

There Is No Justice for Black People in the Racist Capitalist Courts

Black America Under the Gun

Workers Revolution Will Avenge Philando Castile

JUNE 25 – This proves it beyond a shadow of a doubt: *there is no justice for the oppressed in the racist capitalist courts.* The acquittal of Jeronimo Yanez, the cop who gunned down Philando Castile last July 6 as he sat in his car in suburban St. Paul, Minnesota, is proof positive that the whole system is rigged to guarantee that the police can kill with impunity.

Philando Castile did nothing wrong. When Yanez pulled him over, he was calm and polite. He followed the protocol that young black men are taught about how to stay alive in an encounter with the police. Philando knew the drill: he had been stopped by cops at least 46 times over the past dozen years. Only six times was it for something that could be seen from outside the car (speeding, broken muffler). He was racially profiled, targeted. And look what happened.

Anyone who saw the heart-wrenching Facebook Live video by his girlfriend Diamond Reynolds, as millions did, knows. It showed Philando in a puddle of blood as he lay dying after being struck five times from seven shots. Anyone who saw the horrifying police dashboard camera video and audio, as the jury did repeatedly, of the frenzied cop pumping bullets into Philando with his girlfriend Diamond and her four-year-old daughter in the car with him, can have no doubt.



Demonstrators with portrait of Philando Castile protest in St. Paul suburb on June 18 against verdict acquitting the cop who murdered him.

Philando Castile was executed, the ultimate penalty for “driving while black.” And his executioner, killer cop Jeronimo Yanez, walked. It’s the way the system works.

That system is capitalism. From the time it was founded on the bedrock of chattel slav-

ery, racist American capitalism has meant extermination of Native Americans, subjugation of African Americans, persecution of Latino Americans and all-sided oppression. Today the system is based on exploitation of “wage slaves,” as Karl Marx described the

working class. Immigrants and Muslims are currently top targets. But there is always an “enemy within” to be hounded.

Philando Castile was a supervisor in the school cafeteria of J. Hill Montessori Magnet School in St. Paul. He was a member of Teamsters Local 320. The kids called him “Mr. Phil” and he served meals to more than 400 kids twice a day. He knew all their names, and remembered who had which food allergies. He was well-liked by the kids, parents and school staff. To the J.J. Hill community, Castile was a “kind, gentle soul,” as a parent Sally Rafowicz said, “kind of like Mr. Rogers with dreadlocks” (Minneapolis *StarTribune*, 7 July 2016).

Castile was pulled over as he was driving in Falcon Heights, a tiny suburb of St. Paul near the state fairgrounds, so small that it hired police from another suburb, St. Anthony, to patrol it. A 2003 study of racial bias in policing by University of Minnesota law professor Myron Orfield found that in the lily-white suburbs of the Twin Cities, African Americans and Latinos were “up to seven times more likely to be stopped by police” (National Public Radio, 15 July 2016).

When Yanez approached the car, he told Philando he had been pulled over because of a cracked tail light, which was a

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Police Protect Vastly Outnumbered Racists

Portland Labor Mobilizes to Stop Fascist Provocation

Militants from 14 Area Unions Point the Way Forward

PORTLAND, OR, June 8 – The rally here on Sunday, June 4 of white-supremacist and outright fascist Trump supporters was surrounded by far greater numbers of furious protesters outraged by this brazen provocation barely a week after the double murder by a local Nazi. One of three protests, a mobilization called by Portland Labor Against the Fascists, brought out several hundred union members and supporters who gathered to the east of Terry Schrunk Plaza, where the race-haters were protected by triple lines of heavily armed local, state and federal riot police.

Present at the labor mobilization against the fascists were members of at least 14 area unions, including: IUPAT (painters) Local 10; IATSE (stage hands) Local 28; Carpenters Local 1503 and Carpenters Northwest Regional Council; Laborers Local 483; AFT Oregon (teachers); IWW (Industrial Workers of the World), Seattle; SEIU Local 503; Iron Workers



Several hundred unionists and supporters came out on June 4 in the first significant labor action against white supremacists in decades.

Local 29; AAUP (university professors); CWA (telecommunications workers); SAG-AFTRA (actors); AWPPW (pulp and paper workers); ATU (transit workers) District 757, and others. The first seven unions

earlier passed coordinated motions calling for “mobilizing against the clear and present danger that the provocations of racist and fascist organizations pose to us all.”

Meanwhile, an army of police from

seven different jurisdictions turned downtown Portland into a police state to ensure that the racist provocation proceeded. Specially outfitted copmobiles, each with a dozen black-clad state police standing on the running boards circled the plaza where the ultra-rightists were gathered. After a standoff of several hours, the police unleashed volleys of flash-bang grenades, rubber bullets and tear gas to clear anti-fascist protesters out of Chapman Square just to the north of Schrunk Plaza. As they did on May Day, the police “kettled” the entire area, holding 200 people on the street as they IDed everyone and picked out individuals to be detained. Fourteen arrests were reported.

We demand that all antifa and other protesters arrested on June 4 be released and all charges dropped, and the same for those arrested on May 1 and those who were protesting a prior racist rally on April 29.

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Introducing *Permanente Revolution*, German-Language Newspaper of the LFI

The following article is translated from *Permanente Revolution* No. 1 (Summer 2017), published by the League for the Fourth International.

With this first issue of *Permanente Revolution*, we are introducing the German-language newspaper of the League for the Fourth International (LFI), which fights for international socialist revolution on the Marxist program of V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky. It is precisely this perspective, proclaimed by the Bolshevik October Revolution of 1917, that is today the only hope of mankind in the face of the spectacular decline of the imperialist-capitalist system of war, economic crisis and poverty.

We take the name of our newspaper from the weekly paper of the German Trotskyists in the early 1930s. The Bolshevik-Leninists, as the Left Oppositionists in the Stalinized German Communist Party (KPD) called themselves at the time, fought tirelessly for proletarian united-front actions of all workers organizations to stop the Nazis. This stood in stark contrast to the KPD leadership, which first declared the reformist German Social Democratic Party (SPD) a “social-fascist” twin of the Nazi party, then turned around and proclaimed, “After

Hitler us!” They ended up pushing an underground “people’s front” with a mythical progressive wing of the bourgeoisie. After the KPD’s capitulation without a fight (not to mention the SPD’s) and the complete absence of opposition to this in the Communist International, it was clear to the Trotskyists that the Comintern was politically dead, and that building a new, fourth International was on the order of the day.

Founded in 1938, the Fourth International stood for defense of the Soviet Union against counterrevolution from within and without, and for a proletarian political revolution to replace the Stalinist bureaucracy with workers councils (soviets) under revolutionary leadership. Following the privations caused by the Civil War and imperialist military intervention, as well as because of demoralization due to the absence of successful revolutions in the economically more developed countries, the world’s first workers state degenerated under Stalin. The bureaucracy led a political counterrevolution and usurped political power, but had to maintain the foundations of the collectivized economy from which it siphoned off its privileges.

With its anti-Marxist, nationalist dogma of building “socialism in one country,” Stalinism opposed the internationalist policies of the Bolsheviks. While the Stalinists betrayed a series of revolutions on the alter of the popular front and “peaceful co-existence” with imperialism, the Trotskyists fought for revolutionary class independence and proletarian solidarity. When after years of undermining the consciousness of the working class, Stalinist rule succumbed to the imperialist offensive in 1989-92, genuine Trotskyists stood at their posts and fought against the counterrevolution that destroyed the bureaucratically deformed and degenerated workers states, from East Germany (DDR – the German Democratic Republic) to the USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics).

At that time, and also today, the pseudo-Trotskyists stood on the side of imperialism with their “democratic” alibis. Today the League for the Fourth International fights against the restoration of capitalist rule, whether through imperialist blockade and attack or by internal counterrevolutionary forces, which menaces the remaining deformed workers states, from China and North Korea to Vietnam and Cuba. Another key programmatic pillar of the Fourth

International was Trotsky’s theory of *permanent revolution*, which holds that in countries with belated and uneven capitalist development, to win even the most basic gains of the bourgeois revolution requires that the working class take power and extend the socialist revolution internationally.

The devastation of the Second World War and the all-round murderous repression to which innumerable Trotskyists fell victim weakened the Fourth International. Thereafter, between 1951 and 1953, it was plagued by the revisionist tendency of Michel Pablo, who denied the necessity for a Trotskyist leadership. This led to the organizational dissolution of the Fourth International. We of the League for the Fourth International seek to reforge it on the basis of the revolutionary political continuity upheld first by the U.S. Socialist Workers Party under James P. Cannon, and then for three decades by the Spartacist tendency/International Communist League. The consequences of counterrevolution in the DDR and USSR had a demoralizing effect on the ICL, which tenaciously fought against it, and led to a sharp internal fight in 1995-96, beginning in the German section, the SpAD (Spartakist Workers Party of Germany). In response to the counterrevolution, which was a severe defeat for the proletariat worldwide, the ICL drew defeatist conclusions and claimed that it was the Stalinist bureaucracy, not the imperialists, who led the counterrevolution. The ICL thus repudiated the Trotskyist understanding of the contradictory nature of the parasitic bureaucratic caste.

Following this, leading members of the French, Mexican and U.S. sections of the ICL were expelled, while the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil (Fourth Internationalist League of Brazil) was abandoned by the ICL in the midst of a sharp class struggle. The expulsions led in 1996 to the founding of the Internationalist Group in the United States, and then in 1998 these cadres formed the League for the Fourth International in order to continue the struggle for authentic Trotskyism, while the ICL was infected by the bourgeois triumphalism over the “death of communism.” The ICL withdrew into passive propagandism, blaming this on the backward consciousness of the working class, and in subsequent years it abandoned one Trotskyist position after another until in 2010 it welcomed the U.S. invasion of Haiti (as a supposed rescue mission after the earthquake). Several months later, the ICL itself had to renounce this as a “social-imperialist betrayal.”

Later, after a series of internal fights against the increasingly social-chauvinist line of the ICL leadership over the refugee crisis (see “Strange Encounters with the ICL,” *The Internationalist* No. 44, Summer 2016), one of the “deviationists,” a longtime member of the editorial board of *Spartakist* and of the Berlin local leadership of the SpAD, left the ICL in December 2015, after all hopes of some kind of self-reform of the ICL proved to be definitively illusory. Shortly afterwards,



To order a copy of *Permanente Revolution* send e-mail to permanenterevolution@posteo.de.



Permanente Revolution was the name of the newspaper of the German Trotskyists in the early 1930s who fought for united-front workers action to stop the Nazis. This issue, from December 1932, featured Trotsky’s call, in his speech in Copenhagen, to “Defend the October Revolution.”

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It Will Take Workers Revolution to Get Rid of Austerity

Corbyn's Labour Party Surges, But "Welfare State" Capitalism Is Dead

For the second time in a year, British voters delivered a wholly unexpected verdict that upended the established wisdom about British politics and sent shock waves around the world. On 23 June 2016, a majority went to the polls to cast a ballot to leave the European Union – “Brexit.” That led to the downfall of Conservative (Tory) prime minister David Cameron, who called the referendum anticipating a big vote to “remain.” The Brexit vote set off panic in certain capitalist circles, particularly among the bankers of the City of London, who have built their speculative empires as the financial linchpin of the EU.

Then this past June 8, a “snap election” called by Cameron’s successor, Conservative prime minister Theresa May, hoping to solidify her support in the House of Commons, instead led to the loss of the Tory parliamentary majority and a huge increase for the opposition Labour Party. Prior to the vote, it was a near-universal belief among the political establishment and pundits of the bourgeois press that Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn was “unelectable” because of his mildly leftist politics. Instead, Labour went from 26% in the opinion polls at the start of the campaign to 40% at the ballot box, only slightly behind the Conservatives’ 42%.

Then, only days after the vote, came the monstrous fire at Grenfell Tower that killed at least 79 people. This crystallized the mounting fury at the Tories and their policies of deregulation, privatization and utter disdain for the lives of poor and working people. The blaze was the result of cheap appliances provided in council flats (public housing) and cheap flammable exterior cladding that turned the high-rise building into a death trap, all to save the local housing authority, in the richest borough in the country, £300,000 (a little under \$400,000). Six hundred high rises across Britain have the same deadly shell, and so far every one has failed a fire safety test. This *corporate murder* could bring the government down.

This was a death foretold – the tenants’ organization Grenfell Action Group repeatedly warned against just such a catastrophic fire. Meanwhile North Kensington is full of unoccupied luxury buildings and apartments held as investments. Rather than let the survivors be exiled far outside of London, a mass working-class based mobilization to immediately rehouse them in such vacant properties is on the order of the day.

At present, May’s occupancy of the prime minister’s residence at 10 Downing Street hangs by a thread, dependent on a shaky alliance with Northern Ireland’s Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), an ultra-reactionary, Protestant sectarian, homophobic party opposed to women’s right to abortion. With the loss of even a handful of votes threatening the government’s majority, before long they may be wheeling in ailing Tory Members of Parliament (MPs) on hospital gurneys to vote. Should there be a “hung Parliament,” with no party or coalition having a majority, a new election could well put Jeremy Corbyn in No. 10.

May-June 2017



Phil Noble/Reuters

Jeremy Corbyn with young supporters on June 8. Youth voted by 2-to-1 for Labour, but this reformist party won't and can't end capitalist austerity.

Beyond Corbyn’s appeal as a rare case of a fairly honest politician, Labour owes its stunning advance – the largest since 1945 – to its election Manifesto which called for investing in the National Health Service, abolishing tuition for university students, some renationalizations and for an end to “Tory austerity.” This struck a chord particularly among youth (one million young voters registered during the campaign), who voted 2-to-1 (66%) for Labour, and among working-class voters in hard-hit industrial areas. But despite the euphoria of the reformist left, the manifesto is not a bit radical, and the hard fact is that Labour will not and cannot end anti-worker austerity.

Almost the entire left in Britain, inside and outside of the Labour Party, portray the enemy as “neoliberalism,” namely the policies of “free trade,” cutbacks and privatization of state services, driving down wages and destruction of trade unions. This was carried out over the last three and a half de-

cades, starting with the Tory “Iron Lady” Margaret Thatcher and continuing under both Conservative (John Major, David Cameron) and “New Labour” (Tony Blair, Gordon Brown) prime ministers. But there will be no return to the social-democratic capitalist “welfare state” of yore, for “neoliberalism” is not a policy to be adopted or discarded depending on vote totals, but the vicious expression of bankrupt capitalism in its epoch of imperialist decay.

Any illusions about overturning neoliberalism at the ballot box should have been dispelled by the bitter experience of the left-populist SYRIZA government in Greece in 2015. Elected on an anti-austerity program that January, Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras held a sham referendum in July supposedly to vote down the extortionate demands of the Brussels bankers ... and a week later agreed to implement an even more brutal austerity program. It was all, as we wrote, “the Dictatorship of Finance Capital.”¹ Although Labour is a reformist (or as Lenin put it, a bourgeois) workers party rather than an outright capitalist party like SYRIZA, the result would be no different in a Britain governed by Corbyn than in Greece under Tsipras. As we wrote in 2015:

“A revolutionary opposition, both outside and inside the Labour Party, would underline that fighting austerity and regenerating the British economy can only be accomplished through workers revolution laying the basis for international socialist planning. ... For the workers to take power, they must bring down the dictatorship of capital. In no way can that be done by the thoroughly parliamentarist Labour Party, even if it resuscitates Old Labour’s famous Clause IV calling for public ownership of industry.”

–“Corbynmania Sweeps Britain,” *The Internationalist* No. 41, September-October 2015



Grenfell Tower inferno on June 12 has crystallized fury at the Tories.

Revolt of the Youth and the Have-Nots

Behind the double miscalculation by Conservative leaders (and virtually the entire political elite) is a blindness to the harsh economic and political realities facing working people, young people and much of the middle class in Britain. Believing their own propaganda and phony government statistics that the British economy was on the mend since the 2007-08 financial crash, the high and mighty ignored the continued mass unemployment and increased poverty in the ongoing capitalist depression. Last year, economic discontent was diverted into the narrow English nationalism of the Brexiteers and the anti-immigrant racism that dominated both sides in the referendum. This year it fueled the huge increase in the Labour vote.

The discontent is based on reality. From 2008 to 2015, while the gross domestic product rose by 2% a year, real wages for British workers *fell* by 1% a year. Of the G7 leading capitalist countries, Britain was the only one in which pay packets actually declined. Of the 34 advanced capitalist countries in the OECD (Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development), the only one that did worse than Britain in terms of real wages was Greece (“Falling real wages show the British economy is still struggling,” *Guardian*, 7 May). A report of the Social Mobility Commission says that Britain is increasingly divided between “haves and have-nots.” What’s happening is a revolt of the have-nots, but Labour’s call for a return to the welfare state is dead on arrival.

The situation is particularly acute for young workers, whose unemployment rate is three times the national average (officially 12% for ages 18 to 24, in reality far higher). Meanwhile, the “labor market flexibility” touted by the neoliberal capitalist ideologues means that young workers are consigned to part-time and precarious jobs. Millions of young people in Britain have “zero hours contracts,” meaning that they are “on call” with no job stability whatsoever. It is this economic disaster for youth that gave rise in 2011 to the “Arab Spring” revolts in North Africa, to the *indignados* who occupied city squares in southern Europe and to Occupy Wall Street in the United States. Their cry was one of desperation, and their movements were short-lived.

This is what led young people to eagerly vote for Tsipras and SYRIZA in Greece in 2015, only to be bitterly disappointed when he inevitably capitulated to the Brussels bankers. Last year youth in the United States likewise flocked to rallies for Bernie Sanders in the United States, and then despaired when this liberal Democrat who calls himself a “democratic socialist” inevitably endorsed Wall Street’s candidate, Hillary Clinton. In Britain, the enthusiastic youth vote won Jeremy Corbyn the Labour leadership and then confounded the pollsters and politicians with a huge

¹ “Greece: The Naked Rule of Finance Capital” (18 July 2015), in *The Internationalist* No. 41, September-October 2015

turnout on June 8. Tsipras and Sanders are populist bourgeois politicians, while Corbyn is a Labour reformist. But their common program of a return to “welfare state” capitalism is doomed to fail.

Labour’s Militarist, Pro-Police Manifesto

The Conservatives thought that they could pummel Labour in the election (and maybe destroy it as a party) by stepping up their virulent immigrant-bashing, and pushing for a “hard Brexit.” But Corbyn headed off an attack from the anti-immigrant right by joining them, declaring in Labour’s election Manifesto that “freedom of movement will end when we leave the European Union.” Meanwhile, he instructed Labour MPs to vote for May’s bill to trigger Brexit without conditions. And by talking in the campaign of staying in the European single market (“soft Brexit”), he attracted votes from youth who were getting worried that they might be stuck in an insular Britain. Some were also frightened by May’s embrace of Donald Trump.

When Labour’s Manifesto was leaked to the press in early May, the leakers figured it would be universally condemned as hopelessly radical and help them topple Corbyn as Labour leader after a crushing defeat at the polls. Pundits declared it the most left-wing manifesto since Labour’s 1983 platform, recalling the description of that document by a right-wing Labour MP as “the longest suicide note in history.” But instead of universal condemnation, the opposite occurred. Youth heard it was radical and even “socialist,” and rushed to register to vote and join Labour. But the reality of the Manifesto is very different from the hype. Even the title, “For the Many, Not the Few,” was taken from Tony Blair’s 1997 “New Labour” election campaign. In fact, key clauses of the 2017 Manifesto were imposed by the right wing of Labour.

Michael Foot’s 1983 Labour Manifesto called for unilateral nuclear disarmament. It didn’t mean it, of course, as it continued to call for a “strong” defense, was committed to the NATO imperialist military alliance and strongly supported the anti-Soviet Cold War drive. The 2017 Manifesto, in contrast, declares that “Labour supports the renewal of the Trident submarine system” and that “Conservative spending cuts have put Britain’s security at risk.” It vowed to *increase* “defense” spending to 2% of the gross domestic product, as Donald Trump and his predecessors in Washington have long demanded. Nothing even vaguely “anti-capitalist,” much less “socialist,” about it, this is the program of an emphatically pro-imperialist party.

The 2017 Labour Manifesto also criticized the Tories for reducing the number of police by 20,000, declaring that “Labour will recruit 10,000 more police officers” in the name of “an effective anti-terrorism strategy.” “We will work with the police in the performance of their duties,” it vowed. So don’t expect any criticism from Labour when police kettle and brutally beat demonstrators, as they did in the 2010 student protests in London.² And don’t expect opposition to this point of the Manifesto from social democrats on the left fringe of Labour, like the Socialist Party of England and Wales of Peter Taaffe, or the Socialist Appeal group led by Alan Woods, both heirs of

² See “Fury of Student Revolt Shakes Up Britain,” *The Internationalist* No. 32, January-February 2011.

the Militant Tendency of Labour, who pretend that police are “workers in uniform.”³

Under Corbyn, Labour continues to fulfill its role as “Her Majesty’s Loyal Opposition,” pledging fealty to the military and police, the central organs of the capitalist state. For the rest of the election platform, it promises very small reforms indeed. Corbyn calls for spending more on the National Health Service, which the Conservatives in power are running into the ground. The Manifesto talks of a “Public Ownership of the Railways” bill, but in the concrete it proposes “bringing our railways back into public ownership, as franchises expire.” Some of those franchises don’t expire until 2030! Even sectors of the bourgeoisie could back this, given the impending disaster in the NHS and the abysmal safety record of the privatized railways.

No Vote for Labour Reformism – For a Revolutionary Workers Party

Corbyn’s leadership of Labour has awakened hopes, particularly among young people who have known nothing but “neoliberal” austerity all their lives. But those hopes are for a gradual, very gradual, return by baby steps to the welfare state of yore. Yet that is impossible, it is fool’s gold. The City bankers will not tolerate that any more that the Brussels bureaucrats and Frankfurt bankers would, because the entire financial system is bankrupt and they have to extort massive profits from the working class and slash state expenditures to survive the coming meltdown. Awakening illusions in a return to the (capitalist) welfare state will not lead to heightened class struggle but rather serve as an obstacle to it.

Revolutionaries must drive home that the only way austerity for working people will be ended is through international socialist revolution, and more particularly through the overthrow of the capitalists’ European Union by continent-wide workers struggles leading to a Socialist United States of Europe. Thus in the 2016 British referendum, the League for the Fourth International was against both Leave and Remain: both options were pro-imperialist, the former supporting Little England nationalism and Union Jack British imperialism, the latter supporting the German-dominated bankers’ cartel of the EU. Moreover, the referendum was dominated by anti-immigrant racism on both sides. In this chauvinist circus, we wrote:

“The only possible course for proletarian revolutionaries was to abstain on the vote (including blank or spoiled ballots) and counterpose to it a class-struggle campaign for asylum for refugees and full citizenship rights for all immigrants.”

–“The ‘Brexit’ Trap: British Left Caught Between ‘Leave’ and ‘Remain’ in European Union,” *The Internationalist* No. 44, Summer 2016

With Labour’s election platform there was no reason for class-conscious workers to vote for this militarist, pro-police party. It was standard social-democratic fare, which only seems leftist when compared with Tony Blair’s New Labour treachery. The most concrete and consequential of the proposed reforms, abolition of university tuition fees and the reintroduction of maintenance grants for students, could be the

³ See “Her Majesty’s Social Democrats in Bed with the Police,” *The Internationalist* No. 29, Summer 2009.

focus of a big struggle. Getting rid of a raft of Tory anti-union laws could be another key battlefield. Yet these battles won’t be won in Parliament, but through mobilizing the power of the working class, including against opposition from a Labour cabinet and back benches, where anti-Corbyn right-wingers still have a huge majority.

Not so long ago, impressionistic leftists wrote off Labour under Blair as just another bourgeois party. All it took was a change of the Leader to send these wayward Labourites scurrying home. Despite the exclusions enforced by chief witch hunter Tom Watson, an opportunist hodgepodge of the Labour Representation Committee, Labour Party Marxists, Red Flag, Socialist Fight and assorted other Labour lefts looked to the Momentum movement, set up to further Corbyn’s fight for the party leadership. Since Momentum leader John Lansman and Corbyn’s right-hand man John McDonnell decided to purge “the sectarian left” and “Trots” (including the Shachtmanite Alliance for Workers Liberty), the opportunists have now migrated to Grassroots Momentum.

Almost the entire British left called to vote for Labour. But who were they voting for? The party machinery starting at the top is still controlled by the right wing. As for the Parliamentary Labour Party, which sets its own policy irrespective of party conferences, branch meetings and the like, a pre-election tally by the *New Statesman* (4 May) came up with 33 pro-Corbyn MPs. A post-June 8 head count by Labour Party Marxists added 13 more Corbynistas among the new backbenchers, giving a total of 46 out of 262, a little under one in six. The most virulent right-wingers declared in the campaign that they would “never” vote for Corbyn as prime minister. Now they are begging to be included in the shadow cabinet. This is the party the left voted for.

