make college campuses ‘sanctu- aries’ for undocumented students. While

1 In the ICL internal fight, Eibhlin McDonald, leader of its British section, wrote (27 May 2015) of “people in the boats, who were drown- ing by the thousands” and “those who are wait- ing to get on boats to try and get to Europe. One of the pressures towards liberalism comes from the need not 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.

2 Supporting this demand critically, we warn against liberal illusions.... “As revolutionary Marxists, we support banning I.C.E. from campuses, forbid- ding their presence on campuses, includ- ing having a “no-match” Social Secu- rity number, that the SL doesn’t.

3 Comisiones Obreras (CCOO), one of the two main union federations in Spain.
Brazil... continued from page 10

“In addition to the spending cap, Mr. Temer has introduced a proposal to revamp Brazil’s pension system. The new pension plan 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 four 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 Neoliberal... 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 of the bourgeois-bureaucratic class, 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, 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 Roussef, the PT has been playing hardball on the institutional and judicial front.

The PT, the PCdoB, 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, the judicial system has clearly declared that a “coup d’état” was underway, but within the institutional framework they accepted the verdict of the bourgeois, 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 Petrobras 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 en- demic bourgeois corruption which is in the very nature of capitalism. Caught in the trap of the so-called “Operation Car Wash” for shoveling billions to bourgeois politi- cians for election financing via the mega- contractor Odebrecht, skirting current legal norms, they are 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 PT is in the ultra-right’s camp, because in the PMDB and almost all the bourgeois parties left their fingerprints and were caught with their hands 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 ori- gins and for the last two decades its bid to come up in Brazilian politics was 70% bourgeois morality.

But with the PT’s screw-up, the bour- geois 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 embarrassed, the PT is trying to resuscitate a new version of the Brazilian Popular Front which won the 2002 elections.

But its ability to do a turnaround is very much in doubt.

League for the Fourth International

LFI, Box 3321, Church Street Station, New York 10006, U.S.A. E-mail: internationalistgroup@msn.com

Nucleo Internazionalista d’Italia

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

Gruppo Internacionalista/México

Mexico: write to Partido Apartado Postal 12-2101, Admón. Postal Obrero Mundial, CP 03001, México D.F., México E-mail: grupointernacionalistasmexico@ymail.com
Tel. Mexico City: 55-3154-7361; Guadalajara: 33-1752-6643; Oaxaca: 951-815-6815; Tijuana: 664-112-5423

Internationalist Group/U.S.

Internationalist Group, Box 3321, Church Street Station, New York, NY 10006, U.S.A. E-mail: internationalistgroup@msn.com

New York Tel. (212) 460-0983 Fax: (212) 614-8711
Los Angeles Tel. (323) 984-8590
Portland Tel. (971) 282-7903

March-April 2017

19
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 Fordism, 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 coma-like 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 a hundred 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, “Mexcare,” 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 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 Ojea Jiménez, a 20-year-old construction worker from Mexico who in 2010 fell from a twenty-foot roof in a hospital 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, 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 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 their families want them home, and lie to their families, saying the patient wants to go home. All this to get 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 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 doing attention from hospital staff, according to an indigent 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 Treatment and Labor Act.

The following motion was adopted by AFSCME DC 57 Local 768 (NYCHC Employees) on February 6. The resolution is also available on the Local 768 web page at: http://www.localsevenbillion.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-trade, 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.”

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

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.

Quelino Ojea Jiménez in Chicago hospital in 2010.
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. To build the power of the labor movement to stop deportations. Rapid response networks are needed in schools and neighborhoods. If students or their 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.

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

For further information: E-mail cs_edworkers@hotmail.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 are eligible to receive 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 démodé 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 working hours (see “ObamaCare Screws Workers, Windfall for Insurance Companies,” The Internationalizer 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 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 sharp relief the disjunction between the vast wealth and luxury of the parasites who exploit workers like Quelito Oxeda 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 situation 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 inexorably linked to the crisis of capitalism and the need for revolution, militant workers and defenders of immigrant rights can do something to 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.
The Internationalist

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 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 I.C.E., 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 formation, 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

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

1° de Mayo... sigue la página 24
March-April 2017

Bajo la Quinta Enmienda a la Constitución de Estado Unidos, todos tienen derecho al debido proceso. Bajo la Catorceava Enmienda (ganan mediante la Guerra Civil) “la igual protección de la ley” está supuestamente 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 atractiva 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 policial de “ventanas rotas” que ha sido impulsada por los diversos alcaldes desde los republicanos Giuliani y Bloomberg, hasta el democrata Bill de Blasio. Esa práctica desemboque 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 debía existir. ¿Y por qué? Meditante 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 rehusa. ¿Por qué? Uma 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 refuñan 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 Gestapo del ICE tiene una vasta red de campos de concentración. Actualmente, está en curso una huella de hambre en el Nor- west 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 esponáto 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 mercados 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 video y fotografía B&H, donde los trabajadores “organizaron un paro colectivo para protestar en contra de las redadas y las deportaciones”. Además, a lo largo del último mes, trabajadores de B&H y Tom Cat de inspirar a más de medio millón 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”.

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 go- biernos 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 cualquiera que haya sido encontrado culpable); 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 gu- bernamental (¿número no match del Social?); a quienes que haya “abudado” de beneficios públicos (“programas de salud infantil”); o a quienquiera que “a juicio de un agente de migra- ción” pueda representar un “riesgo” para la “seguridad pública”.

Esto en Estados Unidos “autorización” no es en mismo un delito; en muchos casos, se trata tan solo 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.

1 Gleichem Staatspolizei, la policia secreta nazi.
¡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 ola 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 derrotop d el régimen de Trump, pero necesitan urgentemente el apoyo activo de todos los trabajadores y oprimidos en una aguda lucha clasista.

Tras una campaña electoral azucarada por la xenofobia (el odio por los extranjeros), Trump emitió tres decretos tan pronto como asumió el cargo: impedir la entrada de inmigrantes indocumentados, construir su muro a lo largo de la frontera con México y criminalizar y deportar a todos los inmigrantes indocumentados. Habrá 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. Este 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 superando 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 creador, 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 palabra 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 antinmigrante.

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 cerró el puerto de Oakland y encabezó una marcha de miles de personas para exigir “Alto al terror policial”. Ese mismo día en Portland, Oregon, activistas de varios sindicatos marcharon en un contingente de “Trabajadores en contra de los racistas asesinatos policiales”. 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 cărceles 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!”, reprodicido 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 Clásicas, en protesta en defensa de los trabajadores de B&H, el 12 de febrero, los camionet del ICE buscando inmigrantes y sus partidarios bloquearon el área de la Bahía de San Francisco cerró el puerto de Oakland y encabezó una marcha de miles de personas para exigir “Alto al terror policial”. Ese mismo día en Portland, Oregon, activistas de varios sindicatos marcharon en un contingente de “Trabajadores en contra de los racistas asesinatos policiales”. 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 cárcel 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 Clásicas) 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 para 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 de masas obreras y en solidaridad con el pueblo de Palestina.

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