Unmoored ICL Twists and Turns on Corbyn

One group that called for no vote for Labour on June 8 was the Spartacist League, the British section of the International Communist League. Having lost its Trotskyist moorings in the wake of the counterrevolution that destroyed the Soviet Union, the ICL has been spinning around on a whole range of programmatic issues. In the first flush of excitement over Jeremy Corbyn being elected Leader of the Labour Party, the SL/B climbed on the bandwagon together with the rest of the British pseudo-Trotskyist left. It issued a leaflet titled “Jeremy Corbyn: Tony Blair’s Nightmare” (12 August 2015), which said that “the demands raised by the Corbyn campaign are supportable,” the only criticism being that “they cannot be achieved through old Labour parliamentarianism.” We wrote that “the ICL and SL/B have become ‘critical’ Corbynistas.”

By the next year, the “critical” veneer had disappeared altogether. In the face of the attempt by Labour right-wingers to unseat him, the SL/B newspaper, *Workers Hammer* (Autumn 2016), had the front-page headline, “Let Jeremy Corbyn Run the Labour Party.” In the body of the article it proclaimed: **“Jeremy Corbyn must be allowed to run the Labour Party, in his own way”** (emphasis in original). This was not “critical support,” as Lenin talked of giving electoral support to Labour in some circumstances “as a rope supports a hanged man.” This was full-throated political sup-

port to the leadership of the reformist Labour Party. The SL/B declared there was a “class difference” between Corbyn and his Blairite challenger Owen Smith, because Corbyn (who campaigned for Remain) pledged to honor the vote for Brexit, while Smith continued to oppose it.

The gyrations continue. The Spring 2017 issue of *Workers Hammer* has a front-page headline, “Shame on Corbyn for Supporting the EU.” The article contains a partial “correction.” It turns out “there is no class difference between Smith and Corbyn over the EU” after all. “Corbyn betrayed when it mattered by crossing the class line and serving the bourgeoisie in campaigning for the EU.... By covering for Corbyn’s betrayal on the EU, we helped to reinforce illusions in a Corbyn-led Labour Party.” But it says this was “counter to the otherwise correct thrust of our propaganda” of defending Corbyn against the Blairite agents of the bourgeoisie. Aside from the bizarre scolding tone, all this puts the SL/B and the ICL in a pretty pickle.

If the policy is correct, then what about “Jeremy Corbyn must be allowed to run the Labour Party, in his own way”? That seems to be exactly what he has done. But there is no self-criticism about that fulsome political support for the reformist leader of a reformist party. In a May 27 statement on the British elections, “No Vote to the Labour Party!” the SL/B writes: “The central issue in the 8 June general election is Brexit – and Labour’s position on the EU is contrary to the interests of the working class.” But if by the ICL’s twisted logic the class line is between pro- and anti-Brexit, then *mirabile dictu!* hard-Brexitteer Theresa May must be fighting for the workers while soft-Brexitteer Corbyn is supporting the bourgeoisie!

For decades, various ostensibly Trotskyist tendencies in Britain have pushed to “make the Labour lefts fight.” But as Trotsky warned at the time of the British General Strike of 1926, it was the Labour lefts who were the biggest betrayers and the biggest obstacle to revolution. The once-Trotskyist International Communist League has lately been gyrating like a top on just about every hotly disputed issue. This has led it into the embrace of the most retrograde British nationalism, the very antithesis of the proletarian internationalism of the Bolsheviks. Who can imagine Lenin and Trotsky declaring that the class line runs down the English channel?

Genuine Trotskyists, in contrast, have remained consistent with our revolutionary program. The League for the Fourth International opposed Corbyn when he campaigned to remain in the EU, and we oppose him now when he calls to implement Brexit. We oppose the NATO imperialist military alliance, which Corbyn’s Labour Party supports. We called in September 2014 “For a Scottish Workers Republic in a Socialist Federation of the British Isles” (*The Internationalist* No. 40, Summer 2015) while Corbyn opposes Scottish independence and even promises to “tirelessly campaign” against a second referendum on independence.

The LFI fights to bring down both the imperialist European Union and British imperialism through Europe-wide socialist revolution. And that requires the leadership of a genuinely revolutionary, Leninist-Trotskyist workers party built on the solid foundation of Bolshevik internationalism. ■

The Internationalist

Mobilize NYC Labor to Smash Union-Busting De Blasio Administration Complicit in Closing of B&H Warehouses

On January 12, the owners of B&H Photo announced that the company plans to close its two warehouses in Brooklyn and shift the work to a site in New Jersey not far from Philadelphia. (The first of these closures is set to take place in July, the second in December.) This is a transparent move to break the union organization of the B&H workers, who won overwhelming victories in representation elections at the warehouses in late 2015, and a few months later at the company's mid-Manhattan store. The unionization of the largest independent supplier of photo and video equipment in the United States was a stunning gain for immigrant workers in New York. But the bosses, who bitterly opposed the union drive, have been working non-stop ever since to undo their defeat. Now over 350 union workers stand to lose their jobs.

The B&H owners' brazen union-busting plan is an attack on all NYC labor, and all defenders of workers' and immigrants' rights. All-out mobilization of labor/immigrant power is needed to stop it.

Facing long-standing abusive and unsafe conditions on the job, B&H workers began organizing with the Laundry Workers Center (LWC), and turned to the United Steel Workers (USW) to win union representation. The LWC had earlier (in 2012) helped win union recognition and a contract, including a union hiring hall, at a Hot and Crusty bakery restaurant on Manhattan's Upper East Side. But when the contract ran out, the owners suddenly closed the store (see "All Out to Stop Union-Busting at Bröd/Hot and Crusty!" *The Internationalist*, January 2016). The Internationalist Group, Internationalist Clubs at the City University of New York and Class Struggle Education Workers actively supported the organizing drives at Hot and Crusty and at B&H Photo (see "V-I-C-T-O-R-Y! B&H Workers in Big Win for Labor and Immigrant Rights," *The Internationalist* No. 42, January-February 2016).

B&H has been in contract negotiations for well over a year with the USW, which represents the workers. Yet during the protracted bargaining the company dragged its feet on presenting a wage proposal. Management never mentioned the plan to move the warehouses, which obviously was in the works for months, until it dropped the bombshell at a negotiating session in mid-January. On February 13, the USW filed an unfair labor practice (ULP) complaint with the National Labor Relations Board. The B&H move is a transparent attempt to avoid negotiating a contract. But NLRB complaints typically take years to settle, and then often end up in court, while soon enough the Trump administration will staff the agency with blatantly anti-labor appointees.

The day before the USW filed its ULP, May-June 2017



B&H workers demonstrate outside store on February 12 protesting plans to close Brooklyn warehouses. The company move is a blatant attempt to avoid negotiating contract after workers won union representation.

the union called a protest outside the B&H emporium on Ninth Avenue and 34th Street in Midtown Manhattan. Some 150 demonstrators, workers from both Brooklyn warehouses and the Manhattan store along with left, labor, student and community groups, marched in a cold drizzle. Workers donned t-shirts saying "I Am Union." A USW leader said that the union would follow the company wherever it went. A spokesman for the Internationalist Group emphatically called to "bring out the unions, the Verizon workers who were on strike last year, the Teamsters who came out to defend the Muslims at JFK [airport], the 32BJ workers who clean these buildings, the hotel workers, the restaurant workers" in powerful labor solidarity.

The IG speaker pointed to a crucial aspect of this fight for union rights and workers' jobs: ***the fact that the administration of Democratic mayor Bill de Blasio has been complicit in the union-busting move.*** On February 13, the day after the protest outside B&H, de Blasio in his State of the City speech emphasized the need for "good-paying jobs," the "kind of jobs that allow you to afford to live in New York City." This is also a key theme of the mayor's reelection campaign. But the city government of New York shares ***direct responsibility*** for the looming loss of hundreds of jobs of unionized immigrant workers caused by a company that is fleeing NYC precisely in order to avoid negotiating a contract that would substantially raise their low pay!

B&H owns one of the warehouses – at 105 Evergreen Avenue – outright, which makes the union-busting nature of its plan to move warehouse operations all the more clear. At the time the move by B&H was announced, the company claimed it was not able to find a new warehouse after its lease on the building in the Brooklyn Navy Yard expired this year. DNAInfo New York (13 January) reported: "The Navy Yard facility will become a movie studio when the company leaves at the end of this year, ac-

cording to David Ehrenberg, the head of the Brooklyn Navy Yard's Development Corporation." Yet the development corporation is a "real estate developer and property manager of the Yard on behalf of its owner, the City of New York" (brooklyn-navyard.org). So the de Blasio administration knew of B&H's plans to leave while the company was pretending to negotiate a union contract.

But more than that, the city could have renewed the lease for Navy Yard Building 664, the larger of the two Brooklyn warehouses of B&H (the other is on Evergreen Avenue in Bushwick). A company spokesman said "We have no choice when it comes to our lease because it is ending with no ability to extend it," and that they had worked "for several years" unsuccessfully with Empire State Development to find suitable space in NYC (Hyperallergic, 24 January). The idea that B&H couldn't find space in New York is hardly believable, since the proprietor, Herman Schreiber, owns dozens of other properties in the city. But why exactly couldn't B&H simply renew its lease at the Navy Yard?

The answer is that the de Blasio administration wants to turn the Navy Yard into "Hollywood on the East River" amid an unprecedented boom of TV production in the city. The prime tenant in the industrial park is Steiner Studios, with the largest stage east of Los Angeles, numerous sound stages and more than 5 acres of backlot space. Its main facility is right next to the windowless hulk of Building 664 where B&H immigrant workers toil. Four years ago, Steiner was already expanding around B&H. *Crain's New York* (20 October 2013) reported: "When the company vacates its current space in Building 664, Steiner Studios, the yard's largest employer, will expand into the building with around 300 of its own employees."

So the reality is that *the city government under Democrat de Blasio is pushing the B&H warehouses out of their present location.* When the mayor named Cynthia López New York City's "film czarina" he did so at Steiner Studios, where they posed with Bill's pal, studio owner Doug Steiner. At the ceremony López praised Steiner for "revitalizing" the area. And while de Blasio has criticized tax breaks for other industries, he is a fervent backer of such giveaways to the film industry, which is the main reason the number of TV shows shot in NYC quadrupled over a decade, and the number of films increased by a factor of 10. The industry has showed its appreciation by making contributions to de Blasio's favorite causes.

Currently de Blasio is under investigation by state and federal prosecutors over the financing of his 2013 election campaign. The owners of Broadway Stages said they were asked for donations to the mayor's Campaign for One New York ("The Cash Envelope, Please: Bill Put Squeeze on Showbiz," *Daily News*, continued on page 17



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

Black America...

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lie. The cop later testified he stopped the black man because the driver “resembled a suspect in a local convenience store robbery a few days earlier.” What was the resemblance? He said that as Castile drove past, his nose reminded him of the nose the black suspect in the robbery. His nose? That “suspicion” was enough to pull him over and in a matter of seconds shoot him.

As Philando was producing his driver’s license and registration, as requested, he told the officer he had a gun. Reynolds told the officer that Philando had a permit. That was it. Yanez went off, began screaming and started shooting. *He never saw a gun.* All the trigger-happy cop had to do was lie and say he feared for his life. “Seventy-four seconds after Yanez activated his squad lights, he fired the last of seven shots into the car,” Minnesota Public Radio reported.

Even then, as Castile lay dying, the cop kept screaming not to move. But the jury wouldn’t convict. Not on the minimal charge of second-degree manslaughter (due to negligence), not even on lesser charges of dangerous discharge of a weapon. Hours after the acquittal, the city fired him, saying “the public will be best served if Officer Yanez is no longer a police officer in our city.” As if that would satisfy people.

So why did killer cop walk? There were some highly dubious prosecutorial decisions, like not entering Yanez’ self-contradicting statement to state police authorities into evidence. And the jury was stacked against conviction. A *StarTribune* profile listed an older woman manager of a gas station with a contract with the police who had pro-cop posts on her Facebook page; a middle-aged white man who grew up around police, had a nephew who is a cop and said it would be difficult for him to be unbiased; a middle-aged white female who had a high regard for police; a retired white man who thought Reynolds’ Facebook video “seemed overly calm.”

More fundamentally, U.S. laws give police “qualified immunity” from prosecution for actions in carrying out their official duties, and the Supreme Court has ruled that even an imagined threat, as long as the cop “reasonably” believed it, is enough to justify pulling the trigger. Ramsey County prosecutor John Choi said “we gave it our best shot” and that the jury’s decision “must be respected,” because that is the “premise of the rule of law.” He added that prosecutors

sought to bolster “the integrity of the process.” What the police murder of Philando Castile and its aftermath shows, however, is that in this capitalist system, the “rule of law” is the embodiment of racist injustice.

We are told that “Before Yanez, no officer had been charged in more than 150 police-involved deaths in Minnesota since 2000,” and that he was “the first Minnesota police officer in modern history to be charged with the shooting death of a civilian” (*StarTribune*, 17 and 18 June). That’s supposed to inspire confidence in the “integrity of the process”?! The reality is that police are very seldom charged with any crime at all for killing a civilian, and almost never convicted. Since 2005, nationwide 82 cops have been charged with manslaughter or murder for an on-duty shooting. That is less than half of 1 percent of the at least 16,000 civilians killed by police over that period. Of those charged, only 13 were convicted, and only one for murder.

The federal government until recently had no count of killings by cops around the country, although it had a sketchy list of “justifiable homicides” by police. Since the massive protests over the police murders of Eric Garner and Michael Brown in 2014, a number of independent Internet databases of police killings have been established, including by the *Washington Post* and *Guardian* newspapers, and the websites Mapping Police Violence, Killed by Police and Fatal Encounters. The last is the most complete, showing 1,760 police killings of civilians in 2013, 1,703 in 2014, 1,545 in 2015, 1,554 in 2016 and 749 so far in 2017.

This is a horrendous slaughter, comparable to that of an occupying military force. And it is racist to the core: the number of African American victims is proportionately two and a half times higher than the number of whites; black men are five times as likely as white men to be killed by cops; and young black men are *nine times* more likely to be gunned down than young white men (*Guardian*, 31 December 2015). We have noted before: “*Like the death penalty, the massive racist killing by U.S. police goes back to the very foundation of American capitalism on the basis of slave labor. That bloody heritage continues to this day*” (see “Democrats Are the Bosses of the Racist Killer Cops,” *The Internationalist* No. 42, January-February 2016).

And this time it was not in Texas, Mississippi or Ferguson, Missouri – this was a close suburb of St. Paul and its twin city, Minneapolis. It was in the historically liberal state (not so much any more) that prides itself on its reputation for congeniality, “Minnesota Nice.” Not so nice, after all, and not the first time. The cop execution of Philando Castile came only a few months after Minneapolis police shot Jamar Clark in the head, killing him, in November 2015. Fascists then shot and wounded five protesters at a Black Lives Matter encampment (see “Minneapolis: ‘Cops and Klan Go Hand in Hand,’” *The Internationalist* No. 42).

After the not-guilty verdict was read out in court on June 16, protesters went to the state capitol with signs declaring, “Justice Is

Dead” and “On Trial: The System. Verdict: Guilty.” Philando’s mother, Valerie Castile, fervently denounced injustice in Minnesota: “There has always been a systemic problem in the state of Minnesota. And me thinking with my common sense, that we would get justice in this case. But nevertheless the system continues to fail us, the system continues to fail black people and it will continue to fail you. When they get done with us they are coming for you and you, y’all are next.”

That night angry protesters headed to the I-94 highway in St. Paul and shut it down for several hours; 18 were arrested. Last July, hundreds headed to the Interstate to protest, and held it for six hours. Over 100 were arrested as Democratic-Farmer-Labor mayor Chris Coleman denounced the protest as a “riot.” Charges of third-degree unlawful assembly were later dropped, and an absurd bill to charge protesters in “disruptive” demonstrations with the cost of overtime pay for the police who arrest them was shelved. But in the end, Philando Castile was murdered, killer cop Yanez walked, and nothing has changed.

Not only in Minnesota. On June 21, a jury in Milwaukee acquitted the cop who shot and killed Sylville Smith as he lay on the ground. And on June 23, in Cincinnati for the second time a hung jury failed to convict the trigger-happy cop who killed unarmed motorist Samuel DuBose in 2015. In each case, it was murder. In each case, it was filmed. Cellphone cameras, police bodycams and dashcams have indeed changed matters – now everyone can see the full horror of these crimes. But it has not changed the impunity of the murderers in blue one iota. They have a license to kill from their bosses, the capitalist rulers, whether Republican or Democrat.

Various leftists and would-be socialists have weighed in on the killing of Philando Castile. Socialist Alternative posted a June 16 statement on its website from Ginger Jentzen, the SALT candidate for Minneapolis City Council, who after condemning the verdict goes on to say, “We need restorative justice, housing and jobs programs by taxing the rich, to address the deeper social issues that feed criminal and antisocial behavior, like the violent robberies on the University of Minnesota campus last week.” How repulsive, in talking about the racist cop killing of Philando to relate this somehow to a couple of muggings (reportedly by a “black male and female”)! Who is SALT appealing to with this garbage?

On top of this, calls to “tax the rich” spread illusions that the vast inequality of capitalism can somehow be altered by tax reforms, while talk of “restorative justice” implies that the *injustice* system can be made more “people-friendly.” Throw in SALT’s call for “elected civilian review boards with real teeth: full powers over police department priorities, over the budgets, and with the ability to launch investigations.” It’s all a reformist pipedream, which never has been and never will be realized. Why not? Because it ignores the basic character of the capitalist state as an instrument of repression. Of who? Of us. Don’t believe it? Look around, look at U.S. history.

Socialist Alternative is a social-democratic outfit that incredibly holds that cops are workers. In addition, SALT’s recipe would take responsibility for the “priorities” and



David Joles/Star Tribune

Diamond Reynolds

“budget” of capitalism’s police apparatus. In reality, the police are professional enforcers for the bourgeoisie. In 2014, Kshama Sawant, SALT’s city council member in Seattle, praised the process of hiring a new police chief, saying it was “positive ... that a woman will be at the head of what has been and still is a male-dominated bastion.” She hailed the new top cop’s “openness” and “commitment to build a relationship with the community,” as well as her “tiered approach for policing protests,” so that riot police will only be deployed “if absolutely necessary.”¹

So last week, when Seattle police shot and killed Charleena Lyles, 30, a pregnant black mother of two, fully aware that she was struggling with mental health issues, Sawant’s response was to petition for a “community-based investigation.” She took the same tack last year when Seattle cops gunned down another African American, Che Taylor, calling for a hearing where the public could question Police Chief Kathleen O’Toole. As if that would solve anything. They can petition and question and investigate all they want, but the racist killer cops keep on killing. It’s what they do, and will continue to do until the racist capitalist state is swept into the dustbin of history.

The Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) likewise calls for “greater community control of policing,” urging that “police intervention must be as restrained as possible, with the use of firearms as an absolute last resort.” And it calls for “Stronger gun control policies, as well as severe restrictions on police use of firearms” as part of a “restructuring of the role of police” (statement on DSA web site, 12 July 2016). To pretend that the police can be “restructured” and “restrained” by a “radical democratic change” is to build dangerous illusions in the reformability of capitalist rule.

As for gun control, the hobby horse of white liberals, this is a threat to black people first and foremost. As Marxists we are opposed to the capitalist state controlling guns and are for the right of black armed self-defense. A disarmed black population would be even more vulnerable to the police, who are armed to the hilt. The program of social democrats like SALT and the DSA is “color-blind” liberalism, reflected in their support for the presidential campaign of Democratic Party “socialist” Bernie Sanders, who never called to mobilize against racist cop terror. On the acquittal of the cop who killed Philando Castile, Sanders said the justice system “has failed African Americans” and that “major reforms” were needed, “making certain that lethal

¹ See “Killer Cops, White Supremacists: Racist Terror Stalks Black America,” *The Internationalist* No. 40, Summer 2015.



CUNY Internationalist Clubs at speakout against racist terror, 30 August 2016.

NYC Protest Against Muslim-Bashing Rally

On June 10, anti-Muslim hate rallies were held in 20 cities around the U.S., with smaller-than-expected turnouts, ranging from a few dozen to slightly over 100 at the high point in New York and Seattle. The rallies were called by ACT for America, an Islamophobic outfit with close connections to the Republican Party. They featured alt-right fascists including Gavin McInnes, founder of the Proud Boys frat rat fascists, who spoke in NYC. The New York rally was patrolled by the Oath Keepers, a virulently anti-socialist militia mainly made up of ex-military and police.

In New York, the “anti-sharia” rally was held in Foley Square between state and federal courthouses and the Federal Building. There were two separate NYC counterdemonstrations, with a liberal crowd of a couple hundred gathered in City Hall Park, several blocks away, and a leftist protest of several hundred directly across from the fascists. The International Socialist Organization and the Revolutionary Communist Party shuttled in between the two protests. The Internationalist Group, Class Struggle Education Workers and Trabajadores Internacionales Clasistas had called for a labor mobilization to stop the anti-Muslim provocation. But no unions came out and we participated prominently in the leftist protest.

We publish below our call for workers mobilization:

A Call on Labor to Mobilize Against June 10 Anti-Muslim Hate Rally

From the Internationalist Group, Class Struggle Education Workers and Trabajadores Internacionales Clasistas Sisters and brothers:

New York City is a union town, where a quarter of all workers are members of a labor union. New York City is an immigrant town, where over 40% of the entire population was born in another country. We have enormous potential power. Workers – black and white, Latino and Asian, Muslim and Jewish, born here or abroad – make every wheel turn. Nothing moves without our labor.

force is the last response, not the first response.” Where have we heard that before?

Finally, the fact that the police who murdered Philando Castile, Sylville Smith and Samuel DuBose were not convicted, all in the space of one week, underscores the disorienting effect of calls by various reformist leftists to “jail killer cops.” Certainly Jeronimo Yanez and the rest of them should be locked up behind bars for the rest of their lives. But as they go free along with the killers of Eric Garner, Michael Brown, Alton Sterling, Akai Gurley, Freddie Gray, Tamir Rice, Sandra Bland, Terence Crutcher and so many others, it should dawn on the pseudo-socialists that the ruling class is not about to lock up the snarling guard dogs that it depends on to uphold its rule. In the rare instances where some kind of verdict comes down against one, as with the Bay Area cop who murdered Oscar Grant on New Year’s Day 2009, it will be a slap on the wrist and they will be out in no time.

It is the task of genuine revolutionaries to warn that all these supposed reforms – community control, community policing, civilian review boards, disarming and demilitarizing the police, more black police, May-June 2017



Internationalists protest against anti-Muslim provocation in NYC, June 10.

But now we are all being targeted by outright fascists and violent race-hate groups of the “alt-right,” who have announced they will hold a vicious Muslim-bashing action on June 10 at Foley Square in Lower Manhattan. They claim the purpose is to oppose the imposition of “sharia law,” an entirely made-up threat. The real and obvious purpose of this “dog whistle” is to attack all Muslims. As recent events show all too clearly, this is a real and present danger to all working people.

It is crucial to bring out the power of New York’s multiracial working class and opponents of racist, anti-immigrant bigotry, to shut down the fascists and their June 10 provocation.

Fascist rallies are not exercises in free speech, they are staging grounds for lynchings. That stopping fascist provocations is a matter of life and death has been shown yet again by escalating racist terror in recent weeks:

- On May 13, “alt-right” fascist leader Richard Spencer led a mob of hundreds rallying to “save Confederate monuments” in Charlottesville, Virginia. Imitating the German Nazis, they marched with flaming torches, while waving the Confederate battle flag of the slave-owners and KKK.

black police chiefs, black mayors, women police and police chiefs, gay police, dashcams, bodycams, calls to jail killer cops, etc. – are “not only utterly worthless in controlling police violence, they actually serve to legitimize it” (see “Killer Cops, White Supremacists: Racist Terror Stalks Black America,” *The Internationalist* No. 40, Summer 2015). The Internationalist Group doesn’t peddle illusions of impossible reforms to the nucleus of the capitalist state. We look to the working class, calling for **labor/black/immigrant mobilization against racist attacks, cop terror and deportations.**

Following the June 16 verdict, the St. Paul Federation of Teachers put out a statement saying, “We are outraged that the justice system failed today, yet again.” The teachers and other unions also protested over the killing of Jamar Clark. This is important, but expressions of outrage alone will accomplish little. The Internationalist Group has insisted on the need to *mobilize the power of labor* together with all those targeted by police violence – African Americans, Latinos, immigrants and all the oppressed to put a stop to this racist terror. Not just shutting down the Interstate

- A week later, on May 20, African American student Richard Collins was murdered by an “alt-right” fascist at the University of Maryland, in what has widely been described as a lynching.

- On May 25, nooses – a threat of lynching – were found at one of the main terminals in the Port of Oakland in California. ILWU longshoremen walked off the job in protest.

- On the same day in New York, racists including Islamophobe Pamela Geller, immigrant-bashing provocateur Milo Yiannopoulos and fascists wearing body armor and helmets staged a rally against CUNY for allowing well-known Arab American rights activist Linda Sarsour to give a commencement speech. The fascists violently assaulted counter-protesters.

- On May 26, less than a month after a race-hate rally was held in Portland, Oregon, a fascist who had prominently attended it murdered two men and seriously injured a third for standing up to him as he screamed anti-Muslim insults and death threats against two young women on a train.

NYC’s powerful labor movement must not stand by while fascists try to bring their racist terror to our town. Fascists are the deadly enemies of the working class. They

for a few hours – the Twin Cities should be shut down tight by strike action in the face of such racist atrocities. And the same everywhere else in this nation blighted by murderous racism from before it was born.

It can happen. On May Day 2015, the International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 10 shut down the Port of Oakland, California and marched on City Hall at the head of thousands behind a union banner demanding “Stop Police Terror.” What’s key in bringing out the full power of labor to smash this racist system is the understanding that the police are the iron fist of the ruling class. These are the special bodies of armed men enforcing the dictates of capital that, as Marx, Engels and Lenin explained, are at the core of state power. If there is outrage and protest, their job is to repress it. The courts are part of the same machinery of the capitalist state. Their role is to ensure that the cops can repress with impunity.

Today the police kill with abandon under Republican Trump. Yesterday they did the same under Democrat Obama. Various liberals and opportunist pseudo-socialists call to join together all protests in a broad “resistance” to Trump. Meaning they want

would smash the unions and pave the way for an unfettered corporate dictatorship. They seek to obliterate the most basic rights of everyone opposed to racism, of women, gays and lesbians, of students and youth. They are a threat to us all.

The city government and Democratic Party won’t stop them. Democratic mayor De Blasio has declared 170 “deportable offenses” for which NYC will collaborate with I.C.E. immigration police. He is opposing City Council bills to widen “sanctuary city” limits on cooperation with the I.C.E. His “broken windows” policy causes the arrest of over 100,000 people a year, setting up thousands of immigrants for deportation. And the NYPD alerts I.C.E. about immigrants’ court appearances.

The fascists, Muslim-bashers and anti-immigrant racists feel they have a green light for terror with Republican Donald Trump in the White House. But don’t forget that Democratic president Obama deported over 5 million immigrants (8 million if you include those stopped at or near the border), a record number.

In Portland, Oregon, eight area unions, including several construction workers unions, the Carpenters regional council and statewide teachers federation, have passed motions calling to bring out labor against the threat of reactionary racist forces. This coming June 4, Portland labor activists are mobilizing to stop a fascist provocation only nine days after last week’s double murder. That should spur NYC labor to use its power to shut down the June 10 Muslim-bashing event.

Already in February, Teamsters Joint Council 16 set an important example when it demonstrated at JFK airport in defense of Muslims. The Taxi Workers Alliance shut down airport service to protest Trump’s Muslim ban. In strikes and organizing drives from Verizon and Spectrum Cable to B&H Photo and AT&T Mobility, NYC workers have fought back in defense of our rights.

Now is the time to bring out the united power of the working class in a massive labor/immigrant mobilization to stop the fascists here in New York on June 10. ■

to make a “popular front” with the Democrats, chaining black people to the party whose mayors preside over police murder across the country. Changing which capitalist party is in office will not alter things. We must fight instead to build the nucleus of a multi-racial and multi-ethnic revolutionary workers party that can attack the scourge of racial oppression at its roots.

Kill-crazy cops are an expression of the fact that American capitalism is based on black oppression, the forcible subjugation of the African American population which has continued from the days of chattel slavery through Jim Crow segregation to today’s mass incarceration. Professional police in the U.S. began as slave-catching patrols. The racism that pervades every facet of cop activity – from “stop and frisk” and “broken windows” policing to rampant murder of black, Latino and immigrant “suspects” – is inherent in their function. The police “protect and serve” exploiters and oppressors by repressing the exploited and oppressed. Nothing short of workers revolution will change that.

It is our job to cohere the most conscious and committed defenders of all the oppressed to organize that revolution. ■

Enough is Enough: Stop the Scabs! Defeat the Cable Bosses!

June 10 marked the 75th day of the bitter strike by 1,800 cable workers in International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 3 against Spectrum, formerly Time Warner Cable. That's two and a half months on the picket line, with the hardships that entails. The determination of the Spectrum workers is an example to all defenders of workers' rights. More than that, this battle is a test for the entire labor movement. New York-area union leaders have made speeches about solidarity, while relying on empty promises by Democratic politicians. But what's needed – and long overdue – is for the unions to use their collective muscle

now to help the Spectrum workers win.

Telecommunications workers have a vital stake in this fight. There are tens of thousands of them in the NY-NJ area – their power must be mobilized in united action now, together with other key unions, to help the Spectrum strikers win. This is a case where solidarity is not just “the right thing to do” but in the immediate interest of all workers in the telecom industry. For years, the telecom bosses have played divide and conquer against the workers, using a range of tactics from manipulating technology expansion to subcontracting and naked union-busting. We saw this in last year's Verizon phone workers strike (see “Verizon Strike: A Fight for All Workers,” *The Internationalist*, April 2016), in which the issue of Fios (high-speed fiber optics) expansion was closely related to competition with cable companies.

Looming in the background is Comcast, which has been called “the worst company in America” (The Verge, 19 August 2014), which is really saying something given the competition for that title. Given Comcast's use of Walmart-style tactics to block union organizing drives, the IBEW brands it “one of the most anti-union companies in the telecommunications industry” (The Electrical Worker online, July 2011).

In April 2015, Comcast's attempt to buy Time Warner Cable was stymied by a threatened federal antitrust suit. The following month, Charter Communications bought Time Warner Cable for a cool \$65 billion and changed its name to Spectrum (which makes you wonder if little Charter is some kind of stalking-horse for Comcast).

For the past four years, the Spectrum workers have been without a union contract, and now Donald Trump's administration vows ever-bigger rollbacks of regulations to let big companies like Comcast run rampant even more than they did under his Democratic predecessors. In the face of the employers' offensive, it's the understatement of the year to point out that the labor movement has got to use its power – or lose it. Strikes have to be waged with a strategy to win.

This past May, with the Spectrum strike already in its fourth week, 21,000 AT&T Mobility workers struck over healthcare, sick days and other key issues. “This is the biggest strike in the United States since 40,000 Verizon workers walked out last year, and may be the biggest strike of retail workers at a national company in U.S. history,” noted the New York State AFL-CIO in a May 18 statement. Yet leaders of the Communications Workers of America (CWA) limited the strike to just three days!

Instead, bringing together AT&T Mobility and Spectrum workers, and beefing up picket lines with Verizon workers and big (not just symbolic) contingents from building trades, hotel and restaurant, hospital, Teamsters and other key unions can stop the scabs, defeat the union-busters, and win this battle in the interests of the entire workers movement.

“Scabs Must Go!”

On May 18, several hundred strikers and supporters held a boisterous mass rally in front of the company's main office on East 23rd Street in Lower Manhattan. Giving a glimpse of the enormous potential power of the NYC-area labor movement, the strikers packed both sides of the street, chanting, cheering and blowing hand-held horns. The IBEW strikers were joined by delegations from HERE (hotel and restaurant), RWDSU (retail and department store), CWA, Utility Workers and other area unions. A contingent of City University of New York students and adjuncts, organized by the CUNY Internationalist Clubs and Class Struggle Education Workers, was greeted with clenched fists by the raucous and energetic picketers, who also snapped up 40 copies of *The Internationalist*.

Spectrum has been raking in the profits while its workers have gone without a contract since 2013. Charter's first moves after buying the company two years ago have been broad attacks on the workers' healthcare, pensions and seniority rights together with a raft of other attempted take-aways (on personal days, weekend overtime pay and many other issues). In line with this, the company has taken aim at the workers' union through increasing use of subcontractors and seeking to effectively eliminate representation by shop stewards. Local 3 members report that they have been the victims of disciplinary actions by the company as a result of customer complaints about infrastructure and services, which Spectrum refuses to update.

Spectrum strikers are fed up with the arrogant company bosses, and the several hundred scabs they're bringing in to try to break the strike. At one point during the May 18 rally, strikers poured into

the middle of the street to block traffic. Faced with a hundreds-strong rally of a union local with close to 30,000 members, the normally belligerent NYPD handled the burly street-blockers with gloves (literally), politely requesting that they move back to the sidewalk, which the strikers (joined by our contingent) took their time in doing.

Not long afterwards, an apparently disoriented scab drove down the street in a Spectrum van, which was pelted by water bottles and surrounded by angry strikers. Our comrades' chant of “Scabs must go!” was enthusiastically picked up by the crowd, and a woman striker borrowed one of our placards to make

her own sign with that slogan. Showing that their job is to “serve and protect” the capitalists' profits and system of exploitation, the police moved in to escort the scab away. Just a few minutes later, the union tops shut down the rally.

“Partnership of Labor and Capital Is a Lie”

Being on strike this long is no joke. Spectrum workers are determined and angry, facing a company that plays hardball in its attempt to grind them into the dirt. The fact that the company can bring in several hundred strikebreakers in a union town like New York is outrageous. NYC labor can and must stop it. The presence of delegations of several key area unions at strike rallies reflects the fact that the Spectrum strike is an important battle for workers throughout the city and the country. To win it requires more than symbolic delegations and periodic mass rallies to express workers' anger and blow off some steam – it requires **bringing out the power of labor in mass pickets to stop the scabs** and decisively defeat the company's union-busting plans.

A noteworthy aspect of the Spectrum strike is the multiracial and multiethnic composition of the strikers, with a significant presence of women workers, which is something of a departure for the union. For the labor movement to beat back the decades-long offensive by the employers (which is about to escalate as court cases against public employee unions head to the Supreme Court), it is essential to bring out their power in defense of immigrants, against racist police brutality, and for the rights of us all.

This is highlighted by the stamp of approval given to Spectrum by none other than Donald Trump. Days before the Spectrum strike began on March 28, Charter Communications made the news when its CEO, Thomas Rutledge, joined Trump, the current CEO of American capitalism, for a press conference in the Oval Office. Completing this rogues' gallery was labor- and immigrant-hating Texas governor Greg Abbott, who was brought in to tout a Charter call center opening in his state. Trump

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Strike rally outside Spectrum headquarters in New York City, May 18.



Internationalist contingent joins with Spectrum strikers. May 18.

Social Democrats Organized Diversion Against Efforts to Drive Fascists Out of Portland

How Do You Spell Class Collaboration? ISO

Ever since the election of Donald Trump last November, assorted white supremacists, anti-immigrant racists and out-right fascists have been staging confrontations around the country.¹ In several cases, the result has been inconclusive brawls between the relatively small fascist squads and poorly organized counterprotesters. In Portland, Oregon a “Trump Free Speech” event was nationally advertised for June 4, with several of the more violent fascist media celebrities invited. This was a grotesque provocation, especially after a local Nazi murdered two anti-racists and severely injured a third the week before as they came to the aid of two young black women he was threatening.

The June 4 alt-right event brought several hundred reactionaries from out of town, but it was vastly outnumbered by up to ten times as many anti-racist demonstrators. At least 3,000 ringed Terry Schunk Plaza where the race-hate rally was held under the protection of an army of city, state and federal police. There were three separate counterdemonstrations. The first was called by antifa (anti-fascist) groups in Chapman Square to the north; a second, to the east, by Portland Labor Against the Fascists, initiated by Class Struggle Workers – Portland (CSWP), called for unions to stop the racist provocation; but the third, by social democrats and liberals on the steps of City Hall to the west, was called explicitly to avoid confrontation with the fascists.

A number of observers and participants wondered why there were three different protests and if it wouldn’t have been possible to prevent the fascist provocation from taking place at all. The International Socialist Organization (ISO), the main organizer of the reformist/liberal “Portland Stands United Against Hate” event at City Hall, wrote that: “Our counterdemonstration was based on the belief that we wouldn’t have the numbers to either occupy the plaza where the far right was rallying or push them out once they started, as the other two counterprotests wanted” (*Socialist Worker*, 12 June). Against this, we in the Internationalist Group, which along with the CSWP played a leading role in the labor mobilization, wrote:

“With the racists vastly outnumbered and the Plaza surrounded on three sides, if it was not for the massive police presence and the diversion by the liberals and reformist leftists who organized the City Hall rally in coordination with the mayor/police chief, the racist provocation by white supremacists and Nazi lovers could have been stopped.”

–“Portland Labor Mobilizes to Stop Fascist Provocation,” *The Internationalist*, 8 June

So why the division? *The main reason was the bitter determination of the ISO to undercut any effort to drive the fascists out.* The call by Portland Labor Against the Fascists for a massive mobilization to “stop the racists and fascists in their tracks” was the outgrowth of months of efforts

¹ See “Donald Trump, the ‘Alt-Right’ and Fascism,” *The Internationalist* No. 46, January-February 2017, and “Milo Yiannopoulos, ‘Free Speech’ and the Assault on Universities,” *The Internationalist* No. 47, March-April 2017.

May-June 2017



Social-Democrat/Liberal rally at Portland City Hall, June 4.

that resulted in coordinated resolutions by eight area unions calling for “mobilizing against the clear and present danger that the provocations of racist and fascist organizations pose to us all.” The first motion, initiated by CSWP members in Painters (IUPAT) Local 10, was passed the week after Trump’s election. Then when the June 4 race-hate provocation was announced, we proposed that the unions take the lead in organizing protest against it.

We got an enthusiastic response. CSWPs with the backing of Local 10 and IATSE (stage hands) Local 28 went to the Northwest Oregon Labor Council (NWOLC) on Monday, May 22 with a resolution for such a mobilization. The reception from the labor bureaucrats was chilly. Still, we were able to make the case and the Council agreed to distribute the call to all 52 affiliates of the NWOLC, which was done. This was important in bringing out members of at least 14 different unions at the labor mobilization on June 4.

However, barely an hour after the Labor Council meeting ended on May 22, Jamie Partridge, a retired Letter Carrier who was at the meeting, along with two other prominent supporters of the ISO in Portland, sent out a call for a planning meeting for a “vigil and rally” to be held “on a separate day” (possibly the next evening) from the far-right’s rally to avoid placing people in the middle of any possible violence” (our emphasis). This was a deliberate attempt to undercut the labor mobilization.

In a post-protest wrap-up article (“How Did Portland Stand United Against Hate?” *Socialist Worker*, 12 June), the ISO slams Jesse Jackson for flying into town to declare that any protest should be on another day. Jackson’s move, it wrote, was a “cynical maneuver to disorganize and demobilize” any anti-fascist protest on June 4. Yet on May 22 the ISO proposed the exact same thing, in a *cynical maneuver to disorganize and demobilize the protests calling to stop the fascists!*

Portland Labor Against the Fascists went to the May 26 planning meeting called by the ISOers. Sure enough, they proposed an event for June 5. Wael Elasadly went on at length in opposition to antifa strategy of physically confronting the fascists. The spokeswoman for the labor mobilization explained that organizing was already underway for a June 4 protest, that having a rally the next day would do nothing to

stop the fascists or build confidence that we could stop them, that we were in communication with the antifa protest organizers, and that a planning meeting would be held the coming Wednesday, May 31. In response, the overwhelming majority of those present voted to build for the protest on June 4, and agreed to “fold their organizing into the meeting on Wednesday.”

Late on the afternoon of May 26 on the MAX light rail line Nazi thug Jeremy Christian carried out the murder of Ricky Best and Taliesin Myrddin Namkai-Meche, and the near-murder of Micah David-Cole Fletcher. At a vigil on Saturday the 27th, Portland Labor Against the Fascists put out a statement and hundreds of fliers for the upcoming labor mobilization were handed out. Many in the crowd catcalled when Mayor Ted Wheeler spoke. But after giving in to having a rally against the racists on June 4 instead of their original proposal for the day after, the ISO then called for a meeting to plan a *separate rally* at the same time but at a different location, on the steps of City Hall, deliberately dividing the forces of those opposing the fascists.

The ISO-initiated Portland Stands United Against Hate (PSUAH) emphasized that it would be a “peaceful event.” It eventually pulled together a typical liberal/left “coalition” with a long list of endorsers including a number of religious groups, various liberal activist groups, two or three union locals, immigrant rights groups and the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) and Socialist Alternative (SAIt). They sat down to coordinate with Mayor Wheeler, who is also police commissioner. After trying unsuccessfully to get the federal government to deny a permit to the alt-right event, the mayor “opted instead for massive police deployment combined with the City Hall ‘unity against hate’ love-in,” as we wrote in our article on the anti-fascist protests.

In a post on the PSUAH Facebook page, an ISO document containing an “Open Letter” complains of “an irresponsible and dangerous online smear campaign” that it claims is spreading “lies and distortions” about their actions on June 4. They say that they didn’t expel any masked antifa activists and that only one person had an “all lives matter” sign, which may be true. They emphasize their rally had the “explicitly stated goal rejecting a strategy of physical confrontation between the far right and a relatively small number of ac-

tivists,” and claim that this “allowed anti-racist Portland to break through their fear and terror, to stand up to bigots.” In reality, the Facebook page for the reformist/liberal rally had so many references to people being “scared,” the need for a “safe rally,” to be peaceful, to have a “family-friendly event” (really, bring kids?), that it amounted to fear-mongering.

The “Open Letter” objects to the accusation of collaboration with the police, saying they merely asked for (and received) a permit for a rally on the steps of City Hall, and got an agreement that the “police would not wade into our rally,” and instead would rely on the rally’s “trained peacekeepers.” In fact, the City Hall rally organizers relied on the line of police around the fascist/racist event as their main line of defense. The day before the event, the main local newspaper, *The Oregonian* (3 June), reported:

“Cari Luna, the chair for Portland Democratic Socialists of America, said organizers are ‘100 percent committed to a non-violent rally.’ The group is one of several co-sponsors for the event.

“The organizers met with Portland police and [Mayor] Wheeler to discuss keeping the rally peaceful, Luna said. The demonstrators will not confront the right-wing protesters and police will provide a buffer between the two groups, Luna said. Peacekeepers trained in de-escalation tactics will also be present, Luna said.”

On the day of the event, the ISO distributed an update for those who wanted to “peacefully stand in opposition” to the bigots, complete with “our pledge to non-violence” saying participants would be “nonviolent under all circumstances” which would be read to the rally.

But this commitment to “non-violence” had a sinister side to it. On June 1, the City Hall rally organizers e-mailed a letter to Portland Labor Against the Fascists and to antifa “asking” that:

“a. You respect our commitment to have a totally non-violent City Hall rally.

“b. You respect our desire to have no physical contact with the Joey Gibson group [of Patriot Prayer and Warriors for Freedom, the groups sponsoring the alt-right rally].

“c. You respect our Peacekeepers (orange vests) attempt to de-escalate any harassment, intimidation, provocation or violence from whatever source.

“d. You respect our security arrangements with the Portland Police, which include shutting down part or all of 4th Avenue from Madison going south a block or two, depending on the size of our rally.

“We understand that, while you may not intend to provoke violence, that you may physically respond to provocations from the police or Joey Gibson’s group. We ask that you attempt to direct any confrontations with the police or Gibson’s group away from, not into, our space.”

Let’s be clear: this letter is a lawyer’s brief to use in case their “explicitly peaceful,” police-“buffered” event should experience some altercation, in which case the labor and antifa protests could be blamed for the “violence.” This shameful letter is a set-up for repression.

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Portland Labor...

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The labor mobilization stood its ground to the very end, with non-stop chants and speeches that reverberated throughout Terry Schrunk Plaza and the surrounding area for over six hours. Worker activists stood proud and loud behind their union banners until the last of the racist and fascist scum exited on buses protected by the police.

This marks the first significant working-class action in the U.S. against white supremacists in decades. The importance of this mobilization goes beyond denouncing the few hundred reactionaries across the street, and the horrific lynch murder by one of their number nine days earlier. June 4 was an important first step in bringing out the power of Portland's labor movement in defense of working people, immigrants, Muslims and all those targeted by the all-round reactionary offensive coming out of Washington. It points to the potential for organizing workers defense guards that could send the fascist vermin scurrying back into their holes. And it sharply posed the need for a workers party fighting to overthrow the capitalist system that breeds fascism, and to replace it with the liberating rule of the working class.

Months of Work Leading Up to Labor Mobilization

The big business press "even-handedly" described the hours-long confrontation as "dueling protests" (*The Oregonian*). "The many extremes of Portland collide in protest," said CNN. The *Washington Post* talked of counter-protests against a "free speech rally." These mouthpieces for official ruling-class opinion peddled the white supremacists' claim that they were just defending constitutional rights. Countering this sinister ploy, the call issued on May 24 by Portland Labor Against the Fascists warned: "They pretend to defend 'free speech.' This is a lie.... The poisonous race-hatred they spew out spawns lynchings. **They must be stopped.**"¹ Two days later, the Nazi racist, well-known to Portland police, carried out a lynch murder on the MAX train.

The major media tried to disguise the huge disparity in numbers, but *Willamette Week* noted that "the socialists, labor unions and anarchists who showed up today ... outnumbered the right-wing extremists by as much as 10 to 1." The antifa mobilization in Chapman Square and the "Portland United Against Hate" rally at City Hall numbered well over 1,000 people each. The bosses' press gave little play to the labor action, basing themselves on the numbers of who said they would attend on Facebook pages. Yet the labor action was not organized on the Internet and social media but through the unions themselves, and some 300 unionists and supporters came out, chanting for hours until the racists climbed on buses heading back out of Portland.

As tension mounted daily in the run-up to June 4, the *Willamette Week* (31 May) published a story headlined "Organized Labor Groups Pledge Show of Support (And Muscle) on June 4." *The Oregonian* (1 June) quoted Ashley Jackson, spokeswoman for Portland Labor Against the Fascists: "When asked about the mayor's calls for non-violence, Jackson said 'we can't rely on the city or the government to stop these



The June 4 labor mobilization in Portland stood its ground for over six hours, until the last of the fascists departed.

people'." Oregon Public Radio reported on June 3: "Jackson said her group intended to 'stop the fascists from turning Portland into a staging ground for even more violent racist anti-immigrant attacks.'"

In the aftermath of the Sunday protests, the bourgeois press as always focused on violence, blaming the antifas for the police assault. Regarding the labor protest, *The Oregonian* reported, "Union organizers gathered on a Southwest Third Avenue sidewalk and chanted across the street, 'Immigrants are here to stay! Nazi scum, go away!'" The *Washington Post* noted that "labor union members clad in helmets and safety vests screamed: 'Racists! Murderers! Fascists out of Portland!'" The *Seattle Times* wrote, "Meanwhile, a group called 'Portland Labor against Fascists' organized a fourth rally. That protest formed just east of the free-speech rally as hundreds of people lined a narrow strip of pavement."

These unions that participated in this labor mobilization are acutely aware of how racist attacks are used to divide and weaken labor. As the mobilization call stated: "Fascists are the deadly enemies of the working class. They would smash the unions and pave the way for an unfettered corporate dictatorship. **That is why Portland-area labor and unions in the Pacific Northwest and beyond have resolved to use our power to stop them.**" Meanwhile, as occurred after the 9/11 attacks, the escalating hysteria is being used to step up repression. The Amalgamated Transit Union representing workers of the TriMet system directly affected by the murders on the MAX light rail train issued a May 31 statement opposing the city's ominous plan to put police officers on trains and buses. The statement read in part:

"In addition to our support for victims and survivors, we also wish to express our strong opposition to the reactionary proposal from TriMet management and others to increase the presence of armed police officers aboard our transit system in the wake of this horrific tragedy.... [E]xperience has taught us that armed police officers aboard transit vehicles intimidate the public...."

The union called for a "demilitarized, decriminalized public transit system" and reiterated its position for free public transit.

The June 4 labor mobilization was the result of months of work. The initial motion calling for union action against the fascists was passed on November 16 by Painters Local 10, in response to the explosion of racist attacks following the election a week earlier of Republican Donald Trump as president. This followed the groundbreaking resolution passed by Local 10 last Au-

gust, calling to break with the Democrats and Republicans and for a class-struggle workers party. An official IUPAT banner with those calls was front and center in the June 4 labor mobilization. This underscored that while nativist fascists like the Ku Klux Klan and other violent racists have been emboldened by Trump's win, the police power that has backed them up, in Portland and elsewhere, was greatly expanded under Democrat Barack Obama.

The motions for union action against the racists and fascists and for a workers party were first presented by supporters of Class Struggle Workers – Portland, a tendency of labor militants which works fraternally with the Internationalist Group. The CSWP also initiated Portland Labor Against the Fascists in mid-May calling for unions to mobilize to stop the racist rally on June 4, a proposal which was quickly embraced by their and other unions. It was publicized through the Northwest Oregon Labor Council, although leadership of the state AFL-CIO turned its back on the action.²

Racist Double Murder Shocks Portland to the Core

The urgency of labor action against the racists and fascists sharply escalated following the May 26 murder of two courageous men, Ricky Best and Taliesin Myrddin Namkai-Meche, and near-murder of Micah David-Cole Fletcher, by a local Nazi, Jeremy Christian. They had come to the aid of two young African American women, one of them a Muslim wearing a hijab (Islamic scarf), who the killer was

² For more information on the CSWP initiatives and program, see its publication *Bridge City Militant* and other articles on its web site: <https://csw-pdx.org/>.



Paramilitary police mobilization protected the fascists in Schrunk Plaza.

menacing. The racist double murder shook liberal Portland's smug self-image to the core. Yet this is the whitest major city in the U.S. and in the not-so-distant past it was a hotbed of fascist skinheads. The state of Oregon was founded as a "racist white utopia," in the words of an analyst of black history in the Pacific Northwest, and had a host of "sundown" towns with laws to keep out black people and other non-whites (see "Portland's dark history of white supremacy," *Guardian* [U.S. edition], 31 May).

On the evening of May 27, an emotional vigil brought well over 1,000 people to the Hollywood transit center where the racist lynching took place. Jackson spoke in the name of the CSWP, saying she had just returned from the hospital and would never forget how she saw Micah being wheeled out of surgery with a deep gash from the stab wound in his neck. She said, "On June 4 there are white supremacists, fascist organizers, coming to town. We cannot let fascism organize in our streets [and] march in our streets. We have to say 'no'!" When Mayor Ted Wheeler spoke, many booed. Portland Labor Against the Fascists and the Pacific Northwest Anti-Fascist Workers Collective passed out hundreds of leaflets to the crowd.

As Portland reeled under the shock of the hideous murders, thousands of Portlanders wanted to take action to stop the killing. However, this effort was undermined by a diversion at City Hall organized by the social democrats of the International Socialist Organization (ISO) along with various liberals in collaboration with city authorities, which explicitly opposed confronting the fascists. Mayor Wheeler, who is also police commissioner, initially tried to get the federal government to ban the racist rally. When that was denied, he opted instead for massive police deployment combined with the City Hall "unity against hate" love-in. Yet despite warnings of all-sided violence, as noon approached on Sunday, you could see many people walking across the bridges to downtown Portland with homemade signs to protest the racists.

At the labor mobilization, organizers emphasized the vital importance of bringing out the enormous strength of the working class, chanting "Drive the Nazis out! Portland labor has the clout!" "Portland, this is the hour – immigrant/black/union power!" and "We're here to shut the Nazis down, Portland is a union town!" In opposition to the massive police mobilization, protesters shouted, "Fascist terror we must stop – Don't beg the mayor, don't beg the cops!"

¹ See the Portland Labor Against the Fascists leaflet online at: <http://www.internationalist.org/pdxlaboragainstfascistscall1705.pdf>

And they stressed the need for labor to take up the fight against all forms of social oppression, chanting “Muslim rights, union rights, same struggle, same fight, workers of the world, unite!” This message was repeated over and over for black rights, women’s rights, gay rights, trans rights, abortion rights and immigrant rights.

The chants were taken up by the crowd and boomed out by the mobile sound system put together by union workers. Demonstrators called out the names of our martyrs Ricky Best and Taliesen Namkai-Meche, Mulgrew Seraw (an Ethiopian student murdered by white supremacists in Portland in the 1980s), Richard Collins (the black student stabbed to death by a racist at the University of Maryland only two weeks ago), Larnell Bruce (the young African American run down by a white supremacist in nearby Gresham last August), Matthew Shepard (the gay man tortured to death in Wyoming), James Byrd (the black man dragged to his death by white supremacists in Texas) and Trayvon Martin, murdered by a racist vigilante in Florida.

The most class-conscious union militants took up the chants to “Break with the Democrats – Build a workers party!” and “Remember Hiroshima, remember Vietnam – Democratic Party, we know which side you’re on.” The fact that many protesters do not yet understand the nature of the Democratic Party underscores the need to explain, as a CSWP member did on the mike, the

spawned these murders, the double murder and near murder of the brave people who stood up for Muslim women.

“It’s necessary to mobilize our power of the working class, politically – because this is directed against immigrants. Trump says he wants to deport 11 million immigrants. Under Obama, the Democrats already deported 5 to 8 million immigrants.

“We need to organize our own class party, a workers party, and it has to be internationalist, [it] has to defend Muslims, blacks, women, and it has to be a party with a revolutionary program to overthrow this capitalist system which we are seeing in action right now. We need a revolutionary workers party, and workers united action. In the 1930s Trotsky called for workers united action. That is what we need today, and not just against the fascists but also against the defenders of the capitalist state.”

Then as the fascists and racists in Schunk Plaza cheered the police assault on the antifascists, chanting “U.S.A., U.S.A.,” celebrating and lusting for blood after each explosion or shot rang out, the labor protesters responded chanting “Fascists out! Fascists out!”

Sinister Fascists in Schunk Plaza

Many of the participants in the June 4 “Trump Free Speech Rally” may have been your run-of-the-mill white-supremacist right-wingers, but the motley crowd of a few hundred was shot through with neo-Nazis, paleo-fascists and militias. The Vancouver, Washington man who called the rally, Joey Gibson, has two fronts, Patriot Prayer (which also called the April 29 rally where the murderer Jeremy Christian was giving Nazi salutes and calling to “kill Muslims”) and his militia, Warriors for Freedom, LLC. Among the Hitlerites were the Traditionalist Workers Party with its “Diversity = White Genocide” signs and Identity Evropa, whose local rep was photographed shaking hands with Christian on the April 29 march.

The self-promoting social-media fascists “Based Stickman” (Kyle Chapman from the Bay Area), “Based Spartan” (Pat Washington from Seattle) and “Baked Alaska” (Tim Gionet, originally from Anchorage) flew in to sign autographs for their alt-right fans and prance around for the cameras. But there were also sinister fascist “Patriot” militias, the “Oath Keepers” and the “III Percenters” in olive drab, who patrolled Schunk Plaza on June 4. These paramilitary groups boast of many active-duty police and ex-military, and the thugs with yellow stripes on their makeshift uniforms worked closely together with the police.

This is now well-documented with multiple videos and photos. In one case, a slightly built anti-racist who had ventured into Schunk Plaza ran from a helmeted III Percenter and was slammed to the ground by a Warriors for Freedom leader. Homeland Security Rapid Protec-



Natalie Behring/Getty Images

Billed as a “Trump Free Speech Rally” the plaza was chock full of neo-Nazis and paleo-fascists who thirst for genocide, all under police protection.

tion Force police then moved in to arrest the anti-racist, and the III Percenter who was chasing him pulled a zip-tie handcuff from the federal agent’s belt and handed it to the agent. This happened across the street from the Portland Labor Against the Fascists demo and on videos you can hear incensed union supporters loudly yelling, “Racists! Murderers! Fascists out of Portland!”

Still, with the racists vastly outnumbered and the Plaza surrounded on three sides, if it was not for the massive police presence and the diversion by the liberals and reformist leftists who organized the City Hall rally in coordination with the mayor/police chief, the racist provocation by white supremacists and Nazi lovers could have been stopped. The significant turnout of union members and supporters on June 4 in a labor action against the fascists, unprecedented in recent years, shows the potential. And there will certainly be a next time, as decaying capitalism spawns the fascist gangs who would destroy the organizations of labor and unleash deadly violence against all the oppressed.

Trotsky on the Struggle Against Fascism

There has been lots of loose talk on the left labeling Trump a fascist. The Maoists of the utterly reformist Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) and its RefuseFascism.org liberal front group call to “drive out the fascist Trump/Pence regime.” In practice that means bringing back the Democrats. So the “fascist” label serves to justify an “anti-fascist popular front” with another section of the capitalist ruling class. But as we wrote earlier this year, “being a vicious anti-Mexican, anti-Arab, anti-black race-hater, a sexist and national chauvinist, a union-basher and advocate of unfettered police power, does not in itself make Trump a fascist.” We noted that in the U.S. today, there is not a mass fascist movement, since

the ruling class does not feel immediately threatened by a radicalized working class, mainly due to the sabotage of struggles by the pro-capitalist bureaucratic misleaders of labor. Still, “actual fascists are crawling out of their holes and looking forward to the Trump years” (see “Donald Trump, the ‘Alt-Right’ and Fascism,” *The Internationalist* No. 46, January-February 2017).

Both in the 1930s and today, the growth of fascism was/is a result of capitalist economic crisis. Since the 2007-2008 crash we are in an ongoing worldwide depression. Despite lying government statistics, there are still tens of millions of unemployed. This has bolstered fascist parties like Golden Dawn in Greece and the National Front in France, and has spawned new fascist outfits in the U.S. As Trotsky wrote of Hitler’s Nazis in Germany: “Through the fascist agency, capitalism sets in motion the masses of the crazed petty bourgeoisie and the bands of declassed and demoralized lumpenproletariat – all the countless human beings whom finance capital itself has brought to desperation and frenzy” (“What Next? Vital Questions for the German Proletariat” [1932]).

The capitalist rulers resort to these terror gangs to preserve their endangered rule. That the fascists are not just some “fringe groups” or “fight clubs” was underscored by the recent statement by the top Republican official in Portland that his party was considering using militias, “like the Oath Keepers and the Three Percenters,” as a “security force” for public events rather than relying on police (*Guardian* [U.S. edition], 29 May). And the fact that newly formed fascist groups are forming squads to attack antifa groups, like Chapman’s “Fraternal Order of Alt-Knights” linked to the “Proud Boys,” or the “DIY Division” that appeared with swastikas at a pro-Trump “Make America Great Again” (MAGA) rally in Orange County, California in March, un-



Bryan M. Vance/Oregon Public Broadcasting

Cops and fascists go hand in hand, literally. “III Percenter” militia member helps police arrest anti-racist.

role of this capitalist party in fostering war, racism and attacks on the unions. Then, just as the police moved to drive out the antifa militants in Chapman Square with volleys of flash-bang grenades and tear gas, a speaker for the Internationalist Group declared:

“We have to know who are our friends and who are our enemies. We cannot rely on the police to clear out the fascists. We’re looking right now as the police are attacking hundreds of people who came out here to say the fascists have no place in Portland. The people who called for a counter-demonstration that was not going to try to stop the fascists, collaborating with the police and with the mayor, are undercutting the necessary struggle.

“So we’re watching here today the capitalist state in action. We need to mobilize the power of our class, of the working class, to be able to throw the fascists out, to drive them out of Portland. The people who were rallying over there [the antifa protest in Chapman Square] are on the side of the working class. They’re opposed to the fascists, and the state has protected this racist scum over here [in Schunk Plaza], the same people that



Monad Press

Threatened by Silver Shirt fascists, in August 1938 the Trotskyist-led Minneapolis truck drivers formed a Union Defense Guard (above) that drove the fascists out of town. The U.S. later charged them with “sedition” for their revolutionary opposition to the imperialists’ World War II.

underscores that they are gearing up for violent street-fighting, and ultimately civil war.

The fascists use vulnerable sectors as scapegoats. In Germany the Nazis demonized Jews as the “enemy within.” In the U.S.A. today, their prime targets are Muslims, immigrants and African Americans. And they are deadly dangerous. In November 2015, a III Percenter shot five people at a Black Lives Matter encampment in Minneapolis protesting the cop killing of Jamar Clark. This underscores the need for class-struggle militants to redouble efforts to build effective workers mobilizations to drive out the ultra-rightist racist and fascist thugs. As the Nazi fascists were threatening to seize power in Germany, the Bolshevik revolutionary Leon Trotsky urgently called on Communists and Socialists and the unions to join in united-front actions to stop these killers who would sweep away all the rights and gains won by the workers movement and with them the last vestiges of bourgeois democracy.

Tragically, these warnings went unheeded, and Hitler took power in 1933, voted in by parliament without resistance by the Stalinists and social democrats. The next year, as provocations by fascists and other ultra-rightists erupted in France, Trotsky wrote insistently that to counter the fascist gangs, “*what is needed is a workers’ militia*.” He explained: “The struggle against Fascism is basically a political struggle which needs a militia just as the strike needs pickets. Basically, the picket is the embryo of the workers’ militia” (L.D. Trotsky, *Whither France?* [1934]). Yet, he added, “The militia in itself does not settle the question. *A correct policy is necessary*.” And that requires above all the leadership of a revolutionary workers party with a program to sweep away the capitalist system which breeds and makes use of the fascists.

Yet the policy of the Stalinists and social democrats was instead to form “anti-fascist popular fronts” chaining the workers to the supposedly “democratic” bourgeois parties that everywhere served as a roadblock to *prevent* revolution, leading to bloody defeats at the hands of fascists and militarists, from Spain and France in the 1930s to Chile in the 1970s. On a vastly smaller scale, that is what the City



Class Struggle Workers – Portland presented motions for a workers party and for workers mobilization to stop fascist and racist provocations, as well as initiating Portland Labor Against the Fascists.

Hall rally on June 4 represented: an alliance with the Democratic Party mayor *against trying to stop the fascists*.

Trotsky wrote in the Transitional Program (1938), the founding document of the Fourth International, that “‘People’s Fronts’ on the one hand – fascism on the other: these are the last political resources of imperialism in the struggle against the proletarian revolution.” He went on:

“The struggle against fascism does not start in the liberal editorial office but in the factory – and ends in the street. Scabs and private gunmen in factory plants are the basic nuclei of the fascist army. Strike pickets are the basic nuclei of the proletarian army. This is our point of departure. In connection with every strike and street demonstration, it is imperative to propagate the necessity of creating *workers’ groups for self-defense*. It is necessary to write this slogan into the program of the revolutionary wing of the trade unions.”

These were not just words on paper. The Trotskyists in Minneapolis, who at the head of a Teamsters local waged a successful general strike in 1934, formed a union defense guard that ran the Silver Shirts, a fascist gang sponsored by big business interests, out of town. (A few years later, in 1940, the government jailed the Minneapolis Teamster leaders on trumped-up charges over the defense guards, and then the next year imprisoned the Trotskyist leaders for their revolutionary opposition to the imperialist Second World War.)

Only Workers Power Can Smash the Fascists

Today, following the election of Donald Trump, a new generation of fascists are raising their heads. They are still small in numbers, and can be crushed. But sheer numbers of opponents are not enough. So long as the unions and black, women’s, gay and immigrant rights organizations are bound to the Democratic Party, they *cannot* defeat the fascists, for the violent partisans of Trump have the same *class* interests as Obama, Clinton and Bernie Sanders: they all defend capitalism. Writing in the lead-up to the November elections, we called for a revolutionary workers party with a program of sharp class struggle, including “for workers defense guards to defeat strikebreakers and fascist gangs” (“The Election From Hell, Whoever Wins, We Lose,” *The Internationalist* No. 45, September-October 2016).

The Internationalist Group has continued to fight for workers mobilization against the fascists, and for building workers defense guards. In our article written the day after the election, we warned: “As violent racist and outright fascist forces are emboldened by Trump’s victory, Muslims and Middle Eastern immigrants in particular may be singled out for attack. Class-conscious militants should begin the work now of building *workers defense guards*, based on the mass organizations of the working class and oppressed, to counter this threat” (“Post-Traumatic Election Shock: Defeat Trump ... And the Democrats, Fight for Workers Revolution!” *The Internationalist* No. 46, January-February 2017).

As with the Trotskyists in the 1930s, our revolutionary program is not empty rhetoric but a guide to action. In the Pacific Northwest, as reports circulated of plans for race-hate rallies by fascist groups like the Ku Klux Klan, members of Class Struggle Workers – Portland put forward the resolution passed by Painters Local 10 to mobilize against provocations by the KKK and other racist forces. As we wrote earlier this year: “Revolutionists should seek to organize mass labor-centered mobilizations to crush the fascist provocateurs as they attempt to make forays into urban centers of the multiracial working class.” The June 4 labor action is the product of that effort. And as we noted then: “In the context of such a mobilization, a squad of demonstration marshals could become the nucleus for labor-based defense guards that can effectively disperse the lynchers and Nazi scum”

(“Donald Trump, the ‘Alt-Right’ and Fascism”).

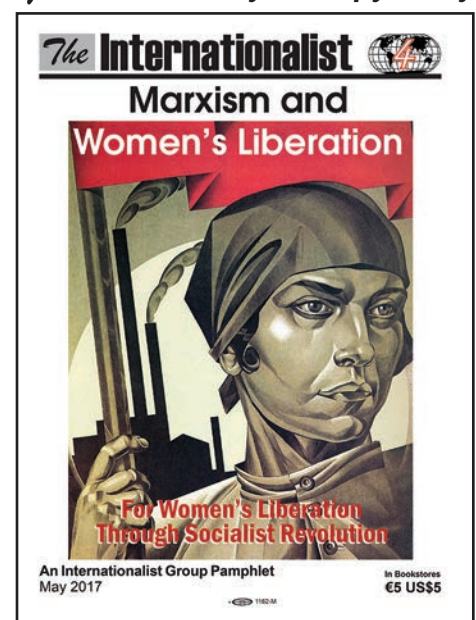
The June 4 action was a major achievement for class-conscious workers in Portland, demonstrating that workers action is possible, gaining political authority and carrying out the political program put forward by the Internationalist Group of working-class mobilization against the racists. This mobilization should spur workers and those who would oppose the race-haters and immigrant-bashers to action throughout the U.S. and beyond. As the first significant labor mobilization against fascists in the U.S. in decades, it sets a starting point for building workers defense guards against the white-supremacist gangs. And as the banners of the CSWP and the Painters union highlighted, to unchain the power of the working class it is essential

to break with the Democrats and Republicans, and build a class-struggle workers party.

June 4 is only a beginning. We were aided by our collective past experience in organizing to stop the fascists in the U.S. in the 1980s and to defend immigrants against Nazi threats in Germany in the early 1990s. We also learned a lot in the course of the intense activity of the last two weeks. A key challenge in the coming struggles will be to greatly expand the core of marshals coming from several unions and to undertake systematic training. Building an organized workers defense will be crucial not only against the fascists but also in the struggle to stop the deportations of immigrants, as well as to defend Muslims, blacks, Latinos, women, gays and lesbians against the forces that spewed their venom in Schunk Plaza on Sunday.

Above all it is necessary to wage the vital *political* struggle against the labor bureaucracy and reformist misleaders who would tie the workers to the Democratic Party and rely on the very police who protected fascists and arrested the anti-fascists, and to forge a revolutionary workers party to lead the socialist revolution that alone can wipe out the scourge of fascism, once and for all. The welfare, safety and very lives of working people and the oppressed in Portland and elsewhere depend on successfully waging and winning this key class battle. ■

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Painters and Drywallers Union Local 10 calls to break with all the bosses’ parties and for a workers party.

U.N. Get Out! Haitian, Dominican and U.S. Workers, Unite to Smash Imperialism!

Haitian Workers Brave Repression in Fight Against Starvation Wages

Since the beginning of the year, workers in Haiti have sharply stepped up struggle against the wage-gouging bosses of the garment industry. They have walked out to protest firings of labor organizers and struck for a huge hike in the minimum wage, presently set at 360 gourdes (the Haitian currency), or US\$5.50 a day. On May Day, garment workers unions in the four main factory areas announced that they were demanding an increase to 800 gourdes. Even that, more than double the present rate, would only raise daily pay to \$12.60, not even remotely enough to live on. But just to win such minimal demands and, more broadly, to combat the starvation wages imposed on Haitian workers by imperialist capitalism requires active solidarity by labor and working people in the United States.

On Friday, May 19, workers in several plants in the SONAPI industrial park in the Haitian capital of Port-au-Prince walked out demanding 800 gourdes. They set out on a march toward the Presidential Palace, but were stopped by a wall of police. Meanwhile, the bosses' Association of Industries of Haiti (AIDH) unleashed a barrage of anti-strike propaganda, falsely accusing "militants and trade-unionists" of "beating the workers to get them to leave the plants." The next day, the bosses closed dozens of plants – a lockout – while 4,000 workers blocked the road to the airport, located next to the industrial park. On Monday, the strike spread to the CODEVI industry park at Ouanaminthe on the border with the Dominican Republic, where thousands walked out, and to plants in the industrial area of Carrefour, just south of the capital (Rapid Response Network, 22 May).

In response, police stepped up repression, firing volleys of tear gas and rubber bullets at strikers. Workers at the SONAPI factory complex returned on May 23, but many just sat at their stations with their arms folded, refusing to sew. At that point the bosses brought CIMO riot police into the plants, where they viciously



Striking workers from SONAPI industrial park in Haitian capital of Port-au-Prince are blocked by police as they march toward Toussaint Louverture Airport. They are demanding that the minimum wage be more than doubled.

beat women strikers. Workers fled from the factories, fearing for their lives. Many were arrested, while those who could escape headed to the hall of the SOTA-BO union, which organizes garment workers in Port-au-Prince and Carrefour. That same day, workers at the Caracol industrial park in the north joined the strike, led by their union, SOVAGH, the "Textile Union of Valiant Workers."

SOTA-BO, SOVAGH and SOKOWA in Ouanaminthe are part of the PLASIT-BO coalition of garment unions affiliated with the May First Union Federation led by the leftist Batay Ouvriye (Workers Struggle) syndicalist group. Together the unions kept up "Operasyon Bra Kwaze" (Operation Folded Arms), taking to the streets by the thousands again on May 29. Feeling the heat, the head of the AIDH industrialists association claimed "I have never said I

was against adjusting the minimum wage" (*Le Nouvelliste*, 29 May). He cynically shifted the blame to Haitian president Jovenel Moïse, who, in between jet-setting to Miami, Ecuador and Mexico, said he had no intention of getting involved in discussions about raising the wage.

Moïse passed the buck to the Higher Council on Wages (CSS), whose members he appoints. This is just another trap for labor, to drag out the dispute while workers suffer from the ravages of inflation, particularly of sharply increased prices for transportation and basic necessities. But Haitian garment workers do have power: their labor produces fabulous profits not only for the small-time Korean and Haitian factory owners but for the huge "multinational" corporations who buy their products. The 40,000 workers, overwhelmingly women, in the textile/garment industry produce 90% of Haiti's exports. On June 16, the unions announced they were pausing the action in order to reorganize for the next round of struggle.

That round will inevitably go up against the imperialists who rule over Haiti, and their flunkies in the presidential palace in Port-au-Prince. More than almost any other country in Latin America, Haiti is run as a neo-colony out of Washington, where the fundamental decisions are made about who will be president, or how little Haitian workers will be paid. But Haiti is also the birthplace of black freedom in the Americas, where the first victorious slave revolution in history sparked uprisings throughout the Caribbean and in the U.S. South. Today the wage slaves of Haiti, joining with their sisters and brothers on the other side of the border that divides the island of Kiskeya/Quisqueya (Hispaniola) as well as with workers in the imperialist heartland, can again become a beacon in the revolutionary struggle to bring down the capitalist masters of the world.

Starvation Wages Imposed by Washington

Wages in Haitian factories are the lowest in the Western hemisphere. And while the daily minimum is supposedly for an eight-hour workday, it is a piece-rate wage and garment workers generally have to work 12 hours or more in order to make the daily quota. That works out to a miserable 45 cents an hour, not even enough to put food on the table. In reality, most Haitian garment workers make considerably less than that. A U.S.-funded survey of 24 of the main garment and textile plants (*Better Work Haiti: Garment Industry 6th Biannual Synthesis Report* [April 2013]) found



Workers walk out from CODEVI in Ouanaminthe, Haiti, June 22.



CUNY Internationalists protest at NYC event honoring Hillary Clinton, pointing to her financing sweatshops where women workers make \$5 a day.

May-June 2017

that all 24 were out of compliance with the minimum wage law. Another report, by the Worker Rights Consortium, concluded:

“Research conducted by the WRC for this report found that the majority of Haitian garment workers are being denied nearly a third of the wages they are legally due as a result of the factories’ theft of their income.”

—Worker Rights Consortium, *Stealing from the Poor: Wage Theft in the Haitian Apparel Industry* (October 2013)

Most of the factories are owned by Haitian or South Korean capitalists, but they produce for some of the biggest retailers in the world. Most men’s underwear sold in the U.S. is made in Haiti (Hanes, Fruit of the Loom) as are most women’s bras (Bali, Playtex, Maidenform, Hanes, Wonderbra) as well as many jeans (Levis, Dockers, Calvin Klein, DKNY, Old Navy), sports and college apparel (Champion, Columbia), work clothes (Carhartt) and t-shirts (Gildan, Polo, Aéropostale). These brands are owned by giant corporations with annual revenues of tens of billions of dollars between them. But according to the information in the WRC study, at one plant (Genesis) producing t-shirts for Gildan, which supplies U.S. university licensees, *the actual labor cost per shirt* for cutting, assembling, sewing and packaging is a little over 2 U.S. cents.

The Haitian unions are demanding that the minimum wage be more than doubled, to \$12.60 a day, which if a worker could actually earn that much in an eight-hour workday would amount to \$1.57 an hour — still a starvation wage. Another study, by the Solidarity Center of the AFL-CIO union federation, concluded that a “real living wage” allowing one adult worker with two minor dependents to meet basic needs would be \$23 a day (*The High Cost of Low Wages in Haiti* [May 2014]). Even that is an outrageously low figure: a single mother with two children working at a Levis plant would still be living in dire poverty. But the figures on labor costs show that they could raise wages *ten times* (1000%) and it would raise the production cost of a t-shirt by 18¢.

So this issue has been studied to death, yet absolutely nothing has been done about it. With inflation, Haitian garment workers today are making a dollar less per day than they were in 2014. Why? The plant owners are money-grubbing, wage-gouging cockroach capitalists. The retailers they supply are avaricious mega-capitalists raking in fabulous profits. What else is new? There is a lot of talk about cutthroat competitors from lower-cost producers in, say, Bangladesh. What competition? The corporations who are supplied by both Haitian and Bangladeshi producers are near-monopolies: all the brands cited above belong to a few conglomerates. But beyond that, a key reason Haitian wages are so abysmally low is that *the U.S. government wants it that way*.

In the course of last year’s presidential election campaign, it became more widely known how Bill and Hillary Clinton wreaked havoc with the economy of Haiti (where they spent their honeymoon, after meeting while crossing picket lines at a Yale workers strike). As U.S. president in the 1990s, Bill singlehandedly destroyed Haiti’s rice farming by subsidizing rice grown in Arkansas (where he had been governor). After the 2010 Haiti earthquake, as U.S. secretary of state Hillary siphoned millions from relief funds to finance the industrial park at Caracol, far from the quake zone, anchored by a garment sweatshop owned by SAE-A Trad-

ing corporation headed by Woong Ki Kim, a donor to the Clinton Foundation.

When Donald Trump called the Caracol park a giant sweatshop, paid by \$400 million in U.S. funds. Democrats were quick to retort. The total paid and budgeted so far for the park and the factory was “only” \$370 million. The *Washington Post* (17 October 2016) wrote that Caracol didn’t fit “our definition of a ‘sweatshop’.” It claimed that “full-time workers are paid at least the minimum wage.” Belying this, a report the *Post* cited by PolitFact (11 October 2016) said that of workers paid piece-work rates (almost all), “only 41 percent make the government’s target minimum wage.” In fact, the SAE-A plant has consistently paid substantially less than other Haitian manufacturers. Meanwhile, ABC News (11 October 2016) reported:

“In April, a group called Better Work Haiti published a report finding the factory was noncompliant in the areas of sexual harassment, bullying and humiliation of employees. Yannick Etienne, a labor organizer, told ABC News she received reports from SAE-A workers that they had to provide sexual favors to supervisors in order to obtain jobs in the factory.”

So here we have the Walmart and Wall Street feminist icon Hillary Clinton sponsoring a sweatshop paying workers starvation wages where women are subject to sexual harassment, bullying and humiliation. At a Women in the World Summit meeting in New York this past April, held to honor Clinton, the Internationalist Group and CUNY Internationalist Clubs showed up to spoil the celebration with signs proclaiming “Solidarity with Striking Haitian Garment Workers” and “Women Workers Make \$5/Day in Hillary’s Haitian Sweatshops.”

And now Clinton’s former chief of staff Cheryl Mills is partnering with SAE-A chief Kim “to expand the textile trade in Ghana, where BlackIvy [Mills’ consulting company] says the country’s 23-cents-an-hour minimum wage ‘compares favorably’ to higher wages in China, Bangladesh and Vietnam” (*New York Times*, 17 October). So an SAE-A plant in Ghana could “compete” with SAE-A plants in Vietnam and Haiti by paying half the Haitian minimum wage. That’s globalized capitalism for you. It’s all part of a system: *imperialism*. And that system depends on state power, particularly on the dominant imperialist power: the United States.

The Clinton connection to low-wage misery in Haiti goes far beyond a single factory in northern Haiti. In previous articles on Haitian workers’ struggles,¹ we cited the State Department cables released by WikiLeaks in 2011 showing how the U.S. embassy mounted a major operation to roll back a 2009 attempt to raise the minimum wage to \$5 a day. The U.S. chargé d’affaires wrote to his boss (Hillary Clinton) that this “would make the [assembly] sector economically unviable and consequently force factories to shut down” and “would devastate the industry and negatively impact the benefits of the Haitian Hemispheric through Opportunity Partnership Encouragement Act (HOPE II),” which provides for duty-free imports of clothing made in Haiti. It all depends on keeping Haitian wages “competitive” with those in Bangladesh.

¹ See “Haiti: Battle Over Starvation Wages, Neocolonial Occupation,” *The Internationalist* No. 30, November-December 2009; and “Haiti: Women Workers Strike Against Starvation Wages,” *The Internationalist* No. 36, January-February 2014.

Haitian Governments Made in U.S.A.

In addition to derailing legislative initiatives to raise rock-bottom wages, in order to keep the lucrative system of generating superprofits through superexploitation rolling along the bosses need to crush workers’ protests. For the past dozen years, that repression has been the task of the “blue helmet” troops and cops of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). Having brought international condemnation for introducing cholera to Haiti, leading to perhaps 20,000 deaths or more and sickening hundreds of thousands,² the U.N. finally decided in April to wind down the MINUSTAH. But it will simply be replaced by a new mission, MINUJUSTH, to beef up Haiti’s police.³ Strikers will hardly notice the change.

Meanwhile, Washington has perennially intervened to determine who will lead Haiti. The U.S. invaded Haiti in 1915, kicking off 19 years of brutal occupation.⁴ Decades later, after the populist priest Jean-Bertrand Aristide was elected president in 1990, he was ousted after eight months in a coup led by CIA-financed intelligence officers under Republican George Bush I. In 1994, Aristide was reinstalled as Haitian president as Democrat Bill Clinton sent in 20,000 U.S. troops, several thousand of whom stayed on until 2000 as “U.N. peacekeepers.” During the next decade, Aristide and his successor René Préval carried out U.S. dictates of privatization and suppression of labor struggles. But in 2004, under Republican George Bush II, the U.S. orchestrated a coup together with France and Canada, sending a snatch team that kidnapped Aristide and bundled him off to the Central African Republic, dropping him on the tarmac.

That led to 13 years of MINUSTAH occupation of Haiti by some 5,000 soldiers and police, acting as mercenaries for U.S. imperialism, which was too busy with its wars in Afghanistan and Iraq to send troops. Even with this force to “pacify” the country, the U.S. paid close attention as to who was named president, or not. Despite his earlier services, Aristide was to be kept out. Following the January 2010 earthquake, the U.S. simply took over the country, with thousands of troops and Bill Clinton as U.N. “special envoy.” Haiti’s elected president René Préval was sidelined as “Bill and Hill” ran the show. In the presidential vote that October, Préval’s candidate Jude Célestin came in second. But citing corruption, the U.S. demanded he be removed from the runoff. Hillary Clinton herself flew to Port-au-Prince to lay down the law to Préval.

The victor in the U.S.-rigged February 2011 “selection” was pop musician and son of a Shell Oil executive Michel Martelly, Washington’s favorite, with ties to “Baby Doc” Duvalier (son of long-time dictator

² A study by the Haitian Ministry of Health released last year covering 4% of the entire population of the country reported that the actual number of deaths in the initial epidemic was almost triple the number reported at the time (*New York Times*, 16 March 2016).

³ The MINUSTAH troops were under the command of Brazilian army generals. The police component of MINUSTAH was led by a Canadian superintendent, with a contingent from the Sûreté de Québec (provincial police) and the Montréal police. A number of the Québec police were involved in scandals of sexual misconduct and abuse.

⁴ See “Yankee Occupation of Haiti, 1915-1934,” *Workers Vanguard* No. 608, 14 October 1994.



Toussaint Louverture, “Black Jacobin”

“Papa Doc”), who was ousted in a popular uprising in 1986. Martelly was intimately linked to the drug-trafficking Duvalierist death squads whose coup-plotting set the stage for Aristide’s removal in 2004. After a scandal-plagued four years in office, Martelly called legislative elections in August 2015 that were violently broken up by his thugs. An October 2015 first-round presidential election was annulled because of massive fraud. But this time, the U.S. demanded that the second round be held anyway, as the Obama administration supported Martelly’s protégé Jovenel Moïse and had invested \$33 million in financing the vote.

Tens of thousands of Haitians took to the streets, and Haiti’s parliament, in a rare (but ultimately empty) show of defiance, ordered the presidential vote to be postponed and an interim government installed. Finally, in November 2016, Moïse, the banana exporter and candidate of Martelly’s PHTK (bald-head) party, won in an “election” in which barely 17% of the electorate voted and 2.4 million voting cards were reported missing. So the U.S. keeps changing horses, it installs and removes Haitian presidents, but there are two constants: under Democrats or Republicans, Washington’s candidate always wins, and Haitian working people always lose. They will continue to lose until a revolutionary leadership is forged to take on and defeat the enormous forces arrayed against them. And that is not the task of Haitian workers alone.

From the Haitian Revolution to International Socialist Revolution

Haiti has been beset by a seemingly endless series of man-made “natural” disasters. It is regularly depicted in the media as a basket case country, a “failed state,” its long-suffering population the object of liberal pity or racist disdain. These disasters are not only compounded by but directly caused by the imperialist system that has consigned Haiti to abysmal poverty. After Haiti threw off French colonial rule in 1804, the European colonizers and the U.S. blockaded the black republic in order to strangle its economy. In 1825 France demanded that Haiti pay 90 million gold francs (almost \$29 billion today) to compensate French slave owners for their plantations seized in the revolution. The “debt” eventually passed to National City Bank of New York, and collecting this ransom was the excuse for the 1915 U.S. invasion of Haiti.

In more recent years, the 2010 earthquake that flattened the Haitian capital Port-au-Prince, killing up to half a million people, was met with promises of some \$13 billion in aid. Only a small portion of that was ever disbursed, mostly for tent cities and other temporary measures. Some \$500 million donated to the American Red Cross disappeared into administrative costs and scams. The money that was disbursed was overwhelmingly done directly by international agencies, by celebrities (Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie, Sean Penn) or through thousands of “non-governmental organizations” (NGOs) that flocked to Haiti; in this “republic of NGOs” only 1% went to the Haitian government. Most of the 1.5 million living in camps have left, but for hundreds of thousands that just meant moving to precarious hillside slums.⁵

Since 2010, Haiti has been hit by more calamities. There was the cholera epidemic, started by U.N. occupation troops from Nepal and still continuing. Then in 2015 the government in neighboring Dominican Republic began implementing its racist nationality law, expelling tens of thousands deemed to be of Haitian origin (many of them born in the D.R.). And in October 2016, Hurricane Matthew struck, causing hundreds of deaths and damaging or destroying the homes of half a million people. As a result, in Haiti today there are 55,000 people living in 31 camps near the capital since the 2010 earthquake; many of the 170,000 expelled from the Dominican Republic since 2015 are living in makeshift camps near the border; and 175,000 people left homeless by Hurricane Matthew are in temporary shelters in the south.⁶

As we wrote at the time, the 2010 disaster was caused by capitalism: the earthquake was predictable and predicted, the collapsed buildings due to shoddy construction caused by Haiti’s poverty, the swollen slums the result of U.S. destruction of Haitian agriculture.⁷ The League for the Fourth International and our U.S. and Brazilian sections demanded from the very first day that U.S. and “U.N.” troops get out.⁸ We denounced Washington’s rigging of the 2010 Haitian presidential elections.⁹ We campaigned for Haitian-Dominican workers solidarity against the mass expulsions in 2015.¹⁰ And in October 2016 as the Obama administration barred Haitians at the Mexican border just as Hurricane Matthew hit, the LFI initiated united-front protests in the U.S., Mexico and Brazil to demand an end to exclusion and deportation of Haitians.¹¹

⁵ Haitian leftist filmmaker Raoul Peck has produced a powerful documentary, *Fatal Assistance* (Assistance mortelle), exposing the disastrous disaster relief. See also Johnathan Katz, *The Big Truck That Went By: How the World Came to Save Haiti and Left Behind a Disaster* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

⁶ U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, *Haiti Humanitarian Needs Overview 2017*.

⁷ See “Haiti Earthquake: Capitalism, Occupation and Revolution,” *The Internationalist* No. 31, Summer 2010.

⁸ “Haiti: Workers Solidarity, Yes! Imperialist Occupation, No!” (January 2010), in *The Internationalist* No. 31.

⁹ “Haiti: Occupation Elections In Times of Cholera,” *The Internationalist* No. 32, January-February 2011.

¹⁰ “Stop Expulsion of Haitians from the Dominican Republic,” *The Internationalist* No. 40, Summer 2015.

¹¹ “Haiti Hurricane Disaster: Workers Revolution the Answer,” and “Stop Exclusion of Haitians! Stop All Deportations! Occupation Troops Out of Haiti!” *The Internationalist* No. 45, September-October 2016.

In the face of the colossus of Yankee imperialism, whether the immediate struggle is against starvation wages, racist immigration laws, or repression by imperialist occupiers, the poor and working people of Haiti must not stand alone. The small Haitian proletariat must join with workers across the border in the Dominican Republic and inside the United States to wage a common *class* struggle. As the Russian Bolshevik Leon Trotsky explained in his theory and program of *permanent revolution*, in this epoch of decaying capitalism, even to achieve basic democratic gains, it is necessary for the working class to take power and spread the socialist revolution to the imperialist centers. At every turn, the key is to forge a *proletarian, internationalist and revolutionary leadership*.

A fundamental principle is for *total independence from the capitalist state*. Haitian workers experience daily how every instance of the neo-colonial state power represents the class enemy. Courts, cops, parliament and government agencies brutally impose the demands of the corrupt and criminal bosses and their imperialist masters. The CSS wage council is a case in point. Formally a “mixed” body with representatives of the employers, labor and the government supposedly representing “the nation,” in reality the government, too, represents the interests of capital. And now Moïse has “reorganized” the council with two out of three “labor” representatives opposed to an increase in the minimum wage, one of them a member of the party of Charles Baker, a leading textile manufacturer.

Batay Ouvriye spokeswoman Yanick Étienne rightly rejected this maneuver as a “delaying tactic” and denounced the president’s “practices of interference” in union affairs (AlterPresse, 1 June). She refused to meet with the “reorganized” wage council, citing the two phony union reps. Two years ago, Yanick Étienne was the target of a vile assassination attempt at the SONAPI industrial park. But for the past period Étienne has herself been a member of the CSS, when the task of class-struggle unionists was to denounce this council of class collaboration as an instrument of the bosses. The failure to do so before undercuts the present struggle for the 800 gourde wage, which must be won against the employers, the president and his hand-picked council.

It is likewise crucial to fight for the political independence of the workers and for a *revolutionary workers party*. For decades, petty-bourgeois leftists in Haiti and the U.S. have supported the bourgeois-populist Aristide and his Fanmi Lavalas party. Pro-Aristide newspapers like *Haiti Liberté* have denounced U.S. meddling in Haiti, particularly when Republicans ousted Aristide, but they didn’t complain when Democrat Clinton sent 20,000 U.S. troops to reinstall him in 1994. To break the grip of bourgeois populism, it is necessary to forge a party fighting for the revolutionary class interests of the workers. In early 2016, thousands went into the streets to stop the imposition of of Martelly’s flunkey Moïse, but in the absence of a workers party, new elections would at best install another capitalist president.

A third vital element is to wage an *international class struggle*, joining with workers next door in the Dominican Republic and in the United States in particular. At every key juncture, events in Haiti have been intimately connected to world events, beginning with the Haitian Revolution of 1791-1804. Haitian nationalists revere the figure of Jean-

Tri-National Protests Denounce U.S. Exclusion and Expulsion of Haitians



Leading up to last year’s presidential election in the U.S., the administration of Barack Obama wanted to undercut Republican claims that the Democrats were “soft on illegal immigrants.” So at the end of September, the Department of Homeland Security announced that it was barring entry to the U.S. to thousands of Haitians waiting on the Mexican border, and would begin deporting those who had Temporary Protected Status after the 2010 earthquake.

The League Fourth International immediately initiated a united-front protest together with the Batay Ouvriye Solidarity Network. Shortly

afterwards, Hurricane Matthew devastated southern Haiti. Nevertheless, the U.S. announced it would resume deportations as soon as possible.

On 20 October 2016 demonstrations were held in New York City (bottom); San Diego, California (top left); Tijuana, Mexico, and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (top right) demanding: “Stop Exclusion of Haitians! Stop All Deportations! Occupation Troops Out of Haiti.” This was an example of the kind of solidarity Haitian workers need in their battle for survival against the Haitian bourgeoisie and its imperialist masters.

Jacques Dessalines, who declared the country’s independence. But the revolution led by Toussaint Louverture was inspired by and part of the French Revolution of 1789-1802, and it sparked slave revolts throughout the Caribbean and in the American South.¹² In fact, it was precisely because of its connection with revolution in Europe that the first slave revolution in history succeeded.

The 1915-34 occupation of Haiti, in turn, was part of the expansion of U.S. imperialism under Republican Teddy Roosevelt and Democrat Woodrow Wilson, including invasions and occupations of Cuba and Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Panama, Nicaragua, Honduras, Mexico and elsewhere in Central America and the Caribbean. The second U.S. invasion of Haiti, in 1994, was the result of Democratic Party politics in Washington. The third U.S. invasion, in 2004, by Republican George Bush II, and the subsequent occupation by the MINUSTAH, were a direct result of U.S. wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. And the fourth U.S. invasion, following the 2010 earthquake, reflected Democrat Barack Obama’s posture of providing disaster relief to black Haiti while assuaging racists by sending the Coast Guard to block Haitian refugees at sea.

In short, every turning point in Haiti’s history was the result of events in the imperialist centers, and it is there that crucial fights in the next Haitian revolution will be fought. That includes the struggle against the deportation and exclusion of Haitians from the U.S. The “temporary protected status” of

Haitians already in the U.S. in January 2010 was recently renewed for six months by Donald Trump’s Homeland Security chief John Kelly, but this only temporarily postpones the inevitable battle. Moreover, Trump’s anti-immigrant offensive also affects many Dominicans in the U.S. New York City is a key place where Haitians (400,000) and Dominicans (600,000) can unite in struggle against their common oppressor, particularly I.C.E. immigration police, providing a potential basis for overcoming the anti-Haitian hysteria in the Dominican Republic.

The importance of an internationalist program is evident even at the level of basic trade-union struggles. Unionized workers at the CODEVI industrial park owned by Grupo M, the Dominican textile giant, should seek to work with unionists at Grupo M plants in the D.R. Workers at the BKI plant at CODEVI, which supplies uniforms to the city of Los Angeles, California should seek ties to labor in L.A. Unionized workers at the SAE-A factory in Caracol, should contact militant trade unionists in South Korea. Potentially there could be a basis for powerful international labor action. But to realize that potential, a leadership with a proletarian internationalist program is needed.

Haitian workers’ battle against starvation wages is the fight of all labor. The Internationalist Group and League for the Fourth International have paid particular attention to Haiti since our inception. In every struggle, we seek to cohere the nucleus of a genuine communist leadership, laying the basis for revolutionary workers parties on both sides of the border that divides Haiti and the Dominican Republic, in the heart of U.S. imperialism and internationally, in the struggle to reforge the Trotskyist Fourth International as the world party of socialist revolution. ■

¹² See “Toussaint Louverture and the Haitian Revolution,” Parts 1 and 2, *Workers Vanguard* Nos. 446 and 447, 12 and 26 February 1988, available in the Marxist Readings section of www.internationalist.org.

Mobilize Labor's Power to Bust the Union-Busters!

It Will Take Hard Class Struggle to Defeat "Right to Work"

The following article is reprinted from Bridge City Militant No. 4 (Spring 2017), published by Class Struggle Workers – Portland, a union tendency that works fraternally with the Internationalist Group.

The labor movement in the United States is under full-scale attack, and its leaders are lying down and playing dead. They have no plans to fight the rightist capitalist onslaught spearheaded by Donald Trump. Worse yet, having been burned by their support for Democrat Hillary Clinton, the professional defender of Wall Street who didn't even bother to go through the motions of pretending to be a "friend of labor," and whose economic policies have led to the destruction of hundreds of thousands of union jobs, top labor leaders are doing everything they can to play ball with labor-hater Trump.

In an interview with Fox Business Network, AFL-CIO president Richard Trumka praised Trump's cancellation of the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade deal and his talk of rebuilding infrastructure. "If he does something that's good for the economy and workers, we're going to be behind him," he summed up, adding lamely: if not, not. Others were totally positive. When Trump called construction union leaders to the White House in late January, the head of NABTU (North America's Building Trades Unions) Sean McGarvey crowed, "The respect that the President of the United States just showed us... was nothing short of incredible.... We have a common bond with the president."

Laborers' International Union president Terry O'Sullivan issued a press release saying "LIUNA is ready to work with the new Administration in the coming years to strengthen our country." Doug McCarron, president of the International Brotherhood of Carpenters, was downright fawning. After Trump declared "I love Doug," McCarron gushed to the media that the president's inaugural speech was "a great moment for working men and women in the United States." But behind the love fest, working people will get screwed by a president who has declared that wages in the U.S. are too high, has fought unions at his Las Vegas hotel and elsewhere, and supports union-busting "right-to-work" laws.

Various commentators have argued that the construction union leaders are being played. For sure. But then they are also being played when they regularly back the Democrats. Labor will always get screwed so long as it is chained to the parties of capital. But forging those chains is how the sellout labor bureaucrats got in office, and how they got where they are today: facing the abyss.

The paralysis of union tops in the face of threatened "right-to-work" legislation, or a potential Supreme Court decision that would do the same to public sector workers, is a declaration of bankruptcy. It demonstrates again that their fundamental loyalty is to the capitalist system, not the working people they claim to represent. What's needed is to build a fighting opposition inside the labor movement based on a program of sharp



Union militants picket outside event of the Freedom Foundation, which is pushing for a slave labor "right-to-work" law in Oregon, 24 June 2016.

class struggle, against the suicidal class collaboration of the present pro-capitalist labor bureaucracy. There's got to be a clean sweep, or the unions are going down.

"Right to Work" and Racist American Capitalism

A year ago, labor unionists breathed a sigh of relief as the U.S. Supreme Court, by a 4-4 tie vote, killed *Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association* by letting stand the ruling of the appeals court. Funded by deep-pocketed anti-union "think tanks," the lawsuit sought to cripple the unions financially by outlawing the "agency shop," the requirement that employees at an organized workplace pay union dues or an equivalent. The target was public sector unions (representing 35% of the workforce) which because of their political connections have been able to withstand the union-busting onslaught that has decimated labor in the private sector, where union membership is down to 6%.

Now anti-union forces are gearing up for another attempt. They are pushing ultra-rightist corporate stooge Neil Gorsuch – whose CV includes "joking" in his elite Jesuit Georgetown Prep boarding school yearbook of founding a "Fascism Forever" club – for Supreme Court justice. If Gorsuch survives the Democrats' softball "questions" and impotent filibustering to win confirmation, ensuring a hard anti-union Court majority, the Supremes may soon have another *Friedrichs* case, namely *Janus v. AFSCME* from Illinois, which is being pushed by the National Right to Work Foundation.

Meanwhile, in January Kentucky enacted a double-whammy "right-to-work" law coupled with a "no-right-to-strike" provision for public employees. Missouri passed its "RTW" law in February (it already had a public sector strike ban). And on February 1, a bill for a National Right to Work Act was introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives by two of the most reactionary congressmen in the country, Steve King of Iowa and Joe Wilson of South Carolina. If neither

of them is formally part of the right-wing Republican Freedom Caucus it is because this pair stands even further to the right.

Wilson is a Tea Party asset and a virulent immigrant-basher whose main claim to fame was to yell "you lie" (about immigration reform) at Barack Obama during a 2009 presidential address in Congress. Steve King is, if anything, an even more unabashed racist, sporting a Confederate battle flag on his desk, claiming Obama favored blacks and saying that "white people" have a "superior culture." He declares that Islam is "antithetical to Americanism," says that "we can't restore our civilization with somebody else's babies," and wants to eliminate citizenship for all children of undocumented immigrants born in the U.S. in order to produce an "America that's just so homogenous that we look a lot [sic] the same."

It's no wonder that spewing out such garbage, King is a hero of fascist and fascistic "white nationalists." He is not only opposed to gay marriage, but even to civil marriage. And it's entirely predictable that such a race-hater would also be a labor-hater. The fact is that the campaign for open-shop "right to work" laws, now threatening a nationwide offensive, was championed from its beginning by racist ideologues who oppose unions because in order to be effective, the unions must organize black and white workers together.

"Right to work" as a deceptively-named political movement was launched in the 1940s in Texas by a prolific right-wing political organizer named Vance Muse. Muse's *modus operandi* was to rake in funds from some of America's most powerful capitalist families – the Sloans (General Motors), Pews (Sun Oil), and Duponts, along with leading Southern grandees – while hobnobbing with fascist groups like the Klan and "Silver Shirt" leader Gerald L. K. Smith. Muse organized a Georgia convention of a "Southern Committee to Uphold the Constitution" in 1934 chaired by former National Association of

Manufacturers president John H. Kirby and featuring Smith and other fascists.

Two years later, Muse launched the Christian American Association in Texas. According to the Texas State Historical Association's *Handbook of Texas Online*, "The Christian Americans worked for passage of right-to-work laws in sixteen states," starting with Florida and Arkansas. According to "Limiting Labor: Business Political Mobilization and Union Setback in the States" by Marc Dixon in the *Journal of Policy History* (Vol. 19, No. 3, 2007):

"The Christian American Association was the first in the nation to champion the 'Right-to-Work' as a full-blown political slogan. Vance Muse became intrigued by the use of the Right-to-Work term in a 1941 Labor Day editorial in the *Dallas Morning News* that called for an open-shop amendment to the constitution. After traveling to Dallas and consulting with the editor, Muse was encouraged to use and promote the idea of Right-to-Work. This became their primary cause and they campaigned extensively for Right-to-Work legislation throughout the country, and especially within Texas."

Muse and the fascist forces he mobilized with industry backing opposed unions because, in Muse's words, the agency shop meant that "from now on, white women and white men will be forced into organizations with black African apes whom they will have to call 'brother' or lose their jobs" (Gerard Colby, *Du Pont Dynasty: Behind the Nylon Curtain* [1984]). Muse was joined in his efforts by his older sister Ida Darden, who was notable as the publicity director of the Texas Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage in 1916, and the editor of the *Southern Conservative* newspaper from 1950 to 1961, which campaigned against unions, civil rights, modern art and Hollywood movies.

Christian American lobbying led to laws in Texas limiting picketing and other union activities. But while far-right and fascist organizations such as Muse's groups were early and strident advocates of open-shop laws, they were not alone. Dixon writes that by 1947, when "right to work" was made law in Texas, its major backer was the Texas Manufacturers Association, headed by Herman Brown of the Brown & Root construction firm. By this time, the TMA kept its distance from Vance Muse and allied far-right groups. And the anti-labor forces were not the only ones to make racist appeals. In opposing "open shop" laws, Harry Acreman of the Texas AFL "invoked race as an issue, arguing that Right to Work would end segregation in southern workplaces," as Dixon noted.

The fact is that ever since Franklin D. Roosevelt's 1930s New Deal, labor officialdom has been in the Democrats' pocket. While the Republicans opposed unions outright, FDR sought to hogtie them with government control, from the 1934 Wagner Act to the WWII War Labor Board. The kept labor bureaucracy went along with its wartime no-strike pledge, while the gov-

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ernment jailed the Minneapolis Teamster leaders and Trotskyists for opposing the imperialist slaughter. Since a mainstay of FDR's "New Deal coalition" was the Southern Dixiecrats, in opposing anti-labor legislation the craven union misleaders appealed to these racists for support. That doomed the postwar attempt to organize the South (Operation Dixie), which could have succeeded had the CIO fought Jim Crow segregation.

That was when employers' "right-to-work" drive could have been stopped cold. Instead, you got the "open shop" South, a bastion of anti-unionism. And under the Democratic administration of Harry Truman, the 1948 Taft-Hartley Act was passed outlawing the closed shop and banning communists from union leadership positions. Although the AFL and CIO tops claimed to oppose that "slave-labor" law, they refused to strike against it, meekly submitting to the dictates of capital. Meanwhile, as part of the anti-Soviet Cold War, liberal Democrats purged the unions of the "reds" who had built them, laying the basis for the subsequent witchhunting associated with Republican senator Joseph McCarthy. And McCarthy's chief witch-hunter, Roy Cohn, was the mentor of Donald Trump.

Forge a Class-Struggle Leadership of Labor to Defend All the Oppressed

Today, the drive to roll back the remaining gains of the industrial unions that were born in the class struggles of the 1930s is intensifying in the context of a political crisis of U.S. imperialism. A bogus "democracy" elevates a fake-populist billionaire and woman-hating media personality into the Oval Office. Once ensconced, Donald Trump promises a skeptical Wall Street (which considers him unreliable and favored Democrat Hillary Clinton) mountains of golden loot from the federal treasury, while throwing a few crumbs to some gullible labor fakers. His arch-racist attorney general Jeff Sessions vows to ratchet up police repression. And whipping up anti-immigrant hysteria, he reinforces the key structural element of American capitalism since it was founded on chattel slavery: the division of American workers along race-color lines and the brutal racial oppression of black people.

So how do the AFL-CIO leaders plan to fight the threat of national "right-to-work" legislation or court-ordered "open shop" rules that would cripple unions? Answer: they don't. There are no plans for mass mobilization, besieging Congress and the Supreme Court or jamming Wall Street to shut down the center of world financial capital. At most they talk of stepping up "education" campaigns to convince workers to join the union. Even at that level union leaders remain beholden to the bosses, relying on dues check-offs which give management the power to turn off the financial spigot whenever it wants. In New York City, the United Federation of Teachers won't get union dues subtracted from salaries in January until March. A class-struggle leadership would collect the dues itself.

The only way to defeat this anti-labor onslaught is not to seek a new "New Deal Coalition" that would continue to subordinate the working class to one party of racist U.S. imperialism, but to drive out the pro-capitalist bureaucracy that chains the unions to the Democrats and forge a class-struggle leadership of labor that defends all

those oppressed by capitalism.

In the Pacific Northwest, union militants of Class Struggle Workers – Portland (CSWP), politically supported by the Internationalist Group, have played a leading role fighting the threat of "right-to-work" union-busting. In September 2013, Wyatt McMinn, vice president of Local 10 of the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades (IUPAT) and a CSWP spokesman, was arrested and threatened with a year in jail for protesting a meeting of the union-hating Freedom Foundation (see "Defend Wyatt McMinn, Defeat 'Right to Slave,'" *The Internationalist* No. 36, January-February 2014). The class-struggle unionist, a founder of the CSWP, was eventually found not guilty, a victory for labor solidarity and the more than a dozen union and labor councils that endorsed his defense (see "Wyatt McMinn Not Guilty!" *The Internationalist*, June 2014).

Two years later, in the fall of 2015, as *Friedrichs* loomed at the Supreme Court, members of Class Struggle Workers – Portland, elected from their unions as delegates to the Oregon state AFL-CIO convention, brought a motion that "area unions should prepare a major region-wide stop-work action against this effort to impoverish workers." The resolution won significant support but was shot down by the state AFL leadership, which has repeatedly refused to fight union-busting with industrial action, instead devoting itself to lobbying Democrats. One of their main arguments is that opinion polls show "the public" as being hostile to unions. But as the experience of the 2011 labor uprising in Wisconsin against an anti-labor governor showed, once unions began acting like defenders of workers, public support soared ... and then plummeted when protests were called off in favor of voting for Democrats.

As CSWP militants wrote in *Bridge City Militant* No. 2 (Winter 2016):

"Above all, *every union needs to begin preparing to fight the coming union-busting onslaught in the streets and in the workplaces.* We need to form committees in every local and every workplace to prepare to *tie up metro Portland like the workers in Wisconsin shut down Madison in 2011* – but Wisconsin shows that we can't let the fight be diverted into the dead end of electoral support for the Democrats or any capitalist party. We need a *class-struggle workers party*: not just a vote-getting apparatus but a party to organize and lead the fight for the oppressed and exploited, using the powerful weapons that our class has."

The AFL-CIO tops went on to throw millions of dollars to Hillary Clinton and her pro-"right-to-work" vice-presidential candidate Tim Kaine. This set the stage for a demagogue like Donald Trump to reap protest votes from workers and the unemployed suffering the ravages of the capitalist economic crisis, and the bipartisan job-killing policies implemented by Obama that have devastated the industrial "rust belt." Class-struggle unionists called instead to break the Democrats' stranglehold on labor, and in August 2016 Painters Local 10 passed a groundbreaking resolution calling for "No Support to the Democrats, Republicans, Or Any Party of the Bosses," and instead "call[ing] on the labor movement to break from the Democratic Party, and build a class-struggle workers party." This, and not belly-crawling before Congress, the courts and the capitalist politicians, is the way to bust the union-busters! ■



NYC mayor Bill de Blasio poses with city motion pictures chief Cynthia López and studio owner Doug Steiner, April 2014.

De Blasio...

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27 February). Steiner is also a generous donor. A selling point was de Blasio's \$2.5 billion plan to build a streetcar line extending from Bay Ridge to Astoria. As City Hall lined up developers to back the BQX line, "Steiner Studios, a movie lot near a potential trolley stop at the Brooklyn Navy Yard in Fort Greene, ponied up \$5,000" for the Campaign for One New York, reported the *Daily News* (12 December 2016).

At the same time, while de Blasio is tight with the TV industry, he has been cultivating political alliances with various constituencies. Among his key allies are the followers of Rabbi Aaron Teitelbaum, the Satmar Jewish Rebbe of Kiryas Joel, the Orthodox village in upstate Orange County. Millionaire B&H owner Schreiber and hundreds of store employees are members of the "Aaroni" sect, which is also dominant in Boro Park, Brooklyn. Aaroni Satmar political operatives boast that their bloc of 7,500 votes won de Blasio the Democratic nomination in 2013. Now the FBI is putting the squeeze on top Aaroni political fundraisers, including Isaac Sofer, Moishe Indig and Rabbi David Niederman, to get dirt on the mayor, but no one's talking.

Bill de Blasio poses as a "progressive." His reelection drive kicked off with endorsements from key unions including the United Federation of Teachers, AFSCME District Council 37 and SEIU Local 32BJ. In reality he's a straight Clinton/Obama Democrat, who would clearly be, as we put it in 2013, nothing more than "Bloomberg Lite," a lower-key continuation of the policies of the Republican billionaire mayor. In the political horse-trading of Democratic Party politics, de Blasio owes the Satmar power brokers. Thus Rabbi Niederman, head of the United Jewish Organizations of Williamsburg and North Brooklyn, is a mayoral appointee to the Navy Yard Development Corporation board where he is in a position to look out for the interests of B&H.

While B&H is one of the biggest Hasidic-owned companies in New York, in fighting wage gouging, dangerous working conditions, abusive manage-

ment practices and discrimination – including separate bathrooms for whites – the immigrant workers have emphasized that they are waging a labor, not a religious or ethnic, struggle. Union militants are vigilant against any hint of anti-Semitism. Jews for Racial and Economic Justice has been an important ally throughout the battle. At the February 12 rally, a JFREJ spokeswoman reported that 225 rabbis had signed a letter calling on B&H to negotiate in good faith with the union. The CUNY Internationalist Clubs initiated the chant that has been widely picked up over the recent

period, "Jew and Arab, black and white, workers of the world, unite!"

Democrats Bill de Blasio, the phony "friend of labor," and Hillary Clinton, the faux friend of women, along with deporter-in-chief Barack Obama, are in fact representatives and defenders of capital. While Clinton and Obama hobnob with the Wall Street fat cats, de Blasio attends to the retail-level wheeling and dealing of bourgeois politics. He allies with entertainment moguls and real-estate barons like Bruce Ratner, who promised thousands of apartments for low-income tenants (yet to be built) in exchange for tearing down homes to make way for the Barclays Center sports/entertainment arena. It's no surprise, then, that despite his talk of good jobs and affordable housing, Democrat de Blasio presides over the elimination of hundreds of immigrant workers' jobs.

The fight for union jobs at B&H must be a *class* struggle to win. That means mobilizing the powerhouses of NYC labor in defense of immigrant workers. On February 16, while restaurant and shop owners shut down for a "Day Without Immigrants," B&H workers organized a collective stay-away action to protest against raids and deportations. Trabajadores Internacionales Clasistas (TIC – Class Struggle International Workers), including workers at B&H, calls on NYC unions to bring out the ranks and take the battle to City Hall and Wall Street. We have the power to *smash* the union-busting attack, but it will not be accomplished with paper resolutions and having a few bureaucrats and staffers show up. Surround B&H with thousands of workers and the bosses will get the message.

Above all, as Karl Marx insisted a century and a half ago, *every genuine class struggle is a political struggle.* We must break the stranglehold of the Democratic Party which has led to the decimation of the unions in this country. We join with the militant Painters Union in Portland in calling to build a class-struggle workers party fighting to replace the dictatorship of capital with the liberating rule of the working class championing all the oppressed. ***Stop the B&H bosses' job-killing, union-busting plan! ¡Unión, fuerza, solidaridad! – Union, power, solidarity! ■***

Defend Leftist Lecturer Eleonora Roldán Mendívil!

Germany: Anti-Palestinian Witch Hunt Targets Leftist and Jewish Activists

BERLIN – In recent months, there have been several incidents of persecution of Jewish and leftist groups and individuals in Germany's capital for their pro-Palestinian views. The attackers range from right-wing German nationalists to the peculiar self-described (and grossly mislabeled) "Anti-Germans."¹ What they have in common is total support for whatever the Israeli government is doing, and virulent anti-Muslim bigotry.

A case of anti-Palestinian censorship that gained international attention is the exclusion of Free University (FU) Berlin lecturer Eleonora Roldán Mendívil. During the winter term she taught an undergrad class on "Racism under Capitalism" under a teaching assignment contract which has to be extended before each semester (the equivalent of an adjunct in an American university). On December 25, an obscure blog, "Boasinfo," run by a German nationalist called Andreas Boldt (who hails Trump's travel ban and calls for more "racial profiling" of Muslims in Germany) ran a hit piece on Roldán Mendívil slanderously labeling her an anti-Semite.

Shortly after, the campus group "Against Every Form of Anti-Semitism" sent a letter (January 5) to the FU president and the Otto-Suhr Institute for political science, calling for her dismissal. With unprecedented speed, and before even talking to her, the acting department head Bernd Ladwig posted a public statement (January 5) on the OSI website, announcing a decision to exclude Roldán Mendívil from future teaching assignments "at least until the accusations are cleared up." This at a university where the main building is still named after Hitler-lover Henry Ford, even after many years of campaigning to change it!

What is the evidence that compels a major university to publicly cast suspicion on one of its teachers of anti-Semitism (a career-ending accusation in Germany) and to mete out the punishment before any kind of hearing or proceedings? Roldán Mendívil had signed a letter along with hundreds of artists, musicians and performers (including beloved singer Nina Hagen) demanding an end to Israel's indiscriminate bombing of Gaza in 2014, which killed over 2,000 Palestinians, mostly civilians. She also, in her discontinued personal blog, called Israel a "colonial state," compared its policies with South African apartheid and stated support for the boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) movement.

The denunciation letter expressed particular outrage that such language puts Israel, a supposed "democratic nation of laws", on a par with "regimes of injustice"². Israel a "democratic nation of laws"?! Tell that to Palestinian children sentenced to years of prison for throwing stones at heavily armed soldiers, while an Israeli army medic guilty

of the cold-blooded murder of an incapacitated Arab recently received a sentence of only 18 months! Another charge is that Roldán Mendívil helped stop an attack by "Anti-Germans" on a Maoist for carrying a Palestinian flag at a refugee demo in 2015. None of this is anti-Semitic.

Nevertheless, the university commissioned a "scientific expert" on anti-Semitism to carry out this witch hunt and character assassination. As department head Ladwig's statement confirms, these "charges do not relate directly" to Mendívil's course. A letter of support, signed by 32 students who took her class, states that her teaching reflects her opposition to anti-Semitism and rejects attacks on her qualifications: "We appreciate her differentiated and scientific approach to racism and capitalism, which enriches the range of courses offered at OSI. Based on what she said in class, we assess Roldán Mendívil's political position as showing reflectiveness and being and critical of all forms of racism."

This entire campaign has nothing to do with a concern about anti-Semitism, and everything to do with a political witch hunt against a leftist. At a public panel discussion at OSI on "Criticism of Israel and the Limits of Academic Freedom of Debate" Ladwig confirmed this, when he bluntly said that he "honestly does not care" whether Roldán Mendívil's statements were anti-Semitic or not. Given his cooperation with Israeli universities, he said, "such a person has no place in my house" (klassegegenklasse.org, 17 February), as if he embodied the university.

Ladwig repeatedly referred to the so-called "3D test" invented by Zionist warhawk and right-wing Israeli ideologue Natan Sharansky, according to which use of delegitimization, demonization, and double standards on Israel is anti-Semitic. This former anti-Soviet spy was in charge of Israel's illegal settlements in the Occupied Territories as minister of housing when he concocted this "test", an obvious ploy to divert international outrage at the decades-long Zionist occupation of Palestinian lands. But beyond that, the FU administration is sending a message to employees: you're risking your job if you publicly voice opinions the bosses don't like, even outside the workplace.

Indeed, leftist unionists, who tried to rally support for their colleague were met with resistance in their campus union groups. While only a minority of active unionists supported the campaign against Roldán Mendívil, they found de facto bloc partners in social-democratic bureaucrats who sought to keep the unions from taking a stand. Paired with an element of fear for their livelihoods if they speak up in this matter, the majority of active unionists chose to not take a side.

In the case of a campaign to fight the system of contingent teaching assignment contracts (granted one semester at a time), the group decided to not mention Roldán Mendívil at a public event, in order to avoid a split. Yet an important reason for the system of short-term teaching assignments is that it discourages teachers from speaking

up out of constant fear of not receiving a new contract. In the name of upholding unity, the initiative turned their back on a colleague whose case embodies the very injustice they supposedly set out to fight.

Berlin teachers, whose union GEW (Union for Education and Science) also includes a small section of university employees, have repeatedly shown their militancy. Their strike actions over the past couple years to demand equal pay for equal work in Berlin's schools were shut down by the union bureaucracy whenever the strikes started to hurt (i.e., to be effective). This militancy must be mobilized in support of the more vulnerable university employees, many of whom labor under short-term contracts that effectively prevent unionization.

The victimization of Eleonora Roldán Mendívil for her leftist political views is an obvious example of all that is wrong with the system of short-term employment. Defending her is in the objective interest of every unionist, whatever political differences they may have. The social-democratic sellouts who block such a perspective must be fought politically and be replaced by a class-struggle leadership of the union.

Throughout the controversy, the group "Against Every Form of Anti-Semitism" has been portrayed as a couple of harmless students. They use the cover of "fighting anti-Semitism" to organize campus events for people from the milieu around the "anti-German" rag *Bahamas*, which enthuses about vile anti-Muslim racists from late Italian ex-leftist Oriana Fallaci (who declared that Muslims in Italy "breed like rats, and they piss in baptismal fonts") to the fascist "English Defence League." One figure who was invited to speak at FU is Tjark Kunstreich who supported the war on Iraq and once chastised those "friends of Israel" who recoil at Avigdor Lieberman's plan to expel all Arabs from Israel. Another is Gerhard Scheit who, in a recent article on the refugee crisis, bemoaned the lack of a "European Guantanamo" and called for the "reeducation" of refugees, "for the sake of enlightenment".

In case it has not yet become clear, the "Anti-Germans" have no place in the left – in fact, they want it destroyed. They have no problem aligning themselves with reactionary bourgeois politicians, like prominent Green Party deputy Volker Beck who recently called for an official definition of criticism of Israel as anti-Semitic (*Jüdische Allgemeine*, 2 March), in an article that "Against Every Form of Anti-Semitism" posted on their Facebook page. Such a definition serves to empty justified charges of anti-Semitism of all meaning.

The German nationalist/"Anti-German" character assassination notwithstanding, Eleonora Roldán Mendívil has re-



Eleonora Roldán Mendívil, removed from her teaching assignment on the basis of slanderous charge of anti-Semitism.

ceived a good deal of support. Her students started a petition, leftist and liberal groups have sent solidarity messages, and international scholars have expressed outrage at this attack on academic freedom, among them Israeli historian Ilan Pappé. The Israeli organization Academia for Equality, which represents over 250 academics, wrote (January 15): "As academics well versed in the Israel-Palestine question, some of whom also study anti-Semitism, we hold that Ms. Roldán Mendívil's vocal opposition to the ongoing occupation of Palestine falls well within the range of legitimate academic speech, and thus strongly defend her right to express these opinions without fear for her livelihood."

Jewish Civil Rights Activists Under Attack by Pro-Israeli Groups

"Anti-Germans" and Zionists willfully conflate Jewish religious/ethnic minorities in various countries, the Hebrew-speaking nation in Israel, and the Zionist Israeli state. This imaginary monolithic bloc is shattered by Jewish leftists and human rights advocates who do not accept being used by Israel's government and its supporters to justify the oppression of the Palestinians. Hence they are effectively banned from "democratic" Germany, which asserts its legal identity as the successor state of the Nazi Third Reich.

For example, liberal Jewish-American historian Norman Finkelstein, the son of Holocaust survivors, cannot speak in Germany and Austria anymore without threats against him or his hosts by "Anti-Germans." In 2010 "BAK Shalom," an "Anti-German" group within the Left Party (Die Linke) youth organization, successfully pressured the Die Linke's Rosa Luxemburg Foundation to cancel an event in Berlin with threats of disruptions. In January, an unholy alliance of "BAK Shalom," Volker Beck and the hard-line Zionist-rightist *Jerusalem Post* tried to prevent an in-house workshop featuring Finkelstein at the Max Planck Institute in Halle, which was able to proceed under heavy security (*Mitteldeutsche Zeitung*, 26 January).

Other examples of this Zionist witch hunt abound. This past fall, the human rights group Jewish Voice for a Just Peace in the Middle East, which includes German and Israeli citizens, had its bank account cancelled. The Bank for Social Economy, where many charities, political organiza-

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¹ See "Anti-German" Witch-Hunters Support Zionism and German Imperialism" at <http://www.internationalist.org/germanyanti-palestinianwitchhunt1703.html#anti-German>

² In German the term "*demokratischer Rechtsstaat*" is often used to describe imperialist West Germany while "*Unrechtsregime*" is used to equate the East German deformed workers state with the Nazi Third Reich.

tions and unions have accounts, accused the group of opposing Israel's right to exist for participating in the boycott, divestment and sanctions movement, which tries to pressure Israel to withdraw from the Occupied Territories. The bank was tipped off by Benjamin Weinthal, correspondent for the *Jerusalem Post*, who smeared JVJP as being "pro-Hamas" and "anti-Semitic." As Shir Hever, a board member of the group, put it: "This is the first time since World War Two that a German bank has closed the account of a Jewish organisation" (Middle East Eye, 8 December 2016).

More recently, the weekly newspaper *Jungle World* (9 February) defamed a group of *Israeli gay rights activists* in an article disgustingly titled "The Lunatics of Zion." The group "Berlin Against Pinkwashing" is portrayed as a bunch of violent savages for staging peaceful protests against attempts to use Israel's relatively liberal gay rights legislation to alibi (i.e., "pinkwash") Zionist oppression of Arabs in Israel and the Occupied Territories. One of their actions was a "die-in" in front of an Israeli embassy stall at a gay street fair. The article singles out two activists by name, because they dared to voice pro-Palestinian opinions after a *Jungle World* writer's speech in defense of Israel. This could set them up for potential reactionary attacks and reprisals by immigration officials. They, too, are denounced as "anti-Semitic" supporters of the BDS movement.

Jungle World plays an important role for the "Anti-Germans" making anti-Palestinian propaganda respectable among parts of the left and liberal public, as it has a much broader appeal than openly racist scene publications such as *Bahamas*, and is sold in many ordinary bookstores and newsstands. Taking a cue from right-wing demagogues on prime-time TV who loudly complain about non-existent "*Speechverbote*" (speech bans), the author uses his forum of some 15,000 *JW* readers to whine about imaginary "*Speechverbote*" – supposedly enforced by a handful of Israeli immigrants!

At last year's Christopher Street Day parade in Berlin, the activists of "Berlin Against Pinkwashing" were physically assaulted – shoved and beaten with flagpoles – when they protested the speech of Israel's ambassador, holding up signs such as "No Pride in Israeli Apartheid." An attacker caught on video using an Israeli flag to beat a woman is Andrew Walde, a bureaucrat at the DGB union federation and Social Democratic Party candidate in the last local elections. Another, who used a rainbow flag as a weapon, is Left Party member and former Berlin Parliament deputy Oliver Höfinghoff (*Berliner Kurier*, 26 July 2016).

The Marxist position on BDS

The League for the Fourth International defends the proponents of boycotts, divestment and sanctions against right-wing and Zionist attacks and censorship. We denounce the recent Israeli law banning supporters of BDS or others accused of spreading "Palestinian propaganda" from entering Israel. We oppose all attempts to equate opposition to Zionism with anti-Semitism. Where debates over BDS on university campuses become a referendum on Zionism, we would critically support such calls.

That does not mean, however, that we endorse BDS politically, which is misguided and wrong on several counts. Most importantly, it is not compatible with a *class* approach to overthrow capitalism in



July 2016 protest in Berlin against "pinkwashing" Israeli crimes against the Palestinian people.

general and Zionist oppression in Israel/Palestine in particular. Who is going to divest and sanction Israel? The working class has no investments to divert elsewhere, nor does it hold political power in any state to impose any sanctions. Impotent consumer boycotts of Israeli goods or academics do not threaten Israel's capitalist rulers or their imperialist patrons, but have the potential to tighten the nationalist grip of the bourgeoisie over "its" proletariat.

BDS is fundamentally an appeal to imperialist corporations, governments and international institutions to intervene on behalf of the Palestinians. In the first place, this fosters illusions in bringing about a more peaceful, rational and social form of capitalism, if only enough pressure can be mounted. This illusory notion has proven deadly in the past. Recall the 1982 massacre of Sabra and Shatila, two Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon. Palestine Liberation Organization forces had been evacuated from Lebanon under the supervision of the U.S.-led Multinational Force. Instead of bringing peace, this set the stage for Israeli occupation forces to surround the camps, while sending in their allies of the fascistic Christian Phalange militia to slaughter some 2,000 unarmed civilians.

Secondly, BDS completely whitewashes the crimes of imperialist powers such as the U.S., Germany, Britain and France, to whom this "strategy" appeals. The "democratic" imperialists are responsible for unspeakable carnage all over the neo-colonial world, slaughtering millions, including in the Middle East, compared to which, quite frankly, the atrocities committed by Israel's ruling class pale.

Third, the policies of the imperialists are governed by their particular economic and political interests, which can change. However remote a possibility right now, it is conceivable that the U.S. or Germany could at some point in the future pull back from their unconditional support for Israel as a regional gendarme, as the U.S. did in the 1956 Suez war. Should this occur, it could spark a genocidal frenzy among the bloodthirsty Zionist militarists, desperate to "establish facts on the ground" while they can, by wholesale expulsion of the Palestinian population.

In any case, Marxists are not in the business of advising "their" ruling class about whom to ally with. We seek to *defeat* the imperialists through internationalist workers struggle, including in alliance with anti-Zionist Israeli workers and leftists.

Beyond that, the entire premise is wrong. The model is the boycott, sanctions and divestment campaign against South African apartheid. Yet it was not American

investors failing to buy Krugerrands or the BBC withholding broadcasting licenses that brought down that racist regime. Rather it was a fundamental shift in the world balance of forces and sharp social and class struggle in South Africa. A massive strike wave forced significant concessions from the bosses, which combined with popular upheaval posed a threat to foreign investments and, therefore to imperialist interests. Meanwhile, the crumbling of the Soviet bloc meant that the "Communist threat" in South Africa was qualitatively lessened.

The U.S. and other powers started to put pressure on their white supremacist allies in South Africa *to save the country for capitalism*. The resulting power sharing deal with the African National Congress did just that: While legal apartheid was abolished, the black masses are still subject to superexploitation by the same local white capitalist class (now with some black capitalist front men) and their imperialist overlords, as the 2012 massacre of black miners by the ANC government showed.

In fact, neither South Africa nor Israel is a "colonial settler state" where settlers act as agents of colonial rulers (and could return to the imperialist metropole if they no longer served this purpose, as French *colons* did following Algerian independence). The South African apartheid regime wanted to create a permanent black working class to be exploited by white capitalists. The ideal of the Zionist state, on the other hand, is a homogenous Jewish nation state, with a Jewish working class. This means excluding as many Arabs from the Israeli economy as possible.

Where Israel does impose an apartheid-like regime is in the occupied West Bank. The fascistic Zionist settlers in the Occupied Territories seek to replace this by "cleansing" what they refer to as Judea and Samaria and driving out the entire Palestinian Arab population, euphemistically called "transfer." Trotskyists call to expel the Israeli army and all Zionist settlements from the Occupied Territories, in order to defend the Palestinian people end the occupation.

For an Arab/Hebrew Workers State in a Socialist Federation of the Middle East!

The establishment of Israel was a result of the genocide of six million Jews by German imperialism in World War II. On top of this heinous crime came the refusal of the imperialist Allies to accept Jewish refugees. Israel's 1948 "war of independence" involved the deliberate driving out of hundreds of thousands of Arabs. Many ended up in refugee camps not only in the West Bank

and Gaza, but also in neighboring countries like Lebanon and Jordan, where they and their descendants remain today, viciously oppressed at the hands of local Arab rulers.

The fact is that a Hebrew-speaking nation has been forged through the dispossession of Palestinian Arabs, who have also become a nation through their bitter experience of oppression. The existence of these two nations as a result of monstrous historical crimes is an accomplished fact. This is hardly unique. The American nation was built on the genocide of Native American populations and the enslavement of African Americans. Marxists do not divide the world into "good" and "bad" nations, we recognize the democratic right to self-determination of all nations while opposing all nationalist ideologies with the program of revolutionary internationalist class struggle.

In a situation like Palestine, with interpenetrated populations and two nations laying claim to the same tiny piece of land, there can be no equitable solution to their competing national rights under capitalism. Capitalism is based on the nation-state, ensuring the exploitative rule of each national bourgeoisie. Trotskyists oppose the existence of a "Jewish state" and all theocratic and religion-based states, just as we oppose Islamic republics or declaredly Christian states such as Vichy France or Franco's Spain.

Moreover, the now defunct "two-state solution" of the Oslo Accords was always a formula for oppression of the Palestinians. Under capitalism, the stronger state power will dominate, in this case Israel. Who controls the waters of the Jordan? Who gets the oil? Might will decide. A "one-state solution" of a "democratic, secular Palestine" under capitalism is a pipe dream, for the Zionist oppressors fear that if they are outnumbered and overpowered, their former victims would treat them as brutally as they have treated the Palestinians for the past 70 years. The League for the Fourth International fights for Arab/Hebrew workers revolution.

We hold that the only just solution is a socialist revolution that establishes a collectivized economy throughout the Middle East. In Palestine that can only come about through the joint efforts of the Arab and Hebrew workers. A separate Israeli revolution that brings the Zionist butchers to justice is inconceivable. But acting together, the impoverished Palestinian masses and a Hebrew-speaking working class that has tired of living in a garrison state under constant threat of yet another war could prevail. The first step in this direction must be a fight to win Jewish workers to the defense of the beleaguered Palestinians against the Zionist oppressor, demanding full democratic rights for Palestinians in Israel and the withdrawal of troops and settlers from the occupied West Bank.

What is necessary above all is to smash imperialism through international socialist revolution, particularly in the key imperialist centers, the United States and German-dominated Europe. Palestine will likely not be the first place on the planet where socialism will prevail. However, a wave of revolutionary internationalist struggles in the region and elsewhere may well break Israeli workers from Zionism and Palestinians from Arab nationalism. The LFI seeks to build an Arab/Hebrew Trotskyist party to lead the fight for a binational Arab/Hebrew workers state, as part of a socialist federation of the Middle East. This perspective lays the basis to unite the toilers from the patchwork of national, ethnic and religious groups in this crossroads of civilization. Then we can truly make the desert bloom. ■

For the ICL: The Main Enemy Is in Brussels

Latter-Day Spartacists Call for “Italexit”

The following article is translated from L'internazionalista No. 2 (June 2017), published by the Nucleo Internazionalista d'Italia, section of the League for the Fourth International.

There has been a rise in racist frenzy and nationalist chauvinism in Europe with the refugee “crisis”, the anti-immigrant inspired campaign for British exit from the European Union (“Brexit”) and various far right and fascist forces like Matteo Salvini in Italy and Marie Le Pen in France calling for their countries to pull out of the EU and drop the euro in order to better defend Christian culture and deport all “illegals”. The Lega Trotskista d'Italia (LTd'I, Italian section of the International Communist League, ICL) has been tailing behind this chauvinist wave, the latest gambit being their recent call for the Italian bourgeoisie to pull out of the EU and return to the lira. The German Spartacists proclaimed in World War I that “the main enemy is at home.” For the ICL today, like the reactionary nationalist populists, *the main enemy is in Brussels*.

The reaction of the LTd'I to the refugee crisis, when thousands of refugees were dying trying to enter into Europe, was to polemicize against “open borders”. The LTd'I refused to call for the right of anybody to have refugee status in Europe who was not already there. Their paper *Spartaco* (April 2016) polemicized against the right of immigrants and refugees to move around freely in Europe (see article “The Refugee Crisis and Imperialist Barbarism” in *The Internationalist* No. 44, Summer 2016). This anti-immigrant position is especially reactionary since EU citizens have the right to do so. The LTd'I refused then and still refuses today to oppose the Dublin III fast-track deportation decree.

Then the ICL screamed victory with the success of the chauvinist Brexit campaign last June, calling it “a stunning defeat for the city of London, for the bosses and bankers of Europe as a whole as well as for Wall Street and the U.S. imperialist government” (*Workers Hammer*, Summer 2016). They fail to mention the dramatic increase in the number of racist attacks during and after the chauvinist Brexit campaign. The campaign was marked by the murder of Labour MP Jo Cox in Yorkshire on June 16. Her killer reportedly shouted “British first” and was in contact with fascist circles both in the U.K. and U.S. for years. They do not explain how imposing further restrictions on Polish workers entering Britain (the main selling point for Brexit) and endangering the status of many workers already there furthers the interests of the working class.

Single-mindedly pushing Brexit instead of fighting for international solidarity actions with the large contingents of the French proletariat who were mobilized and striking at the time does not raise class consciousness, but instead lowers it. In *The Internationalist* No. 44 (Summer 2016), we wrote:

“Revolutionary Marxists are irreconcilable opponents of the EU – a ‘Fortress Europe’ which condemns refugees at its borders to death every day – and would

never advocate voting for this imperialist alliance. Yet when a referendum about EU membership is posed by competing bourgeois forces, the political content of the referendum is a key factor. In this case, when the battle focused on different formulas for restricting immigration, campaigns by ostensible Marxists for a ‘Leave’ vote meant giving this chauvinist ‘circus’ a ‘left’ cover. *The only possible course for proletarian revolutionaries was to abstain on the vote (including blank or spoiled ballots) and counterpose to it a class-struggle campaign for asylum for refugees and full citizenship rights for all immigrants.*”

So the LTd'I is now calling for “Italexit” and distributed a leaflet titled “Italy Out of the European Union!” (March 25) at a Eurostop demonstration in Rome of the same day. In it they write: “The exit of Italy [from the EU] could make the entire EU collapse and this would be to the advantage of all the workers and oppressed and be a hard blow against the bosses.” The LTd'I, which puts out propaganda very infrequently, chose to dedicate the entire three page leaflet to the question of the EU, which has virtually become their be-all and end-all. According to them, the difference between Trotskyism and Stalinism in Italy is supposedly that Trotskyists are the best fighters for Italexit. Perhaps these pseudo-Trotskyist imposters would like to propose a two stage theory of revolution; first a nationalist fight to breakup the EU and then the fight for socialism. They could call it the “strategic anti-EU united front.”

The same leaflet quotes and attacks (from the right) a statement of the PCL (Partito Comunista dei Lavoratori, Workers Communist Party) which reads: “The truth is that the alternative is not between the euro or lira, between free trade and protectionism, between the European Union and nations. The real alternative is between capitalists and workers, between capitalism and socialism. In every country and on a worldwide scale” (“Euro or Lira, the Real Problem Is Capitalism,” www.pcllavoratori.it, 4 February). The statement is true enough, although the PCL is constantly pursuing class-collaborationist popular-front and parliamentary-reformist policies rather than revolutionary struggle against capitalism. But the LTd'I is denouncing the PCL from an Italian nationalist point of view, pushing for an independent imperialist Italy in the context of capitalism.

The LTd'I goes on to polemicize against the Nucleo Internazionalista d'Italia, claiming that we “give a Marxist veneer to the arguments of the bourgeoisie against the exit of Greece and Great Britain from the EU.” In reality, we called to abstain in the June 2016 referendum, counterposing to the competing bourgeois chauvinist campaigns to “Stay” or “Leave” a *class* fight for asylum for refugees and citizenship rights for all immigrants. We opposed the bourgeois nationalist call for “Grexit,” while noting that the Greek bourgeoisie might be forced to leave the EU and the euro out of desperation. But the LTd'I bombastically declares that we “are heading towards the Fourth Reich of

German imperialism” because we didn't tag along with the bulk of the Greek left (and the ICL) in obeying bourgeois populist premier Alexis Tsipras' call to vote “no” in his phony July 2015 referendum. Instead, we told the masses the bitter truth, that Tsipras had already organized a sell-out to the Eurobankers and that following his vote call would only give cover to that. Instead, we put forward a program of class struggle against this farce. In fact, the “no” vote won, and as we had warned, Tsipras promptly made an even worse deal with the Brussels bankers.

While the ICL loudly insists that it is an absolute principle to call for withdrawal of imperialist countries like Britain and Italy from imperialist alliances at all times, joining in this with bourgeois nationalists and fascists, it no longer demands the independence of Puerto Rico from U.S. colonial rule and independence for the French colonies of Guadalupe and Martinique. So they accept the presence of French and U.S. imperialism in these colonies. Lenin called groups like the ICL “social-imperialist,” socialist in name and pro-imperialist in deeds. These fake-Trotskyists would have been barred from joining the Communist International in 1920 because they violate point 8 of the famous 21 conditions necessary for admission. Their acceptance of colonialism is in line with the ICL's loud support for the U.S. imperialist military occupation of Haiti in 2010.

The ICL's British paper *Workers Hammer* (Spring 2017) claimed that there was a “clear class difference” between voting to “leave” or “stay” in the EU. There is no “clear class difference” or “class line” in the Brexit and Italexit campaigns, as both sides of this debate are reactionary and bourgeois. But we note that with its position the ICL places itself on the same side of the class line as various far right racist forces such as Matteo Salvini of the Northern League and Nigel Farage of the UKIP, as well as Marine Le Pen of the fascist National Front in France. From Puerto Rico and Haiti to Europe, and elsewhere (such as Mexico, where the ICL can't tell the difference between death squads and a workers union), the latter-day ICL repeatedly fails to see the real class line dividing the exploited and oppressed from the bourgeois exploiters and oppressors.

And in the U.S., the ICL's Spartacist League shamefully refused to support the demand of the Standing Rock Sioux Native Americans that the Dakota Access Pipe-

line (DAPL) not cross the Missouri River right next to their reservation. Echoing the DAPL's capitalist owners, and effectively lining up with Donald Trump, the SL argues that the land has not belonged to the Sioux for the last century and a half – after it was stolen by the U.S. government! (See “Spartacist League: Land Surveyor Socialists,” *The Internationalist* No. 46, January-February 2017.)

Now during Trump's bonapartist mobilization to round up and deport immigrants and ban refugees, the SL refuses to call for asylum for refugees (or even just to let them in) and attacks the Internationalist Group (the U.S. section of our LFI) for calling to “defend sanctuary cities.” These 400 jurisdictions have been targeted by the Trump administration for not cooperating with federal requests to keep undocumented immigrants arrested on minor charges in jail as a “courtesy” to the I.C.E. immigration police (which courts have ruled unconstitutional), and for telling local government employees not to inquire about or pass on information about individuals' immigration status. This minimal prohibition (often ignored by the cops) can mean a lot for undocumented workers. But while Trump is moving to slash billions of dollars from education and social service funds to “sanctuary cities” to punish them, the SL tells workers to do nothing against this threat.

The LTd'I/ICL, having long ago abandoned Trotskyism and retreated from the class struggle into demoralized do-nothing defeatism, is now capitulating to openly reactionary forces. Its “Italexit” line is only the tip of the iceberg. ■

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CLASS STRUGGLE EDUCATION WORKERS

L.A. “Sanctuary Clinic” Defends Immigrant Patients

The following articles are reprinted from the Class Struggle Education Workers website, <http://edworkersunite.blogspot.com/>.

Bringing the power of labor into the fight to defeat the anti-immigrant onslaught has been central to the Class Struggle Education Workers’ work in the past period. This is reflected in materials on the CSEW site, such as “NYC Schools Must Be a Sanctuary for Immigrant and All Students – Keep I.C.E. Cops Out of Our Schools,” “NYC Health Care Workers Say: Mobilize the Power of Labor to Defend Muslims and Immigrants,” and “The Crime of Medical Deportations.” CSEW members have played a leading role in putting into practice the call to establish committees to defend immigrants in unions, schools and workplaces, while helping build protests and mobilizations against attacks and provocations aimed at immigrants, Muslims and basic democratic rights.

So it was with great interest that CSEW activists learned that a health clinic in Los Angeles had declared itself a sanctuary from the recent wave of raids targeting undocumented immigrants (“L.A. Health Clinic Protects Immigrants Against Illness — and Deportation,” *LA Weekly*, 15 March). Located in the largely Central American Pico-Union neighborhood, the clinic is named after Archbishop Oscar Romero of El Salvador, who was assassinated in 1980 by right-wing death squads determined to silence his denunciations of U.S.-backed army terror during the Salvadoran civil war. The *LA Weekly* reported:

“Administrators for the Clínica Monseñor Oscar A. Romero declared the sanctuary policy ... after caregivers reported an alarming rise in the number of missed medical appointments since the Immigrant and Customs



Ana Grande, organizing director for the Clínica Oscar A. Romero in Los Angeles.

Enforcement sweeps began in earnest in the area in mid-February. Most of the patients who come to clinic for care were born in El Salvador, Guatemala or Mexico, and an estimated 40 percent of them are undocumented, according to Ana Grande, the organizing director for the clinic.”

Grande was quoted as stating, “If agents come in storming, our providers are prepared to act as human shields.”

Inspired by this courageous stance, we sent her the motion passed by NYC health care workers Local 768 (part of AFSCME DC 37) on the fight to “defend undocumented immigrants in need of health care from round-ups, jail and deportation.” Phone discussions on the importance of

linking up these struggles from coast to coast led to a mid-April visit to the Clínica Romero, where CSEW member Sándor John interviewed Ana Grande. The edited and abridged interview is published below.

* * *

Can you tell us a little about the clinic, its name, and the patient population?

Clínica Monseñor Oscar Romero was founded in 1983 by a group of Salvadoran refugees and their allies. It was originally a concept from a committee of the El Rescate legal services group, who were [concerned about] health access for the new diaspora of Central Americans in Los Angeles. There were some nurses in the community who said, “Let’s start a clinic.” It started as a non-profit, volunteer-run free clinic.

The founders wanted to ensure that there would be a community organizing department within the clinic, so we’d be able to tackle what we now know as the “social determinants of health” such as housing, immigration, food scarcity, mental health issues, you name it.

Over the last 34 years we have transitioned to having a staff of 183, and we’re now a federally qualified agency with 12,000 patients. 95% of our patients are monolingual Spanish-speaking, and 2% speak a Mayan language called Kanjobjal spoken in Guatemala, and others speak dialects of Náhuatl. There are now some African immigrants as well. We believe that we owe it to our immigrant patients, and our brothers and sisters in the community at large, to be working in their defense, advocating for them.

So the clinic was founded at the height of the civil war in El Salvador.

Yes. The clinic is named Monseñor Oscar Romero partly because he lived and worked at a hospital in El Salvador, El Hospitalito, which we provide resources for, but also because we always wanted to be a voice for the voiceless. Over 40% of our patients are undocumented, and those that are legal residents or citizens come from mixed-status families. I was a patient here when I was a kid; I used to get my shots here. I came in two years ago as community organizing director, and I get to work directly with the culture I’m from. My father is the cousin of Rutilio Grande, who was Monseñor Romero’s best friend and the first religious martyr of the civil war. One of the reasons why Monseñor Romero became the “voice of the voiceless” was to highlight the human rights atrocities in El Salvador.

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Protest Anti-Communist Witch Hunt in NYC School

For the past several months, the Office of Special Investigations of the New York City Board of Education has been conducting an ominous “investigation” in the Park Slope Collegiate school in Brooklyn. The principal, Jill Bloomberg, and four teachers are charged with communist organizing in the school! This is a throwback to the McCarthyite witch-hunting of the 1950s when over 1,100 teachers in the New York City public schools were investigated and close to 400 were fired or forced to retire over accusations of communist associations. People asked, how could this be happening in this day and age? But it is, and it has to be fought tooth and nail.

The OSI is a sinister cabal that goes after teachers the administrators want to get rid of. Its specialty is framing educators on sex charges of the sort that tabloids like the *New York Post* feast on. Bloomberg has long complained of segregation of NYC schools. She was singled out because of her official complaint to the D.O.E. in January of race discrimination against the girls’ basketball team on the John Jay HS campus. Although New York schools are the most segregated in the country, according to a 2014 study by the University of California, Los Angeles Civil Rights Project, Mayor Bill de Blasio refuses to use the



CSEW joined protest against D.O.E. witchhunt, May 31.

word “segregation,” instead using the deliberately ambiguous term “diversity.”

The 21st century Savanarolas in Tweed Courthouse (the D.O.E. headquarters behind City Hall) have accused Bloomberg and other teachers of “belonging to the Progressive Labor Party,” an ex-Maoist group (*New York Times*, 5 May). Yet there is nothing illegal in being supporters of a leftist po-

litical group. Nevertheless, in early May a federal district judge refused to grant a preliminary injunction blocking the OSI snooping on grounds that it violated First Amendment rights and the Civil Rights law. So the bogus “investigation” continues.

Parents at Park Slope Collegiate have strongly supported the principal and teachers. They called a rally to defend them on the steps of the DOE headquarters on May 31. Marjorie Stamberg, a delegate of the United Federation of Teachers (UFT) in District 79 and a supporter of Class Struggle Education Workers, spoke at the rally. Here are excerpts from her remarks:

“I was at the court a couple of weeks ago – that outrageous thing that was called a hearing –and it gave us some education about what the capitalist courts in America will do. We have to defend Jill Bloomberg and stop the McCarthyite witch hunt. The fact that we have a red-baiting witch hunt going on in the D.O.E., the likes of which has not been seen since the Cold War, is certainly connected to what is going on in Washington and it has to be stopped. “We have another big challenge in front of us, and that is to defend our immigrant students. In my school we have formed a UFT committee of students and parents and teachers and all school staff to defend

and protect all of our immigrant students. We say – I.C.E. out of the schools, I.C.E. out of New York! And finally, here we are 60-plus years after *Brown v. Board of Education* [the landmark Supreme Court decision ordering school integration] and New York City schools are the most segregated schools in the country.

“But how are we going to stop it? My group, Class Struggle Education Workers, thinks it’s not just a question of the schools, not just a question of Trump. I’m a proud member of the UFT and the 100,000-plus teachers. But we need a change in leadership there, and we need to know that the UFT itself was forged in anti-communism, in the anti-communist purge of left-wing teachers in the original Teachers Union.

“So we need a fighting class-struggle leadership in the unions that can bring a revitalization of all of labor. And most important, we need a class-struggle workers party! No support for Democrats or Republicans, because [Obama’s “education czar”] Arnie Duncan paved the way for [Trump’s education secretary] Betsy DeVos! All honor and defense of not only Jill Bloomberg but all of the teachers and students there who are fighting against the sinister inquisitors of the OSI.” ■

L.A. Clinic...

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In the mid-1980s, a large number of people from the Salvadoran diaspora moved to this part of Los Angeles, as well as Hondurans and Guatemalans. At that time, we had what we called sanctuaries, which were churches that became a network of solidarity and a community of support for one another. I started being trained as an organizer at that time, and now we're taking up that concept with what we're living through right now.

The thing is, we've always been living through mass deportations, even in the Obama era. Everyone was like, "Oh, it's not going to be horrible, because it's Obama, he's not going to go into clinics or schools." Well, yes and no. But nobody did anything, other than the "Dreamers," who were really at the forefront of being undocumented and unafraid. Now when Trump came into power, there was now a major scare; it was going to up the ante, and we knew that no place was going to be safe. So now we see raids happening not only at workplaces, which they always have, but we see them more in neighborhoods, everywhere, during daylight time.

Because we've been very vocal about our undocumented population, we felt it would behoove us to have policies in place that not only protected the organization, but those within it, and of course our patients. We talk about being a part of the sanctuary network or the "safe space" network now. We're not providing sanctuary in the sense that it used to have; we're not housing people here. We're now part of a more extensive network...

Your point about deportations under Obama is a very important one, which we've raised in articles like the one about medical deportations. A lot of the institutional and policy structures that Trump is ramping up go back to that. The LA Weekly article said that if I.C.E. came storming in, clinic personnel would be human shields.

Yes, because they would be breaking the law, because this is private property. We are hoping to continue with that message, but obviously that is not the route we would like to go...

At the City University of New York, the campus presidents have made various declarations with an escape hatch, where they say if I.C.E. comes with a legal order, they will comply. We've been calling on people to say, "No, we won't comply," and if they raid a campus or go to the home or workplace of a student or campus worker, and threaten them or their family with deportation, we would shut down the campus and spread that to the rest of the University. We've also talked about comparisons to the fight against the Fugitive Slave Act in the period before the U.S. Civil War.

Well, as Monseñor Romero would say, "No man is obliged to abide by the law that is contrary to the laws of God."

One of the things that the CSEW emphasizes is that we think the labor movement – and more broadly the working class, which has such a key immigrant component – has the power to actually shut down these raids. [The Clínica Romero's staff is unionized in the SEIU.] I wanted to end the interview by asking if you have any message for health workers in the New York area, or the students and faculty that are organizing around these issues.

I think right now we are living in a

time where the best of us is being called forth. So how are we going to be humane with the rest of humanity that is being tackled, marginalized, oppressed? And it is up to us to really be at that forefront, and to not give up. Giving up is not a choice right now. It is really our responsibility to change the course of history. We're proud of the position we've taken. Becoming a "safe clinic," or a "sanctuary clinic," has allowed our patients to feel safer, and our staff to become more united. When you are in solidarity, that is what happens. ■

Spectrum...

continued from page 8

sought to take credit for a \$25 billion investment that Charter had already announced last August, together with plans to close overseas call centers (*Dallas News*, 23 March). Meanwhile, the list of call centers being closed in Indiana, Kentucky and elsewhere in the U.S. continues to grow.

This is a vivid warning for workers not only at Spectrum but throughout the country facing viciously anti-worker employers who wrap their war on labor in the stars and stripes. The union-busting Charter CEO joining the billionaire grifter president in "America First" propaganda is a blatant example of how politicians of both bosses' parties (and all too many labor "leaders") try to set workers in the U.S. against those in other countries, when our real enemy is right here "at home," on Wall Street and in Washington.

Meanwhile, the liberal Democratic version of class collaboration has been promoted by Mayor Bill de Blasio as well as Public Advocate Letitia James, who wrote a letter (signed by many city council members) calling on Charter/Spectrum to "be a good corporate actor" by providing an example of "partnership." (James was a featured speaker at a previous Local 3 rally on April 5.) But as James P. Cannon, the founder of the Trotskyist movement in the U.S., wrote back in the 1930s: "The partnership of labor and capital is a lie."

Cannon stressed that every strike is "a bullheaded struggle between two forces whose interests are in constant and irreconcilable conflict.... The only strike strategy that is worth a tinker's dam is the strategy that begins with this conception. The problem of the strikers consists in estimating what their strength is, and then mobilizing it in full force and pressing against the enemy until something cracks..." ("The Maritime Strike," November 1936). But mobilizing the full force of labor is precisely what has not happened, so far, in the Spectrum strike.

A winning strategy at Spectrum is counterposed to the labor tops' reliance on Democratic politicians. Where this leads can be seen by what happened when subway and bus workers in Transport Workers Local 100 brought the city to a halt in 2005: then-mayor Michael Bloomberg (Republican) and state attorney general Elliot Spitzer (Democrat), backed by their respective parties, used the "slave-labor" Taylor Law to try to bust the strike, fining the workers thousands of dollars apiece and jailing the union president.

The need to unite workers in a powerful class struggle is shown by the ongoing battle to stop union-busting at B&H Photo. After an intensive organizing campaign that won union recognition for the mostly Latino immigrant workers with United Steelworkers, B&H dragged contract negotiations out for over a year, only

to announce plans to close the company's unionized Brooklyn warehouses. As we have reported, the union-busting owners have gotten a helping hand from the Democrats in City Hall (see "De Blasio Administration Complicit in Closing of B&H Warehouses," on page 5 of this issue).

As the B&H workers chanted in their courageous walkout on May Day, echoing a slogan previously popularized during immigrant workers' unionization battle at the Hot and Crusty bakery: "*Jugar con reglas del patrón es segura perdición*" (Play by the bosses' rules and you're sure to lose). To unchain the power of labor we have to free it from subservience to the bosses' parties and politicians. Breaking from the Democrats, along with all the parties and politicians who represent a system based on the merciless drive for profit, is crucial if we are to win strikes, bust the union-busters, and defend the most basic rights and gains of the working class. ■

ISO...

continued from page 9

In the ISO's post-demo articles it never calls for dropping all charges against the arrested protesters. It only has a brief mention that the Portland police used "excessive force" and that its attacks on the antifa activists were "unwarranted." But in the next breath it claims that when the police launched a full-scale attack on this year's May Day demo with tear gas, flash-bang grenades and rubber bullets, "Black Bloc protesters undermined a march of some 1,000 people by provoking police" ("Anti-Racists Show Their Strength In Numbers," *Socialist Worker*, 6 June). On that occasion it also did not call for freeing the more than two dozen people arrested that day.

While the ISO, DSA, SALT and other social democrats frequently talk of united fronts as a cover for their class-collaborationist *popular-front* blocs with Democrats, from Bernie Sanders to local officials, in this case they justify their splitting tactics by blaming militants for "provoking" police. An earlier (May 4) *Socialist Worker* article about May Day reported that "local and national media laid the blame on protesters for a march that had 'turned violent,'" and then proceeded to do exactly the same thing, saying that Black Bloc protesters were "incredibly irresponsible," that they "give the police an excuse for attacking protesters," etc.

On June 4, the ISO didn't wait to put the finger on militants after the fact, but did so before the event, which it deliberately split in order to have nothing to do with anyone who sought to actually drive out the fascists.

In its June 12 wrap-up article it claims

that its policy of "challenging the far right, but not physically confronting them or attempting to deny them the space," was only "tactical," and "was a way to build confidence and organization, and break through the fear barrier that was being fanned by the media." It pretends that "our aim should be to build our numbers and confidence so that we not only protest the far right, but ultimately are able to drive them from our streets." This is nonsense, perhaps to assuage any of their own members who may be uneasy about the dirty tactics they used in Portland.

The grotesque actions of the ISO in Portland did not come out of the blue. They are not an aberration or exception; on the contrary these actions are a vivid example of what the ISO's politics means when applied in a situation of sharp struggle with real stakes. Its effort to help Portland's rulers head off militant mobilization to stop the fascists, while seeking to preempt blame for "confrontations" by casting it on other leftists, is a stark illustration of what Trotskyists mean when we characterize the ISO as a *social-democratic* organization. Behind these actions is the ISO's entire political method of adapting its "socialism" to bourgeois liberalism and Democratic Party "progressives." It is the politics of class collaboration.

The social democrats pretend that the only alternatives are small-group skirmishes with the fascists or "peaceful legal" protests protected by the police. Not only will such reformist/liberal love fests not prepare for more militant action later – in fact, they undermine that potential – it is a false dichotomy. The organizers of Portland Labor Against the Fascists, including Class Struggle Workers – Portland and members of several area unions, put forward a very different strategy, of ***mobilizing mass labor-centered action that can vastly outnumber and overpower the fascists***, who today are still quite small in number.

This is the strategy put forward by Leon Trotsky in Germany and France in the 1930s, and carried out by the American Trotskyists who led the Minneapolis Teamsters in organizing workers defense guards and who surrounded a Nazi rally in Madison Square Garden with 80,000 workers and youth determined to shut it down. The key is to mobilize the power of the workers movement, that can not only promote public safety by sweeping the fascists off the street but can defend against the racist police terror and anti-immigrant raids that are the greatest immediate danger today. The initiative by Portland Labor Against the Fascists was an historic first step in that direction. ■



Hundreds of union members and supporters in Portland, OR came out on June 4 to oppose racist/fascist rally.

sigue de la página 24

mente con el Internationalist Group. El CSWP lanzó también la iniciativa Sindicalistas de Portland Contra los Fascistas a mediados de mayo, instando a los sindicatos a movilizarse para poner alto al mitin racista del 4 de junio, propuesta que fue rápidamente adoptada por sus sindicatos y otros. Esta iniciativa fue publicitada a través del Northwest Oregon Labor Council, aunque la dirección estatal de la AFL-CIO dio la espalda a la movilización.

Doble asesinato racista sacude a Portland hasta los cimientos

La urgencia de la acción sindical en contra de racistas y fascistas se intensificó agudamente tras el asesinato el 26 de mayo de los valientes Ricky Best y Taliesin Myrddin Namkai-Meche, y el casi asesinato de Micah David-Cole Fletcher, a manos de un nazi local, Jeremy Christian. Fueron degollados por ayudar a dos jóvenes afroamericanas, una de las cuales portaba un hiyab (velo islámico), a las que el asesino estaba amenazando. El doble asesinato racista sacudió la petulante imagen que tiene de sí mismos los liberales de Portland. Sin embargo, ésta es la más blanca de las principales ciudades norteamericanas, y en un pasado no muy lejano fue un hervidero de skinheads fascistas.

Mientras Portland se bamboleaba tras el shock ocasionado por los espantosos asesinatos, miles de sus habitantes querían hacer algo para parar los asesinatos. Sin embargo, este esfuerzo fue minado mediante una distracción en la alcaldía organizada por los socialdemócratas de la International Socialist Organization (ISO) junto con diversos liberales en colaboración con las autoridades de la ciudad, que explícitamente se opusieron a confrontar a los fascistas. El alcalde Wheeler, quien también es comisionado de la policía, intentó inicialmente que el gobierno federal prohibiera la realización del mitin racista. Cuando esto fue rechazado, optó en cambio por un enorme despliegue policíaco combinado con el amoroso festival de “unidad contra el odio” en la alcaldía.

En la movilización sindical, los organizadores enfatizaron la importancia vital de la movilización de la enorme fuerza de la clase obrera, coreando “¡Hay que expulsar a los nazis! ¡Los trabajadores de Portland tienen la fuerza!” “¡Portland, es la hora! ¡Poder inmigrante, negro, sindical!” y “¡Estamos aquí para poner alto a los nazis, Portland es una ciudad sindical!” También subrayaron la necesidad de que la clase obrera asuma la lucha contra toda forma de opresión social, coreando “¡Derechos de los musulmanes, derechos sindicales, la misma lucha, la misma batalla! ¡Proletarios del mundo, uníos!” Este mensaje se repitió una y otra vez con respecto a los derechos de los negros, de la mujer, de los homosexuales, de los transesexuales, del derecho al aborto y de los derechos de los inmigrantes.

Los militantes sindicales con más conciencia de clase repitieron la consigna de “¡Romper con los demócratas! ¡Hay que construir un partido obrero!” y “Recuerden Hiroshima, recuerden Vietnam, Partido Demócrata, sabemos de qué lado estás”. El hecho de que muchos manifestantes no comprendan aún la naturaleza del Partido Demócrata subraya la necesidad de explicar, como hizo un miembro

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del CSWP en el micrófono, el papel de este partido capitalista en el fomento de la guerra, el racismo y los ataques contra los sindicatos. Entonces, justo cuando la policía se movilizaba para echar a los manifestantes antifa de la plaza Chapman con descargas de granadas aturdidoras y gas lacrimógeno, un portavoz del Grupo Internacionalista declaró:

“Lo que estamos viendo aquí hoy es al estado capitalista en acción. Necesitamos movilizar el poder de nuestra clase, de la clase obrera, para ser capaces de echar a los fascistas, para sacarlos de Portland.

“Necesitamos organizar el partido de nuestra propia clase, un partido obrero, y tiene que ser internacionalista; tiene que defender a los musulmanes, los negros, las mujeres, y tiene que ser un partido con un programa revolucionario para derribar al sistema capitalista que estamos viendo en acción justo ahora. Necesitamos un partido obrero revolucionario, así como acciones obreras unidas. En los años 1930, Trotsky hizo un llamado a favor de acciones obreras unidas. Eso es lo que necesitamos ahora, y no sólo en contra de los fascistas, sino también en contra de los defensores del estado capitalista”.

Trotsky sobre la lucha contra el fascismo

Ha habido mucha palabrería en la izquierda que tacha a Trump como fascista. Los maoístas del ultra reformista Partido Comunista Revolucionario (RCP) y su frente liberal RefueseFascism.org, llaman a “echar al régimen fascista de Trump y Pence”. En la práctica, esto significa traer de vuelta a los demócratas. De modo que la etiqueta de “fascista” sirve para justificar la formación de un “frente popular antifascista” con otro sector de la clase dominante capitalista. Pero como escribimos a principios de año, “ser un virulento racista antimexicano, antiárabe, antinegro, un xenófobo, un sexista, un rompesindicatos, un promotor del poder policíaco irrestricto no hace de por sí que Trump sea un fascista”. Señalamos que, en los EE.UU. de hoy, no hay un movimiento fascista de masas, toda vez que la clase dominante no se siente inmediatamente amenazada por una clase obrera radicalizada, lo que se debe principalmente al sabotaje de las luchas que han realizado los falsos dirigentes de la burocracia sindical procapitalista. Aun así, “sí hay verdaderos fascistas que están saliendo de sus agujeros y ven con esperanza los años de Trump” (véase “Donald Trump, la ‘derecha alternativa’ (Alt-Right) y el fascismo” en *The Internationalist* No. 46, enero-febrero de 2017).

Los fascistas utilizan a sectores vulnerables como chivos expiatorios. En Alemania, los nazis demonizaron a los judíos como el “enemigo interno”. En EE.UU. hoy, su principal blanco lo constituyen los musulmanes, inmigrantes y afroamericanos. Son mortalmente peligrosos. Cuando los nazi-fascistas amenazaban con tomar el poder en Alemania, el revolucionario bolchevique León Trotsky hizo un llamado urgente a comunistas, socialistas y sindicatos a unirse en acciones de frente unido para poner alto a esos asesinos que pretendían aplastar todos los derechos y conquistas logrados por el movimiento obrero y, con ellos, hasta los últimos vestigios de la democracia burguesa.

Sin embargo, la política de los estalinistas y socialdemócratas fue, en cambio, formar “frentes populares antifascistas”

que encadenaban a los trabajadores a partidos burgueses supuestamente “democráticos” y que sirvieron en todos lados como dique para impedir la revolución, lo que condujo a sangrientas derrotas a manos de fascistas y militaristas, desde España y Francia en los años 1930, hasta Chile en los 1970. En una escala mucho menor, esto es lo que representaba el mitin en la alcaldía de Portland el 4 de junio: una alianza con el alcalde del Partido Demócrata en contra del intento de parar a los fascistas.

Los trotskistas en Minneapolis, que a la cabeza del local de los Teamsters [sindicato de los choferes de camiones] libraron una exitosa huelga general en 1934, formaron una guardia sindical de defensa que corrió a los Camisas Plateadas, una banda fascista patrocinada por los intereses de los grandes patrones, de la ciudad. (Unos años más tarde, en 1940, el gobierno encarceló a los dirigentes de los Teamsters de Minneapolis con acusaciones inventadas por haber organizado las guardias de defensa; un año después, encarceló a los dirigentes trotskistas por su oposición revolucionaria a la Segunda Guerra Mundial.)

Sólo el poder obrero podrá aplastar a los fascistas

Hoy, tras la elección de Donald Trump, una nueva generación de fascistas está levantando la cabeza. Aún son pocos, y pueden ser aplastados. Pero meras cantidades de oponentes no son suficientes. Mientras que los sindicatos y las organizaciones de negros, mujeres, homosexuales e inmigrantes sigan atados al Partido Demócrata, no podrán derrotar a los fascistas, pues los violentos partidarios de Trump tienen los mismos intereses de clase que Obama, Clinton y Bernie Sanders: todos defienden al capitalismo. Al escribir en vísperas de las elecciones de noviembre, llamamos a formar un partido obrero revolucionario de dura lucha de clases, incluyendo la formación de “guardias obreras de defensa para derrotar a los esquiroles y las bandas fascistas” (“Las elecciones del carajo: quienquiera que gane, perdemos” en *The Internationalist* No. 45, septiembre-octubre de 2016).


El Grupo Internacionalista ha continuado la lucha por la movilización obrera

contra los fascistas, así como por la construcción de guardias de defensa obrera. Como en el caso de los trotskistas en los años 1930, nuestro programa revolucionario no es retórica vacía sino una guía para la acción. En la costa del Pacífico Noroccidental de EE.UU., cuando empezaron a circular informes de que grupos fascistas como el Ku Klux Klan urdían planes para realizar movilizaciones racistas, miembros de Class Struggle Workers – Portland presentaron una resolución aprobada por el local 10 del sindicato de pintores para movilizarse en contra de las provocaciones del KKK y otras fuerzas racistas. Como escribimos a principios de este año: “Los revolucionarios deben intentar organizar movilizaciones de masas enfocadas en la clase obrera para aplastar a los provocadores fascistas cuando pretendan realizar incursiones en centros urbanos de la multi-racial clase obrera”. La acción sindical del 4 de junio es producto de ese esfuerzo. Como señalamos entonces: “En el contexto de una movilización así, el servicio de seguridad de la manifestación podría convertirse en el núcleo de guardias de defensa basadas en los sindicatos que puedan dispersar efectivamente a los linchadores y a la escoria nazi”.

La movilización del 4 de junio fue un importante logro de los trabajadores con conciencia de clase en Portland, y demuestra que la movilización proletaria es posible, ganando autoridad política y haciendo realidad el programa presentado por el Grupo Internacionalista de movilización de la clase obrera en contra de los racistas. Esta movilización debe alentar a los trabajadores y a quienes se oponen a los racistas y antiinmigrantes a movilizarse en todo Estados Unidos y en otros países. Como la primera movilización de importancia en contra de los fascistas en EE.UU. realizada en décadas, establece el punto de partida para la construcción de guardias obreras de defensa en contra de las bandas de supremacistas blancos. Y como subrayaban las mantas del CSWP y del sindicato de pintores, para desencadenar el poder de la clase obrera es esencial romper con demócratas y republicanos y construir un partido obrero clasista. ■

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La policía protegió a los fascistas muy minoritarios

Movilización obrera en Portland para poner alto a una provocación fascista

Militantes de 14 sindicatos de la región muestran la vía hacia adelante

Esta es una traducción abreviada del artículo de primera plana de este número de The Internationalist. El artículo completo está disponible en español en nuestro sitio de Internet, www.internationalist.org

PORTLAND, Oregon, 8 de junio – El mitin que aquí realizaron el domingo 4 de junio supremacistas blancos y fascistas descarados que apoyan a Trump, fue cercado por furiosos manifestantes indignados por esta abierta provocación, que vino apenas una semana después del doble asesinato perpetrado por un nazi local. Una de las tres manifestaciones, la movilización convocada por la iniciativa Sindicalistas de Portland Contra los Fascistas, reunió a varios cientos de sindicalistas y de sus partidarios al este de la plaza Terry Schunk, donde los racistas estaban resguardados por tres líneas de policías antimotines (locales, estatales y federales) fuertemente armados.

En la movilización sindical en contra de los fascistas estuvieron presentes miembros de al menos 14 sindicatos de la región, entre los cuales se cuentan: el Local 10 del IUPAT (pintores); el Local 28 del IATSE (tramoyistas); el Local 1503 del sindicato de carpinteros y el Consejo Regional del Noroeste de los Carpinteros; el Local 483 de los Laborers; la AFT de Oregon (maestros); los IWW (Industrial Workers of the World) de Seattle; el Local 503 del SEIU; el Local 29 de los siderúrgicos, la AAUP (profesores universitarios); el Distrito 757 de la ATU (trabajadores del transporte), y otros. Los primeros siete sindicatos aprobaron mociones coordinadas en las que llamaba a “movilizarse contra el peligro claro y presente que las provocaciones de organizaciones racistas y fascistas representan para todos nosotros”.

Entretanto, un ejército de policías provenientes de siete distintas jurisdicciones convirtió al centro de Portland en un estado policíaco para garantizar que la provocación racista tuviera lugar. Vehículos policíacos especialmente equipados, cada uno con una docena de policías estatales vestidos de negro de pie en los estribos, rodearon la plaza en la que los ultraderechistas se habían reunido. Después de un empate que duró varias horas, la policía lanzó descargas de granadas aturdidoras, balas de goma y gas lacrimógeno para desalojar a los manifestantes antifascistas (antifa) en la plaza Chapman, justo al norte de la plaza Schunk. Tal como hizo el Primero de Mayo, la policía cercó el área, reteniendo a 200 personas en la calle mientras los identificaban y seleccionaban a individuos para



Cientos de sindicalistas se movilaron el 4 de junio en contra de un mítin racista y fascista. El Local 10 del sindicato de pintores de Portland llamó a defender a los inmigrantes, a romper con los partidos demócrata y republicano, y a construir un partido obrero de lucha clasista.

arrestarlos. Se reportó que 14 personas fueron detenidas.

Exigimos que todos los antifa y otros manifestantes arrestados el 4 de junio sean liberados y que se retiren todos los cargos en su contra, y lo mismo con respecto a todos los arrestados el 1º de mayo y a los que protestaban en contra de un mitin racista realizado el 29 de abril.

La movilización sindical se mantuvo en su puesto hasta el final, coreando consignas y lanzando discursos sin parar que reverberaban a lo largo y ancho de la plaza Terry Schunk y las zonas colindantes a lo largo de más de seis horas. Activistas obreros se mantuvieron orgullosamente tras sus mantas sindicales hasta que toda la escoria fascista y racista salió en autobuses protegidos por la policía.

Esta es la primera acción significativa de la clase obrera norteamericana en contra de supremacistas blancos en décadas. La importancia de esta movilización trasciende la mera denuncia de unos cuantos cientos de reaccionarios reunidos al otro lado de la calle, y del espeluznante linchamiento asesino a manos de uno de los suyos nueve días antes. El 4 de junio es un importante primer paso en la movilización del poder del movimiento obrero de Portland en defensa de los trabajadores, los inmigrantes, los musulmanes y todos los amenazados por la ofensiva reaccionaria generalizada que viene de Washington. Muestra el potencial para organizar guardias obreras de defensa que consigan que las alimañas fascistas se arrastren de vuelta a sus agujeros. Asimismo, subraya la necesidad de un partido obrero que luche por el derribo del sistema capitalista que alimenta al fascismo, y por remplazarlo con el gobierno emancipador de la clase obrera.

Meses de trabajo desembocaron en la movilización sindical

Los principales medios noticiosos intentaron disfrazar la enorme disparidad en números entre los fascistas y los que protestaban en su contra, pero *Willamette Week* señaló que “los socialistas, sindicalistas y anarquistas que se movilaron hoy ... sobrepasaron en número a los extremistas de derecha en una proporción de hasta 10 a 1”. La movilización antifa de la plaza Chapman y el mitin “Portland Unido Contra el Odio” en la alcaldía, reunieron cada uno a más de un millar de personas. La acción sindical no fue organizada en el Internet ni en las redes sociales, sino por medio de los sindicatos mismos, y unos 300 sindicalistas y sus partidarios se movilaron.

Mientras la tensión se intensificaba rumbo al 4 de junio, *Willamette Week* (31 de mayo) publicó un artículo titulado “Grupos sindicales organizados se comprometen a mostrar su apoyo (y su fuerza) el 4 de junio”. *The Oregonian* (1º de junio) citó a Ashley Jackson, portavoz de la Iniciativa Sindical de Portland contra los Fascistas: “Cuando se le preguntó con respecto a los llamados del alcalde a favor de que no hubiera violencia, Jackson dijo que ‘no podemos confiar en que la alcaldía o el gobierno pongan alto a esta gente’”. La Radio Pública de Oregon informó el 3 de junio: “Jackson dijo que su grupo pretende ‘impedir que los fascistas conviertan a Portland en un centro de organización de cada vez más violentos ataques racistas contra los inmigrantes’”.

Tras las manifestaciones del domingo, la prensa burguesa se enfocó, como siempre, en la violencia, culpando a los antifas del ataque policíaco. Con respecto a la pro-

testa sindical, *The Oregonian* informó: “Organizadores sindicales se reunieron en una banqueta de la Tercera Avenida y corearon al otro lado de la calle ‘¡Los inmigrantes llegaron para quedarse! ¡Escoria fascista, lárguense!’”. El *Washington Post* señaló que los “sindicalistas que portaban cascos y chalecos de seguridad gritaban: ‘¡Racistas! ¡Asesinos! ¡Fascistas fuera de Portland!’”. El *Seattle Times* señaló: “Entretanto, un grupo llamado ‘Sindicalistas de Portland Contra los Fascistas’ organizó una cuarta manifestación. La protesta se realizó justo al oriente del mitin por la libertad de expresión, con cientos de personas alineadas en una estrecha franja de la calle”.

Los sindicatos que participaron en esta movilización de trabajadores están muy conscientes de que los ataques racistas son usados para dividir y debilitar al movimiento obrero. Como señalaba la convocatoria de la manifestación: “Los fascistas son enemigos mortales de la clase obrera. Aplastarían a los sindicatos para imponer una dictadura ilimitada de los patrones. Por eso, sindicatos locales de Portland y de la región noroeste de Estados Unidos han decidido usar su poder para pararlos”.

La movilización del 4 de junio fue el resultado de meses de trabajo. La moción inicial que llamaba a favor de movilizaciones obreras contra los fascistas fue aprobada el 16 de noviembre por el local 10 del Sindicato de Pintores, en respuesta a la explosión de ataques racistas que siguió a la elección una semana antes del republicano Donald Trump como presidente. Esto siguió a la pionera moción aprobada por el mismo local en agosto pasado, en la que se llama a romper con los partidos Demócrata y Republicano y por la construcción de un partido obrero de lucha clasista. Una manta oficial del Sindicato de Pintores (IUPAT) con estas consignas estaba al frente y al centro de la movilización del 4 de junio. Esto subraya que, aunque los fascistas nativistas como el Ku Klux Klan y otros racistas violentos se han envalentonado con el triunfo de Trump, la verdad es que la fuerza policíaca que los respalda, tanto en Portland como en otros lugares, se expandió considerablemente bajo el demócrata Barack Obama.

Las mociones a favor de la acción sindical contra racistas y fascistas y a favor de un partido obrero fueron originalmente presentadas por miembros de Class Struggle Workers –Portland, una tendencia de militantes sindicales que trabaja fraternal-

sigue en la página 23